

Teacher Candidates' Attitudes Towards the Teaching Profession in Turkey

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This study examined the attitudes of teacher candidates in Turkey towards the teaching profession. Descriptive surveys were used and the research data was obtained from Pamukkale University Classroom Teaching students. During data analysis, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the groups were calculated and a t-test and One-Way ANOVA were used. The attitudes of teacher candidates towards the teaching profession don't vary in terms of "gender", "type of teaching", "type of high schools they graduate from" and in order of their preferences to be a teacher. More than half of the candidates choose the Classroom Teaching Program willingly and about all of them want to perform this profession, but their attitudes towards the teaching profession were not well developed. The majority of the participants were not satisfied with the University and faculty administrations and reopted that they don't show enough effort required to develop themselves for the profession. It is found that the attitudes of students expressing their discontent are at a lower level. It is necessary to provide the teacher candidates not only with knowledge and skills, but also to help them develop the beliefs and positive attitudes related to the profession.

Cette étude a porté sur les attitudes qu'ont des étudiants au programme de formation à l'enseignement en Turquie envers la profession enseignante. Nous avons effectué des sondages descriptifs auprès d'étudiants au programme de formation à l'enseignement d'enseignement en classe de la Pamukkale University. Pendant l'analyse des données, on a calculé les moyennes arithmétiques et les écarts types des groupes en appliquant un test t et une ANOVA unidirectionnelle. Les attitudes qu'ont les étudiants au programme de formation à l'enseignement envers la profession enseignante ne varient pas en fonction des critères suivants : « genre », « type d'enseignement », « type d'école secondaire fréquentée » et « désir de devenir enseignant ». Plus de la moitié des candidats choisissent de leur plein gré l'enseignement en classe et à peu près tous veulent poursuivre cette profession; pourtant leurs attitudes envers la profession enseignante n'étaient pas bien développées. La majorité des participants n'étaient pas satisfaits de l'université, ni de l'administration et ils ont signalé qu'ils ne démontraient pas suffisamment d'efforts nécessaires pour se développer comme enseignants. On a trouvé que les attitudes des étudiants qui exprimaient leur mécontentement étaient plus négatives. Il est nécessaire de non seulement transmettre aux étudiants au programme de formation à l'enseignement des connaissances et des compétences, mais aussi de les aider à développer des croyances et des attitudes positives par rapport à leur profession.

Teachers are pillars of society. The importance of teachers in the life of a nation cannot be overlooked. The teacher influences the minds of youth, moulding young minds into various forms. The future of the nation is built through the process of education. A nation which tries to march ahead on the road to progress must do so with the help of able teachers. A nation cannot

afford to leave its future in the hands of incompetent teachers. According to Singh (2009, p. 32), "The world of tomorrow will be born from the schools of today." Thus teachers are very significant as the builders of a nation. In addition, teachers play a major role in serving society via manpower training, providing a peace of mind and social peace in society, the socialization and being prepared for social life of individuals, culture and values of society to be transferred to young generations (Özden, 1999).

In developing and changing world, the importance of the teaching profession hasn't decreased, despite all technological developments and their reflections in education. There has been the suggestion that the teaching profession, unlike other professions, includes knowledge, skills and behaviour in more than one field (Gürbüz Türk & Genç, 2004). Teaching is a working area in professional status which has the dimensions of education, social, cultural, economic, scientific and technological fields and having a special expertise with the knowledge of personal and teaching skills in the field that requires academic study and vocational formation (Erden, 2004, p. 34; Gürkan, 2000, p. 30). Shulman (1987) says that teaching is the profession of people who have pedagogical content knowledge.

In order for individuals who are to embark on a teaching career to fulfill the requirements of the profession effectively, having a positive attitude towards the profession is essential (Üstüner, 2006). Teachers' attitudes towards their profession is an important factor in determining teacher effectiveness (Shaw, Stratil, & Reynolds, 1973). Various studies have shown a positive correlation between teacher attitudes and teacher effectiveness (Stronge, 2007) and productivity and success in the profession (Arıcak, 1999, p. 94; Çakır, 2005). Teacher attitudes also directly affect school climate (Woolfolk-Hoy & Hoy, 2003, cited in Stronge, Tucker, & Hindman, 2004). Employees with positive attitudes towards their profession have higher job satisfaction and are more committed to their profession (Holdaway, 1978; Robbins, 1994; Schackmuth, 1979; Weaver, 1977). Attitude towards the teaching profession is a pivotal quality that determines a teacher's willingness to develop and grow as a professional. The more positive and enthusiastic teachers are about teaching, the more likely their students will be enthusiastic about learning (Edmonton Public Schools, 1993, as cited in Stronge et. al., 2004).

The Report on Teacher Quality (Blackboard, 2008) suggests that "high quality teachers are the most important factor in a child's education" (p. 3). This same report notes that teachers are the single most important factor in student achievement. Lower achieving students are most likely to benefit from improvements in teacher effectiveness. In addition, good teachers can make a difference of one grade-level equivalent in annual achievement gains. Teacher quality continues to rank as the most reliable predictor of student achievement (Blackboard, 2008). It has been further suggested that the attitudes of teachers are directly related to teaching behavior and students' achievements (Marchant, 1992).

Attitudes: An Overview

Papanastasiou (2002) defines attitude as an individual's positive or negative emotional tendency towards people, objects, events, and ideas. Anastasi (1957) defines attitude as a tendency to react in a certain way towards a designated class of stimuli. According to Allport (1938), "an attitude is a mental and neural set of readiness, exerting a directive dynamics influence upon the individuals response to all objects and situation with which it is related" (p. 28). In other words, attitude means mental readiness towards a person or an object (Hussain, 2004). People have attitudes towards all objects, which may be positive, negative, or

neutral (Fishbain, 1967 as cited in Hussain, 2004). Attitudes express how people feel about something (Robbins, 1994) and are part of an individual's personality traits. It has been suggested that, like other acquired personality traits, attitudes are learned later in life through classical and operant conditioning models or through observation and imitation (Morgan, 1991, p. 363). They are not static (Koballa, 1988; Shrigley, Koballa, & Simpson, 1988); they change with the passage of time as person gains experience in life (Hussain, 2004).

Attitudes have the following features: Attitudes, (a) are related to a psychological object, (b) they are ready to react, (c) have the power to motivate, (d) can be static for periods of time, (e) include evaluation, and (f) are not, directly, observable features but tendencies attributed to an individual by means of making inferences from the observable behavior of him/her (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1999; Sakallı, 2001). Parents, peers, mass media, and the individual's personal experience with the attitude object are important factors in the formation of attitudes. These factors play an important role in changes to existing attitudes and the formation of new ones (Myers, 1996, as cited in Uzunöz, 2002).

Luthans (1993) suggests that a professional attitude is valuable in many ways, and knowing about these attitudes can also be very useful. People's attitudes towards their profession have an effect on their performance. These perspectives are also valid for the teaching profession (Sparks, 1979). Teacher training is of great significance as the attitudes of teachers towards their profession is learned like all attitudes (Can, 1987). The main goal of teacher education is to educate student teachers to become qualified teachers (Koster, Dengerink, Korthagen, & Lunenberg, 2008). The training received during teacher candidates' undergraduate studies is of particularly great importance since teachers obtain most of their qualifications regarding their profession in this period. During their undergraduate studies, candidate teachers develop values and attitudes related to the profession along with field information (Lašek & Wiesenbergovala, 2007). That is why teacher training programs should equip candidate teachers with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes necessary for them to become better teachers, and give priority to the development of these attitudes (Carkhuffs, 1982, as cited in Hussain, 2004).

For teachers to possess these qualities and carry out their profession lovingly and willingly, the selection of prospective teachers, the education received by teacher candidates, and the life that they lead during this process are of great significance. This paper reports on a study done in Turkey. Anyone who finishes high school and gets the required score in the university entrance exam can apply to become a teacher in Turkey. Prospective teachers are accepted to their departments based on the scores they get on the university entrance exam that they are required to take after high school. In this exam only their academic qualifications are assessed, not their attitudes towards the teaching profession; that is, their affective features are overlooked. However, being successful in a professional field depends on some 'private' abilities, interests and motivation in addition to academic knowledge. To understand these 'private' matters, it is necessary to determine the interest, attitudes, values, the degree of compliance with the profession, speaking and the competence of using the language of teacher candidates towards the teaching profession. As Bloom (1979) indicates, affective features play a key role in establishing and influencing success. Like every profession, teaching can be more effective when individuals possess positive affective characteristics (Pehlivan, 2009). If students with positive attitudes towards the teaching profession are accepted to faculties of education and these attitudes are supported and developed throughout their educational life, these students should be more successful in their profession.

The responsibility attached to the teaching profession and the importance of teachers' attitudes towards teaching have increased interest in studies in this field. Many studies have been carried out in Turkey regarding attitudes towards the teaching profession. In these studies the attitudes of teacher candidates studying in a variety of programs at the Faculties of Education towards the teaching profession were discussed. The relationship between the variables such as gender, personality traits, the order of preference of the teaching program, the type of the program, the reason for preferring the teaching profession, family characteristics, physical self-perception, self-sufficiency beliefs, anxiety levels and the attitudes of teacher candidates towards the teaching profession have been explored (Azeem et al., 2008; Çelenk, 1988; Dagga, 2005; Gujjar & Naoreen, 2010; Hoşgörür, Kılıç, & Dündar, 2002; Keser, Bayır, & Numanoğlu, 2009; Oral, 2004; Pehlivan, 2010; Şahin, 1992; Şimşek, 2005; Temel, 1990; Terzi & Tezci, 2007). However, in this study, along with a range of variables which are presumed to have an effect on teacher candidates' attitudes towards the profession, variables such as educational policies in Turkey, students' satisfaction with university and faculty administration, the competence of the instructors, and the teacher candidates' individual efforts which have not been previously dealt with are scrutinized. The reason for these variables to be chosen can be explained in short below:

Gender

The teaching profession in the Turkish society is seen as a profession for women in terms of leading the family life together with the business life (Doğan & Çoban, 2009) and not only in Turkey but also in the world, it is a profession often preferred more by women (Frusher & Newton, 1987; Üstün, Erkan, & Akman, 2004). The situation of women who prefer the teaching profession more may affect their attitudes.

Manner of teaching

Faculties of education have to deal with very large numbers of students. Many have had years of two-shift working, one shift consisting of regular students during the day, the other of evening classes catering to a second tuition-paying group (Grossman, Sands, & Brittingham, 2010). Students studying in the evenings are sometimes those who entered the university with having lower academic points and paying more fees than others. It is pondered whether this difference makes a difference in relation to their attitudes towards the teaching profession.

Preference for the classroom teaching program

There are students who prefer the classroom teaching program willingly in education faculties, whereas there are candidates who aren't able to apply for the sections (programs) requiring high scores or for other reasons and become obliged to study in this program. Past research (Hayes, 1990; Phillips & Hatch, 2000) suggests that teacher candidates choose this profession for the following reasons: They have had positive experiences about teaching in the past or don't want to be a negative teacher model, have or have had a few teachers in their families, have thought of being a teacher in their dreams since childhood, have a love of children, want to create a positive difference in the lives of children, their families love this profession finding the profession rewarding and respected, having a lot of holidays or fewer monetary concerns.

Desire to perform the profession

Salaries, discipline problems, and working conditions are perceived by teacher candidates as discouraging factors for teaching profession (Frusher & Newton, 1987; Page, 1981). For this reason, some students will perform this profession unwillingly. It is expected to be a difference between the attitudes of students who will perform this profession willingly and others who won't.

Teacher Training in Turkey

As of 2010, there were 102 state universitarian and 52 private universitarian in Turkey. All institutions that train teachers for the Turkish education system are within a universitarian framework. Teachers are trained in faculties of education within this framework. There are 70 faculties of education in Turkey. Sixty-four of these are in state universities, and 6 of them are in private foundation universities (Council of Higher Education [CHE], 2010). The students whose opinions were asked within the scope of this study are students of elementary classroom teaching departments of 4-year faculties of education. The teacher education programmes in Turkey follow very similar coursework as suggested by the CHE. During the four years of the undergraduate elementary teacher education programme in Turkey, teacher candidates are required to follow a programme that includes courses related to general education and subject matter classes. They must also satisfy a practice teaching requirement. The four years of coursework include overall 152 credit-hours (Çakıroğlu, 2008).

Educational policies in Turkey

The most important educational problem in Turkey is the 'change of educational policies according to governments' (Tok, 2010). Educational policies in Turkey are frequently changed to reflect the view/s of incumbent governments. It is even evident that, as a result of the replacement of the ministers in the same cabinet, a previous policy can completely be abandoned and a new one adopted, giving way to a perpetuation of problems. Seventy-three Ministers of National Education have served in Turkey between 1920 and 2010. The average term of office per minister is not even a year-and-a-half.

Another educational problem in Turkey results from the low level of resources allocated to education. While the percentage of resources allocated by the state for education was 3.38 % in 2008, the same percentage is 5.8 in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries (Educational Reform Initiative, 2009). Teachers in Turkey, while they work longer hours than their peers in European countries, earn less. As of 2007 while the average compulsory working hours in OECD countries is 1652, it is 1832 in Turkey. On the other hand, while the highest ranking teachers in Turkey earn \$17,515 (USD), the same figure reaches \$54,000 (USD) in OECD average earnings. While the number of students per teacher in elementary and secondary schools is 23 in Turkey, it is 15 for OECD countries (OECD, 2009; Turkish Education Association [TEA], 2009).

The teaching profession is perceived as a 'low profile' profession (Bloland & Shelby, 1980, as cited in Pigge & Marso, 1992). This perception affects the respectability and the status of the profession. Studies conducted in Turkey also show that the teachers do not receive the rewards and positive attention they deserve. A study by Celep, Tuncer, and Binali, (1999), reveals the fact

that external reward resources such as wage, rank, supplementary payment are not at a satisfactory level. These external rewards are far from providing the teachers a minimum life standard. Yet one of the most important factors that determine the level of respectability of a profession in society is its economic gain (Tezcan, 1991).

Some students think the current position of the education system in Turkey is related to wrong policies, whereas some of them don't see it (the current position) as a problem and evaluate it as a part of conditions. As a result, the policies in effect affect teacher candidates. Regarding the teaching profession, it is thought to be differences between the attitudes might reflect variations between those who think these policies will affect the education system and the teaching profession negatively and those who consider the current policies to be appropriate.

Students' satisfaction with university and faculty administration

Most students in Turkey do not have sufficient information on the various boards that operate at the universities (e.g., Faculty Boards, University Senates) and on the individuals that have a say in university or faculty administrations except for the rector and the dean (Dönmez & Özer, 2009). In addition, students are having interoperability-related problems of communication and trust with the administrative employees (Boz and Babadoğan, 2005). This is an indication of a significant communication breakdown between the students and university and faculty administrations. The administrations should develop a culture of governance trying to establish communication within horizontal relations rather than doing this in strict hierarchical relations (CHE, 2007).

The students have different attitudes depending on the influence of the environment of the university they attend. Universities are embraced, or otherwise, by students on the level of their attachment of value to their students, their offering of services and opportunities for participation in the decision making process, their understanding of democracy as shown by the administrations, social interest towards the university that the students are attending, and the quality of their graduates. These types of factors might affect the students' attitudes towards their future profession.

The competence of the instructors

Faculties of education have the most crowded student population among all faculty types, including the Open Education Faculty in Turkey. Because the increase in the number of students is higher than the increase in the number of instructors, the number of students per instructor rises each year. While the number of students per instructor is 28 for all Turkish universities, the same figure is 38 for faculties of education (CHE, 2007). There are 38 students per the instructor in the education faculties of Pamukkale University (PAU) (Pamukkale University, 2011). In addition, one of the most important problems of the instructors is that they are under a heavy load of teaching (Smith, 2003). Therefore, they cannot allocate enough time to the activities of scientific research and professional development. Instructors in Turkey also have the same problem/s (Boz & Babadoğan, 2005). This may prevent the instructors from showing the desired performance. Consequently, some students might find the competence of instructors adequate whereas some of them may not. Differences between the thoughts of both groups can result in variations in attitudes towards the teaching profession.

Individual efforts teacher candidates

Hosgorur et al. (2002), found almost half of the teacher candidates do not enjoy reading books dealing with the teaching profession. While there are students showing the required efforts to improve themselves towards the profession, there are also students who don't show it on this matter. This situation is thought to be reflected in the attitudes of students.

Type of high school they graduate from

In this research, the opinions of students graduating from Anatolian Teacher High Schools (ATHSs) and other high schools were sought. ATHSs are primarily in charge of preparing students for higher education institutions which train teachers, instilling the spirit of the teaching profession, ensuring students have the required behaviour for teaching profession, and providing all students with a common general culture at secondary education level. ATHSs implement both a general high school program and also teaching activities as the preparation of students for the education faculties. Students graduating from these schools can study not only at education faculties but also in different study fields of universities. At other high schools, students don't have an education as preparation for education faculties. It is hypothesized that there might be differences in attitudes between the ATHSs students and students graduating from other high schools.

Order of preference for teaching

Students who take university entrance exam in Turkey make their program selections according to their exam results which they get. Students choose the universities and the departments that they want to get in their initial options and they choose others as latter options if they do not acquire their first choice. Accordingly, some students are accepted to universities according to their first preferences and some are accepted according to their latter preferences. In the study group, there are both students who prefer teacher education programme as their first choice/s and those who accept it as a later option. It is considered that attitudes towards the teaching profession of those who chose teacher education programme as their first choice might be higher when compared to the others.

Study Aims

In this research, whether the differences among all variables towards the profession make a difference was studied. Since attitudes are overlooked while choosing students for faculties of education in Turkey, the attitudes of candidate teachers towards the teaching profession are explored in this study. As stated by Üstüner (2006), identifying the attitudes of individuals within an organization can be a guide for determining administrative strategies and points of focus during pre-vocational training. This can also contribute to studies aiming at reducing negative attitudes towards the profession and the cultivation of positive attitudes.

The aim of this study is to examine the attitudes of candidate teachers towards the teaching profession in terms of certain variables. For this purpose, the questions of the research are determined as follows:

Do the attitudes of teacher candidates towards the profession show variations according to the students’:

- a) gender,
- b) manner of teaching,
- c) voluntary preference for the classroom teaching program,
- d) desire to perform the profession,
- e) opinions related to educational policies in Turkey,
- f) students’ satisfaction with university and faculty administration,
- g) the competence of the instructors,
- h) individual efforts of the teacher candidates),
- i) type of high school they graduate from, and
- j) order of preference for teaching?

Method

This study aimed at determining whether there is a significant relationship between defined variables and the attitudes of candidate teachers towards the teaching profession. Accordingly, the study is a general survey type research; the most popular (quantitative) research design in the social sciences is survey research. This is largely because it is an efficient way of collecting large amounts of data and is flexible in the sense that a large number of factors can be studied (Muijs, 2004).

While the population sample of the study includes classroom teaching majors at PAU Faculty of Education, 177 seniors of the same program were selected for the sample. A total of 460 students are studying in Classroom Teaching Program, 194 of them are at 4th class. Students studying at the final season in the research sampling were all reached. Seventeen questionnaires were left out of the analysis because of faulty and/or incomplete filling. The study was conducted through 177 students. Within the scope of the study, 93 of teacher candidates are men, 84 of them are women; 99 students are studying during the day, and 78 students are studying in the evening 76 students graduated from ATHSs, 101 students graduated from other high schools; the average age is 22.

A scale consisting of three parts was used in the study. The first part of the scale consists of personal information regarding the candidates. The second part consists of the “Attitude Scale Towards the Teaching Profession” (ASTTP) developed by Aşkar and Erden (1987). The scale is a 10-item instrument comprised of six positive and four negative statements (Appendix A). These items are graded as “Definitely agree” 5 (4.21-5.00), “Agree” 4 (3.41-4.20), “Moderately agree” 3 (2.61-3.40), “Disagree” 2 (1.81-2.60), “Definitely disagree” 1 (1.00-1.80). The scoring of the negative statements has been done in reverse order. The scores can range from 50 to 10. The scale’s Cronbach’s Alpha (α) reliability coefficient is 0.75. High scores on the scale are indicators of the positive attitudes, and lowest scores indicate negative attitudes. The third part of the scale consists of aforementioned variables such as the desire to carry out the profession, views of educational policies, views of university and faculty administrations, instructors, and the

individual efforts of candidate teachers (Appendix B). This scale's Cronbach's Alpha (α) reliability coefficient is 0.83. On looking at the results. It can be said that the scales are reliable. Because the reliability coefficient is 0.70 and above, it is considered as an indication of the reliability of the scale (Büyüköztürk, 2002; Gorsuch, 1983).

During data analysis, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the groups were calculated. In order to determine whether there was a difference between the mean values between groups of students an independent-samples test was conducted. In order to determine whether there is difference between the mean values of dependent variables based on the levels of the independent variable, a One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. The level of significance was determined as 0.05; considered to be sufficient for many cases (Eymen, 2007).

Results

This part of the study covers the findings based on the comparative analysis of teacher candidates' attitudes towards the teaching profession in view of certain variables.

The teacher candidates' attitudes towards the profession don't display a statistically significant difference according to "gender" [$t_{(175)} = -.02, p > .05$]. In other words, although the female students' attitude scores ($\bar{X} = 31.60$) are lower than the male students ($\bar{X} = 31.61$), there is no significant difference between them (Table 1).

When viewed in light of the "manner of teaching," candidates' attitudes towards the profession in the evening education program ($\bar{X} = 31.58$) are lower when compared to the others (normal education) ($\bar{X} = 31.62$), but there is no significant difference between them [$t_{(175)} = .065, p > .05$] (Table 1). We can say that they have similar ideas on the subject.

Table 1

The t-test results of the Attitude Scale Towards the Teaching Profession (ASTTP) scores according to certain variables

Variables	Option	N	\bar{X}	SS	Df	T	P
Gender	Female	86	31.60	2.89	175	-.02	.089
	Male	91	31.61	4.18			
Mode of education	Day	104	31.62	3.98	175	.065	.423
	Evening	73	31.58	3.01			
Voluntary preference for classroom teaching	Yes	116	31.57	3.83	175	-.16	.692
	No	61	31.67	3.15			
Desire to perform the profession	Yes	164	32.26	2.46	175	11.30	.001*
	No	13	26.13	5.25			
Satisfaction with the current educational policies	Yes	43	35.32	1.67	175	9.53	.065
	No	134	30.41	3.23			
Satisfaction with university administrations	Yes	60	34.73	1.71	175	10.49	.042*
	No	117	30.00	3.26			
Satisfaction with faculty administrations	Yes	31	35.83	1.71	175	8.52	.120
	No	146	30.71	3.25			
Finding the instructors competent	Yes	87	34.03	1.78	175	11.69	.007*
	No	90	29.26	3.37			
Teacher candidates' finding their own efforts sufficient	Yes	57	34.82	1.71	175	10.33	.042*
	No	120	30.08	3.25			

* $p < .05$

When the teacher candidates' attitudes towards the profession are seen in view of their "voluntary preference for the classroom teaching program," while the ones who voluntarily preferred to major in the classroom teaching program have lower attitude scores ($\bar{X} = 31.57$) than the others ($\bar{X} = 31.67$), again there is no statistically significant difference between them [$t_{(175)} = -.16$] (Table 1).

The candidates' attitudes towards the profession displays a significant difference according to their "desire to perform the profession" [$t_{(175)} = 11.30, p < .05$]. The attitude scores of those who do not want to perform the profession ($\bar{X} = 26.13$) are lower than the others ($\bar{X} = 32.26$) (Table 1).

When Table 1 is examined it is seen that the candidates who are satisfied with the "educational policies" have a higher attitude score ($\bar{X} = 35.32$) than the others ($\bar{X} = 30.41$) in developing a positive attitude towards the profession. The difference between them, however, is not significant [$t_{(175)} = 9.53$].

There is a statistically significant difference in the candidates' attitudes towards the profession when viewed in light of their "satisfaction with the university administration" [$t_{(175)} = 10.49, p < .05$]. In other words, the ones who are not satisfied with the university administrations have a lower attitude score ($\bar{X} = 30.00$) than the others ($\bar{X} = 34.73$) in developing a positive attitude towards the profession (see Table 1). There is no significant difference [$t_{(175)} = 8.52, p > .05$] between the candidates' attitudes towards the profession according to their "satisfaction with the faculty administrations." The attitude scores of those who are not satisfied with the faculty administrations ($\bar{X} = 30.71$) are lower than the ones who are satisfied ($\bar{X} = 35.83$), but there is no significant difference between them (Table 1).

There is a significant difference in the candidates' attitudes towards the profession when viewed in light of their "finding the instructors competent" [$t_{(175)} = 11.69, p < .05$]. The attitude scores of the ones who find the instructors incompetent ($\bar{X} = 29.26$) are lower than the others ($\bar{X} = 34.03$) (Table 1).

When the participants' attitudes towards the profession in light of their "finding their efforts sufficient," the attitude scores of the ones who find their efforts insufficient ($\bar{X} = 30.08$) are lower than the ones who think that their efforts are sufficient ($\bar{X} = 34.82$) and the difference between them is significant [$t_{(175)} = 10.33, p < .05$;] (Table 1).

There is no significant difference between the attitude of the teacher candidates towards the profession regarding the "type of high school they graduated from" [$F_{(5, 171)} = .174, p > .05$] (Table 2). While it is expected that the attitude scores of students who graduated from teacher high schools to be higher, when the formation classes they have taken is taken into consideration, it is seen that the type of high school does not affect the level of attitude.

Table 2

Variance analysis table of the type of high school the teacher candidates graduated from and ASTTP scores

Source of variance	Sum of squares	Sd	Mean squares	F	p
Intergroup	11.627	5	2.325	.174	.972
Intragroup	2280.475	171	13.336		
Total	2292.102	176			

Table 3

Variance analysis table for the teacher candidates' order of preference for teaching and ASTTP scores

Source of variance	Sum of squares	<i>Sd</i>	Mean squares	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Intergroup	36.043	5	7.209	.546	.741
Intragroup	2256.059	171	13.193		
Total	2292.102	176			

The candidates' attitude towards the profession does not change according to the order of preference either [$F_{(5, 171)} = .546, p > .05$] (Table 3). In other words, there is no difference in attitude regarding whether teaching is the first or a later one in the order of preference.

Discussion

The results of this study revealed that there was no significant difference between the teacher candidates' attitudes towards the profession according to their "gender" and "mode of education." A similar study conducted by Ören, Sevinç, and Erdoğan (2009) also states that gender and mode of education do not affect teacher candidates' attitudes. Other studies by Dagga (2005); Demirtaş, Cömert, and Özer (2011); Karahan (2005); Semerci and Semerci (2004); and Şahin (1992), however, argue that only gender does not put forward a significant difference between the teacher candidates' attitudes towards the profession. Therefore, the results obtained by these studies are consistent. On the other hand, there are studies that show that there are significant differences between the attitude towards the profession and gender, and conclude that female students have higher attitude scores (Çelenk, 1988; Çetinkaya, 2009; Köğçe, Aydın, & Yıldız, 2010; Oral, 2004; Özbek, 2007; Terzi & Tezci, 2007). Çapa and Çil (2000) also state that female students have a more positive attitude than male students regarding "love for the teaching profession" and "respect for the teaching profession." Some of these studies are qualitative and some are quantitative. The research samplings and the numbers of them are also different. This situation may have influenced their findings.

While this study reveals that there is no significant difference between the teacher candidates' attitudes towards the profession and the "condition of voluntary preference for classroom teaching," it also shows that about two thirds of the candidates chose this program willingly. In light of these findings, although the expectation was to find that the attitude scores of those who willingly preferred to major in the classroom teaching program to be higher, the results suggest that those who did not choose the program willingly had better attitudes.

According to Festinger (1957), if the beliefs, knowledge, or attitudes that an individual requires are the opposite of the same person's other beliefs, knowledge, or attitudes, a dissonance takes place. This cognitive dissonance is the major factor that stands at the heart of the individual's perpetual thinking, research, and transformation. The existence of the state of dissonance is enough instinct for the individual to try to get rid of it. Following the discarding of the dissonance cognitive harmony is formed and the individual's unease regarding the subject disappears and s/he feels peaceful (as cited in Freedman, Sears, & Carlsmith, 2003; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1999). There is a similar condition here in this study too. The students who did not willingly choose the teaching program initially might have had a prejudice, negative beliefs towards the

profession. But reasons such as the positive experiences during their education in the program or during the job training, the difficulties of restarting their education in another field, and employment concerns might have first given way to the formation of negative thoughts, and then to a positive transformation in their ideas towards the profession, thus creating cognitive harmony. It can be stated that this condition has a positive effect on the candidates' attitude scores.

On the other hand, it can also be argued that the students, who have low attitude scores towards the profession, although they chose the program willingly, have preferred this profession for pragmatic reasons. Katz underlines that one function that attitudes serve is an instrumental or pragmatic function. In other words, the adoption of certain attitudes for profit is very significant (Armstrong & Dawson, 1989, as cited in Oktay, 1996). Thus, it can be argued that the students thinking as such preferred to be in the teaching profession out of necessity or for pragmatist reasons in Turkey where the problem of unemployment is huge. There are also studies that support this argument. In a study conducted by Özbek, Kahyaoğlu, and Özgen (2007), it is stated that although the teacher candidates' ideal job description does not match teaching, they had to choose this profession, and they even saw teaching as boring and state that it was the last profession they would want to pursue.

Another study by the Turkish Education Association (TEA, 2009) reveals that 38.8 % of classroom teachers and 32.2 % of in-field-teachers say that they have chosen the profession for reasons other than being interested in the profession. According to the results of the same study, teaching is not a profession chosen because of interest and desire for at least one third of the teachers. In studies by Chivore, (1988); Hacıömeroğlu and Taşkın (2009); Özbek (2007); Özder, Konedralı, and Zeki (2010); and Yong (1995) teacher candidates state that they have chosen the profession because of reasons such as it has more employment opportunities and has convenient working conditions, because they had no other chance, and because of the wills of people close to the individuals. Studies conducted in other countries, however, reveal that the teaching profession is regarded as worthy, important (Bontempo & Digman, 1985; Kasten, 1984, as cited in Evans, 1998, p.43) and a profession in which to take pride (Su, 1997). Therefore, in order to increase the attitude scores of the candidates towards the teaching profession in Turkey, they should be prepared for teaching both in cognitive and affective ways. To achieve this end, the students' awareness about the field and the profession should be raised and the respectability and importance of the teaching profession should be stressed.

There is a significant difference in the attitude scores of teacher candidates regarding their "desire to perform the profession." While the attitude scores of those who do not want to perform the profession are "low," the scores of the ones who want to engage in the profession are at a "medium" level. It is only natural to see that the scores of the ones who do not want to perform the profession are low. Yet, although the attitude scores of those who want to perform the profession are higher than the others, the fact that their scores are at a medium level is surprising. When the other results of the study are examined, however, one notices that some of the teacher candidates are not satisfied with the educational policies, university and faculty administrations, and instructors. These dissatisfactions might have a negative effect on the attitude scores of the candidates.

Although almost all the teacher candidates have stated that they want to perform the profession, courses like School Experience or Teaching Practice might have an effect on their low attitude scores. Studies conducted reveal that the teacher candidates have problems with school administrators and associate teachers when they go to associate schools for these

courses. It was observed that there were negative attitudes and conduct towards the students and the teaching practice instructors and associate teachers did not guide the students sufficiently in planning the courses, classroom management, mode of teaching, and material selection (Akpınar, Yıldız, & Ergin, 2006; Boz & Boz, 2006; Demircan, 2007; Gömleksiz, Mercin, Bulut, & Atan, 2006; Güngördü, 1999; Kiraz, 2002; Ören et al., 2009). It was also made clear that the teacher candidates wanted to engage in a more effective dialogue with the associate teachers, asked for more help, had expectations like co-teaching the courses (Özbek & Aytakin, 2003), expected to be accepted as “colleagues” by associate teachers and instructors, and wanted support during the learning process (Sağ, 2008). Further, the candidates think that they were not able to use some of the knowledge they learnt in courses at the faculty in practice and that some of these were contradicting (Yapıcı & Yapıcı, 2004). Thus, the first experiences of the students participating in teaching practice programs that have these problems may be negative. The nature of this experience will play a decisive role not only in this teaching placement practice but also in their future success, and might lead to low attitude scores although they want to perform the profession because of various reasons like unemployment.

Although there is no significant difference between the candidates' attitudes towards the profession and the “educational policies regarding the development of positive attitude towards the profession,” it is seen that more than two thirds of the candidates in the study are not satisfied with the educational policies and their attitude scores are “average.” Among the issues frequently raised are the displacement of the necessary status for teachers, low level of social respectability, teaching in negative conditions, perpetual change of teacher training policies, meeting teacher shortage with different sources and different methods, trivialization of the teaching profession, and the fact that there are almost 350 thousand teachers waiting to be appointed after graduation (Eğitim Sen, 2009; Güçlü, 2009; Özbek et al., 2007; Tezcan, 1991). Shortcomings in educational policies like these and the problems that the education system is going through might have a negative effect on the views of teacher candidates towards educational policies, therefore preventing high scores in attitude towards the profession.

The study also shows that while there is a significant difference between the teacher candidates' attitudes towards the profession and their “satisfaction with university administrations,” there was none with their “satisfaction with faculty administrations.” Most of the participants of the study are dissatisfied with both the university and the faculty administrations. Attitude scores of the ones who are not satisfied are at a “medium” level. Myers (1996), argues that the special conditions of the environment the individual is in can prevent the transformation of a specific attitude into conduct (as cited in Uzunöz, 2002). Therefore, it can be inferred that the students' university environment, the approaches of university and faculty administrations also effect the low attitude scores of the teacher candidates towards the profession.

The students' being in a good relationship with the university administration is important, as is their participation in the decision-making processes. Studies show (Kaba, 2001; Richter & Tjosvold, 1980; Wood, 1993) that the students who participate in the decision-making process have an increased sense of loyalty and commitment for the institution, an easier adoption process to university life, lower level of alienation, and the interaction between the students and academics executing administrative posts will be more effective because both parties will understand each other (as cited in Dönmez & Özer, 2009). Steps taken towards a free and participative environment will create a positive mutual effect on the students' academic and social development and will lead to a more active and dynamic university environment than

today. All these are highly significant not only in the development of social life and the quality of education at the university, but also for the establishment of culture of democracy (CHE, 2007).

Being a student of a university seen to educating qualified teachers not only has a positive effect on the self-esteem of the students and on their point of view about the profession but will also influence the status of the teaching profession. Tezcan (1991) also states that the qualities of the universities and faculties of the individuals who preferred the teaching profession affect the status of the teaching profession.

Further, the teacher candidates should also be prepared for the profession affectively. The candidates studying in faculties of education in Turkey, however, are not educated in line with affective goals (CHE, 2007). Regarding these, university and faculty administrations should prepare their students for the profession in an affective way, should display more democratic governance, should be in an open dialogue, and should attach the required value to their students.

In this study, the students might be seeing the value given to them, services offered, and the steps taken in their names as insufficient. All these negative conditions might have affected the candidates' attitudes towards the profession in a negative way.

This study reveals a significant difference between the attitude scores of teacher candidates and their "finding the instructors competent." More than half of the teacher candidates state that they do not find the instructors 'competent' and their attitude scores are 'medium.' A study by Saracaloğlu, Serin, Bozkurt, and Serin (2004) also concludes that the attitude scores of teacher candidates are "medium" and the attitudes of instructors influence the students' attitudes towards the profession. Further, the same study shows that the teacher candidates are not satisfied with the education they receive and the indifferent instructors negatively affect students' attitude scores. The results of the present study and the latter are similar. Just as the quality of teachers affects the learning results of pupils, the quality of instructors affects the quality of teachers (Koster et al., 2008). It is the responsibility of instructors to ensure quality teacher education. To fulfil this responsibility instructors need to be involved in continuous professional development. They need to become more knowledgeable professionals than they were a year ago (Smith, 2003).

On the other hand, attitudes can be learnt through individual experiences and taking other people's modes of behavior as models (Gagne, 1977). The profiles of instructors also form a role model for teacher candidates. As stated by Karakütük, Tunç, Özdem, and Bülbül (2008), the desired qualities in an instructor are also the ones that need to be seen in the teachers. An instructor who has these qualities will contribute to the development of these qualities in the teacher candidates s/he will educate and at the same time will provide a good role model for them. The fact that the instructors working for institutions educating teachers are not good role models in developing attitude might have affected the result of the study. In fact, teacher educators should develop the teacher candidates' attitudes towards the profession during the whole span of their education (Lašek & Wiesenbergová, 2007). Many studies show that teacher educators are content with only explaining the course subjects. But the beliefs, attitudes, expectations, and perceptions of the candidates should be taken into consideration along with the course subjects (Pajares, 1992). Therefore, instructors are to prepare the candidates both with academic knowledge and developing positive attitudes for the profession.

When the participants' attitudes towards the profession are regarded in view of their "finding their own efforts sufficient," it is seen that the attitude scores of the ones who do not find their efforts sufficient are lower than the ones who find it sufficient, and the difference

between them is significant. Approximately two thirds of the participants state that they do not find their own efforts sufficient and their attitudes towards the teaching profession are at the 'medium' level. Hoşgörür et al. (2002) have also found that almost half of the teacher candidates do not take pleasure in reading books about the teaching profession. Both studies show that the teacher candidates do not make sufficient effort to further their development professionally.

The teacher candidates acknowledge that they do not engage sufficient effort to learn more about their future profession although they will be performing the profession for various reasons. Beliefs such as, the social status of teachers is not high, they cannot receive the necessary respect, and the perception that it is a profession chosen by necessity might have affected the candidates' views. Beliefs are information that a person accepts as right (Koballa & Crawley, 1985). Because they play an important role in the formation of attitudes, they are also closely connected to behavior (Bandura, 1982). Therefore, having negative beliefs towards the profession might have resulted in low attitude scores and in insufficient efforts towards their professional development.

The teacher candidates' attitudes towards the profession do not vary according to their 'high school types.' Similar studies also show that there is no significant difference between the teacher candidates' types of high schools and their attitudes towards the profession (Çetinkaya, 2007; Çetinkaya, 2009; Ören et al., 2009; Saracaloğlu, 1993). When the teaching formation courses taken by the students who have graduated from ATHSs during their secondary education are taken into consideration, it is seen that the type of high school does not have an effect on the level of attitude although their attitude scores were expected to be higher.

There are also studies that show that the attitudes of (ATHSs) students are lower than other high school graduates (Aksu, Daloğlu, Yıldırım, Kiraz, & Demir, 2008; Köğçe et al., 2010). These results might be interpreted as teacher high schools not being able to prepare their students for the teaching profession in a distinctive way compared to other high schools. In some past research (Çoban, 2004; Özbek, 2007), it was found that students prefer ATHSs to general high schools; rather than 'making a teacher,' it was thought that the quality of education in these schools was better. For this reason, the difference between the attitudes might not have occurred.

The teacher candidates' attitudes towards the teaching profession did not vary according to their 'order of preference for teaching.' The studies done by Capa and Cil (2000); Dogan and Coban (2009); and Üstün et al. (2004) came to similar conclusions. This shows that there is a consistency with the findings of this research. However studies conducted by Akpınar et al. (2006); Oral (2004); and Tanrıöğen (1997) have found that there was significant difference between the order of preference and the students' views, and those who chose the teaching profession as their first preference had higher attitude scores. The reason for these varying findings may be because they the selected research sampling groups with different features. For example, in some studies, students who prefer education faculties in initial parts are in majority in the research sampling, however, in some studies they may be in minority. This situation can affect the studies.

As a result, the attitudes of teacher candidates towards the teaching profession do not change according to "gender", "manner of teaching", "type of high school graduation", "order of preference for teaching". It is understood that more than half of the students preferred the Classroom Teaching Program willingly, almost all of them want to make this profession, but their attitudes towards the profession are not high. The vast majority of the participants are not satisfied with the education policies, the university and faculty administrations and instructors.

In addition, the majority of candidates do not show the necessary effort to improve themselves professionally. The attitudes of candidates who expressed their discontent and who were not involved in improving themselves were found to be low.

This research is the study done by means of getting the opinions of students studying in the final year at Classroom Teaching Department in Education Faculty of PAU. A supplementary study including all education faculties in Turkey is thought to be prepared by the researcher. In that study, the attitudes of teacher candidates studying in different departments and classes are planned to be tested. In addition, towards the teaching profession, the comparison of the attitudes of teacher candidates from Turkey and different countries can also provide significant contributions to this field of study.

The following recommendations based on the results of this research can be given:

1. In order to increase the interest and ensure positive attitudes towards the teaching profession, and social, cultural and economic aspects should be improved.
2. The academic competence of teacher candidates should be measured before they are taken to education faculties. The successful ones should also be interviewed in terms of personality, interest to the profession, skills, attitudes and feelings.
3. Due to the different findings related to the gender variable, more research should be done.
4. The instructors are to be expert in their fields of study and to have knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitudes that the teaching profession requires. They should be good models with their approaches to the management of their classes.
5. Environments where different experiences are shared by the instructors should be created. Their self-control mechanisms should be developed to keep motivation alive. Also, the performance criteria for the instructors should be determined and their performance should be evaluated annually.
6. Instructors should not only provide students with knowledge and skills but also develop beliefs and positive attitudes related with 'making' the profession in the best way.
7. Extra activities apart from courses should be organised to make them 'love' the teaching profession. Special days should be celebrated and the participation of teachers and students should be encouraged.
8. University administrations should support the organization of students in clubs or associations where the students will be active. They should determine the student profiles through basic information gathered from surveys and during the registration by taking the students' consent. They should also gather information regarding the students' views and expectations about the services and opportunities offered by the university, courses and examinations. They should enable the representation of students in academic boards at different levels and should show awareness of their criticisms.
9. Students should be encouraged to follow professional developments.
10. ATHSs students need to comprehend the importance of teaching and adopt it. Through a review of the functions and the programs of these high schools, a system encouraging the qualified candidates towards the teaching profession is to be created.

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Appendix A

Attitude Scale Towards The Teaching Profession (ASTTP)

1. I read books about teaching in my free time.
2. Teaching is the last job that I want to do.
3. Teaching has a sacred nature as a job.
4. Teaching is one of the most respected professions.
5. Teaching is not an enjoyable profession.
6. I would not like to become a teacher.
7. Teaching is an honorable profession.
8. I like teaching as a profession.
9. Teaching is an ideal profession for me.
10. Teaching is not a valuable profession.

Appendix B

Scale Consists of Variety Variables

1. Do you want to make the teaching profession?
2. Do you think the followed education policy is appropriate to develop positive attitudes of teacher candidates towards teaching profession?
3. Do you think university administrations do the necessary studies to develop positive attitudes of teacher candidates towards teaching profession?
4. Do you think faculty administrations (Dean's office, department presidencies) do the necessary studies to develop positive attitudes of teacher candidates towards teaching profession?
5. Do you think faculty (teaching) members have the required knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop positive attitudes of teacher candidates towards teaching profession?
6. Do you think you, as a teacher candidate, show the necessary effort to develop positive attitudes of teacher candidates towards teaching profession?