

# Prospective Teachers' Ideas about Teacher Recruitment and Their Professional Future

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## Abstract

This research aimed to reveal how prospective teachers viewed their professional future and to discern how their lives would be affected in case they were not recruited as teachers. The research was conducted on senior students at Buca Faculty of Education. The sample of the research consisted of 149 senior students, including 82 girls and 67 males. The data were collected through a measurement instrument developed for this research, consisting of six open-ended questions. In data analyses, Miles' and Huberman's approach, namely "data reduction", "data display" and "conclusion verification", was made use of. Some of the results of the research could be outlined as follows: About 40% of the participants attended the programs they had chosen unwillingly, 87% would like to work as teachers, 81% thought that working on contract was not fair, 34% stated that they would not work everywhere in the country, %81 had negative ideas about their professional future, and 91% thought that their lives would be affected very badly in case they were not appointed as teachers.

## Key Words

Prospective Teacher, Recruitment, Professional Future.

There are several reasons effecting students to choose teaching and a branch of teaching as a job. Students demand for education affected by the student characteristics, student's personal environment, the education system and the community outside of the education system (Harnnqist, 1978 cited in Ünal, 1996). However, due to the difficulty of being a student at university, some of the students have to choose the departments which they are a little or non-interested instead of choosing the ones they are really interested in. In addition,

recently not only being a student at university but also finding a job in their field of graduation has been a crucial problem.

Unemployment, which is perceived as an economic, political, and social problem by many countries (Kulik, 2000), has increased in a significant rate among university graduates (Ünal, 1990). Today, many university graduates work in different fields in order not to be unemployed. A university diploma no longer provides a job opportunity and this situation causes disappointment among educated people and reduces motivation in academic field (Güven, 2002). It was found that 27% of senior students in Middle East Technical University were anxious about unemployment (Gizir, 2005).

Unemployment has increased distinctly in Turkey. However, the quota of education faculties has been expanded more than 50% in the last two years (Eşme, 2009). But, being recruited or not determines the future careers of the prospective teachers. For example, the ministry of education who answered a proposal in Turkish Parliament explained that according to the results of 2008-2009 public personnel selection exam (Kamu Personeli

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Seçme Sınavı [KPSS]) there had been 312.232 teachers waiting for recruitment and 72.688 teaching positions to be fulfilled (Güçlü, 2010). Education Union stated that there were over 320.000 teachers waiting for their recruitment (Eğitim ve Bilim Emekçileri Sendikası [Eğitim Sen], 2010).

Unemployment results in many psychological and social problems. Being unemployed in spite of having the motivation and talent to work causes desperation, hopelessness, loneliness, and depression (Üngören & Ehtiyar, 2009). Having a proper and regular job helps the individual to hope for the future, have a family and a position in society (Tümkiye, 2005). Anxiety about being not recruited after graduation causes prospective teachers to experience some psychological problems. For example, a study on prospective teachers of Physical Education Faculty proved that the desperation levels of the participants were low in the first year of their education whereas the level increased in the following years of their education (Gençay, 2009). In another study it was found that the graduates of Physical Education Faculty had high levels of anxiety about finding a job which also increased their desperation level (Kırımoglu, 2010).

High level of anxiety causes uncertainty, and indecision about the future. University students in Turkey experience this anxiety (Çakmak & Hevedanlı, 2005). It was found in a study that some prospective teachers' expectations for their future were positive whereas the others had intensive levels of desperation (Ceyhan, 2004).

An education system isolated from the realities of the society may destruct the social order (Sönmez, 1993). Teachers should be trained well to construct a good future. One of the basic conditions of providing it is to keep the hopes of the prospective teachers alive. Because hope expresses the prediction about the success of plans to meet the targets (Dilbaz & Seber, 1993) whereas desperation expresses pessimism about the future (Tümkiye, 2005).

There has been a lack of planning about teacher training and recruitment. Education faculties were the only institutions training teachers in 1998, but in August 2009, the Turkish Council of Higher Education provided pedagogy courses for the students of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

### Purpose

The aim of this study was to investigate the opinions of prospective teachers related to their career

and how their lives might be affected if they are not recruited. The following were the research questions:

1. What are the prospective teachers' reasons to choose their division?
2. What are their opinions about being a teacher?
3. What are their opinions about permanent and temporary teaching recruitments?
4. What are their opinions about working in any part of the country?
5. What are their opinions about their careers?
6. What are their opinions related to their life if they are not recruited?

### Method

The data of this study were collected with open-ended questions. Open-ended questions promote direct point of views about people's experiences, opinions, knowledge, and emotions without being dependent on the categories in questionnaires (Patton, 2002).

### Population and the Sample

The senior students in Buca Education Faculty (BEF) formed the population. There were 22 divisions consisting senior students in 2010. There were 1494 (Female: 825, Male: 669) senior students in these divisions. The sample was chosen in two phases. Firstly, each class was considered as a cluster as suggested in cluster sampling (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2000). Then, considering the gender distribution, 10% of total student number in each division was randomly chosen. 149 participants (82 females, 67 males) formed the sample of the research.

### Data Collection

The form containing open-ended questions was developed to collect the data for this study. After piloting, the questions were edited with the suggestions of the students and the academicians. The final version of the form had six questions. Experts were consulted to ensure the validity of the research questions. Data was collected in March, 2010 by the researcher.

## Data Analysis

Miles and Huberman's (1994) "data reduction", "data display", and "conclusion drawing and verification" approach was used in data analysis. First, the answers for the questions were typed on computer. Next, they were printed out and read by taking notes. These notes helped the researcher to categorize the data. The unity, uniqueness, and comprehensiveness of these categories were taken into consideration during the analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2000). Data analysis was conducted by an expert in qualitative research and the researcher. Direct quotations were used to explain the categories. In addition, agreement frequencies were calculated. Reliability is the conformity of the coders (Creswell, 2007). To increase the objectivity and provide the reliability of the data analysis, the percentage of the conformity of the codes in the first and second questions were checked. Reliability was calculated using  $\text{reliability} = (\text{number of agreements}) / (\text{total number of agreements} + \text{disagreements})$  formula (Miles & Huberman, 1994:64). The reliability of the first question was 0.91 and the reliability of the second question was 0.88.

## Results

### Reasons for Choosing the Division

59,73% (n=89) of the participants stated that they chose their division willingly. Interest in the field, curiosity, and thought of being happy by studying in a field that they would like affected the choice of 34,22% (n=51) of the participants. High level possibility in their recruitment and finding a job easily also affected their choice in the field of study. In addition, the willingness of being a teacher affected the choice of 21.47% (n=32) of the participants. These prospective teachers thought that teaching was appropriate for their personality and skills and they could be happy if they become teachers. 2.68% (n=4) of the participants thought that being a teacher was an ideal job and 1.81% (n=2) stated that they chose their field because they perceived one of their teachers as a model.

40.27% (n=60) of the participants had to choose their division. 14.09 (n=21) of them had to choose the job as they wanted to find a position easily even though the job was not appropriate for their interests, skills or likes. Besides, 6.71% (n=16) of the participants chose their divisions because of the high school they had graduated from, university entrance system or lack of choices. 1.34% (n=2) of them chose their division due to their families' wishes or enforcement.

### Opinions Related to Being a Teacher

87.25% (n=130) of the participants wanted to be a teacher whereas 6.04% (n=9) of them did not, 5.37% (n=8) of them had to do it, and 1.34% (n=2) of them reported being indecisive. Nevertheless, 49.66% (n=74) of the participants reported they would not have chosen another job if they had had another chance. 4.70% (n=7) of them did not mention any reasons for that. 31.54% (n=47) of them mentioned that they would not have chosen another job because they liked teaching, they willingly chose to be a teacher, and teaching was appropriate for them. 13.42% (n=20) believed that teaching was an ideal job and they would be happy as teachers.

50.34% (n=75) of the participants stated that they would have chosen another job other than teaching if they had been given a chance to choose. 2.68% (n=4) of them did not mention any reasons for this point. 20.80% (n=31) of the participants, however, thought that teaching was not appropriate and far from their interests and there were more interesting jobs for them. 12.08% (n=18) mentioned that recruitment of teachers was problematic and they would choose a more comfortable job which provides some opportunities. 9.40% (n=14) thought that teachers were badly-paid, their value was underestimated, and they had a low position in society. 5.37% (n=8) thought they would have chosen their ideal job if they had been given a chance to choose.

### Opinions Related to Permanent-Temporary Teacher Employment

38.92% (n=58) of the participants emphasized that all teachers should be employed permanently and teachers graduated from same faculties should be given the same personnel rights. However, 18.12 % (n=27) of these participants were consent to work in a temporary position instead of being unemployed. 16.78% (n=25) of the participants thought that temporary teaching position was the result of low-priced work force policy, exploitation of effort and it was against human rights and unacceptable. 6.71% (n=10) of the participants added that temporary teacher employment reduced the quality of education and damaged the job itself.

On the other hand, 6.04% (n=9) thought that the problem was insufficient recruitment despite the need for the teachers not the discussion about temporary or permanent teaching positions. 2.01% (n=3) thought that all teachers should be in the same position as temporary or permanent teachers. Finally, 8.72% (n=13) told that they did not know the difference between being in a temporary or permanent teaching position.

### Opinions Related to Working in any Parts of the Country

63.09% (n=94) of the participants stated that they would work in any parts of the country because of their nationalist feelings, idealist thoughts or obligations whereas 2.02% (n=3) did not state a specific reason. 24.16% (n=36) mentioned that they would work in any parts of the country as they did not want to be unemployed and they had no choice. 22.25% (n=33) believed that everyone had the equal rights to get education so teachers should perform their jobs without considering the difficulties. 14.76% (n=22) who had nationalist thoughts such as unity of the nation, holiness and wholeness of the state mentioned that they were eager to work in any parts of the country.

34.23% (n=52) of the participants stated that they would not (be able to) work in any parts of the country because of "security", "limited social life", and "cultural or family matters". 2.68% (n=4) did not specify any reasons for that while 2.68% (n=4) mentioned that they would decide according to the circumstances when they got recruited. 12.08% (n=18) expressed that they would not work in East and South-east Anatolia because of lack of security of life. 11.41% (n=17) stated that they would not work in cities where social life was limited and 8.05% (n=12) reported that they wouldn't work in cities far away from their families or cultures. 2.68% (n=4) of them were indecisive.

5. 80.54% (n=120) of the participants had "negative" opinions about their job's future when they considered the KPSS (public personnel selection exam) and teacher recruitments. 27.52% (n=41) thought that their career depended on KPSS and they were anxious about their careers since there had been so few recruitments. 19.46% (n=29) thought that they did not expect to be recruited and finally they would work in another job.

19.46% (n=29) of the participants had positive opinions related to KPSS exam, their recruitment and future careers. 14.09% (n=21) were hopeful about their recruitments and 3.36% (n=5) did not expect any problems for their recruitment and thought that they would have a bright future career. In addition, 2.01% (n=3) thought KPSS exam was necessary.

### Opinions Related to the Effects of Being not Recruited on Their Lives

90.60% (n=135) reported that being not recruited would affect their lives "quite negatively" 20.80%

(n=31) of these participants thought that their families and they would be affected negatively both financially and psychologically if they were not recruited. 20.80% (n=31) of them reported that that situation would result in psychological problems; 14.09% (n=21) thought all their efforts would be wasted and they would feel miserable. 10.74% (n=16) of them thought that their life would change completely and this situation would lower their morale. 9.40% (n=14) stated that their life pace would change and they would have to choose another job. 4.70% (n=7) would feel the pressure of their families and acquaintances while 8.72% (n=13) did not explain how they would be affected. 1.34% (n=2) emphasized that their life depended on their recruitment and their ties with life would come to an end. Only 9.49% (n=14) of them thought that their life would not change much in case of being not recruited.

### Discussion

Firstly, the result of the findings showed that 60% of the participants chose their field of study reluctantly, whereas 40% of them did it because of obligations. Their ÖSS exam results, finding a job easily, job guarantee, conditions and the family wishes were the factors affecting compulsory choice. Therefore, the ways of showing teaching as an appealing job should be thought. This result is consistent with what Turkish Education Association's (Türk Eğitim Derneği [TED], 2009) research on teacher efficiency found.

Secondly, although the majority of the participants (87%) wanted to be teachers, half of that number stated that they would choose another job if they were given another chance. Their reasons for that were considering the job inappropriate, problems in finding a job and recruitment, the unsatisfactory salary and position in society and doing an ideal job.

These findings are consistent with Kılıç and Kuyumcu's (2008) research findings in which the majority of the participants reported that they were willing to be teachers. The findings are also consistent with Temizkan's (2008) research results. On the other hand, Gök and Okçabol (1998) found that 30% of their participants would work in another job if they "meet an opportunity". The findings of this study show that more than half of the participants would choose another job. The findings of these two studies may mean that opinions towards teaching have been changing negatively. In addi-

tion, this finding supports the claim that in some countries traditional public perceptions on teacher and their work and their relatively admired status have been in decline (Mulryan-Kyne, 2007).

Thirdly, 81% of the participants were against temporary teaching position. They perceived permanent working position as a right and temporary working position as a policy for low-price work force, exploitation of efforts and inequitable practice which damages the job itself. However, 18% of them would accept temporary position if they had to. These seem to hinder the dependence and dedication to the job and institution. Different behaviors, approaches and practices in organizations destroy the dependence (DeConinck & Stilwell, 1996).

As a result, it may be concluded that permanent teachers recruitments are in favor of the public because otherwise the occupational attitudes of the teachers may be affected negatively which may lead the destruction of the job. Low human force proficiency in educational systems is mainly due to employment policies (Uluğ, 1998). Minister of Education, who answered a proposal in TBMM (Turkish Parliament), explained that the ministry paid 1610 liras to a permanently recruited teacher, 1580 liras to temporary recruited teacher, and 587.26 liras to part-time teachers who had 25 hours to teach. This situation shows that there is an unsystematic employment policy and part-time teachers are paid only one third of permanent teachers' salary ("Din öğretmenleri", 2010).

Fourthly, two thirds of the participants stated that they would work in any parts of the country. 24% of them would work unwillingly, just because of the obligations; 22% of them had idealistic thoughts, and 15% of them had nationalist thoughts. About one third of the participants reported that they would not (be able to) work in cities where there is a risk of life and limited social life, and in cities which are far away from their families and cultures. These results show that teachers are not permanent in cities or regions and this causes negative effects on the continuity of education.

Fifthly, four fifths of participants had negative thoughts about their future careers. These participants were anxious for their future and thought that they possibly do not have a future career. They also reported that KPSS exam was useless and exhausting, and they added that they would have difficulty in finding a job. One fifth of the participants

had positive feelings about their future careers.

The results of the study are consistent with Kurt's (2008) study in which university students were evaluated according to their anxieties and "I am anxious about my future" was the first expression chosen by the participants. These results show that there is a necessity to find a balance between teacher training and employment. Here, we may think that Turkish National Committee of Teacher Training has not been doing its job (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu [YÖK], 2010) properly. As a matter of fact, MEB itself reported in 2010-2014 strategic plan that "there is a lack of supply-demand balance in teacher training and employment" which was among the weaknesses and "there is an insufficient communication and cooperation between YÖK and MEB" which was among the treats (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [MEB], 2010).

Finally, these results indicate that giving hope to prospective teachers, meeting their individual and social needs and providing conditions to improve themselves and do their jobs are crucial. Working right is one of the most important rights of the individuals. Societies must provide appropriate jobs for their members (Gündoğan, 1999). Occupation provides an income for an individual to lead a life and helps him/her feel content and independent (Gill, 1999; Yüksel, 2003). Working affects people's psychological health and prosperity positively (Aytaç & Keser, 2002). Studies show that physical and mental problems are more common among unemployed people (Tüzün, 2006). Some participants' expressing their losing of ties with life may cause serious results. There has been news on the newspapers related to these events. For example, in the newspaper *Birgün* on 28.03.2010, it was reported by the Eğitim Emekçileri Derneği (Education Workers Organization) that 13 teachers committed suicide because they had not been recruited ("İntihar eden," 2010).

In conclusion, while there has been an increase in the number of prospective teachers, the rate of the employment of the graduates has not increased accordingly. In addition to some other factors, this is a consequence of the lack of balance between teacher training and employment of teachers. This results in unemployment of trained people and lead to economic, psychological and social problems. Therefore, there should be urgent planning and structuring about teacher training and employment.

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