



The Relationship between the Levels of Alienation of the Education Faculty Students and Their Attitudes towards the Teaching Profession

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Abstract

It was intended in this study to ascertain the relationship between the levels of alienation of the education faculty students, and their attitudes towards the teaching profession. The sample of the research was composed of the 875 students appointed via simple random sampling out of the total population of 2600 of the Education Faculty of Adiyaman University. "Personal Information Form", "Student Alienation Scale", and "Scale of Attitude towards Teaching Profession" were used so as to collect respective data. In the data analysis, t-test for independent groups was conducted so as to determine whether the alienation levels and the attitudes towards the teaching profession varied according to the variables of gender and mode of teaching, while One-Way Analysis of Variance was performed so as to determine whether there was any differentiation according to the variables of program type and class, and Tukey HSD test was computed so as to determine the source of the intergroup difference. Regression analysis was used in order to determine the level of the relationship between the levels of alienation and the attitudes towards the teaching profession. Out of the obtained findings, it was seen that the students experienced a medium level of alienation, while their attitudes towards the teaching profession were at a high level. In the two dimensions, according to the variables of gender and class, meaningful differences were only seen at the level of alienation in view of the variable of the mode of teaching, and the same was seen at the dimension of attitudes towards the teaching profession in view of the program type variable. Meanwhile, a medium level of negative relationship was found between the level of alienation and the attitudes towards the teaching profession.

Key Words

Alienation, Teaching Education, Attitude, Education Faculty Students.

Education is one of the fields which are influenced by the alienation the most. Alienation is evident especially in the secondary education and higher education (Tezcan, 1997). Studies addressing the concept of alienation are grouped around two different approaches in general. While the Marxist view, which treats alienation as a social and historical process, and uses it in explaining the position of the working class within capitalist society, represents the sociological approach, while the second approach, relying on the existentialist

thought, which describes the alienation as an inevitable part of the human life, represents the psychological approach (Mann, 2001). Alienation may be defined from various points of view either as a disconnection in a desired or expected relationship (Case, 2008), the distrust being felt by the individual towards other people and society, and the feelings of powerlessness, senselessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-alienation being stirred in the individual due to social, institutional, or interpersonal problems (Seeman, 1959), man's

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break-away from its own self, from its own product, from its natural and social environment, and coming under the domination of all the aforesaid (Tolan, 1981).

Alienation in education, on the other hand, is defined as the individuals' alienating themselves from knowledge, learning, from any process related with learning, these processes' becoming ever-increasingly meaningless in view of the individuals, lack of interest towards the learning process, and learning process' becoming gradually dull and unpleasant (Sidorkin, 2000). Although the studies related with alienation have resized the concept in different forms, a concept of alienation with four dimensions, namely as powerlessness, normlessness, isolation, and meaninglessness, are more likely to be applicable for the educational organizations (Brown, Higgins, & Paulsen, 2003; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004; Mau, 1992; Sanberk, 2003).

Powerlessness describes the conditions, under which the individual lacks any control over not only his/her own product, but also over the outputs of the instruments he/she has used in this process. *Normlessness* means to disapprove of the necessity of the behaviors, which are required to achieve one's objectives (Seeman, 1959). Normlessness, in terms of school, implies the students' rejection of the decisions and rules, being laid down by the school directors and the teachers. *Isolation*, describes either the lack of any bond of friendship, or participation in an organizational environment at the lowest level (Seeman). Isolation may be experienced due to either the individual's departure from the society, or due to the individual's exclusion from its community (Yılmaz & Sarpkaya, 2009). Alienation, in terms of education, implies such feelings as becoming distant from one's friends and teachers, failure in integrating with the school, and not belonging to the school as well (Erjem, 2005). The students, who feel like being isolated, do not lay claims to their schools' objectives, and therefore do not hold them dear (Rafalides & Hoy, 1971). *Meaninglessness*, describes the individual's failure in understanding his/her own activities, a failure in building a bridge between the present and the future (Manneheim, 1954 as cited in Mau, 1992).

Researches, which are addressing the alienation being experienced at the schools, reveals the correlation of the student's alienation with so many factors. In addition to the studies, which sought after the correlation between alienation and the factors regarding the school, namely as student participation (Paulus, 1971), the program being pursued at the school, established values of the school and teachers'

expectations (Kunkel, Thampson, & Mcelhinney, 1973), nature of the relationships between the students (Valverde, 1987), academic success (Johnson, 2005), school and student culture (Calabrese, 1987), quitting the school (Girves & Wemmerus, 1988; Liu, 2010), there are also studies intended for inquiring the correlation between alienation and psychological factors, namely as personality traits (Merwin, 1971), sense of commitment (Rosenblum & Firestone, 1987), feeling of anger (Trent, 2001), social acceptance (Taylor, 1999), social alienation, academic success and satisfaction (Wiseman, Emry, & Morgan, 1988), etc. The level of alienation and isolation among university students (Duru, 1995), anomie and alienation among university students (Bayhan, 1995), level of alienation to school among secondary education students (Çelik, 2005), are some of the researches being conducted in this field.

It has been monitored that effects of alienation are quite a few on the organizations and on the schools in particular. Individuals, who have highly been alienated to their organizations, are likely to isolate themselves from the social environments that they used to become regulars at, and thereby become desensitized towards their environments, and finally retire into their shells (Eryılmaz & Burgaz, 2011). Students' lack of control over their own lives, their lack of autonomy, lack of a sense of pride towards the success at school, failure in interrelating what is taught at school with what is lived outside, teachers' lack of understanding, parents' lack of sensibility, and authoritarian nature of the school rules are the noteworthy factors which not only bring forth, but also increase the alienation at school (Kunkel et al., 1973).

Attitude, being defined as an inclination, which is being ascribed to the individual, and which develops the individual's thought, feeling, and behaviors toward a psychological object (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1999), is an important factor, which determined the individual's interest towards the profession in his/her mind. Researches reveal that, there may be a measurable relationship between attitude and behavior; in other words, attitudes may influence behaviors (Robbins, 1994).

Entering a profession, being defined as the whole of the activities, which are performed in order to produce useful goods and services for people, and to earn money in return, which are dependent to systematic knowledge and skills being acquired from a certain training, and rules of which have been laid down by the society (Kuzgun, 2000), depends at first to undergoing a respective vocational education. Professional training has a place in the attitude

towards profession, for being an environment, in which the individual's earliest attitude towards his/her profession develops.

No matter how well the objectives in education and teaching have been set, how functional the contents of a lesson are chosen and organized, it is quite unlikely to achieve the desired outcome, unless they are carried out by the teachers, who possess such objectives and understandings (Sünbül, 2001). Teacher's role, in a sense, is based on his/her teaching notion. This notion is the outcome of not the intellect, but that of the education and experience. Such a notion, to a certain extent, also determines the teacher's attitude towards his/her profession. Attitude towards profession directs the teacher's behaviors in his/her relationships with the elements both in and out of the school (Bursalıoğlu, 1994).

While a portion of the studies intended for ascertaining the teacher candidates' attitudes towards teaching profession inquire into the attitudes of teacher candidates, studying at the primary education programs (Akpınar, Yıldız, & Ergin, 2006; Aksoy, 2010; Bozdoğan, Aydın, & Yıldırım, 2007; Demirtaş, Cömert, & Özer, 2011; Pehlivan, 2008; Pektaş & Kamer, 2011; Tanel, Şengören, & Tanel, 2007; Taşkın & Hacıömeroğlu, 2010; Uğurlu & Polat, 2011; Üstüner, Demirtaş, & Cömert, 2009), there are also studies intended for ascertaining the attitudes of the teacher candidates, studying at the preschool programs (Girgin, Akamca, & Ellez, 2010; Üstün, Erkan, & Akman, 2004), those of students of non-thesis master programs (Can, 2010; Ocak & Demirden, 2008; Özben, 2010), those of the Turkish teaching students (Temizkan, 2008), and those of the physical education and sports division students (Semerci & Semerci, 2004; Yamaner & Kartal, 2001) towards their profession.

Quality of the vocational education has a place in the process of formation of the attitude towards teaching profession. Teacher candidates gain their first experiences in the vocational faculties, which will have significant influence on the formation of their attitudes towards their future profession. Throughout the process, from which the aforesaid experiences are gained, not only a number of individual factors, numerous factors related with the school environment also play significant roles. The sense of alienation, which is felt by the students towards the learning environment, and towards the school as well, may be referred as one of the factors related with the school.

Purpose of the Research

It was intended in this study to ascertain the relationship between the levels of alienation of the education faculty students, and their attitudes towards the teaching profession. Sub-goals of the study were comprised of determining whether the sense of alienation being experienced by the students and their attitudes towards the teaching profession varied as per the variants of gender, program, class, and mode of teaching.

Method

Population of this research, in which associational research methods were used, was comprised of 2600 undergraduate students being taught in the Educational Faculty of Adiyaman University. The sample of the research was comprised of 875 students who were appointed by way of simple random sampling.

Data Collection Tools

Personal Information Form: consisted of items regarding the participant students as per the variables of gender, program type, and the classes in which they were taught.

Students' Alienation Scale: Students' Alienation Scale, having been developed by Çağlar (2012), was used in order to quantify the sense of alienation being experienced by the students. The scale's coefficient of internal consistence was .79 for the first dimension, .75 for the second dimension, .76 for the third dimension, .76 for the fourth dimension, and .86 for the overall scale. The coefficients of internal consistence found in this research were .83 for the overall scale, .77 for the powerlessness subscale, .64 for the normlessness subscale, .67 for the isolation subscale, and .71 for the meaninglessness subscale.

Scale of Attitudes toward Teaching Profession: *Scale of Attitudes toward Teaching Profession, having been developed by Üstüner (2006), was used so as to quantify the attitudes toward teaching profession.* The scale consisted of one dimension, and 34 items. Coefficient of internal consistence regarding the scale was .93. The same obtained with regard to the scale herein was .94.

Data Analysis

It was tested in the study via multiple regression analyses whether the students' level of alienation

predicted the level of attitude toward teaching profession. While each subscale point of the alienation scale was taken as independent variable, attitude towards teaching profession was taken as dependent variable. Regression coefficients, standardized regression coefficients, t-test results regarding the regression coefficients, multiple correlation coefficients, and interpretive coefficients were taken into consideration while interpreting the analyses. Regarding the analyses, conducted for reviewing the students' levels of alienation as per their qualifications, while t-test was used in the comparison of two groups, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) technique was used for the groups more than two. While F statistics was used in order to ascertain the intergroup difference, upon ascertaining the said difference, equation of the variances was controlled via Levene statistics, then Tukey HSD test was conducted (Çokluk, Şekercioglu, & Büyüköztürk, 2010; Kalaycı, 2006). The effect size values, which reveal how effective the independent variables are on the dependent variables, were interpreted as follows: "low level of effect" $0.01 \leq \eta^2 < 0.06$, "medium level of effect" $0.06 \leq \eta^2 < 0.14$, and "wide level of effect" $\eta^2 \geq 0.14$ (Cohen, 1988).

Results

Alienation Level and Attitude towards Teaching Profession with regards to the Gender Variable

A statistically meaningful difference is seen between the groups in terms of the levels of alienation and students' attitude towards teaching profession with regards to the gender variable. Upon analyzing the mentioned differences, it is seen that while the point average of male students is higher in terms of alienation, that of the female students is higher in terms of the attitude towards teaching profession. Taking the effect size values into consideration, it may be said that gender has a low level of effect on both alienation and the attitude towards teaching profession.

Alienation Level and Attitude towards Teaching Profession in regard to the Program Variable

Having no statistically meaningful difference detected in regard to the program variable between the groups in other dimensions, a statistically meaningful difference is seen between the programs in terms of the attitude towards teaching profession. According to the analysis,

intended towards the source of the difference, point averages of the students from the preschool and social sciences departments are higher than those of the students from the math department. Taking the effect size values into consideration, it may be said that the program variable has a low level of effect on the attitude towards teaching profession.

Alienation Level and Attitude towards Teaching Profession as regards the Class Variable

Having no statistically meaningful difference detected as regards the class variable in the sub-dimension of isolation, a statistically meaningful difference is seen between the groups in terms of alienation and that of the sub-dimensions thereof as well. According to the analysis, intended towards the source of the difference, point averages of the students from the fourth and third classes are seen to be higher than those of the students from the first and second classes in terms of alienation, and that of the sub-dimensions thereof as well. Taking the effect size values into consideration, it may be said that the class variable has a low level of effect on the level of alienation.

A significant differentiation is also in question between the groups in terms of the attitude towards the teaching profession. According to the analysis, intended towards the source of the difference, the point average of the first class is seen to be higher than those of the third and fourth classes. Taking the effect size values into consideration, it may be said that the class variable has a low level of effect on the attitude towards teaching profession.

Alienation Level and Attitude towards Teaching Profession with respect to the Mode of Teaching Variable

While there is a meaningful differentiation between the groups in terms of alienation with respect to the mode of teaching variable, no meaningful differentiation is seen in terms of the attitude towards teaching profession. Taking the meaningful differences into consideration, it is seen that the point average of the students from the normal education is higher than that of the students from evening education. Taking the effect size values into consideration, it may be said that the mode of teaching variable has a low level of effect on alienation.

Findings with regard to the Level of Alienation and the Attitude towards Teaching Profession

Out of the multiple regression analysis conducted so as to reveal the relation between the points was taken from the scales of alienation (and the sub-dimensions thereof), and the attitude towards teaching profession, positive correlations were obtained in between the independent variables, while negative and meaningful correlations were obtained between the independent and dependent variables. The equation on the subscale points of alienation predicting the scale point of the attitude towards teaching profession is [$F = 42.563; p < .01$] important. Upon review of the regression coefficients, it is seen that the coefficients regarding the points of powerlessness, normlessness, and meaninglessness are statistically meaningful, while the coefficient regarding the point of isolation is not meaningful. The multiple correlation coefficient ($R = 0.408$), revealing the relation between the dependent and independent variables, is statistically important. Interpretive coefficient reveals that, the independent variables may reveal approximately 18% of the differentiation in the dependent variable. This value may be deemed sufficient, due to the statistical importance of R .

Discussion

Upon having the research findings assessed in general, it is seen that the students experienced a medium level of alienation, while their attitudes towards the teaching profession were at a high level. In view of the gender variable, a statistically meaningful differentiation in the dimension of alienation is seen among the male and female students. Taking the point averages of the both two groups into consideration, it may be said that male students feel higher level of alienation than that of the female students. This finding shows a parallelism with the research findings of Klomegah (2006). Lower level of alienation being felt by the female students may be evidenced with their social roles, and with their consequently lower levels of expectation. In the dimension of the attitude toward teaching profession, it may be said that female students have developed higher levels of positive attitude than those of the male students. While in quite a small part of the studies, which seek after the relationship between the attitude towards teaching profession and gender, male students are told to have more positive attitudes (Başçiftçi, Yanpar, & Ergül, 2012; Özben, 2010), a part of them reveals no differentiation (Bulut & Doğar, 2006; Can, 2010; Demirtaş et al., 2011; Hacıömeroğlu & Taşkın, 2010;

Kılıç & Bektaş, 2008; Semerci & Semerci, 2004; Tanel et al., 2007; Taşkın & Hacıömeroğlu, 2010). The finding obtained from the research which reveals that the female students have higher levels of positive attitude is parallel with those obtained from the studies of Akkaya (2009), Yamaner and Kartal (2001), Aksoy (2010), Pektaş and Kamer (2011), Pehlivan (2008), Akpınar et al. (2006), Bozdoğan et al. (2007), Gürbüz and Kışoğlu (2007), Uğurlu and Polat (2011), and Üstüner et al. (2009). Female students developing more positive attitudes towards teaching profession than those of the male students may be correlated with the gradual transformation of teaching into a womanly job (Bursaloğlu, 1994).

In view of the program variable, a differentiation is seen among the groups in the dimension of the attitude towards teaching profession. Taking the averages into consideration, while the students studying in the preschool and social sciences programs display more positive attitudes, the levels of the attitudes of those studying in the math program towards the profession tend to be lower. While this finding of the research shows parallelism with those obtained from the studies of Üstüner et al. (2009), Taşkın and Hacıömeroğlu (2010), and Aksoy (2010), it contradicts with the findings of a couple of studies (Demirtaş et al., 2011; Hacıömeroğlu & Taşkın, 2010; Ocak & Demirdelen, 2008) Lower levels of attitudes from the students in the math program towards the teaching profession may be correlated with higher expectations.

In view of the class variable, a meaningful difference is seen both in the dimension of alienation, and in all its sub-dimensions other than isolation. Based on this finding, it may be said that the sense of alienation escalates as the level of class increases. Concurrent increase in both the level of class and in the sense of alienation may be associated with the experiences of the students. A significant differentiation is also in question between the groups in terms of the attitude towards the teaching profession. While the first class students have the highest average, the lowest average comes from the fourth class students. Based on this finding, it may be said that the positive level in the attitude towards the teaching profession decreases as the level of class increases. This finding of the research shows parallelism between those of Akpınar et al. (2006), Bulut and Doğar (2006), Uğurlu and Polat (2011), and Pektaş and Kamer (2011). While the increase in the concerns regarding the assignment may be among the causes of this differentiation, the experiences increased in parallel with the class level may influence the attitudes towards the teaching profession.

In view of the mode of teaching variable, a statistically meaningful difference is seen in the dimension of alienation. Upon comparing the averages, it may be said that students from normal education feels the sense of alienation more than those from evening education. Such a differentiation may arise from the fact that the students from evening education are placed in the programs with relatively lower points, and that these students consequently have lower expectations. Taking the dimension of the attitude towards from the teaching profession in view of the mode of teaching variable, no difference is seen between the groups. This finding of the research contradicts with those of Üstüner et al. (2009).

Taking the relation between the level of alienation and the attitude towards teaching lesson, a negative relation at a medium level is seen. On the basis of this finding, it may be said that increase in the sense of alienation may influence the attitude towards teaching profession negatively. Taking the following facts into consideration, the sense of alienation may only interpret 18% of the variance on the attitude towards teaching profession, and it is a meaningful predictor on the attitude; hence, it may be said that all efforts to lessen the sense of alienation and the sense of powerlessness in particular will positively influence the attitude towards teaching profession.

The findings from the research reveal that one of the ways to make the attitude towards teaching profession more positive is to lessen the sense of alienation being felt. In order to uplift the students' attitudes towards the profession to a more positive and higher level, the directors and instructors of the education faculty on upbringing the teachers of the future should arrange such educational environments in which the students are to feel less alienated.

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