

PERCEPTIONS OF INMATES ON PRISON EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In Turkey, a total number of 52, 716 convicts are received into prisons because of their committed crime each year. Majority of these inmates have only education at primary school level (Judicial Statistics, 2005). Education is recognized as a “basic human need and as a human right, also for prison inmates” (United Nations and UNESCO, 1995). Accordingly, in recent years, there has been an increasing amount of interest internationally in prison education and education after inmates have been released into society.

Through its publication “Education in Prison” the Council of Europe (1990) issued seventeen recommendations for prison education. Recommendation states: “All prisoners shall have access to education, which is envisaged as consisting of classroom subjects, vocational education, creative and cultural activities, physical education and sports, social education and library facilities” (pg.4).

Prisoners become citizens once again at the completion of their sentences. After release, prisoners need to be able to gain employment adequate enough to care for themselves as well as other family members. Moeller (2004) determined that “...although literacy does not guarantee a better life outside prison walls, illiteracy guarantees a higher recidivism rate” (pg.41).

According to Bethel (1985), in a statistical sense, the inmate is born into a family that lacks the resources that a child needs to develop into a capable adult. This includes not only financial resources, but also personal qualities, knowledge and

time. In general, the people in prisons tend to come predominantly from poor families where all these resources are in short supply. Additionally, Bethel (1985) indicated that many of the theories of criminality associate a lack of education and employability as a contributing factor to why crime is committed. Because of this belief, education is a major component of the rehabilitative program in prisons. Educational achievement is also said to provide the prisoner with an opportunity to improve their attitudes and behavior. Therefore, the educational needs of the inmate are great. If education is an agent for changing attitudes, Bethel determined that “the educational achievements should be a good indication of the likelihood that prisoner attitudes toward their future should improve favorably” (pg. 25).

The lack of quality education is one of the major causes of criminal activity. If inmates are unable to acquire education while they are incarcerated, the chances are very great that they will make similar mistakes and return to criminal activity after release. However, if they are able to obtain the education and vocational training, they will need to make better life choices and find meaningful work; they will be able to build law-abiding careers for themselves and better lives for their families and communities. There is a need for prisons to provide services which include education and vocational training that will prepare these men and women for successful reentry into society (Why Educate Prisoners, 2007).

In the present study, the researcher’s interest in prison education programs was enhanced by the lack of available research in this area in Turkey. As the researcher’s review of existing studies focusing on inmates’ perceptions demonstrated, there had not been any research published in this area in Turkey. This study has drawn attention to the inmates. It is necessary that the research in the area of prison education takes into consideration inmate perceptions. The purpose of this study is to

investigate the views of inmates about the prison education programs they are participated in.

### Statement of the Problem

Bethel (1985) noted that “it is not rehabilitation that is needed in a literal sense; but rather habilitation or qualifying for living and functioning in society” (pg.3). One possible way of describing or evaluating correctional education is to identify the perceptions of inmates. Therefore, the first step in the consideration of prison education was to conduct a study of the perceptions of inmates about prison education programs.

The main purpose of this study is to determine the perceptions of inmate participants about prison education programs. It attempts to explore the views of inmates participating in educational activities in prisons (social-cultural activities and courses, vocational education programs, Level I and Level II literacy courses) in terms of their evaluations of their educational experiences, the effect of these programs on their lives in prison, and the expected contributions of these educational activities on their future plans after being released.

The study is descriptive and the main concern is to describe the perceptions of inmates enrolled in these educational activities. Also, the relationship between inmates’ demographic characteristics and their perceptions about the programs were investigated.

## Questions of the Study

In this study answers were sought to the following research questions:

1. What are the inmate participants' perceptions of prison education programs in terms of the following sub-research questions?
  - What are the bases of the decision making of inmate participants in choosing and participating in educational activities?
  - What are the positive effects of educational programs on inmate participants' lives in general, and on their future plans?
  - What are the inmate participants' views on the deficiencies of the educational programs in which they are participating?
  
2. Is there any relationship between the following selected demographic characteristics and inmates' perceptions?
  - Is there any relationship between gender and participation in social-cultural activities?
  - Is there any relationship between gender and the perceptions of inmates of prison education programs?
  - Is there any relationship between gender and inmates' future plans?
  - Is there any relationship between age and participation in social-cultural activities?
  - Is there any relationship between age and the perceptions of inmates of prison education programs?
  - Is there any relationship between age and inmates' future plans?

- Is there any relationship between education level and participation in social-cultural activities?
- Is there any relationship between education level and the perceptions of inmates of prison education programs?
- Is there any relationship between education level and inmates' future plans?

### Significance

Existing studies in this area indicate that participation in educational programs yields a positive influence on the psychological well being of inmates, reduces rule infractions, and enrolled inmates serve as role models to other inmates (Gordon & Weldon, 2003; Vacca, 2004; Schlesinger, 2005). These positive influences also facilitate a culture of respect that allows prisoners to develop personal motivations for enrichment. By understanding both how programs affect participants and how inmates perceive their educational programs we can continue to enhance inmate participants' opportunities to succeed.

From the review of the literature, it is evident that varying views exist with respect to the value and purpose of prison education. Despite several studies abroad showing numerous positive effects of prison education programs, the literature also shows that no educational program is carried out with the real interests of the individual inmates. Therefore, it is essential to determine their perceptions and thoughts.

For determining the effectiveness of education and training, the first step is to examine the perceptions of the participants. The perspectives of the inmates are an important issue for the field of prison education. This study is the first step in this



area and explored the views of inmates participating in educational activities in prisons in terms of their evaluations of their educational experiences, the effect of these programs on their lives in prison, and the expected contributions of these educational activities on their future plans after being released.

There have been organized educational activities in Turkish prisons since 1981, but no research has been conducted on inmates' perceptions. This study was an attempt at gathering data demonstrating the perceptions of inmates upon prison education. This issue is also highly significant due to the impact that the inmates have on their respective families and communities.

It is expected that the information gathered from this study can be used to assist prison administrators and educators in their efforts to improve the educational programs in the prisons.

#### Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the terms are defined as the following:

Inmates (offenders): a convicted person serving a sentence in prison (Hall, 2006).

Incarcerated: to confine in jail or in prison (Hall, 2006).

Recidivism: returning to prison following release as a result of the commission of an additional criminal offense (Hall, 2006).

Prison (correctional) education: educational classes and/or training within the prison (Hall, 2006).

## Organization of the Study

Chapter two will review the literature on prison education, beginning with the purpose of prison education. This chapter will also determine inmates' perceptions of prison education programs and prison education in Turkey.

Chapter Three presents information about the methodology, including research design, population and sample selection, the development of the instrument, data collection procedures and the analysis of data.

Chapter Four provides data analysis the findings. Finally, Chapter Five presents a summary of the findings and discussion. It also includes conclusions and recommendations, states the limitations of the study and offers suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature for this study includes information related to prison education and inmate participants' perceptions of prison education programs, which are the focus of this study. The final section of this part presents the literature related to prison education in Turkey.

#### Prison Education

##### The Purpose and Need of Prison Education

The philosophy of educating inmates to reduce recidivism has been in practice for more than a century. Since the early attempts at providing treatment programming to the inmate population, many programs throughout the world have been developed to better address the lack of education and cognitive skill development of criminals to reduce recidivism (Conway, 2000).

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (1990) recommended that "it is essential that all people engaged in providing education in prisons should be encouraged to see those in their classes as adults involved in normal adult education activities" (pg.18). The students should be approached as responsible people who have choices available to them. In other words, the prison context should be minimized so that the normal atmosphere, interactions and processes of adult education can flourish as they would in the outside community. For determining such

an approach is that the educational program should be based on individual needs. According to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (1990), some generalizations can be made in the investigation of the educational needs of those who are in prison. The majority of prisoners are severely disadvantaged and have experienced multiple failures. These prisoners, who have had little or no work or vocational training in their lives, have low self-esteem and lack participatory skills. From their point of view, they have failed at school. Initially, they are convinced that there is nothing that education can offer them. Many of them face severe literacy problems and the associated sense of stigma.

According to the report of the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (2005), the purpose of education and training in prisons should be to play a key role in improving the employability of prisoners and therefore contribute to reducing recidivism. However, the report states that “we should wish the purpose of prison education to be understood in broader terms than just improving the employability of a prisoner. We would emphasize the importance of delivering education also because it is the right thing to do in a civilized society” (pg.14). Education has a value in itself and it is important to develop the person as a whole, not just in terms of the qualifications he or she holds for employment.

Davidson (1995) determined that correctional education comes from the belief that “criminals lack the academic, vocational and social skills needed to be successful in society” (cited in Conway, 2000, pg.3). Lacking these skills, individuals turn to crime in order to survive. By meeting the criminals’ basic education and social needs, we should be able to correct the criminal behavior by opening up employment and social opportunities which allow them to achieve these goals legally (cited in Conway, 2000).

Conway (2000) also explained that law-abiding citizens have developed the ability to rationalize the cost of the punishment against the social cost of committing the crime. The goal of education is to develop cognitive thinking. By developing cognitive thinking, it is believed criminals will make socially normal and law-abiding decisions.

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (1990) recommended in their report on Education in Prison that education in prisons should have purposes no less important than those of education in the community outside. In particular, the aims of prison education should be essentially the same as those in adult education. The primary aims of prison education services must be to facilitate the right to learn, which all men and women have and which is a key to their human development.

According to Lawrance et al. (2002), prison programs frequently are justified on the grounds that they contribute to a wide range of goals, including improved public safety, greater community cohesion, and improved offender and family functioning. These goals are thought to be realized through various outcomes, such as reduced recidivism, stable offender employment and housing, improved family interactions. In each instance, prison programs are designed to address one or more areas of need (e.g., education, vocational training, life skills training, mental health and substance abuse treatment) that are believed to contribute to the specific outcomes. Additionally, these areas of need in turn are believed to be linked to specific background characteristics, such as the age, race, sex, prior record, previous educational and work experiences of offenders, and their mental health and physical status upon entry into prison (Lawrance et al., 2002).

The Declaration of Kampala (1997) recommends that: “The prisoners must have access to education and to a vocational training providing them a chance to a

better reintegration into society after their release” (cited in Document of Workshops Held at the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education, 1997).

The basic objectives of education for prisoners are:

- To teach them new skills;
- To help them retain previous vocational skills, necessary for their later social reintegration.

There is nevertheless a general consensus that adult education for prisoners is a fundamental step towards their social reintegration. The following are some of the important considerations for the development of successful policies in this area.

- Education practices that stress personal development should be advocated for prison inmates.
- Adult vocational education must take into account other dimensions of the educational process such as personal development and attitudinal change.
- The education process should begin as soon as the inmate is sentenced. It is also crucial to offer adult educational opportunities after the release of prison inmates. This would maximize the possibility of social reintegration.
- The issue of motivation to study is also fundamental in adult learning for prison inmates. The problem is not only an individual motivational one but also a social problem. The involvement of many other actors needs to be taken into account, including the attitudes of guardians and of other inmates. Other issues relate to the choice between studying and working and of creating a learning environment in prisons.
- All adult education projects must try to link adult learning with the social context of the learner. It is necessary to take into account the variety of social contexts of prison inmates when designing adult learning projects (cited in Document of workshops held at the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education, 1997: 6-7).

Sutton (1992) determined that supported educational programming is not the only factor in the successful reintegration of inmates into the community. Its importance in the broader scope of the development of the individual must be considered. “A prisoner’s problems are greater than any solution that education alone can offer, but without education the problems are unlikely to be dissipated by prison regime” (cited in Hobbey, 2002: 14).

## The Impact of Education Programs on Inmates

The literature has shown that inmates who attend educational programs while they are incarcerated are less likely to return to prison following their release. Several studies have indicated that recidivism rates decline where inmates receive an appropriate education. Furthermore, the right kind of educational program leads to less violence by inmates involved in the programs, a more positive prison environment, positive feelings of inmates and positive effects on inmates' learning opportunities.

According to results of her study, Fox (1994) states that "it appears that the participants in the study benefit from their incarcerated status because they are given the opportunity to learn. Therefore, the prison has a positive influence on their learning opportunities" (cited in Sachdev, 1995: 22).

Effective education programs are those that help prisoners with their social skills, artistic development and techniques and strategies to help them deal with their emotions. In addition, these programs emphasize academic, vocational and social education. The inmates who participate in these programs do so because they see clear opportunities to improve their capabilities for employment after being released. Inmates need education programs that not only teach them to read effectively but also "provide them with the necessary reinforcement that promote a positive transition to society when they are released" and "efforts in this direction would help stimulate better participation of inmates in all prison education programs and will go a long way to help the prisoner rehabilitation process" (Vacca, 2004: 297).

The Education Department at the Huttonsville Correctional Center provided files pertaining to inmates who had been enrolled in educational programs during

1999-2000. Vocational completers had a recidivism rate of 8.75%, inmates who participated in both GED (General Educational Development) and vocational training reported a recidivism rate of 6.71%, and non-educational participants had a recidivism rate of 26%. GED and vocational training programs had a positive effect on reducing recidivism. Education is a change agent. The combination of career and technical education along with incarceration for the qualified inmate may help to increase the safety of society when the offender is released (Gordon & Weldon, 2003).

The impact of educational programs was also reported by Brown et al., (2000). Their report cites statistics from a study of the Virginia Department of Corrections Education program that indicated a positive impact of education on the recidivism rate. The authors reported a recidivism rate of 49.04% for inmates who had no educational programming while incarcerated compared to a 19.1% recidivism rate for inmates who had completed an academic program while incarcerated (Brown et al., 2000).

Studies have shown that a combination of vocational and educational programming together produce a better rate of recidivism than educational programs alone. Gerber and Fritsch (1995) evaluated adult academic and vocational correctional education programs for men. Their research shows a fair amount of support for the hypothesis that adult academic and vocational correctional education programs led to “fewer disciplinary violations during incarceration, to reductions in recidivism, to increases in employment opportunities, and to increase in participation in education upon release” (pg. 38). They also determined that education improves prison operations. Intellectually challenged inmates tend to maintain clean records because they acquire the ability to respond to situations intellectually and verbally



rather than physically. A literate inmate is usually more rational and thus easier to control (cited in Fox, 2002).

According to Tewksbury and Stengel (2006), in order to best understand the impacts, experiences and most appropriate structures for successful correctional education programs it is important to look across the type of programming options from which both inmate-students and correctional administrator have to choose. Due to a high level of interest in correctional educational programs as a means to reduce recidivism, “serious attention must be given to understand which programs best address the needs of prisoners” (pg.13). For the study Tewksbury and Stengel gathered data using a survey with all (n=281) students enrolled in educational programs at the Kentucky State Reformatory. In regard to what motivates the inmates to go to school, the responses indicated that the most common motivation for academic students is to increase one’s self esteem. Academic students are especially likely to report this as a motivation whereas vocational students most frequently reported participation so as to increase their chances for securing employment when they were released. “It appears that the foundation for participating is that they now feel positively about their ability to improve themselves as well as their positions in society” (pg.14). Participants in both academic and vocational programs reported a high level of confidence that they would finish the program. “This self confidence in the ability to succeed may, in turn, greatly enhance their ability to avoid re-incarceration” (pg.14). The important aspect of this study is that the inmates understood the connection between success in the academic programs and success after release. This finding gives support to the argument for maintaining, and expanding, educational programs in correctional facilities (Tewksbury and Stengel, 2006).

## Types of Programs in Prison Education

According to the United Nations and UNESCO Institute for Education (1995), there are considerable differences in the manner in which prison education is implemented throughout the world. The goals of and approaches to prison education change greatly at the regional level and also between nations with similar economic, cultural and political backgrounds. However, some generalizations can be made. First of all, there are parallel regional instruments that authorized education as a basic human right. Second, the goals of any prison education programs throughout the world are to enable those who have only minimal educational achievements and to learn so that they can be successfully reintegrated into society. Last, the need to establish or improve the educational provision for inmates, especially in support structures, facilities and resource allocation is an issue throughout the world (United Nations and UNESCO Institute for Education, 1995).

Lawrence, Dubin and Travis (2002) argue that prison programs in United States frequently are justified on the grounds that they contribute to a wide range of goals, including improved public safety, greater community cohesion, and improved offender and family functioning. These goals are thought to be realized through various outcomes, such as reduced recidivism, stable offender employment and housing, and improved family interactions. In each instance, prison programs are designed to address one or more areas of need (e.g., education, vocational training, life skills training, mental health and substance abuse treatment) that are believed to contribute to the specific outcomes. These areas of need in turn are believed to be linked to specific background characteristics, such as the age, race, sex, prior record, previous educational and work experiences of offenders, and their mental health and physical status upon entry into prison (Lawrance et al., 2002).

In many of the states of the United States prison programs are presented in four categories in general. *Educational Programming* typically includes adult basic education classes, high school/general education degree classes, and post-secondary classes. *Vocational training* involves skills development in a particular trade or industry, such as carpentry, auto detailing, electronic servicing, graphic, arts/printing, horticulture, masonry, and welding. *Prison industries programming* involves work in a particular industry, including traditionally prison-based industries (e.g., license plate manufacturing, laundry, food services) as well as farming, textiles, and restoration (i.e., computer refurbishing). *Employment services training* typically involves providing assistance in how to obtain and retain employment, including job interviewing skills, resume development, and professional workplace habits (Lawrance et al., 2002).

According to a report of the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research (2004-2005), in Nordic countries education and training in the correctional services follow the curricula for basic education. Skills acquired while serving time will form the basis for qualification for work of further education. Vocational programs are largely limited to mechanical trades. Otherwise, woodworking trades and hotel and food-processing trades are the most common. Lower-security prisons are able to provide a wider offering by using day-release to local upper-secondary schools. Due to considerable differences between the various prisons, educational and training offerings vary widely. They range from brief preparatory courses to extensive training programmes that result in qualifications.

According to a report of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (1990), the educational activities in prisons in Europe can be classified under following main headings: literacy and adult basic education, vocational education,

libraries, physical education and sports, creative and cultural activities, and social education.

### Inmates in Prison: Characteristics, Participation and Motivation

According to Bethel (1985) adult students, in general, bring diverse life experiences to the learning situation. However, the prisoner has negative experiences. Many of the inmates are from minority groups, low-socioeconomic levels, and poor financial conditions. They often are oriented to failure. Additionally, prison is seen as an official label of failure to conform to the norms of society. This is usually preceded by years of failure in the school system. This failure and poor attitude is carried over into corrections education.

The prior family, educational and employment, and substance abuse histories of prisoner students have a large impact on the decisions that he makes while incarcerated. These prior experiences can serve as a deterrent or an impetus for success. “The key to overcome the obstacles presented by prisoner students’ background characteristics is educational intervention” (pg.25). Thus, an inmate must have desire or motivation of some sort to begin taking classes and/or seeking treatment while incarcerated (Hall, 2006).

In Wildman’s (1987) study, the respondents determined several reasons for initially participating in prison education programs: for the challenge, for something to do, for the stimulation, the education program was more appealing than other institutional alternatives, and the subject was influenced by friends taking similar courses. However, Wildman concluded that regardless of the original reason for participating in the prison education programs, once the individual becomes

involved, “something happened that made them want to continue their education” (pg. 23). He states that this motivation to continue with education is due to “feelings of increased confidence, self-esteem, self-worth, the satisfaction of accomplishment and the vague belief that what they were doing was externally validated outside the prison and might somehow provide a path to a new life on the street” (Cited in Sachdev, 1995: 23).

In Kendall’s essay “What Makes Correctional Education Correctional?” he writes that “its first and most important job is motivation...the success or failure of correctional education must rest on the answer to the question: How many uninterested, discouraged, contemptuous inmates have we succeeded in interesting and motivating? How many have we helped to realize that they do have potential?” (Cited in Bethel, 1985: 28).

The results of several studies show that inmates enroll in correctional education programs for many reasons. Ayers (1981) reports that some offenders participate in prison programs as a way to avoid work or to do easy time. However, once involved, students showed improvement in commitment, confidence, interpersonal relations, and intellectual, social and moral growth. Lawrence (1997) found that earning credits toward early release, reducing boredom, seeking knowledge, looking for ways to increase job skills are other reasons given for participating in programs (Olden, 2003).

Schlesinger’s (2005) research of fifteen incarcerated African American males in Wisconsin provides insight into prisoner student motivation. The subjects stated several reasons for participating in adult basic education classes in the prison that were non-educational. An opportunity to associate with other inmates was given most often. Other reasons frequently mentioned that were not related to education

included getting out of one's cell and earning school pay. Additional reasons mentioned were avoiding a kitchen assignment and improving chances for release. These motives and goals derived from the particular difficulties of incarceration. Schlesinger states "all subjects valued education, most felt good about their participation in correctional education, some wanted to learn for learning's sake, and many believed correctional education was one good thing about going to prison" (p.242). Therefore, Schlesinger's research shows that there are many factors that motivate the incarcerated to attend and persist in classes (Schlesinger, 2005).

### Views on Prison Education

There are different views about prison education. One view, the social control perspective, is that prison education programs have a social control function. Sachdev (1995) summarizes that "the social control position on prison education contends that prison education is merely a form of social control and is not carried out in the individual's best interest" (pg.9). The literature on prison education with a more humanitarian side, in contrast, demonstrates how these programs have been placed in correctional institutions to meet the needs of inmates and to benefit them. The final view is made up of theories of cultural resistance. "While acknowledging the various interests that education may meet, these theorists also recognize that individual inmates can be active agents in their educational environment" (pg.5). Inmates may bring their own interests to the programs, perhaps rejecting or resisting other agendas explicit or implicit in what is presented to them (Sachdev, 1995).

Finally is the reviewing the literature on the theory that the system of punishment and power develop a comprehensive understanding of punishment and how it is used as a tool of power. The idea of the use of punishment to control society

comes from Foucault (1979), according to whom, the literature on punishment describes the evolution of the disciplinary society, its relationship to capitalism, and its effects on people. It describes how the identities of individuals and groups of individuals develop in response to experiences with violence, and the resulting impact on their ability to be successful in life (Foucault, 1979).

### Research on Inmates Perceptions of Prison Education Programs

This section is included in order to review previous research conducted as seen from the inmate perspective. Most of the studies that have been conducted abroad about this subject are related to recidivism. Still, there are a few that examine the perceptions, of inmates as determined in the following. In Turkey, no research related to this subject has been done.

Bethel (1985) tries to determine the perceptions of inmates of the prison education in Pennsylvania. The population of the study consisted of 389 inmates and the majority of which participated in vocational education programs and a general education development program. The researcher concludes that the inmates generally perceived that the prison education programs were beneficial and these programs met their individual needs. Additionally, the inmates perceived that the prison education programs needed more academic and vocational counseling and guidance. Finally, they generally thought that the prison education programs prepared them for life after prison.

Rose Sachdev (1995) explores the relevance of prison education from the inmate-students' perspective. She determines "how human agency is manifested" (pg.79) in the context of education programs in the correctional setting. Here, she defines the human agency as the interactions and actions that an individual brings to

his environment. The results of Sachdev's research display in inmates' perceptions feelings of a positive nature, control, and resistance. School was favored because the students were able to attain some positive benefits from being involved, including increased self-esteem and increased learning. For many of the students this was their first positive educational experience. Finally, the issue of control was recognized by the students. This was especially apparent in the relationship of education to parole (Sachdev, 1995).

Moeller, Day and Rivera (2004) assessed inmate-students' perceptions of programs, resources and experiences. The results showed that reading, math, writing, and spelling were rated as the most important subjects and practical, real-world "life skills" the least important. However, both academic and vocational programs were perceived positively and the inmates reported a high degree of satisfaction with the programs and enjoyed the learning environment. The only complaints resulted from the need for additional resources, mainly computers, and "a desire to separate inmates that really want to learn from those that cause a distraction to the learning process" (pg. 40). According to Moeller, Day and Rivera, the students at this facility understood the connection between education and success in life. "With this in mind, maintaining, as well as improving, prison education programs may prove to be one of the most efficient and sensible ways to rehabilitate inmates"(Moeller et al., 2004: 40).

Hall (2006) examined the prisoner student's experience in the correctional education classroom with ten prisoner students in one-on-one interviews. In Hall's study, each participant shared his prior educational and employment experiences, current experiences in the correctional education classroom, and his future career and life goals. The findings of this study indicate that the correctional education



experience is a product of the past experiences of the prisoner student as well as “where the student hopes to go in the future” (pg. 101). The past experiences include “those regrettable actions that led to the incarceration of the prisoner student” (pg. 101). The family and children of the prisoner student provide motivation to attend and persist in classes. There is also an element of self-motivation that drives the students to continue in school (Hall, 2006).

### Prison Education in Turkey

#### Education Rights

According to Article 42 of the Constitution, “No one shall be deprived of the right of learning and education. The scope of the right to education shall be defined and regulated by law.” This constitutional right is valid for detained and imprisoned people, except for the natural restrictions required by the life in the institution. The educational activities in the penal institutions are carried out by Article 110 of the regulation related to the Administration of the Penal Institutions and Detention Houses and also the Execution of Juridical Sentences. According to this article, the treatments related to the improvement and education include the whole regime, the precautions and methods applied in order to develop within the imprisoned person an idea and feeling of living respectfully according to the laws, a personal and social responsibility towards his family and society, an adaptation to normal daily life and the ability to earn a living (Saldırım, 2004).

## Educational and Improvement (Treatment) Activities

Various educational programs are applied by the Ministry of Justice in order to encourage detained and imprisoned people to return to society as positive, useful individuals. Some of these programs are compulsory. Participation in the non-compulsory programs is subject to the willingness of the inmates. It is also required that it be possible for the administration to provide the courses related to all programs carried out at the institutions (Saldırım, 2004).

Level II literacy courses, vocational courses and religious services are compulsory programs to be offered to inmates by the prison administrations. Inmates are required to attend these courses. It is required that all detained and imprisoned people who do not know how to read and write, and who do not have primary school diplomas participate in these courses. The courses are carried out by the teacher of the institution. These courses are organized with the cooperation of different administrations and institutions by taking as a base the Curriculum of Vocational Education prepared by the Ministry of Justice and forwarded to the institutions. Those who are successful at the end of the courses receive a certificate. These courses are organized taking into account certain principles such as the local characteristics, employment after release, the start up a private business and the acquisition of vocational bank loans.

Lastly, in the penal institutions it is obligatory to provide lessons on religion and morals but the attendance of these courses is voluntary (Saldırım, 2004).

According to Saldırım (2004), middle school education, university education, social and cultural activities and library activities are non-compulsory programs. The detained and imprisoned can attend Open Lycee Education courses and can participate in the examinations through commissions sent by the National Education

Provincial Administration to the penal institutions. The detained and imprisoned can also participate in the University Entrance Exams and the Open Education Faculty through commissions sent to the institutions.

In order to cure physiological and psychological negative effects of incarcerations, cultural and social activities and courses such as theatre, music, painting, folklore, handcraft, sports competitions, chess and language courses, conferences, concerts are provided. Inmates are allowed to attend these activities and courses just as audience or observers, as well as active members.

Finally, inmates have access to the mass communication media provided in adequate amount by the penal institutions. According to Article 4 of the Regulation for the Libraries in the Penal Institutions, in penitentiaries and other penal institutions libraries should be built. Inmates can benefit from these libraries in order to contribute to their own education and to spend their free time (Saldırım, 2004).

### Judicial Statistics

In Turkey, there has been no research on judicial statistics. Therefore, only judicial statistics can be given for the following.

In Turkey, in 2005 52,716 people were incarcerated for committed crime within the year. 51,463 (97.6%) of the convicts were male, and 1,253 (2.4%) female. The rate of juvenile convicts between the ages of 11-17 in the total number convicts was 1.7%. The rate of adult convicts age 18 and over was thus 98.3%. The majority age group was 25-34 (Judicial Statistics, 2005).

When the occupational status at the time of imprisonment of discharged convicts is studied, it is observed that while 24.4% of convicts were not in the labor force, 75.6% of them had occupations. The ratio of skilled agricultural, animal

husbandry, hunting, forestry and fishery workers was 18.5%; craft and related trades workers 19.3%; legislator, senior officials and managers 18.1%; and other occupational groups 44.1% (Judicial Statistics, 2005).

The analysis on the marital status of convicts at the time of imprisonment revealed that 60.7% of convicts were married, 35.3% single, 3.5% divorced and 0.5% widowed (Judicial Statistics, 2005).

According to Judicial Statistics (2005), the ratio of illiterate convicts prison was 3.7%, and that of literate convicts, 96.3%. The ratio of convicts graduated from primary school was 68.2%, and graduated from university or other higher educational institutions 2.7% among literate convicts.

As can be seen from Table 1, the majority of the convicts had primary school degree for each year. The educational level category with the next highest number was junior high school and equivalent degree. The minority of them had university higher education degree.

Table 1. Number of convicts by educational status (Judicial Statistics, 2005)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Illiterate	2 555	2 784	2 976	3 287	1 961
Literate without any diploma	2 614	2 405	2 442	2 407	1 746
Primary school	80 562	68 819	68 150	67 514	34 610
Primary education	-	-	82	276	198
Junior high school and equivalent	12 607	11 899	12 579	12 649	6 519
High school and equivalent	11 644	10 896	11 334	12 483	6 289
University and higher education	2 255	2 152	2 313	2 692	1 393
Total	112 237	98 955	99 876	101 308	52 716

The statistics of The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses (2006) related to educational programs were given detailed in the following Table 2. In all courses the highest numbers of participants were obtained in year 2006 while the lowest numbers are seen in 2003 except for the case of social cultural activities. Year 2001 has the lowest number of participants in social cultural activities. In general, tables show slight increase throughout the years in number of participants. However, there is a discrepancy between numbers of participants in courses and certificates given in each year. If it is generalized, the numbers of given certificates are almost half of the numbers of participants (see Table 2).

Table 2. Number of participants by course type, and year (Judicial Statistics, 2005)

		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Level I Literacy Courses	Participants of course	2394	2354	2524	1864	2853	3581	5291
	Given certificate	1499	1237	1417	1031	1404	1846	2802
Level II Literacy Courses	Participants of course	1490	1306	1580	1302	1472	1912	2604
	Given certificate	805	644	891	758	780	1043	1488
Vocational Education Courses	Participants of courses	14839	12512	15914	12362	13521	20650	46620
	Given certificate	5499	5420	7495	5636	7127	11138	26021
Social Cultural Activities	Participants	157295	71616	82331	86117	122767	398733	1978201

Table 3 gives the numbers of arranged social cultural activities inside and outside of the institutions according to years. In year 2006, number of social and cultural activities arranged in both inside and outside of the institution was more than in year 2005 (The statistics of The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses, 2006).

Table 3. Number of Social Cultural Activities Arranged

	2005	2006
Inside of the institutions	7433	12365
Outside of the institutions	1296	17897

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a discussion of the methodology used to address the research questions including research design, population and sample selection, development of the instrument, data collection procedures and analysis of data.

#### Research Questions

The review of literature was used to clarify issues in the investigation of the research problem. The major concern of this study was how inmates perceive prison education programs. Additionally, the relationship between inmates' demographic characteristics and their perceptions about programs were investigated. Therefore, the followings questions guided this study:

1. What are the inmate participants' perceptions of prison education programs in terms of the following sub-research questions?
  - What are the bases of the decision making of inmate participants in choosing and participating in educational activities?
  - What are the positive effects of educational programs on inmate participants' lives in general, and on their future plans?
  - What are the inmate participants' views on the deficiencies of the educational programs in which they are participating?

2. Is there any relationship between the following selected demographic characteristics and inmates' perceptions?
- Is there any relationship between gender and participation in social-cultural activities?
  - Is there any relationship between gender and the perceptions of inmates of prison education programs?
  - Is there any relationship between gender and inmates' future plans?
  - Is there any relationship between age and participation in social-cultural activities?
  - Is there any relationship between age and the perceptions of inmates of prison education programs?
  - Is there any relationship between age and inmates' future plans?
  - Is there any relationship between education level and participation in social-cultural activities?
  - Is there any relationship between education level and the perceptions of inmates of prison education programs?
  - Is there any relationship between education level and inmates' future plans?

### Research Design

This study is conducted by using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In this research, firstly, the qualitative research method is used; secondly, the quantitative method complemented the qualitative part of the research.



According to Merriam (2000), qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meanings people have constructed about a particular phenomenon, experiences they have had, and how they make sense of the world around them. Qualitative research is a particularly appropriate strategy to use where there is little knowledge about the problem. If there is lack of theory, or if existing theory does not adequately explain the phenomenon, hypothesis cannot be used to structure an investigation (Merriam, 2000).

In the qualitative part of the study, interviews were conducted with inmate participants of prison education programs to gain insight into the views and perceptions of inmates about the prison education programs. Then, the survey questionnaire was constructed by the researcher according to the findings of interviews, to be able to gather data on a larger scale.

### Population and Sample Selection

Population of the study consisted of the inmates enrolled in educational programs including social-cultural activities and courses, Level I and Level II literacy courses, and vocational courses in prisons, in Turkey.

The sample selection was done at two levels. First, the prisons in which to conduct the study were chosen, then the sample selection within the selected prisons were made both for the qualitative and quantitative studies.

### Selection of the Sample Prisons

The prisons in which this study was conducted are the prisons in which educational programs are conducted more intensively and on a regular base. Therefore, the selection of the prisons is based on a purposive sampling. Furthermore, at the

beginning of the study an interview was held with the authorized person in the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses. The authorized person made suggestions about which prisons provide a variety of educational programs.

Interviews were conducted in suggested prison3, prison9 and prison11. By the same token, eleven prisons were determined with the authorized person for the application of the survey. The prisons in which the interviews were conducted also were chosen for the survey.

#### Sample Selection of the Inmate Participants in Prison Education Programs

The sample of the study consisted of the inmates in eleven prisons from different cities in Turkey.

A purposive method of sampling was used because certain characteristics were more important to the study than others. The main criterion for sample selection was current enrolment in the educational programs, including social-cultural courses, vocational courses, and literacy courses. There were no restrictions with regard to age or other demographic characteristics.

In the following the sample selection procedures both for the qualitative and quantitative studies are presented separately.

#### Sample Selection for the Interview Participants

The participants in the interview included 10 female inmates and 10 male inmates, totally 20 interviewees from three prisons. Four female inmates were from prison11, six female inmates were from prison9 and 10 male inmates were from prison3. These participants are among the participants in educational programs.

The interviewees are selected by using the convenient sample selection procedure. Therefore, those who were available at the time allocated for interviews consists the sample of the qualitative part of the research study.

In the interview form, there were questions concerning the following characteristics of the inmates: age, gender, marital status, number of children, educational level, occupation, economic status, prior convictions, total sentence, and educational status of partner, mother and father. Those who participated in the interview were between 17 and 47 years old. Females constituted 50% of the subjects, and males constituted 50%. As for the educational level of the subjects, five of the subjects were illiterate, two of them were literate; five of them were graduates of primary school, two of secondary school, two of high school, and four of university.

#### Sample Selection of the Survey Study

The participants in the survey included 534 inmates from eleven prisons. The total population consisted of 97 females and 437 males (see Table 4). These participants had all attended prison education programs. There is a discrepancy between the number of female and male samples because, according to the Judicial Statistics (2005), while 51,463 (97.6%) convicts are male, 1,253 (2.4%) convicts are female. In Turkey, the total number of 52,716 convicts had been incarcerated for committed crime within the year (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2005).

Table 4. Survey sample size by prison

	Female	Male	Total
	N	N	N
Prison1		66	66
Prison2		17	17
Prison3		20	20
Prison4		117	117
Prison5	9	20	29
Prison6	3	11	14
Prison7	3	57	60
Prison8	24		24
Prison9	43		43
Prison10	1	129	130
Prison11	14		14
Total	97	437	534

Totally, 703 surveys were collected from eleven prisons. 169 surveys were not included in the analysis because the subjects had not participated in any educational activities. 534 surveys, as in Table 4 included data analysis. The demographic characteristics of the survey sample are given in the findings part.

#### Development of the Instrument

The present study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. For this reason, quantitative and qualitative instruments were developed for data collection. The last revisions of both the interview guide and survey questionnaire were done together with the authorized person in the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses. The development of the interview guide and the survey questionnaire is explained in the following.

#### Interview Guide

The literature review and research question were helpful in constructing the interview guide, especially in the light of previous studies; those of Hall (2006),

Sachdev (1995) and Bethel (1985) that were discussed in literature review above. The results of these studies guided the researcher when formulating interview questions. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format (see Appendix B). A semi-structured interview guide was used to gain the opinions of the inmates about their educational experiences. The interview schedule grouped similar questions together. The purpose of the guide was to ask each participant the same set of questions. The researcher might then probe the participants and ask additional questions if needed during the interview.

There were three parts in the interview schedule: 15 questions designed to obtain demographic information including the demographic data of inmate's family members, 11 questions designed to get an understanding of the inmates' perceptions about the prison education programs, and two questions designed to obtain perceptions of their future plans (see Appendix B).

### Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire was constructed according to the data derived from the interview to measure specific information associated with inmate perspectives as they relate to education programs. The items also were developed from the review of literature as well as the data from the interview.

The questionnaire consisted of 30 questions and one of the questions had 12 items. A three-point scale was used with these items in the following response categories: (1) yes, (2) partially, and (3) no. There were also open-ended questions in the questionnaire.

There were three parts in the questionnaire as in the interview: questions designed to obtain demographic information, questions designed to get an

understanding of inmates' perceptions about the prison education programs and questions designed to obtain perceptions of their future plans. The first category had 15 questions, the second category had 13 questions, and the third category had two questions (see Appendix D).

### Data Collection Procedures

The Republic of Turkey Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses was contacted to obtain permission to apply this study. For the interview and the survey, authorization was obtained separately. The permission forms are included in Appendix (see Appendices G and H). With the help of the authorized person, the prisons in which the study was to be conducted were determined.

The interview data was collected by the researcher and another person, who is assisting the researcher during the data collection procedure for the qualitative part of the study, within two weeks during July, 2007. The survey data were collected by the researcher and the prison teachers starting from late August until October, 2007.

The two methods of data collection that were used in this study included a semi-structured interview and a questionnaire. It should be noted that inmate participation in the interview was voluntary. In the questionnaire, all of the inmates enrolled in educational activities were included.

### Interview

Once the sample had been identified, data were collected through interview. The purpose of the interview was to get an understanding of the inmates' perspectives of and experiences within the prison education programs. Also, interviews are able to

provide greater flexibility and reliability in the sense that questions can be repeated, rephrased, or clarified to ensure understanding.

The perceptions of the inmate as participant in prison education were captured through one-on-one interviewing. The researcher explained the purpose of her investigation. Interviews took between twenty to sixty minutes. Interviews with female participants were in average around 45 to 60 minutes, and interviews with male inmates were in average between 20 to 30 minutes.

These interviews took place in locations that the prison administrations determined. In prison3, the male inmates were interviewed in the waiting room. In prison9, the female inmates were interviewed in the literacy classes and workshops of embroidery and hairdresser courses. Interviews with female inmates took place in a conference hall in prison11. An assistant helped the researcher record during the interview. Interviews were planned to be conducted using type recording, so as not to miss any of the important details. However, permission for this was not granted by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses. Therefore, during the interviews another person helped the researcher in writing down the responses. Each of the respondents was assigned a number, so that only the researcher was able to identify him or her. Respondents did not have to answer any questions with which they felt uncomfortable.

### Survey Questionnaire

The questionnaire was conducted in eleven prisons. In prison3, prison9 and prison11, the researcher conducted the questionnaire. However, with the suggestion of the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses to support the data collection process, the questionnaire was administered by

the prison teachers in the other prisons. The researcher contacted each prison teacher by telephone to describe the sample and how to conduct the questionnaire. She emphasized that the participants had to have attended prison education programs.

The researcher administered the questionnaire in the library, classes and waiting room of the three prisons by forming groups of inmates.

Items were read to inmates who could not read well in Literacy I classes by the researcher. It should be noted that the inmate recorded his or her own responses to the questionnaire. In other prisons, prison teachers carried out the questionnaire with Literacy II classes' inmates who could read and write well.

### Analysis of Data

In this research, the main data depended on qualitative findings and the quantitative survey provided additional and general information. Data analysis was done with the interviews, field notes, and the questionnaire.

After the completion of interviews, the researcher analyzed the content of each interview and then composed emerged themes. After collecting data with the questionnaire, the findings were analyzed through descriptive statistics. A statistical software package for Windows (SPSS 15.0) was used for the analysis. For demographic characteristics, cross tabulation, frequency distribution and percentiles were carried out.

Depending on the number of the respondents, crosstabs and chi-square tests were carried out to see the differences between selected demographic characteristics and perceptions of inmates about prison education programs. Chi-square analysis allows a researcher to examine the pattern of relationship among a set of categorical



or nominal variables and categorical or nominal variables assign values by virtue of being a member of a category (Whitley, 2001).

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

In this chapter, the results derived from analysis of the survey and the interviews with inmates are presented. First, findings about the demographic characteristics of the sample in the survey and interview are provided. Second, the survey results are given, and then the selected examples from the interviews are quoted.

The names of the subjects were kept anonymous to ensure the confidentiality of the participants. Instead, they were assigned numbers (for instance, inmate1). Their numbers were used in the discussion. To provide some basic personal characteristics of the participant quoted, the age, gender and educational level of each are provided in parenthesis after the English translation.

Following the analysis of the interviews with inmates, the major findings were structured around the emergent discussion themes based on the research question and the analysis of the interview transcripts. In this way, the quantitative and qualitative data are intended to complement each other. When presenting the survey data, distinction is made for gender.

The emerging discussion themes were organized under the following major headings: participation in social-cultural activities and education programs, perceptions of inmates of the prison education programs, and inmates' overall evaluation of the education programs.

## Demographic Findings of the Sample

### Survey

In the survey there were questions concerning the following characteristics of the inmates: age, gender, marital status, number of child, educational level, occupation, perceived economic status, prior convictions, total sentence, remaining sentence and educational status of partner, mother and father. The sample of the survey was constituted with 97 (18.2%) females and 437 (81.8%) males.

Age level: The majority of the inmates fell in the range of 20 to 30 years of age (48.7%). The age category with the next largest number was 31 to 40 years (31.1%) (see Table 5).

Table 5. The sample by age group

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Below 20	11	11.3	8	1.8	19	3.6
20-30	46	47.4	214	49.0	260	48.7
31-40	29	29.9	137	31.4	166	31.1
41-50	9	9.3	57	13.0	66	12.4
51-60	-	-	14	3.2	14	2.6
Over 60	-	-	3	0.7	3	0.6
Total	95	97.9	433	99.1	528	98.9
No answer	2	2.1	4	0.9	6	1.1

Educational status: As for the educational level, 195 (36.5%) of the inmates had primary school degrees. 116 (21.7%) of the inmates had secondary and high school degrees. A minority of the inmates, 23 (4.3%), were illiterate (see Table 6).

Table 6. The sample by educational status

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Illiterate	13	13.4	10	2.3	23	4.3
Literate	4	4.1	16	3.7	20	3.7
Primary School	22	22.7	173	39.6	195	36.5
Secondary School	21	21.6	95	21.7	116	21.7
High School	27	27.8	89	20.4	116	21.7
University	6	6.2	40	9.2	46	8.6
Other	3	3.1	11	2.5	14	2.6
Total	96	99.0	434	99.3	530	99.3
No answer	1	1.0	3	0.7	4	0.7

Marital status: The majority of the inmates were single (48.3%). The percentage of legal married male inmates (33.6%) was greater than the percentage of legally married female inmates (19.6%). However, the percentage of female inmates with religious marriages (7.2%) was greater than the percentage of male with religious marriages (3.4%) (see Table 7).

Table 7. The sample by marital status

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Single	36	37.1	222	50.8	258	48.3
Legal Marriage	19	19.6	147	33.6	166	31.1
Religious Marriage	7	7.2	15	3.4	22	4.1
Divorced	13	13.4	36	8.2	49	9.2
Widowed	21	21.6	13	3.0	34	6.4
Total	96	99.0	433	99.1	529	99.1
No answer	1	1.0	4	0.9	5	0.9

Economic status: According to the findings, most of the inmates determined their economic status as an average (43.4%). The economic status category with the next largest percentage was low (23.8%) (see Table 8).

Table 8. The sample by economic status

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Low	16	16.5	111	25.4	127	23.8
Below average	4	4.1	47	10.8	51	9.6
Average	47	48.5	185	42.3	232	43.4
Above average	9	9.3	26	5.9	35	6.6
Good	17	17.5	64	14.6	81	15.2
Total	93	95.9	433	99.1	526	98.5
No answer	4	4.1	4	0.9	8	1.5

Employment: 76.4% of the inmates had been employed and 22.1% of the inmates had not been employed before they were incarcerated. 54.6% of the female inmates had not been employed, while, 14.9% of the male inmates had not been employed (see Table 9).

Table 9. Status of employment before incarceration

Were you employed before you were incarcerated?	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	40	41.2	368	84.2	408	76.4
No	53	54.6	65	14.9	118	22.1
Total	93	95.9	433	99.1	526	98.5
No answer	4	4.1	4	0.9	8	1.5

Occupational status: At the end of the analysis, 52 different occupational statuses were identified. The occupations (such as door keeper, cleaner, footballer, play craftsman, paper collector, timpanist etc.) which have a frequency of between 1 and 5 are categorized as “Other”. 6.0% of the inmates determined that they had no occupation. Most of the male inmates were self-employed (14.9%) and most of the female inmates were housewives (29.9%) (see Table 10).

Table 10. The sample by occupational status

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Self employment	7	7.2	65	14.9	72	13.5
Craftsman	5	5.2	36	8.2	41	7.7
Construction worker			38	8.7	38	7.1
Textile worker	2	2.1	27	6.2	29	5.4
Housewife	29	29.9			29	5.4
Farmer			26	5.9	26	4.9
Driver			25	5.7	25	4.7
Functionary	4	4.1	20	4.6	24	4.5
Electrician			22	5.0	22	4.1
Cook	1	1.0	20	4.6	21	3.9
Hairdresser	3	3.1	14	3.2	17	3.2
Manufacturer			15	3.4	15	2.8
Metal worker			13	3.0	13	2.4
Waiter			12	2.7	12	2.2
Auto repairman			11	2.5	11	2.1
Tourism business worker	1	1.0	9	2.1	10	1.9
Without occupation	15	15.5	17	3.9	32	6.0
Others	12	12.4	37	8.5	49	9.2
Total	79	81.4	407	93.1	486	91.0
No answer	18	18.6	30	6.9	48	9.0

Total sentence: The majority of the inmates fell in the range of 11 to 20 years of total sentence (30.9%). The total sentence category with the next largest number was 6 to 10 years (16.7%) (see Table 11).

Table 11. The sample by total sentence

Years	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Below 2	17	17.5	8	1.8	25	4.7
3-5	15	15.5	52	11.9	67	12.5
6-10	11	11.3	78	17.8	89	16.7
11-20	24	24.7	141	32.3	165	30.9
21-30	5	5.2	69	15.8	74	13.9
Over 30	6	6.2	38	8.7	44	8.2
Lifelong	2	2.1	19	4.3	21	3.9
Total	80	82.5	405	92.7	485	90.8
No answer	17	17.5	32	7.3	49	9.2

Remaining sentence: The majority of the female inmates fell in the range of below two years of the remaining sentence (51.5%). However, 28.8% of the male inmates

fell in the range of three to five years and 28.1% of the male inmates fell in the range of below two (see Table 12).

Table 12. The sample by remaining sentence

Years	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Below 2	50	51.5	123	28.1	173	32.4
3-5	13	13.4	126	28.8	139	26.0
6-10	5	5.2	79	18.1	84	15.7
11-20	3	3.1	49	11.2	52	9.7
21-30	2	2.1	11	2.5	13	2.4
Over 30	-	-	2	0.5	2	0.4
Total	73	75.3	390	89.2	463	86.7
No answer	24	24.7	47	10.8	71	13.3

Prior penalty: One question of the study was related to prior convictions. 11.3% of the female inmates and 31.4% of the male inmates had served time (see Table 13).

Table 13. Previous penalty received before present sentence

Have you ever punished for something before?	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	11	11.3	137	31.4	148	27.7
No	82	84.5	294	67.3	376	70.4
Total	93	95.9	431	98.6	524	98.1
No answer	4	4.1	6	1.4	10	1.9

Number of Children: Out of 242 inmates (except single subjects), 240 of them had at least one child. Additionally, four female inmates noted that they had children staying with them in prison (see Table 14).

Table 14. The sample by the number of children they have

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
One	14	14.4	57	13.0	71	13.3
Two	19	19.6	63	14.4	82	15.4
Three	12	12.4	35	8.0	47	8.8
Four	5	5.2	18	4.1	23	4.3
Five and more	3	3.1	14	3.2	17	3.2
Total	53	54.6	187	42.8	240	44.9

Educational status of spouse: The largest number the spouses of the inmates had educational levels of primary school (17.2%) (see Table 15).

Table 15. Educational status of the samples' spouse

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Illiterate	5	5.2	19	4.3	24	4.5
Literate	6	6.2	9	2.1	15	2.8
Primary School	13	13.4	79	18.1	92	17.2
Secondary School	6	6.2	30	6.9	36	6.7
High School	3	3.1	26	5.9	29	5.4
University	4	4.1	12	2.7	16	3.0
Total	37	38.1	175	40.0	212	39.7

Educational status of mother: The majority of the inmates' mothers were illiterate (39.1%) and then the next largest percentage of educational status of mother was primary school degree (33.9%) (see Table 16).

Table 16. Educational status of samples' mother

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Illiterate	39	40.2	170	38.9	209	39.1
Literate	14	14.4	38	8.7	52	9.7
Primary School	27	27.8	154	35.2	181	33.9
Secondary School	7	7.2	30	6.9	37	6.9
High School	3	3.1	21	4.8	24	4.5
University	2	2.1	2	0.5	4	0.7
Total	92	94.8	415	95.0	507	94.9
No answer	5	5.2	22	5.0	27	5.1



Educational status of father: The majority of the inmates' fathers had primary school degrees (42.3%). 21.6% of the female inmates' father and 13.5% males' father were illiterate (see Table 17).

Table 17. Educational status of samples' father

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Illiterate	21	21.6	59	13.5	80	15.0
Literate	14	14.4	54	12.4	68	12.7
Primary School	36	37.1	190	43.5	226	42.3
Secondary School	9	9.3	60	13.7	69	12.9
High School	9	9.3	48	11.0	57	10.7
University	5	5.2	3	0.7	8	1.5
Other	-	-	1	0.2	1	0.2
Total	94	96.9	415	95.0	509	95.3
No answer	3	3.1	22	5.0	25	4.7

### Interview

The details of the demographic information of the interviewees are provided in the following. The detailed information is also given in Appendix F as a table.

Inmate 1: She was 26 years old and a housewife. She was illiterate. She was married with two children. She mentioned that her economic status was average. She had no prior conviction.

Inmate 2: She was 32 years old. She had a university degree and had been working as a bank employee. She was single and she had a very good economic situation. She had no prior conviction.

Inmate 3: She was 17 years old and single. She was literate. She was an apprentice of hair dressing. She mentioned that her economic status was good. She had no prior penalty.

Inmate 4: She was 27 years old and single. She had a university degree and had been working as a pedagogue. She stated that she had a good economic status. She had no prior conviction.

Inmate 5: She was 44 years old and widowed. She was graduated from primary school. She determined her economic status as good. She had no prior penalty.

Inmate 6: She was 17 years old and married. She was illiterate. She was a housewife. She expressed that her economic status was good. She had a prior conviction.

Inmate 7: She was 31 years old and a housewife. She was illiterate. She was married with two children. She mentioned that her economic status was average. She had no prior conviction.

Inmate 8: She was 17 years old. She was illiterate. She did not mention anything about her occupation, but she stated that her economic condition was bad. She had a prior conviction.

Inmate 9: She was 33 years old and divorced. She is a primary school graduate. She had been working as a cook. She denoted that her economic situation was average. She has no prior penalty.

Inmate 10: She was 27 years old. She was a secondary school graduate. She was married with two children. She was a waitress. She stated that she had a very good economic status. She had no prior conviction.

Inmate 11: He was 27 years old. He was a secondary school graduate. He was single and had been working as a weaver. He said that his economic condition was average. He had no prior conviction.

Inmate 12: He was 32 years old. He had a university degree and had been working as an inspector. He was divorced. His economic condition was very good. He had no prior penalty.

Inmate 13: He was 34 years old. He was a primary school graduate and married with two children. He was working as a furnisher and his economic status was average. He had no prior conviction.

Inmate 14: He was 34 years old and single. He was illiterate. He described himself as an unskilled worker with a bad economic status. He had no prior conviction.

Inmate 15: He was 49 years old. He was a primary school graduate and married with two children. He was retired and said that his economic status was average. He had no prior conviction.

Inmate 16: He was 42 years old. He was a high school graduate and married with two children. He had been working as an electrician. He said that his economic situation was average. He had no prior conviction.

Inmate 17: He was 43 years old. He was a primary school graduate and married with two children. He had been working as a cook and as a chauffeur. He said his economic situation was bad. He had no prior conviction.

Inmate 18: He was 47 years old. He was literate and married with four children. He was a tradesman. He had an average economic situation. He had a prior conviction.

Inmate 19: He was 27 years old and engaged. He had a university degree and had been in the military. He said that he had a good economic situation. He had no prior conviction.

Inmate 20: He was a 21 year old and university student. He was single. He stated that he had very good economic situation. He had no prior conviction.

Participation in the Social-Cultural Activities and Education Programs

Within this theme there are statistical results related to frequencies of type of social-cultural activities and inmates’ decision making process in choosing and participating in social-cultural activities. Also, there are statistical results related to frequencies of type of courses in which the inmates participated and how they had decided to take these courses was determined.

Participation in Social-Cultural Activities

Survey

As Table 18 shows 46.4% of the inmates participated in sports activities, 44.0% of them participated in seminars, 35.6% attended concerts, 34.5% participated in theater and 21.7% attended the cinema.

Table 18. Types of social-cultural activities inmates participated in

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Theatre	27	27.8	157	35.9	184	34.5
Cinema	19	19.6	97	22.2	116	21.7
Concert	38	39.2	152	34.8	190	35.6
Seminar	35	36.1	200	45.8	235	44.0
Sport	51	52.6	197	45.1	248	46.4

In Table 19, the answers to the question, “do you participate in social-cultural activities?” are set out. The majority of the inmates (59.9%) determined that they

tried to participate in all of the activities. 19.7% of the inmates chose among activities and participated in some of them. 9.6% of the inmates said, “I am not interested in and I don’t participate”. 5.2% of the inmates explained that there were no activities in their prison. Only 1.8% of the male inmates cited that they become bored during the activities and had left.

Table 19. Participation in social-cultural activities

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Try to participate in all of them	52	53.2	268	61.3	320	59.9
Not interested in, I don't participate	15	15.5	36	8.2	51	9.6
Choose and participate only some	20	20.6	85	19.5	105	19.7
Feel bored and get out early			8	1.8	8	1.5
There is no activity	4	4.1	24	5.5	28	5.2
We participate compulsorily	1	1.0			1	0.2
Total	92	94.8	421	96.3	513	96.1
No answer	5	5.2	16	3.7	21	3.9
Total	97	100	437	100	534	100.0

### Interviews

During the interviews the interviewees did not say much about their participation in social-cultural activities. Only four inmates expressed their considerations about participating in social-cultural activities. One of the inmates interviewed stated that he had become selective when deciding whether or not to participate:

No, I have not participated. I am selective. I do not join activities that I think are useless. Everybody has a concept of utility. In terms of other subjects I participate in the course if I need it. When I was at the prison in Sivas I attended a course for musical instrument. (Inmate13, age 34, Male, Primary School, see Appendix A.1.)

Inmate16 also determined that if he was interested in the activities he participated:

Recently there was a conference about AIDS. I attend the training sessions when it happens. I am informed which film is shown, and if I

don't like I don't go. (Inmate16, age 42, Male, High School, see Appendix A.2.)

Inmate1 said that she did not like these activities. Also she tried to express that she wanted only to go to the mosque, but the prison guardians did not give them permission to go if they saw.

There was a concert, I went to it. I don't like to go. Sometimes we go secretly. If they see us they send us back. If they don't we go to the mosque to pray. (Inmate1, age 26, Female, Illiterate, see Appendix A.3.)

Inmate3 expressed that she was bored and she unable to adapt:

I went to the movie. When I go to the theater I watch half and then leave. I get bored. I can't concentrate. (Inmate3, age 17, Female, Literate, see Appendix A.4.)

The considerations of the respondents in the interview about participating in social-cultural activities ranges from being selective to getting bored and leaving the activity like in the survey.

### Participation in Education Programs

#### Survey

Table 20 shows the frequencies of courses in which the inmates participated. The majority of the inmates (50.6%) took vocational courses. The category with the next largest frequency was social-cultural courses (23.8%). The social-cultural courses included wood working, jewelry, painting, folklore, chess, ceramics, copper handling and hobby workshops. 13.9% of the inmates participated in preparation courses. 5.9% of the inmates took Level I Literacy course and 5.8% of the inmates took Level II Literacy course. The percentage of the female inmates who attended level I literacy (11.0%) and level II literacy courses (11.7%) were more than the percentage

of the male inmates who attended level I literacy (4.7%) and level II literacy course (4.4%).

Table 20. Courses inmates participated in

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Level I Literacy	18	11.0	32	4.7	50	5.9
Level II Literacy	19	11.7	30	4.4	49	5.8
Social-cultural courses	46	28.2	155	22.7	201	23.8
Preparation courses	17	10.4	101	14.8	118	13.9
Vocational courses	63	38.7	365	53.4	428	50.6

According to Table 21, the greatest number of inmates (23.0%) took computer courses. However, the greatest number of the female inmates (30.9%) participated in handiwork courses including tailoring, hosiery, embroidery, knitting, and lace making. The percentage of attendance of computer courses (22.6%) and gas and plumbing courses (23.6%) for male inmates were close to each other. The gas and plumbing courses featured lessons in heating and natural gas installation, plumbing installation, central heating operations and electric wiring plumbing. 13.1% of the male inmates attended construction courses, which included plastering, tiling, PVC joinery and assembly, bricklaying, flooring and wall coating, surface preparation and painting. 10.3% of the female inmates and 14.6% of the male inmates attended textile courses which included training in knitting, confection and textile. 18.5% of the female inmates and 13.5% of the male inmates participated in barber and hairdressing courses.

In other words, there is a difference between male and female inmates in terms of courses in which they participate. Female inmates participate in handcraft courses

mostly and there is not much variety in the courses for them. However, there is a diversity of courses for male inmates.

Table 21. Types of vocational courses in which inmates participate

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Computer	24	24.7	99	22.6	123	23.0
Gas and plumbing			103	23.6	104	19.4
Auto motor			19	4.3	20	3.7
Construction			70	16.0	70	13.1
Agriculture husbandry			36	8.2	36	6.7
Animal husbandry			60	13.7	60	11.2
Barber and hairdressing	18	18.5	54	12.3	72	13.5
Wood working			10	2.3	10	1.9
Cookery			46	10.5	46	8.6
Hand waving	30	30.9	29	6.6	59	11.0
Textile	10	10.3	68	15.6	78	14.6
Accounting courses	7	7.2	1	0.2	8	1.5

Table 22 shows the frequency of the question “how did you decide to participate in these courses?” The majority of the inmates (86.2%) gave the answer of “I decided to participate in these courses of my own accord”. 10% of the inmates determined that prison administrators, a prison teacher, a psychologist or prison guard recommended. 3.8% of the inmates stated that their friends recommended them to participate.

Table 22. Decisions for participating in courses

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
I decided to participate of my own accord	83	85.6	374	86.4	457	86.2
My friends recommended	7	7.2	13	3.0	20	3.8
Administration, teacher, psychologist or prison guardian recommended	7	7.2	46	10.6	53	10.0
Total	97	100	433	100	530	100



Regarding the survey results, most of the inmates were motivated by personal interests and the minority of them participated by suggestions of others.

### Interviews

The interview participants expressed also both personal interests and suggestions by others for participating in education programs. Some of the motivation was due to their friends, prison administrators, prison teachers, and psychologists and prison guardians.

As was found in the survey sample, most of the inmates interviewed had decided to participate on their own accord for different reasons.

Inmate6 and inmate15's source of motivation was related to social reasons:

Once we heard there was a reading-writing course we wanted to join. After the reading-writing I took the jewellery course. One day they asked if there was someone who would go to the course. I joined voluntarily. I liked it and then continued regularly. (Inmate6, age 17, Female, Illiterate, see Appendix A.5.)

Just to spend time and voluntarily. The guards recommended that we join to relax (Inmate15, age 49, Male, Primary School, see Appendix A.6.)

Inmate9 saw it as an opportunity that she could not have when she was outside:

I used to wish to be a hairdresser. I wanted to take a course outside but it cost 350 million. How can I afford that? This was an occasion, I wanted it myself without having any guidance... in fact I am alone. (Inmate9, age 33, Female, Primary School, see Appendix A.7.)

Inmate17 determined that this opportunity would be helpful for his future plans:

There is a future, all we have learned will serve us in our profession. We will have our certificates and we will not have difficulty. These are useful. I attended voluntarily. They put up a list notifying the starting date. Nobody forces you. Those who have personal ambition

go and participate. With our own motivation. It depends on the character of people. (Inmate17, age 43, Male, Primary School, see Appendix A.8.)

Being able to reading letters from her family was the major source of motivation for inmate8:

I wanted to learn to read and write myself. My family was sending me letters and I could not read them. I participated in the textile course to have work. Once I go outside maybe it will be useful. (Inmate8, age 17, Female, Illiterate, see Appendix A.9.)

Three inmates decided to participate in these courses with the encouragement of their family, prison administrators, prison teacher, and psychologist and prison guard.

I was lying down and the teacher came up. My mother insisted it would be useful for me. When the teacher came just to call me then I wanted to go. I participated in the computer course on purpose. I was bored. There are games, pictures and so on. In a week I will have my certificate. When the juridical process was badly finished I gave up. (Inmate3 age 17, Female, Literate, see Appendix A.10.)

We participated to the theater. We had a teacher. He told us that we had to go and do it. We were volunteers. With my own decision. We are also talking among ourselves. I said it to my friends. It makes us cool. We pass time. So I do not stay at the dormitory. That's good. (Inmate5, age 44, Female, Primary School, see Appendix A.11.)

They said that the certificate would be useful if I were employed. I am away from my native town and I have also troubles with certain people. Therefore I can't return there. I think I can find a job with this document...with their encouragement. (Inmate11, age 27, Male, Secondary School, see Appendix A.12.)

Therefore, inmates made a decision to attend courses at some point and this decision to attend ranges from personal interests to suggestions of other people.

### Perceptions of Inmates of the Prison Education Programs

To determine the perceptions of inmates there was a question in the survey that included items which had been written in such a way that degree of agreement or

disagreement. There were also open ended questions. These open-ended questions also were asked to the inmates during the interviews. Next, the survey results are given. Then, the related data from the interviews are presented.

### Survey

According to the results of the survey, prison education programs generally were perceived in positive terms. As shown in Table 23 the most positively perceived items were “I improve myself” (89.7%), “I like learning and I need to learn” (89.5%), “The educators connected with the education programs treat us with respect” (87.5%); and “I feel better” (81.3%). The next higher positively perceived items were “Inmates involved in education programs develop better social attitudes” (75.8%), “I believe that it makes my life better” (74.3%), “It makes me more confident” (74.2%), “It provides to pass the time away” (72.8%), “It helps me to get along with people better” (72.3%), and “It helps me take up a profession” (72.1%). In respect of the other items the less positively perceived item was “Inmates who participated in educational programs stand a better chance for a job when released” (67%). 24.7% of the respondents agreed with the statement “Inmates do not take the programs seriously” and 41.8% of them did not.

Table 23. Inmates' perceptions of the education programs

Statement	Yes			Partially			No		
	Female %	Male %	Total %	Female %	Male %	Total %	Female %	Male %	Total %
a. It provides me take up a profession.	63.9	73.9	72.1	16.5	16.9	16.9	12.4	7.3	8.2
b. Provides a better chance for a job after release.	67.0	67.0	67.0	16.5	19.2	18.7	9.3	12.4	11.8
c. Helps to pass the time away.	81.4	70.9	72.8	7.2	14.4	13.1	4.1	9.2	8.2
d. I feel better.	81.4	81.2	81.3	9.3	12.8	12.2	5.2	3.7	3.9
e. It makes me more confident.	74.2	74.1	74.2	12.4	14.4	14.0	6.2	7.8	7.5
f. I like learning and I need to learn.	88.7	89.7	89.5	5.2	7.6	7.1	2.1	0.5	0.7
g. I improve myself.	88.7	89.9	89.7	5.2	7.6	7.1	2.1	1.4	1.5
h. Improved by communication with people.	73.2	72.1	72.3	15.5	18.5	18.0	4.1	5.9	5.6
i. Helps developing better social attitudes.	73.2	76.4	75.8	16.5	18.3	18.0	4.1	3.0	3.2
j. I believe that it makes my life better.	76.3	73.9	74.3	9.3	17.6	16.1	10.3	6.9	7.5
l. Inmates do not take the programs seriously.	28.9	23.8	24.7	25.8	30.0	29.2	35.1	43.2	41.8
m. The educators treat us with respect.	84.5	88.1	87.5	6.2	6.9	6.7	5.2	3.9	4.1

In short, the respondents to this survey generally expressed positive perceptions about their involvement in their prison education programs.

### Interviews

As in the survey, the respondents generally determined positive feelings. As result of the interviews analysis, the effects of prison education programs on the lives of the inmates were revealed.

## The Effects of Prison Education Programs on the Lives of the Inmates

Through analysis of the interviews, common experiences and meanings between the respondents when about talking their education experience were sought. Prison education has been a positive influence in the lives of the inmates. There was no difference between the respondents in this study and the studies reviewed in determining the positive effect prison education had on their lives. These influences are described as: self-confidence and increased positive feelings, prison education as the first educational experience and the future plans of inmates.

### Self-confidence and Increased Positive Feelings

As in the survey, the interview results showed that the students felt good about the way the education programs made them feel. When asked how they felt about the education programs in the interview, they expressed that they were able to build up their self confidence and felt better.

As inmate4, who participated in scenario writing workshop, clearly stated:

My self-confidence developed in regard to scenario writing. People started to talk about my scenario. Being appreciated by the director and the scenarists is a big step for me. (Inmate4, age 27, Female, University, see Appendix A.13.)

Inmate16 said that he had become a master as learning provided changes in his knowledge and skills, which gave him more confidence.

There is time to think. You have to decide by yourself. It is for sure they changed in terms of knowledge and skill too. I became a master. (Inmate16, age 42, Male, High School, see Appendix A.14.)

These courses provided inmate2 to become aware of her skills, which made her more confident about her future.

I realized that I could manage, that my hands have ability. When I go out I will not be able to work in a private company. After joining the book club I intend to sell books. I can design and sell jewellery. (Inmate2, age 32, Female, University, see Appendix A.15.)

Inmate3 expressed that as well as learning something, understanding people was also a positive aspect of the learning process.

I learned things that I did not know before. I knew how to behave people, respect, affection but I was disappointed and kept a distance towards people. Then I approached them. (Inmate3, age 17, Female, Literate, see Appendix A.16.)

Inmate12 cited his positive feelings as he learned patience from the confection course.

Confection course taught us patience. I am an impatient person. It taught me to be patient. Being outside is a big question mark. I can sell lemons in the markets, I do not care, I can do it... then I would spend my time. However, the courses changed my point of view. (Inmate12, age 32, Male, University, see Appendix A.17.)

Inmate9 and inmate11 said that before they participated in the courses, they had been pessimistic, but with the courses their feelings had changed positively.

When I came I was very pessimistic and I found myself in the void. I had no father, no husband, I have to stand alone so that I can resist to all I had to submit and fix up things. One day I will be out, for sure... briefly I have to be self-sufficient. Here I had friends. People love me... when I will be out of here I wish to buy a machine... it is good for me. (Inmate9, age 33, Female, Primary School, see Appendix A.18.)

It changed my point of view about my life. I started to be optimistic and to think in that way. Before I was more pessimistic. Now I make plans for the future. (Inmate11, age 27, Male, Secondary School, see Appendix A.19.)

Inmate18 and inmate15 determined that they had refreshed their minds with these programs.

Certainly. First you refresh your mind, then I hope it will serve me in the future. (Inmate18, age 47, Male, Literate, see Appendix A.20.)

You refresh your mind. I could not accept all that happened.  
(Inmate15, age 49, Male, Primary School, see Appendix A.21.)

For inmate17, these courses thought him to be more conscious and to improve his profession.

You develop your own profession. You became more conscious. I mean you have a certificate. If you run your own business you need document, certificate... If you apply for a job they ask you if you have a certificate. (Inmate17, age 42, Male, Primary School, see Appendix A.22.)

Different from the others, inmate13 expressed his positive feelings about having the chance to continue his education. He also learned to play a musical instrument that helped him relax more.

The biggest change is the likelihood of being able to acquire middle level of education. I could not play a musical instrument, now I can do that. When psychologically I feel myself in depression, by playing the musical instrument I can recover from the bad mood. (Inmate13, age 34, Male, Primary School, see Appendix A.23.)

Inmate13 was pleased that educational programs taught him to be more organized and more adaptable for life after incarceration.

These would make us more organized. They may help us to adapt ourselves to the life outside of the prison. Sometimes I can feel myself somehow anxious. Therefore it is good to have this kind of training. (Inmate13, age 34, Male, Primary School, see Appendix A.24.)

Overall, prison education had a positive influence on the lives of the inmates. The reported positive influences were self-confidence and increased positive feelings including patience, awareness of skills, more optimism, more consciousness, and being more adaptable to the outside.

The other effect of the prison education programs in the lives of the inmates was education as the first experience, especially for illiterate inmates.

## Prison Education as the First Educational Experience

For some of the inmates, learning was an important aspect of the education programs. Learning to read and write was a rewarding experience for them. Inmate1 had never had a formal education before her incarceration. As inmate1 stated, writing a letter becomes important.

I felt it was different. My husband is a soldier and I wanted to write him a letter. It is much better if I write the letter myself instead of having it written by someone else. I can help my kids. I can also learn with them. (Inmate1, age 26, Female, Illiterate, see Appendix A.25.)

Likewise, inmate6, inmate7, inmate8, and inmate14 had also been illiterate before they were incarcerated and they took literacy courses as well as the vocational courses. They expressed positive feelings about being able to read and write.

Literacy is something nice. I had a deep desire for it, I was attracted by books, notebooks, pencils... I wish I could have learned how to read and write a lot before. As an illiterate you cannot sign anything if they ask, you to do so. Now I can show my family resistance. (Inmate6, aged 17, Female, Illiterate, see Appendix A.26.)

I even could not write my own name. Now I have learned it. We read books. I would have remained as an illiterate person. I was asking people at vacation time, now I can it do myself. (Inmate14, age 34, Male, Illiterate, see Appendix A.27.)

As some of the above quotations have already suggested, some of the inmates made their prison education experience positive by recognizing the opportunity that provided, which may not have appeared to be an option before. For inmate7, learning became an important aspect of the prison education.

I felt we could accomplish and do something too. Now when I go out I will have an accomplishment. I want to write something but if you ask someone to do it for you, you do not know whether she will or won't. Now although with some errors I can write it myself. Before, I did not care about anything. Now as everybody I want to have knowledge. If I had been literate before, I would not have been here now. To be here makes you lose certain things, but there are also some gains. I did not



know about mathematics, now I will learn it. While sewing I am learning how to measure before cutting the clothes. I know the numbers. My husband was paying the invoices. Since I was travelling by car before, once I go out of it I was lost. I did not know which bus I should get on, at which bus-stop I should get off. Now I understand it better. I can manage travelling alone. (Inmate7, age 31, Female, Illiterate, see Appendix A.28.)

By the first educational experience and learning, inmate8 became aware of her ability for working.

My way of thinking has changed. I realize that I can work. I have learned about life. Now I am reading everything. You read a newspaper and it serves you as an example. Reading and writing is beneficial. Before, I was more of an idiot. We were dominated by the family. I did not know about the bus-stops. I was always asking where the bus was going. Now the illiteracy is over. (Inmate8 age 17, Female, Illiterate, see Appendix A.29.)

As a result, for illiterate inmates, prison education as a first educational experience had a positive influence on their lives. Being able to read and write brought new and positive experiences and opportunities for them.

The last positive effect of the education programs was on the future plans of the inmates.

#### Future Plans of the Inmates

The meeting of the inmate's needs for attaining goals was another positive feeling of the educational programs. It was evident from this study that the inmates participated in the education programs saw these programs as an important part of their future goals.

In the following, the survey results concerning what the inmates planned to do when they were released and how these education programs helped them to actualize these plans are set out. Later, the related data from the interviews are presented.

## Survey

In Table 24, the responses to the question “what are you going to do when you are released?” are set out. The figures show that 31.6% of the inmates had arranged to find jobs related to courses in which they had participated in prison. 23.8% of the inmates had no plans for their futures. 32.9% of the inmates had determined to keep their prior occupation. 5.2% of the inmates had arranged to find jobs. 0.6% of the inmates wanted to see their families, 0.9% of the inmates had arranged to start a trade. The subjects of this study also planned to return to school when released. In the survey, 1.3% of the inmates had decided to continue their educations.

Table 24. Future plans of inmates

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
No plan	33	34.0	94	21.5	127	23.8
Finding job related to course	25	25.8	144	33.0	169	31.6
Keeping prior occupation	21	21.6	154	35.2	175	32.8
Finding job	7	7.2	21	4.8	28	5.2
Meeting family	1	1.0	2	0.5	3	0.6
Opening a trade			5	1.1	5	0.9
Attending school	4	4.1	3	0.7	7	1.3
No answer	6	6.2	14	3.2	20	3.7
Total	97	100	437	100	534	100

The last item of the survey is related to whether education programs help inmates to actualize their future plans. Table 25 shows that 83% of the inmates thought that education programs will help them to actualize their future plans. However, 11.8% of the inmates didn't think in that way.

Table 25. Contribution of education programs attended on future plans

Will these education programs help you to actualize your future plans?	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	78	80.4	369	84.4	447	83.7
No	16	16.5	47	10.8	63	11.8
Total	94	96.9	416	95.2	510	95.5
No answer	3	3.1	21	4.8	24	4.5
Total	97	100	437	100	534	100

In short, generally the inmates determined to keep prior occupations and find jobs related to courses in which they participated. Also, the majority of the inmates thought that education programs help them to actualize their future plans.

### Interviews

Related to this heading, the questions “what are you going to do when you are released; what are your plans?” and “will these programs in which you participated help you to actualize these plans” were also asked to inmates in the interviews. The future goals of the participants varied from being scenarist to opening a business related to embroidery.

As was found in the survey sample, some of the inmates interviewed expressed that they wanted to find jobs related to what they had learned in the courses. Several participants had aspirations of going into business for themselves in areas related to courses they had taken. Inmates saw the education programs at prison as helping them reach their goals.

Inmate16 attended a computer course and three levels of textile courses. He earned a certificate from the textile course and had arranged to work in the field textile. When the question of “will these programs in which you participated help you to actualize these plans” was asked to him, he said,

Yes, sure. For example, if I work in the textile field it would serve me. I have learned it completely. Without a certificate you cannot run your own business. (Inmate16, age 42, Male, High School, see Appendix A.30.)

Inmate5 participated in jewelery, embroidery and knitting courses earned certificate from these courses. She had a job in prospect related to knitting or embroidery work.

Also she wanted to teach them her new skills to her daughter-in-laws:

I had joined a course around 30 years ago but I have forgotten what I learned. I had some knowledge but it was not enough. Now I have self-confidence. I have a certificate. I have power. I can run a shop. This is good luck. Whether it is embroidery or knitting course I do not want to learn only for myself. I don't have any daughter but my daughter-in-laws can do something. (Inmate5, age 44, Female, Primary School, see Appendix A.31.)

Inmate9 attended hairdresser and embroidery courses. She had a hairdressing certificate and would get one from the embroidery course. She planned to find a job or to open a haircutting salon after being released:

It is necessary to find a job. The most important thing is a job. During my life I have never needed help of others. I know how to use tools, I can work for my relatives, friends. If I become a hair dresser, this would be my own business. I have suffered a lot; therefore I have to be successful. (Inmate9, age 33, Female, Primary School, see Appendix A.32.)

Similarly, inmate10 had taken the embroidery course and inmate 7 had taken the needlework and the knitting courses. They wanted to open a trade related to these works:

In the long-run, I want to open a business related to embroidery. I don't want to something else. I hope so. It will finish for me once I learn the embroidery work. When I get out I can employ a couple of woman workers. I can teach them the work. We can earn our lives together. (Inmate10 age 27, Female, Secondary School, see Appendix A.33.)

Inmate 14 had participated in a literacy course and a central heating system course.

He said that when he released these courses would help him with his plans:

Certainly... If I have the diploma I can do it. Certificate of central heating system or natural gas... of course it would serve. I have learned how to read and write. I can even do addition and subtraction if you ask me. (Inmate14, age 34, Male, Illiterate, see Appendix A.34.)

Inmate16 had taken the computer course and completed 3 level of a textile course.

He believed that he would be able to help his children with the knowledge attained from computer course. Also he expressed that the textile course may help him when he was released:

I hope these courses will be useful. I bought a PC for the kids. It would be useful for their education. Textile also will help. After the prison life I can produce myself and market them. I will decide later on when I will be free. (Inmate16, age 42, Male, High School, see Appendix A.35.)

Future goals entailed more than having the skills for future employment. Different from the others, inmate4 had participated in a scenario writing workshop and had written scenario. After she will be released, she plans to continue to write her scenario as a book:

Sure, definitely...For example, scenario writing. When I will be out of here I will follow upon what I have written. I will make them into a book. I have learned the technical sides. We postpone our life, I realized it here. (Inmate4, age 27, Female, University, see Appendix A.36.)

In summary, the respondents of this study generally expressed positive perceptions about their involvement with their prison education programs. Developing self-confidence, attaining future goals as well as learning were apparent.

## Inmates' Overall Evaluation of the Education Programs

This study has looked at how the inmates perceived the prison education programs in which they participated. This next section examines the respondents' perceptions in the light of their overall evaluation of the education programs in which they participated. This heading includes negative aspects and inadequacies of education programs, the most beneficial courses and the desired courses for inmates.

### Negative Aspects and Inadequacies of the Education Programs

For determining the negative aspects and inadequacy of the education programs according to the inmates, there was an open-ended question related to this heading in the survey as well as in interview.

### Survey

Table 26 gives the frequencies of these negative aspects and detailed information is given following.

Table 26. Negative aspects/inadequacies of education programs

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Continuity of courses	3	3.1	37	8.5	40	7.5
Opportunity to participate			8	1.8	8	1.5
Cursory of instruction			25	5.7	25	4.7
Participant's attitudes	1	1.0	7	1.6	8	1.5
Physical characteristics	3	3.1	12	2.7	15	2.8
Difference in levels of inmates			2	0.5	2	0.4
Lack of financial support			2	0.5	2	0.4
Diversity of the courses	4	4.1			4	0.7
Announcing problem	5	5.2	2	0.5	7	1.3
Total	16	16.5	95	21.7	111	20.8

As shown in Table 26, 7.5% of the inmates emphasized that because of the lack of continuity of courses, practical development could not be achieved. That is, there was no chance to strengthen learning. Also, the duration of the courses was limited causing lack of education.

1.8% of the male inmates determined that there was no opportunity to participate in these courses all the time. They said, “I have applied many times but I have never been called.”

5.7% of the male inmates expressed the opinion that education could not be taken notice and the instruction was cursory. According to them, the courses needed more discipline and the content of the courses should be enriched. One of them said, “we got the literacy school; they gave us a book and let us go back rooms. We want more effective education.”

1.5% of the inmates complained about the participant’s attitudes. According to them, the classes were crowded and some participants did not take the courses seriously. Therefore, these participants were alienated from the courses. In this way, they expressed that selecting participants should be given more importance.

2.8% of the inmates cited that opportunities were limited and that the physical characteristics of the educational places were insufficient. Because of the lack of educational materials, practice was not enough and the educational environment was not satisfactory. They said that “two participants received computer education on one computer.”

There are some other complaints of inmates. They said that they were taken out of their rooms late and they had been unable get the courses on time. Therefore, the courses start late and also they fell behind in the course. They added that they couldn’t be announced on time. Some of them said that because of the difference in

the levels and the needs of the inmates, development could not be achieved and 0.5% of the male inmates expressed that the courses did not provide financial support. Additionally, female inmates expressed that in general there were needlework and hairdressing courses and added that diversity of the courses for women inmates should be extended (see Table 26).

### Interviews

In the interview eight inmates expressed their negative opinions and inadequacies of the courses in which they had participated. The rest of the inmates cited that they could not think of any negative aspects of the courses or they said that they did not know how these courses should be because it was their first educational experience.

Similar to the survey, two of the inmates interviewed emphasized the duration of the courses. They proposed that the programs should be continual. They expressed their thoughts as follows:

The duration of the courses is limited. They should be much more regular and better organized. (Inmate2, age 32, Female, University, see Appendix A.37.)

I wish the same courses continued. There should be a regular program. I want to be given as much knowledge as completely as possible. A course lasts 3 months. Once you are out of here you have to believe in yourself. (Inmate5, age 44, Female, Primary School, see Appendix A.38.)

According to two of the inmates, because of the difference in the level of the participants, development could not be provided. They expressed their feelings in the interview as follows:

Not a kind of inefficiency but, for example, the musical instrument playing course... we start the course, but when there is a newcomer we have to spend time and wait for her...so we stop and do not make progress... For example, the computer course starts and finishes... it



lasts for about a month. The newcomers participate in the next one. (Inmate4, age 27, Female, University, see Appendix A.39.)

Not for me but the trainings could be organized according to the levels of the participants. There are people who even do not know what a mouse or keyboard are. We want to go faster but how come! We have to follow the pace of the slow learners. Different levels could be set. First the university graduates, then lycee, then primary school, etc... It is better if they accept at the first run those people whose remaining sentence is quite short and who do not have enough time. (Inmate16, age 42, Male, High School, see Appendix A.40.)

Two of the interviewees cited that the courses did not provide financial support.

They had no income from the outside and they wanted a little bit of financial return from their work in the courses in consideration of their labor. Also, they said that this would improve their motivation in the courses to work harder and participate.

I do not have any income from outside. I am giving my labor, so they could pay us a little bit. I am purchasing what I am producing myself. If they paid me a little I could buy tea and sugar and work harder. For 3.5 months I am working for others. What we are producing is sold and the income goes to the prison administration... it is OK, it is good what I am learning, but let me earn something since I am working hard... what we learned is our surplus. I became a perfect master of this job, but then there would be more clients. I would motivate myself to work harder and earn more. (Inmate9, age 33, Female, Primary School, see Appendix A.41.)

If we earn something for what we are suffering to produce, it would be better for us. It would be better if they gave us special needles for the embroidery work. Small markets could be organized and we could generate income. I could send to my family what I am producing. They could sell them and send me the money. (Inmate10, age 27, Female, Secondary School, see Appendix A.42.)

The last negative aspects that they considered were the announcement and information problems. One of the inmates complained that they could not be informed. The other determined that the prison guards did not believe them and they could not be taken out of the rooms. These two inmates stated these negative aspects as:

I could not learn completely. They would not even open the doors. The teacher called through the loud speakers but the guards did not open the doors, they did not believe. I was always late to the course. (Inmate1, age 26, Female, Illiterate, see Appendix A.43.)

I participated in the jewelery course. We go to folklore. But they do not inform us. An announcement is made over the loud speakers but we do not understand what they are talking about. I went to the jewelery course and finished it. Now we go to folklore course for eight months. (Inmate6, age 17, Female, Illiterate, see Appendix A.44.)

In short, the inmates made considerable determinations about the negative aspects of the education programs even if the number of respondents was low. These negative aspects changed from the continuity of courses to lack of opportunity and financial support.

### The Most Beneficial Courses

To determine the courses the inmates thought most beneficial, there was an open-ended question in the survey as well as in the interview: “which programs seem to be most beneficial to you? Why?”

### Survey

In general, the respondents who specified vocational courses explained that these courses helped them learn a profession. 27.5% of the inmates determined that all of these courses were beneficial. 19.6% of the female inmates expressed that the literacy courses were beneficial for them; 3.4% of the male inmates determined in the same way. 2.9% of the inmates denoted social cultural activities including music courses, folklore and sports activities (see Table 27).

Table 27. The most beneficial courses determined by inmates

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Computer course	10	10.3	80	18.3	90	16.8
All of the courses	25	25.7	122	27.9	147	27.5
Husbandry courses			15	3.4	15	2.8
House painting courses			10	2.3	10	1.9
Electric, gas and plumbing course			29	6.6	29	5.4
Handicraft courses	2	2.0	12	2.7	14	2.6
Foreign language courses	3	3.1	26	5.9	29	5.4
Cookery courses			22	5.0	22	4.1
Auto motor courses			15	3.4	15	2.8
Textile courses	14	14.4	47	10.7	61	11.4
Barber and hair dressing courses	5	5.2	24	5.5	29	5.4
Literacy courses	19	19.6	15	3.4	34	6.4
Social cultural activities	5	5.2	11	2.5	16	2.9
Others	4	4.1	11	2.5	15	2.8

### Interview

In the interview, the answers were similar to those in the survey. Inmate1 and inmate11 determined that they had chosen the one that would allow them to learn a profession.

I would have taken any one of them which would enable me to be my own trade. I would have wanted any one of them that suited my needs. (Inmate1, age 26, Female, Illiterate, see Appendix A.45.)

I think it was the computer course, because can find a job as a government employee. All employees should know how to use computers. (Inmate11, age 27, Male, Secondary School, see Appendix A.46.)

Inmate7 cited the most beneficial course for him as literacy course.

Reading and writing. I was not aware even of minor information. Now I read a little bit and if I am interested I go on reading the rest. (Inmate7, age 31, Female, Illiterate, see Appendix A.47.)

Inmate9 proposed to open a haircutting salon. Therefore, she expressed that hair dressing course was beneficial for her.

Hairdressing; because I intend to run a business. I always worked for others. Let it be my own job and let me earn money for myself. I have

self-confidence, I can manage... I want to have a tranquil life.  
(Inmate9, age 33, Female, Primary School, see Appendix A.48.)

### The Desired Courses

The other open-ended question of the survey was that “is there any course or activity which is not in the programs that you wish were here?” 16.5% of the female inmates and 9.2% of the male inmates said musical instrument course. 11.6% of the male inmates said sports activities. Additionally, 1.5% of the inmates expressed that they desired courses which would provide them a salary (see Table 28).

Table 28. The desired courses determined by inmates

	Female		Male		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Seminar, chess, cinema etc. activities	5	5.1	19	4.3	24	4.5
Foreign language courses	5	5.1	31	7.1	36	6.7
Sports activities	4	4.1	51	11.6	55	10.3
Musical instrument courses	16	16.5	40	9.2	56	10.5
Handicraft courses	8	8.2	15	3.4	23	4.3
Husbandry courses			18	4.1	18	3.4
Electronic courses			12	2.7	12	2.2
Computer course	1	1.1	31	7.1	32	5.9
Driver's license courses			10	2.3	10	1.9
Salaried courses	3	3.1	5	1.1	8	1.5
Auto motor courses			8	1.8	8	1.5
Folklore	3	3.1	8	1.8	11	2.1
Others	6	6.2	52	11.9	58	10.8

### The Relationship between the Demographic Characteristics and the Perceptions of Inmates

In order to see whether there was a relationship between the demographic characteristics and the perceptions of inmates about prison education programs, cross tabs and chi-square tests were carried out. The relationship between demographic characteristics; age, gender and the educational level and the perceptions of inmates;

question17, participation in social and cultural activities; question24, items related to perceptions; and question29, future plans and goals of inmates, were examined.

Question23, decision about participation was also considered, but all the answers related to the variables were “yes”. Since there was no variation in the answers, the test would be meaningless. Therefore, this question was not included in the analysis.

Carrying out the analysis, demographic characteristics, age and, educational level groups were regrouped. Additionally, in question17, participation in social and cultural activities, two options were missed because the number of respondents was too few. In question29, future plans and goals of inmates, three options were added and recoded as others for the same reason.

The analysis indicated that there was no relationship between age and the perceptions of inmates. However, there was a relationship between gender; educational level and the perceptions of inmates on several questions and items which are explained in the following.

Gender: the chi-square test showed that there was a relationship between gender and View1 (“educational program helps to pass the time away”, Chi-square with two degrees of freedom = 6.834,  $p = 0.033$ , see Table 29). According to row and column percentages, gender difference existed in this view. Male inmates have more negative view determining “no” (9%, N=40). However, female inmates have negative view less than male inmates (4%, N=4).

Table 29. Frequency distribution by gender for view 1.

View 1 : Educational program helps to pass the time away	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Yes	79	310	389
Partially	7	63	70
No	4	40	44
Total	90	413	503

( $\chi^2 = 6.834$ ;  $df=2$ ;  $p=0.033$ )

Additionally, there was a relationship between gender and the future plans of inmates (Chi-square with four degrees of freedom = 14.405,  $p = 0.006$ , see Table 30).

According to row and column percentages, gender difference existed in future plans of inmates. Female inmates (36%,  $N=33$ ) who had no plans for their future are more than male inmates (22%,  $N=94$ ). Additionally, male inmates said “keeping prior occupation” ( $M=36\%$ ,  $N=154$ ;  $F=23\%$ ,  $N=21$ ) and “finding job related to course” ( $M=34\%$ ,  $N=144$ ;  $F=27\%$ ,  $N=25$ ) more than female inmates.

Table 30. Frequency distribution by gender for future plans.

Future plans/goals of inmates	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
No plan	33	94	127
Finding job related to course	25	144	169
Keeping prior occupation	21	154	175
Finding job	7	21	28
Other	5	10	15
Total	91	423	514

( $\chi^2 = 14.405$ ;  $df=4$ ;  $p=0.006$ )

Educational level: the analysis indicated that relationship existed between level of education and participation in social and cultural activities (Chi-square with nine degrees of freedom = 22.890,  $p = 0.006$ , see Table 31). According to row and column percentages, there was a difference in participation in terms of levels of education.

Illiterate and literate inmates (28%,  $N=12$ ) reported “Not interested in, I don’t participate” more than those who have higher levels of education.

Table 31. Frequency distribution by educational level for participation

Participation in social and cultural activities	Educational level				Total
	Illiterate and literate	Primary school	Secondary school	High school and university	
Try to participate in all of them	21	116	77	103	317
Not interested in, I don't participate	12	16	6	17	51
Choose and participate only some	7	40	19	39	105
There is no activity	2	6	8	11	27
Total	42	178	110	170	500

( $\chi^2=22.890$ ;  $df=9$ ;  $p=0.006$ )

The analysis also showed that there is a relationship between educational level and View 2 (“education program provides me take up profession”, Chi-square with six degrees of freedom = 31.432,  $p = 0.000$ , see Table 32). According to row and column percentages, there was a difference in terms of levels of education in this view. The primary school graduates had more positive view determining “yes” (85%,  $N=164$ ). However, illiterate and literate inmates (66%,  $N=28$ ), secondary school graduates (77%,  $N=87$ ), and high school and university graduates (61%,  $N=104$ ) expressed less positive view

Table 32. Frequency distribution by educational level for view 2

View 2: Education program provides me take up profession	Educational level				Total
	Illiterate and literate	Primary school	Secondary school	High school and university	
Yes	28	164	87	104	383
Partially	7	19	17	45	88
No	7	9	8	20	44
Total	42	192	112	169	515

( $\chi^2=31.432$ ;  $df=6$ ;  $p=0.000$ )

Additionally, there is a relationship between educational level and View 3 (“education program provides a better chance for a job after release”, Chi-square with six degrees of freedom = 22.700, p = 0.001, see Table 33). According to row and column percentages, there is a difference in terms of levels of education in this view. The primary school graduates had more positive view determining “yes” (78%, N=153). However, illiterate and literate inmates (64%, N=64), secondary school graduates (65%, N=73), and high school and university graduates (60%, N=102) expressed less positive view. Literate and illiterate inmates (23%, N=10) were higher in percentage compared to others who said “no” which means that educational programs they were participating in do not provide a better chance for them, whereas respondents from other levels of education perceived this in positive terms.

Table 33. Frequency distribution by educational level for view 3.

View 3: Education program provides a better chance for a job after release	Educational level				Total
	Illiterate and literate	Primary school	Secondary school	High school and university	
Yes	27	153	73	102	355
Partially	5	26	22	46	99
No	10	16	16	21	63
Total	42	195	111	169	517

( $\chi^2=22.700$ ; df=6; p=0.001)

According to the chi-square test, there is a relationship between educational level and View 4 (“I feel better”, Chi-square with six degrees of freedom = 16.110, p = 0.013, see Table 34). According to row and column percentages, there was a difference in terms of levels of education in this view. Illiterate and literate inmates (11%, N=5) had more percentage of negative answer “no” than primary school (3%, N=6), secondary school (6%, N=7); and high school and university graduates (2%, N=3).



The highest percentage of “yes” answers were given by primary school graduates (86%, N=165).

Table 34. Frequency distribution by educational level for view 4.

View 4: I feel better	Educational level				Total
	Illiterate and literate	Primary school	Secondary school	High school and university	
Yes	34	165	94	138	431
Partially	4	20	10	30	64
No	5	6	7	3	21
Total	43	191	111	171	516

( $\chi^2=16.110$ ; df=6; p=0.013)

There was also a relationship between educational level and View 5 (“education programs improved by communication with people”, Chi-square with six degrees of freedom = 16.369, p = 0.012, see Table 35). According to row and column percentages, there was a difference in terms of level of education in this view. Secondary school graduates (70%, N=77) and high school and university graduates (68%, N=114) had positive view less than other levels of education.

Table 35. Frequency distribution by educational level for view 5.

View 5 : Education programs improved by communication with people	Educational level				Total
	Illiterate and literate	Primary school	Secondary school	High school and university	
Yes	35	157	77	114	383
Partially	5	28	21	42	96
No	3	5	11	10	29
Total	43	190	109	166	508

( $\chi^2=16.369$ ; df=6; p=0.012)

The analysis also indicated that there is a relationship between educational level and View 6 (“education programs help developing better social attitudes”, Chi-square

with six degrees of freedom = 12.785,  $p = 0.047$ , see Table 36). According to row and column percentages, there was a difference in terms of levels of education in this view. Secondary school graduates (27%, N=30) and; high school and university graduates (19%, N=33) had higher percentage of “partially”. The primary school graduates (84%, N=162) and literate and illiterate inmates (83%, N=35) had more positive view.

Table 36. Frequency distribution by educational level for view 6.

View 6 : Education programs help developing better social attitudes	Educational level				Total
	Illiterate and literate	Primary school	Secondary school	High school and university	
Yes	35	162	76	128	401
Partially	6	27	30	33	96
No	1	1	5	8	17
Total	42	192	111	169	514

( $\chi^2=12.785$ ;  $df=6$ ;  $p=0.047$ )

Lastly, the chi-square test showed that there was a relationship between educational level and view 7 (“inmates do not take the programs seriously”, Chi-square with six degrees of freedom = 20.571,  $p = 0.002$ , see Table 37). According to row and column percentages, there was an educational level difference in this view. High school and university graduates (42%, N=71) said “partially” more than others when compared to other levels of education which means that they had no definite idea on this item and also they have less positive view.

Table 37. Frequency distribution by educational level for view 7.

View 7 : Inmates do not take the programs seriously	Educational level				Total
	Illiterate and literate	Primary school	Secondary school	High school and university	
Yes	14	59	27	32	132
Partially	7	50	26	71	154
No	21	81	53	66	221
Total	42	190	106	169	507

( $\chi^2=20.571$ ; df=6; p=0.002)

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter begins by providing a summary of the study as a whole. Then, a summary of the findings and discussion will be presented on the research. Lastly, the conclusion and recommendations, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research are presented.

#### Summary

The focus of this research was on the inmates' perceptions of prison education programs. It explored the views of inmates participating in educational activities in prisons in terms of their evaluations of their educational experiences, the effect of these programs on their lives in prison, and the expected contributions of these educational activities on their future plans after being released.

Both qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches were used for this research. Twenty inmates participated in the interview in three prisons and 534 inmates participated in the survey in eleven prisons.

The two methods of data collection that were used in this study included a semi-structured interview and a survey. Inmates were interviewed with an instrument developed by the researcher. The researcher analyzed the content of each interview. The emerging issues were analyzed and categorized drawing upon the data and the related literature. Three themes emerged from the interviews, participation in the social-cultural activities and education programs, perceptions of inmates of the

prison education programs and inmates' overall evaluation of the education programs.

Inmates responded to the survey developed by the researcher after the interviews. The findings of survey were analyzed through a statistical software package for Windows (SPSS 15.0). The findings of the survey were given with the related interview results.

The overall findings of the survey showed that inmates generally perceived the educational programs were beneficial and they described these programs in positive terms. Regarding the interview, the effect of the prison education programs on the lives of inmates was described as improving self-confidence and increased positive feelings, the prison education as the first educational experience, and future plans. Nonetheless, several inmates expressed some negative aspects and inadequacies of these educational programs both in the survey and the interview. Additionally, they made an overall evaluation about the courses including the most beneficial and desired courses.

#### Summary of the Findings and Discussion

Most of the inmates were in the range of 20 to 30 years of age (48.7%) and 11 to 20 years of total penalty (30.9%), primary school graduates (36.5%), and single (48.3%). Among the married, 44.9% of the inmates had at least one child.

Additionally, 11.3% of the female inmates and 31.4% of the male inmates had served time before. Most of the married inmates' spouses' educational levels were primary school (17.2%). The majority of the inmates' mothers were illiterate (39.1%) and the majority of their father had primary school degrees (42.3%). The literature shows that the lack of education is one of the major causes of criminal activity. This study

also determined that the majority of the inmates had a lack of education as well as their parents.

According to Bethel (1985), in general, the people in prisons tend to come predominantly from poor families where all resources are in short supply. However, most of the inmates surprisingly described their economic status as average (43.4%) in this study. 76.4% of the inmates had been employed. There was a discrepancy regarding unemployment: 54.6% of the female inmates and 14.9% of the male inmates had not been employed a rate consistent throughout Turkey. 52 different occupational statuses were found. Most of the male inmates had been self employed (14.9%) and most of the female inmates had been housewives (29.9%).

In terms of participation, most of the inmates participated in sport activities (46.4%) social-cultural activities and took vocational courses (50.6%) among the educational programs. Additionally, the majority of the inmates (59.9%) reported that they try to participate in all of the activities. The respondents in the interview considerations also changed from being selective to becoming bored and leaving the activity.

Pelissier (2004) determined that internal motivation is initiated by the inmate and serves as a driving force for participation in an educational or treatment program. External motivation is pressure or incentives from an outside force such as the criminal justice system, the prison administration, or even family members. Pelisser writes that since most correctional education classes are voluntary, it is important to possess internal motivation (cited in Hall, 2006, pg. 106).

The respondents of this study were both internally and externally motivated to participate in the education programs. Participants who were externally motivated were few. In both the surveys and the interviews, the majority of the inmates

(86.2%) had decided to participate in courses of their own accord. The minority of them had been encouraged by prison administrators, prison teachers, psychologists, guards or their friends. For instance, inmate8 was motivated internally by reading letters from her family.

The prison education programs generally were perceived in positive terms. According to the findings related to items in the survey, the inmates generally perceived that the education programs helped inmates to attain job skills and increased their chances at finding a job when released. The educational programs were taken by inmates to pass the time. Additionally, education programs had a positive influence on how inmates felt about themselves and made them more confident. The inmates said that they liked learning, they needed learning and they developed better social attitudes when they were attending educational programs. They believed that the programs make their lives better and they developed better social attitudes. Lastly, the data indicated that the educators did not have disrespectful attitudes towards inmates and inmates valued this highly.

The literature has shown that educational programs lead to a more positive prison environment, positive feelings of inmates and positive effects on inmates' learning opportunities. According to Tewksbury and Stengel (2006), participants in both academic and vocational programs reported high levels of confidence that they would finish the program. Parallel to the literature, the respondents of this study displayed in their perceptions positive feelings in general. The education programs were favored because the inmates were able to attain some positive benefits from being involved including higher self-confidence and better feelings, and first educational experience and learning and attaining future goals and plans. Inmate4 clearly stated that her self-confidence had improved as a result of developed scenario

writing and inmate2 had become aware of her skills, which made her more confident about her future. For inmate17, the courses helped him to become more conscious and to improve his profession. In terms of first educational experience and learning, Inmate7 made her prison education experience positive by recognizing the opportunity that provided her learning, which may not have appeared to be an option before. Inmate6, inmate7, inmate8, and inmate14 had been illiterate. Becoming able to read and write was a new and positive experience for them. As inmate1 expressed, for some of them writing a letters had become important.

Last, a positive influence of programs was the development of future goals and plans. The inmates who participated in the education programs saw these programs as an important part of their future goals. 31.6% of the inmates had arranged to find jobs related to the courses in which they had participated in prison, and 83% of the inmates thought that the education programs would help them to actualize their plans.

According to Hall (2006), the plans of prisoner students are unique in that they match the prisoner students' interests as well as increase his desire to make a good living and stay out of jail. Additionally, Hall concluded that most important is that every participant acknowledge that to achieve his goals, education of some kind was the first step. In parallel with Hall's findings, some inmates identified of particular professions. Inmate4, who had participated in a scenario writing workshop in prison, wanted to write scenario and she hopes to be a scenarist. Inmate16 wanted to be a textile worker. The findings also showed that the future plans of inmates arose from the inmates' course choices. Inmate9 earned a hairdresser certificate from the course and she can establish her own business upon release. Inmate10 hoped to establish her own business related to embroidery, which was a consequence of the



course in which she had participated. The inmates wanted to own business related to the courses that they had taken. Their goals had become attainable through prison education programs.

The inmates overall evaluations of the education programs included negative aspects and described the inadequacies of the education programs, as well as the most beneficial and desired courses. While 21.7% of the male inmates determined negative aspects and inadequacies, 16.5% of the female inmates expressed such aspects and inadequacies. They emphasized the lack of continuity of the courses and the cursory nature of the instruction mostly. They found that physical characteristics and diversity of the courses were insufficient. Other negative aspects were differences in the levels of the participants and their attitudes during the courses. They also complained about how the courses were announced and they expressed that they were not informed on time. Additionally, lack of financial support was perceived by the inmates as an inadequacy of the education programs. Lastly, 1.8% of the male inmates stated that there was not the opportunity to participate in these courses all the time. They said “I have applied many times but I have never been called”. However, according to Saldırım (2004), Level II literacy courses, vocational courses and religious services are compulsory programs to be offered to inmates by the prison administrations.

The last evaluations of inmates were about the most beneficial and desired courses. The findings of the study demonstrated that 27.5% of the inmates found that all of the courses were beneficial because they provides them the opportunity to learn a trade. Additionally, while 19.6% of the female inmates expressed that literacy courses were beneficial for them, 3.4% of the male inmates thought in that way. However, when asked what courses they would like to take, the largest number of

female inmates (16.5%) and 9.2% of the male inmates wanted a traditional musical instrument course. 11.6% of the male inmates wanted sports activities.

The findings indicated that there was no relationship between age and the perceptions of inmates. However, there was a relationship between gender; educational level and the perceptions of inmates. Gender difference existed in future plans of inmates. Female inmates who had no plans for their future are more than male inmates. Additionally, male inmates had more negative view on the statement “educational program helps to pass the time away” than female inmates.

There was a difference in participation in social and cultural activities in terms of levels of education. Illiterate and literate inmates reported “Not interested in, I don’t participate” more than those who have higher levels of education. The primary school graduates had more positive view on the statement “education program provides me take up profession” than other levels of education. Literate and illiterate inmates determined that educational programs they were participating in do not provide a better chance for them, whereas respondents from other levels of education perceived this in positive terms. Illiterate and literate inmates did not feel better when compared to other levels of education graduates. Secondary school graduates and high school and university graduates had positive view about statement “education programs improved by communication with people” less than other levels of education. High school and university graduates said “partially” more than others when compared to other levels of education which means that they had no definite idea on “inmates do not take the programs seriously” and also they had less positive view on this issue.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The main purpose of this study is to determine the perceptions of inmate participants about prison education programs. It can be concluded that inmates generally expressed positive perceptions about their involvement with the prison education programs. The reported positive influences were increased self-confidence and positive feelings, being able to read and write, and considering future goals. As well as positive effects of educational programs, some inadequacies also determined.

In the study, several inmates determined that they had not been given the opportunity to participate, even if they called upon the authorities. These inmates do not benefit from educational programs. Therefore, it seems prison education should offer more programs and opportunity for them.

Every prison should provide inmates to access educational programs which meet their needs as much as possible. Significance and priority should be given to inmates who need literacy and basic vocational skills.

The female inmates mentioned that the variety of courses was limited for them. The courses available were mostly needlework, hairdressing and similar courses. These did not meet some of female inmates' needs. To meet all inmates' needs of courses, it seems prison education programs should expand the offers in vocational training.

Several inmates expressed that practical skills development could not be achieved through vocational courses. Prison should offer not only theoretical studies but also practical training which helped inmates to improve their skills. Additionally, from the results of this study it can be concluded that prison education provided increase in self-confidence.

If it could be determined that prison education works and that the majority of inmates perceived it in positive terms, commitment to a more structural plan for improving these educational program is needed. This structural plan may focus on the needs of all inmates, measure their learning and also effect of these programs on their life after prison with regard to employability and recidivism.

In the study, the value of sports and social-cultural activities was recognized. When determining the most desired course and activities, the majority of inmates want musical instrument courses and sports activities. As well as educational programs, social and cultural activities and sports activities should be provided and encouraged. Higher quality on educational programs, in combination with the social-cultural activities and practical training, could make the programs more attractive to the inmates.

In the study, the researcher observed that authorities try to improve educational programs as much as possible compared to former endeavor in Turkey. This was also supported by authorities interviewed.

Prison education cannot fulfill all of the needs of the inmates alone. According to the researchers' observation in the prisons, to meet all the inmates' needs, prison administrators, teachers and other staff, like social workers and psychologists, should work together, and with the inmate, in an organized way. If all needs are met, the inmates would benefit more from participating in prison education, both while in prison and after they are released.

#### Limitations of the Study

This study was restricted to the inmates in the eleven prisons who were involved in educational programs. These findings cannot be generalized to other prisons

throughout Turkey. Purposeful sampling does not present the population, but may provide some inside information.

One of the limitations of the survey study is the lack of pilot study. There are different reasons for this. First of all, due to time restriction it was not possible to apply for written permission from the Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses both for a pilot study and field study. Secondly, a written permission have been already obtained for the interview study before the survey study, and when the researcher applied for another permission for the survey study the authorized people in the ministry mentioned that it would be difficult to get two different written permissions both for the pilot and field study and suggested that it would be easier to revise the survey questionnaire at the ministry together with the researcher and get the written permission for this finalized form.

Additionally, the sample selection was an issue that could not be controlled. The researcher only emphasized the criteria of participants' enrollment in educational activities and then the administration and prisons' teachers selected the participants based upon this criterion.

Another, limitation was caused by the data collection procedure. Interviews were planned to be made with using tape recording, but, permission was not granted by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses. Therefore, during the interviews the responses were written down. Thus may have caused some detail loss.

The interview time with the male inmates was shorter than that with time female inmates. Each female inmate was interviewed between forty-five to sixty minutes by the researcher. However, each male was interviewed between twenty to

thirty minutes by the researcher. This may have emanated from the gender of researcher.

### Suggestions for Further Research

This study examined the perceptions of inmates about education programs. The perceptions of the prison administrators and prisons' teachers should be also determined to see whether there are discernable differences between the perceptions of the inmates and prison administrators and teachers related to the education programs. It would also be important to see if the needs and perceptions of students, teachers, and administrators coincide, and if prison education is able to meet all these needs. An evaluation of whether the range offered as prison education corresponds to the educational needs of the inmates should also be made.

Obtaining a clear picture of which inmates do and do not participate in the courses, and how inmates are recruited to participate in prison education are other important issues. It should be beneficial to compare the participant and non-participant inmates' perceptions and their motivations.

Another considerable issue is that evaluation and research on education in prisons can be carried out with a view to assessing teaching methods and quality. Last, there is a need to see if inmates can take the benefits they derive from the prison education programs and apply them after release.

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