

## The Evaluation of the Relationship between the Academic Achievement of Social Studies Teacher Candidates and Their Attitudes towards Environment

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**Abstract:** The century that we left behind took its place in the history books as a century of urbanization, industrialization, information and development, where there were many discoveries and breakthroughs in science and technology, and many global changes in human history. In order to provide an original environmental education, firstly educators who can give this education should be trained. The training of teachers who will train generations to decide on the environment in the future constitutes one of the most important stages of environmental education which is expected to be given to all segments of the society for life. Therefore, the relationship between education and the environmental problems in the last quarter of the century will be examined again; the sensitivity of teachers, schools, curriculums to environmental awareness and the ability to raise individuals with high environmental awareness has been questioned again. The aim of this study is; The aim of the course is to determine the level of relationship between the academic achievement of the social studies teacher candidates and their attitudes towards the environment. In this study, qualitative research methods, relational scanning technique has benefited from. The study group of research Nizip, Gaziantep University, Faculty of education social studies were conducted with students who studied at 12. Data from semi-structured interview were analyzed according to the responses given from the form. According to the results, it is observed that the sensitivity towards the environment is higher in female students with higher academic achievement, and that teacher candidates' attitudes towards environmental behavior and environment and their attitudes towards environment are above medium level and positive.

**Keywords:** Teacher candidates, Attitude, Environmental education

### Introduction

The roots of environmental education are based on nature and natural resource conservation education. However, as environmental movement is different from nature conservation activities, environmental education is different from nature and natural resources conservation education. Environmental education is focused on protecting and improving the entire environment, including biosphere, biomes and ecosystems, in addition to developing and conserving natural resources such as soil, water and forest. Ecology has been an important cornerstone of environmental education in terms of explaining how ecosystems operate. Over time, environmental education has gone beyond informing the world citizens about the environment and making them participants with environmental management skills and hearts (Peyton, Campa and Winterstein, 1995).

According to the findings of international studies on environmental education, the level of education in which individuals can receive environmental education in the most efficient way is secondary education. The most important factor in achieving the objectives of environmental education is the teacher and naturally secondary education teachers should be trained to provide environmental education.

Although a wide variety of solutions to environmental problems are proposed, it is most notable that these problems are prevented before they emerge at the source. It is accepted by many circles that education is the most important factor for this. For this reason, many organizations such as UNESCO, UNEP, Ministries of Environment, Universities, Municipalities and some NGOs are carrying out studies based on environmental education (Peyton, Campa and Winterstein, 1995).

The basis of environmental education is to protect nature and natural resources. In addition to providing information, environmental education should also influence human behavior. The main objective of environmental education is to gain positive and lasting behavioral changes and to ensure the active participation of individuals in solving problems. Although there are various opinions that the level of education in which children can receive environmental education in the most efficient manner is secondary education, positive attitudes and behaviors towards the environment have been made in a systematic and regular way in pre-primary and primary education period since many families in our country do not have enough consciousness to inform and educate their children about the environment. improved. In the studies conducted to contribute to environmental education, it is stated that the environmental issues discussed in Preschool, Primary and Secondary education programs in our country are not sufficient in terms of developing environmental awareness (Hungerford, Volk and Ramsey, 1989).

Individuals who are effective in the emergence of environmental problems should also be brought to the awareness of their responsibilities in the elimination of these problems. This can only be achieved through effective environmental education ( Altın, Bacanlı ve Yıldız, 2002; Soran, 2000; Özer, 1991). However, in the studies conducted in this field, misconceptions detected in all levels of education reveal that environmental education is not effective at the desired level and emphasizes that the course should be saved from memorization (Webb and Boltt, 1990; Özkan, Tekkaya and Geban, 2001; Haktanır and Çabuk, 2000; Yılmaz, Morgil, Aktuğ and Göbekli 2002). This suggests that teachers who will provide environmental education should have good education at higher education level. However, sensitive and conscious teachers can give the students the necessary awareness and responsibility about the environment. However, to increase the effectiveness of the course; it becomes necessary to use teaching approaches that activate the student, free him from the portrayal of knowledge and improve his brain power.

As a result of the fact that environmental pollution experienced in the end of the 20th century knew no limits, on the other hand, the rapid development of communication tools, the event being heard at one end of the world and the other end in a short time is one of the reasons for the creation of an important environmental sensitivity all over the world (Geray, 1992). In order to educate environmentally sensitive individuals, an education system that actively participates in environmental issues and reacts to the negative effects should be developed. Consideration should be given to raising individuals with respect for each other and with humanitarian values. Thus, all elements of the environment to be known as full and correct and environmental protection can be provided (Glover and Deckert, 1998). Environmental sensitivity can be defined as willingness to take positive initiatives against environmental problems (Çalıklan, 2002). In this case, it is possible to improve the environmental sensitivity of individuals by raising the awareness level. Increasing the level of consciousness may be provided by environmental education which will be given in accordance with each level (Türksoy, 1991; Çelikkıran 1997; Kapyła and Wahlstrom, 2000). It can be said that individuals' behavior towards the environment is a reflection of the environmental sensitivity of each other. In this context, environmental sensitivity of individuals can be determined by considering green area problems, environmental pollution, population growth and ecological balance. The aim of this study is to determine the level of relationship between the academic achievement of social studies teacher candidates and their attitudes towards the environment. For this purpose, the answers to the following sub-problems were sought.

1. Is there a relationship between the academic achievement of social studies teacher candidates and their interest towards the environment?
2. Are there any service practices you have made for the environment in your 4-year university life?
3. Have you been involved in environmental research activities?
4. What can we do for a better environment?

## **Method**

Semi-structured interview technique, one of the qualitative research methods, was used to reveal the current situation. It is a descriptive study.

### ***Working Group***

The study group of the research is limited to the social studies teacher candidates studying in the 4th grade of Gaziantep University Nizip Education Faculty. 20 of the teacher candidates are female and 17 of them are male students.

### ***Data Collection Tools***

The data of the research;

- a. 37 semi-structured interview forms applied to prospective teachers.
- b. Academic achievement averages of prospective teachers.

### ***Analysis of Data***

The data obtained from the interview form were analyzed descriptively. The aim of the descriptive analysis approach is to present the obtained data to the reader in an edited and interpreted state (Şimşek and Yıldırım, 2011).

## **Results**

### ***Findings for the First Sub-Problem***

It was observed that male teacher candidates with high academic achievement had higher attitudes towards environment than female teacher candidates with high academic level. However, it was observed that both male and female teacher candidates had higher environmental attitudes.

### ***Findings for the Second Sub-Problem***

Are there any service applications you have made for the environment in your 4-year university life? They stated that they were engaged in activities related to air, sound and soil pollution in the courses of community service practices and social sensitivity projects in the faculty of education to which they were connected. Within the scope of the course, they contacted the related organizations and stated that they are doing activities to collect noise from the traffic, planting trees and waste in the environment.

### ***Findings for the Third Sub-Problem***

Do you carry out environmental research activities? Most of the pre-service teachers stated that they participated in scientific studies such as panels, conferences, etc. in cat faculties and other faculties. Some of the teacher candidates stated that they participated in voluntary organizations working on environmental issues.

### ***Findings of the Fourth Sub-Problem***

What can we do for a better environment? They have stated that they have not received enough environmental education in the educational institutions they have received so far. It can be said that a significant number of students stated that they did not receive sufficient education to become conscious. For this, they stated that in every program determined by YÖK, there should be environmental courses.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

In general, according to the findings, it was seen that male teacher candidates were more sensitive to environment than female teacher candidates. Pre-service teachers stated that they do environmental studies in challenging courses in the faculty they are studying during their university education. They also stated that they

participated in scientific activities related to the environment. Finally, they stated that YÖK's exchange definition should be rearranged for more efficient regulation of environmental awareness.

In the light of the results obtained, female students should be encouraged to participate in voluntary environmental studies, the number of activities such as panel conferences should be increased and more effective people should be invited for the speaker, afforestation of the faculty should be realized with the participation of all students and faculty members.

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