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An Analysis of Teachers' Levels of Participation in Cultural Activities

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Abstract

This research aims at examining secondary education teachers' levels of participation in cultural activities on the basis of a) gender, b) seniority, c) field of teaching, d) order of preferences, and e) factors influential in their preferring the teaching profession. The research was conducted with 434 teachers, 265 of whom were female and 169 of whom were male. A questionnaire was given to the participants so as to gather the data. The Chi-square was employed in the analyses. The findings obtained demonstrated that there were no differences between teachers working in secondary education institutions in terms of participating in cultural activities on gender basis whereas there were significant differences on the basis of seniority, field of teaching, order of preferences and the factors influential in preferring the teaching profession. The results reached showed that almost half of the teachers took part in cultural activities.

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1. Introduction

The most important element in a nation's attaining the level of contemporary civilization is, undoubtedly, education. One of the objectives of the educational system is to raise the qualified manpower required by the country and to offer the citizens education of citizenship. Yet, it is possible to achieve such goals only through successful institutions of education. The success of the educational institutions and maintaining the success depend on the extent to which the educational goals are attained. Teacher stands as the main component in operating the educational programme and in achieving the goals of education (Karagözoğlu, 2003).

Teacher is defined as the person who puts the theoretical bases of teaching into practice and thus guides the changes to occur in individuals' behaviours which are to add quality to both individuals' and society's life (Şahin,

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2010). Teaching is the art of rising the next generations as benevolent people and good citizens (Tekişik, 1986: 1-9; Gerek, 2006: 7). Article 43 of the Law of Basic Education numbered 1739 defines the teaching profession as “an expertise job taking on the educational, teaching-related and such duties of the government” (Şahin, 2010), and states that preparation for the job can be facilitated through education in general knowledge, the special field of teaching and in pedagogy (Özoğlu, 2010). In line with this statement, the programmes for teacher education are composed of courses in field knowledge, vocational knowledge, and pedagogy, and through such a harmony the goal is to set up a structure to secure that students become ready to serve to the society in cognitive and affective ways and in behaviour.

As is widely known in our country, the task of transferring the cultural heritage is assigned to schools (Tezcan, 2010). Culture is a complex whole including the knowledge, art, traditions-customs and abilities, skills and habits alike that an individual learns and gains (Er, 1997); and therefore, teachers are liable to pass down the society’s culture to people. This requires that teachers should participate in the cultural activities. Activities such as reading daily newspapers and popular books, going to the cinema, the theatre and the concerts, visiting museums, joining in touristic visits in and out of the country, attending congresses and conferences are considered to be cultural events. In research conducted by Pehlivan (200), it was found that teachers participating in cultural activities displayed more positive attitudes towards teaching profession. Hence, this current study examines teachers’ levels of participation in cultural activities and seeks answers to the following questions:

- 1) Does teachers’ level of participation in cultural activities differ on the basis of gender?
- 2) Does teachers’ level of participation in cultural activities differ on the basis of seniority?
- 3) Does teachers’ level of participation in cultural activities differ on the basis of branch of teaching?
- 4) Does teachers’ level of participation in cultural activities differ on the basis of the order of job preference?
- 5) Does teachers’ level of participation in cultural activities differ on the basis of factors influential in choosing teaching as the job?

2. Method

2.1. Research Problem

The general survey model, one of the descriptive research methods, is used in this research. General survey model is a series of survey arrangements made with the whole of the population or with a group or sample of it so as to reach a general statement about the population in a population of a great number of elements (Karasar, 1994).

2.2. Study Group

The study group was composed of 434 teachers working in the state high schools located in the central districts of Ankara, 265 of whom were female and 169 of whom were male.

2.3. Data Collection Tool

A questionnaire form developed by the researchers was used in this research as the tool of data collection.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data were analysed through the SPSS 15 package programme. Frequencies, percentages (%) and the Chi-square were used in the analyses.

3. Findings

Table 1. The Levels of Participating in Cultural Activities According to Gender

Can you participate in cultural activities?			
Gender	Yes	No	Total
Female	48.3	51.7	100
Male	52.1	47.9	100
Total	49.8	50.2	100

Insignificant

Table 1 shows the levels of participating in cultural events on gender basis. Accordingly, 48.3% of the female teachers and 52.1% of the male ones said that they could join in such activities. A close examination of the table makes it clear that approximately half of both groups can participate in cultural activities. Based on this finding, it may be stated that gender is not very influential in participation in cultural activities, but that the level of participation should be raised.

Table 2. The Levels of Participating in Cultural Activities According to Seniority

Can you participate in cultural activities?			
Years of working	Yes	No	Total
1-5 years	52.4	47.6	100
6-11 years	55.0	45.0	100
12-17 years	41.3	58.7	100
18-23 years	46.6	53.4	100
24 years or more	61.2	38.8	100
Total	49.8	50.2	100

$P=,046 < ,,05$ the differences in the percentages between the groups are significant

The level of participating in cultural activities according to seniority is shown in Table 2. As is evident from the table, 52.4% of the teachers with 1-5 year experience, 55.0% of the teachers with 6-11 year experience, 42.3% of those with 12-17 year experience, 46.6% of those with 18-23 year experience, and 61.2% of those with 24 or more years of experience say that they could participate in cultural activities. The data in the table show that the groups do not display a very consistent structure. It is remarkable that the group with 24 years or more experience is the one with the highest level of participation. This might have stemmed from the fact that they had become competent in teaching, they had no longer such responsibilities as looking after their children since their children had already grown up, or from the teacher training policies of their time.

Table 3. The Levels of Participating in Cultural Activities According to the Branch of Teaching

Can you participate in cultural activities?			
Branch of teaching	Yes	No	Total
Social sciences	50.0	50.0	100
Science studies	38.0	62.0	100
Turkish / foreign language	61.3	38.7	100
Vocation and culture	61.5	38.5	100
Total	49.8	50.2	100

$P=,001 < ,,01$ the differences in the percentages between the groups are significant

Table 3 shows teachers' levels of participation in cultural activities according to their branch of teaching. According to the table, 50% of teachers of social sciences can take part in such activities while 38.0% of science studies teachers, 61.5% of language teachers (Turkish /foreign language), and 61.3% of the teachers of vocational and cultural courses are able to participate in cultural activities. The data presented in the table demonstrate that the groups with the highest level of participation in cultural activities are language teachers and the teachers of vocational and cultural courses whereas the group with the lowest level of participation is the group of teachers teaching science studies. This situation shows that teachers of science studies do not allocate much time for cultural activities or that they do not consider those activities very important.

Table 4. The Levels of Participating in Cultural Activities According to the Order of Preference

The order of preference	Can you participate in cultural activities?		Total
	Yes	No	
1-5	56.6	43.4	100
6- 11	45.9	54.1	100
12- 17	32.7	67.3	100
18-24	38.2	61.8	100
Total	49.8	50.2	100

$P=,005 < ,.05$ the differences in the percentages between the groups are significant

Table 4 shows the level of teachers' participation in cultural activities on the basis of their preferences for fields of study they made in the university placement exam. According to the table, the level of participation is quite high for those who put teaching in their first five preferences while it tends to decrease with preferences in the lower orders. The table also makes it clear that the level of attending cultural activities is high with teachers who have chosen the profession themselves whereas it is low with teachers who have chosen the profession with the persuasion of others or due to obligatory reasons.

Table 5. The Levels of Participating in Cultural Activities According to the Factors Influential in Choosing the Job

Factors influential in choosing the job	Can you participate in cultural activities?		Total
	Yes	No	
Their free will	51.8	48.2	100
Other people's wish/persuasion	66.7	33.3	100
Obligatory causes	40.4	59.6	100
Total	49.8	50.2	100

$P=,038 < ,.05$ the differences in the percentages between the groups are significant

Table 5 shows the data concerning teachers' levels of participation in cultural activities according to the factors influential in choosing the teaching profession. Accordingly, 51.8% of the teachers who have chosen the job with their free will take part in cultural activities while 66.7% of them who have chosen the job with the persuasion of other people and 40.4% of those who have chosen teaching for obligatory reasons participate in those activities. It is evident from the table that those who have chosen teaching with the persuasion of other people have the highest level of participation in cultural activities. It may be said that this group is the one that needs self-development most.

4. Conclusions And Recommendations

This research has been performed so as to determine the high school teachers' levels of participation in cultural activities. The findings of the research, which was conducted with 434 teachers (265 female and 169 male teachers), demonstrated that 48% of the female and 52% of the male teachers could participate in cultural events. From the perspective of seniority, 52% of them with 1-5 year experience, 55% of those with 6-11 year experience, 41% of those with 12-17 year experience, 47% of those with 18-24 year experience and 61% of those with 24 years or more experience could follow those activities. In terms of the branch of teaching, 50% of social sciences teachers, 38% of science studies teachers, 61% of Turkish/foreign language teachers, and 62% of teachers of vocational and cultural

courses could participate in cultural activities. When analysed from the perspective of the order of preference, it was found that 57% of those putting the teaching profession in their first five preferences, 46% of those putting it in their 6th-11th preference, 33% of those putting it in their 12th-18 preference, and 38% of those putting the job in their 18-24th preference could join in cultural activities. An evaluation on the basis of factors influential in choosing the job showed that 52% of those choosing the job by themselves, 67% of those choosing it with other people's persuasion, and 40% of those who had to choose the profession due to some reasons could participate in cultural activities. In general, 50% of teachers said that they could participate in cultural activities whereas 50% said they could not join in those events. As is commonly known, teaching is a profession which requires cultural accumulation, and research done in this field (Pehlivan, 2009) has shown that the levels of teachers' participation in cultural activities influence their attitudes towards the teaching profession. Therefore, both the Ministry of Education and the administration in schools should organise activities to lead teachers into participating in such events, and thus teachers should be encouraged to join in those activities. Besides, additional research studies analysing teachers' participation in cultural activities from different perspectives should be done.

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