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TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' CONCEPTIONS OF ASSESSMENT IN A
UNIVERSITY EFL PREPARATORY SCHOOL CONTEXT

THESIS BY

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We certify that this thesis under the title of **"TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' CONCEPTIONS OF ASSESSMENT IN A UNIVERSITY EFL PREPARATORY SCHOOL CONTEXT"** is satisfactory for the award of the degree of **Master of Arts** in the Department of **English Language Teaching.**

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ÖZET

ÜNİVERSİTENİN HAZIRLIK OKULU BÖLÜMÜNDEKİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN VE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN ÖLÇME VE DEĞERLENDİRME SÜRECİNE İLİŞKİN KAVRAYIŞLARI

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Bu araştırmanın amacı, Üniversitenin Hazırlık Okulu Bölümündeki öğretmenlerinin ve öğrencilerinin ölçme ve değerlendirme sürecine ilişkin kavrayışlarını araştırıp belirlemektir.Her bir grup için düzenlenen araştırma gereçleri kullanılarak, öğretmenler ve öğrenciler demografik bilgilerini, ölçme ve değerlendirme sürecinde uyguladıkları yöntemleri girmişlerdir. Veri toplama sürecinde, araştırmacılar tarafından Türkçe'ye uyarlanan "Öğretmenlerin Ölçme ve Değerlendirme Sürecine İlişkin Kavrayışları" ölçeğinin 27 maddelik kısaltılmış haliyle "Öğretmenlerin Ölçme ve Değerlendirme Sürecine İlişkin Kavrayışları" ölçeğinin uyarlanmış hali olan "Öğrencilerin Ölçme ve Değerlendirme Sürecine İlişkin Kavrayışları" kullanılmıştır.

Açıklayıcı Faktör Analizi sonuçları ölçeklerin aslına benzer yapıda olduğunu ve dört faktörden oluştuğunu göstermektedir. Faktör isimleri ölçeğin aslına uygun bir şekilde öğretmenler için "Öğrenci Sorumluğu", "Okul Sorumluluğu", "Gelişim" ve "Önemsizlik", öğrenciler için ise "Önemsizlik", "Gelişim", "Toplumsal Fayda" ve "Dışsal Yükleme" olarak isimlendirilmiştir.

Gruplar arasında istatistiksel olarak önemli farklar olup olmadığını incelemek için çoklu varyans analizi kullanılmıştır.Öğretmenlerin meslekteki hizmet yılları, öğretmenlerin ölçme ve değerlendirme süreci hakkındaki kavrayışları üzerinde anlamlı bir farklılığa yol açmamıştır.Ancak, öğretmenlerin cinsiyetleri ve eğitim seviyeleri "Okul Sorumluluğu" hakkındaki kavrayışları üzerinde, mezun oldukları yükseköğretim kurumları ise öğretmenlerin "Gelişim" hakkındaki kavrayışları üzerinde farklılığa yol açmıştır.Öğrencilerin ölçme ve değerlendirme süreci hakkındaki kavrayışları göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, çoklu varyans analizine göre, öğrencilerin mezun oldukları okulun ölçme ve değerlendirme süreci

hakkındaki kavrayışları üzerinde anlamlı bir farklılığa yol açmadığı gözlenmiştir.Fakat öğrencilerin cinsiyetleri "Önemsizlik" hakkındaki kavrayışları üzerinde farklılığa yol açmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ölçme ve Değerlendirme, Kavrayış, Geleneksel Değerlendirme, Alternatif Değerlendirme, Biçimlendirici Değerlendirme, Genel Değerlendirme

ABSTRACT

TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' CONCEPTIONS OF ASSESSMENT IN A UNIVERSITY EFL PREPARATORY SCHOOL CONTEXT

Senem ZAİMOĞLU

The purpose of this study was to study and investigate teachers' and students' conceptions of assessment in a university EFL Preparatory School context. Using survey instruments designed for each group, teachers and students provided demographic information about themselves and their conceptions of assessment practices. Data were gathered through the short version of Teacher Conceptions of Assessment Scale (TCoA-IIIA), which had 27 items and Student Conceptions of Assessment Scale (SCoA), which was the adapted form of TCoA. A total of 400 students enrolled at Çağ University Preparatory Department and 31 teachers teaching at Çağ University Preparatory Department completed the questionnaires.

The Exploratory Factor Analysis results revealed that there were four factors in the scale affecting teachers' conceptions of assessment, namely Student Accountability, School Accountability, Improvement, and Irrelevance as in the original scale of TCoA. There were also affecting students' conceptions of assessment, specificically Irrelevant, Affect/Social Benefit, External Attributions and Improvement as in the original scale of SCoA.

A Multivariate Analysis of Variances with Pillai's Trace test was employed to investigate whether the significant differences among dependent variables across independent variables existed both for teachers and students. The findings of Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with Pillai's Trace test indicated that years of teaching experience did not make any significant difference in teachers' conceptions of assessment. However, teachers' gender and education level showed a significant difference in the conception of *School Accountability*. The undergraduate institution teachers graduated from did have a significant difference in their conception of *Improvement*. When students' conceptions of assessment were taken into consideration, it was observed that the type of school they graduated from did not have a significant difference in their conceptions of assessment

according to the findings of Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). However, there was a significant difference based on gender in students' conception of *Irrelevance*.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS

TCoA-IIIA	**:**	Teacher Conceptions of Assessment Abridged Scale
CoA-III	**:**	Conceptions of Assessment
SCoA	**:**	Students' Conceptions of Assessment Scale
STACC	**:**	Student Accountability
SCACC	**:**	School Accountability
IMP	**:**	Improvement
IRR	**:**	Irrelevance
EXTERNAL	**:**	External Attribution
AFFECT	**:**	Affect/Benefit
N	**:**	Sample Size
F	**:**	Frequency
M	**:**	Mean
SD	**:**	Standard Deviation
P	**:**	Significance Level
EFA	**:**	Exploratory Factor Analysis
MANOVA	**:**	Multivariate Analysis of Variance
PASW	**:**	Predictive Analysis Software
ANOVA	**:**	Analysis of Variance

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

In order to give a general idea about the structure of this thesis, the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose, significance, and some important definitions used in the study are mentioned in this thesis.

1.1. Background of the Study

Assessment has an important role in effective teaching and learning. Jandra (2011) defines assessment as "an ongoing process aimed at improving student learning" (p. 2). National Research Council [NRC] (2001) also adds that assessment is a process of collecting and interpreting information about student progress related to identified learning goals. Teachers assess their students to get information about their improvement in all cases. Brown (2004) states that " whenever a student responds to a question, offers a comment, or tries out a new word or structure, the teacher subconsciously makes an assessment of the student's performance" (p. 4).

In classrooms, assessment is an essential part of teaching and learning process. In this process, it is possible to explain assessment under two main categories: traditional and alternative assessment. Traditional assessment is generally defined as one-shot tests used to assess student indirectly whereas alternative assessment is known as a form of assessment that reveals what and how a student is learning directly (Dietel, Hermen & Knuth, 1991; Reeves, 2000; Dikili, 2003). The term traditional assessment refers to a paper and pencil based test used to determine what a student knows and can recall" (Brawley, 2009, p. 2). On the other hand, alternative assessment is based on the idea that assessments should be performed on what the students are learning and not just what they are expected to learn (Brawley, 2009, p. 2). According to Brualdi (1998), "alternative assessments provide teachers with information about how a child understands and applies knowledge" (p. 1).

Teachers generally prefer alternative assessments to traditional assessments as alternative assessments are more authentic to assess student learning and have a connection with the real world (Darling-Hammond, 1994) whereas traditional assessments focus on the product of learning rather than on the process of learning (Henning-Stout, 1994). Some of the inclusions of alternative assessment strategies applied by the teachers in the classroom are teacher observation, personal communication, student performances, demonstrations and portfolios.

The purpose of assessment is also very important in the classroom. There are two general purposes for assessments: formative and summative. Formative assessment is

assessment for learning, which "focuses on judgments about the quality of student work: who makes the judgments, how they are made, how they may be refined, and how they may be put to use in bringing about improvement" (Sadler, 1989, p. 119). It is also defined as "all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provides information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (Black & William, 1998a, p. 8). Summative assessment is assessment of learning, which is used for "internal school tracking of students' progress; informing parents, students and the students' next teacher of what has been achieved; certification or accreditation of learning by an external body; and selection for employment or higher education" (Harlen, 2005, p. 208). Harlen (2005) states that the summative uses of assessment can be grouped into 'internal' and 'external' to the school community. According to Harlen (2005) and Moss (2012), internal uses of summative assessment include using regular grading for recordkeeping, informing decisions about choices within the school, and reporting to parents and students. Moreover, external uses include the high-stakes use of the results on students, monitoring the school's performance and school accountability and improving the quality of students' learning or maximizing students' scores.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Researchers and teachers are both very interested in the subject of student assessment. Educational research has revealed the difficulty of implementing new forms of assessment, and especially those aimed at assessment for learning (Black & William, 2009; Stiggins, 2005). To illustrate, Stiggins (1998) points out that "classroom assessment requires a great deal of time and effort; teachers may spend as much as 40% of their time directly involved in assessment-related activities" (p. 363). As Wiggins and McTighe (1998) point out, "good teaching is dependent upon good design and a good teacher needs to think like an assessor prior to designing lessons" (p. 159). The problem here is that there are many teachers who are not trained or prepared to face this demanding task (Stiggins, 1988). Thus, it is important to investigate conceptions of the primary stakeholders, namely the teachers and the students, of the assessment process.

Brown (2003) argues that all pedagogical acts "are affected by the conceptions teachers have about the act of teaching, the process and purpose of assessment, and the nature of learning" (p. 1). Not only teachers' conceptions but also students' conceptions of assessment are important because students' thoughts and beliefs have an influence on their behaviors, studying, learning, and their academic success. What students believe could be the "single most important construct in educational research" (Pajares, 1992, p. 329).

Neither teachers' nor students' conceptions of assessment at Çağ University Preparatory School has been searched to date. Therefore, it was essential to implement this study in order to understand teachers' and students' conceptions of assessment. At the Çağ University Preparatory School, students are given an English Proficiency Examination at the beginning of the Academic Year and the students receiving a grade of 70 or higher grades on this exam start their education in their departments. The students whose English is not sufficient enough to pass this exam are divided into three levels (Pre-Intermediate, Elementary and Beginner) according to the results of a Placement test. At this point, students start English Preparatory Education in groups of fifteen to twenty students. In the first semester, students take six weekly quizzes from main course lesson, four quizzes from listening and speaking lessons, four quizzes from reading and writing lessons and three monthly exams. 20 % of these quizzes and 25 % of the monthly exams are taken in the first semester. In the second semester, students take four weekly quizzes from their main course lessons, four quizzes from listening and speaking lessons, four quizzes from reading and writing lessons, two quizzes from ESP lesson and three monthly exams. However, the percentages are different from first term. 25 % of these quizzes and 30 % of the monthly exam scores are taken in the second semester. At the end of the year, 40 % of yearly total and 60 % of a final exam determine the students' passing grade. When the aim of weekly quizzes, monthly exams and the final exam is taken into consideration, weekly quizzes assess preparatory students' weekly performance. It includes the topics of previous week. Students are not informed about the exact date and time of the weekly quizzes. Monthly exams are implemented three times in each semester. In these exams, students' listening, reading, writing skills and grammar knowledge are tested. The date and time of these exams are announced at the beginning of the semester. The final exam is implemented to test students' success at the end of the academic year. This exam includes students' listening, reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary skills and grammar knowledge. At Çağ University Preparatory School, the passing grade is 60, but at least 50 must be achieved on the final exam. The students who fail to achieve 50 on the final exam are considered unsuccessful regardless of their previous grades throughout the year.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the conceptions of Çağ University Preparatory teachers and students regarding assessment. It was essential to understand the belief structures of teachers and students as their beliefs influence the decisions they make throughout their teaching and learning process. Teachers' gender, years of teaching

experience, education levels, undergraduate institution and students' gender, type of school they graduated from were also aimed to be investigated to further identify the effects of such factors on their conceptions of assessment.

1.4. Significance of the Study

The issue of how teachers' and students' conceive assessment has not been given great importance and studied in detail to date. This study aims to contribute to literature by investigating Çağ University Preparatory School teachers' and students' conceptions of assessment at Çağ University. Further, the findings related with variables such as gender, years of teaching experience, education level, undergraduate institution of teachers and gender, type of school of students and the similarities and differences between teachers' and students' conceptions of assessment are expected to shed some light into teacher development programs related to assessing second language learning.

1.5. Research Questions

The research questions driving this study are:

1. What are Cağ University Preparatory Teachers' conceptions of assessment?
   a. Is there a significant difference in teachers' conceptions of assessment according to their gender?
   b. Is there a significant difference in teachers' conceptions of assessment according to years of teaching experience?
   c. Is there a significant difference in teachers' conceptions of assessment according to their educational background?
   d. Is there a significant difference in teachers' conceptions of assessment according to their undergraduate institution they graduated from?
2. What are Cağ University Preparatory Students' conceptions of assessment?
   a. Is there a significant difference in students' conceptions of assessment according to their gender?
   b. Is there a significant difference in students' conceptions of assessment according to the type of school they graduated from?

1.6. Limitations

The present study focused on a target population consisting of all the English teachers and students at Çağ University Preparatory Department. A limited sample population consisting of teachers and students from the same department posed certain limitations that need to be taken into account when considering the study and its contributions. An innate limitation of the study's results is that they rely on teachers' and students' self-reported data.

The second limitation of this study is the constraints on generalization and utility of findings. A further limitation of this study is that assessment research indicates that both the teachers' and students' conceptions are described in a one dimensional perspective. Generally, teachers are believed to have one particular assessment belief; however, it is probable that teachers endorse multiple conceptions of assessment and that these intermingle with one another (Brown, 2003).

1.7. Definitions of the Terms

Assessment: "A broad term meaning a process for obtaining information that is used for making decisions about students; curricula, programs, and schools; and educational policy" (Brookhart & Nitko, 2008, p. 4).

Conceptions: A framework or mental structure, encompassing beliefs, through which a teacher views, interprets and interacts with the instructional environment; in this study the words conceptions and beliefs are used interchangeably (Calveric, 2010).

Traditional Assessment: Traditional assessment is based on an interrelated set of philosophical beliefs and theoretical assumptions (Bintz, 1991). "Traditional assessments would include standardized and classroom achievement tests that feature predominately close-ended items (e.g., multiple- choice, true/false, checklist, fill-in the blanks)" (Bol, Stephenson, O'Conell& Nunnery, 1998, p. 2).

Alternative Assessment: Alternative ass*ess*ments "aim to measure not only the correctness of a response, but also the thought processes involved in arriving at the response, and encourages students to reflect on their own learning in both depth and breadth" (Liskin - Gasparro, 1997, p. 1). "Alternative assessment techniques include performance-based assessments, observation techniques, student self-assessment, and portfolios (a collection of student work that might include the other types of assessment)" (Bol, Stephenson, O'Conell & Nunnery, 1998, p. 2).

Formative Assessment: An assessment which includes all activities that teachers and students undertake to get information that can be used diagnostically to alter teaching and learning (Black & William, 1998b).

Summative Assessment: An assessment which helps learning, summarizing achievements at a certain time, monitoring levels of achievement, and research (Harlen, 2005).

CHAPTER 2

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter consists of a representation of literature regarding assessment practices in English lessons and also related to the conceptions of the university students and teachers at Çağ University's Preparatory School. The purpose of this study was to examine students' and teachers' conceptions of assessment practices in an English lesson. The significance of assessment styles is discussed in the first section. Following this, students' and teachers' conceptions of assessment are introduced by referring to four main conceptions of assessment. This chapter concludes with the relationship between students' and teachers' conceptions of assessment.

2.1. Assessment

Assessment has a crucial role in the education process. It is one of the most important parts of the learning and teaching process, both for teachers and students. With the help of assessment, teachers can decide when, what and how to teach. Likewise students have the chance to realize what and how much they have learned, which raises their awareness and helps them realize their own learning. When we take students' perspectives into consideration, most researchers define assessment in different ways. According to Rust (2002), assessment determines much of the work students undertake and assessment affects students' approach to learning. It is the analysis of data about the needs, interests, learning styles and achievements of students (Ming, 2002). Lambert and Lines (2000) define assessment as a process of gathering, interpreting, recording and using information about students' responses to educational tasks. Hancock (1994) states that assessment is "an ongoing strategy through which student learning is not only monitored but by which students are involved in making decisions about the degree to which their performance matches their ability" (p. 1). In a nutshell, assessment is important in order to improve and enhance students' learning and development effectively and efficiently.

Taking the issue from the teachers' view, Gonzales (2003) defines assessment as "a systematical gathering of information about students' performance that enables teachers to monitor their learning" (p. 89). However, teachers monitor not only their students' learning but also their own teaching. They can decide whether teaching methods and materials are suitable for the needs of the students thanks to assessment practices in different settings. Brown (2004) states that "whenever a student responds to a question, offers a comment, or tries out a new word or structure, the teacher subconsciously makes an assessment of the student's performance" (p. 4). Teachers make use of information about students' performance

to communicate with their students, improve their learning and better understand them. Thus, an interaction arises between the teacher and the student, which has a positive effect on the learning and teaching process. However, teachers generally take the students' exam scores into consideration more than their performance in different settings. Morgan and Watson (2002) found that most teachers view classroom assessment as an added requirement to their teaching job and not as a tool to improve their teaching. At this point, it is important to mention types of assessment methods that teachers apply in their teaching process.

2.1.1. Types of Assessment Methods in an English Classroom

There are lots of classification systems for assessing student learning. One way of grouping these classroom assessments is putting them into two major categories: traditional and alternative assessments.

Traditional assessment includes standardized and classroom achievement tests that feature predominately close-ended items (e.g., multiple- choice, true/false, checklist, fill-in the blanks) (Bol, Stephenson, O'Conell & Nunnery, 1998). These kinds of tests do not give students a chance to construct their own knowledge and meaning about what they have been taught by their teachers. They are more concerned with memorization instead of the thought process. The majority of students assessed exclusively by traditional practices, such as grading, try to avoid educational challenges, such as problem solving activities and/or critical thinking (Kohn, 1999). Nickell (1993) states that ''traditional fixed-response testing does not provide a clearor accurate picture of what students can do with their knowledge. Such testing enables students to demonstrate recall, comprehension, or interpretation of knowledge, but not to demonstrate ability to use knowledge" (p. 1). In traditional assessment, "the focus is on learning about something rather than learning how to do something. This passive process involves students (novices) memorizing the knowledge dispensed by the text or instructor (expert)" (Anderson, 1998, p. 8). According to Herman (1992), "the presence or absence of discrete bits of information, which is typically the focus of traditional multiple-choice tests, is not of primary importance in the assessment of meaningful learning" (p. 5). The task of the student is to focus on finding the correct answer or solution from these multiple choice tests as there is only onesingle correct answer for every question and one single correct solution for every problem (Eisner, 1991). "Students do not participate in making decisions about what is important for them to learn or in determining how well they are learning" (Anderson, 1998, p. 8). In this situation, teachers are the only power to decide about the learning environment and assessment practices. "The problem with traditional assessment is that too many teachers and too many schools rely solely on these types of assessments for determining if students are

learning what they need to" (Karet & Hubbell, 2003, p. 2). However, schools and their teachers cannot understand whether students reached their learning goals simply taking traditional assessments into consideration.

On the other hand, alternative assessments, also known as performance-based assessments or authentic assessments include various forms of student performance, which include short answer questions, essays, performance assessments, oral presentations, exhibitions, and portfolios (Hancock, 1994). These forms of assessment break new ground in student progress evaluation in schools. The purpose of these types of assessment is not to find the correct response from paper-and pencil tests but reveal students' critical-thinking and evaluation skills by asking students to complete open-ended tasks. According to Yıldırım (2004), "standardized multiple-choice tests, essay tests and portfolio assessments are giving way to a richer set of formats in which students can demonstrate their mastery of a subject matter and of complex skills" (p. 158). These assessments "aim to measure not only the correctness of a response, but also the thought processes involved in arriving at the response, and encourages students to reflect on their own learning in both depth and breadth" (Liskin-Gasparro, 1997, p. 1). Moreover, alternative assessments provide students with the opportunity to express themselves creatively through their own choice of words. Teachers also make use of these assessments in their own teaching process in the classroom or school. Liskin-Gasparro (1997) states that teachers who teach these kinds of alternative assessments will naturally teach in ways that emphasize reflection, critical thinking, and personal investment in one's own learning. Hamayan (1995) also adds that "alternative assessment refers to procedures and techniques which can be used within the context of instruction and can be easily incorporated into the daily activities of the school or classroom" (p. 213). In this way, students may find a chance to develop their critical thinking skills and perform or produce something having a real world connection. Although traditional ways of assessing were widely used in the past, many teachers today prefer alternative methods to evaluate students' learning.

Summative and formative forms of assessment are another classification system. In a balanced assessment system, both summative and formative assessments are an integral part of information gathering (Garrison & Ehringhaus, 2007). These two classifications of assessments contribute in different ways to the larger goals of the assessment process.

Summative assessment, referred to as assessment of learning, aims to measure what a student has grasped, and describes learning achieved at a certain time for the purposes of reporting to parents, other teachers, the pupils themselves and school governors or school

boards (Harlen & James, 1997; Brown, 2004). Some examples of summative assessment are final exams in a course and general proficiency exams. These assessments help evaluate the effectiveness of programs, school improvement goals, alignment of curriculum, or student placement in specific programs (Garrison & Ehringhaus, 2007). Thanks to summative assessments, teachers can determine what students know and do not know and to what extent the instructional and learning goals have been met.

Meanwhile, formative assessment, commonly referred to as assessment for learning, has been the label used for assessments conducted during instruction to promote learning, not merely to judge or grade student success (Stiggins, 2005). Besides aiming to improve the student, this assessment also aims to evaluate students in the process of forming their competencies and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growth process (Brown, 2004). In this process, it provides information about student achievement which allows teaching and learning activities in response to the needs of the learner and generates feedback on performance to improve and accelerate learning (Black &Wiliam, 1998a; Sadler, 1989). Black & Wiliam (1998b) also state that the improved formative assessment helps low achievers more than other students and so reduces the range of achievement while raising achievement overall. Writing an essay or undertaking a class presentation, for example, can be valuable formative activities, which focuses on the ongoing development of the learner's language (Brown, 2007; East, 2011). Formative assessment is not only used at the student level but also at the classroom level. At the student level, it measures how a student is progressing, identifies where support is needed and gives immediate feedback on his/her progress. With the help of feedback, students can realize their strengths and weaknesses. At the classroom level, it informs teaching practices to reveal how students are progressing and how many students are having difficulty with these practices. In this way, teachers can make necessary instructional adjustments, such as revising and changing their instructional approaches which can lead to student success (Fisher & Frey, 2007).

Overall, students develop positive conceptions of assessments if students are involved in various classroom assessment practices whether traditional or alternative, or formative or summative. Badders (2000) states that "different kinds of information must be gathered about students by using different types of assessments. The types of assessments that are used will measure a variety of aspects of student learning, conceptual development, and skill acquisition and application" (p. 2).

2.1.2. Teachers' roles in assessment

Assessment refers to the tools, techniques and procedures for collecting and interpreting information about what learners can and cannot do (Nunan, 1999). Through assessment practices, learners have a chance to see how well or badly they have performed in the classroom. At this point teachers' role is very important in assessment practices as they shape students' learning. Harlen (2006) states that "teachers can enhance or destroy students' desires to learn more quickly and more permanently through their use of assessment than through any other tools at their disposal" (p. 62). Therefore, teachers' assessment has both positive and negative effects on students. At the end of an effective assessment, students benefit from their results and the teachers get valuable information about the process of teaching and learning as their primary aim is to help and promote EFL learning when giving assessments to the students. Shepard (2000) states that the purpose of effective assessments in classrooms is to "help students learn and to improve instruction rather than being used only to rank students or to certify the end products of learning" (p. 31). Teachers would find out whether students had improved and would take necessary measures for students' next steps for improvement in learning because of effective assessments.

While assessing the students, teachers can use different methods such as observations, portfolios, self assessment, and peer-assessment for formative purposes (Gordon, 2007; McKay, 2006; Pinter, 2006; Rixon, 2007). Apart from these, Oh (2011) adds that teachers can also use observation checklists when observing students' performance in tasks and activities.

Teachers with more training in assessment make use of different assessment practices in their teaching process. However, most of the teachers dislike using these different methods in their classrooms as they have little or no in-depth knowledge of assessment principles (Stiggins, 1988). If teachers do not prepare their classroom assessment based on achieving goals for students, students may not make use of the results of these assessments. Moreover, these assessments may destroy students' willing to learn more quickly. As Brookhart (2009) states, the central task of teachers is to afford students more opportunities to direct their own learning. Teachers should provide summaries of learning and information on learning process, diagnose specific strengths and weaknesses in an individual's learning, and motivate further learning (Biehler & Snowman, 1997). Breen (1997) emphasizes that teachers need to recognize both conceptually and affectively the ultimate benefit to their own pedagogic priorities. They need to trial and adapt the framework to their established assessment procedures and fully integrate the procedures into their practice. Teachers need to create

positive classroom learning environments for student learning and prepare effective classroom assessments that will encourage students to improve.

2.1.3. Students' Grades in Classroom Assessment

There are different kinds of assessment practices in the education system. As they profoundly influence students and enhance students' learning, teachers give importance to assessment practices in the classroom. They use a wide variety of data from students' performance to understand them better. Teachers gather these data from portfolios, presentations, quizzes, tests, journals and students' attitudes towards learning in the classroom.

The results of assessments have a great influence on students. They develop different attitudes in the classroom according to the results of these assessments. If they get good grades, they are eager to take participate in the classroom activities. Students perceive good grades as benefits, rewards and signs of improvement (Elkhader, 2008). However, if they get bad grades, they lose their motivation and interest in the classroom. Students who get failing grades in their subjects perceive themselves as outsiders in their classroom and school (Zoeckler, 2007). Kohn (1999) states that "students tend to lose interest in whatever, they are learning. As motivation to get good grades goes up, motivation to explore ideas tends to go down" (p. 40). Students in this situation tend to concentrate on getting good grades instead of learning something or creating new ideas. In order to better understand how these grades affect students' and teachers' conceptions of assessment, the following section gives detailed information about conceptions of assessment.

2.2. Conceptions of Assessment

Most researchers define conceptions in different point of views. Thompson (1992) explains conceptions "as a more general mental structure, encompassing beliefs, meanings, concepts, propositions, rules, mental images, preferences, and the like" (p. 130). According to Pajares (1992), conceptions are tightly linked to practice. Ponte (1994, p. 169) further explains "conceptions are cognitive constructs that may be viewed as the underlying organizing frames of concepts".

Studying conceptions of assessment became a great issue for researchers in last decades to understand how assessment users perceive of assessment in teaching and learning environment (Vardar, 2010). Conceptions of assessment, partly because of its evaluative role, ought to contribute to our understanding of students' assessment careers and their academic behavior (Brown &Wang,2014, in press).

Conceptions of assessment might prevent the learning dialogue during mentoring and affect the student's achievements (Tillema, Smith, & Leshem, 2011). Therefore, many educators change their assessment practices in response to new policies and curriculum because of their fixed conceptions of assessment. These conceptions represent different categories of ideas behind their descriptions of how educational things are experienced (Pratt, 1992). Marton (1981) adds that conceptions act as a framework through which a teacher views, interprets, and interacts with the teaching environment. Students' conceptions of assessment are as important as teachers', because those conceptions have an impact on their educational experiences and learning (Brown, 2003). Enwistle (1991) also adds that students' learning is more influenced by their perceptions of the educational environment than by the actual educational practices. As a person's conception is an organized system of beliefs that this person holds (Remesal, 2011), students shape their behaviors according to their conceptions or beliefs.

2.2.1. Students' Conceptions of Assessment

The purpose of assessment should be to improve student learning, which means it should be integral to the teaching and learning process (Bond, 2007). This improvement becomes more successful when students are involved in assessment practices. Bond (2007) states that when students are involved with the assessment of their learning, they are empowered to take ownership of their learning. Thus, students experience assessment as a part of their learning, rather than as a separate evaluative process (Wiggins 1993; Earl & LeMahieu, 1997). Furthermore, students have a chance to reflect upon what they are learning thanks to effective assessment practices (Earl & LeMahieu, 1997).According to Conzemius and O'Neill (2001), one of the most significant features of student success is students' ability to reflect on their learning and make adjustments. Therefore, students' beliefs, attitudes, experiences, and responses about assessment are very important to understand the learner. That is, it is important to understand students' conceptions of assessment for their learning as "conceptions influence intentions and the behaviour a person exercises in response to a phenomenon"(Brown &Wang, 2014, in press, p. 2).

Students' conceptions of assessment in educational processes are important because there is evidence that assessment has a significant impact on the quality of learning (Entwistle, 1991; Ramsden 1997). There is a link between students' conception of assessment and student participation in the classroom. If students feel themselves insecure about the assessment, they do not want to take part in the learning process

Most researchers have studied on students' conception of assessment. According to Struyven, Dochy, and Janssens (2005), students' conception of assessment has an impact on their learning and studying system. In a survey study of junior and high school students, Brookhart and Bronowicz (2003) showed that students' own interests and needs influence their conceptions of classroom assessment. On the contrary, students perceive classroom assessments to be under the power of the teachers' judgments and opinions (Cowie, 2005). They believe that teachers' beliefs influence their conceptions of assessment. Therefore, students relate their own knowledge to their teachers' objectives and try to achieve teacher instructional objectives (Sadler, 1989).

Another study with students in European universities found that students' learning strategy preference shaped their understanding of the learning required by assessments (Segers, Nijhuis, & Gijselaers, 2006). According to Zeidner's (1992) study with junior high and high school students, students placed the importance of assessment at the same level as student achievement, student interest and motivation, teaching quality and administrative purposes.

Some researchers shed light on the importance of age and gender in students' conceptions of assessment (Black et al., 2002; Moni, van Kraayenoord, & Baker, 2002; Thomas, Bol, &Warkentin, 1991). Moni et al.(2002) found that "younger and lower achieving students attributed good grades to external factors such as teacher and task factors, while older and higher achieving students attributed good grades more to their own effort" (p. 322).

Apart from these studies, Brown's studies might be considered an example to reveal the importance of students' conceptions of assessment in the classroom. In his study, Brown (2009) mentions that there are four conceptions on classroom practice including: (a) improvement, (b) externality, (c) affect, and (d) irrelevance.

In Improvement Conception, students have a chance to make their learning better and teachers attempt to alter or improve their instruction due to assessments. While students use assessment to find out their mistakes, correct them and improve their learning activities (O'Farrell, 2009), teachers use assessment to improve their teaching of students (Brown, Irving, Peterson & Hirschfeld, 2009).For this reason, assessments have a big influence on students' and teachers' improvement in the education process.

Assessment also relates to External Factors if school quality or students' future is taken into consideration. From the studies conducted by researchers, it is clear that there is an external attribution in students' understanding of assessment (Peterson & Irving, 2008). "If the purpose of assessment is focused on an attribute external to the student (e.g., evaluation of

the school), student performance will be negatively impacted" (Brown et al., 2009, p. 5). Rotter (1982) also states that if students believe that the locus of control lies outside their personal control, they do worse academically. In other words, "the more students believe that the purpose of assessment is related to external factors outside their control, the worse they do in school" (Brown et al., 2009, p. 5). For this reason, the external attribution conception has a strong effect on students' academic performance.

Researchers have also been interested in the emotional impact of assessment on students (Linn & Gronlund, 2000; Brown et al., 2009), which is related to Affect/Benefit conception. According to Brown et al (2009), "the conception 'affect/benefit' measures the affective or emotional impact of assessment and consists of assessment as a personally enjoyable experience and assessment as a benefit to the class environment" (p. 3).

The last conception, Irrelevance, measures a negative evaluation of assessment because it is seen as bad, subjective, or unfair and whether it is tolerated but ignored" (Brown & Hirschfield, 2008, p. 5). Students often fear assessment and see it as a negative element of their education. However, if the assessment is fair and relevant, it can motivate them to study more or be more interested in the lesson (Harlen, 2012). However, students may think that the results of assessment are irrelevant if they don't trust their teachers' decisions. Students may believe that their teachers aren't objective or fair towards them (Weekers, Brown &Veldkamp, 2009). Hence, students might not care about their assessment results.

It is also important, at this point, to mention and clarify the idea of teachers' conceptions of assessment, as well as students' conceptions of assessment.

2.2.2. Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment

Conceptions of various educational processes have an effect on educational practices and outcomes (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Calderhead, 1996). For instance, conceptions act as a framework through which a teacher views, interprets, and interacts with the teaching environment (Marton, 1981). Therefore, teachers' conceptions of assessment are important as they shape their usage of assessment practices (Cizek, Fitzgerald, Shawn, & Rachor, 1995; Brown, 2004; Brown & Harris, 2009), which are directly related to instruction and student learning (Elkhader, 2008).

Some researchers have been interested in teachers' conceptions of assessment by giving importance to teachers' purposes or intentions for assessment (Heaton, 1975; Brown, 2008). A teacher who has a conception that student learning should be concerned with developing deep understanding, would be expected to hold the conception that assessment is a means of improving learning and teaching (Vandeyar & Killen, 2007). Vandeyar and Killen

(2007) also add that "educators who view assessment as a useful means of gathering data upon which to base decisions about learning and their own teaching, will attempt to make assessment an integral part of teaching" (p. 2). Therefore, teachers' conceptions influence students' learning and performance. In other words, while teachers are assessing the students in their classroom, their individual experiences and conceptions are affecting their students' learning and classroom performance (Vardar, 2010). Teachers' conceptions also influence classroom decisions and their teaching methods (Gow & Kember, 1993; Remesal, 2006). As Tittle (1994) states, it is important to understand teachers' conceptions of assessment while implementing assessment systems as teachers "construct schemas or integrate representations from assessments into existing views of the self, of teaching and learning, and of the curriculum, broadly construed" (p. 161). On the whole, Brown (2002) puts forward the importance of teachers' conceptions in educational processes as follows:

> Teachers' conceptions of and evaluations of student behavior and performance (i.e., assessment), are affected by the conceptions teachers have about their own confidence to teach, the act of teaching, the nature of curriculum or subjects, the process and purpose of assessment, and the nature of learning among many educational beliefs. (Brown, 2002, p. 3)

There are many other studies based on teachers' conceptions of assessment. For example, Cizek, Fitzgerald and Rachor (1995) showed through a survey of elementary school teachers that many teachers have assessment policies based on their values and conceptions of teaching. In a study of high school English classes, Kahn (2000) has argued that teachers used a wide variety of assessment types, in which they eclectically practiced their own models of teaching and learning. In New Zealand, primary teachers perceive assessment as relevant in improving teaching (Brown, 2007). Cizek et al. (1995) studied with teachers from the elementary to secondary level, and discovered differences between teachers' assessment practices and background characteristics, such as gender, grade level, and years of teaching experience. From their research, it is clear that teachers reflected their own individual values and beliefs about teaching. In another study with 10th grade English teachers, Kahn (2000) found that teachers' assessment practices are under the influence of their individual beliefs or conceptions. Remesal (2007) did research about teachers' conceptions of assessment with primary and secondary teachers. His research was to find teacher beliefs about instructional practices and the differences in their practices.

Based on the studies on assessment conceptions, Brown (2002; 2004; and 2008) developed a scale, Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment Scale (TCoA III) and put forward a

four-facet model for teacher conceptions of assessment. He changed the results of his previous studies (TCoA I and TCoA II) and proposed the following of four, main conceptions of how teachers conceive assessment:

(1) assessment is useful in improving teacher instruction and student learning by providing quality information for decision-making,

(2) assessment is about accountability of students through certification processes,

(3) teachers or schools are made accountable thorough internal and external evaluations, and

(4) assessment is irrelevant or pernicious to the work of teachers and the life of students" (Brown, 2002, p. 25).

These conceptions are important to figure out how teachers perceive assessment and assessment techniques that they use in their classrooms, how they support their classroom assessment practices by preparing in-service trainings or by professional development programs, andwhether they are affected by their strengths and weaknesses (Brown, 2002).

2.3. The Relationship between Teachers' and Students' Conceptions of Assessment

"Human beings spontaneously develop sets of mental representations about mind, knowledge, and the processes of knowledge acquisition and transmission as a result of our biological and cultural heritage" (Bautista, Pérez-Echeverria, Pozo & Brizuela, 2012, p. 80). These beliefs and conceptions about the mind and about knowledge influence the ways in which people learn, teach, and interpret their knowledge (Hofer & Pintrich, 2002). While teachers are teaching or using their assessment practices, they may be affected by their personal experience, which influences their students' achievement in assessments. How teachers conceptualize teaching influences their practice of teaching, which applies to their conceptions of assessment (Brown, 2003 & 2004). Therefore, it is important to understand in what ways teachers' conceptions of teaching, learning and assessment have an impact on students' conceptions of assessment, learning and being successful in their academic life.

Most researchers have reported a similarity of conceptions between students and teachers. According to Pajares (1992), similar conceptions might be found in both teachers and students as teachers' conceptions are a product of their educational experiences. These conceptions can also affect how the teachers interact with students.

Educators' conceptions of assessment are strongly interwoven with their views on the issues of learning and teaching (Brown, 2003). That is, teachers' conceptions of teaching, learning, and curricula influence strongly how they teach and what students learn or achieve (Pajares, 1992; Thompson, 1992). Rueda & Garcia (1994) clarify this as follows:

If educators view learning as the personal construction of meaning, it is logical for them to view assessment as an informal, long-term monitoring process that provides an indication of student competence on various types of authentic activities and is used to guide instruction. (Rueda & Garcia 1994, p. 4)

Teachers' conceptions will also influence their students. As a result of this influence, students begin to perform the expected behaviors by their teachers (Elkhader, 2008) as teachers' conceptions reflect their own current thinking about the purpose of student assessment, assessment policies and regulations (Brown, 2006). Hence, students would have similar thoughts of assessment to their teachers.

Accordingly, "in order to obtain valid classroom perceptions of assessments, teachers must align their perceptions with the intended perceptions of their students" (Broekkamp et al., 2004, p. 216). Otherwise, all the assessment methods that aim to support students in their development become ineffective. If teachers conceive assessment as not informative for student learning but as serving the purpose of student accountability, or if teachers believe that assessment informs students as to the next steps to take in their learning process, students will perceive assessment in a similar way to their teacher (Segers & Tillema, 2011), as students are influenced by their teachers' conceptions. Segers and Tillema (2011) also add that if students believe assessment is irrelevant or information derived from assessment might be ignored, teachers will find it difficult to fulfill the improvement purpose. It is for this reason that it is important to study both students' and teachers' conceptions of assessment.

CHAPTER 3

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The third chapter is organized to introduce the design and methodology for this study. This study focused on determining teacher and student conceptions related to assessment practices in English classrooms. The method of this study included these parts: (a) research design (b) dependent and independent variables of study (c) participants (d) instrumentation, (e) data collection, and (f) data analysis.

The purpose of this study was to study and understand the relation between Çağ University Preparatory students' and teachers' conceptions of assessment practices in English.

3.2. Design of the Study

This study is designed as a quantitative study, aiming firstly to understand teachers' and students' conceptions of assessment and secondly the differences and similarities between their assessment practices at Çağ University Preparatory School. Hopkins (2000) defines quantitative research design as "a design to understand the relationship between one thing (an independent variable) and another (a dependent or outcome variable) in a population" (p. 1). According to Dörnyei (2003), "The essential characteristic of quantitative research is that it employs categories, viewpoints, and models that have been precisely defined by the researcher in advance, and numerical or directly quantifiable data are collected to determine the relationship between these categories and to test the research hypotheses" (p. 9). Fraenkal and Wallen (2006) also state that "quantitative research includes comparisons between alternative methods of teaching; examining research among variables; comparing groups of individuals in terms of existing differences on certain variables; or interviewing different groups of educational professionals, such as teachers, administrators, and counselors" (p. 429).

Among the quantitative research methods, survey research was used in this study to investigate the teachers' and students' conceptions of assessment by using the appropriate data-gathering tool. "The major purpose of all surveys is to describe the characteristics of a population" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 423). Moreover, a cross-sectional survey was adopted in the study to find out the opinions of the participants (Fraenkel& Wallen, 2006) through a demographic information questionnaire.

3.3. Description of Variables

3.3.1. Independent Variables

Teachers' gender, teaching year, role, education level, department and nationality were independent variables in this study for teachers. Teachers' gender might affect their perception to upgrade their knowledge and skills in English. According to analyses across gender done by researchers, it was found that female teachers require more attention in equipping themselves with skills in all dimensions (Osman, Halim & Meerah, 2006). Teachers' teaching year is another independent variable included in this study. Through this variable, it is revealed how many years teachers have spent teaching English. The value of this variable is categorized into five groups, *less than 2, between 2 and 5, between 6 and 10, more than 10.* Teachers' role in education also has an impact on their conceptions of assessment. This independent variable is categorical with the levels of *Teacher, Assistant or Deputy Principal, Principal, Other.* Teachers' education levels are also important in shaping their conceptions of assessment, which are categorized into four groups, *BA, MA, PhD, Other.* The department that teachers graduated from is another independent variable, which is used to examine the effects on teachers' conceptions of assessment. It was a categorical variable, with the levels being *Literature, Linguistics, Translation, ELT, Other.* The last independent variable for teachers is their nationality. It is also categorized into five groups, *Turkish, American, Irish, Ukrainian* and *British*.

When we look at students' independent variables, there are just two parts taken in to consideration, which are students' gender and the type of school they graduated from. In the same way as teachers, students' gender might also have an impact on their conceptions of assessment. The type of school they graduated from is the other independent variable for students. This variable is categorized into two groups, *State School* and *Private School*.

3.3.2. Dependent Variables

The first dependent variable in this study is Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment, which has four subscales, *Improvement, School Accountability, Student Accountability* and *Irrelevance*. These subscales give information about how teachers perceive assessment in their profession. The mean scores of each subscale indicate teachers' agreement level of each conception. If the mean scores are high for each conception, it means that these groups of teachers have a higher level of agreement for each conception.

The second dependent variable in this study is Students' Conceptions of Assessment, which has four subscales, *Improvement, Externality, Affect* and *Irrelevance*. These subscales also give information about how students conceive of assessment in their academic process, in

a similar way to teachers. The mean scores of each conception are also important in understanding students' agreement level for each conception.

3.4. **Participants**

The researcher selected participants non-randomly from Çağ University Preparatory School. The participants for this study can be categorized under two main groups, the first group being the 401 students who were enrolled at Cag University Preparatory School in the 2011-2012 Academic Year, and the second group being the 35 teachers who taught English lessons in the 2011-2012 Academic Year. The researcher preferred purposive sampling, "which the researchers use their judgment to select a sample that they believe, based on prior information, will provide the data they need" (Fraenkal & Wallen, 2006, p. 101).

3.4.1. Students

Students who were enrolled at Cag University Preparatory School in the 2011-2012 Academic Year participated in the study. According to the documents provided by the Preparatory School Secretary, there were 433 students enrolled during the academic year. The students who were taking English lessons in the Preparatory school during that academic year were mainly new-comers to the university. However, there were a few students who were repeating the preparatory class.

The age range of the students who participated in the study was between 17 and 23; however, the majority of the students were 19 years old. While 216 of the students were females, 184 of them were males.

All of the preparatory students were not involved in the study, as some were absent on the day the questionnaire was conducted. Only 400 students were involved in the study using a questionnaire (SCoA) developed by Brown (2003) which is discussed in detail in Table 12.

3.4.2. Teachers

The teachers involved in this study constitute the ELT instructors who were teaching English lessons at Cag University Preparatory School in the 2011-2012 Academic Year. All of the teachers (excluding the researcher) teaching English were involved in the study.

The participant teachers, 10 males and 21 females, were all speakers of English. Twenty-two of them were Turkish, six of them were from the USA, one was from Ukraine, one was from Ireland and one was from Britain. They had teaching experience ranging from 2 years to more than 10 years, as is discussed in further detail in section 4.1.

Teachers who taught the same courses were responsible for designing the course, selecting the materials, and developing the assessment tools together. While Turkish teachers were responsible for main course lessons, native speaker teachers were responsible for

listening, speaking, writing and speaking lessons. All teachers had an average teaching load of 15 hours per week.

3.5. Instrumentation

Data were collected using the quantitative method in this study. A total of two research instruments were devised for this study: a questionnaire for students and a questionnaire for teachers. Brown (2001) states that "Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers" (p. 6).

This study of perceptions of English classroom assessment included two instruments. One instrument was designed for students, a self-reported survey questionnaire called "Students Conceptions of Assessment" (SCoA) (the adapted form of TCoA), which is about students' perceptions and understandings of assessment (See Appendix A). This instrument contained two components: demographic information and Students Conceptions of Assessment (SCoA) (Brown, 2003).

The second instrument was designed for English language teachers. This instrument contained three components: measurement and evaluation techniques, demographic information and "Teacher Conceptions of Assessment Abridged Scale" (TCoA-IIIA Abridged Scale), which is the short version of Teacher Conceptions of Assessment Scale, originally developed and used in English by Brown (2001-2003) (See Appendix B). Teachers indicated their degree of agreement using a five-point Likert rating scale. Permission to use the SCoA and TCoA-IIIA Abridged Scale was granted by G.T.L Brown. There were two main sections in the instrument given to students and three main sections given to teachers in this study.

3.5.1. Demographic Information

In this section, the items about students' and teachers' demographic information are included. There were two questions prepared for students regarding their demographic information; the first to learn their gender, and the second to learn type of school which they graduated from. The levels were State School or Private School (see APPENDIX A). Seven questions were prepared to learn the background of teachers in detail (see APPENDIX B).

In the teachers' section, teachers' gender, teaching experience (options were, in years, less than 2, between 2 and 5, between 6 and 10, and more than 10), role in education (options were teacher, assistant or deputy principal, principal, other), and education level (options were BA, MA, PhD, other) were asked. Moreover, the departments which teachers' graduated from (options were Literature, Linguistics, Translation, ELT, Other) and their nationality were also asked.

3.5.2. Measurement and Evaluation Techniques

This section was prepared only for teachers, which included the names of the assessment techniques that were used by the teachers in their classrooms. Eighteen tools (See Appendix B) were presented to teachers and the researcher wanted them to choose the ones they most often used.

3.5.3. Conceptions of Assessment Abridged Scale (CoA- IIIA Abridged Scale)

The TCoA- IIIA and SCoA scales were developed by Brown (2001-2003). While TCoA-IIIA gives information about the teachers' conceptions of assessment, SCoA gives information about the students' conceptions of assessment.

In this study, the short version of TCoA was given to the teachers, which had 27 items on a 5-point rating scale, degreed from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). On the other hand, SCoA, the adapted form of TCoA, was given to students, which had 33 items on a 5-point rating scale degreed from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) similar to the teachers' scale.

Firstly, the original scale was translated into Turkish by two different faculty members teaching English at Çağ University. It is believed that "the relationship of target language receptors to the target language text should be roughly equivalent to the relationship between the original receptors and the original text" (Nida, 1993, p. 112). Su-ju (2006) also adds that it is important to "render receptor words from one language to another, and caters to the receptor's linguistic competence and cultural needs" (p. 72). Therefore, the translators were chosen cautiously, as the translation should be roughly equivalent to the original text. Then, back-translation from Turkish to English was conducted by two experts in English, who again teach English at Çağ University, who are specialized in the field of language translation. Moreover, taking into consideration the opinions of two different English teachers, the translations were carefully revised.

After the revision of the translations, the wording of the items was checked to understand if there were any negative statements in the tool. The negatively worded statements were recorded before calculating the composite scale scores. Then, the reliability and validity analyses were conducted.

3.5.4. Reliability Analysis

In order to measure the reliability of the students' and teachers' questionnaires, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated for each factor separately after the data were collected. Item analyses process was also conducted in order to check for the corrected item-total correlations. According to result of the process, four items for teachers and three items

for students were removed from the scale. Moreover, the results of Cronbach's alpha showed that if item 7 was deleted from the teachers' questionnaire, there was a significant increase in the reliability of the tool. For this reason, this item was also excluded.

3.5.5. Validity Check

In validation process of the scale, 22 items of 27 items of the Teacher Conceptions of Assessment Abridged Scale (TCoA- IIIA) and 30 items of 33 items of the Student Conceptions of Assessment Scale (SCoA) were subjected to Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) using PASW Statistics 20 (Predictive Analysis Software- Formerly SPSS). Since there were only 32 teachers working at Çağ University Preparatory School and one teacher did not want to participate in this survey, the sample size was limited to 31. However, the sample size is 400 for the students, which could be considered as a suitable sample size. After checking all the data for factor analyses, EFA was implemented. Since there were 22 items for teachers and 30 items for teachers, it was necessary to reduce the large number of items into a smaller number of components, Principal Component Analysis, which is a useful initial step in factor analysis (Thompson, 2004). The details for the variances of the components obtained in factor analysis for teachers are given in Table 7. According to the scree plot of the data, there were four eigenvalues for teachers and five eigenvalues for students, which showed the sharp changes in the curve. Figure 1 and 2 show the scree plot of our data.

Figure 1

Teacher's Scree Plot
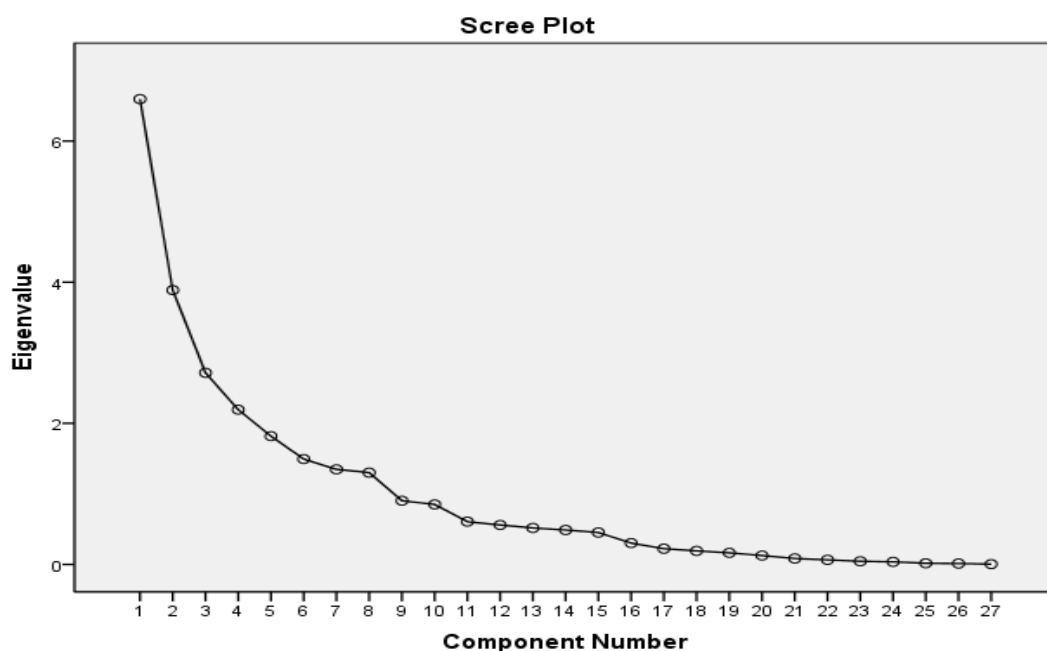
Figure 2

Students' Scree Plot
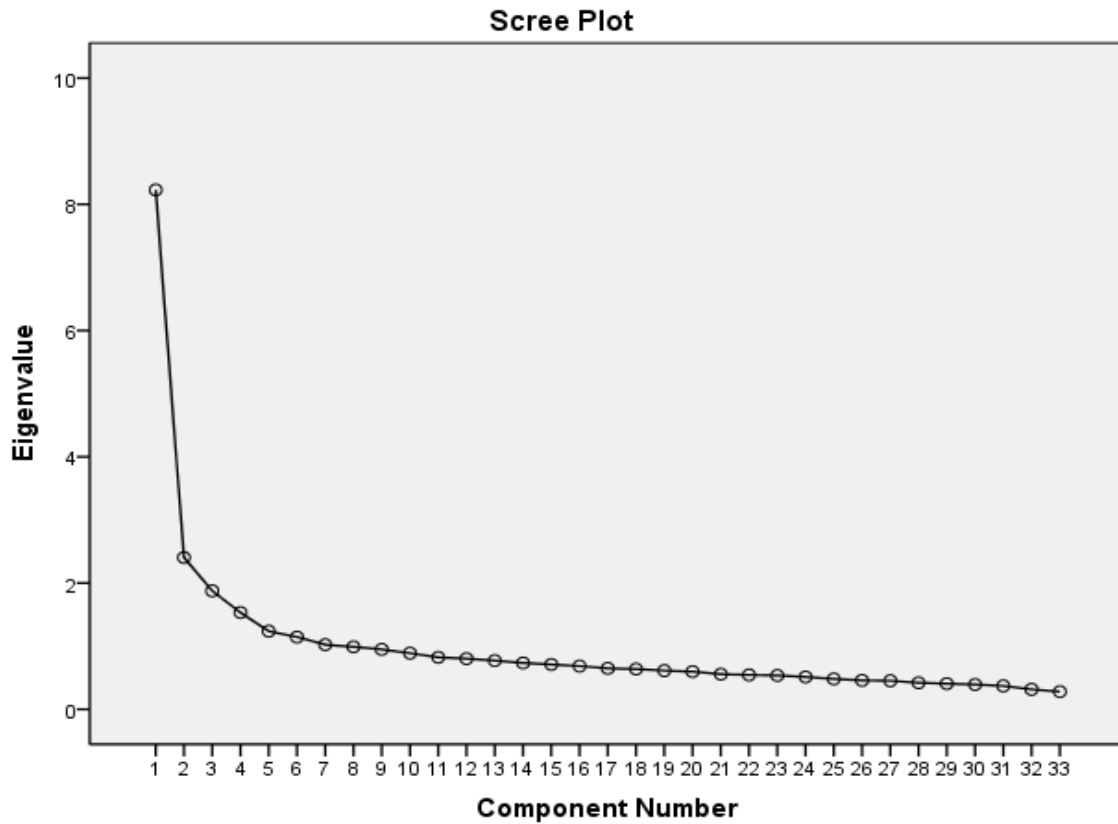
It is hard to interpret the results of factor extraction. Therefore, "Varimax, which was one of the orthogonal rotation techniques, was used in order to easily group and interpret the factors" (Vardar, 2010, p. 37). In Table 7, the distribution of the items for teachers and in Table 12, the distribution of the items for students can be seen more clearly.

When the original scale (CoA-III) which was developed by Brown (2002) was taken into consideration, it had both first and second order factors. When the TCoA-IIIA abridged scale which was conducted at Çağ University Preparatory School was compared with the original scale, a similar structure was realized, which had only four main factors. The original names were given to each of the factor, which were based on Brown's CoA-III Measurement Model of Conceptions of Assessment (2002), and New Zealand Primary Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment Measurement Model-CoA-IIIA Abridged Scale (2008). The same process was also implemented for the students. Students Conceptions of Assessment Scale (SCoA- the adapted form of TCoA), which was developed by Brown (2003), was also compared with the original scale and the same factors were found. For this reason, the factors

were named by their original names, which based on Brown's SCoA Measurement Model (2003).

The distribution of the items with their factor names can be seen in Table 8, 9, 10 and 11 for teachers, Table 13, 14, 15 and 16 for students. These tables show the reliability of each subscale and its related items.

3.6. Data Collection

The researcher completed the official requirements to measure teachers' and students' conceptions of assessment at the Çağ University Preparatory School. Firstly, an electronic mail was sent to Gavin T.L. Brown, who had developed "TCoA-IIIA" and "SCoA", to ask for the questionnaires and permission to use them. After the questionnaires were sent, the researcher took necessary permission from the Head of the Çağ University Preparatory School to conduct a questionnaire during the 2011-2012 second semester. Afterwards, the classes were arranged for the surveys to be given and the researcher gave information to the instructors about the study. The questionnaire was given to a total of 400 students in the last week of March, 2012. The students were provided with information about the study and how to fill in the instrument.

3.7. Data Analysis

The data obtained from the Students' Conceptions of Assessment (SCoA) Questionnaire and Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment (TCoA-IIIA) were computer coded and processed with PASW Statistics 20 (Predictive Analysis Software- Formerly SPSS). The negatively worded statements were recorded before calculating the composite scale scores.

Statistical comparisons between these two groups were conducted using PASW Statistics 20 (Predictive Analysis Software- Formerly SPSS). The analysis of the data gathered from 431 participants, 400 of whom are students and 31 teachers, was done by inferential statistics. "Inferential statistics is concerned with making predictions or inferences about a population from observations and analyses of a sample which is representative of the group to which it is being generalized" (Crossman, 2012, p. 1). Fraenkal and Wallen (2006) also define inferential statistics as "certain types of procedures that allow researchers to make inferences about a population based on findings from a sample" (p. 220). Descriptive statics was also included to describe the identified features of the data in the study. The means and standard deviations for the items were calculated. In order to calculate descriptive statistics, questionnaire items were grouped in accordance with independent variables. Descriptive categories were developed from the data itself for the sections. According to Fraenkal and Wallen (2006), "the major advantage of descriptive statistics is that they permit researchers to

describe the information contained in many scores with just a few indices, such as the mean and median" (p.189).

Before the data were analyzed in detail, incorrect or out-of-range values, missing values and assumptions recommended by the inferential statistics were taken into consideration to make the interpretation of the findings easier.

The analytical procedure consisted of four phases. First of all, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was implemented to "determine what the factor structure looks like according to how participant responds and underlying constructs for a set of measured variables" (Suhr, 2006) by using PASW Statistics 20 (Predictive Analysis Software- Formerly SPSS). This process was applied for both teachers' and students' questionnaires to describe and identify the number of existing factors. Before starting the analyses, the suitability of data for EFA was checked. At the end of EFA, four factors for teachers, *Student Accountability, School Accountability, Improvement* and *Irrelevance*, and four factors for students, *Improvement, Externality, Affect* and *Irrelevance* were identified. Secondly, in order to check if the scales in SCoA and TCoA-IIIA were reliable, the researcher computed the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient for each scale. Items which reduced the internal consistency of a scale were omitted from the scales before further analytical procedures were carried out.

Further, one-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was run to answer the research questions related with teachers' and students' conceptions of assessment. Although these analyses could be done by doing a series of ANOVAs for each dependent variable, MANOVA was preferred in order to adjust for the risk for Type 1 error when there are more than one dependent variable (Pallant, 2007).

CHAPTER 4

4. RESULTS

In Chapter IV, the data analyses and related findings of the study are presented. This chapter describes the results of the study that answer two main research questions.

4.1. Demographic Data

This section describes the demographic characteristics of the English teachers' gender, years of teaching experience, their role in teaching, the undergraduate institution they graduated from, their level of education and their nationality. There were 31 participants, 10 of whom were male (30 %) and 21 were female (70 %). Table 1 displays the range of teachers' total years of teaching experience.

Table 1

Teachers' Teaching Experience

Years of teaching experience	F	P
Never taught	0	0%
Less than 2	1	4%
Between 2 and 5	5	16%
Between 6 and 10	15	48%
More than 10	10	32%
Total	31	100

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage.

As seen in Table 1, while 6 participants out of 31 had 1-5 years of teaching experience, 25 of the teachers indicated that they had 6 or more years of teaching experience. Accordingly, most of the teachers at the Cağ University Preparatory School could be regarded as experienced teachers and familiar with the education system in general.

Table 2 presents the information about teachers' education level. While 17 of the participants held a B.A. degree, 13 of the participants held an M.A. degree. One participant specified having other degrees.

Table 2

Teachers' Education Level

Teachers' Education Level	F	P
BA	17	55%
MA	13	42%
PhD	0	0%
Other	1	3%
Total	31	100

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage.

While the majority of the participants carry out their duties as teachers, the others are deputy principal or principal at the Cağ University Preparatory School.

Table 3

Teachers' Role in Education

Teachers' Role in Education	F	P
Teacher	25	81%
Assistant or Deputy Principal	1	3%
Principal	1	3%
Other	4	13%
Total	31	100

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage.

Table 4 displays the information about teachers' undergraduate institution. While 12 of the participants graduated from a department of literature, 13 of the participants graduated from an ELT department. 5 of the participants graduated from other departments and one participant graduated from a department of translation.

Table 4

Teachers' Undergraduate Experience

Teachers' Undergraduate Experience	F	P
Literature	12	39%
Linguistics	0	0%
Translation	1	3%
ELT	13	42%
Other	5	16%
Total	31	100

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage.

Table 5 presents the information about teachers' nationality. The majority of the participants are from Turkey. Six of the participants are from the USA, one of them is from Ukraine, one of them is from Ireland and one of them is from Britain.

Table 5

Teachers' Nationality

Teachers' Nationality	F	P
Turkish	22	71%
American	6	19%
Ukrainian	1	3.2%
Irish	1	3.2%
British	1	3.2%
Total	31	100

Note: F= frequency; P= percentage.

4.2. Results for Frequency of Assessment Tools

In this part, teachers' choices about commonly used assessment tools are shown with their frequencies. As shown in Table 6, Teacher Made Written Test (77%), Student Written Work (74%), Oral Question & Answer (71%), Standardized Test (61%), Essay Test and Planned Observation (55%), were the most common assessment tools preferred by English teachers at the Çağ University Preparatory School. However, Unplanned Observation (39%),

Portfolio/Scrapbook (35%) Conferencing (6%), 1-3 Hour Examination (19%) and Student Self or Peer Assessment (29%) were less.

Table 6

Frequency of Teachers' Assessment Tools Preferences (N=31)

Assessment Techniques	N	%
Teacher Made Written Test	24	77
Student Written Work	23	74
Oral Question & Answer	22	71
Standardized Test	19	61
Essay Test	17	55
Planned Observation	17	55
Unplanned Observation	12	39
Portfolio/Scrapbook	11	35
Student Self or Peer Assessment	9	29
1-3 Hour Examination	6	19
Conferencing	2	6

4.3. Exploratory Factor Analysis

To answer the research questions "What are Cağ University Preparatory Teachers' conceptions of assessment?" and "What are Cağ University Preparatory Students' conceptions of assessment?" exploratory factor analysis was performed. This statistical procedure was used to extract factors from the teachers' and students' conceptions of assessment. Using exploratory factor analysis, 4 factors were extracted both for teachers and students: *Improvement, School Accountability, Student Accountability, and Irrelevance* for teachers; *Improvement, Externality, Affect and Irrelevance* for students.

4.3.1. TCoA IIIA-Teacher Questionnaire

Table 7 shows loadings for the teacher questionnaire in excess of .910 on their scales. First of all, principal components analysis of standardized item scores was undertaken on teachers' responses. Examination of the scree plot and item-loading patterns indicated that a four-factor solution provided the clearest interpretation of the data, with the most interpretable item groupings. Items 15 and 27 that loaded on more than one factor were removed from the analysis. Item 9 and 18 that weren't grouped with other factors were also extracted from the analysis. When alpha reliability coefficient was taken into consideration, item 7 was removed.

Table 8, 9, 10 and 11 show the four factors, factor loadings of each item, and alpha reliability coefficients.

Table 7

Factor Loadings for Teacher Questionnaire

| Item | Factor Loading | | | |
	IMP	SCACC	STACC	IRR
Q3	.841			
Q4	.315			
Q5	.786			
Q12	.452			
Q13	.685			
Q14	.495			
Q21	.739			
Q22	.701			
Q923	.354			
Q24	.242			
Q8		.830		
Q16		.740		
Q17		.690		
Q25		.879		
Q26		.752		
Q1			.796	
Q6			.599	
Q10			.358	
Q19			.910	
Q2				.845
Q11				.296
Q20				-.509

Table 8

TCoA Improvement Factor

Questionnaire Item		Factor Loadings
Q3	Assessment is a way to determine how much students have learned from teaching	0.841
Q4	Assessment provides feedback to students about their performance	0.315
Q5	Assessment is integrated with teaching practice	0.786
Q12	Assessment establishes what students have learned	0.452
Q13	Assessment feeds back to students their learning needs	0.685
Q14	Assessment information modifies ongoing teaching of students	0.495
Q21	Assessment measures students' higher order thinking skills	0.739
Q22	Assessment helps students improve their learning	0.701
Q23	Assessment allows different students to get different instruction	0.354
Q24	Assessment results can be depended on	0.242
		Alpha= 0.729
		N=31

Items 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, 14, 21, 22, 23 and 24 loaded on one factor which is related to *Improvement*. This factor shows the importance of assessment tasks and their power to influence the quality of teaching and learning (Table 8). Items 4, 23 and 24 have the lowest factor loadings. Item 4 shares variance with factor 2. However, this item has one peculiar characteristic; it mentions the importance of students' improvement. Item 23 and 24 can be also grouped with other factors; but these items are also related to the quality of teaching and learning. In a nutshell, this *Improvement* group underlined the importance of the quality aspects of assessment tasks, their descriptive power, and their ability to improve the quality of teaching and provide information to students that assist their learning.

According to Brown, Hui, Yu and Kennedy (in press), "the Improvement factor invoked helping learning, confidence in the reliability of assessments, and introduced a more

complex, richer construal of development" (p. 13). They also add that assessment leads to improving student learning and personal development; provided that it is accurate. That is, this *Improvement* factor has a positive effect on educational outcomes as it motivates students in the assessment process and gives feedback to the students who need to learn.

Table 9

TCoA Irrelevance Factor

Questionnaire Item		Factor Loadings
Q8	Teachers conduct assessments but make little use of the results	0.830
Q16	Assessment is unfair to students	0.740
Q17	Assessment results are filed & ignored	0.690
Q25	Assessment interferes with teaching	0.879
Q26	Assessment has little impact on teaching	0.752
		Alpha= 0,676
		N=31

Five items, Q8, Q16, Q17, Q25 andQ26 loaded onto *Irrelevance* factor (Table 9). Factor loadings are relatively high (.879, .830, .752, .740 and .690, respectively). They are directly-stated items. According to Shohamy (2001), Irrelevance is based on the view that external evaluation processes are inadequate, inaccurate, and/or irrelevant to the teachers' ability to improve student learning. In that factor, teachers conceive of assessment as something irrelevant in educational achievement. Brown (2002) also adds that teachers reject assessment because of its pernicious effects on teacher autonomy and professionalism and its distractive power from the real purpose of teaching. Based on these views, these items confirm the claim. This factor was strongly inverse to improvement. These five items appeared under the same factor as they are all based on the same passage.

Table 10

TCoA School Accountability Factor

Questionnaire Item		Factor Loadings
Q1	Assessment provides information on how well schools are doing	0.796
Q6	Assessment results are trustworthy	0.599
Q10	Assessment is an accurate indicator of a school's quality	0.358
Q19	Assessment is a good way to evaluate a school	0.910
		Alpha= 0.796
		N=31

Items 1, 6, 10 and 19 are loaded on the *School Accountability* Factor (Table 10). Item 10 is not factor pure and loads on factor 1 as much as it does on this factor. However, it is more related to *School Accountability* than it is to the *Improvement* factor. Therefore, it was grouped with this factor. Items 1 and 19 are mostly school accountability items. These items not only give information about comprehending the topic but also help the researcher in factor naming. Item 6 looks like one that doesn't belong. The reason can be attributed to the fact that the item has commonalities with factor one in wording. In Brown's (2008) Teachers Conceptions of Assessment Questionnaire results, item 6 loaded on factor 1. However, item 6 was loaded on factor 3 according to the questionnaire in this study.

Table 11

TCoA Student Accountability Factor

Questionnaire Item		Factor Loadings
Q2	Assessment places students into categories	0.845
Q11	Assessment is assigning a grade or level to student work	0.296
Q20	Assessment determines if students meet qualifications standards	-0.509
		Alpha= 0.256
		N=31

Items 2, 11 and 20 loaded on the *Student Accountability* Factor (Table 11). Item 2 has a high factor loading and is factor pure. Item 20 is factor pure with a negative factor loading. Lastly, item 11 has a low factor loading and shares variance with factor 3. This is surprising because this item is related to students. When Cronbach's alpha coefficient was taken into consideration, it is very low when it is compared with the other factors. This is because there are only three 3 items grouped under this group. Moreover, factor loading of item 11 was much less than the others. Brown (2008) defines *Student Accountability* as "students' participation in the setting of achievement goals that are marked by assessment events" (p. 41). He also adds that "students are individually accountable for their learning through their performance on assessments" (p. 41).

4.3.2. SCoA- Student Questionnaire

According to principal component analysis, there are also four factors for students. Table12 shows that all 30 items had loadings in excess of .776 on their scales. Brown (2011) states that "SCoA focuses on students' conceptions of how assessment functions and what it is rather than on students' understandings of intellectual ability, which did not play a statistically significant role in discriminating between high and low motivation students" (p. 14).

The same process followed for teachers was also implemented for students. First of all, principal components analysis of standardized item scores was undertaken on students' responses. Examination of the scree plot and item-loading patterns indicated that a four-factor solution provided the clearest interpretation of the data, with the most interpretable item groupings. Items 1 and 20 that loaded on more than one factor were removed from the analysis. Item 14 that wasn't grouped with other factors was also extracted from the analysis. Table 12, 13, 14 and 15 show the four factors, factor loadings of each item, and alpha reliability coefficients.

Table 12

Factor Loadings for Student Questionnaire

Item	Factor Loading			
	IMPROVEMENT	EXTERNAL	IRRELEVANCE	AFFECT
Q4	.705			
Q5	.684			
Q6	.349			
Q11	.702			
Q15	.384			
Q19	.420			
Q22	.718			
Q23	.640			
Q28	.664			
Q29	.526			
Q7		.620		
Q12		.704		
Q13		.648		
Q21		.375		
Q30		.568		
Q31		.423		
Q2			.693	
Q3			.776	
Q9			.602	
Q10			.417	
Q18			.476	
Q26			.227	
Q27			.708	
Q33			.656	
Q8				.610
Q16				.690
Q17				.723
Q24				.523
Q25				.758
Q32				.398

Table 13

SCoA Improvement Factor

Questionnaire Item		Factor Loadings
Q4	I look at what I got wrong or did poorly on to guide what I should learn next	0.705
Q5	I make use of the feedback I get to improve my learning	0.684
Q6	Assessment is a way to determine how much I have learned from teaching	0.349
Q11	I pay attention to my assessment results in order to focus on what I could do better next time	0.702
Q15	I use assessments to identify what I need to study next	0.384
Q19	I use assessments to take responsibility for my next learning steps	0.420
Q22	Teachers use my assessment results to see what they need to teach me next	0.718
Q23	Assessment helps teachers track my progress	0.640
Q28	My teachers use assessment to help me improve	0.664
Q29	Assessment measures show whether I can analyze and think critically about a topic	0.526
		Alpha= 0.801
		N=400

Items 4, 5, 6, 11, 15, 19, 22, 23, 28 and 29 loaded on the *Improvement* Factor (Table 13). The items can be analysed in terms of factor pureness. All ten items are based on a single passage. Items 6 and 15 have the lowest factor loadings. The two items have appeared under the same factor for a good reason. It is that they are both based on the same passage, which is related to improvement. Therefore, these factors can safely be called *Improvement*. It should come as no surprise that item 22 has the largest factor loading of all as well as being a pure-factor item. The reason is that this item gives information about how teachers improve their students just by looking their assessment results. The factor loadings of other items are relatively high .705, .702, .684, .664, .640, .526, and .420, respectively. They are also directly-stated improvement items. Just looking at the explanation of the items, it is easy to name the factor as *Improvement*. According to Brown (2011), "The Improvement conception

captures the notion that the purpose of assessment is to improve student learning and teachers' instruction" (p. 4). He also adds that "Improvement occurs as students use assessments to evaluate, plan, and improve their learning activities and as teachers interpret student performance as a means of improving instructional activities" (p. 4).

Table 14

SCoA External Attribution Factor

Questionnaire Item		Factor Loadings
Q7	Assessment measures the worth or quality of schools	0.620
Q12	Assessment provides information on how well schools are doing	0.704
Q13	Assessment is important for my future career or job	0.648
Q21	Assessment results show how intelligent I am	0.375
Q30	Assessment tells my parents how much I've learnt	0.568
Q31	Assessment results predict my future performance	0.423
		Alpha= 0.746
		N=400

Brown (2011) explains that "the External conception captures student perception that assessments measure their future and intelligence or the quality of schooling" (p. 4).This factor consists of items 7, 12, 13, 21, 30 and 31 (Table 14). Item 12 is factor pure with a high factor loading. This item has made the greatest contribution to the factor. By the same token, item 13 is factor pure and has a factor loading close to that of item 12. Items, 21 and 31 share variance with factor 1. However, they load more on factor 2 than they do on factor 1. Although items 7 and 18 give information about different functions of the assessment, they are grouped under the same factor with a close factor loading.

Table 15

SCoA Irrelevance Factor

Questionnaire Item		Factor Loadings
Q2	Assessment interferes student learning	0.693
Q3	Assessment is unfair to students	0.776
Q9	Assessment is value-less	0.602
Q10	Teachers are over-assessing	0.417
Q18	Assessment results are not very accurate	0.476
Q26	Assessment has little impact on my learning	0.227
Q27	I ignore or throw away my assessment results	0.708
Q33	I ignore assessment information	0.656
		Alpha=0.702
		N=400

Items 2, 3, 9, 10, 18, 26, 27 and 33 came to be included under the *Irrelevance* Factor (Table 15). It is easy to interpret these items as they are clear in wording. Item 3 is factor pure and is likely to be accountable for the greatest contribution to the factor as opposed to item 26 which has the lowest factor loading in the group. However, there is something more important than its factor loading. It is the fact that the words "little impact" lead us to conclude that the concern of this item is to tap "irrelevance relationship". The other items are all based on a single passage. They tap topic identification, which is irrelevance. The facility values for the mentioned items are: .708, .693, .656, .602, .476, and .417. The factor loadings of items 10 and 18 can be considered lower than the other items except for item 26. However, they are also related to the *Irrelevance* factor. Brown (2011) gives further explanation to this factor. According to Brown (2011), "The Irrelevance conception captures students' tendency to ignore or negatively evaluate assessment. This factor is maladaptive to the growth pathway since it rejects the validity of assessment to provide learning-related feedback" (p. 5).

Table 16

SCoA Affect/Benefit Factor

Questionnaire Item		Factor Loadings
Q8	Assessment encourages my class to work together and help each other	0.610
Q16	Assessment motivates me and my classmates to help each other	0.690
Q17	Our class becomes more supportive when we are assessed	0.723
Q24	When we do assessments, there is a good atmosphere in our class	0.523
Q25	Assessment makes our class cooperate more with each other	0.758
Q32	When we are assessed, our class becomes more motivated to learn	0.398 Alpha=0.786 N=400

According to Brown (2011), "The Affect conception captures the degree to which students consider assessment to be a personally enjoyable experience and the degree to which they consider assessment benefits the class environment" (p. 4). He also adds that "this factor relates to the well-being pathway in that it focuses on the enjoyment emotion and the quality of peer relations in response to assessment" (p. 4). Items 8, 16, 17, 24, 25 and 32 loaded on this factor (Table 16). When their explanation is taken into consideration, they are all related to positive sides of the assessments. Apart from item 32, the factor loadings of other items are relatively high. All the items underline how assessment positively affects the students. The key words can be considered as "motivate, encourage, supportive, good atmosphere, cooperate and motivated". These words are really helpful to name the factor as *Affect/Benefit*. All the items are factor pure and held accountable for explaining the factor.

4.4. Descriptive Results for Conceptions of Assessment

In this part, the main question for determining the kind of conceptions teachers and students have about assessment was investigated. In Table 17, descriptive statistics for the agreement level of teachers for each component of the Teacher Conceptions of Assessment

Abridged Scale (TCoA-IIIA) was given. For this scale, the minimum value was 1, and the maximum value for each response was 5.

Table 17

Agreement Level of Teachers for Components of TCoA- IIIA Scale (N=31)

Dependent Variables		M	SD
Student Accountability	(STACC)	3.50	.62
School Accountability	(SCACC)	3.15	.71
Improvement	(IMP)	3.71	.44
Irrelevance	(IRR)	2.57	.67

As shown in Table 17, there were four conceptions of assessment included in the scale. The mean scores for *Student Accountability, Improvement, School Accountability* and *Irrelevance* were 3.50, 3.15, 3.71 and 2.57 respectively. *Student Accountability* (*M*= 3.50, *SD*=.62) and *Improvement* (*M*= 3.71, *SD*=44.) had the highest two agreement levels which were considered as being around "Moderate Agreement" level among other variables. The *Irrelevance* conception (*M*= 2.57, *SD*= .67) had the smallest mean which could be considered as being around "Slight Agreement" level among other variables.

In Table 18, descriptive statistics for the agreement level of students for each component of the Student Conceptions of Assessment Abridged Scale (SCoA) was given. For this scale, the minimum value was 1, and the maximum value for each response was 5, as it was in teachers' scale.

As shown in Table 18, there were four conceptions of assessment included in the scale. The mean scores for *External Attribution, Affect/ Benefit, Improvement* and *Irrelevance* were 2.70, 2.86, 3.40 and 2.78 respectively. *Affect/Benefit* (*M*= 2.86, *SD*=.87) and *Improvement* (*M*= 3.40, *SD*=.71) had the highest two agreement levels which were considered as being around "Moderate Agreement" level among other variables. The *External Attribution* conception (*M*= 2.70, *SD*= .86) had the smallest mean which could be considered as being around "Slight Agreement" level among other variables.

Table18

Agreement Level of Students for Components of SCoA Scale (N=400)

Dependent Variables		M	SD
External Attribution	(EXTERNAL)	2.70	.86
Affect/Benefit	(AFFECT)	2.86	.87
Improvement	(IMP)	3.40	.71
Irrelevance	(IRR)	2.78	.77

When the mean scores of teachers and students were compared with each other, the *Improvement* conception had the highest mean in both scales. According to this result, it can be understood that both teachers and students gave importance to the *Improvement* conception.

4.5. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) Results

4.5.1. MANOVA Results for Teachers

In order to see if teachers' perceptions varied with some background variables such as gender, years of education, undergraduate institution and education level, and a set of MANOVA analyses were employed. Pillai's Trace test was used, as it was the most robust to violations of assumptions (Bray &Maxwell, 1985).

4.5.1.1. Results related with Gender

A one-way multivariate analysis of variance was conducted in order to determine the effect of gender on teachers' conceptions of assessment. Based on the data shown in Table 19, the MANOVA results indicated that gender had no significant effect on teachers' conceptions of assessment [Pillai's trace= .209,F(4, 26)= 1 .71, p>.05, *η2*=.209].

Table 19

The Results of MANOVA for the Effect of Gender on Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	p	$\eta2$
Pillai's Trace	.209	1.71	4.0	26.0	.177	.209

The means of teachers' conceptions of assessment in four factors according to gender are presented in Table 20. The results revealed that teachers' conceptions about assessment did not change according to their gender. Although there were not any significant changes in teachers' conceptions in general, their mean values had some differences according when the factors are analyzed separately. For instance, although female (*M*= 3.71) and male (*M*= 3.72)

teachers had the highest means values in the *Improvement* conception, the same teachers had the lowest mean values in the *Irrelevance* conception (F.*M*=2.50; M.*M*= 2.72). Then, in the School Accountability conception, male teachers' mean scores (*M*=3.52) are much higher than female teachers' mean scores (*M*=2.97) compared with the other conceptions. In the *Student Accountability* conception, there is not much difference between female (*M*=3.42) and male (*M*=3.66) teachers' mean scores.

Table 20

Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment by Gender

Factors	Female	Male
	M	M
School Accountability	2.97	3.52
Improvement	3.71	3.72
Student Accountability	3.42	3.66
Irrelevance	2.50	2.72

Table 21

Tests of Between-Subjects for Gender

Source	*Variable*	*df*	*F*	*p*	*η2*
Gender	SCACC	1	4.49	.04	2.04
	IMP	1	.04	.95	.01
	STACC	1	.98	.33	.38
	IRR	1	.68	.41	.31

The results showed that teachers' gender made a significant difference only in the *School Accountability* conception with significance value of .01 for this conception. However, the MANOVA results demonstrated that teachers' undergraduate institution had no significant effect on their general conceptions of assessment

4.5.1.2. Results related with Years of Teaching Experience

In order to determine teachers' years of teaching experience, MANOVA was performed. As illustrated in Table 22, the MANOVA results demonstrated that teachers' years of teaching experience had no significant effect on their conceptions of assessment [Pillai's trace= .238, F(12, 26)=.559, p>.05, η_2=.238].

Table 22

The Results of MANOVA for the Effect of Years of Teaching Experience on Teachers'
Conceptions of Assessment

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	p	η_2
Pillai's Trace	.238	.559	12.0	78.0	.86	.238

MANOVA results revealed that teachers' years of teaching experience did not have a significant effect on teachers' conceptions of assessment. The means of teachers' conceptions of assessment in four factors according to years of teaching experience are presented in Table 23.

Table 23

Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment by Years of Teaching Experience

Factors	Less than2	2-5	6-10	10 plus
	M	M	M	M
School Accountability	2.75	3.0	3.18	3.22
Improvement	3.80	3.76	3.64	3.78
Student Accountability	3.33	3.60	3.51	3.46
Irrelevance	2.60	2.64	2.40	2.80

When the mean scores of groups were checked, it was seen that each mean score for the dependent variables were close to each other as shown in Table 23. However, In the *School Accountability* conception, it was observed that the mean scores of the teachers according to years of teaching experience were increasing. While teachers who were experienced less than 2 years had the mean score of 2.75, teachers who were experienced more than 10 had the mean score of 3.22. Moreover, teachers having less than 2 years teaching experience (*M*= 3.80) had significantly highest level of the *Improvement* conception in comparison with the other three groups of teachers. However, the other groups or teachers were not significantly different from each other, apart from the *Irrelevance* conception. Although the mean scores of teachers in the *Irrelevance* factor were close to each other, it was less than the other factors when it was compared with the other factors. Further, multiple comparisons for the *Irrelevance* conception revealed significant differences among each group of teachers with respect to their years of teaching experience. The mean score of the

group of teachers having 10 years or more teaching experience (*M*= 2.80) had significantly highest level of the *Irrelevance* conception in comparison with other two groups.

Table 24

Tests of Between-Subjects for Years of Teaching Experience

Source	*Variable*	*df*	*F*	*p*	*η2*
Years of	SCACC	3	.209	.88	.34
Teaching	IMP	3	.201	.89	.13
Experience	STACC	3	.069	.97	.09
	IRR	3	.701	.56	.98

The results showed that the years of teaching experience did not make a significant difference for those conceptions. However, multiple comparisons for the *Irrelevance* conception revealed significant differences among each group of teachers with respect to their years of teaching experience.

4.5.1.3. Results related with Teachers' Undergraduate Institution

The question investigating whether there was a significant difference between teachers' conceptions of assessment according to the undergraduate institution that teachers graduated from (Faculty of Education, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Translation and others) was examined in this section.

Table 25

The Results of MANOVA for the Effect of Undergraduate Institution on Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	p	η2
Pillai's Trace	.578	1.55	12.0	78.0	0.12	.578

As illustrated in Table 25, the MANOVA results demonstrated that teachers' undergraduate institution had no significant effect on their conceptions of assessment [Pillai's trace= .578, F(12, 78)=1.55, p>.05, *η2*=.578].

Table 26

Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment by Undergraduate Institution

Factors	literature	translation	ELT	other
	M	M	M	M
School Accountability	3.02	3.25	3.17	3.35
Improvement	3.40	3.70	3.95	3.74
Student Accountability	3.57	2.66	3.38	3.86
Irrelevance	2.67	2.60	2.55	2.40

The teachers who graduated from the "Faculty of Education" (*M*= 3.95) had significantly the highest level of the *Improvement* conception, compared to the teachers from a "Faculty of Arts and Science" (*M*=3.40), "Translation" (*M*=3.70) or "Other" (*M*=3.74). Further, the group of teachers who graduated from other faculties (SCACC *M*= 3.35) (STACC M= 3.86) had significantly the highest level of the *School Accountability* and the *Student Accountability* conception, when compared with the ones coming from a "Faculty of Arts and Sciences" (SCACC *M*=3.02) (STACC *M*= 3.57), "Translation" (SCACC *M*= 3.25) (STACC *M*= 2.66), or "Faculty of Education" (SCACC *M*=3.17) (STACC *M*= 3.38). Moreover, the group of teachers who graduated from a "Faculty of Arts and Sciences" (*M*= 2.67), "Translation" (*M*= 2.60), "Faculty of Education" (*M*=2.55) or other faculties (*M*=2.40) had the lowest mean scores in the *Irrelevance* conception when compared with the other conceptions.

Table 27

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Undergraduate Institution

Source	*Variable*	*df*	*F*	*p*	*η2*
Undergraduate	SCACC	3	.242	.86	.39
Institution	IMP	3	4.154	.01	1.86
	STACC	3	1.447	.25	1.62
	IRR	3	.177	.91	.26

The results showed that the institution that teachers graduated from made a significant difference only in the *Improvement* conception with a significance value of .01 for this conception. However, the MANOVA results demonstrated that teachers' undergraduate

institution had no significant effect on their conceptions of assessment when it was analyzed as a whole.

4.5.1.4. Results related with Teachers' Education Level

The question investigating whether there was a significant difference between teachers' conceptions of assessment according to the education level (BA, MA and other) was examined in this part.

Table 28

The Results of MANOVA for the Effect of Education Level on Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	p	η2
Pillai's Trace	.355	1.402	8.0	52.0	.218	.355

Based on the data illustrated in Table 28, the MANOVA results indicated there is no significant main effect for teachers' education level on their conceptions of assessment [Pillai's trace= .35, $F(8,52)=1.40$, p<.05, **$η2$**=.35].

Table 29

Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment by Education Level

Factors	BA	MA	Other
	M	M	M
School Accountability	2.91	3.36	4.50
Improvement	3.63	3.74	4.60
Student Accountability	3.35	3.61	4.66
Irrelevance	2.67	2.50	1.80

As it can be observed in Table 29, the teachers who completed their BA degree (*M*=2.67) achieved the highest mean score for the *Irrelevance* conception of the other degrees (MA *M*= 2.50, other= 1.80). Apart from the *Irrelevance* conception, teachers who completed other degrees had the highest mean scores of all conceptions (SCACC *M*= 4.50, IMP *M*=4.60, STACC *M*= 4.66). Teachers who completed their BA degree had the highest mean score in the *Improvement* conception (*M*=3.63) when compared with the other conceptions (SCACC *M*= 2.91, SCACC *M*= 3.35, IRR *M*= 2.67). Teachers who completed their MA degree had the

highest mean score in the *Improvement* conception (*M*=3.74) when compared with the other conceptions (SCACC *M*= 3.36, SCACC *M*= 3.61, IRR *M*= 2.50). Teachers who completed their other degree had the highest mean score in the *Student Accountability* conception (*M*=4.66) when compared with the other conceptions (SCACC *M*= 4.50, IMP *M*= 4.60, IRR *M*= 1.80).

Table 30

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Education Level

Source	Variable	df	F	p	η2
Education	SCACC	2	4.01	.02	3.39
Level	IMP	2	2.52	.09	.90
	STACC	2	2.70	.08	1.90
	IRR	2	.88	.42	.81

The results showed that the education level of the teachers made a significant difference in the *School Accountability* conception with significance value of .02 for this conception. However, the MANOVA results indicated there is no significant main effect for teachers' education level on their general conceptions of assessment.

4.5.2. MANOVA Results for Students

In order to see if students' conceptions varied with some background variables such as gender, type of school they graduated from, a set of MANOVA analyses were employed.

4.5.2.1. Results related with Gender

Multivariate analysis of variance was conducted in order to determine the effect of gender on students' conceptions of assessment.

Table 31

The Results of MANOVA for the Effect of Gender on Students' Conceptions of Assessment

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	p	η2
Pillai's Trace	.029	2.914	4.0	395.0	.020	.029

Multivariate analysis of variance was conducted in order to determine the effect of gender on students' conceptions of assessment. Based on the data shown in Table 31, the MANOVA results indicated that gender had no significant effect on students' conceptions of assessment [Pillai's trace= .029, F(4,395)= 2 .91, p>.05, ***η2*** =.029].

Table 32

Students' Conceptions of Assessment by Gender

Factors	Female	Male
	M	M
External Attribution	2.68	2.73
Improvement	3.46	3.35
Irrelevance	2.69	2.89
Affect/Benefit	2.83	2.89

The results revealed that students' conceptions about assessment did not change according to their gender. Although there were not any significant changes in students' conceptions, their mean values had some differences according to their gender. For instance, although female (*M*= 3.46) and male (*M*= 3.35) students had the highest mean values in the *Improvement* conception; the same students had the lowest mean values in the *External Attribution* conception (F.*M*=2.68; M.*M*= 2.73). Then, in the *Irrelevant, External Attribution* and *Affect/Benefit* conceptions, male students' mean scores (IRR *M*=2.89, EXTERNAL *M*= 2.73, AFFECT *M*= 2.89) are much higher than female students' mean scores (IRR *M*=2.69, EXTERNAL *M*= 2.68, AFFECT *M*= 2.83) when compared with the *Improvement* conception.

Table 33

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects for Gender

Source	Variable	df	F	p	η2
Gender	EXTERNAL	1	.34	.56	.25
	IMP	1	2.33	.12	1.19
	IRR	1	6.29	.01	3.69
	AFFECT	1	.46	.49	.35

The results showed that students' gender made a significant difference in the *Irrelevance* conception with significance value of .02 for this conception. However, the MANOVA results indicated there is no significant main effect for students' gender on their general conceptions of assessment.

4.5.2.2. Results related with Type of School

The question investigating whether there was a significant difference between students' conceptions of assessment according to the type of school that students graduated from (State School and Private School) is examined in this part.

Table 34

The Results of MANOVA for the Effect of Type of School on Students' Conceptions of Assessment

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	p	η^2
Pillai's Trace	.012	1.230	4.0	395.0	.020	.012

As illustrated in Table 34, the MANOVA results demonstrated that type of school had no significant effect on students' conceptions of assessment [Pillai's trace= .012, $F(4,395)=1.230, p>.05, \eta^2=.012$].

Table 35

Students' Conceptions of Assessment by Type of School

Factors	State	Private
	M	M
External Attribution	2.66	2.85
Improvement	3.38	3.52
Irrelevance	2.78	2.77
Affect/Benefit	2.85	2.89

According to the results, while the students who graduated from state school had lower mean scores than the students who graduated from private schools in the *External Attribution* and *Improvement* conceptions (EXTERNAL State *M*=2.66, IMP State *M*= 3.38; EXTERNAL Private *M*=2.85, IMP private *M*=3.52), the same students who graduated from state schools had higher mean scores than the students who graduated from private schools in the *Irrelevance* and *Affect/Benefit* conceptions (IRR State *M*= 2.78, IRR Private *M*= 2.77; AFFECT State *M*=2.85, AFFECT Private *M*= 2.89). The students who graduated from state schools and private schools had the highest mean scores in the *Improvement* conception. (State *M*= 3.38; Private *M*= 3.52) as compared with the other conceptions.

Table 36

Tests of Between-Subjects for Type of School

Source	*Variable*	*df*	*F*	*p*	*η2*
Type of	EXTERNAL	1	3.04	.08	2.24
School	IMP	1	2.44	.11	1.25
	IRR	1	.016	.89	.01
	AFFECT	1	.164	.68	.12

The results showed that type of school students graduated from did not make a significant difference for those conceptions.

4.6. Summary

Both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted to answer the research questions in this study. The analysis of descriptive findings was done through frequencies and mean. There were four main conceptions of assessment (*Student Accountability, School Accountability, Improvement,* and *Irrelevance*) for teachers in TCOA-IIIA and four main conceptions of assessment *(Improvement, External Attribution, Irrelevant* and *Affect/Benefit)* for students in SCoA. When the mean scores of factors in TCoA-IIIA and SCoA were taken into consideration, the *Improvement* factor was observed as the highest factor among other factors. That means that teachers perceived assessment in the *Improvement* factor as a way to determine how much students have learned from teaching. Similarly, students perceived assessment in the *Improvement* factor as improving their learning and benefiting the class. It can be concluded that both teachers and students conceived the purpose of assessment as a way to improve teaching and learning process. The *Irrelevance* factor, on the other hand, was observed as the lowest factor for teachers and the *External Attribution* factor for students. Teachers gave little importance to the *Irrelevance* factor as they conceived the purpose of assessment as improving the quality of teaching and providing information to students to help their learning. That is, teachers were not in favor of the idea that assessment was something irrelevant in educational achievement and that assessment had little impact on teaching. Students disagreed with the idea that assessment measures the quality of schools.

When the frequencies of the assessment tools used by the teachers were examined, it was found that *Teacher Made Written Test* was the most common assessment tool preferred by English teachers at Çağ University Preparatory School. *Student Written Work*, *Oral*

Question and Answer, *Standardized Test*, *Essay Test*, and *Planned Observation* were the other mostly preferred assessment tools.

The findings of Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) showed that teachers' background variables such as gender, years of teaching experience, undergraduate institution and education level did not make any significant differences between teachers' general conceptions of assessment. Some differences were observed when the factors were analyzed separately. For instance, gender showed a significant difference in the *School Accountability* factor. Male teachers (*M*= 3.52, *S.D*= 2.13) had significantly higher level of this conception compared to female teachers (*M*= 2.97, *S.D*= 1.47). It was also observed that teachers' undergraduate institution made a difference in their conceptions of the *Improvement* factor. Teachers who graduated from Faculty of Education considered assessment a tool for *Improvement* (*M*= 3.95, *S.D*= .10) more than the teachers from other departments, such as Literature (*M*= 3.40, *S.D*= .11) and Translation (*M*= 3.70, *S.D*= .38). The last significant difference was observed for the teachers' education level. Accordingly, teachers who hold degrees like Ph.D considered using assessment for the *School Accountability* higher (*M*= 4.5, *S.D* .65) than the ones with M.A (*M*= 3.36, *S.D*=.18) or B.A degrees (*M*= 2.92, *S.D*= .15).

MANOVA results for students' conceptions revealed similar results in that students' gender and the type of school they graduated from did not reveal significant differences in their general assessment conceptions. The only difference was observed in the gender variable for the *Irrelevance* factor. Accordingly, male students (*M*= 2.89, *S.D*= .56) had significantly higher level of conception for *Irrelevance* than female students (*M*= 2.69, *S.D*= .52).

CHAPTER 5

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains a summary, discussion of the study and its research findings with respect to the research questions. In addition, this chapter presents implications of the study as well as recommendations for further research based on the collected data.

5.1. Summary of the Study

This study investigated conceptions of Çağ University Preparatory teachers and students regarding their assessment conceptions. Data were collected using quantitative method in this study. Two research instruments were used for this study: a questionnaire for teachers (TCoA-IIIA) and a questionnaire for students (SCoA). The participants of this study were 31 preparatory school teachers and 400 students at Cag University in the 2011-2012 academic years. The questionnaire was administered in order to get a general picture of teachers' and students' conceptions of assessment. The responses to the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively using PASW Statistics 20 (Predictive Analysis Software- Formerly SPSS). In order to find out the reliability of the questionnaires, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated for each factor. Items which reduced the internal consistency of a scale were omitted from the scales. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was also run to answer the research questions related with teachers' and students' conceptions of assessment.

5.2. Discussion of Descriptive Results

In order to answer the research questions "What are Çağ University Preparatory Teachers' and Students' conceptions of assessment?", exploratory factor analysis was conducted. The descriptive results of each dependent variable in Teacher Conceptions of Assessment Abridged Scale revealed that the *Improvement* conception had the highest (*M*= 3.71, *SD*= .44), whereas the *Irrelevance* conception had the lowest mean (*M*= 2.57, *SD*= .67) scores among other conceptions. The highest score for the *Improvement* conception of teachers might result from teachers' awareness of the function of assessment in the educational environment. Teachers learn how they could use assessment effectively in their classrooms not only to improve students' learning but also their quality of teaching. Moreover, they are aware of the importance of assessment tasks and their power to influence students' learning and teachers' instructions in the classroom. There are other studies that find out similar results. For example, according to survey research with the Teachers' Conceptions of Assessment (TCoA) inventory in New Zealand, Queensland, Hong Kong and Cyprus, Brown (2011) observed that primary and secondary teachers' dominant purpose for assessment was the improvement of teaching and learning. Vardar (2010) also found that

teachers view assessment as a way to improve students' learning and their teaching in their classrooms. However, she also underlined the importance of the necessity of change in their *Student Accountability* conceptions by practicing various assessment techniques which focus on increasing students' learning. Similarly, Şahinkarakaş (2012) stated that "teachers, in general, perceive assessment as a way to provide evidence of teaching and learning" (p. 1791).

The lowest mean score for the *Irrelevance* conception (*M*=2.57, *SD*=.67) among other conceptions showed that teachers did not perceive assessment as irrelevant in teaching and learning process as they supported its power on teaching. According to Brown's study (2007) with the teachers, he stated that "New Zealand primary and secondary teachers disagreed with the factors *Assessment is Bad* and *Assessment is Ignored*, while they gave moderate agreement to the factor *Assessment is Inaccurate*" (p. 10). The results of Brown's study were similar to teachers' conceptions of assessment at Çağ University Preparatory School.

Descriptive results of each dependent variable in Student Conceptions of Assessment Scale revealed that the *Improvement* conception had the highest (*M*= 3.40, *SD*= .71), whereas the *External Attribution* conception had the lowest mean (*M*= 2.70, *SD*= .86) scores among other variables. The reason why the *Improvement* conception of students was the highest score among other conceptions might be the positive effects of assessment on students' learning. From this perspective, it can be said that students at Çağ University Preparatory School perceived the purpose of assessment as evaluating, planning and improving their learning activities. However, some of the students were still afraid of the assessments as they did not see the positive effects they could have on them. Instead of helping students to improve, assessment was seen as a tool assigning grades to students. What is pleasing is that this concept is changing each day by the teachers' effort. However, helping students understand the invaluable effect of assessments on their learning takes time. Brown (2011) stated that "Improvement is still the most strongly endorsed conception of assessment among high school students" (p. 9). He also added that "there is still a window of opportunity for teachers to take advantage of the relative confidence of students in the role of assessment" (p. 9). In another study of Brown's(2009), it was clear that students conceived the purpose of assessment as improving their learning and benefiting the class. It can be concluded that they did not ignore information gained from assessment activities and did not think that assessment is without value or having little impact on their learning.

The lowest mean score for the *External Attribution* conception (*M*= 2.57, *SD*= .67) among other conceptions showed that students did not believe that assessments measure their

future, intelligence or the quality of schooling. "If students believe that the purpose of assessment is related to external factors outside their control, they will do worse in school" (Brown etal., 2009, p. 5). Therefore, the *External Attribution* conception has a strong effect on students' academic performance.

5.3. Discussion with Respect to Gender

To answer the research questions "Is there a significant difference in teachers' and students' conceptions of assessment according to their gender?" MANOVA was applied. The results revealed that there was not a significant difference in teachers' general conceptions of assessment according to their gender. Both female and male teachers had the highest mean values in the *Improvement* conception and the lowest mean values in the *Irrelevance* conception. It can be concluded from this finding that whatever teachers' gender is, they give importance to the function of assessment, which improves teaching and students' learning. Moreover, they ignored the *Irrelevance* conception as they did not believe that assessment had little impact on their teaching. However, it was observed that some differences occurred when the factors were analyzed separately. For instance, teachers' gender showed a significant difference in the *School Accountability* factor. Male teachers had a significantly higher level of this conception when compared to female teachers. This might result from their belief that schools should be held accountable through assessment. That is, they believed that assessment results were used to evaluate the quality of schooling.

What is surprising is that both female and male students had the highest mean values in the *Improvement* conception similar to teachers. That is, they also considered assessment as a tool to improve learning. However, the lowest mean value for female and male students was the *External Attribution* conception, which was different from teachers' result. It is also clear from these findings that students' gender did not have any effect on students' general conceptions of assessment. However, when these factors were analyzed separately, it was observed that there was a significant difference in the gender variable for the *Irrelevance* factor. Male students had significantly higher level of conception for *Irrelevance* than female students. The reason of high mean scores of male students' *Irrelevance* conception could originate from their previous experiences with assessment. They might capture the notion that assessment has a little impact on their learning.

5.4. Discussion with Respect to Teachers' Years of Teaching Experience

To answer the research question "Is there a significant difference in teachers' conceptions of assessment according to years of teaching experience (less than 2, 2-5 years, 6-10 years, and 10 years more)?", MANOVA was used. The results revealed that years of

teaching experience did not make a significant difference for the conceptions. However, there were some differences between the mean scores of teachers' conceptions of assessment with respect to years of teaching experience. Based on the findings, the less experienced group of teachers had the highest mean score in level of the *Improvement* conception when compared with more experienced groups. This group of teachers was generally newly graduate teachers who were full of a desire to share their knowledge with students. It can be concluded from this finding that the reason of high mean scores of the less experienced teachers' improvement conception could result from their enthusiasm to teach something new to students.

However, when the lowest mean score was checked, it was found that the teachers having six or ten years teaching experience had the lowest mean score for the *Irrelevance* conception. This result might show that these teachers understand the importance of assessment on their teaching more than the other group of teachers.

In Turkey, Vardar (2010) also examined sixth, seventh and eighth grade teachers' conceptions of assessment by years of teaching experience and found out that the more experienced group of teachers had the highest level of the *Student Accountability* conception than the other less experienced groups. This result might indicate that these teachers were affected by their previous experiences. However, when Brown's study (2002) was taken into consideration, it was seen that teachers' years of teaching experience did not make a significant difference for teacher conceptions of assessment.

5.5. Discussion with Respect to Undergraduate Institution Teachers Graduated from

To answer the research question "Is there a significant difference in teachers' conceptions of assessment according to their undergraduate institution they graduated from? (Faculty of Arts and Science, Faculty of Education, Translation and others)", MANOVA was preferred. According to the results, the differences in the *Improvement* conception were significant for the groups of teachers coming from a Faculty of Education (ELT). The teachers graduated from a Faculty of Education had higher mean scores than the teachers graduated from other departments, such as Literature and Translation. It might be said that teachers who graduated from a Faculty of Education had positive attitudes towards teaching as they were all educated with the best teaching techniques during their educational life at the university. It is worth mentioning that the main objective of Faculty of Education is to provide students with relevant and up-to-date knowledge and pre-requisite skills to enable them to guide their students to cope with the challenges they will face during their teaching life. Therefore, it is not surprising to find out that teachers who graduated from a Faculty of Education give importance to the *Improvement* conception.

When this finding was compared with Vardar's study (2011), it was seen that the group of teachers coming from a Faculty of Arts and Sciences had significantly higher level of the Student Accountability conception compared to teachers from a Faculty of Education. Vardar (2010) states that "the training given in a small period of time to those teachers graduated from Faculty of Arts and Science to become teachers might be the reason for having high level of the *Student Accountability* conception" (p. 75).

5.6. Discussion with Respect to Teachers' Education Level

To answer the research question "Is there a significant difference in teachers' conceptions of assessment according to their educational background? (BA, MA and others)", MANOVA was used. The results revealed that teachers' education level made a significant difference only in one conception. Teachers who hold degrees like Ph.D. considered using assessment for *School Accountability* with a higher value than the ones with M.A or B.A degrees. The reason of such high mean scores could result from their beliefs that assessment makes schools and teachers accountable. Moreover, it is possible to conclude that this group of teachers saw assessment as an indicator of school quality.

5.7. Discussion with Respect to Type of School Students Graduated From

To answer the research question "Is there a significant difference in students' conceptions of assessment according to the type of school they graduated from? (State School or Private School)", MANOVA was preferred. According to the results, there were differences in mean scores of each conception but these differences were not statistically significant according to the findings gathered in analysis process.

The reason for this issue might be explained as follows: each group of students, whether they graduated from State or Private Schools, was exposed to the same kind of assessments at Cağ University Preparatory School. During the grouping process, students were not divided according to the schools they graduated from. Therefore, the type of school they graduated from did not make a significant difference on their conceptions of assessment.

5.8. Discussion of Assessment Preferences of Teachers

When the frequencies of the assessment tools used by the teachers were examined, it was found that Teacher Made Written Test, Student Written Work, Oral Question & Answer Standardized Test, Essay Test and Planned Observation were the most common assessment tools preferred by English teachers at Çağ University Preparatory School. From the results of the survey, it was observed that teachers showed differences in their assessment practices that they used in the classrooms. From their choices, it can be concluded that teachers make use of assessments to help students improve their learning and higher order skills, which is directly

related to the *Improvement* conception. They preferred using objective techniques in classroom assessment. This may be because of the subjects they teach.

When these results were compared with Vardar's study (2010), the commonly used tools by the sixth, seventh, eighth grade teachers were Multiple Choice, Performance-Task, Fill-in-the Blanks, True-False, Project, Short Answer, Group-Work, Matching, Portfolio and Drama. She emphasized that most of the participant teachers in her study selected the traditional assessment tools.

5.9. Pedagogical Implications

Students' conceptions of assessment play an important role on their academic performance. From this study, we can conclude that if students' beliefs about the nature and purpose of assessment could be changed from negative to positive, considerable improvement can be observed in their academic process. Brown and Hirschfeld (2008) state that "if the assessment programme is presented to students as a school or teacher accountability mechanism, achievement is likely to go down; whereas, if the assessments are presented as measures of individual student learning, scores are more likely to go up" (p. 13). If students conceive assessment as something that makes them personally accountable and could be utilized for their future performance, students will achieve more. That is, students who see assessment as a beneficial process tend to get higher achievement scores. In this study, male students had higher level of the *Irrelevance* factor. They think assessment had little impact on their learning. If it could be changed by their teachers, they can be more successful in their education life. Therefore, it is important to understand whether students conceive of assessment as an outstanding effect on their motivation or not.

Moreover, how students conceive the purpose of assessment is important to understand the effect of changes in assessment practices on student learning. If students conceive assessment as an instrument which measures how intelligent they are, teachers cannot improve students' learning whatever they do. For this reason, in order to improve their learning, teachers should understand students' conceptions of the purpose of assessment and help make them aware of those conceptions.

Finally, results from this study show that students' conceptions of assessment are an invaluable source of information for the teacher to improve both their teaching and students' learning. In other words, if teachers identify and recognize students' conceptions of assessment, they can create an effective learning and teaching environment for both themselves and students. Students give importance to the *Improvement* factor in this study. If teachers are aware of their students' conception, they can focus on how to improve their

students' learning and their teaching instructions. Another dimension worth mentioning is classroom learning might be improved through a variance of and an increase in the quality of teachers' assessment practices, as assessment serves as a feedback mechanism for students. In this way, students' success can be achieved.

5.10. Recommendations for Further Research

1. Further studies should be conducted in order to understand students' and teachers' conceptions of assessment. Future research should be deeply interested in how these conceptions of assessment have an impact on student learning and teachers' approach to teaching within different contexts.

2. This study was limited with the sample being selected only from the Cağ University Preparatory School. In further studies, it is possible to include a larger sample of teachers and students from other cities of Turkey in order to increase the generalizability of the results.

3. Besides teachers' and students' conceptions, other stakeholders' conceptions in other academic discipline areas of study could also be taken into consideration to make a comparison with the results of assessment users' conceptions.

4. The same survey could be conducted in different universities to the same age level of students to understand the differences and similarities between students.

5. A similar study could be conducted in other states or countries using the same survey in order to compare teachers' conceptions in different localities to see if there are cultural, regional or environmental differences in how teachers share information about the assessments they use in their classrooms.

6. Apart from questionnaires, multiple methods of data collection including classroom observation, analysis of teacher-made tests, teachers'/students' grade books, and teacher/student interviews could be used to validate teacher and student self-reports for future research.

7. Based on the findings of the assessment tools, the number of seminars or workshops related to assessment should be increased to make teachers use the most recommended assessment tools in their academic life. An opportunity should be given to the teachers to confront what their weak and strong points are in assessment processes so that they can be aware of the importance of their choices in assessment.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1. APPENDIX A: STUDENTS' CONCEPTIONS OF ASSESSMENT (SCoA)

Conceptions of Assessment Survey

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1. Cinsiyetiniz: A) Bay   B) Bayan
2. Mezun olduğunuz okul: ....

Bu anket size ölçme ve değerlendirme ile ilgili olan inanışlarınızı ve anlayışlarınızı, terim size her ne ifade ediyorsa onu sormaktadır. Lütfen kendi ölçme ve değerlendirme anlayışınıza dayanarak soruları cevaplayın.

Aşağıdaki değerlendirme ölçeğini kullanarak sizin görüşünüzü en iyi açıklayan şıkkı seçin.

➢ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum
➢ Katılmıyorum
➢ Tarafsızım
➢ Katılıyorum
➢ Kesinlikle katılıyorum

Anketi doldurduğunuz zaman lütfen öğretmeninize teslim ediniz.

Katıldığınız için teşekkür ederim.

Senem Zaimoğlu

Bu anketi doldurarak bu çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorum.

Conceptions of Assessment	Hiç Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Tarafsız	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
1. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme süreci, benim için ilgi çekici ve eğlenceli bir deneyimdir.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme süreci öğrenmeme engel oluyor.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme süreci, öğrenciler için adil değildir.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Bir sonraki öğrenmem gerekenlere yol göstermesi için yapamadıklarımı ya da yanlış yaptıklarımı gözden geçiririm.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Öğrenmemi geliştirmek için aldığım geri bildirimden faydalanırım.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme süreci, öğretilenden ne kadar öğrendiğimi belirleyen bir yoldur.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme süreci, okulların kalitesini veya değerini ölçer.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme süreci, öğrencileri birlikte çalışıp birbirlerine yardım etmeleri için teşvik eder.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme sürecinin bir değeri yoktur.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. Öğretmenler aşırı derecede sınav yanlısıdır.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. Bir sonraki sefere neyi daha iyi yapabileceğime odaklanmak için değerlendirme sonuçlarımı dikkate alırım.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme süreci, okulların işlerini ne kadar iyi yaptıkları bilgisini sağlar.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme süreci, benim gelecek kariyerim ve işim için önemlidir.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme süreci, başarmam gereken hedeflere ulaşmama engel oluyor.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme sürecini daha sonra ne çalışmam gerektiğini belirlemek için kullanırım.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme süreci, beni ve sınıf arkadaşlarımı birbirimize yardım etmek için motive eder.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. Sınıftaki öğrenciler değerlendirme yapıldığı zaman birbirlerine daha fazla yardımcı olurlar.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme sonuçları çok doğru değildir.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme sürecini bir sonraki öğrenme adımımda nelere dikkat etmem gerektiğini belirlemek için kullanırım	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. Değerlendirildiğim zaman öğrenmekten gerçekten keyif alıyorum.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme sonuçları, benim ne kadar zeki olduğumu gösterir.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. Öğretmenler benim ölçme ve değerlendirme sonuçlarımı daha sonradan bana neyi öğretmeye ihtiyaç duyduklarını görmek için kullanırlar.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Conceptions of Assessment	Hiç Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Tarafsız	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum
23. Ölçme ve değerlendirme süreci, öğretmenlerin ilerlememi takip etmesine yardımcı olur.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
24. Değerlendirme yaptığımız zaman, sınıfımızda güzel bir atmosfer olur.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
25. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme süreci, sınıfımızın birbirleriyle daha çok işbirliği yapmasını sağlar.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
26. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme sürecinin öğrenimim üzerinde az bir etkisi vardır.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
27. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme sonuçlarımı göz ardı ederim veya atarım	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
28. Öğretmenlerim ölçme ve değerlendirme sürecini benim gelişmeme yardım etmek için kullanırlar,	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
29. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme kriterleri bir konu hakkında ciddi derecede düşünüp analiz yapıp yapamayacağımı gösterir	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
30. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme süreci aileme ne kadar öğrendiğimi gösterir	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
31. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme sonuçları, gelecekteki performansımla ilgili öngörüde bulunur	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
32. Değerlendirildiğimiz zaman sınıfımız öğrenmek için daha çok motive olur	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
33. Ölçme ve Değerlendirme bilgisini göz ardı ederim	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

7.2. APPENDIX B: TEACHERS' CONCEPTIONS OF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (TCoA-IIIA)

Conceptions of Assessment III Abridged Survey

This survey asks about your beliefs and understandings about ASSESSMENT, whatever that term means to you. Please answer the questions using YOUR OWN understanding of assessment.

1. Please indicate which of the following assessment PRACTICES you have in mind when you think about assessment.

> When I think about ASSESSMENT these are the kinds of PRACTICES I have in mind (*Tick all that apply)*
>
> ☐ Unplanned Observation   ☐ Student Self or Peer Assessment
>
> ☐ Oral Question & Answer   ☐ Conferencing
>
> ☐ Planned Observation (*e.g., Running*   ☐ Portfolio / Scrapbook
> *Record, Checklist*)
>   ☐ Teacher Made Written Test
>
> ☐ Student Written Work (*e.g., activity* ☐ Standardised Test
> *sheets or spelling*)
>   ☐ Essay Test
>
>   ☐ 1-3 Hour Examination

2. Please give your rating for each of the following 27 statements based on **YOUR** opinion about assessment. Indicate how much you actually agree or disagree with each statement. Use the following rating scale and choose the one response that comes closest to describing your opinion.

> ➢ Strongly Disagree
> ➢ Disagree
> ➢ Neutral
> ➢ Agree
> ➢ Strongly Agree

Note that the ratings are ordered from Disagree on the LEFT to Agree on the RIGHT. Once you have completed the survey return it to Senem Zaimoğlu for analysis. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Senem Zaimoğlu.

Please continue …

Conceptions of Assessment	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Assessment provides information on how well schools are doing	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
2. Assessment places students into categories	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
3. Assessment is a way to determine how much students have learned from teaching	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
4. Assessment provides feedback to students about their performance	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
5. Assessment is integrated with teaching practice	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
6. Assessment results are trustworthy	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
7. Assessment forces teachers to teach in a way against their beliefs	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
8. Teachers conduct assessments but make little use of the results	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
9. Assessment results should be treated cautiously because of measurement error	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
10. Assessment is an accurate indicator of a school's quality	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
11. Assessment is assigning a grade or level to student work	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
12. Assessment establishes what students have learned	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
13. Assessment feeds back to students their learning needs	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
14. Assessment information modifies ongoing teaching of students	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Please continue …

Conceptions of Assessment	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
15. Assessment results are consistent	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
16. Assessment is unfair to students	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
17. Assessment results are filed & ignored	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
18. Teachers should take into account the error and imprecision in all assessment	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
19. Assessment is a good way to evaluate a school	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
20. Assessment determines if students meet qualifications standards	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
21. Assessment measures students' higher order thinking skills	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
22. Assessment helps students improve their learning	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
23. Assessment allows different students to get different instruction	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
24. Assessment results can be depended on	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
25. Assessment interferes with teaching	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
26. Assessment has little impact on teaching	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐
27. Assessment is an imprecise process	❐	❐	❐	❐	❐

Would you also provide the following personal information?

A) What is your gender?

     (*Tick one only*)

     ❒ Female

     ❒ Male

B) How many years have you taught?

     (*Tick one only*)

     ❒ Less than 2

     ❒ Between 2 and 5

     ❒ Between 6 and 10

     ❒ More than 10

C) What is your role in education?

     (*Tick one only*)

     ❒ Teacher

     ❒ Assistant or Deputy Principal

     ❒ Principal

     ❒Other: _____

D) What is your education level?

     (*Tick one only*)

     ❒ BA

     ❒ MA

     ❒ PhD

     ❒ Other:

     _____

E) Which university did you graduate from?

     _____

F) What is your name?

     _____