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## Teacher Certificate Program Students' Occupational Anxiety Levels

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### Abstract

In Turkey, the need of trained teacher is met by two sources: faculties of education and pedagogical formation certificate programs. It has been expected that prospective teachers, who are one of the most important parts of education, have low occupational anxiety towards this profession. But prospective teacher's emotions and perceptions are changing so rapidly due to recent developments in technology as well as changes in social and economic structures of the societies. In that reason, teacher certificate program students' occupational anxiety is very important. This research in general aims to determine the relationship between teacher candidates' occupational anxiety levels who are taking teacher certificate. This qualitative study used a descriptive survey model of data collection. Participants responded to a survey developed by the researchers and findings were presented descriptively. 500 teacher candidates participated in this study. The participants were enrolled in the teacher certificate program at the Faculty of Education at Ondokuz Mayıs University in the 2015-2016 academic years. The "Occupational Anxiety Scale for Prospective Teachers" was used as the data collection tools. For independent groups along with the descriptive statistics, inferential statistics like t-test, one way anova and scheffe test were used. The study illustrated that male students' occupational anxiety scores are higher than female students. The students' occupational anxieties that perceive as inadequate socio-economic level are higher than others. That this research is carried out only in Ondokuz Mayıs University Faculty of Education is a limitation about generalization of results. In the future, it will be more useful to carry out similar research on larger sample groups which involve pedagogical formations programs in different universities.

**Key words:** mud Occupational anxiety, teacher certificate program students, prospective teachers

### Introduction

The most general objective of education in a society to render the individuals beneficial to that society. The environment makes an impact on the individual being raised in parallel with that objective. The school is the educational institution and the teacher is the person that is officially responsible for the child to be raised within that environment

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(Küçükahmet, 2002). Therefore, the importance of the teacher's quality and proficiency is evident.

The professional proficiency of being a teacher may be defined as the acquirement of necessary knowledge on the field that teaching will be professed (Celep, 2004). As it is known, teachers have been trained under different methods. One of these methods is materialized by the decision taken by the Council of Higher Education in 2010 (Tepeli& Caner, 2014) regarding teachers' formation. This policy dictated that the non-thesis Master's programs were rescinded while pedagogical formation programs were re-instituted, also criteria that would enable the faculty of arts and sciences students and students of the fifth semester could benefit from formation programs were put into effect. Accordingly, the education faculty graduates and the art and sciences faculty graduates having completed the pedagogical formation successfully may apply for a teaching position in case they comply with the "Principles on fields, programs of higher education to graduate from, and the courses to instruct by the teachers to be appointed to the Ministry of National Education institutions" promulgated by the Ministry of National Education (Eraslan&Çakıcı, 2011).

Teachers, during their academic period where they receive specialty formation, acquire teaching formation courses on how to approach the students, as well as theoretical and applied courses related to their area of specialization (Dursun&Karagün, 2012). However, students enrolled in faculties other than the faculties of education graduate by taking courses only on their area of specialization. These students are required to take courses on teaching formation in order to practice the profession of teaching. In this context, it is deemed significant to conduct a research on teacher candidates' concerns on practicing their profession.

It is considered that the increase in teacher candidates' level of professional concerns would affect their success in their profession negatively while teaching. Therefore, the principal objective of this study is to reveal the level of professional concerns among students having graduated from, or having their final year and receiving teaching formation in faculties other than the faculty of education, to become teachers.

In line with that objective, responses to this following question is sought response;

Are there significant differences of professional concern average scores among students receiving Pedagogical Formation, per their gender, department where they received education, reason to choose teaching and financial situation?

## **Methodology**

### ***Study Group***

This study of descriptive nature was conducted with students receiving pedagogical formation at the Ondokuz Mayıs University Faculty of Education in the 2015-2016 academic year fall semester. In this study featuring 324 female and 176 male students, the age range is between 21 and 43 ( $X=24.95$ ;  $Ss=3,810$ ). The distribution of students regarding their gender, marital status, reason to choose teaching, perception of achievement and financial levels are given in Table 1.



**Table 1.** The distribution of students regarding their gender, marital status, reason to choose teaching, perception of achievement and financial levels

Variable		N (500)	%
Gender	Female	324	64,8
	Male	176	35,2
Marital status	Married	101	20,2
	Single	399	79,8
Due to Occupationa choice	States coincidence	45	9,0
	Job safety	37	7,4
	Their own accord	387	77,4
	Peer effect	17	3,4
	Family request	14	2,8
Living place	Big city	174	34,8
	City	110	22,0
	Town	135	27,0
	Village	81	16,2
Academic achievement	Inadequate	11	2,2
	Average	153	30,6
	Good	261	52,2
	Very good	75	15,0
Financial situation	Poor	14	2,8
	Average	238	47,6
	Good	209	41,8
	Very good	39	7,8

According to the data in Table 1, the 64.4% of 500 participating students are female (324 persons), and 35.2% (176 persons) is male. 20.2% (persons) is married, 79.8% is single. 9% (45 persons) states coincidence, 7.4% (37 persons) job safety, 77.4% (387 persons) their own accord, 3.4% (17 persons) peer effect, 2.8% (14 persons) family request as their reason to choose teaching. 2.2% (11 persons) of all students perceives their achievement level as inadequate, 30.6% (153 persons) as average, 52.2% (261 persons) as good and 15% (75 persons) as very good. 2.8% of all students (14 persons) perceive their financial situation as poor, 47.6% (238 persons) as average and 7.8% (39 persons) as good.

### **Data Collection Tool**

Data related to the study is collected by the “Scale of Professional Concerns for Teacher Candidates” and the Personal Information Form.

*Scale of Professional Concerns for Teacher Candidates:* This scale is developed by Cabı and Yalçınalp (2013) in order to detect of anxiety the level of professional concerns among teacher candidates. The scale is a Likert-type scale of five levels with Level (1) being “I am very concerned”, Level (2) “I am fairly concerned”, Level (3) “I am partially concerned”, Level (4) “I am concerned a little”, and Level (5) “I am not concerned at all.” Higher scores signify lower levels of professional concerns, while lower scores would mean higher professional concerns. The reliability co-efficient for the entire scale is .95.

*Personal Information Form:* This form features questions such as student’s age, gender, marital status, department they receive education from, reason to choose the profession, and perception of achievement and financial level.

## **Data Collection**

The data for this study was collected by the Scale of Professional Concerns for Teacher Candidates and the Personal Information Form applied to voluntarily participant students receiving pedagogical formation at OndokuzMayıs University Faculty of Education in 2015-2016 academic year fall semester.

## **Data Analysis**

The data collected by the application of the data collection tools to 500 students is analyzed by the SPSS 21.0 software. In the data analysis, the t-test and one-way analysis of variance are used.

## **Findings and Interpretation**

The findings regarding the level of professional concerns among students receiving pedagogical formation are given in this section as tables, and are analyzed and interpreted as sub-sections according to the research questions.

### **1. Findings on the Comparison of Professional Concern Levels among Pedagogical Formation Students per Gender.**

Findings regarding the comparison of professional concern levels per gender are given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Independent-Samples t-Test results for Professional Concern Scores per gender variable

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Sd</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Female	324	164,98	32,63	4,782	,000
Male	176	179,28	30,64		

\*\*p<.01

As seen in Table 2, the average score of professional concerns among male students (X=179.28) is higher compared to female students (X=164.98), and the statistical analysis suggests that there is a significant difference in students' professional concerns per their gender [t(498)= 4.782, p<.01].

### **2. Findings on the One-Way Variance Results of Professional Concern Levels Among Pedagogical Formation Students per their Departments of Education.**

The findings on the comparison of professional concern levels per students' departments are given in Table 3.

**Table 3.** One-Way Variance Analysis results on the professional concern level scores per department of education.

Professional concern faculty students	Mean	Sd	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Arts and sciences faculty students	164,2350	33,43202	Between groups	39249,744	2	19624,872	19,813	,000
Theology faculty students	166,1748	30,80569						
Sports sciences faculty students	185,4553	28,21064	Within groups	492273,206	497	990,489		

In Table 3, it is observed that the average professional concern scores vary per departments students have been receiving education from. The arts and sciences students have the lowest average professional concern score ( $X=164.23$ ). The score of students in the theology faculty is  $X=166.17$ , and among sports sciences students, it is  $X=185.45$ . A significant difference is detected per one-way variance analysis results [ $F(2,497)= 19.813$ ;  $p<.001$ ]. According to the Scheffe test conducted, the professional concern levels of arts and sciences and theology students are significantly lower compared to that of sports sciences students.

### ***3. Findings on the One-Way Variance Results of Professional Concern Scores among Pedagogical Formation Students per their Reason to Choose Teaching.***

Findings on the comparison of professional concern scores per their reason to choose teaching are given in Table 4.

**Table 4.** One-Way Variance Analysis results on the professional concern level scores per reason to choose teaching.

Professional concern	Mean	Sd	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
States coincidence	157,6667	40,49018	Between groups	24518,155	4	6129,539	5,984	,000
Job security	159,0270	33,14403						
Their own accord	173,2997	30,12380	Within groups	507004,795	495	1024,252		
Peer effect	172,4706	28,91824						
Family request	144,7857	49,35613						

In Table 4, it is observed that the average professional concern scores vary per students' reasons to choose the profession. Those who choose the profession per family influence have the lowest average score of professional concerns ( $X=144.78$ ). Those who have chosen teaching coincidentally have an average score of  $X=157.66$ , those who have chosen due to job safety have  $X=159.02$ , and those who select teaching by peer effect have  $X=172.47$ , while those who choose at their own accord have an average score of  $X=173.29$ . As per the one-factor ANOVA results, these findings constitute a significant difference [ $F(4,495)= 5.984$ ;  $p<.001$ ]. According to the Scheffe test conducted, the concern levels of those who choose their profession coincidentally are lower than of those who choose at their

own accord, while the concern levels of the latter are higher than of those who choose teaching by family influence.

#### 4. Findings on the One-Way Variance Results of Professional Concern Scores

##### *Among Pedagogical Formation Students per their Perception of their own Financial Situation.*

The comparison of professional concern scores per perceptions of financial situation is given in Table 5.

**Table 5.** One-Way Variance Analysis results on the professional concern level scores per perception of financial situation

Professional concern	Mean	Sd	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Poor	186,1429	25,87799	Between groups	24473,920	3	8157,973	7,980	,000
Average	164,7605	32,23760						
Good	171,3876	33,08276						
Very Good	188,8718	25,33375	Within groups	507049,030	496	1022,276		

In Table 5, it is observed that the average professional concern scores are different per perception of financial situation. The students who perceive their own financial situation as average have the lowest average score of professional concerns ( $X=164.76$ ). The average score of those who perceive their financial situation as good is  $X=171.38$ , those who perceive as poor is  $X=186.14$ , and those who perceive as very good is  $X=188.87$ . As per the one-way variance analysis results of these findings, a significant difference is detected [ $F(3.496)=7.980$ ;  $p<.001$ ]. According to Scheffe test conducted, the concern levels of those who perceive their financial situation as average and good are lower than of those who perceive their financial situation as very good.

## Discussion

The findings received by the study examining the differentiation of professional concerns among students receiving pedagogical formation per various variables are discussed below:

In the study, it is identified that the average professional concern score of male students is higher, compared to female students. In the literature of studies treating findings on professional concern levels per gender variable, it is also detected that female students carry more concerns than male students (Akgün et al., 2007; Dilmaç, 2010; Saban et al., 2004; Taşğın, 2006). The professional concern levels of male students being higher according to this study may be explained by social gender roles. In the society, roles such as being successful, powerful and practical are expected from men. Therefore, the uncertainty of carrying out the profession successfully may increase the level of concerns. Furthermore, while men have a more unconstrained life compared to women per social values, the financial responsibility of a traditional family is socially expected from men. Accordingly, the male students having a higher level of professional concerns compared to females can be explained by the concerns of having a profession, having necessary qualifications to profess.



It is also found out that the average professional concern scores vary per students' departments and there is a statistically significant differentiation in between. According to the findings, lowest average score of professional concerns is observed in arts and sciences students, and highest in sports sciences faculty students. Although, in the literature, it has been observed that the professional concern level is low among students' in departments with special entry exams (Bozdam&Taşğın, 2011). The fact that the result is different in this study may be explained by students having entered the university with special talent exams perceiving themselves in a more negative way compared to other students regarding general and academic proficiency.

It is also reached the conclusion that there is a statistically significant differentiation of average professional concern scores per students' reasons to choose the profession. According to the findings, those who choose their profession at their own accord have the highest average score of professional concerns, while the ones who make their choose by family influence have the lowest. This may interpreted as people who choose their profession at their own accord paying an intensive effort in order to reach their goals and therefore feeling more professional concerns. It may equally be claimed that those who choose their profession by family request would feel less pressure, because in case of failure it was not their choice, but their families', therefore have a lower level of professional concerns.

It is also found out that the differentiation in average score of professional concerns is statistically significant per students' perception of their own financial situation. According to the findings, those who perceive their financial situation good have a higher score of professional concerns, while those who perceive their financial situation average have a lower score. This may be explained by students with the perception of having a good financial situation feeling professional concerns about being assigned to a position and conducting the profession in a desired level in order to continue having a similar financial situation in the future.

As per the findings collected, following suggesting can be made:

In order to help students overcome their professional concerns, they may be given psychological consultancy and guidance in line with their needs regarding the profession of teaching. The professional concern levels of students having formation and final year students in education faculties may be compared. It is important that the study is repeated with different sample groups.

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