

# The Investigation of Teachers Candidates' Occupational Anxiety Levels and Their Views on Occupational Anxiety

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## Abstract

This research was carried out in order to examine the occupational anxiety levels of the teacher candidates in terms of some variables and to determine their opinions about the occupational concerns of the teacher candidates. The research was carried out in the 2016-2017 Academic Year with the participation of a total of 377 teacher candidates studying at Necmettin Erbakan University 279 of whom studying at Ahmet Keleşoğlu Faculty of Education and 97 of whom studying at Pedagogical Formation Program of Necmettin Erbakan University. As a scale, a sub-dimension of 14 items named "Job Oriented Anxiety" of Occupational Anxiety Scale for Prospective Teachers developed by Cabı and Yalçınalp (2013) was used. As a result of the data obtained from the research and analysis of the results, it was revealed that the occasional anxiety levels of the teacher candidates did not show statistically significant difference in terms of gender and graduated high school type, and they showed a statistically significant difference from the other grades and departments. In addition, when the opinions of teacher candidates about occupational anxiety are examined, it is determined that the most worried parts are that they cannot be assigned after graduating from university, transferring their knowledge to students and establishing authority in class. At the end of the research, suggestions related to the occupational anxieties of the teacher candidates were given.

**Keywords:** Teacher candidates, Occupational anxiety, Pedagogical formation.

## 1. Introduction

In order for Turkey to be among the developed countries, it needs to have well-trained and qualified human resources. Certainly, the ability to raise qualified people is closely related to the educational system of the country. The education system includes many components such as teachers, students, parents, administrators and policy makers. The most important part of this system is the teachers. Teachers play an important role for the future of a country. The most important role that teachers assume is to educate individuals who can build the future of the country. Özden expresses the most basic and most important role of the teachers with these words: The architects of a country, the future of a society, are teachers. Teachers play a leading role in the development of a country, in raising qualified human resources, in ensuring peace and social peace in society, in socializing individuals and preparing social life, and in transferring the cultural values of society to younger generations (Özden, 1999: 9). It is also important to educate teachers with a vital mission to be professionally equipped. Teachers whose basic mission is to ensure learning should have sufficient professional qualifications to perform this mission. As Erden notes, the professional nature of a teacher depends on liberal education, subject area knowledge and teaching knowledge and skills. No matter how well a teacher is in terms of personality, it is not possible to be a successful and effective teacher if the above-mentioned occupational characteristics are not his characteristics (Erden, 1999: 43).

Cannon interprets the anxiety as a result of efforts to rearrange a reaction to the threats that disturb balances or disturbed balances (Kierkegaard 2004; as cited in Develi, 2006). According to Taş (2005), anxiety is a state of alertness that manifests itself in physical, emotional and mental changes that the person experiences when faced with a stimulus (as cited in Başaran, 2010). According to Linn (1975), anxiety is an unpleasant emotional condition characterized by a sense of danger, uneasiness, tension and fear and a characteristic autonomic nervous system activity involving changes in respiratory rate, increased heart rate, pallor, mouth dryness, sweating, muscle tension and shaking (as cited in Karagüven, 1999). In recent years, social and economic changes and developments in education and technology have also affected the feelings and thoughts of teacher candidates. When anxiety is considered as a negative emotional reaction, minimizing its level will raise the quality of life in people (Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1979). So determining the anxiety-causing factors will be the first step in minimizing the anxiety level. It cannot be denied that the senior students of the university are in the most important period of their life and that this period is the beginning of business life or unemployment life. In this period, choice of work, thoughts about taking a role in real life, friendships experienced, fear of not being able to work and different responsibilities can be seen as some of the anxiety creating factors for the individual (Tümerdem, 2007). The studies related to the occupational anxieties of the teacher candidates are among the studies carried out to increase the quality of the teacher candidates raised in the Education Faculties. Today,

teachers are faced with many situations that cause them to feel the anxiety. The increase of student numbers and the difficulties of learning, the anxiety of giving the inadequate education to students, the professional insecurity and the inadequacy are some of them. In addition, it has been found that the level of anxiety is higher for beginners than for experienced teachers (Wagner, 2008). Cabi and Yalçınalp (2009) found that there are concerns about student communication, finding a job, school experience, economic life, occupational acceptance and environment for teacher candidates in a qualitative study conducted with the participation of teacher candidates to determine their concerns about the teaching profession. Postponing a teacher's work because of his anxiety will affect not only himself but also his students. Even if the teachers assume a decision with great difficulty, they will experience an excessive anxiety for the mistakes they may have made and the negative consequences they may have.

According to Parsons and Fuller (1974), teachers are concerned about; self-centered anxieties, task-centered anxieties, and student-centered anxieties. The focus of self-centered anxieties are the concerns like adherence to the teaching profession and competencies. The focus of mission-centered anxieties are the concerns about teaching tasks such as maintaining professional development and whether choosing the right teaching materials or not. Student-centered concerns include topics that are relevant to the student, such as meeting the needs of the students and ensuring environmental conditions that will facilitate the learning process (Parsons & Fuller, 1974; Saban, Korkmaz & Akbaşı, 2004). In the study of Cabi and Yalçınalp (2013), the anxieties experienced by teacher candidates are identified as “job oriented”, “socio-economic”, “interaction with students”, “colleagues and students’ parents”, “individual self-development”, “occupational exam”, “adaptation” and “school management”. In this study “job-oriented anxiety” sub-factor was approached profoundly.

### *1.1 Problem Statement and the Purpose of the Study*

It is of utmost importance that the teachers’, who cannot be replaced in the education system, anxieties and their reasons should be determined for their years of studying the profession. While determining these reasons, it is also important to study on teacher candidates. Identification of the anxieties of teacher candidates with the reasons for the profession will make it easier to classify these anxieties and determine the precautions to be taken against them. In this study, the concerns of the teacher candidates about the teaching profession were examined together with various demographic variables and the researchers tried to find answers to the following questions:

Is there a significant relationship between some demographic characteristics of teacher candidates and levels of occupational anxiety? What are the views of teacher candidates on this topic?

Research Problems are:

1. Is there a significant relationship between the level of occupational anxiety of teacher candidates and their gender?
2. Is there a significant relationship between the level of occupational anxiety of teacher candidates and their grades?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the level of occupational anxiety of teacher candidates and their departments?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the level of occupational anxiety of teacher candidates and their high school types from which they graduated?
5. What are the views of teacher candidates on occupational anxiety?

## **2. Method**

In this section, the method of research, the sample, the scale, the type of the data and the statistical techniques used are emphasized. In this study, explanatory design of mixed method was used. The obtained data were analysed statistically in the SPSS 21 Package program and the significance level was tested at a level of 0.05. During the statistical analysis, in order to describe personal characteristics of teacher candidates descriptive frequency and percentage distributions were calculated. The mean (X) and standard deviation (sd) values were used while the scores obtained by the teacher candidates on the anxiety scale were being determined. Independent group-t test was used for two sets of comparisons, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for three or more sets of comparisons.

The sample of the study includes 377 teacher candidates studying at Necmettin Erbakan University 279 of whom studying at Ahmet Keleşoğlu Faculty of Education and 97 of whom studying at Pedagogical Formation Program of Necmettin Erbakan University. The distribution of teacher candidates in terms of department and gender is shown in Table 1:

Table 1: The distribution of teacher candidates in terms of department and gender

Department	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Special Education	48	28	76
Science Education	41	7	48
Psychological C. and Guidance	31	5	36
Social Sciences	57	22	79
Computer Ed. & Inst. Tech.	24	17	41
Ped. Formation	84	13	97
<b>Total</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>377</b>

The distribution of the teacher candidates in terms of the department they are studying at and the high school they graduated from is shown in Table 2:

Table 2: The distribution of the teacher candidates in terms of the department and the high school

Department/ High School	High School	Anatolian	Anatolian Teacher	Science High Sch.	Vocational High Sch.	İmam Hatip	Open Education	Basic High School	Military High Sch.	Total
Special Ed.	9	18	25	-	23	-	1	-	-	76
Science Ed.	7	24	2	-	1	11	1	2	-	48
PC.Guid.	2	15	3	2	2	8	1	2	1	36
Social Sc.	37	18	2	-	5	11	2	4	-	79
Computer E.	11	2	-	-	28	0	-	-	-	41
Ped. Form.	36	17	1	1	9	25	8	-	-	97
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>377</b>

Cabı and Yağcınalp (2013) developed a scale named Occupational Anxiety Scale for Prospective Teachers. The scale comprising a total of 45 items consists of an eight factor structure. These eight dimensions are identified as “job oriented”, “socio-economic”, “interaction with students”, “colleagues and students’ parents”, “individual self-development”, “occupational exam”, “adaptation” and “school management”. In this study “job-oriented anxiety”. The researchers who developed the scale found that the eight factors’ Cronbach’s alpha coefficients included in the scale were changed between 0.94 and 0.67 and the total reliability coefficient estimated from the scale was 0.95. In this study, a sub-dimension of 14 items named “Job Oriented Anxiety” was used. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of this study was calculated as .90. A question was added on the bottom of the scale to determine teacher candidates’ anxieties of the teaching profession "What are your anxieties about the teaching profession? Please explain with a few sentences. "

### 3. Findings

In this section, the findings obtained from the research are dealt with according to sub-problems of the research. First sub-problem of the study is “Is there a significant relationship between the level of occupational anxiety of teacher candidates and their gender?” The results obtained from the Independent T Test on this sub-problem are given in Table 3:

Table 3: Teacher Candidates’ Genders and Occupational Anxiety Levels

Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	ss	p
Female	285	3,8095	,74662	.79
Male	92	3,8331	,82224	

When the Table 3 including the data obtained as a result of the Independent Samples T Test performed is observed, it is seen that there is no significant relationship between the genders of the teacher candidates participating in the research and the levels of occupational anxiety. The next sub-problem of the study is stated as “Is there a significant relationship between the level of occupational anxiety of teacher candidates and their grades?” The results obtained from the Independent Samples T Test on this sub-problem are given in Table 4:

Table 4: Teacher Candidates’ Grades and Occupational Anxiety Levels

Grade	N	$\bar{X}$	ss	p
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	125	3,9869	,74393	.002
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	252	3,7302	,76200	

When Table 4, which shows the data obtained as a result of the Independent Samples T Test performed, is observed, it is seen that there is a significant relationship between the grades of the teacher candidates participating in the research and the levels of occupational anxiety. The results of the ANOVA on whether there is a significant relationship between the departments of the teacher candidates and the levels of occupational anxiety are shown in Table 5:

Table 5: Teacher Candidates' Departments and Occupational Anxiety Levels

Department	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
Special Educ.	76	4,0141	,68024
Science Educ.	48	4,0848	,70920
P.C.Guidance	36	3,8571	,62667
Social Sci.	79	3,8427	,92796
Computer Ed.	41	3,2352	,33436
Ped. Form.	97	3,7334	,75751
<b>Total</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>3,8153</b>	<b>,76470</b>

Source	Sum of Squares	SD	Mean Squares	F	p
Between Groups	21,060	5	4,212	7,860	,000
Within Groups	198,814	371	,536		
<b>Total</b>	<b>219,875</b>	<b>376</b>			

When Table 5 is analysed, it is seen that there is a statistically significant relationship between the level of occupational anxiety and the departments at the teacher candidates are studying. The results of the ANOVA on whether there is a significant relationship between the high school type the teacher candidates graduated from and the levels of occupational anxiety are shown in Table 6:

Table 6: Teacher Candidates' High Schools and Occupational Anxiety Levels

High School Type	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
High School	103	3,8717	,79881
Anatolian High School	94	3,8009	,78818
Anatolian Teacher High Sch.	33	3,8853	,63108
Science High School	3	4,0238	,99060
Vocational High School	68	3,5525	,68017
İmam-Hatip High School	55	3,9494	,82061
Open Education High Sch.	13	3,9835	,51106
Basic High School	8	3,9286	,84688
<b>Total</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>3,8153</b>	<b>,76470</b>

Source	Sum of Squares	SD	Mean Squares	F	p
Between Groups	6,794	7	,971	1,681	,112
Within Groups	213,081	369	,577		
<b>Total</b>	<b>219,875</b>	<b>376</b>			

When Table 6 is analysed, it can be seen that there is no statistically significant relationship between the high school types they graduated from and the occupational anxiety levels of the teacher candidates. The percentage and frequency values of the answers given to the question asked to teacher candidates "What are your anxieties about the teaching profession?" are shown in Table 7:

**Table 7: Occupational Anxieties Specified by Teacher Candidates**

Anxiety	n	%
1. I won't be able to assigned	70	18.5
2. I cannot transfer my knowledge to my students	41	10.8
3. I cannot be an authoritative	28	7.4
4. I'll be an ordinary teacher, I can't excite attention on students	25	6.6
5. I can't provide my students with enough instruction	19	5
6. The value and respect shown to the teaching profession	16	4.2
7. Using the proper methods or techniques	12	3.1
8. Considering the individual differences	12	3.1
9. Working with the help of interested and self-sacrificing parents	10	2.6
10. I can't practice the methods I learnt at the faculty	10	2.6
11. I won't be able to qualified in my early teaching years	10	2.6
12. Working in a coordination with the school principals	9	2.3
13. Having communication problems with my colleagues	8	2.1
14. I won't be able to follow the innovations	7	1.8
15. I won't be able to see my mistakes	5	1.3
16. I won't be able to teach at a city/school I want to work in.	5	1.3
17. Teaching at a low-level class	5	1.3
18. Being too excited while teaching in classroom	5	1.3
19. Whether the teacher salary will be enough for me or not	5	1.3
20. I won't be able to use effective evaluation methods	4	1
21. Being an unlovable teacher	4	1
22. Dying down in the system	3	0.7
23. Managing the curriculum for time	3	0.7
24. Loving the job	2	0.5
25. Using the time effectively and efficiently	2	0.5
26. Frequently changing curriculum	2	0.5
27. I won't be able to evaluate the exam papers in time	1	0.2
28. I won't be able to overcome the prejudice for my lesson	1	0.2

Remarkable and striking answers from the collected data related to the occupational anxieties of the teacher candidates can be listed as follows:

"I am anxious to apply wrong methods and techniques according to the individual differences of the students or not to find the appropriate method" (S21)

"We do not have any concerns about students because we are in special education department. Our main concern is that we cannot provide appropriate education for the special education students and their families who come us. When the family comes together for guidance with me, I worry about not being able to help them when they ask for advice." (S28)

"When I saw people in the teaching profession, I saw that they were impatient with their students. I especially think that teachers in special education should patient. Human beings must love and feel loved, that is, a teacher must approach his student with love like a bond between a mother and her infant above all. As a result, I think that teachers will make progress in education and training. In short, a teacher should be patient, know that time works wonders, and approach his student with love as he approaches his son." (S55)

"I am very concerned that I cannot have as much knowledge as I need, and that I cannot provide the necessary instruction for my students. I have a feeling as if I do not know anything at all." (S74)

"The generations are changing over and over. Student behaviours at this time are very different with student behaviours in my time. I worry about behaviour." (S84)

"My worry is only going to a country far away from my family. I believe I will give to children, love of animals, love of nature, love of Atatürk, and mercy except the lessons." (S92)

"I did not select department willingly. I think I cannot achieve." (S102)

"Not being assigned, not being assigned, not being assigned..." (S103)

"Teaching was actually a department I wanted to study at. But after I finish the school I worry about not being assigned and selecting another profession." (S104)

"I don't want to be a teacher." (S160)

"Actually, being assigned is my greatest concern. But I have a promise to myself "to be a teacher" in any way. I think that I will be able to work with that concern because it gives me courage. No other country or any other person is causing any anxiety. I have no worries that I can teach everywhere and in all conditions." (S165)

"There are teachers whose students find boring and not boring. I am worried about being a teacher that

students listen to without being a boring teacher." (S188)

"I like teaching profession. I want to teach children something and be very influential in their development. But I fear that I cannot be fully qualified for my students." (S195)

"My greatest concern is not teach students the correct information. Because an incorrect information can lead to enormous problems in the child's life." (S208)

"My personal concern for the profession is that we have a wide field of knowledge: history, geography, citizenship. I am partly concerned that I cannot dominate the whole field." (S214)

"Our primary concern is not in the teaching profession but rather in reaching the teaching profession. When I reach my profession, the first concern in my mind is undoubtedly the inadequacy of the educational environment and the stolidity of students and school management. For being a strict discipline and order in the teaching profession; it is my greatest concern to meet with a disorganized school administration and colleagues." (S216)

"I am worried that the increasing tendency of violence and the rise of conscientious values are beginning to disappear, as students now tend to focus on technological tools, social media, less attention to the lessons, students do not pay attention to the moral rules of the past." (S220)

"My concern for the teaching profession is that after a certain period of time there is a generation gap between me and my students and they cannot understand me. Doing all the school and house work together... This is my concern for the future. In addition, I am worried that if I face a inclusive student or a student at that function, I will very much act with emotion rather than in the direction of professional knowledge." (S233)

"I am afraid that I cannot find a self-teaching technique." (S260)

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This research was carried out to investigate the levels of occupational anxiety of teacher candidates in terms of some variables and to determine the opinions of teacher candidates about their occupational anxieties. As a result of the data obtained from the research and analysis of the results, it was revealed that the occupational anxiety levels of the teacher candidates did not show any significant difference in terms of gender and high school graduate, and they showed a significant difference in terms of grades and departments. In addition, when the opinions of teacher candidates about occupational anxiety are examined, it is determined that they feel anxiety about not to be assigned after graduating from university, transferring their knowledge to students and establishing authority in class.

When studies investigating the levels of professional anxiety according to gender variable are examined; it is seen that female students are more worried than male students (Akgün et al., 2007; Bozdam 2008; Dilmaç 2010; Saban et al., 2005; Taşgün 2006). Efe (2013), on the other hand, did not find any significant difference between the anxiety levels of the teacher candidates and their genders, but pointed out that there was a meaningful difference between the occupational anxieties of the teacher candidates and their ages. According to literature studies; it was determined that the mean scores of the teacher candidates regarding the self-centred, task-centred and student-centred levels of anxiety differed significantly according to age. It has been shown that as a result of the decline in the level of occupational anxiety loss in parallel with the growth of the age, the experience grows with the growth of the age and therefore the anxieties can be kept under more control (Bozdam, 2008; Saban et al., 2005). In addition to the researches that determined there is a significant relationship between the type of high school graduated and vocational anxiety, there are also studies that determine that there is no relationship between the type of high school graduated and the level of occupational anxiety (Dilmaç, 2010; Özsarı, 2008; Saracaloğlu 2009)

Among the answers to the question "What are your concerns about the teaching profession" directed at the students during the research, it has been determined that the greatest concerns of the teacher candidates are that they cannot be assigned after graduating from university and therefore unable to do their profession. This is perhaps one of the most important problems of Turkey. Teacher candidates enter the university without knowing whether they will begin teaching when they graduate. On the other hand, some of the teacher candidates have pointed out that they are studying at a department where they do not want to. At this point the attraction of the teaching profession and learning at an education faculty need to be restored the old reputation. Because, according to the answers given, some of the prospective teachers are concerned about the value given to the teaching profession and the respect shown.

Teacher candidates' anxieties about not being able to transfer their knowledge to students shouldn't be considered unimportant. Teaching practice classes in the last year of the education faculties should be given more time in the education faculty teaching programs, if necessary, teacher candidates should have teaching practice course by the 2nd or 3rd grade.

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