Full Length Research Paper

Self-efficacy perceptions of social studies candidate teachers

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The aim of this study was to determine the self efficacy beliefs of pre-service social studies teachers. For this purpose, the scales developed in various areas were examined, the opinions of experts were taken and a final scale was created to be used for this study. The validity and reliability of the scale were checked. The validity coefficient was calculated which was higher than .30. The reliability coefficient was found .81. The scale was applied to 268 candidate teachers of social studies, studying at Universities of Kastamonu and Kilis. The study consisted of two parts. The first part had information about students such as the gender, the grade level, and the type of graduated high school. The second part consisted of items to determine the self efficacy feelings. The SPSS 16.0 package program was used to analyze the data. The data are analysed with t-test and variance analyse method (ANOVA). At the end of the study, it was not found a significant difference between the self efficiency of teacher candidates and their gender, grade level and type of the high school graduated.

Key words: Pre-service social studies teachers, self efficacy, perceptions.

INTRODUCTION

In our time, it is necessary for teachers to have a general knowledge accumulation so that they can convey the universal values with the national values in center and the gainings which have primary importance in the curriculum to their students in a desired level. What is more crucial for him / her is to provide every student with schooling and education keeping in mind that every student is an individual with different abilities and capacities.

Ministry National Education in Turkey puts the skills a teacher should have into six categories (MNE, 2004):

i. Personal and vocational values- occupational development
ii. The knowledge of the program and content
iii. Recognizing the learner
iv. Learning and teaching period
v. Watching and measuring the learning and development
vi. The relations of school, family and the society

The education of teachers does not only include teaching the discipline, which is only a step. However, being a good teacher requires having knowledge of curricula including the knowledge of the content they are supposed to teach. What is more necessary for candidate teachers is to improve themselves in their communication with students, students’s parents, and other related groups in the society. According to Draw (1998), the peculiarities to be found in a good teacher of Social Studies should help teachers and students to follow and deal with argumentative issues. These issues are:

i. Improving the future thinking
ii. Promoting the sensitivity for the behaviour and belief of others
iii. Leading the students to search for different sources
iv. Using different strategies and methods to realize students’ learning.

The belief of individuals about how well they can take the necessary precautions on the cases which may emerge to be deal with is described as the belief of self-efficacy. It is mentioned that the belief of self efficacy affects the individual’s inclination to do right or wrong activities. It is also stated that the degree of effort an individual spends
to solve a problem when necessary is an indication of how insistant he/she is (Bandura, 1977). In other words, how much an individual feels self confident on the face of a problem is defined as self efficacy. It is necessary for the candidate teachers of Social Studies to be teaching at primary schools to trust themselves about being able to give the gainings of the social studies lessons according to the spirit of the programme at academic level. In other words they have to have the self-efficacy. Because, according to Klausmeier and Alen (1978) (as cited in Akbas and Celikkaleli, 2006). The teacher’s belief of self-efficacy affects the quality of teaching, the methods and techniques applied the student’s participation in the learning process and their ability to comprehend the things taught, and this, at the end, leads to a difference in the success level of the students.

Besides this, the self efficacy belief is described as the individual’s ability to fulfill the necessary actions in order to realize a performance and their capacity to organize these actions. Moreover, the self-efficacy belief also affects the four basic psychological periods: a) communicational period, b) motivational period, c) emotional period, and d) choosing period, which are very important in human life (Bandura, 1986, p.391).

Self-efficacy beliefs play an important role in the process of teaching and learning period of individuals and as a result they can succeed more easily.

From the research carried out, it has been understood that the individuals with lower self efficacy remain shy and introvert at every incident and accept the condition in which they are as a threatening towards themselves (Yaman and et al., 2004).

If an individual has the ability and capacity to carry out a given task, but lacks self efficacy, his/her chance of attaining the success is pretty little. “Believing is half of the achievement” is a Turkish proverb that means that those who believe have got the chance of success in the solution of a problem and that those who do not believe lack this chance. Self efficacy is the trust of the individual to himself and something which can be improved in time by experience. An individual’s belief of self confidence is affected by four factors:

i. Past experience (Achievements or failures),
ii. Observational (The achievements and failures of others),
iii. Persuasion period (Approval from friends and family),
iv. Emotional period (Excitement, anxiety fear, etc.) (Bandura, 1995).

The studies carried out in different fields have revealed that there is a close relation between an individual’s self-efficacy and his/her success. It has been found that there is a meaningful relation between students’ success at maths and their self-e (Chen, 2002; Hacket and Betz, 1989; Migray, 2002; Moore, 2005).

A strong self efficacy belief results in choosing a field willingly, being motivated to achieve a certain goal, showing willingness to spend effort, and time to do things and not being discouraged by the failures (Akkoyunlu and Kurbanoglu, 2004).

It is a fact that self efficacy belief of teachers affects the level of their effort and goals (Hoy and Spero, 2005).

Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine the self efficacy level of candidate teachers of Social Studies according to following variations: candidate teachers’ gender, their level of class, and type of high school they have graduated from.

Limitations

The study is limited by:

i. The 2009–2010 academic year,
ii. The Candidate teachers of Social Studies studying in Kastamonu and Kilis Universities,
iii. The scale of self efficacy,
iv. The accurate responds the candidate teachers have provided.

METHODOLOGY

The research is a quantitative study depending on collecting data to determine the self efficacy beliefs of candidate social studies teachers by asking their views. The study has been been carried out in the scanning model with a descriptive content.

According to Karasar (1998, p. 81) scanning model is practised in order to determine the presence of variations among two or more facts.

A scale has been developed in order to determine the self efficacy beliefs of the learners in the study. While determining the items in the scale, our experiences in public schools and our interactions with the students have helped us. Some studies conducted in the field have been also revised and some items thought to be related with the topic have been added to initial scale. Then, the ideas and suggestions of the experienced people in the field had been received and their suggestions have been taken into consideration before giving the scale its final form.

The scale is made up of two parts. While the first part has the data about students’ personal information consisting of three variations such as gender, class level, and type of high school they have graduated from, the second part contains the scale items related to measuring the students’ feeling of self efficacy. The final scale used in the study has been practised on 268 candidate teachers of Social Studies at universities of Kastamonu and Kilis. The final scale contains 21 items, six of which have negative expressions and fifteen of which are negative. The scale has been prepared to determine the self efficacy beliefs of candidate teachers in the form of Likerts of 5.

SPSS 16.0 packet program has been used while processing the data. T-test and the analysis of variance (ANOVA) have been done to interpret the data (Table 1).
Validity of the scale

Analysis of the Items and examination of the factorial structure of the scale

To determine the factor form of the scale, analysis of basic component factor using the method of Varimax rotation to the points of 268 candidate teachers have got in return for the response has been practised.

Factor analysis has been carried out for the validity of the scale. It has been understood that the items in the scale were valid after the factor analysis, as the factor load value of all items were all above 30. Moreover, the eligibility of the data to the factor analysis has been examined by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Barlett’s test. It is necessary for the statistical value of Barlett test to be meaningful so that the data should be over 60 in the eligibility of factor analysis test by Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO). The fact that the KMO has been proved to be meaningful in 78 Barlett tests has led to the idea that data is eligible to factor analysis. In KMO statistics 0.50–0.70 means mid level, 0.80–0.90 means very good and 0.90–above means excellent (Field, 2002). As a result of KMO test, the means of measurement improved is evaluated as “good” according to this classification. In brief, it is possible to say that the factor analysis done on the scale improved has produced reliable results. Because it is seen that the values above 0.50 of KMO test are acceptable due to the fact that the factor analyze can be practised.

Factor loads obtained as a result of Varimax rotation were interpreted as the followings: “0.32–0.44” means bad”, “0.45–0.54” means normal “0.55–0.62” means good “0.63–0.70”, means very good and “0.70 – above” means” (Comrey and Lee, 1992).

According to the chart, items 10 and 20 were accepted as bad, items 2, 5, 6, 7, 11, 19 and 20 are accepted as normal; items 4, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, and 17 were accepted as good; items 15, 16 were very good and item 18 was excellent.

Reliability of the scale

This likert type scale was devised to measure the self efficacy beliefs of the candidate teachers studying in the department of Social Studies. The respond options of the items in the scale are: “5 = I completely agree”, “4 = I do not agree”, “3 = I am undecided”, “2 = I disagree” and “1 = I certainly do not agree”.

Arithmetical average intervals taken as the base in evaluating research data were as: “1.00–1.80 = I certainly disagree”, “1.81–2.60 = I do not agree”, “2.61–3.40 = I am undecided”, “3.41–4.20 = I agree “ and “4.21–5.00 = I completely agree taking the with of the scale intervals to be estimated with the formula of interval with/numbers in the group (Tekin, 1996). Since the points in the scale were between 1.00 and 5.00, the closer the points to 5.00, the higher the students level of agreeing with the suggestion and the closer the points to 1.00, the lower the student’s level of agreeing with the suggestions. The statements with a negative root were transformed into positive ones in the grading stage.

The validity and reliability study of the pre-scale formed in the study has been practised on 85 candidate teachers studying in Adiyaman University.

It is stated that it is necessary for the number of respondents to be used in the development stage of a study not to be less than 50 (Karasar, 1996).

Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient has been estimated to be 81.4. All items of the pre-scale, whose reliability coefficient had been to high, formed the last version of the final scale.

RESULTS

The following data have been found as a result of the study (Table 2).

According to the results, it has been understood that the candidate teachers showed meaningful difference in self efficacy beliefs based on their gender (t(268) = 0.615, p>0.05). In other words, the level of self efficacy of the candidate teachers is affected greatly by their gender. Out of 268 participants of this study, 138 candidate teachers were female and 130 were male. The points of the self efficacy level of the male candidates (X = 82.96) has been found higher than the female ones (X = 82.31).

From this condition, it can be interpreted that male candidate teachers trust themselves more than female candidate teachers and have much more positive attitudes about being a teacher of Social Studies (Table 3). The results indicate that samples from every class level

### Table 1. KMO and Bartlett’s test results of self-efficacy scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KMO</th>
<th>0.785</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barlett’s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ki-Square</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sig</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2. The Results of Factor Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor load value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I1</td>
<td>0.614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I2</td>
<td>0.528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I3</td>
<td>0.569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I4</td>
<td>0.593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I5</td>
<td>0.480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I6</td>
<td>0.520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I7</td>
<td>0.485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I8</td>
<td>0.624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I9</td>
<td>0.568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I10</td>
<td>0.384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I11</td>
<td>0.491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I12</td>
<td>0.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I13</td>
<td>0.601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I14</td>
<td>0.623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I15</td>
<td>0.635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I16</td>
<td>0.633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I17</td>
<td>0.624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I18</td>
<td>0.712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I19</td>
<td>0.502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I20</td>
<td>0.490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I21</td>
<td>0.388</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of Social Studies teaching departments have been chosen diligently. 85 of the candidate teachers taking part in the study were from second year of the school, 83 of them from third year; 50 of them from first and fourth year of the program. The average value has been to be $\bar{X} = 82.63$ and standard deviation to be $S=8.64$ in the study where 268 students had taken part in. The average points of the forth year student teachers is $\bar{X} = 84.28$ higher than the others.

The third year students have got the lowest average point ($\bar{X} = 82.12$), but with regard to the standart deviation points, the highest points have been obtained by the third year students ($S = 9.12$) while the forth year students have obtained the lowest points ($S = 7.90$) (Table 4).

When the results were checked the level of self efficacy of the candidate Social Studies teachers showed meaningful differences according to their class level (F(264–3) = 0.779, p>0.05). However, when looking into the results of the Scheffe test carried out to understand if there were any differences among the groups, it has been noticed that the fourth year students are the ones with the most positive attitudes ($\bar{X} = 84.28$). The group showing the most negative attitudes is found to be the candidate teachers who were in the third year of the school ($\bar{X} = 82.12$). The candidate teachers who are freshmen have occupied the second rate in terms of having positive attitudes ($\bar{X} = 82.62$), and the ones in the second year have occupied the third rate ($\bar{X} = 82.17$). The self efficacy level of fourth year student teachers is high and it can be explained with the pedagogical formation and curricular education they have received during their education at the university. They found themselves eligible to become a teacher of Social Studies, in other words they have high level of self efficacy. In the case of freshmen students, it is because the students have chosen the department willingly and for the second and third year student’s condition, it can be said that they are worried about environmental factors among which is finding employment upon graduation and have already started to lose their confidence about themselves (Table 5).

When the table is examined, it can be understood that the students have graduated from three different high schools namely, Anatolian High Schools, General High Schools, and Vocational High Schools. The group obtaining the highest average point among these groups is the candidate teachers graduated from Anatolian High Schools ($\bar{X} = 83.29$). The second group includes the ones graduated from General High Schools ($\bar{X} = 82.62$). The lowest scores belong to the group containing the candidate teachers having graduated from other
Table 6. Participants’ high school type (Mean and standard deviation points).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High school type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>$\bar{X}$</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General high school</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>82.62</td>
<td>8.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anatolian high school</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>83.29</td>
<td>9.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>81.64</td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>82.63</td>
<td>8.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Anova results of participants’ self efficacy beliefs according to high school type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variance</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Significant difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>42.510</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21.255</td>
<td>0.283</td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>19909.654</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>75.131</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19952.164</td>
<td>267</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vocational High Schools ($\bar{X} = 81.64$). The group obtaining the highest standard deviation points can be said to be the group containing the graduates of Anatolian High Schools ($S = 9.47$) (Table 6).

Upon examining the table 7 no meaningful differences can be seen among the candidates teachers according to the high school types they have graduated from and their level of self confidence ($F(2,265) = 0.283$, $p > 0.05$). In other words, the high school type the candidate teachers graduated from has not caused an important difference among them in terms of their level of self efficacy. However, when the results of the Scheffe test which was carried out to understand if there were any differences among the groups examined, the group with the most positive attitude is understood to be the group containing the students graduating from Anatolian High Schools ($\bar{X} = 83.29$). The group of the candidate Social Studies teachers with the most negative attitude is the one containing the students graduated from the Vocational High Schools (namely others) ($\bar{X} = 81.64$). Besides this, the average of the group of the candidates from General High Schools is seen to be lower than the ones from Anatolian High Schools ($\bar{X} = 82.62$). As can be seen self efficacy beliefs of the candidates of Social Studies teachers, who graduated from Anatolian High Schools have proved to be higher than the others. This condition can be explained with the fact that the students of Anatolian High School have received a better and quality education than the others as well as the fact that they are more conscious about everything such as planning the future and making decisions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Collaboration is crucial among teacher educators, experienced teachers and school managements so that newly employed teachers can develop and improve their self efficacy about their ability to teach (Ginns and Watters, 1994).

If an individual has self-efficacy while fulfilling a task is described as self-efficacy. The individual’s feeling of self-confidence is affected by various factors. According to the data obtained, it has been understood that candidate teachers were affected by some factors during their education and schooling process, and this condition leads to some differences in their level of self confidence. In this study, the candidate teachers’ gender, their class level, types of secondary education institutions they have graduated from have been examined in order to understand if these factors lead to any meaningful differences between their self efficacy beliefs. No meaningful difference has been observed among the teacher candidates regarding their gender and level of self efficacy in the study. However, self efficacy belief level of the male candidates has been observed to be higher than the female ones. This condition suggests that male candidate teachers trust themselves more than the female candidates in terms of various points from class management to presenting curricula about being an effective Social Studies teacher. In the study called “Study of candidate chemistry teachers’ self efficacy beliefs in terms of various factors” carried out by Morgil et al. (2004), it has also been concluded that the self efficacy belief points of the male candidate teachers are much more positive than the female ones.

Another result obtained as a consequence of the study is that no particular difference was seen between the class level and self efficacy belief. However, the fact that the average self efficacy points of fourth year students has been observed to be high which means that they trust themselves more than any other group of students. This result shows a parallelism with the results obtained in the study by Uredi et al. (2006). According to this
study, about the success level of candidate science teachers, it has been observed that fourth year students' level of self-confidence regarding to teach science is much higher than the candidates who are in the third year. Similar conclusions have been reached in the study called "The effects of primary mathematics programme on the perception of students self-efficacy towards maths by Umay (2000)". According to this study, it has been found that the self-efficacy perception of students attending fourth year in the programme of primary maths teaching department is seen to be statistically much higher than the first year students. Moreover, no meaningful difference has been observed between the candidate teachers' self-efficacy and type of high school they graduated. Similar outcomes have been obtained in the studies carried out by Yaman et al. (2004) and Alabay (2006). In these studies, it has also been observed that the group with the students who graduated from Anatolian High Schools trust and feel more confident to themselves than the other groups about becoming a Social studies teacher. The same result has been obtained in the study carried out by Alabay (2006), in fact; this can be seen as something which was expected, because the students who graduated from Anatolian High Schools have passed through a much better and more quality educational and schooling period.

Therefore, when we compare these students with the students in other groups, we see that they are generally one step ahead of the students who have graduated from other schools not only because of the accumulation of knowledge but also the social and cultural features of the environment in which they have been brought up. The parents of the students graduated from Anatolian High Schools are more interested in their children's education, though there may be some exceptions. This condition results in students' confident about themselves too.

Suggestions

1. It is necessary for the parents of the students to be supportive and understanding to their kids so that they can express themselves easily and freely.
2. The students should be encouraged to be more initiative and sociable both by the school management and the teachers starting from the primary school.
3. It is crucial that the teacher education faculty should use suitable strategies for improving self-esteem of the candidate teachers attending to the department of Social Studies.
4. Teacher candidates should be encouraged to participate in more social activities during their education at university.

REFERENCES