

5th World Conference on Educational Sciences - WCES 2013

The Hopelessness Level of 3rd Grade Elementary Mathematics Preservice Teachers' and Their Perspectives about Future

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the hopelessness level of 3rd grade elementary mathematics preservice teachers and their perspectives about future at government university in 2011 – 2012 academic year. The sample of the study is 73 elementary preservice teacher. Because the existing situation aimed to be determine screening model used. The 20 item Beck Hopelessness scale scale that was generated by Beck et. al (1974), and reliability and validity test was made by Seber (1991) and Durak (1994) is used to determine the hopelessness level of 3rd grade elementary mathematics preservice teachers and their perspectives about future. The hopelessness interval is determined by calculating the average score. 4 open ended questions are also asked. Suggestions made in accordance with the results of the study.

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Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of Academic World Education and Research Center.

Keywords: Mathematics preservice teachers, hopelessness, future

1. Introduction

Social and economic problems, university entrance tests, education and unemployment affects young people's spiritual development in a negative way. The most important problem that they experience at this time is hopelessness (Şahin, 2009). Hopelessness is defined as the negative attitude of the person about future expectations (Abramson et.al., 1989) and hope is defined as the strong will and positive belief for reaching an aim. This two opposite expectation is shaped according to situations and conditions (Dilbaz ve Seber, 1993). Thus, the hopelessness and hope level of individual's present differences, and same individual express different feelings in different conditions. The level of these feelings affects the direction of the future perspectives. Factors as difficulties in education, unemployment, poverty (Özmen et al., 2008), ambiguity and future concern increase the hopelessness

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level of young people. It is important to understand the perspective and expectations of young people who are the future of the study.

Most of the researches indicate hopelessness has a negative effect on health, perspective, success and many other concepts (Beck et.al, 1985; Abramson et al., 1989; Chang et al., 1994; Poch et al., 2004). Also hopelessness has a significant role in depression, and the relationship between depression and suicide (Fasko and Fasko, 1990). It is thought that social competency and psychological health has a close relationship between hopelessness, desperation and instability (Poch et al., 2004 akt. Oğuztürk et al., 2011). Thus, the direction of individual's expectancies, negative or positive level affects personal wellbeing and social contribution. The development of societies directly related to the qualified individuals and their productions. The improvement of these qualifications and their reflection to society is strongly related to the willingness of individual and hope level about future.

The more positive attitude an individual represents about future expectations, the stronger of will of individual to produce and survive. Thus, as educators of the next generations it is important to analyze the hope level, their problems and their perspectives about future. In the light of this idea determination of the hopelessness level of 3rd grade elementary mathematics preservice teachers and their perspectives about future is aimed in this study

2. Methodology

The sample of the study consists 73 third grade preservice mathematics teachers who are students at Marmara University in 2012-2013 academic year. Hopelessness test generated by Beck et al. (1974) is used to determine the hopelessness level of the sample. 8 open ended questions was asked to analyze the general view of the sample about future.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of hopelessness scale was found $\alpha=.86$ by Seber (1991) and found $\alpha=.85$ by Durak (1994). In this research Cronbach Alpha coefficient is found as $\alpha = .85$. Score interval is 0-20. The higher the score is the more hopeless the individual (Deveci, Ulutaşdemir ve Açık, 2011). This scale consists 20 statements related to feelings and ideas about the future and scores calculated as 0-1. The answer 'yes' carries 1 point in 11 questions (2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20), and answer 'no' carries 1 point in 9 questions (1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 19). In other situations 0 point is given. The score can be changed between 0-20 intervals. Beck and Steer (1988) classified their sample into four groups; 0-3 means there is no hopelessness, 4-8 means slight hopelessness, 9-14 middle level hopelessness, 15-20 severe hopelessness (Duman et al.,2009). In this study analyze of arithmetic average and standard deviation values are calculated. The hopelessness level of students is interpreted according to evaluation criteria of the scale. The general profile of the future perspective of students is constructed after the evaluation of the answers.

3. Findings

Findings of the study are evaluated in this part of the study.

Table 1. Findings Related to Hopelessness Level of Preservice Teachers

1. Scores from the scale				
Number of students	\bar{X}	Ss	Lowest	Highest

86

4.37

4.04

0

18

The average hopelessness level of preservice teachers is calculated as 4.37 and standard deviation 4.04. The hopelessness level presents variety between 0-20 intervals.

According to score intervals determined by Beck and Steer (1988) the hopelessness level of preservice mathematics teachers (34.37 ± 4.04) 4-8 shows slight hopelessness. It is possible to say that preservice mathematics teachers are not so hopeless about the future. In addition to this some of the students are severely hopeless about future and some of the students are very hopeful about the future.

One of the four questions related to general perspective about future is; 'Do you concern about the future, what kind of concerns do you have?'. Generally preservice teachers concern about unemployment, uncertainty of working place, not to be assigned, being successful and not to be graduated. Also, they concern about disappointing their family, having a family, reaching their aims, healthcare and KPSS exam. In addition to this economic problems, and hesitations about their occupation are also source of concern.

The second question is 'what are the sources of your concern and situations cause hopelessness in you?'. Some of the answers to this question are unfair recruitment, taking more responsibility, less chance of to be assigned, artificial relationships, exam stress, economic conditions, political situations of the country, unfair exam system. Also changing environment of the country, unsuccessful results, expectations of the families, inadequate education causes hopelessness.

Third question 'does your education affect your view towards future or how it affected, did your level of concern changed during this education?'. There are different perspectives about the effect of education on concern levels. Some of the preservice teachers claimed that pedagogy courses affected their view positively, mathematics courses improved their thinking ability, and education helped to comprehend the importance of their profession and increased their confidence level. Thus, education has a positive effect on their perspective towards future. Some of the students indicated that their education is not adequate, they need to go to internship during the education, the education based on memorizing dampens their abilities and some of the professors present negative attitudes. They inferred that education had negative effect on their perspective towards future.

Last question is 'how does your satisfaction level (satisfied /unsatisfied) about your profession effect your perspective about future?'. Some of the preservice teachers think that the profession as a teacher does not get the respect that it deserves, and they lose the belief they have about their profession. On the other hand some of others defends even it is not satisfying physically it is satisfying spiritually and this encourages them about future.

4. Results

The average hopelessness level of elementary preservice mathematics teachers is calculated as $\bar{X}=4.37$ as a results of the evaluation of the findings. It is determined that preservice teachers experience slight hopelessness. When the results are analyzed one by one it is seen that some of the students experience severe hopelessness. They gave different answers to other four questions that were asked to get a deeper understanding about their perspectives about future.

According to results students generally concern about; unemployment, economic conditions and uncertainty of future. In addition to this some of the students found their education sufficient and some not, and this situation affects their future perspectives in negative or positive way. Also their future perspectives changes according to their attitude towards profession. Students who appreciates and loves this profession presents positive attitudes, while

students who has negative approaches concerns about future. Thus, students experience hopelessness about different issues and concern about future. It is important to analyze the situation and try to overcome these problems.

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