Professional anxieties of preschool teacher candidates*

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to determine the anxieties of preschool teacher candidates regarding their future profession. A survey was administered to 269 teacher candidates in all grade levels studying at Kastamonu University. We collected data by means of questionnaires that included demographic questions (grade level, gender, high school, grade-point average, and whether they willingly chose to be teachers and to enter preschool education specifically) and nine open-ended questions on specific areas. The results showed that 49.8% of the teacher candidates had anxieties about classroom management; 46.1% about communication with parents; 26.8% about communicating with children; 29.7% about communicating with school directors and other teachers; 61% about the children's orientation to school; 43.9% about childcare issues; 59.9% about inclusion of children with disabilities; 59.1% about the environment in which they will find themselves once they are hired; and 40.9% about the planning and execution of teaching and learning processes.

Keywords: Preschool education, teacher training, professional anxiety

INTRODUCTION

Preschool education covers the first six years of children's lives, from birth to entry into elementary school. During these years, most of children's physical, motor, social-emotional, cognitive, and linguistic development takes place, and their personalities are substantially shaped, powerfully influencing later stages of life (Ministry of National Education (MONE), 2013). During the preschool educational process, children are prepared for elementary education while learning to share, cooperate, socialize, and study together. Children raised in appropriate physical and social conditions and in healthy and interactive environments develop faster and more successfully. Other than parents, preschool teachers are the individuals most responsible for creating suitable environments in which children develop eagerness and curiosity about learning and enhance their existing abilities (MONE, 2013).

In order to provide a qualified education environment, the teacher must be qualified, and to be a qualified teacher, field knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and attitude towards the profession should be at the expected level (Akpınar, Yıldız and Ergin, 2006). Field knowledge and pedagogical information are given to prospective teachers during their university education, and when they are transferred to their professions, this training is provided by various in-service training courses organized by the ministry and of course it is very important. However, in order to become a qualified teacher, it is not enough for the teachers to have these knowledge and skills. Teachers should also have the ability to demonstrate these knowledge and skills. Teachers' ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills at the desired level depends on their positive perception of themselves and their anxiety about their profession at the lowest level (Donmuş, Akpınar and Eroğlu, 2017). Some have argued that teachers' classroom behavior, psychology, and personality have a greater effect on preschool children than their teaching technique and knowledge. In this context, it has been suggested that teachers can perform better if not preoccupied by professional anxieties regarding their occupation (Dursun and Karagün, 2012).

Işık (1996) defined anxiety as a state of uneasiness and nervousness that one feels when faced with a threatening situation. Dictionary definitions of anxiety include "sadness, anxiety about a thought, worry"; "restlessness felt by individuals due to the possibility that a strong wish or motivation may not be realized"; and "a feeling of restlessness that emerges when it appears that a strong desire will not be realized" (Turkish Language Society (TLS), 2009). A high level of

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anxiety leads individuals to exhibit stricter and simpler behaviors, to suffer from anxiety, and to focus too heavily on satisfying others. On the other hand, a moderate level of anxiety provides stimulation and motivation. If managed well, moderate anxieties cause individuals to work harder to succeed and to take precautions against possible unfavorable developments. For this reason, we should make sure that the anxieties experienced by teacher candidates function as a stimulant that improves their attitudes toward their occupation as well as providing motivation (Doğan and Çoban, 2009).

Fuller (1969) divided these anxieties into three categories: self- anxieties, task anxieties, and impact anxieties. Self-anxieties related to whether one will be able to successfully pursue his or her desired professional career; task anxieties involve whether one is a good teacher and lead people to research new teaching methods, materials, tools, and equipment that they can use in their work; impact anxieties focus on the students and how best to serve each student's cognitive, emotional, and social needs (Cabı and Yalçınalp, 2013).

Research has shown that professional anxieties negatively affect teacher candidates' learning (Ülgen, 2002) and their tendency to improve themselves (Akbulut, Erol and Say, 2018); however, it reveals that this effect is mainly due to external anxieties (task, economic, personal development, appointment and adjustment-centered concerns) than self-centered anxieties.

Recent changes and developments in many fields have led to complementary changes in educational programs, which have affected the experience of teacher candidates raised key issues regarding their ability to adapt to these changes. It is important to identify these anxieties before teacher candidates embark on their professional career, so that they can become effective educators. Moreover, shaping the processes of teaching and learning at schools of education in accordance with these anxieties would produce better-equipped and more qualified teachers (Cabı and Yalçınalp, 2013).

When the literature in the field is examined, it is seen that various studies have been carried out about the professional anxiety of teachers and teacher candidates. Some of these studies were conducted for scale development and adaptation (Borich, 1992; Cabı and Yalçınalp, 2013; Fuller and Borich, 1988; George, 1978; Saban, Korkmaz and Akbaşlı, 2004); some are made to determine what these anxieties are (Gözler, Bozgeyikli and Avcı, 2017; Mergen, Arslan, Erdoğmuş-Mergen and Arslan, 2014); some of them were made to determine whether these anxieties change according to various demographic variables (Akgün and Özgür, 2014; Abalı Öztürk, Şahin, Demir, and Arcagök, 2019; Deniz and Tican, 2017; Gümrükçü-Bilgici and Deniz, 2016); and some of these anxieties were made to determine the relationship between variables such as attitude (Akgün and Özgür, 2014; Serin, Güneş and Değirmenci, 2015), self-efficacy (Doğan and Çoban, 2009; Donmuş, Akpınar and Eroğlu, 2017; Erdaş, Aşıkuzun and Ergün, 2017; Kahraman and Çelik, 2019), learning disposition (Akbulut, Eroğlu and Say, 2018), career compliance (Gerçek, 2018), burnout (Bozgun and Akın-Kösterlioğlu, 2018), and personality traits (Çelik and Şengül, 2017).

When the findings of these researches are examined, it is observed that the teacher candidates generally have various anxieties about communication with students, school life, professional acceptance environment, economic life and finding a job (Cabı and Yalçınalp, 2009; Sadıkoğlu, Hastürk and Polat, 2018); it is reported that the reasons such as increase in the number of students and parallel learning difficulties, teachers' anxiety to provide their students with insufficient education, occupational insecurity and inadequacy cause these professional anxieties (Wagner, 2008). In these researches, it was found that professional anxieties were influenced by variables such as gender, age, class, achievement, friendship relations at school, parental attitudes and shelter (Akgün, Gönen and Aydın, 2007; Aydın and Tekneci, 2013; Çakmak and Hevedanlı, 2005; Dursun and Kargün, 2012; Tabancalı, Çelik and Korumaz, 2016); that the relationship between teacher candidates' professional attitudes and anxiety levels is significant (Akgün and Özgür, 2014); that teacher candidates' professional anxieties significantly predict their academic self-efficacy (Donmuş, Akpınar and Eroğlu; 2017; Kahraman and Çelik, 2019); anxiety level negatively affected teacher candidates' lifelong learning tendencies (Akbulut, Eroğlu, Say, 2018); that these concerns predict the professional burnout of teacher candidates in a low but meaningful way (Bozgun and Akın-Kösterlioğlu, 2018); it was observed that the anxiety levels of

the teacher candidates had an inverse meaningful relationship with career compliance (Gerçek, 2018).

Preschool teachers' addressing to younger children and the need for teacher support in terms of self-care, intensive communication with the children and their families, continuous education etc. may cause professional anxieties in this branch to differ both in terms of level and variety. When the studies conducted with teacher candidates were examined, it was seen that these studies were mostly aimed at teacher candidates in different branches and the studies conducted with preschool teacher candidates were quite limited (Alisinanoğlu, Kesicioğlu and Ünal, 2010; Erdaş, Aşıkuzun and Ergün, 2017; Gümrükçü-Bilgici and Deniz, 2016; Haskan-Avcı, Karababa and Zencir, 2018). Further studies are needed in this field.

The purpose of this study was to determine the anxieties of preschool teacher candidates regarding their future profession. More specifically, we sought to identify their anxieties in nine areas: (1) classroom management; (2) communication with parents; (3) communication with children; (4) communication with school directors and other teachers; (5) children's orientation to the school; (6) childcare issues other than teaching; (7) inclusion of children with disabilities in the classroom setting; (8) the environment in which they will work as teachers once they are hired; and (9) the planning and execution of teaching and learning processes.

METHOD

Research Model

The research designed according to the survey model. The survey model is a research approach that aims to present and describe a situation that has existed in the past or still exists (Karasar, 2009).

Participants

The participants consisted of 269 teacher candidates studying at the Department of Preschool Education, within the School of Education at Kastamonu University at Turkey. Considering the ethical principles; participation in the research was provided on a voluntary basis and the identities of the researchers and the university name were reserved. Students were selected from all four years (i.e., freshmen to seniors). Details about the subjects are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Teacher candidates' demographics*

		f	%
Grade	1. Freshman	91	33.8
	2. Sophomore	106	39.4
	3. Junior	48	17.8
	4. Senior	24	8,9
Gender	Female	236	87.7
	Male	33	12.3
GPA	0–2.25	16	5.9
	2.26–2.50	27	10.0
	2.51–2.75	72	26.8
	2.76–3.00	80	29.7
	3.01–3.25	46	17.1
	3.26–4.00	28	10.4
High school from which the subject graduated	General high school	68	25.3
	Anatolian teacher training high school	27	10.0
	Anatolian high school	83	30.9
	Vocational high school	91	33.8
Selection of profession	Willingly	238	88.5
	Reluctantly	31	11.5
Selection of department	Willingly	234	87.0
	Reluctantly	35	13.0

Data Collection

Data were collected by using a two-part questionnaire. The first part consisted of demographic questions on the students' level of education, gender, grade-point average, high school attended, and whether they willingly chose the profession (i.e., education generally) and the field (preschool education). The second part contained a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions on the eight issues of interest listed above. We conducted pre-interviews with 20 teacher candidates before developing the questionnaire and used this information to prepare the wording of the questions in the final questionnaire. We consulted with specialists in the field and with education faculty members to ensure that the questionnaire was valid and reliable. We revised some items in accordance with the feedback we received.

Data Analysis

Since this study was qualitative in nature, we used a descriptive approach to analyze the open-ended answers given by the 269 teacher candidates. Descriptive analysis is a kind of qualitative analysis in which the data obtained are summarized and interpreted according to previously determined themes. In this analysis, the data can be determined according to the themes revealed by the research questions or presented by taking into consideration the questions or dimensions used in the data collection process. In the descriptive analysis, direct quotations are frequently included in order to reflect the views of individuals strikingly and it is aimed to present the obtained data to the reader in an edited and interpreted manner (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011).

The analysis was carried out in 4 stages: creating thematic framework for descriptive analysis, processing the data according to the determined thematic framework, defining the findings and interpreting the findings. Firstly, the themes were determined based on the research questions, and the data were processed according to these themes, while various categories were determined for each theme based on the answers given to the questions. Expert opinions were obtained from two field experts on whether the categories identified under the themes represented the relevant theme. The data were processed independently by the two researchers according to the themes and categories identified, and a common perspective was tried to be developed by comparing the analysis of the researchers. The reliability formula given by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used to calculate the consistency between the analyses of the researchers (Özsoy, 2012).

$$R \text{ (Reliability)} = \frac{Na \text{ (Agreement)}}{Na \text{ (Agreement)} + Nd \text{ (Disagreement)}}$$

In the first calculation, the consistency between the encoders was calculated as 96%. Unconformable statements were reviewed and a common understanding was developed for analysis. In the next stage, the number of participants in the related themes and categories were calculated and the findings were reported using descriptive tables containing percentages and frequencies. In the last part of the analysis, the findings were interpreted considering descriptive tables. In qualitative research, detailed reporting of the data and describing how the results are reached is an important criterion of validity (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011). In this study, the validity data was obtained by explaining the analysis process and including the findings of the analysis related to the themes identified.

RESULTS

Anxieties Regarding Classroom Management

We asked the teacher candidates whether they felt qualified for classroom management; 50.2% answered "yes." Table 2 indicates the main reason given by each respondent as to why he or she felt either qualified or unqualified.

Table 2. *Main reasons for teacher candidates' beliefs as to whether they were qualified for classroom management*

		f	%
Yes	Sufficient experience	22	16.3
	Sufficient knowledge	8	5.9
	High self-efficacy	105	77.8
Total		135	100
No	Insufficient experience	50	37.3
	Insufficient knowledge	31	23.1
	Low self-efficacy	45	33.6
	Wrong or insufficient internship practices	8	6.0
Total		134	100

As Table 2 shows, the great majority (77.8%) of the teacher candidates who felt qualified to handle classroom management cited their high level of self-efficacy as the main reason. One respondent, coded as T89, explained, *"I believe I can persuade a child who is reluctant to do what I want him to do and establish a harmonious order in the classroom."* Similarly, T98 stated, *"I am able to make an activity attractive to children even when they do not want to participate in it."*

Twenty-two of the teacher candidates who considered themselves qualified for classroom management (16.3%) referred primarily to their experience. For example, T99 said that he was experienced and qualified because he had attended a vocational high school and interned as a teacher while there.

A small percentage (5.9%) of the teacher candidates who felt qualified for classroom management cited having sufficient knowledge about the topic in their answers. For example, T134 stated, *"We learned enough about classroom management theoretically from our classroom management course. The internship we did during the same semester reinforced this knowledge."*

On the other hand, among the 134 teacher candidates (nearly half of the total) who did not feel qualified in this area, most indicated anxieties about insufficient experience (37.3%) or low self-efficacy (33.6%), with 23.1% citing lack of knowledge. Following are representative responses exhibiting each of those three anxieties, respectively:

> *(Insufficient experience) "I do not feel qualified enough, because I have not had an internship or work experience. However, I believe I will improve [in classroom management] after working as a teacher for a year. " (T101)*

> *(Low self-efficacy) "I do not feel qualified. I fail to communicate well with children. " (T188)*

> *(Lack of knowledge) "I do not feel qualified because I am not knowledgeable about it. I do not know how to handle a class and manage the children. We have not yet been trained about such matters. However, I still do not think that [training] would be enough. " (T21)*

A small percentage of the teacher candidates who felt unqualified (6.0%) expressed dissatisfaction with the internship practices included in their undergraduate education. T108 was one of those: *"No, I do not feel [qualified]. Up until now, we only took theoretical classes. However, I have not spent any time with preschoolers. We are scheduled for an internship in our junior year, but I believe that is too late. "*

Anxieties Regarding Communication with Parents

Anxieties about communicating with parents were expressed by 46.1% of the respondents.

Table 3 summarizes the primary reasons why teacher candidates did or did not have anxieties in this area. Again, among the teacher candidates who had anxieties about their preparedness, low self-efficacy was the most frequently cited reason (44.4%). T171 gave a common explanation of this perceived inadequacy: *"I am hesitant, because I have anxiety about public speaking."*

Table 3. *Main reasons for teacher candidates' beliefs as to whether they were qualified for communicating with parents*

		f	%
Yes	Low self-efficacy	55	44.4
	Anxieties about being criticized	10	8.1
	Anxieties about being misunderstood	22	17.7
	Anxieties about parent participation	11	8.9
	Socio-cultural structure of the families	15	12.1
	Parental child-rearing attitudes	9	7.3
	Parental attitudes toward male teachers	2	1.6
Total		124	100
No	High self-efficacy	84	57.9
	Strong communication skills	57	39.3
	Positive attitude of parents	4	2.8
Total		145	100

Among those anxieties for being misunderstood by parents (17.7% of those with anxieties), T13 said, *"Parents do not like it when you say something negative about their child. I have anxiety about whether they would understand me in case there is an unpleasant situation related to their child."*

The next four most common anxieties were the families' socio-cultural structures (12.1%), parent participation issues (8.9%), being criticized (8.1%), and parental child-rearing attitudes (7.3%). Following are typical examples of each of these responses:

(*Socio-cultural structures*) *"Yes, I have anxiety. The socioeconomic status of the area where the school at which I will be working is located, issues of family structure, and how much the child is appreciated all make me worried about the parents' reactions or lack of reaction to my demands of them. " (T72)*

(*Parent participation*) *"Yes, I have this anxiety. I am worried about the families' level of awareness and whether they participate in some events. " (T89)*

(*Being criticized*) *"I have anxiety because parents see a beginning teacher as inexperienced. I am worried about the possibility of them interfering with how I do my job. " (T201)*

(*Parental child-rearing attitudes*) *"As I see how overly protective some parents are around me, I am worried about meeting the expectations of such parents. " (T7)*

Two teacher candidates mentioned anxiety about how society reacts to male preschool teachers. T24 believed that parents might be prejudiced against males as preschool teachers: *"I have anxiety because I am unable to figure out how parents would react to my being a male."*

On the other hand, 53.9% of the teacher candidates did not have any anxieties about communicating with parents. The reason given by 84 members (57.9%) of this group was high self-efficacy. T182, for instance, indicated that he could handle this area well by contacting the parents of each child individually. Another 57 respondents (39.3% of those without anxieties in this area) referred to their strong communication skills. For example, T193 said, "*I do not think we will have any problems as long as I remain respectful to them and encourage honest communication.*" Lastly, four teacher candidates without anxieties in this area named the positive attitude of parents as an encouraging factor. T174 explained, "*Nowadays parents have a high level of awareness; thus, I do not have any such anxieties."*

Anxieties Regarding Communication with Children

Anxieties about communicating with children were expressed by only 26.8% of the respondents (Table 4).

Table 4. *Main reasons for teacher candidates' beliefs as to whether they were qualified for communicating with children*

		f	%
Yes	Low self-efficacy	44	61.1
	Insufficient experience	13	18.1
	Lack of patience	5	6.9
	Individual differences	10	13.9
Total		72	100
No	High self-efficacy	60	30.5
	Strong communication skills	93	47.2
	Fondness for children	37	18.8
	Sufficient experience	7	3.5
Total		197	100

Once again, low self-efficacy was the dominant anxiety, cited by 44 of the 72 respondents who did not feel qualified in this area (61.1%). T111 emphasized that his various efforts to improve in this area still seemed inadequate: *"I read books and attend conferences to improve myself about this matter, yet I still feel like I will fail."*

Lack of experience accounted for 18.1% of the anxieties, 13.9% cited individual differences among children, and 6.9% referenced lack of patience. Sample replies in these three categories follow:

(Lack of experience) "I have little anxiety because I have not had the experience of communicating with children in a classroom. I do not know much about how to communicate with them. " (T126)

(Individual differences) "Some children might be special. I am wondering whether I would be able to communicate with all of them simultaneously. " (T174)

(Lack of patience) "Yes, I have anxiety, because I am not very patient. Therefore, I might fail to develop the necessary relationships with children. " (T26)

On the other hand, 93 (47.2%) of the teacher candidates who indicated that they did not have anxieties about communicating with children based their self-confidence on their strong communication skills. T88 stated, *"No, I get along with the children and do not have problems in adapting. I believe that attracting the children's attention at the right time on the right topic will make it easier to communicate with them."*

Other reasons for not having anxieties in this area were high self-efficacy (30.5%) and fondness for children (18.8%). Two teacher candidates with these views gave the following responses:

(High self-efficacy) "I have not anxiety about this matter in any way, because I will be fully qualified once I graduate. This will have a positive impact on my relationship with the children. " (T119)

(Fondness for children) "I think I will treat the children fairly. I believe I will have healthy communication with the children because I am fond of children." (T149)

The other seven respondents who felt positive about their ability to communicate with children (3.5%) referred to having sufficient experience.

Anxieties Regarding Communication with Preschool Directors and Other Teachers

With regard to communication with preschool directors and fellow teachers, 29.7% of the teacher candidates expressed anxieties (Table 5). Thirty of the 80 teachers with anxieties in this area (37.5%) mentioned the tendency for directors to have a negative attitude toward teachers. T2 viewed this as a widespread problem, stating, *"Directors generally have unfavorable attitudes and behaviors."*

Fifteen (18.8%) of the teacher candidates who expressed anxieties about communicating with their directors and other teachers stated that they worried about experiencing intolerance. As T29 said, *"I do not like receiving orders and living under pressure."*

Table 5. *Main reasons for teacher candidates' beliefs as to whether they were qualified for communicating with preschool directors and other teachers*

		f	%
Yes	Negative attitudes of directors toward teachers	30	37.5
	Anxieties about being criticized	7	8.7
	Lack of tolerance	15	18.8
	Low self-confidence	18	22.5
	Insufficient experience	10	12.5
Total		80	100
No	High self-efficacy	107	56.6
	Strong communication skills	69	36.5
	Positive attitudes of directors toward teachers	5	2.6
	Sufficient tolerance	6	3.2
	Sufficient experience	2	1.1
Total		189	100

Anxieties about being criticized were mentioned by seven teacher candidates (8.7% of all respondents with anxieties). T1 said, *"People sometimes leave each other in a tight spot. There might be cases of my being opposed to other people's ideas and thoughts."*

Finally, 12.5% referred to lack of experience, like T91, who said that this might be a serious problem during the first year of employment.

On the other hand, 107 (56.6%) of the teacher candidates who have not anxiety about communicating with their directors and other teachers mentioned their high self-efficacy. For example, T96 stated, *"In the end, I believe that as long as there is respect between me and the others, there will not be any problems."*

Another 69 (36.5%) noted their strong communication skills, such as T89: *"Administration is very important. But I have not anxiety. I believe I can have good relations and find a middle way."*

Anxieties Regarding Children's Orientation to School

A large proportion (61.0%) of the respondents indicated anxieties related to the children's orientation to school (Table 6).

Table 6. *Main reasons whether teacher candidates have anxieties about children's orientation to school*

		f	%
Yes	Children being away from their parents for the first time	34	20.7
	Individual differences	39	23.8
	Low self-efficacy	78	47.6
	Parental child-rearing attitudes	8	4.9
	Inclusion of children with disabilities	1	0.6
	Lack of patience	4	2.4
Total		164	100
No	High self-efficacy	89	84.8
	Strong communication skills	10	9.5
	Sufficient patience	6	5.7
Total		105	100

Low self-efficacy was the leading source of anxiety in this area. T107 indicated worries that his own attitudes and behavior would have undesirable effects on the children: *"I am worried about distancing a child from the school because of my own negative attitude."*

Another 39 (23.8%) cited individual differences among children, like T101 who expressed anxieties *"because each child will be different and communication will be different with each one."* Children's first time being separated from their parents was the primary anxiety for 34 respondents (20.7%). As T112 noted with some trepidation, *"In the end, they all will be separated from their parents and this will cause them to get stressed, cry, and scream."*

Less frequently expressed anxieties were parental child-rearing attitudes (4.9%), lack of patience (2.4%), and inclusive classrooms (0.6%). Sample answers in these three categories follow:

(Parental child-rearing attitudes) "I have anxiety because we do not know exactly in what kind of an environment the children were raised, how their familial relations are, and thus we do not know how to treat them." (T14)

(Lack of patience) "Yes, [showing patience will be hard], because most children are raised by either protective parents or overly liberal parents." (T98)

(Inclusive classrooms) "The presence of a child with a disability in my class would make me worried, because I do not have sufficient knowledge about that." (T41)

On the other hand, 39% of the teacher candidates stated that they did not have any anxieties about the children's orientation to school. Overwhelmingly (in 84.8% of cases), high self-efficacy made possible this lack of anxiety. T166 stated confidently, *"No, if enough orientation is provided initially and the children' positive attitude toward the school is reinforced, there will not be any such problems."*

Reasons given less frequently were strong communication skills (9.5%) and sufficient patience (5.7%). Teacher candidates citing these factors offered the following statements:

(Communication skills) I think if I manage to have an impressive introduction in the first few weeks with drama, games, and leisure activities, I will not have any such issues. (T135)

(Sufficient patience) Some children will definitely have adaptation problems. But I can teach them in time, with patience and friendliness. (T179)

Anxieties Regarding Childcare Duties

Childcare duties other than teaching were a source of anxiety for 43.9% of the teacher candidates (Table 7).

Table 7. *Main reasons for the beliefs of teacher candidates regarding preparedness for childcare*

		f	%
Yes	Insufficient experience	11	9.3
	Low self-efficacy	72	61.0
	Lack of personnel available to assist	16	13.6
	Insufficient knowledge	13	11.0
	Lack of patience	4	3.4
	Parental attitudes toward male teachers	2	1.7
Total		118	100
No	Fondness for children	8	5.3
	High self-efficacy	118	78.1
	Children' self-care abilities	6	4.0
	Paying attention to childcare and health	3	2.0
	Sufficient experience	10	6.6
	Sufficient patience	6	4.0
Total		151	100

Again, low self-efficacy was the predominant cause of anxiety (61.0% of all those expressing anxiety in this area). For T130, healthcare issues presented fears: *"I have serious anxieties about dealing with the health care of the children. I am not a calm person. This is my biggest problem."*

For 13.6% of those with anxieties, the lack of personnel available to assist, especially in view of the number of children in a typical classroom, was the main problem. T5 explained, *"Actually, this is one of my biggest fears. It is difficult for a beginning teacher to take care of 20 to 25 children without any help."*

Another 11.0% cited lack of sufficient knowledge, 3.4% mentioned lack of patience, and 1.7% indicated anxiety about the attitudes of parents toward male teachers. Examples follow:

(Lack of sufficient knowledge) "I am afraid of them not being potty-trained or getting injured, because we have not yet received a course on first aid." (T39)

(Attitudes toward male teachers) "My only anxiety is about female children having not been potty-trained. Since it is my duty, I would try and do my best about it, but I am worried about what parents would think about it." (T24)

On the other hand, 118 (78.1%) of the teacher candidates who did not have any anxieties regarding childcare cited their high self-efficacy. T162 declared, *"I find myself qualified at every level. I believe I will be able to take care of all the problems."* Ten (6.6%) of the teacher candidates with no anxieties gave credit to their sufficient training. One of these, T98, evidenced confidence in the training received by stating, *"I gained experience during my internship at the high school."* Eight (5.3%) referred to their fondness for children, such as T119, who indicated, *"Thinking that they need me and the love I feel for them makes it easy to take care of and handle them."* Lastly, a few teacher candidates identified, as their main reasons for not having anxiety about childcare, children's ability to take care of themselves (4.0%), sufficient patience (2.2%), and their ability to pay attention to childcare and health issues (2.0%).

Anxieties Regarding Inclusion of Children with Disabilities

Issues related to inclusive classrooms were a source of anxiety for 59.9% of the teacher candidates surveyed (Table 8).

Table 8. *Main reasons for teacher candidates' beliefs regarding inclusive classrooms*

		f	%
Yes	Insufficient experience	14	8.7
	Insufficient knowledge	41	25.5
	Crowded classrooms	5	3.1
	Lack of patience	2	1.2
	Classroom management	29	18.0
	Low self-efficacy	70	43.5
Total		161	100
No	Sufficient experience	4	3.7
	Sufficient knowledge	21	19.4
	Sufficient patience	22	20.4
	High self-efficacy	61	56.5
Total		108	100

Low self-efficacy accounted for 70 (43.5%) of the expressions of anxiety. T97 explained, *"This is definitely the most difficult [issue]. Even though [the students] are at the level of inclusion, they are much below the normal level. I am aware of how difficult this is because of my internship and I have anxiety about it."*

Another 41 (25.5%) teacher candidates said they lacked sufficient knowledge regarding inclusive classrooms, such as T126, who said, *"I have anxiety. I do not know exactly how to take care of them"* (i.e., children with disabilities).

Twenty-nine teacher candidates (18.0%) mentioned classroom management issues and 14 (8.7%) believed that they lacked adequate experience. Following are answers in these two categories:

> (Classroom management) *"Yes, I believe that special-needs children need an emotionally different approach as well. "* (T95)
>
> (Lack of experience) *"Yes, I have anxiety. It is already difficult to adapt to a new classroom and I am worried about making [the children] be friends with each other if there are any children with disabilities. I will not have anxieties after gaining some experience."* (T136)

The remaining teacher candidates have anxieties about this matter stated that their anxieties arose from crowded classrooms (3.1%) and lack of patience (1.2%). T158 stated, *"If the classroom is crowded, it will be difficult."* T15 observed that caring for children with disabilities requires greater patience and more time and effort than other children need.

On the other hand, 61 (56.5%) of the teacher candidates who did not express anxieties about inclusive classrooms offered comments that indicated high self-efficacy. For example, T166 stated, *"No, I do not have any such anxieties. I believe I will do whatever I need to do about it."*

Twenty-one (19.4%) teacher candidates said that they were (or would be) sufficiently knowledgeable about inclusion issues, and 22 (20.4%) said that their high level of patience would

assist them. In these two categories (respectively), T106 stated, *"I have not anxiety because we have received training about it. We are still being trained about it,"* and T111 said, *"I would feel myself there, especially for those children. I have read and researched a lot on this matter. I am so comfortable with it that I would pay ten times more attention to those children than the others."*

A small number of the teacher candidates (3.7%) cited their prior experience as contributing to their sense of preparedness, including T1, who indicated, *"I have not anxiety. I worked at a private education institution two years ago and I gained experience. Inclusive education is very beneficial for special-needs children."*

Anxieties Regarding the Environment Teachers Will Work in Once They Are Hired

Anxieties about the environment in which the teachers will work after obtaining a position were mentioned by 59.1% of respondents (Table 9).

Table 9. *Main reasons for the beliefs of teacher candidates regarding the environment in which they will work once they are hired*

		f	%
Yes	Position for their spouses	1	0.6
	Limited opportunities	44	27.7
	Cultural differences	107	67.3
	Lack of attention to preschool education	7	4.4
Total		159	100
No	Proliferation of preschool education	3	2.7
	High capability to adapt	107	97.3
Total		110	100

Among the respondents with anxieties, cultural differences (107 responses or 67.3% of all anxieties) predominated. For example, T7 highlighted linguistic differences: *"Yes, especially if it is in the East, there will be a linguistic problem. This would slow down the educational process."*

Another 44 respondents (27.7% of those with anxieties) described limited opportunities, such as T86: *"In some areas, there are limited resources and equipment. Therefore, I need to plan the activities considering such things. Classrooms might be small."*

Seven respondents (4.4%) expressed anxieties about the possibility of lack of attention to preschool education in the area where they will be employed, and one said it might be difficult for a spouse to secure a position in the same geographic area.

On the other hand, nearly all the teacher candidates who did not have anxieties in this regard referenced their high capability to adapt. Three respondents said that the recent proliferation of preschool education gave them confidence that they would have a good work environment.

Anxieties Regarding the Planning and Execution of Teaching and Learning Processes

The planning and execution of teaching and learning processes was a anxiety for 40.9% of respondents (Table 10).

In this topic area, insufficient knowledge (36 responses or 32.7% of all anxieties) was the leading source of uncertainty among respondents, with low self-efficacy cited by 35 respondents (31.8%). For example, T107 said, *"I do not know what to pay attention to while teaching the learning outcomes to the children. Therefore, I have anxiety about not being able to develop an appropriate plan and failing to execute the plan."*

Table 10. *Main reasons for the beliefs of teacher candidates regarding the planning and execution of teaching and learning processes*

		f	%
Yes	Insufficient experience	31	28.2
	Low self-efficacy	35	31.8
	Insufficient knowledge	36	32.7
	Children's level	7	6.4
	Limited opportunities	1	0.9
Total		110	100
No	Sufficient experience	5	3.1
	High self-efficacy	135	84.9
	Sufficient knowledge	19	12.0
Total		159	100

Lack of experience was a third common anxiety, mentioned by 31 (28.2%) teacher candidates. T161 complained that internships do not provide sufficient experience: *"I did not gain the necessary experience during my internship. We might experience some growing pains during the first few years."* Among less frequent anxieties, seven teacher candidates mentioned children's ability level and one cited limited opportunities available at the school.

On the other hand, 135 (84.9%) of the teacher candidates who have not anxiety about the planning and execution of teaching and learning processes expressed high self-efficacy. T167 was typical, stating simply, *"No, I strongly believe that I will excel at this in time."* Sufficient knowledge was cited by 12.0% of the teacher candidates with positive beliefs in this area, and 3.1% referred to having sufficient experience.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

Summarizing the responses in each specific area, we found that 49.8% of the teacher candidates had anxieties about classroom management; 46.1% about communication with parents; 26.8% about communication with the children; 29.7% about communication with school directors and other teachers; 61.0% about the children's orientation to school; 43.9% about childcare; 59.9% about inclusion of children with disabilities; 59.1% about the environment in which they will work once they are hired; and 40.9% about the planning and execution of teaching and learning processes.

Gümrükçü-Bilgici and Deniz (2016) revealed that preschool teacher candidates have child-centered, colleague-centered, appointment-centered, parent-centered and compliance-centered anxieties. In addition, Cabı and Yalçınalp (2009) found that preschool teacher candidates had various concerns about communication with students, school life, professional acceptance environment, economic life and finding a job. It can be said that the findings of our study are consistent with these studies in terms of various child-centered concerns of prospective teachers.

Lack of experience was a cause of various anxieties among a large number of the teacher candidates. Research shows that professional self-efficacy significantly predicts professional anxiety (Donmuş, Akpınar and Eroğlu; 2017; Kahraman and Çelik, 2019). In other words, it is stated that self-confident teacher candidates have lower professional anxiety (Gümrükçü-Bilgici and Deniz, 2016). Increasing their experiences can increase teacher candidates' self-confidence. Therefore, classes in the preschool education training program that are directly related to preparation for practice, such as those on classroom management and parent education, should include a strong emphasis on giving students practical experience. Moreover, the number of class hours devoted to teaching practicum and school experience should be increased, so that teacher candidates can have more practice in actually working with children. Since the internships and school practicums of preschool teacher candidates in Turkey begin later than the start of the school year in preschool settings, teacher candidates currently cannot observe the adaptation process of children attending school for the first time in their lives. Thus, it should not be surprising that many teacher candidates expressed anxieties related to the children's orientation

process. Schools of education should take this difficulty into consideration when scheduling their internships and school practicums.

Finally, our findings show that male preschool teacher candidates have anxiety especially about communicating with parents. Our findings are consistent with the findings of Haskan-Avcı, Karababa and Zencir's (2018) study with male preschool teacher candidates. In this study, it was observed that male preschool teacher candidates were worried that parents and society would be biased towards male preschool teachers (Haskan-Avcı, Karababa and Zencir, 2018). An effort should be undertaken to increase positive awareness of male preschool teachers so as to reduce negative reactions to them by parents.

Teacher candidates in the context of Turkey, are settled in the faculty of education through the educational process is a challenging and ever-changing university entrance exam (Akbulut, Erol and Say, 2018). During their university education, they continue their education with the intensification of courses and social adaptation struggles, as well as with the anxiety of appointment. To be appointed as a teacher in the context of Turkey primarily two-stage Public Personnel Selection Examination for teachers (KPSS) in terms of take-changing basis points according to the branch, then it is necessary to be successful in the oral conducted the interview. This process raises various anxieties for teacher candidates during and after university education. These anxieties may arise from lack of employment, warming up to the profession, friendship environment and various responsibilities throughout the teaching process (Doğan and Çoban, 2009; Tümerdem, 2007). Research shows that especially KPSS exam causes various anxiety and psychological problems in teacher candidates after graduation (Tümkaya, Aybek and Çelik, 2007). In this research, it has not been investigated whether there is a level of anxiety related to not being able to find a job because of the exam they will take. Given that the most prominent concerns of teacher candidates in today's conditions are the inability to appoint and find work (Akbulut, Erol and Say, 2018), it can be said that this study is limited in terms of revealing the anxieties of presumed teachers that they are assigned to the profession. In recent years, both the teacher appointment system and the teacher education undergraduate programs have changed in Turkey. Changes in the teacher appointment system (eg. field exam and interview exam) may have caused different professional anxieties in teacher candidates. Considering the changing conditions, it is recommended that new studies be conducted on this subject. The research is also based on the assumption that the teacher candidates answer the questions sincerely and is limited to the teacher candidates studying in only one same faculty of education. Studies that evaluated the combination of teacher candidates studying in various universities in Turkey may increase the representativeness of the results to be obtained.

In addition, it is an undeniable fact that teacher candidates who will educate future generations should be able to provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable them to fulfill the requirements of their professions, as well as their perspectives and feelings and thoughts about their professions (Aydın and Tekneci, 2013). Because the teacher candidates to start their professions efficiently and to fulfill the requirements of their professions depend on the fact that they are free from the professional anxiety they feel towards their professions (Taşğın, 2006). For this reason, teacher educators and politicians should take into consideration the findings of these studies investigating the professional anxieties of teachers and teacher candidates and the arrangements to be made should be planned in a way to minimize these anxieties.

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