

WCES 2012

Effects of pre-school teachers' self-esteem on teacher attitudes

Rengin Zembat^a*, R. Ceren Gursoy^b

^a *Atatürk Education Faculty, Marmara University, İstanbul, 34722, Turkey*

^b *Second affiliation, Address, City and Postcode, Country*

Abstract

In this study the effects of pre-school teachers' self-esteem on teacher attitudes was analyzed. The data collection tools used in the study were the Teacher Attitude Scale for Pre-School Teachers developed by Bilgin (1995) and the Self-Esteem Scale developed by Arıcağ (1999). The tools were completed by 307 pre-school teachers in the second half of 2007-2008 academic year. It was studied whether a meaningful difference was caused in the subdimensions of the two tools by the variables of age, attending graduate school, being satisfied with income, marital status, intentional choice of the teaching profession, being content with the profession, and having in-service training. In order to test this arithmetic means, one-way ANOVA, independent groups t-test and Pearson Moments Correlation were used. All statistical analyzes in the study were made by using the SPSS package program. The level of significance was set at minimum .05. The results showed a weak positive relationship between pre-school teachers' self-esteem and teacher attitudes.

© 2012 Published by Elsevier Ltd. Selection and/or peer review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Uzunboylu

Keywords: Pre-school teacher, self-esteem, teacher attitudes;

1. Introduction

Education is the purposeful process of creating cognitive, emotional and kinesthetic knowledge, skills and attitudes, or a favorable behavioral change by making use of students' experiences. At the same time, transferring the scientific and cultural accumulation of a society to future generations and changing and developing the natural and social environment are also among education's main functions (Çelikkıran, 1995). Teachers are the main element of the education system. They have a crucial role in the development of a country, establishment of a qualified workforce, maintenance of peace and harmony within a society, socialization and preparation of individuals for social life, and transfer of a society's culture and values to future generations (Özden, 2002:9).

Teachers' individual qualities are believed to have an important role in the effectiveness and efficiency of education. Teachers today are expected to place an emphasis on practice and help children grow, instead of merely transfer knowledge to them. Teachers' treatment of children determines their success or failure (Karahana 2003). The formation of desired behavior in students is linked directly to teachers' qualities and attitudes (Yapıcı and Yapıcı, 2000).

Oktay (2002) states that pre-school teachers should have sound knowledge and skills in the field, be psychologically stable and display exemplary behavior, as well as possess a love for students and the profession. The pre-school teacher, who transfers knowledge, manages the process of education and maintains order and

* Rengin Zembat

E-mail address: rzembat@marmara.edu.tr

discipline within the class, is the first adult a child encounters outside of the family. That is why the child perceives the teacher as a wise person who knows everything (Hanyaloğlu, 1995). This brings the teachers' identity to the forefront. Contemporary psychology is divided into two: humanistic and non-humanistic. While both emphasize research, understanding, and supporting functional and healthy social institutions, one important difference between them is the psychology of self-esteem. According to humanistic psychology, self-esteem has a major role on human behavior (Mruk, 2008). Self-esteem, which develops in relation to the sense of identity, is the state of appreciation that emerges from a positive self-concept as a result of self evaluation. It enables people to be positive, find themselves worthy of love and have self-confidence (Kahrman, 2005). It has a major role in one's life and is the source of motivational power (Gün, 2006).

John Rawls (1973) defines the sense of identity as "the first good" in democratic societies. He states that therapists and teachers have a professional interest in the individual's self-esteem. Jung takes the concept of self as the centre of conscience. The self appears in the first developmental stage of childhood (Cited in Stevens 1999:83). During the development of the self, the family meets needs and oversees cognitive, intellectual, emotional and social development. This is especially helpful for children to develop different personalities and positive self-esteem (Gladding, 2002:83).

Despite the possibility that the relationship between self-esteem and the students' learning and attitudes may not be as strong as it is assumed, it has been thought that there is a strong relationship between a student's self-esteem and learning and attitude, and self-esteem has been taken as the primary factor (Swinson, 2008). Karahan (2005) states that a teacher's personal differences cause differences in his opinions and practices regarding education. In other words, it is important that personal traits affect teacher attitudes because this affects not only teachers' lives but also the lives of those around him.

Hence, it seems possible that a pre-school teacher's self-esteem, which changes according to personal characteristics, plays a role in executing this profession. This has great importance in children's development and their future. In light of this information, the present study analyzes whether pre-school teachers' self-esteem makes any difference in their teaching attitudes.

2. Methodology

2.1. Participants and Setting

The population of the study comprises teachers of kindergartens and nursery schools affiliated with the Ministry of Education and located in the European side of Istanbul during the academic year of 2007-2008. The study sample included 307 randomly selected pre-school teachers employed in schools located in Beşiktaş, Şişli, Sarıyer, Bakırköy districts of Istanbul. These districts were chosen to make it more convenient for the researcher.

2.2. Data Collection Instruments

Personal Information Form: There are nine questions in the form which was prepared to determine the variables thought to be related to the concept of self-esteem and teacher attitudes.

Teacher Attitude Scale for Pre-School Teachers: The Teacher Attitude Scale was prepared by Bilgin (1995) by making use of the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory. It has been tested for reliability and validity.

Self-Esteem Scale: The Self-Esteem Scale was developed by Arıcağ (1999) as a result of studies initiated in 1996. It is a five point likert type attitude scale. Before the scale was developed, the self-esteem literature was reviewed. Afterwards, 40 last year students from the department of elementary school teaching were asked to write essays on "self-esteem", as a result of which positive and negative comments about self-esteem attitude were determined.

After the purpose of both scales was explained to the teachers by the researcher, pre-school teachers were given three days to complete the scale. Completed scales were collected on the due date.

2.3. Data Analysis Procedure

As this study aims to analyze the effect of pre-school teachers’ self-esteem on their teaching attitudes, it follows the relational survey model. The data collection tools used in the study were a Personal Information Form, the Teacher Attitude Scale for Pre-School Teachers and the Self- Esteem Scale. The obtained data were analyzed by using arithmetic mean, one-way ANOVA, independent groups t-test and Pearson Moments Correlation.

3. Results (Findings)

This part of the study aims to make clear the statistical analysis of the obtained data related to the examined variables and the findings obtained through this analysis.

Table 1. Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviation Distributions of Pre-School Teachers’ Self-Esteem

	N	Lowest	Highest	A. Mean.	St.dev.
<i>Self Value</i>	307	2,71	5,00	4,40	,51
<i>Self-Confidence</i>	307	2,78	5,00	4,42	,46
<i>Depressive Feelings</i>	307	1,00	5,00	4,45	,62
<i>Self-Sufficiency</i>	307	1,80	5,00	4,59	,57
<i>Success</i>	307	2,83	5,00	4,42	,51
<i>Self-Esteem</i>	307	2,94	5,00	4,45	,42

When pre-school teachers’ self-esteem levels were investigated in line with the first goal of the study, it was observed that the majority have high scores in success and self-confidence subdimensions and low scores in the depressive feelings dimension.

Table 2 Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviation Distributions of Pre-School Teachers’ Preschool Education Attitudes

	n	Lowest	Highest	A. Mean	St. Dev.
<i>Democratic Attitude</i>	307	1,94	5,00	4,36	,41
<i>Autocratic Attitude</i>	307	1,38	4,38	2,66	,54
<i>Apathetic Attitude</i>	307	1,26	4,00	1,96	,39
<i>Teaching Attitude</i>	307	2,23	4,19	2,96	,25

An analysis of Table 2 reveals that, appropriate to the second goal of the study, teachers displayed democratic attitude.

Table 3 Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient of Pre-School Teachers’ Attitude and Self-Esteem Scales

	n	x	Ss	r	p
Self Value	307	4,40	.51		
Democratic Attitude	307	4,36	.41	.24	.00

Autocratic Attitude	307	2,66	.54	-.20	.00
Apathetic Attitude	307	1,96	.39	-.28	.00
Self-Confidence	307	4,42	.46		
Democratic Attitude	307	4,36	.41	.35	.00
Autocratic Attitude	307	2,66	.54	-.16	.00
Apathetic Attitude	307	1,96	.39	-.29	.00
Depressive Feelings	307	4,45	.62		
Democratic Attitude	307	4,36	.41	.21	.00
Autocratic Attitude	307	2,66	.54	-.15	.00
Apathetic Attitude	307	1,96	.39	-.31	.00
Self-Sufficiency	307	4,59	.57		
Democratic Attitude	307	4,36	.41	.30	.00
Autocratic Attitude	307	2,66	.54	-.24	.00
Apathetic Attitude	307	1,96	.39	-.30	.00
Success	307	4,42	.51		
Democratic Attitude	307	4,36	.41	.30	.26
Autocratic Attitude	307	2,66	.54	-.25	.00
Apathetic Attitude	307	1,96	.39	-.34	.00
Self Value	307	4,40	.51		
Democratic Attitude	307	4,36	.41	.24	.00
Autocratic Attitude	307	2,66	.54	-.20	.00
Apathetic Attitude	307	1,96	.39	-.28	.00
Self-Confidence	307	4,42	.46		
Democratic Attitude	307	4,36	.41	.35	.00
Autocratic Attitude	307	2,66	.54	-.16	.00
Apathetic Attitude	307	1,96	.39	-.29	.00
Depressive Feelings	307	4,45	.62		
Democratic Attitude	307	4,36	.41	.21	.00
Autocratic Attitude	307	2,66	.54	-.15	.00
Apathetic Attitude	307	1,96	.39	-.31	.00
Self-Sufficiency	307	4,59	.57		
Democratic Attitude	307	4,36	.41	.30	.00
Autocratic Attitude	307	2,66	.54	-.24	.00
Apathetic Attitude	307	1,96	.39	-.30	.00
Success	307	4,42	.51		
Democratic Attitude	307	4,36	.41	.30	.26
Autocratic Attitude	307	2,66	.54	-.25	.00
Apathetic Attitude	307	1,96	.39	-.34	.00

As shown in Table 3, while there is a positive and meaningful difference between the subdimensions of self-esteem, self value/self-confidence/depressive feelings/self-sufficiency/success and teaching attitudes, there is a negative difference between the subdimensions of self-esteem and autocratic and apathetic subdimensions of teaching attitudes.

4. Discussion

The results showed that while the subdimensions of self-confidence and success had the highest means, the lowest mean belonged to depressive feelings. According to the means obtained from the self-esteem scale, pre-school teachers who participated in this study have an average level of self-esteem. However, in earlier studies, no data were reported concerning pre-school teachers' self-esteem.

It was determined that pre-school teachers who participated in this study displayed the democratic attitude. Very few pre-school teachers stated that they adopted the autocratic attitude. Karahan (2005), in a study with secondary school geography teachers, indicated that they had a positive attitude. Şen (2006) found in a study with teacher candidates that their teaching attitudes were at an average level.

The present study found a positive but weak meaningful relationship between the democratic attitude and self value/self-confidence/depressive feelings/self-sufficiency/success. It may be argued that teachers with high self-esteem display the democratic attitude. No meaningful difference was found between the self-esteem subdimensions of self value, self-confidence, depressive feelings, self-sufficiency, success and the ages of pre-school teachers. In the present study, a meaningful difference was not found in the subdimensions of democratic, autocratic and apathetic attitudes according to the age of pre-school teachers. This result also supports the findings of Bilgin (1996) and Karahan (2005).

The results of the study did not reveal a meaningful difference between the subdimension of self-esteem and the institution that pre-school teachers graduated from. In this study, no meaningful difference was found between the subdimensions of self value, self-confidence, self-sufficiency, and contentment with the profession of teaching.

On the other hand, Aslan and Akyol (2006) found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and self-esteem. In the present study too, a meaningful difference was found between depressive feelings and contentment with one's profession. The ones who were satisfied with their profession had a higher score in the subdimension of success than those who were not satisfied. This is an expected result as being content with one's profession and working happily are both factors that increase success.

A meaningful difference was found between the subdimensions of self value and intentional choice of one's profession. Several previous studies also revealed that an intentional choice of one's profession and being satisfied with it positively affects one's self value.

While intentionally choosing the profession does not create a difference in the dimensions of democratic and autocratic attitude, there is a meaningful difference between the dimensions of apathetic attitude and intentional choice of one's profession. These findings are parallel to Aslan and Akyol-Köksal (2006)'s findings. However, they are different to the results of Bilgin (1996) and Karahan (2005).

References

- Arıcak, T. (1999). Grupla Psikolojik Danışma Yoluyla Benlik Ve Mesleki Benlik Saygısının Geliştirilmesi, Doktora Tezi. Marmara Üniversitesi, İstanbul.
- Aslan, D. ve Köksal Akyol, A. "Okul öncesi öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğine yönelik tutumları ve mesleki benlik saygıları üzerine bir araştırma", Avrupa birliği sürecinde okul öncesi eğitimin geleceği sempozyumu, II Cilt, 201-214. Ya Pa Yayın Pazarlama Sanayi ve Tic. A.Ş. İstanbul, 2007.
- Bilgin, H. (1995). Okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında çalışan öğretmenlerin öğretmenlik tutumlarının incelenmesi. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Marmara Üniversitesi, İstanbul.
- Bilgin, N. (1996). İnsan ilişkileri ve kimlik. İstanbul: Sistem Yayıncılık
- Çelikkıran, A. (1995). İnsan, Çevre, Eğitim. Eğitim Yönetimi Dergisi, Yıl:1 Sayı: 4 Ankara: Önder Matbaacılık
- Gladding, T. S. (2002). Family Therapy: History, Theory and Practice. New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Gün, E. (2006). Spor yapan ve spor yapmayan ergenlerde benlik saygısı düzeylerinin karşılaştırılması. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Çukurova Üniversitesi, Adana.
- Hanyaoloğlu, E. (1995). Okul Öncesi Kurum Öğretmenlerinin Kisilik Özellikleri ile sahip Oldukları Anne-Babalık Tutumları Arasındaki ilişki. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Marmara Üniversitesi, İstanbul.
- Kahriman, I. (2005). Karadeniz teknik üniversitesi trabzon sağlık yüksekokulu öğrencilerinin benlik saygıları ve atılganlık düzeylerinin bazı değişkenler açısından incelenmesi. C.Ü Hemsire Yüksekokulu Dergisi. Sayı:9.
- Karahan, E. (2003). Öğretmen Adaylarının Öğretmenlik Tutumları açısından İncelenmesi. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Marmara Üniversitesi, İstanbul.

- Mruk, C. J. (2008). The Psychology of Self-Esteem: A Potential Common Ground for Humanistic Positive Psychology and Positivistic Positive Psychology. *Humanistic Psychologis*. Vol. 36. Issue 2, p143-158.
- Oktay, A. (2000). Yaşamın Sihirli Yılları: Okul Öncesi Dönem. İstanbul: Epsilon Yayınevi.
- Özden, Y. (1999). Eğitimde Dönüşüm Eğitimde Yeni Değerler. Ankara: Pegema Yayınları.
- Sen, B. (2006). Sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının öğretmenlik tutumları ile öğrenme ve ders çalışma stratejileri arasındaki ilişki. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Marmara Üniversitesi, İstanbul.
- Stevens, A. (1999). Çev. Ayda Çakır. Jung. Ankara: Kaknüs Yayınları
- Swinson, J. (2008). The Self-Esteem Of Pupils In Schools For Pupils With Social, Emotional And Behavioural Difficulties: Myth And Reality. *British Journal of Special Education*. 35 (3), 165-172.
- Yapıcı M., Yapıcı Ş. (2005). Gelişim ve öğrenme psikolojisi. Ankara : Anı yayıncılık.

"This Study in Supported by Marmara University Office of Scientific Research Projects, 2012 (EGT-D-040112-0011)"