

# *A Sudden Change in Turkish Education System: Public Attitude Towards Dershane Debates in Turkey*

*Emrah Dolgunsöz<sup>1</sup>*

## **Abstract:**

*Dershanes in Turkey are like Bamboo plants; take quite long time to grow but in when required conditions are provided they grow so rapidly that they cannot be uprooted easily. Their academic efficiency and closure are seriously open to debate today due to financial, social and educational factors. The purpose of this study is to reveal public perception on Dershane debates and shed light on the complexity from different perspectives to develop contemporary solutions. This research aims to reveal public attitude towards Dershanes through a 24 item Questionnaire developed by the researcher ( $\alpha$ : .76). 961 participants involved in the study and statistical data was analyzed by performing parametric tests including One Way ANOVA, T-test and frequency analysis to reveal if different social groups (monthly income, age, education level and profession) significantly differ within themselves. The results are supported by descriptive findings. The findings are multifaceted, indicating that attitudes towards Dershane phenomenon remarkably differ in each social group. The findings point out that people perceive Dershanes in accordance with their socio-economic status, age, profession and education level. On the other hand, a majority of the participants gather around the idea that a sudden total closure of these private institutions may cause more complexities.*

**Keywords:** Turkish education system, Dershane, public attitude

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## Türk Eğitim Sisteminde Ani Bir Değişim: Türkiye'deki Dershane Tartışmalarında Kamuoyunun Tutumu

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### Özet:

Türkiye'de Dershaneler tıpkı Bambu bitkilerine benzerler; büyümesi uzun zaman alır ama uygun koşullar sağlandığında o kadar hızlı büyürler ki artık onları sökmek hiç de kolay değildir. Bugün Dershanelerin akademik yetkinlikleri ve kapatılması meselesi ekonomik, sosyal ve eğitimsel faktörlere bağlı olarak tartışmaya açılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı tartışmalara yönelik kamuoyunun tavrını ortaya çıkarmak ve soruna farklı perspektiflerden bakıp güncel çözüm önerileri sunmaktır. Bu araştırma yazar tarafından geliştirilen 24 soruluk bir anket (a: .76) ile toplumun nabzını tutmayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmaya 961 kişi katılmış olup, elde edilen istatistiksel veriler grup içi (aylık gelir, yaş, eğitim seviyesi ve meslek) farklılıkları ortaya çıkarmak için tek yönlü varyans analizi, T testi ve frekans analizi parametrik testleri ile analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar betimsel bulgular ile de desteklenmiştir. Sonuçlar çok yönlü olup, Dershane olgusu her grupta farklılık göstermektedir. Buna göre Türk kamuoyunun Dershanelere bakış açısı sosyo-ekonomik durumları, yaşları, meslekleri ve eğitim seviyeleri ile doğrudan ilintilidir. Öte yandan katılımcıların büyük bir bölümü Dershanelerin ani bir biçimde kapatılmasının daha fazla soruna yol açacağı konusunda hemfikirdir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türk eğitim sistemi, Dershane, kamuoyu tutumu



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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

### Problem:

Bambu bitkileri oldukça yavaş büyümelerine rağmen gerekli şartlar sağlandığında o kadar hızlı gelişirler ki artık onları yerlerinden sökmek gerçekten çok zordur. Türkiye’de Dershaneler tıpkı bambu bitkileri gibidirler. Birçok Asya ülkesindeki muadilleri gibi, öğrencileri ulusal sınavlara hazırlayan ve formal eğitime destek veren bu özel eğitim kurumları son 20 yıllık süreçte Türk eğitim sisteminin vazgeçilmez unsurları haline gelmişlerdir. Sınava dayalı eğitim sistemi ve devlet okullarının akademik yetersizlikleri bu özel kurumların büyümelerini hızlandırmıştır. Bugün Dershanelerin gerekliliği ve akademik verimliliği tartışmaya açılmıştır. Tartışmalar tek yönlü olmaktan ziyade eğitimsel, sosyal ve ekonomik faktörler etrafında çok yönlü olarak seyretilmektedir. Meselenin eğitimsel boyutu sınavlar ile yakından ilişkilidir. Ulusal merkezi sınavların bu kurumların varlığını ciddi boyutlarda etkilediği bir gerçektir. Çoktan seçmeli sınava dayalı mevcut eğitim sisteminde devlet okullarında aradığını bulamayan aileler ve öğrenciler, özel Dershanelerin kapısını çalmaktadırlar. Sınavsız geçiş üzerine henüz sağlıklı bir eğitim politikası üretilmediğinden, Dershanelere olan ihtiyaç halen devam etmektedir. Öte yandan merkezi sınavlar bir rekabet ortamı oluşturmakta, bu yarışta geriye düşmek istemeyen aileler ve öğrenciler zincirleme olarak her yıl binlerce lirayı bu kurumlara yatırmaktadırlar. Görsel medya ise özellikle yılın belirli dönemlerinde bu kurumların reklamını yapmakta, birçok aile ve öğrenci kendi sosyal çevresinde gittiği Dershanelerin iyi ya da kötü reklamını yapmaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra eğitim etiği ve ekonomisi açısından Dershanelerin eğitim eşitliği ilkesine zarar verdiği öne sürülmektedir. Bu iddiaya göre Dershanelere kayıtlar tamamen ailenin veya bireyin ekonomik durumu ile ilgili olup, maddi durumu yetersiz olanlar için sorun teşkil etmektedir.

**Tablo 1.** *Aylık Gelir ve Dershane Kayıtları İlişkisi*

Aylık Gelir	Dershane Kaydı yüzdesi
250 TL den daha az	% 31
250-500 TL	% 46
500- 750 TL	% 61
750-1000 TL	% 69
1000- 1500 TL	% 71
1500- 2000 TL	% 71
2000 TL den fazla	% 75
TOPLAM N	120.000

(Tansel and Bircan, 2005)

Tablo 1’e göre Dershane Kayıtları ve maddi durum arasında doğrudan bir ilişki olduğu görülmektedir. Öte yandan ÖZDEBİR ve GÜVENDER gibi Dershane kuruluşları bu durumu burslarla açıklamaktadırlar. Maddi durumu yetersiz öğrencilere verilen bursları gerekçe gösteren bu kurumlar, Dershanelerin eğitim eşitliği ilkesini desteklediğini savunmaktadırlar. Ancak bu bursların oranları ve yıllık kaç öğrenciye ulaştığı tartışma konusudur. Buna ek olarak Tansel (2013), Dershanelerin Türkiye’deki dağılımının homojen olmadığı belirtmektedir. Bu çalışmaya göre Dershaneler daha çok Türkiye’nin Batı bölgelerinde yoğunlaşmış olup, Doğu ve Güneydoğu’da bu oran gittikçe azalmaktadır. Bu durum ise eğitim

eşitliği tartışmalarında önemli rol oynamaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı bu tartışmalara yönelik kamuoyunun tavrını ortaya çıkarmak ve soruna farklı perspektiflerden bakıp güncel çözüm önerileri sunmaktır.

### **Yöntem:**

Bu çalışma yazar tarafından geliştirilen 24 soruluk bir anket ( $\alpha$ : .76) ile Türk kamuoyunun bu konuda ki fikirlerini de tartışmaya ortak etmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmaya toplumun birçok kesiminden 961 kişi katılmış olup, elde edilen istatistiksel veriler grup içi (aylık gelir, yaş, eğitim seviyesi ve meslek) farklılıkları ortaya çıkarmak için tek yönlü varyans analizi, T testi ve frekans analizi parametrik testleri ile analiz edilmiştir.

### **Bulgular:**

Sonuçlar betimsel bulgular ile de desteklenmiştir. Sonuçlar çok yönlü olup, Dershane olgusu her grupta farklılık göstermektedir.

Aylık gelir üzerinden yapılan analiz sonuçlarına göre yüksek gelirli katılımcılar düşük gelirli olanlara oranla Dershanelerin eğitime ve öğrenciye daha fazla katkı yaptığını düşünmektedirler. Öte yandan tüm gelir grupları devlet okullarının yetersizliğini kabul etmekte olup, bu durumun Dershanelere olan talebi körüklediğini savunmaktadırlar. Bunun yanı sıra sonuçlar göstermektedir ki dar gelirli bireyler Dershaneyi akademik bir ihtiyaçtan ziyade sınavlardan kaynaklanan bir zorunluluk olarak algılamaktadırlar. Bu durum yüksek gelirli bireyler için tam tersidir; yani Dershaneler bir zorunluluk değil, akademik bir ihtiyaçtır.

Yaş değişkeni üzerinden yapılan analizlere göre genç nüfus (14-25 yaş) Dershaneler konusunda oldukça karamsardır. Dershanelerin eğitimlerine ve sosyal hayatlarına çok fazla bir katkı sağlamadığını düşünen bu grup, merkezi sınavlara devlet okullarında yeterince hazırlanamadıkları için Dershaneye gitmek zorunda olduklarını belirtmektedirler. Buna karşın daha yaşlı gruplar Dershanelerin öğrenciye katkıları konusunda daha iyimserdirler. Bütün yaş grupları devlet okullarının yetersizliği konusunda hemfikirdirler. Bu durumu Dershaneleri vazgeçilmez yapan temel unsur olarak görmektedirler.

Eğitim seviyesi üzerinden yapılan analiz sonuçlarına göre az eğitilmiş bireyler yüksek eğitilmiş bireylere göre Dershanelerin katkıları konusunda daha olumludurlar. Sonuçlar göstermektedir ki yüksek eğitilmiş ve eğitim farkındalığı yüksek bireyler Dershanelerin mevcut sistemde çok da faydalı olmadığına, faydadan çok zarar getirebileceğini düşünmektedirler. Düşük eğitim düzeyine sahip bireyler ise Dershanelerin sınav odaklı mevcut sistemde olmazsa olmaz olduğuna inanmaktadırlar ve faydalarının yadsınamaz olduğunu düşünmektedirler. Bütün eğitim seviyeleri devlet okullarının akademik açıdan yetersiz olduğunu düşünmektedirler.

Mesleki durum açısından bakıldığında sonuçlar öğrencilerin Dershanelerin faydası konusunda az bir farkla daha olumsuz olduklarını göstermektedir. Öğrencilerin büyük bölümü Dershaneyi bir zorunluluk olarak görmek ve devlet okullarının yetersiz olduğunu düşünmektedir. Öte yandan çalışan bireyler öğrencilere göre daha olumlu olup, mevcut sistemde Dershanelerin vazgeçilmez olduğunu düşünmektedirler. Her iki grup da devlet okullarının yetersiz olduğu gerçeğinde hemfikirdir.

## **Sonuç ve Tartışma:**

Sonuç olarak Dershaneler kısa vadede ve mevcut sınav sistemi ile kapatılması yarardan çok zarar getireceği düşünülmektedir. Şöyle ki, tüm olumsuzluklara rağmen katılımcıların büyük bir bölümü Dershanelerin kapatılmaması gerektiğini savunmaktadır. Bu durum aslında sorunun Dershane değil, daha derinlerde olduğunun bir göstergesidir. Eğitim sistemindeki aksaklıkların bir sonucu olan Dershanelerin kapatılmasının çözümden çok, eğitimsel ve ekonomik kargaşa getireceği aşikar. Bunun yerine eğitim sisteminde uzun vadeli çözüm politikaları sunulmalı ve hayata geçirilmelidir. Devlet okullarının iyileştirilmesi ve aile-öğrenci-öğretmen sosyal iletişime dayalı üçlü sacayağına oturtulması, mevcut sınav sisteminin adım adım gevşetilip sınavsız sistemlerin planlanması ve öğretmenlerin akademik ve maddi seviyelerinin yükseltilmesi gibi doğrudan Türk eğitim sistemini iyileştirici tedbirlerin alınması gerekmektedir. Bu tür iyileştirmeler neticesinde Dershanelere olan ihtiyaç azalacak ve bu kurumlar kendiliğinden bir çözüme sürecine girecektir. Aksi takdirde kısa vadede yapılan ani müdahaleler uzun vadede daha fazla soruna ve kargaşaya yol açabilir.

## INTRODUCTION

Bamboo plants grow so slowly and need at least five years to see the earliest sprout. But when enough patience and time are given in right conditions, they reach 27 meters length in a few weeks. Then it is nearly impossible to uproot them as they massively grip the soil with their strong roots. Dershanes in Turkey are quite like bamboo plants. Similar to their international equivalents such as “Jukus” in Japan and “Hakwon” in South Korea, “Dershanes” are the cram schools in Turkey which primarily aim to prepare students for national entrance exams. Educational expectancies in Turkey have always rotated around instrumental objectives such as entering a university or having a prestigious profession rather than being a social advancement. These expectancies created a vast cloud of educational rivalry and anxiety in which millions of people competed with each other every year (Aslan, 2004; Ceyhun and Karagölge, 2004; Ekici, 2005; Turan and Alaz, 2007). As the competing masses are not satisfied with the formal education in public schools, they sought the solution in these private institutions: Dershanes.

Due to the changes and challenges in test-oriented Turkish education system; Dershanes rapidly overspread in just two decades. According to Biçer (2008), Dershanes has turned out to be an essential component of education system which not only became a critical matter for millions of people but also a reality for many years. The gap between school curriculum and national entrance exams has been filled by “Dershanes” so far and their efficiency and benefits are open to debate today. Turkish education system is at a turning point and gets stuck in the dilemma of what to do with Dershane phenomenon: total closure, transformation or going on with the same system? The debates have complicated roots and multifaceted including, educational, social and financial aspects. One of the most severe challenges has been the national entrance examinations, especially two phased university entrance exams. The vitality of Dershanes for these exams led parents to pay considerable amounts of money every year and a problem of equality of educational opportunity rises. According to Tansel (2013), distribution of Dershanes is not homogenous in the regions of Turkey and economic status is a strong determiner of Dershane enrollment. Moreover, social influence plays a great role in Dershane registrations as parents view entrance exams totally as competitions. Between their parents and national exams, students are stuck in Dershanes and public schools with the anxiety of failure in critical exams. Depending on these facts, the debates on Dershanes are quite multidimensional involving sociological, financial and educational aspects. Thus, it is vital to suggest long term solutions regarding these factors.

Private tutoring and institutions are global, so related research are conducted by various researchers in international contexts. Bray (1999) investigated the rate of private tutoring attendance in Cambodia and found out high attendance rates. In Hong Kong context, Lee (1996) conducted a survey with 507 students and revealed that 45% of primary, 26% of lower secondary, 34% of middle secondary, and 41% of upper secondary students receiving tutoring. According to an East Asian research by Bray and Kwok (2003), levels of private tutoring is quite common in certain countries

including Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong where more than 70% of regular students receive private support at some point in their academic life. On the other hand, these rates are relatively low in European countries. Private tutoring in European context mainly refers to one to one tutoring unlike Asian organized and institutionalized private tutoring. A 2002 research by Mischo and Haag in Germany indicated that the rates of private tutoring were about 20%. Similarly, a related research by Reay (1998) in UK revealed that most students receive private tutoring only in the final year of primary school.

On the other hand, related research in Turkey is similar to Asian context. According to a survey with 1000 students by Şirin (2000), students' view Dershanes as an obligation for success in university entrance examination as they serve extra services like one-to-one tutoring and academic guidance when compared with public schools. A 2006 research by Tansel and Bircan focused on the number of Dershanes and found out that there were only 157 registered Dershanes in Turkey in 1970s. This number increased dramatically to 1092 by 1990s. In 2005-2006, 3986 Dershanes were active in Turkey. In another research by Biçer (2008), attitudes of freshmen students towards Dershanes were scrutinized. The results of the study indicated that the main reason of Dershane enrollment was the university entrance exams and the conflict between school curriculum and university entrance exam questions. Recently, Tansel (2013) has conducted a quantitative research on regional Dershane distribution and enrollment in Turkey to scrutinize equality of educational opportunity debates. The findings of the research emphasize the fact that there are less Dershanes in Eastern region of Turkey while this rate is quite high in the Western part.

This research with 961 participants is an extensive quantitative research on Dershane phenomenon in Turkey as it includes perceptions of not only students but also attitudes of various social groups. It aims to reveal public perceptions towards Dershanes in detail regarding different social strata with various and divergent financial, social and educational backgrounds. This study also compares perceptions of these groups towards Dershanes and seeks for the underlying reason behind the difference to shed light on the current debates.

## *Review of Literature*

### *Planting the Bamboo: Brief History of Dershanes in Turkey*

The earliest forms of private tutoring institutions in Turkey are quite different from their modern forms. First Dershanes in Turkey were founded in the early years of the Turkish Republic solely to train adults in the fields of art, foreign Languages, commerce and housework (Özoğlu, 2011). With the spread of primary and secondary schools, private classrooms started to flourish all around Turkey. Up until the mid 1960s, private classrooms served as a support center for the ones who failed in exams and wanted to finish secondary schools through open education.

The increasing number of national exams especially for university entrance in the mid 1960s triggered the emergence and spread of modern Dershanes. These private institutions started to change form and turned out to be exam oriented which was

quite similar to the ones today. During this period, demand for higher education was accumulating year by year which led to the foundation of "Student Selection and Placement Center" (ÖSYM) in 1974 in which national examinations were transformed into a more organized structure. The increasing demand for education, competitive host system university entrance examinations, rising educational gaps between different regions of Turkey and the pedagogical and motivational mismatches between national exams and school curriculum promoted the need for an educational support.

After the 1980 Military Coup in Turkey, the new government legislated new regulations to control these private institutions claiming that they spoiled the right of educational opportunity and equality. In 1983, National Security Council closed all Dershane until 1984 (Akyüz, 1997). According to Özoğlu (2011), this critical turning point triggered the unity of private classroom holders who then went on their activities under umbrella foundations such as "ÖZDEBİR, "GÜVENDER" and "TÖDER".

#### *The Bamboo Fertilizers: The Reasons behind the Huge Demand for Dershane*

Dershane issue is a multidimensional one, so the reasons do not rotate on a single axis but rather revolves around financial, social, and educational orbits. Surely, the most important reason behind Dershane is the university entrance exams. Tansel (2013) states that private tutoring institutions are quite common in countries of which academic advancements and transitions are made through host exams. According to Baştürk (2003), entrance exams shaped the entire secondary education in Turkey. These exams in Turkey require students to answer several multiple choice questions in a limited time span. As students need extra techniques to solve these multiple choice questions in a limited time span, they knock the door of Dershane. (Şirin, 1998, 2000; Okur and Dikici, 2004; Gök, 2005). Being one of the strongest reasons behind the demand for Dershane, entrance exams in all periods of education have also created an atmosphere of rivalry which has always boosted these private institutions.

In addition to national exams, quality of public schools in Turkey stands as an important factor. According to David et al (1991), the term shadow education refers to the image of outside-school learning activities paralleling with formal schooling to increase their educational opportunities. These shadowy institutions flourish depending on the nature and quality of educational systems and their prevalence rely on the stability of state education system. In poor quality state educational systems, private and supportive tuition are demanded for adequate level of education. Students and parents may seek tutoring in subjects they perceive to be poorly taught in school. In Turkey, many students who cannot take required education for a successful exam knock the doors of expensive Dershane (Özoğlu, 2011). According to National Education Statistics 2012/13 by Turkish Ministry of National Education (2013), 1.280.297 students are having supplementary education in 3961 Dershane in Turkey today. Statistics show that in a few decades, the capacity of them has reached to a tremendous number which refers to the fact that millions of

students in every region of Turkey have enrolled them each year as they found public school inefficient.

It is a fact that social influence is another factor to encourage Dershane enrollment rate in Turkey. Parents and pupils in contact with others who attend Dershanes are more likely to do the same with the anxiety of falling back in entrance exams. Parents and students influence their social environment and serve as a medium of advertisement. According to TED report in 2010, Turkish society does not believe in a successful entrance exam without Dershane support (Ted, 2010). Tansel and Bircan (2006) emphasize the point that parents do not see private classrooms as a waste of money, on the contrary, they think it is an investment on their children's future. In addition, Dershane advertisements on the media and on billboards also promote this social perception especially in certain periods. ÖSYM feeds this perception by ranking students city by city. Parents who anchor in "more education, more salary, better future" belief for their children are easily influenced by their social milieu and mass media so they inevitably pay considerable amounts of fees to Dershanes every year.

*How to Uproot a Grown Bamboo: Current Debates on the Closure of Dershanes*

Despite all the strong and robust reasons, Dershanes and Turkish education system is at a very critical turnout. The issue is still ambivalent but it has been open to debate recently. One of the most crucial topics is the equality of opportunity in education and Dershanes. As Dershanes are private investments which operate with money in simplest terms, enrollment to them is closely related with income. Whereas, Baloğlu (1995) suggests that Dershanes violate equality of educational opportunity. According to this argument, wealthy parents are considered to provide any private educational assistance for their children while ones with lower income do not have the same opportunity. Table 1 below by Tansel and Bircan (2005) explains and supports the situation:

**Table 1.** *The relationship of income and Dershane Enrollment*

<b>Monthly Income</b>	<b>Dershane Enrollment</b>
Less than 250 TL	31 %
Between 250-500 TL	46 %
Between 500- 750 TL	61 %
Between 750-1000 TL	69 %
Between 1000- 1500 TL	71 %
Between 1500- 2000 TL	71 %
More than 2000 TL	75 %
TOTAL N	120.000

According to Table 1, monthly income and Dershane attendance are directly proportional. In other words, while Dershane enrollment rate is relatively high among high income groups, the case is not so for groups with lower income. On the other hand, Dershanes are also favored by ÖZDEBİR and GÜVENDER which put forward that these institutions are also a way of socialization and protection especially for students who come from smaller settlements with low income (Erdoğan, 2010; Özer, 2006). These Dershane organisations argue that remarkable

scholarship is provided for these successful students. This argument surely seems to promote the equality of opportunities in education but it is disputable as the number of scholarship students is not known. In fact, Dershanes are not steam turbines but a kind of commercial investment in its true nature and require financial stability to survive. This undeniable reality is the point from what inequality debates arise. Most of the time, financial adversities have led parents and students to the thin line between obligation and necessity.

Supplementary private tutoring is idealized as a support for formal education. Whereas, Stevenson et. al. (1992) warn that these institutions should keep their supportive nature and avoid being substitutive. Nevertheless, today the Dershanes in Turkey are losing their supportive nature and superseding state schools. Baloğlu (1995) warns that students do not attend activities at school when there is an important event or exam in Dershanes. He adds that some courses in state schools are not regarded as important by students and Dershane courses are preferred. So they spend more hours in Dershanes especially when the date of a host-examination approaches. The results of this imbalance do not only damage formal education progress but also adversely affect pupils' psychology. Özer (2006) argues that children are also harmed psychologically and physically by the dense course hours both in schools and in private classrooms and frequently need breathing rooms to relax. Surely exam oriented education and academic achievement system created a Dershane versus state school contradiction.

### *Research Questions*

Following research questions are posed in this research to reveal public perception of Dershanes in detail:

Is there a significant difference among low income, average income and high income groups in terms of Contribution, Comparison and Obligation components?

Is there a significant difference among young, middle age and old age groups in terms of Contribution, Comparison and Obligation components?

Is there a significant difference among less educated, averagely educated and highly educated groups in terms of Contribution, Comparison and Obligation components?

Is there a significant difference between labored group and students in terms of Contribution, Comparison and Obligation components?

## **METHOD**

### *Participants and Sampling*

961 subjects involved in this research. Financial, professional, age related and educational backgrounds of the participants vary to a great extent which enables healthy comparisons. Participants attended the survey through online procedures such as social media and e-mailing. In addition, snowball sampling strategy is

applied to expand the scope of participation in which many participants also shared the scale in their social milieu. Thereby, perceptions of several groups are included in this research. Participant details are given in Table 2 below:

**Table 2.** *Participants' Characteristics*

		Count	%			Count	%
<b>Gender</b>	Female	403	41,9%	<b>Profession</b>	Private Sector	227	23,4%
	Male	558	58,1%		State Sector	73	7,5%
<b>Age</b>	14-18	93	9,7%	Freelance	10	1,0%	
	19-25	330	34,3%	Faculty Member	335	34,5%	
	26-40	418	43,5%	Student	283	29,2%	
	41 and over	120	12,5%	Primary school	18	1,9%	
<b>Monthly Income</b>	0-1000 TL	278	30,2%	<b>Education</b>	High school	110	11,4%
	1001-2000 TL	225	24,4%		Vocational school	38	3,9%
	2001-3500 TL	332	36,0%		Bachelor Degree	588	60,8%
	3501-6000 TL	64	6,9%		Master Degree	171	17,7%
	6001 TL and over	22	2,4%		PhD. Degree	42	4,3%
	<b>Total N</b>	961					

### *Instruments*

To reveal public opinion on the closure of Dershanes, an online Questionnaire with 24 items was designed by the researcher. These 24 items include 6 demographic, 4 yes-no, 1 open ended and 13 Likert scale items. The questionnaire was piloted 3 times and required changes were made. These 13 Likert scale items were found to be reliable ( $\alpha = .76$ ) Reverse items were edited before the analysis. As only frequencies of 4 yes-no items were analyzed, they were excluded for factor analysis and reliability analysis. Similarly, 1 open ended item was excluded. After these procedures, a Principal Axis Factor (PAF) with a Varimax (orthogonal) rotation of 13 Likert scale questions from this questionnaire was conducted on data gathered from 961 participants. An examination of the Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy suggested that the sample was factorable (KMO=.923).

**Table 3.** *Obliquely Rotated Component Loadings for 13 Questionnaire Items*

	Component		
	1	2	3
Contribution to Education System	,363	,775	
Contribution to learner success	,354	,762	
Contribution to learner socialization		,757	
Contribution to state economy		,764	
Harm to educational equality	,321	,603	-,462
No exam no Dershane		-,350	,625
Dershane is obligatory		-,487	,626
Dershanes are more qualified than state schools	,777	,417	
Dershanes are results of educational problems			,719
Dershane courses are more important	,762		
Dershane staff is more interested in education	,795		
Dershanes have better educational settings	,786	,349	
Success can come just by Dershanes	,773		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Loadings = .30

The results of an orthogonal rotation of the solution are shown in Table 3. When loadings less than 0.30 were excluded, the analysis yielded a three-factor solution with a simple structure (factor loadings  $\geq .30$ ).

Five items were loaded onto Factor 1. It is clear from Table 3 that these five items all relate to the comparison between Dershanes and state schools. Being in harmony, these 5 items reveal participants' perceptions of Dershanes as educational institutions regarding their superiorities and inferiorities in comparison with state schools. This factor is labeled "Comparison Component". This component was found to be highly reliable ( $\alpha = .88$ ).

Five items loaded onto a second factor were related to the contribution of Dershanes to students' academic achievement and sociability. These items describe public perception of Dershanes as an educational and social support. This factor was labeled "Contribution Component". This component was also found to be highly reliable ( $\alpha = .86$ ).

The three items that loaded onto Factor 3 refer to the dilemma of whether Dershanes phenomenon is an obligation or a necessity. In other words, this factor depicts why people keep their ties with Dershanes for many years and aims to reveal the underlying reasons behind this fact: "Do people find them really useful and necessary for success or do they feel obliged to enroll despite their negative attitude towards them?" This factor was labeled "Obligation Component". Reliability level for this component is relatively low at  $\alpha \geq .70$  level ( $\alpha = .54$ ). The main reason for this can be explained by the low number of items. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient ranges are defined between "0 and 1" which means there is actually no lower limit to the coefficient. The closer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0, the greater the internal consistency of the items. George and Mallery (2003) provide the following rules of thumb: " $\alpha \geq .9$  - Excellent,  $\alpha \geq .8$  - Good,  $\alpha \geq .7$  - Acceptable,  $\alpha \geq .6$  - Questionable,  $\alpha \geq .5$  - Poor, and  $\alpha < .5$  - Unacceptable" (p. 231). Depending on this, current coefficient refers to poor but not unacceptable. This partially explains the situation.

### *Data Analysis*

The data was analyzed using SPSS 20. Nominal groups were recoded into different variables by clustering them into smaller groups. Related Likert item data was reunited under related components revealed by factor analysis. The assumption of normality for this large sample scale ( $N = 961$ ) was tested via examination of the unstandardized residuals. The 3 components are slightly skewed and kurtotic. S-W Tests for 3 components indicated abnormality ( $P = .000$ ). According to Pallant (2011) these levels are quite common and expected in large samples unless there are no extreme values. The boxplots suggested a normal distributional shape (with a few outliers) of the residuals. The Q-Q plot and histogram suggested normality was reasonable. Relying on these results, parametric tests were found to be suitable to implement for further analysis. Frequencies for 4 yes-no items were calculated via cross-tabulation to provide a general panorama and reveal group percentages. Then

details and group differences for 3 components (Contribution- Comparison- Obligation) were calculated with One Way Anova Test and Independent Samples T Test. Results were supported with tables and descriptive results.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The frequency analysis show that public finds no good in the closure of these institutions (67,5%, N = 961). According to the frequency output, more than half (60,9%, N = 961) of the population perceives Dershanes as an educational institution while only 31,3% of them think they have only commercial purposes. However, for such a rooted complex issue, these results are too general and holistic. The underlying reasons and details behind these perceptions are clarified through detailed statistical analysis of 3 components by stratifying public into different groups according to their monthly income, education level, age and professional status.

### *Monthly Income and the Three Components*

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of monthly income on contribution, comparison and obligation components.

**Table 4.** *Anova for 3 Components Regarding Monthly Income*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>contribution</b>	BetweenGroups	9,408	2	4,704	4,643	,010
	WithinGroups	904,709	893	1,013		
	Total	914,117	895			
<b>compare</b>	BetweenGroups	9,325	2	4,662	4,136	,016
	WithinGroups	1000,966	888	1,127		
	Total	1010,291	890			
<b>obligation</b>	BetweenGroups	26,798	2	13,399	15,473	,000
	WithinGroups	777,663	898	,866		
	Total	804,461	900			

The results showed that there was a significant effect of monthly income on contribution component at the  $p < .05$  level [ $F(2, 893) = 4,64, p = .010$ ]. Scheffe post-hoc comparisons of the three groups indicate that the high income group ( $M = 4.19, SD = 0.99, 95\% CI [3.98, 4.41]$ ) significantly differs from low income group ( $M = 3.84, SD = 1.01, 95\% CI [3.75, 3.93]$ ),  $p = .011$ . Comparisons between the average income group ( $M = 3.92, SD = 1.00, 95\% CI [3.81, 4.03]$ ) and the other two groups were not statistically significant at  $p < .05$  level. Depending on these results, it can be stated that higher income fosters positive thoughts on Dershanes and their contribution to socialization and academic efficiency of the students. Frequencies also showed that the majority of high income group perceives Dershanes as educational institutions (74.1%, N= 81). On the other hand, low- income group is less optimistic on the academic-supplementary efficiency of Dershanes as they are required to spare a remarkable budget for them. Descriptive analysis for this group showed that only half of them thinks Dershanes are purely educational institutions (59%, N= 452). A remarkable amount of this group perceives Dershanes as commercial institutions (33%, N= 452).

Statistics also revealed a significant difference between monthly income and comparison component at the  $p < .05$  level [ $F(2, 888) = 4.66, p = .016$ ]. Scheffe post-hoc comparisons of the three groups indicate that the low income group ( $M = 3.84, SD = 1.02, 95\% CI [3.74, 3.92]$ ) significantly differ from average income group ( $M = 3.62, SD = 1.12, 95\% CI [3.50, 3.75]$ ),  $p = .031$ . Comparisons between the high income group ( $M = 3.88, SD = 0.99, 95\% CI [3.67, 4.10]$ ) and the other two groups were not statistically significant at  $p < .05$ . All of the three groups are highly pessimistic about state schools and seem to have accepted the superiority of Dershanes regarding the quality of academic achievement and educational settings. For these groups, Dershanes provide much better and positive learning environment and academic quality when compared with state schools. This may be why the majority of this group does not favor the closure of Dershanes.

Anova tests pointed out a significant effect of monthly income on obligation component at the  $p < .05$  level for the three conditions [ $F(2, 898) = 15.47, p = .000$ ]. Scheffe post-hoc comparisons of the three groups indicate that the low income group ( $M = 3.86, SD = 0.99, 95\% CI [3.77, 3.94]$ ) significantly differ from the average income group ( $M = 3.63, SD = 0.90, 95\% CI [3.53, 3.73]$ ),  $p = .003$  and from high income group ( $M = 3.30, 95\% CI [3.07, 3.53]$ ),  $p = .000$ . Comparisons between the high income group ( $M = 3.30, SD = 1.05, 95\% CI [3.07, 3.53]$ ) and the average income group is also found to be significant ( $p = .015$ ). These results revealed that individuals from different income groups differ from each other in terms of obligation levels. While low income families and individuals feel more obliged and perceive Dershanes as an obligation rather than a standard procedure of academic progress, participants with higher income feel less obligatory and perceive Dershanes as a normal component of education system. Low income parents and individuals may be highly discontented with educational fees of Dershanes but feel obliged to attend or register their children every year as a substantial number of people in their social environment do so.

### Age and the Three Components

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of age on contribution, comparison and obligation components.

**Table 5.** Anova for the Three Components Regarding Age

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>contribution</b>	BetweenGroups	48,907	2	24,454	24,840	,000
	WithinGroups	918,508	933	,984		
	Total	967,415	935			
<b>compare</b>	BetweenGroups	4,099	2	2,050	1,832	,161
	WithinGroups	1035,724	926	1,118		
	Total	1039,823	928			
<b>obligation</b>	BetweenGroups	54,069	2	27,034	31,994	,000
	WithinGroups	789,218	934	,845		
	Total	843,287	936			

The results showed that there was a significant effect of age on contribution component at the  $p < .05$  level [ $F(2, 933) = 24, 84, p = .000$ ]. Scheffe post-hoc

comparisons indicate that young group (14-25 years) ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ , 95% CI [3.57, 3.75]) significantly differs from both mid-age group ( $M = 4.03$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ , 95% CI [3.92, 4.13]),  $p = .000$  and old-age group ( $M = 4.31$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ , 95% CI [4.14, 4.48]),  $p = .000$ . Similarly, both old-age and mid- age groups significantly differ from each other ( $p = .028$ ). As results clearly indicate, age groups highly differ from each other regarding supportive function of Dershanes. While oldest participants showed utmost positive perception towards the benefits of Dershanes, this rate slowly decreases for younger subjects. It is a fact that 12- 19 years interval is the most intense period of attending Dershanes in Turkey and this group showed the least positive attitude towards these institutions. Descriptive calculations point out that nearly half of this group view Dershanes as commercial institutions (40%,  $N = 380$ ). The underlying reason behind this pessimism may be directly related to non-stop education rush hours which also cover weekends. While older people measure Dershanes' contribution just in terms of academic achievement in entrance exams; younger ones also add their own personal development and entertainment into this scale. For young learners, the amount of Dershanes contribution is far less than the amount it absorbs. However, same age group keeps the distance with the closure issue by taking a negative stand to the total closure of Dershanes (62%,  $N = 380$ ). This paradox surely derives from the test-anxiety and the deep-seated perception of "absolute failure without Dershanes.

Statistics showed no significant difference between age and comparison component at the  $p < .05$  level [ $F(2, 926) = 1.83$ ,  $p = .161$ ]. So it can be stated that all groups gather around the idea that Dershanes are better academic institutions when compared with public schools.

Anova tests pointed out a significant effect of age on obligation component at the  $p < .05$  level [ $F(2, 934) = 31.99$ ,  $p = .000$ ]. Scheffe post-hoc comparisons of the three groups indicate that the young group ( $M = 3.96$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ , 95% CI [3.88, 4.05]) significantly differs both from the mid-age group ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ , 95% CI [3.55, 3.73]),  $p = .000$  and old-age group ( $M = 3.01$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ , 95% CI [3.04, 3.42]),  $p = .000$ . In addition, both old-age and mid- age groups significantly differ from each other ( $p = .000$ ). Similar to the contribution component, the most pessimist group is the youngest one. The results of the analysis indicate that young participants perceive enrolling Dershanes as an obligation rather than a necessary beneficial educational activity. Undoubtedly, young learners would not attend Dershanes if they did not have to. When compared with younger people, older participants; especially old-age group, feel less obligatory and this low-level obligation is mainly financial. Instead, they view Dershanes as an academic necessity rather than an obligation due to national university entrance exams. This group is accustomed to being hand in glove with Dershanes for many years and does not believe in success without these institutions. Hence, this group shows ultimately rejects the closure of these institutions (84%,  $N = 99$ ). Therefore, legal or illegal alternatives may be sought if Dershanes are to be totally closed.

### *Education Level and the Three Components*

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of education level on contribution, comparison and obligation components.

**Table 6.** Anova for 3 Components regarding Education Level

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>contribution</b>	BetweenGroups	12,087	2	6,043	5,903	,003
	WithinGroups	960,329	938	1,024		
	Total	972,415	940			
<b>compare</b>	BetweenGroups	23,066	2	11,533	10,449	,000
	WithinGroups	1029,794	933	1,104		
	Total	1052,860	935			
<b>obligation</b>	BetweenGroups	2,261	2	1,131	1,253	,286
	WithinGroups	849,380	941	,903		
	Total	851,642	943			

The results showed that there was a significant effect of education level on contribution component at the  $p < .05$  level [ $F(2, 938) = 5,90, p = .003$ ]. Scheffe post-hoc comparisons indicate that less educated group ( $M = 4.19, SD = 0.96, 95\% CI [4.02, 4.36]$ ) significantly differs from average educated group ( $M = 3.85, SD = 1.03, 95\% CI [3.76, 3.93]$ ),  $p = .003$  and highly educated group ( $M = 3.89, SD = 0.98, 95\% CI [3.75, 4.02]$ ),  $p = .034$ . No significance is found between average educated group and highly educated group ( $p = .859$ ). The results point out the fact that low education level promotes the perception of Dershanes as highly fructuous institutions for academic achievement. A vast majority of this group perceives Dershanes as purely educational institutions (85%,  $N = 126$ ) while only the half of highly educated group thinks the same (54.1%,  $N = 115$ ). Families and individuals with poor education value Dershanes more than the ones with average or higher education and perceive Dershanes as a savior.

Statistics showed a significant difference between education level and comparison component at the  $p < .05$  level [ $F(2, 933) = 11.53, p = .000$ ]. Scheffe post-hoc comparisons indicate that less educated group ( $M = 4.18, SD = 0.90, 95\% CI [4.02, 4.35]$ ) significantly differs from both averagely educated group ( $M = 3.73, SD = 1.08, 95\% CI [3.64, 3.82]$ ),  $p = .000$  and highly educated group ( $M = 3.69, SD = 1.02, 95\% CI [3.55, 3.83]$ ),  $p = .000$ . No significance is found between average educated group and highly educated group ( $p = .888$ ). Drawing upon these results, it can be put forward that less educated people or parents discredit state schools and appreciate Dershanes more than the educated. In other words, the appreciation rate decreases as level of education increase. Naturally, less educated group initiates a remarkable rejection to the closure of Dershanes (85.7%,  $N = 121$ ).

### *Professional Status and the Three Components*

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare 3 components (contribution, comparison and obligation) in terms of profession type: Labored and Studentship.

**Table 7.** *Independent Samples T-Test for 3 Components regarding Professional Status*

	Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means					95% CID	
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	MD	SED	Lower	Upper
<b>contribution</b>	,082	,774	4,712	941	,000	,3390	,07195	,19783	,48023
<b>compare</b>	1,154	,283	,905	935	,366	,0688	,07602	,21798	,08038
<b>obligation</b>	3,936	,048	5,364	944	,000	,3580	,06676	,48907	,22705

Regarding the contribution component, there was a significant statistical difference between the means at the  $p < .05$  level for the labored group ( $M= 4.00$ ,  $SD= 1.00$ ) and student group ( $M=3.66$ ,  $SD= 1.01$ );  $t(941) = 4,712$ ,  $p = .000$ . Cohen's effect size value ( $d = .33$ ) of this test meets Cohen's standard for a small effect ( $d \geq .30$ ). Despite small effect size, the results still indicate a slight difference between the two groups. Students are less positive about the benefits of Dershanes when compared to working people.

Regarding comparison component, no significant statistical difference is found between the means at the  $p < .05$  level for the labored group ( $M= 3.76$ ,  $SD= 1.08$ ) and student group ( $M=3.83$ ,  $SD= 1.01$ );  $t(935) = ,905$ ,  $p = .366$ . Both groups accept superiority of Dershanes over state schools.

Regarding obligation component, there was a significant statistical difference between the means at the  $p < .05$  level for the labored group ( $M= 3.63$ ,  $SD= 0.94$ ) and student group ( $M=3.98$ ,  $SD= 0.90$ );  $t(944) = 5,364$ ,  $p = .000$ . Cohen's effect size value ( $d = .38$ ) of this test meets Cohen's standard for a small effect ( $d \geq .30$ ). Although effect size is low, these two groups still show a slight difference. Students are more apt to see Dershanes as an obligation rather than a necessity when compared with labored group.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, despite all clear and justified reasons, Dershanes are hard to be closed totally in current Turkish education system. Although parents and students show negative attitudes in various degrees towards these institutions regarding social, financial and educational factors, they cannot deny their vitality in exam oriented education system as no one wants to fall behind in this academic rivalry. Indeed the focal point is not learning in such a competitive education system but to have a remarkable score among millions and winning in the final. For many people, to achieve this goal, any medium can be used including Dershanes. On the other hand, killing the hydra-headed chimera is not easy as the consequences are unpredictable. Parents and students are anxious about the closure of Dershanes as any practical alternative has not been proposed yet. Besides, total closure may provoke illegal private tutoring constructs which may totally paralyze current crippled education system. And then the ambivalence goes on and the debates are stuck. This research revealed that public can support any non-exam oriented educational policy without Dershanes. The results show that the main problem is not Dershanes but the dynamics of Turkish education system. Current education system in Turkey focuses on effort and rivalry rather than aptitude and learning. Dershanes are the results of such a competitive educational context and mentality. Thus, the solution starts with

the education system not Dershanes. Depending on the current research, some suggestions are listed as follows:

- Improving public school settings such as creating new learning environments like laboratories, technology classrooms and sports centers
- Creating a better social learning atmosphere in schools through cooperative activities which enable students and parents to spend more time in formal learning environment
- Increasing teacher self-efficacy and academic competence with periodical training workshops and seminars
- Increasing teacher salaries
- Regulating a healthy control mechanism to measure teacher efficiency and supervision
- Administrating a single university entrance exam and regulating an efficient course for it in public schools every year only at high school
- Designing better curriculum for art and sports related courses
- Increasing parent and student awareness on success and career through periodical seminars
- Creating a social tripod of family-student-school relationship by establishing efficient communication with parents and students

This study revealed that Dershane reality is a supply –demand issue with critical socio-economic aspects. Closure of Dershanes heavily relies on the idea that their absence would increase the quality of formal education dynamics and promote Turkish education system. Indeed, long term application of such so called remedial steps in formal education may cure the Dershane dilemma, lead them to lose their efficiency in time and cause them to be suppressed by formal education. However, any short term result is still unforeseen as these private institutions are closely integrated with millions of families and students. Surely, any sudden decision without repairing certain parts of the education system would adversely affect millions of students and citizens.

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