THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GRADUATE EDUCATION TO PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract:

One of the core figures of education system is undoubtfully the teacher who is expected to contribute dramatically to the qualified learning environment both with professional skills and with personal characteristics. Therefore, the need for graduate education and its significance to specialize in maintaining education after Bachelor's degree has increased so far. In this regard, this research aims to determine teachers' perspectives regarding the implementation of graduate education to their professional performance. The present study has used interview technique as a qualitative research method and semi-structured interview form including seven open-ended questions as a data collection tool. Totally 28 teachers who receive graduate education in educational sciences department at a Turkish state university in the 2015-2016 academic years participated in the study. Research results have revealed that teachers mostly use the courses learning and teaching environment for preparing lesson plans. They also state that they have difficulty in implementing theoretical courses. As for the contributions of graduate education to teachers' professional performance, teachers mostly believe that they learn how to teach, and the courses that are more effective in their profession are predominantly thinking education, qualitative research methods and teacher training. Considering the extra courses that teachers want to take, it has been noted that foreign language, education, special education and writing an article are the most emphasized courses. Last but not least, teachers mostly feel themselves self-reliant as they enroll in graduate education; moreover, teachers' most significant reason for enrolling in graduate education is to update information.

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Keywords: graduate education, teachers' perspectives, professional performance, contribution to profession

1. Introduction

Nowadays information becomes by far the most significant factor in terms of economic and political power status. With the effects of globalization, countless developments regarding several disciplines uncover that knowledge is not static but an ongoing process. Social environment in which individuals live and their opportunity for following technological advances undergo change day by day. During the process of obtaining information, individuals who are to be brought up through education are expected to have various qualifications such as searching, questioning, having problem solving skills, thinking critically, learning to learn, being creative and expert on their fields and following educational developments (Cruickshank, Jenkins & Metcalf, 2003; Moore, 2005).

In the production and development of knowledge process, universities have an undeniable importance. Güven and Tunç (2007) stated that universities have been attributed a variety of functions which are classified as "*to educate, to conduct research and to train highly skilled individuals*". The development of knowledge emerges through not only research and development activities but also postgraduate studies. As in the other disciplines, in the field of educational sciences, information is continuously updated, practices and beliefs related to the field are being questioned and educational practices are discussed from different point of views. Thus, it is accepted that the core figures of education system are teachers who contribute dramatically to the qualified learning environment both with their skills and with their personal characteristics (Kavcar, 2002). So that countries can have enough power and quality for education, they are expected to train teachers who have advanced professional skills such as pedagogical content knowledge and communication skills for creating efficient atmosphere in the school. In this regard, higher education is of paramount significance to specialize in maintaining education after Bachelor's degree, upgrading their qualifications, keeping track of innovations and integrating them into their activities.

In this respect, there are various definitions with regard to the significance of higher education. In the World Declaration on Higher Education which was adopted by the World Conference on Higher Education in 1998, higher education was defined as "*All kinds of studies, training for research at the post-secondary level, provided by universities or other educational establishments that are approved as institutions of higher education by the competent state authorities*" (MEXT, 2000). Likewise, Çakar (1997) defined graduate

education as a specialized training program that trains individuals with high power efficiency and knowledge through studying in-depth in a field.

The main objective of graduate education in the field of educational sciences is to conduct scientific studies with the aim of improving the quality of education (Kaya, Sezgin & Kavcar, 2005). Besides, it also aims to raise individuals who are creative, respectful for ethical values, active participants in group work and interdisciplinary studies, have problem solving skills with a scientific perspective (Aslan, 2010). Even if the purposes of graduate programs differ across regions and societies, these programs particularly refer to professionalism and pedagogical skills of teachers. Specifically, graduate programs provide students with understanding research methods and pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, graduate programs offer teachers the opportunity for gaining knowledge, as well as carrying out creative research (Moulding & Hadley, 2010). In fact, it is claimed that performing both informal mini-research study and formal study with modern methods enable teachers to gain classroom practice (Reis-Jorge, 2007).

Graduate teacher education programs show a substantial preponderance of the needs for the graduate students such as finding and implementing consistency from their graduate experience to their professional teaching performance (Molseed, 2009). To achieve this, diversity and content of curriculum of graduate education programs should be increased in parallel with the changing world. Karakütük (1989) presents several factors that accelerate the development and change of graduate education as following:

- The integration of research activities into the functions of universities.
- The emergence of new professions thanks to vast knowledge and inventions after World War II.
- The need for high quality manpower (faculty members, scientists and researchers) in the development of countries.
- The extension of primary school year and the increase in the need for higher education with the rise in enrolment rates within education levels, thus leading to a high demand of faculty members.
- Due to the rapid realization of knowledge and technological developments, the insufficiency of qualifications acquired through higher education after graduation makes it necessary to take graduate education.

Numerous studies concerning graduate education have been carried out so far. Upon analyzing the relevant literature, Özmenteş and Özmenteş (2010) has investigated music education department master class students' expectations about the graduate education and their views on master class curriculum, faculty members, courses, and

teaching and evaluating techniques. Ünal and İlter (2010) put forward the attitudes of classroom teachers towards graduate education. In a study carried out by Löfmark and Mamhidir (2010), both students' and preceptors' perceptions as well as experiences of graduate education in primary health care focusing on the clinical area have been identified. The study carried out by Ion and Iucu (2016) determined that postgraduate studies provide teachers with a vital relation between the research and reported education faculties and their own studies in schools, and researches conducted in universities have a personal impact as well as improving their teaching skills. Ören, Yılmaz and Güçlü (2012) have conducted a qualitative research on the preservice teachers' views related to graduate education. In another study performed by Varış (1972), master class students' expectations from graduate education and how to have a career, develop themselves in their fields and have an academic qualification in accordance with the practices have been analyzed. The findings show that the expectations of master class students have been partly met. Moreover, Gemme and Gingras (2012) have underpinned that students are willing to receive graduate education with a view to having more job opportunities and raising their social status, thus, they are expected to graduate with the required skills and equipment. The survey performed by The Gallup Organization Hungary with the request of Directorate General Education and Culture in 2009 reflects students' views on the novel features of graduate education, one of which is based upon the fact that graduate education should develop communication skills and learning to learn. In addition to these, academicians also view their ideas related to the graduate education. Hermanowicz (2016) has investigated how academicians who are at different stages of their careers view their graduate training through asking and analyzing what sort of shortcomings they detect from graduate education. Endedijk, Vermunt, Meijer and Brekelmans (2014) show that one of the major tasks of postgraduate education is to improve students' conceptions along with skills which are required for lifelong learning in their profession.

In this regard, different from the aforementioned studies, the present study aims to determine the views of teachers receiving graduate education in terms of its implementation to their professional performance. The studies which have been previously done recently are generally based upon expectations and goals. With regard to the teachers' views receiving graduate education, it is likely to point that the implementation-oriented course content will lead to more effective and efficient teaching process. Within this context, the research problem statement is as such "*What are the teachers' views receiving graduate education in terms of its implementation to their professional performance?*"

2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine teachers' perspectives in terms of the implementation of graduate education to their professional performance. Accordingly, answers for the following questions have been sought:

1. What are the teachers' views related to the implementation of courses in learning and teaching environment?
2. What are the teachers' views regarding the consistency between theoretical courses and their implementation in classrooms?
3. What are the teachers' views related to the contributions of graduate education to teachers' professional performance?
4. What are the teachers' views regarding the courses that are more effective in their profession?
5. What are the teachers' views regarding the extra courses they want to take?
6. What are the teachers' views related to the contributions of graduate education to teachers except for their professional performance?
7. What are the reasons for teachers to enroll in graduate education?

3. Method

This is a qualitative study, based on interview method and it has employed phenomenological design. Phenomenological design focuses on the cases that we are aware of but that we are free from an in-depth and detailed understanding. This design is the basis for the researches aiming to investigate cases that are not completely strange to us (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

In qualitative research methods, events and phenomena are observed in their natural environment. In this regard, qualitative researchers who are of the opinion that facts are structured more than one and socially conduct their research through examining people in the natural environment. Qualitative research methods provide with understanding and recognizing the natural environment as well as revealing educational facts as it is susceptible to explain the effects of them on the results. These features diversify educational researches (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). One of the techniques used in the qualitative research methods is interview (Karasar, 2002). This research used semi-structured interview technique in which the interviewer and respondents engage in a formal conversation. The interviewer develops and utilizes a list of interview questions that are needed to be covered during the interview. Besides, semi-structured interview guide includes open-ended questions which provide

interviewers an opportunity for identifying new ways of understanding the topic (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

3.1. Sample

In phenomenological studies, it is essential that people who will explain the phenomenon be selected carefully (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). The study was carried out with 28 teachers who received graduate education at a Turkish state university in the 2015-2016 academic years. The current study employed convenience sampling method as the sample was selected among teachers who receive graduate education in the university where this study's researchers work. Convenience sampling is a type of nonrandom sampling in which a significant criterion of sample selection is the convenience of the researcher. Those who are considered as the target population are included in the study only if they meet certain practical criteria such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate (Dörnyei, 2007). The demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The demographic information about the participants

Branch	Female	Male	Total
Science	5	3	8
Foreign language	4	3	7
Mathematics	2	2	4
Primary school teacher	3	1	4
Psychological counseling and guidance	1	1	2
Turkish lesson	1	1	2
Social studies	0	1	1
Total	16	12	28

As shown in Table 1, the sample of the study consists of 28 teachers from seven branches and mostly consisted of women who are science teachers.

3.2. Data Collection Tool

Through interviews, the views of participants have been tried to be identified under the light of their statements. In this context, interview technique provides the researcher an opportunity for obtaining information in a more detailed way concerning how and in which conditions, thoughts and behaviors vary in such cases (Seidman, 2006). The present study has utilized a semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers through asking expert opinions for the purpose of providing the construct

validity and content validity. The interview form includes seven open-ended questions that have been developed by the researcher. Before implementing the final interview form to the teachers, a pilot study has been conducted with 3 teachers through asking nine open-ended questions, two of which has been combined as the participants give the same answers. The final form of interview questions was used after two experts' opinions.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

Within the scope of the research, the sample was determined and data were collected during two weeks of spring term in 2015-2016 education years. Before interviewing with the teachers, they were informed about the aim of the study. Teachers were also asked for the use of voice recorder. Hereunder, face to face interviews were done and teachers' views were offered related to the interview questions. During the interviews, notes were also taken for those who did not allow the use of voice recorder.

Interviews took between 20-25 minutes. After all interviews were completed, the words and intonations were also taken into account while the teachers' answers were put down on paper as transcripts. Content analysis was used in data analysis. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) define content analysis as the process by which summarizing and reporting written data and the main contents of data and their messages are generated. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013) put forward the main purpose of the content analysis as to achieve the concepts and relations through which the collected data are clearly explained. Teachers participating in the study were counted from 1 to 28 (T_1, T_2, ….T_{28}). Female teachers were represented with even numbers while male teachers were denominated with uneven numbers. Afterwards, the general expressions of teachers are summarized, then teachers' views were coded and the same codes were put together. The codes which were determined for each research question were depicted in tables and reporting was carried out with comments. Exact quotations were included in order to identify the underlying meanings of the codes.

4. Findings

Teachers' views regarding the implementation of courses in learning and teaching environment are presented in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, more than half of the teachers think that course plan preparation is useful for learning how to prepare a designed and effective lesson plan and how to implement it in classes. Less than half of the teachers are of the opinion that they provide active participation for their students thanks to the courses they have

received. Only a few teachers indicated that they implement the courses in the learning environment through making personal planning. One of the most remarkable results is that one teacher implied the courses are inappropriate for implementing them in learning and teaching environment.

Table 2: Teachers' views regarding the implementation of courses in learning and teaching environment

Yes, because of...	f
Providing course plan preparation	18
Active participation	10
Knowledge wealthiness	10
Shaping the schedule depending on the class	8
Guidance activities	5
Personal planning	3
Scientific study	1
Problem solving	1
Information guide	1
Providing thinking education	1
General culture	1
Positive attitude	1
Inappropriate course	1
No, because of...	**f**
Teachers' obedience to traditional methods	1
The difficulty in course implementation	1
The lack of equipment in classes	1

2 of the teachers explain their opinions about course plan preparation and obedience to traditional methods as regards:

"We cannot implement the courses we have taken in learning and teaching process in a detailed way as we are used to traditional teaching methods. Therefore, we have difficulty in using modern ones, but I have learned how to prepare an organized course plan. Now, I am preparing my course plan much more consciously." (T14)

"Yes, I can implement the courses especially thinking education course in the classrooms. I generally integrate thinking skills into guidance and counseling activities." (T4)

Table 3 displays teachers' views on the consistency between theoretical courses and their implementation in classrooms.

Table 3: Teachers' views regarding the consistency between theoretical courses and their implementation in classrooms

Codes	f
The implementation difficulties of theoretical courses	21
The lack of implementation	17
Inappropriate content of the courses	16
Ignoring the readiness	12
Crowded classrooms	12
Time constraint	10
Lack of equipment in classes	7
Exam anxiety of students	4
Lack of motivation in students	2
Limitation of space	1
Learning and using new methods	1

As seen in Table 3, the majority of teachers underpin the implementation difficulties of theoretical courses while almost half of them express that the theoretical courses are inconsistent with their implementation in terms of the lack of implementation and inappropriate content of the courses. Besides, less than half of the teachers think that the reasons for the inconsistency between theoretical courses and their implementation are ignoring the readiness, crowded classrooms and time constraint. Only one each teacher notes that there is a consistency between theoretical courses and their implementations with regard to learning and using new methods. The following quotations identify teachers' responses to the consistency between theoretical courses and their implementation in classrooms:

"I must say that we have difficulty in implementing theoretical courses…. The theoretical courses we have taken are beneficial, but we are incapable of implementing them. So inconsistency occurs between them."(T1)

''Actually, there is not a consistency between them. Exam anxiety hinders us from putting them into practice. In addition, crowded classrooms make it hard to do activities. As the number of students increase, time is limited as well. So I cannot implement the theoretical knowledge in the class. To achieve this, we should share the course plans we have developed during the academic year with the other teacher to get feedback or we should apply these plans in the class to see the difference."(T17)

"No, how I can implement Statistics or Program Development Studies."(T2)

Teachers' views regarding the contributions of graduate education to their professional performance are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4: The contributions of graduate education to teachers' professional performance

Codes	f
Learning to teach	23
Developing a new perspective	20
Teaching ability	18
Gaining experience	17
Narrowing the gaps among students	17
Job identification	13
Being tolerant to differences	11
Acquiring thinking skills	10
Being a model for students	6
Having scientific ethics	4
The joy of learning	1
Feeling as a researcher	1
Understanding methods in depth	1

As can be seen in Table 4, most of the teachers believe that receiving graduate education provides them for learning to teach and developing a new perspective. More than half of them declare that the contributions of graduate education to their professional performance are considered as to gain teaching ability and experience as well as narrowing the gaps among students. Less than half of the teachers think that they become much more tolerant to the differences, which is a striking finding of the study. Some of the teachers declare their opinions as follows:

"Man loves himself. For instance, imagine that you take a photo with our friends. When you look at the photo, you try to find yourself at first. Under these circumstances, I feel unique when the other teachers do not receive graduate education since I am becoming a model for them." (T26)

"Through graduate education, I have developed a different point view towards my profession and environment. Now, I am much more tolerant of differences that I have encountered. In fact, we are learning 'how to become a teacher'. We identify with our profession seeing the details of our own profession ''. (T3)

"Yes, I feel that I am learning how to become a teacher. It completes the lack of theoretical substructure."(T22)

Teachers' views regarding the courses that are more effective in their profession are given in Table 5.

Table 5: Teachers' views regarding the courses that are more effective in their profession

Courses	f
Thinking education	21
Qualitative research methods	19
Teacher training	19
Curriculum development	17
Statistics	15
Research methods	10
Curriculum development researches	2
Contemporary philosophy in education	1
Turkish education history	1
Development and learning	1
None	1

Table 5 depicts teachers' views regarding the courses that are more effective. Accordingly, the majority of teachers express that thinking education is the most effective course While more than half of the teachers listed the courses that make a great contribution as qualitative research methods, teacher training, program development and statistics, respectively. On the other, only one teacher thinks that none of the courses contributes to his/her professional life. The verbatim quotations have been presented to emphasize the courses that are more effective in teachers' profession:

"All courses have great contributions to my profession, particularly thinking education. We have developed course plan in detail." (T11)

"Especially thinking education course is effective in the school environment both in terms of different teaching methods and techniques and different thinking skills." (T26)

"Unfortunately, I think that none of them is effective as many of the courses are taught theoretically. In the practice-oriented courses, the first thing to be done is to present how to implement the theoretical course in the class. However, we are just preparing homework and some corrections are being made." (T18)

Table 6 presents teachers' views regarding the extra courses that they want to take.

Table 6: The extra courses that teachers want to take

Courses	f
Foreign language education	20
Special training	15
Writing an article	15
Guidance	10
Scientific preparatory period	9
Educational psychology	5
Teaching methods and techniques	4
Political implications of education	4
Innovative courses	2
Increasing the number of elective courses	2
Instructional planning and evaluation	1
World history of education	1
Intellectual history	1
Courses for implementation	1

As noted in Table 6, most of the teachers want to receive foreign language education as an extra course while almost half of the teachers wish to take writing an article as an extra course. Less than half of the teachers think that courses such as guidance, scientific preparatory period, and educational psychology. The most remarkable finding is that some of the teachers want to take special training as an extra course. The most emphasized and remarkable responses have been noted as following:

''I want to get the guidance course since it is unlikely to encourage students without understanding them and being a psychological counselor. In addition, we should take history of Turkish education. We need to be trained in a professional and pedagogical sense." (T23)

"The courses we have taken are not at the graduate education level. It is of paramount significance to search, examine, learn different topics and methods, yet merely Turkish scientific studies are analyzed; instead, international studies need to be examined. Therefore, foreign language is required therein. For instance, I cannot search articles which have been published in international journals. When students enroll graduate education, they need to take foreign language education." (T9)

Table 7 displays the contributions that graduate education make to the teachers except for their professional performance.

As seen in Table 7, half of the teachers believe that graduate education program enables them for gaining self-reliance. Less than half of the teachers participating in the

study indicate various advantages of taking graduate education as effective use of time, return to campus, critical thinking skills, communication skills, developing point of view, increase in the additional course fee. Two of them emphasize the disadvantages of receiving graduate education as it is limited to a micro environment and it cannot be adapted to everyday life, respectively. Moreover, only one teacher thinks that the courses do not make any contributions to his/her social life.

Table 7: The contributions of graduate education to teachers except for their professional performance

Codes	f
Self-reliance	14
Effective use of time	12
Return to campus	11
Critical thinking skills	9
Communication skills	9
Developing point of view	9
Regular life	8
Increase in the additional course fee	6
Social life	6
Meeting faculty members	4
Making friends	4
Limited to a micro environment	1
Inability to adapt to everyday life	1
No benefit	1

Some of the teachers stated their opinions as follows:

"Man is a social living being. We are having a different social environment thanks to graduate education program and I think it enriches me. We have the opportunity for meeting faculty members..." (T16)

"First of all, return to campus is a very nice feeling. It boosted my self-esteem to enroll graduate education. I recognized my shortcomings and I start to improve myself. This makes me feel better." (T23)

"The courses are thinking education and qualitative research methods. I can analyze the existing problems in detail." (T8)

Teachers' views regarding the reasons for enrolling in graduate education are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Teachers' views regarding the reasons for enrolling in graduate education

Codes	f
Updating information	18
Contribution to the profession	17
Scientific progress	15
Being an academician	14
Increasing professional knowledge	11
Meeting new people	8
Desire for learning	7
Providing personal development	5
Increasing productivity	2
Increasing scientific literacy	1
Students 'failure in courses	1

According to Table 8, more than half of the teachers indicate the reasons for enrolling in graduate education as updating information, contribution to the profession, scientific progress. On the other, half of them state that they begin graduate education in order to be academicians. Less than half of the teachers emphasized the reasons for enrolling in graduate education program such as increasing professional knowledge, meeting new people, desire for learning, providing personal development, increasing productivity. Two of the teachers each explain the reasons as to increase scientific literacy and students' failure in courses, respectively:

"We are constantly confronted with the failure of students. Therefore, I enrolled in graduate education on behalf of investigating the causes of this failure and to achieve the solutions." (T_{14})

"I like reading, searching and learning new things. Graduate education is an opportunity to do them so I enrolled in graduate education program." (T_7)

"Personal development and the reasons for the failure in mathematics and search for solutions." (T_{25})

"I have started graduate education so as to be much better than I am and to raise literacy." (T_{22})

5. Results and Discussion

The present study has examined teachers' views receiving graduate education in terms of its implementation to their professional performance. By this way, this study focuses on not only the contribution of higher education to teachers' professional development by implementing the knowledge which they acquired via higher education programs, but also emphasizes the transformation of theoretical knowledge into professional practices. Teachers' views regarding the implementation of courses in learning and teaching environment have been determined as active participation, personal planning, scientific study, problem solving and positive attitude. Similarly, in the study conducted by Bauer and Fisher (2007) teachers with graduate degrees claim that educational research contributes greatly to their professional life in terms of classroom practices, as well as in individual and professional development. The assumption that planning affects in some systematic way the manner that teachers behave in a classroom or that decisions made by teachers during the planning process have a great influence on all aspects of their classroom behavior. This may result in the active participation of students in the learning process (Sherman, 1979). Davies (1995) indicated that teachers need to know how to handle the problems emerging in the classroom while implementing the instruction program. In the present study, one teacher explains that teachers' problem solving skills develop through graduate education. It is therefore obvious that problem solving skills are needed during implementation process. In addition, plan preparation is regarded as effective and encouraging in the current study. Likewise, Craig and Dickenson (2003) pointed out that good planning ensures that lessons include periods in which students are allowed to have discussion in open or close groups or in pairs. Good planning organizes the material which allows doing more and better during a session.

As for the results of the second research question, teachers were asked whether there is a consistency between the courses they have taken and their implementation in school environment. In this regard, the majority of teachers think that it is highly difficult to implement the theoretical courses in the school environment. What is more, they are of the consideration that lack of equipment, exam anxiety, crowded classrooms, time constraint, lack of motivation are among the reasons for the inconsistency between theoretical courses and implementation. In parallel to the present study, Kahraman and Tok (2016) suggest several recommendations with regard to the development of graduate education and teaching process. They concluded that implementation-oriented courses were presented rather than theoretical knowledge. Likewise, in his study, Alhas (2006) stated that some of the teachers emphasized that

"*Courses are not as efficient as they should be*". Khan and Iqbal (2012) indicated that effective teaching was not possible in crowded classes; in addition, majority of the teachers were facing instructional, discipline, physical and evaluation problems. This result is parallel to the finding of present study regarding the inconsistency between theoretical lessons and implementation because of crowded lessons.

Upon analyzing teachers' views about the contributions of graduate education to their profession, most of the teachers are of the opinion that receiving graduate education provides them for learning the teaching and developing point of view. More than half of them define how they feel as teaching ability, gaining experience, narrow the gaps. Less than half of the teachers consider the qualifications that they feel while receiving graduate education as tolerant to differences, acquiring thinking skills, being a model, and having scientific ethics. This may result from the fact that teachers have consciously enrolled in graduate education. Further, a similar finding has been determined in the study performed by Ion and Iucu (2016). Accordingly, researches conducted in universities have a personal impact, and that improve their teaching skills.

Moreover, based upon the results concerning the courses that are more effective, the majority of teachers believe that thinking education course enables them to improve themselves. Teachers refer to the courses that make a great contribution as qualitative research methods, teacher training, program development, statistics, scientific research methods, program development researches, respectively. That teachers see thinking education course as the most effective one may result from the need for learning different thinking types for effective teaching. This finding shows that teachers are aware of the importance of thinking and preparing lesson plan based upon each thinking style. Nickerson (1994) concluded that students need to be taught how to think more effectively. As Limbach and Waugh (2006) argued, thinking is a natural process, but when left to itself, it can often be biased, distorted, partial, uninformed and potentially prejudiced; excellence in thought must be cultivated.

Given the extra courses that teachers want to take, it was found that foreign language education, special training, writing an article, guidance, scientific preparatory period, educational psychology, teaching methods and techniques, political implications of education are considered among the essential courses. Teachers also state that the number of elective courses should be increased and application-oriented courses should be developed. Stewart (2005) concluded that those who study foreign language become more creative and better problem solvers. The reason for teachers to choose foreign language learning may due to the fact that foreign language study is linked with higher achievement in the other international academic areas. Another striking answer for the extra courses is special education. Hocutt (1996) presented in a

study that some of the teachers emphasized that teachers are needed to receive special training course so as to be more knowledgeable about individual students By this way, teachers may also have a wider repertoire of responses to handle students' disruptive behavior or inattention.

The research has also investigated the contributions of graduate education to teachers receiving graduate education except for their profession. Accordingly, it was indicated that half of the teachers feel themselves more self-confident. Teachers participating in the study also specify various advantages of receiving graduate education as effective use of time, return to campus, critical thinking skills, communication skills, developing point of view, increase in the additional course fee, social life, meeting family members, making friends. Some of them emphasize the disadvantages of receiving graduate education as it is limited to a micro environment and it cannot be adapted to everyday life, respectively. Moreover, only one teacher thinks that courses do not make any contributions to his/her social life. Most of the replies are the characteristics that a good teacher should have. Gurney (2007) noted that to be an effective teacher there should be an interaction among different factors. One of them is the teacher's knowledge, enthusiasm and self-confidence. Another factor is that effective teachers should provide the students with using time effectively, as well as having critical thinking skills. Some teachers stress that receiving graduate education increases the additional course fee, which is a substantial finding of our study. This may result from the idea that earning much more money motivates people.

Teachers' views regarding the reasons for enrolling in graduate education program have been analyzed. In this regard, teachers point out the reasons for enrolling in graduate education as updating information, contribution to the profession, scientific progress. On the other hand, half of them state that they begin graduate education in order to be an academician. Some of the teachers listed the reasons for enrolling in graduate education program as to increase professional knowledge, to meet new people, to have a desire for learning, to provide personal development, to increase productivity. In parallel to these results, Sayan and Aksu (2005) found that individuals who are enrolled in graduate education aim to specialize in their field, to be an academician and to progress scientifically. Similarly, in the study conducted by Savaş and Topak (2005), it was found that the expectations of students who receive graduate education are the joy of obtaining new knowledge, to have an academic career, the opportunity to achieve self-fulfillment.

6. Recommendations

Following recommendations were developed for implementers and researchers:

- In the present study, the results suggest that most of the teachers are willing to receive foreign language education as a master course. Thus, it may be wise to provide teachers who want to be academicians with foreign language education.

- One of the striking results of the present study is mostly related to the necessity for implementing courses to teachers' professional performance. Therefore, theoretical courses should be incorporated into practical activities.

- As emphasized by the teachers, it is highly significant to have self-confidence in order to advance in their career. Accordingly, the teachers who attend to post graduate education may be encouraged for their professional performance during the courses.

- The teachers indicate some handicaps of the graduate education program they have attended. Positive and negative situations that master class students may encounter should be introduced before enrolling in the graduate education program. In this context, an orientation program may be organized.

- The sample of this study only includes the teachers working in state schools. Researchers may be recommended to investigate for comparing the efficiency of master teachers working at both state and private schools.

- This study used qualitative research method with a view to uncovering the opinions of teachers receiving master education. More than that, experimental studies can be conducted in order to determine the effectiveness of graduate education.

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