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The Relationship between the Personal Characteristics of Teacher Candidates and Their Career Choices: A Descriptive Analysis

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Abstract

Teaching profession has been a profession of interest to all groups in any society since the sophists. In the relevant literature, there are many studies on how the choice of teaching profession as a career is influenced by the personal characteristics of the teacher candidates, their experiences, occupational knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and family characteristics (Brookhart and Freeman, 1992). Thus, it is possible to conclude that it would be significant for teacher education institutions to reveal the reasons behind the preferences in terms of the socioeconomic levels, educational backgrounds and attitudes towards the teaching profession of young people (Karagözoğlu, 2009; Çelikten et al., 2005; Orhan and Ok, 2014). In this context, the present study aims to reveal the reasons why individuals choose the teaching profession and their perceptions regarding the teaching profession.

Keywords: teacher candidates, career choices, characteristics

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Introduction

Teaching is the profession which educates querent, productive individuals who are capable of change management, and who lay claim to democracy, develop themselves holistically, and are able to think scientifically. Consequently, the teaching profession has been a profession of interest to all groups in any society since the sophists. The profession of teaching, into which initially only the children of wealthy families were accepted, later turned into a profession in which all groups in the society were interested. On the other hand, as far as recent history is concerned, it is possible to say that very low or middle social groups began to choose the teaching profession more frequently (Kohn, 1969; Wiken, 1999).

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The Factors that Play a Role in the Choice of the Teaching Profession

Different factors have been at play in the choice of the teaching profession from past to present. Specifically, from the Ancient Greek Times to almost a century ago, the teaching profession focused on the education of the children of administrators and the elite; therefore, the teaching profession in this period was mainly preferred by the upper socioeconomic groups. For example, until 60-70 years ago, the teachers in the United States of America regarded themselves as middle-class and upper middle-class, and therefore described themselves as white collar workers (Rellas, 1953).

As a result of modernization, the aim of which is to enable education to be accessed by all social groups, for nearly a century the teaching profession has been increasingly chosen by the lower-class social groups in the United States, European Countries and Turkey. For instance, teacher training via the Village Institutions in Turkey can be regarded as one of the most important practices of this endeavor.

According to Kohn (1969), social class values and gender also have a great impact on the choice of teaching profession. For instance, the fact that undergraduate students studying at teacher training institutions at a university come from lower socio-economic classes compared to the others from different departments supports this particular judgement (Wiken, 1999). In a study by Harrison (1953) which revealed that 34% of the participating teachers stated that their fathers were involved in farming, fishing, forestry, and manual labor; 27% worked in jobs not requiring any qualification; 17% involved in administrative and other jobs, 5% in the service sector and 4% in sales can be seen as an example of this. More recently, a conducted in China and Tibet revealed that majority of those who choose teaching profession come from rural areas, can be regarded as another example supporting the results of Harrison's study (Su et al., 2001; 2002).

According to Lanier and Little (1986), those from different social strata have different knowledge and learning backgrounds. Specifically, although the students coming from lower social classes have more conservative and pragmatic learning characteristics, those coming from upper social classes are directed to art, music, science, mathematics, and philosophy for the development of their intellectual and cognitive abilities. For example, in the United States of America, especially after the 19th century, while women and men from the low and middle-classes chose the teaching profession, men from upper classes did not tend to work for public schools. Rather, they channeled themselves into the fine arts, thus avoiding contact with those from lower social classes. Therefore, the teachers from upper social classes were replaced by women and men from the lower classes. The efforts of the educationalists in the 20th century to attract those in the upper classes into teaching failed, and children of the upper social strata generally tended towards the field of medicine and law (Wiken,

1999). The teaching profession for the young people in the upper socio-economic groups was described as a profession that was canonical and very monotonous, freedom-limiting and boring requiring full attendance every day (Herlinger, 1944). For instance, the study by Burke (1946) which he carried out with 1194 high school students in villages and provinces indicated that 90% of the men and 80% of women were not at all interested in the teaching profession. Similarly, in the study Hood (1944) carried out in Northern Montana college, the students stated that they did not choose the teaching profession due to the reasons such as the teachers not being paid during the summer holidays, limited life conditions in the rural regions, lack of individual liberties, huge workload, low wages, low status in the society, the problem of occupational safety, prohibition of marriage, and to be despised by the community, (Rellas, 1953). Moreover, it is quite meaningful that the teachers left their profession due to the following reasons: their school did not prepare them for the profession properly (9%); too much work and responsibilities (8%); and living conditions in teaching were not rich enough (3%) (Harrison, 1953). As it is clearly seen, the teaching profession has been chosen by the children of families from low social classes for at least a century. Therefore, it is possible to say that since a majority of teachers come from low and middle social classes, they lay claim to the educational values and see them as appropriate for the whole society.

The Factors that Play a Role in Choosing the Profession of Teaching in Turkey

It can be said that modernization has also had an important role to play for the choice of teaching as a profession in Turkey. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the development and proliferation of teaching in Turkey was an obligation of Ottoman-Turkish modernization. With the introduction of modernism in Europe in the 19th century, Turkish ports were connected to the central part of the country via railways, the discourse of freedom and rights was strengthened and the western model of education was selected. However, many people considered the Ottoman/Turkish modernization as a top-down process. It is because the reformists generally directed their efforts towards altering the Ottoman institutions and shaping them into the European standards. Throughout this period, the Ottoman reformists emphasized progress based on science and reason. For the Ottoman, and later Republican, reformists, people's physical appearance, the cleanliness of the cities for urban life were the fundamental indications of modernization. Just as the turban had been replaced by the fez and gown, the headscarf was replaced by trousers and boots in 1829. However, the ordinary people in Anatolia were unaware of all these modernization initiations. This could be because, at the beginning of the 20th century, only 5% of the Turkish population was literate, moreover this rate was only 0.4% for women. In the 1920s, 60% of the population worked in farming and 30% of the housing was not appropriate for human habitation. This particular situation was one of the biggest obstacles facing the modernization process in Turkey. However, in spite of all these hindrances, the modernization movement advanced rapidly. The Hat Act, which foresaw the replacement of the fez was enacted in 1925. In a report written by a committee in 1928, emphasizing that "the religious life needs to be reformed according to scientific principles just like the ethics and economic life", literacy skills, citizenship and vocational education were emphasized for the reconstruction of social life. Cleanly-shaven men, unveiled women, school uniforms, the modern buildings of Ankara, a symphony orchestra, ballet and opera performances, factories, dams, railways were all considered as signs of modernization in Turkey. However, the process of modernization has had to deal with the problems of education for many years (Kasaba, 1998).

The subject of teacher education can be considered as one of the most important problems of education throughout the process of modernization in Turkey. From Fatih Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror all the way to the Reform Period, teachers were commissioned among from madrasah graduates. However, following the Reform Period, the graduates of madrasah began to resist to the new system (Altın, 2009). Nevertheless, in order to be able to implement successful education at the Rüştiye Schools that opened following the proclamation of Imperial Edict of Reorganization in 1839 as the first model of education, the emerging need for teachers had to be met. Therefore, following the opening of Darülmüallimin on March 18, 1848, the very first teacher training school in the Ottoman land, Darülmüallimin-i Sıbyan (1870), Darülmüallimin-i İdadi (1877) and Darülmüallimin-i Ali were

opened respectively. By this way, the profession of teaching in Turkey entered into the process of professionalization in a contemporary sense in the second phase of elementary education (Kına, 2006).

Regarding the practices of teacher education during the Republican Period, except those who were trained for basic literacy skills, it is seen that a Music Teacher School was opened in 1925, a Secondary Teacher School in 1926, Village Teacher Schools in Kayseri and Denizli in 1927, a Girls Vocational School in 1934 and Boys Vocational School in 1936. The opening of the Village Institutions in 1940, an attempt to train elementary school teachers for village schools, can be given as an example of teacher education practices in the early period of the Republican Period (Erdem, 2015).

After the transformation of vocational teachers' schools into higher teacher training institutions in 1960s, we see that an Education Faculty was founded in Ankara University in 1965. The education institutions established to train teachers in 1970s were discontinued in 1980s and this task was transferred to the universities. Teacher education in 1990s within the framework of "CHE (YÖK)/World Bank Preservice Teacher Education Project", was created according to a model based on taking the subject-field courses from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. This model can be specified as based on the following American model: the subjects such as Preschool, Elementary, Foreign Language, Music, Art, Physical Education, Special Education, Computer Education and Instructional Technologies consisted of a four-year undergraduate program; secondary school Science, Mathematics and Social Science teachers were to be trained in the non-thesis master's program (3.5+1.5=5 years or 4+1.5=5.5 years). It can be said that the teacher education practices currently in operation are in general based on this particular model (Okçabol, 2004).

According to the 2012 statistics, with an economy of nearly 800 billion dollars, and a per capita income of 18,000 dollars, Turkey is ranked 17th among developing countries in terms of economic development (UNDP, 2014). Nevertheless, parents expect the education system and teachers to educate their children as the citizens of a developed country in the world of the future.

Previous studies demonstrated that there is an important relationship between the personal and cultural characteristics of teachers, and their family structures, the social environment they live in and their proficiencies (Brookhart and Freeman, 1992; Papanastasiou and Papanastasiou, 1997; Coultasande Lewvin, 2002; Saban, 2003; Eğitim-Birsen, 2004; Aksu et al., 2007; TED 2009). Therefore, the aim of the present study is to investigate the relationship between the personal characteristics of the teachers, their families and the social environment in which they live, and their qualifications. For this purpose, answers to the following research questions will be sought;

- a. What are the socio-economic levels of preservice teachers and their families?
- b. What are the factors that lead teacher candidates to choosing this profession?
- c. What are the expectations of preservice teachers from the teacher education institutions and the Ministry of Education?
- d. What are the perceptions of teacher candidates about the world, their country and themselves?

Method

Participants

In the present study, the participants were 902 undergraduate students (female=74.8%, male=25.2%) studying on different programs at the Education Faculty of X University participate. Specifically, Psychological Counseling and Guidance (4.7%), Turkish Language Teaching (10.6%), English Language Teaching (16.0%), French Language Teaching (2.3%), German Language Teaching (3.9%), Pre-School Education (6.3%), Classroom Teaching (14.1%), Mathematics Teaching (6.0%), Science Teaching (3.8%), Social Sciences Teaching (3.5%), Computers and Instructional Technologies Teaching (7.6%), Art Teaching (8.0%), Music Teaching (3.8%), Physical Education (5.7%), and Special Education (3.8%).

97.1% of the participants stated that they were single, 2.8% married, and 0.1% divorced. Regarding the marital status of the participants' parents, it was found that 96.5% of the mothers and 96.9% of the fathers were married; 3.5% of the mothers and 3.1% of the fathers were divorced. The percentage of families with one child was 6.3%, two children 4.9%, three children 27.5%, four

children 11.2%, five children 6.5% and more than five children, 5.5%. Moreover, 99.3% of the participants stated that they were biological children, and only 0.7% step children.

Procedure

In order to collect data, a questionnaire composed of 95 questions in four sections inquiring about preservice teachers' decisions to choose the teaching profession and its development was used in the study. The questions in the questionnaire were organized under the following headings; "Personal Information", "Perceptions about the Teaching Profession", "Education Faculties as Institutions of Teacher Education", and "Personal Development of Teacher candidates". Regarding the preparation of the questionnaire, previous studies (Aksu et al., 2007; Orhan and Ok, 2014; Coultas and Lewin, 2002; Richardson and Watt, 2006) on the same subject and questionnaires (Eğitim Bir-sen, 2004; Harrison, 1953) have been utilized. During the process of developing the questionnaire, international examples, and the opinions of national and international academicians were also consulted, and the questionnaire was finalized in a form appropriate to be used in Turkey.

Data Analysis

The opinions obtained were presented and interpreted in percentages and frequencies.

Results

This section includes findings regarding the teacher candidates' families' and their own socio-economic levels, the factors that played role in their preference of the profession, their expectations from the teacher training institutions and the ministry of education and their perceptions of the world, their country and themselves.

The findings of the study will be presented according to the order of the specified research questions.

1. Socio-Economic Levels of the Participants' themselves and their Families

Under this heading, education levels of the teacher candidates' mothers, fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, their professions, the residential areas of the participants and findings related to their social and economic lives were illustrated by graphs and percentages.

Given the education levels of the mothers and fathers of the participating teacher candidates' in the study; it is seen that while 36% of their fathers and 60% of mothers were primary school graduates, 50% of their grandfathers and 45% of grandmothers were illiterate. This particular finding can be considered significant as it clearly illustrates the education levels of the teacher candidates (Table 1).

Table 1. Education Levels of Participants' Families

<i>Education Level</i>	<i>Fathers</i>	<i>Mothers</i>	<i>Grandfathers</i>	<i>Grandmothers</i>
Illiterate	0 %	0 %	20 %	45 %
Primary school	36 %	60 %	57 %	46 %
Secondary school	15 %	15 %	12 %	7 %
High school	29 %	19 %	8 %	2 %
Associate degree	7 %	2 %	2 %	0 %
Bachelor's degree	11 %	4 %	1 %	0 %
Postgraduate degree	2 %	0 %	0 %	0 %

When we analyze the findings regarding the occupations of participants' families, it is seen that only 4% of their fathers were teachers whereas 72% of their mothers were housewives. On the other hand, it is also seen that 32% of their grandfathers were farmers and 82% grandmothers were housewives (Table 2).

Table 2. Occupations of Participants' Families

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<i>Occupations</i>	<i>Fathers</i>	<i>Mothers</i>	<i>Grandfathers</i>	<i>Grandmothers</i>
Worker	17 %	6 %	12 %	0 %
Service Sector	12 %	2 %	5 %	0 %
Teacher	4 %	2 %	2 %	0 %
Retired	32 %	6 %	25 %	7 %
Police	1 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Lawyer	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Engineer	1 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Farmer	8 %	1 %	32 %	7 %
Academician	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Self-employed	16 %	2 %	14 %	1 %
Unemployed	2 %	5 %	0 %	0 %
Housewife	0 %	72 %	0 %	82 %
Other	7 %	4 %	10 %	3 %

The findings regarding the birth places and residential areas of the participants show that 17.3% reported that they were born in a village, 8.5% in a small town, 27.6% in a small city, and 11.2% in a metropolis, and 3.1% reported that they were born abroad. While it was reported that 61.4% of the participants' fathers were born in a village, 10.1% in a small town, 15% in a small city, 9.6% in a big city, 2.1% in a metropolis and 1.7% abroad; 57.6% of their mothers were born in a village, 11% in a small town, 15.5% in a small city, 11% in a big city, 3.1% in a metropole and 1.8% abroad. On the other hand, 11.2% of the families reported that they lived abroad, 7.8% in a small town, 25.8% in a small city, 39% in a big city, 14.9% in a metropolis, and 0.8% abroad.

3.8% of the participants in the study reported that their families had high income, 87.7% medium income and 8.5% low income; 16.3% of their families lived in a rented home, 76.3% owned their homes and 7.4% together with the elders of the family. 75.9% reported that their rent was between 250-500 TL, 17.1% between 500-750TL, 3.8% between 750-1000 and 3.2% over 1000 TL; while 19.4% reported that they spent 20-50 TL for transportation, 42.6% 50-80 TL, 22.3% 80-100 TL and 15.7% over 100 TL; 12.7% spent 50-100 TL, 29.9% 100-150 TL, 29.9% 150-200 TL, 13.3% 200-250 TL and 17.1% over 250 TL for food. On the other hand, it was found that annual education expenses of the participants were 100-250 TL for 11.4%, 250-500 TL for 14%, 500-700 TL for 13.5%, 750-100 TL for 14.9% and over 1000 TL for 46.2%.

1.0% of the participants reported that they regarded Turkey as a very developed country, 11.8% developed country, 62.5% moderately developed country, 20.2% underdeveloped country and 45.5% undeveloped country. Regarding Turkey's EU membership, 39.1% stated that Turkey should be accepted, 32.2% did not mind, and 15.1% were not interested. If the participants had a chance to choose a country to live, 16.6% stated that they would live in the USA, 8.9% in Germany, 20.2% in Italy, 7.9% in France, 2.7% in Russia, 10.2% in Japan and 12.1% in England. On the other hand, while 21.2% of the participants reported that they had been abroad, 78.7% had never been abroad.

2. The Factors that Play a Role in the Career Choice of the Teacher Candidates for the Teaching Profession

Considering the factors that play a role in the career choice of the teacher candidates for the teaching profession; it is clearly seen that their opinions regarding the profession as a service to society, and the prestige of the profession were much higher than the other factors (Table 3).

Table 3. Reasons for Choosing the Teaching Profession

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
1. Because I want to be beneficial to the society and to the next generation	24 %
2. Because I believe I will be happy in my profession and believe in its respectability	24 %
3. Because my family wanted me to	6 %
4. Because business opportunity, working hours and conditions are appropriate	13 %
5. Because I love teaching	8 %

6. Because I have passion for the profession of teaching	8 %
7. Because I want to increase my level of knowledge	3 %
8. My university entrance exam score was effective	12 %
9. Other	2 %

3. Teacher Candidates' Expectations from the Ministry of Education and Teacher Education Institutions

Regarding teacher candidates' expectations from the Ministry of Education and teacher training intuitions, while 3.9% of the participants of the study reported that the society attached great value to the teachers; 22.5% average level of value; 43.0% little value; 27.1% very little value and 3.5% no value at all, 7.4% stated that the Ministry of Education attached great value to the teachers; 34.8% little value, 40.1% very little value, but 16.7% no value at all.

Below are the findings regarding value attached by the faculty administration and lecturers to the teaching profession at the faculties where the teacher candidates studied: 4.5% of the participants stated that the faculty administration attached great value to the teaching profession; 25.5% little value; 47% average level of value; 18.6% very little value; and 4.4% no value at all. Regarding the value attached to the teaching profession by their lecturers, participants pointed out that 14.3% of the lecturers attached great value to the teaching profession; 34.3% little value; 8.0% very little value; and 1.8% no value at all. Correspondingly, while 51% of the participants stated that they could choose the teaching profession as a career again, 20% stated that they would not and 29% were undecided; when the same question was asked regarding the participants' own children's career choices in the future, 32.5% stated that they would wish them to choose teaching as a career in the future, 30.2% did not want it and 37.7% were undecided on this issue.

The following are the teacher candidates' opinions on employee personal rights and salary system. While 75.3% of the participants thought that the teaching profession should be separated into certain career steps, 24.1% disagreed. While 61.4% of the participants agreed on the opinion that performance evaluation system should be introduced and salaries should be determined based on this, 15.5% disagreed and 23.1% was undecided. While 83.8% of the participants supported the opinion that the teachers should be paid in accordance with the conditions they worked under, 7.1% disagreed and 9.1% were undecided.

While 59.8% of the participants agreed with the opinion that all the teachers should be enabled to have master's degree, 17.8% disagreed and 22.4% did not express any idea about this subject. While 58.6% of the participants supported the idea that teaching careers system should be exam-based, 17.6% disagreed and 23.7% were undecided. On the other hand, 19.1% of the teacher candidates stated that the teachers' unions/syndicates were very beneficial, 61.1% somewhat beneficial and 19.2% not beneficial at all.

4. The Perceptions of Teacher Candidates About the World, Their Country, Their Personal and Professional Development

54.1% of the participating teacher candidates reported that they wished to have an academic career, 22% did not wish to do so and 23.7% were undecided. While 2% of the participants stated that they did not spare any time for studying, 19% reported that they studied between 1-4 hours a week, 24% spared between 3-4 hours for studying every day, 21% stated that they spared 1-4 hour for studying per month, and 25% per week, 14% reported that they never spared any time for studying.

While 16% of the participants reported that they did not read any teaching profession-related journals, it was found out that the rate of those sparing 1-4 hours per week was 35%. On the other hand, it was also found that the rate of those who stated that they did not read any other journal other than teaching related-ones was 15% and the rate of those who spared 1-4 hours per week for reading non-teaching journals was 26%.

The rate of those participants surfing on the internet for 1-2 hours was 42.7%, 3-5 hours 32.9%, more than five hours every day 10.5%, one hour every other day 6%, 3 hours per week 4.2%

and those who surf less was 3.7%. The rate of those reading a book every day was 27.3%, once a week 23.7%, once a month 34.4%, once a year 12.0% and those who never read 2.7%. The rate of those going to cinema was as follows: more than once a week 1.7%, once a week 13.9%, once a month 64.3%, once a year 17%, and those who never went was 3,1%. 0.7% of the participants went to the theater more than once a week, 2.7% once a week, 29.2% once a month, 50.1% once a year and 17.2% never went. 18% of the participants exercised every day, 26.8% once a week, 18.2% once a month, and 26.5% never exercised at all. 55% of the participants spared once a week of their time for entertainment, 27.9% once a month, 8.3% once every other month, 2% once a year and 5.3% never spared any time for entertainment. 8.1% of the participants had a holiday once a month, 30.7% once every six months, 51.7% once a year and 9.5% never had a holiday.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The rapid and diverse global changes of recent times have laid some significant responsibilities on education institutions as well as on the teachers. Therefore, teacher selection, training, appointment and in-service development can be regarded as some of the fundamental, and potentially problematic, issues of the education system. The current study has focused on particular findings related to the "selection of the teaching profession".

Criticism and expectations of teacher output require teacher education institutions to regard their programs, learning and teaching processes and opportunities as an ethical responsibility (Büyüköztürk et al., 2009). This is because in a society, teachers may have deep impact on the students that they have taught, as well as over the people they have contact with. Rather than acquiring the knowledge and information transferred from the teachers and memorizing them, the students of today's knowledge-based society must have the skills of critical thinking, communication with others, accessing sources of information and problem solving by using these knowledge and information (Karagözoğlu, 2009). Therefore, it is possible to say that expectations from teachers in all societies are very high. For instance, while Eric Fromm states that "*The purpose in the field of education is to support the development of one's critical powers and provide opportunities with the creative expansions of one's personality. In other words, the purpose is to train independent people who are resistant to be managed as well as to the exploitation of one's interests in favor of others.*"; the teaching profession in the Japanese education system is described as "A society that can benefit once again from every person that it has educated is one that is rational, civilized and advanced. However, a society that can lead the best of the adults into teaching is a strong society".

Therefore, as the fundamental components of an education system, teachers should take into account organizational, educational, social and individual expectations. These expectations can be defined first in terms of knowledge and information, that is possessing knowledge and information on appraisal, organizational structures, organizational context, administrative theories and processes, process of change, learning and teaching methods, techniques and strategies. Second, in terms of skills, that is, being able to analyze large and complex systems, collecting, processing diverse information and making use of it, creating a purpose and making a plan, taking mutual decisions, managing conflicts, feeling empathy for others, demonstrating a political stance, counselling and guidance, public relations and training. Third, in terms of personal characteristics, namely sharing information on the results at the highest level, a strong ethical stance that will contribute to the development of the most appropriate behavior, an intellectual perspective generated by distinguished personality traits and education, a powerful feeling and tendency of optimism, feeling the pleasure of being influential without the approval of others, high level of willingness for putting up with the consequences devoid of negative life experiences, coming up with appropriate consequences with appropriate tools, the capacity to accept and manage conflicts, having a low tone of voice and low level of anxiety, knowing himself and having self-awareness at a high level, high tolerance towards complexity and uncertainty, tendency to avoid debates causing conflicts indicating certainty and polarization such as right or wrong, black and white and high level of sympathizing with others (Morrison, 1998).

In a large scale study done by Okçabol (2004) with teacher candidates, on it was found that

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40% of the suggestions on “the qualities a good teacher must have” determined by the participants included love and respect for students, non-discrimination among students, being friendly with children, being understanding towards students and valuing them, being approachable and affectionate, sympathizing with the students’ problems, not threatening students by grades, being a guide and leader to the students, and having positive attitudes towards the students. 37% of the suggestions included being prepared for the lessons, teaching with pleasure and effectively, being cultured and knowledgeable, fulfilling one’s profession deservedly, trying to improve oneself continuously, establishing discipline and authority in the classroom. 12% of the suggestions comprised of being open to criticism and innovations, setting a role model for the students and the society, being patient and friendly, tolerant and sociable and not being authoritative. and 7% included suggestions such as that a teacher should love and respect his/her profession.

In the report of expectations titled “Education Report for the Future” prepared by the teachers’ union/syndicate Eğitim-Birsen in 2010, some of the expectations from future teachers are given as follows:

- a. A teacher with a vision of future possesses leadership qualities, and the ability to influence and encourage his/her environment. S/he knows that s/he is capable of answering questions on almost every subject, but supports an environment that allows others to answer and participate as well.*
- b. A teacher has moral values. S/he possesses the fundamental moral values to tell the difference between right and wrong, and has the integrity to advocate his/her choices.*
- c. As s/he takes part in all the decisions taken at the school and supports the participation in the environment inside and outside the classroom.*
- d. In classroom management, s/he truly and emphatically enables the establishment and sustenance of democratic values and innovations.*
- e. S/he has the constant desire to improve him/herself; s/he loves the profession; s/he conducts student-centered teaching and does his/her best to fulfill his/her educational ambitions.*
- f. As s/he has been affected by the student performance, program planning, classroom management and teaching approaches, s/he must be competent enough in this field.*
- g. S/he supports the creation of a climate supportive of an efficient teaching at school. This climate is one that emphasizes education, has high expectations from everyone, and encourages mutual planning, academic and cooperative endeavors.*
- h. S/he emphasizes the recognition of students’ success and reward rather than recognizing the negativities.*
- i. S/he endeavors to educate individuals who are socially strong, independent and able to think versatile, are physically and spiritually healthy, entrepreneurs, have a vision, and have internalized the social culture.*
- j. S/he encourages the cooperation of school staff and students’ parents and supports their mutual endeavors.*
- k. S/he highly regards the protection of the environment at a universal dimension and tries for the acquisition of the necessary behavior.*
- l. S/he is interested in fine arts; as his/her interest in fine arts is reflected in his/her behavior, s/he tries to encourage students’ interest as well and supports those students with talent in fine arts.*
- m. S/he tries to be well-equipped, well-educated and continually able to improve him/herself.*
- n. S/he considers learning, development, helping students to develop as a daily, irrecusable and routine action.*
- o. S/he tries to equip him/herself and his/her students with the skills of change management and risk management” (Eğitim Bir-Sen, 2010).*

Nevertheless, a field study carried out by the Turkish Education Association involving 2007 teachers, 272 administrators and 2112 students’ parents in 12 cities revealed some striking findings regarding the existing state of the teachers. According to some of these findings:

- 1. Annual income of the teachers is nearly 50% lower than international average.*

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2. *For at least one third of the practicing teachers, the teaching is a profession chosen involuntarily.*
3. *Activities organized for the professional development of the teachers and the efforts of the teachers for professional development are insufficient; a) The rate of the teachers who participated in in-service training activities in the last two years is 40%. b) Only 12% of the teachers follow the periodicals of educational sciences or a relevant field.*
4. *Students' parents think that the education provided at the school is insufficient and choose to allow their children to receive additional education.*
5. *According to the students' parents, extracurricular activities organized at school are insufficient. (Nearly 44% of the parents state that extracurricular activities are insufficient.)*
6. *Half of the teachers do not use educational technologies.*
7. *Nearly half of the teachers (53%) have difficulties in maintaining classroom management and discipline.*
8. *Teachers turn out to be insufficient in using the alternative measurement and evaluation tools and methods required by the renewed programs. Teachers mostly use the traditional measurement and evaluation methods.*
9. *Teachers are insufficient in keeping track of the relevant legislation changes regarding their subject field and the changes in the educational programs (TED, 2009).*

Based on the expectations specified above and results of the research, it is possible to say that it is inevitable that the teachers of the 21st century should be educated and developed not only for today, but in such a way to respond to the environmental changes and societal demands as well. However, for 50-60 years, it is not possible to say that there have been very great developments with regard to teacher education and teacher education programs, and those who choose this career. It is because it is difficult to talk about radical changes in social groups who choose this profession. Of course, many changes have taken place in technology in the last 50-60 years. However, the changes in learning and teaching methods, techniques and strategies have not taken place in the same pace. Therefore, it is possible to say that the teaching profession continues to be chosen by the children of lower middle and moderately so by the middle-class families, and that an internationally accepted model of teacher education has failed to be developed. For instance, according to the international report of the International Teaching and Learning Study carried out by OECD (2009) (TALIS-Teaching and Learning International Survey), school principals in Turkey think that more than three quarter of teachers are not capable of giving quality teaching. According to the findings, one third of the teachers do not take part in professional development activities, with a great majority stating that they are not in need of professional development (Büyüköztürk et al., 2009).

In a nationwide study done by Okçabol et al. (2003) involving 1000 teacher candidates in Turkey, it was revealed that 57% of the teacher candidates stated that there was at least one other family member in the teaching profession. Furthermore, the study concluded that in their choosing the teaching profession, the following reasons were effective; teacher candidates' wish to be a teacher (23.7%), the teaching profession was appropriate for them (13.6%), the score they received at the university entrance exam (8%) and employment guarantee (7.6%).

According to Çermik et al. (2010), the following were teacher candidates' reasons for choosing the teaching profession: (1) dedication such as serving for the people and being beneficial to one's community and country, (2) internal reasons such as love of the profession, love of children, interest in the profession and (3) external reasons such as guaranteed employment, long holidays, social security and appointment conditions. Nevertheless, coming from different socio-economic groups may play a role in choosing the teaching profession. For instance, in a study carried out by Papanastasiou and Papanastasiou (1997) in the USA and Cyprus amongst the elementary school teacher candidates, it was found that internal reasons in the USA and external reasons in Cyprus played a role in their choice of the teaching profession. In their study at two universities in Ankara, Boz and Boz (2008) found that the following were the main reasons for teacher candidates in their choice of the teaching profession; guaranteed employment, long holidays, social security and

appointment conditions. On the other hand, while it was found in a study done by Saban (2003) that serving for people and the desire to be beneficial for one's country were the main reasons; in a study done by Özbek (2007), it was found that personal reasons were more influential in choosing the teaching profession (Cited in Çermik et al., 2010)

In another study done by Saban (2003), on the other hand, education levels of teacher candidates' parents varied between 6 and 9 years; their mothers did not have any particular occupations and were in general housewives; and their fathers were mostly farmers, workers, civil servants and small traders. Based on these findings, it is possible to say that the teacher candidates mostly came from low socio-economic class family backgrounds.

In a study done by teachers' union/syndicate Eğitim-BirSen in 2004, the following findings were obtained: 58.4% of teachers' wives were university graduates, 11.4% primary school graduates, 20.1% high school graduates, and 26.8% were housewives. This study also concluded that 42.6% of teachers' fathers were primary school graduates, 12.8% university graduates, 13.7% were only literate, and 5% illiterate, whereas 27.4% of their mothers were literate, 17.1% illiterate, 40.5% primary school graduates, 3.5% university graduates; and 88.7% of their mothers were housewives and 3.1% were teachers. In the same report, it was revealed that 17.6% of the teachers did not use computers; 63.4% sometimes used; 2.7% never read a book; 62.6% sometimes watched a play, and 31.2% never spared any time for exercise.

According to this report, 65% of the teachers never spared any time for writing (poems, narratives, essays), and 19.8% did not go on a vacation. The same report also concluded that 34.4% of the teachers chose the profession in order to become beneficial to the society and children, 22.2% for the love of the profession, 22.6% for employment guarantee, 9.7% for the respectability of the profession, 7.1% due to the wish of their families and 5.1% due to the influence peers.

According to the report prepared by Eğitim-BirSen (the teachers' union/syndicate), it was revealed that 19.2% of the teachers did not read any out of the profession journal, 14.3% any profession-related journals, 10.2% subject-related journals; 43.7% did not take part in seminars, panels and conferences, 40.5% in-service training courses, and 12.1% did not follow any innovations related to the profession and the relevant field.

Although 64.3% of the participating teachers did not wish their children to become teachers, 56.1% stated that they could choose the teaching profession once again. 56.9% of the participating teachers could not have access to the teaching materials when needed, 74.8% were not satisfied; 80.2% believed that the teaching needed to be divided into certain career steps; 77% believed that performance evaluation system should be introduced; 92.1% wished to have a master's degree. 60.6% of the teachers were in favor of teachers' unions/ syndicates and a member of a teachers' union/syndicate. However, 80.7% believed that the teachers' unions/syndicates did not provide sufficient services and 61.8% thought that the teachers' unions/syndicates were not democratic. 24.1% of the teachers were fashion followers and 29.9% believed in gender equality. 51% of the participating teachers did not consider Turkey as a European country; 14.6% believed that freedom of expression was a crime; 65.9% did not believe that Turkey would be a full member of EU; but, if they had a choice, only 53.3% would continue to live in Turkey (Eğitim-Birsen, 2004).

Regarding the teaching profession as a career choice; variables such as preference order in the university entrance exam, class, program, education level of their families and work experience were also considered. The results of the current study show similarities with those of many other studies. For instance, in the studies done by Aydın and Tekneci (2013) and Çapri and Çelikkaleli (2008), while gender was a significant factor in choosing teaching as a profession, in a more current study involving 18,266 first year teacher candidates, Aksu et al. (2007) revealed that the candidates came from families with low socio-economic status and levels of education. In this study, it was also found that 34% of the teacher candidates lived in metropolitan cities with a population of over 1 million, 24.9% in small cities, 28% in towns, 4.1% in small towns, 8.1% in villages and mothers of 82.4% of the candidates were housewives. Moreover, while 51.2% of the participating teacher candidates chose their current department in order to become a teacher, 28.5% chose it because their entrance exam score was sufficient only for that department. While 36% of the participants stated that European

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Union membership would be beneficial, 48.1% reported that it would only be partially beneficial. Nevertheless, as much as 78.8% of a majority stated that they did not believe that Turkey would one day become a full member of the EU. It was found that 78.8% of the participants supported mixed education, but 11,7% were against the mixed education (Aksu et al., 2007).

On the other hand, in a study done by the Turkish Education Association in 12 cities involving 2000 practicing teachers in 2008-2009, 10.6% of the primary school department graduates, and 7.7% of the subject matter teachers stated that they chose the profession because of the request of their families. 22.1% of the primary school teachers and 21.4% of the subject matter teachers chose teaching profession due to its high chance of guaranteed employment; 4% of the primary school teachers and 3,1% of the subject matter teachers due to non-availability of another job; 13.3% of the primary school teachers and 16.6% of the subject matter teachers due to respectability of the profession; 28.9% of the primary school teachers and 28.4% of the subject matter teachers due to being the ideal profession for them; 13.2% of the primary school teachers and 13.8% of the subject matter teachers due to their desire to be beneficial to the society and children; and 2% of the primary school teachers and 3.5% of the subject matter teachers due to the fact that they took their previous teachers as role models (TED, 2009).

Moreover, it is possible to talk about studies in different countries focusing on teacher candidates' qualities and attitudes towards the teaching profession (Akyeampong and Stephens, 2002; Brookhart and Freeman, 1992; Coultas and Lewin, 2002; Richardson and Watt, 2006). The findings obtained from these studies demonstrated that the teacher candidates in general came from relatively lower socio-economic and education level family backgrounds. Furthermore, it is possible to say that in majority of the studies, love of the teaching profession and positive attitudes towards the profession had a significant role in their choice of teaching as a profession.

It is possible to say that the present study also obtained similar results to those of previous studies. For instance, the reasons for choosing the teaching profession in the present study were similar to those of previous studies. The fact that 16% of the participants chose teaching for the love of the profession and 48% for the social benefits and to gain status is the examples of this particular findings. On the other hand, the fact that a group of 12% teacher candidates chose the profession just to be a university student and 6% because their families demanded the profession is thought-provoking.

When it comes to the families of the participants, it is clearly understood from the level of education and their occupations that teaching is a profession still commonly preferred by the lower income groups. Although an improvement was observed in the level of education and occupations of the mothers and fathers, the emerging differences did not seem to be very significant in comparison to the level of education and occupations of the grandmother and grandfathers. Based on these results, as it is the case all over the world, it can be concluded that the teaching profession is also a profession chosen by lower and middle income groups in Turkey.

Conclusion

Since the teachers have, from past to present, been regarded as a crucial part of learning-teaching process, teaching has been the subject of much discussion over the centuries. However, it is difficult to say whether any significant developments and models have been made in the profession. This may be because theories, methods, techniques, strategies and principles related to learning-teaching have not changed much from past to present. However, individual, social, economic and institutional reasons should not be ignored, either.

The problem areas of the teaching profession may shed clearer light on the evaluations on this subject. Generally speaking, it is possible to list three basic problem areas of the teaching field: first, those who are accepted as teachers; second, how the teachers are educated; and third, selecting the teachers among the graduates, their appointment and in-service training.

In the present study, the issue of those who choose the profession of teaching, in other words, which social groups in the society head for the profession has been dealt with. The reason why this particular problem area has been selected is based on the assumption that the raw material is the main

element of the quality of a product. Given the developments in the teaching profession, especially in the last century, it is possible to conclude that the teaching has been a profession commonly chosen by people from lower and middle income groups. As it has been revealed by the present study as well, teaching is a profession commonly chosen by already specified income groups in Turkey as well as all over the world. However, given the profiles of those who choose the teaching profession, the existing teachers do not seem to possess the qualities to prepare our children for the future to compete with their peers in the world.

The issue remains to suggest solutions to these findings. It has to be said at the outset that no country can collect its teachers from another country. On the other hand, it takes a long time for a society to change socio-economically and culturally. Nonetheless, teacher education institutions can remedy their deficiencies and prepare the country's children for a world where they can compete confidently. However, in Turkey where establishing a teacher training model has so far failed, it can be said that educating the individuals for the future in Turkey with the existing teacher education model, program and practices is not possible in the foreseeable future.

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