

## Exploring the Wellbeing of Pre-Service Teachers During Their Practicum

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### Abstract

Understanding the psychology of pre-service teachers and the factors that affect their well-being have received relatively little attention in the relevant literature. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate how pre-service teachers perceive their wellbeing during their practicum by collecting data from pre-service teachers via narratives and semi-structured interviews. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyze the data. The results revealed a number of factors influencing the well-being of pre-service teachers, including motivation, students, their appreciation of the profession, feelings of inadequacy, relationship management, their multiple roles, technical concerns, and future perceptions. The findings highlight how pre-service teachers' well-being influences their professional practices and provide insights for teacher educators, pupils, and researchers who are concerned with the well-being of pre-service teachers and work in the field of teacher education. Overall, the study sheds light on the complex and multifaceted nature of pre-service teacher wellbeing during practicum and emphasizes the need for a more holistic approach that considers the various factors that influence pupils' psychological and emotional states.

### Keywords

Wellbeing  
Practicum  
Teacher education

### Article Info

Received  
April 08, 2023  
Accepted  
July 11, 2023  
Article Type  
Research Paper

## Öğretmen Adaylarının Öğretmenlik Uygulaması Sürecinde İyi Oluşlarının Araştırılması

### Öz

Öğretmen adaylarının psikolojilerini ve iyi oluşlarını etkileyen faktörleri anlamak, ilgili literatürde nispeten daha az ilgi görmüştür. Bu nedenle bu çalışma, öğretmen adaylarından anlatılar toplayarak ve öğretmen adaylarıyla yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yaparak öğretmenlik uygulamaları sırasında kendi iyi oluşlarını nasıl anladıklarını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Veriler, Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz (IPA) yaklaşımı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, öğretmen adaylarının iyi oluşlarını etkileyen bir dizi faktör olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bunlar; motivasyon, öğrenciler, mesleğe olan takdirleri, yetersizlik hissi, ilişki yönetimi, birden fazla rol, teknik endişeler ve algılanan gelecek gibi faktörlerdir. Çalışma sonucunda elde edilen bulgular göz önünde bulundurulduğunda öğretmen adaylarının mevcut iyi oluşlarının mesleki uygulamalarını şekillendirmedeki önemine işaret etmekle birlikte öğretmen eğitimi alanında çalışan öğretmen eğitimcileri, öğrenciler ve araştırmacılar için önemli bilgiler sağlamaktadır. Genel olarak bakıldığında çalışma öğretmenlik uygulamaları sırasında öğretmen adaylarının iyi oluşlarının karmaşık ve çok yönlü doğasını göz önüne sermekte, öğrencilerin psikolojik ve duygusal durumlarını etkileyen çeşitli faktörleri dikkate alan daha bütünsel bir yaklaşımın gerekliliğini vurgulamaktadır.

### Anahtar Sözcükler

İyi oluş  
Öğretmenlik uygulaması  
Öğretmen eğitimi

### Makale Hakkında

Gönderim Tarihi  
08 Nisan 2023  
Kabul Tarihi  
11 Temmuz 2023  
Makale Türü  
Araştırma Makalesi

*Citation:* Zaimođlu, S., & Dagtas, A. (2023). Exploring the wellbeing of pre-service teachers during their practicum. *Ege Journal of Education*, 24(2), 194-208. <https://doi.org/10.12984/egeefd.1279510>

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## Geniřletilmiř Trke zet

### Giriř

ğretmenlik; ğrencilerin ğrenmelerine destek olan, akademik ve akademik olmayan ihtiyalarını karřılayan en zorlu mesleklerden biridir (Chirico, Sharma, Zaffina ve Magnavita, 2020; Mercer, 2020). Mesleđin gereksinimlerini yerine getirmek iin ğretmenlerin psikolojik durumlarını; zellikle de etkili ğretmen-ğrenci etkileřimini, samimi iletiřim ve güvenli bir ğrenme ortamını teřvik eden faktrlerin gz nnde bulundurulması gerekmektedir. Kariyerlerinin ilk ařamalarında olduklarını gz nnde bulundurarak ğretmen adaylarının uzun vadeli iyi oluřlarını teřvik etmek iin ğretmenlik stajı sırasında endiřelerini, sevinlerini, hedeflerini ve motivasyonlarını anlamamız gerekmektedir. Okullardaki ađır iř ykleri, yetersiz idari destek, velilerle yařanabilen sıkıntılar (Gkonou ve Miller, 2017; Tomazin, 2008), profesyonel imknların yetersizliđi, eđitim reformlarının karar alma dzeyinde yer almamak, istikrarsız alıřma kořulları ve dřk z saygı (Boyle, Borg, Falzon ve Baglioni, 1995; Naghie, Montgomery, Bonell, Thompson ve Aber, 2013; Ortan, Simut, & Simut, 2021) gibi birok stres faktr ğretmenlerin iyi oluřlarını etkilemektedir. ğretmen adayları iin durum farklı deđildir ünkü kiřisel ve bađlamsal stres faktrlerine srekli maruz kalmaktadırlar ve bu durum iyi oluřlarını etkilemektedir. En nemli stres faktr hem ğrenci hem ğretmen olarak gereksinimlerini ve sorumluluklarını dengelemeye alıřmaktadır (Day ve Gu, 2010; Hong, 2010). Bu nedenle ğretmen adaylarının, ğretmenlik kariyerlerine bařlamadan nce iyi oluřları dřk dzeyde olabilir. Arařtırmacıların ve eđitimle ilgili karar alanların ana hedefi, ğretmen adaylarının profesyonel geliřimlerinin bu nemli ařamasında iyi oluřlarını anlamak ve desteklemek olmalıdır. Aslında bireyin iyi oluřunu teřvik etmek; duyguların, sosyal iliřkilerin ve hayattaki tatmin dngsnn derin bir analizini gerektirir (Davis, 2019). ğretmen adayları genellikle ğretim srelerinde olumsuz duyguların etkisi altındadırlar, bu nedenle iyi oluř dzeylerini geliřtirmek iin bir řans veya fırsat bulamazlar. MacIntyre ve Gregersen'a (2012) gre "*negatif duygusal tepkilerin yođunluđunu azaltmak iin bir gevřeme tepkisi ile deđiřtirme*" tekniđi nerilmektedir (s. 205). Buradaki ama negatif duyguları tamamen ortadan kaldırmak deđil, iyi duyguların gcnden faydalanmaktır (Dewaele, Franco Magdalena ve Saito, 2019). Sınıf ortamı dikkate alındıđında ğrenciler neřeli, ilgili, mutlu, gururlu ve istekli olduklarında daha etkili bir řekilde ğrenirler ünkü bu duygular, sınıftaki ayrıntıları fark etmelerini ve dile olan farkındalıklarını etkinleřtirir. Gregersen'a (2013) gre bu olumlu duygular yabancı dil ğretmenleri iin de son derece faydalıdır. Barker ve Martin (2009), yksek dzeyde iyi oluřları olan ğretmenlerin eđitim kalitesini artırdıđını ve bu durumun ğrencilerle olan iliřkiyi ve yařamın deđerine ynelik algılarını olumlu etkilediđini belirtmektedirler. Bu bilgiler iřıđında alıřmanın amaı, hizmet ncesi ğretmenlerin iyi oluřlarını etkileyen faktrleri ve ğretim srecinde deneyimledikleri zorlukları ve mutlulukları arařtırmaktır. Bu psikolojik ve davranıřsal grřler, hizmet ncesi ğretmenlerin mesleki geliřimleri sırasında diđer kritik olaylarla bařa ıkarken ihtiya duyabilecekleri trde bir yardımı daha kapsamlı bir řekilde anlamak iin nemlidir.

### Yntem

Bu alıřmanın arařtırma bađlamı ve katılımcıları Trkiye'deki ğretmen eđitim programından ncelikli İngilizce ğretmenleri olarak belirlendi. alıřmada amalı rnekleme yntemi kullanılarak staj deneyimi yařamıř  katılımcı (iki kadın ve bir erkek) seildi. Katılımcıların yařları 22 ila 25 arasındaydı. Veriler temel bilgi anketi, anlatılar ve rportajlar gibi yntemler kullanılarak toplandı. Bu veriler, katılımcıların staj deneyimleri sırasında yařadıkları deneyimleri ve bu deneyimlerin iyi oluřları zerindeki etkilerinin daha derinlemesine anlařılması konusunda yardımcı oldu. Veri analizi iin Yorumlu Fenomenolojik Analiz (IPA) yaklařımı kullanıldı. Anlatılardan ve rportajlardan toplanan veriler satır satır kodlandı ve ortaya ıkan temalar vaka iinde ve arasında bađlantılar kurmak iin kullanılarak genel veya st dzey temalar belirlendi. Etik konularla ilgili olarak katılımcılara alıřma hakkında nceden detaylı bilgi verildi ve bilgilendirilmiř onamlarını imzalamadan nce soru sorma řansı verildi. Ayrıca katılımcıların rahatsızlık hissi yařamalarını nlemek iin takma adlar kullanıldı.

### Bulgular

Katılımcılardan; mesleki geliřimleri, ğretmenlik mesleđine ynelik algıları, hedefleri ve motivasyonları ile staj dnemlerindeki stres faktrleri hakkında ayrıntılı anlatılar istendi ve onlarla mlakatlar yapıldı. Katılımcıların anlatıları; iyi oluřlarına katkı sađlayan faktrler, iyi oluřlarına engel olan faktrler ve iyi oluřlarına hem katkı sađlayan hem de engel olan faktrler olmak zere  ana tema etrafında toplandı. ğretmen adaylarının iyi oluřuna katkı sađlayan faktrler arasında motivasyon, olumlu geri bildirim, mesleđe olan takdir ve ğrencilerle olan etkileřimleri ortaya ıktı. Katılımcılar, mesleklerinde tatmin ve ama bulmanın yanı sıra ğrencilerinin bařarısı ve mentorlarından aldıkları yapıcı geri bildirimler sayesinde de motivasyonlarının arttıđını dile getirdiler. Bunun yanı sıra zellikle Trkiye bađlamında yapacakları mesleđin takdiri edilmemesine ve toplumdaki statsne vurgu yapıldı. ğrencilerle etkileřimlerinin ve ğrencilerin dil ğrenme abalarını gzlememenin yařadıkları zorlukları unutmalarına ve bu sayede iyi oluřlarına nemli lde katkıda bulunduđunu da eklediler.

Diđer taraftan ğretmen adaylarının iyi oluřunu olumsuz etkileyen faktrlere bakıldıđı zaman yetersizlik hissi, iliřki ynetimi ve oklu roller gibi  ana faktr ortaya ıkmıřtır. ğretmen adayları; İngilizce ğretme becerileri,

öğrencilerle, ebeveynlerle ve mentorlarla ilişkileri yönetme ve çoklu rolleri dengeleme konularında endişelerini dile getirmişlerdir. Bu makalede, dijital teknolojinin öğrenmeyi kolaylaştırarak bilgi erişimini, iletişimi artırarak bağımsız ve grup öğrenme şansları sunması gibi faktörlerin öğrenmeye katkı sağladığı ancak teknolojinin zorluklarıyla başa çıkmanın öğretmenlerin iyi oluşlarını etkileyebileceği ve birçok öğretmenin teknolojiyi iyi kullanmadığı veya yeni teknolojiyi kullanmanın, öğretme etkinliğini azaltabileceği belirtilmektedir. Ayrıca öğretmen adayları, gelecek kaygıları ile ilgili endişelerini ve umutlarını da ifade etmişlerdir.

### **Tartışma ve Sonuç**

Çalışmanın katılımcıları, öğretmenlik uygulama döneminde hayallerine ve gelecek hedeflerine daha da yaklaştıklarını düşünmektedirler. Öğretmen adaylarının başarı ve memnuniyet duyguları da motivasyonlarını etkilemektedir. Çalışmanın katılımcıları, iyi oluşları için temel bir kaynak olarak öğrencileri görmektedirler. Çalışma; öğretmen adaylarının öz yeterlilik inançları, danışman öğretmenin tutumu, ilişki yönetimi ve teknoloji kullanımının iyi oluşları üzerinde olumsuz bir etkisi olduğunu da göstermiştir. Öğrencilerin kazanımları da öğretmen adaylarını etkileyen bir diğer konudur çünkü derslerini mümkün olduğunca kusursuz yapmak istemektedirler. Teknik sorunlar, mentor öğretmen desteğinin eksikliği ve gelecekteki sınavlarla ilgili endişeler iyi oluşlarını olumsuz etkilemektedir. Çalışma, öğrenciler için yüksek kaliteli bir öğrenme ortamı sağlamak ve öğretmenlerin iyi oluşlarını yüksek bir seviyede tutmak için öğretmen adayının iyi oluş düzeyinin artırılmasının gerekliliğine işaret etmektedir. Çünkü bu durum öğretmenlerin etkinliğini ve öğrencilerinin akademik başarısını etkilemektedir.

İyi bir kaliteli dil öğretim sistemi oluşturmak için öğretmenlerin iyi olma durumlarıyla ilgili konuların ele alınması önemlidir. Öğretmenlerin kendi stres düzeylerini, duygularını, motivasyonlarını ve genel iyi olma durumlarını düzenleyebilmeleri için öz düzenleyici ve sosyo-duygusal yeterliliklerinin öğrencilere öğretilmesi gereklidir. Gelecekte daha geniş öğretmen aday örneklerinin bulunduğu çalışmalar yapılması gereklidir. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, öğretmen adaylarının iyi olma durumu üzerine gelecekteki çalışmalara yardımcı olabilecek birçok önemli bulgu ortaya koysa da öğretmenlerin günlük hayatları, görevleri ve sorumluluklarının genel iyi oluşları üzerindeki etkileri hakkında hâlâ çok şey öğrenilmesi gerekmektedir.

## Introduction

Teaching is one of the most demanding and challenging professions as it assigns teachers with the task of addressing learners' academic and non-academic needs (Chirico, Sharma, Zaffina, & Magnavita, 2020; Mercer, 2020). In order to fulfill the requirements of the profession, teachers' psychological state, particularly their wellbeing needs to be given priority in light of factors that foster effective teacher-student interactions, sincere communication, and a confident learning environment. Considering that pre-service teachers are in the early phases of their career, we need to broaden our understanding of their concerns, joys, goals and motivations during their practicum in order to promote their wellbeing in the long term.

There are many stressors that affect teacher wellbeing such as heavyworkloads, a lack of administrative assistance in schools, and parent relations (Gkonou & Miller, 2017; Tomazin, 2008). Additional factors that contribute to this phenomenon include a lack of career opportunities, a lack of participation in discussions about educational reforms, unstable working conditions, and low self-esteem (Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni, 1995; Naghieh, Montgomery, Bonell, Thompson, & Aber, 2013; Ortan, Simut, & Simut, 2021).

This situation is not different for teacher candidates because they are also continuously exposed to various contextual and personal stressors. These stressors include the requirements and responsibilities as teachers and students (Day & Gu, 2010; Hong, 2010). In addition, they face challenges such as deficient feedback and high expectations from their supervisors and mentors. Moreover, they must instruct students, cater to their unique requirements, and develop evaluation skills (Osiesi et al., 2023). As a result of this, they may demonstrate low levels of wellbeing before they start their career as a teacher.

In their work, MacIntyre and Gregersen (2012) propose a method for reducing the intensity of conditioned negative, narrowing emotional responses. This method involves replacing the original affective response with a relaxation response when the negatively conditioned stimulus is encountered (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012, p. 205). The goal here is not to completely eliminate negative emotions but to harness the power of good emotions (Dewaele, Franco Magdalena, & Saito, 2019). Considering the classroom environment, students learn more effectively when they are joyful, interested, happy, proud, and in love because these emotions make it easier for them to notice details in the classroom and sharpen their awareness of linguistic input (Fredrickson, & Branigan, 2005; Richards, 2022). Moreover, Barker and Martin (2009) state that teachers who have high levels of wellbeing improve the quality of the education and this positively affects the relationship with the students as well as their perceptions toward the value of life. All in all, wellbeing of pre-service teachers is considered as both an individual and social phenomenon (Sulis, Mercer, Mairitsch, Babic, & Shin, 2021) and it is described by the way a person reacts to the circumstances and contexts of their lives (Mercer, 2020).

In the light of this information, this study aims to explore the factors that influence pre-service teachers' wellbeing including the challenges and joys they experience in their teaching process. These psychological and behavioral insights are essential for gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the assistance that pre-service teachers might need.

## Literature Review

**Wellbeing.** Defining wellbeing requires a multidimensional approach to fully comprehend people's physical, mental, and psychological states of an individual and address problem areas. Therefore, studies on wellbeing approach this concept from either hedonic or eudaimonic perspectives (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The hedonic approach emphasizes subjective happiness and defines wellbeing as the sense of pleasure against dissatisfaction (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Subjective wellbeing assessments, which involve a person's affective and cognitive evaluations of their own life, have been widely used within this method (Diener, Lucas, & Oshi, 2002, p. 63). These evaluations take into account three separate factors: happiness, positivity, and a lack of negativity in one's life (Diener & Lucas, 1999). Conversely, from the perspective of the eudaimonic approach, subjective happiness and wellbeing are not interchangeable concepts. Eudaimonic theories argue that not all goals or outcomes valued by individuals would necessarily lead to happiness upon achievement (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Following a review of the prior research, Ryff (1995) presented a multifaceted model of eudaimonic wellbeing based on areas of agreement among the various viewpoints. This integration, which is basically about wellbeing as represented by psychological wellbeing yielded six crucial elements; self-acceptance, life purpose, personal growth, autonomy, mastery, and positive relatedness (Ryff, Boylan, & Kirsch, 2021). Each aspect of psychological wellbeing describes the various difficulties individuals face as they attempt to operate effectively.

Apart from the models of wellbeing already outlined above, Seligman (2011) created his own model of wellbeing in which he determined five core elements of wellbeing; *positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment* (PERMA). Each of these five elements, according to him, provides an intrinsic benefit and justifies action. These five measures of wellbeing are said to work together to promote human flourishing. On the

other side, Mercer (2020) states that many wellbeing models neglect to take into account the social context of the concept and mentions a framework for defining wellbeing proposed by Knight and McNaught (2011). This framework expands wellbeing to a variety of domains beyond individual subjectivity by including the family, community, and society as well as a variety of environmental, geographic, socioeconomic, and political variables (La Placa, McNaught, & Knight, 2013). The model includes all four dimensions of the framework, *individual wellbeing; family wellbeing; community wellbeing and societal wellbeing*. In light of this information, it is important to define the concept of wellbeing particularly teacher wellbeing from a broader perspective with distinct elements and connections that have been developed in a variety of contexts.

**Pre-service Teachers' Wellbeing.** Although teachers are exposed to various challenges in their profession which affect their wellbeing, there are some challenges that are unique to language teachers (Babic et al., 2022). These challenges may be due to some factors such as language teacher's role as a cultural mediator, negative feelings when students do not cooperate, teacher's motivational role and institutional factors (King & Ng, 2018). Moreover, language teachers who are not proficient in their target language are more likely to develop anxiety or stress (Nayernia & Babayan, 2019). Considering that pre-service teachers might also face similar challenges, practicum serves as a major component in teacher training to make the students gain instructional skills including preparation, course adaptation, evaluation, teamwork with colleagues, and parent contact.

In this way, pre-service teachers can make use of their theoretical knowledge by integrating it to actual classroom practices with the help of their mentors and supervisors. Throughout this process, pre-service teachers confront multiple challenges which may in turn influence their wellbeing. Regarding the conceptual struggles, it seems that the pre-service teachers' university training and the current methods may conflict with the real teaching practices (Hudson, Nguyen, & Hudson, 2008). Pre-service teachers have to deal with stress because they are in the real classroom with students and they are monitored by their supervisors and mentor teachers. Although pre-service education programs are designed to prepare instructors for their profession, a prevalent criticism is that teachers are not adequately prepared for the so-called "realities" of teaching (Mason, 2017).

## Methodology

### Research Context and Participants

Data were collected from pre-service English language teachers ( $n = 3$ ) who were all students in a four-year teacher education program in one of the foundation universities of Turkey. Creswell (2013) asserts that "*the process of collecting information involves primary in-depth interviews with as many as 10 individuals. The important point is to describe the meaning of the phenomenon for a small number of individuals who have experienced it*" (p. 161). Therefore, researchers selected participants who experienced a certain event or situation closely through purposeful sampling because it allows you to delve deeper into wellbeing of pre-service teachers.

Alase (2017) states that to really grasp the composition of the research subject matter, participants must be chosen from a homogenous sample pool of participants. As a result, three participants, two females and one male, took part in the study voluntarily. They were 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in the English Language Teaching Department at a foundation university, aging between 22 and 25 (see Table 1). They all had their teaching practice at a state high school in a province close to their university. The school, which has around 850 pupils, was located in a big town.

The participants attended various courses in their undergraduate programme. Among these courses, Teaching Practicum in EFL is one of the most important ones since they provide pre-service EFL teachers a deeper knowledge of what it means to be a teacher. All students were required to complete their practicum in their fourth year, which includes activities such as observation, practice, and familiarization with elementary, middle, and high school practices. Before beginning full practicum teaching, it is the aim of the practicum to familiarize pre-service teachers with instructional programs, materials, technological resources, administration, and teaching profession. Moreover, pre-service teachers seize the opportunity to engage in reflective practices alongside their colleagues and supervisor during their practicum. They actively solicit and incorporate feedback from their mentor instructors in order to improve their instructional practices. Additionally, it should be noted that the experiences pre-service teachers acquire through the practicum have a substantial impact on their wellbeing throughout their careers.

Table 1  
*Participants' Demographic Information*

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	The school of teaching practice	Grade level they teach
Deniz	Female	22	State High School	9
Can	Male	25	State High School	9
Eva	Female	23	State High School	10

## Data Collection

The lived experiences of the participants are very important for the research study. In order to get a more comprehensive picture of the lived experiences of the participants during practicum and their effect on the participants' wellbeing, the current study involved qualitative data sources such as a basic bio-data questionnaire, narratives and semi-structured interviews. Narratives were the primary data sources, since they reflect the perceptions of the participants. In addition, not only do narratives provide a lens through which the inner world of individuals can be explored, but they also disclose the nature of language acquisition and instruction (Dağtaş & Zaimoğlu, 2022). Following the narratives, semi-structured interviews with each participant were conducted (see Table 2). According to McNamara (1999), interviews are one of the most commonly used data collection procedures in qualitative research because they allow the researcher to learn details about the problems underlying the participants' lived experiences. Before writing narratives, participants were required to fill out a simple bio-data questionnaire in order to gain a deeper understanding of the environment and any personal issues that could have an impact on their wellbeing.

Table 2

### *Dates of Narratives and Interviews*

Pseudonym	Narratives	Interviews	Time between
Deniz	5 April 2022	12 April 2022	7 days
Can	6 April 2022	20 April 2022	14 days
Eva	7 April 2022	28 April 2022	21 days

In their narratives, participants were asked to make sense of their learning and teaching experiences, stressors, motivations, and relationship with pupils, colleagues and instructors, and their future aspects as language teachers from their own viewpoints. Some of the guiding questions were; *“What motivates you during your practicum? What are some challenges that you face in your practicum?”*. In the narratives and interviews, the participants were free to use either English or their native language. They shared their narratives in a shared Google document. The semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face and the interviews were recorded for transcription after the narratives were analyzed. Based on their viewpoints in the narratives, some related questions were asked to learn details about the participants' lived experiences during the interviews. Some of the interview questions were as follows: *“How do you feel in the classroom?” “How did you feel when your instructor told you to help other teachers?” “How do you currently prioritize your own wellbeing as a pre-service teacher?” “You stated that you had some problems with your instructor, what did you do to overcome these problems?”*. Through the interviews, participants had the chance to concentrate on their own viewpoints and priorities while using the language and words they like. Since they choose how to present their perspective, what to say, and, of course, what not to say, the responder may be perceived as more in control than in a more organized interview.

## Data Analysis

In this study, in order to investigate the lived experiences of pre-service teachers in their practicum, the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach was used. IPA focuses on lived experiences of the participants and this in-depth examination involves the interpretation of the researcher rather than using predetermined categories (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). While trying to grasp and fairly represent the concepts of the respondents to better understand their social and mental lives, the researcher needs to engage with the text through an interpretive process (Smith & Osborne, 2015). Both the narratives and semi-structured interviews were piloted with two voluntary pre-service teachers who were not part of the present research. Changes included the rephrasing of the questions for better understanding and for providing feedback on any confusing or ambiguous aspects that may impact trustworthiness and validity.

The data collected from narratives and interview transcriptions were read repeatedly by both researchers as case by case and as a whole to ensure inter-rater reliability. Once each set of data was coded line-by-line and extensive memoing was conducted, the emerging themes were used to make connections within and among cases. Finally, overarching or super-ordinate themes were identified by looking at how the sub-themes were connected.

Credibility and trustworthiness of the study was established by collecting data through narratives and semi-structured interviews, employing member checks, giving a thorough account of the research procedures, and examining the subjective experiences of the research participants.

## Ethical Issues

The research was carried out following ethical principles. All participants had been informed thoroughly about the study beforehand and they had the chance to get more information before they signed the informed consent form. Moreover, pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' anonymity.

## Findings

The participants were asked to write and talk extensively about their professional development, perceptions of being a teacher, goals and motivations and stressors in their practicum. The participants' account clustered around three superordinate themes: factors contributing to wellbeing, factors detracting from wellbeing and factors both contributing to and detracting from wellbeing (see Figure 1).

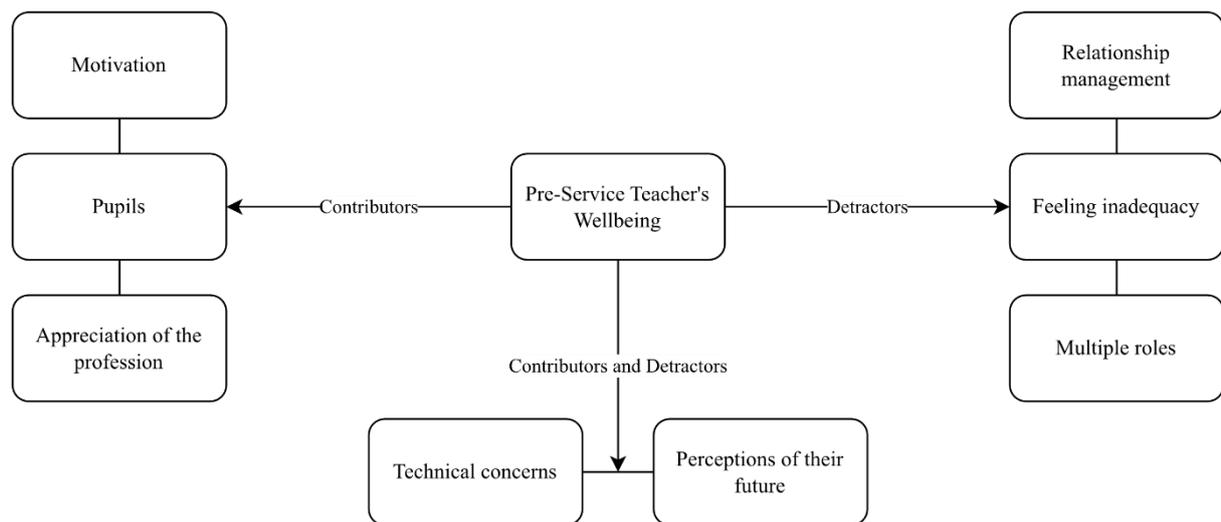


Figure 1. Factors affecting preservice teachers' wellbeing

### Factors Contributing to the Pre-Service Teachers' Wellbeing

**Motivation.** Both in the narratives and interviews, the three participants talked about how motivated they were to become language teachers. It was clear that they derived a sense of satisfaction and purpose from their profession. For example, in his narrative, Can stated: *"Thanks to practicum I am learning how to be a teacher and how to teach in a real classroom. This will make me a better teacher."*

Similarly, Deniz considered herself as a teacher at the moment and she was confident that as she gained experience, she would improve herself as a teacher. During the interview, Deniz also talked about her motivation for the practicum: *"Being a language teacher is something significant. I am really happy that my dreams have come true. I feel as a real teacher in the classroom and I feel that I make progress."*

Deniz and Can also pointed out that success and constructive feedback from their mentors and supervisors had positive effects on their motivation. They said when they felt that they were successful, they put more effort into their work.

**Pupils.** All the three respondents talked about their pupils as having positive effects on their wellbeing from various viewpoints. Observing students' progress and helping them to learn the language significantly contributed to pre-service teachers' wellbeing. Eva referred to her role as a guide in the classroom. Although she talked about the challenges of being a teacher, she thought that guiding pupils and observing their success made teachers forget about the difficulties of being a teacher. Her words showed that she respected her profession and she was aware of the possible challenges that she would face in her career: *"During my practicum, my pupils' desire to learn makes me feel good. Although teachers in general face a number of challenges, I think when you see that your pupils succeed and you guide them, it's worth everything."* (Interview).

Deniz's account emphasized the interaction with students regarding wellbeing. She pointed out her individual problems and she said when she went into the classroom, she forgot about her own problems. The interaction she had with the pupils gave her satisfaction in terms of her career. She stated:

In the classroom, it is like I am somebody else. I forget about all my problems when I interact with the pupils. Talking to them, seeing their engagement in the tasks, their effort to learn English are all precious to me. (Interview)

**Appreciation of the Profession.** In both sets of data, the participants' perceptions of the profession appeared as an influential factor in their wellbeing. Deniz emphasized the meaning she found in being a teacher. She thought that the status of teachers was one of the reasons that she liked her job: *"Being a teacher is like being involved in life. Especially, being a language teacher is valued. I really love my job."* (Narrative).

Can also talked about the status of teachers and pointed out that particularly being a language teacher in the Turkish context. He thought that teachers are respected in society.

Teaching is a highly respected profession in society. In the practicum my pupils respect me as their teacher, my family and friends also respect my job. In my country learning a language is really important and it is highly appreciated. This makes me feel good. (Interview)

Eva referred to Atatürk's (the founder of Turkish Republic) words, to tell the status of her profession *"Teachers: The new generation will be your masterpiece"* These words indicate how important teachers are in shaping the future and the society.

### Factors Detracting from Their Wellbeing

**Feeling of Inadequacy.** The pre-service teachers in this study were concerned about their effectiveness in terms of their ability to teach pupils English. They admitted that they were not equipped enough to satisfy the pupils' needs at different levels. The total emotional demands of responding to pupils include the sensation of changes in their own feeling of self-efficacy. This was apparent in the language that the pre-service teachers used while expressing their feelings. For example, Deniz considered lessons as *"struggling hours to be successful"* although she concluded her fourth teaching practicum. The reason for using the word *"struggling"* results from her desire to be the best in her profession, which affected her wellbeing negatively. Moreover, Can described English courses as *"alarming"* as he believed that he did not have enough ability to manage the classroom or use instructional strategies. For instance, Can was an anxious participant. He was always worried about his pupils' achievement. He stated: *"I have some concerns about my teaching. I do not know whether my pupils can get positive learning outcomes or not."* (Narrative).

His worries gave harm to his wellbeing in different ways such as continuously questioning himself regarding his teaching style, and sleeping problems. On the other hand, Eva talked about the English lesson as *"an undesirable atmosphere"*. This apparent emotional response indicates she experienced high levels of fear towards the teaching context. Eva expressed it briefly in her own words:

The fear of not being able to reach my pupils, not being able to get them to participate in my classes, not being able to get paid for my efforts and not leaving a mark in the lives of the pupils puts me under stress. (Interview)

This highlights a negative impact on her wellbeing associated with her experience of helping students.

**Relationship Management.** All participants expressed an acknowledgment and understanding of the importance of relationships with their students, parents and their own mentors. Moreover, they were concerned about not being able to arrange the limits of the relations. For example, Deniz was worried about trying to communicate with some pupils effectively. She stated that these pupils took their good or bad attitude personally and acted accordingly and added *"I think more about what to say and what not to say"* (Interview). The experience of fluctuations in her communication with her pupils had a great impact on her overall wellbeing. On the other hand, Can was more cautious in his relations and communication with parents, as he believed that these parents blamed teachers for their children's inability to learn English. He expressed his feelings in this way:

I think that some parents in the 21st century are directing all the consequences of their children's inability to learn or the proper education to teachers. Therefore, one of the factors that will put me under stress is to constantly communicate with parents about this issue. (Interview)

Can highlighted how positive it could be when parents also felt responsible for their children's learning process. In addition, Eva pointed out the importance of the relationship with her mentor by using a metaphor: *"Every time I meet her, I feel like I've hit a glacier because of her authoritarian behavior and non-communicative stance."* (Narrative).

Regarding this relationship, Deniz also complained about the lack of opportunities to try out different ideas in the classroom out of her mentor's plan. She explained her experience of this as follows:

I used her lesson ideas for my two-week master teaching session. We sat together, but she dictated what we should do, so I left after a while. I wish I had the opportunity to teach my own lesson and use my own ideas. However, she basically told me what to do. (Interview)

**Multiple Roles.** The participants' multiple roles (student, teacher, friend and colleague) and especially how this affects their availability and capacity to support pupils with their learning process emerge as another subtheme. For instance, Eva succinctly described the difficulty of balancing various roles, saying:

Although I have become more aware of all the things I have to do as a teacher, I still do not know how I can manage it as I still think of myself as a student doing the tasks successfully in the classroom. (Interview)

Eva's comments revealed the difficulties with her transition from student role to professional role. Instead of comprehending the significance of the tasks and how they contributed to the development of her teaching ability, she was still focused on the role of the student, giving priority to her performance and task completion. However, there is a need for pre-service teachers to shift from the role of student to teacher to meet educational responsibilities. Otherwise, pre-service teachers hover between the roles as a student and a teacher and eventually cannot carry out the responsibilities of these roles properly. In addition, another participant, Can described his feelings regarding the confusion of roles in his mind. He stated that he felt frustrated when completing chores rather than doing anything useful for teaching. He portrayed his experience: *"I did lots of things but not teaching such as copying, pasting, stapling, editing the papers... That took up so much of my time. I do not know if I am a teacher or attendant working at school."* (Narrative).

Since he could not reconcile what he did at school with his teaching profession, he began to question the concept of teaching that he had in mind. Besides, Deniz also described her annoying experience at school by the following quote:

All the staff at school had a party... I simply thought it was really rude when my instructor would bring me in and tell the other teachers that I could help them if they need. At that moment I thought I was not her personal assistant but her intern. (Interview)

Due to unclear expectations, Deniz became irritated with the situation. She felt unsure of what her teacher expected of her, teaching or assisting.

It is clear from the excerpts that these participants are in conflict with their roles because their role as a pre-service teacher (i.e. teaching) contradicts with others' expectations (e.g., expectations of general education teachers or administrators), which affects their attitudes toward others as well as their level of passion and energy for their jobs, and more importantly their overall wellbeing.

### **Factors Both Contributing to and Detracting from Wellbeing**

**Technical Concern.** Teachers have the task of developing pupils' technology skills and integrating technology into curricular content. However, many educators may complain about the difficulties that technology may cause, suffer from its effects on their job, or fail to use technology wisely. Moreover, many pre-service teachers see the use of new technology as a barrier to their teaching effectiveness. For example, Eva stated her disappointment regarding technology use in the classroom:

It was my first teaching experience in front of my university supervisor. Although I was so excited, I was sure that everything would go well. When I started my teaching, I realized that there was a problem with the projector in the classroom. I tried to do my best, but it still did not work. Even worse, I did not have extra materials for this lesson. It was not what I expected from my first teaching. I do not want to use technology in my classroom any more. (Narrative)

The unfortunate event that happened to Eva put a barrier against the use of technology in her classroom, more importantly made her feel less self-confident. On the other hand, many other pre-service teachers try to make use of the technology in their classroom. Instead of being concerned with following the prescribed curriculum, they integrate technological tools to their curriculum to make lessons deeper, more meaningful, engaging, and entertaining for students. For example, Can focused on playing games via computers and realized that the pupils become more engaged and enjoy the learning process more. In his interview, he explained his experience like this:

The teaching and learning became more real since it focused on how they were managing their own learning. I concentrated more on teaching them how to learn by playing computer games such as Kahoot, Quizizz. I have completely reversed the typical teaching. I can have some problems with the Internet or computer but it is not important. I know that I can fix it. Using such games is more authentic, richer, and more purposeful. There was a lot of excitement and laughing in the space. (Interview)

Deniz also wanted to use technology in the classroom although she had some worries regarding its use. Her concerns were student enjoyment and engagement because according to her, when pupils enjoyed their learning and felt valued, they were more eager to participate in their lessons. She stated during her interview:

Listening to students' opinions and valuing them is crucial. I changed my teaching style based on their interests although I was a bit afraid. At first, it was hard because some technical problems prevented us from having our lesson. However, I did not give up. I was aware that it was more crucial that the pupils enjoyed their education; felt appreciated, and had choice in the classroom. (Interview)

From three pre-service teachers participating in this study, Eva seemed to be the most negatively affected due to her unfortunate experience with technology use, resulting in a sense of helplessness about her lack of ability to overcome the situation. On the other hand, Can and Deniz sounded pleased at this point during the interview and

used the terms “*enjoyable*” and “*entertaining*” while explaining about the classroom atmosphere with the use of ICT. The fluctuations in the psychological states of participants had an impact on their wellbeing.

***Pre-service Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Future.*** All the three participants reported their worries and hopes about their future regarding passing the required exams or finding a suitable teaching position. They have been training to be a language teacher and now they are really close to their future goals. Eva explicitly stated this in the interview: “*I have goals. I want to do my master’s degree so I need to take some exams. I have to study hard for these exams. It is a bit stressful but I feel confident that I will be successful.*”.

In Turkey, the candidate teachers need to pass an exam in order to be appointed to a state school as a teacher. Deniz did not think that she would pass the exam the first time so she made a plan to work in a school where she would be happy. Here being happy was her priority, but she also stated that in the long term she would be successful in the exam and she was very excited about her being appointed to a state school. She said “*I know I will have more responsibilities, but I am ready for it*” (Narrative).

Can’s account captures the personal perspective in relation to starting a new life. He considered starting his career as a new beginning. Considering the difficulties, he would face, he was worried about finding a job and he was hopeful like his friends. He reported: “*It is a new era in my life; I will live on my own. I will take the exam to be appointed later. Actually, I want to be a teacher, whom people respect.*” (Narrative).

## Discussion

This study investigated perceptions of pre-service language teachers’ wellbeing during their practicum. We were only able to highlight some of the most important elements influencing or hindering pre-service teachers’ wellbeing within the scope of this research. In this section, the main themes emerged from the data are discussed: motivation, pupils, appreciation of the profession, feeling inadequate, relationship management, multiple roles, technical concerns and perceptions of their future.

As teacher candidates, the participants of the study are motivated to become language teachers and this is their primary goal. They think that the practicum makes them closer to their dreams and future goals. It is believed that teachers perform better if they are passionate about their profession and enjoy and appreciate their careers (Kunter & Holzberger, 2014). Besides, their reason to become a teacher is drawn from a feeling of purpose they experience at the start of their career and this also affects their decision to remain in their profession (Steskal, 2015). The feeling of success among pre-service teachers serves as an additional motivational factor. When examining motivational theories, specifically the expectancy-value theory within the realm of cognitive theories of achievement motivation, certain studies indicate that the anticipation of success and the subjective significance attributed to a task play crucial roles in motivating individuals in their academic pursuits as well as career decisions (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). When teachers have a sense of success and satisfaction, they will be more motivated to put their energy and effort into it.

Wellbeing is impacted by social and environmental elements in addition to human qualities and psychological states (Babic et al., 2022). In this study, the participants remark the students as one of the primary sources of positivity for their wellbeing. Numerous studies have demonstrated the beneficial effects of the positive teacher-student relationship on teachers’ wellness and work satisfaction (Collie, Shapka, & Perry, 2012; Talbot & Mercer, 2018). The participants of the present study give particular importance to the pupil-teacher relationship because it is their first encounter with the pupils in a real classroom. As they state; interacting with the pupils, seeing them progress significantly promotes their wellbeing. According to research, a significant portion of an individual’s wellbeing and happiness levels may be attributed to their choices on how they perceive the world (Seligman, 2011). Generally, the pre-service teachers in this study emphasize the sense of meaning they attribute to their job; that is how they interpret the status of teachers and its contribution to their wellbeing. According to Hargreaves and Flutter (2013), job happiness is strongly related with individual elements and social aspects of teaching, whereas job discontent is caused by external factors like how others perceive the job. However, pre-service teachers of this study perceive being a language teacher as a highly respected profession. Teachers who find teaching meaningful and regard the profession as respected in society are more likely to report on the positivity of their wellbeing. In a number of studies on language teachers, teachers think that their profession is not respected in society or they complain about the low status of the job (e.g., Mercer, 2020; Babic et al., 2022); however, the pre-service teachers think the opposite. This may be because they are at the start of their career and their perspectives determine their cognition and wellbeing.

This study also showed that pre-service teachers’ beliefs in their abilities, their supervisor’s attitude, their relationships to the school management and colleagues and their familiarity with educational technology had an impact on their wellbeing. These factors in turn influence their personal, or physiological and emotional states. For instance, the unsatisfactory classroom environment or unfavorable mentor teacher reactions have an impact on these teachers’ emotions in courses as in the case of Deniz, Can and Eva. Teaching becomes fulfilling and

results in the desired learning outcomes for the pupils when pre-service teachers feel at ease in their classroom setting (Bandura, 1997).

As it is understood, pre-service teacher education is necessary to ensure a high-quality learning environment for future students. The main concern is whether or not pre-service teachers receive or fulfill the basic learning requirements for the experience with the mentor teacher they work with. This experience helps pre-service teachers to carry out the duties of the position and increase their professional development while assisting student teaching. For instance, pre-service teachers who cooperate with their mentors show off their newly acquired skills more. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) state that teachers' well-being must be kept at a high level since it affects both their capacity to teach and the academic success of their students. For instance, in the present study, the participants felt nervous and concerned as they were unable to exhibit their effective teaching skills because of their mentors.

Additionally, one of the participants faced technical difficulties in her teaching context, which decreased the level of her wellbeing and she failed to successfully educate the students. However, teachers who have high wellbeing never give up and work hard to help their pupils reach their learning goals. They decide how to improve their teaching environment when their wellbeing is affected negatively. As in the case of Can and Deniz, they search for appropriate teaching strategies, and they struggle to overcome the difficulties they face in their teaching context (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Moreover, their ability to teach improves and they work more to support pupils' academic success.

On the other side, pre-service teachers have contradictory views about their future career since they both have worries and hopes. Their primary concern is the exam they have to take in order to be appointed to a state school. The Selection Examination for Professional Posts in Public Organizations (KPSS) is utilized in Turkey. Following their graduation, all pre-service teachers who wish to become practicing teachers must take the KPSS test. The respondents' aim is to study hard and pass the test to be able to practice their profession. Although they think that it will not be easy to start their career, they are hopeful and excited about their future.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

As teacher wellbeing is a priority for professional practice (Mercer, 2020), we investigated pre-service teachers' wellbeing considering that pre-service teachers' perspectives throughout their practicum may help teacher educators understand motivations, internal conflicts, and difficulties future teachers face as their self-perceptions change from those of students to those of professionals. This understanding could aid teacher educators in facilitating this transition by guiding pre-service teachers'. Moreover, the findings from this study can hopefully be used to inform future research by shedding light on pre-service teachers' perspectives during practicum.

To enhance pre-service teachers' wellbeing, university supervisors should work with student teachers to assist them become confident in their abilities to master the competences and professional activities of teaching at an early stage in their careers. This will enhance pre-service teachers' ability to teach effectively. Apart from these, there are numerous strategies and interventions that can be employed to promote their wellbeing. Initially, stress management and self-care education should be provided through workshops and seminars, allowing pre-service teachers to learn techniques for stress management, self-care, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Additionally, mentorship programs should be established in which experienced teachers or educators offer guidance to set realistic expectations for pre-service teachers in relation to daily teaching routines and assist them in navigating obstacles. Access to counseling services and mental health professionals should also be ensured so that any emotional difficulties can be effectively addressed. Encouragement of pre-service teachers to form peer support networks can cultivate a sense of community by allowing for the sharing of experiences and provision of emotional support. Moreover, incorporating wellbeing-focused modules or courses into the curriculum for teacher education can raise awareness and equip pre-service teachers with the skills necessary to prioritize their own wellbeing. It is essential to provide training on burden management, including strategies for effective task prioritization, time management, and setting reasonable expectations. In addition, encouraging reflective practices such as journaling and self-reflection enables pre-service teachers to increase self-awareness, personal growth, and resilience. Creating flexible learning environments, such as part-time or online programs and accommodating assignment due dates, assists future educators in balancing their academic and personal obligations. What is more, it is essential to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of pre-service teachers throughout their training in order to foster a sense of accomplishment and motivation. Collaboration between teacher education programs, mentorship programs, and institutions is also essential for the effective implementation of these strategies and interventions to promote the wellbeing of pre-service teachers.

Apart from these, in order to establish a good quality language teaching system, it is important to address the issues which are related to teacher wellbeing. The concept of wellbeing also entails examining how to develop, promote, and foster our social and personal qualities in addition to how to manage stress and overcome obstacles in our day-to-day teaching careers (Mercer, Oberdorfer, & Saleem, 2016). In this sense, it is vital to support the pre-service

teachers to promote their wellbeing as teacher wellbeing is closely related with learning and learner wellbeing. It is highly recommended that pre-service and in-service teacher training programs would benefit from the self-regulatory and socio-emotional competencies required to regulate their own levels of stress, emotions, motivation, and overall wellbeing (Mercer, Oberdorfer, & Saleem, 2016).

All in all, although this study produced a number of significant findings that may help future studies on pre-service teacher wellbeing, there is still much to be learned about how teachers' everyday lives, duties, and responsibilities affect their general wellbeing. Additionally, it needs to be considered that this study is limited by the number of participants in one teacher education program at a foundation university although responses were obtained from three different participants with the help of narratives and interviews. Participants in other teacher education programs and geographical areas might have different experiences that may influence their wellbeing. Despite the fact that our research sheds light on factors that affect pre-service teachers' wellbeing, it is important to take caution to its small sample size, the short time frame and possible interpretations. In other words, the results provide just a cursory and temporal glimpse into the thoughts and feelings of a small group of pre-service teachers during practicum. Therefore, future studies with a larger sample of pre-service teachers are necessary. Moreover, having pre-service teachers narrate their experiences as an ongoing process throughout their practicum would reveal stronger data and lead into more explanatory conclusions.

### **Declaration of Competing Interest**

The authors have declared that they have no financial or non-financial interests that could potentially interfere with the study.

### **Funding**

The authors did not receive any financial support for their present research.

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**Ethics Committee Permission Information:** *This research is carried out with the permission obtained with the 02 numbered decision of the Çađ University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee in 07/04/2022.*

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