

Full Length Research Paper

An examination of teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching profession

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Teaching profession is one of the hardest jobs of today. Teachers who raise the safeguards of our future, that is, our students should be aware of the principles, methods and techniques needed for teaching; should have taken the pedagogical formation training, should have enhanced communication skills and should closely follow science and technology with a mind open to modernization. Teachers also must carry the feeling of responsibility, have high sense of awareness and consciousness, be developed in their own fields, should know well how to learn and teach, continuously refreshing their self, away from troubles, problems, and stress and supportive to their students in any case. This study was conducted to determine the attitudes and views of the teacher candidates towards the teaching profession. In the study, general survey model, which is an example of descriptive survey methods, has been implemented. The sample of the study consists of 347 teacher candidates from Mustafa Kemal University, Faculty of Education in 2017/2018 academic year. As data collection tool, Attitude Scale Towards the Teaching Profession was utilized. Study of validity and reliability of the scale has been calculated and Cronbach Alpha coefficient has been found to be 0.919. As a result of the study, it was found that the attitudes of teacher candidates towards the teaching profession were below the expectations, the attitudes of female teacher candidates were better than male candidates' attitudes and teacher candidates studying in computational programs were more passionate about the teaching profession.

Key words: Teaching profession, teacher candidate, occupational experience, professional attitude.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching profession is the oldest occupation that has a valuable place in society with high respect and love. While its beginning date is not clearly known, considering the meaning and significance of the teaching profession today despite all the theoretical and practical developments in the educational platform, the responsibilities and roles of teachers are preserved as in

the past (Mezhova, 2015). This is because the main duty of educationist is to develop insights towards the goals of individuals in life and direct them (Baltusite and Katane, 2017). Therefore, despite all the improvements, teacher is still the most paramount component of the education and the provider of cultural and scientific development of society (Balci, 1991). Moreover, education plays an

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important role in the economical growth of a country, especially in the raising of quality individuals for the sectors of industry and information.

Apart from their cumulative contributions to the society, teachers can cause significant changes and developments on individuals' lives. In a study conducted by Hattie (2009), 800 studies on the factors affecting the success of students were investigated and it was concluded that teachers had important roles on the way to the achievements being just after genetical factors. Particularly within constructivism, it is crucial that teacher guides the student, be supportive, have gained communication abilities, have humanitarian educational approach, and support cognitive, affective and kinesthetic improvements of the student (Ames, 1992; Deci et al., 1991; Nicholls and Nolen, 1995).

In order for teachers to provide quality and successful education for students, firstly, they should learn how to train. An effective education requires the comprehension of verbal and nonverbal feedback of students by teacher, guidance of teacher, utilization of various evaluation tools and taking momentary decisions as a result of evaluations accurately (Corno, 2008). In particular, decision making phase is one of the most important stages in educational concept. The decision taken consciously or unconsciously affects the educational process in many ways. Thus, teacher should observe students inside and outside the school carefully and make the decisions based on these observations (Shavelson, 1973).

Shulman (1986), states that for an effective education, teachers should be aware of six elements. These are subject knowledge (maths, sciences, chemistry, biology, etc.), pedagogical information/teaching methods, educational theories, etc.), pedagogical field knowledge (presentation of subjects within educational sciences), knowledge of students (the psychology of teaching, theories and arguments of student development stages within educational psychology), and programme knowledge. A teacher willing to develop oneself should start from these six elements. Ideas and knowledge on how to apply effective teaching are gained through the teaching education (Kennedy, 1999). The quality of educational system is also associated with the teaching education (Ataç, 2003). As a result of this, particularly, the courses offered to teacher candidates in education faculties and the quality of these courses are of great importance. Not only the courses but also the psychological states and social lives of teachers have impact on education and instruction.

According to Özdayı (1998), one of the prominent factors influencing the teaching of instructors are the psychological, social and cultural states they live in. Attitude is the tendency attributed to an individual that describes that person's ideas, emotions and behaviours about a psychological object (Smith, 1968). In particular,

after 1950s when the term stress entered, the literature, the notion that negative behaviours lead to stress has taken place and a bond was formed between the terms stress and bad attitudes. Stress, concern level and bad manners might impact the individual both physically and emotionally. Negative feelings such as stress and concern may cause physical and psychological problems for teacher by time (Ganster and Rosen, 2013). These kinds of troubles can influence the process and abilities of teaching and training (Lhospital and Gregory, 2009). The most important reason for the negative attitudes in teachers is the stress (Brown, Ralph and Brember, 2002). Therefore, it is necessary for teacher candidates to develop positive attitudes against certain situations, attitudes are the states created mentally by individual on how to act and behave (Gagne, 1985).

According to İnceoğlu (2004), attitude is the emotional, cognitive and behavioural reaction of the individual against a situation with personal knowledge, experiences and motivations. As understood by the definitions, for teachers to overcome problems faced in class, provide quality education and like teaching profession, positive attitudes are necessary. If teachers lose their respect towards the teaching profession, this will impact their teaching and result in unsuccessful educational environment (Chakraborty and Mondal, 2014). Similarly, positive relation was found between attitudes and the educational abilities and satisfaction of the teacher (Pushpam, 2003). In the studies of teacher candidates, it was observed that positive attitudes impacted academic success of students and students with higher positive attitudes had reached more academic success (Cornelius, 2000). That is why the positive attitudes towards the profession will enable teachers to have more academic success and raise students with the same achievements.

Teachers with bad experiences might develop concerns, stress and bad attitudes towards the profession of teaching whereas they may also learn from the experiences and conversely ease the concern and troubles of students and help them acquire favourable attitudes (Pigge and Marso, 1987). Teacher candidates should learn about how to manage all positive and negative behaviours and how to overcome these behaviours at school before becoming instructors (Srivastava, 1989).

Bhargava and Pathy (2014), realized that teacher candidates that begin the training of teaching had some values initially and during the training these values transformed favourably to develop the attitudes of the students towards the teaching profession. Experiences in this period will affect teacher candidates' desire to remain as teachers; those having good experiences will continue as teachers whereas those facing negative experiences might go towards elsewhere (Richardson and Watt, 2005). Besides, in teacher training, teacher candidates

not only obtain attitudes but also acquire self-conception and social maturity (Yadav, 1992). In the examinations of the candidates receiving teaching/training, it was detected that only 8.5% had positive attitudes, 66% had average level attitudes and 25% had low attitudes (Chakraborty and Mondal, 2014). In the studies conducted in Turkey, the attitudes of teacher candidates were only positive (Oral, 2004; Erdem et al., 2005; Başbay et al., 2009; Taşdemir, 2014). The attitude of the individual is not only determined by characteristic features. Çeliköz and Çetin (2004), argue that the education level of the family, socio-economical state and number of siblings also impact on the attitudes towards teaching. Çağlar (2013) observed that the affect of grade level on attitude and noticed that as the grade level increases the attitude level decreases. He also compared the programmes in his study and concluded that students' attitudes towards educational sciences, history, and geography were higher than their attitudes towards computational classes such as mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology. In the lights of all of this information, it is undoubtedly important that how teacher candidates develop attitudes throughout their training and what impacts the level of attitudes in which way.

Therefore, this research was carried out both for the sake of giving clues to teachers, academicians, and students and providing sources.

METHODOLOGY

The method of the study as well as the problem statement, the purpose, the population and the sample are included.

Research questions

What is the level of attitudes of teacher candidates towards the teaching profession in education faculty?

Do the attitudes of candidates differ by gender, type of programme, monetary income and residential place?

The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to try to determine teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching profession based on the gender, type of programme, income, residential place and demographic variables and arithmetic averages of responses given to scale items.

Population and sample

The population consists of all the teacher candidates studying at different programs affiliated to Mustafa Kemal University, Faculty of Education and the sample includes 347 teacher candidates studying in the following departments: Classroom Teaching, English Language Teaching, Art Teaching, Computer and Instructional Technologies Education, Turkish Teaching and Science Education. The sample has been selected at random.

Research model

This study was conducted for the purpose of determining the attitudes of teacher candidates studying in Faculty of Education towards the teaching profession by considering the demographic variables of gender, type of programme, monthly income of the family, and residential place. To this end, the surveys used in the previous studies about this subject and scales were scanned; Attitude Scale towards Teaching Profession was deemed suitable by the researcher. Validity and reliability studies of the scales were re-calculated and Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was found to be 0.919. The consistency of scale to factor analysis was tested by Kaiser Mayer Olkin and Bartlett test; Kaiser Mayer Olkin value was found to be 0.91, Bartlett test result was calculated as 7835,194. Factor load values of the scale vary between 0.74 and 0.41. The responses of participating teacher candidates were analyzed with SPSS 20 statistic package programme by using t-test, F test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) test which is a one-way variance analysis. The scale that was used in the research is in the form of five point likert scale consisting of (1) Totally disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Totally agree, including 34 items. General evaluation of the scale is demonstrated (Özkartal 2016a-2016b; Dönger 2015a-2015b):

$$OR = \frac{HV - LV}{NO} = \frac{5 - 1}{5} = 0.8$$

where OR: Option Range, HV: Highest Value, LW: Lowest Value, NO: Number of Options and 1.00 - 1.80: Totally Disagree, 1.81 - 2.60: Disagree, 2.61 - 3.40: Neutral, 3.41 - 4.20: Agree, 4.21 - 5.00: Totally Agree.

In this study, the general survey method that is one of the descriptive scanning techniques is utilized. The general survey model involves in arrangements on a sample group in a larger population with many populations in order to make conclusion about that population (Karasar, 2010: 79).

FINDINGS

In this part, the attitudes of the teacher candidates from the faculty of education towards the teaching profession are included. "Attitudes Scale towards Teaching Profession" was applied on the teacher candidates for purpose of the answers which were given by the prospective teachers to the scale items which were the tabled and interpreted.

According to the data in Table 1, it has been determined that there are significant differences between female and male teacher candidates in favor of female teacher candidates studying in the Faculty of Education depending on the gender variable according to given responses of participant candidates to the Attitudes Scale towards Teaching Profession ($p < 0.05$). Thereby, it can be said that the female teacher candidates have a higher and more positive attitude towards the teaching profession compared to the male teacher candidates.

According to the data that was examined in Table 2, it was found out that there was a statistically significant difference in opinions between the prospective teachers who are studying in different types of education programs

Table 1. t-test analysis of the responses of the prospective teachers to the Attitudes towards Teaching Profession scale according to the gender variable.

Gender	N	\bar{x}	Ss	Sd	-t	p
Peer learning						
Female	244	134.324	18.147	345	2.986	0.003
Male	103	127.806	19.564			
Total	347	-	-	-	-	<0.05

Table 2. Analysis of ANOVA test results of the teacher candidates' answers about the Attitudes towards Teaching Profession according to type of department variable

Type of program	N	\bar{x}	Ss	Source of variance	Sum of squares	Sd	Mean of squares	F	p (Tukey)
CT	65	123.35	15.07	Between groups	17669.69	5	3533.94	11.54	0.000
ELE	63	132.70	20.11	Within groups	104472.79	341	306.37		
AT	51	144.13	17.93	Total	122142.48	346		6-1, 5-1	
CEIT	56	137.62	16.83	-	-	-		4-1, 4-6	
TT	52	132.45	22.09	-	-	-		3-6, 2-6	
ESE	60	125.89	12.63	-	-	-		-	
Total	347	132.39	18.79	-	-	-	-	-	<0.05

Table 3. Analysis of ANOVA test results of the teacher candidates' answers about the Attitudes towards Teaching Profession Scale according to the monthly income variable.

Monthly income	N	\bar{x}	Ss	Source of variance	Sum of squares	Sd	Mean of squares	F	p
0-250	54	133.11	15.51	Between groups	605.04	4	151.26	0.426	0.790
251-500	144	132.68	18.06	Within groups	121537.44	342	355.37		
501-750	82	133.51	20.26	Total	122142.48	346		-	
751-1000	33	130.27	20.23					-	
1001-ov.	34	129.35	21.89					-	
Total	347	132.39	18.79					-	>0.05

according to the responses given to Attitudes Scale Towards Teaching Profession from the results of ANOVA test [$F_{(11.54), p(0.000)}$; $p < 0.05$]. In the results of the Tukey test analysis conducted to learn this source of significant difference; it has been found that there is significant difference between students studying in Elementary Science Education (ESE) and Classroom Teaching (CT) and it is in favor of Elementary Science Education (ESE) department; between students studying in Turkish Teaching (TT) and Classroom Teaching (CT) it is in favour of Turkish Teaching (TT); between students studying in Department of Computer Education and

Instructional Technology (CEIT) and Elementary Science Education, it is in favor of Computer Education and Instructional Technology department (CEIT); between students studying in department of Art Teaching and Elementary Science Education (ESE), it is in favour of students in Art Teaching and between students studying in English Language Education (ELE) and Elementary Science Education, it is in favour of students studying at department of English Language Education (ELE).

According to the analysis of the data in Table 3, it was found that there is no significant difference statistically in opinions between the teachers whose families have

Table 4. The results of ANOVA test analysis of prospective teachers' answers about the Scale of Attitudes towards Teaching Profession as the residential place of family.

Place of residence	N	\bar{x}	Ss	Source of variance	Sum of squares	Sd	Mean of squares	F	p
Province	142	130.36	20.88	Between groups	1044.88	3	348.29	0.987	0.399
District	129	133.44	17.17	Within groups	121097.60	343	353.05		
Town	24	133.83	13.30	Total	122142.48	346	-		
Village	52	134.65	18.69	-	-	-	-		
Total	347	132.39	18.79	-	-	-	-	-	>0.05

different monthly incomes according to teacher candidates' responses to the Attitudes Scale towards Teaching Profession from the analysis results of ANOVA test [$F_{(0.426), p(0.790)}$; $p>0.05$]. Therefore, the monthly income of the family does not affect the attitudes of the teacher candidates about the teaching profession.

According to the analysis of the data in Table 4, as the responses given to the Scale of Attitudes towards Teaching Profession, it was found that there is no significant statistical difference between the attitudes of the prospective teachers whose families live in different places, about teaching from the analysis results of ANOVA test [$F_{(0.987), p(0.399)}$; $p>0.05$]. Therefore, the place where the family lives does not affect the attitudes of the teacher candidates about the teaching profession. Therefore, the residential place of family does not affect the attitudes of the teacher candidates about the teaching profession.

Arithmetic means of the answers of the prospective teachers studying in the Education Faculty on Attitudes scale towards Teaching Profession is included in Table 5. As the arithmetic mean of the answers of the scale items are examined, it was found that item 18 'The idea of teaching people something they do not know pleases me' ($\bar{X}=4.64$), item 31 'I find it honorable to guide people's life by working as a teacher' ($\bar{X}=4.57$), item 9 'I believe that I will be successful in the teaching profession' ($\bar{X}=4.47$), item 3 'The teaching profession is appropriate for me' ($\bar{X}=4.47$), and item 24 'I care about being successful in the professional teaching knowledge courses' ($\bar{X}=4.46$) are the highest arithmetic mean items in scale.

According to the answers of the teacher candidates to the scale results, it is possible to say that teaching people pleases teacher candidates, they feel honorable when they guide people in accurate and positive way, teacher candidates feel confident in teaching profession and believe they will be successful, teaching profession will be appropriate in cognitive, affective and dynamic

domain. Moreover, it can be said that teacher candidates give importance to being successful in teaching profession and they have high expectations in all these issues according to the items with high arithmetic mean.

As the data in Table 5 show, it was found out that item 30 'I fear that I will have troubles in the teaching profession' ($\bar{X}=2.84$), item 21 'I do not recommend teaching to those who are choosing a profession' ($\bar{X}=2.85$), item 6 'I think that teaching is not suitable for my lifestyle' ($\bar{X}=2.91$), and item 32 'I do not like talking about the issues of education, learning, teaching, and the teaching profession' ($\bar{X}=2.93$) are the lowest arithmetic mean items.

According to the answers given by the teacher candidates to the items of scale, it can be thought that teacher candidates have troubles in the teaching profession, they would not recommend teaching so much to those who are to choose a profession because of problems related to finding a job, teaching profession is not appropriate for everyone's lifestyle, they do not like to talk about the issues of education, learning, teaching, and the teaching profession with the lowest arithmetic mean.

DISCUSSION

According to answers of the teacher candidates on scale of Attitude Towards Teaching Profession, the significant difference between the female and male teacher candidates is in favor of female teacher candidates. Therefore, it can be said that female teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching profession are more positive than male teacher candidates and female teacher candidates give more importance to teaching profession. As parallel to this study, Çağlar (2013) also determined that attitudes of female students are higher as compared to male students in his study. However, according to some researches, there was no significant difference between female teachers/candidates and the male ones

Table 5. The arithmetic means and skill levels of the answers given by the prospective teachers to the scale of Attitudes towards Teaching Profession.

THE ITEMS OF THE ATTITUDE SCALE TOWARDS TEACHING PROFESSION	\bar{x}	Skill Level
18. The idea of teaching people things they do not know pleases me	4.64	Totally agree
31. I find it honorable to guide people's lives by working as a teacher	4.57	Totally agree
9. I believe I will be successful in the teaching profession	4.47	Totally agree
3. The teaching profession is appropriate for me	4.47	Totally agree
24. I consider success in the courses on professional teaching knowledge as important	4.46	Totally agree
20. It makes me happy to think that I will become a teacher	4.38	Totally agree
28. I believe teaching will bring me a prestigious status in society	4.33	Totally agree
27. I think I will be a learned and qualified teacher	4.33	Totally agree
13. I feel sure of the requirements of the teaching profession	4.31	Totally agree
11. I believe I can overcome the difficulties I will have in the teaching profession	4.30	Totally agree
19. I feel sympathy to people working as teachers	4.28	Totally agree
1. The idea of becoming a teacher attracts me	4.28	Totally agree
25. I like conversing with people working as teachers	4.27	Totally agree
22. I think I will have much to do when I become a teacher	4.26	Totally agree
16. I think teaching will provide me with opportunities to be productive and creative	4.24	Totally agree
17. I believe I will be a professional teacher	4.24	Totally agree
10. I am pleased with having chosen this department related to the teaching profession	4.24	Totally agree
34. The continuous nature of the teaching profession makes me feel secure	4.16	Agree
12. I would like to work as a teacher even under difficult conditions	4.16	Agree
26. I talk about and discuss the issues of education, learning, teaching, and the teaching profession	4.12	Agree
33. I believe I will be sufficiently esteemed by society when I become a teacher.	4.09	Agree
29. I voluntarily chose the teaching program I am currently attending	4.09	Agree
23. The working conditions of the teaching profession attract me	3.99	Agree
14. I believe I have a special talent for teaching	3.95	Agree
4. If I had to choose a profession again, I would prefer becoming a teacher	3.89	Agree
8. I regret to have chosen the teaching profession	3.82	Agree
7. I think teaching does not suit my personality	2.99	Neutral
5. I think teaching is not a suitable profession for me	2.96	Neutral
2. The teaching profession is boring for me	2.94	Neutral
15. I think teaching is not a suitable profession for me	2.93	Neutral
32. I do not like talking about and discussing the issues of education, learning, teaching, and the teaching profession	2.93	Neutral
6. I think teaching does not suit my lifestyle	2.91	Neutral
21. I would not recommend teaching to those who are to choose a profession	2.85	Neutral
30. I fear I will have troubles in the teaching profession	2.84	Neutral

The General Arithmetic Mean of the Scale: 3.894 (Agree).

regarding the teaching profession (Açıkgöz, 1990; Lampe, et al., 1996; Lindquist and Abraham, 1996; Özkal, 2001; Tombul, 2001).

It has been found that there was a significant difference statistically among the teacher candidates studying different types of education programs in favor of students

studying at computational programs as shown by the responses of teacher candidates to the scale of Attitudes Towards Teaching Profession. Therefore, they have been defined that teacher candidates studying in computational departments have higher attitudes towards teaching profession. It has been found that there is no significant difference statistically among the teacher candidates whose families have different monthly incomes according to teacher candidates' responses to Attitudes Scale about Teaching Profession. Therefore, level of income of families does not affect the attitudes of teacher candidates towards teaching profession. According to answers of the teacher candidates to scale of Attitude towards Teaching Profession depending on variable of residential place of family, there was no significant difference among teacher candidates whose families reside in different sized settlements. Hence, settlements where families of teacher candidates live have no effect on attitudes of candidates toward the teaching profession.

According to interviews with prospective teachers and the answers of the teacher candidates to the items of scale, it has been determined that experiences of teaching people pleases teacher candidates, guiding people in accurate and positive way makes them proud, teacher candidates feel confident in teaching profession and believe they will be successful, and teaching profession will be appropriate for them in every sense. Moreover, it has been found that the teacher candidates' individual expectations from the profession are very high in every sense. According to interviews with prospective teachers and the answers of the teacher candidates to the items of scale again, it is possible to think that teachers do not recommend teaching profession so much because teacher candidates have worries about teaching profession; it may create problems and there may be problems related to finding a job in teaching profession based on the items with low arithmetic average. The overall arithmetic average of the answers of the teacher candidates participating in this study to the items of scale were lower (Agree) than the expected skill level (Totally Disagree). It has been defined that the prospective teachers love the teaching profession and give value to their profession based on either from the answers of the scale items or interviews with the prospective teachers. However, it can be said that teacher candidates have some worries about the profession due to both living conditions and there are some question marks in their minds based on interviews.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been observed that female teachers or teacher candidates have more positive or higher attitudes as compared to male teachers or teacher candidates.

Therefore, courses, in-service trainings or seminars should be given to all teacher candidates especially for male teacher candidates in order to raise their attitude about the teaching profession, so attitudes of all teachers about their profession should be enhanced. The attitudes of teachers studying at computational programs or graduated from computational programs are also high. Therefore, attitudes of all teachers with various activities should be raised by taking the help of necessary institutions and organizations starting from verbal programs towards their professions.

Attitudes of teacher candidates towards the teaching profession substantially affect their success in teaching. Therefore, both various practical and theoretical lessons should be given especially regarding the development of a positive attitude towards teaching profession by education faculties.

Many students choose teaching profession just because they admire teaching. However, when students understand how it is difficult raising a child, giving students information, accustoming them to life, they are also aware of the responsibilities that teaching profession possess and this awareness causes concern in teacher candidates over time. Psychological courses about this issue should be given to teacher candidates since the first year by education faculties in order to eliminate these worries of students or to detract teacher candidates from such negative worries, so that the anxiety levels of the teacher candidates should be prevented.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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