

Examining Teacher Candidates' Attitudes towards Teaching Profession and Pupil Control Ideology

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Abstract

The attitude of teachers towards teaching profession is as important as teaching knowledge. It is estimated that teachers who have positive attitudes towards teaching profession may show humanistic attitudes and behaviors to students. Therefore, this study examines correlation between attitudes towards teaching profession and pupil control ideology of teacher candidates. The participants of the study comprise 281 teacher candidates at Ondokuz Mayıs University's Faculty of Education. In this study, two instruments were used for data gathering. "Teaching Profession Attitude Scale" was used to evaluate the attitudes towards teaching profession of the teacher candidates. "Pupil Control Ideology Inventory" was used for determining the level of pupil control ideology of teacher candidates on a humanistic-custodial dimension. The results of Pearson moment correlation analysis indicated that the pupil control ideology was negatively correlated with the attitude towards teaching profession of teacher candidates. According to simple regression analysis, the attitude towards teaching profession is a significant predictor for pupil control ideology on teacher candidates T-test analysis indicated that there was no significant difference according to gender in terms of pupil control ideology and the attitude towards teaching profession of teacher candidates.

Key Words: Pupil control ideology, attitudes towards teaching profession, teacher candidates, teaching profession

Introduction

The quality of education has important effects on the development of a country. This vital service is provided by teachers who are the key person on quality of education. The success of Education System depends on a teacher's professional qualifications which form the basis of the system (Çeliköz & Çetin, 2004). Teacher's Professional competence as well as personal characteristics and attitude regarding the profession plays an important role in this success. A considerable part of cognitive and affective competencies of teachers is known to have acquired during their training (Lasek & Wiesenbergova, 2007).

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Teacher candidates are expected to develop appropriate professional behaviors in cognitive, affective and psychomotor areas at the end of their training. It is highly important that candidates not only do their profession with dedication and motivation but also they should have the knowledge of how they could teach in order to have effective teaching qualifications.

It is known that the pupils of the teachers who create class atmospheres which are based on democratic, humanistic and cooperative approaches have frequent opportunities to study and have more efficient results while the pupils of supervisory and oppressive teachers do not conform to the school activities (Yavuzer, 1990; Erdem, Gezer & Çokadar, 2005; Memişoğlu, 2006). Student behaviors in class atmosphere are mostly affected by the teachers' remarks and ideas which form their methods of approach to the students or in other words their tendency to control (Willower, Eidell & Hoy, 1973).

The teachers whose pupil control ideology is "custodial" believe that students could be disciplined by applying and controlling strict disciplinary rules. These teachers have prejudgments about pupils' behaviors, attitudes and their families' social scales. They consider the students as potential people who break the rules. Therefore, they believe that students can be controlled by applying punitive sanctions (Willower, Eidel & Hoy, 1973). Both the communication and power flow in a vertical hierarchy occurring in one direction and students are expected to abide by the decisions of the teachers without questioning (Lunenburg, 1983).

The teachers whose pupil control ideology is humanistic are optimistic and they believe that love, respect and friendship relations are necessary to be improved. They also embrace the idea of helping the students for self-discipline more than being disciplined by the teachers. The teachers who have the humanistic approach mostly desire the democratic class environment and are flexible about social scales and status. They are open to bidirectional communication and enable the students to express themselves (Willower, Eidel & Hoy, 1973). This creates an atmosphere that the student needs are highly met and it also emphasizes the importance of student individuality (Hoy, 1969).

While Lunenburg and Stouten (1983) state that there is a direct connection between pupil control ideology and feelings of hostility and disapproval towards the teacher, Harty and Hassan pointed that pupils of teachers who have pupil control ideology perceive the psycho-social environment in class less supportive. Besides, there is a positive connection between pupil control ideology and perception of the class environment as teacher-controlled. According to Lunenburg and Schmidt (1989), the students of the teachers who have pupil control ideology show less interest in school studies and make more negative response against the teachers ensuring less satisfaction from the school life. Evans (1989) also states that the students of the teachers who have humanistic approach have higher academic achievements when it is compared to the other students. As can be seen, maintaining teacher-student relationship in unison and teachers' having humanistic approach provide satisfaction and happiness; and this is also a basic need for an efficient study in terms of teaching activities. Therefore, it is important to know determinants and related variables of the pupil control ideology of teacher candidates and teachers.

Studies suggest that pupil control ideology of the teachers are associated with the variables such as school class size (Cicmanec, 2001), school culture (Kottkamp & Mulhern, 1987), whether the teacher is a candidate teacher (Griepenstrop & Miskel, 1976), behaviors of school administrators (Appleberry & Hoy, 1970), student-teacher, teacher-administrator relationships (Deibert & Hoy, 1977), school atmosphere (Appleberry & Hoy, 1969; Hoy & Henderson, 1983), personal characteristics (Hoy, 2001), job satisfaction (Uskiewicz & Willower, 1973), professional satisfaction (Willower, Heckert & Hoy, 1977), bureaucracy (Lunnenberg, 2000) and low self-perception (Lunenberg, 1983). When it is taken into consideration that an individual's receptive or rejection behaviors regarding another individual or an object are connected with their attitudes (Çetin, 2006), it will be very important to know the opinions and attitudes of teacher candidates towards teaching profession to determine their pupil control ideology.

Besides, as teaching is a profession that directly serves people, it must be free of error as much as possible. Since damage done to people is hard to compensate or is irreversible, the teachers must have professional readiness and humanistic attitude towards teaching

profession. Knowing the relationship between the attitude of teacher candidates towards teaching profession and their pupil control ideology will shed light on determining and applying remedial and preventive precautions. In this way, it may be aimed at improving humanistic attitude and approaches through workshops and group guidance applications for teacher candidates who have negative attitude towards teaching profession.

With this purpose, it is supposed that examination of the relationship between attitudes towards teaching profession and pupil control ideology of teacher candidates is going to contribute to the literature. Therefore, this study examines correlation between attitudes towards teaching profession and pupil control ideology of teacher candidates. Answers for the following questions are sought in this study: (1)Is there a meaningful relationship between attitudes towards teaching profession and pupil control ideology of teacher candidates? (2)Is the attitude towards teaching profession a meaningful predictor for pupil control ideology on teacher candidates? (3) Is there meaningful difference between teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching profession and pupil control ideology according to gender?

Method

Participants

The participants of the study comprises 281 (Female= 187, Male= 94) teacher candidates at Ondokuz Mayıs University's Faculty of Education in Turkey during the 2010–2011 academic year. The average age of the students is 24.64±2.57 (min. 21- max. 34). 73 (26%) were mathematics teacher candidates, 62 (22.1%) were Turkish language teacher candidates, 32(11.4%) were biology teacher candidates, 30(10.7%) were teacher candidates who teach the knowledge of religion and ethics, 24(8.5%) were history teacher candidates, 20(7.1%) were geography teacher candidates, 20(7.1%) were chemistry teacher candidates, and 20(7.1%) were physics teacher candidates.

Instruments

Two tools were used for data gathering. "Pupil Control Ideology Scale" used to evaluate the humanistic and custodial attitudes of teaching candidates were adapted to Turkish by Abacı (1996). "Attitude Scale towards the Profession of Teaching" was used for determining the level of positive and negative attitudes towards the teaching profession of the teacher candidates was developed by Üstüner (2006).

Pupil Control Ideology, a single dimension Likert type scale with 5 points, adapted to Turkish by Abacı (1996). The scale includes 20 items about teacher candidates' pupil control ideology among them 17 items represent positive attitudes, while 3 of them represent negative attitudes. Higher scores from the scale indicate custodial pupil control ideology while it indicates humanistic pupil control ideology as the score decreases. The concurrent validity of the scale was .79. The internal reliability coefficient is .71 (Abacı, 1996).

Attitude Scale towards the Profession of Teaching, a single dimension Likert type scale with 5 points, originally developed by Üstüner (2006). The scale includes 34 items about teacher candidates' attitudes towards the profession of teaching. Among them 24 items represent positive attitudes, while 10 of them represent negative attitudes. When the negative items are scored in the opposite way round the maximum total score one can get from the scale is 170 and the minimum total score is 34. Higher scores from the scale indicate positive attitudes towards the profession of teaching while it indicates negative attitudes towards the profession of teaching as the score decreases. The concurrent validity of the scale was .89. As for the reliability, the reliability coefficient of the scale in terms of its score stability is .72 and internal reliability coefficient is .93 (Üstüner, 2006).

The validity and the reliability of measurement tools which were used in the research were not reproduced for this study.

Data Analysis

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z test was used to analyze if there was normal distribution in terms of pupil control ideology scores and the attitude scores of teacher candidates towards teaching profession. As shown in Table 1, there was normal distribution on scores of Pupil Control Ideology Scale and Attitude Scale towards the Profession of Teaching. Therefore, test was used to analyze if there was a significant difference between the genders in terms of pupil control ideology and the attitude towards teaching profession of teacher candidates. As a statistical analysis method, t-test, Pearson correlation coefficient and simple linear regression analysis were used.

Table 1. Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov z analyses on pupil control ideology and attitude scale towards the profession of teaching

	N	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	p
Pupil control ideology	281	1.132	.154
Attitudes towards teaching profession	281	1.259	.084

Findings

At the first place, teacher candidates' pupil control ideology and their attitude levels towards teaching profession have been studied. Related information has been given in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics on pupil control ideology and attitudes towards teaching profession

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Pupil Control Ideology	67.26	8.18
Attitudes towards teaching profession	114.91	10.61

The minimum score that can be obtained from pupil control ideology scale is 20 and the maximum score is a 100. High scores show high custodial pupil control ideology. When the findings of this research are analyzed, it can be seen that pupil control ideology levels

of teacher candidates are above the average. Consequently, teacher candidates are closer to custodial pupil control ideology. The minimum score is 34 and the maximum score is 170, which can be obtained from Attitude Scale towards the Profession of Teaching. In this scale, high scores show positive attitude towards the teaching profession. From the perspective of this research's findings, the attitude levels of teacher candidates towards the teaching profession are above average.

Results concerning the questions to which answers were sought are provided below:

(1) Is there a meaningful relationship between attitudes towards teaching profession and pupil control ideology of teacher candidates?

Pearson moments correlation coefficient results produced with the aim of answering this question are used. The results of Pearson moment correlation analysis indicated that the pupil control ideology was negatively correlated with attitudes towards teaching profession of teacher candidates (r=-.139, p<.05). However, this correlation is rather low.

(2) Are the attitudes towards teaching profession a meaningful predictor for pupil control ideology on teacher candidates?

Simple linear regression analysis was used to answer this question. The results are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of simple linear regression analyses predicting pupil control ideology

Variable	β	t	р	R	R ²	
Attitudes towards teaching profession	139	-2.352	.019	.139	.02	_

As shown in Table 3, attitudes towards teaching profession is significant predictor for pupil control ideology on teacher candidates (R^2 =.02, t= -2.352). According to the results of the analysis, the rate of being able to explain the pupil control ideology regarding the attitude towards teaching profession is 2 %. This rate is too low. There is an inverse correlation and it is p<0.05 in a significance level.

(3)Is there a meaningful difference between the teacher candidates' attitude towards the teaching profession and pupil control ideology in terms of gender.

The t-test was used to analyze whether or not there was a significant difference between the genders in terms of pupil control ideology of teacher candidates (Table 4). The mean for pupil control ideology levels was 66.97 for males, and 67.41 for females.

Table 4. T-test results for pupil control ideology levels by gender

	Gender	N	X	S	t	p
Pupil control ideology	Female	187	67.41	8.42	.428	p>.05
	Male	94	66.97	7.73		
Attitudes towards teaching profession	Female	187	114.93	10.66	.035	p>.05
	Male	94	114.88	10.55		

As shown in Table 4, there was no significant difference according to gender in terms of pupil control ideology (t=428, p>.05) and attitudes towards teaching profession (t=.035, p>.05) of teacher candidates.

Discussion

In this study, the correlation between pupil control ideology of teacher candidates and their attitude towards teaching profession have been examined and that the attitude regarding teaching profession is a predictor for pupil control ideology has also been studied. According to this, a significant negative correlation has been found between pupil control ideology of teacher candidates and their attitude towards teaching profession. In other words, the higher the tendency of the supervisory control gets, the less positive attitude regarding teaching profession teacher candidates have. Likewise, the attitude of teacher candidates towards teaching profession is considered as a significant predictor for pupil control ideology.

Love or dislike of a situation, embrace or decline, accept or refuse, have a tendency or not, all help to understand the attitude of an individual towards a situation. The individual's attitude for the other individual or the object is directed by the value and the respect they have for them. The individual tend to be receptive for whom they find valuable or reject the ones easily whom they consider invaluable and have a positive attitude for whom they find sensitive (Çetin, 2006). According to this, a positive attitude towards teaching profession will be consistent with the teaching behaviors that teacher candidates will have while performing the profession and will affect all the elements regarding the teacher in a positive way (Çakır, 2005). Haylon has also stated that the teachers who have professional and inter-personal skills are more effective in terms of student behaviors, attitude and their success. The idea that affective properties of an individual influence selfachievement (Bloom, 1998) supports the connection that there is a relationship between the positive attitude of teacher candidates towards teaching profession and having a humanistic approach towards students. Moreover, Capri and Çelikkaleli (2008) have stated that the attitude regarding the teaching profession is influential on professional experiences as well as reflecting the opinions related to teaching.

Finally, pupil control ideology and the attitude towards teaching profession have been studied according to the gender of teacher candidates; however, no significant difference has been found between male and female students in terms of two variables. When the literature has been searched in relevant field, different findings have been found concerning the subject matter. Some studies have revealed that male teachers have a tendency of more supervisory control (Multhauf, Willower & Licata, 1978; Evans, 1989; Appleton & Stanwyck, 1996; Richardson & Payne, 1998), whereas Saad and Hendrix have reached a conclusion in which female teachers are more supervisory. Nevertheless, in some other studies, it is found that there is no difference according to the gender (Sewell, 1991; Sparks & Lipka, 1992; Kalkan, 1996).

Likewise, the attitudes towards teaching profession show no difference according to the gender in some studies (Gürbüztürk & Genç, 2004; Başbay, Ünver & Bümen, 2009; Bulut, 2009), however some studies have proved that there is difference (Çapa & Çil, 2000;

Dodeen, 2003; Oral, 2004; Terzi & Tezci, 2007; Hussain et al., 2011). When we consider the values that are attached to teaching profession, it is discovered that teaching profession is thought to be important by both men and women equally in terms of social importance and prestige. Furthermore, teacher candidates have the same training program and have the same acquisitions during their training. This could be one of the reasons why there is not a difference between their pupil control ideology and the attitudes towards teaching profession (Oral, 2004). Consequently, in training qualified teacher candidates before service or training students for teacher education programs, the students' eagerness, vocational aptitude and the attitude to the teaching profession, their community and social values must be taken into consideration.

Conclusions

In conclusion, there is a significant negative correlation between the attitude of teacher candidates towards teaching profession and their pupil control ideology. There isn't a significant difference between the attitude of teacher candidates and their pupil control ideology in terms of their gender. If it is taken into consideration that supervisory approach identifies with order-based classroom atmosphere which—is based on strictly and extremely controlled classroom environment, it can be said that teacher candidates could promote more fear- based education culture in their classes. The teachers who have this kind of perception see the school as an order-based organization where there is a strict hierarchical structure. Supervisory school has been defined as an order-based organization with its strict pupil control status hierarchy. In the supervisory school, there is strict hierarchy between teacher-pupil status and an order-based organization for the pupil experiences (Kottkamp and Mulhern, 1987; Yılmaz, 2007).

Some suggestions can be made based on the results of the research. In Education faculties, some remedial applications can be carried out to improve humanistic pupil control ideology. The teacher candidates who have supervisory control ideology can be helped to develop a more positive approach by giving them human relations skills training with the

group guidance. In this context, seminars and workshops can be organized by the Guidance and Psychological Counseling Programs of universities. From the early years of teacher training, communication with the pupils can be provided in a school atmosphere by having more observation and application-oriented courses.

For the researches which will be done in the future, the research can be repeated by taking the variables into consideration such as the obligation or the willingness have the priority or that the department the teacher candidates are attending was in which order of their choice.

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