Empowering Educators: A Sociological and Critical Inquiry into Teacher Models

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to interpret the roles and models of teachers, as the most fundamental actors of education, through their own narratives. This research employs a qualitative case study methodology, utilizing semi-structured interviews with a group consisted of eleven master's and doctorate teachers working in Türkiye in the field of Educational Sciences. The teaching profession, which largely determines the fate of a society and the quality of education, makes it necessary to investigate the roles and models of teachers in society. Here, the question arises whether teaching models are solely focused on delivering essential knowledge or if they should be viewed as a profession that plays a crucial role in driving societal change and transformation. The research findings indicate that the education systems and the desired teacher models are shaped according to the preferences and needs of decision makers and those in power within society. Additionally, participating teachers noted that their inability to play an active role in current arrangements, their failure to question the established order, and the inequalities perpetuated by the system have compelled them to adopt the technician teacher model and they acknowledged that the ideal teacher model is the transformative teacher model. Despite these critical approaches, it is evident that transformative teaching has not found substantial practical application in contemporary education systems. It remains inadequate in contributing to societal consistency, progress and development, and it would be

> *inappropriate to generalize the shortcomings in terms of ensuring equal opportunities.*

Keywords: *Critical pedagogy, roles of teachers, models of teachers, sociology, sociology of education*

1. Introduction

The role and function of teachers is an ongoing subject of debate. Teachers are often depicted as artists, psychologists, administrators, and counselors (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). The concept of "role" is not only about individual behavior but also about meeting societal expectations, which may change depending on whether those expectations are fulfilled (Ceylan, 2011; Linton, 1936). A teacher, therefore, must embody the behaviors and responsibilities associated with their status (Apple, 1998). Societal models of teaching vary, and each society has unique expectations of its educators. UNESCO defines teachers as collaborative, autonomous, and competent professionals capable of using technology to enhance teaching and communication. This raises debates about whether education should prioritize technical knowledge or universal wisdom, and whether it should serve the common good or benefit those in power (UNESCO, 2024).

Teacher models also diverge between those who question and those who merely implement instructions (Ural, 2024). This distinction recalls the historical divide between the sophists and Socrates. The sophists, early educators who taught practical knowledge for a fee, traveled between cities to meet societal needs (Tarnas, 2013). In contrast, Socrates focused on universal concepts like virtue, justice, and goodness through critical dialogue. This philosophical divide, as discussed in *Plato's Apology*, led to significant conflict and ultimately to Socrates' execution. Socrates' model of questioning and critical engagement reflects a transformative approach to teaching, which challenges societal norms.

Ultimately, education systems and teacher models are shaped by the values and needs of those in power (Leppert, 2020).

1.1. The Roles and Models of Teachers

The function of education has been addressed in two primary ways in the literature. Functionalists, led by Talcott Parsons and Emile Durkheim, view education as a means to foster a democratic and egalitarian society (Sever, 2012; Welch, 1985). In this perspective, teachers play a crucial role in shaping individuals to meet societal expectations, develop human resources, and transmit social values. Conversely, the critical approach, represented by scholars like Giroux, sees education as a tool for maintaining the dominance of existing power structures and reproducing knowledge that serves the status quo (Esen, 2010; Giroux, 2021). From this perspective, the teacher's role is to act as a transformative intellectual, encouraging students to challenge existing ideologies and critically engage with knowledge (Giroux, 1988; Giroux & McLaren, 1986).

Various teacher models have emerged within the literature. Akhan and Demirezen (2020) focus on the 'Investigative Teacher Model', which emphasizes research awareness and critical inquiry. Teachers in this model are expected to engage in problem-solving, collaborate with colleagues, review literature, conduct research, and share findings (Çepni & Akdeniz, 1996). Dreikurs et al. (1982) offer another classification based on classroom management, distinguishing between democratic, theocratic, and free (disinterested) teachers. The 'democratic teacher' is ideal, valuing student input and fostering a collaborative environment. The 'theocratic teacher', in contrast, is authoritarian, cold, and oppressive, while the 'free teacher' neglects student engagement and responsibility. Furthermore, education, as a concept, is often linked to the rise of the capitalist system, which sought to ensure the continuity

of labor power and the control of production processes (Apple, 1998; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Buyruk, 2015; Foley et al., 2015). In this context, Ural (2024) categorizes teacher models into 'Passive Transmissive Technician Teachers', 'Reflective Practitioner Teachers', and 'Transformative Intellectual Teachers'. These models align with broader educational ideologies: the 'Passive Transmissive Technician' corresponds to 'Technicist Teacher Education', the 'Reflective Practitioner' relates to 'Thinking Practitioner' and 'Reflective Teacher Education', and the 'Transformative Intellectual Teacher' aligns with 'Critical Teacher Education' (Tezgiden Cakcak, 2016).

When analyzing these models, the Passive Transmissive Technician Teacher represents a figure who does not question or innovate, simply fulfilling the tasks assigned (Giroux, 2021). The Reflective Practitioner Teacher, in contrast, critiques and integrates theory with practice, promoting active learning and ongoing professional development (Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Rooted in John Dewey's early 20th-century advocacy for critical thinking and active teaching (Dewey, 1899), this model emphasizes reflective practice and personal growth. Lastly, the Transformative Intellectual Teacher strives to challenge and transform ideological and political consciousness, advocating for social change (Giroux, 1988; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Ural, 2024). In conclusion, these teacher models reflect different educational philosophies and approaches, ranging from the passive, technical roles to more critical and transformative models that challenge the status quo and promote social change. Each model carries distinct implications for the role of the teacher in shaping students' intellectual and social development.

Characteristics of the Practitioner (Technician) Teacher: The practitioner (technician) teacher strictly adheres to established educational norms, relying on predetermined methodologies without questioning their validity. This model

emphasizes the transmission of knowledge over creative or innovative teaching strategies. Such teachers often remain within a comfort zone, focusing predominantly on the curriculum and widely accepted practices, while neglecting to integrate personal experiences or adapt to students' needs. Their role is seen as following a set of prescribed procedures, and their effectiveness is measured by their ability to deliver content rather than stimulate critical thinking or foster dynamic classroom engagement. This model reflects a teacher who operates within a rigid framework, valuing compliance over innovation.

Characteristics of the Reflective Teacher: The reflective teacher, in contrast, views teaching as a dynamic process that involves constant self-reflection and critical engagement with established norms. This educator systematically evaluates their own beliefs, knowledge, and practices, seeking to improve their teaching and better serve students. Reflective teachers are facilitators of learning who recognize the interconnectedness of school, students, and parents, and they engage in ongoing professional development. They view teaching as both an intellectual and artistic endeavor, actively contributing to curriculum development and the overall school culture. By continually assessing their own performance, the reflective teacher adapts their methods to create new learning opportunities and responds to the challenges and complexities of the classroom.

Characteristics of the Transformative Intellectual Teacher: The transformative intellectual teacher, rooted in critical pedagogy as outlined by Paulo Freire in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, is a change agent who seeks to transform both educational systems and the broader societal structures that perpetuate inequality. This teacher challenges the traditional role of education as a tool for maintaining social hierarchies and instead uses teaching to promote sociopolitical liberation and empower students. A transformative teacher actively critiques the injustices inherent in the education system and works to

address these disparities by encouraging critical thinking and social action. Flexible in their approach, they present problems from multiple perspectives, nurturing both the intellectual and emotional growth of their students. Ultimately, the transformative intellectual teacher fosters student agency, encouraging learners to take ownership of their educational journeys and become active participants in societal change.

These three teacher models, practitioner, reflective, and transformative, differ significantly in their approaches to teaching and learning. They illustrate a spectrum of pedagogical practices, from the rigid adherence to established norms to the dynamic, critical engagement with the world around us. Each model offers a unique perspective on the teacher's role, contributing to a broader understanding of how teaching can facilitate both individual and social transformation (Tezgiden Cakcak, 2016).

1.2. Reassessing the Transformative Teacher Model and Critical Pedagogy

At this juncture, it is essential to emphasize the transformative teacher model within the broader discussion of teacher paradigms. Transformative learning requires critiquing and addressing societal issues such as oppression, inequality, and injustice (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Tezgiden Cakcak, 2016). A transformative teacher embodies a critical perspective, shaped by their experiences and values, and engages in actions that challenge dominant societal norms (Erden & Yıldız, 2020). This approach draws from Paulo Freire's concept of emancipatory education, which critiques the traditional 'banking model'—where education simply molds passive, compliant citizens—in favor of an education that empowers individuals (Freire, 2017). Transformative teachers are keenly aware of their social and political environment, and they act consciously to advocate for marginalized groups, often confronting those in positions of power (Giroux & McLaren, 1986). The goal of this model is to

raise awareness among both teachers and students, fostering a critical consciousness that resists oppressive societal structures.

The transformative teaching model also challenges social inequalities, particularly those perpetuated by economic conditions, which shape an individual's opportunities and future (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). Central to critical pedagogy, this model questions the role of education as a tool for social control, rather than liberation, and critiques the dominant ideologies embedded in educational systems (Burbules & Berk, 1999). Despite the significant theoretical support for critical pedagogy, its practical implementation faces challenges. Scholars argue that while the transformative approach offers valuable insights, it is often underutilized due to its theoretical nature and the dominant focus on practical applications in modern education systems (Tinning, 2002; Zokaeieh & Fakhri Alamdari, 2018). Moreover, despite the theoretical gaps, global initiatives aimed at improving educational equity and access reflect a growing recognition of these issues (OECD, 2018; UNESCO, 2017; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2023; Özer et al., 2020). Additionally, the transformative teacher's focus on revising curricula and encouraging active student participation aligns with contemporary educational objectives, such as developing 21st-century skills (Apple, 1998; Hamarat, 2019; Rotherham & Willingham, 2009; Trilling & Fadel, 2009; World Economic Forum, 2020).

However, it is important to recognize that poverty and marginalization are not solely the result of educational shortcomings. Outdated rules, a lack of practical solutions, and a tendency to dismiss academic research often hinder the potential for transformative educational practices (Gur-Ze'ev, 2005). Thus, while education plays a critical role in addressing social inequalities, it cannot bear sole responsibility for societal problems.

Furthermore, the transformative theories of critical pedagogy, often characterized by a pessimistic or dystopian view of the world, are increasingly seen as less effective in contemporary contexts (Gur-Ze'ev, 2005). To make meaningful progress in education, it is essential to adopt realistic pedagogies and implement practical social initiatives, rather than focusing solely on utopian goals (Stańczyk, 2021). While criticism remains a necessary part of the educational process, it is equally crucial to take concrete, sustainable steps toward advancing and developing education systems.

1.3. Importance of the Research

This study examines the roles and models of teachers, focusing on the purpose of education and the function of schools. It explores whether education should aim to foster a democratic, egalitarian, and transformative society, or if its role is to preserve the existing system and reinforce established values. The central question is whether teaching models should be viewed merely as vehicles for transmitting essential knowledge, or as a profession that can drive societal change and transformation.

Recent developments, such as changes in student profiles and advancements in information and communication technologies, have prompted a re-examination of teacher models and training (İzmirli et al., 2012). While educators increasingly aim to democratize schools and develop critical, active citizens, these efforts often remain more theoretical than practical. This research aims to understand teachers' roles by analyzing and discussing three key teacher models: the technician teacher, the reflective teacher, and the transformative teacher. Unlike studies that primarily rely on document analysis or literature reviews, this research directly engages educators with postgraduate academic training, asking them to reflect on current and ideal teacher models.

Furthermore, this study distinguishes itself by adopting an impartial approach to both functionalist and critical pedagogical perspectives, evaluating their strengths and weaknesses based on teachers' experiences. The research problem centers on identifying the teacher models adopted by participating educators, the models they consider optimal for themselves, and the model the current education system promotes. This approach emphasizes understanding and critically examining the reasons behind the adoption of various teacher models, rather than simply evaluating them as positive or negative. By taking this balanced approach, the study seeks to provide a clearer picture of how different teacher models align with broader educational goals. The central research questions guiding this study are: What are teachers' views on the role and model of teaching in society? And what suggestions do teachers offer regarding the ideal teaching model for the future?

2. Method

2.1. Research Model, Data Collection Tool and Data Analysis

This study, which aims to evaluate the factors influencing the role and model of teachers based on teachers' perspectives, adopts a qualitative approach. This research uses semi-structured qualitative interviews, allowing for in-depth exploration. The raw data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using the "content analysis technique". The analysis followed a four-stage process outlined by Yıldırım and Şimşek (2013). In the first stage, the data were coded; in the second stage, themes within the coded data were identified; the third stage involved organizing the codes and themes; and the fourth stage focused on the description and interpretation of the findings. Through this process, the study aimed to derive meaningful insights into the various teacher models and the factors influencing their adoption.

2.2. Participants

The research group of this study consisted of 11 teachers with master's and doctorate degrees in educational sciences at Ankara University among teachers working in public schools in the educational districts with different socio-economic levels. The research was conducted on this group since it was thought that they both knew the problems in the field and applied them in practice and could look at the models of teachers from an academic framework. The study group of the research was determined by the easily accessible case sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods used in qualitative research method. Purposive sampling method is a type of sampling that is suitable for qualitative research tradition and widely used (Patton, 2014; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). The reason for using convenience sampling in this study is that the researcher wants to select the people who have the desired competence from these postgraduate students and can reach them more easily. In the Manuscript, the participant names were not given during coding. Participants were coded as T1, T2, T3, etc., in interview order. Demographic data is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Teachers in the Study

Variables	Groups	N	(%)
Gender	Woman	5	45,5
	Man	6	54,5
Age	26-35 Years	3	27,3
	36-45 Years	3	27,3
	46-55 Years	3	27,3
	56 and above	2	18,2
School Type	Primary	5	45,5
	Middle School	5	45,5
	High School	1	9,1
	University	8	72,7
Educational	Master's Degree	1	9,1
Background	Doctorate	2	18,2

Upon examining Table 1, it becomes evident that the research cohort of teachers exhibited a balanced distribution concerning both age and gender, with 45.5% of participants identifying as female and 54.5% as male. Notably, while many prior studies often indicate a predominance of female teachers, this study demonstrates a higher representation of male participants, likely attributable to the selection criteria, which emphasized individuals with postgraduate education. Additionally, the age distribution among respondents was equally balanced, thereby enriching the study's capacity to incorporate diverse perspectives, as the sentiments and viewpoints of individuals can vary significantly with age and experience. In terms of school type, nearly half of the participating teachers (45.5%) were primary school educators, while an equivalent percentage represented middle school teachers, with a smaller fraction (9.1%) identifying as high school educators; intriguingly, no participants were drawn from pre-school settings. Concerning educational background, this study specifically targeted teachers involved in postgraduate programs in educational sciences. Participants were asked to disclose their educational qualifications, revealing that eight held master's degrees, one was pursuing a doctorate, and two had already completed their doctoral studies. This underscores the considerable experience and expertise possessed by the selected participants in relation to the roles and models of teaching.

3. Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study address key issues aligned with its objectives. Specifically, the research examines the role of teachers within society and the education system, identifies the ideal teacher model as perceived by society, assesses the model favored by the current education system, explores the teacher model articulated by participants, and evaluates the impact of transformative teachers on education.

3.1. The Role of Teachers in Society and in Education System

The participating teachers were asked about the role of teachers in society and the education system, and they described teachers' roles with the following words and phrases:

Table 2

Phrases Defining the Role of Teachers

Social and Societal Impact	Prestige and Status
Advocator of Justice (T11)	Foundation of The Education System (T3)
Society Builder (T8)	Diminished Prestige (T2, T10)
Locomotive (T11)	Development Facilitator (T4)
Leader (T9)	Neutralized Person (T2)
Education and Knowledge Transmission	**Guidance and Influence**
Transmitter of Knowledge and Values (T4)	Transmitter of Knowledge and Values (T4)
Preparer of the Future (T1, T4, T5, T11)	Primary Actor in Education (T7, T8, T1)
Transmitter of Skills (T7, T8)	Life Lessons Provider (T4, T7)
Knowledge Transmitter (T2)	Significant Figure (T4)
Future-Oriented Roles	Students' Supporter (T4)
Future Shaper (T1, T2, T4, T11, T8)	Role Model (T6)
Potential Discoverer (T4)	Guide (T1)
Pioneer of Renewal (T5)	

These expressions underscore the diverse and vital roles teachers play in society, emphasizing that their status should be elevated. However, the phrases "Diminished Prestige" (T2, T10) and "Neutralized Person" (T2) convey negative connotations, depicting teachers as individuals with low status, lacking initiative, and perceived as ineffective.

3.1.1. The Ideal Teacher Model: The teachers participating in the study were asked to describe what they believe the 'ideal teacher model' should be within society. The teachers were given the options of technician teacher, reflective

teacher and transformative teacher and were expected to form an ideal value judgment. The most interesting finding in this section is that none of the teachers who participated in the research answered 'technician teacher' as an ideal model. Three teachers answered 'reflective teacher' (T1, T5, T10), while seven teachers answered 'transformative teacher' (T3, T4, T6, T7, T8, T9, T11). One teacher (T2). did not choose one of these three models and stated that the teacher should be an exemplary role model. Teacher T8, who made a general evaluation before choosing one of these three approaches, described the transformative teacher with the following statements:

> All three teacher models have important contributions, but the transformative teacher model can best meet the needs of society. Transformative teachers are teachers who not only transfer knowledge but also encourage students to think, develop critical thinking skills and contribute to social change. This model enables students not only to learn knowledge, but also to understand, question and improve the world. Therefore, a transformative role for teachers in society can help to ensure a more robust education and societal transformation (T8).

Teacher T8, who emphasized the importance of criticizing, questioning, and thinking, stated that transformative teaching would help to understand and improve the world. In this way, he emphasized that social transformation can be realized.

On the other hand, although the participating teachers in the study acknowledge that transformative teachers can foster social change and emphasize students' creativity and critical thinking, the practical application of transformative teaching in contemporary conditions appears challenging. The discrepancy between the ideal teacher model that educators aspire to and the roles they actually perform in practice serves as an indication of the ongoing presence of power dynamics, as discussed by Foucault. According to Foucault (1977), this

discrepancy reflects the continued efforts of those in positions of power to dominate and exert control over individuals and society. He argues that individuals are constantly monitored and shaped by societal norms and disciplinary mechanisms, and that the policies implemented are not tools of liberation, but rather part of the mechanisms through which power maintains its control. These mechanisms, Foucault suggests, work to confine individuals and regulate their behaviors. In a similar vein, Gramsci (1971) builds on this notion by asserting that the acceptance of the dominant ideology by individuals serves to legitimize and reinforce this control, thereby further entrenching the structures of power. Despite the pervasive impacts of oppression, inequality, poverty, violence, and the strengthening of political and cultural factors, it is important to recognize that current globalizations, evolving communication technologies, changes in information acquisition methods, dramatic societal transformations, and shifts in professions and the workforce also weaken these critical discourses (Gur-Ze'ev, 2005).

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3.1.2. The Desired Teacher Model: This section critically examines the teacher model endorsed by the current education system alongside the model it aims to cultivate. Ten out of eleven participating teachers identified with the "technician teacher" model. Although one teacher (T9) responded with "reflective teacher," he also indicated a desire to "create a generation that thinks like him." The participants provided the following responses regarding the preferred teacher model within the current education system:

> Technician teacher. Because it is desired to raise individuals who are compatible with the system instead of critical and creative individuals (T1). Memorizing, not questioning and too independent (T2). Current education systems are generally focused on knowledge transfer, so teachers often prioritize a knowledge-oriented model (T4). It prioritizes the technician teacher model. The reason for this is related to the aim of facilitating the concentration of power in a certain group by producing people who do

not question or intervene in life (T7). Current education systems generally prioritize the technician teacher model because they measure specific knowledge and skills through standardized tests. However, the future generation is more likely to be raised with the transformative teacher model because it allows students to focus not only on academic achievement but also on social good (T8). The reflective teacher model is desired because they want a generation that thinks like them (T9). Technician teacher. Because they know that the enlightenment of the society will bring the end of the existing order such as the feudal structure. To create a crowd that does not question, does not produce, and thinks that voting is democracy. They want to create tribal individuals who do not understand science and art and cannot integrate with the world (T11).

The statements above reveal that participating teachers have adopted a critical perspective on the current education system. Their reluctance to mention the transformative teacher model suggests a hesitation to challenge administrative authority and a preference for cultivating a generation that mirrors their own thinking. This aligns with Freire's (2017) description of the traditional "banking education method," where the teacher primarily serves as an information transmitter, leaving no space for fostering awareness among the oppressed (Erden and Yıldız, 2020). Teachers believe that the administration does not expect a questioning, action-oriented teacher model; instead, they interpret the increasing ideological and political pressures as pushing educators toward a technician role, performing only what is expected of them (Giroux, 2021). Echoing Giroux and McLaren (1986), they argue that the political landscape diminishes their professional value, rendering them passive and powerless in their roles.

3.1.3. The Models Reflecting the Teachers: In this section, the teachers participating in the study were asked about the teacher model they adopted. The reason for asking this question was to find out how the participating teachers defined themselves and to understand to what extent they were trying to realize

themselves in the profession. The teachers who participated in the research, coded T2 and T5, defined themselves as technician teachers:

> Unfortunately, I am a technician teacher who transfers the curriculum (T2). I am a technician teacher. With LGS (Central Student Selection Exam) in front of me, there is no other possibility (T5).

Five teachers (T1, T3, T7, T8, T10) who participated in the study expressed themselves as reflective teachers:

> Reflective teacher. As long as the critical thinking skills and creative thinking skills of the individuals who make up the society are developed, social progress can be made. In addition, a society that learns to establish cause and effect relationships between events can assume an identity that seeks rights, respects each other's rights, and aims to reach the level of modern civilization (T1).

> It can be said that I am more of a reflective teacher. Although my social life is close to the transformative teacher model, I believe that the current MoNE system is not suitable for this teaching model (T3).

> In my teaching experience, the model that reflects me with the effect of working in private institutions is "reflective teacher". Both the desire not to stay within the boundaries of technician teaching and working in institutions that are not open to the transformative teacher model pushed me more or less to the middle option. I wanted to do my best in my field in a lively learning atmosphere (T7).

> I mostly reflect the reflective teacher model because I encourage students to learn based on their previous knowledge and experiences (T8).

> I am a reflective teacher. I think it is freer according to the primary school level and individual differences of the students (T10).

The quotations reveal a clear preference among participants for the reflective teacher model, highlighting its importance in fostering critical and creative thinking skills essential for social progress. T1 emphasizes that such skills enable individuals to understand cause-and-effect relationships, fostering a society that values rights and aspires to modern civilization. T3 acknowledges a personal alignment with the reflective model but expresses concern that the current Ministry of National Education (MoNE) system is not conducive to transformative teaching practices. T7 reflects on the influence of private institutions, noting that while they strive to avoid a purely technician approach, they find themselves constrained within the limits of the reflective model due to institutional resistance to transformation. T8 and T10 further affirm their alignment with the reflective model, focusing on personalized learning and the adaptability required for diverse student needs. Additionally, four teachers (T4, T6, T9, T11) expressed themselves as transformative teachers and expressed the following statements:

> I think I am a transformative teacher. Collaboration between myself and my students is essential and my students see themselves as active participants in learning process (T4).

> I am a transformative teacher. I want to make children the most valuable like a diamond that looks like a stone (T6).

> I am a transformative teacher. I think I am a teacher profile in harmony with the world that prioritizes universal principles (T9).

As can be seen, 2 of the 11 teachers who participated in the study defined themselves as technician teachers, while 5 of them stated that they are reflective teachers. The remaining 4 teachers (teachers coded T4, T6, T9) considered themselves as transformative teachers. The teachers agreed with Mezirow (2000) by stating that transformative teachers focus on pursuing their own goals

and values rather than simply meeting the wishes and desires of others. This shows that teachers are willing to take action by looking at events and processes with a critical eye. Teachers offering perspectives that are congruent with Bowles and Gintis's (1976) stance, complain about the inequalities they face and try to raise awareness on this issue. The participating teachers think that the transformative teacher is a model of a teacher who has a radical view of changing people's ideas and mindsets in order to achieve social justice, peace and happiness, who looks at life from a different perspective, and who can see the interaction between those who hold power and other people. These articulated viewpoints also mirror Kostoulas-Makrakis (2010) views.

3.2. Impact of Transformative Teachers

This section explores the feasibility of transformative teaching and its potential impact on education. When asked about possible changes, several teachers expressed skepticism, with T1 stating, "Unfortunately, it can change very little in this system," T2 adding, "It does not give anything in this country," and T10 commenting, "I don't think the mindset of society can handle that much." Collectively, these responses suggest that the current educational framework severely limits change, critique, and transformation. The teachers recognize that meaningful change is a challenging and painful process, believing that individuals struggle to articulate their experiences and worldviews within the existing system. Furthermore, they argue that these ingrained perspectives are deeply rooted in the subconscious, making them difficult to alter (Mezirow, 2000). Although this change has been challenging, teachers have developed various mechanisms of resistance in response. Teachers try describe their approach to resistance through the concept of the transformative teacher model. In this context, teachers coded T8 and T11 articulate their views on how they believe they can resist the system:

> Transformative teachers can contribute to making the education system more flexible and student-centered by developing students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills (T8).

> I believe that the salvation of my country depends on these teachers. Religious communities are not civil society organizations. Liberation from this mentality can only be achieved through revolutionary, productive thinkers, teachers like those who bring the educational policy of our republic to the most remote villages, just as village teachers did. Teachers should mobilize society against injustice and inequality, using education as a tool to lead the society to brighter days (T11).

While the teacher coded T8 speaks to resisting the existing order through critical thinking and inquiry, T11, referencing the significant influence of religion in the current system, calls for a revolutionary spirit rooted in the founding philosophies of the nation. This form of resistance can be understood through Bourdieu's (1986) concept of social capital, which suggests that individuals and groups, by questioning their own habitus, have the potential to reshape societal structures. Furthermore, through social networks and relationships, they can organize and mobilize resistance. On the other hand, Foucault (1977) argues that individuals must free themselves from constant surveillance and disciplinary mechanisms, and in doing so, reconstruct their identities. Thus, both Bourdieu and Foucault provide theoretical frameworks to understand how resistance to established systems can be organized, whether through the questioning of societal structures or the process of individual liberation from oppressive forces.

Amidst the prevailing negativity, it is crucial to acknowledge the optimism teachers hold regarding transformative teaching practices. Participants in the research emphasized that such practices could enhance the quality of education (T3), foster critical thinking and self-confidence (T4), empower individuals to influence society (T6), address various social crises (T7), create a more flexible

education system (T8), broaden students' perspectives (T9), and facilitate development that extends globally (T11). These views align with Leppert's perspective (2020), asserting that transformative teachers aspire to effect meaningful change in society and education. The teachers believe that educators possess the capacity for independent thought and can drive social change, demonstrating their commitment to these ideals. Thus, while maintaining a critical stance, the teachers effectively highlight the potential benefits of transformative teaching.

3.3. Suggestions of the Participating Teachers on 'Teacher Models'

- Instead of promoting individuals who merely conform to the system, a teacher profile should be developed that is critical, inquisitive, innovative, creative, grounded in universal principles, aligned with global perspectives, and advocates for justice (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9, T10, T11).

- Although the curriculum suggests a reflective and transformative model, teachers are expected to implement what is expected or desired. It is necessary to put the proposed teacher models into practice (T3).

- There is a need for more transformative teachers with critical thinking and problem-solving skills in education. There is a need for revolutionary productive and thought-provoking teachers. In this way, many crises in society can be solved more easily. (T7, T8, T11)

- Individuals who say what they know and seek their rights should be raised in society. (T1)

- Since teachers cannot do what they know to be right, they impose the desired education on their students. In this way, a generation that cannot think and question is raised. (T4)

- Since being a transformative teacher is not accepted by the government, even though teachers see this model as ideal, they hesitate to implement it. It is necessary to be more transparent and inclusive in this regard (T3).

- Rather than a teacher who only conveys and memorizes information, a teacher model that is suitable for the individual needs of students and society should be adopted (T1, T4).

- Teachers who understand science and art and are integrated with the world should be trained (T11).

- It is necessary to move away from a model that only allows a group of like-minded people to live. T9).

- The education system should avoid centralizing power within a single group and ensure that the views of all groups are valued and considered (T7).

- The exam-oriented education system should be abandoned. This is the most important practice that turns teachers into technicians. More importance should be given to character development and social benefit rather than academic achievement (T4, T5).

- While private schools warn their teachers not to become technician teachers, public schools give a similar warning about transformative teaching. Therefore, most teachers strive to be reflective teachers. This situation causes teachers to express themselves within those limits. There is a need for a system that is more liberating and leaves the initiative to the teacher. (T7)

- The emancipatory and flexible education policies proposed at the founding of the Republic should be adopted as soon as possible (T11).

- The education system should not depend on a certain group, community or individual. Critical discourses that embrace universal values should be listened to and should be carefully implemented (T11).

These suggestions collectively advocate for a more transformative, inclusive, and student-centered education system. The teachers' proposals emphasize the importance of critical thinking, teacher autonomy, and social responsibility while critiquing the current system's focus on conformity, exams, and

centralized power. The readers are encouraged to consider how these ideas could reshape teacher education, curriculum design, and policy-making to create a more flexible and dynamic educational environment that nurtures the development of thoughtful, active, and empowered teachers.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

This study seeks to interpret the roles and models of teachers based on the perspectives of participating educators, drawing on a literature review and survey findings. While various teacher models exist in the literature, this research primarily focuses on three: the Technician Teacher Model, the Reflective Teacher Model, and the Transformative Teacher Model. The Technician Teacher Model involves educators who strictly adhere to the existing curriculum, lacking creativity or innovation, and primarily fulfilling prescribed standards and expectations (Leppert, 2020). This model emphasizes content delivery and compliance with set guidelines. In contrast, the Reflective Practitioner Teacher Model encourages interactive learning opportunities, fostering critical thinking, questioning, and creativity. These teachers not only develop their own skills but also act as facilitators for their students. Finally, the Transformative Intellectual Teacher Model champions sociopolitical liberation and individual empowerment. This teacher model, which is a pioneer of change, aims for sociopolitical liberation and individual empowerment. It is the teacher who criticizes and interprets the problems, oppression and persecution, inequalities and injustices in society (Bowles and Gintis, 1976), makes them visible and tries to transform them (Giroux, 2021).

In the research, the teachers clearly articulated that the ideal educator is not merely a technician who accepts and implements everything unconditionally. This indicates that the teachers desire to scrutinize their instructional practices and adopt a critical perspective. This situation also indicates that the teachers

reflect upon their instructional practices and employ their creativity in their teaching methods. The teachers involved in the research expressed whether due to lamentation or a conscious choice that the education system now demands individuals who teach test-taking techniques, as required by the system. Such recent developments in the education system show that functional policies that serve the interests of the dominant power are being implemented as stated by Giroux (2021). This system also shows that schools and education systems are being managed with the logic of a private company with discourses such as current examination systems, economic growth concerns, technical specialization efforts, curriculum changes, career success (Giroux and McLaren, 1986). These developments, which are not under the control of teachers, lead to the adoption and spread of the technician teacher model. It is seen that the expected and desired teacher model differs according to educational systems and culture (Pishghadam and Meidani, 2012). The roles expected of the teacher are sometimes considered as transferring the given information, sometimes as using interactive and creative teaching techniques, and sometimes as an element that helps to change and transform society from an oppressive and technician teacher. Here, it is important to remember that the transition from technician teacher to reflective teacher and then to transformative teacher can progress in line with the needs and desires of the teacher.

As articulated by the participating teachers, parallel to Tezgiden Cakcak's (2016) opinions, teachers claim that they cannot take an active role in the current regulations, question the order and express their opinions because they apply the technician teacher model in the Turkish education system. That is to say, the teacher education system in Turkey seems to prefer to train more technician teachers, not wanting teachers to take leading and active roles in the system. Moreover, teachers believe that the intense workload of teachers and the socio-cultural situation of the country disempower teachers and this

situation reinforces the logic of technician teaching. Therefore, teachers endorse the views expressed by Giroux (2021) by stating that teachers need to resist the pressure of the system and create a more democratic and livable environment. Teachers subscribe to the same opinion as Yıldız (2017), by stating that the model of teachers as obedient practitioners of education, preparing students for central exams, transferring knowledge to students, transferring information to students, trying to prepare students for central exams, and, they cannot go beyond being a technician teacher in today's education system. In this way, teachers need to develop themselves in terms of sociopolitical aspects and to be able to look at education programs with a critical eye, in this sense, teachers need to graduate with a philosophical background as well as the necessary theoretical knowledge. In this way, teachers who gain critical skills will be able to raise awareness of the society about taking joint actions to combat existing inequalities and injustices through transformative actions (Okçabol, 2012). In this way, ideas can be changed through consensus and logical discussion rather than coercion (Mezirow, 1998).

Based on the research findings, it can be said that neo-liberal policies and education systems have an impact on the formation of teachers' professional status and shaping the teacher roles expected of them (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). In this sense, teachers are expected to take ownership of their roles and status, to realize that educational systems can be used as an ideological apparatus by the government and to take conscious actions accordingly (Giroux, 2021). On the other hand, the teachers' personal beliefs, the learning and teaching theories they believe in, the theories they adopt and the educational philosophies they apply, the principles they adhere to, their teaching styles, as well as their personal and professional experiences are the determinants of their professional roles. In addition to all these variables, the school, society and education system in which the teacher works also have an impact on the shaping

of these roles. This situation shows that many factors are effective in the selection and implementation of roles. Today, while the teacher should present the rich culture, values and knowledge of the society, due to the way the education system is constructed, the teacher has been a transmitter and a professional group that serves the dominant understanding with a rote learning approach, antidemocratic and ideological prejudices for many years (Gündoğdu, 2013).

Critique of Transformative Teaching and Critical Pedagogy

The preceding section has discussed the ideal of the current education system from teachers' perspectives, which aims to produce teachers who do not question and merely perform the actions required ideologically by the system. The critical and transformative stance of transformative teaching is significant in terms of raising individuals' awareness and consciousness. Furthermore, amplifying the voices of marginalized groups and recognizing their previously disregarded identities within the educational system represents an important advancement in awareness and is undoubtedly a progressive step. However, it is also evident that this transformative teaching approach has not found substantial practical application in contemporary modern education systems (Pishghadam and Meidani, 2012).

Critical pedagogy emerged from concerns that strict adherence to politically motivated curricula foster passivity among students and reduces teachers to mere technicians following instructions without questioning (Apple, 1998). Transformative educators oppose this passive approach, advocating for an education system that actively challenges such inertia. Supporting Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977) perspective, teachers recognize schools as institutions that, through their curricula, reinforce cultural norms and produce students who accept societal inequalities without scrutiny. In contrast, modern education

systems prioritize self-discovery and creativity, aiming to create student-centered environments that foster exploration and innovation, marking a shift towards more dynamic and engaging educational practices (Schleicher, 2012).

Critical approaches also emerged with the assertion that economic infrastructure and cultural capital determine individuals' destinies (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). In this context, the primary argument of transformative teaching is to challenge the perpetuation of individuals' disadvantaged positions by the school and educational system. However, the factors contributing to individuals' social class, culture, economic status, and societal disadvantage are not solely a product of the school or educational process. To attribute these issues exclusively to the school and claim that the source of such disadvantages is only the educational system would be an oversimplification. On the other hand, transformative teachers often assert that schools do not provide equal opportunities and that disadvantaged individuals receive inadequate education, and they are inclined to take action to address this. Additionally, the transformative teaching approach argues that economic social justice and equity are not being achieved in schools (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). However, modern school systems are working towards this goal. They are designed to help students realize their potential and guide them according to their career preferences, thus enabling individuals to advance socially when they succeed. Nonetheless, while there are still shortcomings in the public education systems aimed at equality for the disadvantaged segments of society, including the poor, marginalized, and othered individuals, it should be noted that many countries have developed various programs to ensure educational opportunities, such as scholarships, free education, housing, and clothing assistance (OECD, 2018; UNESCO, 2017; European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2023; Özer et al., 2020). While criticism and advocacy for improvement are essential for progress, there remains a need for stable and consistent policies. Therefore, it would be

inappropriate to generalize the current educational system's shortcomings in providing equal opportunities.

Although the teachers participating in the research believe that transformative teaching enhances the quality of education and offers the potential to transform society, it is also accurate to say that the transformative teaching approach can be variable, indecisive, and lacks concrete solutions. What is more, critical and transformative educational approaches face criticism for falling short in terms of social accountability, being unclear on impact on real-life situations, and for being abstract and artificial (Burbules and Berk, 1999). In fact, measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of this approach can also be time-consuming and challenging to implement (Forbes and Kaufman, 2008). Merely blaming authorities or criticizing market and capitalist neoliberal globalization may not be sufficient. Consequently, transformative teaching ideals often remain abstract and are difficult to apply in classroom settings (Gur-Ze'ev, 2005). For meaningful progress, some aspects need to be realistic and practical. Achieving order and sustainability can often be difficult, and sometimes impossible. In this regard, reflective teaching approaches may offer key insights for advancement and development. Therefore, identifying and addressing the shortcomings of the education system, and focusing on its remedial and compensatory functions, may be more beneficial.

In conclusion, defining the role of teachers within education systems necessitates a variety of transformative developments aimed at enhancing the overall educational landscape. To achieve this, education systems must prioritize strategies and policies that move beyond neo-political influences, thereby improving teachers' working conditions and fostering quality teaching and learning. Rather than relying on outdated models that emphasize mere information transmission, an ideal teacher profile should focus on critical

thinking, creativity, and alignment with universal principles, while actively addressing societal needs. These changes must be concrete and sustainable to effectively tackle the numerous crises faced by society. Additionally, it is crucial to implement policies that elevate teachers' professional identity and respect, promoting collaboration among educators and unions to oppose detrimental policies. Ultimately, by adopting realistic pedagogies and robust social initiatives, the education system can progress confidently, while further research is essential to gain deeper insights into the roles and models of teachers through larger sample sizes.

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