

# EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHER EDUCATION: MAKING JUDGMENTS THROUGH POSSIBLE SELVES

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**Abstract-** Criticism about the effectiveness of teacher education have attracted the attention of scholars. Although emerged as a field of research, evaluation of the effectiveness of teacher education is not an easy task. In this study, we utilized possible selves of teacher candidates to gain ideas to fulfill that purpose as a moderate attempt. The results of this survey study revealed that there is a need for doing some regulations in terms of elevating the level of effectiveness.

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**Index Terms-** Effectiveness of teacher education, possible selves, teacher candidates.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Debates about teacher education had been and continuing to be made in many countries. Many people believe that knowing a subject is a sufficient condition for letting someone teach. However, research findings suggest that the teacher education program graduates contributes more to the quality of student learning in general [1]. The effectiveness of teacher education programs have become an important field of research as a response to the continuing discussions. Cohen [2] defined effectiveness of teacher education as the capability of institution to cause change in teacher candidates. Ayers and Berney [3] described effectiveness as the level of the graduates' performance to demonstrate the competencies determined by the goals of the programs.

Measuring the effectiveness of teacher education is a challenging task since the competency requirements for teachers are complex [4]. However, any attempt to do so has merit. In this study, teacher candidates' possible selves were used as an indicator of effectiveness of teacher education.

### Possible Selves

Markus and Nurius [5] introduced the term possible selves as a type of self-concept which originates from the representations of the self in the past and involves the representations of the self in the future. Although possible selves were mentioned at first as the selves one would like to become, one might become and one is afraid of becoming in the future, these selves were referred as hoped-for selves, expected selves and feared selves respectively in some later work [6]-[7]. The expected selves can emerge from the hoped-for selves depending on the degree of attainability realized by an individual [8]. That is, the expected selves are more realistic selves compared to the hoped-for ones. An individual may own various possible selves and those possible selves are shaped by the environmental agencies such as media and the social experiences of the individual [5]. Social experiences of the individuals contribute to

their self-schemas which include the generalized identity and the beliefs about competence [9]. Beliefs about competence and the generalized identity are thought to be important for the possible selves created. During the formation of identity through social experiences an individual develops beliefs about his/her interests, values and personality which in turn affect the possible selves created. For instance, a high school student believing that being a graduate of university is very important will likely have expected and feared academic possible selves. In addition to this, an individual's beliefs about the abilities and competence related to a certain domain will again shape the possible selves created. To illustrate, teacher candidates gaining a solid pedagogical knowledge and necessary skills during their education are more likely to develop positive possible selves than the ones who are not. In this sense, teacher candidates' existing professional possible selves can be thought of as indicators of the effectiveness of teacher education they experience.

With regard to the above mentioned ideas, we attempted to make judgments about effectiveness of teacher education via the information provided through professional possible selves of teacher candidates.

## II. METHOD

The work group of this cross-sectional survey study included the teacher candidates (38 male and 67 female) of primary education. The group consisted of 37 science education, 32 social studies education, and 36 primary school education seniors. The candidates took the classroom management course and they were taking the school experience course at the time of data collection. The data were collected voluntarily with the Turkish-version of New Teacher Possible Selves Questionnaire (NTPSQ).

The questionnaire was originally developed by Hamman, Wang and Burley [10] and adapted into Turkish by Dalioğlu and Adigüzel [11]. The two subscales, namely expected teacher possible selves

(ETPS) and feared teacher possible selves (FTPS), are six-point Likert-type scales with nine items each. ETPS has two factors (professionalism and learning to teach), and FTPS has three factors (uninspired instruction, loss of control and uncaring teacher) in the original NTPSQ. The confirmatory factor analysis results reported by Dalioğlu and Adıgüzel [11] for the Turkish-version (for ETPS:  $\chi^2/df=2.48$ , RMSEA=0.067, GFI=0.96, AGFI=0.93, SRMR=0.038, CFI=0.98 and for FTPS:  $\chi^2/df=3.29$ , RMSEA=0.084, GFI=0.95, AGFI=0.90, SRMR=0.040, CFI=0.98) verified the structures of the two original subscales. Moreover, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients for each factor in the Turkish-version were reported as greater than 0.70. Thus, the adapted version of NTPSQ was shown to be a reliable and valid instrument.

During data collection, the candidates made choices for each given statement in the questionnaire. They rated the given statements from 1 (absolutely do not expect) to 6 (absolutely do expect) for ETPS and from 1 (absolutely do not fear this) to 6 (absolutely do fear this) for FTPS. It took 8-10 minutes to complete the questionnaire and NTPSQ was administered before class. Independent samples t-test, Mann-Whitney U test and one-way ANOVA were used during data analysis. Moreover, percentages were reported for some of the items. Gender and type of education program were the independent variables since we thought they both would have affect on the possible selves of teacher candidates. The findings were reported in the following section.

### III. FINDINGS

The descriptive statistics for each of the subscales are given in Table I. The mean values for the subscales of the expected possible selves reveal that the teacher candidates rated high for positive future selves of professionalism and learning to teach for the next year.

**Table I. Descriptive statistics for the subscales**

| Subscale               | N   | M    | SD   |
|------------------------|-----|------|------|
| professionalism        | 105 | 5.46 | .54  |
| learning to teach      | 105 | 5.15 | .61  |
| uninspired instruction | 105 | 3.03 | 1.58 |
| loss of control        | 105 | 3.12 | 1.29 |
| uncaring teacher       | 105 | 2.66 | 1.34 |

An examination of the means for the negative future selves indicates that the teacher candidates show low amount of fear for the uninspired instruction, loss of control and uncaring teacher. One-way ANOVA tests were carried out to determine any statistically significant differences between the subscale means according to the teacher education programs. There were no differences according to ANOVA results (professionalism  $F_{(2-102)}=0.08$  and  $p>.05$ ; learning to teach  $F_{(2-102)}=0.80$  and  $p>.05$ ; uninspired instruction  $F_{(2-102)}=1.82$  and  $p>.05$ ; loss of control  $F_{(2-102)}=0.73$

and  $p>.05$ ; uncaring teacher  $F_{(2-102)}=0.61$  and  $p>.05$ ). Independent-samples t-tests were done to determine any significant differences for the means of the subscales with respect to gender. Gender had no effect on learning to teach ( $t_{(103)}=-0.84$  and  $p>.05$ ), uninspired instruction ( $t_{(103)}=-1.11$  and  $p>.05$ ) and uncaring teacher ( $t_{(103)}=0.04$  and  $p>.05$ ). Effect of gender on professionalism could not be checked by t-test since one of the assumptions of independent samples t-test, normality condition, was violated. Instead we utilized Mann-Whitney U test. The test results revealed that there was a significant difference with respect to gender ( $U=930.50$  and  $p<.05$ ) and the females had higher mean rank ( $=58.11$ ) compared to the males ( $=43.99$ ). In addition to these, we observed statistically significant difference for the means of loss of control ( $t_{(103)}=-2.70$  and  $p<.05$ ) in favor of females ( $M_{\text{female}}=3.37$  and  $M_{\text{male}}=2.68$ ).

The ratings for each item were considered in order to determine any extreme and important results which would shed more light on to the effectiveness of teacher education. For positive possible selves we thought that higher total percentages for absolutely do not expect and do not expect would be a sign for ineffectiveness of teacher education. The highest percent was 3.8 in this case for the item learn new teaching strategies.

For negative possible selves our thinking was that higher total percentages for do fear and absolutely do fear would be a sign for ineffectiveness of teacher education. The highest percent was 26.6 and the lowest percent was 12.4 for the items. Those percentages calculated for all the items of FTPS are given in Table II.

**Table II. Total percentages for FTPS items**

| Item                                        | Total percentage |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|
| not have a good classroom management plan   | 18.1             |
| not be successful in teaching my content    | 15.2             |
| lose control when students are disruptive   | 17.1             |
| be uncaring to my students                  | 12.4             |
| not be a positive role model to my students | 16.2             |
| become a worksheet teacher                  | 25.7             |
| be a boring teacher                         | 26.6             |
| treat students unfairly                     | 23.8             |
| teach boring lessons                        | 24.8             |

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Considering the mean values for the subscales, positive judgments about the effectiveness of teacher education can be made since the teacher candidates have high means for the expected possible selves and relatively low means for the feared possible selves. On the other hand, as can be seen from Table I, the ratings for the feared possible selves are more dispersed

around the mean. Regarding this and the percentages given in Table II, we believed that further thinking about the effectiveness of teacher education provided is needed. Those items in Table II are related to classroom management and teaching. Therefore, we proposed that the causes for these negative results may be the theory focused nature of the classroom management courses [12] and the ineffective [13] and small number of the school practices offered [14]-[15]. In some cases, rather than contributing to the teacher candidates professional development the school experience courses caused the formation of negative attitudes toward the profession [16].

Teacher candidates from three different programs took place in this study. Although we thought that each program's candidates would differ somehow due to the teaching staff's personal differences, we observed that no differences existed between the subscales' means. The female candidates had higher mean than the males for the professionalism subscale. For females showing higher future selves of professionalism may be partly due to their higher positive attitudes towards the teaching profession [17]- [18].

The male candidates seemed to be showing more competency signs than the females for the loss of control subscale which include classroom management related future selves. The reason for this may be that males are more likely to take control of a conversation and more interrupting compared to females [19].

## CONCLUSION

According to the results of this study we claim that there is a need for elevating the level of effectiveness of teacher education. This may be done by providing a more practice oriented teacher education programs. This study has some limitations. Firstly, NTPSQ items reflect a constrained domain due to its development conditions. Measurement and evaluation related and some other possible selves may emerge for different teacher candidate samples. Next, instead of direct measurement of effectiveness of teacher education, we carried out this study on the basis of the assumption that possible selves are an indirect indicator for making judgments about the effectiveness of teacher education.

Further research can include the development of a more inclusive scale regarding the possible selves of different samples, and the measurement of their possible selves. This was a cross-sectional study, doing a longitudinal study will provide more information about the effectiveness of teacher education.

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