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The Role of the Professional Characteristics of Teachers in the Context of the General Qualifications of the Teaching Profession

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find out the role of teacher traits within the context of general qualifications of the teaching profession. The participants of this study, which was designed as a qualitative case study, consist of parents, teachers and administrators selected by the sampling technique. In the study, observation, interview, and document analysis techniques were used to collect data. The data obtained from the study were analyzed by employing the descriptive analysis technique. The findings of the study conclude that parents, teachers, and administrators generally emphasize the qualifications about attitudes and values regarding teaching profession while defining a qualified pre-school teacher. Activity observation conducted at a school, classroom environment observation and data obtained from photographs exhibited at the end of school year reveal that teachers' general qualifications regarding teaching profession do not overlap with the ones in professional knowledge and professional skills.

Keywords: preschool, qualification, preschool teacher, professional skills.

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Introduction

Some basic qualifications that teachers have are crucial factors in increasing the students' development and achievement at school. Teacher characteristics are one of the factors affecting both the child's development and the quality of pre-school education. Preschool teachers offer children various learning opportunities. However, it is only possible for children to benefit from the learning opportunities offered when they perceive themselves as loved persons and feel secure. Therefore, pre-school teachers should be able to organize educational and learning processes and environments accordingly and develop coherent and safe relationships with children keeping in mind that children have some basic individual differences. In addition, pre-school teachers should consider the individual characteristics of children. Classroom activities should focus on the process and the efforts of children rather than the outcome obtained from the process in the classroom. On the other hand, well-designed educational environments support effective learning. The fact that teachers design learning environments in a supportive way are important to develop and update the development of children's existing skills. It is stated that it is necessary to establish learning corners in classrooms for effective learning in the Pre-School Education Program, which was updated in 2013 (Ministry of National Education, General Directorate of Basic Education, 2013). The main determinant of improving the quality of learning corners is the teacher (Ramazan, Arslan-Çiftçi & Tezel, 2018). However, relevant researches conducted in the field reveal that teachers experience problems with organizing learning corners, using the organized corners effectively and observing children in the learning corners (Metin, 2017).

In Turkey, the process of teacher training for pre-school education, the schools where teachers are employed, and the functioning of these schools are all determined by the central administration (Higher Education Council, General Directorate of Teacher Training, Ministry of National Education). Various updates are made in order to increase and evaluate teacher qualifications. The General Qualifications of Teaching Profession in our country were last updated in 2017. The updated qualifications of the teaching profession consist of three qualifications (professional knowledge, professional skills, attitudes, and values) and 11 qualifications within these 3 fields. Having the relevant professional knowledge, which is one of the three basic fields of professional qualifications covers having advanced theoretical and methodological knowledge in the field of occupational knowledge, having the knowledge of the curriculum and pedagogical content of the field, knowing their rights and responsibilities as a teacher and individual. In the field of professional skill is planning the teaching and learning process, providing appropriate materials, and organizing safe education environments.

In the field of "attitudes and values", taking into consideration the national spiritual and universal values, having a supportive attitude towards the development of students, communicating

effectively with students, colleague, and parents, and participating in the studies for personal and professional development can be counted (General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development, 2017). On the other hand, some studies suggest that early childhood teachers should have some occupational characteristics. These are loving their job, developing positive and warm relationships with children, participating in children's activities energetically, knowing that children can have intense emotions, knowing how children develop and learn, involving humour, volunteering in taking responsibility, evaluating their own performance, being willing to learn, being respectful and sensitive to colleagues and families (Alat, 2015). In the literature, there are researches regarding the effects of pre-school teachers' qualifications or characteristics on children. Some of these studies reveal that teachers' educational status does not predict children's academic skills (Lin & Magnuson, 2018), but the quality of teacher-child interaction makes a difference in terms of children's self-regulation ability (Güler-Yıldız, Ertürk-Kara, Fındık-Tanrıbuyurdu, & Gönen, 2014). The success of schools as organizations is causally related to the qualifications of teachers who will operate the education system (Blanton et al., 2003; cited in Şahin, 2011). The qualifications of the teachers are also among the factors affecting the quality of pre-school education. Quality is defined in the pre-school education program updated in 2013 in Turkey as *" indicating how something is and what distinguishes it from other things. Quality is a systematic approach to efficiency, flexibility, effectiveness, compliance with the program, process, investment, and perfection. In other words, quality is the compliance to specifications and customer requests."* *The assessment of the quality of pre-school education depends on keeping the records of what teachers do and to what extent teachers benefit from the facilities provided at schools.* Considering the elements in this definition, it could be suggested that the satisfaction of the family and children who take part in the preschool education as a consumer closely depends on teachers who interact with them most. In the Preschool Education Program booklet, teachers are mentioned as one of the factors affecting quality, and the quality of pre-school education services is associated with some characteristics of teachers. These are stated as the level of knowledge and understanding of teachers' training program, how young children learn, and how teachers and other adults support children in solving their conflicts (Ministry of National Education General Directorate of Basic Education, 2013)

In general, physical state and regulations in an education program supporting all areas of development of the child, teacher-child interaction, family participation in the education program, and the evaluation of the program are considered in quality assessment in early childhood education (Kandır, 2003). The quality related studies conducted within this context in our country are mostly used in ECERS and CLASS in a limited number of studies. ECERS is generally used to evaluate the quality of the school as well as the quality of the classes in particular, and the quality of interaction (4 items) on the scale aims to determine the quality of teacher-child interaction (Baştürk & Işıkoğlu, 2008). CLASS was designed to assess the quality of the class and is measured by teacher-child-

interaction under the sub-dimensions of emotional support, educational support, and classroom organization on the scale (Ertürk-Kara, 2013). The results of the surveys conducted with the use of these scales reveal that quality is often lower than the target set at preschool education institutions (Güçhan-Özgül, 2011; Göl-Güven, 2009; Kalkan & Akman, 2009; Baştürk & Işıkoğlu, 2008; Solak, 2007).

However, high-quality preschool education environments where children are satisfied are essential elements for them to develop various skills (Cunningham, 2010) as well as their future school achievements (Stotz, 2008; Sandstrom, 2012). In the literature, there are some researches in which the evaluation of some dimensions of quality is done as well as the evaluation of teachers, parents, or children. It is understood that these researches are carried out within the framework of the expectations of parents from preschool education and the perceptions/satisfaction of children regarding pre-school education institutions. The results of the research based on the perceptions and expectations of the children and families regarding the quality at school can be evaluated within the context of children's views. Findings from the study conducted by Şimşek and İvrendi (2014) take into account the practices of the families and teachers considering their educational background and family participation. In some studies, families expressed their expectations from teachers as being educated, experienced, positive, and building good relationships with children (Şahin, Sak & Şahin, 2013).

In the study conducted by Stotz (2008), children stated that the three most important things for them in the school were playing games, having a playmate and predictable class activities. In another study conducted in eight preschool classrooms with high and low-quality standards, children defined what made them happy as “*plays, playing with friends, and playing together*”. In addition, the findings of this study indicate that children are not satisfied with some negative behaviours in the school setting such as hitting, kicking, punching, biting, ridiculing, using bad language (Wiltz & Klein, 2001). The findings of the research conducted by Kyrönlampi-Kylmänen and Määttä, (2012) conclude that 5-7-year-old children perceive school as a playground and that they are not pleased with their friends' teasing.

In a study conducted with some children from Denmark and the United States, it was found out that the best thing in school was to play with peers and to have friends, and the worst thing was not to have a friend to play, to sit in class, to fight other children in the classroom, to stay out of the game (Kragh-Müller & Isbell, 2011). According to the findings of the study conducted by Einarsdottir (2005), playing with friends and interacting with friends were found to be the most favourite activities for 5-6-year-old children and the least loved ones were found to be “being teased, being told off” at schools.

When the research findings about children's perceptions regarding pre-school education and their expectations from the pre-school education are examined, it could be said that the school quality is the reason for children to be satisfied with the school and playing games with peers and the relations with peers are also some other reasons to be satisfied with the school. Pre-school education institutions are the ones that will generally meet these expectations. However, it is the teachers who provide an appropriate planning and environment to meet the expectations of children at schools. Therefore, it could be said that the qualifications of the teachers are an important indicator determining if the expectations of the children from the pre-school education institutions are met. This study was conducted to find an answer to the research question, which is “What is the role of teacher characteristics defined in this research within the context of the general qualifications of the teaching profession?”

Method

This research was designed as a case study, which is one of the qualitative research methods. In this study, the professional characteristics of teachers were taken as cases.

Participants

The participants of the study were selected according to the convenience sampling method which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. For teachers and managers to be chosen as the sample, having at least 5 years of experience was set as the criterion. Face to face interviews was conducted with the participants and the aim of the study was explained, and the research was conducted with the participation of 7 preschool teachers who volunteered to participate in the study, 11 teachers working at these schools and 7 parents whose children attended to these schools. The school principals participating in this research are graduates of different undergraduate programs and have at least five years of management and teaching experience. Teachers have a bachelor's degree and have at least 5 years of teaching experience. All the parents except for one parent (with an undergraduate degree) consist of mothers who are graduates of high school and lower education level.

Data collection instruments

In this study, the centralized management of teacher training programs in our country (national teacher training program established by the Higher Education Institution) and the central management of pre-school educational institutions (Ministry of National Education) were considered and all the teachers with an undergraduate degree were assumed to have relevant basic professional knowledge, skill, and values. Therefore, the research was carried out on two stages.

At the first stage, 7 principals, 11 teachers and 7 parents who participated in the study voluntarily from different provinces were investigated. Semi-structured interview forms, observation

and face-to-face interview techniques were used to collect data. The semi-structured interview forms were given to the participants. Interviews were conducted in the fall and spring semesters of the 2017-2018 academic year.

The semi-structured interview questions are as follows:

S1. Could you identify the teacher behaviours that illustrate the definition of quality/good teachers under the light of the experiences that you have had so far?

Q2. Could you identify the teacher behaviours that illustrate the definition of poor quality/bad teachers under the light of the experiences that you have had so far?

II. Stage

A voluntary school was chosen among the participating schools at the second stage, and data were collected through interviews, document analysis and observation techniques. In this context, formal and informal interviews were conducted with the administrators of the school (principal and deputy director) and 1 teacher at the school. The interviews lasted 90 minutes. In the scope of the observation, one teacher at the school was observed during the activity session at different times and the observation was tape-recorded by the researcher. Exemplary observations were selected from at least two similar observations. Within the scope of the document review, the year around exhibition photographs and the daily exhibition boards where all teachers exhibited their activities throughout the year were examined. Marshall and Rossman (2006) claim that the photographs taken by the researcher or previously taken photographs could be examined as documents in qualitative researches (Reported by Baş & Akturan, 2008). In addition, the physical order of the classes in the school was observed within the scope of the observation (learning corner, written materials).

Data Analysis

The data obtained at the stage I was evaluated according to the descriptive analysis technique. The participant responses coded in this context as themes were placed within the general qualifications (professional knowledge, professional skills, attitudes, and values) of the teaching profession which were determined as themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2003). Themes and codes are presented in the findings section of the study.

In addition to the descriptive analysis, document analysis technique was also used in the analysis of the data at the II. stage. In this context, the exhibition photos of the last two years (2016, 2017) of the school were examined. The photographs were not included in the study due to the confidentiality principles, but examples were presented by describing the activities in the photographs. In this study, individual and group activities of the children were examined, and the activities carried out within the scope of project studies were not taken into consideration.

Validity and reliability

In this study, one of the applications made within the scope of validity is to include direct quotations from the participants (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2003).

Results

Findings Regarding I. Stage

Definitions of teachers, administrators, and parents in different provinces regarding quality / good teacher

The responses given to the question "Could you identify the teacher behaviours that illustrate the definition of quality/good teachers under the light of the experiences that you have had in your job so far?" asked school directors, teachers and parents were analysed one by one (see Figures 1,2 and 3). While defining the quality / good teachers, it is seen that the teaching profession general qualifications, attitudes and values were referred most often (patient, cheerful, self-given, voluntary, conscientious, sharing, empathy, open to learning etc.). It is also understood that a limited number of principals referred to the qualifications of teachers in the field of professional skills (recognizing children, observation, guiding children, attracting children's attention, teaching by living) (General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development, 2017). When the teachers defined high quality / good teachers, it was seen that they mostly referred to the attitudes and values qualifications in the teaching profession general qualifications (patient, investigative, reading, loving the profession, good communication with the parents, conscientious, honest, caring, respectful, energetic, pleasant etc.).

In addition, a limited number of teachers were found to refer to the qualifications of teachers in their fields of professional knowledge (good knowledge of the field) professional skills (using the game in all activities). When defining quality/good teachers, parents were found to refer to the attitudes and values in the teaching profession general qualifications, (warm, friendly, cheerful, self-renewing, gentle and friendly to parents, making the child feel loved, approaching the child with motherly affection etc.). In addition, a limited number of parents were found to refer to the qualifications in the field of professional skills (providing good education, helping children to gain a sense of responsibility). It is stated that when the general qualifications of teaching profession are used by different institutions and teachers (career planning, recruitment, determining the need for in-service training, evaluating teachers' performance, teachers' self-evaluation, teaching practice, candidate teacher training), minimum standards can be established for the teaching profession (General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development, 2017). In this study, it was found that teachers, principals, and parents emphasized teachers' attitudes and values more than their professional knowledge and skills.



Figure 1. The codes regarding the definitions of quality/good teachers

- Professional Knowledge and Skill
- Attitudes and Values

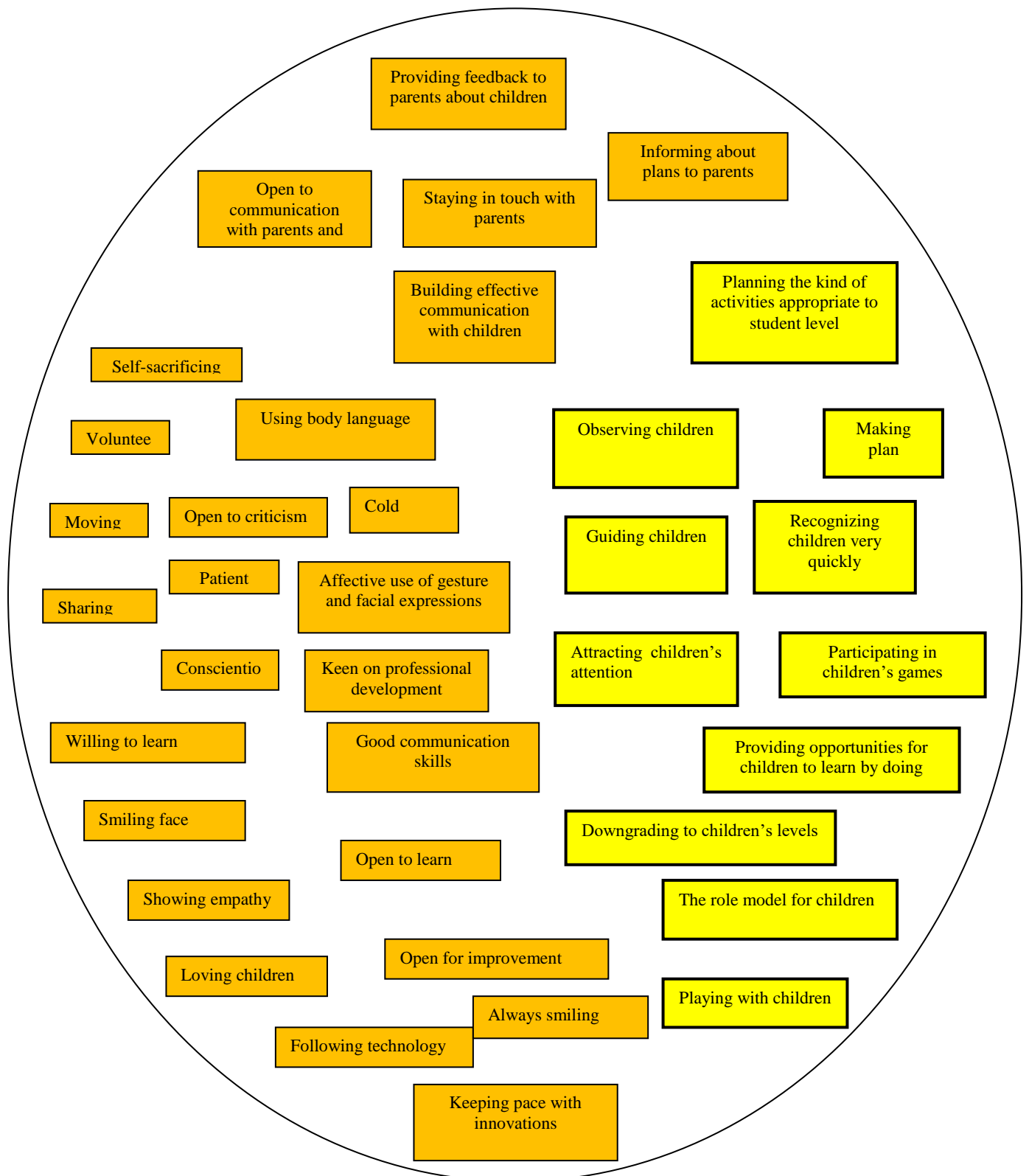


Figure 2. The codes regarding the definitions of quality/good teachers according to principals

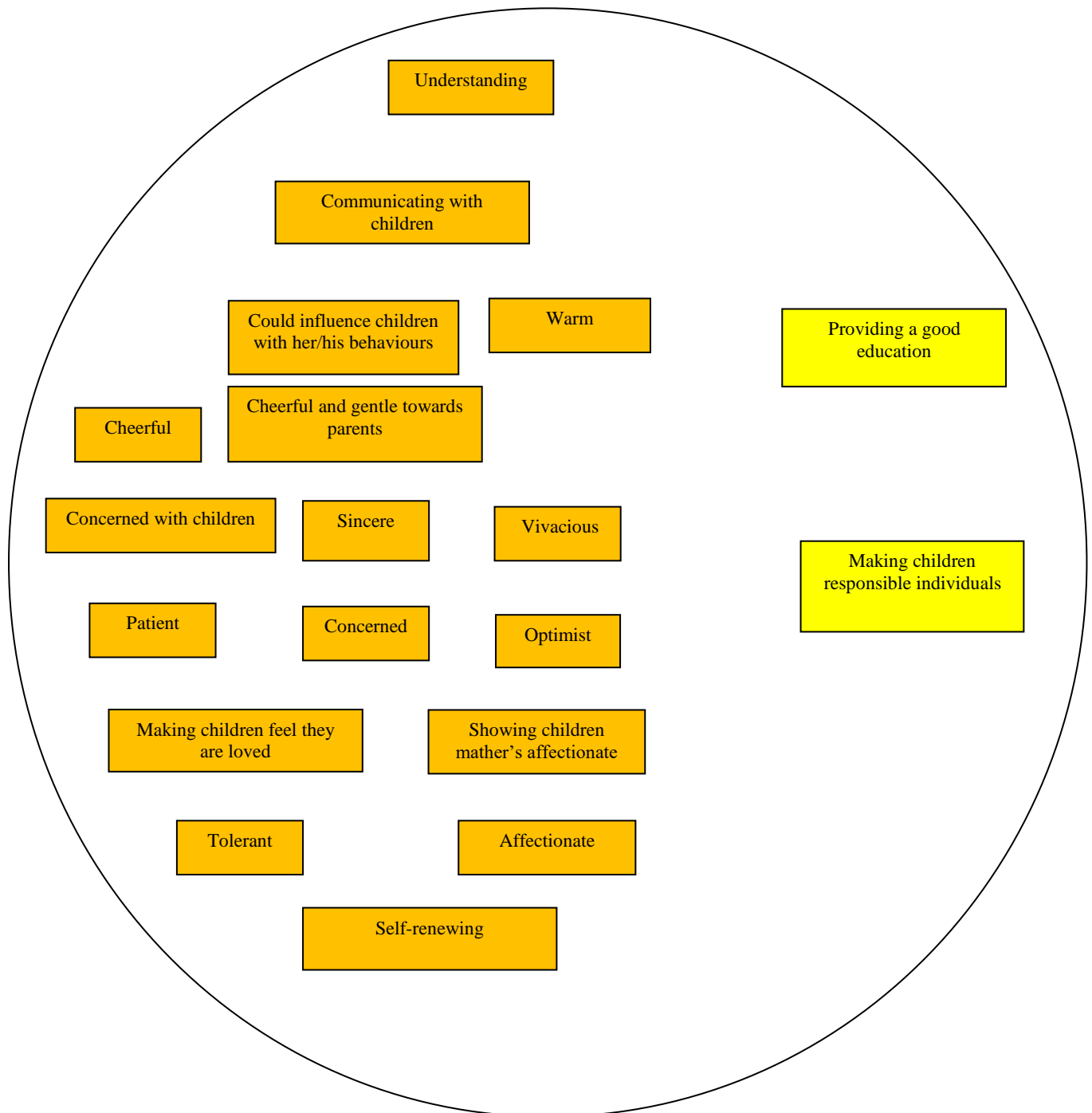


Figure 3. The codes regarding the definitions for quality/good teachers according to parents

In defining the bad / poor quality teachers, administrators were found to refer to the attitudes and values in the general qualifications of the teaching profession most (bad human relations, no emotional fluctuations, closed to communication, dull, not reading, no self-development, avoiding parent etc.) (see figure 4). It is also understood that a limited number of school principals refer to the competency of teachers regarding professional knowledge (not having a good command of field) and professional skills (children are constantly seated, there are conflicts among children and no settled

class rules). In defining the poor quality / bad teachers, it was found out that most teachers referred to the attitudes and values in the general qualifications of the teaching profession and personality traits (unhappy, selfish, disrespectful, innovation-free, self-developed, non-affectionate, etc.). In addition, a limited number of teachers were found to refer to professional skills (fixed class order, use of stereotypical methods, not downgrading the teaching based on student level). Parents have not produced any definition regarding of the poor quality/ bad teacher. This may be related to the fact that parents do not have the opportunity to observe different teachers.

Teachers' and administrators' opinions Regarding poor quality / bad teachers

The responses given to the question “Could you identify the teacher behaviours that illustrate the definition of poor quality/bad teachers based on the experiences that you have had so far?”

ADMINISTRATORS' OPINIONS	TEACHERS' OPINIONS
<p><u>Attitudes and Values</u> Not caring for children Bad human relations Not caring if others are hurt Reserved against children No emotional fluctuation Implementing the plan and forgetting about the rest Not loving the profession Evading responsibility Dull Closed to communication Having bad communication skills Not reading Neglecting self-improvement Pacing out of the classroom Avoiding contact with parents <u>Professional Knowledge Category</u> No control in the field knowledge (Professional Knowledge) <u>Professional Skill Category</u> Children stand still and always sit in the classroom (Professional Skill) The type of teacher in the class where there is always a conflict among students rather than harmony (Professional Skill) Not having a class with settled rules (Professional Skill)</p>	<p><u>Attitudes and Values</u> Having problems with colleagues and administrators Ignoring the complaints from parents Lacking eagerness to learn Not exhibiting love to children Failing in establishing relationships with children Exhibiting bad behaviours around including students Closed to innovations Making it a habit of shouting at children Not flexible No self-development Selfish Rude Unhappy</p> <p><u>Professional Skill Category</u> Sticking to the same class order every year/classroom activities Using stereotyped methods Failing in downgrading to students' level</p>

Figure 4: The themes and codes regarding bad/poor quality teachers

Within the scope of this study, the participants were requested to give an example of the quality/good and poor quality/ bad teacher behaviours that they encountered during their professional experience. Below are the direct quotations of the participants about the quality / good, poor quality / bad teacher behaviour. (T: teacher, P: Principal)

T1. Good quality / good teacher: In her class, she had a student with a genetic, physical, mental, perceptive, motor, ie obstacle with all aspects. She went to dinner with her family to get to know this boy. In a parent-teacher meeting, she introduced the child to the other parents mentioning about the boy's father as "we have Ahmet in our classroom, you all know, and he will tell us about Ahmet now. The father told about his experiences with Ahmet beginning from the birth.

P1. Quality / good teacher: Teaching not just in the classroom but everywhere. He does different activities. For example, he makes a milkshake with the students using the milk distributed by the school. He gets prepared before events. For example, if he is going to the school garden, he prepares the materials necessary for the garden, and he realizes one of the concepts in the garden which is a part of the daily plan (for example, he counts the kernels). For example, it is compulsory to visit 5 parents. However, he visits the parents of all the children. If you hear cheerful sounds and child laughers coming from the school, it is definitely his classroom.

P1. Poor quality / bad teacher: When high-quality teachers line up the students, he speaks to the students as "come on my flowers". The poor teacher speaks to the students as loudly "get in line, why don't you get in line?" He gets out of the garden unprepared. He doesn't make any effort to encourage children to participate voluntarily in the activities in the garden. If there is noise at school, it is certain that he is the one shouting at children.

P2. Poor quality/ poor teacher: He defined one side of the carpet as the border. When the children are going to communicate with him or say something, they speak standing in the defined line.

T1. Poor quality / poor teacher: He shouts at the children, insults them. If there is a child with a behavioural problem in his class or has any disabilities, he makes negative shares with other children in the class and the teachers at the school.

T2. Poor quality/ poor teacher: I was playing games with the children on the floor. She came in the class and asked why I was on the floor because she usually sits at her desk.

P5. Poor quality / poor teacher: he hangs around, visits another classroom at every opportunity, there is no discipline, there is a chaos in the classroom, there are conflicts among the children instead of harmony, the rules are not settled in the classroom, he evades the parents and he

has bad communication skills. The teachers who do not like his profession are poor quality teachers. He's working to get the salary.

T6. Good quality / good teacher: There is a teacher in the classroom and he piles up boxes full of with waste materials and expects beautiful activities and participation in the activity. However, another teacher gives examples, shows pictures, lets them examine nature. Then he pulls out the materials and accompanies them in their journey to their dreams

T6. Poor quality / poor teacher: These people choose the way to shout too much to ensure discipline in the classroom. They are usually in competition for ego satisfaction with their students or parents. They do not choose the mechanisms of reasoning and solution generation.

T9. Poor quality / bad teacher: I was disappointed with the school when I started with an excitement whereas I thought I would learn a lot in the school. He was only doing art activities, letting us watch cartoon films all day, letting students free. The aim was to create a positive image in parents' minds with the art activities. The education of the children was not important for him.

T10. Poor quality / bad teacher: He orders children as if they were soldiers in the army and tells off the ones who do not obey the orders.

P5. Poor quality / bad teacher: He is undisciplined, irregular, purposeless at school, takes children to the garden and he himself sits on a bench. The quality teacher plays with children. A purposeless teacher who does not think what he can do to improve the child.

When the given examples are evaluated, it is understood that teachers and principals emphasized more on the attitudes and values among the characteristics of the teacher qualifications in defining teachers as quality/good or poor quality / bad teacher based on their experiences.

Findings of the data at stage II

Evaluation of teacher qualifications based on the end-of-year exhibition photos of the school, observation of activity time and physical order of classes

Below is an evaluation of end-of-year photos, physical observation of the classrooms, teacher observations conducted at activity sessions in order to evaluate the quality of the teachers at the school. In this study, the photographs of the activities of the teachers taken in the activity sessions and exhibited in the end-of-year exhibitions (photos of the project work were not included in the study) were examined. When the photos were examined, it was understood that there was no information regarding the dates when the activities were done. However, it is expected that teachers consider the date information on the activities as the records regarding the gradual improvements in the skills of the students. When the end-of-year photographs were examined, the art activities that were exhibited were

usually made with the materials and that students used the same materials and similar works were made by cutting, tearing, and folding technique (fund carton, A4 paper or Eva paper were used as the main material). According to these, it is understood that there is a choice of colour selection in the materials used in some activities, but children are not given the option of creating different shapes (examples 1, 2, 3, 4). In the exhibition, the activities that reflect the drawing skills of children were found to be extremely limited. This implies that teachers neglected the type of activities that improve their skills in some areas. However, it is stated in the pre-school education program that children should be given the right to choose the activities in the pre-school education program (Ministry of National Education General Directorate of Basic Education, 2013). Activity and class observation: In this context, a teacher at the school was observed at least twice in the activity sessions (art, play in the garden, play time). The data obtained from the observation shows that the teacher had problems in pre-preparation for the activities, active participation in the activities, guiding children, and choosing the activity appropriate for the development of the child. These issues are among the qualifications required for teachers within the scope of professional knowledge and skills (examples 5,6, 7).

Evaluating the physical conditions of the class: In this context, all the classes of the school were observed. Although the classes had an exceptionally large physical area (60 m²), it was found out that they were not divided into specific corners. The materials were placed on top or inside of the cabinets arranged by the wall. There is one event exhibition board on the wall. In the classroom walls, no written materials were used on the classroom walls except the names of the learning corners and the children's names in the children's cabinets (the names of the children were written with so small fonts that it was not possible to read them from a distance. The importance and necessity of having classroom learning corners in a preschool education program are clearly stated. Teachers are expected to use this in the class, which is clearly specified in the program which the teacher is responsible for in the implementation process. These centres should be considered by teachers as an opportunity to observe children's interests, individual differences, and peer relations (Ministry of National Education General Directorate of Basic Education, 2013).

Below are some direct examples regarding the class observation, teacher observation and photographs from the end-of-year exhibition:

Example 1: White paper plate painted with white pink paints as materials, black pon pon, moving eyes, mouth made of yellow Eva paper, ears cut in a circle from pink Eva paper were used. These specified materials were attached to the bottom of a paper plate and a bear figure was formed.

Example 2: There are red and yellow stripes representing the sun's rays made of the same material around the yellow / stained plastic/paper plates. There is no different feature in the plates except the number of the stripes.

Example 3: In the activity, the same size of paper/plastic cups painted in yellow, eyes of the evil eye and chicks with foot and beak detail from the orange background cardboard were found.

Example 4: The reverse side of the paper sheet painted in red was gently sealed and glued onto white A4 paper. The head, tail and legs of the black background carton were cut in the same standard size as the top surface of each plate, and turtles are formed.

Observation of the Activities

Example 5: The teacher had taken the children to the school garden. The garden had standard park equipment consisting of a swing, a climbing track and a slide. The teacher had not taken any additional material, and while the children were playing, he was sitting on the bench looking at his mobile phone.

Example 6: While the children were playing in the classroom, the teacher was looking at the computer screen at the back of the desk, partly facing the children.

Example 7: Four weeks after the schools were opened, the children at the age of 4 were presented a rabbit figure consisting of 16 detailed pieces and cut glueing. 6 tiny circles (nail), two inner ears, two legs, two legs shaped like a water drop made of a silvery house to be glued on the legs, a circle made of eva paper, two hands and head cut from the paper were given and they were expected to form a rabbit. Despite the help offered by the two practice students in the classroom, most of the children did not yet have the ability to cut, so the time spared for the activity overran too long, so the children wanted to get off the table. When the activity was over, the teacher never talked to the children about the activity and went on to the next activity.

All these examples suggest that the characteristics of the observed teachers in this study are questionable in the field of professional knowledge and skills. The examples show that teachers had problems in considering the importance of the developmental characteristics of the activity selection, knowing the role of teacher-child interaction in the child's learning, considering the individual differences of children, observing children during the activity.

The findings obtained from the participants through interviews at stage II.

Principal opinion		Poor quality/bad teachers
Mather– could be a teacher (could understand what students need when s/he looks at students’ eyes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could implement the program (P2) • Could observe children and recognize • Could play games with children, • Could guide children Could make contact with students, cheerful, in contact with parents(P1),		Dismissive (discriminating children according to individual traits such as their physical appearance, intelligence etc.) Smiling, Cold (P1) Dull, Closed to communication (P2)
Teachers’ opinion quality/good	Poor quality /bad	Parents’ opinion quality/good
Patient, Loving children, Investigative, Self-improving (T1) Self-improving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not implementing the same activities every year • Implementing the kind of activities downgraded based on students’ levels Calm Patient, Solving problems without raising his/her tone of voice (T2)	Indifferent and to children Loveless(T2) No response (T1)	Optimist, Cheerful, Communicating with parents (P1) Patient, Understanding, Humane to children (P2) Communicating with children (P3) Providing good education, Warm, Sincere, Tolerative (P4)
Note: The codes in boldface refer to the knowledge and skills field qualifications as teaching profession competencies and normal fonts refer to attitudes and values		

Figure 5.The opinions of teachers, parents and principals regarding quality/good, poor quality/bad teachers

The responses given to the question “could you describe the teacher behaviours that will illustrate the quality /good teachers based on your experiences you have had so far” were analysed one by one (see figure 5). While defining the quality / good, poor quality / bad teacher, school principals were found to mostly refer to the values of the teaching profession as general qualifications (calm, patient, investigative, self-developing, exclusionary, cold, sincere, tolerably etc.) rather than Professional skills (playing with children, observing children, recognizing, guiding). While defining the quality / good, poor quality / bad teacher, whereas teachers were found to refer to the attitudes and values among the teaching profession general qualifications (patient, calm, self-developing, investigative, loveless), limited number of teachers were found to refer to the professional skills (not implementing the same activities every year, implementing the kind of activities appropriate to students' levels). When the parents define a quality / good teacher, it was seen that they mostly referred to attitudes and values competence among the teaching profession general qualifications (optimistic, cheerful, patient, understanding, warm, sincere, humane towards children).

There are some direct quotes from the participants' responses;

T11. Quality / good teacher: I had an opportunity to work with an experienced teacher in the first year of my profession. He could maintain the discipline in the classroom without raising his tone of voice. He could give a warning with his speaking tone and could solve problems.

T11. Poor quality / bad teacher: He behaves well to parents and always shows a smiling face. When he is with parents, he behaves as if he were extremely interested in the children. He speaks to children with words of wisdom, he also embraces and kisses them. However, he was actually a type of teacher who never had any plans for the classroom, and he would do his best to find a chance to speak to the school principal and go to the kitchen leaving the classroom to the practice teacher. Another teacher had so low voice tone that he failed in teaching even simple classroom rules to the children. Children in his classroom threw play dough out of the window and left the play dough boxes open. They always demanded new play dough.

Another teacher was too bossy in their communication with children. They were not primary school students. Children need to be embraced and kissed by their teachers to see their teachers' love. There should not be any distance between teachers and students at pre-school education opposed to the primary schools. There is a clear distance between teachers and students in this school.

P7. Poor quality / Bad teacher: During the years when I worked as a teacher, there was a teacher at the school and he used to come to school in the morning and hand over the students to the practice teachers. There was also sleeping room across the classroom and he used to sleep there. When it was about the time to leave the school in the afternoon, he used to come to the classroom and implement a short activity. He used to hand in each student to his/her parent by himself. He used to

tell good things to parents about their children and embrace the children with a smiling face. When I was working at a kindergarten, the family of a 7-year-old child who had a physical and mental disability and did not attend the school came to the school. She asked, “my son wishes for playing a lot, can he play a little please?” Meanwhile, another teacher teaching another classroom spoke to his students saying “keep away from him, he may bite”

Discussion and recommendations

This research, which aimed to reveal the qualities of pre-school teachers by using various data sources, was carried out at two stages. The first stage of the study was carried out with volunteers who worked as preschool teachers in kindergartens in different provinces and parents whose children attended these kindergartens. The second stage was conducted with a kindergarten principal, deputy directors and two volunteer teachers and four parents who volunteered to participate in the study. At the second stage, the end-of-year exhibition photographs, observation of activity sessions and observation of the physical order of the classroom were used as the data source in the study.

The data obtained from the first stage of the study reveal that the administrators referred to the attitudes and values among the general qualifications of the teaching profession (patient, friendly, self-sacrificing, voluntary, conscientious, sharing, showing empathy towards children, open to learning etc.) in defining a quality / good teacher. It was also understood that a limited number of principals referred to the qualifications of teachers in the field of professional skills (recognizing children, observing, guiding children, attracting children's attention, teaching by living) (General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development, 2017). When teachers defined a quality / good teacher, it was found out that they mostly referred to attitudes and values qualifications among the teaching profession general qualifications (patient, investigative, reading, loving the profession, good communication with parents, conscientious, honest, caring, respectful, energetic, pleasant etc.). In addition, a limited number of teachers were found to refer to the qualifications of teachers in the field of professional knowledge (good knowledge of the field) professional skills (using the game in all activities). When the parents defined quality / good teachers, it was found that they referred to the teaching profession general qualifications of attitudes and values (warm, friendly, cheerful, self-renewing, gentle and friendly towards parents, making the child feel they are loved, showing children with mother's affectionate etc.). In addition, a limited number of parents were found to refer to the field of professional skills of teachers (providing good education, making children responsible individuals). In the study conducted by Büyükşahin and Şahin (2017), in line with the findings of this study, it was found that teachers emphasized the characteristics of the quality teachers as patient, social, loving, tolerant, model, curious. On the other hand, they also stated that the parent-teacher-student relationship should be good in order to ensure the quality of a school. In another study, it was found that the presence of assistant teachers in pre-school education classes increased the quality at

schools (Karademir, Cingi, Dereli and Akman, 2017). In another study conducted by Ünüvar, (2011), teachers defined a good kindergarten teacher as "friendly, loving his/her job, having feelings for children, good communication skills, open to innovation, aware of the developments in the field. In the same study, parents stated that loving his/her job, having feelings for children, patient, having good communication with parents would increase the quality at schools. In the study conducted by Waluyo and Formen (2015), teachers emphasized the importance of employing teachers with an undergraduate degree and sensitive to children's feelings for a quality school. In parallel with this study, it has been revealed in many other studies (primary school children, university students, high school teachers) with similar findings of this study that the personality traits and professional attitudes and values of teachers are prioritized in different education levels (Sherman & Blackman, 1975; Kızıltepe, 2002; Gökçe, 2002; Karakelle, 2005). All these results can be related to the teaching human being and the fact that education has a face-to-face nature. However, when the general qualifications of the teaching profession are used by different institutions and teachers (career planning, recruitment, determining the need for in-service training, evaluating teacher performance, teacher self-evaluation, teaching practice, candidate teacher training), it is stated that minimum standards can be established for the teaching profession (General Directorate of Teacher Training and Development, 2017). In this study, it was found that teachers, principals, and parents emphasized the attitudes and values of teachers rather than their professional knowledge and skills. In defining poor quality / bad teachers, it was found that school principals were found to refer to the attitudes and values among general qualifications of the teaching profession (bad human relationship, having no emotional fluctuation, closed to communication, dull, not reading, no self-development, evading from parents etc.). It was also found out that a limited number of principals referred to the qualifications of having professional knowledge (not having enough field knowledge) and professional skills (children are constantly seated, there are always conflicts among children and classroom rules are not settled). In defining poor quality / bad teachers, it was found out that teachers referred to the teaching profession, general qualifications, competence of attitudes and values (unhappy, selfish, disrespectful, closed to innovation, no self-development, not showing affectionate to children etc.). In addition, a limited number of teachers were found to refer to the professional skills (the same class order, stereotypical methods, failing to downgrade to students' levels).

Parents did not suggest any definition regarding quality / bad teachers. This may be related to the fact that parents do not have the opportunity to observe different teachers. In this study, the data obtained at both stages consistently reveal that teachers, administrators and parents consistently define teachers' attitudes and values through the general qualifications of the teaching profession. The data obtained from activity observation, class observation and end-of-year photograph exhibitions reveal the limitations of teachers in meeting their proficiency in professional knowledge and skills. When these findings are considered together, it could be evaluated that pre-school teachers' attitudes and

values are prioritized more than their professional knowledge and skills. The reasons for school principals and teachers to refer to professional knowledge and skills limitedly in defining quality /good, poor quality / bad teachers could be subject to further studies whereas they are actually required to know and implement professional knowledge and skill in the field of education

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