



| Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi |

## The Views of Preschool Teachers Working in Turkish Schools Abroad on Teaching Abroad: The Case of Saudi Arabia

### Yurt Dışı Türk Okullarında Görev Yapan Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Yurt Dışı Öğretmenlik Görevine Dair Görüşleri: Suudi Arabistan Örneği

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#### Keywords

- 1.Abroad
- 2.Task
- 3.Teaching
4. Pre-school

#### Anahtar Kelimeler

- 1.Yurt dışı
- 2.Görev
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#### Abstract

*Purpose:* Purpose of this study is to research opinions of pre-school teachers working at Turkish Schools in Saudi Arabia about making teaching duties in a foreign country.

*Design/Methodology/Approach:* This study, the participants of which were eight pre-school teachers in Saudi Arabia in the 2019-2020 education year, was conducted in the qualitative research approach and data were analyzed through the descriptive method.

*Findings:* In result part, it was seen that the participants wanted to work in a different country to learn a new culture, a new language and to improve themselves in their professions and they thought that students showed differences in social and cognitive abilities. Besides, it was also mentioned that the participants tried to teach students Turkish the most, they put stress on national values and social abilities. Again, it was mentioned that participants had various difficulties during their duties and especially female teachers had struggles to settle down and adapt.

*Highlights:* In the study, it was determined that teachers found the content and quality of the orientation seminar held before assignment insufficient, they had difficulties in benefiting from health services, and the substitution of family members due to country conditions created an economic difficulty.

#### Öz

*Çalışmanın amacı:* Bu araştırmanın amacı, Suudi Arabistan'daki Türk Okullarında görev yapan okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin yabancı bir ülkede öğretmenlik görevi yapma konusundaki görüşlerini araştırmaktır.

*Materyal ve Yöntem:* Katılımcılarını 2019-2020 Eğitim Öğretim yılında Suudi Arabistan'da görev yapan sekiz okul öncesi öğretmenin oluşturduğu araştırmada, katılımcılara altı soru sorulmuştur. Çalışmada nitel araştırma yaklaşımı kullanılmış ve veriler betimsel yolla analiz edilmiştir.

*Bulgular:* Çalışma sonucunda katılımcıların yeni bir kültürü tanımak, yeni bir dil öğrenmek ve kendilerini mesleki anlamda geliştirmek istedikleri için yurt dışında öğretmenlik yapmak istedikleri, Türkiye ve Suudi Arabistan'daki öğrenciler arasındaki farklılığın en çok sosyal ve bilişsel becerilerde olduğunu düşündükleri sonucuna ulaşmıştır. Bununla birlikte öğretmenlerin öğrencilere en çok Türkçe öğretmeye çalıştıkları, milli değerler ve sosyal beceriler üzerinde durdukları belirlenmiştir. Yine, katılımcıların görev esnasında yaşadığı çeşitli sıkıntılar ortaya konmuş; özellikle kadın öğretmenlerin göreve ilk başladıkları zaman düzen kurup uyum sağlama aşamasında daha çok zorlandıkları anlaşılmıştır.

*Önemli Vurgular:* Çalışmada öğretmenlerin görevlendirme öncesi yapılan uyum seminerinin içerik ve niteliğini yetersiz bulduğu, sağlık hizmetlerinden yararlanma konusunda sıkıntı yaşadıkları, ülke şartlarından kaynaklı aile üyelerinin ikamesinin ekonomik zorluk oluşturduğu tespit edilmiştir.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education, which we can define as the process of changing the behaviors that individuals are born or acquire later and to evolve into a more positive, is a lifelong interaction that can be carried out in a formal or informal way. The formal acquisition of education, which can occur informally in the family, at home, on the street, in the peer, in the workplace, briefly in all areas of life and instantaneously, in an unplanned, unscheduled and unsystematic way, is carried out in educational institutions in a planned, programmed and systematic way. The first place that comes to mind as an educational institution where the most effective behavioral changes are experienced at an early age is undoubtedly schools. The unconditional way for the state, which has various duties in areas such as family, law, health and security, to fulfill these duties and to continue its existence, is the education it provides to individuals, especially through schools. The "Right to Education", which is given to individuals by the state and defined as a "right", has taken its place among the Basic Principles of Turkish National Education. (National Education Basic Law, 1973)

In today's modern life, where the population is increasing very rapidly, both the widespread use of technology, the emergence of individualism with the individual's becoming self-sufficient, and the voluntary or involuntary adaptation of people to changing living conditions, socialization has become one of the first functions of schools. As a result of socialization defined by Kağıtçıbaşı (2007) as human interaction with the socio-cultural environment in which they live; In this process, they will learn more closely the society they belong to, the customs and traditions, values and rules of the society, whether they live in them or not, and they will enable the society to live with the sense of belonging. The first period of time that this process will begin in a formal way is undoubtedly the preschool years, which have a vital importance in human life. The preschool period is so important and valuable that it cannot be left alone and cannot be ignored because it is critical in terms of the speed of development, the formation and development of personality.

Republic of Turkey; It has included preschool, primary and secondary education institutions, which are among the formal education institutions, both in the country and abroad, and the Ministry of National Education has established the Overseas Organization by providing education in their own language to citizens living abroad. This study has been carried out to examine the opinions of preschool teachers working in Turkish Schools in Saudi Arabia about their teaching duties abroad. In the study, the procedure of determining the teachers to be assigned abroad by the Department of Education and Training Abroad, which is within the Ministry of National Education Overseas Organization and is responsible for Turkish Schools opened abroad, is briefly included. Afterwards, the purpose, method, findings, results and recommendations of the research are included in the study, which mentions the literature on the subject.

### Assigning Teachers Abroad

Some of the duties of the Department of Education and Training Abroad, to which International Turkish Schools are affiliated, are to open schools in countries deemed necessary due to the needs of our citizens abroad, to protect the national and cultural identities of our citizens and their children abroad, to ensure their harmony with the society they live in, and to increase their education level and recruiting and planning, selecting and assigning the teaching staff needed by schools abroad. (Foreign Education and Training Department, 2014). In this context, an examination is held every year to select the teacher to be assigned abroad and teachers who meet the following conditions are entitled to take the exam:

1. Being a citizen of the Republic of Turkey,
2. Having provided at least 5 years of service in the education services class on the last day of the application,
3. Being actually working for the staff in the Education and Training Services Class within the Ministry of National Education subject to the Civil Servants Law No. 657 (excluding those who are employed on a contract with substitute teachers),
4. Having completed military service or being exempted from military service,
5. Having at least an undergraduate degree,
6. Not being handicapped with a physical and mental illness or bodily injury that might prevent him from performing his duty and not being a carrier of any contagious disease,
7. Even if the periods specified in Article 53 of the Turkish Penal Code No. 5237 dated 26/9/2004 have passed; Crimes against the security of the State, crimes against the constitutional order and the functioning of this order, embezzlement, extortion, bribery, theft, fraud, abuse of trust, fraudulent not to be convicted of the crimes of bankruptcy, rigging the tender, rigging the execution of the act, laundering the assets of the crime or smuggling
8. Not having an obstacle to his assignment abroad
9. Not having received a heavier disciplinary action than warnings and reprimands in the last 10 years,
10. To have the ability to represent the service required,
11. For those who were assigned abroad by the Inter-Ministerial Joint Cultural Commission, having been successful in their previous positions abroad and having worked for at least 2 years as of the last day of the examination application from the date of starting their domestic duty.
12. As of the last day of the application for the exam in the foreign language, which is the basis for assignment, for the designated countries, within the last 5 years, at least at the level of "E / 50 Points" from the YDS or YÖKDİL Exam, or as of the last day of the examination application, accepted by ÖSYM and to have a language certificate equivalent to this

score from the exams internationally accepted (TC. Ministry of National Education General Directorate of Higher Education and Foreign Education, 2020).

Although there is no language certificate requirement for Saudi Arabia, all teachers to be assigned abroad are subjected to the Professional Competence Exam and the Representation Ability Exam. Candidates who score 60 or more out of 100 (100) full points are considered successful in the Vocational Qualification Exam held in writing for the determination of professional competence, and among these candidates, success is ranked according to the score superiority, starting from the candidate with the highest score, the number of teachers determined each year to take the Representation Ability Exam are accepted. The Representation Ability Exam is held by the Inter-Ministerial Joint Cultural Commission in the form of an oral exam. The threshold score of the Representation Ability Test is 70. The ranking of success for assignment is determined by taking the arithmetic average of the Vocational Competence Exam and the Representation Ability Exam score among the candidates who get at least 70 points from the Representation Ability Exam conducted by the Inter-Ministerial Joint Cultural Commission. Exam results are valid until the end of the 3rd year following the year in which the exam is held for those who are entitled to be assigned abroad and have not yet been assigned.

### **Literature Review**

Before starting the research, literature on the subject was scanned and no study was found on preschool teachers working abroad. It has been concluded that there are almost no studies on all teachers working abroad.

Written by Tarhan and Peker in 2008, the study titled "The Problems of Educational Consultants, Attachments and Attaché Assistants in Overseas Organization" is noteworthy in terms of its closeness to the subject. In the study, it was concluded that the main problems of the Education Consultants, Attaché and Attaché Aids working in the Ministry of National Education Overseas Organization were caused by the insufficient resources of textbooks, tools, equipment and materials, and the lack of technical equipment reinforced these problems. Again, with this study, it was stated that there are some problems related to the competence and training of the personnel assigned abroad.

Cevahir (2013), in the master's thesis entitled Problems and Solution Suggestions of Teachers Affiliated to the Ministry of National Education assigned Abroad (Germany Example), the orientation seminar before the assignment was not sufficient and appropriate in terms of duration and content, teachers were in financial difficulties, some of them started a new life by going into debt, He concluded that the teachers did not like health facilities and felt lonely.

Gündoğdu (2014), in his study titled "Problems of Teachers Working in Saudi Arabian Turkish Schools", worked with 226 teachers using a questionnaire technique, and as a result of the study, it was concluded that the most important factor in the reason why teachers who participated in the study preferred Saudi Arabia is "sacred places". In the same study, it was determined that the teachers did not find the physical conditions of the schools they work in sufficient for education and they mostly experienced problems related to "health".

In another study named "Problems of Teachers Working in the Organization of Ministry of National Education Abroad", the teachers who participated in the study expressed their perceptions of loneliness and financial problems because they thought that they were not protected as the most important problem; They stated that other problems arise from these problems (Akman, 2017).

Karasu (2018), aimed to determine the reasons lying behind the decision to go abroad for teachers who will be appointed by MEB General Directorate of European Union Foreign Relations in his study titled "The Reasons of Going Abroad by the Ministry of Education" in 2014. In the study, it was concluded that the reasons for teachers to go abroad were to get to know new places, to introduce their culture and to have cultural interaction.

Finally, Gül and Toker Gökçe (2019), in their work titled "Problems in the Management of Abroad Education: Teacher Perspective", in which they aim to determine the problems experienced by the teachers who are assigned in Europe by the Ministry of National Education with the administration in the relevant countries, from their perspective (consultancy and attaché's) problems experienced; They were grouped under two main headings: deficiencies in implementation and administrative deficiencies. Consultancy and attaché's shortcomings in practice; They identified injustices in the distribution of tasks as attitude towards teachers, indifference, lack of communication, lack of guidance, and not having an educator background. Again, administrative deficiencies as a result of the study; permission restriction, unnecessary bureaucracy, incomplete duty of advisor and attaché, management by proxy, problems caused by civil servants and coordinators, and distance.

After the studies examined in the literature, the opinions of preschool teachers who work abroad about their teaching duties abroad emerge as an issue worth examining.

### **Purpose of the Research**

The aim of this study is to examine the opinions of preschool teachers working at Saudi Arabian Turkish Schools on their teaching duties abroad.

### **Importance of Research**

The study is important because it is the only study conducted on pre-school teachers working in Saudi Arabian Turkish Schools based on pre-school teachers in their education duties abroad.

## METHOD

### Research Model

This research is based on the qualitative research method. Because qualitative research enables the use of data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis, and enables a holistic investigation of the subject in the natural environment (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). Again, with this method, it is possible to examine the meanings arising from the experiences of the people studied (Ekiz, 2003). The study was also carried out in case study design, one of the qualitative research methods. In this design, the factors related to a situation are investigated in a holistic manner and how they are affected by the relevant situation and how they affect the situation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013).

### Data Collection Tools and Data Collection

Semi-structured interview technique was used as a data collection tool in the study. In the semi-structured interview technique, there is no obligation to adhere to the questions, additional questions can be asked and the questions can be stretched according to the situation of the interview. (Merriam, 2013). The researcher, who also worked as a teacher abroad, had a conversation with teachers from every branch at her school before interviewing with the volunteer teachers who participated in the study, and tried to learn about her views and experiences about her teaching abroad. As a result, he presented the interview questions she prepared to two experts. The interview form consists of two parts, which include the demographic characteristics of the participants, consisting of eight items, and their views on the six-question on teaching abroad. The researcher first answered the questions herself with the suggestion of the first expert, and the interview questions were presented to the second expert opinion in line with the answers she gave. As a result of the arrangements made, the interview questions were made ready. As a result, the researcher informed the participating teachers about herself and the research, and clearly stated that confidentiality and volunteerism are essential. After the briefings, the study was concluded by making face-to-face interviews with two teachers, and with the others via repeated phone calls and teleconferences<sup>2</sup>.

### Official Data on Research Area

According to the data of the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services, 60,500 Turkish citizens live in Saudi Arabia as of 2016 (Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services, General Directorate of Foreign Relations, 2016). Given the vast size, like all citizens living abroad, in Saudi Arabia, Turkish citizens living in both to adapt to the country they live in and on the fact that they tried to protect their values (Özdemir et al., 2009), in June 2020 by the Republic of Turkey 250 teachers have been assigned in Turkish Schools where 3219 students are educated in KSA.As of this date, there are 242 preschool students studying and 9 preschool teachers working. The distribution of the total numbers in the context of schools is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Number of teachers and students in Turkish schools in Saudi Arabia (as of June 2020)**

	Number of Teachers			Number of Students		
	Pre-school	Primary and Secondary	Grand Total	Pre-school	Primary and Secondary	Grand Total
Jeddah International Turkish School	3	50	53	65	896	961
Riyadh International Turkish School	1	47	48	65	642	707
Medina International Turkish School	1	41	42	16	512	528
Tabuk International Turkish School	1	19	20	24	263	287
Mecca International Turkish School	1	30	31	31	206	237
Taif International Turkish School	1	22	23	16	191	207
Dammam International Turkish School	-	16	16	9	155	164
Abha International Turkish School	1	16	17	16	112	128
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>2977</b>	<b>3219</b>

<sup>2</sup>Data collection could not continue face-to-face due to the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak in the country.

Considering the total number of teachers and students in Saudi Arabian Turkish Schools in the 2019-2020 academic year and the importance of each individual in their educational life, the importance of the subject for scientific studies becomes clear.

## Participants

The participants of this study were eight preschool teachers working in Saudi Arabia in the 2019-2020 academic year. While one of the nine preschool teachers was the researcher, who were assigned by the General Directorate of Higher Education and Foreign Education through written exams and interviews, the other eight teachers participated in the study on a voluntary basis.

Teachers were coded as T1, T2, T3, ....., T8 in order to protect the privacy of the participants participating in the study and to understand the research findings easily. Demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of the Study Group**

	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Number of Children	Graduated University	Province of Staff	Professional Seniority	Seniority Status in Saudi Arabia
T1	Male	30	Married	2	Cumhuriyet University	İstanbul	8	1
T2	Female	44	Married	4	Gazi University	Hatay	23	5
T3	Female	31	Married	2	Kastamonu University	Manisa	9	2
T4	Female	33	Married	2	Selçuk University	Konya	11	1
T5	Female	40	Married	2	İnönü University	Kocaeli	17	2
T6	Female	32	Married	2	Hacettepe University	Malatya	11	4
T7	Female	33	Married	3	Selçuk University	Bitlis	13	3
T8	Female	37	Single	-	Selçuk University	Sivas	11	3

As can be seen in Table 2, one of the eight preschool teachers in the study is male and the rest are female. One teacher is single, the other seven teachers are married, and five of them have two children, one teacher has three children, and one teacher has four children. The age of the teachers is between 30 and 44 years old. Professional seniority years range from eight to twenty-three, and seniority status in Saudi Arabia between one and five years. Again, three of the teachers have graduated from Selçuk University, while the other teachers are graduates of Cumhuriyet University, Gazi University, Kastamonu University, İnönü University and Hacettepe University. Finally, the province where each of the teachers has a staff registration has been determined as Istanbul, Hatay, Manisa, Konya, Kocaeli, Malatya, Bitlis and Sivas.

## Data Analysis

Descriptive analysis technique was used in the analysis of research data. The purpose of the descriptive analysis technique is to present the obtained data to the reader as faithful to its essence as possible (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In the study, it was aimed to reflect the opinions of the interviewed individuals in an effective way by including direct quotations frequently.

## FINDINGS

After asking the teachers participating in the study about their demographic information in the first part of the interview form, the second part was passed.

- First of all, the participants were asked: "Why did you decide to teach abroad?" The answers given by the teachers to this question was grouped under the headings of getting to know culture, learning languages and professional development:

### Getting to Know Culture

Recognizing a new culture, introducing their own culture to other cultures, ensuring that their children live in an environment where different cultures exist for a while were one of the first reasons participants put forward for their decision to teach abroad:

T3: "We wanted to get to know a new culture, expand our perspective on life, and we wanted to try this way with my wife."

T2: "Although it is the first reason to see new countries and see different cultural experiences, frankly, I decided to teach abroad in order to earn better money."

T8: "Since I graduated, I have wanted to go abroad. I had a desire to get to know a different culture. As a teacher, we do not have a chance for this due to financial reasons and unfavorable working conditions. That's why I decided to apply for a teaching post abroad."

### Learning Languages

"Why did you decide to teach abroad?" The question was asked to participants. Some of the participants answered that they wanted him or his child to learn a new language, live in a foreign environment and study in a multilingual environment:

T5: "We were bored, we wanted innovation. I wanted my children to spend time in a foreign environment and learn the language."

T3: "We wanted to improve ourselves in every sense and learn the language."

T4: "We wanted both us and our children to learn a new language."

### Professional Development

Lastly, the answers of the participants to the question "Why did you decide to teach abroad?" were collected under this heading. Participants stated that they made this decision because they wanted to experience it, which is declared as "the peak of teaching" and to improve themselves professionally:

T3: "To improve myself professionally and to learn how our branch works abroad."

T5: "Our life was now monotone. I wanted to improve myself in innovation and professional sense."

T6: "Obviously, we wanted a change in our lives. This is a difference for our profession and added excitement to our lives. "

However, two participants stated that they decided to teach abroad because they wanted to represent their country outside the country and to help children abroad educationally.

- Asked in connection with the first question "Why did you decide to teach in Saudi Arabia?" The question was asked. Teachers stated that the holy lands and Saudi Arabia were mentioned as "safe town" and that there was no language requirement when coming here as two main reasons:

### Holy Lands

The fact that the cities of Mecca and Medina, which are sacred for the religion of Islam, are located in Saudi Arabia and their desire to live their spiritual values, especially the opportunity of umrah, caused all of the participants to choose this country for their abroad task. However, some participants said that Saudi Arabia is a "safe town" and stated that they thought that this country would be safer and more comfortable for them when they were alone as a woman when they first arrived and that they could not get the same trust from other countries.

T5: "I've done umrah before and liked it very much. That's why I wanted to come back and do my duty here. The fact that the holy lands are here is an important factor in this decision, too."

T8: "There is Islamophobia in Europe. I live here alone, there is holy land and I'm comfortable. In that sense, it's pretty safe here."

### Language Requirement

"Why did you decide to teach in Saudi Arabia?" three teachers stated that there is no language requirement when coming here.

T2: "There is no language requirement when coming here, I know Arabic too, there are people from my family here, I chose this country because I thought we would be comfortable."

T6: "There is no language requirement when coming here. They also love Turkish people. We preferred it because here is a Muslim country."

- The answers given by the teachers to the second question, "What are the most striking differences between students in Turkey and Saudi Arabia?", as follows: language and culture differences and the difference in social and cognitive skills of children:

### Language and Culture Differences

"What are the most striking differences between students in Turkey and Saudi Arabia?" The first answer to the question was that the participants had difficulties in communicating because of not knowing Arabic. However, the age group studied are small and therefore they have more frequent contact with families. This situation also revealed the difference between cultures:

T1: "I can say language problem, cultural differences. It is a problem that even children cannot speak the same language among themselves."

T4: "I think eating habits is the biggest difference between the students here and in Turkey. They spend a meal eating chips. Education is viewed differently here. We want children to learn by doing and living. There is no expectation here. They just want teaching children to progress academically. So are the Turkish people living here. Children's Turkish is bad."

T5: "I think the children here are more closed, more timid, more mature, but the children in Turkey are more spoiled. I think those here are more innocent."

T3: "There is not a story clock as in Turkey, questions asked. Although they are citizens of Turkish, they do not speak Turkish, we do not speak Arabic. The class size is large for individual attention. Apart from that, the children staying here are more developed in terms of height and weight. "

T7: "The perception levels of my students here are low. because their social environment is not in active education."



## Social and Cognitive Differences

Children's social and cognitive skill levels were noted as the most notable difference between students in the two countries due to differences in cultural and physical, social and seasonal conditions of the country:

T8: "My students here have lower perception levels. They are always at home, the phone is in their hands, it may be a reason for this. Children in Turkey go out, but children here are always watching TV. Children here come to school just because they are bored at home."

T2 and T6 generally expressed with other participants similarly that children in Turkey are more social and active but children here spend their time with televisions, phones, tablets. T2 explained the reasons as follows: there is no climate change here, kids are generally in their flats, they don't even change their clothes, they grow in narrow spaces, and there isn't a neighborhood relationship much among people. T6 added that spending too much time in front of the television, phone and tablet negatively affects children's social skills as well as decreases their perception levels.

- "What do you try to gain the students here most and do you find your professional performance sufficient?" the question was asked to the participants thirdly. Teachers answered the third question, generally emphasizing language development, national values and social skills, and all the participants stated that they found their professional performance adequate or even more than before:

### Language Development

When asked what they are trying to acquire the students here, some of the participants stated that they try to teach children the language of the country of their citizenship as a requirement of working at a Turkish school abroad:

T4: "I give priority to language teaching here. I do activities based on words and plan the day. For example, if we learn the word 'rain', I use games, art activities, music and story activities about it and reinforce it. I want my students to gain love of homeland, especially for the ones who have never been to Turkey before."

T2: "In addition to getting Turkish citizenship later, I have students whose parents are Turkish and were born here. As a teacher, I want all of them to speak Turkish properly. I work for this."

T1 also stated that she tries to give children language skills most and emphasizes the aims and learning outcomes of our preschool curriculum.

### National Values

Some participants stated that they try to give children love of homeland / nation / flag and to make them feel loyal to the national values of their countries:

T2: "Basically, I emphasize that the child should love school and come willingly. When abroad, he/she should know and love his flag, country. This situation of the child who loves school at this age also affects his/her school success in the future. Sharing is also missing here with children, I'm trying to achieve this."

T8: "What I see missing from the children here is that the children are just at home. They don't know where they live or where they belong. I am trying to encourage them to absorb our national values."

T3 and T6 stated that they mostly try to bring the awareness of Turkishness and love of the homeland to the children here. Also, both participants also expressed that children long for Turkey, so they spend on their efforts to remedy it.

### Social Skills

Stating that the social environment of the students here is more limited due to the differences arising from the country's conditions, the participants stated that even the self-perception of the children is behind due to this situation and their self-confidence is lower:

T5: "I focus on social skills. Children grow up in indoor environments and cannot socialize here. That's why I try to teach social skills rather than cognitive skills."

T7: "I especially try to give the feeling that they are enough. Children are pretty shy, because socialization is minimal. As with the love of homeland, respect for parents is secondary. Their self-esteem is low. Also they are extremely aggressive without adult control."

Following the same question, all the teachers answered this question, "Do you find your professional performance sufficient?". All of them found themselves competent professionally. However, T2, T3, T6 and T7 said that their performances are well above their performances in Turkey. The reason for this is that the same student comes to the same school for a few years, the preschool period is not static and there is a difference here, as there is no paperwork problem here, so this has a positive reflection on the performance.

- The fourth question was asked to the teachers who participated in the study: "What are the problems you face professionally and personally and how do you try to solve it?" Because the professional problems encountered in this question were individual, the answers given were gathered under the heading of professional difficulties in pre-school education:

## Professional Problems in Pre-school Education

Teachers expressed the professional difficulties they experienced while performing their duties as follows:

T6: "I did not have much trouble in the professional sense. My parents are from Hatay, interested, willing. It was just a problem that the children didn't have much interest in school. I'm trying to get over that too."

T7: "There is no problem for me personally. But the school administration puts forward a problem as if the parents are constantly complaining and uses this situation against us. Actually, there is no problem. Saudi superintendents are constantly coming under supervision, and the administration brings them to the first kindergarten class. It shows us as an advertising board."

T8: "Professionally, I had the most physical difficulties. My classroom was full of mice. My classroom was in the school yard, conditions were poor. This year I have 16 students and I have an assistant. But when I first arrived, Arab superintendents were coming and I was ashamed of my class. Now we have arranged the physical conditions, it is better."

T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5 expressed that their biggest problems in terms of professional life are the lack of importance given to pre-school education by the family and the environment, the ineffectiveness of family participation activities, the difficulty of getting feedback from parents, the fact that school life is seen as just a souvenir photo, lack of material, and scarcity of story books.

The answers given by the participants, who explained their personal and family problems with the conditions of the country and school in general, were collected under the headings of health, transportation and social life:

### Health

Participants who expressed that the health infrastructure in the country where they work is insufficient, the number of contracted hospitals where they can receive treatment is limited and especially the dental treatments are expensive, stated that this situation creates a problem:

T2: "We can only go to our country once a year. The health system here is very bad, undeveloped. Dental treatment is very expensive. We only do it in necessary situations."

T5: "Health is a big problem here. Procedures are long, hospitals are inadequate and insurance is very tiring. We pray not to get sick."

T7, who stated that his son suffers from speech disorder, answered this question that the health and social opportunities that he could take to have his child treated, receive education and support were not sufficient.

### Transportation

Indicating that all kinds of transportation in Saudi Arabia are carried out by individual or commercial taxis, the teachers stated that there is a problem if there is no vehicle, and beyond this, it is difficult for families to enter and exit the country continuously when they come with a family visa without substitution:

T1: "It's my first year here. When you first come here, there is a vehicle problem due to the lack of urban transportation. Apart from that, we did not have a big problem, but the family's obligation to enter and exit constantly due to visa is a problem."

T2: "If there is no vehicle, transportation is a problem. But apart from that, it is an advantage to be able to drive around the surrounding countries. We follow the campaigns for the needs, discounts are made, that's good."

T8: "It was the end of September when I got here. The driver's license for women had just been issued. This city where I live is very conservative, closed. The veil thing is boredom. As a woman, I am only a teacher at school. I tried to handle every job myself. I got a driver's license, the biggest problem was solved. Of course, I experienced these difficulties because I am a woman here."

### Social Life

The participants indicating that living in KSA as a woman is not difficult in the way people estimate, even it's mostly discriminated against women to make their life easy added the real issue is for them not to come together with their family at first step:

T3: "Of course, it is difficult to stand clear of the family. I can't take time off my family because of working hours. The school is also a problem for the children. I can not send my children to the school I want. They are with me now. There is only one branch already, children have to be in that classroom."

T4: "It is a problem for us not to know their language at first. We can speak English a little but even so we have difficulty."

T6: "At first I had trouble because of living in a country without my family. I couldn't know their language. It is an issue and these always delay the adaptation to social life. Especially, I had a problem in the hospital because of not knowing the language.

- The fifth question in the form is "When you come to the place of your duty, what kind of issue did you take? What do you want to change?" The teachers mentioned inability of the seminar, time and place of assignment and the cases of their family.



## Adaptation Seminar

The participants indicated that they had to take an adaptation seminar before going to the place of their duty, the seminar was so good but it was not good to get them ready for a new life, the place that they would go showed in a dream, so they said that the seminar must be more realistic.

T3: "When we come here, we will have foreigner students. So we have to know their language. At least we must take a course about language. We have to know Arabic. The adaptation seminar should ensure these.

T4: "The adaptation seminar was held before we arrived, it was nice but it was not enough. It should be according to the countries, not general. Because the seminar was a general framework. Experience may be shared by a teacher who works in the country we are going to. A pre-language training is a must. There may be small language booklets. When there was no language, I could not even greet the children when I first came. Also, the assignment time is bad. We came, we started school immediately. If you come before the school is opened, you will find at least home and furniture. The official procedure is difficult, everything is constantly changing. For these, there must be an interested guide here"

T8: "In the seminar, they said to us when we go there, we will be welcomed by everybody. It is not true. A few people and an officer should be to help us. This should be given to someone as a task. They should not say whenever and wherever everybody can help."

## Assignment Place and Timing

The participants indicated that they had a big deal because of the assignment time (September), trying to find a house and a car etc. They added that they had to come before one month. Also, sending teachers who will work seriously and not assigning female teachers as the only women in the institution due to country conditions were the points that the participants stated during their assignment:

T3: "When we come here first, finding a house is an issue. Here we are proceeding in a village school logic. We have international school status but we have very lacking. We have to stay somewhere the government will find and we will pay them. Also, due to the conditions of the country, the schools for boys and girls are separate. When the parents' meeting is held, even if there is only one parent and the parent is male, it can become a problem."

T5: "There is a system about first coming. Everyone welcomes each other but it would be more convenient and comfortable for an official to deal with newcomers."

T6: "it is really important that the teachers should study hard and really have to be helpful. They have to know the language because it is a trouble."

T7: "According to me, more attention should be paid to the work performance of the people while being sent here. But I saw many teachers and administrators who did not work. We do not have such a luxury, because children need much more here. Everyone's performance should always be considered in Turkey and here."

T8: "There were teachers who didn't say hello because I was a woman, some teachers are very conservative. I came and every teacher went to Mecca-Medina, I was the only woman in the school, I was able to go two months later. While being assigned, women should not be assigned as the only women in that school. "

## Family Members

The participants indicated that it is a problem for them not to be able to come there together with their family at first step and especially the mothers and children took trouble about it. Moreover, teachers' families have to renew their visas at regular intervals. And it looks a problem that teachers say:

T1: "I had a trouble about finding a house and furniture. It is an issue but the real issue is that we are not with our family. For coming here, they can provide us with a five-year passport. It is necessary to solve the substitution problem for family.

T2: "It is difficult for us not to be able to come with our family. The substitution pay is also a big deal. If we pay, it is so expensive, nearly one salary for one person."

T3: "Not being able to come without our family is the most difficulty, especially for the mothers. We need to feel good and be lucky because of being here, but we are not. Because The substitution pay makes us feel bad, especially first year. Family unity is broken."

T6: "We need to come with our family. The ministry can provide us with public housing. They can do better about it. I think that the teachers going to other countries are more comfortable. The other international schools are better but ours not. Even so being here is an experience for us."

T7: "It was so hard to come here without my family. I suckled my baby, handed it into the bed and came here. It was so hard. The women, especially the mothers must come here with their family. Our government must provide it for us."

- When asked here it was difficult or not to work as a preschool teacher, the answers were general and free, so the answers are given under the heading of "Being a Pre-school Teacher in Saudi Arabian Turkish Schools":

## Being a Pre-school Teacher in Saudi Arabia Turkish Schools

The female participants indicated that because being a woman was hard. Additionally, one teacher mentioned being alone and having trouble as a pre-school teacher. The other two teachers said that they did not have enough equipment for their class:

T1: "I didn't have any trouble. I had trouble at first because of working as a manager in Turkey, but I got used to. There is no problem for me now and nothing different from other branches."

T3: "It's hard not to have a permanent colleague. It is necessary for us to ask about something and have an exchange of ideas."

T5: "I worked a small class when I came here at first. I fell behind the others friends as a teacher. My class is small and I don't have a helper."

T8: "We are worse than others in the physical area. The class is outside of the school. I don't know about events or celebrations. When I first arrived, they even forgot to add me to the WhatsApp group for administrative information. For school teachers who will have a dinner on teachers' day, they didn't call me as my only female teacher."

## DISCUSSION AND THE RESULT

When we analyzed the views of preschool teachers working in Turkish Schools Abroad on Teaching Abroad in Saudi Arabia, the result has been reached that the adaptation seminar is not enough. Teachers take trouble about medical and substitution. This result was similar with research by Akman (2017). Akman, in the study about the teachers' problem in the Abroad Organisation of Education Ministry reached and lacked an adaptation seminar, having trouble with medical, visa and visiting Turkey.

Gündoğdu (2014), also indicated that the teachers took trouble about medicine, because they paid by themselves and then they could not take the pay back in a long process. Moreover, it was found out that "religious belief" and "moral feelings" was effective in wanting to go to Saudi Arabia.

In our study, it was concluded that teachers wanted to work abroad for reasons such as seeing new countries, representing our country abroad, and wanting to go abroad. Karasu (2018), also investigated the reasons for the teachers sent abroad by the Ministry of Education and determined that the participants wanted to go for reasons such as seeing new places, promoting our culture and having cultural interaction. This result also supports our study.

Again, research findings show us that the social skills and perception levels of children living in Saudi Arabia are found to be lower by their teachers; due to differences such as language-culture-expectation, family participation activities cannot be performed as desired, teachers have a shortage of materials, especially books.

General of the teachers stated that they had language problems especially when they first came and they had difficulties in communicating with the children, and stated that there might be a language requirement or language education could be arranged before coming.

Not being able to go to the place where they will work with their families is a problem especially for female teachers. Because their branches are mostly female teachers, preschool teachers experience more difficulties than other branches due to indirect reasons.

The substitution pay for family members is causing a big deal. If they don't want to pay this, teachers' families have to log in and out to the country at certain times. This is also a big difficulty.

In the study, it is concluded that teachers need an officially appointed guidance more. In addition, the adaptation of teachers was delayed because the assignment was on the date when the schools were opened. While getting used to a new place, there are teachers left alone because they are "women" and this also requires additional work.

After the interviews, it was concluded that all the participating teachers were happy to work abroad due to their difficulties. Teachers have said that this experience adds something to people professionally and personally and provides professional satisfaction. The participants stated that it was a great pleasure to speak Turkish as a result of the education children received.

## SUGGESTIONS

In the results of study, when considering the processes experienced by teachers before and during their assignment, the following suggestions can be made:

- Adaptation seminars for teachers can be planned not in a general framework, but according to the countries they are assigned to and practical information can be shared as well as theoretical knowledge. For this, one or more teachers who are currently working in that country can share their experiences.
- Teachers can be given language training without going to the countries where they will work.
- Teachers' duty dates can be arranged according to the opening date of schools, and teachers can be given time to set up and adapt.
- Opportunities should be provided for teachers to come with their families to the countries where they will work.
- Officials and civil servants should be provided to guide teachers who go to their places of duty.

- Preschool material, resource books provided by MEB and especially story books should be sent to schools regularly.
- The physical conditions of the classes should be improved.

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### Statements of publication ethics

I hereby declare that the study has not unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed carefully.

### Ethics Committee Approval Information

The research was carried out as of 2020. The research is not an experimental study. Therefore, ethics committee approval was not required.

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