



Evaluation of Twitter Users Writings about Teachers in Turkey

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Abstract

As a social sharing network whose number of users worldwide continues to rapidly increase, Twitter has become an active network for individuals to share their thoughts and feelings at any given time. The purpose of this work, then, is to evaluate Twitter users of Turkey in terms of how they write about their teachers on Twitter. In order to collect research data, the document analysis, a qualitative research method, was used to collect data during the first quarter of 2012. Specifically, Turkish Twitter users' writings containing the 'teacher' were analyzed using the content analysis method. When tweets (articles) containing the word 'teacher' were examined, prominent emerging themes were discovered, including issues relating to teacher appointments, their low salary, criticisms of Turkey's ministry of national education and its training systems, the value given to teachers as a community, teachers' inadequacies, teachers' unfair practices, and clichéd statements and words stereotypically used by teachers in the classroom.

Keywords

Twitter Users, Teachers, Tweet.

With the continuous development of technology, the internet has become one of the various indispensable elements of today's world. Research shows that computer users spend a large portion of their time on social networking sites (Toprak et al. 2009; Yıldırım, Unal, & Celik 2011) and that the internet serves a variety of purposes, including specifically the sharing of information among users and groups.

Consisting of communities which allow users to communicate with each other, social sharing networks permit unlimited data transfer and are now among the most visited websites. In the simplest sense, social networking sites allow users not only to create online profiles or personal pages, but also to use them to develop online social

networks with other users (Enders et al. 2008; Finin et al. 2005).

This interactive situation is due to the application based "web 2.0." As Brown (2009) explains, web 2.0, as an internet environment, allows users to add their own words, photos, audio, and videos. Altunay (2010) has stated that social network users of the web 2.0 are, due to its interactive database, both the users and subjects who make up the content and flow.

Communities in these networks are considered a virtual community (Kim, Park, & Jin, 2008). A virtual community is a community whose participants share a common interest and which is formed and based on a dynamic network, but which is also customized and geographically

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dispersed (Sicilia & Palazon, 2008). Akar (2010) has stated that social networking sites can be used as a versatile communication channel for large numbers of participants.

Launched in March 2006 by a San Francisco company as a web application (O'Reilly & Milstein 2009), Twitter (www.twitter.com) is one of the most of used of these networks. According to Sagolla (2009), Twitter is a social communication tool for short and clear expressions which can be produced simply and viewed by everyone with access to the internet. According to a survey by Nielsen, Twitter was the social networking site experiencing the most growth (1.382%) in 2009, including a wide range of users such as artists, politicians, presidents, and administrators. According to statements made by head of Twitter's international strategy department, Katie Stanton, Twitter (which means *giggle*) has more than 200 million members (Stanton, 2012).

The main feature separating Twitter from other social sharing sites is that it has a maximum limit of 140 characters for its articles. Altunay (2010) has stated that by Twitter's restricting messages to 140 characters, it places a limit not only on the posts themselves, but also increasingly acts to promote a culture in which individuals perform short, immediate tasks in their daily lives. Furthermore, users' writings on Twitter can be seen by everyone as long as they refrain from hiding themselves.

Giving users the opportunity to post articles through a variety of devices anytime and anywhere on Twitter, and having a limited space of 140 characters, are stated as having caused messages to become more concise and force ideas expressed by individuals to be more purposeful (Asphen & Thorpe, 2009; Chan & Lee, 2005; Wright 2010). Regarding the modal properties of Twitter and the scope of its users, it has been stated that Twitter has been used in almost every area and has a large affective area (Java, Song, Finin, & Tseng, 2007, 2009). Twitter serves as an environment that allows interaction of communication, marketing, promotion, education, politics, and cultural fields.

Onat (2010) has stated that Twitter is an effective social network which is used in terms of ownership characteristics, such as responding to various topics, creating public opinion, communicating with the public directly, and networking with other organizations of society by almost every segment of society.

Today, Twitter is used educationally. In various surveys, it has been observed that Twitter has been used to make education more efficient with uses ranging from sharing a variety of experiences during educational conferences on Twitter (Reinhardt, Ebner, Beham, & Costa, 2009), examining students' statements regarding school courses (Holotescu & Grosseck, 2009a, 2009b), having information about their learning areas from tweets sent by students (Asphen & Thorpe, 2009); reflecting themselves sharing feelings and thoughts during teaching practice; and ensuring the projects that are produced in the classroom are saved and thus contribute to effective learning and teaching (Cahill & Adams, 2008; Wright 2010). By debating articles obtained from Twitter, participants' thinking and writing skills on the subject in question develop, thus creating a high awareness of one's environment. Such participation and shared development shows how an educational network through Twitter has been created.

Although Twitter is appreciated for its above-mentioned features, it has been seen as a useless and empty site by many people when first established because its users wrote every emotion, thought, and situation that would come into their mind (McFedries, 2007; Ovadia, 2009).

However, with the continuous interaction of users and the ability to reach a large number of people through quick advertising, Twitter users working in various fields such as policy, arts, education technology, business, and humor have led to a perception of a valuable active and social movement on Twitter through the mutual and holistic expression and debate of their ideas (Jansen et al. 2009; Wright 2010).

As mentioned earlier, Twitter is a network with a wide user base on which each subject is shared. For this reason, there is a large amount of sharing about teachers.

Teaching, among whose responsibilities is the preparation of a nation's future, is both a distinctive and very important profession. Gürsoy (2003) indicated that although quality education has many elements, the most important factor of which are, since they play an active role in the training of new generations, the teachers themselves.

Training qualified individuals is one of the most important roles of both a country and of educational institutions. A teacher is the person who carries out this work in educational institutions which may be considered as one of the most important aspects of

human training. Being experts, teachers provide information to their students, teach them ways of attaining knowledge, guide them, are role models, and prepare them for the future. These features are important indicators of the quality of a teacher (Celikkaya 2006).

Qualified teachers are the largest determinant of student success. Teacher training, ability, and experience are therefore more effective than any of the other factors in a student's success. The knowledge of teachers, their understanding of how students learn, and their practice of effective teaching methods lead to higher student achievement. It is therefore very important that teachers prepare prior to serving and then continually develop their knowledge and skills throughout their careers (Bhat, Chaudhary, & Dash, 2008).

The expected characteristics of teachers are listed as having empathic communication skills, area knowledge, creative thinking skills, skills to make observations for educational purposes, being open to change and development, and liking the profession. Teachers are often seen as the main person responsible for ensuring the success of the education system. In this context, determining how teachers – playing an active role in a healthy society and in the personality development of students – are perceived by both their own and other sectors as well as what kind of criticism is made against them is important.

There has been a plethora of studies in the literature in relation to teachers' utilization of social media for instructional purposes (McIsaac, Blocher, Mahes, & Vrasidas 1999; Park & Burford, 2013). However, there is not enough research based on the evaluation of writings about teachers on social media. Studies about "teacher perception" are of great importance in terms of showing teacher-student interaction and in learning how to better affect students during the teaching process (Schrodt et al. 2009). The fact that Twitter offers a free environment makes it possible for its users to freely state their opinions about teachers. Evaluating these freely stated writings is considered important in terms of revealing perceptions toward teachers and the teaching profession.

The purpose of this study is to identify the general ideas of users about teachers by evaluating users' writings about teachers on one of the most used social sharing networks, Twitter.

Method

Research Model

The articles authored by Twitter users of Turkey about teachers were collected using "document analysis," which is one of the methods of data collection in qualitative research, during the first quarter of 2012 (January, February, and March). Document analysis entails using pre-existing materials (Scott & Morrison, 2005). The data collected were analyzed via an analysis of the content. Maxwell (1992) indicated that everything heard and seen should be reported in order to ensure the scientific validity of the research.

Research of previous studies' results similar to those made during the present study were examined to ensure the validity of theoretical research (Akcadag, 2005; Basaran, 2000; Besuluk & Horzum, 2011; Celikten, 2006; Nikitina & Furuoka 2008; Oğuz, 2009; Saban, 2004; Sağlam & Sağlam, 2005; Yıldırım et al. 2011). Theoretical support with regard to teacher perceptions has been received from these previously conducted studies.

The selection of a working group in accordance with the research subject is required for validity generalization. It is therefore considered that since Twitter users are able to write their opinions in such a free manner, their selection as a research group ensures the validity generalization. The purpose of this study is to analyze Twitter users' writings about teachers. For this reason, it is conceived that selecting Twitter users as the study group for this study provides generalizable validity.

In addition, according to Maxwell (1992), research must be open to other research assessments for validity evaluation. Since Twitter writings are open to everybody, at least theoretically if not necessarily practically, and in the light of previous research, it is considered that the validity evaluator of the current research has been ensured. Moreover, the fact that the current research is limited to the writings of the first three months of 2012 enables other researchers to access and evaluate these writings.

According LeeCompte and Goetz (1982), in order for external credibility of the research to be maintained, the observer/participant needs to explain his/her own position (cited in Yıldırım & Simsek, 2006). In this study, the researcher took the role of an observer who only followed the writings.

In this study, researchers were observers following only typed writings. In addition, the identification of the social environment in which research is

carried out is the only way of ensuring the reliability of a survey (Yıldırım & Simsek, 2006). As such, this research was done on the Twitter environment, an environment via which users can write their opinions freely without exceeding 140 characters. Knowing this, the freedom present on the Twitter environment can be understood to allow users to write their real thoughts about teachers.

Working Group

The research working group consisted of 345 tweets (articles) about “teachers” on www.twitter.com, each of which was written by different users during the first three months of 2012. Special attention was paid to locate the word ‘teacher’ in selected tweets. Writings of institutions or sites were excluded from the scope of research, and only writings authored by individuals were evaluated. The researchers attempted to ascertain the gender of users by comparing the names, nicknames, and photos of users which were then coded and given sequence numbers. In the Findings section, in the beginning of every tweet, the numbers in parentheses signifies the sequence number of users while the abbreviations (F) and (M) indicate the gender of users, female or male, respectively.

Data Collection

Research data were collected using document analysis techniques. With the aim of evaluating Twitter users’ writings about the teachers during the first three months of 2012, all Turkish writings containing the word ‘teacher’ have been examined. The writings have been examined one by one by the researcher with those agreed upon as a result of comparison having been themed. The spelling and punctuation errors in the writings of Twitter users have been corrected, curse words have been removed, and proper nouns have also been changed. Writings are given in quotes and writer’s number and sex are also given in parentheses.

Data Analysis

The aim of this study was to evaluate, using the content method, the writings of Twitter users of Turkey composed during the first three months of 2012. For content analysis, the basic procedure is based on arranging like data together according to definite themes, and then to interpret them by organizing them in such a way that readers can easily understand them. While performing

research for this study, the analysis procedure was performed according to the steps stated by Yıldırım and Simsek (2006) for content analysis: (1) coding data; (2) finding themes; (3) organizing codes and themes; and (4) commenting on the findings.

Findings

Those themes obtained through content analysis and from original quotations by Twitter users are listed in the following section. When the writings that include the word “teacher” are examined, the following prominent themes arise: appointment problems, insufficiency of salary, criticisms on the National Education Ministry of Turkey and education system, the value teachers are given by society, the insufficiencies of teachers, unfair applications against teachers, teachers’ unfair applications toward their students, and clichéd statements stereotypically used by teachers.

Problem of Being Assigned As a Teacher in State Schools of Turkey

It is observed that writings written about the appointments of teachers are mostly written to well-known individuals such as a minister, a parliamentarian, a journalist, or an artist.

Participants have reflected their anxiety of not being appointed as a teacher by frequently uttering questions in the form of how many people will be appointed and when will the next appointment will occur.

“Instead of being in the school, we look at the schools far away. Since I love my profession so much, I don’t want to be an hourly paid teacher. (19.23, January 11) (1, F).

“Children need wise teachers instead of a system. Students will have insane teachers because of the amount of years required for one to even be able to be assigned as a teacher.” (1.18, January 16) (2, F).

“We have become teachers, but are we guilty because of it? We are still citizens of this country. If you care about us, and for the sake of God, assignment us to a teaching position by June.” (21.19, February 25) (3, F).

“Does the National Education Ministry have any study of teacher appointments in June, answer please, we look forward to it.” (20.25, March 28) (4, F).

“Mr. Arınç (Deputy Prime Minister) said that the appointment of additional teachers will be pre-examination at the latest in June. When will the official explanation be given to 28 thousand teachers?” (21.28, March 28) (5, M).

“Teachers who studied five years to become a teacher, but who were not assigned by you committed suicide. We became alcoholics because of not being able to bear this.” (9.35, March 29) (6, F).

“The number of teachers waiting to be assigned in 2002 was 72 thousand. This number is now 472 thousand.” (0.04, March 31) (7, M).

Lack of Salary

There are numerous articles written about teachers' lack of salary. In these writings, it is emphasized that teachers earn the lowest salary among other professional groups and that the difference between teachers' salaries and other professional groups' salaries has increasing compared to the difference that existed in the past.

“The teachers who work the most are Turkish teachers, but they receive the lowest salary.” (19:28, February 16) (8, M).

“Hasan Fehmi Ataç, the first finance minister of Turkey, said ‘Sir, we will organize the salaries of members of parliament. How are we to do this?’ Ataturk: Keep them under the salaries of teachers.” (9.08, February 1) (9, M).

“Teacher salary in 1923 = salary of MP, teacher salary in 1980 = doctor, government employee's salary, teacher salary in 2002 = police salary.” (8.23, January 30) (10, F).

“We not only ignore teachers with salary. It is an important criterion in the sake of perspective.” (21.39, February 19) (11, M).

“I think that the question needing to be asked is, ‘Is there a profession paid more than teachers? (such as teacher salaries above the minimum)’ (21:24, 19 February) (12, F).

“When I heard how much money a member of parliament made, I understood that the salary of a teacher is not the ‘salary of a teacher, but the corpse of a teacher.’ (0.42, 4th March) (13, F).

“You can buy only 2 Republican gold coins with a teacher's salary in 2012. What a shame!” (15:58, March 19) (14, M).

“Do you know how much a teacher's salary is?” (23.14, March 28) (15, M).

“Electricity hikes, natural gas hikes, reduction in teacher salaries. Fortunately, I am soldier not a teacher this year.” (1.56, March 31) (16, F).

“Hundreds of thousands of teachers have been waiting to be assigned. Besides a teacher earns a very low amount of money per month. It is very shameful for us.” (9.08, 31st March) (17, M).

Some users connected lowly salaries with the excess of the number of teachers.

“Teachers deserve to get paid higher than other civil servants do, but there are a high number of teachers out there. This shows how the state of our country's economy.” (20.40, March 30) (18, F).

Criticism against the Ministry of Education and Education System

Because the research was collected during a period of recent changes in the Turkish education system, Twitter users often referred to this issue and reported difficulties about an unseated education system.

“What can teachers do? It is not an education system, it is a trial board.” (15.02, February 12) (19, M).

“How does our country not have a steady educational system?” (19.47, March 25) (20, F).

“Change whatever you want to about the educational system. Everything is wrong about it anyway. You are sinking to the bottom. Teachers are innocent.” (19.46, March 26) (21, F).

“We are like products made by the same factory. Our capabilities are limited because of the educational system. It is not my fault that I am seen as incapable. Ask teachers the reason behind this issue.” (20:19, March 28) (22, M).

“Even if you have the best educational system, when the teachers are not happy, you cannot get any efficiency out of such a system.” (20.31, March 29) (23, F).

Some Twitter users wrote about missing or wrong aspects in education by criticizing Turkey's ministry of education.

“In this century, the only tablet without 3G or a wi-fi connection is the Sumer tablet. Teachers will distribute these.” (18.47, January 22) (24, M).

“Service Point application in assignments causes filling center schools with very old teachers instead of young ones.” (20.14 – February 10) (25, M).

While the education system was criticized, it was stated that assignments given by teachers had been done by parents or found on the internet.

"While giving homework, they make the students to more lazy by saying find the answer by using the internet." (23:32, January 21) (26, F).

"How strange it is for teachers! Although parents are doing students' homework, teacher are grading students." (19:45, February 26) (27, M).

"Her father is doing her homework, saying, 'daddy, be careful, or else the teacher will understand that you did it (Ceren, eight years old)." (15:25, March 7) (28, F).

Value Given to Teachers by their Community

When articles about teachers were examined, statements were encountered about how the value of teachers has been gradually decreasing and how they no longer have their old authoritarian and respected states.

"It is such that a teacher cannot say anything to students or to their parents. I give my lecture, it is not my problem whether the student understands it or not." (8.33, February 8) (29, F).

"Formerly, being an educator was used as a description for a teacher. Now, the only quality a teacher has is being nothing but an instructor." (8.35, March 10) (30, M).

"Whereas in England, a teacher gets more respect than the British Prime Minister, in our country, when a teacher protests for his rights, he/she is faced with pepper spray. It is just one of the thousands of torments that a teacher faces in this country." (15.46, March 1) (31, F).

"Working as a teacher in this country is one of the thousands of countable tortures." (19.45, March 28) (32, F).

Although the numbers of tweets is quite few, the owners of these tweets wrote positive points of views, warm feelings toward teachers, and their love.

"Originally being a teacher may not be such a bad idea." (15.28, January 16) (33, F).

"The teacher is a sun and this sun cannot be plastered with mud." (0.36, February 12) (34, M).

"How can a teacher make me love biology so much? It is impossible! Wow!" (19.11, February 19) (35, M).

"Teachers who trie to play football in their dress shoes during physical education and sports lecture are the best teachers in the world." (18.36, January 22) (36, F).

Some users wrote about teachers' accusations and judgments, expressing that even though it is not expected from them, teachers are capable of committing a crime.

"Although the number of good teachers is low, there are many dirty teachers! We can't be sure about who we are confiding our children to. Supervisors have to reveal dirty teachers. The number of audits must be increased." (23.41, February 12) (37, M).

Criticisms Directed at Teachers' Competencies

Twitter users wrote about how the teachers do not develop themselves professionally. In these writings, it was emphasized that teachers should take more care of their individual and Professional development.

"Teachers should be intellectual and dynamic. Becoming a teacher shouldn't occur just by finishing university." (22.46, January 10) (39, F).

"The ones who aim to be teachers with the mentality of 'You work half a day, weekends are your holiday, a-two-month holiday in summers, shake your head and get your salary'.." (8.13, February 18) (40, F).

"Primary education and education law are currently being discussed, but teachers are still unaware of the law." (23.38, March 27) (41, M).

"They introduced as a teacher somebody who doesn't know how many years ago the republic was declared or the foundational statutes of the republic." (21.44, March 28) (42, F).

"If a student who reads many books and who is the most hard-working of the class becomes a teacher, that class will be successful, but where can such a reality be found..." (14.16, January 14) (43, M).

In some writings, students wrote of situations where they saw teachers as being insufficient in the classroom.

"Guys, the teacher in my lecture destroyed all my joy in life. I do not want to live anymore." (10.24, March 9) (44, F)

"The teacher forgot to check what we were doing and we started to sleep in the classroom." (10.14, March 16) (45, F)

"If our teacher does not come without memorizing the lecture before coming to classroom, I will declare myself as the president of Turkey." (10.26, March 7) (46, F).

Some users wrote articles about the lack of communication with their teachers in a complaining manner.

"How did he become a teacher, he doesn't even know how to say hello." (09.38, January 4) (47, F).

"Mehmet is such a cold, distant, and lacks communication skills." (12.07, February 18) (48, M).

"The teacher governing class must look at his students while keeping in mind that 'this class is the future of the country.'" (22.20, March 19) (49, M).

Unfair Practices toward Teachers

Twitter users wrote a large number of articles on the implementation of the 4+4+4 system, which is the new education system in Turkey. In this system a student has to study 4 years in primary school, 4 years in middle school, and 4 years in high school. When the articles were examined, it was seen that Twitter users criticized police resistance to teachers who protested against the new application. Opinions in these articles are often positive toward teachers.

"Teachers, workers, employees are protesting for whom. Why are you afraid of teachers? Are they burning rubber or throwing molotov cocktails at panzers? Let them continue to walk in protesting." (0.49, March 28) (50, M).

"I think, today was 'the day of beating world teachers,' it was celebrated enthusiastically with batons in Turkey." (18.09, March 28) (51, M).

"Who educated you? Who taught you the letters in your sentences? Isn't it the very teacher you're beating?" (18.47, March 28) (52, F).

"Since yesterday evening, teachers, who are faithful, principled and who want to leave their children with a decent future all over the country, have been peacefully protesting on the street and then beaten." (18.43, March 28) (53, F).

"Today throughout the entire country, most of the people who drowned in gas, were detained, and beaten with batons were teachers or scholars. Are you aware of this?" (18.56, March 28) (54, M).

"The teachers remaining peaceful on the street in spite of violence with pepper gas, water cannons, batons, and all kinds of profanity directed at them are there for our children and your children." (19.45, March 28) (55, F).

"The whipping boys of this country are its teachers..." (23.56, March 28) (56, M).

"Oh, people! We were beaten by our own students, don't forget this, teachers ..." (9.42, March 29) (57, M).

"Announcement to police, people in the Kızılay square are not terrorists, but teachers." (12.04, March 29) (58, M).

However, some users criticized the behaviors of protesting teachers negatively. It is very noticeable that the owners of these writings who negatively criticized teachers were male users.

"I wonder how people who throw stones at our country and who cause trouble can even call themselves educators and teachers." (21.20, March 28) (59, M).

"Teachers should not throw stones at police even if the police are not right. Personally, I warned them many times not to do this." (23.21, March 30) (60, M).

"The teacher group protesting against the educational law should be punished for protesting instead of working at their schools." (12.18, March 31) (61, M).

Teachers' Unfair Classroom Applications

Students make up the majority of those who write about injustices committed by teachers. Students mainly criticized the behavior of teachers, writing of unfair situations. These included discrimination and forcing students to work too much, especially during exam periods.

"Why are two people in our classroom protected by the teachers?" (18.42, January 6) (62, F).

"There are some teachers looking differently to classes which is taking social courses predominantly, and I was devastated to think that why he/she become a teacher." (18.16, February 2) (63, F).

"The intention of a teacher: let's do all exams consecutively or on the same day so that students will go crazy." (16.35, March 20) (64, F).

"Teachers who make exams so difficult and on the same day, shame!" (18.44, March 21) (65, F).

"Some users also wrote about teachers' behaviors which mustn't be expressed in an educational environment." (65, F).

"In Antalya, a teacher punished nine children by having them write 'I am retarded.' Dear teacher, please write 10 thousand times on your forehead 'I am not an educator.'" (14.51, January 2) (66, M).

"Teachers must not impose their twisted political views on students who have no political opinion. I think the reason of that the current deadlock in the country is this." (16:41, March 23) (67, F).

"No teacher in the classroom should lie." (08.07, March 25) (68, M).

Clichéd Words Stereotypically used by Teachers

When Twitter users' articles containing the word "teacher" were read, it can be understood that they are not criticizing teachers, but that they are delighting in and reminiscing about their time in school.

"The bell rings and everyone heads toward the door. Teacher says, 'Did I tell you to leave'" (15.22, January 2) (69, F).

"If teachers didn't ask students saying 'can I look your paper:' 'If I give you more points, I will break it; they could raise a happier generation.'" (17.35, January 6) (70, M).

"Teacher: still look at my face. Student: let me where I look, teacher." (23.17, January 17) (71, M).

"The sentences of teachers having purpose: I will forget you at the end of the year. (teacher's revenge)" (23.03, February 9) (72, M).

"If you have something funny to say, share it so we can all laugh." (12.41, February 11) (73, M).

"I will already abolish group of four back' (teacher proverb)." (18.54, February 14) (74, M).

"When I become a teacher, I really want to say the following sentence to my students: I already know this, I'm not the one who needs to learn it." (22.36, February 19) (75, F).

"The teachers, who don't ask what you were doing during the break to the student, saying that 'teacher, can I go to the toilet', 'What were you doing during the break, baby?' Please quit working." (20.23, March 12) (76, F).

Discussion and Comments

Being a social network extensively used in people's daily lives, Twitter provides its users the opportunity to share ideas whenever they desire. Due to its open and succinct nature, this network may be considered conducive to revealing society's thoughts on any specific topic, including teachers; this being the goal of the current research..

Upon examination of writings (tweets) by Twitter users of Turkey about teachers, it was seen that a large part pertained to the issue of teacher appointments. What is remarkable about these articles is that they were written by teachers to well-known individuals, such as ministers, deputies, journalists, and artists. It can be said that the purpose of this is to attract the attention of the authorities in an attempt to create awareness through Twitter. Participants reflected their concerns about not being assigned by frequently voicing the issue of when the closest assignment would be and how many people were to be assigned.

In a survey conducted by Besoluk and Horzum (2011), it was seen that the problem emphasized by teachers revolved around the civil servant exam required by Turkey to work as a teacher as well as other employment issues. These writings are telling in that they show that both unassigned and prospective teachers undergoing training are worried about the future. In 2011, although the number of candidates who took the civil servant exam to become a teacher totaled 230,415 (http://www.ogretmenatama.com/2011the_full_number_of_candidates-taking_civil_servant_article_88.html), the ministry of national education appointed only 17,000 teachers in the February following the exam. With this in mind, it may be argued that instead of eliminating the need for contracted teachers with hourly paid teachers, increasing the number of teachers appointed combined with reducing student quotas in faculties of education will decrease the number of teachers waiting to be appointed.

There is a multitude of writings in Turkish pertaining to teachers' lack of salary on Twitter in which it was emphasized that not only do teachers receive the lowest salary of all professional groups, but also that the gap between teachers' salaries and that of other professional groups is increasing over time. Twitter users expressed that salaries often cause a negative concern for teachers. In Aydın, Sarier, and Uysal's (2012) study comparing PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) results of Turkey with those of the five most successful countries (Finland, Korea, Netherlands, Japan and Canada)

in terms of socioeconomic and sociocultural variables, they identified that in successful countries implementing the PISA exam, the salaries of teachers were much higher than in Turkey by approximately 250%, emphasizing that the fact that teachers receive such a low salary causes them to lose their prestige in the eyes of their students.

Both the studies by Aydın (1999) and Sağlam and Sağlam (2005) reveal that one of the factors determining not only that of teachers, but the social status and level of respect of any occupation is economic status with it being stated that current salaries are causing teachers' social status to decrease. Erden (1998) stated that in the early years of the Republic of Turkey, due to the high status of government employed officials (including teachers), teaching was among the most attractive and well-respected professions because the education and income levels of teachers were higher than those of other segments of society. He furthermore expressed that this occupational prestige was maintained until 1970, after which it began to decrease due to rapid social change and the induction of industrialization.

However, a number of Twitter users expressed that there are too many teachers and that the country's economic infrastructure cannot afford to pay ever-increasing salaries. Basaran (2000) stated that teachers agree to work for lower salaries than they deserve due both to their inability to find employment outside of the education system and to their large numbers. In some of the writings about "teachers," the idea that teachers' being paid such a low salary was among the reasons preventing teachers from being able to teach effectively. In two separate studies, both Sağlam and Sağlam (2005) and Sahan (2003) emphasized the need of increasing teachers' financial benefits and providing them with sufficient resources in their training and personal/professional development in order to overall increase classroom teaching effectiveness. It can be said that the reason behind teachers' low salaries is due to Turkey's relatively low national income per capita which also works to negatively affect the public's perception of teachers.

Because the research for this study was conducted during a period of changes made in the Turkish education system, this issue is addressed heavily by Twitter users who reported the issue of unseated education system disorders. It can be said that changes in the education system cause frequent criticism against, specifically, teachers and the national educational community of Turkey.

Some Twitter users wrote about unacceptable and deficient aspects in appointments by criticizing the Ministry of Education. In this regard, it can be said that users have reached a negative conclusion about the educational community based on what was written about teachers in these articles. Similarly, in a survey conducted by Akcadag (2005), the conclusion was reached that the ministry of national education in Turkey cannot organize itself properly without sufficient preparations.

In criticizing the education system, it was expressed that homework given by teachers was completed or found on the internet by parents. In a survey conducted by Turanlı (2009), it was discovered that parents did not find homework useful. It can therefore be said that the fact parents felt little to no hesitation in completing their children's homework both indicates and exasperates the negative perception of teachers held by society.

When articles about teachers were examined, the current researcher reached the conclusion that society's perceived value of teachers has been decreasing gradually and that teachers no longer held their previous authoritarian and respected status. This result is similar to the results found in other studies (Basaran, 2000; Erden, 1998; Sağlam & Sağlam, 2005).

In some articles, though few in number, users' positive ideas toward teachers attracts attention. In these writings, teachers are likened to such entities as "mother-father," "light," and "sun." This situation is similar to the results of other studies investigating positive perceptions held by society toward teachers (Celikten, 2006; Cerit, 2008; Nikitina & Furuaka, 2008; Oğuz, 2009). The difference between this and other studies however, is that the other studies observed a higher number of positive perceptions that the current study.

Some users wrote articles about the accusations made and judgments held by teachers, expressing that teachers can also commit offenses notwithstanding the fact that they also consider teachers' committing any offense to be unlikely. In Yıldırım et al.'s (2011) study, he observed that although teachers were generally perceived in a positive light, they could also be perceived negatively. For instance, teachers were sometimes described as being 'denied and unauthorized.'

Users emphasized in some articles that teachers' level of authority has been gradually restricted and that now, teachers represent only the 'instructive aspect' of education. Twitter users in general have

written numerous articles on the inadequacy of teachers, complaining about teachers' reluctance to work, they're not following the curriculum related to their professional fields, and their not being open to personal and professional development. In their study, Yıldırım et al. (2011) found that not only did Turkish society perceive that teachers were failing to fulfill their expected roles adequately, but that they were not being perceived in a positive light. From these results, the conclusion can be reached that teachers' current deficiencies combined with the increasing demands being placed on teachers are in need of immediate attention.

In some writings, students have written about the inadequacies present in their classroom. A large part of these writings were related to the deficiencies of teachers' ability to teach and in teachers' losing control of their classroom. Sağlam and Sağlam (2005) expressed that one of the main reasons behind teachers' deficiencies is that they are not sufficiently professionally equipped. Bhat, Chaudhary, and Dash (2008), in their study, emphasized the need for teachers to continually develop themselves throughout their careers.

In this regard, by taking the underlying ideas expressed in these articles, it can be said that, based on their perceptions of teachers, users hold a negative judgment toward the educational community. In a survey conducted by Akcadağ (2005), the conclusion has been reached that national education cannot organize itself properly without sufficient preparations.

Criticized by the educational system, Twitter users expressed that homework given by teachers was completed by parents. In survey conducted by Turanlı (2009), it was seen that parents did not find the homework issued by teachers to be useful. As a result, it can be said that the fact that parents complete their children's homework for them acts not only to increase, but also to exasperate the negative perception held by Turkish society toward teachers.

When articles about teachers were examined, the conclusion was reached that teachers' perceived value has, over time, been in a state of decrease and that teachers no longer hold their previous authoritarian and respected status. This finding is similar to those results of other studies (Basaran, 2000; Erden, 1998; Sağlam & Sağlam 2005).

Though few in number, users' positive perception of teachers is important. Specifically, teachers are likened to entities such as "mother/father, light, and sun" in these writings. This situation, too, is

similar to the results of other studies investigating the positive perception of teachers held by society (Celikten, 2006; Nikitina & Furuaka, 2008; Oğuz, 2009). With this being said however, the difference between the present study and previous ones is in the frequency of positive perceptions expressed.

Some users wrote articles criticizing the accusations and judgments made by teachers, expressing that although they do not expect teachers to commit a crime, they are certainly capable of doing so. In Yıldırım, Ünal, Çelik's studies (2011), it was seen that teachers were perceived not only positively, but also negatively, being described as 'dents and unauthorized.' In some articles, it was emphasized that teachers' level of authority has been gradually curtailed and that teachers represent only the 'instructive aspect' of education.

Twitter users, in general, wrote numerous articles on the inadequacy of teachers' capabilities. When these articles were examined, it was noted that teachers were reluctant to perform their teaching duties, unlikely to follow the prescribed curriculum, and were not open to personal and professional development. In his study, Yıldırım, Ünal, Çelik (2011) uncovered the perception that teacher failed to adequately fulfill the roles expected of them and were, therefore, not perceived in a positive light. From these results, the conclusion may be reached that there is an immediate need to address teachers' deficiencies and the demands placed on them.

In some writings, students wrote about the inadequacies present in their classes. A large portion of these writings were related to the deficiencies of teachers and how they were likely to lose control of the class. In Sağlam's studies, respondents expressed that the most serious of teachers' deficiencies was that teachers were ill-equipped professionally. Bhat, Chaudhary, and Dash (2008) also emphasized the perceived need for teachers to continue their professional development throughout their careers.

Twitter users wrote, in the form of complaints, about their teachers not communicating with them. Oztas (2001) established that teachers were perceived as being unapproachable by students and observers during the learning-teaching period. Kirsten (2011), attempted to determine whether students considered their teachers trustable and adequate, and how much so, by investigating the tweets written by teachers, finding that teachers wrote more reliable articles about their social life compared to other groups. This finding supports the notion present in previous research in which it was synthesized that knowing personal information

of teachers increases their trustworthiness in the eyes of their students (Hosek & Thompson, 2009; Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007).

In the writings criticizing the use of force by police against teachers protesting the implementation of the “4 + 4 + 4” educational system, users expressed negative opinions toward the police’s use of force against teachers, emphasizing that the teachers did not deserve such treatment.

With this being said however, it was observed that although teachers’ status within society has declined—with this reality being recognized by Twitter users, society also believes that teachers should still be treated with a high level of respect. In Ekinici’s study (2010), he concluded that teachers have the idea of treated themselves fairly. However, some users criticized the attitudes of protesting teachers, stating that actions like resisting police and throwing stones at them do not suit the teaching profession. From this point of view, it can be said that there is a societal expectation to see teachers as above all kinds of bad attitudes and behaviors.

Most of the articles written about “teachers” were composed by students who, for the most part, criticized teachers’ attitudes in school, writing about the cases they perceived as unjust. These include discrimination and, especially during the exam period, being forced to study. Moreover in the study conducted by Ozturk, Koc, and Sahin (2003), it was observed that teachers treated students differently based on whether their expectations of a student were high or low.

Another point worthy of remark in the writings is that users emphasized teachers’ lack of communication and empathy with their students. In his study, Oztas (2001) found that students considered their classroom teachers’ communicative skills in the learning–teaching period to be insufficient.

Some users also wrote about which attitudes teachers should not have in the educational environment. Such statements emphasized that teachers should not hold negative attitudes toward students and not imposing their own political views on the students.

After examining the sentences used by teachers, it was concluded that there exists the commonly held idea that teachers maintain their distance with their students and do not communicate with them effectively. Kugler (2008) stated that students would be much more willing to learn if their teachers communicated effectively with them.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the writings of Twitter users from Turkey, the current researcher has concluded that although Turkish society no longer perceives or associates high societal status with teaching, the idea that one ‘should always be respectful to teachers’ was found to be common. For instance, although students hold more negative ideas toward teachers while in school, negative attitudes toward teachers are not tolerated in society. With this, however, society imposes on teachers the responsibility of demonstrating exemplary behavior within their communities.

It is understood from the tweets that there are various complaints against the changes made in the education system. While changes in education systems may also be regarded as the result of the dynamic structure of educational field, including a large number of shareholders in the planning and implementation of such changes can help to make these changes both more effective and thus more easily adopted by teachers.

Some tweets show that parents might be doing their children’s homework. For this reason, it might be beneficial to elaborate specifically on this issue. If it is truly the case that parents do most of the homework for their children, the possible reasons behind this should be investigated and homework should be assigned in such a way that only students themselves have the ability to do their homework.

Among the negative criticisms made against teachers are a reluctance to developing themselves professionally, their not communicating with students, and their lack of attention to and laxity in following issues related to training. As such, it is conceived that postgraduate education programs and in-service trainings directed at teachers may help to dispel such perceptions held by students. Moreover, the proficiency of schools’ administrative staff should also be promoted in order to transform the school into an institution in which actual learning takes place.

In addition, it can be argued that the frequent appearance and discussion of such issues as appointment problems and the lack of salary for teachers may also contribute to the negative perceptions expressed by Twitter users. For this reason, teacher training policies should be revised and the quota of education faculties and pedagogical certificate programs should be determined based on their actual need.

It can also be argued that a better economic situation for teachers will lead to their being perceived in a more positive light by society. For this reason, teachers' salaries in OECD countries may be used as a criterion in determining teachers' salaries in Turkey.

In addition, it may be concluded that the empowerment of teachers within the education system can provide access to a more respectable position in society.

It is understood from some of the writings that teachers may sometimes engage in unfair practices against their students. For this reason, whether teachers act fairly toward their students should be made clear through future studies implementing

scales and interviews with students whose results should then be evaluated by teachers themselves.

Furthermore, it is seen that there might be unfair practices against teachers, too. Non-governmental organizations formed by teachers should be established in order to contribute to educational policies and a suitable arena should be created for teachers' to voice, and demonstrate, their qualms to the legal wing of the educational world.

It is understood from the tweets that teachers may sometimes use clichéd sentences that have become stereotypically associated with teachers. Although such utterances may be voiced unconsciously, how these utterances are perceived by students and how they contribute to the educational and instructional process should be researched.

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