Trends and Transformations or Deformations in Teacher Training: An 18-Year Interval Study of Prospective Teachers in Türkiye

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This study aims to investigate how the demographic characteristics, social and cultural values, and motivations for pursuing a teaching career among prospective teachers in Türkiye have changed over the past 18 years. The initial study was conducted in 2006. Participants of 2006 are now experienced teachers with nearly 15 years of practice. Children who were not even born at the time of the original study are now studying their first year in teacher education programs in 2024. The main goal of this study is to identify which aspects of prospective teachers' profiles have changed over time and/or which have remained consistent. Analyzing these changes is crucial for understanding the dynamics of teacher training and societal transformations. The education system's quality of is directly interrelated to the investments made in its teachers, therefore making the focus on teacher training essential. In countries like Türkiye strengthening teacher education and enriching the teaching profession's status is vital. Furthermore, prospective teachers' social capitals play a significant role in influencing their access to resources and opportunities. This study highlights that challenges related to teacher recruitment, training, and retention are crucial for preparing future generations to lead confidently in education. By comparing data sets of 2006 with 2024, this research discloses significant changes in prospective teachers' attitudes and trust levels, examining how these changes reflect broader educational and societal swings.

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Introduction

This study aims to discover the extent to which the demographic profiles, sociocultural values, beliefs about the teaching profession, and intentions for pursuing a teaching career have evolved in the past 18 years. It also seeks to classify what aspects have remained steady and what has changed or diverged among prospective teachers over the years. Understanding these changes, if any, is crucial for the vigorous fauna of teacher training and the altering profession landscape.

Türkiye's educational landscape is marked by both significant growth and notable challenges. As of 2023, the country hosts nearly 75,500 schools (MoNE, 2023). This extensive educational network has facilitated a substantial increase in student enrolment over the years. This growth has been accompanied by a significant increase in the student population, as well as in the number of teachers.

The number of teachers today, increased nearly to 1 million 200 thousand. Also, the number of students receiving formal education at primary, middle, and secondary levels in Türkiye has reached almost 20 million. Türkiye's demographic profile is also noteworthy, as the country, with an approximate population of 85 million 400 thousand, ranks 18th among 194 countries by population size (Yıldırım, 2024). This figure underlines a key demographic feature-- nearly one in four people in Türkiye is of the school age. This statistic not only highlights the nation's youthful population but also points to the considerable importance of education in shaping its future. However, the true measure of a nation's educational success does not solely lie in the number of schools or students but in the quality of education. Central to this quality is the role of teachers. The demand for well-trained, skilled, and passionate educators has become one of the most pressing topics in Türkiye's educational discourse. Qualified teachers are not just facilitators of knowledge; they are key figures who shape human capital's knowledge, character, thoughts, beliefs, and ethical values of the future. In a country with a young and rapidly growing population, teachers serve as the guiding force, influencing not just individual learning but also contributing to society's social and cultural development.

Therefore, the importance of teacher training cannot be underestimated. Ultimately, the quality of a nation's education system directly reflects the support and investment in its teaching force. Similar to many developing countries, in Türkiye, where education is a pillar of societal progress, prioritizing teacher training and elevating the teaching profession is not only beneficial but imperative. Addressing the challenge of teacher recruitment, training, and retention will be vital to ensuring that Türkiye's future generations are prepared to lead confidently and competently in an increasingly complex world. However, there are questions to be searched about teaching professionals. For example, *who becomes a teacher, and what are their backgrounds?* From which family structures do they originate, and what kind of social contexts shape the young individuals who choose to pursue the teaching profession? How do their beliefs, perspectives, and both their societal and individual stance related to their approach to teaching and the unique perspectives they bring to the profession (Aksu et al., 2008; Kiraz et al., 2010)? When prospective teachers enter education faculties, what kinds of skills and personal attributes do they bring with them, and in what ways are these qualities refined and developed throughout their training? Understanding these factors is essential, as they can serve as significant indicators of how prospective teachers will grow as educators and what kind of teachers they will become when they step into classrooms. The interplay between their background, experiences, and the education they receive in teacher training programs ultimately shapes their professional identity and the values they impart to their future students.

Backgrounds of Entering Prospective Teachers: Who Are Their Parents

A study conducted approximately thirty years ago in the 1990s found that individuals aspiring to become teachers often came from low- or middle-income families. These families tended to have lower education levels than prospective teachers pursuing degrees in other fields. The findings also indicated that, within these families, the teaching profession held a high level of respect and prestige. This was particularly noteworthy as it emphasized the perception of a teaching job as a reachable and prestigious career choice for parents with limited financial power and educational backgrounds. Such insights explain the socio-economic and cultural factors that motivate career aspirations and perceptions (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Ewing, 2021).

The background of these parents' educational level was modest. Mothers in these societies often faced inadequate opportunities that commonly forced them to stay at home as housewives or be involved in low-wage, unskilled jobs that resulted in minimal financial steadiness (Vale & Maciel, 2019). Fathers' employment conditions were similarly constrained, with many salaried in labor-intensive jobs that offered little long-term safety (Başaran, 2004).

The sociocultural situation played a substantial role in shaping their children's career objectives for these families. Therefore, in many cases, the teaching career was viewed as an honorable and attainable aim for those who are anxious about their children's future (Eren, 2012). This belief was rooted in the parents' minds that education could be an accurate path to a brighter future, not just for the prospective teacher who pursued it but also for those families (Ceka & Murati). As a result, teaching was regarded with respect and seen as an appropriate way to break free from the limitations imposed by their socio-economic conditions. This cultural value placed on teaching as an appreciated profession also reflected a view of education as a means of empowerment and a symbol of growth within communities that were mainly marginalized and economically deprived.

Social Capital's Influence on Prospective Teachers

Prospective teachers who enter education faculties bring a unique set of experiences, values, and perspectives that shape their approach to teaching and their motivations for choosing this career path. 'Social capital,' refers to individuals who developed it throughout their social lives. Social capital is a significant determinant of navigating numerous social and professional challenges. Entering prospective teacher's social interactions is formed by many factors, together with their family background, the community they live in, childhood, and previous education they receive (Pajares, 1992). Understanding social capital's influences can provide valuable input into their potential as future teachers and how they see their professional roles in the classroom (Özmantar & Arslan, 2018).

Literature has numerous studies that state that most of the time prospective teachers come from lower-income and less-educated families. While social capital may foster a solid sense of empathy and determination, it may also come with some restrictions, such as a lack of acquaintance with larger social networks and advanced educational assets (Ahmadi, 2019; Özan et al., 2017; Tinkler & Tinkler, 2020). The social capital that prospective teachers bring can outline their motivations for choosing teaching as a career. For many teachers, the teaching profession represents a stable and valued career choice that offers the opportunity to make a positive impact on their communities (Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Freeman et al., 1999). Those with disadvantaged backgrounds may see teaching profession as an appreciation or a way to give back. For example, candidates who grew up in settings where education was not

properly given may be ambitious by a desire to provide the care, encouragement, and guidance that they once needed (Conley & You, 2016).

Education faculties, on the other hand, play a thoughtful role in bridging these gaps, preparing candidates with the knowledge and skills needed to adapt while still concerning the unique social capital they bring. While it provides a strong foundation of personal sense of promise, it may also reinforce certain limitations or biases. For example, prospective teachers who have grown up in settings where educational access was limited might approach teaching with the belief that their own experiences are representative of other students' experiences. Teacher educators should ensure that prospective teachers are exposed to different perspectives and are trained to recognize and overcome potential biases in their own teaching (Aksu et al., 2010; Ok & Önkol, 2007; Temizyürek, 2008). By understanding the role of the social capital that each prospective teacher, educators in faculties can better prepare future teachers.

The Dynamics of Teacher Training and Candidate Profiles in Türkiye

While literature shows different approaches, teacher training in Türkiye occurs within schools of education. These programs are designed to prepare prospective teachers with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for effective teaching. The Council of Higher Education (CoHE) regulates teacher training programs to established standards and ensure the growth of qualified teaching professionals. The curriculum typically includes a balance of pedagogical courses, subject-specific courses, and general education courses, providing comprehensive groundwork for prospective teachers. Türkiye currently has 97 active faculties of education and hosts with an average of 200 thousand students. The portion of students studying in the faculty of education among the total number of students is 14.8 %. Furthermore, graduates from other faculties, such as arts and sciences, theology, humanities, and social science can become teachers by completing pedagogical formation programs. The strong consideration in teaching position, however, coexists with complex perceptions of the profession. Literature has noted that teaching in Türkiye is mostly regarded as a profession chosen by individuals, predominantly female. One noteworthy factor contributing to the high demand for teachers in Türkiye is the relatively young population. According to the OECD reports, Türkiye has a large proportion of school-age kids which necessitates an education system capable of meeting the needs of this demographic. The increase in the number of students demands teaching as a stable occupation in the job market (Yurdakul & Şahin-Demir, 2024). Thus, teaching is often seen as an attractive career because of its supposed job safety and stability compared to other fields.

Understanding who wants to become a teacher requires an extensive examination of demographic profiles. Prospective teachers are from diverse backgrounds. Many candidates come from families that prioritize schooling (Kiraz et al., 2010; Aksu et al., 2008). Socio-economic background plays a pivotal role in career choices. As emphasized by Özmantar and Arslan (2018), pupils from lower and middle socio-economic backgrounds often assume teaching as a feasible career route that offers potential for upward mobility. Thus, teaching becomes an attractive choice for those seeking stability. However, regardless of the strong desire, Türkiye faces challenges in attracting and retaining competent individuals in teaching. The prestige of teaching has depreciated since the 1970s (Özmantar & Arslan, 2018). Addressing these challenges is critical for attracting and retaining skilled teachers in Türkiye. Eren (2012) asserts that in countries similar to Türkiye, internal motivation plays an important role in the ambitions of many prospective teachers. The aspiration to make a difference in others' lives is a prevailing drive for entering the profession. Recognizing and addressing those

who aspire to become teachers is crucial as Türkiye tries to support its education system and build a robust teaching workforce capable of reaching the demands of a rapidly changing educational landscape. Understanding the teacher and their beliefs and philosophies they hold (Aksu et al., 2010; Kiraz, et al., 2010; Ok & Önkol, 2007; Temizyürek, 2008) play a significant role in shaping teacher profiles. As emphasized by Opdenakker and Van Damme (2006), searching how educational beliefs, thoughts, and theories are shaped is fundamental for understanding how educational practices are formed.

Based on what aforementioned literature suggests this study focuses on if prospective tearchers' demographic and socio-cultural values evolved. Hence, this study investigates changes of some variables such as desire to become a teacher, aspects related to planning to become a teacher after graduation and, and beliefs about teaching profession by comparing the first-year prospective teachers of the Faculty of Education at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University (ÇOMÜ) 18 years apart, in 2006 and 2024. Through a comparative trend study, the research aims to compare the first-year prospective teachers in 2006 with the first year of 2024 concerning various variables. The fundamental questions related to comparisons addressed are as follows:

(1) What are the demographic characteristics of prospective teachers in 2006 and 2024?
(2) Have the educational and social perspectives of prospective teachers examined based on various variables changed between 2006 and 2024?

Methodology

A quantitative research method, trend analysis, is employed since longitudinal studies are conducted by gathering data at different points in time to examine changes over time. Three common designs are used in longitudinal survey research: trend studies, cohort studies, and panel studies. In a trend study, different samples from a population that may change over time are examined at various points in different time durations. Trend studies sample a population whose members may change over time (Fraenkel et al., 2012). As mentioned earlier, historical-comparative trend analysis is the research method because there have been many changes occurring between the two dates nearly in two decades. Many changes such as sociological, technological, economic, political, and scientific have significantly affected educational systems and individuals' experiences worldwide. The historical comparative trend analysis method is particularly suitable for examining changes that have occurred over nearly two decades, allowing for a deeper understanding of how educational policies and the perspectives of prospective teachers have evolved.

Setting and Participants of the Study

The study's population consisted of freshmen first-year prospective teachers from the Faculty of Education at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in the year of 2024, compared with the first-year prospective teachers from the same faculty in 2006. The data collection encompassed 588 (188 male and 400 female) participants in 2006 and 587 (170 male and 417 female) participants in 2024. In 2006, 4.10% of prospective teachers were aged 16-18, 58.60 % were 19-21, 34.10% were 22-24, 2.70% were 25-27, and 0.50% were 28 and older. In 2024, 16% of prospective teachers were aged 16-18, 76.30% were 19-21, 5.50% were 22-24, 0.90% were 25-27, and 1.40% were 28 and older. The researchers of this study are academicians where the study was conducted. Instead of selecting a sample, in the institution where this study was conducted, the researchers included all prospective teachers who were in their first year.

Considering that the prospective teachers are from various cities across Türkiye, it can be argued that the population may partially represent the general population. On the other hand, researchers are members of the institution being studied. Their own experiences, observations, and interactions with teacher candidates play a role in interpreting and predicting the numerical data obtained through the data tool. The findings and discussion sections have been written with the consideration that there may be different perspectives between the readers and the researchers.

Data Collection Tool

The data collection tool used was a three-part survey developed by Dr. Ercan Kiraz and his colleagues in 2005. In this study, the data gathered from the questions in the first and second sections of the comprehensive data collection instrument are presented and analyzed. These sections involve key aspects relevant to the research questions. The third section of the data collection instrument was not included in the current study. This section is intended for future research, where it is planned to explore prospective teachers' perceptions and beliefs regarding various aspects of the educational process, including their views on education, schools, students, and teachers. Additionally, the future study aims to examine the relationships between these perceptions and beliefs and demographic variables such as age, gender, educational background, and teaching profession. This would provide a deeper understanding of how demographic factors influence prospective teachers' attitudes and perspectives, contributing to the broader body of knowledge in teacher education.

The first section of the survey contained 11 questions related to demographic information, including age, gender, primary place of residence (urban/rural), and parental education/employment. The second section included 11 items aimed at examining the socio-cultural values of prospective teachers, reasons for choosing the teaching profession, if they want to be a teacher after graduation, covering their levels of trust in institutions, views on Türkiye's European Union membership, and so forth. The overall reliability of the scale is Cronbach's Alpha value of .82.

Data Collection and Anaysis

In this study, data were collected from 588 prospective teachers in 2006 and 587 in 2024. The research, which involved the processes of data collection, analysis, and interpretation, was conducted in strict adherence to established ethical standards. A key focus of the study was to minimize any potential risks to participants throughout the research process. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, with informed consent obtained from all participants prior to their involvement. Additionally, participants were provided with a thorough explanation of the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights before the research commenced. This ensured that all participants had a clear understanding of the study and were fully informed about their role in it. The research received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the Graduate School of Education at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, confirming that the study met both institutional and national ethical requirements. Data collection occurred during the 2023-2024 academic semester, which provided the necessary time frame for obtaining reliable and relevant data for the study. The data for this study were gathered through a structured survey, which was later analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical methods were employed to interpret the main characteristics of the dataset. Additionally, frequency

distributions and percentages were calculated to further examine the demographic and categorical variables, which facilitated a deeper understanding of the study's participants and their characteristics. To explore potential changes over time, a comparative analysis was conducted between the data collected in 2006 and the data gathered in 2024. This comparison allowed the researchers to classify tendencies, changes, or consistencies in the responses across the two time points. The results of this descriptive statistical analysis laid the groundwork for the consequent interpretations and discussions presented in the study, offering valuable insights into the evolution of the research subject over the intervening years. These findings were then contextualized in light of the broader literature, contributing to a deeper understanding of the topic and its implications.

Results

This section is presented under two headings background characteristics and socio-cultural values of the first-year candidates.

Background Characteristics

Table 1. *Educational background of parents of entering prospective teachers*

	2006 Mother	**2024** Mother	**2006** Father	**2024** Father
Illiterate	4.9	5.3	0.7	1.0
Literate, but no formal schooling	3.9	2.7	1.5	1.4
Primary school	53.6	32.4	33.2	22.3
Middle school	10.8	20.6	15.4	22.7
Secondary (High) school	18.0	23.3	26.2	30.7
2 year college	1.4	4.1	5.4	3.2
4 year college	7.2	10.7	16.0	17.0
Master degree	0.2	0.9	0.9	1.5
Ph.D. degree	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.2

According to Table 1, there has been a positive increase in the education level of mothers over the past 18 years. However, the percentage of mothers who cannot read or write rose from 4.9% in 2006 to 5.3% in 2024, while the proportion of mothers who could read and write but did not attend school decreased from 3.9% to 2.7%. There was a 2.6% decrease in mothers who did not attend any school. This situation can be explained by the termination of literacy courses previously supported by Public Education Centers with the expansion of compulsory education. Table 1 indicates an overall increase in the education level of mothers. The decline in the percentage of elementary school graduates can be explained by the continuation of education to higher levels.

When comparing the education levels of fathers in 2006 and 2024, these results showing similarities with the education levels of mothers in terms of school attendance and literacy suggest that more detailed research into school participation and literacy, as well as the underlying reasons, is necessary. Unlike mothers, fathers' education levels do not show a linear increase after middle school, and the proportional changes in fathers' education levels show less variation than those in mothers' education.

Table 2. *Parents Occupation*

	Mother %		Father%	
	2006	2024	2006	2024
Civil Servant	4.8	10.6	17.5	21.0
Salaried Employee (public sector)	0.7	0.0	5.5	0.0
Salaried Employee (private sector)	2.4	26.2	6.7	53.5
Self-employed	2.1	2.0	16.1	12.8
Daily wage worker	0.5	0.2	3.7	0.2
Housewife (unemployed)	75.8	58.3	-	-
Retired	11.1	2.0	41.1	9.9
Unemployed	2.6	0.7	6.7	1.7
Seasonal worker	0.0	0.0	2.8	0.9

When the data in the table is examined, it is observed that in 2006, the highest percentage of mothers' occupations was 75.8%, representing housewives. The percentage of housewives as an occupation has decreased from 75.8% in 2006 to 58.3% in 2024, although it remains the highest proportion. Other occupations that have seen a decrease include retirees (from 11.1% to 2%) and the unemployed (from 2.6% to 0.7%). Significant increases have been observed in salaried employment in the private sector (from 2.4% to 26.2%) and in civil servant roles (from 4.8% to 10.6%). As seen in the table, the proportions of mothers in housework, unemployment, and retirement have decreased, while the proportions of civil servants and salaried employees in the private sector have increased. The distribution of fathers' occupations in 2006 showed that retired fathers were the most common at 41.1%, while seasonal labor was the least common at 2.8%. When comparing 2006 and 2024, increases are seen in the proportions of salaried employees in the private sector (from 6.7% to 53.3%) and civil servants (from 17.3% to 21%). All other occupational groups have seen a proportional decrease, with the most significant decrease being in the retired category (from 41.1% to 9.9%), followed by the unemployed (from 6.7% to 1.7%). The increase in the retirement age may have contributed to the decrease in the proportion of retired parents. Additionally, the rise in the number of prospective teachers from larger cities may explain the reduction in unemployed parents and the increase in civil servant parents.

When evaluating the motivation of prospective teachers to pursue a teaching career from 2006 to 2024, significant changes influenced by various dynamics within the education system, economic conditions, and social transformations can be observed. In 2006, the desire to become a teacher was reported as a strong motivation for 30.6% of prospective teachers, but this number dropped to 24.8% in 2024. This decrease suggests a decline in the intrinsic interest in teaching over time. Factors such as economic crises, high inflation, low salaries, and job insecurity may have reduced the appeal of the teaching profession.

Table 3. *Preferences to be a teacher*

	2006 %	%2024
Desire to become a teacher	30.6	24.8
Status of teaching as a profession	4.4	5.6
Influence of family	8.2	10.2
Opportunity to find a job	17.6	16.5
Working conditions (long summer vacation, good working hours, etc.)	13.0	17.6
Interest in working with children/youth	10.2	11.6
University entrance exam score dictated choice	14.3	10.6
Others	1.7	3.5

Families of those with lower financial opportunities encourage their children to pursue a stable

job like teaching. In Türkiye, where parental education levels and economic status play important roles in career choices, this trend is an important indicator. The importance of job availability as a motivational issue has diminished, from 17.6% in 2006 to 16.5% in 2024. This decline may reflect the uncertainty for prospective teachers, deteriorated by the increasing number of teachers who remain unemployed or underemployed. The inequality in teacher placements and disparities between provinces could also contribute to this reduction in confidence. Working conditions, on the other hand, have revealed improvement as a motivating factor, increasing from 13% in 2006 to 17.6% in 2024. Compensation such as long summer vacations and regular working hours continue to make teaching appealing, particularly for prospective teachers with families who value work-life balance.

Interest in working with children or youth has slightly raised from 10.2% to 11.6%, indicating that an interest in education and youth growth remains among prospective teachers. However, this interest is somewhat limited by external factors that diminish the overall motivation to follow teaching as a career. The influence of the university entrance exam on career options has decreased from 14.3% in 2006 to 10.6% in 2024. This suggests that prospective teachers no longer realize teaching solely as an option dictated by exam scores and are exploring a wider range of job paths. Changes in higher education procedures and increased access to alternative career options have influenced decision-making processes among candidates. Finally, the "other" category, representing different motivational factors, has increased from 1.7% in 2006 to 3.5% in 2024. These results reveal that the motivation to become a teacher in Türkiye is influenced by a complex interplay of financial, social, and policy-related factors.

Another interesting result is the notable decrease in the proportion of prospective teachers who, despite being in their very first semester, stated in 2024 that they are "definitely considering becoming a teacher." This is an issue that warrants significant consideration and reflects broader concerns about the teaching profession. The failure in commitment among prospective teachers suggests that the teaching profession may not be held in the high regard it once was, and this necessitates immediate action. It underscores the need for efforts to reinstate the respect and prestige that the teaching profession earns, ensuring that it is recognized as a vital and honorable career choice. Rebuilding this respect is crucial not only for attracting and retaining dedicated individuals but also for enhancing the overall quality of education and fostering trust in the educational system.
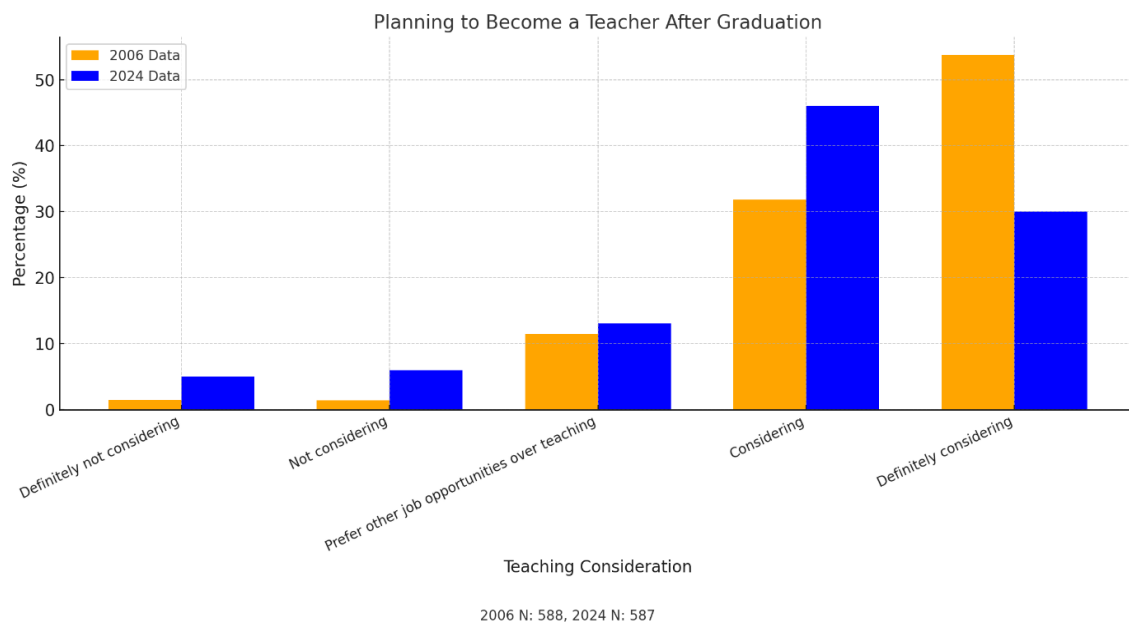
Figure 1. Planning to become a teacher after graduation

Socio-cultural and personal values

Over the past two decades, Türkiye has undergone important political, economic, and social changes that have greatly influenced the trust of entering teachers have in institutions. This period has been marked by major events, such as financial crises, political polarization, social unrest, and the 2016-attempted coup, all of which have contributed to swings in public perception and confidence in these institutions. In 2006, prospective teachers valued religion more in the absence of science. However, thought the increased efforts to incorporate religious thoughts more into the education system following the Prime Minister's February 1, 2012 speech (Habertürk, 2012), about raising a "religious youth/generation," which caused debates, data from 2024 show that prospective teachers find religion less trustworthy in the absence of science compared to 2006. When considering Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 together it is observed that, in 2024, prospective teachers' trust in the education system, government, and Office of Religious Affairs has decreased, and in the absence of science, they tend to explain the situation more with metaphysics rather than religion.
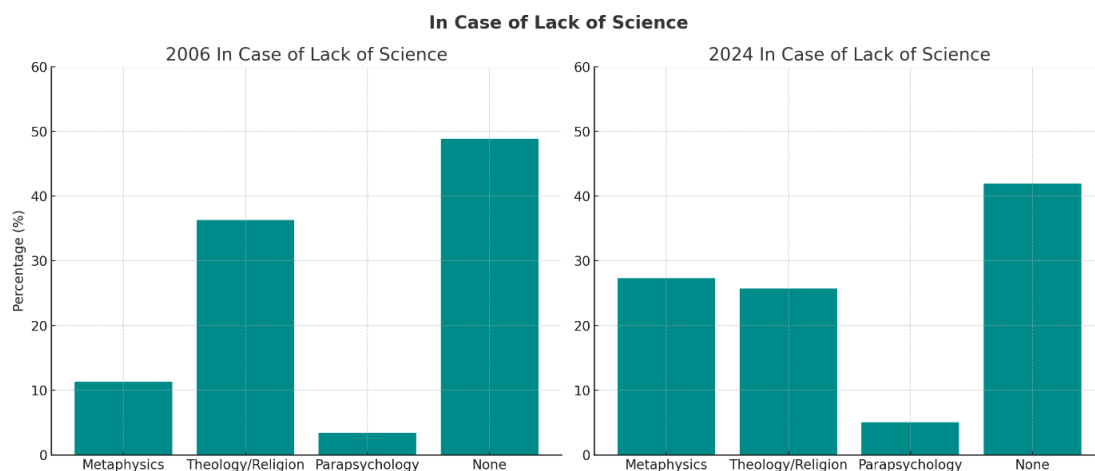

Figure 2. In case lack of science
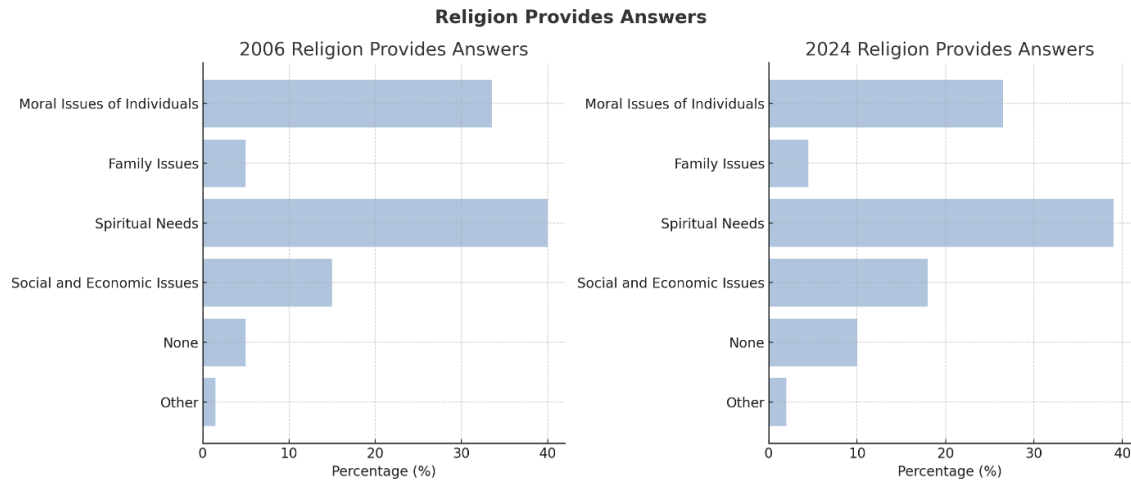
Religion Provides Answers

Figure 3. Religion provides answers

The decline in confidence in the Office of Religious Affairs is obvious, as it coincides with a decrease in the societal tendency to search for answers through religion over the years. Entering prospective teachers now, 2024, prefer metaphysics, which represents a more individual search for answers rather than collectivist searches. However, it is interesting that their expectations of the concept of religion have increased in terms of social and economic issues.

Table 4. Trust to Institutions

	A great deal of confidence %		Some confidence %		No confidence at all %		No idea %	
	2006	2024	2006	2024	2006	2024	2006	2024
Universities	14.3	12.8	63.9	54.5	17.5	26.2	4.30	6.50
Parliament	21.6	15.9	47.9	42.9	26.3	30	6.20	8.30
Labour Unions	5	6.80	47.8	35.3	22.8	39.2	24.4	18.7
Non-Governmental Organizations	12.8	12.3	58.7	46.0	15.4	29.3	13.1	12.4
Political Parties	1.10	2.20	20.1	16.9	69.6	71.6	9.20	9.40
Military	69.8	48.7	20.0	28.8	5.10	11.9	5.10	10.6
Health System	7.90	25.6	54.6	48.2	34.6	19.9	2.90	6.30
Media	1.40	7.50	20.2	40.4	74.3	45.7	4.0	6.50
Government	10.6	9.0	33	30.8	50.7	52.1	5.70	8.0
Security Forces	27.4	24.0	48.7	41.7	20.0	29.0	3.90	5.30
Educational System	8.0	5.50	44.2	29.5	45.0	59.6	2.80	5.50
Office of Religious Affairs	20.5	5.50	43.0	17.5	19.6	67.0	16.8	10.1
Presidency	39.7	9.40	41.1	29.6	12.6	52.8	6.60	8.20
Supreme Court	43.8	17.9	41.7	43.0	10.3	30.3	4.30	8.50
European Union	2.30	15.8	28.6	47.2	64.2	22.3	4.90	14.7

In 2006, prospective teachers showed a relatively high level of confidence in some public institutions. The Turkish Military, for example, was regarded as a stabilizing force, with 69.8%

of respondents expressing trust or a great deal of confidence. The presidency also enjoyed the confidence of 39.7% of participants. By 2024, however, the data displays a noticeable erosion of trust in most institutions. Trust in the military, for example, fell to 48.7 percentage-point a dramatic 20%, decrease, which can be linked to the controversial involvement of the military in political matters and the aftermath of the failed coup attempt. The presidency's trust level also dropped to 30.8%, down 9.4 percentage points, highlighting the increased polarization and centralization of power that has characterized Turkish politics in recent years.

The health system, which had been trusted by in 2024. While this indicates that, a portion of the population still has confidence in the healthcare system. Challenges such as increased pressure during health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic and growing concerns over the system's adequacy to meet the needs of the population.

Discussion

Demographics: Decline in Desire to become Teacher

When viewed in light of demographic findings, the teaching profession is, as frequently stated in the literature, a field predominantly occupied by women. Similarly, when looking at the educational levels of families with relatively low educational backgrounds (Lakkoju & Jeyalakshmi, 2015; Mouer, 2019), it can be observed that there has been an increase in the education levels of both mothers and fathers over the past 18 years, though whether this increase is sufficient remains a question. The main reason for this increase is extending the duration of compulsory basic education from 5 years to 8 years with elementary school graduation, followed by 12 years of compulsory education at the high school level. . Some of the mothers of participants in 2024 may come from a generation that continued their education within the scope of 8 years of compulsory education, while a smaller portion continued into 12 years of compulsory education. By 2024, the education levels of mothers and fathers had become quite similar at the middle school and associate degree levels. This change can be attributed to the widespread implementation of 8 years of compulsory education during this period. For associate degrees, the expansion of vocational schools and their placement in rural areas, along with increased access to higher education for people living in these areas, may have also contributed to this trend.

Significant efforts are being made in Türkiye to improve literacy and school enrollment rates. Numerous projects and campaigns, especially aimed at women, have been launched. However, the effectiveness of these campaigns needs to be examined more thoroughly. Examining major educational campaigns and projects supported by the state, the private sector, and foreign resources in the 1990s and 2000s—such as "Haydi Kızlar Okula" (Girls Let's Go to School), "Tarladan Okula" (From the Field to School), "Anne Kız Elele Okula" (Mother and Daughter Hand in Hand to School), "Kendi Okulunu Kendin Yap" (Build Your Own School), "Bir Tuğla da Sen Koy" (Add a Brick Too), "Kardelenler" (Snowdrops [In the cold of Eastern Anatolia, the winter flowers that bloom before the snow melts are called 'Kardelen' (Snowdrop). Like these flowers breaking through the earth to reach the light, girls who defy tradition to pursue education symbolize strength and resilience]), and "Temel Eğitime Destek Programı" (Basic Education Support Program)—the primary aim was to prioritize the education of girls, mothers, and vulnerable individuals in society (Arık & Akay, 2023). When these campaigns were launched, the goal was to create a more modern and educated society. However, the fact that some girls and women who were brought to school through these campaigns were unable to learn to read and write for various reasons might have contributed to the increase in illiterate

mothers' number (Akyıldız, 2019).

This gender imbalance is reflective of broader social and cultural patterns where teaching, particularly at the primary and secondary levels, is often viewed as a suitable profession for women due to traditional gender roles and expectations (Erginer & Saklan, 2020). Additionally, when reading about the educational backgrounds of families, it is clear that children from families with relatively lower levels of education still have more tendency toward the teaching profession. While data specifies that there has been an improvement in the educational attainment of both mothers and fathers during the past 18 years, questions remain regarding the sufficiency of these achievements. Efforts aimed at improving literacy rates and school enrollment, specifically among girls, have been a priority for Türkiye's educational policies. Many initiatives, programs, and campaigns specifically targeting women have been implemented to promote gender equality and rise women's participation in the workforce and educational activities. However, the effectiveness of these campaigns and the extent to which they have achieved their goals deserve critical examination and further studies.

One notable demographic trend is the significant proportion of housewife mothers among prospective teachers. In the current study, the number of mothers without any professional occupation remains strikingly high, even when comparing data from nearly two decades apart. This high percentage suggests that despite various policies and social initiatives aimed at empowering women and facilitating their entry into the workforce, there is still substantial progress to be made. Government and local authorities have launched various programs to support housewives who do not hold formal jobs and have established platforms to encourage women's economic and social participation (Uraz et. al.). The findings align with the ongoing efforts to convert women's potential for productivity into tangible social and economic contributions, emphasizing the importance of continued and enhanced support for women's empowerment.

In terms of the reasons that drive entering teachers to choose teaching as a profession, the data reveals a decline in the desire to become a teacher over time, coupled with a growing influence of family expectations. This trend may be unique to Türkiye and is worthy of in-depth investigation. The education system, particularly the university entering mechanisms, higher education policies, and the harmonization between the Higher Education Council and the Ministry of National Education plays a significant role in determining the career aspirations of prospective teachers (Kaya & Korucuk, 2022; Akar, 2012). A main issue affecting this dynamic is the "*unemployed teacher*" phenomenon, which has gained prominence over the years and reflects the struggle many graduates encounter in securing teaching positions. This is compounded by challenges such as low incomes that are not aligned with the cost of living and hyperinflation, disparities in pay between public and private schools, and the distinction between different types of teacher hiring, such as contract, permanent, temporary, and paid positions (Flores, 2023: la Velle, 2023). These challenges significantly form the attitudes and perceptions of prospective teachers toward the teaching profession.

The data from 2024 highlights a failure in the desire to become a teacher, with the percentage of prospective teachers who stated they "definitely considered" pursuing the profession reducing from over half in 2006 to just one-third. This shift is a significant finding for educational institutions and faculty management, underscoring the necessity for measures that positively affect prospective teachers' motivation and insights of the profession. Addressing these concerns is crucial for ensuring the effectiveness of pre-service education and enabling forthcoming teachers to enter the workforce as well-prepared and competent professionals. The

findings specify that the approach to teacher education and career development should be revisited, with a stress on enhancing the image of the profession and aligning it with the aspirations of future educators.

Another aspect that requires attention is the role of human resource arrangement in higher education (Ateş & Atanur Baskan, 2014). Teaching, unlike professions such as medicine, law, or engineering, military is not typically pursued as an independent or entrepreneurial occupation path. In Türkiye, opportunities for teachers are largely confined to working in public schools under the Ministry of National Education or in private educational institutions. This limited career room can influence the attractiveness of the profession. Therefore, policymakers need to work on strategies that elevate the status of teaching, ensure fair compensation, and create better job safety for teachers (Özbal & Gökçe, 2018). Only through strategic preparation and investment in the teaching profession can the quality of education be improved and the country's future educators be equipped with skilled, motivated, and competent educators (Cobanoglu et al., 2018).

Eroding Trust: The Decline in Prospective teachers' Confidence in Institutions

Over the past 20 years, The World and Türkiye have had significant transformations in social, economic, and political structure. Results show that during this period, a decline in trust in public institutions has been observed among prospective teachers. This shift underlines the urgent need to reconsider the association between the state and society, the education system, and public administration (Foster & Frieden, 2017; Rauh, 2021). When comparing findings from 2006 with findings from 2024, it is clear that trust in political parties, the Supreme Court, the prime minister's office, the presidency, law enforcement, the parliament, non-governmental organizations, and the Office of Religious Affairs as weakened among prospective teachers. This trend indicates a broader decline in trust in governmental institutions and reflects the growing skepticism among young educators about the operation of the state.

Prospective teachers play a critical role in the education system, and their observations and confidence in public institutions are vital for the future of the country. The mainstream of prospective teachers in Türkiye come from families with lower educational backgrounds. The family characteristics, including economic and social circumstances, significantly shape the children's perceptions of public institutions and trust in the state. Economic encounters, such as crises, high inflation, and rising unemployment rates, can back to young people's doubts about their future and erode trust in government institutions. Additionally, occasions such as attempted coups and political instability have instilled deep-seated skepticism among the public, further influencing the trust of prospective teachers in the state and its institutions.

Prospective teachers' perceptions of public employment, including problems such as hiring policies, low salaries, and contract-based employment, can meaningfully impact their trust in the government. Problems such as appointment delays, salary disparities, and low job security create negative perceptions (Aydın & Arastaman, 2024; Özmantar & Aktaş, 2018). This situation can affect prospective teachers being less motivated to pursue a career in teaching and public service, which may disturb the overall quality of the education system. Ensuring fair, transparent, and sustainable employment applications in education is essential for restoring trust and attracting qualified individuals to the profession.

Rebuilding trust among prospective teachers needs a multifaceted approach from the state and educational institutions. The hiring system must adopt more inclusive, transparent and equitable policies that can help restore young people's faith in public organizations and the government.

Additionally, faculties of education should implement strategies that support prospective teachers' motivation and confidence. The leaders should also work towards enhancing the credibility of the public sector through policies that prioritize fairness and accountability. Strengthening young people's trust in public institutions, especially among prospective teachers, is vigorous for the future of the teaching profession and for society as a whole.

The graphs presented for the years 2024 and 2006 below are intended to illustrate the dimension of the trust crisis identified in Table 4 of the findings part. These visual representations aim to provide a clearer understanding of the changes in prospective teachers' perceptions over the period under review. By comparing the data from these two points in time, the study aims to highlight significant shifts in opinions and identify if there has been a notable progression or regression in trust levels within the context of the findings. This comparison is essential for understanding how prospective teachers' attitudes and beliefs have evolved, which may reflect a better educational or societal change over the years.
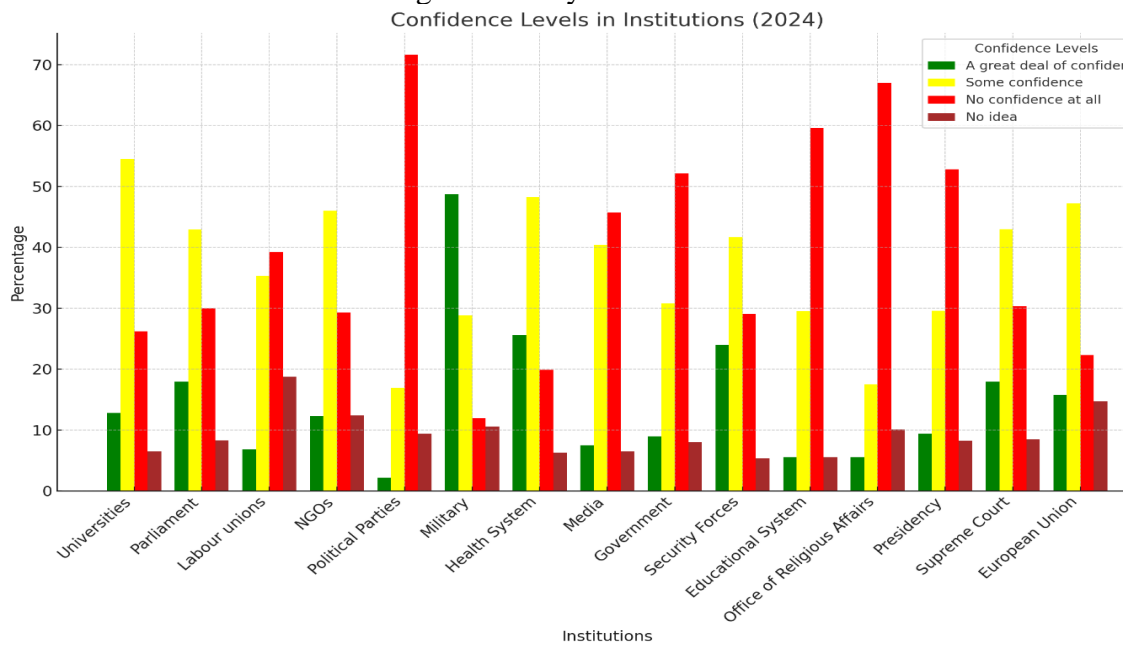

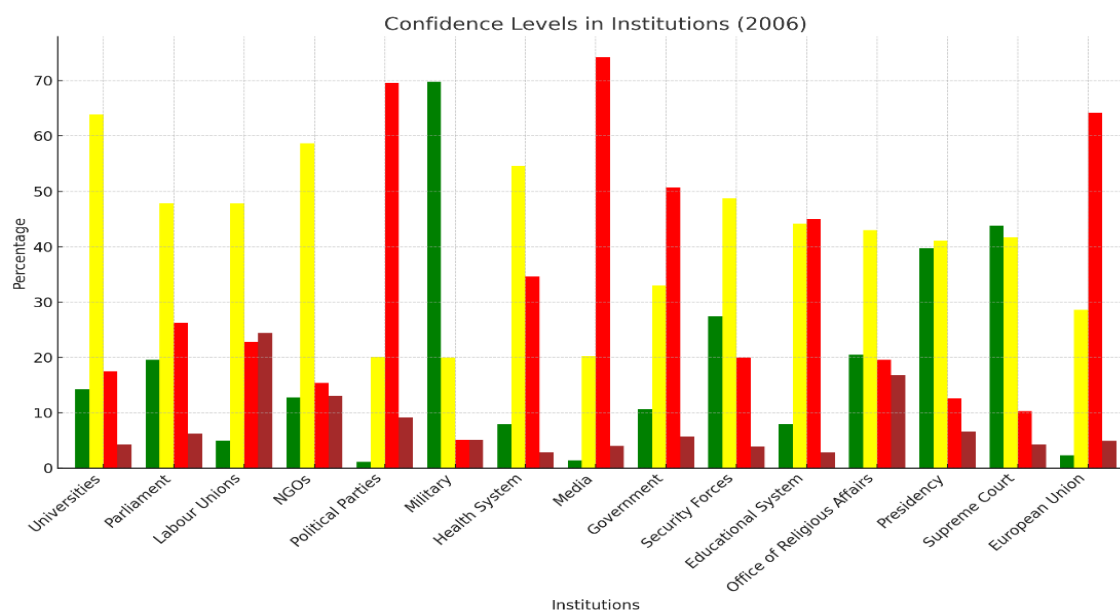Figure 4. Confidence to Institutions 2024

Figure 5. Confidence in Institutions 2006

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study's findings indicate that significant attention is required to address the failure in prospective teachers' desire to pursue the teaching profession and the corrosion of trust in public institutions. To handle these challenges effectively, it is critical to implement multifaceted strategies that enhance the attractiveness of teaching and reconstruct confidence in the education system.

Economic and professional conditions also influence the desire to become a teacher. Low salaries and poor working conditions compared to other fields have contributed to the decline in motivation. To address this, significant investments in teachers' salaries are necessary, ensuring it aligns with the cost of living and inflation. This includes offering decent salaries, and financial incentives, and improving job sanctuary by providing permanent contracts. Enhanced compensation and job stability can make teaching a more striking and long-term career option, fostering greater promise among prospective teachers.

Career development and support programs are necessary for sustaining motivation and professional growth. Comprehensive support should go beyond initial training, including ongoing mentorship, professional development workshops, and seminars.

Reforming higher education policies and university entrance mechanisms is important for creating an environment conducive to teacher training. Addressing the trust crisis in public institutions is also paramount. The data indicates that trust among prospective teachers has diminished, influencing their overall perception of the state. Recruitment practices and clearer communication regarding job expectations can help restore confidence and make teaching a desirable career option.

Limitations

This study includes prospective teachers who enrolled in the Faculty of Education at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University in the first year of 2006 and 2024 to become teachers. However, considering that the prospective teachers come from various regions, provinces, districts, towns, and villages across Türkiye, the findings can, to some extent, be interpreted as representative of the general situation in Türkiye.

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Declaration

Ethical Considerations: The research, which involved data collection, analysis, and interpretation, was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, with an emphasis on minimizing potential risks to participants. Participation in the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement. Before the commencement of the study, participants were provided with a detailed explanation of the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights. Furthermore,

the Ethics Committee of the Graduate School of Education at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University granted ethical approval for the research, ensuring compliance with institutional and national ethical standards.