

A Study of Graffiti in Teacher Education

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Suggested Citation:

Şad, S.N., & Kutlu, M. (2009). A Study of graffiti in teacher education. *Egitim Arastirmalari-Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 36, 39-56.

Abstract

Problem statement: Graffiti is about self-expression. When youth cannot find people to listen to them, they may express their strongly felt, internal experiences and emotions safely by writing on public property. Thus, graffiti can be handled as a counseling issue. When this self-expression of a thought, wish, or attitude comes from prospective teachers, the difficult work of sorting these issues out may help us develop better teacher-education programs and produce better teachers. Thus, this work takes the issue of graffiti by prospective teachers as an interdisciplinary issue, bridging counseling and teacher training.

Purpose of the Study: This research aims at extending the understanding of the contents of and underlying reasons for graffiti written by prospective teachers.

Method: This study is based on the content analysis method and supplemented with structured interviews. A total of 178 inscriptions were analyzed. In addition, six graduating students were interviewed.

Findings and Results: One of the major implications of this qualitative research was the presence of some methodological problems inherent in the graffiti-related studies. Second, it was found that bathroom graffiti might point to the importance for student teachers to express themselves in terms of sexual, political, and religious issues and to socialize through proper communication with others. Finally, the results of the analysis indicated that there were two main spheres of graffiti production: labs/classes and restrooms. The first group included rather socially acceptable topics, which focused on the need for belongingness, homesickness, romance, and humor or the form of someone's name and signs (doodling). The second group included more anonymous inscriptions, mainly about sex and politics/religion. In this category, men were found to write more than women did.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The findings suggested that the anonymous nature of bathroom graffiti particularly makes it difficult to be inquired about through interviews. Prospective teachers' need to express themselves and socialize can be further met through curricular and/or extracurricular activities

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providing opportunities to communicate and interact socially. In addition, graffiti in labs/classes points to the possibility that the faculty's failure to involve the students actively in class causes boredom for students, which implies a need to apply more participative instruction on the part of instructors. As for the bathroom graffiti, the finding that men find more to say about sex, politics/religion, and humor, while women do not even write about romance may indicate a deprivation of liberal perspectives on the part of women.

Keywords: Graffiti, prospective teachers, counseling, and teacher education

How do we interpret the graffiti written by prospective teachers? Do we really need to know the context and reasons for what they write about on the desks and walls of their classrooms? Some may not see graffiti as a serious field of study (Gadsby, 1995). However, as teacher trainers and parents of those children who are to be educated by prospective teachers, we are curious and wish to discover the answers to these questions. Each graffito expresses a thought, wish, or attitude (Gach, 1973). As we go through the difficult work of sorting them out, we learn more about the thoughts, wishes, and attitudes of future teachers, which can help us to develop better teacher-education programs and produce better teachers.

When youth cannot find people to listen to them, they may express themselves by writing on public property (Kurt, 2002). Even when they find people with whom to talk, they still might hesitate to express themselves with these individuals and choose graffiti as a form of reflecting strongly felt, internal experiences and emotions safely (Klingman, Shalev, & Peariman, 2000). Thus, graffiti is also about self-expression (i.e., expression of emotions) and as such is a counseling concern. Graffiti then takes on a more critical direction given that the participants in this study are future teachers who will be engaged professionally with such questions like self-expression in their work with students. Thus, graffiti by prospective teachers is an interdisciplinary issue, bridging counseling and teacher training. This research extends the understanding of the contents of and underlying reasons for graffiti written by prospective teachers.

Defining Graffiti

Gach (1973) defines the Italian word *graffiti* (plural of *graffito*) as "statements and drawings...penciled, painted, crayoned, lipsticked, or scratched on desk and walls, particularly restroom walls" (p. 285). The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the U.S. Department of Justice (1998) describes graffiti in criminal terms as vandalism, which is "a willful destruction or defacement of private or public property" (p. 2). Bates and Martin (1980) think that the anonymous messages of graffiti are socially uncontrolled manifestations of thought. Stocker, Dutcher, Hargrove, and Cook (1972) look at graffiti from a cultural perspective and according to them graffiti shows "the patterns of customs and attitudes of a society" (p. 356). Kan (2001) sees graffiti in bathrooms/lavatories as "a silent and mindless protest against the large educational system that alienates students' primary needs" (p. 19). Although graffiti is considered a serious and costly act of vandalism by many societies (Klingman, et al., 2000; Walsh, 1996), it is also acknowledged as an art form by some (Kan, 2001; Richardson, 1999). This is mainly because certain graffiti features "novelty in both language and visual representation with a unique and holistic aesthetics" (Kan, 2001, p. 21).

Who Writes Graffiti: Reasons

Literature on the motivations for graffiti is quite rich. Although this act of writing or drawing on public walls as a form of anonymous self-expression is a common event (Bates & Martin, 1980; Kurt, 2002), the performers of graffiti are usually suppressed individuals in society (Kan, 2001; Richardson, 1999), who express themselves by making their mark on society or who enjoy the pleasure of risk taking (Richardson, 1999). Blume (in Gadsby, 1995) identifies some of the general motives for writing graffiti, including furnishing proof of one's existence; acting on a need to express oneself; documenting one's membership in a group; taking pleasure in aesthetic, creative, and physical acts; boredom; expressing criticism, protest, rejection, and agreement; marking out territories; and searching for contact with others.

As for the educational context, Gottfredson and Gottfredson reported that most of the graffiti in schools are produced by students "who do not like school, whose school performance is poor, and who are not committed to education" (as cited in Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2007 in the preface). An early study (Gach, 1973) argued that students under pressure tend to create graffiti, thus communicating attitudes and feelings that they would hesitate to utter publicly. More specifically, middle-class teenagers or pre-teen boys—most of whom are not successful at school or in sports—reportedly create most of the street-type wall graffiti (Richardson, 1999). Kan (2001) interprets graffiti as an unconscious rejection of the kind of learning that is not helping students construct personal meanings and effectively integrating their inner needs to promote growth. As a matter of fact, Flaherty reports (as cited in Kan, 2001) that there is less or no such vandalism in "schools that manage a successful community of learning" (p. 19).

What is Written: Content

Graffiti content helps us see the character of a society (Gadsby, 1995). It is an accurate gauge of the socialization process (Bates & Martin, 1980). Some investigators study the content of graffiti as a nonreactive indicator of human attitudes, thoughts, wishes, or attitudes (Bates & Martin, 1980; Gach, 1973). With a more gender-based approach, while the walls in men's restrooms are reported to have usually more sexual content than those in women's restrooms, especially on homosexuality, the walls in women's restrooms have more romantic writing (Green, 2003; Schreer & Strichartz, 1997; Sechrest & Olson, 1971). According to Bruner and Kelso (1980), women's graffiti is more communicative; that is, when a question is posed via graffiti, it is answered in a serious manner. Green (2003) reports women's restrooms include more arguments on religion and philosophy, whereas men's most common themes are sex and politics.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the graffiti written by prospective teachers in terms of their content and the possible reasons for writing them.

For this purpose, answers to the following research questions have been sought:

1. What are the thematic categories of the graffiti written by prospective teachers?
2. What can be the possible reasons for the prospective teachers to write graffiti?

Method

Research Design

This study was based on qualitative design. The method of content analysis was used to glean a rich understanding about the graffiti written by the prospective teachers, which was supplemented with the analysis of the data from structured interviews with six prospective teachers. Qualitative content analysis aims at providing knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Content analysis can be used in qualitative research when direct observation or interviewing is impossible (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2003). In this study, the impossibility of direct observation was the primary reason for choosing content analysis because writing graffiti is an anonymous practice; that is, the producer of the graffiti is generally unknown. Yet, Biklen and Casella (2007) suggest that textual analysis should also include interviews to analyze the perspectives of the target audience, namely the prospective teachers in this study. Thus, content analysis was coupled with structured interviews with six students for the sake of triangulation.

Sample

The university where the data were collected has two buildings (Blocks A and B) where students in the college of education are hosted. Because Block B was recently taken over from the department of engineering, it was excluded from the study. A total of 178 inscriptions, the sample for this study, were collected from five men's restrooms, five women's restrooms (each with four stalls), four laboratories, and thirty-three classrooms with a capacity of about 1,000 students. Block A has been hosting the students from the college of education since 1997, but most inscriptions collected were assumed to be recent since the building was cleaned and repainted in 2006. It is also assumed that during these two years, many of the inscriptions could have been cleaned by the staff or deleted by other students. Inscriptions were either written in pen or pencil or scratched. For this study, the entire building, including the restrooms and classes/labs, were scanned for graffiti content, and only 178 legible ones were found and considered for the study. Although most of the graffiti sample was in the form of a word or sentence, 21 included signs (doodling).

It is assumed that prospective teachers produced the analyzed graffiti, since the building is primarily allocated to the students of the college of education. In addition, the academic and administrative staff has their own offices and restrooms in the adjacent building. Thus, it did not seem likely that faculty or administrative staff would use students' restrooms or that other students from other faculties, who are housed in different buildings, would use the same labs/classes and restrooms.

As for the interviews, participants included six graduating male students from different departments within the college of education who admitted having written graffiti at least once during their education. This sample was one of convenience, obtained from among 36 graduating students (11 women, 25 men) who visited the researcher's department office during the summer either for the purpose of returning the robes and caps they wore at the graduation ceremony or for seeking signatures

for graduation purposes. Only 6 of the 36 students admitted having written graffiti and were, therefore, deemed appropriate to include in the study.

Procedure

The graffiti was recorded in two repeated stages: First, two senior students, one male and one female, collected data using digital cameras during the 2007-2008 spring term for a seminar course. Second, the researchers re-examined the entire building at the conclusion of the term after the building was vacated for summer vacation. The researchers wrote down the graffiti as a check against the graffiti collected by the student assistants. As a result, 97% agreement was achieved between the graffiti recorded in the two stages.

The interviews with the six students were brief. After acknowledging they had written graffiti sometime during their teacher training, they were asked three simple questions: where, what, and why did they write? Their answers were noted by the first researcher. It can be assumed that their answers were reliable since they were about to leave the institution as graduates. On the other hand, as a limitation of the study, the anonymous nature of graffiti (Bates & Martin, 1980) suggests that both the initial 36 and final 6 interviewees may have preferred to withhold or disguise some of the data regarding the place and content of their possible graffiti experience due to personal embarrassment or perceived standing with the faculty member.

Data Analyses

For the analysis of the inscriptions, Nvivo 8 software program was used. Nvivo is a practical qualitative software program, which is mainly used for data analysis in grounded-theory type of studies (Kuş, 2006, p. 39). Yet, in this study, it was used for the sake of more systematic coding and categorization. Both researchers independently coded all of the data with 89% agreement between coders. Most of the disagreement was due to graffiti that was either not categorized (placed in a *miscellaneous* category) or graffiti that fell into multiple categories. The final distribution of the categories with thematic details is displayed in Table 1. A similar procedure was followed with the data obtained in the interviews, which revealed 100% agreement in the coding of categories and themes (see Table 2).

In the findings and discussion sections of this study, some of the graffiti and statements from the interviews are directly quoted. For this purpose, their English translations are provided. In order to validate the translations of the graffiti and interview statements, two independent bilingual academicians, one from the counseling and guidance department and another from the English language and literature department, were asked to review the translations made by the researchers. Based on their remarks, translations were revised to achieve an adequate degree of equivalencies in translation (Beaton, Bombardier, Guillemin, & Ferraz, 2000).

Table 1
Thematic Distribution of Graffiti.

| CATEGORY | PLACE | | | Total |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|----------|-----------|
| | Lab/Class (public) | Restrooms (non-public) | | |
| | | Men | Women | |
| Total number of graffiti | 128 | 34 | 16 | 178 |
| POLITICAL/RELIGIOUS | | | | |
| Political Religious | | | | |
| In favor | 1 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Against | | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Pure religious | 2 | 1 | | 3 |
| Apolitical | | 1 | | 2 |
| Terrorist propaganda | | 1 | | 1 |
| Bourgeois criticism | | 1 | | 1 |
| Subtotal | 3 | 8 | 2 | 13 |
| COMMUNICATION | | | | |
| Search for contact | 1 | | 4 | 5 |
| Dialogue | | | | |
| Receiver known | 8 | | | 8 |
| Receiver unknown | | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Whoever reads | 3 | 7 | | 10 |
| Subtotal | 12 | 10 | 6 | 28 |
| HUMOR | 9 | 5 | 2 | 16 |
| Subtotal | 9 | 5 | 2 | 16 |
| SEXUAL | | | | |
| Homosexual | 1 | 5 | 3 | 9 |
| Anti-homosexual | | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Assault | | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Eulogy | 1 | | | 1 |
| Subtotal | 2 | 11 | 6 | 19 |
| NEED FOR BELONGING/ HOMESICK | | | | |
| City/hometown | | | | |
| Family | 32 | 2 | | 34 |
| Team | | | 1 | 1 |
| Desire to leave | 4 | 1 | | 5 |
| | 4 | | | 4 |
| Subtotal | 40 | 3 | 1 | 44 |
| ROMANCE | | | | |
| Declaration of love | 8 | | | 8 |
| Sorrow of love | 4 | | | 4 |
| Definition of love | | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Platonic love | 2 | | | 2 |
| Subtotal | 14 | 2 | 1 | 17 |
| PHILOSOPHICAL | | | | |
| Subtotal | 3 | 3 | | 6 |
| OTHERS | | | | |
| Names | 23 | | | 23 |
| Signs(doodling) | 21 | | | 21 |
| Miscellaneous | 9 | | 2 | 11 |
| Subtotal | 53 | | 2 | 55 |

Note. Adding the subtotals does not give the total number of graffiti, since some graffiti fall into multiple categories.

Table 2
Graphical Display of Interview Results

| Interviewee | Where? | What? | Why? |
|-------------|--------|-----------------|---------------|
| A | Class | Name | Boredom |
| B | Class | Sign (doodling) | Boredom |
| C | Class | Sign (doodling) | Boredom |
| D | Class | Sign (doodling) | Boredom |
| E | Class | Romance | Boredom, love |
| F | Class | Communication | Boredom |

Findings and Results

Numbers and Topics

Of the 178 inscriptions, a majority (71.9%) were in the labs or classes – mainly on desks and a few on walls – whereas the remaining 50 (28.1%) were in the restrooms, mainly on walls and doors. It is difficult to decide whether this amount of inscription is low, high, or average given the time period (estimated 2 years), number of students ($N=4,488$), and the assumption that many of the inscriptions might have been cleaned. However, the ratio of students (4,488) to the number of inscriptions (178) over 2 years reveals that 1 out of 12 students writes an inscription each year, assuming that each person writes only one inscription. The overrepresentation of graffiti in classes and labs compared to the restrooms can be attributed to the time spent in both locations. Based on the interviews with the students (see Table 2), it seems that all the inscriptions in classes/labs were written during a lesson because of boredom and lack of interest in the lesson:

1. When you become bored during the lesson, you unwittingly inscribe something on the desk. [Interviewee C]
2. When I became bored as the teacher or one of the classmates was giving a presentation, I wrote a message on the desk since there was no paper... [Interviewee F]

A thematic analysis of the overall graffiti in the classes and labs shows that the contents are more diverse than the ones mentioned in the interviews. The most evident finding is city/hometown names ($n=32$; 25%), personal names ($n=23$; 17.9%), and signs (doodling) ($n=21$; 16.4%), followed by romance ($n=14$; 10.9%), and other minor categories.

Gender

As for gender, compared to the general population of students (2,080 men + 2,408 women = 4,488), men tended to write more ($n=34$; 68%), whereas women wrote less ($n=16$, 32%) in the restrooms. This finding was in consistency with the research by Stocker et al. (1972), who found that female students on college campuses wrote less

graffiti. What is remarkable is that female underrepresentation can be associated with the conservative nature of the university (Green, 2003). As a matter of fact, a recent study (Aksu et al., 2007) on 18,226 prospective teachers from 51 universities in Turkey revealed a generally conservative profile. These conservative attitudes were also evident in some of the graffiti:

3. God help all of us! [Class 402]

4. Islam. [Class 201]

5. Man lives his fate/Whatever it brings...Only the *** is invulnerable... [Men's Restroom] (the word God/Allah was deleted most likely as its mention in a restroom is considered a sin)

Examining the distribution of the topics by gender, it seems men's restrooms are dominated by sexual content ($n=11$; 32.3%), followed by a form of communication ($n=10$; 29.4%), political/religious content ($n=8$; 23.5%), and humor ($n=5$; 14.7%). As for prospective female teachers, they also wrote the most, though not as much as their male counterparts, about sex ($n=6$; 37.5%), usually in the form of communication ($n=6$; 37.5%). These findings seem to agree with relevant literature, which suggests that both men and women write more about sex, dominated by homosexuality, that men also write more about politics (Green, 2003), and that women's graffiti are more interactive (Bruner & Kelso, 1980). It is also remarkable that romance is one of the least identified contents in women's restrooms contrary to the relevant literature (Bates & Martin, 1980; Green, 2003; Workman et al., 1983).

Thematic Categories

Political/Religious. A total of 13 graffiti with political/religious content were represented in the men's restrooms ($n=8$; 61.5%) with themes including favoring or opposing a political/religious viewpoint [The lamb (*symbol of the ruling party*) is fading out; One day the universities will *** (illegible)... this infidel way of life will end...], pure religious wish (see 5), a political message [It is neither left nor right, football is the rightest choice (*meaning the most reasonable*)], terrorist propaganda, and bourgeoisie criticism [...A happy minority which muzzled our past attempts to govern our country...]. In fact, the religious/political content of the sample is not concentrated on a single sect, and opposing political/religious views are communicated through an ersatz bulletin board:

6. If showing skin means being civilized, then the animals are more civilized than you. N.F.Kısakürek [Men's Restroom].

7. Get a life! Do make progress! [In response to 6].

8. Does one need to show a part of her body to get progress [In response to 7].

The issue of women covering their heads or the way they dress has always been a delicate issue in the Turkish secular republican regime. What seems paradoxical is that this religious/political issue was discussed by men in the men's restroom. This can be a result of Turkey's patriarchal culture in which women's behavior is something about which men have a say.

Communication. Though not exactly a topic, but rather a form or purpose of writing graffiti, communication stands as another important category. Although the

content of the communication may range from humor (see 19) to searching for a sex partner (see 31), the analysis focused on the possible form and purpose of communication. Communication, especially in the form of dialogue whose receiver is possibly known ($n=8$; 28.5%), was evident in classes:

9. Fortunately! [Class 405] (*A possible response in various contexts in Turkish*)
10. How sly you are! [Class 402]
11. He wouldn't get angry! [Class 402] (*A possible answer or advice*)
12. Let's write to each other! Take out a piece of paper! [Class 203]
13. Me, too! [Class 203]
14. Hey dude, why the hell did we come to this department. [Class 203]
15. I am hungry!.....Me, too! [Class 303]

These findings are supported by one of the interviewees (Interviewee F), who revealed that one reason prospective teachers write on their desks is to communicate with a classmate during class. A possible reason for these dialogues, given the interviews and the contents of the inscriptions, can be long lesson hours without breaks, unattractive and tiring methods of instruction, such as narration, or failure to engage the students.

These dialogues happen to change, especially in men's restrooms, into a response to someone the student does not know (see 6, 7, and 8), an anonymous statement (see 16), a derogatory comment (see 17), or a curse aimed at whomever reads the inscription (see 18):

16. I hope we all graduate without any trouble. It is bad to end something but we have a new life ahead. I wish success in your lives! [Men's Restroom]
17. Are you both shitting and smoking at the same time? [Men's Restroom]
18. I f*** all of you! [Men's Restroom]

Humor. The category of humor includes graffiti in which participants attempted to express their sense of humor to the reader, which is quite easy to distinguish from the other inscriptions. Moreover, humorous graffiti in the restroom and class/lab are quite distinctive. Whereas restroom graffiti are more likely to mock the reader (17, 19, and 20) and refer to a popular movie (21) or to the absurd (22), the majority of the remaining class/lab graffiti (9/16) are organized in the form of a wordplay or logical proposition (23, 24, 25, 26, and 27):

19. (*on the right wall*) Look at the left wall!... (*on the left wall*) Why are you looking? Fool! Keep on shitting!!! [Men's Restroom]
20. (*on the right wall*) Look at the left wall!...(*on the left wall*) Look behind!....(*On the rear wall*) You fool, you fool!!! [Women's Restroom]
21. Free for the Landowner! [Women's Restroom]
22. Wow! Could I ever imagine that I would shit here one day? You can't know how very impressed I am now! [Men's Restroom]
23. Once there was "one" of a man (both means *someone* and *a man with a low mark in exam*), then he fixed it in the second term. [Lab]
24. If working were something good, they wouldn't pay for it. [Lab]
25. As you happen to be born to this world, study physics and chemistry like mad :) [Lab]

26. I used to be arrogant, but now I am perfect. [Class 201]

27. I bet I will quit gambling. [Class 203]

Sexual Content. Sexual content seems to be dominant in men's (11/19) and women's (6/19) restrooms, whereas labs/classes contain less graffiti on sexual discourse (2/19). Among the specific contents, homosexual messages were found to be overrepresented, which is consistent with the literature (Green, 2003). Accordingly, five of the scripts in men's restrooms (e.g., 28, 29, and 30) and three in women's restrooms (e.g., 31) were in favor of homosexuality. A remarkable finding was the presence of five other messages (32, 33, 34, and 35) strongly opposing the homosexual scripts noted above. Apart from the homosexual or anti-homosexual graffiti content, the remaining four sex-related scripts in restrooms (two in men's and two in women's restrooms) were found to be more heterosexual oriented, taking the form of sexual assault (18 and 36). The other two inscriptions insulting/assaulting to heterosexuals in women's restrooms were partly wiped clean (especially the most indecent words).

28. Freedom for gays. [Men's Restroom]

29. We demand a Gays and Lesbians Community at Inonu University. [Men's Restroom]

30. I need a big c***! [Men's Restroom]

31. Your fantasies are important to me. Call 0505*****. [Women's Restroom]

32. Death for gays! [In response to 28]

33. You can get over it. Make sure that you believe you are normal! [In response to 29]

34. A man wouldn't be f***ed in the ass! [In response to 30].

35. I hope they f**k you! [In response to 31].

36. Do you have your mother? [Men's Restroom]

Based on the findings in this category, it seems that although homosexuality receives a relatively high level of coverage among sexual graffiti, it actually receives sharp opposition and is not welcome. In interpreting this finding, we refer to Kinsey et al. (as cited in Sechrest & Olson 1971), who found a relation between low socioeconomic status and graffiti with anti-homosexual and rather heterosexual content. Since it was reported in a recent study (Aksu et al., 2007) that the prospective teachers studying at colleges of education in Turkey come from families with low to moderate socioeconomic status, similarly, in our study, the low socioeconomic status of the participants may be the reason for the anti-homosexual and strong heterosexual graffiti content. The findings of Stocker et al. (1972) further suggest that this intolerant environment can give rise to the production of graffiti with homosexual content because they found an absence or at least a decrease in such graffiti in societies with more tolerant attitudes towards homosexuality.

Need for Belonging/Homesickness. The inscriptions under this category were perhaps the easiest to code, yet the most difficult to comment on. The difficulty stemmed mainly from the city/hometown names ($n=34$), which constituted the most

popular specific content, especially among lab/class graffiti, with 32 entries on desks only. Although one reason for writing them on desks can be general boredom during a lesson as suggested by the interview data, the preponderance of city/hometown names deserves discussion. People have some attachment either personally or collectively to their locality ranging from village, town, city, or nation (Knight, 1982). This can be traced to the feeling of belonging to a group who will provide security against external threats. The presence of names of some Turkish local (e.g., Batmanspor and Trabzonspor) or national football teams (e.g., Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe) ($n=4$) also seems to be in agreement with the same need to identify with a group.

Still another possible reason for inscriptions of city/hometown names could be students' feelings of homesickness (see 37). This interpretation is supported by the presence of two related topics: family ($n=1$) (see 38) and the desire to leave ($n=4$) (see 39 and 40).

37. Amed...my hometown, I have been dreaming of you! [Men's Restroom]

38. This is my family (*an accompanying picture illustrating parents hand in hand and two children*) [Women's Restroom]

39. 22 for dawn (*number of days before military service is over*) [Class 405]

40. I hate the school [Class 203]

Romance. Although romance was one of the least referred contents in women's restrooms, contrary to the literature (Bates & Martin, 1980; Green, 2003; Schreer & Strichartz, 1997; Sechrest & Olson, 1971), its presence in classes/labs cannot be underestimated ($n=14$). Prospective teachers may prefer to write about love publicly, unlike political/religious and sexual content. They especially prefer to declare their love on desks ($n=8$), either by writing (see 41 and 42) or drawing/carving hearts containing initials. In addition, in classes, they express their feelings of grief ($n=4$, see 43, 44, and 45) or platonic love ($n=2$, see 46). One interviewee stated that he once wrote down the name of his lover in fine shorthand (see 47):

41. I damn love! [Class 202]

42. I love! [Class 405]

43. S/he had not loved me! [Class 405]

44. I heard the girl I love got married, she belongs to somebody else now [Class 405]

45. What if I said "Come back to me?" [Class 203]

46. I love you from a distance, you do not even know. [Lab]

47. I was already not interested in the lecture...I found myself writing my girlfriend's name on the desk. [Interviewee E]

Contrary to the categories above, prospective teachers preferred to define love in restrooms:

48. Love is not the *** (*illegible*) on the lips, but tears in eyes. It is to find the lover as *** (*illegible*) dying. [Men's Restroom]

Philosophical Content. Although the literature (Bates & Martin, 1980; Green, 2003) reports philosophy is a popular content among women, in the present study, no philosophical expression was found in women's restrooms, and only three such graffiti were found in classes/labs. All 6 items (3 in men's restrooms and 3 in classes/labs) were philosophical in nature, mostly favoring the message *carpe diem*, whereas some took a humorous turn (49 and 50), and others were more straightforward (51):

49. Life is between 3.5 and 4, so you either turn 3.5 (a *colloquialism meaning to get afraid*) or you live 4/4 (a *colloquialism meaning perfect*).[Lab]

50. If working had been something good, they would not pay you for it.[Lab]

51. Don't think about the past, since it's passed, you cannot change it...And you cannot know about future, thus live for the moment.[Men's Restroom]

Others. Some graffiti were unable to be categorized. They constitute, however, a considerable share in the total (55/178). Although 23 of these were names, it is difficult to understand whose names they are. Given that they exclusively appear in classes/labs ($n=23$) and given the statement of one of the interviewees (Interviewee A), the reason for writing these names can be boredom during lessons, especially considering the signs (doodling including initials, stars, cubes, triangles, flowers, zigzags, and parallel lines) ($n=21$). This reason was endorsed by Interviewees B, C, and D who stated they had once doodled on the desks during a boring lesson. The other 11 were categorized as miscellaneous since they were independent of most of the categories.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In this section, the findings of the study are discussed, and some conclusions are drawn. The major implications of this qualitative research center on methodological problems are inherent in the graffiti-related studies: (1) graffiti as vandalism, (2) implications for teacher training, and (3) what lies behind public and private graffiti written by prospective teachers from a counseling perspective.

Like other graffiti researches (Green, 2003), this study suffers from some methodological problems. First, the sample graffiti were assumed to be written by prospective teachers as the data were collected from the building of the college of education. Yet, other students from other faculties might have written some of the graffiti, and also, some men might have written in women's restrooms or vice versa. Second, individuals that write bathroom graffiti usually hide their identities, which Bates and Martin (1980) calls anonymity, because such activity involves vandalism and some degree of indecency; this fact might have hindered researchers' effort to collect correct qualitative data. In particular, the data collected through interviews may not be complete, credible, or reliable because students were able to maintain their anonymity. That is very evident in the comparison of data from document

analysis and interviews. The interviewees (6 out of 36 graduating students) who admitted having written graffiti stated that they had written a name, a sign (doodling), a communication message, or an inscription about romance in class (publicly) but not politics/religion or sexuality, which comprised the main content of the graffiti found in the restrooms (i.e., non-public and purely anonymous). This anonymous nature of bathroom graffiti might lead us to conclude that bathroom graffiti is not suitable to be inquired about through follow-up interviews.

Considering the act of writing on public property as vandalism, the findings of the study can be interpreted as disappointing, since future teachers cannot be associated with such inappropriate behavior. Yet, if we consider graffiti as a part of the socialization process of adolescents and young adults, the apparent inconsistency between destructive behavior and the desirable personal qualities of teachers can encourage us to examine the unmet needs of future teachers in the formal and hidden teacher-training curricula. To illustrate, bathroom graffiti written by prospective teachers may point to the importance for student teachers to express themselves especially in terms of sexual, political, and religious issues and to socialize through proper communication with other students and faculty members. Although this may have been achieved to some extent, further progress can be obtained through curricular and/or extracurricular activities that provide prospective teachers with opportunities to communicate and interact socially on matters that concern them. Regular parties, open debates, discussion boards, Internet forums, and similar platforms for socialization are some examples of activities to prevent this destructive activity.

As a result of the analysis, there seem to be two main spheres where graffiti was produced with different topics and intentions: labs/classes and restrooms. The more socially acceptable ones, which were produced in labs/classes, focused on the need for belongingness, homesickness, romance, humor, or on the form of someone's name and signs (doodling). As suggested by the analysis of the interviews, a possible reason for students' attraction toward this activity was their instructors' failure to keep using stimulating pedagogies during class. Yet, when it comes to the students' choice of what graffiti to write, the question should be asked: Can the content of these inscriptions really imply some unmet needs? To what extent should we attribute the existence of many city/hometown names to the failure of the faculty to create a sense of belongingness or the existence of graffiti about romance to inadequate/unhealthy social relations between the sexes? These are very difficult questions to answer. An interpretation that is closer to the data, especially of the interviews, is the apparent failure by the faculty to engage students actively.

While these are the inferences based on the findings from the analysis of the public graffiti (i.e., in classes/labs), the more anonymous inscriptions can lead us to appreciate better the attitudes and feelings that prospective teachers hesitate to utter publicly. Consistent with the literature, sex seems to be the foremost taboo domain, disclosed mostly in private by men and women. Putting a side the sexual context, the content of other graffiti, such as politics/religion and humor, can be seen as a reflection of the cultural environment in which students live. The most interesting

point seems to be that men find more to say about politics/religion—even about matters that mostly concern women (e.g., what to wear). This finding seems to support the socio-politic inference as mentioned by Green (2003), which suggests that women deprived of liberal perspectives either refrain from thinking about such issues or are not even aware of their existential rights. This can be a result of Turkey's patriarchal culture in which women's behavior is something about which men have a say. Similarly this "miniature discussion board" reflects the dominance of men in discussing and deciding matters pertaining to religion/politics. In this male-dominant, conservative atmosphere, men might feel freer to write about humor and philosophy, whereas women may not even write about romance, unlike their counterparts in other cultures.

As a result of this study, some recommendations can be made based on the above findings and discussion to better link the counseling profession to teacher training. First, counseling should be employed as a major course in teacher education, highlighting the need to cultivate prospective teachers who can think without radical political/religious biases, judge and solve problems through respectful communication and negotiation, and welcome culturally diverse people and their worldviews (The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2009).

Second, it was clear from the findings that one reason for graffiti writing in classes or labs was boredom. Thus, faculty should improve their instructional pedagogies to activate student interest and involve students more in learning.

Finally, people have needs at all developmental levels in all multicultural contexts caused by a large spectrum of factors, including transitions across the lifespan as well as various situational events and environmental conditions (CACREP, 2009). The need for belongingness or feelings of homesickness may be two of these needs. In order to meet these needs in their students, faculty should welcome their students with an emotionally nurturing atmosphere and maintain such an atmosphere throughout the students' entire education. This can be achieved by organizing special programs and events, which aim at strengthening the solidarity and affection between prospective teachers and faculty.

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Öğretmen Eğitiminde Duvar Yazıları Üzerine bir Çalışma (Özet)

Problem Durumu: Duvar yazıları kişinin kendisini ifade etme yollarından birisidir. Özellikle gençler kendilerini dinleyecek birilerini bulamadıklarında, herhangi bir kamu malının üzerine yazılar yazmak suretiyle kendilerini ifade edebilirler. Hatta kendilerini dinleyecek birilerini bulsalar bile, özel ve yoğun hislerini başkalarına anlatmaktan çekinip, kimliklerini ifşa etmeyecek şekilde tuvalet, sıra, duvar gibi kamu mallarının üzerine yazılar yazmayı tercih edebilirler. Bu yüzden duvar yazıları psikolojik rehberlik ve danışmanlık alanının bir konusu olarak ele alınabilir. Bu çalışmada olduğu gibi duvar yazıları yoluyla duygu, düşünce ya da isteklerini ifade etmeye çalışan kişilerin öğretmen adayları olması halinde, duvar/sıra yazılarının incelenmesi, öğretmen adaylarını daha iyi anlamak suretiyle daha iyi öğretmen yetiştirme programları geliştirmek adına önemli bir fırsat olarak görülebilir. Bu yüzden, bu çalışmada öğretmen adayları tarafından yazılan duvar/sıra yazıları, rehberlik ve psikolojik danışma ile öğretmen yetiştirme alanlarını birleştiren disiplinler arası bir konu olarak ele alınmıştır.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bu çalışmanın amacı öğretmen adayları tarafından yazılan duvar/sıra yazılarının içeriğini ve öğretmen adaylarının bu yazıları yazma nedenlerini incelemektir.

Yöntem: Bu çalışmada öğretmen adayları tarafından yazılan duvar/sıra yazıları hakkında derinlemesine bir inceleme yapabilmek amacıyla nitel içerik analizi ve yapılandırılmış nitel görüşme yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Bu amaçla eğitim fakültesi binasının lavaboları ve derslik/laboratuvarlarından elde edilen toplam 178 yazı incelenmiştir. Ayrıca altı öğretmen adayı ile nitel görüşme yapılmıştır. Görüşme yapılan altı erkek öğretmen adayı toplam 36 (11 kadın ve 25 erkek) kişi arasından belirlenmiştir. Eğitim fakültesinden mezun olmak için gerekli ilişik kesme işlemlerini yürüten bu 36 son sınıf öğrencisi araştırma hakkında bilgilendirildikten sonra, kendilerine eğitimleri esnasında herhangi bir şekilde duvar/sıra yazısı yazıp yazmadıkları sorulmuş ve sadece altı erkek öğretmen adayı en az bir kez yazdığını ifade etmiştir. Devamında bu öğretmen adaylarına ne yazdıkları, nereye yazdıkları ve neden

yazdıklarıyla ilgili üç soru sorulmuştur. Nitel içerik analizi ve görüşmelerden elde edilen veriler Nvivo 8 nitel veri analizi yazılımı kullanılarak kodlanmış ve kategorilere ayrılmıştır.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Yapılan analizler sonucunda öğretmen adayları tarafından yazılan yazıların sınıf ve laboratuarlarda daha fazla (%71.9), lavabolarda ise daha az (%28.1) olduğu görülmüştür. Sınıf/laboratuvar yazıları, il veya ilçe isimlerinden (%25), kişi isimlerinden (%17.9), işaretlerden (karalama) (%16.4) ve romantizm içerikli ifadelerden (%10.9) oluşmaktadır. Erkek lavabolarındaki yazıların cinsellik konulu (%32.3), iletişim biçiminde (%29.4), politik/dini mesajlı (%23.5) ve mizah içerikli (%14.7) olduğu görülmüş, bununla birlikte bayan lavabolarında, sayı olarak erkeklerden daha az olmakla birlikte, cinsellik ağırlıklı (%37.5) ve iletişim biçiminde (%37.5) duvar yazılarının olduğu saptanmıştır. Ayrıca diğer kültürlerde yapılan çalışmalarındaki bulgulara kıyasla bayan lavabolarında romantizmle ilgili nispeten az sayıda duvar yazısına rastlanmıştır. Araştırmada ayrıca duvar/sıra yazılarıyla ilgili çalışmaların yöntemsel sıkıntılarının varlığı saptanmıştır.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Her ne kadar kamusal bir binada duvarlara/sıralara yazı yazma eylemi bir tür vandalizm olarak değerlendirilse de, özellikle lavabolara yazılmış olan yazıların, cinsellik, siyaset ve din konularında öğretmen adaylarının kendilerini ifade etme ve diğer öğrenci ve öğretmenlerle iletişim kurarak sosyalleşme ihtiyaçlarına işaret ettiği söylenebilir. Öğretmen adaylarının bu yöndeki ihtiyaçlarının daha fazla karşılanabilmesi amacıyla kendilerini farklı alanlarda özgürce ifade edebilecekleri ve düzeyli bir sosyal iletişim kurabilecekleri program içi ve program dışı fırsatların yaratılması gerekmektedir.

Ayrıca cinsellik, siyaset/din ve mizah içerikli yazıların kadın lavabolarından çok erkek lavabolarında bulunması, özellikle ilgili alan yazındaki bulguların aksine romantizmle ilgili yazılara kadın lavabolarında rastlanamaması da çalışmanın manidar bulgularından birisi olarak görülmüştür. Bu durum, ilgili alan yazındaki tespitler de dikkate alınarak, söz konusu kadın örneklem grubunun liberal değil, muhafazakâr bir bakış açısına sahip olmasıyla ya da içerisinde yaşadıkları ve etkilendikleri toplumun bu baskın özelliklere sahip olmasıyla açıklanabilir. Eğitim fakültesindeki öğrenimleri esnasında en az bir kez duvar/sıra yazısı yazdığını belirttiği için nitel görüşme yapılan öğretmen adaylarının tamamının erkek olması bu yorumu güçlendirmektedir. Bir başka deyişle, muhafazakâr toplumlarda kadınların duvar yazısı yazma oranı düşüktür. Diğer taraftan sınıf/laboratuarlardaki sıra veya duvar yazılarının ders esnasında yazıldığı varsayıldığında, bunun temel nedeninin öğretim elemanının dersi öğrenciler için yeterince ilgi çekici hale getirememesi olduğu söylenebilir. Bu çıkarımın, nitel görüşmelerden elde edilen verilerle desteklendiği görülmektedir. Ancak bu şekilde derse aktif olarak katılmayan ve ders esnasında sıkılan öğrencilerin neden özellikle belirli kategorilerine giren içerikte yazılar yazdıklarını açıklamak oldukça güçtür. Buna göre yoğun bir şekilde yazılmış olan şehir/ilçe ve spor takımı isimlerinin aidiyet ihtiyacı veya ev/aile özlemi ile bağlantılı olabileceği yorumu yapılabilir. Son olarak, gerek bir vandalizm eylemi olduğu için

gerekse bazı yazıların içeriğinin müstehcen veya siyasi olmasından ötürü, söz konusu yazıları yazan kişilerin doğal olarak isimlerini gizli tutmaya çalıştıkları görülmüştür. Dolayısıyla bu ve benzeri çalışmalarda başta görüşmelerden olmak üzere elde edilen verilerin tam ve doğru olmama riski vardır. Bu yöntemsel sıkıntı incelenen dokümanların gerçekliği için de geçerlidir. Örneğin duvar/sıra yazıları farklı bir fakülteden gelen bir öğrenci tarafından ya da kadın lavabosundaki bir yazı bir erkek tarafından yazılmış olabilir. Bu ve benzeri etmenleri kontrol etmek bu tür çalışmalarda oldukça güçtür.