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Alternatively certified elementary school teachers in Turkey

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Abstract

In Turkey, teachers in several subject areas were trained through regular teacher education programs for years. Since the regular teacher education programs have been insufficient to meet the demands in the country, alternative routes to teacher certification have been searched to struggle against teacher shortages in many subjects. This paper introduces alternative route certified teachers (ACTs) serving at the elementary schools in Turkey. This study aims to clarify ACTs’ problems, perceptions and up to date opinions about teaching, and compare their expectations during the induction period. These aims were examined into two steps. The first study was conducted during the ACTs’ induction period in 2001, and the second one was performed in 2008. The data were collected through two question forms for the first step, and the second step of the study. Both of the instruments were generated by the researcher on the basis of the literature. The participants in the first step comprised 829, and in the second step contained 85 ACTs. The paper provides empirical insights about ACTs’ perceptions about teaching. ACTs had difficulty in planning, finding instructional materials, lecturing, developing instructional materials, carrying out group activities, dealing with students, and establishing good relations with inspectors and parents during their induction period. While more than half of the ACTs stated that they chose teaching since they felt teaching was appropriate for them in the first study, most of them indicated that they chose teaching because of unemployment in the second study. ACTs graduated from the departments of management, economics, and communication were more satisfied with teaching than the others. In addition, female ACTs were seen more satisfied with teaching than the male. Besides, Most of the ACTs’ expectations for future were not related to their career. Finally, almost all participants believe that, ACTs should not be allowed to work at schools without teaching certificate, and anyone who does not like children should not be allowed to be teacher. The lack of information about the numbers of the ACTs, who work at schools and who quitted to profession, is the main limitation of the study. Furthermore, insufficient number of the ACTs, who willing to participate in the second study, is the second limitation of the second study. The paper presents findings to the interested public about ACTs’ perceptions of teaching. ACTs’ ideas and feelings on teaching profession in their initial years (1996-1999), and today are important aspects of the study. Besides, the paper enlightens the administrators and policy makers, for the development of a powerful strategy to combat teacher shortage. The study highlights how it is crucial to pursue teacher education planning to improve quality in education

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Keywords: Teacher recruitment; alternative certification; teaching problems; alternative route teaching induction; elementary schools; education.

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1. Introduction

During the 1990s, the need for high quality teachers, especially in such demanded areas as English for second language, computer, and classroom has growth of alternative routes to teacher certification in Turkey. There has been a chronic and severe teacher shortage existing in the USA for decades, too. Because of the critical teacher shortage, administrators from state departments of education, school districts, and other education agencies have implemented a variety of strategies directed at resolving the problem across the nation in the USA. For example, teachers whose certificates were even in other sciences were recruited in shortage areas. Since this implementation could not have solved the teacher demand effectively, some states experienced “short-term certification and licensing”, and offered alternative certification programs (ACPs) for allowing nontraditional collegiate students to enter the teaching profession. Yet, most states allow these programs due to the need for highly qualified teachers today. While there were only 12 ACPs in the United States in 1983, there were 485 ACPs in 2007. These ACPs included weekend workshops, after-school in-service programs, and summer institutes (Masland & Williams, 1993, 6-8; Bennet, 2008, 4-5). As the US, Turkey has had teacher shortage in various areas for years. Meeting the demand for elementary school teachers, computer teachers, and English for second language teachers has always been a challenge for teacher education institutions throughout the Republican Period. Growing population, rate of schooling, reductions in the payments, growing number of retired teachers, teachers’ low status in social life, and decline in the quality of working conditions have traditionally contributed to teacher shortage in Turkey for years. Therefore, teacher recruitment policy has had the most important effect on teacher shortage in Turkey for the last few years.

Alternative Certification (AC) provides graduates of certain departments of universities shorter but intensified programs in order to be a teacher. Alternative teacher education has a history of more than 20 years in the US. ACPs accept non-traditional students whose bachelor degrees are in other sciences, who have experience in business and industry or who are retired. ACPs give individuals emergency or temporary credentials and they provide non-traditional pathways to standard certificates. By means of ACPs, better-qualified individuals might join teaching, and these programs could improve quality of teacher candidates. Besides alternative routes are cost-effective ways of training individuals who did not enroll traditional teacher preparation programs. Thus, alternative routes attract better and more diverse candidates than traditional routes. ACPs are diverse in terms of their course time, collaboration with other institutes, students they accept, types of courses, and implementations. Besides, ACPs execute characteristics of ‘work-based learning’ to some extent. Four types of non-university organizations implement them; private groups, the state, local school districts, and federal agencies. Finally, alternatively certified teachers (ACTs) represent different age groups, backgrounds and experiences and these ACPs still continue today. Since they open new opportunities to enter teaching, ACPs are a promising development in teacher education (Roth, 1989; Zumwalt, 1991; Brock & Grady, 1998; Miller, McKenna & McKenna, 1998, Zeichner & Schulte, 2001; Bolhuis, 2002; McLeskey, Tyler, and Flippin, 2004).

Since a high demand for classroom teachers grew in the second half of the 1990s, the Ministry of National Education (MONE) supplied that shortage recruiting ACTs in schools in Turkey. MONE reported that 51,578 (21.65%) of 238,204 classroom teachers were trained through ACPs until 1999 in Turkey. The applicants for these ACPs ranged from the graduates of Faculties of Education who were not trained to be classroom teachers originally to the graduates of more than 400 different departments who were not graduated to be teachers originally. The majority of these ACTs were trained through by ACPs offered by the universities while some ACTs were given teaching certificates in-house by the MONE offer they were hired until 1997. In order to meet teacher demand, the MONE and the Higher Education Council (HEC) took some actions to train additional classroom teachers in 1997. Hence, a minor program was designed by the HEC in collaboration with the MONE to allow students in Faculties of Education to receive a classroom teaching certification in 1997. While the purpose was enhancement of quality of the ACPs, this new program could not supply increasing teacher demand. Therefore, the HEC and the MONE reorganized teacher certification program for teacher candidates graduated from faculties other than Education Faculties in 1998. Finally, ACPs were converted to master degrees without thesis into educational faculties in 2002. Therefore, ACPs were given up in Turkey. Through the regulation, the MONE and the HEC tried to fulfill teacher shortage without losing quality (Gökçe, 2001).

Studies on alternative certification in the US present insightful results on the contribution of ACTs to the school system and their problems. Studies comparing the effectiveness of traditional programs and ACPs have mixed
results. Supporters of traditional teacher certification argue that to improve the quality of education, it is vital to make sure that both professional knowledge and subject-matter competency are involved in pedagogical education. However, some ACPs gave teachers an interim status without proper credentials and employed them while they worked to earn the college credits that are equal to standard requirements for teacher education programs. Similarly, ACTs had difficulty with curriculum development, pedagogical content knowledge, attending to students’ different learning styles and levels, classroom management and student motivation. Besides these teachers showed more ignorance about student needs and differences and about teaching basics than trained beginners. Finally, having compared to the mathematical knowledge of the ACTs, they failed in depth of content knowledge (McDiarmid and Wilson, 1991; Darling & Hammond, 1992; Miller, McKenna & McKenna, 1998).

For Zumwalt (1991) alternate route is a cost effective way to train people who did not study teacher education programs, and these programs attract more qualified and diverse candidates than educational faculties. Moreover, gifted candidates with subject-matter competency can enhance educational quality by trained with in-depth subject-matter knowledge into teaching, without necessarily educated with the traditional route. Besides, Lutz and Hutton (1989) found that ACTs scored higher on standard measures of teaching performance and were rated higher by school principals/mentors than were traditionally prepared teachers. On the other hand, Schram, Feiman-Nemser, and Ball (1990) did not find any significant difference between the two groups. Besides, Ball and Wilson (1990) found that subject-matter knowledge of new teachers, whether certified through an alternative or traditional route was inadequate for effective instruction. Furthermore, Goebel, Ronacher, and Sanchez (1989) found that students taught by teachers prepared in an ACP in Houston achieved as well as those students taught by traditionally prepared teachers (Otuya, 1992).

Feistritzer and Chester (1991) studied ACTs and showed that more than 200,000 teachers had been licensed through ACPs between 1985 and 1990. This demonstrated an average growth rate of 20% or 4,000 additional teachers per year. For Feistritzer and Chester (1991) AC encourages diversity in the classroom, which encourages role modeling and promotes learning by drawing relevant experiences from the children's backgrounds to enhance their cognitive development (Otuya, 1992). Miller, McKenna & McKenna (1998), support the ACPs for some reasons. First of all, ACTs are not inferior to the traditionally certified teachers. Second, there were ACPs in place as long as there were certification programs of any kind. All of the conditions of teacher shortage, ACPs were used in the world. Third, there is a widespread desire for creating diversity in teaching profession by recruiting people with the different life experiences. Fourth, the need for teacher shortage is likely to continue. Fifth, the results of the studies about ACPs are conflicting (Otuya, 1992). Bolhuis (2002) studied alternative routes to teaching in secondary education in Netherlands too. He suggested getting involved more parties to the alternative education such as national and regional employment exchanges, trade unions, employers’ associations and employers of prospective part-time teachers. And teacher education institutes have to learn to deal with more parties involved in the alternative teacher preparation.

In Turkey, Dündar (1996) studied ACTs’ professional adequacy and found out that ACTs were perceived inadequate in field knowledge by school principals, by inspectors, and also by themselves. Öztürk (1997) studied problems of ACTs and brought out that ACTs had a variety of difficulties with teaching such as classroom management, planning, lecturing, and preparation of instructional materials. In addition, Çelenk (1998) studied primary education inspectors’ perceptions on ACTs. He reported that inspectors perceived ACTs adaptable into teaching while they claimed that ACTs would quit teaching whenever they find another job related to their profession. Oral and Şentürk (1998) studied perceptions of primary education inspectors and ACTs on ACTs’ teaching adequacy. Consequently, inspectors perceived ACTs less than adequate in field knowledge, in lecturing, in classroom management, in communicate with students, and in assessment. Besides, Dağlı (1998) compared ACTs with regular teachers by means of inspectors’ perceptions. Inspectors perceived regular teachers “somewhat adequate” in field knowledge, instructional methods, assessment and human relations while they perceived ACTs “less than adequate” in these areas. Efe (1998) studied ACTs in order to determine perceptions of ACTs, school principals and inspectors related to ACTs’ vocational quality. He found that while ACTs found themselves “quite” successful in planning educational activities, school principals, inspectors and teachers found ACTs “occasionally” successful. He found out that there is a meaningful discrimination between the perceptions of those ACTS and other subjects. Finally, Demirtaş, (2000) studied ACTs in order to assess the role of inspectors in the growing up of ACTs.

Studies related to ACTs generally resulted that ACTs had difficulties in knowledge, teaching skills, and all other teaching related activities. Although studies on alternative route teachers are few in numbers, they have similar
conclusions. ACTs were found insufficient in using educational materials, in preparing sessions, and in subjects related to students. To summarize, all these studies indicate that research on effectiveness of ACPs presents mixed results. When different nature and orientation of these programs are viewed this is understandable. Therefore, generalizations are difficult to make on how effective these ACPs are, and one needs to look at them individually within its own context. Although there are a lot of studies about regular teachers, teaching and related subjects conducted under the supervision of universities or any other institutes, fewer researches have been done about alternative routes in Turkey.

This study aims to provide additional perspectives about the ACTs; their expectations on teaching profession in comparison to their professional future plans during their induction period (1996-1999), and their professional situations today (2009). Thus, this study would contribute effectiveness of the ACPs in Turkey. Since few studies were done about ACTs in Turkey, there is not much knowledge about them and how they did in schools up to now. Therefore, this study aims to reach information about ACTs’ condition and experience in teaching profession in Turkey. The classroom teachers whose undergraduate educational backgrounds varied (through alternative routes) are named “ACTs” in this paper.

The purpose of the study is to investigate ACTs who serve at the elementary schools in terms of their induction period, and today into teaching. In line with the purpose, the specific research questions include followings:

1. What problems did ACTs face in relation to teaching during their induction period?
2. What were ACTs’ assessment about their first and future status in teaching profession during their induction period (1996-1999), and
3. How do ACTs estimate themselves as teachers today?

The study presents findings to the interested public about ACTs’ teaching problems, their assessment and expectations on teaching profession in their induction period and their self-estimation today. ACTs’ self-assessment about teaching profession during their initial years (1996-1999), and today are important aspects of this study. This enables us opportunity to compare ACTs’ self-assessment on teaching profession during their induction period and today.

1. Method

This study involved in two studies, and was conducted into two steps. The first study, which examined the first two research questions, was conducted in 2001 and the second one, that examined the 3rd research question, was conducted in 2008.

1.1. Study 1

As a study group, all ACTs in 29 cities, which were involved in the “1998 the Ministry of National Education Teacher Recruitment Guide” was selected in 2000. These ACTs were send questionnaires that was developed by the researcher. The Ministry of National Education supported the study by printing, reproducing, sending and collecting the questionnaires to the ACTs. Although 1000 questionnaires were responded by ATCs, 171 were not suitable for analyzing. Therefore, 829 questionnaires were analyzed for the study.

As Table 1 demonstrates, more than two-thirds of the ACTs were female (68%), while one-third (32%) were men. Half are between 26-30 years old (50%), and have 2 years of teaching experience (48%). 32% of the ACTs graduated from management / economics / communication or agriculture related areas. Finally, a little more than half of (52%) the ACTs did not have a teaching certificate before they were recruited.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-more</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.1.2. Data Collection Instrument of the Study 1

A questionnaire was used in order to collect the data. The questionnaire was tested by means of expert judgment, and was piloted with related groups. Through the questionnaire, ACTs were asked in relation to their own professional matters that were categorized such as “teaching skills”, “instructional activities”, “relations with students”, and “school and environment”. All of the questions included in these categories were developed after a related literature survey.

Demographic characteristics of ACTs were gathered in the first section of the questionnaire. The second section of the questionnaire was allocated to necessary teaching skills and contained five items in order to measure orientation of the ACTs in their initial stages. This section consisted of groups of items corresponding to the five aspects of teaching; planning, instructional activities, students’ relationships, schools and environment, and the other skills. All these questions were measured through a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 “not at all hard for me” to 5 “always very hard for me”.

1.2. Study 2

ACTs were invited to participate in the second study by filling out the ACT question forms, developed by the researcher, through internet in 2008. Thus, 85 question forms were collected by e-mails from the ACTs, and responses were analyzed through qualitative methods.

As Table 2 shows, more than two-thirds of the ACTs were male (64%), while one-third (36%) were female. While one fourth were between the age of 36-40 and 41-45 (25%), 43% of the ACTs were 35 years old and below. 28% of the ACTs graduated from departments of educational sciences, and 27% of them graduated from departments of sciences and letter. On the other hand, one fifth (20%) were graduated from departments of administrative sciences and foreign language. 62 of the ACTs have been acting as classroom teachers, while 10 of the ACTs have been acting as branch teachers at the present time. Besides, 13 of the ACTs have been working at other positions at the Ministry of National Education or other institutions now. 12 of the ACTs, who have been acting as classroom teachers at the present time, were graduated from educational faculties, 17 were graduated from faculties of science and letters, 9 were economics, 8 were foreign language, and 16 were from other departments. On the other hand, 11 of the ACTs, who have not been acting as classroom teachers at the present time were graduated from educational faculties, 4 were graduated from faculties of science and letters, 2 were economics, 2 were foreign language, and 4 were from other departments. Finally, a little more than half of (52%) the ACTs did not have a teaching certificate before they were recruited.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. ACTs by Background Variables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-below</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of respondents might be different for each variable due to missing responses.
1.2.1. Data Collection Instrument of the Study 2

The third purpose of the study was measured through the ACTs question form. Demographic characteristics of ACTs were gathered in the first section of the question form. The second section of the form was allocated to the questions for ACTs who work as class teachers currently. This section contained ten items to examine ACTs’ perceptions about teaching. These items were listed as: (1) what was your reason for applying for teaching?; (2) what was your expectation for your career, before you applied to teach?; (3) did your expectations come true?; (4) what problems did you face in during your induction period?; (5) how did your colleagues, who graduated from educational faculties, assess you as classroom teacher?; (6) how did school administrators assess you as classroom teacher?; (7) how did inspectors assess you as classroom teacher?; (8) how do you assess yourselves as classroom teacher?; (9) if you had a chance, would you prefer working as a classroom teacher or doing another job?; and (10) other comments. Finally, the third section was allocated to the ACTs who do not work as classroom teachers now. The section contained seven items to examine their opinions for teaching. The first four items of the third section were the same ones, which were involved in the second section. The other three items were listed as; (1) Why did you prefer your branch or profession to teaching? (2) If you had a chance, would you go back to work as a classroom teacher?; and (3) Other comments? All the items in the second and third sections were formed into open ended question expressions.

2. Results

2.1. Study 1

2.1.1. ACTs’ Perception of Difficulties They Experience in Teaching

The results of the study revealed that, majority of the ACTs found “preparation of yearly plan” the most difficult ($\bar{X}=2.14$) while “preparing for sessions” ($\bar{X}=1.50$) was the least difficult among other planning related activities. However, overall ACTs mentioned that they experienced little difficulty in all these activities. Secondly, ACTs found “finding instructional materials” ($\bar{X}=2.85$) and “lecturing at crowded classrooms” ($\bar{X}=2.78$) somewhat difficult, while they experienced ‘little difficulty’ in all other instructional activities (e.g., doing group study, developing educational materials, using course books effectively, feeling proper at course subjects). Overall ACTs found least difficulty in “asking questions to raise student interest” ($\bar{X}=1.67$), and in “using text books and work-books effectively” ($\bar{X}=1.68$). Thirdly, ACTs found “dealing with students who learn slowly” ($\bar{X}=2.61$) somewhat difficult, while they found “communicating with students friendly” ($\bar{X}=1.36$) and “setting up positive communication with students” ($\bar{X}=1.38$) not difficult at all. All other activities in relation with students were rated as “of little difficulty”. Finally, ACTs experienced ‘little difficulty’ in “establishing good relations with inspectors ($\bar{X}=1.82$) and guardians” ($\bar{X}=1.70$), while they experienced ‘no difficulty’ in other areas such as establishing good relations with school administrators, other school personnel, and collaboration with other teachers and establishing social relations. These results show that ACTs experience more difficulty with outsiders (parents and inspectors) and no difficulty with people in the school.
2.1.2. ACTs’ Assessment about First and Future Status in Teaching Profession

For the second purpose of the study, ACTs were asked to indicate their reasons for choosing teaching as a profession, their satisfaction with the teaching profession, and their plans for their professional future.

The results of the study showed that more than half (52%) ACTs chose teaching because they felt teaching was right for them. On the other hand, more than one-third (36%) chose teaching because they could not find a job related to their own area. Only a 12% chose teaching with different reasons. Since reasons of choosing teaching would affect ACTs teaching performance, this noteworthy rate of reasons is seen significant. After receiving general information about reasons of being teacher, whether gender roles have any effect on choosing becoming teacher was examined in order to gain more specific information for the study. The results demonstrates that the female ACTs who felt teaching was right for them (58%) is higher than the males (40%). On the other hand, female ACTs who could not find a job related to their area is less (31%) than the male ACTs (47%). Similarly, a few female and male ACTs (11% and 13%) chose teaching because of other reasons. It is seen that majority of the female ACTs chose teaching because they felt teaching was right for them while a little more than one-third (31%) chose it because of unemployment. However, 40% male ACTs chose teaching because they felt teaching was right for them while 47% chose because of unemployment. Chi Square results show that the difference between the ACTs’ reasons for choosing the profession and gender is significant \[ X^2 (3,811) = 24.132, p=.000 \]. As the results indicated, nearly half of ACTs chose teaching because they felt teaching was appropriate for them while others chose it for different reasons. Therefore, ACTs who chose teaching for different reasons might not be satisfied with teaching.

Secondly, ACTs were asked to rate their satisfaction with the teaching profession. The results showed that, majority of the ACTs (80%) were satisfied in teaching while the others (20%) were somewhat or less than satisfied with teaching. Therefore, several background variables were taken into consideration in order to understand whether ACTs with different characteristics differ on their levels of satisfaction with teaching. The results showed that female ACTs (\( \bar{X}=4.11 \)) seem to be more satisfied with the teaching profession than the male ACTs (\( \bar{X}=3.75 \)). T-test results indicate this difference is statistically significant at the level of .001 \( [t(807)=5.368, p=.000] \). Whether departments they graduated had effect on satisfaction levels of ACTs or not examined additionally. The results show that those ACTs graduated from management, economics and communication related departments are more satisfied with teaching than the others. In addition, ACTs with agriculture and science related education at the undergraduate level appear to have lowest level of satisfaction with teaching among others. These noteworthy differences are significant at the .10 level but not .05 level as shown in the table through on ONE-WAY ANOVA test. ONE-WAY ANOVA results indicate that being graduated from different departments has no statistically significant effect on the ACTs’ job satisfaction (\( p=.075 \)). On the other hand, when an additional analysis (Tukey) was done in order to find out which departments are different, a difference between “agriculture (water products, gardening, etc)” and “management, economics, communication” appears to be significant (See Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departments Graduated From</th>
<th>( \bar{X} )</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture (water products, gardening, etc)</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management, economics, communication</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences (physics, chemistry, etc)</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences (literature, history, etc)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other departments</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.98</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ F(5,720)= 2.009, p=.075 \]

Lastly, ACTs’ plans for their professional future were searched. The results of the study revealed that, contrary to general perception on ACTs, more than half ACTs planned to continue teaching (51%) or move to a different position in schools (24%). Only 25% planned to quit teaching, move to a different position in schools such as skip out their branches or higher position in management, or other. While this 25% is not a few, rate of the ACTs adapted into teaching is importantly high. While whether reason of quitting teaching was because of having different undergraduate backgrounds or not is not clear, this reason might have an important role on ACTs future plans. In
addition, while half of ACTs were satisfied with teaching. 75% planned to continue to teaching or move to a different position in schools. This result shows that many ACTs might have positive feelings about the profession. In addition, 58% female ACTs chose teaching because they feel teaching was appropriate for them. The same 58% planned to continue teaching, and 21% planned to move to other institutions related to their profession. On the other hand, while 40% male ACTs chose teaching because they feel teaching was appropriate for them, 64% planned to continue to teach or move to a different position in schools. In addition, while two-third (60%) male ACTs chose teaching because of unemployment or other reasons, only 36% planned to quit teaching or move to other institutions related to their profession. Chi Square results show the difference between female and male ACTs is statistically significant on their professional future plans ($p=0.000$) $[X^2 (5,799) = 62.166, p=.000]$

2.2. Study 2

The third purpose of the study was to explore the ACTs’ current self-assessment about teaching profession. For this purpose, ACTs were asked to indicate their reasons for choosing teaching as a profession. Secondly, ACTs were asked to reflect their problems related to relationships with colleagues and teaching during their career. Finally, they were asked to clarify whether their expectations related to their career come true or not, and self assessments in terms of teaching today.

The results indicate that, three fifth of the ACTs (66%) applied for teaching, because they could not find job related to their profession, while only %1 chose teaching, because working conditions were more convenient for their lifestyles than the other jobs. On the other hand, one fourth (26%) preferred teaching because they like teaching. After receiving general information about reasons of being teacher, their expectations about their career were examined in order to gain more specific information for the study. The results revealed that, one third of the ACTs (36%) had desired serving public through teaching, while tenth (12%) had chosen teaching because of unemployment. Besides, while 16% had expected to move on their branches or profession in time, 17% had had not any expectation about their future. Furthermore, 12% had desired to gain prestige in public and 13% had expected to have more free time during teaching.

Secondly, nearly half of the ACTs (44%) had difficulty during their induction period, while two fifth (40%) did not. ACTs found pedagogical aspects of teaching difficult. Almost one third (31%) had difficulty especially in pedagogical aspects of teaching such as lecturing according to the students’ learning levels, teaching reading & writing, using teaching techniques, and classroom management, and planning. Besides, few of the ACTs (1%) stated that they had difficulty in teaching courses such as art, math, gym, and music.

The numbers of the ACTs, whose expectations come true (33%) were less than the numbers of the others, whose expectations did not (42%). Besides, one fourth (24%) expressed that their expectations come true partially. On the other hand, while one fourth of the ACTs (n=22) do not work as classroom teacher, almost three fourths (n=61) continue teaching now. Few ACTs, who have been acting as classroom teachers at the present time, expect to move on their professions, while nearly half of them do not expect anything related to their career.

Besides, more than half of the ACTs (56%) revealed that regular teachers, who graduated from educational faculties, regarded ACTs as professional, and supported them at schools. However, one third (33%) of the ACTs expressed that they did not. In addition, only 7 of the ACTs (1%) revealed that, the other classroom teachers, who graduated from educational faculties, did not take up them seriously at the beginning. Furthermore, most of the ACTs (80%) stated that school administrators perceived ACTs successful into teaching, and supported them at schools, while nearly one fifth (15%) did not. Similarly, most of the ACTs, who have been acting as classroom teachers at the present time, expressed that more than half of the inspectors (67%) assessed them as successful, while nearly one third (28%) revealed that the inspectors perceived them inadequate for teaching. Lastly, most of the ACTs, who have been acting as classroom teachers at the present time, perceive themselves successful in teaching (n=59, 95%). More than half of the ACTs (n=38, 62%) stated that they had preferred teaching since they like children and teaching. On the other hand, one third 30 % (n=25, N=83) indicated that they had hoped to switch to their profession as soon as possible.

The results indicated that the ACTs, who have not been acting as classroom teachers at the present time, gave up teaching because; they were not respected as classroom teachers, and they were not satisfied with teaching; they wanted to do their own job; they perceived themselves more qualified to be classroom teacher; and there is no career development chance in teaching. Therefore, more than half of the ACTs, who have not been acting as classroom
teachers at the present time (52%), stated that they would never be classroom teachers again. On the other hand, one fifth (20%) revealed that they would prefer working as classroom teachers because of convenient working conditions of teaching. Finally, all of the ACTs stated that being classroom teacher is so hard and only people, who like children and teaching, should be classroom teacher.

3. Discussion

ACTs’ responses in the first study indicate that ACTs had difficulty in planning (especially preparing yearly plan), finding instructional materials, lecturing in crowded classrooms, developing instructional materials, carrying out group activities, dealing with students who learn slowly, helping students who have problems, and establishing good relations with inspectors and parents during their induction period. These problems are more apparent for ACTs who were certified before they started teaching. So it appears that going through an ACP is better than not being trained at all even though the content and duration of these ACPs are insufficient compared to regular teacher education programs. The results of the second study were quite consistent with the first one. The results of the second study support to the outcomes of the first one in respect to the difficulties ACTs’ had in their induction period, such as teaching according to the students’ learning levels, teaching reading and writing, using teaching techniques, planning, and classroom management.

When ACTs’ reasons for choosing teaching and future plans for their career were compared in the first study, it was seen that more than half of the ACTs chose teaching since they felt teaching was appropriate for them. Besides, more than half of the female ACTs chose teaching since they felt teaching was appropriate for them. On the other hand, most of the male ACTs said they would not continue teaching in the future in the first study. In addition, male ACTs said they were not satisfied with teaching. As a result, most of the male ACTs were not willing to be classroom teachers at the beginning and they were not satisfied with teaching. Thus most of the male ACTs looked for different alternatives to being a classroom teacher. Besides, according to the second study, most of the ACTs chose teaching because of unemployment. In addition, most of the ACTs’ expectations for future were not related to their career.

The results of the first study showed that ACTs graduated from management, economics, and communication were more satisfied with teaching than the others. Besides, female ACTs were seen more satisfied with teaching than the male ACTs. The reasons of being satisfied with teaching might be different for female ACTs than male ACTs. Since teaching is accepted mostly as part time job and it has a lot of holidays, especially females might prefer it to other professions. Since females are responsible with housekeeping and child care more than males, teaching is accepted as most proper for females in Turkey. In addition, having low income, teaching might not be preferred by males in Turkey. On the other hand, the results of the second study revealed that most of the ACTs who have been acting as classroom teachers at the present time perceive themselves successful in teaching. Therefore, a significant part of them hope to switch to their profession whenever they find an opportunity.

Finally all of the ACTs stated that, ACTs should not be allowed to work at schools without teaching certificate. This is the most important point that all ACTs stated in the second study. Ideally all teachers should be trained in regular teacher education programs to deal with a variety of aspects of teaching. Short-term programs cannot be replaced these programs. If regular programs cannot supply sufficient number of teachers, then at least an ACP should be looked for in the applicants’ background. Those without teaching certificate seem to be the poorest in teaching according to the results of these studies. ACTs’ teaching practice should be conducted more carefully during the training. Besides, ACTs should be employed only after they received teaching certificate and they are found successful in entrance interview. ACTs should be examined whether they are willing to work with children and like teaching in this interview. Questions of interview should be prepared carefully to investigate appropriate individuals for teaching.

4. Conclusions

Especially in the first year of the teaching requires simultaneous socialization into the teaching profession. New teachers enter a new school environment, and teaching methods they learned need to be adapted to specific needs of the school setting and backgrounds of the students. Teachers feel overwhelmed and isolated during their first year. In addition, without knowing that other teachers also experience similar problems, they feel inadequate as teachers.
While regular teachers experience these kinds of problems, ACTs might have greater problems at schools. Since the length of ACPs is shorter than 4-year teacher education, how ACTs deal with these problems during the teaching is not known. Having a pedagogic formation without studying 4-year teacher education is not enough for individuals to be allowed to be teachers. Besides, most of the ACTs were lacking suitable knowledge of the subjects, pedagogic formation and adequate communication skills (Brock & Grady, 1998; Alkan 1998). Doubtless, when properly developed and administered, ACPs can help to address the growing need for classroom teachers. The quality of teachers ascertains the quality of education. Thus, it is crucial that well-qualified teachers in sufficient numbers are to be recruited for the quality of the young generation in future.

Finally, some limitations of this study should be noted. First, there is not any information about the number of the ACTs, who work at schools, who work at MONE institutions, who work as branch teachers today, and who quitted to profession. Second, participants in the second study were reached by means of internet. Thus only volunteer ACTs participated in the second study. Besides, although results of the study revealed important data about ACTs in Turkey, the need of further researched are still critical. Since unemployment is a crucial problem in our country ACPs have to be constructed carefully in collaboration with the MONE, universities, and the other related institutions.

References


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