

The Effect of Teaching Practice Lessons on Social Studies Teachers' Self-efficacy Perceptions

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ABSTRACT Teaching practice is a course in which prospective teachers acquire skill and experience related to teaching profession during pre-service period and there exist activities about the profession. Applications about the teaching practice are conducted in the schools that are governed by the Ministry of National Education and influence prospective teachers to learn professional knowledge. Ideas of the prospective teachers are important because their ideas reveal efficacy level of the course. The present study was carried out determining impact of teaching practice on prospective teachers' self-efficacy. Sample of the study consists of 106 4th grade prospective teachers who attended Ataturk University Kazim Karabekir Education Faculty Social Studies Department. The study was designed according to experimental study with pre-test and post-design with control group. Data from the study was analyzed through independent t-test, dependent t-test, Mann Whitney U test at .05 significance level. As a result of analyses it was found that the course of teaching practice increased prospective teacher's self-efficacy level, impact of course did not vary according to the gender, but the course have more impact on female prospective teachers' self-efficacy level than it does on that of male prospective teacher. Impact of course did not differ significantly according to school type.

INTRODUCTION

There are many elements of qualified education and the most important one among them is teacher. Teacher ship is seen as one of the areas of expertise that bear responsibility of preparing the future of the nation; because teachers have quite effective roles in growing new generations (Gursoy 2003). Today it is known that wise people can be grown up with a qualified education and qualified education can be supplied only with teachers who improve themselves. To improve pre-service teachers' occupational development, starting with 1997-1998 academic year, School Experience I and School Experience II lessons were placed into education faculties' curriculums. For this purpose Board of Higher Education revised the education faculties' curriculums and added Community Service Practices, Teaching Practices I, and Teaching Practices II lessons to the curriculum contents (Isik et al. 2010; Paker 2008). It is anticipated that this course is supposed to be implemented as one full-day or two half-days a week, planned, two hours teaching practice seminar, evaluating and sharing the teaching practice. And it is implemented for pre-service teachers to gain teaching ability for teaching a particular course or courses in a planned manner (YOK 1998).

For helping pre-service teachers to improve their occupational development, to apply the required theoretical knowledge in classroom environment, and to develop positive attitudes towards teaching, we benefited from the Faculty-School Cooperation Model. Within this scope, by inquiring the teacher education programs in the USA and England, it is provided that pre-service teachers in Turkish education faculties can find more opportunities to practice and the studies in this process were observed and evaluated orderly and systematically (YOK 1999). With this model for preparing pre-service teachers in training process, it was planned parties in the model to share duties and responsibilities and acting together for solving (Coskun 2011). In these processes, improving their knowledge and experiences so far with the guidance of the practice school teacher and practice faculty member was expected. In this situation the feedback that pre-service teachers receive throughout the processes is important. Additionally, these feedbacks should be constructive and be intended to improve pre-service teachers in terms of profession. Furthermore, pre-service teachers get to see and strengthen their strong aspects; to identify and improve their poor aspects, required feedbacks should be given in a constructive manner

considering pre-service teachers' readiness level and requirements, starting with the most important one (Acheson and Gall 1980). Thus, the aim of this course is preparing pre-service teachers to teach better; to improve their knowledge, ability, attitude and practices regarding general knowledge, special area education and teaching profession and use them in education environment (Sands et al. 1996).

In pre-service teachers' training we can mention about two different approaches. These are the theory-practice approach, also known as traditional approach and the practice-theory approach. Theory-practice approach could be described as pre-service teachers' training to being depended on theory and not to associate the training with teaching activities in real classroom settings. In practice-theory approach on hand, unless pre-service teachers were encountered with the knowledge and skills they need in real classroom settings, it is well known that theoretical knowledge does not carry much meaning to improve teaching profession (Azar 2003; Hammond 2006; Kagan 1992; Yigit and Alev 2007; Zeichner and Conklin 1990).

Requested individual characteristics for any teacher seem as endeavors to recognize and understand students more. It is thought that teachers who know, listen, and understand his/her students understand students' learning styles and the situations they like or do not like more (Wubbels et al. 1997). In terms of classroom management, the strategies and acts that teacher uses to solve problems in classroom is described as teacher's overall sufficiency. Teacher who has appropriate qualifications can include students in setting principles and rules and construct a body of habits and rules (Doyle 1986). Besides, teacher's efficiency regarding classroom organization is stated as capabilities of arranging classroom physically and constructing classroom environment to support affective learning (Education Review Office 1998). Planning teaching provides information for teacher regarding actualizing activities in how much time and how; and eliminates randomness in the process. Difficulty made by individualization of teaching for the skills of realization of teaching, forces teachers to use the methods and techniques that they well know (Stronge et al. 2007). Another important proficiency requested from qualified teachers is the ability of tracking and evaluating students' improvement development. This ability is related

not only to academic dimension of students' development, but also to social and emotional dimensions (Fullan 2000).

It could be said that pre-service education given to pre-service teachers in colleges has direct effects on their qualifications mentioned above (Hansen 2008; Azar 2003). Pre-service education is accepted as the first lesson of life that establishes a ground pre-service teachers' professional development (Reimers 2003). On the other hand, it should not be forgotten the self-efficacy beliefs' importance on pre-service teachers' professional development.

Self efficacy belief concept is firstly appeared with Bandura's Social Learning Theory and relevant with individual judgments regarding how individuals are good at doing actions to overcome possible problems (Bikmaz 2004). Approximately in last forty years, human effectiveness was studied and these studies showed that there is a continuous tendency towards individuals' initial construction processes. Individuals' thoughts about their own sufficiency of performance were accepted as the most important element of individual efficacy. According to the social cognitive theory which constitutes theoretical foundation of self efficacy, as long as individuals do not believe that they can reach their goals with their own behaviors, they want less to transform these behaviors to performance. In other words, perceptions related to practicability of a behavior may enable the behavior get repeated (Bandura et al. 1996).

In the opinions about individual efficacy processes, self-efficacy has more central place (Bandura 1989). Self-efficacy is individuals' beliefs on their own sufficiency to increase their learning lives and the behaviors they exhibit to a suitable level. Self-efficacy is to know what an individual can do more than what he/she would do. In other words, it means evaluating his/her own skills and sufficiency and transform them to behavior (Bandura 2001). Perceived self-efficacy is a concept that connected with individuals' developed beliefs about their own sufficiency regarding their behavior exhibition (Bandura 1977).

According to Bandura, by leading individuals' strategic, disorganized, optimistic or pessimistic thinking directly, self-efficacy beliefs affect individuals' motivation levels in terms of exhibiting behavior. Furthermore, by evaluating existing individual efficacy, behaviors could be

leaded (Table 1). Perceived self-efficacy has a key role on formation of behavior. Because, perceived self-efficacy affects behavior directly and has an important effect on the determiners such as aims, expectations, emotional tendencies, barriers, and opportunities (Bandura 2000).

Table 1: Self-efficacy sources

Source	Sub -components
<i>Direct Experiences</i>	• Participative modeling • Reducing anxiety regarding exhibiting performance systematically • Transforming behavior to performance automatically
<i>Indirect Experiences</i>	• Learning from live model • Symbolic modeling
<i>Verbal Conviction</i>	• Suggestion • Encouragement • Self-training • Explanatory behaviors (Feedback)
<i>Physiological and Emotional Situation</i>	• Mental inferences • Relief, biofeedback • Reducing anxiety • Symbolic desensitization

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in general terms grow from four sources. These are direct experiences, indirect experiences, verbal conviction and emotional situation (Bandura 1999).

The most effective way of constructing self-efficacy for individuals is their successful experiences from direct living; because, direct living are based on new learning living and experiences. While acquired successes provide a strong self-efficacy perception, failure reduces. If individuals do not make evaluations by considering their behaviors' consequences, this situation affects development of self-efficacy negatively as a cause of many failures (Oettingen 1995).

Another effective way of construction of self-efficacy is indirect living obtained from social models. Knowledge sources regarding individuals' efficacy development do not depend on only direct living. Self-efficacy perceptions are affected partly from indirect living. Individuals can evaluate their own self-efficacy perceptions by observing individuals who perform behaviors in a successful manner (Bandura 1982, 1986).

Social persuasion is the third way of construction of self-efficacy. Generally the efficacies that necessary for individuals to accomplish aimed behaviors are defined as verbal persuasion (Bandura 1986).

Another effective element of constructing self-efficacy is physiological and emotional situations of individuals. When individuals perceive their exhaustion, pains and aches as physical weakness in the activities that required endurance and power, self-efficacy level can decrease. Furthermore, person's psychological structure also affects self-efficacy perception. The fourth way of improving self-efficacy is empowering physical situation and terminating stress and negative emotion situations (Bandura 1999).

At the end of all these evaluations it could be said that self-efficacy perception might has important effects on individual's professional and educational success. Also it has effects on individual to construct herself a professional and educational alternative, to prepare for her profession in an educational manner, and to struggle with difficulties in career and education process (Bandura 2002).

Teacher self-efficacy is one of the important academic development areas which are affected by self-efficacy perceptions. The most effective way of construction of self-efficacy for a pre-service teacher is teaching practice and gained living during her studentship life. Especially if pre-service teacher's implementations are successful, these implementations might make pre-service teacher feel herself efficient. In constructing pre-service teachers' self-efficacy based on direct experiences, at the first stage maintaining classroom management might be so important. Because, pre-service teachers' efficacy perceptions are depend on keeping students under control and to maintain classroom management. Pre-service teachers who have low self-efficacy have pessimistic viewpoints toward the students. These pre-service teachers to orientate students to lessons and to maintain classroom management may apply punishment and strict classroom rules often. After getting a certain experience satisfaction in teaching profession, development of self-efficacy may become permanent. But pre-service teacher who could not find enough implementation opportunity would be deprived of such experience. This deprivation would cause pre-service teacher to develop her self-efficacy evaluations with indirect experiences (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy 1998). As a conclusion, it can be said that pre-service teachers' self efficacy beliefs provide opportunity for lessons to be taught more ambitiously by effecting their in-class performances

and practices positively (Tuckman and Sexton 1990).

The Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of teaching practice courses on social studies pre-service teachers' self-efficacy perception level.

Sub-problems of the Study

1. How effective the teaching practice course on?
2. Do pre-service teachers' self-efficacy perceptions differ regarding gender?
3. Do pre-service teachers' self-efficacy perceptions differ regarding the high school type they graduated?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this research one group pretest posttest experimental design which is one of the qualitative research approaches. In pre-service teachers' teaching practice lessons, there are a lot of detrimental variables such as equipment conditions of schools, parents' participation to education process, relations among teachers, and relation between practice teacher and pre-service teacher. And it is impossible to keep these under control. For this reason in the study one group pretest posttest experimental design of experimental research method was used (Cohen et al. 2000).

Population

Population of the study consists of 205 4th grade prospective teachers who attended Ataturk University Kazim Karabekir Education Faculty Social Studies Department at 2013-2014 academic year.

Sample

Sample of the study consists of 106 4th grade prospective teachers who attended Ataturk University Kazim Karabekir Education Faculty Social Studies Department at 2013-2014 academic year.

Information regarding gender of social studies pre-service teachers who compose the research sample was shown in Table 2. As it was seen in the Table 2, 44 female (41.5%) and 62 male (58.5%), a total of 106 pre-service teachers were participated.

Table 2: Dispersion of pre-service teachers in terms of gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
Male	62	58.5
Female	44	41.5
Total	106	100

High school types that pre-service teachers graduated were grouped in three categories as Anatolian High School, General High School, and Teacher High School. Anatolian High School graduated 35 (33%), General High School graduated 37 (35%) and Teacher High School graduated 34 (32%) social studies pre-service teachers who composed the research sample were shown in Table 3 in detailed.

Table 3: Dispersion of pre-service teachers in terms of high school they were graduated

<i>High school</i>	<i>Frequency (f)</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
Anatolian High School	35	33
General High School	37	35
Teacher High School	34	32
Total	106	100

Data Collection Tool

Which developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy (2001) and adapted to Turkish by Capa et al. (2005) was used for data collection instrument.

Data collection tool is a 9 level likert type scale and composed a total of 24 items. The maximum point pre-service teachers can get is 216 (24X9). "Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale" is composed of three sub dimensions as "Student Participation"(SP), "Classroom Management" (CM), and "Teaching Strategies"(TS). Each dimension has eight items and pre-service teachers can get 72 (8X9) points maximum from one sub dimension. The reliability of SP dimension determined as .82, TS dimension determined as .86, and CM dimension determined as .93 (Capa et al. 2005).

Collection of Data

At the beginning of Fall Semester primarily pretest was applied to volunteer fourth grade social studies pre-service teachers who attend Atatürk University Kazım Karabekir Education Faculty and at the end of the semester post test was applied.

Analysis of Data

Research data was analysed with SPSS 17 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Dependent groups t-test, independent groups t-test, Mann Whitney U test, and Wilcoxon test were used for analysing data.

FINDINGS

In this paper given place to statistical processes and the findings at the end of these processes regarding testing research hypotheses.

Based on the findings shown in Table 4 it could be said that posttest points which pre-service teachers got from all the sub-dimensions of the scale are higher than the pretest points. To determine whether both test points disperse normally, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was done at the .05 significance level and was found that the points did not disperse normally ($p < .05$). At the end of normal dispersion analyses to determine the difference between pretest and posttest Mann-Whitney U test which is one of the non-parametric tests was used (Field 2000).

According to Mann-Whitney U test results that was shown in the Table 5, for all sub-dimensions a significant difference was found between pretest and posttest points and in favor of posttest ($P = .000$; $p < .05$). Based on this analysis results it was reached to the conclusion that teaching practice lessons increase pre-service teachers' self-efficacy level significantly.

In Table 6, in terms of gender variable descriptive statistics and normal dispersion results

Table 4: Dependent t-test results regarding pre-service teachers' pre-test and post-test points means

Sub-dimensions	Implementation	N	KS	X	SS
Student Participation	Pre-test	106	.000	48.50	5.09
	Post-test	106	.001	57.12	5.33
Teaching Strategies	Pre-test	106	.000	47.92	5.74
	Post-test	106	.024	57.71	4.41
Classroom Management	Pre-test	106	.000	48.15	6.91
	Post-test	106	.000	57.66	4.42

Table 5: Mann Whitney u test results regarding pre-service teachers' pre-test and post-test points means

Sub-dimensions	Implementation	N	Post-pretest mean rank	Rank sum	Mann Whit.U	p
Student Participation	Pre-test	106	65.35	65.35	1256.50	.000
	Post-test	106	147.65	15650.50		
Teaching Strategies	Pre-test	106	64.53	6840.50	1169.50	.000
	Post-test	106	148.47	15737.50		
Classroom Management	Pre-test	106	66.14	7010.50	1339.50	.000
	Post-test	106	146.86	15567.50		

Table 6: Post-test and pre-test points means difference and normality results regarding gender variable

Sub-dimensions	Gender	Post-pre-test mean x	Pre-test mean	X mean difference	SS (Post-Pre-test)	KS
Student Participation	Female	57.14	47.41	9.73	4.70	.200
	Male	57.50	48.32	9.18	4.51	.005
Teaching Strategies	Female	58.65	46.07	12.58	4.54	.200
	Male	57.37	47.93	9.44	4.03	.200
Classroom Management	Female	55.31	45.48	9.83	6.72	.055
	Male	57.37	48.70	8.67	4.77	.004
Self-efficacy	Female	170.86	141.43	29.43	5.56	.015
	Male	173.67	146.80	26.87	5.20	.003

were shown. According to these findings to determine whether there is a significant difference or not between pretest and post-test regarding "Student Participation," "Classroom Management" and "Self-Efficacy" sub-dimensions Mann-Whitney U test which is one of non-parametric tests was decided. And for "Teaching Strategies" sub-dimension independent group t test which is one of the parametric tests was used.

The findings shown in the Table 7 show that there is no significant difference in terms of gender at "Teaching Strategies" sub-dimension ($t_{(104)} = 1.47, p > .05$).

In the Table 8 Mann Whitney U test results were shown. While the findings show no difference determined at Student Participation sub-dimension ($p = .224; p > .05$); at Classroom Management ($p = .026; p < .05$), and Self-Efficacy ($p = .011; p < .05$) sub-dimensions significant differences was found. And this difference is in favor of female pre-service teachers. With these findings it could be said that in the teaching practice process female pre-service teachers improve their self-efficacy levels more.

Table 9: Findings about effectiveness of experimental processing regarding high school type they graduated

Group	KT	Sd	KO	F	p
Between groups	44.46	2	22.23	.73	.48
Within group	3112.07	103	30.21		
Sum	3156.53	105			

With the results of variance analysis in Table 9 it was determined that effectiveness of experimental processing does not show any differences regarding high school type ($F_{(2, 103)} = .73, p > .05$).

DISCUSSION

The issues, qualifications that teacher education have, roles and competences that teachers have, qualifications that requester for teaching profession, and inadequacies in teacher education will be quite important in the future. Besides all these points differ society to society and culture to culture, determining teachers' proficiencies in detailed is so important for all countries. In this context, teachers fulfill the necessities of teaching profession with special area knowledge and pedagogical formation. Pre-service teachers to internalize the theoretical knowledge they received in faculty enables them to improve their self-efficacy perceptions. Beside training teachers' how efficiently in terms of profession, it is also important to what extent they see and perceive themselves efficient. This situation is related with teachers to trust, recognize and evaluate themselves. Teachers who trust and evaluate themselves objectively are closer to success (Ustuner et al. 2009). Thus, for an effective teaching it is important to determine professional and self efficacy of pre-service teachers

Table 7: Independent t-test results of post-test and pre-test points mean difference regarding gender variable

Sub-dimensions	Gender	N	X	SS	KS	sd	t	P
Teaching Strategies	Female	44	10.56	4.51	.200	104	1.47	.14
	Male	62	9.24	4.61	.200			

K-S: Kolmogorov Smirnov

Table 8: Mann Whitney u test results of post-test and pre-test points mean differences regarding gender variable

Sub-dimensions	Gender	N	KS	Post-pretest mean rank	Rank sum	Mann Whit.U	p
Student Participation	Female	44	.200	49.22	2165.50	1175.50	.224
	Male	62	.005	56.54	3505.50		
Teaching Strategies	Female	44	.055	61.35	2699.50	1018.50	.026
	Male	62	.004	47.93	2971.50		
Self-efficacy	Female	44	.015	62.47	2748.50	969.50	.011
	Male	62	.003	47.14	2922.50		

K-S: Kolmogorov Smirnov

who are about to finish their undergraduate degree. Research shows that teacher's self efficacy beliefs about teaching are effective on his or her performance in terms of teaching (Brownell and Pajares 1999). At the end of this study, which is to examine the effects of teaching practice courses on social studies pre-service teachers' self-efficacy perception level, these findings were reached:

This study put forward that teaching practice course increased pre-service teachers' self efficacy perceptions. With this aspect the study supports the studies like (Ashton 1984; Cantrell et al. 2003; Fives et al. 2007; Gibson and Dembo 1984; McDonnough and Matkins 2010; Oksuz and Coskun 2012; Woolfolk-Hoy and Sphero 2005; Ross 1992; Ramey and Shroyer 1992). But it has different findings with the studies like (Giallo and Little 2003; Newman 1999; Plourde 2002).

When we look at the study's findings regarding gender variable, it is determined that woman pre-service teachers' self efficacy beliefs are higher than the males'. This result is overlaps the studies of (Aktag and Walter 2005; Capri and Celikkaleli 2008; Cantrell et al. 2003; Edwards et al. 1996; Otacioglu 2008; Shahid and Thompson 2001). On the other hand, there are studies show that pre-service teachers' self efficacy beliefs do not differ regarding gender or males' perceptions are higher than females' (Aksu 2008; Akbas and Celikkaleli 2006; Kahyaoglu and Yangin 2007; Morgil et al. 2004; Oksuz and Coskun 2012; Kaya and Donmez 2008; Yaman et al. 2004; Ustuner et al. 2009).

In terms of genders, indifference of self-efficacy beliefs of classroom teachers could be explained with the change of traditional women role, women to come into prominence in academic world, and the liberty in choice of profession regarding gender in Turkey (Akbas and Celikkaleli 2006).

It is determined that pre-service teachers' self-efficacy perceptions do not differ regarding school type. With this aspect, some studies while (Aksu 2008; Ekici 2008; Yaman et al. 2004; Duatepe Paksu 2008; Alabay 2006; Kaya and Donmez 2008) support the study result; some other studies' results (Otacioglu 2008; Akengin et al. 2010; Oksuz and Coskun 2012) show that pre-service teachers' self-efficacy perceptions differs regarding school type (Otacioglu 2008; Akengin et al. 2010; Oksuz and Coskun 2012).

CONCLUSION

This study reached to the conclusion that teaching practice course has positive effects on social studies pre-service teachers' self-efficacies. Also it is determined that regarding gender variable, it is determined that woman pre-service teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are higher than the male teachers'; and pre-service teachers' self-efficacies do not differ regarding high school type they graduated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations can be made to the researchers; the factors that affect Social Studies pre-service teachers' self-efficacy belief levels should be inquired. For Teaching Practice course environments should be prepared which they could be more effective and competent in regarding responsibility and authorization; and should be concentrated more on School Experience and Teaching Practice courses. For these two courses, schools and advisor teachers that pre-service teachers would be sent to should be selected carefully. And lastly, it should be focused on guidance studies to increase higher grade pre-service teachers' self efficacy belief levels.

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