

# Comparison of Turkey and United States in terms of teacher performance indicators

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Article Info	Abstract
<b>Article History</b> Submitted: 30 November 2017 Revised: 6 December 2017 Published: 8 December 2017	Developing objective standards and indicators, and establishing the transparency of the evaluation process have significant importance in reducing negative teacher opinions and ensuring healthy functioning of the performance evaluation system. The purpose of this study is to compare teacher performance indicators in Turkey and United States. This study was conducted using document review, which is one of the qualitative research methods. In the study, document review was used as the data collection method. In the first stage, the official documents of the two countries were accessed via websites. The authenticity of the obtained documents was checked. Finally, the analysis was done with the classification form developed by the researchers. In the study, the analysis of the documents was done by descriptive analysis technique. General Proficiencies of Teaching Profession consist of 233 performance indicator and Core Teaching Standards consist of 74 performance indicators. The findings of the study were examined under five themes determined by considering the General Proficiencies of Teaching Profession and Core Teaching Standards: Student and learning, content knowledge, instructional practice, assessment and professional development. General Proficiencies of Teaching Profession lists the knowledge, skills, and behaviors expected from teachers as performance indicators. In Core Teaching Standards, the performance indicators provide suggestions and explanations for the development of teaching in accordance with the requirements of today's world. the preparation of performance indicators to provide teachers' development and the realistic use of these indicators in evaluating will help improve the quality of teacher performance evaluation.
<b>Keywords</b> Teacher performance Performance evaluation Performance standards Teacher proficiencies Performance indicators	

## 1. Introduction

Performance is defined in different ways such as, the evaluation of all the efforts displayed to achieve organizational objectives (Palmer & Winters, 1993); the outcome of the organization after a certain time; a concept that quantitatively or qualitatively determine the outcome (Şimşek & Nursoy, 2002), which has been obtained through a purposeful and planned activity. Performance evaluation is the evaluation of the employees by the manager by measuring and comparing their performance with predetermined standards (Palmer & Winters, 1993). Performance evaluation makes significant contributions in terms of providing objective criteria, determining educational needs, offering a fair salary structure and identifying the differences on performance levels (Satır, 2011). The performance evaluation performed at an institution determines the degree to which the

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organization achieves its objectives, while also evaluating its quality and productivity (Koçak, 2006).

The rapidly changing social and economic life is also changing the organizations and the nature of organizational behavior expected from teachers. From this perspective, performance evaluation of teachers is a field which is gaining importance. The achievement level of the school and the performance of the organization are considered to be correlated with the performance of the teachers in the way of organizational objectives. The evaluation of the performances of the teachers is different and self-specific as it is in the profession. The prerequisite for a beneficial evaluation of performance depends on the clear definition of the tasks (Koçak, 2006). In this respect, the fact that teaching is a multidimensional profession makes it difficult to define job descriptions. The adaptation of Taylor's (1997) The Principles of Scientific Management to educational performance evaluation led to the evaluation of teachers with the results of standardized exams entered by students. Classical performance evaluation approaches are used to make decisions such as performance based wage and promotion. This outcome-oriented assessment system increases the destructive competition culture and thus leads to adversity in the educational environment. In this respect, the evaluation of the teachers by measuring the results in a process in which different forms of interaction are experienced does not seem correct (Buyruk, 2014; Yıldırım, 2013). Peterson (2000) notes that typical teacher assessments do not develop teacher behavior and do not represent what is happening in the classroom. Likewise, the criticisms that have come to the fore are that teacher evaluation methods have low validity and reliability (Darling- Hammond, Wise, & Pease, 1983), teacher evaluation is superficial (Stiggins & Duke, 1988), teachers are measured at minimum level (Danielson & McGreal, 2000). Contemporary performance evaluation approaches are aimed at ensuring personal development and increasing organizational productivity. Although requirement of contemporary performance evaluation are accepted (Koçak, 2006); performance assessment continues to be a problematic area due to evaluation errors and unfair judgments (Kozlowski et al., 1998), confusion of political and personal considerations (Cooper, Ehrensal, & Bromme, 2005) and difficulties in questioning employee maltreatment (Remington, 2002).

In Turkey, performance evaluation has been underlined in 8th, 9th and 10th Development Plans, where the signals of the shift to a performance-based system have been given (DPT, 2000; 2006; Ministry of Development, 2013). Pilot scheme of the Performance Management Model in School was initiated during 2002-2003 academic years, in 23 cities and 208 schools. The Performance Management Model in School consists of the proficiency of the teacher, proficiency areas that a teacher should have, sub-proficiencies required by each field and performance indicators to observe these proficiencies (EARGED, 2006). The Ministry of Education has determined general and specific proficiencies of the teaching profession in 2008 and put it in a more comprehensive form than the Performance Management Model in School (Ministry of National Education [MEB], 2008). Teacher competencies are used for the following purposes: (i) teacher training policies; (ii) pre-service teacher training programs of higher education institutions that train teachers; (iii) in-service training of teachers; (iv) selection of teachers; (v) evaluation of teachers' performance; (vi) teachers' self-awareness and career development, teachers are identified as self-awareness and career development, and that the qualifications will be constantly improved and updated by the Ministry (MEB, 2008). Teacher General Proficiencies consist of 6 main proficiencies, 31 sub-proficiencies, and 233 performance indicators.

In United States, performance evaluation standards of the teachers can be determined and implemented by the states, communities, regions and even by schools. However, Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) has determined teaching standards and proficiencies in the most comprehensive manner in 1992 and continued to update it over years. It is the Core Teaching Standards prepared by InTASC which is the most accepted according to regional and school-based standards prepared in a similar way. Finally, the Core Teaching Standards prepared in 2013 aim to explain the new vision needed for today's learners and the teaching practices in accordance with this vision and what strategies teachers can use for

development (CCSSO, 2013). Basic Teaching Standards consist of 10 standards under 4 general categories.

The success of the student as the most important output of the teacher performance, that is receiving strong support from the public. The quality of schools and teachers depends on how successful the students are in the exams, and as a result, schools and teachers are under great pressure to ensure that their students succeed (Archer, 2000; Popham, 2000). It appears that many experts agree that the scores of students receive from standard tests are influenced by many variables that can not be controlled by teachers and that they will not reflect the performance of teachers (Kohn, 2000; Neill, 1999; Tell, 2001). However, in studies that reveal the relationship between teacher performance and student achievement in the literature, it is concluded that there is a lower level of relationship between classical performance evaluation made by the principal only and student achievement (Medley & Cooker, 1987), and also there is a higher relationship between teacher performance and student achievement in standard-based evaluations (Bommer, Johnson, Rich, Podsakoff, & MacKenzie, 1995; Fritzsche, Weerasinghe, & Babu, 2003; Heneman, 1986; Milanovsk, 2004).

When the literature is examined, it is seen that performance and performance evaluation are considered together with many concepts: Organizational commitment (Swales, 2002); organizational citizenship (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Paine, & Bachrach, 2000); organizational culture (Biswas, 2009; Harwiki, 2013; Jung & Takeuchi, 2010; Ogbonna & Harris, 2000); organizational climate (Litwin & Stringer, 1968); stress (Kakkos & Trivellas, 2011; Kazmi, Amjad, & Khan, 2008; Khalid et al., 2012); exhaustion (Garden, 1991; Nowack & Hanson, 1983; Taris, 2006); motivation (Harackiewicz, Abrahams, & Wageman, 1987; Kunz & Pfaff, 2002); organizational learning (Garcia-Morales, Jimenez-Barriónuevo, & Gutierrez-Gutierrez, 2012; Montes, Moreno & Garcia-Morales, 2005); conflict management (Kotlyar, 2001; Wakefield, Leidner, & Garrison, 2008); organizational justice (Williams, 1999; Poison, Akyüz, Eren, & Turhan, 2013); school culture (Heck & Marcoulides, 1996; Maslowski, 2001), teacher education (Ferguson & Womack, 1993; Pecheone & Chung, 2006). At the same time, there were lots of research about evaluation of teachers 'and administrators' views on performance evaluation (Akbaba Altun & Memişoğlu, 2008; Soydan, 2012; Süzen, 2007; Yariv, 2009); performance evaluation tools (Flowers & Hancock, 2013; Gün, 2012; Koçak, 2006); performance evaluation methods (Anagün, 2002; Kanton, 2013).

In many of the studies on the evaluation of teacher performance, contemporary performance evaluation is considered necessary. On the other hand, many researches featuring the opinions about evaluating teacher performance have been concluded with various positive and negative opinions and no clarity has been achieved on this issue. The researches performed in various countries show that having knowledge and understanding about the process of performance standards and evaluation let the teachers to approach performance evaluations positively. Developing objective standards and indicators, and establishing the transparency of the evaluation process have significant importance in reducing negative teacher opinions and ensuring healthy functioning of the performance evaluation system (Buyruk, 2014; Erken, 1990; Koçak, 2006). The purpose of this study is to compare teacher performance indicators in Turkey and United States.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Research design

This study was conducted using document review, which is one of the qualitative research methods. Document analysis includes the review of the written materials that contain information about the targeted fact(s) (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). In this regard, the official documents of the two countries were examined in the study as a source.

### 2.2. Data collection

In the study, document review was used as the data collection method. The document review has based on the steps specified by Forster (1995) and Rowlinson (2004). In the first stage, the official

documents of the two countries were accessed via websites. The authenticity of the obtained documents was checked. Finally, the analysis was done with the classification form developed by the researchers.

### **2.3. Data analysis**

In the study, the analysis of the documents was done by descriptive analysis technique. Descriptive analysis is a descriptive analysis based on the words in qualitative analysis, the language used, the structure and characteristics of the dialogues, the symbolic expressions used and analogies (Kümbetoglu, 2005). The descriptive analysis used in the study consists of 4 steps as it follows; (i) creation of a framework for descriptive analysis, (ii) processing of data according to the thematic framework, (iii) identification of findings, and (iv) interpretation of findings (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). Examples of performance indicators from both countries were presented in findings. The numbering of the performance indicators was made in the form of A1.1 for Teaching General Field Qualifications for Teaching Profession and 1a for Basic Teaching Standards, adhering to the original documents.

## **3. Findings**

### **3.1. General proficiencies of teaching profession**

The proficiencies that all teachers should have in Turkey are structured under the roof of General Proficiencies of Teaching Profession; these are proficiency area, sub-proficiencies and performance indicators. Accordingly, 6 proficiency areas, and 31 sub-proficiencies and 233 performance indicators, which are related to these areas, were determined. These proficiency areas and sub-proficiencies are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

*General Proficiencies of Teaching Profession*

Proficiency Area	Sub-proficiencies
1. Personal and Professional Values – Professional Improvement	1.1 Caring, understanding and respecting students
	1.2 Believing that students can learn and achieve
	1.3 Caring national and global values
	1.4 Self-evaluation
	1.5 Ensuring personal improvement
	1.6 Following professional developments and making contributions
	1.7 Making contributions to the improvement and progress of the school
	1.8 Following professional laws, fulfilling his/her duties and responsibilities
2. Knowing Student	2.1 Knowing developmental characteristics
	2.2 Considering his/her interests and needs
	2.3 Caring students
	2.4 Guiding students
3. Teaching and Learning Process	3.1 Planning the course
	3.2 Preparing the materials
	3.3 Organizing learning environments
	3.4 Organizing off-class activities
	3.5 Diversifying teaching considering individual differences
	3.6 Time management
	3.7 Behavior management
4. Measurement and Evaluation of Learning and Development	4.1 Identifying the methods and techniques of measurement and evaluation
	4.2. Measuring students' learning using various measurement techniques
	4.3 Analyzing and interpreting the data, and providing feedback about the development and learning of the students
	4.4 Reviewing teaching-learning process according to the results

**Table 1 continued**

5. School, Family and Community Relations	5.1 Knowing the environment 5.2 Using environmental opportunities 5.3 Making the school a cultural center 5.4 Knowing the family and keeping neutrality in relations with parents 5.5 Ensuring the involvement and collaboration of the family
6. Program and Content Knowledge	6.1 Purposes and principles of Turkish National Education 6.2 Knowledge about the education program of the specific field and application skill 6.3 Monitoring, evaluation and development of the education program of the specific field

### **3.2. Core teaching standards**

Core Teaching Standards consist of general categories, standards, performance indicators under each standard, essential knowledge and critical dispositions. Core Teaching Standards, (i) The Learner and Learning, (ii) Content, (iii) Instructional Practice, (iv) Professional Responsibility have been shaped under the 4 general categories. These are 10 standard under these categories. These standards are listed in Table 2.

**Table 2*****Core Teaching Standards***

General Category	Standards
1.The Learner and Learning	1.1 Learner Development 1.2 Learning Differences 1.3 Learning Environments
2.Content Knowledge	2.1 Content Knowledge 2.2 Application of Content
3.Instructional Practice	3.1 Assessment 3.2 Planning for Instruction 3.3 Instructional Strategies
4.Professional Responsibility	4.1 Professional Learning and Ethical Practice 4.2 Leadership and Collaboration

In summary, General Proficiencies of Teaching Profession consist of 233 performance indicator and Core Teaching Standards consist of 74 performance indicators. The findings of the study were examined under five themes determined by considering the General Proficiencies of Teaching Profession and Core Teaching Standards: Student and learning, content knowledge, instructional practice, assessment and professional development.

### **3.3. Student and learning**

In this theme, students' and learning performance indicators such as development characteristics, interests, and needs of students, learning differences and guidance are addressed. It is seen that in terms of teaching suitable for the individual differences of the students, the indicators in the Core Teaching Standards are presented in a more comprehensive and detailed way; that in the General Proficiency of Teaching Profession indicators at the knowledge level. The sample indicators for these findings are presented below.

*Teachers are aware that students have different learning characteristics. (A2.2)*

*Teacher plans the learning-teaching process according to individual differences. (B2.1)*

*The teacher designs, adapts, and delivers instruction to address each student's diverse learning strengths and needs and creates opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning in different ways. (2a)*

*The teacher makes appropriate and timely provisions (e.g., pacing for individual rates of growth, task demands, communication, assessment, and response modes) for individual students with particular learning differences or needs.(2b)*

What teachers should do in order to monitor the development of students is explained with similar expressions. Examples of this finding are as follows:

*The level of development of learners and their individual differences are measured by observation, interview, individual and group projects, scales, etc. using techniques. (B1.2)*

*Assignments and responsibilities are given appropriately to the level of development, the way of learning, their interests. (B1.3)*

*The teacher regularly assesses individual and group performance in order to design and modify instruction to meet learners' needs in each area of development (cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical) and scaffolds the next level of development (1a)*

*The teacher creates developmentally appropriate instruction that takes into account individual learners' strengths, interests, and needs and that enables each learner to advance and accelerate his/her learning. (1b)*

Many basic values such as love, respect, and tolerance expected from teachers in terms of arranging relations between teachers and students are covered in the performance indicators of General Proficiencies. These values have been expressed more practically in the Core Teaching Standards. Sample indicators are presented below.

*The teacher calls the student by name. (C7.2)*

*The teacher reacts positively when the students give different answers to the questions. (A1.7)*

*The teacher behaves without prejudice according to the student's past and socio-economic status. (A1.13)*

*The teacher is respectful in verbal reactions and behaviors (A1.8)*

*The teacher collaborates with learners, families, and colleagues to build a safe, positive learning climate of openness, mutual respect, support, and inquiry. (3a)*

*The teacher communicates verbally and nonverbally in ways that demonstrate respect for and responsiveness to the cultural backgrounds and differing perspectives learners bring to the learning environment.(3f)*

It can be said that the performance indicators of both countries have similar responsibilities for teachers in terms of motivating and encouraging students. Teachers need to have the necessary emotional skills to be able to motivate their students. This finding can be illustrated as follows:

*The teacher aims to develop a positive attitude towards learning in students. (A2.1)*

*The teacher promotes and supports the success of students. (A2.9)*

*The teacher believes every student will succeed. (A2.10)*

*The teacher encourages the learning efforts of students at different levels. (A2.7)*

*The teacher takes responsibility for promoting learners' growth and development.(1j)*

*The teacher believes that all learners can achieve at high levels and persists in helping each learner reach his/her full potential.(2l)*

### **3.4. Content knowledge**

It is seen that the performance indicators differed in terms of teachers' knowledge and application of subject area. General Proficiencies of Teacher Profession restricted the subject area to knowing and using only field teaching programs, but the Core Teaching Standards pointed out that more complex skills in field knowledge and teaching should be employed.

*The teaching-learning process is carried out in line with the aims and principles of Turkish National Education. (F1.5)*

*The teacher reflects the purpose, principle, and approach of the subject area curriculum in his/her plans. (F2.1)*

*The teacher follows the changes in the subject area curriculum. (F3.1)*

*The teacher engages learners in applying content knowledge to real world problems through the lens of interdisciplinary themes (e.g., financial literacy, environmental literacy).(5b)*

*The teacher engages learners in generating and evaluating new ideas and novel approaches, seeking inventive solutions to problems, and developing original work.(5f)*

### **3.5. Instructional practice**

Similar performance indicators have been established in terms of taking into consideration the individual, social and cultural differences and impressions of the students in the planning of instruction. It can be said that both countries take into account the fact that they are multicultural in determining teacher proficiencies.

*The teacher provides diversity in class and out of class activities in accordance with the social and cultural characteristics of the students. (A1.9)*

*The teacher brings multiple perspectives to the discussion of content, including attention to learners' personal, family, and community experiences and cultural norms.(2d)*

In terms of planning, implementing and managing the learning-teaching process, there are more performance indicators in General Proficiencies of Teaching Profession, and the indicators are progressing step by step. Core Teaching Standards handle performance indicators more holistically. Examples of this finding are as follows:

*The teacher indicates what purpose and learning outcomes will be in the lesson plan. (C 1-3)*

*The teacher considers individual differences when preparing and selecting materials. (C2.2)*

*The teacher organizes to support the learning of the physical conditions of the learning environment. (C3.3)*

*The teacher prepares a plan for extracurricular activities. (C4.1)*

*The class rules are determined by students and teacher together. (C7.6)*

*The teacher plans how to achieve each student's learning goals, choosing appropriate strategies and accommodations, resources, and materials to differentiate instruction for individuals and groups of learners.(7b)*

*The teacher manages the learning environment to actively and equitably engage learners by organizing, allocating, and coordinating the resources of time, space, and learners' attention.(3d)*

### **3.6. Assessment**

In terms of the evaluation of the teachers' pupils, more comprehensive statements are given in Core Teaching Standards. While General Proficiencies of Teaching Profession are dealt with at a simpler level of performance indicators, Basic Teaching Standards require that multiple indicators be handled together. Some examples of this theme are presented below.

*The teacher determines appropriate measurement tools. (D1.2)*

*The teacher organizes individual assessment and assessment activities and uses strategies to involve students in these activities. (D2.5)*

*The teacher interprets the measurement results and provides feedback to the student. (D3.4)*

*The teacher reviews teaching strategies, approaches, methods, and techniques. (D4.4)*

*The teacher works independently and collaboratively to examine test and other performance data to understand each learner's progress and to guide planning. (6c)*

*The teacher engages learners in understanding and identifying quality work and provides them with effective descriptive feedback to guide their progress toward that work. (6d)*

*The teacher models and structures processes that guide learners in examining their own thinking and learning as well as the performance of others. (6f)*

### **3.7. Professional development**

In terms of the personal development of teachers, there are more basic expectations in General Proficiencies of Teaching Profession. Core Teaching Standards provide performance indicators to guide in terms of teachers' self-concept development and self-improvement in his/her deficient areas. The sample indicators for these findings are presented below.

*The teacher is consistent and honest in his/her behavior. (A5.3)*

*The teacher struggles with difficulties. (A5.4)*

*The teacher knows how to deal with stress. (A5.5)*

*The teacher has confidence. (A5.6)*

*The teacher has high-level thinking skills and uses them. (A5.7)*

*The teacher uses Turkish in an appropriate and understandable way. (A5.10)*

*The teacher does his/her job professionally and willingly. (A5.11)*

*The teacher reflects on his/her personal biases and accesses resources to deepen his/her own understanding of cultural, ethnic, gender, and learning differences to build stronger relationships and create more relevant learning experiences. (9e)*

*The teacher understands how personal identity, worldview, and prior experience affect perceptions and expectations, and recognizes how they may bias behaviors and interactions with others. (9i)*

It points out similar teaching-learning activities and opportunities for teachers' professional development and emphasizes the proficiencies that must be gained or improved by these means. Sample indicators are presented below.

*The teacher participates in in-service training, meetings and seminars with the aim of improving their professional knowledge, skills and competences. (A6.3)*

*The teacher engages in ongoing learning opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in order to provide all learners with engaging curriculum and learning experiences based on local and state standards. (9a)*

#### 4. Discussion

In this study, it was aimed to compare performance indicators under teacher proficiencies in Turkey and the United States. When we look at performance indicators quantitatively, there are 233 performance indicators under 6 proficiencies in General Proficiencies of Teaching Profession, and 74 performance indicators under 4 general categories in Core Teaching Standards.

General Proficiencies of Teaching Profession lists the knowledge, skills, and behaviors expected from teachers as performance indicators. In Core Teaching Standards, the performance indicators provide suggestions and explanations for the development of teaching in accordance with the requirements of today's world. Indeed, the gap between theory and practice in teacher education is one of the topics discussed (Akdemir, 2013). Küçükahmet (2007) has emphasized the necessity of teacher education to be done according to certain standards and implementations more efficiently. In the literature, there are studies about how to use and apply teacher proficiencies and these are not sufficiently related to teacher education (Atik Kara, 2012; Özoglu, 2010).

It can be said that the performance indicators in the General Proficiencies of Teaching Profession are handled at a more tangible and simple level. In Core Teaching Standards show that basic level indicators are not included and that the indicators are presented in a more comprehensive and detailed way. Certainly, the teacher proficiencies express the knowledge, skills and attitudes that teachers should have. How the teacher proficiencies will be put into practice is determined by their performance indicators. However, it is expected that these indicators will be able to handle the field-specific skills of teaching at a higher level as a profession of specialization. Likewise, there are criticisms stated that about teacher performance evaluation such as superficiality of the teacher evaluation (Stiggins & Duke, 1988) and the minimum level of the teacher's needs (Danielson & McGreal, 2000).

Superficiality and weakness of teacher competencies in Turkey affect the development of these proficiencies, and teacher education. It has been suggested that teacher education should be focused on practice and research in the context of higher level of teacher competencies (Balkar, 2014; Conroy, Hulme, & Menter, 2013; Hollins, Luna and Lopez, 2014; Küçükahmet, 2007; Yavuz, Özkaral, & Yıldız, 2015; Yıldırım & Vural, 2014). In this manner, it is stated that teachers can be specialized in professional ethics and leadership issues which are rarely mentioned except that they are more successful in teaching practices (Hollins et al., 2014; Tirri & Ubani, 2013).

Research on teacher performance evaluation emphasizes the need for contemporary performance evaluation systems. However, first of all, it is necessary to reduce the negative opinions of the teachers about the performance evaluation. This may be possible with the performance evaluation system being implemented with objective standards, indicators, and transparency of the evaluation process (Buyruk, 2014; Erken, 1990; Koçak, 2006).

As a result, contemporary performance evaluation is aimed at ensuring the personal development of individuals and increasing productivity. Typical teacher evaluations are criticized for not serving these purposes, not improving teacher behavior and not representing what is happening in the class (Peterson, 2000). In this context, the preparation of performance indicators to provide teachers' development and the realistic use of these indicators in evaluating will help improve the quality of teacher performance evaluation.

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