

## PROSPECTIVE TEACHER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the qualifications of teachers, which are an important element that determines the quality of the education system. It is emphasized that teacher training processes before and after employment affect teachers' competencies at the beginning of their careers. Research shows that it is important for teacher candidates to gain self-efficacy and self-confidence through the effective guidance and support that mentor teachers offer to candidate teachers. As a result, improving teacher training programs and mentor teacher training can contribute to teachers starting their careers in a more confident and prepared way.

**Keywords:** Prospective teacher, Training, Professional development

### Teacher Training: An Important Process Before and After Hiring

It can be said that one of the important issues that determine the quality of the education system is the quality of teachers (Öztürk, 2011). In this context, the issue of teacher training before and during employment has always been one of the main areas of relevant literature and practice. In particular, the candidate qualification review process, which constitutes the first year of a career, is an important period of combining theory and practice (Kozikoğlu, 2016). In this period, a qualified candidate qualification process is important to continue the career more effectively and successfully (Mercan & Gündüz, 2023).

In their study conducted with a mixed research method, Ekinci, Bozan and Sakız (2019) included 207 candidate teachers assigned to kindergarten, primary school, secondary school and secondary schools and 179 consultant teachers assigned to candidate teachers. Köse (2016) interviewed 10 school administrators in his research conducted in a phenomenological pattern, which is a qualitative study.

It is stated that candidate teachers who go through this process effectively and efficiently with an experienced mentor teacher will strengthen their sense of self-efficacy in preparing for teaching. Studies have concluded that although teacher candidates have a successful undergraduate education, it is not sufficient to provide teachers with experience. It has been determined that teacher candidates have problems in these issues (Köse, 2016; Ekinci, Bozan and Sakız, 2019).

One of the important findings of Ekinci, Bozan, and Sakız, (2019) study is that the consultant teacher sees the candidate teachers as more competent in all abilities. In this respect, according to the teachers' opinions, advisor teachers see candidate teachers as more competent. One of the important reasons to mention is the existence of problems with self-confidence and professional ability. Therefore, it appears that effective mentor teacher support can increase teacher candidates' awareness of their professional abilities. One of the findings revealed by Köse (2016) within the scope of the research is that the candidate qualification exam process is an important turning point to prepare teachers for their careers, and their self-confidence in the experience gained during this period increases, so that they can provide better quality services to students. The findings of both studies reveal the importance of teacher candidates gaining self-efficacy and self-confidence.

From the findings, it is seen that the theoretical knowledge that teacher candidates acquired during their education is insufficient, and this reduces their self-confidence when they start to work in this profession. It has been revealed that, thanks to the training program, teacher candidates gained knowledge about the functioning of the school and adapted to the school more easily. It was emphasized that candidate teachers gained experience in this process. However, in this program, as well as positive aspects, negative aspects also stand out. There are differences between the conditions of the school where the candidate works within the program and the school to which he will be assigned. Another problem stated is that candidate teachers are perceived as intern teachers during the practices, and therefore they remain in the shadows of the consultant teachers, which creates a problem and reduces their motivation. As a result of their studies, Ekinci, Bozan and Sakız (2019) and Köse (2016); They revealed the positive effects of mentor teachers on candidate teachers.

### **Obstacles in Professional Development: Problems of the Education System and Solution Suggestions**

Pre-professional education is not enough to keep teachers updated with the changes in the world because teachers are an important part of the quality of education and teachers are an important element of the quality of education. In addition, on-the-job in-service training is important in ensuring that teachers improve themselves according to today's conditions and improve the quality of education.

Yaylacı (2013) and Yirci (2017) identified issues that hinder teachers' personal and professional development. Research shows that the value given to teachers' professions has decreased and the view that teachers are "incompetent" is dominant. This situation shows that it reduces teachers' desire for the profession and hinders their development. On the other hand, the structure of bureaucracy and centralization is considered to be one of the biggest obstacles to the professional development of teachers. Since teachers are not involved in the decision-making process, they cannot be motivated and do not feel like they belong. According to research, it is important to place teachers at the center and develop practices that will prompt improvement. Unlike practices in a single center, teacher development programs from different sources will provide diversity. According to the teacher, it is argued that working conditions and administrative support in the organization, the introduction of a professional system and rewarding teachers with independent development in various ways (financial privileges, promotions, etc.) will increase the desire for professional development.

In addition; Yirci (2017) research results found that teachers value the help of their colleagues in their personal and professional development. Look at all these studies; The help of colleagues plays an important role in teachers' professional development. In particular, cooperation between new teachers and more experienced teachers is one of the important factors that increase the efficiency of education.

#### **Discussion**

It focuses on the qualifications of teachers, which are an important element that determines the quality of the education system. It emphasizes that pre- and post-employment teacher training processes affect teachers' competencies at the beginning of their careers. Research conducted by Ekinci, Bozan and Sakız (2019) and Köse (2016) shows that the process that prospective teachers spend with experienced mentor teachers enables them to start their teaching careers more confidently and prepared.

Research reveals the difficulties that teacher candidates face in the transition to teaching practice, despite the success of their undergraduate education. At this point, the effective guidance and support provided by mentor teachers to prospective teachers plays a critical role in helping prospective teachers gain self-efficacy and self-confidence.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

**Advisor Teacher Effect:** Advisor teachers are seen as more competent in all abilities of teacher candidates. This shows that mentor teachers increase the self-confidence of teacher candidates with their effective guidance and support. In this context, special training should be organized for consultant teachers and emphasis should be placed on effective guidance skills.

**Candidate Qualification Process:** The candidate qualification process is an important milestone that enables teachers to gain experience and increase their self-confidence at the beginning of their career. In this context, teacher training programs and in-service training should support teachers to improve themselves in accordance with today's educational conditions and increase the quality of education. Organizational support and collaboration opportunities for teachers should be increased, and opportunities should be provided to include teachers in decision-making processes. By improving teacher training processes, it aims to contribute to teachers starting their jobs in a more equipped and self-confident manner.

**Balance of Theoretical Knowledge and Practical Application:** Integrating the theoretical knowledge that teacher candidates acquire during their education with practical application can increase their self-confidence. It should be revised to enable candidates to combine their theoretical knowledge with practical application more effectively.

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