

Full Length Research Paper

Quality problem in teaching profession: Qualities teacher candidates feel to be required of teachers

Ali Yilmaz

Education Faculty, Ondokuz Mayıs University, Samsun, Turkey. E-mail: ayilmaz@omu.edu.tr. Tel: +905326365388.
Fax: +903624575754.

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The primary objectives of this research were to explore if teacher candidates studying in teacher training programs at the undergraduate level have had teachers who they perceived to be effective, the characteristics of these teachers that underlie the perception of effectiveness, and whether these teachers have had any influence in the students' selection of teaching profession and their program of study. The research sample is composed of 554 teacher candidates (undergraduate students) studying at various departments of the College of Education of Ondokuz Mayıs University. The sample composition is 352 female and 203 male students. Of the students comprising the sample, 269 are freshmen and 285 are seniors. Personal Data Form and Effective Teacher Qualities Survey, both of which developed by the researcher, were used for data collection. Results obtained through data analysis reveal that 94.8% of teacher candidates have had teachers they perceived to be effective in their educational experience, spanning from elementary school to university. The ratio of having effective teachers have been found to be higher for females compared to males, senior year students compared to freshman year students, and in the Department of Foreign Language Education compared to other departments. Of the sample, 57% of teacher candidates have indicated that the teachers they perceive to be effective have had an influence on their choice of profession and program of study. This influence is observed to be higher for females compared to males. While the majority of the teacher candidates expressed preference for "warm, kind, sincere, friendly, sociable and familiar" teachers; most frequently top ranked effective teacher characteristics was, "enthusiastic, excited about teaching, dynamic, and motivates students to learn". The highest ranked teacher characteristics varied based on teacher candidates' gender, current grade level, and department of study.

Key words: Teacher candidate, teacher effectiveness, effective teacher.

INTRODUCTION

With the skills, talents, and attitudes they possess or lack, teachers are one of the primary, perhaps the most important, building blocks of an educational system. They play a vital role in educating and teaching future generations. Whether we accept it or not, they are perceived as the architects of the second creation. Therefore, Schools of Education, as the primary teacher training institutions, have vital roles in ensuring adequate development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for teaching. The dynamic nature of the level of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of teachers, increases the importance of the quality of teacher training programs.

There is a growing body of research on this topic that serves to reinforce this opinion. For example, Richardson (1996) emphasizes the importance of teacher training for

teacher quality. Similar research results indicate that increasing the quality and variety of classroom activities largely depends on the development of subject knowledge and pedagogical skills of teachers (Okpola and Ellis, 2005). In order to increase the quality of teachers in the system, some countries, such as Finland and Singapore limit the number of candidates accepted into their teacher education programs (Steward, 2010). Some others, including Turkey, conduct teacher selection examinations to employ the most appropriate teacher candidates among the numerous applicants. The teacher candidates' scores in these exams and the quality of teacher training programs seem to be related. Naturally, this perception directs attention to the relationship between the quality of teacher training programs and the effectiveness of the teaching staff that are responsible for

the development of teacher candidates' knowledge, skills, and attitude. It is a fact that strong academic staffs are essential, along with a commitment to the profession and to serving the nation's outstanding students. However, the effectiveness of the teaching staff serving in teacher training programs is not the only factor effecting quality; the effectiveness of other teachers encountered by teacher candidates throughout their educational experience should also be taken into consideration.

Although the current teacher training programs, depending on the competence of the faculty they employ, help teacher candidates develop subject knowledge, pedagogical skills and general knowledge, the success level of teachers, who are currently serving in the educational system, is debatable. In his research, Üstüner (2004) draws attention to problems encountered in training of teachers with desired qualifications in recent years. There may be various reasons underlying the observed deficiency in teacher quality. One of the most important reasons is thought to be the inadequate number of qualified teaching staff members at these teacher training institutions and the teacher candidates' lack of professional experience, which should be gained alongside effective teachers. As a matter of fact, much of the research on this topic conclude that there is no significant deficiency in the subject knowledge and pedagogic formation of teacher candidates; they have a deficiency in experience garnered alongside experienced and effective teachers (Kiraz, 2002; Thompson et al., 2004; Boling and White, 2007; Mowrer-Reynolds, 2008). McElroy (2005) draws attention to the need for teacher candidates to observe experienced teachers; share their observations with their mentors, faculty advisors, and peers; and focus on the importance of collectively dwelling on these observations. Trubowitz (2004) also indicates that this collaboration will enhance teachers' professional success and increase the quality of teachers working in the system. In their case study, where candidate teachers and experienced teachers were brought together in a classroom setting for three hours a week, over sixteen weeks, Boling and White (2007) observed that both, teacher candidates and experienced teachers, improved their pedagogic knowledge, teaching skills, and positive behaviors.

On the other hand, a number of existing studies have concluded that there is a low level of correlation between teacher certification/diploma and teachers' influence on students' level of success (Godron et al., 2006). This is also clearly illustrated by Mowrer-Reynolds' (2008) research, where the researcher asserts, as most of us may have experiences in our own educational life, that there are a considerable number of teachers who are perfectly sufficient in subject knowledge but lack the necessary skills for transferring this knowledge to students. In other words, although having subject content and pedagogic knowledge and being able to document this with certificates, diplomas, or test result may be

necessary, are not sufficient for being an effective teacher.

Teacher effectiveness

The concept of "effectiveness", which originated in economics, but has found wide usage in different areas, including management and education, is defined as a person or organization's level of achieving self-set objectives (Tatar, 2004). Used in this context, an effective teacher is described as a teacher who is able to successfully perform tasks expected of him/her. However, effectiveness, when applied to educators, is not a simple, clear, or plain concept to describe. Literature on the subject record a number of definitions for teacher effectiveness, ranging from what a teacher knows and does in the classroom, to those that emphasize how knowledge is attained (Okpala and Ellis, 2005). In their literature search on the topic, Wilson et al. (2001) has concluded that a large proportion of effective teacher studies over emphasize teachers' vocational knowledge and pay little attention to their personality traits. Banner and Cannon (1997) call attention to the fact that we tend to overlook the importance of our personality traits in determining our success or failure as teachers, and see success as a product of our level of academic development. Yet, teachers influence students not only through the content they teach, but also through their personality traits and the communication of these traits through behavior. Küçükahmet (1999) points out that, teachers have the potential to influence students, both positively and negatively, through their professional qualifications and personality traits. According to Ingersoll (1999), the quality of a teacher is determined by his/her personality traits, teaching applications, and level of academic development.

Effective teacher qualities

Research on effective teachers emphasize that teachers need; pedagogic knowledge, subject content knowledge, liberal knowledge, procedural knowledge about education, and various vocational skills; professional knowledge, such as multiple teaching approaches and addressing different learning styles; along with personality traits, such as enthusiasm, helpfulness, friendliness, sense of humor, likeability, supportiveness, and being considerate (Mowrer-Reynolds, 2008). Demirel (1999: 139) concludes that most research on teacher qualities focus on 'effective teacher qualities' and, groups the teacher characteristics in two categories namely "vocational qualities" and "personal qualities". In his literature research about teacher qualifications, Sümbül (2001) groups vocational qualifications of teachers in three categories: (a) personal qualifications,

(b) competency in subject knowledge, (c) educational qualifications. As cited in Çubukçu (2010), Barry and King (1993) pointed out that, teachers need to be proficient in three areas: (a) teaching skills, (b) management skills, and (c) communication skills. Şeker et. al. (2004) cites the Council of Higher Education's teacher qualifications list to group teacher qualifications under four categories: (a) qualifications related to subject matter and subject education, (b) qualifications related to teaching-learning processes, (c) monitoring, evaluating, and recording students' progress, and (d) supplemental vocational qualifications. According to Valli and Rennert-Ariev (2002), measures of teacher qualifications are; diagnosis and evaluation of students' learning problems; collaboration with students when addressing matters that concern them; effective organization and management of the class; asking meaningful and effective questions; and effective usage of appropriate methods, techniques and materials. Çetin's (2001) findings about ideal teacher characteristics largely support the features listed above. The mentioned study concludes that the ideal teacher is a person who has: the ability to establish effective communication with students and work with them in a friendly manner; competency in subject content knowledge; awareness of students' interests and needs; adequate pedagogical knowledge; a scientific attitude; the ability to form and maintain relationships with students and others, based on mutual respect and consideration; an awareness of individual differences; and the ability to masterfully employ appropriate methods and techniques in the classroom. According to Mowrer-Reynolds (2008), these factors are valid in all social groups of society, regardless of ethnic and cultural differences.

In his research on desired teacher qualifications, Malm (2003) cites effective communications skills, respecting others, confidence, responsibility, consistency, and sense of humor as qualities of a 'good' teacher. Boling and White (2007) analyzed the data they collected through: direct and participative observations, semi-structured interviews, and collecting students' personal opinions to determine teacher effectiveness. They grouped their findings in two categories titled: 'internal concerns' and 'external concerns'. Internal concerns include teachers' classroom problem solving skills, in addition to their ability to counsel students and colleagues, and make important professional decisions. They have determined that the ability to make professional decisions is the most important among qualities listed. On the other hand, external concerns include: teachers' life-long learning skills, professional development skills and the level of self-sufficiency. They cite professional development skills as the most important among these components (Boling and White, 2007: 50-53). In his meta-analysis of experimental research on effective teachers, Rice (2003) identifies five main factors that contribute to teacher effectiveness. These factors, listed by the level of

importance include: (1) experience, (2) programmed level of graduation (3) type of diploma (or certificate) (4) courses received during teacher training and (5) scores on vocational entry exam. Kramer and Pier's (1997) research, based on interviews, emphasize enthusiasm and being motivated to teach as important characteristics of effective teachers. In addition, the students taking part in their interviews also cited personality traits of teachers, such as sincerity, transparency, making time for communication before, during, and after class as features that made them effective.

Students' perception of effective teacher characteristics

Studies, conducted to explore effective teacher characteristics based on student opinions, have an important place in the literature. Thompson et al. (2004) call attention to a positive and significant relationship between teachers' professional success and personal characteristics observed and deemed positive by students. Developing an effective teacher prototype based on this relationship can provide contributions to experienced teachers as well as teacher candidates. Hart (2002) states that, in addition to its use in determining effective teacher qualities, resorting to teacher candidates' opinions about effective teacher characteristics helps in efforts for diversifying teaching applications. Much of the early research on effective teaching qualities followed this method and asked students to describe the 'effective' teacher (Medley, 1979). Bousfield's (1940) research on university students found that students consider instructors' personal attitudes and behavior to be more important than the content they teach. Patalano (1978) performed a survey among post-graduate student volunteers to determine characteristics of effective and ineffective teachers; his findings indicated that a majority of students considered teachers' personality traits to be more important than professional skills in determining their effectiveness as teachers. Thompson et al.(2004)'s longitudinal research concluded that effective teacher characteristics, defined by the participants in their study, closely paralleled findings of other studies conducted over many years. In other words, students are good judges of teacher effectiveness.

Okpala and Ellis (2005) administrated Teacher Qualifications Survey to 218 business students to determine four characteristics observed in effective teachers. These qualities, listed in order of importance, consist of; teaching skills, learning centeredness, subject content knowledge, and verbal skills. In his research conducted on Vocational Education Faculty, Çetin (2001) asked students to write an essay describing 'the ideal teacher'. Analysis of the essays indicated that the ideal teacher is a professional educator who has; subject content

knowledge, scientific attitude, ability to work with students in a friendly and cooperative manner, awareness of students' interests, needs, and individual differences, considerate caring attitude, and the ability to employ different methods and techniques in the classroom. One needs to keep in mind that these characteristics are those perceived and considered by students to be the factors that make an 'effective teacher'. As a matter of fact, Intrator (2006: 235) asked students, "As your teacher, how can I contribute to your success?" and some of the responses were: "When I have not understood a subject and am too shy to ask questions, I'd like you to recognize that and help me."; "I would like you to get to know me."; "Instead of being too closely bound by subject content, I would like for you to tell jokes and stories."

Conducted at the teacher training institute with which the researcher is affiliated, the present research utilizes a similar method; the purpose of this study is to explore the characteristics teacher candidates perceive to be necessary for the academic faculty preparing them to become teachers, the teachers in schools where they are assigned as student-teachers, as well as, teachers who currently serve in the educational system. The views and opinions of 1st and 4th year students (teacher candidates) who are currently enrolled in various departments of the School of Education at Ondokuz Mayıs University form the data source of this study.

The purpose of the study

This research had multiple objectives: The first objective was to determine whether students enrolled in teacher training programs have had teachers they characterize as being 'effective' throughout their experience as students at primary, secondary or the university levels; if so, describe the characteristics that made those teachers effective.

The second objective was to investigate if there is a significant difference between teacher candidates' perception of effective teachers depending on gender, department and year of study. The third objective was to find out whether or not these teacher candidates have been influenced by the teachers they identified as 'effective' when choosing teaching as a profession and their field of study. The final objective was to determine the consistency of these findings with existing literature.

Research questions

1. Have the candidate teachers perceived any one of their teachers as 'effective' throughout their schooling from the elementary level to the university?
2. Was the candidate teachers' gender, department of

study, and year of study a factor in their perception of teacher effectiveness?

3. Which characteristics of the participants' effective teachers made them perceived as 'effective'?

4. Based on teacher candidates' point of view, is a teacher's influence on students' academic success or personality development a more important factor in identifying teacher effectiveness?

5. Have the teacher candidates' choice of profession and field of study been influenced by the teachers they identify as 'effective'?

6. Were the findings of current research consistent with findings of the literature?

METHODS

Perceptions of teacher effectiveness have been researched using various methods such as, questionnaires, interviews, and observations at all educational levels, ranging from the elementary to graduate school. Some were based on qualitative data, while others were based on quantitative forms of data. In this study, the mixed method approach based on both quantitative and qualitative data has been utilized. The advantages and the disadvantages of this method, and the contexts where it can be used are covered widely in the literature (Cresswell, 2003).

Participants

The participants of the study is composed of students enrolled during 2010-2011 academic year in the Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance (128 students), the Department of Turkish Language Education (122 students), the Department of Foreign Language Education (126 students), and the Department of Religion and Ethics Education (178 students). Of the total of 554 students who volunteered to take part in the study, 269 were enrolled in the first year, while 285 were enrolled in the fourth year of their programs. The study sample is thought to form a balanced representation of the research universe in terms of number and gender. The distribution of the study sample with regards participants' department, year of study, and gender is presented in terms of numbers and percentiles in Table 1.

Data collection instruments

A comprehensive literature research on teacher effectiveness was conducted in order to develop data collection instruments. The data collection instruments used in earlier studies was examined in detail and a preliminary scale composed of 38 items was developed. The preliminary scale was examined and discussed by four academicians of the field. In light of the feedback provided, the number of items was reduced to 30 and was given its final format; it was later titled "Effective Teacher Qualities Survey". For test-retest reliability analysis, the survey was applied to a group composed of 43 teacher candidates twice, with 14 days in-between. Reliability quotient was calculated at $r=0.78$. The same data was analyzed for internal consistency through Cronbach Alpha and $\alpha=0.93$ was found. A Personal Information Collection Form, consisting of 7 items, was prepared to collect relevant personal information of teacher candidates. Both of the data collection instruments are shown in Appendices 1 and 2.

Table 1. Distribution of the sample according to gender, department, and year of study.

Gender	Department of study	Year of study	Frequency (F)	Percentile (%)	
Female N=352 (%63.4)	Psychological Counseling and Guidance	1st	40	48.2	
		4th	43	51.8	
		Total	83	100.0	
	Turkish Language Education	1st	36	52.2	
		4th	33	47.8	
		Total	69	100.0	
	Foreign Language Education	1st	46	48.9	
		4th	48	51.1	
		Total	94	100.0	
	Religion and Ethics Education	1st	54	51.4	
		4th	51	48.6	
		Total	105	100.0	
	Male 203 (%36.6)	Psychological Counseling and Guidance	1st	18	40.0
			4th	27	60.0
			Total	45	100.0
Turkish Language Education		1st	25	47.2	
		4th	28	52.8	
		Total	53	100.0	
Foreign Language Education		1st	14	43.8	
		4th	18	56.3	
		Total	32	100.0	
Religion and Ethics Education		1st	36	49.3	
		4th	37	50.7	
		Total	73	100.0	

Data collection and analysis

The data collection instruments were designed as a single page and took a short period of time to complete. They were administered to teacher candidates in classrooms by researcher and collected after completion. Participants were asked begin by filling out the 7 item Personal Information Collection Form. Then, they were prompted to choose 10 items they considered as essential characteristics of effective teachers from the 30-item Effective Teacher Qualities Survey and rank them in order of importance. SPSS 18 statistical software was used for data analysis. 10 most important qualities candidate teachers wanted to see in effective teachers were determined by analyzing responses to each item and calculating their frequency and percentages.

RESULTS

Here, the questions anticipated to be answered in this research are considered individually and the findings are presented.

Presentation of findings on whether or not participants have had teachers they identify as 'effective' throughout their schooling

Only 29 (5.2%) out of 554 teacher candidates participating in the research stated that they have never had a teacher they identify as effective. The remaining 525 (94.8%) teacher candidates reported that they have encountered at least one teacher they identify as effective throughout their schooling, from the elementary school to the university. Of the 525 teacher candidates who have had effective teachers, 148 (26.7%) reported that they have had effective teachers at the elementary school level; 306 (55.2%) at the secondary level; 32 (5.8%) at the university level; 19 (3.4%) at both primary and the secondary level; 12 (2.2%) at the secondary and the university level. Only 2 (0.04%) of the participants have reported that they have had effective teachers at the elementary, the secondary, and the university level.

Table 2. Most preferred teacher characteristics.

Rank	Teacher characteristics	Frequency (F)	Percentile (%)
1.	Warm, kind, friendly, sociable, familiar	72	13.0
2.	Cheerful, compassionate, enjoys helping others	67	12.1
3.	Fair, treats students equally	66	11.9
4.	Empathetic, understands students' emotions	61	11.0
5.	Enthusiastic, excited about teaching, dynamic, and motivates students to learn	57	10.3
6.	Knows subject matter, can provide concrete examples	41	7.4
7.	Encouraging, supportive, and provides opportunities for students to express their talents	17	3.1
8.	Patient, non-judgmental	16	2.9
9.	Consistent, confident, actions don't contradict statements	15	2.7
10.	Communicates effectively; able to use tone of voice and gestures effectively	15	2.7

As could be clearly seen, a considerable majority (about 95%) of teacher candidates, at some point throughout their schooling, have had teachers they identify as 'effective'. The percentage of teacher candidates, who have reported having had effective teachers at the high school level, is significantly higher, in comparison to those who have had effective teachers at the elementary school level and at the university level.

Presentation of findings on candidate teachers' perception of effective teachers, regarding their gender, department, and the year of study

Out of 525 participants who stated that they had effective teachers, 335 (63.8%) were female and 190 (36.2%) were male. On the other point of view, 95.4% of female participants, as opposed to 93.6% of male participants have reported having had effective teachers. It is revealed that a greater number of female participants reported that they have had effective teachers as students, than their male counterparts.

When examined based on the departments the participants were enrolled in, responses indicate that 90.6% of those enrolled in the Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance; 92.6% of those enrolled in the Department of Turkish Language Education; 97.6% of those enrolled in the Department of Foreign Language Education; 97.2% of those enrolled in the Department of Religion and Ethics Education reported having had at least one effective teacher throughout their schooling. The candidate teachers enrolled in the Department of Foreign Language Education have had wide range of effective teachers at some point in their educational lives, in contrast to those enrolled in the Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance and the Department of Turkish Language Education.

The data, examined based on the participants' year of study, reveals that 254 out of 269 (94.4%) participating teacher candidates at their 1st year of study, in contrast

to, 271 out of 285 (95.1%) those who are at their 4th year of study, reported that they have had at least one teacher they identify as effective throughout their schooling, including primary, secondary and the university levels. The percentage of 4th year candidate teachers, who have had effective teachers in their educational experience, was found to be slightly higher than that of 1st year candidates.

Presentation of the findings regarding the personal and professional characteristics of the teachers identified as 'effective' by the candidate teachers

In order to determine the factors contributing to participants' perception of teacher effectiveness, a 30 item list of teacher characteristics (Effective Teacher Qualities Survey) was provided. Teacher candidates participating in the study were asked to select 10 significant teacher characteristics, and rank the items in the order of importance. Table 2 illustrates the most preferred teacher characteristics, the frequency, and percentage.

As Table 2 reveals, while 72 (13%) out of the 554 participating teacher candidates ranked being "warm, kind, friendly, sociable, familiar" as the number 1 preferred teacher characteristics, 67 (12.1%) cited being "cheerful, compassionate and enjoys helping others" as the most essential teacher characteristics. Comparatively, 66 (11.9%) of the 554 participants named being "fair, and treating students equally" as the most preferred teacher quality, while 61 (11%) believed being "Empathetic, and understanding students' emotions" was the most crucial characteristics of effective teachers. Data regarding other preferred teacher characteristics ranked as 'the most significant' are included in the table 2.

The items that were most frequently cited among the 10 most important effective teacher characteristics were identified and presented in the Table 3. Out of the 554 teacher candidates participating in the study, 307 (55.4%)

Table 3. Effective teacher characteristics in the order of frequency of preference.

Rank	Characteristics	Frequency	(%)
1.	Enthusiastic, excited about teaching, dynamic, and motivates students to learn	307	55.4
2.	Empathetic, understands students' emotions	296	53.4
3.	Knows subject matter, can provide concrete examples	292	52.7
4.	Warm, kind, friendly, sociable, familiar	282	50.9
5.	Fair, treats students equally	275	49.6
6.	Communicates effectively; able to use tone of voice and gestures effectively	255	46.0
7.	Knows how to motivate students; inspirational	247	44.6
8.	Humorous, funny, makes learning fun	228	41.1
9.	Well informed; up to date on current events	225	40.6
10	Encouraging, supportive, and provides opportunities for students to express their talents	222	40.0

ranked being “enthusiastic, excited about teaching, dynamic, and motivates students to learn” among the top 10 important effective teacher characteristics. In fact, as could be seen at Table- 2, of the 554 participants, 57 (10.3%) rated this item as the number 1 preferred teacher characteristics. Meanwhile, 296 (53.4%) out of 554 participants listed “being empathetic, and understanding students’ emotions” among the 10 important effective teacher characteristics. The other effective teacher characteristics ranked among the top 10 are displayed in Table 3.

Presentation of findings on the teacher candidates’ reasons for identifying their teachers as ‘effective’, with regard to the influence on their academic success or personality development

The number of participants who have encountered ‘effective’ teachers at some point during their academic experience was 525; out of which, 102 (19.4%) expressed that what made their teachers ‘effective’ was their contribution to the participants’ academic success; while 145 (27.6%) cited the defining factor for effectiveness as the teachers’ positive influence on development of students’ personality. The remaining 278 (52.7%) participants believed that what made teachers effective was their contribution students’ academic success and the development of personality.

When the data was reviewed based on the participants’ gender and reasons for identifying their teachers as effective, findings revealed that, of the 351 female participants, 65 (18.5%) stated that teachers’ contribution to their academic success made them effective in their consideration. Of the 351 female participants, 83 (23.6%) declared that teachers’ contribution to students’ personal development was the sole defining factor of effectiveness; while 187 (53.3%) female participants claimed that teachers’ contributions to both, academic success and personal development were equally crucial factors of effectiveness. Only 16 (4.5%) of

the female participants reported that, since they have never had an effective teacher, teacher effectiveness was not a contributing factor for their academic success or personality development. On the other hand, of the 203 male teacher candidates participating in the study, 37 (18.2%) reported their contribution to students’ academic success made teachers effective; 62 (30.5%) cites teachers’ contribution to students’ personality development as indication of effectiveness; while 91 (44.8%) participants stated that contribution to students’ academic success and personality development were equally important factors in determining teacher effectiveness. The remaining 13 (6.4%) male participants reported that, since they have never had an effective teacher, teacher effectiveness was not a contributing factor for their academic success or personality development. The examination of the data based on the participants’ department of study and reasons for identifying their teachers as effective, revealed that out of the 116 participants who are enrolled in the Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance and have had effective teachers, 17 (14.6%) teachers’ contribution to academic success; 40 (34.5%) reported that teachers’ contribution to students’ personal development determined teacher effectiveness; 59 (50.9%) reported that teachers’ contributions to both, academic success and personal development determined teachers effectiveness. Out of the 113 participants who are enrolled in the Department of Turkish Language Education and have had effective teachers, 23 (20.4 %) declared that teachers’ contribution to academic success determined teacher effectiveness; 35 (30.9%) reported that that teachers’ contribution to students’ personal development was the sole defining factor of effectiveness; 55 (48.7%) defined teacher effectiveness based on teachers’ contributions to both, academic success and personal development. Out of the 123 participants who are enrolled in the Department of Foreign Language Education and have had effective teachers, 27 (22.0 %) declared that teachers’ contribution to academic success determined teacher effectiveness;

18 (14.6%) reported that that teachers' contribution to students' personal development was the sole defining factor of effectiveness; 78 (63.4%) defined teacher effectiveness based on teachers' contributions to both, academic success and personal development. Out of the 173 participants who are enrolled in the Department of Religion and Ethics Education and have had effective teachers, 35 (20.2%) declared that teachers' contribution to academic success determined teacher effectiveness; 52 (30.1%) reported that that teachers' contribution to students' personal development was the sole defining factor of effectiveness; 86 (49.7%) defined teacher effectiveness based on teachers' contributions to both, academic success and personal development.

Further examination of the data based on the participants' year of study and reasons for identifying their teachers as effective, revealed that out of the 254 participants who are at their 1st year of study and have had effective teachers, 50 (19.7%) declared that teachers' contribution to academic success determined teacher effectiveness; 68 (26.8%) reported that teachers' contribution to students' personal development was the sole defining factor of effectiveness; 136 (53.5%) defined teacher effectiveness based on teachers' contributions to both, academic success and personal development. Of the 271 participants who are at their 4th year of study and have had effective teachers, 52 (19.2%) declared that teachers' contribution to academic success determined teacher effectiveness; 77 (28.4%) reported that teachers' contribution to students' personal development was the sole defining factor of effectiveness; 142 (52.4%) defined teacher effectiveness based on teachers' contributions to both, academic success and personal development.

Presentation of findings indicating the influence of the teachers they identify as 'effective' on participants' choice of profession and the field of study, with regards to gender, department and year of study

The number of the participating teacher candidates who have encountered 'effective' teachers at some point during their academic experience was 525; out of which, 226 (43%) expressed that the teachers they identify as 'effective' had no influence on the participants' choice of profession or the field of study; while 299 (57%) participants reported that they were influenced by their 'effective' teachers when choosing their profession and field of study.

Out of the 335 female participants who have encountered 'effective' teachers at some point during their academic experience, 139 (41.5%) expressed that the teachers they identify as 'effective' had no influence on the participants' choice of profession or the field of study; in contrast to the 196 (58.5%) participants who reported that they were influenced by their 'effective'

teachers when choosing their profession and field of study.

On the other hand, of the 190 male participants who have had 'effective' teachers, 85 (45.8%) expressed that the teachers they identify as 'effective' had no influence on their choice of profession or the field of study; while 103 (54.2%) participants were influenced by their 'effective' teachers.

The examination of the data indicating the influence of the teachers they identify as 'effective' on participants' choice of profession, with regards to the department of study, revealed that, of the 116 participants who are enrolled in the Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance and have had effective teachers; 61 (52.6%) expressed that the teachers they identify as 'effective' had no influence on their choice of profession or the field of study; while 55 (47.4%) participants reported that they were influenced by their 'effective' teachers when choosing their profession and field of study. Out of the 113 participants who are enrolled in the Department of Turkish Language Education and have had effective teachers, 55 (48.7%) expressed that the teachers they identify as 'effective' had no influence on the participants' choice of profession or the field of study; in contrast to the 58 (51.3%) participants who reported that they were influenced by their 'effective' teachers. Out of the 123 participants who are enrolled in the Department of Foreign Language Education and have had effective teachers, 36 (29.3%) expressed that the teachers they identify as 'effective' had no influence on the participants' choice of profession or the field of study; in contrast to the 87 (70.7%) participants were influenced by their 'effective' teachers. Out of the 173 participants who are enrolled in the Department of Religion and Ethics Education and have had effective teachers, 74 (42.8%) expressed that the teachers they identify as 'effective' had no influence on the participants' choice of profession or the field of study; in contrast to the 99 (57.2%) participants who reported that they were influenced by their 'effective' teachers when choosing their profession and field of study.

Of the 254 participants who are at their 1st year of study and have had effective teachers, 112 (44.1%) expressed that the teachers they identify as 'effective' had no influence on the participants' choice of profession or the field of study; in contrast to the 142 (55.9%) participants who reported that they were influenced by their 'effective' teachers when choosing their profession and field of study.

Comparatively, of the 254 participants who are at their 4th year of study and have had effective teachers, 271 (42.1%) expressed that the teachers they identify as 'effective' had no influence on the participants' choice of profession or the field of study; in contrast to the 157 (57.9%) participants who reported that they were influenced by their 'effective' teachers when choosing their profession and field of study.

DISCUSSION

This study, in line with earlier studies, substantiates that, students consider the characteristics their teachers possess (or lack) to be very important. One must realize the fact that students are undoubtedly the most crucial elements of educational institutions in order to appreciate the importance of this finding. Having teachers they can identify with impacts students' outlook on life, expectations, thoughts and emotions, as well as, contribute to their level of self-esteem and self-sufficiency. Parallel to earlier studies in the literature (Delpit, 2006; Mowrer-Reynolds, 2008; Okpala and Ellis, 2005), the findings of the present study indicate that, a considerable majority (95%) of teacher candidates, at some point in their lives, have had teachers they identify as 'effective'. Hence, through the characteristics that made them effective, these teachers have contributed to the improvement of the quality of education.

Research findings revealed that a greater number (95.4%) of female participants reported that they have had effective teachers as students, than their male (93.6%) counterparts. The higher ratio of the number of female participants who have had effective teachers, to that of males, may be attributed to the differences in the level of sentimentality, self-esteem, and self-sufficiency, perspectives on life, and expectations between the two genders (Pintrich and Schunk, 2002). As a matter of fact, in Turkey, a higher percentage of participants enrolled in the Department of Religion and Ethics Education, where the majority of students are female who come from conservative social backgrounds, and the Department of Foreign Language Education, where the number of female students is significantly higher than male students, have had effective teachers at some point in their lives, in contrast to those enrolled in the Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance and the Department of Turkish Language Education. On the other hand, the percentage of participants enrolled in the Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance, who reported having had effective teachers, was found to be the lowest among the 4 departments. It is thought that, this outcome may be due to the comparatively more resolved and confident nature of the students enrolled in this department.

As could be seen on the findings, the percentage of 4th year candidate teachers who have had effective teachers in their educational experience was found to be slightly higher than that of 1st year counterparts. A possible explanation for this might be that teacher candidates, who are at their 4th year of study, have spent a longer time period as students.

The percentage of teacher candidates, who have reported having had effective teachers at the high school level is significantly higher, in comparison to those who have had effective teachers at the elementary school level and at the university level. As a matter of fact,

during the first five years of the elementary school, students are assigned to a classroom teacher who teaches all subjects; whereas, at the high school level, they have different teachers for each academic subject; thus enabling them to encounter a greater number of teachers. Moreover, teachers at the secondary level have deeper subject content knowledge than those who teach at the elementary level; expectedly, the content and the academic level of instruction are very different at the secondary level than it is at the elementary school level. Furthermore, the criteria students use for evaluating their teachers at the elementary school level differs greatly from the criteria applied by high school students. In essence, high school students are better equipped, in terms ability and opportunity, to reach conclusions about their teachers.

A rather perplexing finding is the low percentage (5.8%) of teacher candidates who have had effective teachers at the university level. In view of this fact, academic faculty members teaching at the university level need to ponder upon the implications of this finding and recognize the need for further research.

In this research, participants were not asked to state the gender of the teachers they identify as effective. Keeping in mind that participants may have had more than one teacher they identify as effective. Since participants may have had more than one effective teacher, they were not asked state the gender of the teachers they perceive as effective. However, of the female participants who have had effective teachers at some point in their lives, 34.4% reported that they had effective teachers at the elementary school level. In contrast, 25.7% of the male participants who have had effective teachers reported encountering these teachers at the elementary school level. Yet, findings revealed that at the high school level, this ratio is 50.7% for females and 55.6% for males. It is a known fact that most of the teachers working at the elementary school level are female, while the number of male teachers is more prominent at the high school level. At the societal level, teaching at the elementary school level is considered to be a profession for women, while teaching specific subjects at the high school level is not perceived as a gender-specific profession. The fact that a higher percentage of female students have expressed having had effective teachers at the elementary school level may serve to substantiate this reality. After all, more female students tend to determine teacher effectiveness based on emotional factors in contrast to their male counterparts. When the age level of the elementary school students and the amount of time they spend with a specific teacher is taken into account, it is easy to see that emotional factors play a bigger role in determining the nature of student-teacher relationships at the elementary school level than they do at the high school level. For instance, teachers working at the elementary school level (especially female teachers) are unlikely to

be questioned when s/he holds a frustrated student in her lap to provide comfort; the same behavior at high school level would cause a scandal. While teachers identified as 'effective' at the elementary school level are more likely to be female, at the high school level, this likelihood shifts in favor of male teachers. Nonetheless, it is advised for future research on this subject to include information regarding the gender of the teachers who are identified as effective.

The review of findings regarding the participants' reasons for identifying their teachers as effective revealed that teachers' contribution to personality developments is a more important factor in determining teacher effectiveness, than their contribution to academic success. Over half of the participants (52.7%) attribute teacher effectiveness to contribution to both academic success and personality development. This is a natural result; in essence, classifying and categorizing teachers' contribution to student growth into two groups based on academic success and personality development is both difficult and unnecessary; for academic success and personality development are intrinsically related.

In contrast to the 57% of the teacher candidates participating in the study who have reported that their effective teachers influenced their choice of profession and field of study, 43% had no such influence. Data also indicates that a higher percentage of female participants reported that their effective teachers have had an influence on their choice of profession and field of study than male participants. These findings corroborate with Mowrer-Reynolds's (2008) study results, where he states that effective teachers have an influence 65% of female students' and 55% of male students' choice of profession.

The level of influence effective teachers had on participants' choice of career and field of study varies by department. The level of teacher influence on choice of profession is highest for participants who are enrolled at the Department of Foreign Language Education (70.7%) and lowest for those who attended the Department of Psychological Counseling and Guidance (47.7%); findings for the Department of Turkish Language Education and the Department of Religion and Ethics Education are 51.3% and 57.2%, respectively. Procedures relating to the student selection and placement for the Department of Foreign Language Education are different from other departments; students are required take a special exam through which their foreign language skills are assessed (YDS), they are later admitted into Foreign Language Education programs based on their test scores. At the high school level, foreign language teachers may recognize students who stand out for foreign language skills and provide further guidance to choose this profession. This may result in higher level of teacher influence on participants' choice of profession and the field of study. Further study should be done on this specific topic. On the other hand, students who attend the Department of Religion and Ethics

Education are required to be graduates of Imam Hatip High Schools (clergy preparatory school). Most of these schools, which primarily appeal to children coming from socially conservative families, are boarding schools where time spent interacting with teachers is considerably longer. The current educational system offers the graduates of these schools a limited number of higher education opportunities. Therefore, along with the system, their teachers are very likely to have had an influence on these students' choice of profession and department of study.

While effective teacher characteristics ranked a number 1 most frequently was "warm, kind and friendly, sociable, familiar", (being) "enthusiastic, excited about teaching, dynamic, and motivating students to learn" was the most frequently cited (55.4%) among the 10 most important effective teacher characteristics. This finding is very similar to those of earlier studies. Cramer and Pier's (1997) study emphasize two characteristics of effective teachers: Enthusiasm and being excited about teaching. Similarly, Costin et al. (1971) report a strong and positive correlation between teachers' level of effectiveness and enthusiasm about teaching and emotional determination. Among the nine qualities Murray (1993) reports, enthusiasm about teaching, clarity of instruction, and maintaining good relationships with students are emphasized. According to Rosenshine and Frust (1971) the two dimensions of teacher attitude that influence student success are comprehensibility and being excited about teaching.

Teachers' enthusiasm and excitement about teaching contributes student success by encouraging them to participate in learning activities and maintaining their attention. While enthusiasm and excitement about teaching are important qualities, there are other characteristics crucial to teacher effectiveness. In his interview-based study conducted with adults who; came from lower socio-economic backgrounds, were raised in single-parent households, needed special education, or lived in foster-care homes; yet, were able to attain notable levels of achievement, Delpit (2006) reported that the common factor leading these adults to success was the fact that, as students, they had teachers who were supportive, encouraging, and made them believe they could succeed.

Among the 10 most important effective teacher characteristics, being "empathetic, understanding students' emotions" was ranked as second (53.4%), while "knows subject matter, can provide concrete examples" ranked third (52.7%). The fact that the first two statements are related to personality traits of teachers and the third is related to professional skills, can be interpreted to mean that students value personality traits of effective teachers more than their professional competency.

According to Ayers (2006), being an effective teacher requires a brilliant brain and a brave heart. Teachers who

are new to the profession must show great effort in order for their students' to reach their utmost potentials; effective teachers do not only have the ability to transmit content knowledge effectively; they are also able to influence students through their personal characteristics. Focusing students' attention into topic is a key component of learning, and enthusiastic and empathetic teachers are more entertaining and can capture students' attention.

Conclusions

Drawing conclusions from a set of data gathered by a study conducted at a single institution, through a single survey based on student perceptions may seem unfair. But, as has been mentioned, a considerable number of earlier studies on the subject report that students' evaluations of their teachers do not change over time, and evaluation sensitivity effect is low. Although making generalizations based on these findings may be controversial, according to Murray (1983), students' evaluations of their teachers tend to resemble those of colleagues, administrators, and other observers.

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Appendix 1. Effective teacher qualities survey.

Item	Item statement
1.	Cheerful, compassionate, enjoys helping others
2.	Empathetic, understands students' emotions
3.	Warm, kind, friendly, sociable, familiar
4.	Fair, treats students equally
5.	Trustworthy, earns students' trust
6.	Enthusiastic, excited about teaching, dynamic, and motivates students to learn
7.	Organized, systematic, displays professionalism in dress code and conduct
8.	Communicates effectively; able to use tone of voice and gestures effectively
9.	Knows subject matter, can provide concrete examples
10.	Patient, non-judgmental
11.	Humble
12.	Humorous, funny, makes learning fun
13.	Well informed; up to date on current events
14.	Takes responsibility for his/her mistakes, willing to apologize when necessary
15.	Disciplinarian, controls classroom environment
16.	Provides feedback on students' behavior, rather than personality
17.	Able to keep his/her personal issues and/or political opinions away from the classroom setting
18.	Knows how to motivate students; inspirational
19.	Uses a variety of teaching methods with success
20.	Able to observe students' growth, aware of individual differences
21.	Makes him/herself available to students outside of the classroom
22.	Creative, innovative, inventive, and has fresh ideas
23.	Has high expectations
24.	Refrains from comparing and contrasting students to one another
25.	Encouraging, supportive, and provides opportunities for students to express their talents
26.	Democratic, flexible, amicable, cooperative
27.	Respectful of students; values their opinions
28.	Able to manage time effectively, maintains attention of the class
29.	Consistent, confident, actions don't contradict statements
30.	Aware of personal and social responsibilities; upholds social values

Appendix 2. Personal information collection form.

Item	Item statement
1.	1. Gender: _____ 2. Department: _____ 3. Year of Study: _____
4.	Have you had teachers you identify as 'effective' during your experience as a student, including the elementary, the secondary, and the university education? Yes:___ No: ___ If your response to the question above was 'yes', at which level of your schooling have you encountered the teachers you identified as effective?
5.	Elementary School: _____ High School: _____ University: _____ Elementary School and High School: _____ High school and University: _____ Elementary School and University: _____ Elementary School High School and University: _____
6.	Do you rate these teachers as effective based on their contribution to your learning and academic success or their positive influence on your personality? Contribution to learning: _____ Contribution to personality: _____ Contribution to both: _____
7.	Have the teachers you identify as effective contributed to your choice of profession and area of study? Yes: _____ No: _____