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Full Length Research Paper

The attitudes of the final students of Technical Education Faculty at Kocaeli University towards their faculty's closing down

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The purpose of the research is to identify the attitudes of the students at Kocaeli University towards closing down of Technical Education Faculty. These faculties were decided to be closed down in 2009. Since then, both the students and the instructors have been in ambiguity about their future careers. This situation has also affected them emotionally. That is why, the students attitudes towards their faculties, curriculum, job opportunities after graduation and the instructors were dealt with in this research. The research was carried out with the scanner model and the universe of this research consisted of 211 students, and the sample included 157 students from TEF at the Kocaeli University. Students' attitude scale towards their faculties was used as the data collector. The following symbols were used to express the statistical analysis: (TEF) for the Technical Education Faculty, (f) for the Frequency; (%) for the percentage; ($\overline{\times}$) for the arithmetical average; (Ss) for the standard deviation. The data were analysed with t test and Anova. Likert 5 rating scale was used so as to determine the students' attitudes. The rating for each statement is as follows; 'I strongly agree' (5), 'I agree.' (4), 'I am indecisive.' (3), 'I do not agree.'(2),'I strongly disagree.'(1). The gap width of the questionnaire was formulated with line width/the number of the groups. In the evaluation of the findings gained from this research; the gaps of arithmetical average were like this: '1.00-1.80' = 'I strongly disagree'; '1.81-2.60'= I do not agree'; 2.61-3.40' = 'I am indecisive '; 3.41-4.20' = 'I agree'; 4.21-5.00 ='I strongly agree'. In this research, the following sub dimensions were evaluated to determine the attitudes of the students: attitudes towards the faculty, attitudes towards the curriculum, attitudes concerning the instructors, attitudes towards job opportunities after graduation. As a result, it could be concluded that students do not like their schools; they chose this school because they had to; they cannot make good contacts with their instructors and they have concerns about getting jobs after they have finished this school. The students are also worried because of the ambiguity after closing down their faculties. This ambiguity has led them to lose their feelings of belonging to their faculties. Their negative attitudes can be explained with this emotional situation.

Key words: Technical education faculty, vocational technical education faculty, the instructors.

INTRODUCTION

Many changes that have great effects on the vocational education have occurred along with the Industrial

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Revolution. Since families cannot function as educators as much as the society requires, schools have taken this responsibility (Turan, 1992). As a result of this, Vocational Technical Education Faculties were set up after the Industrial Revolution so as to meet these needs of the society.

In today's world, the purpose of the vocational education is to upskill the students for the objectives of the society and for the demands coming from the business environment (Tanas, 2013).

Developed countries have a high opinion of the vocational and technical education for the individuals to understand technology, to have basic skills to use technology, to have communication skills and problem solving skills and discipline of collaboration.

The 9th 5-year development plan (2007-2013) is highly important for the vocational technical education which is valid in Turkey today (Ucar and Ozerbas, 2013). That is why, most of the members of European Union (EU) consider the vocational education as a solution for the problems that can be faced in the future. Therefore, a lot of students are accepted to vocational education faculties (Fejes, 2012).

Vocational and technical education can be defined as the compilation of the supervising and training activities, planning, searching, developing, organizing and managing with the coordination of every kind of vocational and technical education service (Alkan et al., 1994).

In developed western countries, vocational and technical education is defined as the field of profession that aims to provide the individuals with practical activities and hand skills for a good career. The purpose of the vocational and technical education is generally to train individuals as the qualified work power for employment in the fields of industry, trade and service sectors. It also aims to give them necessary basic education for higher education, which is the continuation for their jobs (Sahin and Findik, 2008).

In higher education, vocational and technical education is performed via four-year Technological Education Faculties and two-year vocational schools. These two-year vocational schools were founded to provide the industries with the intermediate staff (technician). The aim of the four-year Vocational Industrial Arts, Technical and Tourism Education Faculties is to provide the vocational secondary schools with teachers.

Technical education is an advanced level of professional training that helps students for the acquisition of skills, habits and knowledge, which is necessary for the medium and high levels career hierarchy. It also requires advanced level knowledge of science and maths and practical technical skills. Even though it is common in the fields of engineering, it is not limited with this field. Technical Education in Agriculture, Health, Nutrition, Trade and other fields develops in accordance with the improvements in technology (Sahin and Findik, 2008).

Not only do TEFs provide Industrial Vocational schools, Apprenticeship training centers and Multi-program high schools (which are under the Ministry of Education) with technical teachers; but they also take the responsibility of training technical skilled members to be employed at industry, as well. (ITO, 2008). Teachers who are the graduates of TEFs and who are to work at Vocational Technical Education are called Technical Teachers.

According to the research conducted by Heikkinen et al., (2014), teachers lead a principle role in vocational education. For this reason, teacher training for this field of education is highly significant.

Teachers at vocational and technical education have great contributions to develop the international knowledge, skills and attitudes of the students. They can do this by designing suitable environments for learning and doing some arrangements (Tran, 2012).

TEFs were converted into Technology Faculties in 2.11.2009 by the Council of Ministers in accordance with the 30th article of the Law Number 2809 and Law Date 28.3.1983, after the declaration by the Ministry of National Education. After this period, no students were registered in these schools and the final students graduated from the undergraduate program in 2013/2014 Academic Year. These faculties aimed to train teachers for technical education. That's why, the students' attitudes towards their faculties are very important as they had been experiencing this period for four years. The purpose of this research is to identify the students' attitudes towards their schools, instructors, lectures and curriculum and employment. The decision of closing down of TEFs has negatively affected the students and the instructors, because they have concerns about their ambiguous future and this has led them to despair, as a result, they have lost their feeling of belonging to their school.

METHODOLOGY

The model of the research, sampling and the universe, data sources, collecting the data, processing the data and the statistical techniques used in the research are explained in this part. The research was carried out with the scanning model. It is a research approach aiming to define the situation today and the situation in the past as it is (Karasar, 1995).

The universe and sampling

The universe of this research consisted of 211 students who were the senior students at TEF at Kocaeli University. The data were collected from 157 students out of 211. The students were chosen by simple random method among the universe of the research.

The findings about the students' demographical features can be seen in Table 1.

The demographic information about students are as follows as can be seen in Table 1: Female students consists of 9.6% of the sample and male students are 90.4%. 35.7% of the students is between 20 and 23 years old and 64.3% of them are over 23 years old. 24.8% of the students are at Computer Teaching, 26.1% of them are at Automotive Teaching, 28.7% of them are at Electric Teaching; and 20.4% of them are at Electronic Teaching. 45.2% of

Table 1. The findings concerning the students' demographical features.

Gender	n	%
Female	15	9.6
Male	142	90.4
Age	n	%
20-23	56	35.7
23 and over	101	64.3
Faculty / Departments	n	%
Computer teaching	39	24.8
Automotive teaching	41	26.1
Electric teaching	45	28.7
Electronic teaching	32	20.4
Fathers' Educational Background	n	%
Primary school	71	45.2
Secondary school	27	17.2
High school	41	26.1
University	18	11.5
Mothers' Educational Background	n	%
Primary school	99	63
Secondary school	32	20.4
High school	26	16.6
Families' income	n	%
0-1000 TL	34	21.7
1001-2000TL	59	37.6
2001-3000TL	47	29.9
3001 TL and over	17	10.8
The number of siblings	n	%
Himself and 1 sibling	61	38.9
Himself and 2 siblings	67	47.7
Himself and 3 siblings	18	11.5
4 siblings and over	11	6.9

students' fathers are the graduates of primary school, 17.2% are the graduates of secondary school, 26.1% are high school graduates and 11.5% of them have completed their university education. 62.4% of students' mothers are the graduates of primary school, 20.4% of them secondary schools, 15.9% of them have had high school education and only 1.3% are postgraduates. The income analysis of families is as follows: 21.7% of the families earn 1000TL at most, the ones that earn between 1001 TL and 2000 TL are 37.6%; 29.9% of the families earn between 2001TL and 3000 TL, only 10.8% of the families can earn more than 3000 TL. 38.9% of the students have got only one sibling apart from themselves, 42.7% of them have got two, 11.5% have got three and 6.9% of them have got more than four siblings.

Results of Tunc's (2011) study revealed that most of the students in the research were male students.The source of difference in rates of gender of students is based on technical programmes of Technical Education Faculty.

Data collecting tool

To determine TEF students' attitudes towards their schools, the attitude scale for the TEF students' attitudes towards their schools has been developed by Mahiroglu and Ozerbas (2007).

The scale was prepared by using 5-level scale, which is likert type. It was applied to 528 students at Gazi University in order to prove its validity and reliability. Varimax Rotated method was used at factor analysis, and its Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value is 914.The Cronbach Internal consistency value of the scale and its percentage of cumulative burden were calculated as .905 and 52,387 in order. The reliability co-efficent in the sub dimension of the scale is as follows; the attitudes towards the faculty .779, the attitudes towards the curriculum .835, the attitudes concerning the instructors .805, the attitudes towards the employment .737.

According to the results of the factor analysis, the scale consists of 4 dimensions, which are the attitudes towards their faculty, towards the lectures and the curriculum, towards the instructors and the attitudes towards the employment. It consists of 24 items in all.

Data collection

'The attitude scale' for the TEF students' attitudes towards their schools that has been developed by Mahiroglu and Ozerbas (2007) was used in this research. It was applied to 157 students face-to face by the researcher.

Analysis of data

The programme, SPSS 17.0, was used in the analysis of the data. The reverse encoding was conducted for the negative statesments in the scale. The level of significance was taken as .05 in the interpretation of the results. In the research, (f) for the Frequency, (%) for the Percentage, ($\overline{X}$) for the Arithmetical Average and (Ss) for the Standard Deviation were used for statistical abbreviations. And (t) test and Anova was also applied in the research.

RESULTS

In this part, the findings were interpreted by analysing the data with the objectives and sub goals, and they were supported with the results of the research. The findings about the sub dimensions of the attitudes towards the Faculty are illustrated in Table 2.

The statement 'I do not like this school.' has the highest value with an average of =3.98 and it is placed in the ' I agree' column. The statement ' I believe that I have to study hard to succeed this school.' has the lowest value with an average of = 1.97 and it is placed in the ' I do not agree' column.

The values concerning the sub dimensions of the student attitudes towards the curriculum are shown in Table 3.

As seen in the table, the statement 'I preferred this school because I had to.' has the highest value with an average

Table 2. The findings about the sub dimensions of the attitudes towards the faculty.

The attitudes towards the faculty	$\overline{X}$	Ss
I believe that I have learned a lot in this school.	2.19	.63
I believe I have to study a lot to be successful in this school.	1.97	.64
I think the lectures are very boring.	3.87	.65
I think I could make progress in this school.	2.17	.67
I think the level of the education at this school is of low quality.	3.80	.67
I think the lectures are at the expected level.	2.21	.70
I believe I waste my time at this school.	3.92	.68
I do not like this school.	3.98	.74
I am getting worse at this school.	3.93	.74
Average	3.11	.68

Table 3. The findings about the sub dimensions of the attitudes towards the curriculum.

The attitudes towards the curriculum	$\overline{X}$	Ss
I like this school very much.	2.12	.63
I am at ease to get the help and support I need at this school.	2.19	.68
I believe this school is very active at social environment.	2.03	.67
I preferred this school because I had to.	4.26	.63
This school looks like a vocational high school rather than a university.	4.08	.63
I felt the university atmosphere at this school.	2.14	.70
I think there is no social environment at this school.	3.96	.67
Average	2.96	0.65

Table 4. The findings about the sub dimensions of the attitudes concerning the instructors.

The attitudes towards the instructors	$\overline{X}$	Ss
I think the instructors behave the students in a rude and harsh way.	3.89	0.62
I think the instructors are willing to train us.	2.19	0.67
I cannot find anyone to get help when I am in need.	3.85	0.68
I think the instructors are kind and gentle towards the students.	2.18	0.66
The instructors do not care about the students as is required.	3.78	0.69
Average	3.17	0.66

of =4.26 and it is placed in the 'I absolutely agree.' column. The statement ' I believe this school is very active at social environment.' is placed in the 'I do not agree.' column and has the lowest value with an average of =2.03.

The values concerning the sub dimensions of the student attitudes towards the instructors are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 illustrates that the statement 'I think the instructors behave to the students in a rude and harsh way.' has the average of =3.89 and it is the highest. That is why, it is seen in the 'I agree' column. The lowest value is =2.18 and it is the statement ' I think the instructors are kind and gentle towards the students.' As a result, it is seen in the ' I do not agree 'column. As TEFs are mainly for male students and also the majority of the instructors are male, male-dominant culture might be observed in these schools. That is why, instructors may sometimes behave harshly.

The values concerning the sub dimensions of the student attitudes towards the employment are shown in Table 5.

As the figures in Table 5 suggest, the highest value is =4.23 and it is the statement ' I am seriously concerned about getting a job after I have graduated from this school.' As a result, it goes to the 'I absolutely agree.' column. Very few of the students believe that they will be good technicians in the future. It is proved with the figures

Table 5. The findings about the sub dimension of the attitudes towards the employment.

The attitudes towards the employment	$\overline{X}$	Ss
I am seriously concerned about getting a job after I have graduated from this school.	4.21	.72
I am seriously concerned about finding jobs after I have graduated from this school.	4.23	.69
I think I will make a good technician when I have finished this school.	2.23	.72
Average	**3.55**	0.71

Table 6. The results of the student attitudes towards technical education faculty concerning their gender.

Attitude dimensions towards the Faculty	Gender	$\overline{X}$	Ss	t	P
Attitudes towards the Faculty	Male	28.07	2.16		
	Female	28.00	1.36	.13	.892
Attitudes towards the curriculum	Male	20.88	1.74		
	Female	20.26	1.48	1.31	.190
Attitudes towards the instructor	Male	15.94	1.29		
	Female	15.60	1.05	.99	.323
Attitudes towards the employment	Male	10.71	1.33		
	Female	10.40	1.68	.85	.395

Table 7. The results of the student attitudes towards technical education faculty concerning their age.

The attitude dimension towards the Faculty	Age	$\overline{X}$	Ss	t	p
The attitudes towards the Faculty	20 and 23	28.05	1.99		
	23 and over	28.07	2.15	.07	.942
The attitudes towards the curriculum	20 and 23	20.87	1.56		
	23 and over	20.79	1.81	1.28	.287
The attitudes towards the instructor	20 and 23	15.71	1.18		
	23 and over	16.01	1.31	-144	.152
The attitudes towards the employment	20 and 23	10.83	1.34		
	23 and over	10.60	1.38	1.3	.305

at the table 5. Because the lowest rate is =2.23 and it is the statement ‘ I think I will make a good technician when I have finished this school.’ Therefore, it is in the ‘I do not agree.’ column.

The findings about the sub dimension of the attitudes towards the Technical Education Faculty are illustrated in Table 6.

T test was performed so as to determine whether the students differ from each other when their sexuality is in question. No significant difference in the attitudes towards the Faculty, towards the curriculum, towards the instructors and towards the employment was found in the sub factors concerning what sex group they belong to.

The findings about the sub dimension of the attitudes towards the Technical Education Faculty concerning their age are illustrated in Table 7.

To determine whether the students differ from each other when their age is in question, t test was performed. No significant difference in the attitudes towards the Faculty, towards the curriculum, towards the instructors and towards the employment was found in the sub factors concerning how old they are.

Table 8. The results of the students' attitudes towards technical education faculty concerning their departments.

Departments	Computer teaching (n=39)	Automotive teaching (n=41)	Electric teaching (n=45)	Electronic teaching (n=32)	F	P
	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}$		
The attitudes towards the Faculty	28.15	28.26	28.02	27.78	.349	.790
The attitudes towards the curriculum	20.30	20.87	21.00	21.12	1.685	.173
The attitudes towards the instructor	15.69	16.07	15.84	16.06	.788	.502
The attitudes towards the employment	10.53	10.97	10.71	10.46	1.032	.380

Table 9. The results of the students' attitudes towards technical education faculty concerning the father's educational background.

Departments	Primary school (n=71)	Elementary school (n=27)	High school (n=41)	University (n=18)	F	P
	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}$		
The attitudes towards the Faculty	28.11	28.29	27.90	27.94	.221	.882
The attitudes towards the curriculum	20.76	21.03	21.09	21.11	1.558	.202
The attitudes towards the instructors	15.90	16.03	15.80	16.00	.209	.890
The attitudes towards the employment	10.84	10.66	10.56	10.38	.711	.547

Table 10. The results of the students' attitudes towards technical education faculty concerning the mother's educational background.

Departments	Primary school (n=99)	Elementary school (n=32)	High school (n=26)	F	P
	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}$		
The attitudes towards the Faculty	27.89	28.81	27.80	2.597	.078
The attitudes towards the curriculum	20.68	21.21	20.84	1.158	.317
The attitudes towards the instructors	15.85	16.09	15.88	.413	.662
The attitudes towards the employment	10.80	10.37	10.61	1.252	.289

The findings about the sub dimension of the attitudes towards the Technical Education Faculty concerning their departments are illustrated in Table 8.

To determine whether the students differ from each other when it comes to their departments, anova test was performed. No significant difference was found in the sub factors concerning the student's department.

The findings about the sub dimension of the attitudes towards the Technical Education Faculty concerning the father's educational background are illustrated in Table 9.

To determine whether the students differ from each other when it comes to their fathers' educational background, anova test was performed. No significant difference was found in the sub factors.

The findings about the sub dimension of the attitudes towards the Technical Education Faculty concerning the mother's educational background are illustrated in Table 10.

To determine whether the students differ from each other when it comes to their mothers' educational background, anova test was performed. No significant difference was found in the sub factors.

The findings about the sub dimension of the attitudes towards the Technical Education Faculty concerning the families' income are illustrated in Table 11.

Anova test was performed so as to determine whether the students differ from each other when it comes to their families' income. No significant difference was found in the sub factors concerning how much their families earn.

The findings about the sub dimension of the attitudes towards the Technical Education Faculty concerning the number of siblings are illustrated in Table 12.

To determine whether the students differ from each other when it comes to the number of siblings, anova test was performed. No significant difference in the attitudes towards the Faculty, towards the curriculum and towards

Table 11. The results of the student attitudes towards Technical Education Faculty concerning the families' income.

Departments	0-1000 TL (n=34)	1001-2000TL (n=59)	2001-3000TL (n=47)	3000 TL and over (n=17)	F	P
	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}$		
The attitudes towards the Faculty	27.76	28.40	27.87	28.05	.887	.449
The attitudes towards the curriculum	20.26	20.81	21.27	20.70	2.363	.073
The attitudes towards the instructors	16.14	15.77	15.95	15.76	.685	.562
The attitudes towards the employment	10.88	10.91	10.40	10.29	1.938	.126

Table 12. The results of the students' attitudes towards technical education faculty concerning the number of siblings.

Departments	Himself and one	Himself and two	Himself and three	Four and more	F	P
	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}$	$\overline{X}$		
the attitudes towards the Faculty	27.96	28.32	27.38	28.18	1.035	.379
the attitudes towards the curriculum	21.19	20.68	20.16	20.63	2.051	.109
the attitudes towards the instructors	15.73	16.16	15.33	16.27	2.870	.038
the attitudes towards the employment	10.85	10.50	10.83	10.63	.748	.525

the employment was found in the sub factors concerning how many sisters or brothers they have. However, attitudes do differ to a great extend when it comes to the instructors. According to [F(2-367)=2.870; p<0.05. LSD comparison test, a really significant difference was observed between the ones who have 3 siblings and the ones who have 4 or more siblings. As seen in the table, it can be said that the more siblings they have, the more positive they feel for their instructors.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this research, it was aimed to identify the attitudes of the students who are in the final years of Technical Education Faculties, which were closed down, towards their schools, towards the curriculum, towards the instructors and towards the employment fields.

According to the results of the research, it can be said that most of the students come from lower social class when the demographic variables are analyzed .In the research done by Tunc at Tarsus Technical Education Faculty in 2011, it was observed that the social and economic position of the students showed parallelism with the characteristics of lower social class. Hence, it can be concluded that the students who prefer TEFs feature the lower social class identity.

In the attitudes of the faculty, the statement, 'I do not like this school.' has the highest value with an average of = 3.98 and it is placed on the ' I agree' column. The lowest value is = 1.97 and it is the statement ' I believe I have to study a lot to be successful at this school.' Therefore, it is in ' I do not agree' column. Tanas remarked in his research in 2013 that the application of converting TEFs into Technology Faculties would not have negative impacts on vocational and technical high schools only if necessary precautions were taken. However, according to the results, it is obvious that students do not like their schools and they have no hopes of being teachers in the future.

The study done by Kılıc and Kuyumcu (2008) revealed that most of the students in Faculty of Technical Education wanted to be teachers. The results of research by Tanas (2013) suggested that closing of Technical Education Faculties would affect teacher training for professional technical education negatively in terms of quality and quantity.

In the attitudes of the students towards the curriculum, 'I preferred this school because I had to' has the highest value with an average of =4.26 and it is placed in the 'I absolutely agree.' column. The statement ' I believe this school is very active at social environment' is placed in the 'I do not agree' column and has the lowest value with an average of =2.03. The most important factor in the teaching and learning process is definitely the students as they are the reason for the existence of the process. Thus, the students' feelings, opinions and attitudes towards their schools do determine the quality of the education and the level of making educational goals true (Mahiroglu and Ozerbas, 2007). Under these circumstances, it can be said that closing TEFs has a negative impact on students.

In their research, Kelesoglu and Aksoy (2006) found out that it was detected that students were generally not satisfied with Technical Education Faculty. Students expressed that they had difficulties in both professional, theoretical and science lessons and did not make use of labs and workshops enough.

Depending on the results of research done by Aykac et al. (2014), courses in Education Faculty should be performed practically, not theoretically, and teaching methods and techniques should be allowed. Besides that, it should be enriched in terms of equipment, physical conditions, opportunities and lecturers.

In the attitudes towards the instructors, the statement ' I think the instructors behave the students in a rude and harsh way' has the average of =3.89 and it is the highest. That is why, it is seen in the 'I agree' column. The lowest value is =2.18 and it is the statement ' I think the instructors are kind and gentle towards the students.' As a result, it is seen in the ' I do not agree 'column. It can be said that that closing TEFs has also affected the performances of the instructors in a negative way. In the research carried out by Ucar and Ozerbas in 2013, the instructors stated that qualified academic members ought to give technical education.

Okay et al. (2010) found out in their study that Technical Education Faculty automotive students had unstable attitude towards the pleasure related to educational activities. This outcome showed that they had satisfaction at the medium level intended for educational activities done in their faculty.

As for the attitudes towards the employment, the highest value is x=4.23 and it is the statement ' I am seriously concerned about getting a job after I have graduated from this school.' As a result, it goes to the 'I absolutely agree.' column. Very few of the students believe that they will be good technicians in the future. It is proved with the figures at the table 5, because the lowest rate is =2.23 and it is the statement ' I think I will make a good technician when I have finished this school.' Therefore, it is in the 'I do not agree.' column. In the research done by Kilic and Kuyumcu in 2008, the students at TEFs stated that not only are the lessons designed for teaching but they are also good for the private sector. Hence, it can be understood that the process of closing TEFs has a negative impact on students.

Mahiroglu and Ozerbas (2007) stated that the school had weakened the role of providing the graduates with a good career and promising them a good future as they would be facing the unemployment problem not only in their fields but also in their careers.

In the sub dimensions of the attitudes towards the instructors, when the demographic features are analysed, only the number of siblings has a meaningful difference. Having more than four siblings can be said to have led the students to perceive the instructors positively.

As a result, it can be concluded that the students have developed negative feelings for closing TEFs , they have preferred this school because of having no other choice, the instructors cannot make good contacts with their students, and students have concerns about getting a job in the future.

Kılıc and Kuyumcu (2008) suggested that the decrease in teaching opportunities of Technical Education Faculty graduates affected students negatively.

According to results of reseaarch done by Okay et al. (2010),it was found that pleasure of Technical Education Faculty Automotive Department students related to social activities by their faculty was so low.

During the process of closing down the TEFs, the authorities who are in charge of this decision ought to deal with the uncertainty about the future of the students and instructors of these faculties. The students who have some expectations and some plans for the future are attending these schools. However, their motivation decreases to a great extent. So as to preserve these students' rights, the principles of the faculties ought to make some attempts so that these students can get the right to be engineers or teachers.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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