

# Investigation of the Attitudes of Physical Education Teacher Candidates toward Teaching Profession and Sense of Competence in Terms of Some Variables

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of physical education teacher candidates toward the teaching profession and the perceptions of professional competence according to some variables. A total of 351 teacher candidates, studying in the last class of Physical Education and Sport Teaching Department in the Faculty of Sports Sciences and Physical Education and Sports Schools were enrolled as the research group. "Attitude Scale Related to Teacher Education", "The Candidate Teacher's Proficiency Perception Scale" and "Personal Information Form" developed by the researchers were applied on the study subjects to collect the data. It was found that according to the universities, there are differences in the perception of professional competence but there is no difference in attitude. It was also found that there is no meaningful difference between professional perceptions and teaching attitudes in terms of sport branches, the situation in which the education section is selected voluntarily or not.

**Keywords:** teacher candidate, physical education, professional attitude, sense of competence, teacher

## 1. Introduction

Education is the development of an individual's mental, physical, emotional and social skills and behaviors in a most appropriate or desired direction, and incorporates a set of instructions to teach new skills and behaviors and information to meet some purposes (Akyüz, 2009). In this perspective, learning and teaching activities have a long history and probably have begun with the existence of human beings and will end with the end of life on the earth.

In the earlier times, the main means of education were through a simple one-to-one tutorial, but with the proliferation of human generation and the diversification of the requirements, the need for learning and teaching has also increased (Hoşgörür, Kılıç, & Dündar, 2002). As a result, educational institutions emerged and teachers possessing the higher education and professional qualifications were bestowed with the charge. Teaching is accepted as a profession of professional status and has individual, social, cultural, scientific and technological dimensions (Kara, 2004; Uygun, 2008). Teaching profession requires adequate equipment depending on individual social, cultural, economic, and scientific environments. According to Kavcar (1987), the success of the education system depends mainly on the characteristics of the teachers and other education workers who operate and implement the system. No education model can provide services above the qualifications of the employees who operate the model. Therefore, a school can only be said to be as good as its faculty members.

The preference of individuals for the right profession affects largely their positive behaviors toward their profession (Bozdoğan, Aydın, & Yıldırım, 2007; Kara, 2008). The ability of teachers to fulfill their responsibilities and improve the quality of the education system requires developing positive attitudes toward the pre-service phase of their profession and sensory domain competencies. The performance of the teachers, who are fond of their profession and having a positive attitude toward the profession, will be better (Hussain, Ali, Khan, Ramzan, & Qadeer, 2011; İzci & Kara, 2010). In this regard, having positive attitudes and values regarding the profession is seen as a determinant of the teachers' achievements in professional life (Kara, 2004; Karadağ, 2012; Özden & Kara, 2006). Attitudes toward the profession, individual feelings and behaviors

represent the commitment to the profession (Hussain et al., 2011; Kara et al., 2013; Kara, Demirbağ, & Işık, 2013). In addition to occupational attitudes, professional competence is also very important for an individual's professional success. Competence perception is defined as an ability of individuals to meet certain expected performance and to organize the actions necessary to do so and their judgments or beliefs about the capacity to carry out these expected actions (Bandura, 1986). Vocational competence, along with the necessary knowledge while carrying out a profession, implies using it effectively to fulfill the duties and responsibilities. In this sense, the individual's attitude will not be enough alone, and his perception of proficiency would also be very important. When self-competence and positive attitudes are combined, success and happiness become inevitable.

In our country, it has been observed that one of the most important problems related to the education system in recent years is teacher training and the quality of the teachers. The competence of teacher candidates related to the teaching profession and their attitudes toward the teaching profession are important in determining the nature of the teachers being educated. The facilities that the faculties of education possess (economic situation, the number of teaching staff, building, facility status, etc.) play a great role in perceiving themselves as professionally competent and gaining positive attitudes toward teaching profession (Çapri & Çelikkaleli, 2008). The efficiency and effectiveness of teacher training programs can be evaluated by the positive attitudes and high self-competence perceptions of the candidate teachers who graduated from the program (Çakır, Kan, & Sumbül, 2006).

Considering the importance of teacher candidates' attitudes toward the teaching profession as well as their self-competence, it is necessary for the candidates to be examined for their professional attitudes and self-competence while performing the teaching profession. For this purpose, in this descriptive study, it was tried to determine the attitudes of the teacher candidates in the last class of Physical Education and Sport Teacher Education of ten different universities toward the teaching profession and perceptions of competence.

## **2. Material and Method**

### *2.1 Participants*

A research group was formed by randomly recruiting 351 prospective teachers, who were attending to the Sports Science Faculties and the Physical Education and Sports Schools in the Physical Education and Sports Teaching Department of ten universities in different region of Turkey.

### *2.2 Method*

In the study, Physical Education Teacher Candidates' attitudes toward the teaching profession and their perceptions of competence were aimed to evaluate following the variables such as gender, university, sports branches, monthly income situation, age and whether or not the department is selected voluntarily. The data were collected on a Likert-type "Teacher Profession Attitude Scale" and the Attitudes for Teaching Profession were analyzed quantitatively by using descriptive scanning model (Karasar, 2006).

#### *2.2.1 Data Collection Tools*

In the study, as the data collection tool, the "Teacher Attitude Scale", developed by Erkuş et al. (2000), was used in order to determine the attitudes of candidate teachers to the teaching profession and "Candidate Teacher Self-Perception Questionnaire for Self-Esteem" was used to measure their perception of competence (Çakır, Erkuş, & Kılıç, 2004). The attitude scale for teacher education was of the Likert-type 5 and consisted of 22 items. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal consistency of the scale is .99 and the same calculated for the data obtained in this study was found to be .86. The Candidate Teacher's Perception of Self-Competence Scale was also of Likert-type 5 and consisted of 30 items. For this scale, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient is .80, while the same for the data obtained in this study was calculated to be .88. The items were scored from 1 to 5 and the scale was rated from the option "not at all suitable to me" (1) to the option "appropriate to me" (5). The lowest score that can be taken from the scale was "30" and the highest score was "150".

Both scales were applied toward the end of the second semester of the 2015-2016 academic year after obtaining the necessary permissions for the students attending 10 different physical education and sport teaching programs.

#### *2.3 Data Analysis*

The relevant scales were applied to the teacher candidates in the study group and the obtained data were evaluated in SPSS package program. The evaluations were performed according to t-test and one-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) for the obtained independent groups. In addition, Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney tests were also used to determine which group differs significantly from the others.

### 3. Results

The statistical data are shown in Table 1 according to students' gender, age, the situations of whether or not the department is selected voluntarily, sports branches, monthly income levels, the place where the candidates lived for the longest time, and the points scored on "Attitude Scale for Teacher Education" and "Candidate Teacher's Perception of Self-Sufficiency Scale".

Table 1. Demographic information

		n	%
University	Ardahan University	35	10.0
	Fırat University	38	10.8
	Gazi University	37	10.5
	Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University	36	10.3
	Karadeniz Technical University	35	10.0
	Sakarya University	35	10.0
	Erzurum Atatürk University	32	9.1
	Dicle University	34	9.7
	Mersin University	35	10.0
	Kayseri Erciyes University	34	9.7
Gender	Male	245	69.8
	Female	106	30.2
Sports Branch	Athleticism	29	8.3
	Badminton	9	2.6
	Basketball	22	6.3
	Boxing	16	4.6
	Football	77	21.9
	Wrestling	25	7.1
	Handball	13	3.7
	Karate	7	2.0
	Ski	8	2.3
	Tennis	16	4.6
	Volleyball	38	10.8
	Swimming	7	2.0
	Other	48	13.7
Monthly Income Level	No	36	10.3
	0-1000 TL	221	63.0
	1001-2000 TL	91	25.9
	2001 TL and over	39	11.1
Have you chosen voluntarily the Department of Education?	Yes	342	97.4
	No	9	2.6
The place you live the longest	Provincial Center	244	69.5
	County/Town	66	18.8
	Village/hamlet	41	11.7

Age	21 and under	101	28.8
	22 years	108	30.8
	23 years	60	17.1
	24 years	37	10.5
	25 years	21	6.0
	26 years and over	24	6.8

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the participants. Among the participants, 69.8% were male and 30.2% were female. Regarding the sports, 21.9% were from football, 10.8% from volleyball, 8.3% from athletics, and 7.1% from wrestling. The majority of the teacher candidates (63.0%) had a monthly income between 0-1000 TL. Most of them (97.4%) voluntarily selected the department where they were studying. The place where 69.5% of people lived the longest was the city center. The age group of the participants varied between 20-35 years.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of participants' scale scores

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Attitude	351	22	110	73.9	11.3
Sense of Competence	351	30	150	119.9	22.55

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics for the participants' scale scores. The average attitude score was 73.94 and the average score of the Sense of Competence was 119.9.

Table 3. Normality tests of scale scores

	Shapiro-Wilk	P
Attitude	.864	.000
Sense of Competence	.878	.000

As shown in Table 3, according to the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality of the scale scores, Attitude and Proficiency Perception scores did not show a normal distribution ( $p < 0.05$ ), therefore nonparametric methods were used in the comparison analysis.

Table 4. Kruskal Wallis test results in terms of universities

Universities	N	Sıra Ortalama	X <sup>2</sup>	P	
Attitudes	Ardahan University	35	181.66	7.273	.609
	Fırat University	38	164.39		
	Gazi University	37	180.47		
	Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University	36	163.15		
	Karadeniz Technical University	35	177.97		
	Sakarya University	35	169.06		
	Erzurum Atatürk University	32	202.52		
	Dicle University	34	175.26		
	Mersin University	35	197.30		
	Erciyes University	34	150.85		
Sense of Competence	Ardahan University	35	162.64	31.868	.000*

Fırat University	38	195.38
Gazi University	37	173.09
Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University	36	167.72
Karadeniz Technical University	35	129.44
Sakarya University	35	140.13
Erzurum Atatürk University	32	231.41
Dicle University	34	151.16
Mersin University	35	210.16
Erciyes University	34	202.40

There was no statistically significant difference between attitudes toward teaching profession in terms of universities ( $p>0.05$ ) (Table 4). On the other hand, according to Kruskal-Wallis test, there was a statistically significant difference in the terms of teachers' sense of competence in the terms of the university in which the education was taken ( $p<0.05$ ). According to this, it was determined that the perception of the teachers who were studying at Erzurum Atatürk University was higher than those who were studying at other universities. The lowest point average was seen in the participants at the Karadeniz Technical University.

Table 5. Mann-Whitney U test results by gender

Gender		N	Rank Average	U	p
Attitude	Male	245	178.36	12407.500	.508
	Female	106	170.55		
Sense of Competence	Male	245	172.77	12193.000	.364
	Female	106	183.47		

In the comparison of scale scores in the terms of gender according to the Mann-Whitney test, there was no statistically significant difference in the attitude and competence perception scores ( $p>0.05$ ) (Table 5). According to this, there is no significant difference between the attitudes of female and male students toward the teaching profession and their sense of competence.

Table 6. Kruskal Wallis test results in terms of sports branches

Scale	Branch	N	Rank Average	X <sup>2</sup>	p
Attitude	Athleticism	29	132.41	21.442	.065
	Badminton	9	106.44		
	Basketball	22	190.57		
	Boxing	16	156.63		
	Football	77	186.57		
	Wrestling	25	193.56		
	Handball	13	228.38		
	Karate	7	197.14		
	Ski	8	174.06		
	Tennis	16	211.78		
	Volleyball	38	172.53		
	Swimming	7	108.07		
	Other	48	169.88		

	None	36	179.94		
Sense of Competence	Athleticism	29	165.45		
	Badminton	9	218.56		
	Basketball	22	158.20		
	Boxing	16	202.91		
	Football	77	177.42		
	Wrestling	25	175.94		
	Handball	13	161.08	10.137	.683
	Karate	7	172.71		
	Ski	8	178.25		
	Tennis	16	220.94		
	Volleyball	38	183.34		
	Swimming	7	151.36		
	Other	48	177.77		
	None	36	150.01		

According to Kruskal-Wallis test, there is no statistically significant difference between the attitudes toward the teaching profession and the self-competence in the terms of branches of teacher candidates participating in the survey (Table 6).

Table 7. Kruskal Wallis test results in terms of monthly income

	Monthly Income	N	Rank Average	X <sup>2</sup>	P
Attitudes	0-1000 TL	221	175.11		
	1001-2000 TL	91	167.02	3.307	.191
	2001 TL and over	39	202.03		
Sense of Competence	0-1000 TL	221	176.62		
	1001-2000 TL	91	171.34	.405	.817
	2001 TL and over	39	183.35		

As seen in Table 7, according to Kruskal-Wallis test results, there were no significant differences in the teacher attitudes toward their professions and self-competence in terms of monthly incomes ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Table 8. Mann-Whitney test results according to whether or not the department is selected voluntarily

	Have you chosen the department voluntarily?	N	Rank Average	U	p
Attitude	Yes	342	175.87		
	No	9	180.89	1495.000	.883
Sense of Competence	Yes	342	176.51		
	No	9	156.67	1365.000	.562

As seen in Table 8, from the point of view of whether or not the part of education is selected voluntarily, there was no statistically significant difference between the scores of the teacher candidates' attitudes toward teaching profession and self-competence ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Table 9. Kruskal Wallis test results in terms of the longest lived place

	The Longest Lived Place	N	Rank Average	X <sup>2</sup>	p
Attitude	City Center	244	173.19	.809	.667
	County/Town	66	179.04		
	Village/Hamlet	41	187.85		
Sense of Competence	City Center	244	172.29	3.424	.180
	County/Town	66	172.59		
	Village/Hamlet	41	203.55		

According to the results of Kruskal-Wallis test, the differences observed in the mean scores of the longest-lived places were not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Table 10. Kruskal Wallis test results in terms of ages of teacher candidates

	Age	N	Rank Average	X <sup>2</sup>	p
Attitude	21 and under	101	181.93	1.539	.908
	22 years	108	174.15		
	23 years	60	175.32		
	24 years	37	182.51		
	25 years	21	170.31		
	26 years and over	24	156.00		
Sense of Competence	21 and under	101	160.27	7.814	.167
	22 years	108	170.06		
	23 years	60	182.51		
	24 years	37	209.16		
	25 years	21	189.60		
	26 years and over	24	189.67		

As can be seen in Table 10, there was no significant difference in terms of the sense of competence and attitudes toward the teaching profession in terms of the age of teacher candidates.

#### 4. Discussion

The most important element in determining the quality of education is undoubtedly the teachers, who have the greatest influence and power in the teaching process. Teacher candidates' positive perceptions and attitudes toward the teaching profession will make them active and effective at the onset of their career. Positive perceptions and attitudes are effective in the development of personality, thus a positive relationship between a teacher and student can make learning more active (Kara, İzci, & Murathan, 2011; Semerci N. & Semerci C., 2004; Semerci & Kara, 2004).

In this study, the attitudes and profession perceptions about the teaching profession of 351 teacher candidates trained at 10 universities in the last year of Physical Education and Sports Teaching Department were investigated. In general, it has been observed that the attitudes and competence perceptions of the teacher candidates about the teaching profession are very positive. Ayık and Ataş (2014), Gülşen and Seyrathlı (2014), Kara et al. (2011) obtained similar results.

Although there was no difference in the attitude perceptions according to the university where the teacher candidates were being trained, significant differences were found in the sense of competence. The students of Karadeniz Technical University had the lowest score in terms of sense of competence and the students of Atatürk University had the highest average score. Bulut (2010) worked with 411 teacher candidates who were studying in Primary School Teaching, Science Teaching and Social Sciences Teaching Department in the Faculty of

Education of Dicle and Fırat Universities and observed that there was no difference in the attitude scale according to the university variable. In the same work, a significant difference was noted according to the variable of the department.

The attitude and sense of competence scores did not show statistically significant differences according to gender. This observation concurs very well with the literature (Açışlı & Kolomuç, 2012; Bulut, 2010; Gülşen & Seyratlı, 2014; Öksüzöğlü, 2009). Unlike our findings, Çapri and Çelikkaleli (2008) reported that gender has a significant effect on attitude and the sense of competence scales. Üstüner et al. (2009) found that women had a significantly higher score than men in their attitudes toward the teaching profession. Similar results were obtained by Aydın and Sağlam (2012), Durmuşoğlu, Yanık, and Akkoyunlu (2009), Oral (2004), Terzi and Tezci (2007). According to Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory, there should be no difference between men and women about how much they feel enough. In this study, it can be said, in general, that female and male candidate teachers have similar attitudes and the gender variable is not effective on the attitude and competence perception.

The age range of the teacher candidates participating in the study was 20-35 years. According to the age variable, no significant differences were found in terms of the attitude and sense of competence scores. Similarly, there were no differences in the attitude and sense of competence according to the variables of longest living place, the amount of monthly income, the sports branches and, the department where the education was taken. Unlike our findings, in his study, Öksüzöğlü (2009) concluded that the sense of competence score average of teacher candidates coming voluntarily was higher than those coming unwillingly and the difference between the groups was also significant.

As a result, it was determined that the sense of competence increases when candidate teachers' attitudes toward the profession are positive. In order to gain a positive attitude and behavior toward the teaching profession in the teacher candidates, who are studying in the department of physical education and sports teaching, the techniques like enhancement of the practical course hour, symposiums, encouraging students to attend to panels and conferences as listeners and teaching practices can be developed.

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