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## **EXAMINATION OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' ANXIETY LEVELS ABOUT TEACHING PROFESSION**

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### Abstract

In this research, it was aimed to determine the levels of occupational anxiety of pre-service teachers' who read science and primary school teacher programs according to various variables. In this research a questionnaire developed by Köklükaya and Yıldırım (2016) which has validity and reliability analyzes was used. Anxiety Scale for Teaching Profession (ASTP) was used. The research was carried out with 266 prospective teachers who were educated at Kahramanmaraş Sütcü Imam University in the academic year of 2015-2016. Independent t test, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA), Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis analysis and Tukey significance test were used to determine the statistical significance of the obtained data in the research using relational screening model. According to research findings, it was determined that there was no significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the level of vocational anxiety among the teacher candidates according to the degree of willingness to choose the department, grade level and academic achievement score. According to the gender variable, there was no significant difference in the pre-service teachers' who read in the department of primary school teachers', and it was found that the science teachers' professional anxiety levels had a significant difference according to the gender variable.

*Keywords:* Teaching profession, Anxiety, Anxiety about teaching profession, pre-service teachers'

### 1.Introduction

The teaching profession is a special area of expertise that focuses on the state's role in education and training (Saracaloğlu, Kumral, & Kanmaz, 2009, p. 2). Teachers take an active role in the education system and carry responsibilities towards school management, students and parents. Teachers take on the responsibility of being a more qualified instructor by adapting themselves to the rapid changes taking place in the education system (Özer, Şad, Acak, & Kafkas, 2009). These responsibilities are accompanied by vocational concerns for teacher and teacher candidates. Anxiety is defined as unhappiness and excitement experienced by the individual in the face of a generally threatening situation (Işık, 1996). Seven (2013) defines anxiety as an abnormal and arbitrary state of extreme fear and

excitement and the reaction against this scary situation. Although anxiety seems to be a negative situation, it is known to be stimulating, protective and motivating in nature (Scovel, 1978, p. 138). Allwright and Bailey (1991) have stated that anxiety isn't such thing to be avoided.

Today, the increase in the number of students, the difficulties of learning due to this, the teachers' inadequate education for the students, the professional insecurity and the inadequacy are the factors that cause the teachers to have professional anxiety. The fact that occupational anxiety levels are higher in professionally-trained teachers than in experienced teachers (Wagner, 2008) constitutes a weakness in terms of national education system. While confident, and self-confident teachers are inclined to be tolerant, accept different views, encourage participation and interaction from students, anxious and unreliable teachers are afraid of students' feelings towards themselves (Akyıldız, 1989, p. 10)

Looking at the literature, the concerns of the prospective teachers about the profession are concentrated at certain points within certain time intervals (Atmaca, 2013, p. 3). According to Fuller (1969), these concerns about the teaching profession are explained in three groups. First one of these concerns is self-centered concerns. The self-centered focal point is the individual itself. A teacher with self-centered anxiety cannot sustain the teaching profession successfully. The main point of this anxiety is consisting the teaching duty of individual and the individual closely follows the innovations, new teaching methods, tools and equipment that come to the fore in the field of education within the concern of being a good teacher. The other type of anxiety is student-centered anxiety. The main point of this anxiety type is consisting the students. A teacher who carries this concern worries about how he or she will meet the cognitive, social and emotional needs of students and tries to improve himself/herself.

Since 1996, in Turkey, the restructuring process has been entered into training faculties in order to increase the quality of teacher candidates and changes have been made in the programs. Scientific research aimed at increasing the quality of teacher candidates has become increasingly important (Doğan & Çoban, 2009, p. 3). Studies conducted to investigate the professional concerns of prospective teachers are in fact studies to increase the quality and quality of prospective teachers raised in faculties (Wagner, 2008, p. 112).

When literature is searched, it is seen that Dursun and Karagün (2012) has a study about teacher candidates who are in last grade of Kocaeli University Department of Physical Education and Sports Teacher to see if they carry professional anxiety before the start of the profession and have professional anxiety; also if age, monthly income, academic achievement, gender and the type of school they graduated from are effective factors. As a result of the study, in terms of socio-demographic characteristics of students, task-oriented anxiety, student-centered anxiety and self-centered anxiety; Economic status, academic average, high school type they graduated and gender; only the self-centered anxiety scores were found to be significant in terms of age. Kafkas, Açak, Çoban and Karademir (2010) investigated the relationship between self-efficacy perceptions and vocational anxiety states of physical education teacher candidates. According to the research result, the self-efficacy status was found to be significantly different from the sex, licensed sport and high school type variables. It was also found that there was moderate correlation between self-efficacy and occupational anxiety states. Hacıömeroğlu and Taşkın (2010) examined the attitudes of the prospective teachers in the Department of Elementary Education, Science Education in the Department of Education and the teacher candidates in the Master of Science and Mathematics Fields in the Department of Secondary Science and Mathematics in the Teacher Profession. According to the findings obtained from the research, they stated that there is no

significant difference in the attitudes of the candidates regarding the teaching profession in terms of gender. In addition, they found that there was no significant difference between the attitudes of the candidates to the profession and the department they were affiliated with, and that the candidates who had studied in the Department of Education had more consciously preferred this profession compared to the candidates who were educated in Science Education. Doğan and Çoban (2009) studied the relationship between attitudes and anxiety levels, attitudes and anxieties, and variables affecting attitudes and anxiety levels of the students of the Faculty of Education on the teaching profession. They found that students' attitudes were positive, their anxiety levels were low and there was a low negative and significant relationship between attitude and anxiety. In addition, girls have found that those who offer their profession to relatives, those who love their profession, and those who are optimistic about finding employment have a more positive attitude, and those who are pessimistic about finding employment are more anxious. Saracaloğlu et al. (2009) investigated the vocational competencies, profession-related anxieties and academic motivation levels of secondary students without secondary education in terms of their own perceptions in terms of various variables in their researches. According to the results of the research, it was determined that the students who wanted to attend the departments had a low level of job concerns, a high level of academic motivation, and that the female students' proficiency perceptions towards the job were higher than male students. They also found that the academic achievement of students influenced their career concerns and academic motivation levels. Bedel (2008) investigated the relationship between preschool teacher candidates' attitudes towards the teaching profession, internal-external control orientation and demographic characteristics. Akgün, Gönen and Aydın (2007) investigate how the anxiety levels of the students of Science and Mathematics Teaching in their studies are influenced by branch, gender, achievement status, friendship relations, profession, and marriage status, number of siblings, parental attitude and economic situation. The results of the analysis revealed that the anxiety levels of Science and Mathematics Teaching students were affected by variables such as gender, achievement status and parent attitudes. Tümerdem (2007) examined how seniority students affect the level of faculty, gender, school achievement, degree of proficiency in friendship, profession, family attitude and level of anxiety. As a result of the study, the level of anxiety of the senior students of the Faculty of Education and Science is affected by the faculty, gender, school achievement, friendship relations at school, Parental attitude and economic situation variables. Taşgün (2006) examined the vocational concerns of teacher candidates studying in Vocational School of Physical Education and Sports in terms of various variables. As a result of the research, it was found that female students' task-centered and self-centered anxiety levels were statistically significant compared to male students. Çakmak and Hevedanlı (2005) investigated how various variables affect students' anxiety levels in education and education faculties. According to the analysis result, the level of anxiety of biology students changed according to class, gender, friendship relations and parental attitude variables of the school; they did not change according to the faculty, the success in the school, the occupational and economic situation they wanted to work on. Saban, Korkmaz and Akbasli (2004) carried out a study to reveal the professional concerns of teacher candidates. According to research findings, they found that vocational concerns of first grade teacher candidates concentrate more on "students" and those vocational concerns of fourth grade teacher candidates concentrate more on "teaching mission".

### **1.1. The Aim of the Study**

It is undoubtedly directly related to the education system that our country is among developed countries. A qualified generation will be available only through qualified teachers.

Therefore, it is important to investigate the professional concerns that affect the qualifications of pre-service teachers' who are educated in faculties. In this study, it was aimed to determine the level of vocational anxiety of the pre-service teachers' towards the teaching profession. Towards this end, answers the following research questions were sought:

- ❖ Are the professional anxiety levels of pre-service science teachers' and pre-service primary school teachers' differing according to gender?
- ❖ Are the professional anxiety levels of pre-service science teachers' and pre-service primary school teachers' differing according to prefer the department voluntarily?
- ❖ Are the professional anxiety levels of pre-service science teachers' and pre-service primary school teachers' differing according to academic achievement?
- ❖ Are the professional anxiety levels of pre-service science teachers' and pre-service primary school teachers' differing according to grade level?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research model

In this research, which aimed to determine the level of anxiety of pre-service teachers' about teaching profession according to various variables, relational screening model was used. The relational screening model is a general screening model used in research to determine the changes in two or more variables and the degree of change (Karasar, 2006, 81).

### 2.2. Research group

The research is carried out with 266 pre-service teachers who are studying at Kahramanmaraş Sütcü Imam University Faculty of Education Primary school teacher education and Science teacher education department. The research was conducted during the spring semester of the 2015-2016 academic years. The distribution of the demographic information of the pre-service teachers participating in the survey is given in Table 1

Table 1. Demographic information of pre-service teachers

		Science teacher		Primary school teacher	
		N	%	N	%
Gender	Female	101	82.1	115	80.4
	Male	22	17.9	28	19.6
Grade	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	29	23.6	41	28.7
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	25	20.3	40	28.0
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	35	28.5	39	27.3
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	34	27.6	23	16.1
Academic achievement	0.0-2.00	5	4.1	5	3.5
	2.01-2.50	31	25.2	32	22.4
	2.51-3.00	56	45.5	64	44.8
	3.01-3.50	23	18.7	33	23.1
	3.51-4.00	8	6.5	9	6.3
Prefer the department willingly	Yes	82	66.7	93	65.0
	No	41	33.3	50	35.0
		123	46.2	146	53.8

### 2.3. Data analysis

Data gathered through the frame of the research is analyzed with IBM SPSS-21 statistical program. For the evaluation, we used an independent t-test, done the variance analysis (anova), Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis analysis. On the other hand, data is valued

with 0.05 meaningfulness level and their percentage, frequency, average and standard deviation values are given.

#### 2.4. Data collection tool

"Anxiety Scale for Teaching Profession " which was developed by Köklükaya and Yıldırım (2016) as a data collection tool and validity and reliability analyzes were used. This scale consists of four factors and 35 items. Alternatives and points in Positive Expressions prepared on the 5th Likert type; 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Aggregate and 1 = Absolutely Not Participated Cronbach alpha values of scale and factors are given in Table 2.

Table 2. *The anxiety scale for the teaching profession and the reliability values of the subscales*

Test sub-dimensions	Reliability values
Factor 1	.82
Factor 2	.65
Factor 3	.84
Factor 4	.79
ASTP	<b>.90</b>

### 3. Results

In the research, an answer to question "Are the professional anxiety levels of pre-service science teachers' and pre-service primary school teachers' differing according to gender?" is searched and Independent t-test results are given in Table 3. The nonparametric test, Mann-Whitney U test, was used because the homogeneous distribution of the data obtained according to the gender was not obtained in pre-service science teachers' and the result is given in Table 4.

Table 3. *T-test analysis results according to gender*

Department	Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	sd	t	p
Pre-service primary school teachers	Female	115	2.50	141	-.886	.377
	Male	28	2.59			

\*p<0.05

Table 4. *Mann-Whitney U test analysis results according to gender*

Department	Gender	N	Line Avr.	U	p
Pre-service science teachers	Female	101	58.56	763.5	.022*
	Male	22	77.80		

\*p<0.05

When the data of Table 3 are examined, it is understood that gender does not make a meaningful difference for pre-service primary school teachers ( $t(263) = 0.914, p > 0.05$ ). However, according to the average results, it was seen that the level of professional anxiety of male pre-service teachers was higher than that of female pre-service teachers.

When the data in Table 4 were examined, it was determined that there was a significant difference in the scores according to gender by the scores of the pre-service science teachers' ( $U = 763.5; p < 0.05$ ) on the anxiety scale for the teaching profession. According to the line average, it was seen that the level of professional anxiety of the male pre-service science teachers' was higher than the female pre-service science teachers'. According to these results, it can be said that the gender variable is not effective in the level of vocational anxiety for pre-service primary school teachers, and is effective in the level of vocational anxiety for pre-service science teachers.

In the research, an answer to the question "Are the professional anxiety levels of pre-service science teachers' and pre-service primary school teachers' differing according to preferring the department willingly?" is searched and Independent t-test results are given in Table 5.

Table 5. *T-test analysis results according to preferring the department voluntarily*

Department	Preference	N	$\bar{x}$	sd	t	p
Pre-service science teachers	Yes	82	2.42	121	-1.623	.107
	No	41	2.61			
Pre-service primary school teachers	Yes	93	2.46	141	-1.791	.075
	No	50	2.62			

\*p<0.05

When the data in Table 5 are examined, the scores of pre-service science teachers ( $t(121) = -1.623$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and pre-service primary school teachers ( $t(141) = -1.791$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), it is determined that there is not a statistically significant difference according to willingness to choose. However, according to the averages, it has been seen that the professional anxiety levels of the pre-service teachers' who prefer their departments willingly are less.

In the research, an answer to question "Are the professional anxiety levels of pre-service science teachers' and pre-service primary school teachers' differing according to academic achievement?" is searched and results of gathered data are presented on Table 6 and Table 7. The Kruskal-Wallis test, a nonparametric test, was performed because the homogeneous distribution of the data obtained according to the academic achievement was not achieved in the pre-service science teachers', and the result is given in Table 8.

Table 6. *Frequency, average point and standard deviation values according to academic achievement*

Department	Academic achievement	N	$\bar{x}$	ss
Pre-service primary school teachers	0.00-2.00	5	2.50	.25
	2.01-2.49	32	2.56	.47
	2.50-2.99	64	2.54	.49
	3.00-3.49	33	2.45	.50
	3.50-4.00	9	2.40	.80
		143	2.50	.50

\*p<0.05

Table 7. *One way variance analysis (Anova) results according to academic achievement*

Department		Squares All	sd	Squares Average	F	p
Pre-service primary school teachers	Between Groups	.408	4	.102	.392	.814
	In-Group	35.942	138	.260		
	All	36.351	142			

Table 8. *Kruskal-Wallis H test analysis results according to academic achievement*

Department	Academic achievement	N	Line Avr.	Sd	$X^2$	p
Pre-service science teachers	0.00-2.00	5	66.90	4	4.030	.057
	2.01-2.49	31	77.27			
	2.50-2.99	56	55.63			
	3.00-3.49	23	53.52			
	3.50-4.00	8	68.75			

\*p&lt;0.05

When the data of Table 6 and Table 7 are examined, it is understood that academic achievement does not make a meaningful difference for pre-service primary school teachers [ $F(4,138)=.392$ ;  $p>0.05$ ]. When the data of Table 8 are examined, it is understood that academic achievement does not make a meaningful difference for pre-service science teachers ( $X^2=4.030$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). However, according to the average results, the increase in the level of academic achievement was found to decrease the level of professional anxiety of the pre-service teachers.

In the research, an answer to question "Are the professional anxiety levels of pre-service science teachers' and pre-service primary school teachers' differing according to grade level?" is searched and results of gathered data are presented on Table 9 and Table 10. The Kruskal-Wallis test, a nonparametric test, was performed because the homogeneous distribution of the data obtained according to grade level was not achieved of primary school teachers' candidates, and the result is given in Table 11.

Table 9. Frequency, average point and standard deviation values according to grade level

Bölüm	Grade level	N	$\bar{X}$	ss
Pre-service science teachers	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	29	2.48	.50
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	25	2.41	.59
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	35	2.54	.64
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	34	2.48	.74
		143	2.48	.62

\*p&lt;0.05

Table 10. One way variance analysis (Anova) results according to grade level

		Squares	sd	Squares	F	p
		All		Average		
Pre-service science teachers	Between Groups	.408	3	.102	.214	.887
	In-Group	35.942	119	.260		
	All	36.351	122			

Table 11. Kruskal-Wallis H test analysis results according to grade level

Department	Grade level	N	Line Avr.	Sd	$X^2$	p
Pre-service primary school teachers	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	41	76.10		3.043	.385
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	40	62.36	3		
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	39	76.21			
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	23	74.33			
		143				

\*p&lt;0.05

When the data of Table 9 and Table 10 are examined, it is understood that grade level does not make a meaningful difference for pre-service science teachers [ $F(3,119)=.214$ ;  $p>0.05$ ]. When the data of Table 11 are examined, it is understood grade level does not make a meaningful difference for pre-service primary school teachers ( $X^2=3.043$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). However, according to the average results, the increase in the level of grade was found to increase the level of professional anxiety of the pre-service teachers.

#### **4. Discussion and Results**

In this research, it was aimed to determine the vocational anxiety levels of teacher candidates according to gender, grade level, grade of academic achievement and willingness to choose department.

In order to measure the level of professional anxiety of the prospective teachers, 'Anxiety Scale for Teaching Profession' developed by Köklükaya & Yildirim (2016) and analyzed for validity and reliability was used in the research. The prepared scale consists of four factors and contains a total of 35 items. The scale was applied to 266 pre-service teachers studying at the faculty of education. In the reliability analysis, the internal consistency coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) of Cronbach alpha was found to be .90. The internal consistency coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) of the original scale is .92.

Within the scope of the research, it was seen that there was a statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the level of occupational anxiety according to gender of the pre-service science teachers. According to the obtained data, the level of professional anxiety of the male pre-service teachers was higher than that of the female pre-service teachers.

According to the results of analysis, there was no statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the levels of occupational anxiety according to gender of pre-service primary school teachers. However, when looking at the average, the level of professional anxiety of the male pre-service teachers is higher than that of the female pre-service teachers. Dursun and Karagün (2012) found that female anthropomorphic anxiety levels were higher in male anthropometry than male athletes in the results of the analysis conducted on last grade students of Kocaeli University School of Physical Education and Sports. Taşgın (2006) found that task-centered anxiety levels were higher in females than males in the study of teacher candidates studying vocational anxiety levels in physical education and sports college. Kafkas et al. (2010) reached the conclusion that gender variable in physical education teacher candidates did not show any significant difference on occupational anxiety. Doğan and Çoban (2009) reached the conclusion that there is no difference between gender-related anxiety levels in the study of education faculty students' relations between attitudes and anxiety levels towards teaching profession. When the other studies conducted within the scope of the subject are examined, Hacıömeroğlu and Taşkın (2010), Akgün et al. (2007), Tümerdem (2007), Çakmak and Hevedanlı (2005), Saban et al. (2004) have found that there is no significant difference in the level of occupational anxiety according to gender.

There was no statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the level of occupational anxiety according to the grade level variable of pre-service science teachers and pre-service primary school teachers in the research. However, when we look at the average, it is observed that the professional level of the pre-service teachers decreases with the increase of the grade level. We can say that the grade level variable has no effect on the level of vocational anxiety in the obtained data.

There was no statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the level of occupational anxiety according to the academic achievement score of pre-service science teachers and pre-service primary school teachers in the research. However, when we look at the average, it is seen that the increase of the academic achievement score decreases the loss of the profession. Our study Dursun and Karagün (2012) paralleled the results of their study on physical education and sports college students to determine the level of professional anxiety of teacher candidates. Çakmak and Hevedanlı (2005) stated that there was no significant difference between the levels of anxiety according to the achievement of the students in their study. Contrary to these studies, Saracaloğlu et al. (2009) stated that there is a significant difference

in the average grades of the undergraduate semesters in studying the levels of proficiency, anxiety and academic motivation of non-thesis graduate students. In the same way, Saban et al. (2004) do not agree with the study results they have done to determine the professional concerns of prospective teachers.

There was no statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the levels of occupational anxiety according to the state of willingness to select pre-service science teachers and pre-service primary school teachers in the survey. However, when looking at the average, it was seen that the professional anxiety levels of the pre-service teachers preferring to take the department are lower. We concluded that Saracaloglu et al. (2009) do not correspond with our study because of the results they have conducted to determine the levels of competence, anxiety and academic motivation for non-thesis graduate students in the teaching profession.

## **5. Suggestions**

Regulations can be introduced to faculty programs to reduce the level of anxiety of teacher candidates to the teaching profession to the lowest level. The anxiety and the reasons for the teaching profession can be explored in terms of different variables and new studies can be made about the subject.

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