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Evaluation of Introduction to Education Course Through Student Achievement Scores and SWOT Analysis

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the academic achievement of education faculty students in the "Introduction to Education" course through midterm, final and average scores and to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the course in line with the students' views. In the mixed-method design study in which quantitative and qualitative data were used together, quantitative data were obtained from students' midterm and final exam scores, and qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interview forms consisting of open-ended questions. According to the quantitative findings of the study, female students showed higher academic achievement than male students in the 'Introduction to Education' course. In addition, significant differences were found between the academic achievement of the students, and the departments they studied in the faculty of education. This suggests that the course can be associated with different levels of achievement according to departments. According to the SWOT analysis obtained from the qualitative data, the strengths and opportunities of the course include that it provides basic knowledge and skills related to education, prepares students for the profession, and teaches the education system. Among the weaknesses and threats to the course, the theoretical intensity, the lack of practical studies, and the failure to address current problems were emphasized. The findings indicate that the Introduction to Education course should be restructured regarding content and methodology to make it more effective and functional.

Key Words

Academic achievement • Curriculum assessment • SWOT analysis

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Introduction

From the moment humans came to earth, the work of learning and teaching began. For this reason, teaching can be said to be the oldest profession in the world (Alacapınar, 2018). In the Basic Law on National Education No. 1739, teaching is defined as "a specialized profession that takes over the education, training and related administrative duties of the state,", and it has been suggested by various scientists that there are certain criteria for a field to be considered a profession. This idea has been discussed in different ways by scientists (Freidson, 1986; Ingersol, 1997). The scope of teacher education in Turkey consists of general culture, subject area knowledge, and professional knowledge of teaching courses for prospective teachers studying in all undergraduate departments of education faculties (TTK, 1980).

Different courses have been included in teacher training programs. Since 1982, the first and one of the most important courses among the basic courses of "teacher professional knowledge" in teacher training programs conducted by higher education institutions is "Introduction to Education" course (Çalık & Arslan, 2023). Introduction to Education is a course that is taught in all teacher training institutions and provides an understanding of the faculty of education and the teaching profession (Erginer, 2006). The Introduction to Education course is of great importance because it covers the foundations of the theoretical knowledge, skills and approaches that prospective teachers will encounter throughout their education. This course will increase the pre-service teacher's acquisition of both professional knowledge and content knowledge (Dilekli et al., 2024). The course was reorganized as a first semester course and three hours a week in 1982, "Introduction to Educational Science" in 1985, "Introduction to Teaching Profession" in 1997, and "Introduction to Educational Science" in 2006. Teacher training undergraduate programs were updated in 2018 and the course was organized as a compulsory course in the first semester and two hours a week with its first name "Introduction to Education" (Köstereliođlu, 2008). The content of the course includes the basic concepts, aims and functions of education, its relationship with other disciplines, learning environments, approaches, and methods, and current developments in the teaching profession and teacher training (Köstereliođlu, 2008). In this way, it was ensured that the prospective teacher received and transitioned into the world of teaching (Som et al., 2016).

According to Abraham Maslow's theory, needs form the basis and direct (Maslow, 1970). In the theory, it is seen that human beings have weak and deficient aspects; this is emphasized, and their strengths are ignored. A continuous and timely needs analysis should be conducted in educational training sessions, and the training should be organized accordingly; one of these needs analyses is the SWOT analysis.

SWOT analysis can include the examination of organizational and environmental factors with their positive and negative aspects (Cebecioğlu, 2006). SWOT analysis is part of the strategic planning process carried out by those who work on a company's goals and strategies and is applied in four key strategic areas. SWOT is the analysis conducted to identify the strengths and weaknesses of an educational system, training, course, commercial project, organization, event, etc. by taking into account the opportunities and threats arising from its environment (Osita et al., 2014). This analysis is the result of internal factor evaluation analysis (EFI) and external factor evaluation analysis (EFE).

Each curriculum can be evaluated using different evaluation models at each stage (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2015; Uşun, 2012). The stakeholders to be consulted about the adult can consist of students, teachers, administrators, supervisors, staff, parents, and other people and systems that affect and are affected by the inputs, processes, and outputs of the system. Students are the most important stakeholders in the education system. In this respect, assessing students' views can provide first-hand information about outcomes, content, instruction and testing situations. It can provide convenience for educational programmers in organizing, implementing, evaluating, and improving education (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2015; Uşun, 2012). Based on the information obtained from the students and the consistent data presented on the effectiveness of the training, the training can be made more effective by identifying and eliminating errors, deficiencies, and incomplete features in the training.

SWOT analysis can be used effectively to determine and improve the outcomes, content, training, and testing environments of the education system. Since it will contribute to the effective functioning of the system at every stage, it can increase profitability and effectiveness by reducing costs. In order to increase the quality of the Introduction to Education course and to serve the above-mentioned purposes, it is thought that strategic planning (SWOT) analysis is one of the requirements that should be regularly conducted in educational training.

It has been revealed that the concept of strategic planning emerged during World War II, it was used in the military sense, and was later applied in the business world, higher education, and other school levels (Reiger, 1993). Since the use of strategic planning in education is based on the view that schools cannot be managed like private businesses, it is mentioned that there should be cooperation, harmony, agreement, and communication in the planning process by the people who implement strategic planning in education (Callahan, 1996). SWOT analysis is a technique used not only in the field of business management but also in the field of education, especially to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the institution (Krisnawati et al., 2019; Rutherford, 2009).

Research in the field of education reveals that SWOT analysis plays an important role in developing academic programs and improving teaching processes. Özan et al. (2015) aimed to determine the internal and external factors affecting the school by evaluating the current situation of primary and secondary schools with SWOT analysis. At the end of their study, they determined that the physical conditions of schools and the socio-economic and socio-cultural levels of parents are the main factors affecting the school. Çolak and Efeoğlu (2021) aimed to determine the needs through SWOT analysis for the teaching practice courses carried out by the distance education method in the new normalization process. At the end of their research, they found that distance education provided convenience to prospective teachers in the theoretical parts of the courses, but it was difficult to carry out the practical courses remotely. At the end of her research, Ezin (2021) aimed to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of accounting education conducted as distance education during the pandemic and noted the existence of strengths and opportunities brought by the system despite many experienced negativities. Tekin and Yanpar Yelken (2022) aimed to evaluate the pedagogical formation education certificate program in terms of student views through SWOT analysis. At the end of the research, they determined that the pedagogical formation program stands out in terms of professional development, personal development and internship practice. Budak Durmuş (2024) aimed to evaluate the use of an artificial intelligence chatbot named ChatGPT in education through SWOT analysis and found

that ChatGPT's support for individual teaching was its strength and its reduction of social interaction was its weakness.

When foreign studies are examined, Maqruf (2022) aimed to evaluate entrepreneurship-based mathematics learning planning through SWOT analysis. According to the results of the study, quality teachers and students were the strengths of the planning, while the lack of facilities and funding were its weaknesses. Slavit et al. (2022) aimed to evaluate students' ways of thinking in STEM-rich learning environments through SWOT analysis: they found that students' problem solving, decision making, increased learning capacity, and interdisciplinary concept generation skills improved. Farrokhnia et al. (2024) aimed to evaluate the use of an artificial intelligence chatbot named ChatGPT in education within the framework of SWOT analysis. At the end of their study, they found that ChatGPT's self-improvement and its ability in producing individual responses are its strengths, while its lack of deep understanding, and difficulty in evaluating the quality of its responses are its weaknesses. Gal (2024) analyzed the current status of a long-term outdoor environmental education program through SWOT analysis and concluded that long-term planning for outdoor environmental education would be beneficial both environmentally and socially. Humble (2024) aimed to evaluate the status of generative artificial intelligence in informatics education through a SWOT analysis. At the end of his research, he found that the use of generative artificial intelligence in education is strong supporting teaching, learning, and educational transformation, while prejudices, dependency, and skill loss are weaknesses.

The aim of the study is to determine the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Introduction to Education course taught in the Faculty of Education by revealing the success of pre-service teachers in terms of some variables. The Introduction to Education course is very important for pre-service teachers to gain basic knowledge and skills related to the profession. It is thought that education faculty students who gain these basic knowledge and skills will not have difficulty adapting to other professional knowledge courses and will develop a positive attitude towards the profession. In this context, it is very important to make an objective evaluation of the Introduction to Education course and to renew the objectives, content, educational situations and measurement/assessment practices of the course to increase the efficiency of the course and improve the learning outcomes. The aim is to evaluate the internal potential and limitations and possible or probable opportunities and threats from the external environment. By examining all the positive and negative factors inside and outside the educational environment, one can anticipate changing trends. The knowledge that students of the faculty of education gain from the Introduction to Education course will form a basis for their success in the profession. The research problem is as follows: Do the midterm, final, and average scores of the students of the faculty of education from the Introduction to Education course differ significantly according to some variables? What are the opinions of the students about the strengths and weaknesses of the course and the opportunities and threats?

Sub- Problems

1- Do the midterm, final and average scores of the students of the Faculty of Education differ significantly according to their gender?

2- Do the midterm, final and average scores of the students of the faculty of education differ significantly according to the departments they study?

3- What are the opinions of the students of the faculty of education about the strengths and weaknesses of the Introduction to Education course?

4- What are the opinions of the students of the faculty of education about the opportunities and threats for the Introduction to Education course?

Method

Research Design

In this study, a mixed method was used to determine whether the gains of the Introduction to Education course differ significantly according to gender and departments, and to reveal student views on the strategic planning of the course. Mixed methods is defined as a method that uses both types of data in the research process and contributes to making the results more meaningful (Karasar, 2014). The explanatory design, one of the mixed-method designs, was employed (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2019). This design involves first collecting and analyzing quantitative data and then examining these results in depth with qualitative data. In the research, quantitative data were first collected, and then qualitative data were collected to interpret, deepen, and enrich these data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

The quantitative dimension of the study was conducted using a descriptive research design. Descriptive research is based on the direct and simple presentation of the data obtained and aims to convey the facts as they are (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2019). According to Kaptan, descriptive research takes into account current events and conditions, relationships with previous events, and the interaction between situations in order to explain them (Kaptan, 1998). The main goal of this method is to organize the data collected during the research process systematically and to convey them to the reader clearly and understandably. In descriptive research, the data are not only listed, but explanations and interpretations are offered, and logical connections are attempted between the emerging situations. Thus, the reasons underlying the phenomena observed through the data are discussed and possible conclusions are reached (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In the qualitative aspect of the study, phenomenology, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. The phenomenological method focuses on phenomena that we are aware of but do not have an in-depth and detailed understanding. It is also an appropriate research method for investigating phenomena that are not completely foreign to us but whose meaning we cannot fully grasp (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

Population and Sample

The population of the study, was selected from the students studying at the Faculty of Education of a state university in the spring semester of 2023-2024. The study sample, determined through convenience sampling, consisted of 111 students. Convenience sampling is the selection of the sample from the environments that can be easily applied due to limitations arising from working conditions, time, and financial constraints (Büyüköztürk et al., 2018).

Participants

The distribution of the faculty of education students participating in the study according to gender and department variables is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of demographic data of participants

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	38	34,2
Female	73	65,8
Department of Study		
Biology Teaching	3	2,7
Geography Teacher Education	18	16,2
Physics Teacher Education	3	2,7
English Language Teaching	61	55,0
Chemistry Teacher Education	9	8,1
Mathematics Teacher Education	17	15,3
TOTAL	**111**	**100**

According to Table 1, 73 of the participants were female (65.8%) and 38 were male (34.2%). When their majors are analyzed, it is seen that English language teaching (55%) constitutes the majority of the distribution, followed by geography teaching (16.2%) and mathematics teaching (15.3%).

Data Collection Tools

The scores obtained from the midterm and final exams, of the course, were used to evaluate the participants' success in the course. The quantitative data of the study were obtained through the midterm and final exam consisting of multiple-choice questions prepared by the researcher. The reliability coefficient of the cognitive domain test, which was organized in line with the opinions of experts and applied to the students, was found to be KR-20 = 0.82. Based on this value, it can be said that the test is reliable. The qualitative data of the study were obtained using a semi-structured interview form prepared by the researcher. In the interview form, the participants were asked 4 open-ended questions about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the Introduction to Education course. The written responses from the students and the situation can be accepted as proof of credibility. The collected data were retained for presentation to the appropriate people and institutions.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data constituting the quantitative dimension of the study were collected from the individuals in the sample during the 14-week Introduction to Education course. Midterm exam scores were obtained at the end of the 7-week course, and final exam scores were obtained after the completion of the course. Then, the average of the two exams constituted the average scores of the students. SWOT analysis data, which constitutes the qualitative dimension of the research, were obtained from the students at the end of the 14-week course, with an interview form.

The data obtained in the quantitative dimension of the research (midterm, final exam, and average scores) were subjected to descriptive statistics using SPSS software, and since the data showed normal distribution, the differences between group averages were calculated with a t-test and an analysis of variance (ANOVA) using parametric statistics. Qualitative data were collected through SWOT analysis. The content analysis method was employed for analyzing qualitative data. Content analysis technique is defined as a systematic and objective method used to identify, classify or interpret the basic components of discourses or texts (Alanka, 2024). Content analysis can be described as the process of analyzing what people say or write. In qualitative research, it is not necessary to present data in numerical form or conduct statistical analyses by converting them into mathematical language. The responses based on SWOT analysis given by the students were coded by content analysis and presented in tables.

Findings

In this section, the findings related to the sub-problems of the study are presented. Quantitative analysis of the academic achievement scores of the students participating in the Introduction to Education course, and qualitative evaluation of the course through SWOT analysis are presented in tables.

Findings Related to the First Sub-Problem

The first sub-problem of the research is whether the midterm, final, and average scores of the students of the Faculty of Education from the Introduction to Education course differ significantly based on gender. In order to test whether there is a statistically significant difference between the genders of the participants in terms of the scores they received from the course, the independent groups t test was applied. The test results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Midterm-final-average scores of faculty of education students by gender

	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	ss	sd	t	p
Midterm	Male	38	51,47	14,603	109	-5,784	.001
	Female	73	65,91	11,243			
Final	Male	38	48,03	20,016	109	-4,349	.001
	Female	73	63,48	16,485			
Average	Male	38	49,74	15,319	109	-5,828	.001
	Female	73	64,69	11,327			

As seen in Table 2, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference ($p<0.05$) between the midterm, final, and average scores in the Introduction to Education course for education faculty students and their gender. According to the table, this difference is in favor of female students in all three score types. In addition, Cohen's d effect size was calculated separately for all three score types in order to determine the magnitude of this difference. Cohen's d was 12.485 for midterm scores, 17.762 for final scores, and 12.822 for average scores. The academic achievement of female students in the introduction to education course is significantly higher than that of male students.

Findings Related to the Second Sub-Problem

The second sub-problem of the research is whether the midterm, final and average scores of the students of the Faculty of Education from the Introduction to Education course differ significantly according to the departments they study. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied to test whether there was a statistically significant difference in the scores received from the course among the departments of the participants. The test results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Midterm-final average scores of faculty of education students according to their departments

	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Squares	F	p	Significant Difference
Midterm	Between groups	2741,763	5	548,353	2,958	,015	Biology-Geography Biology-English Biology-Mathematics Physics-English English-Chemistry
	In-group	19464,64	105	185,378			
	Total	22206,40	110				
Final	Between groups	1694,653	5	338,931	,920	,471	-
	In-group	38662,37	105	368,213			
	Total	40357,02	110				
Average	Between groups	1354,283	5	270,857	1,284	,276	-
	In-group	22151,52	105	210,967			
	Total	23505,81	110				

As seen in Table 3, analysis showed there was a statistically significant difference ($p<0.05$) between the midterm, final, and average scores of the students of the faculty of education in the introduction to education course and the department they studied. This difference was valid only for midterm scores. The LSD test, one of the post-hoc tests, was applied to determine the significant differences between groups. According to the table, there is a statistically significant difference between the department of physics teaching and the departments of geography, English, and mathematics teaching.

Findings Related to the Third Sub-Problem

The third sub-problem of the research is "What are the opinions of the students of the faculty of education about the strengths and weaknesses of the Introduction to Education course?". The opinions of the students of the faculty of education about the strengths of the introduction to education course are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Strengths of the introduction to education course according to student opinions

Code	Frequency
To gain basic knowledge and skills related to education	42
Preparation for the profession	31
Teaching the education system	31
Developing professional awareness	26
To comprehend the importance of education in social terms	23

Providing different perspectives on education	22
To comprehend the relationship between education and other disciplines	19
Teaching the historical development of education	19
Gaining the responsibilities of the profession	18
Teaching different teaching methods and techniques	18
Developing solutions to problems	18
Gaining critical thinking skills	14
Teaching how to communicate with students	11
Including current issues and problems	9
Form the basis for future courses	9
Providing professional equipment	8
Gaining professional awareness	8
Gaining professional ethics	7
Teaching rights and laws related to education	7
Guidance in career planning	7
Gaining a positive attitude towards the profession	7
Providing an understanding of the nature of education	6
Recognizing student psychology	6
Gaining analytical thinking skills	5
Gaining professional knowledge	5
To comprehend the philosophy of education	5
Providing information about education and training	5
Providing the opportunity to compare the educational approaches of different countries	4
Giving the chance to practice	4
Gaining general culture	3
Teaching the application of technology in education	3
To comprehend the characteristics that a teacher should have	3
Making them academically equipped	2
Developing scientific thinking skills	2
Improving communication skills	2
To comprehend the profession and its place in education	2
Providing opportunities for self-improvement	2
Introducing different learning theories	2
Gaining classroom management skills	2
Teaching social, cultural and psychological aspects of education	2
Teaching the purpose of education	1
Develop thinking and questioning skills	1
Developing a sense of empathy	1
Providing intellectual accumulation	1
Enabling the exchange of ideas	1
Teaching the requirements of the profession	1
Increasing interest in education	1
To comprehend the subtleties of the profession	1

Ensuring the development of cooperation skills	1
Helps build professional identity	1
Teaching the conditions of the profession	1
Providing a student-centered approach	1
Providing opportunities for self-evaluation of the training	1
Providing pedagogical knowledge	1
Providing a professional perspective on education	1
Teaching the role of the profession in society	1
Being a verbal-based course	1
Providing the opportunity to follow innovations and developments	1
Develops the ability to comment	1
Face-to-face teaching of the course	1
Total	**439**

As seen in Table 4, according to the students' opinions, the strengths of the introduction to education course, in the first place, are "To gain basic knowledge and skills related to education". In addition, "Preparation for the profession", "Teaching the education system", "Developing professional awareness", "Comprehending the importance of education in social terms" and "Providing different perspectives on education" are among the most frequently mentioned strengths of the introduction to education course.

The opinions of education faculty students on the weaknesses of the introduction to education course are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Weaknesses of introduction to education course according to student opinions

Code	**Frequency**
Theoretical emphasis	55
Lack of practical work	41
Failure to address current issues	31
The course remains abstract	24
Superficial treatment of topics	21
Inadequate course duration	21
Too many topics	19
Teaching the course through lecture	15
Lack of interactive processing	14
Focus on general information	14
Being boring	13
Comprehensive in scope	13
Lack of connection with real life	11
Lack of opportunity to practice	11
Being memorization-oriented	10
Monotonous	10
Information-intensive information load	9

Processing without a break	8
Failure to address individual interests and needs	7
Lack of student interest in the course	7
Complex content	7
Lack of resources	6
Verbal predominance	6
Recurring topics	5
The course is heavy	5
Giving in first grade	4
Low persistence	4
Difficult exams	4
Lack of efficiency	4
Intensive subjects	3
Focus on concepts and terms	2
Examples are given little space	2
One-way education approach	2
Lack of opportunity to do it again	2
Long duration of the course	2
Learning information and concepts takes a lot of time	1
Dominance of the cognitive dimension	1
Processing in large classes	1
Being responsible for too many resources	1
Closed to change	1
Lack of experience transfer	1
Not sharing course presentations with students	1
Continuous change of course content	1
Worry about failing classes	1
Lack of emotional development	1
Lack of focus on problems in the education system	1
Not contributing to critical thinking	1
Lack of space for different approaches	1
Being together with philosophy and psychology	1
Closed to development	1
Lack of group work	1
Inadequate facilities	1
Crowded	1
Lack of motivation	1
Test anxiety	1
Focusing on the exam	1
Failure to attract enough attention	1
Not promoting the profession sufficiently	1
Insufficient use of technology	1
Being based on interpretation	1
Total	**437**

As seen in Table 5, according to the students' opinions, the first weakness of the introduction to education course is "Theoretical emphasis". In addition, "Lack of practical work", "Failure to address current issues", "The course remains abstract", "Superficial treatment of topics", and "Inadequate course duration" are among the most frequently mentioned weaknesses of the introduction to education course.

Findings Related to the Fourth Sub-Problem

The fourth sub-problem of the research is "What are the opinions of the students of the Faculty of Education about the opportunities and threats to the Introduction to Education course?" The education faculty students' opinions about the opportunities for the introduction to education course, are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Opportunities for introduction to education course according to student views

Code	**Frequency**
To gain basic knowledge and skills related to education	40
Providing an opportunity to understand the education system	28
Gaining critical thinking skills	20
Providing different perspectives	19
Understanding the importance of education in society	18
Improving problem solving skills	18
Preparation for the profession	16
Gaining professional responsibilities	14
To comprehend current problems and solutions related to education	14
Gaining professional awareness	14
Teaching different teaching methods and techniques	11
Creates professional awareness	9
Enables learning about education systems in different countries	8
Improving communication skills	8
Providing career planning opportunities	8
To comprehend the relationship between education and other disciplines	6
Teaching different educational approaches	6
Provides an understanding of educational philosophies	5
Teaching rights and laws	5
To form the basis for future courses	5
Teaching how to be a good teacher	5
Providing the opportunity to get to know the profession	5
Providing a pedagogical approach	5
Providing an understanding of student psychology	4
Develops the ability to analyze	3
Ensuring to be a well-equipped individual	3
Understanding the nature of education	3

To learn the historical development of education	3
Providing opportunities for self-improvement	3
Informs about theories	3
Developing leadership skills	3
Gains professional ethics	3
Provides professional development	3
Encouraging the use of technology	4
Providing the opportunity to get to know the field well	2
Developing scientific thinking skills	2
To comprehend educational science and teaching profession	2
Teaching education policies	2
Teaching the social cultural psychological aspects of education	2
Teaching with different activities	2
Gaining general culture	2
Gaining cooperation skills	2
Understanding the importance of the profession	2
Helping to create a professional identity	2
Teaching to communicate with the student	2
Gaining social sensitivity	2
Assignments based on academic articles	1
Providing advantage in appointments	1
Adopting Atatürk's understanding of education	1
Teaching the economic foundations of education	1
Developing the ability to empathize	1
Provides intellectual development	1
Encouragement to read books	1
Rich in terms of subject matter	1
Teaching the use of materials	1
Providing a student-centered approach	1
Teaches to discover talent in students	1
Providing the opportunity to understand learning processes	1
Providing information about maintaining classroom order	1
Drawing attention to social problems	1
Total	**360**

As seen in Table 6, according to student opinions, the primary aim of the introduction to education course is "To gain basic knowledge and skills related to education". In addition, "Providing an opportunity to understand the education system", "Gaining critical thinking skills", "Providing different perspectives", "Understanding the importance of education in society", and "Improving problem-solving skills" are among the most frequently mentioned opportunities for the introductory course.

The opinions of education faculty students about the threats to the introduction-to-education course are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Threats to introduction to education course according to student views

Code	**Frequency**
Theoretical emphasis	35
Failure to include current issues and problems	17
Lack of opportunity to practice	15
Lack of motivation	14
Exam anxiety	12
Not allowing the development of practical skills	12
Superficial knowledge acquisition	12
Lack of connection with real life	11
Being abstract	9
Being general	8
Lack of interest	8
Too many topics	8
Too much emphasis on problems	8
Failure to address individual needs	7
Being boring	7
Intensive knowledge transfer	7
Monotonous teaching	6
High information load	5
Lack of interactive processing	5
Being based on rote memorization	5
Being a verbal-based course	5
Comprehensive in scope	4
Insufficient time	4
Complex topics	3
Insufficient resources	3
Creating a wrong perception of profession	6
Being challenging	3
Not meeting expectations	3
Having many concepts	2
Not getting enough efficiency from the course	2
Emphasizing the negative aspects of education	2
Not providing different teaching approaches	2
Too much information	2
Classical teaching methods	4
No feedback and correction to students	2
Low persistence	2
Assignment problems	1

Lack of experience transfer	1
High course load	1
Failure to fully understand the aim of the course	1
The course is boring	1
Problems with absenteeism	1
Failure to attract attention	1
Lecturing through lectures	1
Frequent use of generalizations	1
Unrealistic expectations	1
Lack of group work	1
Not providing up-to-date methods and techniques	2
Not addressing everyone's interests and needs	1
Difficulty in understanding the content	1
Lack of opportunity for self-improvement	1
Lack of global understanding	1
Loss of reputation of the profession	1
Insufficient time given for the exam	1
Providing a one-dimensional perspective	1
Insufficient use of technology	1
Contains repetitions	1
Inconsistency	1
Lack of international focus	1
Not developing creative and analytical thinking skills	1
Total	**285**

As seen in Table 7, according to students' opinions, "Theoretical emphasis" ranks first among the opportunities for the introduction to the education course. In addition, "Failure to include current issues and problems", "Lack of opportunity to practice", "Lack of motivation", "Exam anxiety", and "Not allowing the development of practical skills" are among the most frequently mentioned threats to the Introduction to Education course.

Comment & Discussion

The Introduction to Education course is considered an essential course that provides teacher candidates with the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for the teaching profession. Therefore, it is important to evaluate the course in terms of success and understand teacher candidates' views on it for the future of teacher training programs that have undergone many restructuring processes (Önen & Koçak, 2011). The findings of this study, which aims to evaluate the Introduction to Education course taught in different departments of the faculty of education through student achievement scores and SWOT analysis, reveal that achievement levels in the Introduction to Education course and perceptions of this course differ according to various variables. In line with the data obtained, the finding that female students have higher academic achievement compared to male students is consistent with previous studies. It has been emphasized in previous studies that female students have more regular study habits, are more disciplined in the learning process, and are more responsible in fulfilling academic tasks (Duckworth & Seligman, 2006; Voyer & Voyer, 2014). At the same time, these findings are in line with those of Yenilmez and Özbey (2007)

and Yiğit and Kaçire (2015). In this context, it can be stated that the effect of gender difference on achievement is not only biological but also related to social expectations and learning culture (Çakır ve Baş, 2018; Kurtdaş, 2021; Legewie ve DiPrete, 2012; Penner, 2008).

The significant differences between departments indicate that the Introduction to Education course does not have the same level of effectiveness in all teaching programs. Students of some departments have higher academic achievement scores in the Introduction to Education course compared to other departments, which is thought to be a result of their level of interest in the course or their greater adaptation to the teaching method. In addition, in some departments, students' higher interest in education or more developed academic competencies can be considered among the important factors affecting differences in achievement (Küçükahmet, 2017). This finding suggests that the course should be enriched with different content and teaching strategies at the department level.

Teacher candidates in education faculties undergo training to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by their departments. The needs of each department vary according to their pedagogical priorities and professional competence goals (Fernandes et al., 2023; Rodrigues et al., 2021). Due to these differences, presenting the Introduction to Education course with the same content and teaching strategies in all departments may limit its pedagogical effectiveness. Therefore, it can be argued that the content and delivery of the course should be differentiated according to the unique structures of each department. Students in the Guidance and Psychological Counseling department can be encouraged to learn through case analysis of the psychological foundations of education and structured discussion participation. These approaches help students understand psychological concepts in practical contexts (Corey, 2013). In the Elementary Mathematics Education department, problem-based learning models and concrete examples can be used to structure teaching, enabling students to relate mathematical thinking to education (Polya, 2004).

In the Classroom Teaching program, emphasizing constructivist and active learning techniques, such as collaborative learning, drama, and role-playing, can effectively develop students' classroom interaction skills and pedagogical creativity. In the Turkish Language Teaching program, teaching methods based on text analysis, critical thinking, and discussion can contribute to students' in-depth understanding of language and meaning construction processes (Sever, 2011). In foreign language teaching departments, such as English, German, French, and Arabic, the Introduction to Education course can focus on language learning and teaching processes. This allows students to analyze pedagogical theories in the context of the target language (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). In art education fields, such as art and music teaching, it is considered more meaningful for the course to focus on developing aesthetic sensitivity and revealing creative potential (Eisner, 2003).

The results of the SWOT analysis show that students see the Introduction to Education course not only as an academic obligation, but also as an area of professional and social achievement. The most prominent statement in the strengths is "providing basic knowledge and skills related to education," which reveals that this course plays an important role in developing professional awareness in students. Similarly, Yapucuoğlu et al. (2024) examined teacher candidates' perceptions of professional knowledge courses and discovered that these courses promote professional competence. Additionally, Şimşek and Özgür (2023) evaluated teacher candidates' views on teacher

education courses in terms of professional development. They concluded that the "Introduction to Education" course teaches basic educational concepts and the relationship between education and other disciplines. This coincides with the general objectives of the course and shows that program outcomes are reflected in student perception. In addition, these findings were in line with the findings of Tekin and Yanpar Yelken (2022).

In terms of weaknesses and threats, students stated that the course focused too much on theoretical knowledge, which reduced their motivation. They also mentioned that there were few opportunities for practice and insufficient opportunities to develop practical skills. Similarly, Emek (2021) evaluated the emergency distance Turkish teaching program using SWOT analysis. He found that the lack of practice opportunities was one of the threats to the course, which could cause professional anxiety among teacher candidates. Furthermore, Akçöltekin et al. (2022) used SWOT analysis to examine the needs of science teachers regarding remote education applications conducted during the pandemic and determined that a lack of experiential learning opportunities was a threat to the course. This makes it necessary to review the teaching methods and support the course with more active learning strategies. The lack of discussion of current educational problems may especially cause students to have difficulty in relating the course to life. The lack of opportunity to develop problem solving, critical thinking, and application skills can be considered a threat that limits students' development of professional competence.

Conclusion & Recommendations

In this study, the results of SWOT analysis based on student achievement levels, and student perceptions of the compulsory Introduction to Education course in faculties of education were evaluated comprehensively. In line with the findings, the gender of the students and their teaching departments significantly affects their achievement levels in this course. The higher achievement of female students reveals that gender-based awareness should be considered in the education process. In addition, achievement levels vary between different teaching programs, indicating that the way of conducting the course and student profiles vary across departments.

The data based on the SWOT analysis revealed that the Introduction to Education course provides basic gains related to the education system, professional awareness, and social awareness, but has limitations in terms of implementation and methodology. In particular, the predominance of theoretical knowledge limits students' opportunities to discuss current educational problems and generate solutions. The weaknesses and threats of the course suggest that the teaching process should be reorganized with a student-centered, participatory, and critical approach. In this context, making the Introduction to Education course compatible with curricula, interdisciplinary, practice-based and sensitive to current problems will both increase students' academic achievement, and strengthen their commitment to the teaching profession.

Based on the research findings, it suggests that the content of the course should be updated, and it should be restructured into a practice-based structure. Since the current structure of the Introduction to Education course is based more on theoretical knowledge, the course content should be restructured to cover current educational problems. Group work, case studies, and discussion-based activities should be planned to increase student participation. In addition, achievement differences arising from gender differences in the course should be taken into account. To align with the finding that female students have higher achievement levels, guidance and supportive

learning environments can be created, to increase male students' motivation for the course. Differentiated teaching strategies can be used according to learning styles.

It should be considered that education faculty students studying in different departments have different achievement scores. To make the course homogeneous, similar teaching objectives and methods can be adopted across departments. The lecturer who teaches the course and the field expert lecturers working in the departments can cooperate and share information about the interests and needs of the students specific to the department. In addition, conducting regular analyses such as SWOT analysis to determine students' perceptions of the courses can contribute to the development of the courses. These suggestions will both increase the pedagogical effectiveness of the course and ensure more active participation of pre-service teachers in the education process.

Ethic

I declare that the research was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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