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Experiences of Turkish Teachers Working Abroad

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Abstract

Turkish teachers seek to work abroad for a variety of reasons with a mixed degree of success. This study examined the common essence of the experiences of Turkish teachers, through 25 interviews with teachers commissioned to teach Turkish and Turkish culture to Turkish students in Germany and France. Interviews were conducted using semi-structured interview questions and audio recordings. The analyses used an appropriate content analysis process for a qualitative phenomenological approach. Krippendorff's alpha coefficient showed high interrater reliability with a value of .83, and to ensure the credibility the codings have been submitted to internal and external checks. The direct quotations of the participants' discourses were shared in the text. The results of the study showed that there was a particular driving force that directed teachers to teach abroad. This driving force embodied itself in a sense of curiosity and pride for being chosen to work abroad.

Keywords

experience teaching abroad, Turkish and Turkish culture, phenomenological research design

Introduction

The laws of the market economy have led to the problem of creating a new type of person. The characteristics of this new type of person are as follows: the ability to work in uncertain and hard situations to be foreseen by changing and flourishing in technology, technical, and production areas at a high rate; to show tolerance and flexibility in communication forms; adapting to a dynamic flow of information; demonstrating the ability for problem-solving; and the ability to switch one's way of thinking in a speedy way. People with these abilities are described by the notion of "mobility" in many national concepts and doctrines. Raising a mobile individual becomes one of the aims of the educational system (Valeeva & Amirova, 2016). It is emphasized that the world is becoming more globalized, and people are communicating more with each other through the internet and social media. The world is getting smaller as borders begin to shift in area (Reid et al., 2014). From the point of view of educational sciences, it is in the form of willingness to change (change of life or workplace, leisure time, social groups, pleasures, etc.) as a response to various stimuli (including space). Mobility is the most important factor in the socialization of people (Kalinovskiy, 1999; Mudrik, 2002). Mobility is most common in the professions such as health and engineering. In the last two decades, there has been a tremendous increase in the field of education, especially in temporary or permanent teacher mobility, and empirical and qualitative studies. In fact, teacher mobility can be considered as a reflection of the international mobility of highly qualified workers in the global labor market. In addition to nurses, doctors, and engineers, teachers also represent one of the "most mobile professions" and play an important role in the global employment market these days (Reid et al., 2014; Scholefield, 2006; Sznycer et al., 2015; Vandeyar et al., 2014).

According to Byram and Dervin (2008), the term "academic mobility" implies "a period of study, teaching and/or research in a country other than a student's or an academic staff member's country of residence." Academic mobility is vital to the personal and professional development process, as each participant is confronted with the need to deal with real-life situations and at the same time analyze them from the perspectives of "native" and "foreign" cultures. The main objective of academic mobility is to ensure the quality of education received under the conditions of creating a common world education area and to enable participants' personal and professional growth (Khoroshilova et al., 2015). Within the context of academic mobility, teacher mobility

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has also been an opportunity for professional development, as teachers bring their experience to their classrooms and make use of recently acquired knowledge and skills. Teachers get new pedagogical experiences and skills in the sense that they incorporate new information as part of existing courses, promote student-centered teaching, learn how to integrate technology into teaching, improve new methods and techniques, exchange curriculum ideas, design effective lesson plans, and prepare materials for use in the classroom (Altun, 2015; Manik, 2014a; Reid & Collins, 2013; Rudder, 2012; Sharma, 2012; Voigt-Graf et al., 2007). International teaching experience also improves a global awareness of teachers so that teachers change the content of the courses by incorporating references from the countries where they have worked to improve their teaching. Teaching with international experience enables teachers to improve their cultural awareness and use their awareness to motivate learners to perform better in the classroom, using authentic materials about their experiences abroad (Evans, 2004). In addition, reinterrogating one's own culture, together with previously undisputed values, leads to a higher cultural awareness and respect for those who differ from themselves (Cushner & Mahon, 2002; Quezada, 2004). The cultural knowledge acquired also contributes to promoting an understanding of one's own valuable cultural diversity (Black & Mendenhall, 1990; Coleman, 1998; Manik, 2014a; Voigt-Graf, 2007).

This study focused on Turkish teachers who went abroad to teach. Our pilot interview protocol explored the impressions of these Turkish teachers teaching Turkish courses in Germany and France.

Although teacher qualifications and competences are questioned and it is controversial whether improvements in teacher education serve to attain these competences, (Altun, 2015; Güven, 2010; Küçükahmet, 1993; Öztürk, 1996; Sanal & Ozen, 2018) some of the teachers are chosen and appointed to educate children of Turkish families living abroad about Turkish language and its culture. Although, on one hand, the qualifications of a teacher are questioned in Turkey, it is not usually questioned whether a teacher, as a professional, is qualified enough for an international mobility. Yet, this kind of mobility is expected to be more common in our global world (Altun, 2015; Armağan, 2016).

Turkish people live in many different countries including the Turkic nations in Central Asia, the Arab States of the Gulf, and in various parts of the European Union. Teachers who are chosen to teach Turkish culture are appointed within Turkey for 1 year, and Turkish Ministry of Education can extend their appointment up to 5 years. Any teacher can decide to come back before completing the 5-year appointment. The number of teachers appointed for abroad is approximately 2,000 (Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2019). Despite increasing interest in research on international teacher mobility issues, the existing literature has been determined to be superficial, which increases the importance of this study.

Method

Research Design

This study investigated how teachers, who were sent to teach Turkish and Turkish culture in France and Germany, understood their teaching abroad experiences. The study has tried to scrutinize how their foreign duties were reflected in their lives and in what direction their perceptions and their understanding of their role have changed through teaching abroad.

Phenomenological research design, which is a qualitative research method, was used in this study. The phenomenological approach is one of the five dominant approaches used in qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; Güler et al., 2015; Nevra Seggie & Bayyurt, 2015). The philosophical origins of phenomenological qualitative research are embodied in Husserl and Schutz's understanding of this approach to research. He says that people can only be aware of what they have experienced (Husserl, 1970). Schutz has stated that the phenomenological method is a method of exploring deeply and revealing experiences in life (Goulding, 2002). Phenomenology focuses on people's perceptions of these close experiences and tries to find out what aspects these things have in common. These common points are called the essence of experiences (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). In this study, it is aimed to reach the "essence of teachers," who have teaching experiences abroad.

Study Group

In this study, an approach known as convenience sampling, which is a sampling method in qualitative research, which meets the easy accessibility criteria was used (Maxwell, 1996; Patton, 2002). On the other hand, the numbers of teachers appointed to a teaching abroad position are limited and they have been working or have worked in different cities of Turkey after their return. Therefore, these teachers were asked to refer other teachers who fitted the study requirements. The study sample can be considered within the scope of snowball sampling (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). The study group consisted of 25 teachers who worked abroad as a teacher in France and Germany. Eight of these teachers taught in France and 17 in Germany, 15 were male and 10 female, five were assigned teaching abroad two times, and 20 of them were assigned for once.

Data Collection Method and Tool

In the study, the semi-structured interview method was used to collect data. The qualitative interview is generally defined as an in-depth, semi-structured, or flexibly structured interview (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). In accordance with this method, researchers prepared a semi-structured interview form for the purpose of the research. Before the interview a form was prepared. The researchers then had a preliminary interview with two teachers who had worked abroad. The

interview form was created with the impression of this interview and the support of the literature. The draft interview form was consulted for the opinions of field expert academicians who have experience in phenomenological qualitative or at least qualitative research. In line with the opinions of the five experts, the interview form was revised and prepared for implementation. This version of the interview form was preapplied to three teachers who have worked abroad. Two questions, which were understood to be very close to each other and caused almost similar answers, were removed from the interview form and the interview form was finalized.

Participation in the study was based on a volunteer basis. Interviews were conducted with 25 participants, whose consent was given for tape recordings to be made. Before the beginning of the interview, the participant was informed about the aim of the study, the way the interview would take place, and the importance of tape recordings. The duration of each interview was different. The shortest interview took 35 min, whereas the longest interview took 110 min. The interviews were conducted face to face in a room suitable for the interview so that the participants had the opportunity to express themselves freely. Where necessary, a break was given for the participants who needed it.

Data Analysis

The voice recordings were transcribed professionally. Transcribed interviews were analyzed through a phenomenological coding technique. In phenomenological coding, the researchers have to first put aside their own preconceptions, beliefs, assumptions, and biases (epoché, aka bracketing) about the phenomenon to be able to reach the core and unencumbered visions of this phenomenon. In the next step, the researcher tries to find and code the statements about how the participants experienced the subject and try to assign keywords to these statements. Then, the list is attempted to be grouped to create experience loops. The resulting units of meaning are combined into larger units under themes. When the experience cycles are combined under the themes, the question of what happened is tried to be asked and the explanations about what the experiences mean and how they are realized are sought. Finally, the researcher seeks to determine the common essence of the participants' experiences from the meanings extracted (Creswell, 2007).

Role of the Researchers

Participants do not have a passive role in qualitative research. During the research process, the researcher and the participant produce the information together. Researchers who try to understand the experience of the participants are an integral part of data production. In this context, the approaches and characteristics of the researchers are important (Creswell, 2012). One of the three researchers is a doctoral graduate who specialized in Psychological Counseling and Guidance, Measurement and Evaluation in Education, and Curriculum and Instruction. He is a teacher who gained the right to work abroad as a teacher. The other researcher is an expert in the field of education specializing in Measurement and Evaluation in Education and is working in the field of continuing education with an interest in lifelong learning and teacher education. In addition, he is a person who has been abroad through academic staff exchange programs. The final researcher was a faculty member who has a doctoral degree in Curriculum and Instruction.

In the relationship between participant and researcher, the researcher should be aware of his or her feelings and thoughts, and his or her biases are expected to be (epoché) (Creswell, 2012). Given that researchers' abroad experiences and interests may be biased, researchers have discussed these prejudices before the study begins. In this study, the researchers, who were aware of their own prejudices as much as possible, participated in the fieldwork.

Validity and Reliability in Research

Before the interview, the researchers informed the participants about the research process and that they had the opportunity to leave the research at any time. Giving this option to the participants is one of the ways to increase the validity and reliability of the studies (Shenton, 2004). Three of the researchers worked on the coding separately. To see the consistency of the coding, the encodings were converted into numerical codes and evaluated within the scope of Krippendorff's alpha interrater reliability. The calculated value was .83 and this level shows high interrater consistency (Krippendorff, 2004).

In this study, the participatory validation strategy was used to ensure credibility (Creswell, 2014; Marriam & Tisdell, 2016). As the findings of the data were analyzed and the findings emerged, two of the 25 teachers who participated in the study were interviewed again and their opinions were sought about whether or not the findings reflected their experiences. In this way, participant control over the data and the analysis of the data was achieved. In addition, three external experts who were not involved in this study were asked to check and evaluate the data and findings obtained. In this way, external audit (Christensen et al., 2014; Creswell, 2007, 2014) was provided. Finally, the participants' words were given with one-to-one quotations. Thus, the direct quotation strategy (Christensen et al., 2014) was used.

Findings and Comments

When the teacher narration is analyzed, it was noticed that they each had some experiences in common. This common "essence" summarizes the common aspects of the experience of teachers who were appointed abroad. The summary of the experiences that teachers had in common is given below.

Motivation

The respondents said that they chose the particular place for curiosity, welfare, interest, mystery, exploration, and so on. Teachers' experience based their ideas on "This adventure was inevitable!" and "The privilege and satisfaction of being the chosen one." This adventure was inevitable because they had desires like being curious about living abroad, discovering, wanting to live there permanently if it is possible, being like their Turkish immigrant relatives in Germany, earning more, the urge to save more money, having sexual experiences in a more comfortable environment, and having a different professional experience:

> First, love of money, second, love of culture. I mean those who have love of money learned to make money, but those who have love of culture learned how to learn more things. This is why one goes there, this is why one wants to go there. There are two reasons. I would applaud if he or she goes for love of culture, but if he or she goes for love of money, that person should not go at all. (T25[1])

The privilege and satisfaction of being chosen was like nothing else in that being appointed abroad needed nepotism and political support. There was the thought that the chosen one could represent the best. Not only are you a teacher there, but you also represent Turkey. In a way, you become a cultural ambassador:

> I passed the written exam to be appointed abroad. Then I went to the interview. The results were announced, I had passed. I went to the compliance training after five months. It takes about two to three weeks. You are lectured by teachers who have been appointed abroad, people from the ministry of foreign affairs and culture, and the police department. A lecturer said "Be aware of your attitude there. You will not just be a teacher there. You will also be a cultural ambassador. You become a model to others with your attitude. Do not go to associations that are about Turkey or the Turks out of the blue as they might be a terrorist organization. You might not be aware of that and it would not suit you to visit those places." Then I thought, who are we? A teacher, a cultural ambassador, or a spy? What you pay is only 1850 Euros. Don't you think what you want is a little too much? (T7)

Success and Satisfaction

Did they have any idea about what they would come across? A teacher in Turkey can be appointed abroad only twice. Those who go for the second time knew what they would come across, but the majority go for the first time. They sometimes had the feeling of "serving for a purpose," and sometimes they faced emotions like "We went through some obstacles and conflicts. We were not ready for that!" They focused on the thought "What are we now? Parents, or professionals?" But, in fact, "They served to a disadvantaged mass."

> A teacher there gets paid 4700 Euros. Then Turkish teachers there do not have any chance to be involved in the same activities as them. Germans, and the consulate keep telling us to go have dinner with other Germans. But you do not really have that chance. A German teacher is paid 4700 Euros. So he or she is not worried about future. Whereas you do because as a Turkish teacher, you get paid 1700 Euros. Dining at a German restaurant costs no less than 50 Euros. (T2)

Some took their spouses and children with them. It was difficult for them to adapt to the culture. A Turkish teacher's spouse who also had a job in Turkey had to take unpaid leave and that made him or her isolated at home. They had major problems with adaptation. They strived to prove themselves. They had to stand tall and be strong. There were many people who could not assimilate into the culture of that country along with those who did not want to assimilate at all. There were also many headless people who tried into take their country's principles to that country:

> They develop a different kind of perspective which results in them associating Turkish culture with Arab culture. Once, when I was at school, a woman colleague of mine looked at what I wrote on the board and asked: "Oh, do you use the Latin alphabet?" I answered yes. Then she said, "I thought you used the Arabic alphabet" to which I answered "That is ignorance. If you do not know about his, then how come you are a teacher now?" This is sheer ignorance. (T14)

There existed many Turkish teachers who had self-esteem issues. The course that they were assigned to lecture would be available only if the families of Turkish children there wanted their kids to learn about Turkish culture. And those courses would be like extracurricular activities. After the students finished their classes, they usually did activities such as swimming and doing sports. Upon families' requests, instead of these activities, students could study Turkish and Turkish culture which would be considered a burden for them. It was the Turkish teacher's duty to change this mindset. No German/French colleague of that Turkish teacher in the same school knew who he or she was because he or she would lecture after regular classes were finished. Only the school administrators knew them. No one knew or cared whether the Turkish teacher was well educated, qualified enough, or an influential teacher. Despite all these, the Turkish teacher was in search of satisfaction in the workplace. He or she would feel elated if he or she managed to bring the 29th of October (Republic Day of Turkey) and the 23rd of April (National Sovereignty and Children's Day) to attention for Turkish students. The Turkish teacher who was appreciated by the Turkish immigrant families, students, school administrators, and other colleagues was proud of himself or herself. Some thought they left a trace. They had good memories of their experiences abroad. Nevertheless, there were some who wanted to go there for a second time if they could and there were others who did not. Some had

demands like "I will not go there again unless I have the same rights as Germans."

They served to a disadvantaged mass. Turkish people there are socioeconomically disadvantaged and most of them are immigrant workers who live as if they are secluded. If the family lives in an area where people immigrate the most, then the children's linguistic skills get weaker which results in their education being negatively affected. They feel stuck between two cultures. Some Turkish families strive to preserve their culture, but this situation brings about conservatism. Turkish families there need Turkish teachers for many reasons in terms of education, linguistic, culture, and so on. The third generation of Turkish kids drift away from Turkish culture. Turkish kids in Germany are stuck culturally:

> When I organized a parent-teacher conference, Turkish parents would not come most of the time. Turkish parents and German parents would attend the official parent-teacher conference. (T3)

Emulation to Quality

What did they think about the education system of the country they served in after their appointment abroad? Most of them envied the environment they lived in. They saw the quality and strictness that they wanted for the teacher in their own country. They witnessed the level of education that was desired and introduced in books.

Is it possible to not envy the environment? Countries they were appointed in had high standards of living and they were expensive cities. These were countries with high rents, no unemployment issues, developed social security, and social equality. People were trusted and their honesty was not questioned. Nonetheless, they followed the rules thoroughly. There was also supervision. Teachers appointed there cannot act upon their own cultural codes. When people do a task in these countries, they do it in a moral, disciplined, and loving way:

> You can call the school to say you have a headache and cannot work that day and they trust you without a doubt. The secretary would tell me not to come that day. You can skip working for three days after which they ask for a medical report. So they believe in your words, your honesty. One day, I actually did not go to the school, and you cannot walk around if you do not go to the school. You have to be at home. This is not a conscious supervision . . . For instance, I was at a café and I did not go to the school that day since I had a headache. One of the German teachers saw me and asked if I was actually ill. I said yes. I mean, as a Turkish I said yes and that I was ill. Then he asked what I was doing out. I said I had seen a doctor and had not had breakfast before seeing him. You know, you cannot really go shopping or spend time at a café in times like this. I was there, but I was not supposed to be. Suppose there is play station somewhere at a mall. And students go there during their schooltime. The police finds them and asks them what they are doing during schooltime at the mall. (T25)

Actual representations of the things you want to be but cannot be: teachers. Teachers in Germany are individuals who are happy with their job, disciplined, hardworking, real professionals, individuals who have high standards of living and morals, individuals who are not sentimental in their job, and individuals who do not even touch students' hair to caress. French teachers always improve themselves, are prominent, and paid differently. An intern French teacher cannot teach, but is only an observer under the supervision of a teacher for 2 years. French teachers' academic knowledge is valued, they are looked up to and economically strong. They are not sentimental in their job, they are professionals. They do not act upon their emotions in their relationship with students and are extremely disciplined. Unlike Turkish teachers, German teachers are not expected to be babysitters. Turkish teachers are less qualified than German teachers in terms of teaching methods. They are actually able to provide a student-centered education. Becoming a teacher is not an easy job in Germany and they are respected in society. Turkish teachers, on the other hand, cannot feel that respect. Teaching is looked up to in France and it is a job that brings economic power, as well:

> German teachers really know what they are doing. I mean they are actually teachers. What I noticed when I first came here was questions like "Shall we have a potluck?" "Should we have a golden day?"—Golden day is a day decided by a group of friends, usually women. Women get together in a house and lend each other gold while eating and talking—They talk about everything but education in teachers' room in Turkey. But there, they only talk about education in teachers' room. They take every task seriously even if it is a short task. Our teachers are not that serious when it comes to conducting a task. (T21)

> When the school bell rings in Turkey, teachers are likely to leave the school even before students. In Germany, they sometimes spend some extra time at school to prepare themselves for the next class. There are so many materials. Preparation matters a lot. I mean, going to classes without having been prepared is not a good idea. Is what is written in books real? In their education system, yes. German education system is developing slowly. Although the use of technology is like that, citizens trust their education system there. They do not have a sense of passing classes with education, but they expect an actual job. Germans value education so much. (T24)

Is what is written in books real? In their education system, yes. German education system is developing slowly. Although the use of technology is like that, citizens trust their education system there. They do not have a sense of passing classes with education, but they expect an actual job. Germans value education so much. Vocational education matters. Education is a must. School prepares a child for life in France and the expectation is that he or she gets a job out of it. There is no gap in salaries based on jobs in France. They trust in humans and their statements. They do not

question their honesty. They care more about learning by doing and living rather than technology. The system keeps its autonomy and does not forgive anyone who makes a mistake. In these countries, they do not care about people's political ideas, but they care about their success. We are crazy about technology, but they are not that curious about it. The local government supports school supplies in France. Principals are educated enough to teach in classes. But in Germany they only plan education and do not do anything else:

> Let me tell you something that happened. My kid went to the kindergarten there. I lived in a lodging building for teachers. My kid was left in the garden of the school. He was crying and asking me to take him. My spouse said go and bring him. You normally cannot enter the garden. My kid was there for about 40 minutes. You need to ring the bell and talk to someone to enter but fortunately the door was open. I went to the principal. He yelled at me telling me things like how could you even enter the school. I told him about the situation. I told him that my child had been crying alone in the garden for 35 minutes. He asked me to calm down. It turns out that the teacher had taken students to an activity, and he had forgotten to take my child. What kind of a teacher was he?! I am a teacher, too. When I was in Turkey, I worked in classes with 40 to 50 students and never forgot whether a student had come or not. The teacher was laid off right away. Mistakes are not forgiven. (T1)

They will go on being ideal individuals because this is how they are brought up. It is crucial for them to create an individual and prepare him or her for life. Academic expectations from individuals start later in school life. They do not have a sense of teaching them everything all at once as we do in Turkey. They teach the child to live and how to stand on his or her own feet:

> If a child is crying at a supermarket, that child is likely to be Arab or Turkish. This is who we are. It is either because we are easily irritated or there is another problem. We cannot educate children about our standards thoroughly most of the time. It has to do with you and the parent. (T2)

> I think the problem is that we educate students as if they are going to study at a university. Whereas there, they have problems with employing technical staff. (T5)

> 4th grade students always have a license to cycle for work. Starting from 3rd grade, they have swimming classes. (T6)

Discussion, Results, and Recommendations

The results of interviews with 25 Turkish teachers revealed that there was a common driving force that directed them to teach abroad. This driving force embodied itself in the sense of curiosity and in the pride they feel for being chosen. "Curiosity" is a concept that is difficult to classify semantically and is defined in different forms. In fact, curiosity can be a personality trait or a desire. Curiosity as a personality trait is a tendency embodied in the desire to learn or know more about a variety of things. The more this trait exists in a person, the more often or the more intensively that person will experience a severe desire or enthusiasm to do research about something and learn more in certain situations (Baumgarten, 2001). "Pride" is an important emotion that plays a critical role in many areas of psychological functionality. Especially, feelings about pride strengthen positive behaviors, including adaptive behaviors such as prosocial behaviors and success. Although pride functions as a "tendency to value" the individuals' own characteristics by others, it is also motivating to develop this "value." Pride also produces socially valuable results for others as a side effect of an accepted natural desire (Sznycer et al., 2012). In this study, "curiosity" and "pride of being chosen" in teachers who do not know what to expect in countries where they will go are important driving forces that direct them abroad. Although they did not know what would meet them, they were not prepared enough to face with difficulties to serve a culturally disadvantaged mass of students, it was a privilege to experience the satisfaction arising from overcoming difficulties and having different things to tell. In most of the similar studies related to temporary or permanent teacher mobility using different research methods, especially the sense of living-abroad experience and the sense of traveling for some teachers in a global context have been found to be important and attractive factors for teacher mobility (Manik, 2014a; Reid et al., 2014; Rudder, 2012; Sharma, 2012; Voigt-Graf, 2007). Sharma (2012) also informed that better living standards, family migration, professional development, and salary differentials were counted as the main reasons by participant teachers from India to work in schools in the United States, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Malaysia.

The envy of the destination country's environment, its education system, emulating the teachers' professionalism and their lifestyle as well as observing that what is explained theoretically in educational science books is reflected in practice were the experiential facts of abroad teachers who wish and desire to see these facts also in Turkey. Similar findings were also found in other studies conducted within the scope of teacher mobility. The main factors lying behind teacher mobility in developing countries are teachers' dissatisfaction with the education system of their countries and economic (better living standards and higher salaries in destination countries) and professional development opportunities (Appleton et al., 2006; Manik, 2014b; Sharma, 2012; Voigt-Graf, 2007). In parallel with other studies conducted in this area (Bascia, 1996; Black & Duhon, 2006; Cushner, 2007; Germain, 1996; Hultquist, 2007; Lupi et al., 2012; Rapoport, 2006; Scoffham & Barnes, 2009; Thomas, 2006), the results of this research reveal that an international teaching experience enables teachers to improve their professional and personal skills and promote their global awareness. In fact, the European Commission (2009) recommends that

"stays abroad and exchanges can provide valuable experience, motivation and continuing professional development." Casale-Giannola (2000) in her study listed some consequences of international experiences as "enhanced teaching skills and improvements in the curriculum." Lukacs (2015) also informs that the experience of teaching abroad as a teacher expands teachers' teaching methods. Iredale et al. (2015) emphasize that international experience has an influence on teachers' pedagogical styles and they can make learning and understanding of learners strong by inspiring them. Although teachers teach abroad, they have the opportunity to develop their personal and professional development and transfer their theoretical and practical knowledge to their teaching styles when they return to their country (Janusch, 2015). Besides, these teachers develop cultural awareness because they have experience of living in another culture, so they may have a better understanding of international and immigrant students, especially in their classes. International experience is a good opportunity to acquire new materials. Teachers who use these new materials can provide students a different perspective on teaching. Increased confidence in itself is an important factor for creating efficient lessons. In addition, the increase in the confidence of teachers who teach in different countries allows them to advance their careers, encourage their teaching, and make their students more successful (Lee, 2015). Therefore, it can be said that teacher mobility is extremely beneficial in terms of education. Awareness toward a multicultural environment is extremely important for teachers working in countries like Turkey which has a population with a multilingual, multicultural environment and has also migrant/refugee people (Özen, 2015). According to a comprehensive report of teachers' experiences by Caravatti et al. (2014), the teachers said that teacher exchange programs were helpful in overcoming stereotypes and prejudices. Participant teachers also altered their instructional practices through their adoption of active teaching methods. The report also revealed teachers' motivation to practice new teaching techniques: The "pioneering effect" enabled international teachers to have the sense that they had learned the most important educational theories and techniques. When they came home, teachers felt responsible for sharing new ways of thinking with their colleagues and students, and considered themselves as paving the way for their country's new educational system. In addition, after having observed different educational approaches in practice, Russian teachers had an "eyewitness effect" that involved the belief that reform and new methods of teaching were practicable in Russia. In this report, it is emphasized that teachers learn from each other, and thanks to global exchange programs, they have a greater professional competency as exchange opportunities drive them to use new ideas and strengthen their aspiration for educating children. Similarly, in Ateşkan's study, preservice teachers had an opportunity to observe student-centered teaching approaches. Later, they were able to teach lessons based on student-centered teaching approaches by observing their mentors. As a result, they had a great experience and developed their teaching confidence, which was an opportunity for them to see and put into action what they learned in theory in Turkey, which supports the finding of this study.

Finally, some researchers (Arun, 2008; Carrison, 2007; Dee, 2003; Myles et al., 2006) emphasize the qualities and strengths that teacher mobility brings to schools. School administrators and teachers can benefit from these mobilities as follows: Teachers who benefit from teacher mobility can be seen as leaders in the school. Besides, it is possible to benefit from the experiences of these teachers in addition to their cultural and linguistic knowledge to create a culturally sensitive school environment for all students. Myles et al. (2006) emphasize the necessity for "schools to become more inclusive, to accept different experiences and identities" (p. 44). They also state that what teachers teach within the scope of teacher mobility significantly enriches not only students' lives, but also large educational communities they are into (p. 244). Acting on what has been said above, teachers who teach abroad can be utilized in schools to the maximum level.

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Supplemental Material

Supplemental material for this article is available online.

Notes

1. The identities of teachers were kept anonymous. Interviews were deciphered by giving codes to interviewed teachers such as T1, T2, and T3.

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