An İnvestigation of Prospective Music Teachers' Early Teacher İdentity

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Abstract
This study was a descriptive study that investigated prospective music teachers' early teacher identity. The study made use of a general screening model. Participants of the research is consists of 162 fourth-year music teacher candidates. The study was conducted in the spring semester of the 2015-2016 academic year at the music teaching department of the fine arts education division of different Universities in Turkey. The " Early Teacher Identity Measure**"** developed by Friesen and Besley (2013) was used in the research as data collection tool. As a result; according the results of the analysis, prospective music teachers' perceptions of early teacher identity was found to be at "high" level in general, and in all sub-dimensions of the measure. In the light of research results, it is considered that when teacher candidates confident in their profession, will exhibit more positive behaviors towards the students, motivate the students more easily, enjoy doing and enjoying their profession and will be able to better assume the duty, responsibility and roles of the teacher. According to the conclusions of this study, it is thought that gaining information about the teacher identity of teacher candidates will help to develop teacher education programs.
Keywords: Prospective music teachers, early teacher identity, music course.

1. Introduction
Teachers are the most important professional element that determines the functioning of the education system and the quality of the service provided. Teachers have a direct impact on the human development and competence of all their developmental areas, including their academic development, as well as their psychological well-being, social cohesion and communication skills (Tedmem, 2014).

 "When students enrol into a teacher education program, they begin their journey into the profession and start to 'act' and 'think' like a teacher. Students have their own individual beliefs and attitudes that will impact on their identity as a teacher" (Joseph, 2011, p.77).

Horn, Nolen, Ward, & Campbells' (2008), defined *identity* as *"*refers to the way a person understands and views himself, and is often viewed by others, at least in certain situations—a perception of self that can be fairly constantly achieved" (p. 62). There are many definitions of teacher professional identity in the literature. Lasky (2005, p. 901) introduced teacher professional identity, "how teachers define themselves to themselves and to others". Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), define teacher identity as "a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be', 'how to act' and 'how to understand' their work and their place in society" (p. 178). Importantly, teacher identity is not something that is fixed nor is it imposed; rather it is negotiated through experience and the sense that is made of that experience (Sachs, 2005, p. 15). Professional identity generally pertains to how teachers see themselves as teachers, based on their interpretations of their continuing interaction with their context (Beijaard et al., 2004).

Being a teacher or feeling like a teacher is not a finished product or a result but a part of a continuing process. Individuals constantly encounter new information while constantly developing their teaching identity in the process of communication with others in the course of time and constantly restructuring their teaching identity (Cooper ve Olson, 1996). Knowless (1992) indicates four sources that influence teachers' view of themselves: 1) role models, especially positive ones 2) previous teaching experiences 3) training courses in the undergraduate period 4) childhood experiences and family activities related to learning. By creating a balance between all these elements, the individual begins to form his own view as a teacher.

Factors influencing teachers' professional identity development can generally be divided into three groups: pre-license experience, teacher training process, and professional experience after starting as a teacher. Many environmental factors play a role in the formation of teaching identity throughout pre-license experience, teacher education and teaching process (Franzak, 2002). Beijjard et al. (2000) further argue that teachers' professional identity perception affects their efficacy, professional development, and willingness to change and adapt new innovative ideas. Bullough (1997) argues that the identity of teachers is based on the experience of teacher candidates in interpreting and deciding on the teaching profession, so that the views of teacher candidates about education and teaching and how they see themselves as teachers are vital for teacher education.

Lerseth (2013), indicated that "teacher identity formation is important in influencing teachers' decision-making, professional lives, motivation, satisfaction, commitment, and career decisions" (p.29). Smith (2007) identifies that preservice teachers' professional identity formation is complementary and connected to the development of teacher knowledge in teacher education programs.

"Teachers' self-perception related to identity as a professional directly alters their development as well as their ability to deal with a variety of situations in and out of the classroom (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000). Research conducted by Beijjard and his colleagues indicates it is beneficial to study professional identity, not only for current teachers examining their self image as teachers, but also for pre-service teacher candidates and teacher prep programs designing orientation courses" (Lerseth, 2013, p.5-6).

Higher education institutions that educate teachers need students who are successful, idealistic, qualified to the qualifications of the teaching profession, and have a positive attitude towards the teaching profession. As a result of the training of the prospective teachers, it is expected that cognitive, emotional and psychomotor behaviours of students will change in appropriate to the profession. However, in order to be successful in the teaching profession, only the development of the cognitive field is not enough and it is also important to make this profession with love and willingness.

According to Beltman et al., (2015), "understanding early pre-service teachers' emerging identity may enable teacher educators to prepare preservice teachers for their teaching career, through facilitating the development of a professional identity as teachers, and eventually the development of effective teachers who thrive in the profession" (p.225-226). Thus, this study aims to identify and evaluate the prospective music teachers' early teacher identity.

2. Method

This study was a descriptive study that evaluated prospective music teachers' early teacher identity. The study made use of a general screening model. Screening models are "approaches that aim to describe, as is, the characteristics of a past or present situation. They attempt to describe the event, individual or item that is the subject of the study according to its own inherent conditions" (Karasar, 2009, p.77).

2.1. Participants

According to the results of the Horn, Nolen, Ward, & Campbells' (2008, p. 70) analysis, "identity shapes (and is shaped) by interns' learning in teacher education. Participants of the research is consists of 162 fourth-year intern music teacher candidates. The study was conducted in the spring semester of the 2015-2016 academic year at the music teaching department of the fine arts education division of different Universities in Turkey. Demographic information for the teacher candidates is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information regarding the prospective music teachers'

		n	%
Gender	Female	103	63.6
	Male	59	36.4
	Total	162	100
Type of high school the teacher candidates graduated from	Fine Arts and Sports High School	130	80.2
	Anatolian High School	24	14.8
	Regular High School	8	4.9
	Other	-	-
	Total	162	100

2.2. Instruments

Early Teacher Identity Measure (ETIM)
This scale was developed by Friesen and Besley (2013) to measure the participants' perceptions of their early development of a teacher identity. The scale consists of 17 items (e.g. "I often doubt if I am the right person to become a teacher", "I have confidence in my ability to one day be a good teacher") and is based on a 5-point Likert scale anchored from 1 (Disagree) to 5 (Agree). Friesen and Besley (2013) developed ETIM consisting of three factors: *Self-categorization as a teacher, Confidence in becoming a teacher, Participation as a teacher.*

"*Self-categorization* as a teacher was assessed with five items (items 5, 8, 9, 10, 17) that question participants' perception of themselves as a teacher. *Confidence in becoming a teacher* was assessed with 6 items (items 1, 3, 7, 11, 12, 16) reflecting participants' confidence in their ability to develop the skills and resources necessary in order to be a successful teacher. Finally, *participation* as a teacher was assessed with 6 items (items 2, 4, 6, 13, 14, 15) and reflected "participants' tendencies to naturally get involved with children on their own accord and satisfaction in teaching or leading children" (Friesen &Besley, 2013, p.26-27). In the adapted Turkish version of ETIM, the cronbach's alpha is calculated .93 after the factor analyses (Arpacı & Bardakçı, 2015, p.695).

2.3. Data Analysis

In this study, teachers' perceived level of early teacher identity was determined by using frequency (f), percent

(%), arithmetic mean and standard deviation. SPSS 20.0 statistical package program was used in analyzing the data. The relevant categories of measure was: "Strongly disagree (1)", "Disagree (2)", "Uncertain (3)", "Agree (4)", "Strongly agree (5)". The options and limits of the scale were as follows: Strongly Disagree (1.00-1.80), Disagree (1.81-2.60), Uncertain (2.61-3.40), Agree (3.41-4.20), Strongly Agree (4.21-5.00). Accordingly, negative question items (1,3,7,10) were scored inversely.

3. Findings

Table 2. The results of the prospective music teachers' early teacher identity

Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	$\overline{X}$	Sd
(n= 162)	f-%	f- %	f-%	f- %	f- %		
1. I often doubt if I am the right person to become a teacher. (reverse coded).	5/3.1	31/19.1	36/22.2	59/36.4	31/19.1	3.49	1.09
2. If I had more time to volunteer my services, I would choose to work with children.	19/11.7	53/32.7	19/11.7	64/39.5	7/4.3	3.08	1.16
3. I have no idea what it means to be a good teacher. (reverse coded).	1/0.6	3/1.9	9/5.6	67/41.4	82/50.6	4.39	.73
4. Family and friends often look to me when it comes to caring for or working with children/adolescents	49/30.2	98/60.5	11/6.8	2/1.2	2/1.2	4.17	.71
5. I see myself as a teacher (either currently or one day)	63/38.9	93/57.4	5/3.1	1/0.6	-	4.34	.57
6. I enjoy helping children discover and learn.	37/22.8	56/34.6	20/12.3	44/27.2	5/3.1	3.47	1.20
7. I often doubt my ability to be a good teacher. (reverse coded).	5/3.1	31/19.1	36/22.2	59/36.4	31/19.1	3.49	1.09
8. I can easily see myself working with children/adolescents and helping them to learn and develop.	18/11.1	61/37.7	6/3.7	61/37.7	16/9.9	3.02	1.26
9. I feel comfortable identifying myself as a teacher	37/22.8	116/71.6	6/3.7	2/1.2	1/0.6	4.15	.59
10.I find it difficult to see myself in charge of teaching a group of children/adolescents. (reverse coded).	2/1.2	5/3.1	15/9.3	92/56.8	48/29.6	4.10	.79
11. I am confident that I will develop the resources and strategies necessary to be a good teacher	41/25.3	103/63.6	15/9.3	2/1.2	1/0.6	4.11	.66
12. I have confidence in my ability to one day be a good teacher.	31/19.1	121/74.7	5/3.1	3/1.9	2/1.2	4.09	.63
13. I look for opportunities to work with children/adolescents in my own time.	30/18.5	59/36.4	66/40.7	4/2.5	3/1.9	3.67	.87
14. Helping a child learn something new is very rewarding.	40/24.7	84/51.9	35/21.6	2/1.2	1/0.6	3.99	.76
15. I enjoy helping out with children's activities.	28/17.3	105/64.8	24/14.8	3/1.9	2/1.2	3.95	.71
16. I am satisfied with the progress that I am making in my teacher education.	51/31.5	104/64.2	5/3.1	1/0.6	1/0.6	4.25	.60
17. I am a natural teacher.	71/43.8	80/49.4	10/6.2	1/0.6	-	4.36	.66

As shown in table 2, when prospective music teachers responses were examined, most of the teachers indicated that "I see myself as a teacher (either currently or one day)" (f=156).The other items with the highest frequency of "strongly agree" and "agree" responses were the statements, "I am satisfied with the progress that I am making in my teacher education" (f=155), "I feel comfortable identifying myself as a teacher" (f=153), "I have confidence in my ability to one day be a good teacher" (f=152), "I am a natural teacher"(f=151), "Family and friends

often look to me when it comes to caring for or working with children/adolescents" (f=147), "I am confident that I will develop the resources and strategies necessary to be a good teacher" "(f=144) and "I enjoy helping out with children's activities" (f=133).

On the other hand, the items that teacher candidates have expressed in the "uncertain" directions were only two statements.These were the items "If I had more time to volunteer my services, I would choose to work with children" ($\overline{X}$ =3.08) and "I can easily see myself working with children/adolescents and helping them to learn and develop" ($\overline{X}$ =3.02).

Table 3. Descriptive statistics to prospective music teachers' perceptions of "self-categorization" sub-dimension

Items		n	$\overline{X}$	sd	Comment
5	I see myself as a teacher (either currently or one day)	162	4.34	.57	Strongly Agree
8	I can easily see myself working with children/adolescents and helping them to learn and develop.	162	3.02	1.26	Uncertain
9	I feel comfortable identifying myself as a teacher	162	4.15	.59	Agree
10	I find it difficult to see myself in charge of teaching a group of children/adolescents.(negative)	162	4.10	.79	Disagree
17	I am a natural teacher.	162	4.36	.66	Strongly Agree
	Overall average	162	**4.00**	.38	Agree

When table 3 is examined, it is seen that the candidates have the most positive opinions for "I am a natural teacher" ($\overline{X}$ =4.36) and "I see myself as a teacher (either currently or one day)" ($\overline{X}$ =4.34). In the direction of these results, it is considered that participants' perceive themselves as a teacher according to measure.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics to prospective music teachers' perceptions of "confidence in becoming a teacher " sub-dimension

Items		n	$\overline{X}$	sd	Comment
1	I often doubt if I am the right person to become a teacher (negative).	162	3.49	1.09	Disagree
3	I have no idea what it means to be a good teacher (negative).	162	4.39	.73	Strongly Disagree
7	I often doubt my ability to be a good teacher (negative).	162	3.49	1.09	Disagree
11	I am confident that I will develop the resources and strategies necessary to be a good teacher	162	4.11	.66	Agree
12	I have confidence in my ability to one day be a good teacher.	162	4.09	.63	Agree
16	I am satisfied with the progress that I am making in my teacher education.	162	4.25	.60	Strongly Agree
	Overall average	162	**3.97**	.43	Agree

As it is seen in table 4, analysis of average scores of prospective music teachers revealed that the highest average which was obtained from the statement is "I have no idea what it means to be a good teacher (negative)" ($\overline{X}$ = 4.39/ I Strongly Disagree). According to measure this finding reflects the participants' confidence in their ability to develop the skills and resources necessary in order to be a successful teacher.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics to prospective music teachers' perceptions of " participation as a teacher " sub-dimension

Items		n	$\overline{X}$	sd	Comment
2	If I had more time to volunteer my services, I would choose to work with children.	162	3.08	1.16	Uncertain
4	Family and friends often look to me when it comes to caring for or working with children/adolescents	162	4.17	.71	Agree
6	I enjoy helping children discover and learn.	162	3.47	1.20	Agree
13	I look for opportunities to work with children/adolescents in my own time.	162	3.67	.87	Agree
14	Helping a child learn something new is very rewarding.	162	3.99	.76	Agree
15	I enjoy helping out with children's activities.	162	3.95	.71	Agree
	Overall average	162	**3.72**	.38	Agree

When table 5 is examined, it is seen that the teacher candidates give opinions on the level of "agree"   ($\overline{X}$

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= 3.72) on the items of the "participation as a teacher" sub-dimension. In the direction of these results it is considered that "participants' tendencies to naturally get involved with children on their own accord and satisfaction in teaching or leading children" according to measure.

Table 6. Overall dimensions of prospective music teachers' early teacher identity

Dimensions	n	$\overline{X}$	sd	Comment
Self-categorization	162	4.00	.38	Agree
Confidence in becoming a teacher	162	3.97	.43	Agree
Participation as a teacher	162	3.72	.38	Agree
Overall average	162	3.89	.25	Agree

As it is seen in Table 6, prospective music teachers' average score to the overall "early teacher identity " measure is ($\overline{X}$ = 3.89), the average score of the dimension of " self-categorization " is ($\overline{X}$ =4.00); the average score of the dimension of " confidence in becoming a teacher " is ($\overline{X}$ =3.97) and the average score of the dimension of " participation as a teacher " is ($\overline{X}$ =3.72).

4. Conclusion

The aim of teacher education is to support the process whereby students become professional teachers, or at least construct a basis for professional development later in work (Krzywacki, 2009, p.61). Krzywacki, (2009), Lamote & Engels, (2010) and Beijaard et al. (2000) emphasizes the importance of teacher education in the professional identity development process. According to Campbell & Brummett (2007) "during teacher education course when teacher candidates go out on school placement they become 'aware of a shift in their roles, from students to teachers'" (p.52).

Teaching identity is a more personal thing and indicates how one identifies with being a teacher and how one feels as a teacher (Mayer 1999, p.8). Teachers are required to be fully qualified within their profession. This is closely related to good education and the belief that they can successfully carry out their duties and responsibilities (Yılmaz, Koseoglu, Gercek & Soran, 2004, cited by Çetin, 2016, p.89). According to the findings of the study, when prospective music teachers responses were examined, most of the teachers indicated that they perceive themselves as a teacher (96.3%,($\overline{X}$ =4.34).

As a result; prospective music teachers' perceptions of early teacher identity was found to be at "high" level in general, and in all sub-dimensions of the measure. Based on the study results, it was determined that prospective music teachers' average score to the overall "early teacher identity " measure is ($\overline{X}$ = 3.89), the average score of the dimension of " self-categorization " is ($\overline{X}$ =4.00); the average score of the dimension of " confidence in becoming a teacher " is ($\overline{X}$ =3.97) and the average score of the dimension of " participation as a teacher " is ($\overline{X}$ =3.72). According to measure, these findings reflects the participants' confidence in their ability to develop the skills and resources necessary in order to be a successful teacher, and also tendencies to naturally get involved with children on their own accord and satisfaction in teaching or leading children".

According to James-Wilson (2001), "the ways in which teachers form their professional identities are influenced by both how they feel about themselves and how they feel about their students. This professional identity helps them to position or situate themselves in relation to their students and to make appropriate and effective adjustments in their practice and their beliefs about, and engagement with students" (p. 29).

In the light of research results, it is considered that when teacher candidates confident in their profession, will exhibit more positive behaviors towards the students, motivate the students more easily, enjoy doing and enjoying their profession and will be able to better assume the duty, responsibility and roles of the teacher. Teacher educators at universities should care about research on teachers' professional identity formation so that they can determine how they should support student teachers to become effective teachers and perceive themselves as teachers (Korthagen, 2004; Tigchelaar & Korthagen, 2004, cited by Arpacı & Bardakçı, 2015, p.691). According to Isbell (2006), "if music teacher educators knew more about the changes in identity that occur during preservice teacher training, it is possible that improvements to music teacher education programs could be made so that preservice music teachers enter the field with clearer ideas about who they are and what they want to accomplish" (p.5). In light of this study, it is thought that gaining information about the teacher identity of teacher candidates will help to develop teacher education programs.

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