

Reasons of Teachers for Applying for Graduate Programs and Their Expectations from Programs

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Abstract

This study aims to find out teachers' motivation for applying for graduate programs and to explore their expectations from the programs and their ideas regarding the necessity of such programs for teachers. The paper is based on a qualitative research method and draws its data from focus group interviews. The study used the criterion sampling method which is categorized under purposive sampling for the selection of participants. The participants are 20 teachers who wish to apply for graduate programs in the Institute of Education Sciences. Descriptive analysis has been used for the interviews whereas for the quantitative expression of the data, content analysis has been employed. The findings show that teachers want to pursue graduate education for reasons of professional and personal development as well as for personal/social reasons. Teachers also believe that they could compensate the insufficient in-service training with graduate programs and state that they could access higher quality training and education through graduate programs. The study also reveals that teachers are not only interested in courses of their own specialized field but they also want to take broader courses such as management, research methods, and history or philosophy.

Keywords: Graduate Programs for Teacher, Teacher Expectations, Professional Development

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Introduction

The continuity of teachers' professional and personal development is important to meet the needs of ever-changing education. It is extremely vital and necessary to support the process of professional and bureaucratic socialization of new teachers and to provide different learning environments in order to update the knowledge of experienced teachers. Moreover, providing teachers with personal and professional development can be seen as a significant motivation tool.

The focus on human development required by the national economies and social lives accelerated the studies on education. Korthagen (2010) argues that the theoretical and practical void in education expands and highlights that new knowledge should be used in teachers' education and aligned with scientific studies and understanding. Therefore, it is important that alternative education environments that teachers could benefit from should be supported and explored by national and international academic studies. Given the above, the starting point of this research is to address the lack of a theoretical background in the studies about teachers, to argue for an update in their professional knowledge and to establish a link between theory and practice.

Both in the world and in Turkey, the alternative education offered for the teaching profession is an important career and professional development opportunity which serves the aim of developing professional competence and updating teachers' knowledge. Therefore, as in all organizations, education organizations underline the importance of career development to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of teachers and see the effective use of human resources as an obligation. Wills, Guerrin and Bernard (1992) emphasize that career management has a significant role in human resources management and stress that career management bridges human resources planning with human resources management. Likewise, Kırır and Gün (2007) refer to the importance of creating an environment that could help employees' development and argue that in this way the employees' professional quality and personal and organizational performance could be increased.

It would not be wrong to argue that the professional and personal development of teachers will be reflected to the education facilities and will also be one of the factors which influence the students' achievements in a positive way. The literature also shows that students' achievements increase as the qualities of teachers improve (Hanushek, 2010; OECD, 2005; Tracy, 1990). Therefore teachers' professional development plays an important role for education organizations which have an educational mission and the output of which affects human beings. Montecinos, Pino, Campos-Martinez, Dominguez and Carreno (2014) argue that teachers conduct studies and plan professionalism policies under a "New Public Management" understanding and these studies define most important qualities of teachers and emphasize the importance of reward. Xuehui (2008) argues that with a good career management, the quality of teaching could be improved. In addition, providing teachers with personal and professional development could be seen as a motivation tool.

Participating in graduate programs is one of the education opportunities that contribute to teachers' professional and personal development. According to the Higher Education Institutions Regulation on graduate education (1996), masters programs (with and without thesis) and PhD programs aim to increase the students' competency raising it to a higher level. The same regulation also states that masters programs with thesis serve the scientific research process and therefore masters students can gain the capability of accessing, processing and analysing information and knowledge whereas masters programs without a thesis develop the capability and ability of students to apply scientific knowledge in their professional lives. Through PhD programs students gain the skills of bringing innovation in their field of expertise, of conducting independent scientific research and of synthesising information from various sources.

The teaching profession extends beyond the skills of regulating and practising the education process. There are various expectations from today's teachers and they are expected to have a higher level of competencies. Therefore, it should be paid attention not only to teachers' initial education but also to the opportunities of continuing education and career development. In this regard, teachers'

interest in graduate programs is increasing in recent years. Baki (2010), in a study on the evaluation of undergraduate and graduate programs in teacher education, argued that teaching is not a one way knowledge transfer to students. Today's teaching profession requires analytical thinking, a perspective based on modern scientific research, developing effective communication skills, having a student centred approach and making constant progress. Namely, it requires turning the education theory into practice. Concordantly, Harding and Parsons (2011) argue that graduate programs designed for teachers should be practice oriented and should involve studies related to real classroom cases.

In Turkey, teachers started to develop awareness about the necessity of alternative education opportunities to gain a higher level of competencies and to make continuous progress. In their research on the promotion system, Özan and Kaya (2009) stated that teachers are mostly against the idea of taking only experience into consideration for promotion and think that different criteria should be introduced instead. Köksalan, İlter and Görmez (2010) looked into the attitudes of primary school teachers towards graduate education and found out that 50.3% of the participants wish to pursue master's education.

Studies looking into the reasons for pursuing graduate education show that teachers apply for graduate programs for various reasons. Alabaş, Kamer and Polat (2012) found out that teachers want to take graduate education for "personal development, higher professional seniority and for having the job opportunity of becoming an academic" and they also wish to "gain greater knowledge in their field and to develop their skills of understanding new teaching approaches and techniques."

Likewise, Özmenteş & Özmenteş (2005) and Aslan (2010) in their research about the desires and choices of students for pursuing graduate education indicated that students are motivated by the prospect of an academic career, getting expertise in the field, enhancing their personal development and gaining a scientific perspective in their profession. The research of Baş (2013) also shows that teachers pursue graduate degrees for having job opportunities in the academia, for their personal and professional development and in order to meet the promotion criteria of the Ministry of National Education. All these studies show that in addition to professional and personal development, teachers pursue graduate education in order to be promoted in the position of school principal or school inspector or in order to work as lecturers in universities.

When the knowledge and skills gained by teachers through graduate programs are considered, it becomes clear that such a level of education is necessary for teachers. Alhas (2006) shows that teachers pursuing graduate education stated that they improved their skills of conducting scientific research, reaching scientific knowledge, analysing and synthesising knowledge, developing effective communication between administration, parents and students and solving the problems in schools and classroom in a scientific manner. These results show that graduate education contributes to developing teachers' scientific qualities.

The graduate education teachers take is also approved and seen as necessary by the field experts. Kara (2008) examined the opinions of lecturers about teachers' receiving graduate education in his master's thesis. His findings suggest that all lecturers had a positive approach towards the graduate education of teachers and they stated that it is necessary to offer courses about the teaching profession in graduate programs.

Not only the teachers in service but also teacher candidates want to take graduate education and want to start their profession equipped with better skills. Ören, Yılmaz and Güçlü (2012)'s research on teachers' ideas regarding graduate education showed that teachers who want to pursue graduate education (which constituted 10% of the participants in the study) noted that they want to improve themselves, increase their expertise and work as academic staff. The research results of Erhan, Sünkür and Yılmaz (2012) also showed that primary school teachers wish to pursue graduate education for personal and professional development. Likewise, the study of Dönmez, Aydoğdu, Sever and Aypay (2012) displayed the positive attitude among teacher candidates towards graduate education.

Graduate programs aim to address the individuals' need for personal and professional development. Therefore, it is important that graduate programs are designed to meet these needs. Balcı (2014) confirmed that expectations from master's programs differ before and during the education and that some programs cannot meet the personal (development-related), societal and academic expectations. This requires that master's programs are updated in accordance with the above expectations and needs.

The studies show that there is a tendency to provide teachers with continuous professional development and to focus on the importance of teacher development facilities. Current research also emphasizes the factors that could motivate teachers - who have the task of educating individuals in a way that they are able to adapt themselves in a changing world- to pursue graduate education (Türer, Balçın, Sevindik ve Er, 2013; Gömleksiz, Et, 2013; Köksalan, İlter, Görmez, 2010; Yıldız, 2006; Başer, Narlı, Günhan, 2005). İlğan (2013) stressed that professional development facilities are effective as long as they increase both teachers' qualities and students' learning and emphasized the necessity of having a knowledge of not only the theoretical field of education but also of the practical teaching approaches and techniques. Thereby, it is important to consider the teachers' perceptions regarding the extent to which education facilities respond to the needs of teachers as well as to offer professional development facilities and to encourage teachers in engaging with these facilities.

Teachers apply to graduate programs of the Institute of Education Sciences for professional and personal development and in order to engage with scientific research. Thus, it becomes necessary to explore which deficiencies teachers wish to address through these programs, to design programs in accordance with teachers' needs and to determine the methods that could respond to students' needs. This study aims to reveal the issues teachers want to develop and to explore the issues or fields for which teachers feel inadequate. In addition, this research aims to find out the expectations of teachers from graduate programs and to propose ways about designing these programs in a way that could meet the teachers' expectations.

The data for this research is collected through focus group interviews. The importance of this research lay in that it is crucial to meet teachers' interests and needs at the graduate education level. Additionally, there is no study in the wider literature focusing on the reasons for which teachers want to pursue graduate education that uses the method of focus group interviews. This study aims to explore the reasons for teachers' participation in graduate programs in the Institute of Education Sciences, their expectations from graduate programs and their opinions on the necessity of the programs. The study seeks to answer to following research questions:

1. What are the **reasons for the participation of teachers** in graduate programs within the Institute of Education Sciences?
2. What are the **expectations** of teachers from graduate programs?
3. What are the **courses** teachers wish to take in graduate education programs?
4. What are the teachers' opinions regarding the **necessity** of graduate education and what are their justification for it?

Method

The Design of the Research

The study is based on a qualitative research methodology and has employed the focus group interview method. In the focus group interview a small group of people who have a common interest about a discussion topic convenes under the leadership of a moderator (Marzach, Sewell; aktaran, Williams, Katz, 2001). Çokluk, Yılmaz, and Oğuz (2011) argue that focus group interview is an effective technique to unearth through communication and interaction the different perspectives

among the participants and to develop an in depth knowledge about the topic under research. Therefore, in order to achieve these aims, two focus group interviews were conducted.

Participants

The study used the criterion sampling method which is categorized under purposive sampling. Participants of the research were 20 teachers (coded as T1, T2...T20) who wished to take graduate education in the Institute of Education Sciences. Thus, the common point among the participants was their need and desire for graduate education.

The first focus group interview was conducted with 8 participants and the second interview was conducted with 12 participants. Çokluk, Yılmaz and Oğuz (2001) suggest that the participants of focus group interviews should range between 4 and 10 or between 4 and 12. This study had, therefore, the ideal number of participants for the interviews. Table 1 below presents the demographic information of the participants.

Table 1. Profile of Participants

Code of the Participant	Field of teaching	Years of experience	The graduate program they wish to participate	Gender	Age
T1	Social Science	12	Social Sciences Education	Female	34
T2	Primary School Teacher	17	Management and Inspection of Education	Male	42
T3	Guidance Teacher	14	Management and Inspection of Education	Male	48
T4	Guidance Teacher	14	Guidance and Psychological Counselling	Female	34
T5	Guidance Teacher	7	Guidance and Psychological Counselling	Female	30
T6	Primary School Teacher	23	Management and Inspection of Education	Male	42
T7	Computer Teacher	6	Computer Education and Educational Technology	Male	32
T8	Science and Technology	7	Assessment and Evaluation in education	Female	29
T9	Primary School Teacher	8	Management and Inspection of Education	Male	30
T10	Mathematics	8	Mathematics education	Female	31
T11	Chemistry Teacher	10	Management and Inspection of Education	Female	31
T12	Primary School	10	Management and Inspection of Education	Male	30
T13	Turkish Teacher	6	Management and Inspection of Education	Male	31
T14	Mathematics	5	Mathematics education	Female	26

T15	Guidance Teacher	17	Guidance and Psychological Counseling	Female	49
T16	Technology and Design	27	Educational Programs and Teaching	Male	54
T17	Science and Technology	23	Educational Programs and Teaching	Male	47
T18	Turkish	10	Turkish education	Female	32
T19	Art Teacher	6	Arts education	Female	29
T20	Physics Teacher	6	Management and Inspection of Education	Female	29

As seen in Table 1, participants belong to different fields of teaching and 55% of the participants is female whereas 45% is male. The participants are anonymised by the codes given to them (T1 for the first teacher, T2 for the second teacher and so on). 75% of the participants have a teaching experience of between 4 and 14 years and 25% has between 17 and 23 years. The table also shows that the teachers may also wish to take graduate education in another field than their respective field of teaching.

Data Collection Instrument

Open ended interview questions is the most appropriate data collection instrument for this research. Firstly, a question pool which included questions designed to elicit the research aims of the study was formed and then four open-ended questions were selected from this pool and prepared by consulting the experts of the field. These four questions along with sub-questions (in case the questions are not understood or found ambiguous by the participants, alternative sub-questions were prepared designed for clarification purposes) and the research aims and research questions of this study were given to three different field experts to be analysed for content validity. In the light of the feedback received, necessary amendments have been made and a semi-structured interview protocol has been formed.

In order to understand whether the semi-structured interview protocol is clear enough for the participants, it has been tested on four teachers who did not participate in focus group interviews. The interviews with these four teachers showed that the questions were clear and comprehensible.

Data Collection Process

There were two focus interview groups. The questions were the same for both groups and in case of ambiguity, the sub-questions were asked for further clarification. The teachers were informed about the date and time of the interviews and the interviews were conducted within this pre-determined time and date. Teachers were asked if they consent to the audio recording of the interviews, and these audio records were subsequently transcribed.

Each question contained in the interview protocol was asked and the opportunity to answer these questions was given to all the teachers. Thus, an interactive environment was established. Special care was also taken in order this interactive environment not to restrict the teachers. The semi-structured interview questions offered flexibility (Türnüklü, 2000) and supporting questions were asked to expand and elaborate on teachers' answers. Participants expressed more than one opinion for each question and presented different ideas.

Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis was used to analyse the data. Firstly, the answers were coded according to themes. The perceptions and ideas for each theme were explained and teachers' different perspectives for each theme were presented. Quotations have been provided for striking points and ideas. In

addition to the above, frequency tables of the answers have been devised to present the findings quantitatively.

The reliability of the research was calculated through Match Percentage Formula used in Törnükü's research (2000). First of all, a coding key including categories, sub-themes and themes was formed. This key and the transcripts were given to two different experts. Experts have been asked to check whether the themes in the coding key appear in the interview transcripts and then to mark the respective section. By controlling the selections and identifying the dissensus and consensus between two experts, a match percentage is calculated. The formula is given below:

$$P (\text{Agreement Percentage}) = \frac{Na (\text{Agreement Quantity})}{Nd (\text{Discrepancy Quantity})} \times 100$$

In accordance with the feedback provided by the experts, the reliability percentage of each question has been calculated. Table 2 presents these percentages.

Table 2. The reliability percentage of the questions

Questions	Reliability Percentage (%)
Question 1	% 84
Question 2	% 81
Question 3	% 88
Question 4	% 100
Questions' average reliability percentage	% 88,25

As seen in Table 2 the reliability mean score of the coding key is 88,25%. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2006) argue that a reliability percentage of over 70% can be seen as satisfactory. Therefore, it is argued here that this research has ensured the reliability of the questions asked.

Findings

This section presents the research findings providing quotations and striking accounts from the teachers' answers. It also presents frequency tables to understand how often certain ideas and themes are repeated.

Findings Regarding the Reasons of Teachers' Participation in Graduate Education Programs

The central question asked to teachers in focus group interviews is the following: "What are the reasons for your desire to participate in a graduate program in the Institute of Education Sciences?" Themes were formed from the different statements. Table 3 presents the themes arising from the answers given to this question and the frequency of these themes.

Table 3. Reasons of participating in graduate education in the Institute of Education Sciences

Themes	Sub-themes	Frequency
Reasons concerning professional development and career	Continuous professional development and update	12
	Career development through specialization in the field	7
	To contribute to the field with various services and scientific studies	7
	To gain different skills in order to change job or institution (to start a career at a university, to work in the ministry or to become an	6
	To gain the skills of integrating theoretical knowledge into the profession and into areas of practice within the school management	5
	To gain classroom management skills	3
Reasons concerning personal development	Skills to conduct scientific research and gain scientific literacy	11
	To gain the skill and the habit of following national and international developments and innovations in the field	6
	Professional/Intellectual development	5
	To be in a professional and academic environment	2
Reasons concerning the desire to increase social status	To gain status and power, prestige and to be different from everyone	6
	To feel happy and content through learning new knowledge, through being appreciated and through meeting the need for personal	5
	To get out of the daily routine of school and ministry work.	2

As seen in table 3, the reasons of applying for graduate education are categorized under three themes; professional and career development; personal development; gaining social status.

The analysis shows that the most frequent answer given by the teachers is the following statement: “to gain professional development and update in the field”. Teachers emphasize the importance of continuous professional development to keep up with ongoing developments and feel that it is necessary to update themselves on the teaching career. Regarding this idea, one of the teachers says that “*the reason for which I want to pursue a graduate education is to update my knowledge about my career. As you know, the teaching profession is developing fast, so it is necessary to keep up with these developments. Every day, something new comes up. I think graduate education will give me an opportunity to keep up with these developments and updates.*” (T7). Another teacher underlines the significance of personal development: “*There is a need for new knowledge to keep up with today’s conditions. I would have liked to do a master’s for career development.*” (T15).

Teachers express that they want to learn how to conduct scientific research and how to reach scientific knowledge and to be trained in problem solving skills. They also touch upon the importance of solving the problems encountered in school or class with a scientific approach and see this as one the most significant reasons for pursuing graduate education. They express the above ideas as follows:

I want to pursue graduate education in order to learn how to conduct research and to write a research article and to learn the steps and process of problem solving (T8)

I feel that I need to learn the correct way of solving problems. Therefore, I want graduate education to equip me with a scientific approach for problem solving. Problems should be approached through a rational process; they should not be dealt without having the appropriate knowledge (T2)

A further desire of me is to solve the problems I face in the class with a scientific approach and to gain the skill of doing this. (T9)

Another idea arising from the focus group interviews is that teachers prefer graduate education in order to specialize in their field, to develop in-depth knowledge and to build a career. They think

specialization is necessary to handle arising issues in a more detailed manner and to make progress in their profession.

Teachers want to be more beneficial to their students through increasing the quality of their service, to share what they have learned with their colleagues, to contribute to the field by participating in scientific research and to participate in studies developing education programs. Therefore, they think that graduate education is essential:

I want to participate in research studies in my field and I want to contribute to this process.” (T11)

I want to gain the skill of making education programs suitable for technology and design relevant lessons and thus contribute to the field. (T16).

I want to be more beneficial to my students so I want to participate in graduate education (T17).

Teachers think that it is important to follow the global developments in education and that the relevant skills can be developed through both graduate courses and discussion with their friends in the courses. They particularly stressed that they cannot follow the international developments in their field in the schools they work and therefore they want to participate in graduate education programs.

Another reason for which teachers want to take graduate courses is the fact that graduate education would provide them with the chance to change their career or their working environment. In this sense, four teachers who want to become inspectors or school managers or want to work in the ministry of education think that graduate education would be an important asset for achieving the above goals. Additionally, two teachers expressed their interest of becoming academics and therefore they expressed their wish to pursue graduate education.

One of the reasons beyond the teachers' desire to do graduate education is the desire to gain prestige and power. Teachers believe that people who have taken graduate education have a more positive and a better image and therefore they themselves want to improve their image through education. Teachers expressed their ideas regarding this issue as follows:

Graduate education gives you prestige (T6).

When I have a master's degree, I will feel myself more successful and people will also think that I am successful (T7)

I want to take graduate education to improve my social status. This is because the way teachers and parents look at you differs when you have a graduate degree. This makes you feel good. When an inspector comes, the ones who have graduate education are treated as if they know everything. (T9)

Some of the teachers think that theory and practice is often incompatible in classroom and say that one of the reasons for starting graduate education is to carry the theoretical knowledge they will gain to the class or in other words to integrate theoretical knowledge to real life. One of the teachers expressed his ideas as follows:

The reason why I wanted to take graduate education was the incompatibility between theory and practice (...). Maybe I want to prove that they could be congruent by participating in graduate education – I may fail to prove this. But I find the academics who produce knowledge without looking into the practice in schools or in an environment without teachers and managers weird. Likewise, I find the teachers who rely on academicians to change the practices with scientific approaches and theories bizarre. I mean if an academic and a teacher do not work together, do not go into class to accomplish some results or plan innovations together then this is not science. This is my foremost reason; I want to combine theory and practice, to share my experiences and to harmonize theory and practice (T6).

Other underlying reasons for teachers' desire to take graduate education are the desire to gain a sense of accomplishment, to be praised and appreciated, to feel satisfied and content by learning new knowledge, to accumulate intellectual capital and to gain fundamental skills and some awareness about classroom management. Another reason mentioned by teachers is taking a break from the work routine at schools:

I want to take a break and get out of the routine and the ordinary work of national education at school. This is among the reasons for pursuing graduate education. At school or within national education system, it is not possible to improve ourselves and we don't have any opportunity to accomplish something. You only do your duties (T7).

Discussions regarding the motivation for participating in graduate education show that in-service trainings are insufficient and therefore, teachers seek to meet this education deficit through graduate education. To explore the nature of education/training deficit, one more question has been added to the interview protocol. Thus, the issues that are not covered by in-service training are looked into and a number of different perspectives regarding graduate programs are presented.

Findings Regarding the Needs That Are Not Met By In-Service Training and Therefore They are Addressed Through Participation in Graduate Programs

When teachers are asked why they want to do graduate education, they indicated that they faced in-service training problems and they sought to address these problems through graduate education. So, one of the reasons why teachers apply for graduate education is "to meet the education deficit of in-service trainings through graduate education". This came up as an important point and one more question is asked during the interviews in order to elaborate on this issue. The findings regarding the question of "which aspects of the in-service training are insufficient and how the graduate programs you wish to apply could address these aspects?" are presented in Table 4. With this question, the aim is not to determine the aspects that in-service training failed to address but to focus on how the graduate programs can deal with this education deficit.

Table 4. Expectations towards meeting the issues that are not covered by in-service training

Themes	Frequency	
Meeting the education deficits of in-service training regarding content, methodology and gains	The opportunity to discuss issues in detail	7
	Teaching how to use theory in practice	6
	Offering useful knowledge that could address the needs	5
	Creating awareness about worldwide developments	4
	Being intellectual and gaining different points of view	4
	Doing scientific research independently and gaining scientific literacy	4
	Gaining a scientific point of view to the field	4
	Providing opportunity to develop different skills	1
	The opportunity to be in mutual interaction with a small group of people and the lecturers	3
	Meeting the needs of teaching staff and trainees' quality	The opportunity of learning from people who are experts in their field.
The opportunity of being a member of an enthusiastic group of people dedicated to learning		4

As can be understood from table 4, teachers developed some expectations towards meeting the in-service training deficits with graduate education. These expectations are categorized under two themes. Teachers argue that in-service training remains too general and superficial due to time

constraints which do not create time for in depth discussions and due to insufficient content. They also add that training is completed only with the aim of getting a certificate and therefore graduate education emerges as an alternative to such a superficial learning:

There are some topics for which you cannot come up with a solution in a couple of courses or hours. In-service training does not have continuity on the various topics that are discussed. But in graduate education, you can discuss in detail a topic or an issue. I expect this. (T2)

During the in-service training, only general information is being given but graduate education includes more detailed, structured and field oriented programs. (T15)

As noted previously, the teachers highlighted that it is important to use the theoretical knowledge in practice. They stated that graduate education should combine theory and practice by providing applied theory courses and that they should be able to find answers regarding their teaching practice related questions in this education:

In graduate education, as long as we participate in psychological counseling we can receive supervision. In university, getting feedback from these psychological counseling sessions is a great experience. (T5).

Teachers could tell you about the theoretical knowledge of teaching methods and techniques or classroom management but they won't know how to use this knowledge in practice or how to develop new knowledge. Graduate education should address this problem. (T6).

How can practice be developed? How teaching tools should be used? Which teaching approaches should be adopted? Graduate education should provide answers to these questions. Therefore graduate education should contribute to teachers' development. (T10).

Another topic that emerged in the group interviews is that the educators who are in charge of in-service training or any educational training are often seen as inadequate or they fail to satisfy the teachers. Therefore this deficiency could again be addressed through graduate education:

In all the trainings I have received in my field, I have never seen an educator who is expert or has a good knowledge of the field. Graduate education will help me in this sense. I will learn from people who have worked in this field diligently, done research and written journal articles and who are competent. The educators who give in-service training often come from a different area of expertise. They don't understand the difficulties I face in my field. So, graduate education will close this gap (T4).

Not many people believe that the educators of in-service training are competent and real experts. Graduate education, in this respect, is a big asset. (T14).

Teachers indicated that the in-service training is not functional, does not address the needs of teachers and ignores the most important issues. They believe that graduate education will focus on the issues or topics that teachers need the most.

In service training includes topics and issues that teachers do not need at all. On the contrary, graduate education will be useful for both personal and professional development. (T7).

Teachers pay, therefore, attention to the usefulness of the given education and they believe that graduate education will be effective in this regard.

Another issue is that in the education programs given by ministry of national education both the educators and teachers are reluctant and therefore the programs are usually inefficient. Teachers think that taking graduate education is a matter of enthusiasm and eagerness and that both the students and the lecturer should be enthusiastic so as this learning process could be more efficient:

In the last in-service training course, the educator was a graduate of primary school education and told us that she was pushed to give the training. That educator was also not happy or enthusiastic about giving the training and she was reluctant. This is usually how in-service training takes place. You need to have willingness for education. Since graduate education is not compulsory, there will be more enthusiastic people in the programs. This will of course increase the quality of education. You will be enthusiastic about learning and there will be people around you and in your class who are eager to learn. You will be in an environment where there are people who study with great enthusiasm. This is something that in-service training cannot provide to you. (T7).

Teachers' further ideas about the complementary role of graduate education include "awareness raising about the global developments in their field, enhancing their intellectual capabilities and gaining different points of view, gaining the ability to do scientific research independently, and gaining a scientific perspective to their field."

Another issue put forward by the teachers is that in-service training takes place in a quite crowded environment and this discourages discussion. Teachers believe that in graduate education they could have a more interactive environment within small groups. One of the teachers expresses his expectations as follows:

In in-service training you don't talk much or interact with the teacher. The groups are generally large. If you want to discuss or talk about a topic, then there is no time for studying the other topics. Even if you initiate a discussion on a topic, you can't expect much because the educator is not well equipped. In graduate education, you can have a discussion with a teacher because the classes are small (T2).

One of the teachers drew attention to the fact that in-service training does not aim at designing studies for the improvement of students' skills and interests in various fields:

I think graduate education should help people develop themselves on the issues that they are keen on in addition to improving teachers' professional competency (...) A way to do this is to offer education-related elective courses. It is important to push teachers to take courses from other majors (T9).

19 of the teachers believe that the benefits of graduate education cannot be provided by in-service training and 1 teacher thinks that graduate education can partially complement the education provided by in-service training. The important point here is that graduate education is believed to meet the needs that cannot be fulfilled by in-service training. Teachers think that in-service training is insufficient in terms of content, time, depth, enthusiasm of the participants and the teachers and education quality and they believe that all these problems could be addressed through the participation in graduate programs. In addition, it is emphasized that the educators' level of competence is low and graduate education offers the opportunity to benefit from the experts in the field.

Findings Regarding the Courses/Topics Expected from Graduate Programs

Teachers were asked which courses they would like to have in graduate programs. This is important for meeting teachers' needs according to their expectations and in line with their reasons for joining the graduate programs. The answers teachers gave to the question of 'What are the particular topics/courses you would like to have in graduate programs?' are presented in table 5. The most desired course mentioned by the teachers is the professional practice course.

The content of courses should not be only theory oriented but also be directed to the teaching practice. We should take practical courses related to schools (T8)

I would like to have different sample cases and take applied courses. (T9)

I think that graduate courses which include both theory and practical areas could be quite sufficient. (T19).

In addition to the above, teachers want the inclusion of scientific research methods and techniques and statistics courses in the programs. They want to gain knowledge about school and classroom management and about teaching approaches and methods. Moreover, they want to use this knowledge in school and classroom and thus to adapt their teaching practice according to scientific theories.

Teachers think that there should be courses which could teach them how to access education sources in order to follow the latest developments and topics in their field and which could give them an opportunity to discuss the latest developments.

I believe that the courses directing us to follow the latest developments in the field are quite important. We should anyway discuss the latest issues but we also need courses on how to access these developments. We should know what to look for in our field (T5).

Table 5. The courses teachers wish to have in the program

Themes		Frequency
Courses/Topics on the teaching process	Professional Practice courses	7
	Approaches to new teaching methods and techniques	4
	Classroom management	3
	Psychology/Child psychology	2
	Use of technology in education	1
	Courses on the education of special talents and disadvantaged students	1
Courses/topics on research methods	Scientific research methods and techniques	6
	Applied statistics	3
Courses/topics on management, policy and planning	School management	4
	Project management-project writing process	2
	Education planning	1
	Crisis management	1
	Time management	1
	Conflict management	1
	Stress management	1
	Effective Communication	1
	Education policies	1
Human Resources Management	1	
Courses/topic on the foundations of education	Courses in which contemporary education issues are	2
	Philosophy of Science	2
	History of Science	2
	Sociology of Education	1
	Philosophy of Education	1
	Ethics in Education	1
Comparative Education	1	

Teachers want courses such as philosophy of science, history of science, history of education and sociology of education in the program. Teachers also express that they would like to have courses on the education of people with disabilities as well as child psychology and the use of technology in education. Moreover, they emphasize the importance of comparative education and ethics in education.

Among the courses, Education Policy and Planning is also seen as important by the teachers. Teachers think that education policies should be discussed by every teacher and awareness about the

importance of planning in education should be created. One of the teachers who emphasizes the importance of planning in education expressed his ideas as follows:

I think the courses on planning in education are significant. For instance, I worked as a teacher in a village. There were five or maybe six thousand sheep. The children's cheeks glowed because of eating dairy products. Children's faces were red due to protein overdose. On top of this, as part of the project of ministry, a truck of milk bottles would be sent to region. It is an extreme case maybe but I would send walnuts and figs to this region. Or I would use this region's sources for areas which do not have milk or I would make a plan according to the needs and characteristics of each region. I want to learn the techniques of education planning at a micro and macro level in the program and I would like to have the skills needed on this issue. (T2)

In parallel with the problems teachers face with individuals at school, they want organizational behavior courses such as crisis management, conflict management, stress management, human resources management and effective communication to be incorporated into the programs.

There should be courses which could teach you how to remain calm when faced with tough circumstances or how to cope with stress. Of course, there are people who "misbehave" in their field but there also people who make the best of their job. There is a need for courses which teach how to act in a solution oriented manner towards other teachers and managers and how to remain calm. There should also be courses which teach us how to cope with conflicts with managers (T4).

Along with a research methods course, teachers express that project management courses are also important and there is a need for courses teaching how to implement a project:

Another issue that I find important is that I would really like to learn how to do a project. (T7)

I would like to have courses on project preparation. There should be courses that teach me how to prepare and apply for a project or how to manage these things at schools (T8).

Findings Regarding the Necessity of Graduate Education for All Teachers

Lastly, teachers were asked whether it is necessary for all teachers to take graduate education. The findings are presented in table 6.

Table 6. Ideas regarding the necessity of graduate education for all teachers

	Yes, they should	No, they should not
Frequency	9	11

As seen in Table 6, 45% of teachers (9 teachers) think that all teachers should take graduate education. When asked why they think so, they justified it pointing to the reasons for participation in graduate education mentioned previously (Table 3). On the other hand, 55% of teachers (11 teachers) say that graduate education is not necessary for all teachers. These teachers gave the following justifications:

82 percent of the teachers (9 teachers) who think that not all teachers need graduate education argue that graduate education should be based on the principles of eagerness and competence; otherwise the quality of graduate education can decrease:

Not everyone should do a master's degree. Only those who want and feel confident should pursue it (...). Only those who have the competency and eagerness to produce a good quality of work should do it. You cannot expect that all teachers will have these qualities (T6)

I think being enthusiastic is very important (...). Graduate Education is a higher level of education that you cannot pursue unless you really want it" (T9).

Compulsory education or training will be inefficient and a waste of time and effort since there will be people who are reluctant.”(T10).

The rest 18 percent of the teachers (3 teachers) indicate that some teachers pursue graduate education to gain only power, authority and status and therefore they think this should be prevented by choosing the teachers that want to pursue graduate education carefully. Teachers who think that teachers should not do graduate education only for authority, power and prestige expressed their ideas as follows:

We have colleagues who pursue graduate education for prestige. I think this should be prevented. The entrance exams for graduate education should be improved in terms of quality and not all applicants should be accepted (...) People who cannot manage the authority they have should not take such education. This is because these people misuse the power they gain after they have completed their graduate degrees (...) There are teachers who paid for and completed a master’s degree in order to become an ‘expert teacher’. Then they show off or patronize teachers like us who do not have any degrees” (T4)

These teachers think that in-service training will be enough as long as its quality is good. In addition, they noted that graduate education is a voluntary training to gain higher skills and that it is not a necessary condition for practicing the teaching profession.

Other ideas regarding this issue include the arguments that not every teacher should be expected to make economic sacrifices for education, that there are a number of other different ways for personal development, and that not every teacher should be expected to have an academic knowledge.

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

This research aimed to explore the motivation beyond teachers’ desire to study in graduate education, the qualities they want to improve in terms of professional and personal development, their expectations and their ideas about the necessity of graduate education. The crucial point is to develop suggestions about the graduate programs through teachers’ expectations and motivations for participating in graduate education. In this way, graduate programs can be designed in a more functional and efficient manner.

Current research in the field shows that the teachers who do graduate education and feel the need to undertake graduate studies are generally early career teachers in their first 10 years of service (Alabaş, Kamer ve Polat, 2012; Alhas, 2006; Baş, 2013; Kara, 2008). This study and the literature show that the early career teachers have a greater tendency to take graduate education. 11 out of 20 teachers expressed their desire to follow graduate education in a field different than their specific field of study. This reveals that teachers do not want only to take graduate education in their field but also in other fields. Thus, teachers either tend towards their field or they want to take education in another field that they see as important.

The research findings display that teachers want to take graduate education in order to be equipped with the necessary qualities that are crucial for keeping up with today’s conditions and for responding to the needs of students. Teachers prioritise a specialization process that shows professional continuity and emphasize the importance of the research skills that can allow teachers to contribute to the field through independent scientific research. They believe that all the above can be achieved and gained through graduate education.

It could be seen that some of the reasons for teachers’ desire to take graduate education are personal satisfaction and the desire to gain status, power and prestige. Teachers believe that with this level of education they will gain the habit of following the latest developments in the field and they will increase their professional knowledge. In addition to these, teachers stated that through graduate education, they will gain a sense of personal accomplishment, be appreciated, feel themselves useful for humanity and be happy and content in their professional life. Eren (2009; 551) argues that

employees will show a higher performance rate if they feel satisfied and their status is increased. Likewise, graduate education through which they can gain personal development, status and respect could be used as a tool for increasing teachers' motivation and performance.

The findings also show that teachers want graduate education in order to get away from the routine of school work and to enhance their intellectual development. Teachers believe that in this way both their professional and personal lives will be different. Graduate education will bring different perspectives to teachers' professional and personal lives and will get them out of their daily routine and a situation where they "think like everyone else" in the profession. Another reason why teachers want to take graduate education is to end the theory and practice incongruence and to learn how to apply the acquired knowledge in real life. Teachers say that scientific knowledge does not mean anything on its own and at the same time practical solutions that are not based on scientific research will not bring any success. Bursalıoğlu (1998; 32) argues that experiences that are not based on theory are a waste of effort and time whereas experiences based on theory can have a higher influence. This situation underlines that theory and practice cannot be separated.

The findings also suggest that in addition to professional and personal development, employment opportunities in ministries, in school leadership positions and in universities are also among the teachers' motivations for graduate education. Thus, teachers think that a graduate education diploma will be an important asset for these positions. Other studies also argue (Alabaş, Kamer and Polat, 2012; Özmenteş and Özmenteş, 2005; Aslan, 2010; Baş, 2013) that employment opportunities in universities in lecturer positions are a significant in shaping teachers' motivation for graduate education.

Another issue is that in-service training is centralized and therefore the discussed topics do not meet teachers' needs. The courses offered in in-service training are not congruent with the contemporary qualities and qualifications that teachers need and the topics are examined in a superficial manner due to time constraints, the crowded classes, the reluctance of groups to engage into discussions and the educators' low level of expertise. This training fails also in meeting the different skills that are desired by teachers and the teachers' interests because of the restricted number of topics discussed. Therefore, teachers think that they could address this deficit with graduate education.

It could be seen that teachers' expectations from graduate education and the problems of in-service training match at some point. In other words, teachers' expectations towards graduate education are shaped by their desire to meet the education deficits of in-service training. These expectations also include gaining a higher level of skills as indicated in the Higher Education Council Graduate Education Regulations (YÖK, 1996).

Findings show that teachers hold expectations regarding the practices in classes and they need courses on classroom management, education technology, teaching methods and approaches and the education of disadvantaged children. Teachers also expect to have organizational topics or courses in graduate education programs such as crisis management, conflict management, stress management, effective communication and time management. A good majority of teachers want to take graduate education in "education management, inspection, planning and economy or education management and inspection" (fifty percent of the participants want to take graduate education in education management and inspection whereas the other fifty percent wants to pursue education in other majors). This could be an indication that teachers are interested in the administrative perspectives of schools, in taking responsibility in school management and in gaining awareness about the administrative issues. Meeting this need and enthusiasm could be used as a motivation tool by school managers. The research of Özdoğru and Aydın (2012) suggest that there is a positive correlation between teachers' say in management decisions and teachers' motivation levels. In this study, teachers may see graduate studies in education management and inspection as an opportunity to increase their awareness of and influence in management issues.

The desired courses in graduate programs include history of science, philosophy of science, history of education and psychology of education; these are courses which require intense intellectual facilities and provide opportunities for personal development. The findings show that expectations focus on courses which make it possible for teachers to follow and discuss contemporary education topics and to make cross-country comparisons. Moreover, the courses on education planning and policies – which are also among the desired courses for graduate programs- are seen as important in terms of interpreting the education practices both in Turkey and in other countries from a holistic perspective, critically scrutinizing education policies and recognizing efficient practices. In this respect, teachers' desire for courses on comparative educational practices, planning in education and economy of education can be argued to be reasonable.

One of the most important expectations of teachers is to gain skill required for conducting independent scientific research. In parallel with this expectation, it could be seen that scientific research methods and applied statistics are among the desired courses. Aims of graduate educations in Higher Education Council Graduate Education Regulation (YÖK, 1996) are also determined as to develop scientific perspective and to contribute innovation to the field. This means teachers have congruent expectations.

Another result to be derived from the study is that the ideas regarding the necessity of graduate education can be categorized under two contrasting positions. 55 percent of teachers do not see graduate education as necessary and argue that it should match teachers' desires, skills, interests and needs. According to these teachers, priority should be given to the improvement of in-service training. They argue that in-service training of high quality can be efficient. Teachers who think that graduate education is necessary justify it mentioning the insufficient education that teachers receive and the benefits of graduate education. In other words, all teachers agree about the benefits of graduate education. However, some teachers think that graduate education is not necessary for practicing the teaching profession. They note that this level of education provides a theoretical perspective and skills of high level which are not needed by all teachers.

Teachers believe that the problems they face in in-service training will not be encountered or will be less pronounced in graduate education. They think that they will take courses from academics specialized in their field, have the opportunity for discussion within small and enthusiastic groups and receive courses tailored according to their needs. Thus, there is an expectation that graduate education can meet the needs that are not fulfilled by in-service training. One of the most significant results to be derived from this study is that teachers who are not satisfied from in-service training seek alternative education opportunities. Teachers state that they cannot benefit from in-service training which is expected to provide professional and personal development. For this reason, they argue that they prefer graduate education in order both to address the deficits from in-service training and to gain a high level of skills.

Based on these results, we could make the following suggestions:

1. When preparing graduate education programs within the Institute of Education Sciences, any research about students' expectations from graduate education programs could be useful. Thus, the teachers' needs could be met to the greatest extent possible. Programs can be devised in accordance with teachers' interests, the qualities they want to develop, and their preferences regarding the teaching style.
2. Elective courses can be diversified in the programs to meet the demand for the development of different skills. In addition, teachers can be guided to take elective courses from different graduate programs.
3. In line with teachers' desire for courses in which contemporary issues can be discussed, courses can be designed in a way that they provide the opportunity for discussion on contemporary knowledge and on how to follow this knowledge and which sources teachers

can reach. A course of such content can be added in the list of elective courses prepared in the context of the Bologna process.

4. Considering the teachers' desire to use theoretical knowledge in practice, the graduate studies and courses can help teaches relate theory with the teaching practices in their schools. In other words, they can link theory with real life.
5. It should be ensured that students are trained in scientific research methods and statistics through projects. Thus, they can gain project experience. There should be studies on how to teach research methods and related courses effectively for each department.
6. Considering that the problems of in-service training are linked with teachers' expectations from graduate studies, graduate programs on education could be regulated and improved. Thus, graduate courses that meet the teachers' needs can be created.
7. This research can be applied to each department in order to assess the departmental needs, courses and expectations and to structure as a result the graduate programs according to this assessment.

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