

Career Choice: Motivations and Perceptions of the Students of Education

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ABSTRACT In Turkey as well as in other countries, choosing an occupation is a lifelong process. Motivations and perceptions of students are of great importance when they choose an occupation that they think is best for them. This paper investigated the motivations for choosing teaching as a career and the perceptions of the teaching profession among 315 first year undergraduate students of a state university in Istanbul. It employed a non-experimental survey research design involving quantitative and qualitative approach. Two open-ended questions were used to obtain authentic and spontaneously expressed responses: (a) What is your primary motivation for choosing teaching as a career? (b) What is the first phrase(s) (in terms of a proverb, a quotation, a saying or a cliché) about teachers and/or teaching that come to your mind? Results revealed that their main motivations of the freshmen students were having a worthwhile job/career; a stable salary; helping children and touching their lives; and personal satisfaction and improvement. Moreover, the respondents tended to perceive teaching as a profession that is ideal for women, comfortable, sacred, and relatively low-paid.