# USING PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTS FOR CHOOSING TEACHER CANDIDATES

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## Abstract

Importance of educational psychology has been emphasized for increasing student success and improving professional competencies of teachers. There has been a growing number of studies showing the effect of teacher motivation, burnout, identity and beliefs on teaching practices and professional performance. However, psychology in teacher education needs more research studies for preparing student teachers psychologically for the complexities and dynamics of real classrooms. Therefore, this study aims to find out and compare the perspectives of pre-service and in-service English teachers about using psychological tests for choosing teacher candidates for pre-service teacher education. For this purpose, 298 pre-service English teachers, all seniors, from four different state universities and 47 in-service English teachers from 15 different cities in Turkey participated in the study. The participants were given a written interview protocol (WIP) to share their perspectives via yes/no questions and open-ended questions. Out of 345 participants, 299 (86.6%) reported that English teacher candidates should go through some psychological tests to be accepted for pre-service teacher education programs aside from getting high scores from the high-stake examination called KPSS, which is a national examination that people have to pass to become a public personnel in Turkey. Yet 27 (7.8%) opposed the idea for various reasons. Additionally, 5 (1.5%) had mixed perspectives with both positive and negative perspectives and 14 (4.1%) were suspicious about the applications. The findings show that the perspectives of pre-service and in-service English teachers are similar to each other because high majority of the participants of both groups think that teacher candidates should pass some psychological tests before beginning university education. These perspectives offer important insights into teacher education in Turkish context. Policy makers and authorities are advised to implement effective policies in setting criteria for choosing teacher candidates like establishing university committees consisting of teacher educators who will hold a face-to-face interview the candidates, apply certain psychological tests, examine the answers of the candidates and reach a final decision about the acceptance or rejection of the candidates.

**Keywords:** Teacher education, educational psychology, psychological tests, psychology in teacher education, teacher selection criteria.

## ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ SEÇİMİNDE PSİKOLOJİK TESTLERİN KULLANILMASI

## Öz

Öğrenci başarısını artırmak ve öğretmenlerin mesleki yeterliklerini geliştirmek için eğitim psikolojisinin önemi vurgulanmaktadır. Öğretmen

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motivasyonu, tükenmişlik, kimlik ve inançların öğretim uygulamaları ve mesleki performans üzerindeki etkisini gösteren birçok çalışma yapılmıştır. Bununla birlikte, öğretmenlik eğitimindeki psikolojinin, öğrencilerin psikolojik olarak gerçek sınıfların karmaşıklıkları ve dinamikleri için hazırlanması için daha fazla araştırılmasına ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu nedenle bu çalışma, hizmet öncesi ve hizmet içi İngilizce öğretmenlerinin, öğretmen adaylarının hizmet öncesi öğretmen eğitimi için seçiminde psikolojik testleri kullanma konusundaki bakış açılarını ortaya çıkarmayı ve karşılaştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla, Türkiye'deki dört farklı devlet üniversitesinden 298 İngilizce öğretmeni adayı ve 15 farklı ilden 47 hizmet içi öğretmen araştırmaya katılmıştır. Katılımcılara, evet / hayır sorularıyla ve açık uçlu sorularla bakış açılarını paylaşmak için yazılı bir görüşme protokolü (WIP) verildi. 345 katılımcının 299'u (% 86,6), İngilizce öğretmeni adaylarının hizmet öncesi öğretmen eğitimi programlarına kabul edilmek için, ulusal bir sınav olan ve insanların Türkiye'de bir kamu görevlisi olmak için geçmesi gerektiği KPSS denilen sınavından yüksek puan almanın yanı sıra bazı psikolojik testlerden geçmesi gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir. Yine de 27 kişi (%7.8) çeşitli nedenlerle bu fikre karşı çıktı. Buna ek olarak, 5 kişi (% 1.5) hem olumlu hem de olumsuz görüşleri içeren karışık görüşler gösterdi ve 14 kişi(% 4.1) bu uygulama hakkında şüpheli idi. Bulgular, hizmet öncesi ve hizmet içi İngilizce öğretmenlerinin bakış açılarının birbirine benzediğini göstermektedir çünkü her iki grubun katılımcılarının büyük çoğunluğu, öğretmen adaylarının üniversite eğitimine başlamadan önce bazı psikolojik testleri geçmesi gerektiğini düşünmektedir. Bu görüşler Türkiye bağlamındaki öğretmen eğitimine önemli bilgiler sunmaktadır. Politika yapıcılar ve yetkililerin, adaylarla yüz yüze görüşmeler yapacakları, bazı psikolojik testleri uygulayacakları, adayların cevaplarını inceleyecekleri, adayların kabulü veya reddi hakkında nihai bir karara varacakları ve öğretmen adaylarının cevaplarını inceleyecek öğretmen eğitimcilerinden oluşan üniversite komiteleri kurmak gibi öğretmen adaylarını seçmek için kriterleri belirlemede etkili politikalar uygulamaları önerilmektedir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler**: Öğretmen eğitimi, eğitim psikolojisi, psikolojik testler, öğretmen yetiştirmede psikoloji, öğretmen seçim kriterleri.

### Introduction

Psychological tests are not unique to the field of education since they are also employed in other fields like forensic psycholinguistics to evaluate testimonies in courts (Archer, Buffington-Vollum, Stredny, & Handel, 2006). Inspired by these fields, education has also referred to psychological tests for various purposes. In this regard, psychological tests can be applied on teacher candidates before they are accepted at higher education institutions.

English language teachers go through different stages and take on different roles throughout their educational lives. First, they are learners of English, then they are pre-service teachers and finally they become in-service teachers. In other words, they are first learners, then student teachers who are learning to teach and finally they turn into teachers who actively teach in real educational settings. When the circle they pass is considered, it is seen that they change roles as they pass from one educational stage to another. While moving among different stages, they may experience conflict and reality shock as they are involved in various learning-teaching

experiences. Their beliefs and identity are also influenced by these changing roles and stages, which cause them to feel psychological conflict in the course of teaching career. Thus, a smooth transition is needed for the emerging identity of student teachers (Brown, 2006). In this regard, student teachers need to be introduced to the complexities of real classroom dynamics. Also, they should be exposed to the psychological requirements to cater for stakeholder needs and be prepared by teacher educators in line with the changing expectations of different school settings.

Having concrete teaching experiences is an emphasized aspect for psychological training for student teachers. They are advised to be educated with a theory-practice approach with the help of mentor feedback and keeping journals for reflective purposes in order to lessen reality shock they experience, help them build a bridge between theory and practice, and prepare them psychologically for the complexities of real classroom settings (Drechsel, Breunig, Thurn, & Basten, 2014).

Psychology in teacher education is multifaceted and affected by both personal, institutional and contextual factors. It is apparent lack of fulfillment of teacher needs and expectations may cause them to feel burnout, lessen their initial motivation and result in various health problems. Although there are a number of studies about the effect of psychological factors on student achievement and teacher performance, there seems to be a missing aspect in educational psychology in terms of using psychological tests in teacher education. Thus, this study aims to compare the views of pre-service and in-service English teachers with regard to inclusion of psychological tests for choosing teacher candidates pre-service teacher education programs in Turkey.

**Review of Literature**

Psychological state of teachers affects their teaching practices. With the help of staff development activities, their psychological needs or problems can be detected and they can be given professional support accordingly. Such staff development activities have turned into in-service trainings in teacher education and these trainings create changes on teachers' beliefs, identity, motivation and competences (Smylie, 1988).

Educational psychology has come a long way due to its impact on the quality of education and student success so educational institutions make investments to ensure quality. However, not every country attaches the same importance to educational psychology and even the institutions in the same country may differ from each other owing the role and place of educational psychology. Similarly, Harris and Joy (2010) states that there needs to be more studies and activities on educational psychology by specifying the situation to the case of

Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada. They further add that more time should be devoted to prevention, counselling, and research although psychoeducational assessment takes a lot of time.

Teachers are expected to fulfil student needs but what about their own teachers? If teacher expectations are not fulfilled, they are likely to ignore student expectations. To carry out their tasks effectively, student teachers and beginning teachers should be supported by administrators and experienced peers. Teachers are in need of professional support especially in their first year of teaching when they are likely to experience reality shock due to theory-practice gap and context-bound differences (Evelein, Korthagen, & Brekelmans, 2008). That some teachers need a specific type of mentoring and induction results from the rate of job-leaving and burnout among them (Gold & Roth, 2005). However, all teachers need support throughout teaching career depending on contextual factors, personal features, professional needs and learner characteristics.

Existence of educational psychological theories does not guarantee their success because what counts is their effective integration into educational settings and teacher education. In other words, how and whether the psychological theories promote learning and better student potential. Tomlinson (2008) calls the practicality of these theories as psychology-based pedagogy and proposes five issues to be considered for an effective integration into teaching circles. These issues center on forming learning/teaching outcomes, selecting appropriate psychological theories, specifying learning functions, designing teaching activities for learning promotion potential (LPP) and questioning implementation quality of the activities. How a theory works or fails with students is decided during implementation so effective application of psychological theories requires theory-practice gap and consideration of the afore-mentioned issues.

First year of pre-service teacher education is an emphasized period for teacher education because to some extent teacher identity and beliefs are shaped in this period. Another reason is the fact that personal and social identity is associated with professional identity of teachers (Friesen & Besley, 2013).

Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) emphasizes the interplay between the external and internal drives, and combines both instrinsic and extrinsic motivation because outer (external) goals may be internalised by the individual at different levels of control and both types of motivation can co-exist within the same individual. Based on self-determination theory and structural equation modeling, it was found out that psychological need thwarting of teachers is associated with job pressure and leads to burnout and health problems among physical

education teachers in the long run (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Cuevas, & Lonsdale, 2014). According to the study conducted with 304 teachers in Singapore, stakeholders were found to have a determining role in teacher empowerment since the attitudes of principals and supervisors influence teaching practices and teachers' psychological empowerment (Lee & Nie, 2014).

Professional competencies of a teacher not only include the field-based knowledge and skills but also cover psychological qualifications because it is a must for a teacher to be able to cope with student misbehavior and discipline problems, and have effective classroom management strategies. Teachers' psychological features shape their belief and identity. That's why psychological preparation of teachers needs to be facilitated and supported by teacher educators and mentors. To point out the effect of teachers' psychological capital, Bissessar (2014) conducted a questionnaire and survey on 51 female Trinidadian teachers and found out that their psychological capital and their collective self-esteem are correlated. If teachers have a high level of self-esteem, they can be more optimistic and have a positive image in the eyes of students, which in turn, will influence their performance and teaching practices.

Psychology has an important place in teacher education because lack of personal and professional competences may cause some teachers feel burnout in their institutions. In a similar vein, it was found out that teachers at secondary schools in Jordan suffered from a mid-level of psychological burnout, lack of achievement and low-level dullness (Alkhateeb, Kraishan & Salah, 2015). The underlying causes could be personal, institutional or contextual but whatever the problem is, it is the teacher who allows outer factors to influence his/her teaching practices or job satisfaction so s/he must be psychologically well-prepared before stepping into his/her future classes. Yokuş (2015) studied the psychological states of 333 music teacher candidates in Turkish context and demonstrated that the participants' psychological resilience and academic achievement were positively correlated.

Teachers' productivity and development is influenced by various factors and stakeholder involvement is one of them. Being the leaders at schools, attitudes of principals are important for psychological state of teachers because the management pattern adopted deeply affects the structure of education. When schools are regarded as workplaces, then teachers are employees and principals are the leaders. In this regard, managerial judgements taken largely shape the educational route of schools. If principals possess transformational leadership features in order to adapt to the rapidly changing nature of educational moves, they can create an innovative climate at schools and contribute to teachers' psychological empowerment (Sağnak, Kuruoz, Polat, & Soylu, 2015). With principals as transformational leaders, teachers'

psychological and professional needs will be met, they will be given opportunities to try out new applications and be involved in innovative activities.

Teachers may feel distressed when they encounter problems related to classroom management. Especially new teachers are thought to have difficulty in coping with student misbehavior and discipline problems, and suffer from emotional exhaustion. At this point, the self-resources come into play in that the combination of cognitive and psychological resources predict the classroom management practices of teachers (Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015). That's why teachers should be empowered with the required pedagogical and psychological resources to solve problems.

Certain inner and outer factors cause achievement gaps on the part of students but recovery of these factors can be ensured with the help of various psychological interventions. In this respect, Spitzer and Aronson (2015) claim that such interventions as meditation, role models, emotional reappraisal, imagining possible selves, belongingness and cooperative learning help to raise student achievement. But what about teacher achievement? And what if the teacher is uninformed about such interventions, lacks the competencies to satisfy psychological needs of students or possesses psychological problems?

Similar to students whose basic psychological needs affect their academic achievement (Maralani, Lavasani, & Hejazi, 2016), teachers' psychological needs also influence their functioning and teaching practices so their psychological needs count for their professional development.

A positive school climate is important for students to feel secure in classrooms. Such a supportive environment may not be present in some school settings and even some students face psychological abuse by teachers. As a stakeholder in education system, students' views should be gathered to explain the possible causes and influence of teachers' psychological abuse. According to students at senior secondary schools in Nigeria, causes of such abuse may result from coming late, low performance and vulgar language usage by the teachers, and participation of school principals and counsellors is a must to create awareness among students, teachers and parents (Pur, Liman, & Ali, 2016).

Minakhmetova and Pyanova (2016) point out the integration of psycho-diagnostic activities into teacher education to improve pedagogical and educational activities at schools, and enhance student learning. They further claim that psycho-diagnostic activities should become important components of teacher education to create a psychological culture at schools which they call as "man-to-man" sphere.

Psychological needs of beginning teachers deserve a closer look since they are found to suffer from burnout and leave teaching profession in early years of their career (Singh & Billingsley, 1996). Since working conditions of teachers are highly context-bound, their psychological states are influenced by these conditions variably. Teacher self-efficacy and affective commitment were found to decrease the rate of job-leaving among 272 beginning teachers in Belgian context, which seems to prove the importance of motivational and psychological features of beginning teachers for persuading them to continue teaching (De Neve & Devos, 2016).

In a nutshell, improving working conditions of teachers, equal distribution of resources and providing professional support appear to be reasonable factors to cater for psychological needs of teachers. Psychological abuse on teachers may cause them implement the same kind of psychological abuse on their own students. The fact that educational success is a team work and is affected by the involvement of different parties, each stakeholder at institutional, local and national level has certain responsibilities and tasks to prevent psychological abuse at schools. To solve the problem with concrete experiences, holding workshops, seminars and conferences is a highlighted aspect to lessen the problem. These activities should take place both at pre-service and in-service teacher education so that the beginning teacher will appreciate the value of previously held activities and gain competencies to diminish psychological problems of students and teachers at educational contexts.

Based on the existing literature, it can be claimed that a growing body of research has contributed to the understanding of psychology in terms of teacher identity (Brown, 2006; Friesen & Besley, 2013), teacher induction (Evelein, Korthagen, & Brekelmans, 2008; Tomlinson, 2008; Drechsel, Breunig, Thurn, & Basten, 2014), teacher beliefs (Smylie, 1988), psychoeducational assessment (Harris & Joy, 2010), teacher burnout (Singh & Billingsley, 1996; Gold & Roth, 2005; Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Cuevas, & Lonsdale, 2014; Alkhateeb, Kraishan & Salah, 2015; De Neve & Devos, 2016), stakeholder involvement (Lee & Nie, 2014; Sağnak, Kuruoz, Polat, & Soylu, 2015; Pur, Liman, & Ali, 2016), psychological capital (Bissessar, 2014), psychological resilience (Yokuş, 2015), classroom management (Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015), psychological intervention (Maralani, Lavasani, & Hejazi, 2016) and psycho-diagnostic activities (Minakhmetova & Pyanova, 2016).

In light of the relevant literature, there have been various studies which touch upon the psychological needs of teachers and the role of counselling for fulfilling the goals of educational psychology. However, there is still an important gap to be filled in the literature to take educational psychology and teacher education into consideration together for comparative

purposes by including different types of stakeholders. In this regard, psychological testing appears to be an overlooked area in teacher education in Turkish context. Therefore, this study aims to find out and compare the views of pre-service and in-service English teachers about the inclusion of psychological tests as a criterion for choosing teacher candidates before pre-service teacher education and shed light upon a missing aspect that have a crucial effect on the quality of teachers.

**Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive research design where findings determine causes and effects, and the aim is to explain the phenomenon in question. In this way, the researcher can acquire a lot of information through description. Here the participants attach meaning to the study depending on their contexts (Maxwell, 1992). Various data collection tools covering qualitative and quantitative tools can be employed depending upon research questions but observation, case studies, and surveys form the three categories of this research design (Talbot, 1995). As Burns and Grove (2003:201) states, descriptive research has the power to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens.

Likewise, the study aims to gather the views of pre-service and in-service teachers about using psychological tests for selecting teacher candidates. As a way of conducting descriptive research design, qualitative research method was adopted to benefit from the power of words and get in-depth answers from the participants. However, frequency and percentage findings were also added and elaborated with participant quotations so as to utilize complementary purposes of words and numbers (Cresswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003; McKay, 2006; Dörnyei, 2007). In this way, the claims and interpretations made will be strengthened and supported by both numerical and non-numerical data (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; McKay, 2006). The nature of the study and the research questions led the researcher to refer to descriptive research in the form of qualitative research method since the focus of the study centers around the phenomenon in question in its natural settings, participants contextualize the findings in light of their own experiences and perspectives and these perspectives come from the "descriptions" of the participants for the researcher to gather and analyze data.

The universe of the study includes pre-service and in-service English teacher in Turkey. The sample of the study consists of senior student teachers receiving education in English Language Teaching (ELT) Department at four different state universities in Turkey and in-service English teacher actively working in cities in different regions of Turkey. The reason for choosing senior student teachers is the fact that they have mastered theoretical lessons, observed their mentors at state schools and are doing their practicum with real students in real school

settings. The reason for chossing in-service teachers from different cities in all regions in Turkey was done to increase the generalizability of findings. Since there were special criteria to choose the participants, purposeful sampling was used in the study. (Dörnyei, 2007). For this purpose, 298 pre-service and 47 in-service English teachers willingly participated in the study so in total there were 345 participants.

The data were gathered via the Written Interview Protocl (WIP) designed by the researcher. The items in the WIP were formed based on the review of literature upon teacher education and educational psychology. The draft form of the WIP was sent to six academicians at ELT Department in Turkey to get expert opinion and increase the validity and reliability of the protocol. The experts gave feedback upon the content, wording, order of the questions and layout in order to contribute to content and face validity of the data collection tool. The researcher made the revisions required, changed the wording of some questions to simplify them, modified the physical appearance of the paper and reordered the questions. The revised form was sent back to the same experts again and the modifications went on till all the experts totally agreed upon the appropriateness of the WIP.

Parallel with research method and data collection tool, qualitative data analysis tools were employed and the researcher drew conclusions from the written statements of the participants (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). In this respect, constant comparison of grounded theory was employed to categorize and analyse the data. However, to reduce the subjective nature of qualitative analyses, a separate and independent coder apart from the researcher was also involved in data analysis procedures. The second coder was a research assistant doctor working in ELT Depaetment at a state university in Turkey. Both coders followed a zigzag pattern while interpreting and analysing the data because they compared the incoming data with the previous and next samples and then decided on the category of the statement (Glaser & Strauss, 1980; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Yet the coder followed Informed Grounded Theory (Thornberg, 2012) which a new term and differ from grounded theory with the review of related literature before beginning data analysis in order not to miss important points, be left with irrelevant details and empowered with the previous research results. Since the researcher informed the second coder about the topic, gave examples from previous studies and showed how to interpret the statements like looking for words with positive or negative connotations and marking the suspicious statements. To ensure intra-rater reliability, each coder revised their previously formed categories after three weeks they completed them. For inter-rater reliability, the coder held a meeting after analysing 25% of the data and the agreement levels of the analyses was calculated according to inter-rater reliability formula suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994:

64), and found to be 84%. The coders discussed on the disagreed points and decided to categorize the statements with both positive and negative sentences seperately. They also agreed to analyze the samples with suspicious statements as a seperate category. And then they continued to anaylse the rest of the data. They held the second meeting after 100% of the data were analysed. This time inter-rater reliability was found to be 94%. They went on discussing upon the disagreed statements and the discussions continued till there was complete agreement.

**Findings**

This study aimed to reveal and compare two groups of participants. First of all, the findings that provide general framework are given and then the findings of each group are given separately for comparative purposes.

Table 1: Perspectives of participants about using psychological tests.

| Answer Type | Pre-service | In-service | F | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive | 258 | 41 | 299 | 86.6 |
| Negative | 24 | 3 | 27 | 7.8 |
| Mixed (cond) | 3 | 2 | 5 | 1.5 |
| Suspicious | 13 | 1 | 14 | 4.1 |
| Total | 298 | 47 | 345 | 100 |

According to Table 1, 4 main categories emerged at the end of the data analyses. High majority of the participants (N: 299, 86.6%) held positive perspectives towards using psychological tests for choosing teacher candidates while a number of them (N: 27, 7.8%) held negative perspectives. This is followed by the participants who were suspicious about using psychological tests (N: 14, 4.1%) and finally, the least frequency belongs to those who either held a combination of positive and negative perspectives or had statements including conditional clauses (N: 5, 1.5%).

Table 1 provides the general framework of the findings. However, the two participating groups need to be explained and dealt based on intra-group findings. Thus, the frequency and percentage of the emerging categories of pre-service and in-service teachers will be given separately for comparative purposes.

Most of the pre-service English teachers (N: 258, 86.5%) held positive perspectives about using psychological tests for choosing teacher candidates while the ones with negative perspectives (N: 24, 8.1%) came second. This is followed by the participants who were suspicious (N: 13, 4.3%). Finally, there were three participants (1.1%) who held mixed perspectives.

As for in-service participants, high majority of the in-service English teachers (N: 41, 87.3%) had favorable perspectives about using psychological tests for choosing teacher candidates whereas some of them (N: 3, 6.4%) had negative perspectives. The in-service teachers with mixed perspectives (N: 2, 4.2%) are in the third place and the least frequency is seen with one participant (2.1%).

When the perspectives of pre-service and in-service English teachers are compared, it is seen that there are similarities between them. First of all, four main categories emerged in both groups, and high majority of the participants in both groups held positive opinions about using psychological tests for choosing teacher candidates and this is followed by the ones with negative perspectives. However, the pre-service participants with suspicious statements outnumbered their in-service counterparts and had higher frequency. In addition, for pre-service participants, the least frequency belongs to the mixed group while it is the suspicious group for in-service participants.

The numerical findings may not be sufficient to explain the details or underlying reasons of the perspectives. Thus, quotations of pre-service and in-service participants are also given to reinforce the quantitative findings. It should be noted that this study presents one part of a large-scale study and each participant was given a number based on the order of participation. The numbers between 1-366 belong to pre-service teachers while the numbers between 367-450 belong to in-service teachers. STE refers to student teachers while T refers to in-service teachers. The following number indicates the order of participation.

The pre-service participants with positive perspectives mainly criticize the national examination called KPSS (Kamu Personeli Seçme Sınavı- Public Personnel Selection Exam) due to its content and determining role for becoming a public personnel in Turkey. They think that psychological tests should become criteria for choosing and appointing teacher candidates and favor their effect on student and student success. They find these tests very important and necessary to become a teacher. While some stress the importance of communication with learners for educational success, others point out the existence of teachers with serious psychological problems. They see these tests as an opportunity to eliminate some unsuitable participants and exclude psychologically bad teachers. They finally add that these tests are the requirements of teaching profession.

*STE54: Yes, I think it should be used. Even today there are some teachers who scolds their students and hits them.*

The student teacher does not approve the violent behaviors of teachers and sees these tests as a way to detect such personalities beforehand.

*STE70: I agree. Because psychological proficiency is the most important factor. Teacher always communicate with children. He/she is model for them. Teacher should be sufficient psychologically.*

This student teacher states that teacher is a model in the eyes of students and s/he always interacts with them so s/he must be psychologically well-prepared for unexpected situations.

*STE336: I think these test should be use to enter in ELT department, and repeated periodically.*

Some pre-service participants thought that psychological tests should be continuously used in teacher education.

*STE345: Yes, it is important. For example, if these tests come out her/his character, they should be. They can tend to violence or sexual things, it should be prevented.*

This student teacher sees psychological test as a means of detecting potential misbehavior of teachers and preventing them from referring to undesired actions.

The in-service participants with positive perspectives also criticize the content and importance of KPSS and suggest psychological tests should turn into requirements of teaching profession. They also add that these tests can be used to check teaching compassion. For example, the following teacher states:

*T394: Yes, exactly psychological tests should be used to choose teacher candidates.*

S/he sees these tests as criteria to select teacher candidates.

*T412: I totally agree. People with psychological problems can be teachers (which I witnessed!) They are not beneficial to their students.*

*T441: Teaching needs some qualifications, so if a teacher has problems, that will affect learners. Therefore, psychological tests should be used to choose teacher candidates.*

The first teacher gives examples from her own experiences with a colleague and the second one states the negative effects of psychologically-bad teachers.

In contrast to these participants, some pre-service and in-service teachers did not appreciate the use of psychological tests for choosing teacher candidates. One of the frequently referred issue is the hesitation of objectivity and some labelled these tests as not useful. While

some expressed the probability of pretention, others highlighted the necessity of practical experience and implementation of interviews.

*S244: No, I don't think so. The tests probably will be adapted from a different country, so they won't be local and realistic enough.*

The student teacher questions the validity and reliability issues of the psychological tests to be used for choosing teacher candidates, and thinks that they may not serve national and local needs and expectations of Turkey.

*STE300: No. If they are applied this means that Ministry of Education does not trust the teachers that they grow.*

This participant takes the use of psychological tests as the negative image of teachers by national authorities.

In-service teachers appear to have similar concerns and criticism.

*T 368: Only psychological tests are not sufficient.*

*T388: No, I don't. because these tests cannot be only decisive indicators. However, the implementation of KPSS exam is not enough to be teacher.*

These teachers report that only relying on psychological tests could be counter-productive and not enough to select teacher candidates but they also criticize KPSS as appointment criteria. Rather, these tests are seen as complementary and informative tools instead of decisive tools.

Apart from these participants, some were suspicious about the use of psychological tests for choosing teacher candidates.

*STE60: Maybe. I do not exactly know what I can say about this.*

*STE330: I'm not sure if they really would be valid and reliable. On the other hand, it would be useful to determine if the person is qualified enough to be a teacher in the mind.*

*T400: I don't know. Maybe some kinds of these psychological tests should be used.*

That these participants were unsure about using psychological tests stems from their lack of knowledge about what these tests are like, what they include and how they are implemented. One of them seems to be undecided about their validity and reliability but decided about the mental health of a teacher as an indispensable criterion. The last one suggests paying special attention to the instrument to be used in terms of its effectiveness.

As the last category, some participants held mixed perspectives. That is, they either possessed a combination of positive and negative perspectives or had statements including conditional clauses.

*STE332: I think they should, but these tests shouldn't be so strict. They should measure certain points.*

*STE361: I think, psychological tests should be used but they cannot be practical and reliable in our country.*

*T397: If it is effective, it should be used.*

While some participants state that psychological tests should be used to measure certain points and shouldn't be followed strictly, some lack belief in their practicality and reliability. A small number of them support the idea that they can be used only if they are proved to be effective.

### Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to find out and compare the perspectives of pre-service and in-service English teachers about using psychological tests for choosing teacher candidates for pre-service teacher education. For this purpose, 298 pre-service English teachers, all seniors, from four different state universities and 47 in-service English teachers from 15 different cities in Turkey participated in the study. Out of 345 participants, 299 (86.6%) reported that English teacher candidates should go through some psychological tests to be accepted for pre-service teacher education programs aside from getting high scores from the high-stake examination called KPSS, which is a national examination that people have to pass to become a public personnel in Turkey. Yet 27 (7.8%) opposed the idea for various reasons like lack of objectivity, probability of pretention, the necessity of practical experience and implementation of interviews.

Echoing Brown (2006), the participants stated that psychological testing and monitoring of teachers is a continuous process which should start at the beginning of pre-service teacher education and go on all stages of in-service teacher education programs. Because teaching is a long journey full of unexpected situations and changes, teachers have different needs, expectations, problems and support systems. To build a bridge between pre-service and in-service teacher education programs, provide professional help and ensure a smooth transition, psychological testing and monitoring of pre-service and in-service teachers should be conducted with field experts, teacher educators and psychologists.

The statements of the participants who were unsure or had mixed perspectives confirm the findings of Harris and Joy (2010) because the required time and resources should be allocated to carry out counselling and research via psychoeducational assessment. In parallel with Drechsel, Breunig, Thurn and Basten (2014), the participants' perspectives reflect that an effective induction system will become possible only if student teachers are educated and psychologically prepared in line with the complexities of real educational settings and learner characteristics. However, lack of professional support may cause teachers experience various psychological problems like incompetency or burnout. Thus, psychological empowerment of teacher by related stakeholders is of great importance for student success (Lee & Nie, 2014; Sağnak, Kuruoz, Polat, & Soylu, 2015) and their own professional development as well (Yokuş, 2015). This is the point which is highly stressed by in-service teachers who claim that the attitudes of colleagues, administrators, students and parents have an unavoidable effect upon the psychological state and motivation of teachers either positively or negatively. Besides, the statements of the participants with positive perspectives are in parallel with the findings of De Neve and Devos (2016) because motivational and psychological sources of teachers were cited to have an important role in sustaining their career.

As some of the participants reported, the reason for the continuation of psychological testing in in-service teacher education in addition to pre-service teacher education is to guarantee smooth transition between the two periods and not to ruin identity and beliefs of teachers and teacher candidates (Brown, 2006), which underlines the important role of psychological testing for an effective teacher induction system. Once teacher candidates are used to be monitored and tested upon their psychological suitability for teaching, they are less likely to experience reality shock (Evelein, Korthagen, & Brekelmans, 2008) since they will be already equipped with the necessary self-sources to cope with expectations (Drechsel, Breunig, Thurn, & Basten, 2014). However, in Turkish context, transition from pre-service teacher education to in-service teacher education appears to be problematic due to lack of controlled and supportive induction system. Based on participant statements, there should be more psychoeducational assessment (Harris & Joy, 2010) and counselling services at schools should be strengthened at an advanced level so that certain misbehaviors and undesired events can be prevented earlier. Participant comments verify the findings of Lee and Nie (2014) for effective role of stakeholders on teacher psychology. Yet, some in-service teachers were found to suffer from peer pressure and feel overwhelmed by administrative expectations, which they claim to affect their motivation and psychological states adversely. Participant statements also support the claims of Bissessar (2014) because some teachers with self-esteem revealed more optimistic opinions than the others stating that a teacher's image in the eyes of students means more than

any external problems. It is again stressed by the participants that psychological states of teachers may either cause burnout and job leaving (Alkhateeb, Kraishan & Salah, 2015; De Neve & Devos, 2016) or affect their professional development positively (Yokuş, 2015; Seiz, Voss, & Kunter, 2015; Maralani, Lavasani, & Hejazi, 2016). As the participants put forward, the changing features of schools, in other words contextual differences, shape teacher motivation and success so an innovative school climate (Sağnak, Kuruoz, Polat, & Soylu, 2015) and supportive administrative staff are seen to be the key aspects in teacher psychology.

In Turkey, there are psychological counselling and guidance teachers at schools who are responsible for the professional choices of students, discipline problems and provide psychological support for teachers and students when needed. However, they may not be enough in some cases which results from the psychological problems of teachers and end in extreme outcomes. Teachers need to be psychologically supported and tested throughout their professional lives to go on their career effectively. This continuous cycle should begin at the beginning of pre-service teacher education, go on till the graduation and continue in in-service teacher training activities until the teacher retires so that the teacher will be systematically and gradually prepared for the psychological needs and requirements of teaching profession, be equipped with competences to cope with future problems and know how to refer to self-skills when needed. However, teacher candidates in Turkey do not go through any psychological test while they are accepted to receive education at universities and they are not tested regularly or observed closely before graduation. Getting the B.A. diploma and a high score on the high-stake examination called KPSS (Kamu Personeli Seçme Sınavı- Public Personnel Selection Exam) seem to be enough to become an in-service teacher in Turkey but the realities of educational settings may be demanding for some teachers. Teachers might become disturbed by student misbehaviors, parental attitudes or discipline problems. To prevent burnout at early stages, prepare student teachers with the real dynamics of educational settings and equip them with the needed personal resources, both pre-service and in-service teachers should be given psychological tests and under close scrutiny all the time.

Student teachers can hold a face-to-face interview and be applied various psychological tests by a committee of the university consisting of teacher educators, experts and psychologists before they are accepted to university level education. Similar interviews and tests should go on in-service teacher education by the related stakeholders to sustain teachers' needs, detect their problems and offer reasonable and practical solutions in order to contribute to their personal and professional growth.

In sum, the following suggestions are made for using psychological tests for teacher education in Turkey:

- Each higher education institution which include teacher training programs should set up a committee to interview the teacher candidates before accepting them officially into their institutions.

- This committee should consist of the lecturers of the related teacher training programs, experts, experienced in-service teachers.

- At this point the Ministry of National Education, the related higher education institution and Council of Higher Education should act cooperatively in terms of personnel to conduct the interview and reach a decision, duration, the content and structure of the interview, the place and documents.

- The accepted teacher candidates should be monitored during pre-service teacher education program till graduation. The related teacher education should fulfill and hand in a report about the psychological suitability of the teacher candidate in question for teaching to the Ministry of National Education.

- In the same way, in-service teachers should be observed and assessed by inspectors, authorities, psychology experts and school directors about their psychological suitability. In other words, psychological testing and evaluation should come from different sources since each stakeholder can provide a different perspective and contribute to detailed evaluation.

- Necessary time, sources, personnel, place and devices should be allocated by authorities and policy makers to include psychological testing of teachers.

- The rules, application procedures and sanctions should be well-defined by authorities and policy makers to prevent any misunderstanding and undesirable results.

- Finally, for pre-service teachers, scores of psychological testing should be included in the final acceptance score in addition to their university exam scores. Similarly, psychological suitability of teachers should be a part of in-service teachers' evaluation.

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