Determining the distinctive characteristics of preservice teachers who willingly or unwillingly prefer their undergraduate programme

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Abstract
The aim of this study is to determine the characteristics that distinguish preservice teachers who willingly selected the undergraduate programme they attend from those who did not. The study group of the research consists of 263 preservice teachers attending Preschool Education, Primary School Teaching, Social Sciences Teaching, Guidance and Psychological Counseling and Special Teaching at the Faculty of Educational Sciences at Ankara University. Correlational research design was used considering the focus of the research, as it is about the relationship between two or more variables and the influential variables determining these relationships. “Student Information Questionnaire” and “Family Support Scale” developed by the researchers were used for data collection. The results of the discriminant analysis indicate that family support, high school grade point average and attending private teaching classes during preparation process for the university exam have a positive effect in distinguishing preservice teachers who willingly selected the programme they attend from those who did not. Also, the contribution of the high school to the programme has a negative effect.

1. Introduction
Communities which gives importance to education in school knows that individuals are successful and useful in social life when they are educated according to their own interests, desires and capabilities. This situation reveals the importance of the requirement for student centered education and educational guidance which lead students according to their own interests, desires and capabilities.

Educational guidance is defined as support and assistance for individuals to select an appropriate educational branch according to capabilities, interests, requirements and personality characteristics and to be successful in this way (Kuzgun, 1992; Tan, 1992). Especially in secondary education, by transition from primary to secondary education, educational guidance services helps by resolving the difficulties of adaptation, being successful, making educational choices and plans, by university preparation.

Working more systematic and planned in secondary education, taking educational and vocational decisions for the future and learning about higher education opportunities are within the scope of educational guidance (Yesilyaprak, 2012). Therefore, with right educational guidance service by choosing secondary school choosing

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secondary school may provide programs to students to make most appropriate choices from the point of educational and vocational aspects.

Students in Turkey, especially in secondary education could not get an accurate orientation service by placement to higher education programs. So they choose a program that they not prefer, and forced to study in this field (Akkok and Watts, 2003; Yesilyaprak, 2011).

And because of lack of guidance services, individuals which studying teacher training programs do not choose their higher education program consciously (Bastick, 2000; Boz and Boz, 2008). In the literature effective factors in order to choose teaching profession are grouped into three categories (Brown, 1992; Chuene, Lubben and Newson, 1999; Kyriacou and Coulthard, 2000; Saban, 2003). These are, reasons based on sacrifice (like sense to help people, desire to be useful to society); internal reasons (like love of profession, love of children, be interested in education); and external reasons (job guarantee, long vacation, social security and an easy assignment, etc.). In general by advanced and prosperous societies, internal preferences, and by currently developing societies, external preferences are common (Bastick, 2000).

When we look at the literature; teacher training programs chosen by students who has a lack of success at secondary school and coming from low socio-economic level families with job finding concerns (Demirel, 1995; Kilic, 2002; Behymer ve Cockriel, 2005; Kniveton, 2004).

Teachers play an active role in development of the country, providing peace and social harmony in the socialization of individuals, prepare them to of social life, giving cultural values of the society to the younger generations and educated skilled persons (Celikten, Sanal and Yeni, 2005). However, in the literature due to the above concerns, individuals who choose the profession of teaching can’t do their duties effectively. This situation reduces the reputation of this profession in society (Altintas, 1999; Erden, 1998; Eskicumali, 2002).

In these aspects, examination of the distinguishing features of students who choose the teacher training program willingly or unwillingly is important. The purpose of this study is determined the discriminative features of teacher candidates who choose the teacher training program willingly or unwillingly.

2. Research model

Correlational survey study was used considering the focus of the research, as it is about the relationship between two or more variables and the influential variables determining these relationships.

2.1. Participants

The study group of the research consists of 263 preservice teachers attending Preschool Education, Primary School Teaching, Social Sciences Teaching, Guidance and Psychological Counselling and Special Teaching at the Faculty of Educational Sciences at Ankara University.

2.2. Data analyzing

Student Information Questionnaire and Family Support Scale developed by the researchers were used for data collection. Family Support Scale is five point Likert scale, one-dimensional and consists of 14 items. The reliability coefficient of this scale is 0.80. Data was analyzed with discriminant analysis. Before Discriminant analysis, Mahalanobis Distance Coefficients was calculated and extreme values were examined. Multi-dimensional extreme values were calculated. Result of the analysis, there were no significant extreme values at 0.01 levels. Box-M statistic was used by evaluation of homogeneity of covariance matrices. F value was not significant. \[F (10, 307194.4)=1.697 \ p>.05\]. This finding indicates that groups covariance matrices homogeneous and evidence for normal distribution. In addition multiple correlation problems between independent variables were examined. Correlations between the variables are between 0.27 and 0.32. This finding is evidence that shows there is no correlation between independent variables.
3. Findings

Prior to analysis, which demonstrates the power obtained from the allocation function groups by and dependent variables, discriminant function that describes the relationship between the “canonical correlation coefficient” is calculated. The resulting correlation coefficient was found 0.58. Canonical correlation coefficient to take high value indicates a good separation between the units that perform the function. Low canonical correlation value may cause some errors by determination units in groups (Mertler and Vanatta, 2005).

Obtained value shows that the function moderately effective by group allocation is. To determine by separation function whether eigenvalue is significant or not, Wilks' Lambda (\(\lambda\)) statistics was used. Chi-square value \([\chi^2 (4) =104, 9; p<.00]\) determined as significant. Separation power of function is significantly high and groups can separate from each other with allocation function.

The results of the discriminant analysis are given in Table 1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predicted Group Membership</th>
<th>Those who choose program willingly</th>
<th>Those who choose program unwillingly</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who choose program willingly</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>78,9</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who choose program unwillingly</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26,7</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

76.0 % of original grouped cases correctly classified.

According to the Table 1, 97 of 123 teacher candidates (79%) who choose learning program willingly; 99 of 135 teacher candidates (73%) who choose learning program unwillingly classified correctly. Separation function of the percentage of total correct classification was 76%.

Wilks' Lambda value variables in the Analysis, levels of significance and standardized coefficients for the allocation function are provided in Table 2. The standardized discriminant function coefficients show of independent variables by group allocation (Kalaycı, 2005; Garson, 2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Değişkenler</th>
<th>Wilks’ Lambda</th>
<th>(\chi^2)</th>
<th>sig.</th>
<th>Standart Coefficient</th>
<th>Structure Matrix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Akademic achievement</td>
<td>0.675</td>
<td>0.801</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.675</td>
<td>0.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>0.571</td>
<td>0.674</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.571</td>
<td>0.674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of university preparation courses</td>
<td>0.662</td>
<td>104,909</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.195</td>
<td>0.357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution of the high school</td>
<td>-0.240</td>
<td>-0.207</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.240</td>
<td>-0.207</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Standardized coefficients related to discriminant function examined by group allocation the maximum contribution of independent variables respectively as follows:

- Mean of academic achievement (0.68)
- Family support (0.57)
- Contribution of university preparation courses (0.20)
- Contribution of the school (0.24).

According to the findings we see that successful students know themselves better and they choose their own desired area. In addition when we examined findings related to family support we see that students, who receive family support, choose the profession of teaching more conscious. Other than this negative contribution of high schools by separating individuals may be a proof that they are providing not the right guidance (orientation) service.
4. Results and discussion

As a result of the research, more than half of the teacher candidates prefer the program which they attending unwillingly. This finding overlaps with the findings of earlier studies (Boz and Boz, 2008; Gurbuz and Sulun, 2004). Also Turkey Country Report of "Career Information, Guidance and Counseling Services" prepared by Akkokand Watts (2003) explains vocational guidance practices in our country, need for vocational guidance and other problems about vocational guidance.

On the basis of the findings of this report we see that students who choose the teaching profession did also not receive a good guidance service. The other results from the research by allocation of preservice teachers who choose the study program willingly or unwillingly are as follows. Average of high school academic achievement, family support and contribution of university preparation courses have a positive effect by preparing for university entrance exams; and high school education has a negative effect. There is a linear relationship between academic achievement and guidance services (Yesilyapark, 2012). Individuals with higher academic achievement know better than their own interests and abilities and at this point they are doing a more accurate choice of profession.

Family support has quite a large effect by school success of individuals and also by choosing occupation (Herr & Cramer, 1996; Yaylaci, 2007). In particular children of families with high economic and cultural level can have the opportunity to choose career according to ability and interest and they receive support from their families. But children of families with limited income and education level have limited educational opportunities and so these children have difficulty in later stages, by achieving the objectives of a professional career and making professional choices (DeRidder, 1990).

From this point of it is expected result that teacher candidates who prefer their study program willingly receive family support. University preparation courses have a positive effect by conscious choice of teacher candidates participated in the study program and high school has a negative effect. It may be related with lack of education and lack of vocational guidance and career counseling services. According to Yesilyapark (2011) interest and need for vocational guidance and career counseling services increasing because of number of students who finish high school and wait for the university placement.

In addition pushing students to competition and settlement anxiety to receive university education caused interferences by the private sector (university preparation courses) to make counseling services. The result of this situation there are many private school contribution. As a result of this research generally teacher candidates receive insufficient service, both in terms of education and vocational guidance. But some candidates who receiving support their family are academically successful and doing more informed career choices. In this respect, by secondary education we suggest working on the guidance services, making activities to enable them to discover their interests and abilities and making effective cooperation between school and family.

References


