# Examination of the Professional Belief Level of the Physical Education Teacher Candidates and Factors Affecting Their Belief Level: A Mixed-Method Research

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**Abstract**

This study aimed to determine the professional belief levels of the physical education teacher candidates and the factors affecting their belief levels. Exploratory sequential design, one of the mixed research methods, was used to examine the candidates of the physical education teachers. The quantitative sample of the study consisted of 278 (n=126 female, n=152 male) candidates teachers attending the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th-grade level at the Faculty of Sport Sciences. The qualitative research sample of the study consisted of 12 physical education teacher candidates who participated in two different focus group interviews. In the quantitative part of the study, while the independent sample t-test was used in the analysis of the gender variable, One-way ANOVA test was used to determine the difference between the grade levels. In the qualitative part of the study, content analysis was used. While there was no significant difference in the "sense of calling" and the "value of physical education" according to gender, there was a statistical difference according to the grade level of the candidate teachers. In the qualitative part of the study, as a result of the focus group interviews, two themes and twelve categories were determined as the reasons that affect the belief levels of the candidate teachers of physical education positively and the reasons that affect them negatively. It was derived from the study that candidate teachers state that their motivation, attitude, and beliefs towards the teaching profession after starting their departments gradually decreased and started to evolve negatively after starting the department. Teacher candidates state the reasons of their negative opinion as "disappointment caused by the department", "insufficient salary", "counting on the spot (make no progress)", "negative physical education teacher perception in the society", "working conditions", "ınsufficient field education" and "difficulty in appointment to the job".

**Keywords:** Physical Education Teachers, Teaching, Profession Belief, Candidate Teachers.

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## Introduction

From the determination of the department preference of the teacher, which is one of the most valuable components of the education system, to the vocational education process, from the candidate teacher to the profession, factors such as perspective, attitude, motivation, expectations and belief in the profession will be determined in terms of his/her success and continuity in the profession. Teaching is a profession that requires emotional behaviour other than knowledge, ability, and experience (Pehlivan, 2010), as well as knowledge in training qualified students, the attitude of the teacher towards the profession and the Value of the profession are also necessary (Kılınçer & Afacan, 2019). As a result of the researches conducted to reveal the relationship between the teacher beliefs and professional beliefs of both candidate teachers and teachers in the last thirty years, very important findings have been obtained in this regard (Shinde & Karekatti, 2012). In particular, reasons such as a decrease in teacher quality and a decline in profession preference have made researches increasingly focused on candidate teachers' perceptions, motivations, passions, and career development (Mangaoil et al., 2017). Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which Turkey is a member, the number of qualified teachers according to the 2009 report has become a common problem for all OECD countries (Moses, et al., 2017; Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012). Similarly, Pop and Turner (2009) pointed out that the decrease in the number of teachers has become a major problem faced by both the United States and many countries in the world. The main reason behind this problem is explained as the discrepancy between the motivation of the person to become a teacher and the tasks that must be performed after the teacher or the facts faced by the teacher (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2012).

There must be some factors that play an important role in motivating the individual to his profession and activate the individual to ensure satisfaction in his profession (Ayık & Taş, 2014). The researchers emphasized that motivation is a force that guides the individual towards certain goals and enables them to act in line with these goals, the effective use of this force is effective in achieving the goals of the individual, and candidate teachers should be motivated to work in the future for education. Altınkurt et al., (2014) stated that high motivation level provides high job performance and candidate teachers' motivations about the teaching profession are very important in terms of reflecting their feelings, thoughts, and behaviours about the profession. In their research, Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2012) concluded that the motivation of individuals to be teachers mostly affects their professional commitment levels. Researchers argue that the main motivation source for being a teacher is "perception of one's teaching ability". In the researches about choosing the teaching profession, it was determined that the candidate teachers see the reasons for choosing the teaching profession as a career as "intrinsic motivation", "extrinsic motivation" and "altruistic" [altruistic: the view that makes life and moral principle working for the well-being of others] (Pop & Turner, 2009).

The researches also show that, motivations such as "desire to work with children", "inner value (the feeling of satisfaction or pleasure that a student feels when he/she understands what is told)", "shaping the future or influencing students", "social contribution" and "perceived teaching ability" were reasons for choosing teaching as a career (König & Rothland, 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2012). Bergmark et al., (2018) stated that salary, status and working conditions are sources of external motivation, passion for teaching and desire, and subject knowledge and expertise are sources of intrinsic motivation. It is stated by the researchers that there is a motivation in the subject of "supporting the development of children" and "making a difference in society" with the concept of altruistic (altruism), which sees "sacrificing for the well-being of others as the principle of life and morality". Pop and Turner (2009) also stated that the candidate teachers having external motivation tend to focus on external aspects that are not inherent in the profession, such as taking long vacations, requesting a certain level of wages, or demanding other benefits related to their profession. Pop and Turner (2009) emphasized that many types of research aimed at determining teacher candidates' views about teaching are primarily focused on individuals who are dedicated to the teaching profession, while Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000) are investigating the reasons why individuals continue their teaching career. Kyriacou and Coulthard (2000) divided the students attending the teacher education program into three different groups as "anti-teaching group", "undecided group" and "pro-teaching group". The results of the research revealed that all three groups were strongly motivated by their professions for reasons such as "the nature of the profession (a job I will find fun)" and "the environment (a pleasant working environment)". Besides, it has been observed that those who do not intend to teach (anti-teaching) emphasize relatively 'good chance of promotion' and "high earning during career" and those who are considering teaching emphasize "a job I can contribute to society" and "a job I can care about for others". In a research conducted by Kılınç et al., (2012), including preschool, primary and secondary school candidate teachers in Turkey, while "altruistic (altruistic: social benefit)" was the first choice in the profession, a safe job desire, intrinsic value and perceived teaching skills followed. Polat (2014) stated that the reason for preference of candidate teachers is the economic factors expressed in the form of "job security" and "job guarantee", as well as working conditions such as being "comfortable" and easy in the profession are also important in the choice.

Another factor for the teaching profession to be efficient and sustainable is the attitude of the candidate teachers towards their profession before starting their field education. Baykara Pehlivan (2013) stated that attitudes are learned, the processes of connotation, reinforcement, and imitation of learning are determined, not only in children, but also the same process applies to peers, teachers, or other persons other than parents. Karadağ (2012) stated that teachers require a positive attitude towards the profession and having affective domain competencies before the service to fulfil their responsibilities in terms of educating individuals in line with the requirements of the age and increasing the quality of the education system. Özkan (2012) stated that teachers' attitudes towards

their professions are related to their love of their professions, being attached to their professions, aware of the fact that their profession is socially necessary and important, and believing that they must constantly improve themselves. The researcher emphasized that positive or negative attitudes are very effective in guiding the professional behaviour of candidate teachers, therefore, the learning lives of students should be arranged in a way that will create positive attitudes towards the teaching profession.

The perception, motivation, and positive or negative attitude of the candidate teachers towards their profession are undoubtedly the elements that will be directly affected by the education environment they are in. At this point, the academic, physical and social competence and quality of the institution where the candidate teacher receives his vocational education directly affect the perception, emotion, thought, and attitude regarding the profession of the candidate teacher. Yıldırım and Kalman (2017) emphasized that, among other variables, teacher education is effective in obtaining qualified student and learning outcomes. Uğraş and Güllü (2019) similarly stated that the quality of the institution that educates teachers is the primary factor that determines the quality of the teacher, the quality of these institutions, the content of the program carried out, the suitability of time, the facilities and equipment, and the quality of the instructors in these institutions directly affect the quality of the teachers who graduate from these institutions. Darling et al., (2005) also emphasized that the relationship between teacher education and teacher effectiveness has been a subject that has been frequently discussed in both research and political circles in recent years, teacher effectiveness is very strongly associated with education for preparation for teaching. The most important role that universities will undertake in the process of training teachers is to develop their ability to go beyond one's perspective, to replace themselves with learners, and to understand the meaning of this experience in terms of learning (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Ozcan (2020) pointed out that while designing the teacher education programs, many issues such as courses, educational process, materials and programs are considered, but among these, "teacher candidates' attitudes towards the profession" and "professional preparation" are the two most important issues. However, the results obtained from research on teacher education, teacher training programs, and teachers who have just started their profession have shown that teacher education programs are not sufficient to gain some competencies (Yıldırım & Kalman, 2017). Aktağ and Walter (2005) emphasized the importance of teacher training programs and stated that educators within the Turkish education system are aware that trained, self-believing and confident, high-motivational teachers are needed for Turkey to take place among the developed countries.

The professional beliefs of the teacher candidates which will ensure being permanent or not in the profession are the most important factors as well as the attitude developed against the profession, the perception developed towards the teaching profession, the factors that motivate the person. Undoubtedly, professional belief is a concept directly related to the institution that provides

professional perception, motivation, attitude, and vocational education. However, professional belief is the main determining factor whether the candidate teacher will start or will continue later the profession, or not. Erbas (2013) emphasized that knowledge and belief are the main factors affecting people's attitudes and behaviours, and it is not possible to say the same situation for belief, which is a subjective concept that can vary from person to person. Teachers' beliefs also affect their perceptions about education, teaching methods and students' learning outcomes. Also, candidate teachers' beliefs about physical education and job requirements affect their decision to become physical education teachers or not. (Xiang et al., 2002). Aktağ and Walter (2005) emphasized that teachers' beliefs in their professional competencies are one of the most important factors affecting their success in the profession. The researchers argued that the early gaining of confidence and competence in candidate teachers will increase the success of the candidate teachers both during their teaching lives and after they become teachers. Uğraş and Dindar (2019) argued that the belief, which is the first step of the beginning of the profession, should be settled in the choice of teacher, in the process of education and after, and that there will be more professional satisfaction in teachers with high belief and motivation. Bergmark et al., (2018) stated that candidate teachers' beliefs in the profession are very important since the beginning of the process and that naming themselves as teachers at the beginning of the education process is an important step for the teaching profession. The candidate teacher's qualification as a teacher and his belief in the profession will be a driving force in overcoming the problems he will encounter in his career (Bergmark et al., 2018). The belief in the teaching profession affects the permanence in the profession in addition to the career choice (Dündar, 2014). Tümkaya and Uştu (2016) found that those who started their teaching profession unintentionally experienced more burnout compared to those who started voluntarily and that teachers who started voluntarily were more dependent on the profession. According to Watt et al., (2014), candidate teachers can be evaluated in three different groups in choosing the teaching profession at the beginning of career planning. While the first group is a candidate for teaching as a career firmly and until the end, the group that is enthusiastic about teaching but desires to move on to a different career after a certain period constitutes the second group, and the group that is lowly committed to teaching as a career is the third group. Therefore, it is possible to say that the belief of the candidate teacher in the profession may affect both education and professional life positively or negatively.

In the review of the literature, in Turkey, it is seen that there are different researches about "the wishes of physical education teacher candidates to start the profession and their professional attitudes" (Abbasoğlu & Öncü, 2013; Pehlivan, 2010; Ünlü, 2013; Yanık & Çamlıyer, 2013; Altınkurt et al., 2014; Oğuz, 2013). It is also seen that the researches generally were focusing on the subject of "self-perception, self-esteem, self-efficacy and belief" (Yılmaz et al., 2017; Karabulut et al., 2019; Arslan & Çolakoğlu, 2019; Kahraman & Çelik, 2019). The study named "Adaptation of the Scale of Physical Education Teaching Professional Belief to Turkish Culture" conducted by Uğraş and Dindar

(2019) draws attention in terms of bringing a different perspective to this issue. It is thought that supporting this quantitative research with a research that will be carried out with a mixed method will make important contributions to the literature. For that reason, in this study, it was aimed to determine the professional belief levels of the physical education teacher candidates and the factors affecting their belief levels.

## Method

### Research Design

Exploratory sequential design, one of the mixed research methods, was used to examine the candidates of the physical education teachers who study at the faculty of sports sciences of Marmara region universities and the level of belief in the profession and the factors affecting it. The exploratory sequential design is a method that the researcher starts with the quantitative research department and then searches for special results through qualitative research (Creswell & Clark, 2018). In this design, it is aimed to explain the relations and trends in the quantitative data with the qualitative stage.

### Research Group

*Quantitative Research Group*

The quantitative sample of the study consisted of 278 (n=126 female, n=152 male) candidates teachers attending the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th-grade level at the Faculty of Sport Sciences.

**Table 1.** Distribution of the Candidate Teachers According to their Gender and Grade Level

| Candidate Teachers' Qualifications | | n | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 152 | 54.7 |
| | Female | 126 | 45.3 |
| | Total | 278 | 100.0 |
| Grade Level | 1st Grade | 62 | 22,3 |
| | 2nd Grade | 106 | 38.1 |
| | 3rd Grade | 53 | 19.1 |
| | 4th Grade | 57 | 20.5 |
| | Total | 278 | 100.0 |

Table 1 shows the distribution of the candidate teachers according to their gender and grade level.

*Qualitative Research Group*

The qualitative research sample of the study consisted of candidates for physical education teachers studying in the 4th grade, whose professional belief levels decreased compared to the quantitative research results. Snowball sampling method, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used for sample selection. In the snowball sampling, it is based on the questions "Who can I get the best information about?" (Patton, 2002). For this purpose, 6 physical education candidate teachers who have high teaching profession beliefs and who do not think of any other career have

formed the 1st Focus group, while 6 physical education teachers who did not think of teaching physical education when they graduated formed the 2nd Focus group. While forming focus groups, it was attempted to reach candidate teachers with high and low professional belief levels.

**Data Collection Tool and Data Collection Process**

*Quantitative Data Collection Tool*

In the quantitative part of the study, the Turkish version of the "Belief Scale for Physical Education Teaching", which was developed by Fan et al. (2018) and adapted by Uğraş and Dindar (2019) into the Turkish was used. The scale consists of 2 dimensions and 11 items, namely "Sense of calling" and "Value of Physical Education". Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed for the construct validity of the scale. According to the CFA results, it was determined that the factor loads of the "Sense of calling" dimension ranged between 0.59 and 94, and the "Value of Physical Education" ranged between 0.57 and 0.92. The scale has acceptable values (Hooper, Coughlan & Mullen, 2008; Kline, 2016) values ($\chi 2$ / sd = 0.903, GFI = 0.903, CFI = 950, NFI = 937, IFI = .950, RMSEA = 0.080) has been identified. It was determined that the Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was 0.94 in the "Sense of calling" dimension and 0.91 in the "Value of Physical Education" dimension.

*Qualitative Data Collection Tool*

A semi-structured interview form was used to determine the reasons that affect the belief levels of the candidate teachers of physical education positively or negatively. A semi-structured interview form was used due to the in-depth clarification of candidate teachers' thoughts and their flexibility (Merriam, 2013). Two separate focus group interviews were conducted to collect the data. Focus group interviews were preferred in terms of providing a broad perspective on the subject being investigated and referring them to new thoughts (Cameron, 2005).

**Data Analysis**

*Quantitative Data Analysis*

Skewness and kurtosis values were examined to understand whether the physical education teacher professional belief scale shows the normal distribution. As can be seen in Table 2, parametric tests were used since the skewness and kurtosis value was between +2 and -2 values (George & Mallery, 2010). DFA analysis AMOS 23 program was used to test the construct validity of the scale. While the independent sample t-test was used in the analysis of the gender variable, One-way ANOVA test was used to determine the difference between the grade levels. The significance value (p ≤ .05) was accepted. Scheffe test was used in posthoc tests to understand which groups the difference is.

### Qualitative Data Analysis

Focus group interviews with candidate teachers were recorded in the voice recorder to avoid data loss, and then transferred to the written medium. Content analysis was conducted to reach concepts and relationships that could explain the factors that affect the beliefs of the physical education and sports teacher candidates on the profession positively or negatively (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Thematic analysis was carried out for the reader to understand better. In thematic analysis, the researcher's familiarity with the data, creating the first codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, identifying and naming themes, and finally preparing the report are followed (Braun & Clarke, 2019). For the reliability of the research, a suitable sample was selected for the study, and some expressions of the participants were given in the themes with direct quotations.

## Results

### Quantitative Results of the Research

In this part of the research, quantitative test results of the research were presented in Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4.

**Table 2.** Arithmetic Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis Values of Teacher Candidates' Scale Sub-dimensions

| Sub Dimensions | N | $\bar{X}$ | SD | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sense of calling | 278 | 5.51 | 1.58 | -1.23 | .64 |
| Value of Physical Education | 278 | 6.28 | 1.26 | -1.07 | 1.08 |

When Table 2 was examined, it was determined that there is no statistically difference in the "Sense of calling" (t(276)= .563, p=.574) and the value given to physical education (t(276)=.588, p=.557).

**Table 3.** Independent Sample T-Test Results According to Gender Variable

| Sub Dimensions | Gender | N | $\bar{X}$ | SS | SD | T | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sense of calling | Male | 152 | 5.46 | 1.63 | 276 | .56 | .57 |
| | Female | 126 | 5.57 | 1.51 | | | |
| Value of Physical Education | Male | 152 | 6.32 | 1.10 | 276 | .58 | .55 |
| | Female | 126 | 6.23 | 1.44 | | | |

When Table 3 was examined, it was determined that there was no any statistical difference between "Sense of calling" [t(164) = 0.563, p=.574] and "Value of Physical Education" [t(164)=0.588, p=0.557] according to gender variable.

**Table 4.** One Way Anova Results by Grade Variable

| Sub Dimensions | Grade Level | N | X | SD | Anova | | Scheffe |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | F | P | |
| Sense of calling | 1 | 62 | 5.64 | 1.57 | | | |
| | 2 | 106 | 5.36 | 1.67 | 2.29 | 0.03 | 3 and 4 |
| | 3 | 53 | 5.99 | 1.25 | | | |
| | 4 | 57 | 5.18 | 1.60 | | | |
| Value of Physical Education | 1 | 62 | 5.51 | 1.58 | | | |
| | 2 | 106 | 6.29 | 1.29 | 3.15 | 0.02 | 3 and 4 |
| | 3 | 53 | 6.34 | 1.35 | | | |
| | 3 | 57 | 6.59 | .76 | | | |

When Table 4 was analyzed, it was determined that there is a statistical difference in the "Sense of calling" and the "Value of Physical Education" between candidate teachers who attend 3rd grade and candidate teachers attending 4th grade.

### Qualitative Results of the Research

As a result of the focus group interviews, two themes were determined as the reasons that affect the belief levels of the candidate teachers of physical education positively and the reasons that affect them negatively. Reasons that positively affect professional belief theme; It consists of "My Dream Job", "Loving Working with Children", "Being Beneficial for the Society", "Being Intertwined with Sports", and "The Effect of the Physical Education Teacher". The theme of the factors that negatively affect professional belief formed as "Disappointment Caused by the Department", "Insufficient Salary", "counting on the spot (make no progress)", "Negative Physical Education Teacher Perception in the Society", "Working Conditions", "Insufficient Field Education" and "Difficulty in Appointment to the Job" into these categories.

#### *Theme 1: Reasons Affecting the Profession Belief Positively*

**My Dream Job.** In the 1st Focus Group meeting comprised of a total of 6 Physical Education Teacher candidates who have high teaching beliefs and do not think of any other careers, the most important factor that increases the beliefs of the Candidates of Physical Education Teachers on their professions was "My Dream Job" category. It is understood that the candidate teachers who stated this view see Physical Education Teaching as a profession to "prove themselves or perform". The candidate teachers in this group stated that "Physical Education Teaching has more flexible, more fun and more comfortable working conditions than other branch teachers", "the workload is lighter" and "Although the salary is the same, the expectation from them is lower than the other branch teachers. Besides, the participants of this group stated that "Physical Education Teachers see their salaries as satisfactory" and "the feeling of not being successful in other branch teachers or other professional groups" positively affect their thoughts on this profession. Nalan and Meltem, two participants whose

belief in the profession is observed very high, answered the question that "What would your attitude be if you received an offer from another profession with a higher salary after you started the profession?" as *"I will not leave my profession in such a situation", "this is my ideal job" and "I think I will be happy in this profession."*

**Loving Working with Children.** It is seen that another factor that increases the beliefs of the Physical Education Teacher candidates participating in the first focus group meeting is "to love working with children". The participants of this group stated that they "love to work with children", and it is seen that "being a beneficial person for the society" and "the pleasure of teaching something to the children" are the reasons that reinforce their belief in the profession of Physical Education Teaching. For example, Nalan, one of the focus group participants, stated that *"Child love and sympathy are very important for this profession. I love children too. Thinking that I will contribute to the physical and mental development of children motivates me and gives me happiness. I have worked with children of different age groups for many years. I am very excited to be able to work with them while teaching."*

**Being Beneficial for the Society.** It is seen that a common opinion that increases the beliefs of teacher candidates on the profession is due to the idea of "being a beneficial individual and benefiting the society". The candidate teachers stated that the education they received was an opportunity for them to reveal talented athletes and believed that they would successfully fulfil their responsibilities towards the society in their profession. One of the participants of this group, Elif stated that *"I want to be a beneficial individual to the society. I intend to serve this society by applying the education I received at school in the field. I want to fulfil my responsibility towards this country and society that raised me".*

**Being Intertwined with Sports.** In the focus group meeting with this group, it is seen that another reason that positively affects the belief in the Physical Education Teaching profession is due to the candidate teachers' thought of being "intertwined with sports". It is observed that all of the candidate teachers' being an amateur or professional level athletes in individual or team sports before starting their departments, as well as their "competing in school teams in primary and secondary education" have a positive effect on their belief in this profession. Also, it is seen that candidate teachers stated that Physical Education Teaching is more attractive for them as a "profession intertwined with sports". For example, Zehra stated that *"I was in the school team in high school and my physical education teacher realized that I was talented and encouraged this department."*

**The Effect of the Physical Education Teacher.** Participants of the first focus group meeting stated that the effect of "the Physical Education Teachers" during their secondary or high school education as a factor that positively affects their belief in the profession. The candidate teachers stated the positive effects of Physical Education Teachers, especially during their secondary or high school

education, on the awareness of this profession, knowing and loving the profession, and stated that "Physical Education Teachers play an encouraging role in this profession". For example, Nalan declared that: *"My Physical Education teacher has a huge impact on the entrance to the department I am currently studying. When I was in primary and high school, we were friends with my Physical Education teachers. Our communication with them was very good compared to other teachers. They were very friendly towards us. I asked, "What is the School of Physical Education and Sports?", "How to enter to these schools?" I never knew. It is a huge factor. They always led me."*

### *Theme 2: Reasons That Affect Belief in Profession Negatively*

**Disappointment Caused by the Department.** Participants of the 2nd Focus Group meeting consisting of a total of 6 Physical Education Teacher candidates who have low teaching professional beliefs and who do not intend to be a Physical Education Teacher when they graduate. They stated that the most important reason that negatively affects their beliefs in the Physical Education Teaching profession is "disappointment about the education they prefer" and "failure of the school to meet their expectations". Participants stated that especially in the first year they started school, both the physical and technical facilities of the school environment and the quality of the instructors were far from the expectations, this situation caused a disappointment and this situation increased negatively in the following years. Erdem, one of the participants of the second focus group meeting, stated that: *"In my second year, I watched how a physical education teacher works in a school setting. The landscape I saw caused me to change my mind. When I compared the effort spent with his salary, I thought that this profession would not be done. They also have incredible pressure on them. I think the current system limits physical education teachers. So, I turned to another profession in the private sector."* Another participant, Halil said, *"My expectations from my department were very high. But then I did not feel myself belong to here. I saw that the content of the courses given in the department is not very suitable for the field, and the teachers do not give enough importance to sports and our field. I cannot say that application training is of very high quality."* Another participant who graduated from Sports High School, Berkay said, *"We could not exceed the high school level. We were having the same lessons in high school. We did not have a very different education. I also think that academic staff is inadequate."* All of the participants were asked, "If you get an attractive offer from another profession with a higher salary after starting the profession, what would your attitude be? They answered the question *"We accept it immediately"*.

**Insufficient Salary.** The participants of the second focus group meeting stated that another factor that negatively affects belief in their profession is "insufficient salary". Participants stated that they could find jobs with higher salaries, where they could sustain their lives, so they did not plan to teach Physical Education. Participants stressed that they could move towards more attractive professions in terms of salary and career in a sport or a completely different sector other than teaching.

For example, Zeynep declared: *"I have to maintain my life and if I cannot be appointed in my first year, I am thinking of being the second alternative as a police officer."*

**Counting on the spot.** The candidate teachers who did not intend to be a Physical Education Teacher stated that their level of belief in the profession decreased due to reasons such as "counting on the spot" or "not having a chance to rise as a status". Erdem, one of the participants of the second focus group, stated that *"I would have a lack of professional satisfaction due to problems related to career planning, this situation would cause low motivation and for that reason, my belief in the profession decrease."*

**Negative Physical Education Teacher Perception in the Society.** Physical Education Teacher candidates have expressed the perception of "negative physical education teacher in society" as another factor in reducing their belief in their profession. Participants stated that the negative perception in society about the Physical Education Course and Physical Education Teacher negatively affects them and reduces their motivation. Teacher candidates, they are not adequately respected in society, their work is seen as worthless, this stereotyped negative judgment cannot be easily improved, they do not expect to be fixed easily, they said. It has been stated that school administrations and other branch teachers do not have enough respect for physical education teaching. They also pointed to the negative effects of violence against teachers, which occur from time to time in society. Participants argued that all this negative atmosphere is important factors that cool themselves off the profession. Yasemin, one of the participants of this group, concern that "*as I saw some of the violence in the community towards teachers, this situation began to scare me, and I began to shy away from this environment".* Zeynep, stated that "although we are valued sufficiently by the students, the perspective of families and the community is not very positive and respectable to our profession."

**Working Conditions.** The participants of the second focus group interview see physical education teachers' "working conditions" as an important factor that negatively affect their profession beliefs. Teacher candidates, after starting the profession, the negative socio-economic and geographical conditions of the region to be appointed, they feared themselves. Berkay, one of the participants of the second focus group, expressed that *"there might be a lack of facilities and equipment in the schools where I will work, this negative situation reduces my interest and motivation for the profession. I don't want to work in this environment."*

**Insufficient Field Education.** The candidate teachers stated "insufficient field education (formation education)" as another factor that negatively affects their beliefs in the profession. Candidate teachers emphasized that the training education they received was insufficient in preparing themselves for the profession. They stated that both the Physical Education Teachers in the application schools and the advisor instructors at their faculty, where they carry out the application course, did not contribute to them professionally. They stated that these negativities are one of the most important

factors that negatively affect their beliefs towards the profession. Erdem, one of the participants of this group, stated that: *" the content of the formation of education is empty and very inadequate. Formation education has turned into a trade. You must pay the money for this education!"*

**Difficulty in Appointment to the Profession.** In addition to this, the fact that the problem of not being appointed to the profession of graduate teachers, which is a general problem in our country, is also valid for Physical Education Teaching, is a leading factor that decreases belief in the profession. All the teacher candidates stated that "the accumulation in the number of candidate teachers in the profession" and "the fact that they could not be appointed to the profession within a few years after graduation" negatively affect them. Zeynep one of the participants of the second focus group stated that *"If I fail to get rid of this negative situation after trying to be appointed for one or two years, I can give up this profession and will turn to another profession."*

### Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

In the current research, firstly, quantitative research findings were presented, and then in-depth content analysis was attempted with qualitative research findings. From this point of view, in this part of the research, it was tried to present whether the quantitative and qualitative research findings overlap with the similar researches in the literature and the extent to which the quantitative research findings match the qualitative research findings.

According to the quantitative research findings, there was no significant difference in the teaching profession belief levels of the teacher candidates according to the gender variable. These findings coincide with the research conducted by Erbas (2013). This finding is supported by the qualitative findings of the current research. For the qualitative part of the research, it was found that female and male teacher candidates gave common answers and did not think differently about the factors affecting their professional beliefs positively or negatively in both focus group interviews with teacher candidates with high teaching profession beliefs and low teaching profession beliefs.

The quantitative findings of the study show that there is a statistically significant difference between the candidate teachers who continue to the 3rd grade and the candidate teachers who continue to the 4th grade. This finding also coincides with the qualitative findings of the research. Both female and male participants of the group, whose teaching profession has low belief level and who do not intend to do the teaching profession, expressed their views in the same way. Candidate teachers in this group stated that after starting the departments, their motivation, attitude, and beliefs towards the teaching profession gradually decreased and started to evolve negatively. Candidate teachers who expressed their opinions in this way especially highlighted the reasons such as "disappointment caused by the department" and "insufficient field education they received during their education life" and stated that these factors negatively affect the belief in their profession. Candidate teachers stated that

this situation became more negative especially when they started the 4th grade and after their teaching formation and field education.

As a result of the focus group meeting with teacher candidates with high teaching profession beliefs, the themes of "my dream job", "love working with children", "being beneficial for the society", "being intertwined with sports", and "effect of physical education teacher" has emerged as the themes that positively affect belief". It is seen that these qualitative findings of the current researcher are supported by other researches in the literature. In their study, Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2012) concluded that factors such as "working with children" and "benefiting the society" are factors that increase teachers' emotional commitment to the profession, Zach et al. (2020) stated that both male and female teacher candidates will continue their jobs for idealistic reasons such as "loving children", "positive relationships with children", "the opportunity to instil value for children" and "their love for the profession". Similarly, Manuel and Hughes (2006) emphasized that for candidate teachers "working with them to make a difference in the lives of young people", "establishing a meaningful connection with their fields of study" and "gaining personal satisfaction and meaning" are the most important reasons that direct them to their profession. Besides, in the research carried out by İman (2014), a significant relationship was found between "loving children", "enjoying working with them" and "motivation of candidate teachers" and "preferring teaching profession". The reasons for candidate teachers to choose their profession also overlap with the different research findings in the literature. Schutz et al. (2001) listed the factors in the choice of a teaching career as "family effects", "teacher effects", "peer effects" and "teaching experience", while Pop and Turner (2009) determined the reason for the preference of physical education candidate teachers as altruistic (altruism). According to the findings of the current research and other studies in the literature, elements such as "the desire to work with children and teach them" and "the belief that society can be improved through education" are the main motivation sources for candidate teachers both in choosing the profession and increasing their belief in their profession. These findings show that candidate teachers tend to start their teaching professions both fondly and willingly, and they want to make an individual and social contribution to their fields. This situation is very important for obtaining expected learning outcomes from the education group where the teacher candidate will teach. On the other hand, candidate teachers are extremely valuable in terms of performing their performance with the same belief and determination after starting teaching.

As a result of the focus group meeting with candidate teachers who have low teaching profession belief, "disappointment created by the department", "insufficient salary", "counting on the spot", "negative physical education teacher perception", "working conditions", "insufficient field education" and themes such as "difficulty in being appointed to the profession" came to the fore as reasons that negatively affect professional belief. Similarly, Zach et al. (2020) stated that the main

reasons for candidate teachers who decided to leave the profession were "insufficient or low wages", "not being provided with enough hours" or "finding a job with better wages" and "not respecting the profession sufficiently by school administrations, families and children". The researchers also emphasized that candidate teachers do not want to continue their profession due to reasons such as the heavy working conditions (excessive working hours), technical impossibilities, and insufficiencies for physical education (school building and lack of existing technical infrastructure). The research conducted by Polat (2014) concluded that "candidate teachers found that the social status and respectability of the teaching profession is low". Cemaloğlu and Şahin (2007) stated that the reasons such as "poor working conditions" and "lowered respectability of the teaching profession in society" lead to professional burnout of teachers.

In the literature, when the findings of qualitative research conducted in different cultures are examined, it is seen that candidate teacher who has high and low levels of professional belief meet at common points both positively and negatively. Regardless of the countries where the research is carried out, it is seen that the main reason that increases the level of interest, motivation, and belief of all teacher candidates to their professions is an "idealist approach". As in other occupational groups, there are many different motivations such as the desire of people to enter the working life and show their talents, the desire to earn a salary from this field, and the ambition to do their job with almost perfect sensitivity and neatness. These motivations are becoming more special for the teaching profession, which touches people's lives and is a role model for them, and it is an expected and usual situation for teacher candidates with high professional beliefs to approach their profession in this way. However, the main important finding obtained from current and similar researches is the factors that enable these negative feelings and thoughts to appear in candidate teachers with a low level of belief in the teaching profession. When the findings obtained from the focus group interviews are analysed, it will be seen that the negative factors such as lack of interest, attitude, motivation, and belief, which are naturally thought to be unique only to the individual, are caused by many external factors such as the environment and society in which the candidate teacher lives. These factors that cause candidates to think negatively towards the profession are not only the problem of the individual but also the society in which they live and the states that give direction to the society in question with their education and economic policies. Investment in humans, which is a very long and hard investment, whose results can only be seen in the medium or long term, may have irreversible consequences in the long term. For this reason, the responsibilities of teacher training institutions are becoming more important (Yıldırım & Kalman, 2017; Uğraş & Güllü, 2019). A teacher needs to be treated like a doctor, a soldier, or a policeman, who plays critical roles in human life, with her/his decisions in the field of health and safety, must be carefully educated and fully prepared for the profession. The critical point here is the "teacher education" process (Darling et al., 2005; Aktağ & Walter, 2005). In these institutions, an education program and content that will keep the motivation and belief of the candidate

teacher alive and high must be determined. Also, if the academic staff in the institutions that give teacher education program to the candidate teachers cannot adequately recognize the candidate teacher and the changing world conditions, it will not be realistic to be too expectant of the teacher candidate who will be presented as an outcome of this process. Physical education teachers may feel inadequate due to their undergraduate education (Uğraş et al., 2019). They stated that candidate teachers with a low level of professional belief do not think of becoming teachers due to both personal reasons and the quality of education, social and economic picture, or they will leave the profession after a certain period. As mentioned before, the teaching profession is a professional group that is the main actor in education, which directs society and is one of the basic needs of people such as health and safety. It should not be considered in a teacher candidate's special that teachers who guide education, which is one of the basic needs of society, do not start their professions willingly or lose their desires, beliefs and excitement shortly after they start, which they see as role models for children and young people even before their family members. External factors that motivate candidate teachers to think in this way should also be evaluated. Teachers with low professional faith levels should be considered that they will have negative consequences on the individuals and therefore society. The more the demands of members of this professional group are met during their education and working life, the more efficiency will be obtained from them. This situation will cause teachers to focus on the children they will touch their lives instead of worrying about whether they can be appointed or not, and the negative atmosphere of physical education teaching in our country will gradually dissipate. Besides, "candidate teacher education" needs to be reconsidered for our country, both based on educational institutions and within the framework of the education policies in force. If necessary, a gradual decrease in the number of teachers who will graduate and potentially start working in a year, while increasing the content, density and quality may help to solve this problem in the medium and long term. After this basic problem is solved, other negative situations such as "insufficient salary", "counting on the spot", "perception of negative physical education teacher in the society", "working conditions" and "difficulty in being appointed to the profession" may be solved more easily. It can be said that the problems will not even come to the agenda.

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