

Identity Functions and Empathetic Tendencies of Teacher Candidates

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Received: April 18, 2016

Accepted: June 6, 2016

Online Published: June 27, 2016

doi:10.5539/hes.v6n3p11

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/hes.v6n3p11>

Abstract

Objective of this research is to investigate identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates. Sample consists of 232 teacher candidates in social studies teacher education. Survey model is preferred to investigate the difference between identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates. And also correlational design is used to investigate the relationship between identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates. Findings are: Identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates don't change according to gender, class, education level of mother and father, family income and education type. Identity functions points of teacher candidates change according to age but empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates don't change according to age. Identity functions points of teacher candidates don't change according to geographical region but empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates change according to geographical region. Identity functions and empathetic tendencies points of teacher candidates change according to administrative division. There is not a significant relationship between identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates at 0.05 level of significance.

Keywords: identity functions, empathetic tendencies, teacher candidates

1. Introduction

Empathy is defined in different ways and these definitions complete each other. Rogers (1983) defines empathy as the process of a person's understanding feelings and his or her thought about a given situation correctly. Empathy ability enables people to evaluate others' emotions and conduct themselves correct (Fitness & Curtis, 2005). Empathetic tendency ensures individuals to empathize in their lives (Dökmen, 1987). Empathetic tendency has dimensions and they are cognitive and emotional components. Emotional empathy is known as an emotional ability that provides to understand others' feelings (Brems, 1989; Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006). Cognitive empathy is defined as a cognitive ability that provides understanding others' feelings (Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1990).

Erikson (1968) assorted process of identity as identity achievement and identity confusion. An achieved identity is usually clear, consistent and well-integrated. But, identity confusion means the lack of a clear and stable sense of self-identity (Schwartz, 2001). Marcia (1966) prepared a identity status model and described four identity statuses; identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, identity diffusion. After these models, Adams and Marshall's (1996) undertook identity in terms of its functions told an active identity is a self-constructive and complicated internal system, which has its own psychological functions for individuals. According to Serafini and Adams (2002), names of functions are; providing structure, providing goals, providing a sense of control, providing harmony, providing future orientation.

Conducting researches about functions of identity and empathetic tendencies with teacher candidates is important. Perceptions of students are important elements within the body of university. During the research of literature, no study has been founded about the relationship between these variables. So, after this study, filling these blanks in literature and providing important benefits to education stakeholders is expected. The problems depending on the purpose were determined as below:

Do identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates differ according to gender, age, class, geographical regions, administrative divisions, education level of father and mother, family income and education type?

How is relationship between identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates?

2. Method

2.1 Research Model

Survey model is preferred to investigate difference between identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates according to independent variables. Survey model identifies people's attitudes, beliefs, values, habits, thoughts (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Besides, correlational design is used to investigate the relationship between identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates. Correlational studies aim to correlational relationships between variables using correlational statistics (Balci, 2011).

2.2 Population and Sample

The accessible population consists of teacher candidates in social studies teacher education at Erzincan University, Faculty of Education. The sample is determined by convenience sampling method and the research was conducted with 232 teacher candidates. This method is used when sample is selected easily due to existing limitations of the money, time and workforce (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2011).

Information of participants is below:

Table 1. Demographic informations of participants

Variable	Groups	n	%
Gender	Female	151	65,1
	Male	81	34,9
	Total	232	100,0
Age	18-21 age	52	22,4
	22-25 age	162	69,8
	26 age and over	18	7,8
	Total	232	100,0
Class	First grade	57	24,6
	Fourth grade	175	75,4
	Total	232	100,0
Geographical regions	Eastern Anatolia	74	31,9
	Southeastern Anatolia	6	2,6
	Mediterranean	83	35,8
	Aegean	11	4,7
	Central Anatolia	33	14,2
	Black sea	13	5,6
	Marmara	12	5,2
	Total	232	100,0
Administrative divisions	Province	73	31,5
	County	87	37,5
	Town	19	8,2
	Village	53	22,8
	Total	232	100,0
Education level of father	Not educated	31	13,4
	Elementary school	128	55,2
	Secondary school	37	15,9

	High school	25	10,8
	University	10	4,3
	Post graduate education	1	,4
	Total	232	100,0
Education level of mother	Not educated	106	45,7
	Elementary school	91	39,2
	Secondary school	19	8,2
	High school	12	5,2
	University	4	1,7
	Total	232	100,0
Family income	0-500 TL	43	18,5
	501-1000 TL	87	37,5
	1001-2000 TL	67	28,9
	2001-3000 TL	22	9,5
	3001 TL and over	13	5,6
	Total	232	100,0
Education type	Daytime education	150	64,7
	Evening education	82	35,3
	Total	232	100,0

As seen in Table 1; percentage and frequencies were given.

2.3 Instruments

As instruments, “Empathic Tendency Scale” developed by Dökmen (1988) and “Functions of Identity Scale” developed by Demir (2011) were used.

2.3.1 Empathic Tendency Scale

Empathic Tendency Scale was developed by Dökmen (1988). It has 3 dimensions consisting of 20 items. 12 items represent positive attitudes, 8 items represent negative attitudes. Overall Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of scale was found 0.68. Responses given items are rated as “5=Strongly eligible, 4=Mostly eligible, 3=undecided, 2=Partly eligible, 1=Strongly eligible”.

2.3.2 Functions of Identity Scale

Functions of Identity Scale was developed by Demir (2011). It has 5 dimensions consisting of 15 items. Responses given items are rated as “5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=undecided, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree”. The coefficient was 0.92 for the overall scale.

2.4 Analyses

SPSS 17.00 program is used to analyze data. Independent Samples T Test and Kruskal Wallis Test are used to examine the difference between identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates according to independent variables. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient is used to examine the relationship between identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates and 0.05 level of significance was used for interpretation of the results.

3. Results

Data obtained from “Empathic Tendency Scale”, “Functions of Identity Scale” were analyzed. Findings are as follows:

Table 2. Independent samples T test results of identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates changing according to gender

Points	Gender	N	M	S.s.	t	p
Empathetic Tendencies	Male	151	69,48	8,60	,37	,71
	Female	81	69,01	9,92		
Identity Functions	Male	151	60,62	10,02	,76	,45
	Female	81	59,58	9,87		

Identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates don't change according to gender ($p > .05$). So gender doesn't have significant effect on identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates.

Table 3. Kruskal Wallis test results of identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates changing according to age

Point	Age	N	Mean Rank	X^2	p
Empathetic Tendencies	18-21 age	52	104,86	2,72	,26
	22-25 age	162	118,48		
	26 age and over	18	132,36		
Identity Functions	18-21 age	52	95,80	6,43	,04
	22-25 age	162	122,12		
	26 age and over	18	125,75		

Identity functions points of teacher candidates change according to age ($p \leq .05$) but empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates don't change according to age ($p > .05$). Teacher candidates in 26 age and over have highest identity functions mean ranks and teacher candidates in 18-21 age have lowest identity functions mean ranks.

Table 4. Independent samples T test results of identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates changing according to class

Points	Class	N	M	S.s.	T	P
Empathetic Tendencies	First grade	57	67,40	9,23	-1,84	,07
	Fourth grade	175	69,93	8,95		
Identity Functions	First grade	57	58,11	10,76	-1,89	,06
	Fourth grade	175	60,96	9,61		

Identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates don't change according to class ($p > .05$). Class variable doesn't have significant effect on identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates.

Table 5. Kruskal Wallis test results of identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates changing according to geographical region

Point	Geographical Region	N	Mean Rank	X^2	p
Empathetic Tendencies	Eastern Anatolia	74	132,18	14,07	,03
	Southeastern Anatolia	6	101,33		
	Mediterranean	83	95,74		
	Aegean	11	126,77		
	Central Anatolia	33	130,55		
	Black sea	13	120,85		
	Marmara	12	118,25		
Identity Functions	Eastern Anatolia	74	122,93	2,64	,85
	Southeastern Anatolia	6	109,50		
	Mediterranean	83	110,31		
	Aegean	11	122,23		
	Central Anatolia	33	108,74		
	Black sea	13	127,15		
	Marmara	12	127,75		

Identity functions points of teacher candidates don't change according to geographical region ($p > .05$) but empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates change according to geographical region ($p \leq .05$). Teacher candidates from Eastern Anatolia have highest empathetic tendencies mean ranks and teacher candidates from Mediterranean have lowest empathetic tendencies mean ranks.

Table 6. Kruskal Wallis test results of identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates changing according to administrative division

Point	Administrative Division	N	Mean Rank	X^2	p
Empathetic Tendencies	Province	73	135,85	14,02	,00
	County	87	103,39		
	Town	19	140,37		
	Village	53	102,81		
Identity Functions	Province	73	130,24	7,74	,05
	County	87	101,67		
	Town	19	125,92		
	Village	53	118,55		

Identity functions and empathetic tendencies points of teacher candidates change according to administrative division ($p \leq .05$) Teacher candidates live in town have highest empathetic tendency mean ranks and teacher candidates live in village have lowest empathetic tendency mean ranks. Teacher candidates live in province have highest identity function mean ranks and teacher candidates live in county have lowest identity function mean ranks.

Table 7. Kruskal Wallis test results of identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates changing according to education level of father

Point	Education Level of Father	N	Mean Rank	X^2	p
Empathetic Tendencies	Not educated	31	112,32	2,66	,75
	Elementary school	128	119,49		
	Secondary school	37	111,95		
	High school	25	124,66		
	University	10	91,90		
	Post graduate education	1	74,00		
Identity Functions	Not educated	31	117,92	3,39	,64
	Elementary school	128	119,71		
	Secondary school	37	117,82		
	High school	25	103,76		
	University	10	91,85		
	Post graduate education	1	177,00		

Identity functions and empathetic tendencies points of teacher candidates don't change according to education level of father ($p > .05$). Education level of father doesn't have significant effect on identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates.

Table 8. Kruskal Wallis test results of identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates changing according to education level of mother

Point	Education Level of Mother	N	Mean Rank	X^2	p
Empathetic Tendencies	Not educated	106	109,55	2,62	,62
	Elementary school	91	124,29		
	Secondary school	19	112,13		
	High school	12	123,71		
	University	4	122,75		
Identity Functions	Not educated	106	112,74	3,96	,41
	Elementary school	91	123,76		
	Secondary school	19	121,68		
	High school	12	86,25		
	University	4	117,13		

Identity functions and empathetic tendencies points of teacher candidates don't change according to education level of mother ($p > .05$). Education level of mother doesn't have significant effect on identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates.

Table 9. Kruskal Wallis test results of identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates changing according to family income

Point	Family Income	N	Mean Rank	X^2	p
Empathetic Tendencies	0-500TL	43	106,57	5,37	,25
	501-1000 TL	87	119,01		
	1001-2000 TL	67	120,88		
	2001 -3000 TL	22	131,43		
	3001 TL and over	13	84,69		
Identity Functions	0-500TL	43	120,13	2,30	,68
	501-1000 TL	87	108,67		
	1001-2000 TL	67	121,10		
	2001 -3000 TL	22	128,07		
	3001 TL and over	13	113,62		

Identity functions and empathetic tendencies points of teacher candidates don't change according to family income ($p > .05$). Family income doesn't have significant effect on identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates.

Table 10. Independent samples T test results of identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates changing according to education type

Points	Education Type	N	M	S.s.	t	p
Empathetic Tendencies	Daytime education	150	69,51	9,16	,45	,65
	Evening education	82	68,95	8,92		
Identity Functions	Daytime education	150	60,14	10,22	-,25	,81
	Evening education	82	60,48	9,52		

Identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates don't change according to education type ($p > .05$). Education type doesn't have significant effect on identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates.

Table 11. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient results of identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates

		Identity Functions
Empathetic Tendencies	Pearson Correlation	,46

There is not a significant relationship between identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates at 0.05 level of significance.

4. Discussion

According to the findings; identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates don't change according to gender. Bozkurt (1997) found empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates change according to gender but Pala (2008) found empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates don't change according to gender. Dereli and Aypay (2012) found significant difference between emotional empathy and cognitive empathy according to gender of students. Göğüş (2013) also found students' genders are related with their personal identities.

Identity functions points of teacher candidates change according to age but empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates don't differ according to age. Balat et al. (2014) found empathetic tendencies points of teachers change according to age. Göğüş (2013) found that students' ages are not related with their personal identities.

Identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates don't change according to class variable. Karataş (2012) found that empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates change according to class.

Identity functions points of teacher candidates don't change according to geographical region but empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates change according to geographical region. Teacher candidates from Eastern Anatolia have highest empathetic tendencies mean ranks and teacher candidates from Mediterranean have lowest empathetic tendencies mean ranks. It can be said culture may affect empathetic tendencies but doesn't affect identity functions.

Identity functions and empathetic tendencies points of teacher candidates change according to administrative division. Teacher candidates live in town have highest empathetic tendency mean ranks and teacher candidates live in village have lowest empathetic tendency mean ranks. Teacher candidates live in province have highest identity function mean ranks and teacher candidates live in county have lowest identity function mean ranks. Akbulut and Sağlam (2010) found that administrative division doesn't have significant effect on empathic tendencies of primary school classroom teachers. Göğüş (2013) found that students' administrative divisions are related with their personal identities.

Identity functions and empathetic tendencies points of teacher candidates don't change according to education level of father. Dereli and Aypay (2012) found empathetic tendencies points of high school students don't change according to education level of father. Göğüş (2013) found that students' education level of fathers are not related with their personal identities.

Identity functions and empathetic tendencies points of teacher candidates don't change according to education level of mother. Dereli and Aypay (2012) found empathetic tendencies points of high school students change according to education level of mother. Göğüş (2013) found that students' education level of mothers are not related with their personal identities.

Identity functions and empathetic tendencies points of teacher candidates don't change according to family income. Pala (2008) found that there was significant difference between levels of empathy of teacher candidates according to economic level. Dereli and Aypay (2012) found empathetic tendencies points of high school students don't change according to family income. Göğüş (2013) found that students' family incomes are related with their personal identities.

Identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates don't change according to education type. Göğüş (2013) found that students' faculty types are related with their personal identities.

There is not a significant relationship between identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates at 0.05 level of significance. Önen (2012) found significant relationships between identity functions, coping with stress attitudes and emotional intelligence of teacher candidates. Findings of Balat et al. (2014) revealed that there is relationship between emotional intelligence and empathic tendency. Demir (2011) found that functions of identity, namely structure, goals, future, harmony and control, all together predict 28% of life satisfaction scores among young people.

Besides findings, identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates don't change according to gender, class, education level of mother, education level of father, family income and education type. Identity functions points of teacher candidates change according to age but empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates don't differ according to age. Identity functions points of teacher candidates don't change according to geographical region but empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates change according to geographical region. Identity functions and empathetic tendencies points of teacher candidates change according to administrative division. This research can be investigated with different methods and samples and reasons of findings can searched.

There is not a significant relationship between identity functions and empathetic tendencies of teacher candidates. Other variables that affect identity functions and empathetic tendencies may be investigated.

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