

The Relationship between Personal Values and Attitude towards Teaching Profession*

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine to what extent the personal values of class teacher candidates predict their attitude towards teaching. The universe of the research is teacher candidates from the Kazım Karabekir Faculty of Education, Ankara University in the 2010-2011 academic year. 305 teacher candidates from 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year class were determined by the criterion sampling method constitute the sample of the research. A Personal Values Inventory and an Attitude Scale towards the Teaching Profession were the data collection instruments. For the analysis of data, frequency, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis were used. According to the data obtained, the personal values of the teacher candidates were found to predict their attitudes towards teaching profession in the proportion of 22%.

Key Words

Personal Values, Teaching Profession, Attitude, Class Teacher.

The most important part of an education system is the teacher; because the impact of the teachers on the students and education programs is known to be much higher than any other aspect. However, in order to be successful in this profession, the teacher candidates should accept the profession unconditionally, and practice it with love and passion. Teaching requires both cognitive competences such as knowledge and skill, and affective competences such as attitudes and behaviors. It is necessary that teacher candidates should have certain values and attitudes regarding the profession, just as they should have certain knowledge (Çetin, 2006).

Values, attitudes, interest and needs are the main factors constituting the personality of teachers

(Güleçen, Cüro, & Semerci, 2008). Attitude means the emotional tendency of an individual in favor of or against any circumstances, events, objects, places or ideas (Papanastasiou, 2002; Tavşancıl, 2006; Temizkan, 2008). Although value has been defined in many different ways (Aspin, 2007; Halstead & Taylor, 2000; Schwartz, 1994), when considered in terms of attitudes, it is the mental representation that shapes many different attitudes affecting an individual's reaction to a certain situation (Devrani, 2010). Therefore, values are important in that they form, shape and change the attitudes of individuals towards different circumstances (Dilmaç, 1999).

The concepts of value and attitude support and shape each other. Attitudes might be observed through values preparing the individual to act, thus they might be considered as the tendency to prepare an individual to act with the help of their values. Many problems regarding the behaviors of individuals stem from their attitudes towards circumstances, and values individuals obtain or already have form and shape these attitudes (Balci, 2008). Individuals' actions mainly result from their values and attitudes (Doğanay, 2009). A person's behaviors mostly depend on his/her attitudes, and attitudes depend

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on values (Tokmak, 2009). Values enable people to judge what? (Akbaba-Altun, 2003), shape their thoughts (Bahçe, 2010; Kılıç-Şahin, 2010), attitudes and behaviors (Fırat, 2007), and determine their cognitive functions and decision-making processes (Özsoy & Vatan, 2007). Therefore, the effect of values and attitudes on an individual's choice of profession should not be ignored.

One of the most important phenomenon shaping individuals' lives is the profession they choose (Bozdoğan, Aydın, & Yıldırım, 2007). Over time, a person will develop certain intellectual and emotional approaches regarding their profession, and these approaches are reflected in their behaviors, thus forming an attitude towards their profession (Korkmaz, 2009). An attitude developed towards a certain profession is the most important determinant of success in that profession (Çakır, 2005; Durmuşoğlu, Yanık, & Akkoyunlu, 2009). The fact that an individual may have practice a profession that s/he does not like makes it almost impossible for her/him to succeed (Terzi & Tezci, 2007). Some professions require certain affective competences besides knowledge and skills; and teaching is one of these professions. Probably the most important difference between the teaching profession and many other professions is that affective competences directly affect the teacher's success (Eraslan & Çakıcı, 2011).

Developing a positive attitude towards teaching profession has an constructive impact on all the factors related to the teachers (Can, 2010). Therefore, determining the attitudes of teacher candidates towards their prospective profession, and when these attitudes are negative, it is important to encourage the person to take a more positive attitude (Semerci & Semerci, 2004). Higher education institutions offering teaching education need successful and idealistic students with the appropriate qualifications for the teaching profession who maintain positive attitudes (Tekneci, 2010) and values towards the profession. Examining the values determining the world views of individuals enables both an understanding of their present attitudes and behaviors, and a prediction of their future behaviors (Aktay & Ekşi, 2009). Therefore, this study aimed to determine the extent to which the personal values of the class teacher candidates predict their attitude towards teaching.

Method

Research Design

The study was designed in an explanatory pattern examining; (i) discipline and responsibility, (ii)

confidence and forgiveness, (iii) faithfulness and sharing, (iv) respect and righteousness, and (v) sharing and respect, with the purpose of determining the extent to which e personal values predict the candidate teacher's attitudes towards the teaching profession. An explanatory pattern is a research pattern that examines the emerging or present cause and effect relationships between certain variables. This pattern is used when there is a cause and effect relationship between the variables in the research problem (Karadağ, 2009). In the current study, the concept of personal value was accepted as the independent variable, while the concept of attitude was used as the dependent variable.

Universe and Sample

The universe of the study was the teacher candidates studying at the Kazım Karabekir Faculty of Education, Ankara University in the 2010-2011 academic year. The participants were 305 class teacher candidates in 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th years, were determined by the criterion sampling method in order to minimize the perception differences. The primary aim of this sampling method is the examination of certain pre-defined criteria. The data regarding the sample of the study is given in Table 1.

Data Collection Instruments

Personal Values Inventory: The Personal Values Inventory developed by Roy (2003) adapted to Turkish by Asan, Ekşi, Doğan, and Ekşi, (2008) comprises five sections: Discipline and Responsibility, Confidence and Forgiveness, Faithfulness and Sharing, Respect and Righteousness, and Sharing and Respect. The inventory is a five-point Likert scale (1. Never, 2. Rarely, 3. Every Once in a While, 4. Sometimes, 5. Always) and contain 47 topics. In each section of the scale, the Cronbach Alpha value is used to calculate the confidence value, and the value varied between .60 and .71. The Cronbach Alpha value calculated for the present research varied between .64 and .73.

Attitude Scale towards Teaching Profession

(ASTP): This scale developed by Çetin (2006), whose validity and credibility have been proved, comprises three sections: affection, value and harmony. The scale is a five-point Likert scale (1. Strongly Disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. No Opinion, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly Agree) and comprises 35 subject matters. The negative subject matters in the scale are calculated via reverse scoring. Variance ratios

for each factor in the scale were calculated to be 29.6%, 12.2% and 9.4% for affection, value and harmony, respectively. The total variance that the scale could explain was determined to be 51.2%. The Cronbach Alpha values of the scale varied between .76 and .95, and the values calculated for the present study varied between .72 and .93. Detailed data regarding both scales is given in Table 2.

Procedure

The *Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis* was used to determine the relationship between the scores obtained through personal values inventory and attitude scale towards teaching profession; and the *Multiple Linear Regression Analysis* was used to determine the extent to which the scores obtained through personal values inventory predict the scores obtained through attitude scale towards teaching profession. In the analyses, sections of the personal values inventory [Discipline and Responsibility, Confidence and Forgiveness, Faithfulness and Sharing, Respect and Righteousness, and Sharing and Respect] were considered to be independent variables, while the attitude towards teaching profession was determined to be the independent variable.

Results

The results of the correlation analysis conducted in order to determine the relationship between personal values and attitudes towards teaching profession are given in Table 3. A statistically significant positive relationship was found between the sections of the attitude scale towards teaching profession and personal values inventory: between 'Affection' and 'Discipline and Responsibility' [$r=.34$], 'Confidence and Forgiveness' [$r=.07$], 'Faithfulness and Sharing' [$r=.24$], 'Respect and Righteousness' [$r=.09$], and 'Sharing and Respect' [$r=.31$]; between 'Value' and 'Discipline and Responsibility' [$r=.35$], 'Confidence and Forgiveness' [$r=.09$], 'Faithfulness and Sharing' [$r=.31$], 'Respect and Righteousness' [$r=.08$], and 'Sharing and Respect' [$r=.37$]; between 'Harmony' and 'Discipline and Responsibility' [$r=.38$], 'Confidence and Forgiveness' [$r=.38$], 'Faithfulness and Sharing' [$r=.24$], 'Respect and Righteousness' [$r=.08$] and 'Sharing and Respect' [$r=.29$]. Moreover, a statistically significant positive relationship was determined between the general score of attitude towards teaching profession and the sections 'Discipline and Responsibility' [$r=.40$], 'Confidence and Forgiveness' [$r=.02$], 'Faithfulness and Sharing' [$r=.30$], 'Respect and Righteousness' [$r=.08$] and 'Sharing and Respect' [$r=.37$].

The results of the multiple regression analysis conducted to determine to what extent the personal values of the teacher candidates predict their attitude towards teaching profession is given in Table 4. The conformity of the scores of the variables to the regression model was determined by the D-W (1.946), VIF ($1 < \text{VIF} < 5$) values and the normal distribution of the Q-Q plot.

All the sections of the personal values inventory were found to be statistically significant in predicting the scores of the attitude towards teaching profession [$F_{(5,299)}=16.449, p<.01$]. Five predictor variables were determined to explain 22% [$R=.46, R^2=.22$] of the change in the attitude score. Moreover, after examining the independent variables separately, the sections 'Discipline and Responsibility' [$\beta=.289$] and 'Sharing and Respect' [$\beta=.244$] were found to be significant in explaining the attitude towards the teaching profession.

Discussion

In this research, a significant positive relationship was determined between the variables of the personal values of the teacher candidates and their attitudes towards teaching profession. The data obtained indicated that personal values are of great significance in predicting the attitude towards teaching profession. Moreover, when the independent variables were separately examined, and the sections 'Discipline and Responsibility' and 'Sharing and Respect' were found to be significant in explaining teacher's attitude towards teaching profession. Finegan (2000) suggested that values should be considered when it comes to sharing in terms of organizations and employees. Today, education is considered to be very valuable for the future of the individuals and society, and teachers are responsible for education (Eraslan & Çakıcı, 2011). Teaching is the most important profession in that many responsibilities and expectations are placed upon the members of the profession. No other profession has ever undertaken such a big responsibility. It is thought that expectations of those in the teaching profession will increase in the future, (Yetim & Gökteş, 2004). In order to practice their profession, teachers should be disciplined and responsible. Being successful in teaching profession is only possible by loving it (Eraslan & Çakıcı). The fact that an individual has to practice a profession that s/he does not like makes it almost impossible for her/him to succeed (Terzi & Tezci, 2007).

There are many studies in the literature concerning attitudes towards teaching profession (Aksoy, 2010; Çapri & Çelikkaleli, 2008; Çetinkaya, 2007; Çiçek-Sağlam, 2008; Gürbüzürk & Genç, 2004; Kaşıkaya,

Ünlü, Akar, Sağırlı, & Özturan, 2011; Özbek, Kahyaoglu, & Özgen, 2007; Üstüner, 2006) and towards value (Aktepe & Yel, 2009; Altunay & Yalçınkaya, 2011; Başol & Bardakçı, 2008; Dönmez & Cömert, 2007; Genç & Eryaman, 2007; Helwig, Ryerson, & Prencipe, 2008; Keskin, 2008; Kirschenbaum, 2000; Meek & Cutner-Smith, 2004; Sarı, 2005; Schwartz & Boehnke, 2004; Uyguç, 2003; Willemsse, Lunenberg, & Korthagen, 2005). However, only a limited number of research has examined the relationship between the personal values of teacher candidates and their attitudes towards the teaching profession.

As a result of the present study, it can be suggested that personal values of teacher candidates affecting their attitudes towards the profession should be included in the pre-service training, and that the contents of this training should be prepared in the light of these values. Today, academic and popular publications strongly emphasize that values are not given sufficient importance (Katılmış, Ekşi & Öztürk, 2010). Nevertheless, raising individuals with basic moral values remains the primary responsibility of the families, schools and society. Schools should offer the students options so that they can make a better choices in negative circumstances, and they should also be taught the strategies for and the reason for these choices (Ekşi, 2003). Family and society should support the values education in schools in order that schools can work efficiently (Ekşi & Okudan, 2011). Therefore, being aware of the importance of values education is of great significance, especially for those working to raise and educate individuals (Uyguç, 2003). Teacher candidates should understand the system of values (Sarı, 2005). Values are reflected in the attitudes and behaviors of the individuals (Tokmak, 2009), therefore the attitudes of an individual might be predicted if the functional relationship between his/her values and a certain circumstance is known (Elkatmış, 2009). Every behavior of an individual is directly or indirectly shaped by the values (Dilmaç, Ertekin, & Yazıcı, 2009). Values are much more important than the attitudes, because they determine the behaviors and attitudes. Values shape and affect the behaviors and judgements (Ünal & Ercis, 2006).

Individuals' lives are surrounded by values of their own and those of others (Turan & Aktan, 2008). Values affect human behaviors, organize social relationships, and enables social development. Therefore, educators give importance to this issue, and try to teach it through direct or hidden curriculum (Akbaş, 2009). The system of values of the teachers should be understood (Aktepe & Yel, 2009; Yılmaz,

2009). The positive perspective of an individual towards himself/herself, his/her environment and future is highly related to the system of value s/he has regarding himself/herself and life (Aydın, 2010).

As a result of the present study, it is considered that determining the relationship between the personal values of the teacher candidates and their attitudes towards the teaching profession will help in predicting their success and satisfaction, contribute to the development and improvement of the teaching profession (Çetin, 2006), and will provide information regarding which values and attitudes should be taught to the teacher candidates. The fact that concepts of value and attitude are open to interpretation, and in the literature there are only a few studies that examine these concepts together constitute limitations of the present research. More quantitative and qualitative studies need to be conducted on this subject to provide more information regarding the relationship between these concepts, thus enabling a comparison of the findings of these future studies.

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