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# An Overview of Tour-Guide Training Literature in Türkiye

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The discussion of tour-guide training, which started in the 1990s in Türkiye has been taken up in the associated literature more than in any other country. No studies were previously carried out, however, to place the nearly-30-year-prolonged discussions in a historical framework and evaluate them. Yet, understanding the evolution of such training-related discussions has the potential to lead to remarkably useful information for future analyses of the subject. The purpose of the present research is to provide an overall evaluation of the literature about tour-guide training in Türkiye. To this end, the literature was reviewed, and the issues addressed as well as the solutions proposed by the relevant studies were identified. The findings reveal that most of the major issues brought up in the early scholarship are still pertinent. They also indicate that the problems in tour-guide training have not subsided; on the contrary, those problems have increasingly varied in the meantime. Based on this judgment, the question of which philosophical and educational bases tour-guide training should be built upon has emerged as a significant matter of concern for future research, and some topics that need to be pursued have been determined.

**Key Words:** tour guiding, training, literature review, Turkey, Türkiye

## Introduction

The earliest academic papers about tour guiding in Türkiye<sup>1</sup> were published in the second half of the 1980s, when Türkiye was seeking to attune itself to the global economy. They focused on how the nature of tour-guide training should be and formed a sizable corpus. For more than a quarter of a century, tour-guide training has been a lively discussion topic—probably more than in any other country.

Despite the presence of long-lasting discussions, studies that provide an overall view of the tour-guiding literature have only recently emerged in both Turkish and non-Turkish literature. Empirical studies in English regarding tour-guiding have started to become available in the past few years (Black, Weiler, & Chen, 2018; Galí & Camprubí, 2020); similarly, overview articles in Türkiye began to appear in recent times (Avcıkurt, Alper & Geyik,

2009; Aslan & Büyükkuru, 2015; Çokişler, 2017; Eser, 2020; Topsakal, 2021; Çokişler, 2021). Yet, there are no comprehensive research articles that compile the discussions so far about the training. The purpose of this study is to determine the subjects of the discussions related to tour-guide training, and to, thereby, bring an overall view and evaluation of the associated literature. To that end, the study seeks to answer the following question:

*Which issues have been discussed in regard to tour-guide training, and how have those issues been addressed in the last thirty years?*

The first section of this paper briefly introduces tour guiding in Türkiye, the method section explains the research methodology, and the results section presents the data obtained through a literature review. The final section provides a general evaluation and includes implications along with suggestions for further studies.

<sup>1</sup> On 31st May 2022 the UN and other international organisations were asked to recognise the name Türkiye instead of Turkey.

## Tour Guiding in Türkiye

One of the most popular tourist destinations worldwide, Türkiye is an example of interest in terms of tour guiding. The first two legal regulations on tour guides date back to 1890 and 1925 (Cansu & Bahar, 2021) and today, guiding education is available at five different levels: vocational courses opened by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, two- and four-year vocational colleges, four-year university programmes, graduate programmes, and doctoral programmes. Of the Group of Twenty<sup>2</sup> (G20) countries, there is no other member that provides tour-guiding education at such different levels, and accepts tour-guiding as an academic discipline (Uçmuş, 2021). In this respect, Türkiye is the first and only country among the G20 members.

Tour-guide training was initiated as an associate-degree programme at vocational schools at the beginning of the 1990s. It was provided as an undergraduate programme at colleges of tourism and hospitality management from 1997 onwards, and at tourism faculties from 2009 onwards. Training was made available in graduate programmes in 2015, and a tour guiding doctoral programme was introduced as of 2021.

According to the 2021–2022 academic year figures, the quota for tour-guide training is 4068 in total: 2104 in 41 faculties and colleges associated with 38 different universities, and 1964 in 32 vocational colleges associated with 28 different universities (OSYM, 2021). Graduate-level education is offered in 15 thesis and 10 non-thesis programmes, totalling 25 (Eser, 2020), while doctoral education is offered in one programme. Associate-degree programmes are available as either distance-learning or in-person education. Undergraduate programmes are taught at colleges or faculties depending on the type of school, and graduate programmes are divided into two, namely, thesis and non-thesis based study. Some of the universities and schools provide education in Turkish and some, in English.

Another feature that makes Türkiye exceptional in terms of tour-guiding is that the occupation is protected by law. With the ‘Tourist Guiding Professional Law Act No. 6326’, which came into force on 22 June 2012, the rights of tour guides began to be legally protected, and the responsibilities of the occupation were determined. Thus, tour guides have had a law of their own before such professionals as teachers or doctors. According to this law, becoming a licensed tour guide in Türkiye requires being a citizen of the Republic of Türkiye; completing one of the associate-degree, undergraduate, or graduate programmes, or a vocational course; attending a field trip and; having certified knowledge of at least one foreign language.

As of May 2022, there were 15,642 licensed guides in Türkiye (TUREB, 2022). Turkish tour guides work in two ways: They either freelance or are affiliated with an agency. They may guide groups of only foreign tourists, only domestic tourists, or both. While tour-guiding service was mostly offered to foreign tourists until the 1990s, thanks to the development of domestic tourism beginning in the 2000s, guides can now take on tours with domestic and/or foreign tourists.

The tour-guiding sector has three major structural problems. The oldest problem is illegal guiding, which refers to the practice of the profession by people who do not hold a guiding license. Despite great efforts, it seems that this problem cannot seem to be resolved. The second structural problem is remuneration in addition to sales pressure. Although the minimum daily fee and monthly salary of tour guides are determined annually by the ministry, it is not uncommon for guides to accept being underpaid to various extents due to a fierce competitive market; most tour guides also face pressure to make extra income from tour sales or tourists’ shopping (Çetin and Yarcın, 2017). The third problem is that the tour-guiding departments mostly train English-speaking guides, and so the teaching of ‘rare’ languages remains a problem.

<sup>2</sup> The G20 comprises 19 countries in addition to the 27 European Union countries, totaling 46.

**Table 1. Certain Differences Between Systematic and Traditional Reviews**

	<b>Systematic Reviews</b>	<b>Traditional Reviews</b>
Research question	Begin with a clear research question to be answered or a hypothesis to be tested.	May also begin with a clear research question, but they usually involve a general evaluation of the subject.
Scanning for relevant studies	Strive to access all available studies to try to avoid bias.	Do not try to access all studies.
Criteria for inclusion and exclusion of studies	Explicitly describe what types of studies are to be included.	Generally, do not describe why certain studies are included while others are excluded.
Assessing study quality	Assess study quality for inclusion into review.	Do not consider differences in study quality.
Synthesising results	Are based on studies that are methodologically most sound.	Do not consider methodological soundness of studies.

## Method

The purpose of this review is to determine the subjects which are discussed in tour-guide training in Türkiye by means of an overall view of literature, and to, thereby, help to holistically understand the issues at hand. The method of traditional / narrative literature review was chosen, because the available publications cover a wide range in terms of time and type. A literature review is regarded as the most important building block of scientific methodology, and is also considered a research method (Snyder, 2019:333). Whilst literature reviews are carried out to identify and/or fill gaps in empirical research, in independent reviews, which use them as a research method, they are conducted for purposes such as seeing the development of discussions about a certain subject and determining the current state thereof, mapping subjects and methods discussed, and proposing new research agendas (Li & Wang, 2018). There are two general types of literature review, namely, *traditional* and *systematic*. The differences between the two methods can be summarised as in Table 1 (Armitage & Keeble-Allen, 2008:104).

Two main factors have been influential in choosing the traditional review method for this research. Firstly, early discussions on issues are part of papers presented at various symposia and conferences, some of which cannot be accessed in full using digital databases. Secondly, consideration of methodological soundness of the publications was

not deemed essential, as the study aims to provide an overall evaluation of discussions regarding tour-guide training. The majority of early studies, indeed, comprise conceptual evaluations, which are not based on any empirical research.

Literature reviews can be conducted to serve two purposes, namely, *descriptive* and *integrative*, in terms of presentation of data (Khoo, Na & Jaidka, 2011); and they can be carried out based on three types of data, namely, *empirical*, *practical*, and *conceptual*, in terms of the analysed content (Li & Wang, 2018:125). Whilst descriptive reviews summarise the methods and results of publications, integrative reviews examine commonalities of the studied publications. Similarly, empirical contents focus on studies' methodologies, and practical contents concentrate on knowledge contributed by practitioners. Conceptual contents, on the other hand, primarily take into consideration discussions that have been held and claims that have been expressed (Li & Wang, 2018:125). This research adopts the integrative and conceptual approaches, reviewing issues that are examined as well as views that are expressed in studies on guide training, and presenting the findings in a holistic way. In presenting the results, this study takes a thematic approach, wherein findings are synthesised under headings, as opposed to the anthological one, in which each publication is elaborated on individually (Li and Wang, 2018).

Table 2: Key Issues Identified Tour Guide Training Literature in Turkey

Why University Education	Instructor / Academic
Level of University Education	Fragmented Structure
Student Selection Criteria	Field Trip
Quota	Apprenticeship
Foreign Language	Educational Philosophy
Curriculum	

The publications included in the research were accessed by using the keywords ‘tour guiding’, ‘tourist guiding’, ‘tourism guiding<sup>3</sup>’, ‘training’, and ‘education’. Publications included in the sample ranged from 1992 up to February 2022. In the first round, searches were conducted on DergiPark, CoHE National Thesis Center, Google Scholar, Web of Science, and Scopus databases. In the second round, the bibliographies of these publications were browsed to determine additional publications, whose relevance was determined by title. Publications—in both Turkish and English—only on tour-guide training in Türkiye were included, while studies on general tour guiding topics were excluded. Of the 93 publications that were found (38 articles, 36 papers, 15 dissertations, and 4 book chapters), a total of 73 were included in the review (32 papers, 27 articles, 10 dissertations, and 4 book chapters).

Publications accessed in this way were read by the researcher, and the issues they address along with their proposed solutions were presented under 11 titles as presented in Table 2.

## Findings

### Why University Education

The earliest scholarly discussions about the field of tour guiding in Türkiye started as part of the *1<sup>st</sup> Tourism Training Conference* held in 1992, with the topic of why tour-guide training needed to be incorporated into university education, and discussion on this has remained lively to the

3 There are two different terms for tour-guiding programmes and departments in Türkiye. 2-year associate-degree programmes are called ‘tourist guiding’, and 4-year undergraduate departments use the term ‘tourism guiding’.

present time. The reasons for the provision of guide training by universities were discussed in terms of (a) inadequacy of the vocational courses and (b) advantages of university education; the former was given more attention in earlier studies. The reasons for preferring university education over vocational courses were stated to be as follows:

the difficulty of instilling, through such courses, a wealth of general knowledge, and of teaching a foreign language sufficiently (Genç, 1992; Ahipaşaoğlu, 1994; Türksöy & Yürük, 1997; Öztaş, 1997; Değirmencioğlu, 1998; Hacıoğlu, 2008; Yür, 2012)

the counter-productivity of evening classes owing to poor concentration

reception of education by groups of trainees whose levels of foreign language and general knowledge are at variance with each other

non-practice of tour guiding following the completion of courses due to already having another occupation (Oral, Demircioğlu, and Çiçek, 1994)

excessive expenditure by the ministry for organising such courses (Akmel, 1992);

the opening of such courses haphazardly regardless of whether they are needed

lack of due diligence in selecting trainees (Değirmencioğlu, 1998)

insufficiency of teaching staff (Atasoy, 1994)

experiencing of poor concentration by course completers because of working a second job (Karaçal & Demirtaş, 2002; Hacıoğlu, 2008; Avcıkurt, Alper & Geyik, 2009).

Advantages of university-level education focused on the feasibility of teaching factual and accurate knowledge solely under the umbrella of universities (Duman & Mil, 2008; Avcıkurt *et al.*, 2009; Çakır, 2010; Karaman, Köroğlu & Köroğlu, 2012), and how this would prevent a waste of resources (Gündüz, 2002; Türker, Güzel & Özaltın-Türker, 2012) in addition to the existence of an opportunity gap (Kuşluyan and Çeşmeci, 2002; Hacıoğlu, 2008) caused by the concurrence of vocational courses and school training. University education is ultimately seen to be essential for resolving these issues.

### ***Level of University Education***

The second theme to be treated in the associated literature is a discussion around the appropriate level(s) at which tour-guide training should be provided under the umbrella of universities. This was discussed at length in the literature prior to 2000, along with various suggestions for alternatives. Amongst the alternatives were proposals such as an independent programme at two-year vocational schools (Oral *et al.*, 1994; Öztaş, 1997); a separate programme at four-year colleges (Genç, 1992; Yıldız, Kuşluyan & Şenyurt, 1997; Öztaş, 1997; Değirmencioğlu, 1998); offering optional tour-guiding instruction during the latter two years of four-year undergraduate tourism programmes, which would rule out a separate guiding programme (Oral *et al.*, 1994); a post-undergraduate programme for those who already hold a relevant bachelor's degree and who are able to prove adequate knowledge of a foreign language (Genç, 1992; Oral *et al.*, 1994; Öztaş, 1997; Değirmencioğlu, 1998); granting tour-guiding qualification to graduates of tourism programmes contingent upon their passing foreign language and general knowledge examinations administered by the ministry, which would rule out a separate guiding programme (Ahipaşaoğlu, 1994).

Also proposed was to transfer tour-guiding programmes from tourism to social science and humanities faculties (Kürkçü, 2018). Over time, all of these options were realised, except that of awarding qualifications to graduates of tourism programmes without their having to complete any

vocational courses and only after their passing the general knowledge and foreign language exams.

### ***The Fragmented Structure Issue***

Over the years in Türkiye, associate-degree and undergraduate programmes continued to be launched, without vocational courses being terminated, leading to tour-guide training via three different systems (vocational courses, associate, and undergraduate). This has been identified in the literature as 'the fragmented structure issue' (Kuşluyan & Çeşmeci, 2002), and has become one of the subjects discussed to this day. The problems that arise from the structural fragmentation of the education system include students' demotivation because of opportunity gaps in receiving training (Kuşluyan & Çeşmeci, 2002), failure to reach the desired quality in the tourism industry (Hacıoğlu, 2008; Avcıkurt *et al.*, 2009), and the system drifting into chaos (Arslantürk *et al.*, 2016). The most commonly suggested solution for the issue of fragmented structure, which is seen as the biggest obstacle against standardisation, is to terminate the associate-degree programmes (Kuşluyan & Çeşmeci, 2002; Hacıoğlu, 2008) in tandem with providing tour-guide training at the four-year undergraduate level (Hacıoğlu, 2008; Avcıkurt *et al.*, 2009; Çetin & Kızılırmak, 2012; Temizkan, Temizkan & Tokay, 2013; Temizkan & Ergün, 2018).

Additionally commented was that thesis (Çokişler, 2017) and non-thesis graduate programmes (Kuşluyan & Çeşmeci, 2002; Temizkan & Timur, 2020) would potentially be less affected by problems discussed in relation to associate-degree and undergraduate programmes. However, the consideration that the training should not entirely be transferred to universities and that the vocational courses should remain active continues to appear, though infrequently, in the literature (Soykan, 2002).

Pursuant to the official basis formed by the 2012 Tourist Guiding Professional Law, graduate- and doctorate-level instruction were initiated in 2015 and 2021, respectively, leading to even further fragmentation of the training system. Following this

development, post-undergraduate programmes also began to be reviewed in scholarship, and studies were published that argue for the termination of non-thesis graduate programmes (Eser, 2020)—or for the revision of enrolment requirements thereof (Ünal *et al.*, 2021).

Yet another item of discussion on the fragmented structure of tour-guide training has been the option of ‘distance-learning’. This was proposed with regard, first, to vocational courses (Nebioğlu, 2009) and, later, to formal learning (Şimşek, 2012; Çalık & Tahmaz, 2012). Since the launch of this approach in the 2014–2015 academic year, distance-training has been available. However, the issue of fragmented structure has failed to be resolved despite all the discussions, and today, qualifying for tour guiding is attainable through five different levels of education (Çokişler, 2022).

### ***Student Selection Criteria and Student Quality Issue***

Beginning with the initiation of tour-guide training at university level, the admission qualifications of applicants who are successful in the central university entrance examination were discussed, and imposition of criteria other than passing the said exam was proposed. Cited amongst the potentially useful selection criteria were the requirement that applicants should take a separate written test and an oral interview subsequent to the central examination, so that their grasp of foreign language as well as aptitude for the vocation could be assessed (Akmel, 1992; Ahipaşaoğlu, 1994, 2002; Karaçal & Demirtaş, 2002; Özbay, 2002; Türker *et al.*, 2012).

The student quality issue came under heavy criticism after a new procedure was introduced in 2002, allowing vocational-high-school diploma recipients to gain priority entry into associate-degree programmes. Criticism of this measure was based on the grounds that it hampered entrance to the programmes, of regular-high-school students who are thought to be more enthusiastic about—and better equipped for—becoming tour guides (Tür, 2012).

### ***The Quota Issue***

The quota issue has been dealt with from two perspectives: training providers and number of trainees. Upon the introduction of the initial two-year programmes, the necessity of restricting the number of students placed in those programmes, and, thereby, of setting a quota for guides who would work in certain languages began to be discussed (Akmel, 1992; Oral *et al.*, 1994; Türksoy & Yürük, 1997). The consideration that most graduates of schools for tour-guide training, the number of which had reached 9 by 1997, would guide in English was pointed out as a major problem (Ahipaşaoğlu, 1997), and limiting the quantity of institutions for tour-guide training to a maximum of 5 or 6 universities appeared as another proposal (Karaçal and Demirtaş, 2002). The accelerated increase in the supply of tour guides was considered a threat that might compromise the quality of the profession. Additionally, the necessity of assessing the need for guides and, accordingly, of adjusting vacancies as needed was expressed (Ahipaşaoğlu, 2002). The rapid growth of the quota was indicated to be an all-important issue of tour-guide training (Arslantürk *et al.*, 2016).

### ***The Foreign Language Issue***

Despite a consensus since the early years, about the importance of foreign language, no general agreement on the fundamentals of language instruction have been established. For example, while certain studies argue that a preparatory year is necessary (Akmel, 1992; Türksoy & Yürük, 1997; Değirmencioğlu, 1998), others recommend intensive foreign-language classes instead of a prep year (Oral *et al.*, 1994; Yıldız *et al.*, 1997) and propose teaching some classes in certain foreign languages (Oral *et al.*, 1994).

Another extensively-debated problem has been overfocusing on guiding in the English language, which has resulted in a shortfall of teaching rare languages (Karaman *et al.*, 2012; Türker *et al.*, 2012; Temizkan, Temizkan & Köz, 2012). Amongst the pertinent responses have been contrasting

suggestions such as replacing second language classes with vocation-specific ones because of the difficulty of teaching the former from scratch (Değirmencioğlu, 1998). Others suggest including second foreign-language courses into the curriculum, provided that they do not interfere with the core curriculum (Akmel, 1992). Contrasting ideas concerning whether the language of instruction should be Turkish (Akmel, 1992; Kürkçü, 2016) or a foreign language (Ahipaşaoğlu, 1994) have likewise been brought up. In spite of all proposals, foreign-language instruction has remained an issue, and has been pointed out as the most serious shortcoming of the relevant programmes (Karaman *et al.*, 2012; Temizkan *et al.*, 2012; Türker *et al.*, 2012; Aslan & Büyükkuru, 2015; Kürkçü, 2016).

Various solutions have been proposed for these problems, such as requiring applicants to pass a foreign-language examination (Değirmencioğlu, 2001; Özbay, 2002; Karaçal & Demirtaş, 2002), instruction in different languages at different schools (Ahipaşaoğlu, 2002; Özbay, 2002; Avcıkurt *et al.*, 2009), making language instruction conversation-rather than theory-oriented (Karaman *et al.*, 2012), increasing the number of vocation-specific foreign-language classes, requiring trainees to accompany experienced guides on several tours (Türker *et al.*, 2012; Aslan & Büyükkuru, 2015), and granting tour-guiding permission through graduate programmes to philology bachelors who have good command of a particular rare foreign-language and who are knowledgeable on the culture of the country associated with that language (Kuşluyan & Çeşmeci, 2002; Temizkan *et al.*, 2012). Yet another means suggested for training rare-language-speaking guides has been opening a tour-guiding programme within the Faculty of Languages and History–Geography of Ankara University (Hacıoğlu, 2008).

A sub-problem of the foreign language discussions has been whether programme graduates who are not qualified for speaking any foreign language should be restricted to guiding only domestic tour groups in Turkish. Rejected in the earlier years (Ahipaşaoğlu, 1994; Değirmencioğlu, 1998), the notion of tour guiding in Turkish gained supporters from the 2000s

onwards, and has been presented as an alternative for those who do not qualify for guiding due to failure to pass a foreign language exam (Özbay, 2002; Karaçal & Demirtaş, 2002).

### *The Instructor/Academic Issues*

As schools that provide tour-guide training grew in number, issues related to instructors/academics started to be addressed in the literature. This subject was discussed under two broad themes: a dearth of academics and the difficulty in finding instructors who are knowledgeable on the practice of tour guiding.

The lack of practical experience by instructors, and the distribution of classes to available members of already-existing teaching staff—regardless of their fields of specialisation—instead of building favourable faculties have been criticised and identified as major problems of tour-guide training (Tür, 2012; Gül, 2012; Yenipinar & Zorkirişçi, 2013; Kardaş, 2020). Solutions offered for the problem of scarcity of academics who are familiar with the practicalities of guiding were as follows: seeking support from other programmes (Karaçal & Demirtaş, 2002) and employment of experienced tour guides at universities (Ahipaşaoğlu, 1994; Türker *et al.*, 2012; Yenipinar & Zorkirişçi, 2013) in the short term. Utilising postgraduate education at tourism management programmes has also been suggested to this end (Yıldız *et al.*, 1997), as has, cooperation of universities with the ministry and professional chambers as well as with international associations such as ‘World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations’ and ‘European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations’, for the long term (Karaman *et al.*, 2012; Tür, 2012; Yenipinar & Zorkirişçi, 2013).

### *The Curriculum Issue*

A considerable portion of the training-related discussions has focused on the issue of curriculum, and this subject was reviewed in three respects: comparison, analysis, and evaluation of certain curricular issues; finding out the opinions of different



stakeholders (e.g., students, faculty members, tour guides) regarding the curricula; and proposals for new curricula. Comparison of the school curricula with those defined in vocational course regulations or those of relevant training programmes in other countries is the approach that appeared first and that has been carried on to the present. Studies in line with this approach appeared in the 1990s, and made comparisons between the classes at vocational courses and those at the then-recently opened vocational schools, as well as between the tour-guide training provided in Türkiye and delivery of training in different countries (Değirmencioglu, 1998; Yıldız & Demirel, 2008; Yıldız, 2008; Gül, 2012; Yenipınar & Zorkirişçi, 2013, Tanrısever *et al.*, 2019; Uçmuş, 2021).

Classes such as *Tourism Geography* (Soykan, 2002), *English* (Ege, 2006; Güneş, 2008; Cansu, 2018; Taş, 2019), and *Art History* (Gökçe, 2016) have been the subject of research studies that analyse the curricula in terms certain subjects. Additionally, classes included in the curricula were analysed in terms of regional guiding (Öztaş, 1997), Turkish identity (Çakmak & Dinçer, 2018), and gastronomy (Çeşmeci & Yılmaz, 2020; Bahar, 2021). Following the Tourist Guiding Professional Law promulgated in 2012, the number of studies with a focus on comparing the curricula with the classes defined in vocational course regulations has increased (Güven & Ceylan, 2014; Hacıoğlu & Demirbulat, 2014). Curricula in undergraduate (İşçeli & Kılıç, 2018; Yenipınar & Kardaş, 2019) as well as postgraduate programmes (Eser, 2020; Topsakal, 2021) have also been compared with the course regulations (Çokışler, 2021b) in the literature.

The second approach regarding the issue of curriculum is centred on stakeholder opinions. Accordingly, points of view of tour guides, students, and faculty about the curricula were evaluated (Arslantürk, 2010; Yılmaz, 2011; Temizkan *et al.*, 2012; Türker *et al.*, 2012; Eker & Zengin, 2016; Kürkçü, 2018; Temizkan & Timur, 2020; Aşkın, 2020; Şahin & Erdem, 2021; Gökdemir *et al.*, 2021). These studies comprise discussions on how to devise an ideal educational programme for tour-guide

training along with proposals for a new curriculum. Four studies, one of which was conducted at associate-degree level (Ahipaşaoğlu, 1997), and three, at undergraduate level (Yıldız *et al.*, 1997; Gül, 2012; Kardaş, 2020), constitute examples of this approach.

The points of criticism regarding the curricula can be summarised as failure to reach a consensus on a shared curriculum, each school shaping its own curriculum depending on the available teaching staff (Karaman *et al.*, 2012; Temizkan *et al.*, 2012; Eser, 2020), deficiencies in applied classes (Yenipınar & Zorkirişçi, 2013), and persistence of pre-internet-era educational philosophy (Çokışler, 2017; Çokışler, 2021b).

Proposals in response to these problems include setting up a curriculum commission with participation of the ministry, relevant professional associations and universities (Tür, 2012), in addition to the use by all schools, of a single curriculum, which, after being developed, would be reviewed by academics who have experience in the industry as well as in tour-guide training (Temizkan *et al.*, 2012; Karaman *et al.*, 2012; Yenipınar & Kardaş, 2019). However, calls for establishing a curriculum commission were not taken into consideration by the authorities, and so, the proposal could not be implemented. Despite ongoing scholarly attempts, the current level of implementation is far from the desired one.

### **Specialisation**

Another notable discussion item in the literature has been specialisation, which gained currency for the first time owing to the related decision taken at the 1998 *1<sup>st</sup> Tourism Council* meeting (Ministry of Tourism, 1998), and attracted more attention following the 2002 *2<sup>nd</sup> Tourism Council* meeting (Ministry of Tourism, 2002), leading to discussions on the ideal method to identify tour guide specialisations. Proposals presented have largely focused on the options of graduate programmes to be instituted within universities (Gündüz, 2002; Kuşlivan & Çeşmeci, 2002; Hacıoğlu, 2008), specialty certification programmes offered by the

relevant professional organisations (Özbay, 2002; Gündüz, 2002), and the use of undergraduate programme electives towards this end (Yenipinar & Zorkirişçi, 2013). The suggested specialties have included health tourism (Akdu *et al.*, 2018) and cultural tourism (Koroğlu & Ulusoy-Yıldırım, 2019).

### ***Field Trip and Apprenticeship Issues***

The duration and participation in and organisation of field trips by tour-guiding trainees, have long been matters of dispute. The fact that some schools have been running their own field trip while others have been accepting student submission of a mere participation document issued by a travel agency has initiated debates as to whom those excursions should be organised by, and who should bear the cost (Karaçal & Demirtaş, 2002). Another item brought up regarding this issue was the insufficiency of 30 days of experience in excursions, so proposals to lengthen (Değirmencioğlu, 2001) as well as to standardise (Gündüz, 2002) that duration have been offered. Transferring the task of carrying out field trips to the Association of Tourist Guides (TUREB) following the 2012 Tourist Guiding Professional Law seems to have boosted the amount of research on the issue. Proposals in such studies include the suggestion to organise field trips for the purpose of guiding trainees as opposed to using the trips to provide an extra-income channel for professional associations (Tür, 2012). Authors have suggested improvement to various aspects of the field trips (Erdem & Etiz, 2012; Kürkçü, 2016; Funda & Gülmez, 2018; Güzel *et al.*, 2019; Manav & Soybalı, 2020).

The apprenticeship issue has only received coverage in the literature after 2011. Prior to 2011, 'apprenticeship' was used to mean the field trip element of training (Karaçal & Demirtaş, 2002), whereas after that year, the term began to be applied to summer jobs taken on by students to develop their practical experience. The fact that field trips used to be carried out at the end of the first academic year of the mostly-two-year pre-2011 programmes seems to be a reasonable explanation

for this change. Suggestions for apprenticeship have included trainees working as assistant tour guides at travel agencies during the summer months, and even making that a requirement (Türker *et al.*, 2012).

### ***The Educational Philosophy Issue***

Studies that discuss the philosophical underpinnings of the educational system have been assessed. As part of these discussions, the persistence of the ministry-run vocational course regulations to determine the outcome of university-level tour-guide training has been criticised. Additionally, the importance of building tour-guide training upon a new philosophy, which is compatible with present-day capabilities and needs, has been emphasised (Güven & Ceylan, 2014; Çokişler, 2021a, 2021b).

### **Conclusion**

This research has evaluated the nearly-30 years of discussion regarding tour-guide training in Türkiye under eleven headings. The main findings of the study may be summarised as follows: Reflections on tour-guide training have mostly been expressed conceptually and through papers. Recent years have seen an increase in articles based on empirical studies, for which small sample groups were chosen and they emphasise that issues cited earlier were not conclusively settled. Despite all the discussions, and the solution proposals offered in literature, training has become even more problematic, and the issues debated since the early years have remained pertinent. The review's findings have also identified certain practical issues of tour-guide training in addition to the more theoretical issues of curriculum and educational philosophy.

It is possible to infer from the research findings that discussions about tour-guide training have concentrated on fundamental themes such as which classes should be taught and for how long, whereas the recently-increasing (Çokişler, 2021a; Çokişler, 2021b) procedural considerations, which focus on how to make classes compatible with the internet era, and the practice of tour-guiding, have generally been neglected. The findings reveal that many proposals have been presented, that those proposals

largely reflect personal views of their presenters, that the underlying issues are not being resolved despite protracted debates, and that the training system has become more troubled with the addition of recent problems.

### *Theoretical implications*

Theoretical implications can be drawn from the findings concerning the reason for the problematic structure of tour-guide training. In the literature, failure to implement solution proposals because of ‘power conflicts and lack of coordination’ has been highlighted (Çokişler, 2022). The explanation (i.e., power conflicts and lack of coordination) can answer the question of why such proposals cannot be implemented; however, it does not point out why the environment of conflicts emerged in the first place. According to the findings of this study, tour-guide training, which started out as vocational training at vocational schools, has become more troubled with the addition of instruction at universities. Based on this judgment, it can be suggested that both the current problematic structure and the power conflicts in combination with the lack of coordination among the stakeholders result from the transfer of vocational training to units which are primarily responsible for providing academic education.

Vocational training is clearly different from academic education in several ways. If that consideration is presumed to be correct, the reason for the present problematic situation may be an incompatibility between the fabrics of vocational and academic

education. This can be viewed as the pains of a process of positioning tour guiding, predominantly vocational in nature, as an academic discipline. The challenge of transition from vocational training to academic education is not unique to tour guiding. The field of tourism management has also undergone a similar process (Kozak & Kozak, 2000; Kozak, 2009). It would then be more accurate to regard the conflicts and lack of coordination among stakeholders not as the first cause, but as a result that has arisen from incompatibility between the aforementioned fabrics.

### *Practical implications*

The question of how to eliminate the discord between vocational training and academic education is not easy to settle. Learning from other countries is also of little help, since, to the best of our knowledge, Türkiye is the only country that provides tour-guide training at such diversified levels, and is possibly the first country that treats tour guiding as an academic discipline. This review has shown that, although many proposals have been presented, the problems have not been solved. This is a clear sign of power conflict and a lack of coordination between different parties. In order to break the repetition of the same fruitless discussions and to resolve the issues, all parties need to come together and decide how to end the fragmented structure of the training. Second, the neglected procedural considerations need to be prioritised, a compatible educational philosophy should be developed, and a suitable curriculum ought to be devised.

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