



EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC MOTIVATION AND LEARNING STRATEGIES OF TURKISH TEACHER CANDIDATES AND THEIR SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS IN TEACHING

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Abstract:

Self-efficacy is an individual's awareness of oneself. In other words, it is to know how much an individual can do about a situation or a skill, briefly knowing oneself. Each individual's self-efficacy, their potential differs in various fields considering individual differences. However, it is seen that self-efficacy is an important concept in an individual's learning process when all these are taken into account. Self-efficacy affecting the learning processes and academic success is also effective on the individual's profession in the future especially when this profession will shape and lead new generations. Therefore, the study was conducted with teacher candidates. The aim of the study was to identify whether there was a relationship between the learning strategies and academic motivation of teacher candidates and their beliefs of self-efficacy in teaching. The study group included the students of the department of Turkish Teaching in Kafkas University. According to the results of the study, it was found that the teacher candidates had good averages regarding their motivation, learning strategies, and self-efficacy beliefs for teaching. While there was no significant difference in terms of gender variable, positive relationships were found between the variables.

Keywords: academic motivation, strategies, learning, Turkish teacher candidates

1. Introduction

The ultimate goal to achieve at the end of learning and teaching processes is success. It is important to address this matter in various ways, especially considering how individual differences may affect the process and outcome. Therefore, every individual will give different feedback to the process. This attracts attention to the self-efficacy concept. Self-

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efficacy is defined as *“judgments regarding the skills of individuals to organise and display actions that may enable them to reach a certain performance”* (Saracaloğlu, Karasakaloğlu and Gencil, 2010: 266). In other words, it can be stated that self-efficacy is the individual's knowledge of what do to and to what extent and his/her utilisation of this knowledge in acquiring skills. Zimmerman (1995) explains the self-efficacy perception as how individuals are competent in skills that may affect the outcome of a task, behavior or situation, rather than the skills themselves.

2. Literature Review

Academic achievement is also associated with how the individual dominates over learning strategies as much as the teaching process he/she receives. In other words, knowing and being aware of self-efficacy is a key to success. However, the road to success passes through knowing the self and knowing how to learn. Thus, positive motivation and learning strategies affect the academic achievement positively (Büyüköztürk, Akgün, Kahveci and Demirel, 2004).

Motive is the individual's preparation to achieving his/her goal. Motivation is everything he/she does or plans to do in this direction. *“Motivation is a whole of an individual's behaviors and expectations. Motivatedness contains behaviors which form as a result of desires. A motivated individual is someone who has integrated his/her knowledge and beliefs with successful behaviors”* (Büyüköztürk et al., 2004: 210). However, it is not easy for the individual to be motivated in every subject or condition. This is because being motivated for a subject or condition requires being able to know that subject or condition and predict its possible outcomes. Therefore, motivatedness grounds on knowing and learning. As a matter of course knowing and learning should occur properly. This condition attracts attention to the actualisation processes of learning and the strategies used in this process.

It can be asserted that learning strategies are techniques assisting the individual in the learning process. This is because the use of these strategies not only facilitates the learning process, but also enables remembering. *“Learning strategy is each of techniques allowing the individual to learn by himself/herself. The goal in learning strategies is to enable the learner to process the knowledge and learn permanently”* (Büyüköztürk et al., 2004: 211). Using such advantageous strategies in the teaching process as well as in the learning process will make it possible to conduct these processes more healthily. Thus, it is a desired and an expected situation for teacher candidates to dominate over learning strategies. *“Learning strategies not only provide easy and permanent learning for the learner, but also increase his/her efficiency in learning and add an independent learning quality to him/her”* (Büyüköztürk et al., 2004: 211). It is important especially for individuals who will perform a profession such as teaching to relay knowledge and experience, besides acquiring them. At this point, these skills are of great importance.

Profession is a status that individuals want to acquire as a result of their education and experience. Acquiring a profession and showing success in that profession are related to liking the profession and knowing its specifics. Every profession has its own

special skill areas. *“The concept of profession is encountered as a field of specialisation which has a socioculturally and economically incontrovertible importance especially in lines of work in which specialisation is crucial”* (Erdem, 2012: 1729).

Teaching as a line of work has been chosen in every era from past to present and thus become a popular area. The education and teaching received by teachers who are the building stone of education and teaching processes, are of prime importance. The experiences they gain in schools form the basis of the successes they will achieve when performing this profession. *“Teacher is one of the building stones of the system of education. It depends largely on the teacher to accomplish several phases such as planning the education process, ensuring effective use of appropriate methods, techniques and equipment, interacting with students and assessing the teaching process. In order to achieve this, it is primarily required for the teacher to be equipped with adequate knowledge and skills related to the field. However, knowledge alone is not enough for success. Attitudes also have an important effect”* (Çetinkaya, 2009: 299).

As is understood from the explanations, self-efficacy, learning strategies, and motivation levels have a great effect on the teaching life of the individual, which makes it necessary to investigate the levels of Turkish teacher candidates, who play a particularly important role in language teaching, in terms of these skills. Accordingly, it is thought that the study would contribute to the field.

3. Material and Methods

The aim of the study was to examine the correlation between the academic motivation, learning strategies and teacher self-efficacy beliefs of Turkish teacher candidates. Since the study tried to describe the present situation as it was, the study was structured in the survey model. Survey model comprises *“studies in which the views of participants on any issue or event or their characteristics such as interests, skills, abilities and attitudes are determined and which are usually conducted in larger samples compared to other studies”* (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel; 2014: 177). The individual or object discussed in the study is tried to be expressed within its own conditions and as it is (Karasar, 2010).

3.1 Study Group

The study group consisted of 272 Turkish teacher candidates studying in Kafkas University Dede Korkut Faculty of Education Department of Turkish Education in the 2020-2021 academic year. Of these teacher candidates, 147 were female and 125 were male.

3.2 Data Collection Tools

3.2.1 Motivation and Learning Strategies Questionnaire

Motivation and Learning Strategies Questionnaire (MLSQ) is the Turkish adaptation of a questionnaire (Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire) developed by Pintrich,

Smith, Garcia and McKeachie (1991). The adaptation study was conducted by a team including the researcher (Büyüköztürk, Akgün, Özkahveci and Demirel, 2004). The questionnaire comprises two sections as motivation and learning strategies.

The Motivation Questionnaire has 31 items and six subscales. Items in the questionnaire comprised 56% of the total variance. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of the questionnaire was $\alpha=0.86$. According to the results of the CFA conducted (RMSEA=0.06, GFI=0.88, AGFI=0.85, CFI=0.82, NNFI=0.80 and RMR=0.38) the questionnaire was assumed to be valid and reliable.

The Learning Strategies Questionnaire has 50 items and nine subscales. Items in the questionnaire comprised 53.4% of the total variance. According to the results of the CFA (RMSEA=0.07, GFI=0.80, AGFI=0.77, CFI=0.70, NNFI=0.67, SRMR=0.06 and RMR=0.22) the questionnaire was assumed to be valid and reliable.

3.2.2 Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs System-Self

Developed by Dellinger, Bobbett, Olivier and Ellet (2008), the Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs System-Self was adapted into Turkish by Taşkın and Hacıömeroğlu (2010). The questionnaire has 31 items and five subscales. Items in the questionnaire comprised 58% of the total variance. The Cronbach's alpha reliability of the questionnaire was found to be $\alpha=0.95$. According to the results of the CFA (RMSEA=0.09, GFI=0.74, AGFI=0.69, SRMR=0.07 and RMR=0.03) the questionnaire was assumed to be valid and reliable.

4. Results and Discussion

In the study the mean scores obtained from the questionnaires of the Turkish teacher candidates were checked in the first place. Table 1 shows the results.

Table 1: Mean scores

Subscales	N	\bar{X}	Ss
Motivation	272	105.5	3.25
Learning Strategies	272	159.0	3.54
Teacher Self-efficacy Belief	272	99.25	7.21

Table 1 illustrates that the highest and lowest scores of the motivation questionnaire are 217 and 31, respectively. Accordingly, it can be asserted that the teacher candidates obtained moderate scores. The highest and lowest scores of the Learning Strategies Questionnaire are 350 and 50, respectively. Accordingly, it can be asserted that the teacher candidates also obtained moderate scores. Finally, the highest and lowest scores of the Teachers' Efficacy Beliefs System-Self are 124 and 31, respectively. Accordingly, it can be stated that the teacher candidates obtained possibly the best scores.

In the study, the t-test was conducted to determine whether or not the teacher self-efficacy belief, motivation and learning strategies showed a significant difference in terms of the gender variable. Table 2 shows the findings.

Table 2: The t-test results according to the gender variable

	Gender	N	\bar{x}	S	Sd	t	p
Motivation	Female	147	104.5	25.0	269.6	-.795	.432
	Male	125	106.8	22.0			
Learning Strategies	Female	147	158.4	20.3	265.2	-.533	.595
	Male	125	159.8	19.8			
Teacher Self-efficacy Belief	Female	147	98.8	12.4	259.9	-.517	.605
	Male	125	99.6	12.8			

**p<.01, *p<.05

According to Table 2, it was determined that the teacher self-efficacy belief, motivation and learning strategies of the teacher candidates did not show a significant difference in terms of the gender variable.

Table 3: Correlations

Variables	2	3
Motivation	.944**	.780**
Learning Strategies		.810**
Teacher Self-efficacy Belief		

**p<.01, *p<.05

When examining Table 3, it was determined that there were highly significant correlations between the variables in a positive direction. These correlations were found to be between motivation and teacher self-efficacy belief ($r = .780^{**}$) and between learning strategies and self-efficacy belief ($r = .810^{**}$).

In order to determine whether the variables predicted each other or not, the multiple linear regression analysis was performed. Table 4 shows the findings.

Table 4: Results of the multiple linear regression analysis

Variables	β	F	R	R ²	p
Motivation	.396*				
Learning Strategies	.227*				
Class	.421*	250.83	.572	.82	.000

*p<.05

The data acquired as a result of the multiple linear regression analysis were examined in Table 4, the p value of .000 showed that the regression model was significant. In the table, it was seen that the teacher self-efficacy belief of the Turkish teacher candidates was significantly predicted by motivation and learning strategies. When examining the R² value, it was found that 82% (R²=.82) of the teacher self-efficacy belief was predicted by motivation and learning strategies.

The standardised regression coefficients revealed that the teacher self-efficacy belief was primarily predicted by motivation ($\beta = .396^*$). In addition, learning strategies predicted the teacher self-efficacy belief in a positive direction ($\beta = .227^*$). Finally, it was

determined that the class ($\beta=.421^*$) variable significantly predicted the teacher self-efficacy belief.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

In the study, it was aimed to examine the correlation between the academic motivation, learning strategies and teacher self-efficacy beliefs of Turkish teacher candidates. Accordingly, the mean scores obtained from the questionnaires were first examined. The results indicated that the Turkish teacher candidates had moderate levels of academic motivation and learning strategies and almost good levels of teacher self-efficacy belief. This result is hopeful. This is because positive emotions and thoughts developed for a profession are the building stones for success in that profession. It is particularly desired for Turkish teacher candidates who will teach new generations the language and language skills, to have positive thoughts about the teaching profession. On the other hand, moderate levels of academic motivation and learning strategies can be explained with the present intensity of undergraduate education and anxiety about the approaching exam. As a result of their study, Berkant and Ekici (2007) found that the classroom teacher candidates had moderate levels of teacher self-efficacy belief in science teaching. In a similar study, Gürol, Altunbaş and Karaaslan (2010) concluded that the teacher candidates had high teacher self-efficacy belief. The literature also has other studies with similar results (Yeşilyurt, 2013; Ekici, 2006). As a result of their study, Saracaloğlu, Üstündağ Kocakuşak and Eken (2020) found that the teacher candidates had moderate levels of academic motivation.

Another point discussed in the study was whether or not academic motivation and learning strategies were correlated with teacher self-efficacy belief. According to the results of the correlation analysis, which was performed with the data acquired, it was determined that there were significant correlations between the variables in a positive direction. According to these results, it can be stated that as the academic motivation levels of the Turkish teacher candidates increased, their teacher self-efficacy beliefs increased. Also, it was found that as the learning strategies usage levels of the Turkish teacher candidates increased, their teacher self-efficacy beliefs increased. This is a desired and an expected result. This is because it can be said that teacher candidates had higher academic motivation and dominance over learning strategies as they take one step closer to teaching, which makes them see the contribution to their potential. In other words, it can be concluded that they will profess as conscious individuals who are aware of their self-efficacy and go through processes contributing to their development. In their study, Deniz and Tican (2017) investigated the correlation between the teacher self-efficacy belief and occupational anxiety levels of teacher candidates. According to the results, they determined that there was a positive low correlation between occupational anxiety and self-efficacy. In a study conducted by Ünal (2013) it was found that there was a positive significant correlation between the academic motivation and self-efficacy of high school students.

Finally, in the study the state of the variables to predict each other was examined. According to the results of the regression analysis, which was performed for that purpose, it was determined that as the academic motivation increased, the teacher self-efficacy belief increased and learning strategies were effective on the teacher self-efficacy belief. Also, it was found that the class variable significantly predicted the teacher self-efficacy belief. It can be concluded that as the class level increased, the teacher self-efficacy belief increased. As a result of a study conducted by Ünal (2013) it was determined that self-efficacy was the strongest predictor of the academic motivation of students.

6. Recommendations

As a consequence, in the light of the findings obtained from the study it can be asserted that motivation and learning strategies are effective on the teacher self-efficacy belief. Taking this result into account, the trainings and applications to be performed should be carried out based on the fact that these concepts are interrelated. The individual's inner world should be taken into consideration in all kinds of studies or processes.

7. Conclusion

As a consequence, in the light of the findings obtained from the study it can be asserted that motivation and learning strategies are effective on the teacher self-efficacy belief.

Limitations

In this study, we were limited to the students of Kafkas University, Faculty of Education, Turkey.

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Necessary permissions were obtained for the scales used in the study. All of them, including the necessary ethical permissions to conduct the study, have been completed.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

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