



Teacher Training in The Turkish Education System: Reflections of The Pedagogical Formation Certification Program^{1,2}

Türk Eğitim Sisteminde Öğretmen Yetiştirme: Pedagojik Formasyon Sertifika Programının Yansımaları

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Öz

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, Türk eğitim sistemi içerisinde öğretmen yetiştiren yapılardan biri olan pedagojik formasyon sertifika programında eğitim almakta olan öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğini seçme nedenlerini ve bu çerçevede almış oldukları formasyon eğitimine yönelik görüşlerini ortaya koymaktır. Çalışma, nitel araştırma yöntemine uygun olarak yürütülmüş olup veri toplama aracı olarak yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada elde edilen bulgulardan hareketle, katılımcıların öğretmenliğin sahip olduğuna inandıkları mesleki avantajlarından dolayı kendi bölümlerini bırakarak öğretmen olmak istedikleri ve bu kapsamda da sertifika programına kayıt yaptırdıkları söylenebilir.

Abstract

The primary aim of this study was to reveal the reasons why teacher candidates who received training within the pedagogical formation certification program chose the teaching profession, and their views on the education they received within the program. The study was conducted in accordance with the qualitative research method, and semi-structured interviews were used as the data-gathering tool. The findings showed that the participants wanted to be teachers instead of pursuing a career in their primary area of study due to the professional advantages that they believed teaching had, and thus, they enrolled in the certification program.

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öğretmen eğitimi
öğretmen adayı
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Keywords

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1. Introduction

Teaching is one of the oldest professions in the history of humanity. No matter how far we go back in the historical timeline the ability to teach has been prominent in almost every society having social life. This teaching mission and functionality that was not quite institutional at the beginning has turned into a profession with stronger bases in the course of time in parallel to the socio-cultural and political developments that societies went through (Oktay, 1991). Whereas there was a development process regarding the teaching profession across the world, teacher training systems started to be discussed. Different countries came up with different answers to the question of through which educational steps teaching as a profession should be acquired (Asare & Nti, 2014), which resulted in a variety of systems on teacher training. These different teacher training systems were built on two fundamental bases: the research/debate on global education, and social characteristics/needs. While designing their teacher training systems, states benefited from the practices in other countries and the international approaches that emerged with these practices, and also aimed to integrate the aspects that they need to teacher training considering their own social characteristics, and thus, make use of the social change and transformation function of education to the maximum extent (Shijie, 1988). In accordance with this aim, another equation existed between teacher training systems and politics. The change of political power in a country can result in changes in education and in this regard the teacher training system (Emihovich, Dana, Vernetson & Colón, 2011). Particularly since the second half of the 21st century, the statements and efforts of states, in other words politicians, on teacher training policies have increased, and the teacher training system has constituted an important place among the political promises about education (Furlong, Smith & Brennan, 2009). The main reason why the teacher training debate has been intense as such is the fact that teachers play a crucial role in the instructional process. It is evident that in order to achieve instructional objectives, teachers having the necessary qualifications should be in charge. Considering the dynamics of the new century, teacher qualifications should be at a very high level (Bransford, Hammond & LePage, 2005). In this sense, efforts are made in the teacher training process to ensure that teachers have the required qualifications.

In terms of teacher training, the Turkish education system included many methods that varied from time to time depending on both the country's own historical continuity and the practices in other countries. The new state founded after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire fell behind in education due to the effect of the harsh war conditions. In the face of low schooling rate and lack of sufficient schools, the priority was given to building elementary schools and training elementary school teachers. In this regard, villages were given a special importance considering the socio-economic conditions of the time, and schooling and teachers recruitment were among the priority issues in villages and small towns as well as city centres. These efforts in the first years of the republican period were also observed in the high school education policies in the following years, and different practices regarding teacher training in particular were implemented (Saracaloğlu, 1992). It is not possible to mention a fully institutionalised and settled system of teacher training in this process. Rather, the teacher training policies were set with an approach that prioritised quantity more than it did quality (Şendağ & Gedik, 2015). Although the Ministry of National Education had been the authority regarding this issue until 1982, teacher training in Turkey was then left to universities under the coordination of the Higher Education Council (Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu, YÖK) (Dağlı, 2006).

With teacher training being in universities, there were efforts to establish a more planned education system, but despite the years passed it has not yet been fully achieved. Especially, the issue of which educational processes that teachers who will teach high school courses should pass has not been resolved. As a reflection of this lack of solution, graduates of science and literature faculties were sometimes given the right to be teachers after doing a non-thesis master's degree, whereas sometimes only the education faculty graduates could be teachers (Kartal, 2011). On the other hand, in the times when there was a need for elementary school teachers, those who graduated from various faculties were entitled to work as elementary school teachers even though they did not go to an education faculty or attend a certification program in education (Kavak, Aydın & Altun, 2007). Today, only the individuals who graduate from the relevant programs of education faculties can be assigned to teach elementary school courses. However, in the context of training teachers for the high school level, there have been two different recruitment practices. Individuals who graduate from the high school programs of education faculties, and those who graduate from a different faculty but have a pedagogical formation certification program could teach at high schools. This certification program, which has been implemented since 2010, accepts applications based on undergraduate grade point average within the framework of the principles and procedures set by the Higher Education Council, and the candidate who graduate from the program are given the right to be a teacher. Within a period of more than five years since 2010, many candidates have obtained this right by completing this certification program. Only in 2015, nearly 50 thousand candidates were accepted to this program, and shortly, took their place in the Turkish education system as teachers waiting to be employed. Today, in order to examine the Turkish education system, and implement successful policies by conducting accurate needs analyses towards teacher

employment, teachers completing the pedagogical formation certification program as well as other teachers should be taken into consideration, and its reflections to the teacher training process should be considered.

Based on the theoretical framework summarised above, the primary aim of this study was to reveal the reasons why teacher candidates who received training within the pedagogical formation certification program chose the teaching profession, and their views on the training they received. The following are the research questions addressed in this study:

1. Why do students choose the teaching profession and to receive pedagogical formation training?
2. What experiences and views do they have regarding the certification program?

2. Method

Research Design

This study focused on the reasons why teacher candidates who received training within the pedagogical formation certification program, which is one of the bodies for teacher training in the Turkish education system, chose the teaching profession, the educational experiences they had in the program, and based on these aspects, what their views and expectations towards the future were in the professional sense. The research questions addressed in the study highlighted aims for describing the meaning world of individuals. In other words, the essence of the study is individuals' meaning world. With respect to research methodologies and the philosophical approaches behind them, two basic approaches are widely used in educational research: interpretive philosophy and positivism. Interpretive philosophy that prescribes examining individuals and their meaning world considering the socio-cultural reality they are in (Glesne, 2011) was preferred in this study because it was more suitable for its aim and design. Although quantitative data are sometimes used as a reflection of the positivist tradition in this research method that aims to examine and reveal participants' meaning worlds (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), revealing individuals' experiences and meaning-making is at the forefront in principle (Mason, 1998). When the problem statement and aims of this study are considered, it can be seen that the target data consist of individual-focused questions that can be answered with individuals' feelings, views and values. Therefore, the study was designed and conducted in accordance with the qualitative research method.

Participants

Consistent with the philosophy it has, qualitative research focuses on the place of the obtained data in social life and whether it makes an in-depth analysis of individuals' meaning world rather than the number of participants (Daniel, 2012). Based on this theoretical framework, unlike quantitative research, the participants from whom the data would be gathered are suggested to be determined through purposive sampling. Using the purposive sampling method can provide researchers in-depth data about the research topic as well as giving them the opportunity to carry out the research on the right theme and find answers for the research questions in the broadest sense (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling includes many different techniques. Among these techniques, the typical sampling technique was used in this study. This technique refers to the inclusion of individuals and groups having the same characteristics in the basic aspects, except individual differences, within the target population that could answer the research questions (Suri, 2011), and the teacher candidates who graduated from a faculty other than the faculty of education and are currently attending a pedagogical formation certification program were determined as the target population. Any individuals or groups within this population can be evaluated as the typical sampling group because what typical implies here is not being the same in every aspect. In this study, the participants were 12 accounting-marketing teacher candidates attending the pedagogical formation program at a state university in Istanbul in 2015. In the selection of the participants, the principle of obtaining and analysing in-depth and multidimensional data in qualitative research was considered (Robinson, 2014). In this regard, the number of participants was determined in a way to not make it too many so that it would not interfere with the in-depth data analysis and revealing the pattern between the themes; however, it was paid due attention not to experience the case of not being able to reach sufficient number of participants to gather meaningful data (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007). Personal information regarding the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Personal information on participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Number of Siblings	Education
1	Female	25	7	Labour Economics
2	Female	25	4	Business
3	Female	23	4	Business
4	Male	24	3	Economics

Participant	Gender	Age	Number of Siblings	Education
5	Female	24	2	Business
6	Female	33	4	Economics
7	Male	27	2	Business
8	Female	54	3	Business
9	Female	25	2	Economics
10	Female	23	2	Economics
11	Female	23	2	Economics
12	Female	22	4	Public Finance

Data Gathering and Analysis

Semi-structured interviews that are commonly used in qualitative research and facilitate gathering in-depth data were employed in the study as the data-gathering tool. By means of this technique, direct communication is established between the researcher and the participant, which enables revealing the participant's feelings and views in his/her own words (Kazmer and Xie, 2008). It can be quite effective in participants' expressing themselves about complex social issues in detail (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). Designing interviews in a semi-structured form can be evaluated as a reflection of the nature of the qualitative research process. Qualitative research that aims to explore the individual and his/her meaning world enables the individual, or in other words the participant, reflect his/her experiences in every aspect in the data gathering process (Galetta, 2013). Individuals with similar characteristics can give different answers to the same question, and every different answer can help revealing a hidden part of the individual's meaning world. In short, individual differences are naturally different, and in order for this difference to be reflected in the research data, the interviews were conducted with the participants in a semi-structured form. Although the duration of the interviews varied among the participants, it was 45 to 60 minutes in average. There are no clear criteria regarding how long qualitative interviews should last, as is the number of participants, but the primary concern is to obtain in-depth and multifaceted data. Therefore, structuring the duration of the interviews and using it meaningfully are as important as the duration itself (Seidman, 2013). Prior to the interviews, the participants were informed about the questions and the content of the interviews, and that the answers would only be used for research purposes. In this way, it was aimed to make the participants feel comfortable and ensure the cohesion of the topic.

In qualitative research, there is no doubt that one of the most prominent steps which should be conducted carefully is the analysis of the data. As a reflection of the interpretive philosophy, the data that would be gathered in the research process are related to the interaction between the participant and the researcher, and partly, the researcher's reading the participant and his/her meaning world. This is because the codes and categories formed during the analysis of interviews in qualitative research are revealed from participants' statements, but the researcher's making sense of those statements are also of significance (Strauss, 1987). The interviews conducted with the participants in the study were recorded, and then transcribed. The raw data were firstly read to be able to get a holistic perspective, and a mental preparation was made for the participants' answers. Then, the transcribed interviews with each participant were examined in detail considering the research questions. In this step, a two-dimensional coding process was implemented. Firstly, the participants' answers to the interview questions were coded, and then, the views and ideas that differed in the interviews due to the nature of this technique were coded. This pre-coding process was followed for each participant. After the completion of this pre-coding, categories were formed in the second step. The codes revealed based on the issues that the participants mentioned in their answers were combined in categories and presented under a single title (Saldana, 2013). In this step of the data analysis, the analysis of one part of the data were completed, but the other part were re-combined under a new title named as upper dimension. In this process, the decision of which categories to gather under a dimension was made based on the characteristics of the data. If the categories of data were few in number and quite different from each other, these were not taken to the dimension step, and if some had a common set of codes, these were combined under a dimension.

3. Findings

Participants' Reasons For Receiving Formation Training

The first of the research questions addressed in the study was about determining the reasons why the teacher candidates who were receiving pedagogical formation training chose this program, or in other words the teaching profession. In this regard, three categories were revealed in the interviews conducted with the participants. These categories and the subsequent codes are presented in Table 2 in detail.

Table 2. Participants' Reasons for Choosing the Teaching Profession

Categories	Working Conditions	Employment	Professional Attitude
Codes	Working conditions (P1, 2, 9, 10, 11)	Finding employment easily (P4, 10, 11, 12)	Loving teaching (P2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9)
	Job security (P4)	Not being able to find employment in their own area (P4, 10, 11, 12)	Respectability of teacher (P1)
	Working hours (P4, 5, 7)		
	Salary (P4)		
	The right for re-appointment due to spouse-related reasons (P5)		
	Holiday period (P7, 11)		

As can be seen in Table 2, the approaches that the participants asserted with respect to the reasons for choosing the teaching profession gathered around three basic categories. When these approaches were integrated to each other, two basic dimensions could be revealed: Professional conveniences/advantages, and professional attitude.

Table 3. Basic Dimensions on the Reasons Why the Participants Chose the Teaching Profession

Professional conveniences/advantages.	Professional attitude.
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The main reason why the teacher candidates who were receiving pedagogical formation training chose the teaching profession was the working conditions being better than those in other occupational groups. When examined in terms of their fields of graduation (see Table 1), the participants were graduates and/or final year students mostly in public finance, business and economics. In this regard, the concern for starting a job in the private sector or finding employment as a civil servant after graduation led the participants to different quests. Among these different professional quests, the teaching profession, which some of the participants said they had wanted to study at university, but could not due to various reasons, was emphasized in their statements. As is seen in Table 2, in the process of their transition to the teaching profession, two primary criteria were considered by the participants: Professional advantages and attitudes towards the profession. The first of these criteria, professional advantages, was one of the determinants in this process. More than 65% of the participants provided answers in this regard to the question "*why the teaching profession?*" One of these participants, P4, explained the reasons behind his/her decision of receiving pedagogical training as follows: "*You can get good jobs when you find employment as a civil servant at the state. However, it requires a very high score, and it is just not possible without an influential contact. That's why I thought I should also receive pedagogical training.*" The tempting aspects of teaching as asserted by P4 were also mentioned in similar statements by P10: "*I studied economics. To be a civil servant in economics, you first take the KPSS exam, and then each department has its own exam, followed by an interview. I don't think I would be able to successful in there.*" The participants, P4 and P10, stated that they chose the teaching profession because they believed that it was easier to find employment in teaching, but more difficult in their own field of study, which was also mentioned in many similar statements by other participants.

The participants' reasons for choosing the pedagogical formation program, or in other words the teaching profession, were not only about professional advantages. Almost all participants stated that there were conveniences in entering the teaching profession and in the process after that, and these issues were among the factors effective in their decision-making process. However, their love of the profession and dreaming to become a teacher were also influential.

The participants' statements show that they loved the teaching profession since childhood, but had to prefer different areas of study due to various reasons in their university entrance process. When they had a chance to be a teacher in the following period, they decided to receive pedagogical formation training and changed their area to teaching, also due to various factors that can be described as professional advantages. An important issue that needs to be emphasized here to be able to make sense of the phenomenon better, although not a direct focus of this study, is the mistakes made during the university preference period. The majority of the participants (n=9) asserted that they firstly wanted to be a teacher when they were at the step of preferring a university department to study, but they had to enrol at a different area because they scores were just not high enough. There were problems regarding the students' adaptation to their profession because they were placed into different majors although teaching-related programs were in the top of their university preference lists, and thus, they sought after an opportunity to become a teacher. This reveals that the university preference process is a significant matter for students, and they should make decisions after careful deliberation.

Based on the findings revealed from the participants' statements with respect to the first research question of the

study, it can be concluded that although most of the participants wanted to study teaching at university, they had to study different majors such as economics, business and public finance because their scores were not high enough. Some of these participants adapted to their new professions to a certain extent during their education, whereas other participants who said *teaching was their dream* continued to have a desire for teaching and looked for ways to achieve it. The students who had two different perceptions came to a common ground after graduation, and the students who had difficulty finding a job in their original area of study and those who looked for an opportunity to do teaching applied to the pedagogical formation training program.

Formation training: Before and after

This section presents the expectations and views of the participants about the pedagogical formation program before they started training, their experiences during the certification program, and consequently, their criticisms and suggestions.

Table 4. Participants' Expectations Regarding the Pedagogical Formation Certification Program

Categories	Emphasis on practice	Emphasis on educational psychology	No knowledge	Other
Codes	It is practical (P1, 6)	It focuses on understanding students better (P2)	P3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12	Challenging and high-quality (P7, 8, 9)
		It has an emphasis on educational psychology (P6)		It equips participants with necessary skills and knowledge (P12)

In Table 4, the participants' views and expectation regarding the certification program before they started the formation training are presented. As is seen in the table, most of the participants did not have any idea about what kind of training they would receive. The participants who studied in different faculties and areas such as economics and business stated that they did not have knowledge of the content and process of the pedagogical formation certification program as part of the teacher training system. P4 expressed this issue as follows: *"At the beginning, I didn't have any idea what formation was. I just knew the name."* On the other hand, there were participants who had a teacher acquaintance and thus an idea about the training they would receive in the certification program, but they were few. One of these participants, P6, explained her expectation regarding the formation training: *"Because there are many teachers in my family, I know what formation means. I came here to study educational science. How to deliver a lesson, how to understand students' psychology... I actually got what I expected."* Apart from the exceptions like P4, it can be argued that the participants generally did not have adequate knowledge of what kind of training they would receive during the certification program.

The findings revealed that the participants did not have adequate knowledge of the educational experiences they would have before they started the pedagogical formation training. With regard to the question of how the participants evaluated the training they received, and the instructional process, and the facilities provided to them after they started the certification program, it can be stated they had criticisms regarding the training in three basic categories. These criticisms that are presented in Table 5 in detail focused on the concepts of instructors, teaching, and benefit.

Table 5. Participants' Views on the Pedagogical Formation Training They Received

Instructors	Teaching	Benefit
It was not taken seriously (P12, 10)	The contents were covered only theoretically (P1, 2, 6, 8, 11)	I was not effective (P4, 9)
It arouse the feeling of buying something (P12, 3)	Contents could not be covered fully (P2, 3, 6, 11)	I learned things that I can use in social life (P4, 5, 10)
Other problems related to instructors (P3, 5, 8, 9)	Rigid and challenging (P7, 8, 10)	It was beneficial (P3, 4)

The problems that the participants mentioned with regard to instructors included issues about the attitude of the instructors who taught the courses in the formation training towards the program and the courses. In this sense, the participants stated that the courses were not taken seriously by the instructors, and this was due to the common belief that the formation certificate was bought rather than earned.

All of the participants stated negative views on the pedagogical formation certification program. P3 who was one of the participants who thought the training was beneficial, and equipped them with adequate knowledge and skills that they can use in their social life asserted the following about the training she received: *"The courses I took in the formation program were beneficial for me. For instance, I have little nephews and I thought of them while the instructors were*

teaching us. Well, I could reflect the theoretical knowledge I learned to my personal life.” Whereas P3 stated that she could use the outcomes she gained during the training mostly in social life, P4 thought that he received a training that contributed to his development in spite of some defects: “*The formation program was not really effective, but the things we learned must have contributed to our development. We had quality instructors, they tried to teach and we tried to learn as much as we could, I think.*”

To sum up, the findings showed that the participants did not have adequate knowledge of what kind of training they would receive before they started the pedagogical formation training because they originally studied in faculties that were not related to education. In this regard, although some of the educational activities like practicum were different for them during the training, all of the participants were eventually qualified to be a teacher after completing the training successfully. The participants’ criticisms regarding their experiences of the training mostly included the instructors’ not showing the necessary care and thus the courses being merely theoretical. Based on their experiences, they offered various suggestions for the pedagogical formation training program. Their suggestions and sub-categories are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Participants’ Suggestions for the Pedagogical Formation Training Program

Categories	Course	Instructors	System
Codes	It should be about students’ psychology. (P2)	Instructors should be more qualified (P5, 6, 7, 9)	The duration should be longer (P6)
	Real classroom environments should be considered (P2, 5)	They should take it seriously (P6, 12)	Content knowledge should be taught (P7, 4, 8, 12)
	It should be practice-based (P2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11)	They should apply what they teach themselves (P10, 2)	Quotas should be reduced (P7)
	Contents should be at high school level (P1, 3, 9, 11)		

The participants’ suggestions for the certification program revealed three basic categories. These categories are consistent with the participants’ views on the program. The suggestions featured aspects such as the teaching of the courses, instructors, and the system, and the issues related to the contents and teaching of the courses were particularly emphasized. The most outstanding suggestion was that the courses should be practice-based, and designed based on the characteristics of the target population. In this regard, P1 stated the following: “*I think the education should be more realistic... They say do this, do that, but those are not possible in high schools. The training assumes that we would have adults in the classroom, but they would just children. I mean we should receive training in accordance with the age group we will teach.*” P1’s suggestion to re-design the training as practice-based and according to the characteristics of the target population was also expressed by P12: “*The courses should focus more on understanding students, what problems I would encounter in a real classroom and how I would handle them.*” The second category revealed from the participants’ suggestions was related to the instructors. The most prominent suggestion was that the instructors should be more qualified, take the courses more seriously, and make students feel this seriousness. The third and last suggestion for the formation training program was about the system. This category included issues regarding the entrance to the program, its duration, and partly the course contents. Although there were students who mentioned that the duration should be longer and less students should be accepted to the program, the most common suggestion was that courses on content knowledge should be added to the program. The students who came from different faculties and areas stated that they could not master the content knowledge of the teaching area they were trained for in the formation training, and to address this deficiency, there should be courses that focus specifically on content knowledge during the program. Considering that the participants of this study studied accounting-finance and marketing-retail in their undergraduate education, accounting courses should also be taught to the candidates during the formation program. P4 referred to the lack of knowledge in accounting as in the following: “*I think we should have been given some content knowledge. After all, we will be teachers of accounting and teach accounting. Of course, we also need to know about the communication with students, but content knowledge should have been taught to us.*” The perception of deficiency expressed by the participants was related to content knowledge, but not about the aspect of teaching methodology, and most of the participants believed that they had the necessary skills and values for teaching although they were not competent in content knowledge.

4. Results and Discussion

This study aimed to reveal the reasons why teacher candidates studying in a pedagogical formation certification

program, which is one of the bodies for teacher training in the Turkish education system, chose the teaching profession, their views on the program before and after the training, and their expectations for the future in the professional sense.

With respect to the findings on the reasons for choosing the teaching profession, it can be argued that the primary criterion for the participants was the working conditions. Although they stated that they loved teaching and always wanted to be a teacher, a detailed analysis of their statements and the resulting patterns showed that their orientation was mostly shaped in the context of professional advantages. Data consisting with this finding were also reported by Low et al. (2011) who stated that economic and social conditions in addition to professional attitudes and perceptions were influential in teacher candidates' choice of the profession. Likewise, Watt and Richardson (2008) concluded that there were many criteria in teacher candidates' choice of the profession, and among these, working conditions and the reflections of these conditions to family and social life were effective. In many studies in the related literature (Azman, 2012), it was reported that more than one factor were effective in choosing the teaching profession, and these factors could be examined in two basic dimensions as professional advantages and professional attitude in that the former had the primary emphasis. Krečić and Grmek (2007) took another perspective, and asserted that elementary school teachers chose teaching because they loved the profession and children whereas higher level teachers' choice was due to benefiting from economic and social rights. Another important issue that needs to be considered related to the reasons for choosing teaching is gender. The perceived effect of professional advantages on family and social life leads women to prefer teaching. In this regard, the participants in this study stated that they would not quit teaching because they needed to spare time for their family. However, the male participants said they could evaluate other job opportunities if they would have more money even after they became teachers. As a result, it can be argued that there is a difference based on gender in terms of preferring the teaching profession. Similar studies in the literature also show a gender-based difference regarding the teaching profession (Watt & Richardson, 2011). However, this difference varies depending on the socio-cultural structure of a country. For instance, only 18% of students in institutions training teachers for primary schools in England are male (Murray & Passy, 2014). The case is similar in Finland (Tirri, 2014) and Pakistan (Hunzai, 2009), and elementary school teaching is mostly preferred by women in these countries. However, the proportion of women in the teaching profession in Ethiopia is considerably low (Hoot, Szente & Tadesse, 2006).

Another important issue the needs to be highlighted regarding the findings is the timing of choice of profession and its effect on the process. The factors affecting the process of choosing a profession after high school education and after graduating from a different faculty, as in the case of the participants in this study, may show a difference. This difference can be observed when the results of this study and those reported by Manuel and Huges (2006) are compared. Whereas the primary criteria for choosing/changing a profession was found to be professional advantages, Manuel and Hughes revealed this criterion as their participants' loving the teaching profession and students. On the other hand, the mistakes made in the university preferences and their reflections in the professional sense were also of significance. Most of the participants stated that they had teaching in the top of their preference list, but they had to study in a different area because their scores were not high enough. These candidates who studied in a different area although they wanted to be teachers tried to get to know that area for some time, and had the chance to observe possible working areas and conditions. At the end of the process, in other words after they graduated, they encountered difficulties in getting a job in their areas of study. These experiences should be evaluated as a negative effect of score-based university preference practice within the Turkish education system. This is because guiding prospective university students more effectively with respect to their preferences would decrease the number of cases where individuals change their profession to the area that they wanted to study at the beginning. Beyond the reflections of such an important issue on individuals' lives, it also causes weaknesses for education and the teacher training system. Like many other, teaching is a profession that needs to be qualified for after a rigid training process, and includes a high level of interaction with people. The fact that individuals who graduate from faculties other than education being able to be qualified for this profession after a relatively short training program causes various problems in terms of the teacher training system (Gray and Weir, 2014), which even the participants who did not have a background regarding the teacher training system realised, and stated during the interviews in different ways. The problems that the participants mentioned were based on two aspects: Systemic dimension and its influence on employment. The problems in the systemic dimension mostly included the issues regarding the design and application of this certification program. The most emphasized aspects in this regard are duration, rigidity, and content. In this respect, if the teacher training system is to be moved out of education faculties to a certain extent, the process should be planned and implemented effectively as it is in Canada (Nuland, 2011). The other aspect of the problems was the issues listed under employment, and the fact that giving the right to be teachers to more people than it is needed was perceived and stated as a problem. Paving the way for the graduates of different faculties to be teachers through the pedagogical formation training is perceived as the result of a sequence of problems, although it also has an important function in bringing in valuable teachers that can be a gain for the profession. It is obvious that teacher training

ning is a long process that should be taken seriously, but this does not necessarily mean that *one cannot become a good teacher afterwards*. As mentioned above, in this profession that has a high level of interaction with people, professional attitude is as important as, or perhaps more important than, knowledge. It is certain that desired objectives in education can only be achieved if teachers love their profession and colleagues while practising it as well as show respect to them (Bottoms, 2002). There were many teacher candidates among the participants of this study who stated that they loved the profession and would do their best to perform teaching, which is consistent with the observations and experiences of the researcher. If this certification program, which is criticised by many, had not been opened, these valuable teachers would never been included in the Turkish education system. As a result, although the teacher training process and system is maintained with a structure that is generally accepted and works well (the main body is now the education faculties), the fact that the participation to the system from outside should be possible is an important result that needs to be emphasized based on the findings, in that the system is designed in this way in many countries around the world; individuals who graduate from a different faculty can become teachers after completing necessary steps (Roth & Swail, 2000). In the United States, although the teacher training process continues to be a matter of discussion (Imig, Wiseman & Imig, 2011), undergraduate programs of education faculties are active whereas individuals can also get qualified for teaching through graduate programs (Zeichner, 2014). In Australia, teachers are trained in a variety of ways including undergraduate education in education faculties, parallel programs and master's education (Mayer, 2014). On the other hand, in South Korea that use different systems based on education levels, while there is a teacher training system for preschool and elementary school education designed within education faculties, the options are various for high school education (Jo, 2010). However, the important issue that needs not to be missed in this point is that the teacher training system should be centred in education faculties. Giving the graduates of different undergraduate programs the right to be teachers based on certain criteria should be designed and implemented in a way not to damage the existence, mission and vision of education faculties as the primary professional units of educations for the teaching profession.

The participants' experiences and views regarding the pedagogical formation training was another issue that was addressed in the study. Based on the findings, it can be argued that the participants did not have adequate knowledge on what kind of training they would receive before the started the program. Only few participants had some idea about the program because they had teacher acquaintances. Although this seems to be normal since graduates of different faculties apply to this program, it can also be inferred that candidates start the program without sufficient competency in terms of readiness and mental preparation. The common expectation of the participants who had an idea about the program was that it would be practice-based. These participants stated that they expected the program to be mostly practice based at the beginning. Besides, another expectation was that the educational process must have been designed in a way that considers the characteristics of the target population. In other words, the courses in this certification program that trains teachers for high schools should be designed based on the physical and developmental characteristics of high school students. At the end of the program, the participants' criticisms mostly focused on these expectations. Most of the participants criticized that the program was too theoretical, and not practice-based, whereas they also thought that covering the contents in a way to include preschool period in the education and developmental psychology courses was wrong. In teacher education, the existence and quality of theoretical and practical dimensions are of great importance. As Ham-merness et al. (2002) states, particularly the practical aspect should not be neglected to effectively perform teaching as a profession that is beyond merely speaking to students in the classroom. In this regard, the lack of the practical aspect as revealed in this study is an issue that should be addressed urgently.

To sum up the results of the study as a whole, the pedagogical formation certification program as one of the bodies for teacher training within the Turkish education system is preferred by individuals who graduated, or are about to graduate, from undergraduate programs in different faculties and departments mostly due to the professional advantages of teaching. Although the teacher candidates in this study did not have an insight about the training they would receive at the beginning, their views and criticisms following the training mostly focused on two dimensions that were the courses in the program being too theoretical and not being able to address the characteristics of the target population. Based on their experiences, they asserted that the duration of similar training programs within the teacher training system should be longer, and practice-based courses should be included in this respect.

5. References

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