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## The Investigation of Teacher Candidates' Attitudes Towards Teaching Profession

(Öğretmen Adaylarının Öğretmenlik Mesleğine İlişkin Turumlarına Yönelik İnceleme)

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate teacher candidates' attitudes towards the teaching profession according to their gender, field and programs from which they have graduated, and whether or not practiced teaching profession before. The research group included 180 female (%83.33) and 36 male (%16.66) teacher candidates studying in Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program at Yıldız Technical University. The Attitude Scale Related to Teaching Profession having been developed by Erkuş, Sanlı, Bağlı and Güven (2000) for measuring the attitudes of teachers toward teaching profession was administered as a data collection tool. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA. Results revealed that while teaching experience has an important effect on attitudes towards teaching, but gender, field, and program variables do not have any significant effect on it. Also, it was found that the teacher candidates in pedagogical formation certificate program have a positive attitude towards the teaching profession.

**Keywords:** Teaching profession, professional attitude, teacher candidate, pedagogical formation program.

### Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğine ilişkin tutumlarını cinsiyet, bölüm, mezun oldukları program ve öğretmenlik deneyimi değişkenlerine göre incelemektir. Araştırmanın çalışma gurubu 180 kadın (%83.33) ve 36 erkek (%16.66) olmak üzere Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi'nde düzenlenen Pedagojik Formasyon Sertifika Programına devam eden öğretmen adaylarından oluşmaktadır. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak öğretmenlik mesleğine yönelik tutumu ölçmek amacıyla Erkuş, Sanlı, Bağlı and Güven (2000) tarafından geliştirilen Öğretmenlik Mesleğine Yönelik Tutum Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Veriler betimsel istatistikler verilerek bağımsız örneklemeler için t-testi ve tek yönlü ANOVA teknikleri kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar öğretmenlik mesleği deneyiminin öğretmenlik mesleğine yönelik tutum üzerinde anlamlı bir fark oluşturduğunu, ancak cinsiyet, alan ve mezun oldukları program değişkenlerinin anlamlı bir fark oluşturmadıklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Ayrıca, pedagojik formasyon sertifika programına devam eden öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğine yönelik olumlu bir tutuma sahip oldukları gözlemlenmiştir.

**Keywords:** Teaching profession, professional attitude, teacher candidate, pedagogical formation program.

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## **Introduction**

Qualified individuals keeping up with developments are needed in a rapidly changing world. Education is considered as responsible for developing these (Şahin, 2010). And, it is regarded as a matter of national importance and an indispensable agency on building a nation (Belagali, 2011). The teachers shape and mould the whole process of education. Due to these, the teacher is the most critical component for implementing of the educational process (Şişman, 2004). Since teaching is a challenging profession and only those teachers that can shoulder the heavy responsibilities of nation building, the raising teacher must conceivably get the highest priority. The teaching profession requires teachers who have cognitive, affective and psychomotor qualifications. The levels of these qualifications, will affect teacher candidates' success in the profession. So, in teacher training, a positive attitude about the profession is of great importance (Tural and Kabadayı, 2014).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Pedagogical Formation Certification Program**

Teaching techniques and methods are changing swiftly thanks to advances in information technologies. Hence, expectations from teachers have increased (Tural and Kabadayı, 2014). Chapman and Mählck (1997), Darling-Hammond (1999), Miguel and Barsaga (1997), and Nye, Konstantopoulos and Hedges (2004) emphasize that there is a positive relationship between teacher quality and student achievement. Teachers should have cognitive, affective and psychomotor qualifications, since the teaching profession has the power to influence society in all areas. And, the levels of these will affect teacher candidates' success in the profession (Tural and Kabadayı, 2014). Teaching is also defined by Turkish National Education. In National Education Basic Law (No 1739, Article 43), it is underlined that teaching is a specialization profession which undertakes the tasks of education, teaching and management duties related to them and preparation to the teaching profession can be provided with general culture, specific field training and pedagogical formation (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı [MEB], 1973). According to MEB (2010), the definition of Pedagogical Formation program is as follows: "The purpose of Pedagogical Formation program is to provide graduates of science faculties with basic knowledge and abilities for being teachers in their areas of graduation. The teacher candidates completing this program successfully can work in public and private high schools as teacher in their graduation area. It also makes the candidates beware of new developments in our education system." According to Senemoğlu and Özçelik (1987), just knowing the subject to be taught does not enough to teach it, since knowing any subject and teaching it cannot be the same. This program supplies helpful views which have importance in any learning area in education (Şimşek, 2000). And, as this program improves teachers' professional development in teaching and the quality of education, it is necessary for all teacher candidates (Atasoy, 2004).

In Turkey, students participating in the Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program represent a group for whom teaching is not their first choice of profession. They later decide to become teachers for different reasons. Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program continues in universities is four semesters in duration for students attending undergraduate school and two semesters for graduate students. In parallel to courses in

education faculty programmes, teacher candidates take courses such as Introduction to Education, Developmental Psychology, Curriculum Development and Teaching, Measurement and Evaluation, Classroom Management, Learning, Teaching Theories and Approaches, Guidance, Special Teaching Methods, Instructional Technologies and Material Design, and Teaching Practice to obtain teacher competencies (Tural and Kabadayı, 2014). If the teacher candidates have positive attitudes towards the teaching profession, they will motivate their students more easily in the future. And, their behaviours towards the students will be sincere (Çeliköz and Çetin, 2004). As information on teachers candidates' attitudes towards the teaching profession suggests directions for the development of positive attitudes before they begin teaching, investigation the attitudes of candidates in the Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program towards the teaching profession is important (Tural and Kabadayı, 2014).

### **Attitudes towards Teaching Profession**

Attitude is important to understand human behaviour and it has been defined in a number of ways (Gourneau, 2005). According to Üstüner (2006), attitude is a tendency attributed to the individual and forming his thoughts, feelings, and behaviours about a psychological object. Also Inceoglu (1993) defined attitude as a cognitive, affective, and behavioural reaction. It is organized by the individual's experiences, motivations and knowledge which are oriented towards himself/herself or any social affair, subject or event around him/her. A profession which affects individual's lifestyle and status has a crucial role in satisfying individual's psycho-social needs. It is believed that teachers should be furnished with general culture, domain, and knowledge. In addition to this, it is expected that they should have positive attitudes towards the teaching profession for professional satisfaction and success (Camadan and Duysak, 2010).

The attitude of an individual towards their profession has an impact on their performance and success in that profession (Çakır, 2005; Durmuşoğlu, Yanık, and Akkoyunlu, 2009). If the teacher has a positive attitude, s/he will not dishonour the name of her/his profession. S/he will be proud of the teaching profession. And also, s/he will not wait for or let others regulate her/his professional work. The professionals will control and adjust their conduct themselves. Moreover, they enjoy and dedicate themselves to this profession. And, they are aware that it is socially necessary and important (Temizkan, 2008). That is to say, teachers' positive attitudes towards their profession have a great importance in fulfilling the requirements of the profession and bringing along professional contentment (Durmuşoğlu, Yanık and Akkoyunlu, 2009, Terzi and Tezci 2007). Attitudes become more important as the profession is teaching (Capri and Celikkaleli, 2008). The manner of the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession affects the way the student learns (Kavcar, 2005).

Education is regarded as a social institution and a system. Students, teachers, curriculum, administrators, educational experts, educational technology, and both physical and financial sources are some major components of education (Şişman, 2004). Education is an activity helping students in attaining needed information, ability, attitude, and developing their identities while they are preparing for public life (Karşlı, 2008). And, how children view themselves inside and outside of school can be influenced by school experiences, and the students' present and future decisions can be shaped by these school memories (Gourneau, 2005). Due to these, the teacher is the most critical component for implementing of the educational process

(Şişman, 2004). Additionally, educational or instructional objectives and the content of the subject depend on the teacher's attitude (Sümbül, 2001). That is, for understanding and improving educational processes, teachers' beliefs, attitudes and practices shaping students' learning environment and influence student motivation and achievement are crucial (OECD, 2009). Only if educational process is implemented enthusiastically can the desired educational development of the students be brought about (Belagali, 2011). Because the impact of teacher candidates' attitudes on teaching and learning process is vital, Sayın (2003) highlighted that teacher candidates should choose the teaching profession for the reasons that they love and respect teaching.

In any profession, negative attitudes towards the profession can be seen. Yet, this issue is more important for teaching profession than the others. As negative attitudes can have a negative effect on one's teaching practice, the attitudes of teachers towards their profession play a crucial role (Duatpe and Akkuş-Çıkla, 2004). Due to this, there are several studies about the attitudes of teachers (Azeem, Nasir, Khalil-r-Rehman, Afzal, Muhammad and Idrees, 2009; Çakır, 2005; Duatpe and Akkuş-Çıkla, 2004; Üstüner, Demirtaş, and Cömert, 2009; Yaakub, 1990). But, there are limited researches about gender differences in attitudes of teacher candidates attending Pedagogical Formation Training Certification Program towards the teaching profession. For example, Alghazo, Dodeen and Algaryouti (2003), Askar and Erden (1986), Çakır (2005), Tanrıöğen (1997) Üstün, Erkan and Akman (2004) investigated the effect of the gender variable on attitudes towards the teaching profession. The findings revealed that female teachers have more positive attitudes towards their profession. Kaya and Büyükkasap (2005) studied on the attitudes and concerns of pre-service teachers regarding teaching profession in terms of several variables. According to their findings, females who viewed it as an ideal profession and had ambition to be a teacher were found to have more positive attitudes towards the profession than males. However, Çakır, Kan and Sümbül (2006) concluded that female teachers have more negative attitudes towards their profession than male teachers.

In Turkey, it is accepted by many people that teaching is an appropriate job for women (Sharbain and Tan, 2013). In the 2006–2007 academic year, according to the report “Gender inequalities in Turkey” (TUSIAD and KAGIDER, 2008), the rate of the female teachers were 95.6% in kindergarten, 48% in elementary schools, 41.3% in secondary schools and 39.3% in general vocational-technical education. It was underlined in this report that they prefer teaching since it leaves suitable spaces to meet the expectations as housewives, spouses, and mothers. That is, women consider teaching as an appropriate profession to the traditional gender roles. Nevertheless, males as principals is greater in number than females (GDSW, 2010). Actually, there is no legal or official barrier in allocation and promotion of women in Turkey. Yet, the profile of managerial system continues to be a “men-hegemonic” area (Sharbain and Tan, 2013). But, in administrative roles, the success of women provides an example for encouraging the advancement of the others (Addi-Racah and Ayalon, 2002).

The attitude towards a profession is the most important determinant of success of the individual in that profession (Gürbüz and Kışoğlu, 2007). Because of this, many researchers give the importance of teachers' and teacher candidates' attitudes. And, some researches indicated that several variables such as gender, class level, type of program they graduated from affect the attitudes towards teaching profession (Akbulut and Karakuş,

2011). Bartan, Oksal and Sevi (2013), analysed attitudes of 583 pre-school teacher candidates at Dumlupınar University Education Faculty Pre-school Teaching Department. It was found that female teacher candidates had a more positive attitude than male candidates.

Yeşil (2011) examined attitudes of the teacher candidates studying in Turkish Language Teaching department on the teaching profession in terms of socio-demographic features. Findings indicated that attitudes of Turkish teacher candidates towards the teaching profession were positive. It was seen that female candidate teachers had more positive attitudes than male candidate teachers in terms of demographic features. And, according to this research, teacher candidates who were satisfied with their department had higher attitude means than the others.

Sözer (1996) determined the attitudes of teacher candidates studying in their fourth year in various undergraduate programs of Anadolu University, Faculty of Education and teacher candidates studying in the Teaching Certificate Program towards teaching profession in terms of several variables. The results of the study revealed that teacher candidates' attitudes were positive and showing a statistically significant difference favouring the females in terms of gender variable. Köğçe, Aydın and Yıldız (2010) carried out a study to compare the attitudes of freshman and senior pre-service teacher candidates pursuing an undergraduate degree in an elementary mathematics education program towards the teaching profession. And, the aim of the research was also to reveal the kind of relationship that existed between these attitudes. It was concluded that the attitudes of freshmen and senior pre-service teachers toward teaching profession showed statistically significant difference in terms of several variables favouring senior pre-service teachers.

Akbulut and Karakuş (2011) studied on pedagogical content courses' influence on teacher candidates' attitudes towards the teaching profession. They were secondary school science and Mathematics (Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Mathematics) teacher candidates. The findings showed that their attitudes towards the teaching profession were positive. Yet, it was found that the attitude scores of the pre-service teachers who are studied to content courses decreased at the end of the pedagogical content courses.

In the literature about teachers and teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching profession, there are many studies. Şahin Taşkın and Hacıömeroğlu (2010) examined attitudes of 223 final year teacher candidates who studied in elementary education on teaching profession. Their findings showed there were differences between pre-service teachers' attitudes and programs in which they enrol. Yet, there was no meaningful difference between candidates' attitudes and gender. The study also indicated that pedagogy courses influence teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching positively. Şimşek (2012) analysed attitudes of 583 teacher candidates who studied at Faculty of Technical Education with respect to class, gender, educational level of parents, and seeing themselves adequate. Male candidates' attitudes were more negative than female candidates' attitudes. According to class levels, no significant change was observed. However, it was seen that departments at which candidates study affected their perceptions of competence of the teaching roles. Akbulut and Karakuş (2011) investigated the attitudes of 239 secondary school science and mathematics teacher candidates. It was found that teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching profession were positive. Though there was no significant difference among the programs, a significant difference was found according to the

grades. For all these, there are limited researches about attitudes of Pedagogical Formation Training Certification Program teacher candidates towards the teaching profession (Tural and Kabadayi, 2014).

The purpose of this study was to investigate Pedagogical Formation Program teacher candidates' attitudes towards the teaching profession according to their gender, field and programs they have graduated from, and whether or not practiced teaching profession before. For this purpose following research question is the frame for this study.

*“Do the attitudes of teacher candidates towards teaching profession differentiate in terms of gender, field and programs they have graduated from, and whether or not they had taught before?”*

## **METHOD**

### **Participants and Setting**

This study was conducted during 2013-2014 academic year with the participation of 180 female (%83.33) and 36 male (%16.66) teacher candidates studying in Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program at Yildiz Technical University. All participants took part in the study voluntarily. The distribution of the sample with respect to programs which were accepted in two main fields as social sciences and applied sciences is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** *Teacher candidates participating in the survey by subject area*

<b>Field</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Social Sciences	Philosophy	61	28.24
	History	43	19.90
Applied Sciences	Mathematics	51	23.62
	Physics	61	28.24

### **Data Collecting Instrument**

This study is based on survey design. The data were collected by The Attitude Scale Related to Teaching Profession having been developed by Erkuş, Sanlı, Bağlı and Güven (2000). This scale is concluded that it can measure the attitude towards the teaching profession. It consists of 23 items for a total of 13 negative and 10 positive. The scale was prepared as a five-point Likert-type. The identification levels of the terms were graded as 1: Strongly Disagree, 2: Disagree, 3: Uncertain, 4: Agree, 5: Strongly Agree. The reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) of the scale was determined to be .99. The highest point to be obtained in The Attitude Scale Related to Teaching Profession prepared as 5 graded Likert-type was 115 and the lowest point was 51.

### **Analysis of Data**

Data acquired by means of the application of The Attitude Scale Related to Teaching Profession were analysed using independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA via SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 21.0 software program. The analysis of independent samples t-test was used to define whether there was a significant difference in teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching profession in terms of gender,

field and teaching experience. Also, the analysis of one way ANOVA was administered to define whether there was a significant difference in teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching profession in terms of program they graduated from.

## FINDINGS

In this section, changes in Pedagogical Formation Program teacher candidates' attitudes towards the teaching profession are analysed according to gender, whether or not the candidates had taught before. The results were interpreted according to the 0.5 significance level in the t-test calculations.

**Table 2:** *The Findings of the Teacher Candidates' Attitudes towards the Teaching Profession*

	N	Mean	Std. D.	Std. E.	Min.	Max.
<b>Teacher Candidates</b>	216	96.55	12.42	.84	51	115

As it is observed in Table 2, the points of teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching profession was very high ( $\bar{X} = 96.55$ ). This finding shows that teacher candidates attending Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program have very positive attitudes towards teaching profession.

Table 3 focuses on the teacher candidates' attitudes towards the teaching profession according to their gender.

**Table 3:** *The Findings of the Teacher Candidates' Attitudes towards the Teaching Profession According to their Gender*

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
<b>Female</b>	180	96.92	12,22	214	.98	.71
<b>Male</b>	36	94.69	13,4			

Table 3 shows that was no significant difference between teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching profession in terms of gender ( $t=.98, p>.05$ ). According to this finding, it can be said that gender is not a significant variable on teacher candidates' attitudes to teaching profession.

Table 4 presents the findings on the teacher candidates' attitudes towards the teaching profession according to their teaching experience.

**Table 4:** *The Findings of the Teacher Candidates' Attitudes towards the Teaching Profession According to their Teaching Experience*

Teaching Experience	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
<b>Experienced</b>	84	100.19	9.55	214	3.52	.01
<b>Inexperienced</b>	132	94.24	13,47			

When compared according to teaching experience, a significant difference was observed in favour of experienced teachers ( $t=3.52$ ,  $p<.05$ ). This finding shows that teaching experience has a positive and significant effect on teacher candidates' attitudes to teaching profession.

Table 5 shows the differences on the teacher candidates' attitudes towards the teaching profession in terms of their field.

**Table 5:** *The Findings of the Teacher Candidates' Attitudes towards the Teaching Profession According to their Field*

Field	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Social Sciences	104	98.03	11.04	214	1.69	.11
Applied Sciences	112	95.17	13.47			

According to the finding in Table 5, there was no significant difference between teacher candidates' attitudes towards the teaching profession in terms of their field ( $t=1.69$ ,  $p>.05$ ). It is found that teacher candidates' field of study has no significant difference in their attitudes towards the teaching profession.

One way ANOVA test was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in the teacher candidates' attitudes towards the teaching profession according to their programs from which they have graduated. Table 6 and 7 show the descriptive statistics and findings of one way ANOVA analysis.

**Table 6:** *The Descriptive Statistics of the Teacher Candidates' Attitudes towards the Teaching Profession According to Their Programs*

Program	N	Mean	Std. D.	Std. E.	Min.	Max.
History	43	99.97	8.89	1.35	81	115
Mathematics	51	93.76	13.88	1.94	51	113
Philosophy	61	96.36	13.12	1.68	61	115
Physics	61	96.67	12.22	1.56	53	115



**Table 7:** *The Findings of One Way ANOVA Analysis of the Teacher Candidates' Attitudes towards the Teaching Profession According to Their Programs*

<b>Groups</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Between Groups</b>	903.67	3	301.22	1.97	.11
<b>Within Groups</b>	32267.66	212	152.20		
<b>Total</b>	33171.33	215			

As seen in Table 6 and 7, it was observed that there was no significant difference in teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching profession according to the programs they graduated from ( $F=1.97$ ,  $p>.05$ ). The result of the ANOVA test demonstrates that program differentiation did not affect their attitudes towards the teaching profession. It was also confirmed that there was not any differences between groups.

## **DISCUSSION**

Knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform the teaching profession effectively and efficiently are accepted generic teacher competencies. A teacher is to have high levels of subject knowledge and professional training. Yet, if he or she has negative attitude towards the teaching profession, it may affect his or her students' performance negatively (MEB, 2006). Therefore, Pedagogical Formation Certification Program teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching profession needs to be investigated in process of teacher education programmes to identify training needs according to results of the current status analysis.

In the literature, it is seen that there are different results related to the gender variable regarding the attitudes towards the teaching profession. For example, Serin, Serin, Saracaloglu and Kesercioğlu (2004) suggested that the attitudes of the male students towards the teaching profession were more positive, while Tanrıoğen (1997) and Sağlam (2008) asserted that the attitudes of the female students towards the teaching profession were more positive. However, Kaplan and Ipek (2002) observed that the gender did not produce a significant difference in their study. These studies support the study data available. Based on the available study data, it can be suggested that female and male students share similar attitudes towards the teaching profession.

Many researchers have emphasized that the teacher profession may cause stress that can affect teachers at almost all stages of their life such as Pearson and Moomaw (2005), and Pearson and Hall (1993). And, many studies have been carried out on teacher stress, and burnout. A study which was undertaken on a group of Florida teachers indicated that one-third of teachers would choose another career if they could start over again (Reglin and Reitzammer, 1998). Also, Byrne (1998) found that two-thirds of new teachers will leave the teaching profession within four years. These studies have indicated that stress and/or burnout are main factors to teachers leaving the field of education. However, these results are contradictory with the results of this study. The present study findings showed that there was a significant difference with respect to teaching experience of the teacher candidates in the Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program. Teachers who had taught before had a positive attitude towards teaching profession. Yet, no statistically significant difference was seen between

their attitudes towards the teaching profession with regard to their programs in which they studied. This finding is similar to that of the studies conducted by Tanrıöğen (1997), Erdem and Anılan (1999), and Şahin et al. (2009). However with present study participants, these conclusions are limited. Further study may be expanded with Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program teacher candidates from various universities.

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