

## Prospective Teachers' Attitudes Towards Curriculum Development and Instruction Course

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**ABSTRACT** This research aimed to specify the attitudes of the candidate teachers towards curriculum development and instruction courses. In the research, a descriptive survey model based on quantitative research was used to understand the thoughts of the candidate teachers participating in the candidate teacher training program. The study group of the research consists of 183 candidate teachers studying at universities in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the academic year 2020-2021. The participants were selected by using a simple random sampling method. The "Curriculum Development and Instruction Course Attitude Scale" was used as a data collection tool in this study. The attitude scores of the candidate teachers toward curriculum development and instruction courses did not differ according to the gender variable. In the study, the attitude scores of the candidate teachers towards the curriculum development and instruction course differed according to their branches and their grade levels.

### INTRODUCTION

The value of the education system, which functions as a bridge to achieve the velocity of the world, which is developing and changing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, cannot be overlooked. This bridge consists of three fundamental elements, namely, the student, the teacher and the curriculum. These are the fundamental factors that enable the education phenomenon and ensure its functionality. This trio should always be kept in balance to ensure the durability of the education phenomenon. It is not even a matter of discussion to separate these elements from each other. At the same time, the teacher, who interacts with the students during every level of teaching-learning process, is one of the most important elements of this operation (Üstüner 2004). In this context, teachers are in the most effective strategic position while actualising the mission of the school, and as having such a vital

role in the process. Teachers should have some competencies and qualifications to perform their job in the best way, to affect students in a positive way and prepare them for living in a social environment besides setting an example for students. A well-prepared education curriculum is vital for teachers to achieve their given tasks and responsibilities (Fullan 2007). The teachers are the ones that directly shape the education system, which is already known and is an inevitable fact (Özden 1999).

Furthermore, two matters are addressed regarding training teachers (Sisman 2021). While improving a prospective teacher physically, mentally, academically, spiritually, morally, emotionally and socially, the education curriculum also must include general culture, branch and professional knowledge lessons. Oguz (2021) emphasises the importance of adapting teachers with positive attitudes and values to their profession in addition to improving their com-

petencies. The attitude that will be adopted by the candidate teachers in pre-service is the positive or negative reaction of the teacher that will be reflected in the face of a situation (Inceoglu 2010). When examining the attitude of the candidate teachers, there can be 2 definitions, that is, a positive attitude and a negative attitude. A candidate teacher can have inconsistent attitudes towards lessons (Bloom 1995). The positive improvement and development of this attitude by candidate teachers is related to the scope of pre-service training (Semerci and Semerci 2004), as pre-service training has an important role in ensuring that candidate teachers feel safe and develop positive attitudes (Aasen and Sadownik 2019). Teacher training curricula not only increases professional knowledge of the candidate teacher, but also provides them with competency and a positive attitude towards lessons (Abu Sharbain and Tan 2012). Tutorism is a special profession as the staple of teaching is the student, hence it has precedence over other professions. This profession requires occupational ability, talent, curiosity and most importantly love, because individual differences are always reflected during the education process (Ekici 2008). Despite the fact that candidate teachers are taught the knowledge of being a teacher during their preparation process, to be able to use or transfer this knowledge requires specific knowledge and skill. In other words, it is believed that the more positive attitudes the candidate teachers have towards the lesson, the more willing and successful they will be. It can also be said that a positive attitude can always be more attractive and what is attractive can be loved, what is loved motivates, what motivates brings joy and this chain paves the way to success for the candidate teachers. In brief, it is believed that even though candidate teachers represent personal differences when they have their profession, they will be able to achieve success when they practise their profession with love (Gömleksiz and Kan 2007). Teacher training programs shed light on how teachers will perform their profession as well as their professional knowledge. It is a method used to represent the candidate teachers on how to use and apply the knowledge and utilise the process after they are supplied with professional knowledge (Kumral 2010).

Curriculum evolves over time as an activity of learning and teaching (Yang and Li 2020), and it is one of the essences of quality education and curricula used by institutions that have to meet the needs of the times and be adapted according to the conditions of the schools, students, and potential of the region (Lafrarchi 2020; Bahri and Arafah 2020; Sutrisno and Nasucha 2022; Krisbiyanto and Nadhifah 2022). The Law On Unification of Education gathered every organisation related to education under a single roof after the establishment of the republic in Turkey in 1924. Later in 1950, the term “educational program” started to be used instead of “curriculum”. Schedule development studies took less place during 1950 and 1960. However, after the 1960s, those studies were focused on more and primary education law with the number 222, which was effective in 1961 was enforced. The curriculum development articles of the VII. National Education law in effectuated in 1962 states that the curriculum should reflect daily life, materials related to the lessons should be supplied, the training of the teacher and curriculum must serve the same things, the curriculum that is prepared should be checked beforehand by committees and experimented with for 2 years, and after that the curriculum is decided as applicable, it is decided to be utilised by the whole country.

Curriculum development efforts in the 1970s did not improve much. But in the 1980s, new studies were initiated. The Ministry of National Education developed a model in the wake of these studies, which consists of four dimensions, namely, aim-act-functioning-assessment, but neither was this model able to provide the Ministry of National Education with success. In the 1990s, the Ministry of National Education again represented sensitivity on that matter and started examinations by firstly creating nine expertise commissions, which were later upgraded to 12. Nevertheless, the desired success could not be gained and a solution to the curriculum model was not achieved (Demirel 1992). Within the scope of the Higher Education Institution and World Bank National Education Development, which was restructured in the 1997 Project, the professional knowledge and general culture courses of the undergraduate programs of the education faculties were rearranged in the 1998-

1999 academic year. After more than eight years of practice in teacher training in 1997, a rearrangement was carried out in 2006-2007 in order to update the curricula and to regulate the defective aspects of the model. One of the changes made in this regulation is the inclusion of the "Curriculum Development and Instruction" course in teaching programs, which was not among the teaching profession courses in 1997 (YÖK 2007). In 2016, teacher training programs were put into effect for a different purpose, it was aimed at training candidate teachers on the job by utilising practice that consists of planning the candidate teaching program (environmental factors, etc.), implementation of the program (supervision of managers and consultants), and assessment of the program.

Candidate teachers will be able to participate in the practices they will carry out during the nomination training processes in institutions, under the supervision of a consultant teacher. However, the consultant teacher must be well-equipped. The requirements are listed as follows, that is, 10 years of professional experience, prior experience as consultant, not to be from another branch and strong communication skills (MEB 2018). In order for curriculum development to be productive, the participation of every partner is expected, including the teacher, student, inspector, parent, manager etc., and educational specialist. According to Taba (1962) and Frymier et al. (1970), the participation and cooperation of all stakeholders, not just the candidate teacher, is required for curriculum development to be successful and qualified.

No matter how well the curriculum development process is prepared, it is the teacher who will ensure its functionality. Therefore, the teacher should be active in the curriculum development process, and the knowledge and skills of the teacher and the readiness of the students and their lives should be taken into consideration (Yüksel 1998). It is the teacher who can first handedly detect whether the students are attendants or not. Therefore, the teacher can adapt the course of the curriculum to be implemented according to their students and do a more beneficial study. The teacher is the most important factor in adapting the materials of the curriculum according to the class (Clark et al. 1972). Oliver (1965) listed the importance of teach-

ers' involvement in the curriculum development process as follows. Teachers should care about not only their own ideas but also the ideas of the students and should reach a consensus on them, developing a program that meets the expectations of students will enable teachers to be useful and productive, each student's learning pace and method are different, so the use of different strategies and materials may depend on the teacher, and the curriculum prepared for implementation by others needs to be adapted by the teacher in accordance with the students' needs and their regional location.

According to another study, the curriculum development process should adopt a perspective that takes the interests and needs of the teachers and students into account. The way the current curriculum will function should meet the expectations of the student as well as the teacher, so that meeting the expectations will play a major role in the success of the curriculum and the teacher (Küçükoglu and Tasgin 2013). In addition, curriculum development should elaborate the knowledge that is to be implemented, provide practical assistance and encourage teachers to work together, as well as provide long-term and multiple teaching opportunities for prospective teachers (Kalinowski et al. 2019). If the program, which trains the candidate teachers' is successful, success is inevitable for future generations. If the present teacher training programs are active and highly applicable, the possibility of removing the deficiencies in education will also follow that ratio (Arslan and Vezne 2021).

When the relevant literature is reviewed, it is seen that the awareness of the prospective teachers towards the curriculum development and teaching course and the existing information are not at the desired point, especially the necessity of paying more attention to implementation part is emphasised, therefore, a common opinion occurred that more studies need to be done regarding this topic. Teacher training programs for prospective teachers are too important to be ignored. The purpose of curriculum development is to prepare prospective teachers for the profession. This preparation process should be practical as well as theoretical. It is emphasised that the desired success will be achieved if these two go hand in hand (Bas 2016;

Önder 2018; Ekinçi et al. 2019; Guy 2020; Ali 2020; Karim et al. 2021; Britton 2021). According to Sisman (2021), the following four basic points should be considered for the curriculum development course, that is, curriculum development courses should be compulsory rather than elective, curriculum development courses and professional knowledge courses should be reconciled, and it should be associated with branch training courses and with general culture courses (Yazçayır and Yıldırım 2021).

According to the input given above, it is seen that supervision in education should be improved to increase the efficiency of the curriculum development course. In the absence of supervision, seriousness and quality may not be touched on adequately and the way to increase the quality of the training of the candidate teachers can be achieved by organising an adequate and regular control mechanism. Regular and continuous supervision is of great importance in order to ensure the validity and efficiency of implementation (Önder 2018).

### Objectives

This research aims to specify the attitudes of the candidate teachers about the curriculum development and instruction course. In line with this general purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Is there a significant difference between the prospective teachers' attitudes towards curriculum development and instruction courses according to their gender?
2. Is there a significant difference between the prospective teachers' attitudes towards curriculum development and instruction courses according to their grades?
3. Is there a significant difference between the prospective teachers' attitudes towards curriculum development and instruction courses according to the variable of the course being practical or not?
4. Is there a significant difference between the prospective teachers' attitudes towards curriculum development and instruction courses according to their branches?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Model

In the research, a descriptive survey model based on quantitative research was used to understand the thoughts of the candidate teachers participating in the candidate teacher training program. The questionnaire was carried out with a method based on giving information about the object, individual or group itself through pencil and paper. Research in which observations and measurements are repeated and carried out objectively are called quantitative research. Scanning pattern, which has descriptive features, enables to obtain the characteristics of the participants, such as their thoughts, attitudes, attention, and curiosity towards a situation, through quantitative data collection, and to describe the results achieved (Balci 2015; Büyüköztürk et al. 2017). In this study, a screening design was preferred by means of the Curriculum Questionnaire to measure the attitudes of the candidate teachers who participated in the candidate teacher training program.

### Study Group

The study group of the research consists of 183 candidate teachers studying at universities in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the academic year 2020-2021. The participants were selected by using a simple random sampling method.

### Data Collection Tool

The "Curriculum Development and Instruction Course Attitude Scale" developed by Oguz (2012) was used to collect the data for this research. In this type of survey research, clusters suitable for the problem are reached in order to select the units or individuals in the universe and these clusters are included in the research. Factor loads of the scale items vary between 0.51 and 0.75. The variance of the three factors is 60.15 percent, and since the alpha coefficient is above 0.80, it has been determined that the scale is a reliable tool in measuring the attitudes of the candidate teachers towards the Curriculum Development and Instruction Course. The

Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is 0.96. The first section of the survey consists of four questions to determine the gender, class, branch of the study of the candidate students and whether the course was taken practically or not. In the second part, a 5-point Likert questionnaire (1. I strongly disagree, 2. I disagree, 3. I am undecided, 4. I agree, 5. I strongly agree) was used to reveal the attitudes of the candidate teachers towards curriculum development and instruction courses. Within the scope of determining the attitudes of candidate teachers towards the curriculum development and instruction course, the questions were formed from three factors, that is, factor one denial, factor two loving, and factor three giving importance. The survey consists of 30 questions.

### Data Analysis

The data of the research were analysed by means of descriptive statistical methods through the SPSS 25 program. In the research, the candidate teachers' attitudes towards the curriculum development and instruction course according to the gender variable were evaluated with the Mann Whitney U Test, since the data were not normally distributed. The attitudes of candidate teachers towards curriculum development and instruction courses was analysed by means of the Kruskal Wallis Test according to their grades. Candidate teachers' attitudes towards curriculum development and instruction course according to the variable of whether the course is given in practice or not, were analysed by means of the Mann Whitney U Test. The candidate teachers' attitudes towards curriculum development and instruction courses related to their branches were analysed with the Kruskal Wallis H test. Pearson correlation was used for the results for the fifth sub-problem of the research, "the sub-dimensions of candidate teachers' attitudes towards curriculum development and teaching class scale".

## RESULTS

The findings regarding the demographic characteristics of the volunteer participants in the research are given in Table 1. According to the findings obtained from the participants, it

was determined that 52.2 percent were female, and 47.8 percent were male. According to the grade variable, 4.4 percent of the participants were in preparatory class, 30.2 percent were in first grade, 20.3 percent were in second grade, 13.7 percent were in third grade and 31.3 percent were in fourth grade. Looking at the branch variable, it was seen that 10.4 percent were from English, 9.9 percent from Turkish, 18.1 percent from special education, 16.5 percent from pre-school, 3.8 percent from computer departments and 41.2 percent were candidate teachers from different branches. 48.4 percent of the individuals participating in the research stated that they took the course practically and 51.6 percent stated that they did not take the course practically.

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the candidate teachers**

Variable		f	%
Gender	Female	95	52.2
	Male	87	47.8
Grade	Preparatory class	8	4.4
	First grade	55	30.2
	Second grade	37	20.3
	Third grade	25	13.7
Branch	Fourth grade	57	31.3
	English	10.4	10.4
	Turkish	9.9	9.9
	Special education teacher	18.7	18.1
	Pre-school	16.5	16.5
	Computer	3.8	3.8
Practical Status of the Course	Other	41.2	41.2
	Yes	88	48.4
	No	94	51.6

The analysis of data showed that there was no significant result between the prospective teachers' attitudes towards curriculum development and instruction course and the gender variable ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 2).

When Table 3 is examined, a significant result was obtained according to the sub-dimension of liking and the variable of grade status in the candidate teachers' attitudes towards curriculum development and teaching course scale ( $p < 0.05$ ). Regarding the sub-dimension of liking, it was concluded that those who were in the fourth grade had the highest average according to the grade level. Candidate teachers at the preparatory class obtained the lowest mark from

**Table 2: Findings obtained by gender variable**

	Variable	n	Average	Total	U	Z	p
Denial	Female	95	92.29	8767.50	4057.500	-0.213	0.83
	Male	87	90.64	7885.50			
Liking	Female	95	93.16	8850.00	3975.000	-0.444	0.65
	Male	87	89.69	7803.00			
Care About	Female	95	92.05	8744.50	4080.500	-0.147	0.88
	Male	87	90.90	7908.50			

p > 0.05

**Table 3: Findings obtained regarding the grades of the participants**

		n	X	Sd	Rank average	Chi-square	df	p
Denial	Preparation	8	2.90	0.32	127.13	4.232	4	0.37
	First class	55			92.97			
	Second class	37			87.27			
	Third grade	25			87.46			
Liking	Fourth grade	57	3.70	1.06	89.60	17.503	4	0.00*
	Preparation	8			63.88			
	First class	55			92.89			
	Second class	37			79.47			
Care About	Third grade	25	2.75	0.50	68.58	8.195	4	0.08
	Fourth grade	57			111.89			
	Preparation	8			120.13			
	First class	55			89.45			
	Second class	37	98.22					
	Third grade	25	105.72					
	Fourth grade	57	78.86					

p < 0.05

this sub-dimension. This shows that the candidate teachers at the fourth grade liked the curriculum development and instruction course more than the other groups.

Results showed that there was a significant result between the candidate teachers' attitudes towards the curriculum development and instruction course. and the variable of taking the course practically in the sub-dimension of "liking" (p<0.05). It was revealed that those who took

this course practically liked this course more than the others (Table 4).

According to Table 5, there was a significant difference between the attitudes of candidate teachers towards curriculum development and instruction course in "liking" and "care about" dimensions of the scale according to their departments (p<0.05). Most of the candidate teachers in other departments liked and cared about this course more than the other participants.

**Table 4: Findings obtained regarding the practical status of the course**

		n	X	Sd	Average	Total	U	Z	p
Denial	Yes	88	2.90	0.32	91.99	8095.50	4092.500	-0.124	0.90
	No	94			91.04				
Liking	Yes	88	3.70	1.06	103.73	9128.00	3060.000	-3.035	0.00*
	No	94			80.05				
Care About	Yes	88	2.75	0.50	84.81	7463.00	3547.000	-1.663	0.09
	No	94			97.77				

p < 0.05\*

**Table 5: Results regarding the departments of participants**

	<i>Variables</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Rank average</i>	<i>Chi- square</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Denial</i>	English	19	85.89	2.442	5	0.78
	Turkish	18	103.61			
	Special education	33	97.15			
	Pre-school	30	92.23			
	Computer	7	75.57			
<i>Liking</i>	Other	75	88.72	12.396	5	0.03*
	English	19	104.89			
	Turkish	18	105.64			
	Special education	33	73.73			
	Pre-school	30	78.50			
<i>Care About</i>	Computer	7	131.71	15.258	5	0.00*
	Other	75	93.98			
	English	19	78.95			
	Turkish	18	95.31			
	Special education	33	113.56			
	Pre-school	30	104.82			
	Computer	7	51.14			
Other	75	82.50				

$p < 0.05^*$

According to Table 6, while in the sub-dimensions of denial and giving importance, there was a significant positive difference between the candidate teachers' attitudes towards curriculum development and teaching course, there was a significant negative difference between the sub-dimensions of loving and giving importance.

**Table 6: The result of the correlation analysis of the sub-dimensions of the scale of the prospective teachers**

		<i>Denial</i>	<i>Liking</i>	<i>Care about</i>
<i>Denial</i>	r	1	0.167*	0.591
	p		0.02	0.00
<i>Liking</i>	r	0.167*	1	-0.524**
	p	0.02		0.00
<i>Care About</i>	r	0.591**	-0.524**	1
	p	0.00	0.00	

## DISCUSSION

In this study, which was conducted to determine the attitudes of candidate teachers towards the Curriculum Development and Instruction course, the candidate teachers were evaluated in terms of the variables of gender, department, grade and taking the course practically.

As a result of the research, the attitude scores of the candidate teachers towards the Curriculum Development and Instruction course did not differ according to the gender variable. Although

there are studies supporting this result (Tanel et al. 2007; Bulut 2009), there are studies that found a significant difference between the attitudes of candidate teachers towards curriculum development and instruction courses according to the gender variable. These studies showed that female candidate teachers were more moderate towards curriculum development and instruction courses (Akkaya 2009; Aksoy 2010). In the study of Eraslan and Çakici (2011), male candidate teachers in the pedagogical formation program obtained more positive results than female candidate teachers.

In the study, the attitude scores of the candidate teachers towards the Curriculum Development and Instruction course differed according to the branches. It varies depending on the program in which the candidate teachers are studying. Although this result was supported by Aksoy (2010), Kartal (2009) found no significant difference between the attitudes of the candidate teachers towards curriculum development and instruction courses according to their branch.

According to the results of the research, the attitude scores of the candidate teachers towards the Curriculum Development and Instruction course represented a significant difference according to the grade level. In the sub-dimension of loving, it was concluded that those who were in the fourth grade had the highest aver-

age according to the grade level. The lowest rate was determined for the students in the preparatory class. Although this finding is in parallel with the research result of Saglam (2008), it was also reached by Çapa and Çil (2000) that the negative attitudes of the preparatory classes are high. Another study that came to the opposite conclusion was carried out by Pehlivan (2008).

A significant result was obtained between the sub-dimension of love in the prospective teachers' attitudes towards the curriculum development and teaching course scale and the variable of the course being practical. In the sub-dimension of liking it was revealed that those who said 'yes' to the course being practical achieved a higher result than those who marked it as 'no'. The fact that the attitudes of the prospective teachers towards the Curriculum Development and Instruction course in the sub-scale of love is generally at the level of "disagree" towards the last grade indicates that they have a positive attitude towards the course. However, the fact that their general attitude towards the preparatory class is at the level of "agree" indicates that they have a negative attitude towards the course.

It was observed that the sub-dimensions of the candidate teachers' attitudes towards curriculum development and teaching course scale had a strong positive relationship between each other and between the sub-dimensions of denial and giving importance. That is, the fact that the attitudes of the prospective teachers towards the Curriculum Development and Instruction course are generally positive towards the denial sub-scale affects the attitude of giving importance to the course positively. In this sense, a linear relationship was found between them. Another study compatible with this result was carried out by Açıslı and Kolomuç (2012). A negative correlation was found between the attitudes of prospective teachers towards the sub-scale of loving and giving importance and the Curriculum Development and Instruction course. The negative attitudes of teacher candidates towards the subscale of loving and giving importance may be due to the fact that the lesson is not motivating, and therefore it will negatively affect their attitudes about giving importance to the lesson. In this sense, an inverse relationship was found between them.

## CONCLUSION

Summarising the results of the research briefly, the gender factor in the candidate teachers' attitudes towards curriculum development and teaching course scale does not have a significant effect, and the attitude scores of the candidate teachers towards the Curriculum Development and Instruction course differ depending on the branches. According to the results of the research, the attitude scores of the candidate teachers towards the Curriculum Development and Instruction course represent a significant difference according to the grade level. A significant result was obtained between the sub-dimension of loving in the candidate teachers' attitudes towards the curriculum development and teaching course scale and the variable of the course being practical.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are included based on the results obtained from the research:

The gender factor in the candidate teachers' attitudes towards curriculum development and teaching course scale does not have a significant effect. Different study methods, larger and different samples can be used for a more in-depth study in this area.

More encouraging studies can be carried out for candidate teachers in the candidate teacher training curricula of universities. Students can be made aware of the importance of their attitudes towards curriculum development and teaching courses.

In addition, it was concluded that candidate teachers should take the curriculum development course in an earlier period, not in the last year, and be supervised. New arrangements can be made to start the curriculum development course starting from the lower grades. In addition, curriculum development courses can be given more frequently, but in parallel with this, more studies should be done to provide practical training.

Different materials and strategies can be developed that can affect prospective teachers' attitudes towards curriculum development and teaching courses.



Working in cooperation with education faculties and national education schools can contribute to developing a positive attitude towards curriculum development and teaching courses.

Finally, while making innovations on theory and practice in order to improve the attitudes of candidate teachers to curriculum development and teaching course, different methods can be used to make them understand the importance of the curriculum, and like this course because this provides motivation, and motivation leads to success and that way one can find an answer to the question of how one can achieve the quality and success sought in education.

The cooperation of education faculties with national education schools can contribute to developing a positive attitude towards the profession.

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#### CONTRIBUTIONS

SI, HS and SH wrote the research questions, designed the research, SH collected the data, and wrote the manuscript, while SI, HS, and SH did the analyses and interpreted the data.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest was declared by the authors. The authors are solely responsible for the content and writing of this paper.

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