*Full Length Research Paper*

# An investigation of self-efficacy beliefs in terms of the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates

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**The aim of this study is to determine whether there is a difference between the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates and their self-efficacy beliefs. Survey method was used in this study. The sample of the study consisted of 972 students (232 males and 740 females) studying at Primary School Education, Science Education and Preschool Education at Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University in Turkey. The data were collected through "The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale" and "The Personal Information Form". It was seen that there was a significant difference between self-efficacy beliefs and the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates. No significant difference between the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates and in the subscales of "Efficacy in Instructional Practices" and "Efficacy in Classroom Management" was discovered from the results of this study.**

**Key words:** Faculty of education, teacher candidate, self-efficacy beliefs, reasons of choosing profession.

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of self –efficacy can be found in the social learning theory. According to the social learning theory, self-efficacy is the main structure affecting motivation (Bandura, 1989). Self-efficacy is the beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy explains the way an individual feels, thinks, motivates himself and behaves (Bandura, 1994). Self-efficacy greatly influences our actions. If individuals do not believe that they can reach certain goals through their actions, then they would be less motivated (Bandura,

1999). Self-efficacy is the ability to control one's emotional performance in challenging situations (Schunk, 1990). Students' self-efficacy influences their efforts and motivation. Self-efficacy affects an individual's choice of activities, efforts expended, persistence and success. The sources of information on one's self-efficacy include personal achievements, vicarious experiences (observations, comparing others' actions and abilities), persuasion, and physical and emotional states (Schunk, 1984).

Teachers' perception of self-efficacy can be described

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as the belief in one's ability to organize and perform the acts required to successfully produce a teaching activity in a specific setting. The self-efficacy beliefs of teachers have a major impact on the educational process. Studies showed that the teachers' self-efficacy is shaped after their teaching experiences during their training (Knoblauch and Hoy, 2008). It was determined that teachers' perception of self-efficacy influences the processes of teaching and learning (Hoy and Spero, 2005). Students would be unmotivated if their teacher's perception of self-efficacy is low. Teachers who have a low sense of self-efficacy do not believe in their efficacy in classroom management abilities. They are intolerable to students and pessimistic about their students' progress and they focus on problems instead of progress. Teachers who have a high sense of self-efficacy, on the other hand, show professional commitment for academic activities (Bandura, 1997). They are usually good at planning and organizing certain activities (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001; Pajares and Urdan, 2006). Furthermore, teachers tend to avoid certain topics when they experience lower levels of self-efficacy; While teachers with a higher level of self-efficacy may encounter problems pertaining to classroom management more often (Pajares and Urdan, 2006). Teacher's self-efficacy is also associated with their behaviors in the classroom (Milner and Hoy, 2003). Efficacy beliefs are raised if a teacher perceives her or his teaching performance to be a success, which then contributes to the expectations that future performances will likely be proficient (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2007).

More than two decades ago, teacher self-efficacy was identified as one of the characteristics contributing to students' success (Milner and Hoy, 2003). Factors which contribute to the development of self-efficacy perceptions in teachers include teaching performances and experiences during the first year of employment (Hoy and Spero, 2005). Teacher self-efficacy is also associated with their behaviors in the classroom (Milner and Hoy, 2003). Furthermore, the self-efficacy perceptions of teachers are associated with various student outcomes such as achievement (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2001). Teachers with a high sense of self-efficacy are open to new ideas and more willing to use new teaching methods, which may meet the students' needs in a better way. The sense of self-efficacy influences teachers' persistence in the face of various problems. Higher levels of self-efficacy help teachers to be less sensitive to students' errors and to be able to work with difficult students. In addition, teachers with a higher level of self-efficacy are more likely to refer challenging students for special education. A higher sense of self-efficacy results in better performance, thus, produces more efficacy and persistence. In other words, low self-efficacy results in unfavorable student outcomes and decreased efficacy, which, in turn, leads to showing less persistence and effort (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

It has been found that the self-efficacy of teachers significantly predict students' academic success (Maguire, 2011; Gaythwaite, 2006; Coutinho, 2008). It has been determined that there is a strong association between self-efficacy scores and academic grades (Coutinho, 2008; Marriner, 2006). Vogt (2005) reported that self-efficacy has a positive effect on academic behavior. King (2007) found that self-efficacy has a strong direct effect on success. Bujack (2012) also demonstrated that self-efficacy affects academic success. According to Çaycı (2011), there was a positive significant correlation between the self-efficacy levels and attitudes toward professional education in classroom teacher candidates. Hoffman and Spatariu (2008) determined that self-efficacy and metacognitive abilities increase the level of problem solving skills in a student group.

Self-efficacy belief has an impact on learning, motivation, choosing process, setting a goal, stress etc. (Jespersen, 1996; Yingling, 2003; Anselmo, 2003). According to Montolbano (2001), self-efficacy influences the choice of behaviours, performance and motivation. Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between success and self-efficacy. This was also supported by the studies of writers such as Jackson (2002) and Prussia et al. (1998). Vogt (2005) stated that self-efficacy is the strongest impact on success.

Because of having impacts on different areas, self-efficacy is important in terms of learning and teaching. Higher levels of self-efficacy help students studying at Faculty of Education to be more successful, to develop their learning skills and to be more motivated. Self-efficacy is an important factor for students' academic performance. In this area, there is not enough study in Turkey and in other countries also; hence this study is expected to fill that gap. The results of this study are important in terms of making contribution to scholars, teachers, authorities of Ministry of National Education and quality of education.

## *Purpose*

The aim of this study is to determine whether there is a difference between the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates and self-efficacy beliefs. The hypothesis of this study is to find out this difference.

## METHODOLOGY

In this study, survey method was used in order to determine self-efficacy beliefs of students according to their reasons for the choice of the teaching profession (Gay et al., 2009; Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006; Creswell, 2008), studying at Primary School Education, Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University.

## Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 972 students (232 males and 740 females) studying at Primary School Education, Science Education and Preschool Education at the Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University. Information on the sample group is given in Table 1.

## Instruments

### The teachers' sense of efficacy scale

The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), which was developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), was used for determining the self-efficacy levels of the teacher candidates. The TSES consists of 24 items and includes three subscales (Çapa et al., 2005). The Turkish adaptation of the TSES was conducted by Çapa et al. (2005). Çapa et al. (2005) named the scale as the "Turkish Version of the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale" (TTSES). The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale includes three subscales: "Efficacy in Student Engagement", "Efficacy in Instructional Strategies" and "Efficacy in Classroom Management". Each subscale has eight items. The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale uses a 9-point Likert-type scale, and the responses are measured with the descriptors 1-inadequate to 9-efficient. The highest score that teacher candidates can have is 216 whereas the lowest score is 24. They used a sample of 628 teacher candidates. The reliability coefficient of the efficacy in student engagement subscales was found to be 0.82, whereas this value was 0.84 for the efficacy in classroom management subscale and 0.86 for the efficacy in instructional practices subscale. The reliability coefficient of the entire scale was found to be 0.93 (Çapa et al., 2005).

### The personal information form

The personal information form which was used for data collection in the study, is composed of three parts: Question of gender, class, department of university and the reasons for choosing the department.

### Procedures

Data were collected from the students (232 males and 740 females) studying at Primary School Education, Science Education, Preschool Education at Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University in the spring term of 2012-2013 academic year. In the study, data were analyzed after descriptive statistics computing was done for the independent variables. The one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted in order to test the differences between self-efficacy beliefs and the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates; whereas the LSD technique (the least significant difference), which computes the smallest significant difference between two means, was used for determining between-group differences.

Fisher's LSD technique was used in this study for testing the smallest significant difference (Büyüköztürk et al., 2011).

## RESULTS

In this section, findings regarding the teacher candidates' self-efficacy beliefs scores according to the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates are presented. The analysis of the variance

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of the sample distribution.

|  |  | F | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | 740 | 76.1 |
|  | Man | 232 | 23.9 |
|  | Total | 972 | 100.0 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Department | Elementary Education | 465 | 47.8 |
|  | Preschool Education | 280 | 28.8 |
|  | Science Education | 227 | 23.4 |
|  | Total | 972 | 100.0 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Class | 1st year | 280 | 28.8 |
|  | 2nd year | 228 | 23.5 |
|  | 3rd year | 195 | 20.1 |
|  | 4th year | 269 | 27.7 |
|  | Total | 972 | 100.0 |

(one-way ANOVA) was used to determine whether there is a difference between the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates and self-efficacy beliefs.

### Evaluation of the teacher candidates' self-efficacy beliefs

It was discovered from the results of Table 2 that the most prevalent characteristic assessed by the students was "It was my ideal to be a teacher" in the "Efficacy in Student Engagement" subscale. This was closely followed by "I like the teaching profession". The lowest rate belongs to the reason of "I chose teaching because of family reasons". As seen in Table 2, the most prevalent characteristic assessed by the students was "It was my ideal to be a teacher" in the "Efficacy in Instructional Practices" subscale. The reason of "I chose teaching because of family reasons" was the lowest prevalent characteristic assessed by the students. In the "Efficacy in Classroom Management" subscale the most prevalent characteristic assessed by the students was "The job offers good job security". The lowest rate belongs to the reason of "I chose teaching because of family reasons". In total, the most prevalent characteristic assessed by the students was "Teachers earn a lot of money" and the lowest rate belongs to the reason of "I chose teaching because of family reasons".

According to Table 3, there is a significant difference between the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates and the results of "Efficacy in Student Engagement" subscale. This is why students chose the factors such as "I like the teaching profession, The job offers good job security, It was my ideal to be a teacher, I chose it because of the university placement exam results". Over whelming evidence from

**Table 2.** The analysis results of the teacher candidates' self-efficacy beliefs according to the reasons for choosing the teaching profession.

| Subscale | Reasons | N | Mean | Std. deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Efficacy in student engagement | I like the teaching profession | 279 | 5.9315 | .78926 |
| | It is a respectable job.. | 18 | 5.7222 | .62655 |
| | I chose teaching because of family reasons | 32 | 5.3086 | 1.06113 |
| | Teachers earn a lot of money | 4 | 5.6250 | .44488 |
| | There are long holidays | 48 | 5.6536 | .81347 |
| | The job offers good job security | 173 | 5.8382 | .75663 |
| | It was my ideal to be a teacher | 173 | 5.9335 | .81752 |
| | I chose it because of the university placement exam results | 245 | 5.7602 | .91087 |
| | Total | 972 | 5.8327 | .83611 |
| Efficacy in Instructional practices | I like the teaching profession | 279 | 6.8522 | .96376 |
| | It is a respectable job. | 18 | 6.6111 | .80541 |
| | I chose teaching because of family reasons | 32 | 6.2695 | 1.22520 |
| | Teachers earn a lot of money | 4 | 7.2188 | .53400 |
| | There are long holidays | 48 | 6.7708 | 1.00707 |
| | The job offers good job security | 173 | 6.8280 | .94645 |
| | It was my ideal to be a teacher | 173 | 6.8598 | .98612 |
| | I chose it because of the university placement exam results | 245 | 6.7612 | 1.07338 |
| | Total | 972 | 6.8002 | 1.00412 |
| Efficacy in classroom management | I like the teaching profession | 279 | 6.8669 | .94945 |
| | It is a respectable job. | 18 | 6.7361 | .85737 |
| | I chose teaching because of family reasons | 32 | 6.3047 | 1.33801 |
| | Teachers earn a lot of money | 4 | 6.9375 | .64952 |
| | There are long holidays | 48 | 6.7708 | 1.02279 |
| | The job offers good job security | 173 | 6.9473 | .89279 |
| | It was my ideal to be a teacher | 173 | 6.8757 | .99367 |
| | I chose it because of the university placement exam results | 245 | 6.7786 | 1.11967 |
| | Total | 972 | 6.8351 | 1.01218 |
| Total score | I like the teaching profession | 279 | 6.8487 | .86503 |
| | It is a respectable job. | 18 | 6.6528 | .68061 |
| | I chose teaching because of family reasons | 32 | 6.2227 | 1.15381 |
| | Teachers earn a lot of money | 4 | 6.9167 | .49301 |
| | There are long holidays | 48 | 6.6788 | .86551 |
| | The job offers good job security | 173 | 6.8321 | .80350 |
| | It was my ideal to be a teacher | 173 | 6.8646 | .89757 |
| | I chose it because of the university placement exam results | 245 | 6.7270 | .99662 |
| | Total | 972 | 6.7856 | .90743 |

the findings of the study revealed that there is a significant difference between the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates and total scores of self-efficacy. This is why students chose the reasons such as "There are long holidays, I like the teaching profession, The job offers good job security, It was my ideal to be a teacher, I chose it because of the university placement exam results". No significant difference between the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates and in the "Efficacy in Instructional Practices" and "Efficacy in Classroom Management" subscales was discovered from the results of Table 3.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a difference between the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates and their self-efficacy beliefs. The findings of this study revealed that there was a significant difference between the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates and in the "Efficacy in Student Engagement"

**Table 3.** The analysis results of the teacher candidates' self-efficacy beliefs according to the reasons for choosing the teaching profession.

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | LSD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Efficacy in student engagement | Between Groups | 16.493 | 7 | 2.356 | 3.429 | .001** | I like the teaching profession |
| | Within Groups | 662.313 | 964 | .687 | | | The job offers good job security |
| | | | | | | | It was my ideal to be a teacher |
| | | | | | | | I chose it because of the university placement exam results |
| | Total | 678.807 | 971 | | | | |
| Efficacy in Instructional practices | Between Groups | 12.271 | 7 | 1.753 | 1.748 | .094 | |
| | Within Groups | 966.752 | 964 | 1.003 | | | |
| | Total | 979.024 | 971 | | | | |
| Efficacy in classroom management | Between Groups | 12.947 | 7 | 1.850 | 1.816 | .081 | |
| | Within Groups | 981.852 | 964 | 1.019 | | | |
| | Total | 994.799 | 971 | | | | |
| | Between Groups | 14.482 | 7 | 2.069 | 2.540 | .014* | There are long holidays |
| | Within Groups | 785.073 | 964 | .814 | | | I like the teaching profession |
| | | | | | | | The job offers good job security |
| | | | | | | | It was my ideal to be a teacher |
| Total | Total | 799.554 | 971 | | | | I chose it because of the university placement exam results |

P< 0.05 *; P<0.01**.

subscale. This is why students chose the reasons such as "I like the teaching profession, the job offers good job security, It was my ideal to be a teacher, I chose it because of the university placement exam results". No significant difference between the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates and in the "Efficacy in Instructional Practices" and "Efficacy in Classroom Management" subscales was discovered from the results.

A similar result was reported by Sağır and Aslan (2009), Özdemir (2008). According to Yavuz (2009), self-efficacy had an influence on choosing the teaching profession by university students. Contrary to the results of this study, Elkatmis et al. (2013) determined no significant difference between self-efficacy beliefs and the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by teacher candidates studying at Primary School Education.

Many studies have investigated factors that influence the choice of teaching as a profession among students alike. Self-efficacy beliefs' of students studying at Faculty of Education is affected by many factors such as metacognition, intelligence, the school environment, learning skills, the choice of profession, self-regulation learning, attitude, motivation, type of high school graduated from etc. However, the most important factor of these is the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by university students. The choice of the teaching profession is one of the most important choice students make in determining future plans, because this decision will impact students throughout their lives.

There is a relationship between students' self-efficacy beliefs and their academic performance. Students with high sense of self-efficacy toward a task are likely to attempt the task and they will work harder and persist longer in the face of

difficulties. Furthermore, higher levels of self-efficacy help students to be more patient to students who have difficulty in learning. Self-efficacy encourages students to try, allows them to make their own choices.

It is important for students to choose their profession willingly at university. It is expected that students should not choose teaching profession because of the economic concerns. If students choose teaching profession reluctantly or unconsciously, they will be in difficulty in terms of self-efficacy. Furthermore, they cannot be able to help their students sufficiently with low sense of self-efficacy. Conclusively, self-efficacy beliefs of students studying at Faculty of Education is affected by the reasons for the choice of the teaching profession by university students. Therefore, students' academic perfor-mance is thought to be affected negatively and positively.

## Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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