

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS'  
ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AND THEIR COMMITMENT TO  
TEACHING AS A CAREER CHOICE

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SEYED HOSSEIN KALATI

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ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AND THEIR COMMITMENT TO  
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submitted by **SEYED HOSSEIN KALATI** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Science in Educational Sciences, Educational Administration and Planning, the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI

Dean

Graduate School of Social Sciences

\_\_\_\_\_

Prof. Dr. Cennet ENGIN DEMİR

Head of Department

Department of Educational Sciences

\_\_\_\_\_

Assist. Prof. Dr. Gökçe GÖKALP

Supervisor

Department of Educational Sciences

\_\_\_\_\_

**Examining Committee Members:**

Prof. Dr. Özgül YILMAZ TÜZÜN (Head of the Examining Committee)

Middle East Technical University

Department of Educational Sciences

\_\_\_\_\_

Assist. Prof. Dr. Gökçe GÖKALP (Supervisor)

Middle East Technical University

Department of Educational Sciences

\_\_\_\_\_

Assist. Prof. Dr. Sevinç GELMEZ BURAKGAZI

Hacettepe University

Department of Educational Sciences

\_\_\_\_\_



**I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.**

Name Last name: Seyed Hossein Kalati

Signature:

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AND THEIR COMMITMENT TO TEACHING AS A CAREER CHOICE**

**KALATI, Seyed Hossein**

**M.S., The Department of Educational Sciences, Educational Administration  
and Planning**

**Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Gökçe Gökalp**

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This study investigated the relationship between pre-service teachers' academic engagement and their commitment to teaching as a career choice. The study was conducted with 225 pre-service teachers (181 females and 42 males) in the faculty of Education at one of the well-established public universities in Ankara, Turkey. University Student Engagement Inventory (USEI) and the Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS) were administered to collect data. Commitment to Career Choices Scale has two independent constructs including vocational exploration and commitment (VEC) and tendency to foreclose (TTF). Moreover, the demographic information including gender, age, class standing, planning to take the Public Personnel Selection Examination (the KPSS exam), planning to become a teacher, and graduating from a teacher training high school were taken into

the analysis. The results of correlation analysis revealed that as pre-service teachers' academic engagement increases, their effort towards career exploration decreases. An independent samples t-test showed that Female pre-service teachers were more engaged than male pre-service teachers. Also, those who have a plan to become a teacher were more engaged than those who do not. Moreover, those who graduated from a teacher training high school had a lower level of engagement than those who did not. Finally, the results of multiple regression analysis revealed that gender and planning to become a teacher predicted academic engagement, class standing predicted vocational exploration and commitment (VEC), and age predicted tendency to foreclose (TTF).

**Keywords:** Pre-service Teacher, Academic Engagement, Commitment to Career Choices

## ÖZ

### ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ AKADEMİK KATILIMLARI İLE BİR KARİYER SEÇİMİ OLARAK ÖĞRETMENLİĞE BAĞLILIKLARI ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİ

KALATI, Seyed Hossein

Yüksek Lisans, Eğitim Bilimleri, Eğitim Yönetimi ve Planlaması Bölümü

Tez Danışmanı: Assist. Prof. Dr. Gökçe Gökcalp

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Bu çalışma, öğretmen adaylarının akademik katılımları ile bir kariyer seçimi olarak öğretmenliğe bağlılıkları arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmıştır. Araştırma, Ankara'daki köklü devlet üniversitelerinin birinde Eğitim Fakültesi'nde görev yapan 225 öğretmen adayı (181 kadın ve 42 erkek) ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veri toplamak için Üniversite Öğrenci Bağlılığı Envanteri (ÜÖBE) ve Kariyer Seçimlerine Bağlılık Ölçeği (KSBÖ) uygulanmıştır. Kariyer Seçimlerine Bağlılık Ölçeği, mesleki araştırma ve adanmışlık (MAA) ve kapama eğilimi (KE) olmak üzere iki bağımsız yapıya sahiptir. Ayrıca cinsiyet, yaş, sınıf durumu, KPSS sınavına girmeyi planlama, öğretmen olmayı planlama ve öğretmen lisesinden mezun olma gibi demografik bilgiler de analize alınmıştır. Korelasyon analizi sonuçları, öğretmen adaylarının akademik bağlılıkları arttıkça kariyer keşfetme çabalarının azaldığını ortaya koymuştur. Bağımsız örneklem t-testi, kadın öğretmen adaylarının erkek

öğretmen adaylarından daha çok akademik bağılıkları olduğu bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, öğretmen olma planı olanlar, olmayanlara göre daha çok akademik bağılılık gösterdiği belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca, öğretmen lisesinden mezun olanların mezun olmayanlara göre daha düşük akademik bağılılık düzeyine sahip oldukları görülmüştür. Son olarak, çoklu regresyon analizinin sonuçları, cinsiyetin ve öğretmen olmayı planlamanın akademik katılımı, öğrencilerin sınıf düzeyinin mesleki araştırma ve adanmışlık (MAA) ve yaşın kapanma eğilimini (KE) öngördüğünü ortaya koydu.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Öğretmen adayı, Akademik Katılım, Kariyer Seçimlerine Bağılılık

*To my eternal Beloved*

*Sahar*

*&*

*To My Supportive Supervisor*

*Dr. Gökçe Gökcalp*

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

USEI: University Students Engagement Inventory

CCCS: Commitment to Career Choices Scale

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (statistical analysis software)

AMOS: analysis of a moment structures (statistical analysis software)

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Teacher education and professional development training programs prepare future and current teachers to address the needs of teachers to prepare them for all of the challenges they will face during their careers. Education systems try to provide opportunities for in-service professional development for teachers in order to maintain a high standard of teaching and retain a high-quality teacher workforce (OECD, 2005). Despite the fact that much of this work by teacher educators and professional development professionals results in increased teacher performance, more than half of those who enter the profession end up leaving it (Tait, 2008; Tynjälä & Heikkinen, 2011).

Teacher shortages and retention are global issues today (Carter, 2021). Turkey, like other countries, is coping with teacher shortages and retention issues, particularly in the east and in rural schools. After one year of teaching, new graduates request reassignment since these economically deprived places do not provide much social life for teachers (Yıldırım & Ok, 2002). Furthermore, Turkey's ongoing issues with high turnover rate (Özoğlu, 2015) and low-quality teaching training programs (Aydin & Baskan, 2005) exacerbate the situation. In this regard, the current research intends to look into the aspects that may have an impact on this complicated situation. As a result, it will assess the relationship between pre-service

teachers' academic engagement and their commitment to teaching as a career choice, as well as how these factors relate to the aforementioned issues.

### **1.1. Background of the Study**

Commitment to a career is defined as the level of dedication, individuals have to a particular aspect of their careers (Morrow, 1993). It would appear to be critical for professional progression and development, and important for individuals and organizations' practical issues. It enables an individual to endure long enough to acquire specialized skills (Colarelli & Bishop, 1990). However, the current generation of workers considers career paths as multidirectional, dynamic, and fluid, leading to decreased commitment to organizations and occupations (Wise & Millward, 2005). Particularly, teachers must maintain their personal commitment to the job in order to keep their energy and enthusiasm for the job (Day, 2000). Teacher commitment has been identified as a substantial component in determining the future success of education and schools (Huberman, 1993). Teacher commitment, is a complex, multifaceted construct related to work performance (Crosswell & Elliott, 2004), passion for teaching work (Elliott & Crosswell, 2001), and new teacher retention (Rots et al., 2007).

Teachers' commitment to teaching is extensively researched all over the world because of its important role in several aspects of education (Moses et al., 2016). Studies indicate that commitment to teaching influences pre-service teachers' decisions to enter the field of teaching (Rots et al., 2010) as well as retention in the profession (Day et al., 2005; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Tait 2008). Commitment to teaching has been identified as a vital variable in determining teacher attrition as well (e.g., Billingsley, 2004; Ruhland, 2001; Tait 2008).

In the literature on teacher commitment, researchers frequently emphasize its negative aspects. Specifically, researchers examine the factors that

contribute to detachment, depersonalization, and ultimately resignation from the profession (Chesnut & Burley, 2015). While some researchers have examined intentions to leave the profession (e.g., Coladarci, 1992), many others have used psychological self-report measures to assess levels of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, accomplishment, and stress (e.g., Betoret, 2009; Chan, 2008; Çelik, 2008; Chwalisz et al., 1992). Finally, the confluence of these elements conceptualizes burnout (Chesnut & Burley, 2015).

On the other hand, researchers have largely concentrated on the positive sides of pre-service teacher commitment in the literature. Specifically, studies examine ways to strengthen psychological bonds, increase the longevity of teaching careers, and encourage pre-service teachers to enter the teaching career (Chesnut & Burley, 2015). In terms of measuring, the majority of researchers rely on psychological self-report measures to ascertain how individuals view the profession's value, their commitment to the job, and their judgments of fit within the profession's standards (e.g., Chesnut & Cullen, 2014; Klassen et al., 2011).

Student engagement refers to the time, energy, and resources that students invest in their education (Krause & Coates, 2008). Broadly speaking, the literature sees student engagement as pertaining to the “interaction between the time, effort and other relevant resources invested by both students and their institutions intended to optimize the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students and the performance, and reputation of the institution” (Trowler, 2010, p. 3). Furthermore, there is a growing body of evidence demonstrating the critical role of academic engagement in fostering student learning (Carini et al., 2006; Cross, 2005; Zhao & Kuh, 2004), enhancing student retention (Braxton, 2008; Kushman et al., 2000), boosting quality assurance (Banta et al., 2009; Coates, 2005), and influencing student persistence (Milem & Berger, 1997). According to

Shulman (2005), higher education institutions must be committed to fostering and tracking engagement since "learning begins with student involvement" (p. 38).

Academic engagement is appealing to a wide range of educational stakeholders, particularly because it is associated with favorable outcomes and all students. A substantial portion of the academic engagement of students has been the creation of self-report measures to assess engagement (Appleton et al., 2006; Martin, 2009; Yazzie-Mintz, 2007). Despite their diverse methods, these instruments represent the efforts to achieve a psychometrically consistent and reliable operational definition of engagement that can be used to investigate critical issues in the field (Darr, 2012).

In the last few years, research has moved from determining why people choose to become teachers to determining what influences teachers' commitment (Watt et al., 2014). However, despite the importance of teachers' commitment, the literature shows that low commitment to teaching is a problem facing the profession in many countries (Moses et al., 2016). The pre-service and in-service teachers' commitment to teaching as a career has been a significant concern of teacher educators (Chesnut & Cullen, 2014; Klassen & Chiu, 2011). Teacher commitment is a vital factor and extensive research has been conducted related to commitment for both preservice and in-service teachers (e.g., Betoret, 2009; Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Chesnut & Cullen, 2014). Protecting pre-service and in-service teachers' commitment is a critical issue due to the global teacher shortage and high turnover rate.

To protect teachers' commitment, it is critical to identify the elements that are related to teacher commitment since it has been linked to teachers' tendency to leave teaching (Billingsley & Cross, 1992). As a factor that

plays a role in commitment to a career choice, academic engagement is considered one of the most important factors that is positively related to commitment to a career choice (Sinclair, 2008). Enhancing student engagement as a means of increasing commitment has been stressed in research (Horstmanshof & Zimitat, 2007; Kuh, 2003). Regarding the relationship between academic engagement and commitment to career choices, a few studies have been conducted so far but a significant relationship between the two has been found (e.g., Human-Vogel & Dippenaar, 2013; Gasiewski et al., 2012; Koyuncu et al., 2008; Watt & Richardson, 2008).

Regarding the factors that play important roles in both academic engagement and commitment to career choices in Turkey and internationally, researchers identified several factors including gender (Oga-Baldwin & Nakata, 2017; Balın, 2008; Blustein et al., 1989), age (Gibson & Slate, 2010; Blustein et al., 1989), class standing (Kinzie et al., 2007; Blustein et al., 1989), planning to choose a career (Torsney et al., 2019; Eren, 2012), graduating from an Anatolian teacher training high school (Başaran-Aksu, 2007; Öztürk & Taluk, 2014), and the KPSS exam (Ergün, 2005; Ugulu & Yorek, 2015). In this regard, females have a higher level of engagement than males (Oga-Baldwin & Nakata, 2017), while there is no difference between them in terms of commitment to career choices (Balın, 2008; Blustein et al., 1989). Older students have a lower level of engagement (Gibson & Slate, 2010) but a higher level of commitment to career choices than younger ones (Blustein et al., 1989). As the students' class standing increases, their commitment to career choices increases as well (Blustein et al., 1989), but their level of engagement decreases (Kinzie et al., 2007). Moreover, those who are planning to choose a career are more engaged than those who are not (Torsney et al., 2019; Eren, 2012). In the last few years, those who graduated from a teacher training high school have a lower level of engagement and commitment to teaching as a career (Öztürk & Taluk,

2014), while a decade ago it was the opposite (Başaran-Aksu, 2007). Finally, planning to take the KPSS exam has a negative impact on students' level of engagement (Sahin & Arcagök, 2010; Gündođdu et al., 2008; Eraslan, 2007).

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Despite the fact that policy documents (OECD, 2005) emphasize the importance of attracting talented and motivated students to the teaching profession, due to difficulties in attracting new students for teacher education and the resignation of trained teachers, and the aging and retirement of existing teachers worldwide, the teacher shortage will not be resolved (Williams & Forgasz, 2009; Sinclair, 2008; Richardson & Watt, 2006). Poor salaries and prestige, low job security, restricted career possibilities, and high teaching requirements have made it hard to lure fresh individuals into teacher training programs and teaching career (e.g., Johnson & Birkeland, 2002; Kittel & Leynen, 2003; OECD, 2005). In addition, insufficient initial teacher education, poor practicum experiences, workload intensity, and student misbehavior all have a negative impact on the retention of teachers, while the commitment to students, ability to work independently, and helpful coworkers all have a positive impact (e.g., Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002; Webb et al., 2004).

In the Turkish context, although teacher shortages and unequal distribution of teachers in urban and suburban areas have been highlighted in almost all national development plans (NDPs) prepared and implemented in Turkey between 1963 and 2013 (Ünsal et al., 2018) and teacher education has been undergoing a comprehensive change since 1998, including changing curricula and accreditation criteria in faculties of education (Esme, 2009; Grossman et al., 2007), these problems could not be effectively handled yet,

and the related goals and objectives were continuously postponed since they could not be accomplished (Altundemir, 2012).

On the other hand, due to the serious economic problems as well as the unemployment issues in Turkey, the demand for the teacher training program has been increased. Additionally, although the number of students has been increased in faculties of education, the number of instructors who have adequate professional knowledge and pedagogical formation is limited, and an increase in the number of students deteriorates the quality of education (Baskan & Ayda, 2018; Aydin & Baskan, 2005). Moreover, the inaccurate and rushed approach to teacher education policy remains as it has been in the past. With limitless quotas, graduates of non-educational faculties also receive certificates of pedagogical training upon completion of a two-semester training program that includes paid courses at different institutions (Polatcan, 2019) and turns the teaching training process into a business for profit (Baskan & Ayda, 2018). In this regard, from pre-service teachers' point of view, the most pressing issues in Turkey's teacher education system are mostly related to pre-service teachers' insufficiency in practice and application, particularly in terms of curriculum and content knowledge. Indeed, curriculum and syllabi failed to address pre-service teachers' needs and that teaching practice and school experience courses did not contribute enough to their profession (Baskan & Ayda, 2018; Kıldan et al., 2013). Additionally, the KPSS examination, over-capacity, scarcity of academic staff and their inadequacy in self-development, lack of physical and technological equipment, and preservice teachers concerns about employment and continuous development are also considered serious problems in the teacher education system in Turkey (Baskan & Ayda, 2018; Balbay et al., 2018; Aydin & Baskan, 2005). Inadequate professional preparation is likely to leave pre-service teachers trained via alternative pathways impotent and ineffective in the classroom, resulting in a poor commitment level to teaching (Seferoglu, 2004). Indeed, pre-service

teachers who view teaching as a fallback vocation risk compromising their professional dedication (Akar, 2012). Additionally, Turkey has a high incidence of mobility-related turnover, particularly in the less developed eastern provinces, due to the region's socioeconomic and geographic characteristics. This issue has a detrimental effect on the motivation and commitment of teachers (Özoğlu, 2015). Additionally, given the high stakes associated with proposed modifications to initial teacher training programs, it is vital to examine pre-service teachers' motivation and engagement with learning (Wurf & Croft-Piggin, 2015).

As the aim of the faculty of education in a major state university in Turkey indicated, it seeks to train prospective teachers to educate future generations of the Turkish nation and conduct research in the field of education (Middle East Technical University, 2018). Based on this goal, the faculty of education has to make sure that its effort towards educating students will encourage them to take responsibility as teachers and also pursue a career in the field of education. However, with low admission standards, modest pay, and a diploma that is life-long valid, teaching is seen as a fallback profession not only by society but also by pre-service teachers (Akar, 2012). Moreover, pre-service teacher training does not effectively address the teachers' needs in the early years (Öztürk & Yıldırım, 2014). It is necessary to provide a teacher preparation program that helps students develop a realistic comprehension of teaching to help them make their decisions clearly about commitment to teaching as a profession (Thomson & Palermo, 2014).

Although, there are a few studies on university students' commitment to career choices (e.g., Kaya, 1996; Balın, 2008; Demirtas & Tezer, 2012), these studies considered undergraduate students in general and did not focus on pre-service teachers in particular. Moreover, in terms of commitment to teaching as a career choice in Turkey, the studies mostly focused on the motivational drive that results in choosing the teaching profession as a career

choice (e.g., Gürbüz & Sülün, 2004; Kılınç & Mahiroğlu, 2009; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012) and investigated a few other factors such as self-efficacy (Koçoğlu, 2011; Er, 2020), emotions (Koçoğlu, 2011), and life satisfaction and resiliency (Yıldırım & Sönmez, 2017) that influence pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching. It is important to identify other significant factors particularly related to pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching in order to promote their commitment and to help policy-makers take effective actions in addressing problems associated with teacher shortage and retention.

On the other hand, student engagement is considered as an indicator for not just a society's educational achievement and the quality of its educational systems, but also as a proxy for an educational institution's instructional quality (Ergün & Kurnaz, 2017; Uur & Akn, 2015; Kuh, 2001). Engagement is crucial for academic efficacy, success, socialization, welfare, and life satisfaction of students, as well as for successful learning (Harris, 2008; Krause & Coates, 2008; Li et al. 2010; Park, 2005; Wang & Eccles, 2012). It is difficult to predict favorable outcomes from an educational system that has little or no student engagement (Gunuc, 2014). In this regard, pre-service teachers' academic engagement and their commitment to teaching are considered important elements that are related to both faculty and students and also influence them (Mérida-López & Extremera, 2020; Kim & Corcoran, 2018; González et al., 2018). Moreover, the relationship between academic engagement and pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching as a career choice requires further investigation (Kim & Corcoran, 2018).

While a few studies investigate pre-service teachers' academic engagement in Turkey (Gunuc 2014; Gunuc & Kuzu, 2015), there is no study in which the relationship between pre-service teachers' academic engagement and their commitment to teaching has been investigated in Turkey. Thus, in light of the relevant literature above and the existing gaps, examining such

relationship could help address the gaps effectively and provide a better insight into factors related to pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching, especially in Turkey which suffers from teacher shortages and retention problems (Yıldırım & Ok, 2002). The current study, therefore, is the first study in which the relationship between the two has been investigated in Turkey and is going to fulfill the following purpose.

### **1.3. Purpose of the Study**

The current study aims to examine the relationship between pre-service teachers' academic engagement and their commitment to teaching as a career choice, and also, to determine whether there were any differences between males and females, between those who are planning to become teachers and those who aren't, those who graduated from teacher training high schools, and those who haven't, and between those who have taken the KPSS and those who have not, in terms of academic engagement and the two independent constructs of commitment to a career choice VEC and TTF. Finally, it aims to investigate whether academic engagement and commitment to teaching as a career were predicted by independent variables outlined in the present study as gender, age, class standing, planning to take the KPSS exam, and planning to become a teacher.

### **1.4. Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship between pre-service teachers' academic engagement and their commitment to teaching as a career?
2. Is there a difference in terms of academic engagement and commitment to teaching as a career choice between the following groups?
  - Males and females,
  - Those who are planning to take the KPSS exam and those who are not.

- Those who are planning to become a teacher and those who are not.
  - Those who graduated from a teacher training high school and those who did not.
3. Do gender, age, class standing, planning to take the KPSS exam, planning to become a teacher, and graduating from a teacher training high school, predict academic engagement and commitment to teaching as a career choice?

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

Examining the role of pre-service teachers' academic engagement in their commitment to career choices helps researchers understand the processes that influence pre-service teachers' decisions on pursuing the teaching profession as a career. It also raises awareness of creating an engaging climate to promote pre-service teachers to be committed to teaching, otherwise, the efforts of faculties of education will be unproductive. Although commitment is the topic of particular consideration in vocational (e.g., industrial-organizational) psychological research, relatively little attention has been paid to this in educational settings (Chan et al., 2008).

Focusing on pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching is necessary for three reasons. First, a considerable body of research indicates that intentions result in behavior (Ajzen et al., 2009; Webb & Sheeran, 2006; Chandon et al., 2005), meaning that quitting intention is associated with actual quitting behavior. Second, retrospective studies find that novice teachers' early career commitment is related to later decisions about entering the profession (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Hong, 2010; Rots, et.al, 2007). Third, teachers' commitment to the profession is vulnerable at later-career stages (Day, 2008).

Turkish pre-service teachers in a variety of subject areas are driven largely by intrinsic and altruistic motivations but are also highly influenced by extrinsic considerations such as job stability and consistent pay (Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). Additionally, when questioned, the majority of students are uninterested in pursuing a profession in education. They are unsure whether they will work as teachers following graduation (Doğan et al., 2007) since the KPSS exam must be taken in order to be appointed (Doğan & Çoban, 2009). In fact, being unable to predict the results and future careers might push the pre-service teachers to uncertainty (Şenol & Akdağ, 2018) which could influence their engagement in their studies and their commitment to teaching as a career.

According to the mission of the faculty of education (stated earlier), it is primarily desired to ensure that highly committed students are admitted into the program, and secondarily to create an engaging program to encourage the students' commitment to the teaching profession. On a larger scale, governments, employers, and educators worldwide are committed to increasing the teaching workforce's quality in order to encourage improved student learning results (OECD, 2005). The emphasis on teacher quality as the primary factor affecting student learning (Hattie, 2009 as cited in Watt et al., 2014) conveys the idea that there are distinct types of teachers, each with their own set of ambitions, goals, aspirations, values, abilities, and skills, and that these distinctions may be significant in terms of teachers' career aspirations, development, and commitment. Governments throughout the world have acknowledged the critical role of skilled teachers and instruction in the creation and preservation of an intelligent, informed population (OECD, 2005).

Difficulty recruiting trainees to preliminary teacher training programs, the resignation of skilled teachers, and senior teachers' retirement are cited as major reasons for current and projected shortages (Santiago, 2007; Bradley

et al., 2006; Johnson & Birkeland, 2002; Ramsay, 2000). Since pre-service teacher education does not effectively address the needs of the teachers in the early years (Öztürk & Yıldırım, 2014), providing a proper teacher preparation program is essential to help students gain a realistic comprehension of teaching to help them make their decisions undoubtedly about commitment to teaching as a profession (Thomson & Palermo, 2014). Moreover, high teacher turnover rate affects students' performance especially in mathematics and English Language Arts (Ronfeldt et al., 2013) and also harms school operations by disturbing school stability, collaboration, collegial relationships among teachers, and leads to a loss of vital institutional knowledge (Wang, 2015).

Recruitment and retention of teachers have an effect on student learning and achievement. Quality teaching has been shown to have a significant effect on students' cognitive, affective, and behavioral results (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hattie, 2003; Masters, 2003; Rowe, 2003) as well as a positive relationship between years of teaching experience and quality teaching (Alton-Lee, 2003; Hattie, 2003; Masters, 2003; Rowe, 2003). (Darling-Hammond, 2000). However, how can young teachers (i.e., pre-service teachers) advance into "quality" teachers if they are not provided with the quality teacher training or are unable to obtain and maintain teaching positions following graduation? At this juncture, engagement can be critical, as a growing body of research has revealed favorable associations between engagement and student outcomes such as satisfaction (Chen et al., 2014), persistence (Kuh et al., 2008), and academic achievement (Carini et al., 2006). It is a reliable predictor of college completion of undergraduate students (Price & Tovar, 2014). It has also a positive effect on students' physical and psychological health (Steele & Fullagar, 2009).

Academic engagement has become a significant priority in higher education in order to improve teaching and learning, a trending topic on meeting

agendas, and a central theme at international conferences (Trowler, 2010). Understanding student engagement may pave the way for a new perspective on educational quality and the resolution of specific issues- such as commitment to a career choice- confronting universities today (Gunuc et al., 2019). There is significant evidence that student engagement benefits both targeted student outcomes and university operations.

Engagement as a notion covers more than participation, involvement, and integration. It requires both sensing and reasoning, as well as action (Harper & Quaye, 2009). Student engagement refers to the sum of students' efforts and time spent on obtaining desired outcomes (Birgin et al., 2017; Carini et al., 2006; Ergün & Kurnaz, 2017; Junco, 2012; Krause & Coates, 2008; Kuh, 2009). Indeed, increased student engagement is associated with higher-quality outcomes (Krause & Coates, 2008).

While academics have explored engagement in higher education in general and among in-service teachers in particular, they have paid less attention to engagement among pre-service teachers (Corcoran & O'Flaherty, 2017; Kim & Corcoran, 2017). The number of conducted studies is limited in Turkey as well, particularly with larger groups of participants (Gunuc et al., 2019). Given the importance of academic engagement in higher education and the limited number of studies investigating its relationship with pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching, conducting such research could elucidate the overlooked aspect of pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching and help policy-makers, researchers, and trainers address teachers' shortages and high turnover rate problems effectively.

### **1.6. Definition of the Key Terms**

*Academic engagement* is described as a student's psychological effort and involvement in learning, comprehending, or mastering the skills, crafts, or

information that the coursework is meant to encourage. (Lamborn et al., 1992).

*Commitment to career choices* is described as having a clear understanding of one's occupational preferences as well as a strong attachment to a certain set of career goals (Blustein et al., 1989).

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Since in this study, the relationship between pre-service teachers' academic engagement and their commitment to teaching as a career choice is going to be investigated, the focus of the current literature review will be on developing and clarifying the concepts of engagement and commitment to career choices as well as reporting and synthesizing the related studies conducted in Turkey and around the world.

Specifically, in this chapter, the concept of engagement and its definitions will be discussed. Moreover, its dimensions as well as studies that have been conducted globally and in Turkey on academic engagement and related measurement tools will be provided. Likewise, the concept of commitment to career choices and its definition will be discussed. Furthermore, its dimensions, as well as studies that have been conducted globally and in Turkey on the commitment to career choices and related measurement tools, will be given. Next, the relationship between academic engagement and commitment to career choices will be investigated. Finally, the current situation of the teacher training programs and teaching career are briefly explained both internationally and in Turkey.

## **2.1. Engagement**

Educators and scholars have attached great importance to engagement from a theoretical perspective. As the importance of fostering student engagement in postsecondary classrooms grows (Gunuc & Kuzu, 2015; Korobova & Starobin, 2015; Barkley, 2010), educators must be able to measure, track, and assess student engagement as part of the total learning experience (Fredricks, 2013; Butler, 2011; Garrett, 2011). Engagement is a multifaceted concept that refers to the various patterns of motivation, cognition, and behavior that students exhibit (Baron & Corbin, 2012; Appleton et al., 2008; Fredricks et al., 2004). Different definitions and dimensions of engagement have been proposed in the previous research (e.g., Sharma & Bhaumik, 2013; Appleton et al., 2008; Baron & Corbin, 2012; Fredricks et al., 2004; Klem & Connell, 2004). Moreover, various studies have supplied interchangeable terms and coverage of engagement, such as study engagement (e.g., Schaufeli et al., 2002), student engagement (Kuh, 2003), and student engagement in academic work (Lamborn et al., 1992).

In terms of several definitions of engagement, Skinner et al. (2009) define it as the quality of students' participation or connection with the educational endeavor, and hence with the activities, values, people, goals, and places that compose it. Student engagement, according to Kuh (2003), is defined as a student's devotion of energy and time to educationally sound activities outside and inside the classroom, as well as the strategies and policies that educational institutions utilize to encourage students to participate in these activities. Study engagement is defined by Schaufeli et al. (2002) as Absorption, vigor, and dedication characterize this fulfilling and positive study-related frame of mind. Finally, academic engagement is described as a student's psychological involvement and effort in learning, comprehending, or mastering the skills, crafts, or knowledge that the schooling is designed to encourage. (Lamborn et al., 1992). These various

definitions are provided in table 2.1. In this study, the definition from Lamborn and colleagues (1992) is used since it is closer to the nature of teaching as a profession in which one needs knowledge and skills together (Vingsle, 2014), and teacher training programs try to promote it.

Table 2.1. Variations in terms and definitions of engagement

Authors	Construct Name	Definition
Skinner, Kindermann, and Furrer (2009)	Engagement	The degree to which students participate in or are connected to the educational enterprise, and hence to the activities, values, people, goals, and setting that compose it.
Kuh (2003)	Student Engagement	The amount of energy and time a student commits to educationally sound activities outside and inside the classroom, as well as the techniques and policies used by educational institutions to encourage student participation in these activities.

Authors	Construct Name	Definition
Lamborn, Newmann, and Wehlage (1992)	Student Engagement in Academic Work	Students' psychological effort and investment toward learning, understanding, or mastering the skills, crafts, or knowledge that the schoolwork is intended to promote.

The concept of engagement was first proposed in professional and occupational contexts (Bakker et al., 2008; Hirschi, 2012; Schaufeli & Bakker 2010), but also has been recently expanded to the educational context (Kuh, 2009; Vasalampi et al., 2009; Reschly & Christenson, 2012). The concept of student engagement is sociological and psychological in nature (Kahu, 2013) which produces high-quality educational outcomes (Krause & Coates, 2008). It is regarded as a malleable, dynamic, and multifaceted concept that evolves over time (Assunção et al., 2020). Although researchers provided different definitions for engagement, all of them derived from certain psychological dimensions which are discussed in the next section.

### 2.1.1. Dimensions of Engagement

According to Fredricks et al. (2004), engagement consists of three dimensions to help explain the theoretical content of engagement.

1. **Behavioral**: refers to students' attendance, classroom involvement, suspensions, and extracurricular activities participation.

2. ***Emotional***: examines students' positive and negative emotional responses to teachers, peers, academic assignments, and school in general.
3. ***Cognitive***: It refers to the students' investment in learning and encompasses factors such as their willingness and consideration to expend the effort necessary to comprehend and master difficult tasks, their use of effective learning strategies (e.g., elaboration rather than memorization), their challenge choice, and their self-regulation.

Student engagement includes students' emotional, behavioral, and cognitive reactions to classroom and extracurricular activities (Gunuc, 2014). Behavioral engagement refers to students' participation in academics as well as their attendance and participation in classes (Gunuc & Kuzu, 2015). In general, behavioral engagement is associated with classroom activities. Campus (extracurricular) and social activities are also included in the definition of behavioral engagement (Fredricks et al. 2004). Emotional engagement refers to students' reactions to the teacher, their peers, the course content, and the class as a whole, which all include attitudes, interests, and values (Bryson & Hand, 2007; Gunuc & Kuzu, 2015). Additionally, emotions such as a sense of belonging to a school/university, a love for the university, and a sense of belonging to a group are recognized as part of emotional engagement (Fredricks et al. 2004). The behavioral and emotional engagements are mutually related (Li & Lerner, 2013; Skinner et al., 2008).

Several studies indicate that emotional engagement, emotional support, or good feelings all contributed to increased behavioral engagement (e.g., Ladd et al., 2000; Li et al., 2010; Skinner et al., 2008). According to Patrick et al. (2007), social and emotional contexts in the classroom are necessary conditions for students' behavioral engagement. Additionally, Gibbs and Poskitt (2010) claimed that emotional and behavioral engagements are

prerequisites for cognitive engagement, implying that students should build emotional and behavioral engagements prior to cognitive engagement.

Cognitive engagement entails an investment in learning; significance is placed on learning objectives, self-regulation, and planning. It is inextricably linked to motivation to learn, and refers to students who take responsibility for their own learning, identify their own requirements, and embrace the mental challenges (Gunuc & Kuzu, 2015; Fredricks et al., 2004). As Fredricks and colleagues (2004) noted, numerous studies did not assess the cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements concurrently, despite the fact that doing so was critical. In the literature, emotional and behavioral engagements are the focus of several studies (e.g., Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Patrick et al., 1993; Ryan et al., 1994; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). It is critical to have a holistic knowledge of engagement as a multidimensional process. These must be taken into account while evaluating and monitoring this concept in higher education (Krause & Coates, 2008). Research also shows that these dimensions have positive effects on student career commitment (Cook, 2013; Solesvik, 2013; Koyuncu, et al., 2008).

### **2.1.2. International Studies Related to Academic Engagement**

Academic engagement of students in higher education has become a growing source of concern in recent years. Academic engagement is critical to the educational system because it provides benefits such as a social network, a sense of belonging, school happiness, academic accomplishment, and positive learning outcomes (Dunleavy & Milton, 2009; Furlong & Christenson, 2008). Additionally, the campus and campus activities have an indirect effect on students enrolled in higher education institutions (Gunuc, 2013). Indeed, social learning areas and the campus as a whole play a critical

role in the development of students' sense of belonging and engagement (Matthews et al., 2011; Nauffal, 2011).

A bulk of research on student engagement in several cultures and countries, including Turkey, has been conducted. Numerous aspects have been investigated in relation to student engagement at the university level. For instance, there is a positive relationship between school climate and student participation (Hopson & Lee, 2011). Individuals who lack future aspirations and make inconsistent choices are more likely to have poor levels of engagement and eventually drop out of school (Belloc et al., 2010; Gury, 2011). Additionally, students from better-income families have a higher level of engagement than students from lower-income families. (Ansong et al., 2018; Perdue et al., 2009; Ansong et al., 2018).

In terms of the role of age and gender in engagement, female students are more engaged than male students (Oga-Baldwin & Nakata, 2017; Ayub et al., 2017; Amir et al., 2014). Female undergraduates are more engaged in educational activities than their male peers. Male first-year and senior students devote less time and effort to difficult academic assignments; senior males are also less engaged in active and collaborative learning activities (Kinzie et al., 2007). Additionally, older students were more engaged than younger students (Gibson & Slate, 2010).

Engagement is almost certainly enhanced by interventions that positively influence performance and avert potential dropout (Appleton et al., 2008). Engaged students commit more time to their performance, participate more in school activities, and are more likely to create mechanisms to aid in their persistence (Klem & Connell, 2004) and self-regulation of their learning processes (Raykov, 2001). Self-regulated learning refers to a cyclical process in which a student plans for a task, monitors their progress, and then evaluates the results (Zimmerman, 2002). It is also positively related to

academic performance and social outcomes in terms of peer acceptance and self-esteem (Li et al., 2008).

Additionally, engagement results in more satisfaction (Elmore & Huebner, 2010) and self-efficacy, that is, their belief in their ability to plan and carry out certain tasks necessary to maintain, organize, and carry out their current studies (Coetzee & Oosthuizen, 2012). However, it is negatively related to the occurrence of achievement problems and dropout (Fredricks et al., 2004; Gilardi, & Guglielmetti, 2011; Reschly & Christenson, 2012).

In the literature, two distinct conceptualizations of academic engagement have arisen (Sinval et al., 2018). Schaufeli et al. (2002) adapted the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) to be used in a university setting. The revised scale used the same three characteristics of work engagement (vigor, absorption, and devotion) but rephrased several of the original UWES items for applying in academic settings. Fredricks et al. (2004) asserted the second conceptualization of academic engagement as a multidimensional construct integrating behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions, which is typically consistent with the notion that the behavioral component corresponds to vigor, the emotional component to commitment, and the cognitive component to absorption (Christensen, 2017). However, critiques have been leveled against Schaufeli et al. (2002) and Fredricks and colleagues' (2004) conceptualizations of student academic engagement. The former was a straightforward adaption of the workplace to the university setting, whereas the latter originated mostly with high school students (Marôco et al., 2016).

Student engagement is assessed differently depending on the accepted definition of engagement and the data gathering methods. Due to the fact that certain theoretical frameworks almost entirely overlap with prior research, clarification is required (Fredricks, 2015). It is vital to establish

precise definitions with separation between the dimensions within the adopted framework in the academic engagement literature (Fredricks et al. 2004). As a result, data on student engagement can be collected in a variety of ways (Fredricks & McColskey, 2012; Chapman, 2002): student self-report, experience sampling, teacher ratings of students, interviews, direct observation, checklists and rating scales, work sample analysis, and focused case studies.

Gunuc and Kuzu (2015) established the Student Engagement Scale in response to the major critiques (SES). The scale consists of six components: valuing a sense of belonging, cognitive engagement, peer relationships (emotional engagement-I), faculty relationships (emotional engagement-II), and behavioral engagement within the context of campus and class engagement. Additionally, Marôco et al. (2016) developed the University Student Engagement Inventory (USEI). This inventory encompasses the behavioral, cognitive, and emotional elements of academic engagement, as defined and classified by the majority of research (Fredricks 2015). The USEI has been shown to have adequate validity, reliability, and measurement invariance across gender and area of graduation (Sinval et al., 2018), and to be capable of producing reliable and valid data on academic engagement among university students worldwide (Assunço et al., 2020). Thus, the USEI is used in this study to assess pre-service teachers' academic engagement.

### **2.1.3. Studies Related to Academic Engagement in Turkey**

In the Turkish context, there are several studies that focus on K-12 student engagement (e.g., Bellici, 2015; İhtiyaroğlu & Demirbolat, 2016; Sağlam & İkiz, 2017) rather than university students. There are a few studies investigating university students' academic engagement in general (Gunuc et al., 2019) and pre-service teachers' academic engagement in particular

(Gunuc, 2014; Gunuc & Kuzu, 2015). Moreover, parallel with international studies, in Turkey, several variables such as school and campus climate, family income, academic achievement as well as age and gender, have been investigated concerning university and K-12 students' engagement.

Based on several studies, the level of engagement in Anatolian teacher training high school students was reported to be moderate (e.g., Büyükgöze et al., 2018; Gür, 2017; Özdemir, 2017). According to Gunuc et al. (2019), the level of student engagement at universities was also found to be moderate- neither high nor low- in Turkey. Additionally, a study of 302 pre-service teachers discovered that those with higher academic achievement have higher levels of engagement than those with lower academic achievement (Bellici, 2015; Gunuc, 2014). Similarly, Bellici (2015) examined 552 secondary school students and discovered that individuals with higher academic achievement have a greater level of engagement than those with lower academic achievement.

Gunuc and colleagues (2019) discovered a positive correlation between campus climate and student engagement in a study including 7,802 undergraduate students from 26 universities around Turkey. İhtiyaroğlu and Demirbolat (2016) found a positive correlation between school climate and student engagement among 1062 high school students from all Ankara districts.

In terms of gender, Bellici (2015) and Salam and Ikiz (2017) reported that female students in secondary school exhibit a higher level of engagement than male students. Similarly, as students' class grades improve, their engagement levels decline. Bellici (2015) showed that as students mature, their levels of engagement diminish. Additionally, students whose parents have a better socioeconomic standing and higher education degrees are

more engaged in school than students whose parents have a lower socioeconomic status and educational degrees (Bellici, 2015).

## **2.2. Commitment to Career Choices**

Commitment to career choices is a significant developmental issue for people in late adolescence and early adulthood who are experiencing their first school-to-work transition. (Super et al., 1996; Blustein et al., 1989; Harren, 1979; Jepsen, 1984; Sharf, 1992; Super, 1984). Marcia (1980), defined commitment as choosing an option and personally investing in it. Individuals must bear the ambiguity, perplexity, and anxiety associated with exploring a number of potential careers throughout this task (Fuqua & Hartman, 1983). They need to engage in a complicated process beyond simple information gathering to make a career decision (Blustein et al., 1989). This process, which demands the formation and characterization of vocational possibilities, often results in transitioning from an indecisive phase to one of a confident and strong commitment to a career throughout their transition from late adolescence to early adulthood (Gottfredson, 1981; Harren, 1979; Super, 1984). Career exploration is defined as a set of goal-directed behaviors and cognitions that facilitate access to the information contained in one's external environment and aid in decision-making and vocational adjustment (Blustein et al., 1989).

Commitment to a career is a term that relates to an individual's commitment to their profession or occupation (Blau, 2003), and is unique in that it focuses on the progression of an individual's work experiences over time (Colarelli & Bishop, 1990). It is a critically essential construct from a practical perspective since it is associated with skill development, plays a role in developing solid professional connections, and contributes to the perceived significance and continuity of one's career (Colarelli & Bishop, 1990).

Commitment to a career is defined by the establishment of personal career objectives, as well as identification with, commitment to, and participation in those objectives. Furthermore, it should transcend occupations or jobs. It entails a longer view and is connected to the individual's subjective (or internal) career aspirations (Hall, 1976 as cited in Colarelli & Bishop, 1990). Career commitment involves developing personal goals and committing to one's own career, which may result in employment with a variety of organizations (Colarelli & Bishop, 1990).

In this regard, Blustein and colleagues (1989) developed the term "commitment to career choices," and defined it as the point at which an individual has an explicit sense of his or her occupational preferences along with a strong bond to a specific set of career goals. The concept of commitment to career choices includes self-assurance and self-confidence in one's particular vocational choices, a positive sense of one's vocational future, and an awareness of potential barriers. They also identified the dimensions of commitment to career choices.

### **2.2.1. Dimensions of Commitment to Career Choices**

It is critical for individuals in late adolescence and early adulthood to not only explore themselves and the world of work and make vocational selections but also to engage in the process of committing to their career choices (Harren, 1979; Super, 1957). In this regard, Commitment to career choices has two independent dimensions (Blustein et al., 1989).

- 1. *Vocational Exploration and Commitment (VEC)***; refers to a continuum from an early uncommitted, exploratory phase to a highly committed, confident phase (Blustein et al., 1989). It assesses individuals' procedural increase in commitment to career decision-making.

2. *The Tendency to Foreclose (TTF)*; refers to a continuum from openness to various experiences to being closed to options other than one's own vocational choices during the commitment process (Blustein et al., 1989). It measures individuals' different types of commitment to career choices

These two dimensions are linked to university students' career indecision, fear of commitment, self-esteem, trait anxiety, and ability to cope under stress (Betz & Serling, 1993). Those with high levels of career commitment would have clear occupational preferences and engage in adequate preparation effort for implementing their career goals (Ladany et al., 1997).

To measure commitment to a career choice, a few tools have been developed. One of them is a 7-item scale developed by Blau (1988), and another one is a 14-item scale developed by Porter and colleagues (1974) for measuring organizational commitment but adapted by Colarelli and Bishop (1990), for measuring career commitment. Moreover, there is a 28-item scale developed by Blustein and colleagues (1989) called the Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS) which also includes the two dimensions of commitment to career choices. Since it fits the aim and scope of the current study, the CCCS is applied for measuring pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching as a career choice.

### **2.2.2. International Studies Related to Commitment to Career Choices**

Given that an individual's commitment to career choices is likely to develop gradually and change throughout the course of his or her career, academics examine it in terms of career stages (Reilly & Orsak, 1991; Aryee et al., 1994). Marcia (1966) develops the theory of identity achievement to understand career stages in this regard. His theory is composed of two separate components that contribute to the achievement of adolescent identity: (1) a period of choice or crisis, and (2) a commitment. A crisis is a

period of uncertainty during which established beliefs or choices are reconsidered and new options are investigated. Both exploration and commitment are processes that influence the outcome of an identity crisis. That is, whether one investigates different identities (to what extent) and whether one commits to chosen alternatives. Marcia (1966) created the Identity Status Interview, which assesses an individual's level of investigation and commitment in several areas of life. He recognized four distinct identity statuses: foreclosure, identity diffusion, moratorium, and identity achievement. The foreclosure status denotes a decision made without considering alternate options. These obligations are typically based on unquestionably accepted parental ideals and values. Adolescents in the identity diffusion phase are unable to tackle the importance of identity development and hence avoid investigating or making commitments, which may result in social isolation. The term "identity moratorium" refers to a state in which individuals are in the midst of a crisis, their commitments are either non-existent or very loosely defined, yet they are actively seeking alternatives. Once a crisis has occurred and been resolved, diffusion to moratorium would be a likely path to identity achievement which refers to the status of individuals who have typically gone through a crisis and explored their identities and made commitments. Erikson (1968) believes the identity crisis that occurs during adolescence and youth is a "psychosocial moratorium"- a period of time when a society allows an individual to develop a viable adult identity. During this time, societies contribute to psychosocial development in a variety of ways by providing "institutionalized moratoria"- structured settings that allow for role-playing and socialization experiences that are conducive to the development of a viable adult identity.

Huberman (1989) builds his work on a life-stage approach to human development, with a focus on career development, teachers' motivational and affective development over the career span. He asserts that career

development proceeds according to sequences or cycles that in many cases apply across professions. For instance, teachers in the earliest stage of career development - exploration - make a preparatory choice, investigate the career through initial practice (e.g., apprenticeship, internship, or practicum) and begin to explore daily roles and routines within the career. Huberman (1989) maintains that teachers at the career exploration stage experience survival and discovery, whereby novice teachers focus on survival (“Can I actually do this job?”) mediated by the discovery (“I really love/hate this job”). Based on Huberman’s theorizing about teachers’ career trajectories, Hargreaves (2005) notes that novice teachers were more open to change and perceived their careers more uncertain and insecure compared with practicing teachers. As a function of age, older people and students who are further along in their studies are more devoted to their career choices. (Blustein et al., 1989). Moreover, in terms of class standing, students with higher class standing evolve from a period of relative indecision to one in which they demonstrate a firm commitment to their career choices (Blustein et al., 1989). However, there is no difference between males and females in terms of tendency to foreclose and vocational exploration and commitment (Blustein et al., 1989; Balın, 2008).

### **2.2.3. Studies Related to Commitment to Career Choices in Turkey**

There are a few studies on the career development of university students (Kağnıcı, 1999; Kaya, 1996; Balın, 2008; Demirtas & Tezer, 2012). These studies mostly focus on the variables such as students’ competencies and their major choices, vocational maturity, gender and perceived career obstacles in career commitment, and the role of romantic relationship satisfaction and career commitment in university students.

Regarding the level of university students’ commitment to a career choice, Kaya (1996) examined 165 first-year university students and found out that

they are not committed to their career choices yet. Similarly, Kagnıcı (1999) investigated the vocational maturity of university preparatory school students. Out of 272 students, more than 70% were reported as immature. In terms of age and gender, there was no significant relationship between vocational maturity and age (Kagnıcı, 1999) or gender (Kagnıcı, 1999; Balin 2008).

Regarding the predictors of commitment to a career choice, Aycan and Fikret-Pasa (2003) found that intrinsic variables (i.e., self-aspirations) had the most influence on career choices, whereas interpersonal factors (i.e., significant others' expectations) had the least influence on Turkish university students' career choices. Furthermore, Balin (2008) found that students who showed a poor commitment to their career choices had a high awareness of obstacles to occupational knowledge, employment opportunities, and personality characteristics. It was also discovered that students with a higher sense of work opportunity as a hurdle had a reduced tendency to foreclose and a higher tendency to investigate various career possibilities.

#### **2.2.4. International studies related to Commitment to Teaching as a Career Choice**

According to Hong et al. (2018), when pre-service teachers' inquiry progresses, they choose an unclear career path, then evaluate whether they took the proper decision and whether the long-term personal investment is worthwhile. It should be highlighting that just because pre-service teachers are enrolled in a teacher training program doesn't mean they have decided to pursue a career in teaching. Commitment is probably a crystallization process than a long-term outcome for pre-service teachers (Hong et al., 2018). As a result of the university context, certain pre-service teachers may undergo role experimentation and temporal commitment, according to

Erikson's (1968) concept of an institutionalized moratorium. Their commitment would be shaky and unstable in those circumstances. Thus, it's vital to pay extra attention when evaluating the sustainability of pre-service teacher commitment (Grotevant, 1986), because less sustainable commitments may be lost as socio-cultural circumstances change. For example, if pre-service teachers become concerned about potential challenges to becoming a teacher and discover they simply lack adequate skills to address those obstacles, their initial commitment to teaching may be revoked. (Hong, et al., 2018). Furthermore, individuals who have demonstrated a higher commitment level are expected to be ready to put their career decision into reality and to overcome any obstacles that may obstruct their efforts to achieve their goals (Wang et al., 2006).

Commitment to the teaching career refers to the motivational drive to decide on entering and preparing for the teaching profession (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Meyer et al., 2004). The decisions involved in preparing for and entering the teaching profession derive from beliefs about the future self (Tabachnick et al., 2008; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), beliefs about self-efficacy - what can be successfully and competently performed (Bandura, 1977; Klassen & Chiu, 2011), the expectations about the job (Buchanan, 2009; Chan, et al., 2008; Inman & Marlow, 2004), the belief in its viability (Miller & Brickman, 2004), emotional awareness and resiliency (Brown et al., 2003; Rots et.al, 2007), and an accurate assessment of the cost to secure the job (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Following these factors, a commitment not only enhances a healthier prospect of work but also facilitates achievement and investment toward realizing goals (Chan et al., 2008; Fresko et al., 1997; Tsui & Cheng, 1999). Commitment to teaching as a career choice is a component of a teacher's professional identity, along with other factors including career decision-making (Thomson & Palermo 2014), motivation (Klassen, et al., 2011), job satisfaction (Lamote, & Engels, 2010), and emotions (Lamote, & Engels, 2010). (Chen, 2019).

The intention to stay in teaching is referred to as teacher commitment (Ware & Kitsantas, 2011). Pre-service teachers, on the other hand, are more dedicated to their career choice than to the profession itself (González et al., 2018). When researching pre-service teachers' commitment, researchers looked at their intentions to enter the teaching career (Rots et al., 2014; Thomson & Palermo, 2014), career choice satisfaction (Lamote & Engels 2010; Watt, & Richardson 2008; Watt et al., 2014), planned effort in the teaching career (Watt & Richardson 2008; Watt et al., 2014), and planned persistence in teaching (Watt & Richardson 2008).

The major objective of teacher training programs is to shape pre-service teachers' professional identities in terms of their commitment to a career choice (Lamote & Engels, 2010; Thomson & Palermo 2014). Professional competence is an effective component in teachers' commitment, referring to a set of individual features such as knowledge, talents, and beliefs that are required for effective teaching, (Kunter et al., 2013). Competency-based training attempts to provide a learning atmosphere in which pre-service Teachers can acquire the skills necessary to perform well in the teaching profession since these competencies are teachable and learnable (Struyven & De Meyst, 2010). As a result, some researchers believe that interactions in the classroom during pre-service training are an appropriate venue for gaining professional capabilities and shaping teaching commitment (Rots et al., 2010). (DeAngelis et al., 2013; Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Rots et al., 2014).

### **2.2.5. Studies related to Commitment to Teaching as a Career Choice in Turkey**

Several studies have been conducted in Turkey to explore commitment to teaching as a career based on the motivating drive that leads to choosing teaching as a profession. The results of these investigations, however, are not the same. Extrinsic factors such as finding a secure job and a consistent

monthly income were more important than intrinsic factors in the career choice of pre-service elementary school teachers (Saban, 2003), whereas pre-service biology teachers were driven primarily by their passion for biology, with the extrinsic goal of "job security" coming in second (Gürbüz & Sülün, 2004; Klnç & Mahirolu, 2009). Furthermore, both intrinsic and extrinsic values affected pre-service chemistry and mathematics teachers, underlining that earlier positive experiences with the subject and teachers play a determining role in the choice of a teaching career (Boz & Boz, 2008). Social utility and intrinsic rewards of teaching were important career motivations for pre-service English teachers. Male participants showed higher ratings for work security and employment opportunities than female participants, despite both being intrinsically and socially driven (Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012).

Aksu et al. (2010) discovered that more than half of prospective teachers from various teaching programs willingly chose to be teachers in a large-scale survey. Extrinsic elements such as work security, flexible hours and vacations, and the potential to pursue a second career were also mentioned as reasons for selecting teaching as a career. In another large-scale study involving pre-service teachers from four universities, Özsoy et al. (2010) discovered that the majority of the participants chose to teach as their intended employment rather than a "fallback" alternative.

As a result, it can be inferred that intrinsic and altruistic incentives drive Turkish pre-service teachers in many subject areas, but they are also influenced by extrinsic factors such as job stability and constant pay. Furthermore, previous teaching and learning experiences, as well as social and personal utility values, were also identified as highly motivating criteria for selecting teaching as a career (Akar, 2012). The broad image of teaching as a profession formed in the social-cultural environment of Turkish society also influences pre-service teachers' motives and attitudes (Akar, 2012).

Regarding the other factors that influence decisions involved in preparing for and entering the teaching profession, a few studies have been conducted in Turkey. Er (2020) investigated 4<sup>th</sup>-year undergraduate and certificate program students and found that beliefs about self-efficacy, specifically in classroom management play an important role. Koçoğlu (2011) discovered that high efficacy beliefs and high emotional intelligence capacities influence pre-service teachers' motivation and are likely to influence teaching competence and teacher effectiveness in English language pre-service teachers. Additionally, Yıldırım & Sönmez (2017) found a positive relationship between resilience and life satisfaction in pre-service pre-school teachers. Also, social support was found to be effective in the improvement of resilience.

According to these studies, similar to the international studies, commitment to teaching as a career choice in Turkey is a factor of motivation (e.g., Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012; Akar, 2012; Aksu et al., 2010), self-efficacy (Koçoğlu, 2011; Er, 2020), emotions (Koçoğlu, 2011), and life satisfaction and resiliency (Yıldırım & Sönmez, 2017). Moreover, when studying pre-service teachers' commitment, planned effort in the teaching profession and intentional persistence in teaching or a commitment to the teaching profession were the most frequent indicators of commitment to teaching as a career choice (Eren 2012).

Considering the educational background of pre-service teachers in Turkey, high school students are required to choose one major in the tenth grade. This decision will define the field of study they will pursue if they plan to continue their studies in higher education. Students who study science, mathematics, and English in high school are more likely to choose a program with a comparable background throughout their university studies (Ok & Önkol, 2007). According to a study by Basaran-Aksu (2007) on 1026 students from over 33 Anatolian teacher training high schools across 32

provinces in Turkey, students' attitudes toward teaching have improved significantly during their four years of Anatolian teacher training high school. In terms of preferring teaching as a profession, academic accomplishment in teacher training programs, and commitment to teaching as a lifelong vocation, graduates in teacher training programs differ from their contemporaries who graduated from other high schools. However, it was revealed that students are most concerned about the unqualified teachers as well as lack of collaboration and communication between teachers and parents (Başaran-Aksu, 2007). Moreover, in a study on 239 students in Anatolian teacher training high schools in 4 different provinces in Turkey, Güleçen et al. (2008) reported that the students' attitudes toward teaching need improvement. Likewise, another study by Öztürk and Taluk (2014) on 172 high school students found that the graduated students from the Anatolian teacher training high school do not consider teaching as a career in the future and are not committed to entering teaching training programs after graduation. Although the number of studies is limited, it could be concluded that through a period from 2004 to 2013, Anatolian teacher training high schools lost their quality and failed to foster students' commitment to teaching as a career choice.

### **2.3. Academic Engagement and Commitment to Career Choices**

Although a few studies examine the relationship between pre-service teachers' academic engagement and their commitment to a career choice, they have indicated a positive relationship between the two (e.g., Hu & Wolniak, 2013; Koyuncu, et al., 2008; Watt & Richardson, 2008). According to studies that Watt and colleagues conducted on elementary and secondary preservice teachers as well as graduate-entry primary and secondary teacher education candidates, those who are highly engaged are more intrinsically motivated and highly committed to a career in teaching (Watt et al, 2014; Watt & Richardson, 2008). Likewise, in another study by

Bruinsma and Jansen, (2010), those pre-service teachers who engage deeply in their teaching training program are more motivated, more actively participate, and expected to be committed to teaching as a profession. University also plays a critical role in establishing accurate values for career choices (Chen & Chen, 2011).

Hu and Wolniak (2013) indicate that student academic and social engagement have a distinct effect on determining early career earnings. Academic preparation, as well as gender and race/ethnicity, significantly moderate the relationship between student engagement and early career earnings (Baron & Kenny, 1986). Career choices and commitments can also be influenced by students' perception of their own engagement (Grier-Reed et al., 2012). Students that show higher levels of academic engagement and fewer levels of burnout in the tourism industry are often more committed to a career in tourism (Koyuncu et al., 2008). Similarly, highly engaged students fit the profile of individuals who are serious about pursuing a teaching career (Watt & Richardson, 2008). In fact, engagement in one's career training predicts commitment to a career choice (Mills & Fullagar, 2017). Moreover, according to a study by Wong and Kaur (2018) on undergraduate students, commitment to a career choice was found to be positively associated with students' academic engagement.

In the following section, in order to provide a better understanding of the relationship between academic engagement and commitment to teaching as a career choice, as influential factors, a brief discussion on teacher training programs and teaching career globally and more specifically in Turkey is provided to create the background in which academic engagement and commitment to teaching as a career choice are investigated.

## **2.4. Teacher Training Programs**

The problem of teacher education has had three main focuses throughout the past five decades. Between the 1950s and 1980s, teacher training was largely viewed as a training issue, with a concentration on teaching skills and abilities in which the teacher was required to be taught. Teacher training was generally seen as a learning problem from the 1980s to the early 2000s. Teachers were supposed to be well-informed and updated in theoretical and practical pedagogy in the subjects they taught, as well as actively involved in the development of curricula, all of which necessitated a continuous learning process. Teachers were also supposed to participate in ongoing professional progress on a regular basis (Cohran-Smith, 2004). Learning to teach was more of a full personal development process involving beliefs, values, knowledge, and experiences than just mastering competencies or teaching strategies (Feiman-Nemser, 1983). Teacher education has recently been viewed as a policy issue (Day, 2019; Cohran-Smith, 2004). Teachers are expected to assure excellent student accomplishment, and the present discussion centers on which aspects of teacher training produce the greatest outcomes. Numerous teacher training programs are now attempting to train teachers who are proficient, reflective, and actively engaged in professional development activities, in addition to mastering more technical sides of teaching, such as classroom management, dealing with diverse students, and effective lesson planning (Day, 2019; Smith & LevAr, 2019).

Pre-service teacher education is an important part of every teacher's education curriculum since it educates pre-service teachers to become competent teachers in the future (Ulla, 2016). Teacher education is recognized as a lifelong process and is considered the initial stage in preparing for a career as a teacher (Flores, 2000; Marcelo, 1999). Many studies have addressed the challenges and experiences of pre-service teachers transitioning from pre-service to beginning teacher roles (e.g.,

Flores & Day, 2006; Lamote & Engels, 2010; Schepens et al., 2009). These studies show that the emotional, social, and cognitive responses influence the development of teachers' professional identities since it is a continuous and dynamic process that necessitates the making sense of and (re)interpretation of one's own values and experiences (Flores & Day, 2006).

Teacher education programs must be restructured to meet the needs of a far more complex profession and a changing society (Flores et al., 2014). Changes in training programs, however, must be understood in the circumstances in which they were formed as a result of national and international policy (Townsend, 2011).

## **2.5. Teacher Training Program in Turkey**

Like other countries, Turkey has also a significant background in teacher training (Kılınç et al., 2012). Vocational schools, also known as Anatolian Teacher Training High Schools, prepare students for education faculties by offering pedagogical courses throughout their secondary education. As a result, these students receive additional credits on the University Entrance Exam if they choose a career in teaching (Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). At the university level, currently, Turkish preservice teacher education offers a four-year program for pre-primary education, primary education, and secondary education. According to a report by the Education Information Network (Eurydice) (2020) established by the European Commission, in accordance with a new regulation implemented in the 2018 educational year, all teacher education programs now include a course on "special education" (including music, physical education, painting, and foreign languages). There is also the Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program which is designed for those individuals whose first choice was not a teaching profession but then decided to become teachers. Moreover, the faculties of education, whether they are affiliated with public or private institutions,

have the same structure and curriculum, and they have some flexibility in terms of the courses they provide. In Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program, students take courses to obtain teacher competencies consistent with courses in education faculty programs (Tural & KABADAYI, 2011). If graduates want to become teachers in state schools, they need to take the KPSS exam administered by the Council for Higher Education (Kılınç et al., 2012).

Each year, the Ministry of National Education determines the required number of teachers for each program, and teachers are appointed based on their KPSS results. There is an excess of prospective teachers in general (Kılınç et al., 2012). For example, in 2016, 460,000 graduates of teacher education passed the KPSS exam, but only 10% were recruited to teaching positions in public schools due to the Ministry of National Education's low number of openings (Mansuroglu, 2017). Those who fall short of the required KPSS score may be hired as government officials in government institutions including the postal service or customs. They may also find work as private instructors or in private test institutes that prepare school students for national examinations. Because these institutes pay low wages, have limited work insurance, and place a high premium on results from both managers and parents, they are unstable forms of employment (Kılınç et al., 2012).

Turkish teacher education faces a number of challenges in terms of educational quality, resources, and physical infrastructure, along with employment and admission procedures (Esme, 2009). The teacher training quality is highly dependent on the overall quality of the university. The critical issues that negatively influence teacher training quality are (1) inconsistencies across teacher training courses and an inadequate supply of instructors. (2) Significant difference in the quality of teacher training graduates, with science and mathematics teaching requiring higher entry

scores than engineering (at some universities), biology, physics, and chemistry. (3) a lack of consistency across public school standards and teacher education curriculum that have been designed around “best practices” in Western societies without being localized. And (4) teacher training is impacted by a high degree of centralized political control, as a result of Council for Higher Education laws that prevent local course flexibility (Cakroglu & Cakroglu, 2003; Ozoglu, 2010).

Moreover, inadequate supply-demand balances and interventionist policies result in repeatedly changing the implementation of the Pedagogical Formation Certificate Programs in Turkey. While the Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program gained popularity in response to teacher shortages, the problem of quality versus quantity arose. Thus, it leads to developing negative attitudes toward the teaching profession in pre-service teachers in the Pedagogical Formation Certificate Programs (Aksoy, 2017).

Regarding the Pedagogical Formation Certificate Programs, while it is important for the teaching profession and provides teachers with the necessary knowledge, abilities, and attitudes, such programs have significant flaws (Önder & Tagay, 2015). It has been chastised on a number of fronts, including its qualifications, methodology, and the professional competence of educated teacher candidates, as well as their attitudes toward the profession (Önder & Tagay, 2015). Indeed, the theoretical training provided in the program was found to be ineffective, and each course covers nearly identical material (Filiz & Durnali, 2019). The primary cause for these criticisms is a lack of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge of the instructors required by the program (Parylo, 2015). Additionally, the instructors do not follow the curriculum and are indifferent toward the students (Polatcan, 2019; Filiz & Durnali, 2019). Finally, the length of the program is short, and the number of students in classes is too large. Thus,

these issues result in dissatisfaction with the overall quality of the Pedagogical Formation Certificate Programs (Filiz & Durnali, 2019).

## **2.6. Teaching Career in Turkey**

Several international studies have looked into the subject of teaching as a career choice in recent years, as a result of growing concern over global teacher shortages (e.g., Kyriacou et al., 1999; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Richardson & Watt, 2005). However, there is a lack of understanding of how the values, beliefs, and motivations of those entering teacher education programs shape their professional objectives and career development paths (Fieman-Nemser, 2000; Watt & Richardson, 2008).

Based on several studies that have been conducted in Turkey, the sociocultural structure plays an important role in the decision-making processes of individuals choosing to teach (e.g., Aksu et al., 2010; Kılınç et al., 2012; Dede, 2013). In this aspect, parents play a critical role in high school graduates' career choices. Although teaching does not possess a high social status in Turkey, parents with a low standard of living are more likely to urge their adolescents to choose jobs such as teaching that offer a high degree of employment stability (Kılınç & Mahiroglu, 2009). In Turkey, females prefer teaching as a career since it is likely to involve family flexibility and part-time employment alternatives (Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). People who choose to teach frequently originate from moderate to lower socioeconomic status families, one-parent working families in which only the father works (Saban, 2003), and lower levels of educational accomplishment (Ozsoy et al., 2010). As a result, given that a teaching career delivers a high degree of job security as a civil employee if successfully appointed, it is expected that those people prefer the stability and status associated with teaching (Kılınç et al., 2012).

The national examination system and the job market are the other considerations specific to Turkey (Kılınç & Mahiroglu, 2009). As one of the primary impediments to career development (Erdogmus, 2004), the examination procedure hinders Turkish youth from forming career goals at a young age (Aksu et al., 2010; Boz & Boz, 2008; Saban, 2003). Thirty percent of prospective teachers indicated that they chose to become teachers after obtaining their scores from the university entrance exam (Kılınç & Mahiroglu, 2009). Similarly, Özsoy et al. (2010) revealed that more than half of the pre-service teachers they questioned claimed that their university admission exam results were lower than those required by the departments in which they wished to study. Since it is easier to gain entry into teaching as a university degree than some science degrees such as medicine, teaching becomes a contingency option for university admission. Upon graduating from a teacher training program in faculties of education, in order to become a teacher, pre-service teachers need to take the KPSS exam (OSYM, 2007) which is a critical stepping stone in teacher recruitment procedure (Ergün, 2005). Due to the fact that the number of pre-service teachers has surpassed the number of vacancies available for employment over time, teachers are obliged to pass an examination prior to being hired. The KPSS exam is a multiple-choice examination that has begun to be administered in the domains of general culture, general ability, and education sciences since 2002 (Özbal & Gökçe, 2018). Since 2013, a new part called the Teaching Field Knowledge Test has been included in the KPSS exam. While it is a part that includes items about the field of study in which the pre-service teacher earned a bachelor's degree, its impact on the achievement score in the tasks is more than that of the other parts. In 2016, an interview (oral examination) was also included in teacher recruitments. In the new approach, pre-service teachers first have to take the two-step KPSS exam, and then those who have been ranked will be hired through an interview. The interview is also conducted to analyze the pre-service teachers'

behavior, speech, and health status (Yurdakal, 2020). Although the importance of the KPSS exam has gradually increased as the gap between graduates of education faculties and the available positions has widened over time (Özbal & Gökçe, 2018), applying the KPSS exam had several consequences: (1) reducing the importance placed on education provided in faculties of education; (2) increasing in the pre-service teachers' enrollment in private teaching institutions where they are prepared for the KPSS exam; and (3) a profile of pre-service teachers focusing exclusively on passing the KPSS exam successfully (Güven, 2010). Moreover, based on pre-service teachers' point of view, the KPSS exam is ineffective for selecting qualified teachers and failed to measure cultural knowledge, ability, and pedagogy adequately (Ugulu & Yorek, 2015; Karataş & Güleş, 2013; Diken et al., 2011).

Additionally, recent economic crises have eroded trust in the private sector, and individuals have shifted their focus to more dependable and secure employment such as teaching in public schools (Kılınç & Mahiroglu, 2009). Although the likelihood of being hired to teach in public schools is quite remote, there is a sizable number of individuals looking forward to becoming teachers (Doan & Oban, 2009), without being actually hired to teach (Kılınç & Mahiroglu, 2009). This situation is likely to make pre-service teachers uncertain about their future career which negatively influences their academic engagement and results in decreasing their commitment to teaching as a career choice. Moreover, it does not help to address the problem of teacher shortage in Turkey.

## **2.7. Discussion/Summary of the Literature Review**

Students' psychological effort and investment toward learning, understanding, or mastering the skills, crafts, or knowledge that the curriculum is designed to encourage is defined as engagement. (Lamborn et

al., 1992). It is divided into three categories: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. These factors aid in explaining engagement's theoretical content. Academic engagement among students is an important aspect of the educational system, providing benefits such as a social network, a sense of belonging, school happiness, academic accomplishment, and positive learning outcomes (Dunleavy & Milton, 2009; Furlong & Christenson, 2008).

Blustein et al. (1989) coined the phrase "commitment to career choices," defining it as the point at which an individual has a clear understanding of his or her professional preferences as well as a strong commitment to a set of career goals. The two distinct characteristics of commitment to career choices are vocational exploration and commitment, and the tendency to foreclose. Both of these dimensions have been indicated to be associated with college students' levels of career indecision, fear of commitment, self-esteem, trait anxiety, and ability to remain functional under stress (Betz & Serling, 1993).

Commitment to the teaching career refers to the motivational drive to decide on entering and preparing for the teaching profession (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Meyer et al., 2004). For individuals of late adolescence and early adulthood who first experience the school-to-work transition, commitment to career choices is a major developmental task (Super et al., 1996; Blustein et al., 1989; Harren, 1979; Jepsen, 1984; Sharf, 1992; Super, 1984). During this task, individuals need to tolerate the ambiguity, confusion, and anxiety of exploring a variety of potential careers (Fuqua & Hartman, 1983). They need to engage in a complicated process beyond simple information gathering to make a career decision (Blustein et al., 1989), and it is likely to develop gradually and change throughout an individual's career.

The suggestions of the research support the need for exploring factors that influence commitment to career choices since pre-service teachers are more open to change and perceived their careers as more uncertain and insecure compared with practicing teachers. Moreover, regarding pre-service teachers, although there is no study in which the relationship between academic engagement and commitment to career choices has been examined in Turkey, there are a few international studies that examined the relationship between the two, and the results revealed a significant relationship between academic engagement and commitment to career choices, supporting the expectation of the current study. Studies did not report a significant difference between males and females in commitment to career choices. However, there was a significant difference between males and females in terms of academic engagement. In terms of age, older individuals and students later in their education are more committed to their career choices but less academically engaged.

Moreover, the quality of teacher training programs can affect a teaching career by influencing pre-service teacher academic engagement and lead to improving or worsening commitment to teaching as a career choice. In terms of pre-service teachers' commitment to a career choice, the main purpose of teacher education programs is to form the pre-service teachers' professional identity (Lamote & Engels, 2010; Thomson & Palermo 2014). In this regard, teacher training programs in Turkey need improvement specifically in addressing the actual career needs of pre-service teachers. On the other side, the examination process in Turkey hinders students' career development. Since it is easy to gain entry into teaching as a university degree, teaching becomes a backup plan for university admission. Moreover, Anatolian teacher training high schools failed to improve students' level of engagement and foster their commitment to teaching after graduation. The KPSS exam has also a negative effect on pre-service teachers' academic engagement since this examination is taken by the majority of students

during their last year of teacher training. It focuses their attention on the exam rather than on teacher training pedagogy and the school teaching practicum (Sahin & Arcagök, 2010; Gündogdu et al., 2008; Eraslan, 2007). Consequently, these issues leave pre-service teachers in an uncertain and insecure situation about their future careers, which negatively affects their academic engagement and leads to a decrease in their commitment to teaching as a profession.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes the research design, population and sample, instrumentation, empirical data, the data collection process, and data analyses.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

Correlational and causal-comparative designs were utilized to answer the research questions. To investigate the relationship between pre-service teachers' academic engagement and their commitment to a career choice correlational research was utilized. Since correlational design determines relationships without any attempt to manipulate the variables and cannot be designed experimentally (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006), it is an appropriate design to investigate the relationship between pre-service teachers' academic engagement and their commitment to a career choice. Moreover, a causal-comparative design was utilized through an independent samples t-test as well as a multiple regression analysis to assess the difference between specified groups in the study and to investigate the stated predictors.

Three sets of questionnaires were applied. The first one was related to demographic data and contains 9 items (e.g., age, gender, and class standing), (see Appendix A). The second one was devoted to academic engagement called the University Student Engagement Inventory (USEI) by

Assunção, et al. (2020) containing 15 items that cover behavioral, emotional, and cognitive dimensions of academic engagement (see Appendix B). The last questionnaire was called the Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS) by Blustein, et al. (1989) contains 28 items and is based on two independent constructs as Vocational Exploration and Commitment (VEC), and Tendency to Foreclose (TTF), (see Appendix C).

### **3.1. Population and Sample**

The sample was selected from all sophomore, junior and senior students of a faculty of education in one of the well-established public universities in Ankara. There is a total of 1283 enrolled undergraduate students with 84 faculty members in the faculty of education. Four-year and a few five-year undergraduate degree programs are offered in 4 different departments including Foreign Language Education, Mathematics and Science Education, Elementary and Early Childhood Education, and Computer Education and Instructional Technology. Moreover, Educational Sciences and Physical Education and Sports Departments only offer graduate programs. Simple random sampling was used to select the participants. Overall data were collected from 187 sophomore, junior and senior students. Primarily, this sample is used for a pilot study to conduct confirmatory factor analysis for the instruments.

Out of 187 participants, 145 (77.5%) were female, 40 (21.4%) were male, and 2(1.1%) of them did not report it. Their age range was 19-39 ( $M= 22.51$ ,  $SD= 2.88$ ) and their GPA range was 1-4 ( $M= 3.15$ ,  $SD= 0.51$ ). Forty-eight (26%), 65 (75%), 64 (34%) of the participants were sophomore, junior, and senior students respectively.

In terms of their programs, 83 (44.3%), 32 (17.1%), 27(14.4%), 17 (9.1%), 16 (8.5%), 7 (3.7%), and 6 (3.2%) were in Foreign Language Education, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Science Education, Elementary

Math Education, Computer Education, and Instructional Technology, and Chemistry Education programs respectively.

Out of 187 participants, 59 (32%) graduated from teacher training high school and 128 (68%) graduated from elsewhere. In terms of the KPSS exam, 19 (10%) of the participants have taken it, and 109 (58%) of them are planning to take it. Finally, 137 of them (73%) have a plan to become a teacher after graduation. Demographic information of the sample in the pilot study was provided in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Demographic Information of Participants of the Pilot Study

Variables		<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender	Male	40	21.4		
	Female	145	77.5		
	Not reported	2	1.1		
Program	Foreign Language Education	83	44.3		
	Early Childhood Education	32	17.1		
	Elementary Science Education	27	14.4		
	Elementary Math Education	17	9.1		
	Computer Education and Instructional Technology	16	8.6		
	Chemistry Education	6	3.2		
	Not reported	6	3.2		

Table Continued

Variables		<i>F</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Class Standing	Sophomore	48	26		
	Junior	75	40		
	Senior	64	34		
Graduated from a High School	Yes	59	32		
	No	128	68		
Teaching Training	Yes	19	10		
	No	168	90		
Already taken the KPSS Exam	Yes	109	58		
	No	78	42		
Planning to take the KPSS Exam	Yes	137	73		
	No	50	27		
Age				22.51	2.88
GPA				3.17	.53

Later on, the data from the pilot study was incorporated into the main study since the two samples' mean scores were not statistically significant and it was collected from the same population (NC3Rs, 2006). Out of 225 participants, 181 (80.4%) were female, 42 (18.7%) were male, and 2(.9%) of them did not report it. Their age range was 19-40 ( $M= 22.76$ ,  $SD= 3.12$ ) and their GPA range was 1-4 ( $M= 3.22$ ,  $SD= 0.47$ ). Forty-eight (21%), 104 (46%), 73 (33%) of the participants were sophomore, junior, and senior students respectively.

In terms of their programs, 93 (41%), 47 (21%), 37(16%), 17 (8%), 16 (7%), 9 (4%), and 7 (3%) were in Foreign Language Education, Elementary Math Education, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Science Education, Computer Education, and Instructional Technology, and Chemistry Education programs respectively.

Out of 225 participants, 103 (46%) graduated from teacher training high school and 122 (54%) graduated from elsewhere. In terms of the KPSS exam, 32 (14%) of the participants have taken it, and 139 (62%) of them are planning to take it. Finally, 167 of them (74%) have a plan to become a teacher after graduation. Demographic information of the sample in the main study was given in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. Demographic Information of Participants of the Main Study

Variables		<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender	Male	42	18.7		
	Female	181	80.4		
	Not Reported	2	.9		
Program	Foreign Language Education	93	41		
	Elementary Math Education	47	21		
	Early Childhood Education	37	16		
	Elementary Science Education	17	8		
	Computer Education and Instructional Technology	16	7		
	Chemistry Education	9	4		

Table Continued

Variables		<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
	Chemistry Education	9	4		
	Not reported	6	3		
Class Standing	Sophomore	48	21		
	Junior	104	46		
	Senior	73	33		
Graduated From	Yes	97	43		
	No	128	57		
Teaching Training High School					
Already Taken the KPSS Exam	Yes	32	14		
	No	193	86		
Planning to take the KPSS Exam	Yes	139	62		
	No	86	38		
Planning to become a teacher	Yes	167	74		
	No	58	26		
Age				22.76	3.12
CGPA				3.22	.47

### 3.2. Instrumentation and Measurement

In this study, data was collected through the demographic questionnaire, University Student Engagement Inventory (USEI), and Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS). The first section of the instrument was for

pre-service teachers' demographic information: Gender (female/male), age, class standing, program, CGPA, whether they are graduated from teaching training high school, whether they have taken KPSS Exam before, whether they are planning to take it, and whether they are planning to become a teacher after graduation. The second and last sections of the instrument booklet included the University Student Engagement Inventory (USEI) and Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS), respectively.

### **3.3.1. University Student Engagement Inventory (USEI)**

The University Student Engagement Inventory (USEI) was developed by Assunção and colleagues (2020). This inventory provides information about students' academic engagement at university. Since the participants of the current study were undergraduate students of a university in which the language of instruction is English, the English version of the questionnaire was used. The inventory had 15 self-reported items. Items 1 to 5 (such as I pay attention in class), 6 to 10 (such as I am interested in the school work), and 11 to 15 (such as I try to integrate subjects from different disciplines into my general knowledge) were designed to assess the behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagements respectively. Item 6 was reversed. All 15 items together provide an instrument to evaluate students' academic engagement. For scoring, the average of responses to all items was calculated. This instrument was designed as a 5-point-Likert-type scale and answers could be given as from Never (1) to Always (5).

Assunção and colleagues (2020), conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to evaluate the psychometric properties of the USEI. The confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to verify whether the first- and second-order factor structure presented an adequate fit for the sample data. They applied the following goodness-of-fit indices:  $\chi^2$  (Chi-square statistic), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis's index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of

Approximation (RMSEA), and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR). When CFI and TLI values were  $>0.90$  and RMSEA and SRMR values were  $<0.06$  and  $<0.08$ , respectively, the model fit was considered acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Marôco, 2014). The USEI first-order three-factor model presented an acceptable fit to the data  $\chi^2(84) = 751.528$ , CFI = 0.936, TLI = 0.923, RMSEA = 0.052, SRMR = 0.040. The regression (structural) coefficients for the academic engagement second-order factor model were high for behavioral engagement ( $\gamma = 0.85$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and emotional engagement ( $\gamma = 0.74$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), and medium for cognitive engagement ( $\gamma = 0.64$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

To analyze the validity evidence, the average variance extracted (AVE; Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT; Henseler et al., 2015) correlations were calculated. Values of AVE  $\geq 0.5$  were considered acceptable indicators of convergent validity evidence. For two factors  $x$  and  $y$ , when HTMT correlation values are  $<0.7$ , the two factors show evidence of discriminant validity. The AVE was acceptable for EE (0.56) and CE (0.49) but low for behavioral engagement (0.34). Convergent validity evidence was acceptable for the emotional engagement and cognitive engagement factors and poor for the behavioral engagement factor. All HTMT inter-construct correlations were below the recommended threshold of 0.70 ( $HTMT_{BE,EE} = 0.63$ ,  $HTMT_{BE,CE} = 0.55$ , and  $HTMT_{EE,CE} = 0.50$ ). These results altogether show acceptable evidence of convergent- and discriminant-related validity of the USEI dimensions.

The reliability of the instrument was also assessed: the Cronbach's alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ; Cronbach, 1951) for each factor. Alpha value  $\geq 0.7$  was a satisfactory indicator of internal consistency (Marôco, 2014). The  $\alpha$  values were  $>0.70$  for all dimensions and  $>0.8$  for the total scale. (Maroco et al., 2016). This result provides evidence of acceptable internal consistency reliability.

### 3.3.1.1. Construct Validity of USEI

In order to assess the construct validity of the University Student Engagement Inventory, the factor structure of the instrument was investigated by applying confirmatory factor analysis.

### 3.3.1.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of USEI

After receiving the necessary permission from the researchers who originally developed the scale, Confirmatory Factor Analysis was conducted using AMOS 26.0 in order to validate the factor structure of the instrument since it was the first time that this instrument is applied in Turkey. The factor structure of the instrument included 15 items and 3 factors. The model chi-square, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) could be considered to assess the model fit (Brown, 2006). When CFI, TLI, and GFI values were  $>0.90$  and RMSEA value was  $<0.06$  and  $<0.08$ , respectively, the model fit considered acceptable (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Marôco, 2014). The results of the analysis indicated an acceptable fit model for all values except for RMSEA,  $\chi^2(90)= 257.75$ ;  $p=.000$ , RMSEA= .1, CFI= .75, GFI= .85, TLI= .71. The factor loadings of the items were checked and it was found out that item 11 had a low factor loading of .28. It was, therefore, decided to remove item 11 from the instrument. Table 3.3 shows the factor loadings of the USEI in the confirmatory factor analysis.

Table 3.3. Factor Loadings for Confirmatory Model of the USEI (n= 187).

		Unstandardized	Standardized
5	Behavioral Engagement	1.00(-)	.761
4	BE	.085	.617
3	BE	.062	.557
2	BE	.051	.490
1	BE	.058	.748

Table Continued

		Unstandardized	Standardized
10	Emotional Engagement	1.00(-)	.825
9	EE	.061	.935
8	EE	.066	.812
7	EE	.071	.730
6	EE	.075	.422
15	Cognitive Engagement	1.00(-)	.875
14	CE	.049	.898
13	CE	.056	.621
12	CE	.065	.759
11	CE	.118	.288

The confirmatory factor analysis was rerun to confirm the fit of the new model. The factor structure of the new model included 14 items and 3 factors. The results of the analysis showed an acceptable fit model,  $\chi^2(74)=150.89$ ;  $p=.000$ ), RMSEA= .07, CFI= .88. GFI= .89, TLI= .86 (See Table 3.4).

Table 3.4. Factor Analysis of University Student Engagement Inventory

Instrument	$\chi^2$	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
USEI	257.75***	.85	.75	.71	.1
USEI <sub>New</sub>	150.88***	.89	.89	.86	.07

\*\*\*  $P < .001$

### 3.3.1.3. Internal Consistency of USEI (Cronbach alpha reliability)

The internal consistency of the USEI was calculated using the Cronbach alpha coefficient formula. The results showed that the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .65 for behavioral engagement, .76 for emotional engagement, and .74 for cognitive engagement respectively. The Cronbach

alpha coefficient was .81 for the overall scale. These results indicated satisfactory support for the internal consistency of USEI (see table 3.5).

Table 3.5. Internal Consistency of the USEI

	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
BE	.65	.66	5
EE	.74	.74	5
CE	.76	.77	4
Overall	.81	.81	14

### 3.3.2. Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS)

The Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS) is an instrument developed by Blustein et al. (1989). It has two independent dimensions and 28 self-reported items, including 6 reversed scored items. The subscales are Vocational Exploration and Commitment (VEC) and Tendency to Foreclose (TTF). The VEC has 19 items, which measure an individual's progress in the career commitment process from an uncommitted, exploratory phase to a highly committed phase. It consists of items such as "I feel uneasy about committing myself to a specific occupation because I am not aware of alternative options in related fields." The TTF has 9 items such as "I believe that only one single occupation is right for me" which measure how much the individuals limit their career options. CCCS has a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (never true about me) to 7 (always true about me). Low scores on VEC mean greater certainty and commitment on career choice whereas high scores indicate an uncommitted posture. Higher scores on TTF, on the other hand, mean a stronger tendency to foreclose on career choices in contrast to low scores on TTF that reflect the weak end of the tendency to foreclose, which means being comfortable in tolerating the ambiguity and open to career choices.

Blustein et al. (1989) reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients as .91 and .83 for the VEC and TTF sub-scales, respectively. In a recent study conducted by Leal-Muniz and Constantine (2005), these coefficients were reported as .83 for VEC and .89 for TTF sub-scales. Reported test-retest reliability coefficients are .82 and .90 for a 2-week interval whereas they are .84 and .92 for a 4-week interval.

### 3.3.2.1. Construct Validity of CCCS

To determine the construct validity of the Commitment to Career Choices Scale, confirmatory factor analysis was used to examine the factor structure of the instrument.

### 3.3.2.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of CCCS

After receiving the necessary permission from the researchers who originally developed the scale (See Appendix D), Confirmatory Factor Analysis was conducted using AMOS 26.0 in order to validate the factor structure of the instrument. The factor structure of the instrument included 28 items and 2 factors. The results of the analysis indicated an acceptable fit model,  $\chi^2(349) = 803.13; p = .000$ , RMSEA = .084, CFI = .74, GFI = .75, TLI = .72. Although most of the items were loaded in the relevant factors, items 7, 9, and 15 had a low factor loading of .19, .15, and .24 respectively, and, therefore, were removed from the instrument. Table 3.6 depicts the factor loadings of the CCCS in the confirmatory factor analysis.

Table 3.6. Factor Loadings for Confirmatory Model of the CCCS (n= 187)

		Unstandardized	Standardized
27	VEC	1.00(-)	.445
26	VEC	.329	.757
25	VEC	.313	.698
24	VEC	.182	.407

Table Continued

		Unstandardized	Standardized
23	VEC	.268	.576
21	VEC	.238	.482
20	VEC	.287	.671
19	VEC	.293	.665
18	VEC	.345	.758
17	VEC	.296	.690
14	VEC	.332	.689
13	VEC	.279	.455
12	VEC	.286	.636
11	VEC	.232	.423
7	VEC	.162	.195
6	VEC	.170	.338
5	VEC	.244	.568
4	VEC	.234	.570
3	VEC	.200	.307
1	TTF	1.00(-)	.470
2	TTF	.219	.714
8	TTF	.167	.321
9	TTF	.158	.156
10	TTF	.260	.809
15	TTF	.142	.241
16	TTF	.192	.405
22	TTF	.217	.748
28	TTF	.192	.682

The confirmatory factor analysis was rerun to confirm the fit of the new model. The factor structure of the new model included 25 items and 2 factors. The results of the analysis indicated an acceptable fit model,  $\chi^2(274) = 615.45$ ;  $p = .000$ ), RMSEA = .082, CFI = .79, GFI = .78, TLI = .77 (See Table 3.7).

Table 3.7. Factor Analysis of Commitment to Career Choices Scale

Instrument	$\chi^2$	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
CCCS	803.13** *	.75	.74	.72	.084
CCCS <sub>New</sub>	615.45** *	.79	.81	.79	.081

\*\*\*  $P < .001$

### 3.3.2.3. Internal Consistency of CCCS (Cronbach alpha reliability)

The Cronbach alpha coefficient formula was used to determine the CCCS's internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the VEC and TTF were .89 and .78, respectively. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the overall scale was .85. These findings provided sufficient evidence for the internal consistency of the CCCS (see table 3.8).

Table 3.8. Internal Consistency of CCCS

	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
VEC	.89	.89	18
TTF	.78	.79	7
Overall	.85	.85	25

### 3.4. Data Collection

Before administering the instruments, necessary permissions were obtained from the Ethics Committee of the university (see Appendix E). After getting the permission, the researcher made appointments with the instructors, who have classes with sophomore, junior, and senior students, for the available classes to apply the instruments in classroom settings.

During the administration, the researcher firstly distributed the informed consent forms (see Appendix F) to briefly explain the reason for the study to the participants and to ask for their voluntary participation. Moreover, the details of the research topic and aim as well as some further information that may be needed about related concerns were provided. Then, the instruments were administered to those who volunteered to participate in the study. The administration of the instruments took approximately 20-25 minutes. Later on, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the informed consent forms and the questionnaires were prepared using a google form, then the researcher informed the instructors and asked them to send the form and questionnaires to their students electronically.

### **3.5. Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed via SPSS 26.0 and both descriptive and inferential statics were used to answer the research questions.

Three types of analysis were conducted to address the research questions. A Pearson Correlation analysis was applied to find the relationship between academic engagement and the two independent constructs in commitment to a career choice. An independent samples t-test was used to find out whether there is a difference in academic engagement, VEC, and TTF between males and females and the other dichotomous variables including planning to take the KPSS exam, planning to become a teacher, and graduating from a teaching training high school. Finally, separated multiple linear regression analysis was applied to assess whether the independent variables including gender, age, class standing, planning to take the KPSS exam, planning to become a teacher, and graduating from a teacher training high school are likely to predict academic engagement, and two independent constructs of commitment to a career choice as VEC and TTF.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

In this chapter, demographic characteristics of participants, descriptive statistics of the variables, Pearson correlation analysis results, independent samples t-test, and the multiple regression analysis results will be presented.

#### 4.1. Results of Descriptive Data Analysis

Results of the descriptive analysis revealed that the level of students' academic engagement is above the average ( $M= 3.55$ ,  $SD= .48$ ), meaning that the students are academically engaged. In terms of vocational exploration and commitment (VEC), it is neutral ( $M= 4.02$ ,  $SD= .95$ ), meaning that the students are neither committed nor uncommitted to teaching as a career choice. According to the Likert scale related to commitment to career choices, the neutral mean score refers to "No Opinion/Not Sure".

In terms of tendency to foreclose (TTF), it is below the average ( $M= 2.92$ ,  $SD= .98$ ), meaning that the students have the desire to consider alternative options. Considering these two separated constructs in commitment to teaching as a career choice, it indicates that the students are more likely not committed to teaching as a career choice. The results of the descriptive analysis were given in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics of the Dependent Variables

	N	Mean	SD
Academic Engagement	225	3.55	.48
Vocational Exploration and Commitment (VEC)	225	4.02	.95
Tendency to Foreclose (TTF)	225	2.92	.98

## 4.2. Pearson Correlation Analysis

### 4.2.1. Checking of Outliers

Analyses related to the relationship between variables are very sensitive to outliers (Pallant, 2007) so, outliers were checked. Deleting outliers from the data set is a good way for correlational studies (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). First,  $z$ -scores were used for checking. Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) stated that if the  $z$ -score values are more than 3.29 ( $p < .001$ ), this signs potential outliers. In this study, no outlier was detected.

### 4.2.2. Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis

To answer the first research question, correlation analysis indicated a statistically significant and negative correlation between student's academic engagement ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = .48$ ) and Vocational Exploration and Commitment (VEC) ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = .95$ ),  $r = -.27$ ,  $p < .01$ , meaning that as students' academic engagement increases, their effort towards career exploration decreases and it could increase their level of commitment to teaching. However, between academic engagement ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = .48$ ) and Tendency to Foreclose (TTF) ( $M = 2.92$ ,  $SD = .98$ ), there was no statistically significant correlation. Moreover, it was revealed that while age ( $M = 22.76$ ,  $SD = 3.12$ ) is positively correlated with TTF ( $M = 2.92$ ,  $SD = .98$ ),  $r = .21$ ,  $p < .01$ , class standing ( $M = 2.11$ ,  $SD = .72$ ) is negatively correlated with VEC ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = .95$ ),  $r = -.15$ ,  $p < .05$ , meaning that as students get older, they

tend to foreclose their career options, and as their class standing goes higher, their effort towards career exploration decreases, and therefore, their level of commitment to a career choice increases. (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2. Correlation Matrix of Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Academic Engagement	1			
2. Vocational Exploration and Commitment (VEC)	-.271**	1		
3. Tendency to Foreclose (TTF)	-.034	-.087	1	
4. Age	.004	-.086	.209**	1
5. Class Standing	.027	-.145*	.018	.074

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### 4.3. Independent Samples T-Test

#### 4.3.1. Assumptions of Independent Samples T-Test

Before conducting the independent samples t-test analysis, the assumptions were checked.

#### 4.3.2. Outliers, Normality, Homogeneity of variances

As mentioned earlier, no outlier was detected. Regarding the homogeneity of variance, the results of the Levens' test were not significant for academic engagement ( $p = .21$ ), VEC ( $p = .15$ ) and TTF ( $p = .28$ ). Also, Shapiro Wilks's test was not found to be violated for academic engagement ( $p = .05$ ), VEC ( $p = .21$ ), and TTF ( $p = .08$ ), and the data was normally distributed. Thus, all the assumptions are met in the present analysis.

### 4.3.3. Results of Independent Samples T-Test

To address the second research question, an independent samples t-test was run to determine whether there were any differences between males and females, between those who are planning to become teachers and those who aren't, those who graduated from teacher training high schools, and those who haven't and between those who have taken the KPSS and those who have not, in terms of academic engagement and the two independent constructs of commitment to a career choice VEC and TTF.

In terms of academic engagement, there was a significant difference between males ( $M= 3.41, SD= .61$ ) and females ( $M= 3.58, SD= .45$ ),  $t(221) = -2.13, p= .03$ , meaning that the level of academic engagement in females is higher than males. There was a significant difference between the students who have a plan to become a teacher ( $M= 3.59, SD= .48$ ) and those who do not ( $M= 3.42, SD= .46$ ),  $t(223) = 2.45, p= .01$ , meaning that the level of academic engagement is higher in students with a plan to become a teacher. There was also a significant difference between those who graduated from a teacher training high school ( $M= 3.46, SD= .46$ ) and those who did not ( $M= 3.62, SD= .49$ ),  $t(223) = -2.45, p= .01$ , meaning that the level of academic engagement is higher in those students who did not graduate from a teacher training high school. However, there was no significant difference between those who have taken the KPSS exam ( $M= 3.47, SD= .52$ ) and those who have not ( $M= 3.56, SD= .47$ ). Finally, there was no significant difference between those who are planning to take the KPSS exam ( $M= 3.51, SD= .46$ ) and their counter group ( $M= 3.61, SD= .51$ ) (see table 4.3 for the summary of the significant relationships). In terms of VEC and TTF, an independent samples t-test revealed no significant difference between any of the groups.

Table 4.3. Summary of the Independent Samples t-test Results

		Gender			
		Females (n=181)	Males (n=42)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Academic	<i>M</i>	3.58	3.41	-2.13	.03
Engagement	<i>SD</i>	(.45)	(.61)		
		Planning to become a teacher			
		Yes (167)	No (58)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Academic	<i>M</i>	3.59	3.42	2.45	.01
Engagement	<i>SD</i>	.48	.46		
		Graduating from teacher training high school			
		Yes (103)	No (122)	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Academic	<i>M</i>	3.46	3.62	-2.45	.01
Engagement	<i>SD</i>	.46	.49		

#### 4.4. Multiple Regression Analysis

##### 4.4.1. Assumptions of Multiple Regression Analysis

Before conducting the multiple regression analysis, the assumptions were checked.

##### 4.4.2. Sample Size

For the generalizability of the results, the sample size should be checked. Field (2009) provided the formula to check the required sample size:  $N > 50 + 8m$ , “m” is the number of independent variables (as cited in Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In this study, the number of independent variables is 5, so, the sample size should be more than 130. Thus, the sample size of this study was high enough for conducting multiple regression analysis ( $N = 225$ ).

#### **4.4.3. Variable types**

To be able to provide this assumption, the predictor variable has to be quantitative or categorical and the criterion variable has to be quantitative and continuous (Field, 2009). In this study, gender, age, class standing, planning to take the KPSS exam, planning to become a teacher, and graduating from a teacher training high school are predictor variables as they are quantitative or categorical and they are all coded as dummy variables by recoding them into different variables as a dummy. Since those who did not graduate from a teacher training high school had higher levels of engagement than those who did, it was decided to remove it from the regression analysis. On the other hand, academic engagement, and commitment to career choices (VEC and TTF) are criterion variables since they are quantitative and continuous. Thus, this assumption was also met.

#### **4.4.4. Multicollinearity**

Multicollinearity means that the correlation between predictor variables is too high. When conducting multiple regression analysis, multicollinearity should not exist. Multicollinearity was checked by scanning the correlation matrix, checking variance inflation factor (VIF), and tolerance value (Field, 2009). First, according to Field (2009), correlation among predictor variables should not be too high; that correlation should not be above .90. In the current study, there is no correlation coefficient value above .90 regarding correlation among predictor variables. For the absence of multicollinearity, VIF values must be below 10, and the tolerance value has to be higher than .10. In this study, the VIF value changed from 1.0 to 1.07 but there is no VIF value higher than 1.07. In addition, the tolerance value changed from .92 to .99, but there is no tolerance value lower than .92. Thus, multicollinearity did not exist in this study, this assumption was also met.

#### 4.4.5. Normality, Homoscedasticity, Linearity, Outliers, Independence of Residuals

The normality of residuals was checked through histogram and normal probability plot (P-P). Shapes of the histogram and normal probability plot indicated normal distribution (See Figure 4.1 - 4.3) so the normality assumption was not violated.

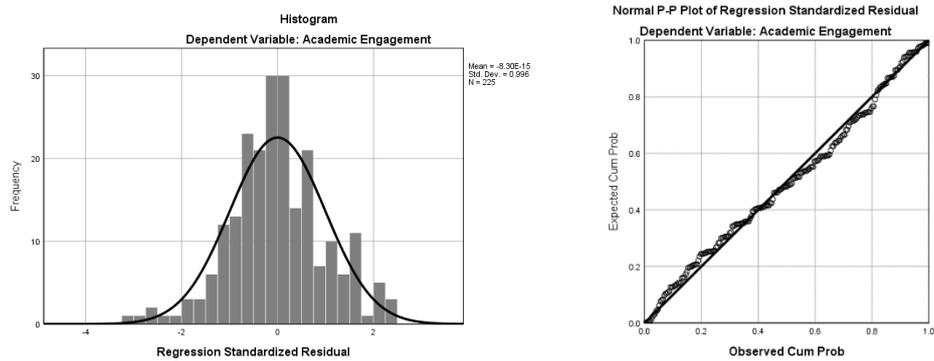


Figure 4.1. The histogram and normal probability plot of the academic engagement.

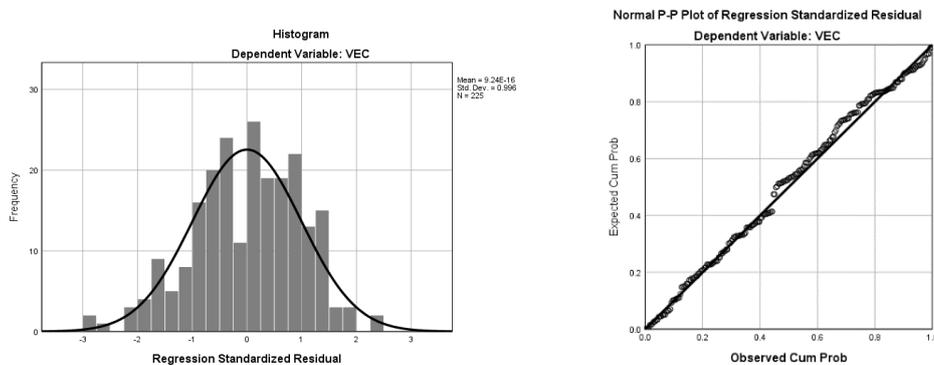


Figure 4.2. The histogram and normal probability plot of the VEC.

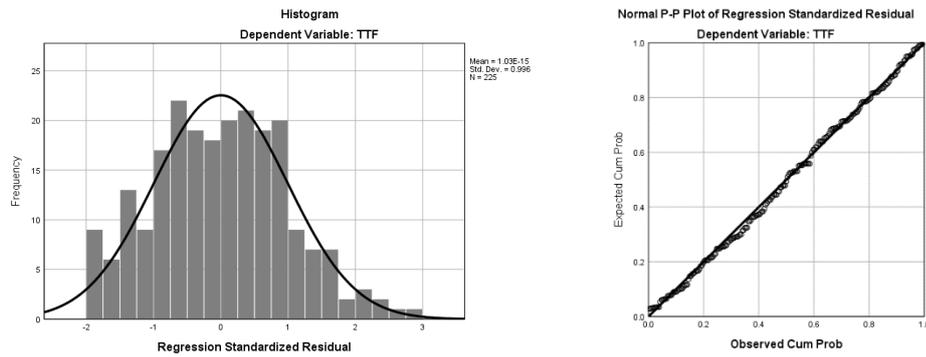


Figure 4.3. The histogram and normal probability plot of the TTF.

In order to check homoscedasticity, a scatterplot was used. The distribution of residuals should be concentrated in the center (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In this study, when distributions of the residuals on the scatterplot were checked, it was seen that homoscedasticity was not violated. In addition, linearity was also checked through a scatterplot. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), nonlinearity occurs when the overall scatterplot is curved, so the distribution of residuals needs to be rectangular and noncurved to provide the assumption of linearity. In this study, this assumption is also provided. Moreover, outliers were also checked from the scatterplot of the standard multiple regression analysis (See Figures 4.4 - 4.6).

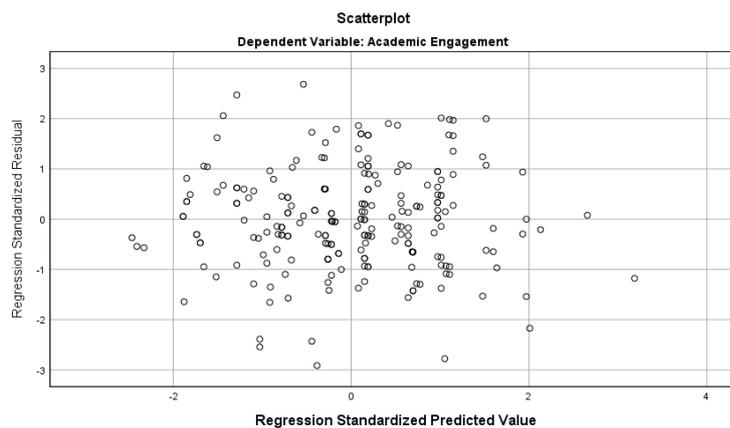


Figure 4.4. Scatterplot of academic engagement

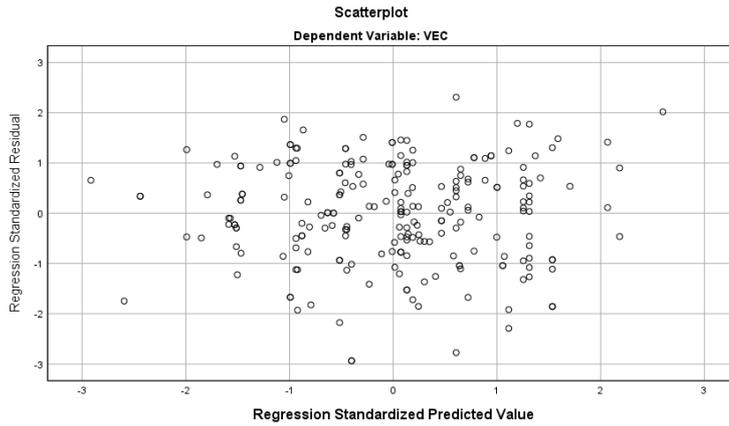


Figure 4.5. Scatterplot of the VEC

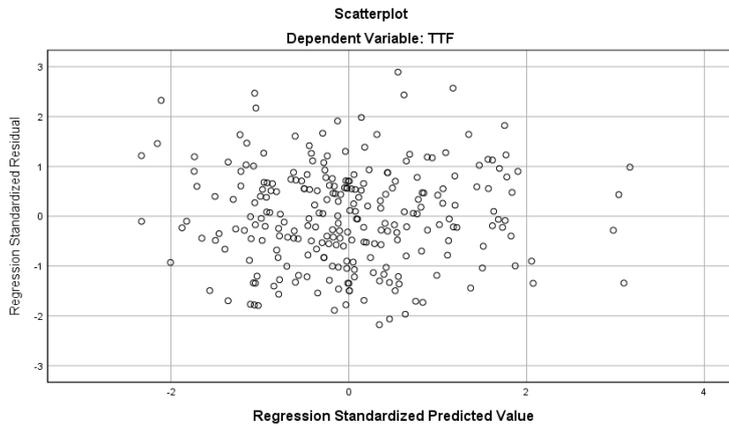


Figure 4.6. Scatterplot of the TTF

Outliers are defined as standardized residuals of less than -3.3 or more than 3.3 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In this study, no outliers were observed from the scatterplot. So, this assumption was also not violated. In multiple regression analysis, it is assumed that autocorrelation does not exist (Field, 2009). That is, residuals should be independent. In order to test this, the Durbin-Watson test was used. According to Field (2009), the Durbin-Watson value should be between the values of 0 and 4. In the present study, the Durbin-Watson value is 1.80, therefore, the independence of residuals assumption was also met.

#### 4.4.6. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was used to test if the gender, age, class standing, planning to take the KPSS exam, planning to become a teacher, and graduating from a teacher training high school significantly predict pre-service teachers' academic engagement, vocational exploration and commitment, and tendency to foreclose.

In terms of academic engagement, the results of the regression indicated that the independent variables explained 7% of the variance and that the model was a significant predictor of academic engagement ( $R^2 = .07$ ,  $F(6,218) = 3.60$ ,  $p < .005$ ). While gender ( $B = .19$ ,  $t = 2.35$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and planning to become a teacher ( $B = -.25$ ,  $t = -3.20$ ,  $p < .005$ ) contributed significantly to the model, age ( $B = -.001$ ,  $p = .93$ ), class standing ( $B = -.012$ ,  $p = .79$ ), planning to take the KPSS exam ( $B = .14$ ,  $p = .06$ ), and graduating from a teacher training high school ( $B = .11$ ,  $p = .09$ ) did not, (see table 4.4).

Table 4.4. Summary of Regression Analyses for Predicting Academic Engagement

Variable	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	3.39	.26		12.88	.000
Gender	.19	.08	.16	2.35	.020
Planning to become a teacher	-.25	.07	-.22	-3.20	.002

In terms of vocational exploration and commitment, the results of the regression showed that the independent variables explained 5% of the variance and that the model was a significant predictor of pre-service teachers' vocational exploration and commitment ( $R^2 = .05$ ,  $F(6,218) = 2.45$ ,

$p < .05$ ). While class standing ( $B = -.21$ ,  $t = -2.44$ ,  $p < .05$ ) contributed significantly to the model, gender ( $B = .24$ ,  $p = .12$ ), age ( $B = -.01$ ,  $p = .69$ ), planning to take the KPSS exam ( $B = -.17$ ,  $p = .21$ ), planning to become a teacher ( $B = .18$ ,  $p = .21$ ), and graduating from a teacher training high school ( $B = .17$ ,  $p = .21$ ) did not, (see table 4.5).

Table 4.5. Summary of Regression Analyses for Predicting VEC

Variable	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	4.32	.51		8.57	.000
Class Standing	-.21	.09	-.17	-2.44	.015

Finally, in terms of tendency to foreclose, the results of the regression analysis revealed that the independent variables explained 6% of the variance and that the model was a significant predictor of pre-service teachers' tendency to foreclose ( $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(6,218) = 2.99$ ,  $p < .01$ ). While age ( $B = .08$ ,  $t = 3.62$ ,  $p < .01$ ) contributed significantly to the model, gender ( $B = .21$ ,  $p = .21$ ), class standing ( $B = -.04$ ,  $p = .63$ ), planning to take the KPSS exam ( $B = -.21$ ,  $p = .14$ ), planning to become a teacher ( $B = -.04$ ,  $p = .78$ ), and graduating from a teacher training high school ( $B = .14$ ,  $p = .35$ ) did not, (see table 4.6).

Table 4.6. Summary of Regression Analyses for Predicting TTF

Variable	<i>B</i>	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
(Constant)	1.07	.54		1.98	.049
Age	.08	.02	.25	3.62	.000

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

In this part, the results of the study will be discussed by taking into consideration the findings of the present research and previous studies in the literature. Furthermore, implications, recommendations, and limitations will be provided.

#### **5.1. Discussion of the Results**

The main aim of this research was to examine the relationship between preservice teachers' academic engagement and their commitment to teaching as a career choice, which has two dimensions: vocational exploration and commitment (VEC) and tendency to foreclose (TTF). In order to examine the relationship, two separate correlation analyses were applied. Overall results of the correlation analysis indicated that there was a strong negative relationship between academic engagement and the VEC, meaning that by increasing engagement, vocational exploration will decrease. However, no relationship was found between academic engagement and the tendency to foreclose. The results of the current study are in line with earlier findings (Watt et al, 2014; Watt & Richardson, 2008; Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010) and contribute to the current literature by indicating that highly engaged pre-service teachers are less expected to explore alternative careers and more probable to be committed to teaching as a career choice.

The level of commitment in the participants of the current study is neutral- neither high nor low- it could provide evidence that commitment is more expected to be a crystallization process for pre-service teachers rather than a permanent outcome (Hong et al., 2018). Regarding the fact that the commitment to career choice develops gradually over time (Reilly & Orsak, 1991; Aryee et al., 1994), in agreement with Seferoglu (2004) and Hong et al. (2018), the current teacher training program is not able to establish a firm commitment to teaching as a career choice, and they have not decided to pursue a career in teaching yet. This situation could be caused by the teaching career situation in Turkey. The low social status of a teaching career is the main concern of Turkish pre-service teachers (Kavanoz & Yüksel, 2017). Although planning to take the KPSS exam did not predict pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching, given that a teaching career delivers a high degree of job security as a civil employee if being appointed upon passing the KPSS exam (Kılınç & Mahiroglu, 2009), it is likely to create ambiguity and doubt in pre-service teachers about their future career and results in moderate commitment to teaching as a career choice.

In terms of gender, it was found that gender is a predictor of engagement. Moreover, females and males had different levels of engagement. It was revealed that the female pre-service teachers are more academically engaged than the male ones which are supported by previous research (e.g., Saglam & Iikiz, 2018; Oga-Baldwin & Nakata, 2017; Ayub et al., 2017; Amir et al., 2014).

On the contrary, it was revealed that gender did not predict commitment to a career choice which is consistent with Blustein et al. (1989), and Balin (2008), but inconsistent with Jin et al., (2009). This contrast could lie in different study levels of the participants. While in the current study, the participants were undergraduate students, in the study by Jin et al. (2009), the participants were graduate students. It is likely that graduate students

have established a firm commitment to their career choices compared to undergraduate students.

Moreover, class standing can predict vocational exploration and commitment. In agreement with Blustein et al. (1989), it was revealed that as the students' class standing increases, their level of commitment increases. In fact, students in the last years of their studies have lower levels of vocational exploration and they tend to be committed to their career choice. However, in contrast with Gibson and Slate (2010), there was no relationship between the level of engagement and pre-service teachers' age. It could be related to the different demographic characteristics since it plays a role in engagement (Gibson & Slate, 2010). While the participants in Gibson and Slate's study (2010) were first-year community college students of different ages, the participants of the current study were pre-service teachers in the last two years of their studies with a wide age range between 19-40. Moreover, in agreement with Blustein et al., (1989), as a function of age, older students later in their education are more likely to limit their career choices and, as a result, committed to their career choices. Likewise, as pre-service teachers' age increases, they tend to choose a career path and stick to it.

The results also revealed that those who have a plan to become a teacher are more engaged than those who do not, which is consistent with previous studies (e.g., Torsney et al., 2019; Appleton et al., 2008; Klem & Connell, 2004). Although the KPSS exam may hinder pre-service teachers from planning towards becoming a teacher, since it predicts neither pre-service teachers' academic engagement nor their commitment to teaching a career choice, teacher training programs should encourage pre-service teachers to set career goals and make plans toward those goals to foster their engagement and promote commitment to teaching as a career choice.

Finally, those who graduated from an Anatolian teacher training high school had a lower level of engagement than those who graduated from elsewhere, and there was no difference in their level of commitment to teaching. In agreement with Öztürk and Taluk (2014), The results implied that teacher training high schools failed to enhance students' commitment to teaching as a career choice and need improvement in fostering students' engagement and their commitment to teaching.

## **5.2. Implications**

Considering the findings of the present study, several implications for the field of education can be drawn.

### **5.2.1. Implications for Theory**

This study offered theoretical implications. The relationship between pre-service teachers' academic engagement and their commitment to teaching as a career choice was investigated, and a significant relationship was found through a few predictors. This study contributed to the literature theoretically by identifications of these predictors for pre-service teachers' academic engagement and their commitment to teaching as a career choice. According to the findings, academic engagement was found to have a significant relationship with vocational exploration and commitment which contributed to the current literature. Moreover, gender, and having a plan to become a teacher predicted academic engagement, whereas, class standing and age predicted the VEC and TTF respectively.

### **5.2.2. Implications for Research**

A limited number of studies investigated pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching and factors that influence it, especially in Turkey, which resulted in conducting the current study. This study has contributed to the research in the field of education by illuminating an unknown aspect of teacher

shortages and high turnover rate problems. It was revealed that academic engagement is an effective factor in pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching and needs to be fostered in teaching training programs. Another contribution of the current study is the work of confirmatory factor analysis of university student engagement inventory (USEI) and commitment to career choices scale (CCCS) identifying those items with low factor loadings in the Turkish sample for both inventories providing a basis for adopting the inventories for Turkey. The low factor loadings of items 9 and 15 in the TTF subscale and item 7 in the VEC subscale as well as item 11 in the cognitive subscale from USEI should be considered and reevaluated in future studies.

### **5.2.3. Implications for Practice**

Regarding the current situation, in which, countries and more specifically Turkey are dealing with teacher shortages and high turnover rate problems, paying attention to pre-service teachers' commitment is a critical issue. In this regard, it is essential to provide an environment that encourages pre-service teachers to engage more effectively in teacher training programs and fosters their professional identity to enhance their commitment to teaching as a career choice. Although there is a teacher shortage problem in Turkey, there is also a large number of prospective teachers who end up not being hired (Doğan & Çoban, 2009; Kılınç & Mahiroğlu, 2009) due to the several difficulties they face in their ways to becoming a teacher such as the examination system. Given this complicated situation, pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching as a career is important and needs to be protected. It is, therefore, essential to examine the factors that influence their commitment. Since effectively training pre-service teachers is important to provide committed teachers in the future, enhancing academic engagement can play a key role in offering effective training and create competent teachers who are committed to teaching. Thus, universities and educational

institutions should seriously consider pre-service teachers' academic engagement and develop effective strategies to enhance it.

### **5.3. Limitations and Recommendations**

Along with the strengths of the current study, it has some limitations. The first limitation is that this study was conducted only on pre-service teachers at one public university. In order to make generalizations, new studies can be conducted in other public and private universities and make comparisons among universities in terms of pre-service teachers' engagement and their commitment to teaching as a career. In fact, it is thought that private universities are likely to have different dynamics. (Gunuc et al., 2019). Thus, taking diverse participants is likely to help generalize the findings. The second one is that the sample size is relatively small. The sample size of this study was 225 pre-service teachers. In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic made it difficult to increase the sample size since the university was closed for a semester. Afterward, collecting data online was more challenging since filling out the questionnaires was voluntary, the response rate was very low. Larger sample size may have been used to improve the population's representativeness at that university.

Furthermore, due to the small sample size for each department in the faculty of Education, it was not possible to include the departments in the analysis in order to investigate whether there is any difference in the level of engagement and commitment to teaching among pre-service teachers in different departments. Since the pre-service teachers in different departments may have a different level of engagement and commitment, it is recommended to conduct a study to assess pre-service teachers' level of engagement and commitment to teaching with respect to their different education departments to provide better insight into the current situation.

Moreover, since this study was quantitative, there may have been some limitations that arose as a result of the nature of such studies. Qualitative research would be required to learn more about the extent to which our pre-service teachers can be considered committed to teaching. Similar to the Western examples in the literature, a qualitative inquiry such as conducting interviews or having focus groups can provide more specified and culture-specific predictors.

While the independent variables of the current study explained 10% of the variance in academic engagement and 11% of the variance in commitment to career choices dimensions, further detailed investigations can help to learn more about the unexplained % 90 and 89% of other possible variables that may predict academic engagement and commitment to career choices. Regarding the fact that the level of pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching is neutral- neither low nor high- it is worth investigating to what extent teacher training programs foster pre-service teachers' professional identity formation in order to provide better insight into the current situation and help to make effective changes that result in enhancing pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

The current study can be considered an elucidating study in terms of revealing the engagement phenomenon among pre-service teachers of a public university and exploring the relationship between engagement and commitment to teaching as a career choice. The goal of teacher training programs is beyond the attainment of good grades (Kaplan & Flum, 2009), and encompasses personal development, such as commitment. However, the latter goal is often neglected by education researchers and practitioners. Therefore, through this study, the author hopes to instigate more commitment-related research in educational contexts and to draw the

attention of education professionals (particularly those in the higher education sector) to this issue.

Overall, the present study illustrates both the importance and relevance of academic engagement and commitment to teaching as a career choice in pre-service teachers. It shows that pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching is associated with their academic engagement. The results have practical implications, as it advises educational and counseling psychologists as well as policy-makers and trainers to emphasize academic engagement when attempting to promote pre-service teachers' commitment to teaching.

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## APPENDICES

### A. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )

1. What is your program? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which year are you in? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your current CGPA? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Did you graduate from the teacher training high school? Yes ( ) No ( )
5. Have you ever taken the KPSS exam? Yes ( ) No ( )
6. Are you planning to take the KPSS exam? Yes ( ) No ( )
7. Do you have any plans to become a teacher? Yes ( ) No ( )

## B. UNIVERSITY STUDENT ENGAGEMENT INVENTORY (USEI)

Using the response scale, indicate how often the following statements apply to you:

1=Never, 2= A few times, 3= Sometimes, 4= Most of the time, 5= Always

1	I pay attention in class.	
2	I follow the school's rules.	
3	I usually do my homework on time.	
4	When I have doubts, I ask questions and participate in debates in the classroom.	
5	I usually participate actively in group assignments.	
6	I don't feel very accomplished at this school.	
7	I feel excited about the school work.	
8	I like being at school.	
9	I am interested in school work.	
10	My classroom is an interesting place to be.	
11	When I read a book, I question myself to make sure I understand the subject I'm reading about.	
12	I talk to people outside the school on matters that I learned in class.	
13	If I do not understand the meaning of a word, I try to solve the problem, for example by consulting a dictionary or asking someone else.	
14	I try to integrate the acquired knowledge in solving new problems.	
15	I try to integrate subjects from different disciplines into my general knowledge.	

**C. THE COMMITMENT TO CAREER CHOICES SCALE –  
SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

**Instruction:** In the items that follow, please indicate the appropriate number using the scale below that most accurately reflects the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement. If you do not currently have a specific career goal, respond to the following items in a way that would reflect your behavior and attitudes if you did have an occupational preference.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Never</b> true about me	<b>Almost never</b> true about me	<b>Usually not</b> true about me	<b>Usually</b> true about me	<b>Almost always</b> true about me	<b>Always</b> true about me

1	I believe that a sign of maturity is deciding on a single career goal and sticking to it.	
2	Based on what I know about my interests, I believe that I am suited for only one specific occupation.	
3	The chances are excellent that I will actually end up doing the kind of work that I most want to do.	
4	I may need to learn more about myself (i.e., my interests, abilities, values, etc.) before making a commitment to a specific occupation.	
5	It is hard for me to decide on a career goal because it seems that there are too many possibilities.	
6	I have a good deal of information about the occupational fields that are most interesting to me.	
7	I have thought about how to get around the obstacles that may exist in the occupational field that I am considering.	

Table Continued

7	I have thought about how to get around the obstacles that may exist in the occupational field that I am considering.	
8	I think that a wavering or indecisive approach to education and career choices is a sign of weakness; one should take a stand and follow through with it no matter what.	
9	I believe that no matter what others might think, my career decisions will either be right or wrong.	
12	I feel uneasy about committing myself to a specific occupation because I am not aware of alternative options in related fields.	
13	I find myself changing academic majors often because I cannot focus on one specific career goal.	
14	I do not know enough about myself (i.e., my interests, abilities, and values) to make a commitment to a specific occupation.	
15	I like the openness of considering various possibilities before committing myself to a specific occupation.	
16	Based on what I know about the world of work (i.e., the nature of various occupations), I do not believe that I should seriously consider more than a single career goal at a time.	
17	It is hard to commit myself to a specific career goal because I am unsure about what the future holds for me.	
20	I have difficulty making decisions when faced with a variety of options.	
21	I feel confident in my ability to achieve my career goals.	
22	Based on what I know about my values (e.g., the importance of money, job, security, etc.), I believe that only one single occupation is right for me.	
23	I feel uneasy about committing myself to a specific career plan.	
26	I am not very certain about the kind of work I would like to do.	
27	I would change my career plans if the field I am considering becomes more competitive and less accessible due to a decline in available openings.	
28	I believe that there is only one specific career goal that is right for me.	

**D. PERMISSION TO USE COMMITMENT TO CAREER CHOICES  
SCALE**



**BOSTON COLLEGE**

DAVID L. BLUSTEIN, PH.D.  
DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING, DEVELOPMENTAL,  
AND EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY  
CHESTNUT HILL, MA 02467  
OFFICE PHONE: (617) 552-0795  
E-MAIL: DAVID.BLUSTEIN@BC.EDU

Dear Colleague:

I am delighted to provide you with the items for the Commitment to Career Choices Scale. Naturally, I am granting you permission to use the Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS) in your research study. In this correspondence, I will provide you with the items for the CCCS along with the scoring criteria for the CCCS. The scoring pattern for the CCCS is as follows:

The nine items that comprise the Tendency to Foreclose Scale (TTFS) are as follows:

Items #1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 22, 28

The nineteen items that comprise the Vocational Exploration and Commitment Scale (VECS) are as follows:

Items # 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27

Please note that six of the items are reversed scored. The reversed scored items are as follows:

Items # 3, 6, 7, 15, 21, 24

I hope that this measure is useful to you. There is no fee for using the CCCS. If you need any additional information on this measure, please do not hesitate to contact me. Best wishes with your research.

Sincerely,

David L. Blustein, Ph.D.

## E. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



DUMLUPINAR BULVARI 06800  
ÇANKAYA ANKARA/TURKEY  
T: +90 312 210 22 91  
F: +90 312 210 79 59  
www.ueam.metu.edu.tr

Sayı: 28620816 / 080

20 Şubat 2020

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Dr.Gökçe GÖKALP

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız Seyed HOSSEİN KALATI'nin "The Relationship Between Pre-Service Teachers' Engagement and Their Commitment to Teaching as a Profession" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve 080-ODTU-2020 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.

  
Prof.Dr. Mine MISIRLISOY  
Başkan

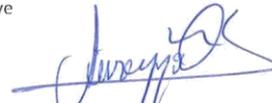
  
Prof. Dr. Tolga CAN  
Üye

Doç.Dr. Pınar KAYGAN  
Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ali Emre TURGUT  
Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şerife SEVİNÇ  
Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ  
Üye

  
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Süreyya Özcan KABASAKAL  
Üye

## **F. INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

The Faculty of Education at the Middle East Technical University supports the practice of the protection of human participants in research. The following will provide you with information about the study that will help you in deciding whether or not you wish to participate. If you agree to participate, please be aware that you are free to withdraw at any point without any penalty.

In this study, the relationship between pre-service teachers' academic engagement and their commitment to teaching will be investigated. In this regard, you will be asked to fill in three sets of questionnaires related to your demographic information, engagement, and career choice commitment. If you are not willing to participate for any reason, please inform the researcher and you do not need to answer the questions. All information you provide will remain confidential and will not be associated with your name. Your participation in this study will require approximately 15-20 minutes. When this study is complete you will be provided with the results of the study if you request them, and you will be free to ask any questions. If you have any further questions concerning this study, please feel free to contact us through phone or email: seyedhossein.kalati@metu.edu.tr (+90 543 288 07 95) or Dr. Gökçe Gökalp at ggokalp@metu.edu.tr (+90 312 210 40 33). Please indicate with your signature on the space below that you understand your rights and agree to participate in the study.

Your participation is solicited, yet strictly voluntary. All information will be kept confidential and your name will not be associated with any research findings.

---

Signature of Participant

---

---

**Seyed Hossein Kalati**, Researcher

---

Name, Surname

## G. TÜRKCÖ ÖZET / TURKISH SUMMARY

### Giriş

Öğretmen eğitimi ve mesleki gelişim programları öğretmen adaylarının ve öğretmenlerin ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak üzere gelecekteki ve bugünün öğretmenlerini kariyerleri boyunca yüz yüze gelecekleri bütün zorluklara karşı hazırlamaktadır. Eğitim sistemleri yüksek eğitim standardını korumak ve yüksek kalitede öğretmen iş gücünü elde tutmak için öğretmenlere hizmet içi profesyonel gelişim fırsatları sağlamaya çalışmaktadır (OECD, 2005). Öğretmen eğitimlerinin ve profesyonel gelişim uzmanlarının çalışmalarının öğretmen performansının artmasına yol açtığı olgusuna rağmen, mesleğe girenlerin yarısından çoğu mesleği terk etmektedirler (Tait, 2008; Tynjälä & Heikkinen, 2011).

Bugün öğretmen açığı ve öğretmenlerin yüksek seviyede mesleği bırakma eğilimleri küresel sorunlardır (Lonsdale & Ingvarson, 2003). Diğer ülkeler gibi, Türkiye de özellikle doğuda ve kırsal okullarda öğretmen eksikliği ve öğretmenleri okulda tutma sorunları ile uğraşmaktadır. Bir yıllık öğretimden sonra, bu ekonomik olarak muhtaç yerler öğretmenler için fazla sosyal hayat sağlamadığı için, yeni mezunlar yeniden görevlendirme talep etmektedirler (Yıldırım & Ok, 2002). Ayrıca, Türkiye'nin süregelen yüksek değişim oranı (Özoğlu, 2015) ve düşük kaliteli öğretim eğitim programları (Aydın & Baskan, 2005) sorunları durumu daha kötü hale getirmektedir. Öğretmenlerin adanmışlığını korumak için, öğretmen adanmışlığını etkileyen unsurları tespit etmek kritik öneme sahiptir, çünkü bu öğretmenlerin öğretmenlik mesleğini terk etme eğilimi ile bağlantılıdır (Billingsley & Cross, 1992). Kariyer tercihine adanmışlığın bir göstergesi olarak, akademik bağlılık kariyer tercihine adanmışlıkla olumlu ilişkisi bulunan en önemli faktörlerden biri olarak kabul

edilmektedir (Sinclair, 2008). Araştırmada artan bağıllığın bir aracı olarak öğrenci bağıllığını arttırmaya vurgu yapılmaktadır (Horstmanshof & Zimitat, 2007; Kuh, 2003).

Bu çalışma öğretmen adaylarının akademik bağıllığı ve bir kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenlik mesleğine adanmışlıkları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemeyi ve ayrıca, öğretmen olmayı planlayan ve planlamayan, KPSS sınavına girmek isteyen ve istemeyen ve öğretmen liselerinden mezun olan ve olmayan, ve son olarak da kadın ve erkekler arasında akademik bağıllık ve kariyer olarak öğretmenliğe adanmışlık bakımından herhangi bir farklılık olup olmadığını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Son olarak, akademik bağıllığın ve kariyer olarak öğretmenliğe adanmışlığın bu çalışmada cinsiyet, yaş, sınıfsal statü, öğretmen olmayı planlama, KPSS sınavına girme, ve bir öğretmen lisesinden mezun olma gibi ana hatları verilen bağımsız değişkenlerce ne kadar yordalandığını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Aşağıdaki araştırma sorularını cevaplamak için korelasyonel ve nedensel-karşılaştırmalı araştırma deseni kullanılmıştır:

1. Öğretmen adaylarının akademik bağıllığı ve kariyer olarak öğretmenliğe adanmışlıkları arasındaki ilişki nedir?
2. Aşağıdaki gruplar arasında akademik bağıllık ve kariyer olarak öğretmenliğe adanmışlık bakımından bir farklılık var mıdır?
  - Erkekler ve kadınlar,
  - Öğretmen olmayı planlayanlar ve planlamayanlar.
  - KPSS sınavına girmeyi planlayanlar ve planlamayanlar.
  - Bir öğretmen lisesinden mezun olanlar ve olmayanlar.
3. Cinsiyet, yaş, sınıf statüsü, öğretmen olmayı planlama, KPSS sınavına girmeyi planlama, ve bir öğretmen lisesinden mezun olma akademik bağıllığı ve kariyer tercihi olarak öğretime adanmışlığı öngörmekte midir?

## Alan Yazın Taraması

Eđitim bilimciler ve diđer bilim insanları bađlılıđa teorik perspektiften bđyđk nem atfetmiřlerdir. Lise sonrası eđitimde đrenci bađlılıđını teřvik etmenin nemi arttıka (Korobova & Starobin, 2015), eđitmenler toplam đrenim deneyiminin bir parası olarak đrenci bađlılıđını lebilmeli, takip edebilmeli ve deđerlendirebilmelidirler (Fredricks, 2013). Bađlılık đrencilerin sergilediđi farklı motivasyon, biliřsellik ve davranıř modellerine atıf yapan ok ynlđ bir kavramdır (Baron & Corbin, 2012: Fredricks ve diđer., 2004).

Fredricks ve diđerlerine gre (2004), bađlılık teorik ieriđini aıklamaya yardımcı olacak  boyut iermektedir:

1. Davranıřsal: đrencinin devamı, derse katılımı, uzaklařtırmaları, ve mđfredat dıřı faaliyetlere katılımına atıf yapmaktadır.
2. Duygusal: đrencinin đretmenlere, akranlara, akademik grevlere ve genel olarak okula pozitif veya negatif duygusal tepkileriđni iermektedir.
3. Biliřsel: đrencilerin đrenmeye yaptıkları yatırımlara atıf yapmakta olup zorlu grevleri kavramak ve stesinden gelmek iin gerekli abayı harcama isteklilikleri ve dđřünceleri, etkin đrenme stratejilerini (rn. ezberlemekten ok ayrıntıları ile hazırlama) kullanmaları, zorluk tercihleri, ve kendi kendilerini denetlemeleri gibi etkenleri kapsar.

Kariyer tercihlerine adanmıřlık okuldan iře geiři yařayan ge ergenlikteki ve erken yetiřkinlikteki kiřiiler iin nemli bir geliřim sorunudur (Super ve diđer., 1996). Bireyler bu sđre boyunca bir ok potansiyel kariyeri arařtırmakla iliřkili belirsizlik, kafa bulanıklıđı ve endiřeye katlanmalıdır (Fuqua & Hartman, 1983). Bu yař grubundakiler bir kariyer tercihi yapmak iin basit veriler toplamanın tesinde karmařık bir sđrele uđrařmaladırlar (Blustein ve diđer., 1989). Blustein ve meslektařları (1989) “kariyer tercihine adanmıřlık” terimini geliřtirmiř ve bunu bir bireyin zgđn bir kariyer hedefi kđmesi ile gđlđ bir bađ oluřturarak kendi mesleki nceliklerine dair aık bir duyguya sahip olduđu nokta olarak tanımlamıřlardır.

Kariyer tercihlerine adanmışlık kavramı kişinin belirli mesleki tercihlerinde kendini güvenceye alma ve öz güven, mesleki geleceğine dair pozitif duygular ve potansiyel bariyerlerin farkında olmayı içermektedir. Kariyer tercihlerine adanmışlığın iki bağımsız boyutu bulunmaktadır (Blustein ve diğ., 1989):

1. Mesleki Araştırma ve Adanmışlık ((MAA); erken adanmışlık, araştırmacı aşamasından daha çok adanmışlık, tutarlı aşamaya uzanan bir sürece atıf yapmaktadır. Bireylerin kariyer kararı verme adanmışlığındaki yönetsel artışı değerlendirir.
2. Kapanma Eğilimi (KE); adanmışlık sürecinde açıklıktan kişinin kendi mesleki tercihleri dışındaki seçeneklere kapanma deneyimlerine uzanan bir sürece atıf yapmaktadır ve bireylerin kariyer tercihlerine farklı yönlerden adanmışlıklarını ölçer.

Öğretmen adayları değişikliğe daha açık oldukları ve kariyerlerini çalışmakta olan öğretmenlere göre daha belirsiz ve güvensiz olarak algıladıkları için, araştırmalar kariyer tercihlerine adanmışlığı etkileyen etkenleri inceleme ihtiyacını desteklemektedir. Ayrıca, öğretmen adayları ile ilgili olarak, Türkiye’de akademik bağlılık ve kariyer tercihlerine adanmışlık arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen bir çalışma olmasa da, bu ikisi arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemiş birkaç uluslararası çalışma bulunmaktadır ve sonuçlar akademik bağlılık ve kariyer tercihlerine bağlılık arasında belirgin bir ilişki olduğunu açığa çıkarmıştır.

Hem Türkiye’de, hem de uluslararası akademik bağlılık ve kariyer tercihlerine adanmışlıkta önemli rol oynayan etkenlerle ilgili olarak, araştırmacılar cinsiyet (Oga-Baldwin & Nakata, 2017; Balın, 2008; Blustein ve diğ., 1989), yaş (Gibson & Slate, 2010; Blustein ve diğ., 1989), sınıf statüsü (Kinzie ve diğ., 2007; Blustein ve diğ., 1989), kariyer seçme planlaması (Torsney ve diğ., 2019; Eren, 2012), ve KPSS sınavı (Ergün, 2005; Ugulu & Yorek, 2015) dahil bir çok etken tespit etmişlerdir.

## Yöntem

Bu çalışmada korelasyonel ve nedensel-karşılaştırmalı araştırma deseni kullanılmıştır. Öğretmen adaylarının akademik bağlılığı ve kariyer tercihlerine adanmışlığı arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemek için korelasyonel araştırma kullanılmıştır. İfade edilen öngörücüleri incelemek için çoklu regresyon analizi vasıtasıyla bir nedensel-karşılaştırmalı tasarım kullanılmıştır

Örneklem Ankara'daki köklü kamu üniversitelerinden birinin eğitim fakültesinin bütün ikinci, üçüncü ve son sınıf öğrencilerinin arasından seçilmiştir. Eğitim fakültesinde 84 fakülte üyesi ile birlikte toplam 1238 kayıtlı lisans öğrencisi bulunmaktadır. Yabancı Dil Eğitimi, Matematik ve Fen Eğitimi, İlkokul ve Ana Okulu Eğitimi ve Bilgisayar Eğitimi ve Eğitsel Teknoloji dahil 4 farklı bölümde dört yıllık ve birkaç beş yıllık lisans programı sunulmaktadır. Veriler 225 ikinci, üçüncü ve son sınıf öğrencilerinden toplanmıştır. 225 katılımcıdan 181'i (80.4%) kadın, 42'si (18.7%) erkek olup katılımcıların 2'si (.9%) cinsiyet belirtmemiştir. Katılımcıların yaş aralığı 19-40 ( $M= 22.76$ ,  $SD= 3.12$ ) ve GPA aralığı 1-4'tür ( $M= 3.22$ ,  $SD= 0.47$ ). Kırksekiz (21%), 104 (46%), 73 (33%) katılımcı sırasıyla ikinci, üçüncü ve son sınıf öğrencileridir.

Programları bakımından, katılımcıların 93'ü (41%) Yabancı Dil Eğitimi, 47si (%21) İlköğretim Matematik Eğitimi, 37si (16%) Okulöncesi Eğitimi, 17si (8%) Fen Bilgisi Eğitimi, 9'u Bilgisayar ve Öğretim Teknolojileri Eğitimi (4%) ve 7'si Kimya Eğitimi (3%) programlarına kayıtlıdır.

225 katılımcıdan, 103 (46%) öğretmen lisesinden ve 122 (54%) başka yerlerden mezun olmuştur. Ayrıca, katılımcıların 139'u (62%) KPSS sınavına girmeyi planlamaktadır. Son olarak, katılımcıların 167'sinin (74%) mezuniyetten sonra öğretmen olma planı vardır.

Bu çalışmada, veriler demografik soru formu, Assunção ve meslektaşları (2020) tarafından geliştirilen Üniversite Öğrencisi Bağlılık Envanteri (USEI) ve Blustein ve

diğerleri (1989) tarafından geliştirilen Kariyer Tercihlerine Adanmışlık Ölçeği (CCCS) vasıtasıyla toplanmıştır. Enstrümanın ilk kısmı öğretmen adaylarının demografik bilgileri ile ilgili soruları içermektedir: Cinsiyet (kadın/erkek), yaş, sınıf statüsü, program, CGPA, KPSS sınavına daha önce girip girmedikleri, girmeyi planlayıp planlamadıkları, ve mezuniyet sonrası öğretmen olmayı planlayıp planlamadıkları.

USEI ve CCCS'nin yapı geçerliğini değerlendirmek için, enstrümanlardaki etken yapısı teyit edici etken analizi uygulanarak incelenmiştir. Aynı zamanda, USEI ve CCCS'nin iç tutarlılığı Cronbach alfa katsayısı formülü kullanılarak hesaplanmıştır.

### **Sonuçlar**

Betimsel analiz sonuçları öğrencilerin akademik bağlılık seviyesinin ortalamanın üzerinde olduğunu ( $M= 3.55, SD= .48$ ) açığa çıkarmış olup bu öğrencilerin akademik bağlılığı olduğu anlamına gelmektedir. Mesleki araştırma ve adanmışlık (MAA) bakımından, bu nötr değere sahiptir ( $M= 4.02, SD= .95$ ) ve öğrencilerin bir kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe ne adandıkları ne de adanmadıkları anlamına gelmektedir. Kariyer tercihi olarak adanmışlığa ilişkin Likert ölçeğine göre, nötr ortalama skor “Görüş Yok/Kesin Değil” şikkına atıf yapmaktadır. Kapanma eğilimi (KE) bakımından bu değer ortalamanın altında ( $M= 2.92, SD= .98$ ) olup öğrencilerin alternatif seçenekleri düşünmeyi arzu ettikleri anlamına gelmektedir. Kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe adanmışlıktaki bu iki ayrı yapı dikkate alındığında, öğrencilerin kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe daha büyük olasılıkla adanmadıklarını belirtmektedir.

Korelasyon analizi öğrencinin akademik bağlılığı ( $M= 3.55, SD= .48$ ) ve MAA ( $M= 4.02, SD= .95$ ) arasında istatistiki olarak belirgin ve negatif korelasyon,  $r= -.27, p<.01$ , belirtmiş olup bu öğrencilerin akademik bağlılığı arttıkça, kariyer araştırması çabaları azaldıkça ve öğretmenliğe adanmışlık seviyelerini arttırabileceği anlamına gelmektedir. Ayrıca, yaş ( $M= 22.76, SD= 3.12$ ) ile KE ( $M= 2.92, SD= .98$ ) arasında pozitif korelasyon,  $r= .21, p<.01$ , varken sınıf statüsü ( $M= 2.11, SD= .72$ ) ile MAA

( $M= 4.02$ ,  $SD= .95$ ) arasında negatif korelasyon,  $r= -.15$ ,  $p<.05$ , olduğu açığa çıkarılmış olup bu öğrenciler yaş alırken kariyer seçeneklerini kapatma eğiliminde oldukları, ve sınıf statüleri yükseldikçe kariyer araştırma çabalarının azaldığı ve böylece bir kariyer tercihinin adanmışlık seviyelerinin arttığı anlamına gelmektedir.

İkinci araştırma sorusunu irdelemek için, erkekler ve kadınlar arasında, öğretmen olmayı planlayanlar ve planlamayanlar arasında, ve öğretmen liselerinden mezun olanlar ve olmayanlar arasında akademik bağlılık ve iki bağımsız kariyer tercihinin adanmışlık yapısı, MAA ve KE bakımından istatistiki olarak herhangi bir belirgin farklılık olup olmadığını belirlemek için bağımsız örneklem t-testi yapılmıştır.

Akademik bağlılık bakımından, erkekler ( $M= 3.41$ ,  $SD= .61$ ) ve kadınlar ( $M= 3.58$ ,  $SD= .45$ ) arasında belirgin bir farklılık,  $t(221)= -2.13$ ,  $p= .03$ , bulunmakta olup bu kadınlarda akademik bağlılık seviyesinin erkeklerden daha yüksek olduğu anlamına gelmektedir. Öğretmen olma planı bulunan öğrenciler ( $M= 3.59$ ,  $SD= .48$ ) ve bulunmayanlar ( $M= 3.42$ ,  $SD= .46$ ) arasında istatistiki olarak belirgin bir farklılık,  $t(223)= 2.45$ ,  $p= .01$ , bulunmakta olup bu akademik bağlılık seviyesinin öğretmen olma planı bulunan öğrencilerde daha yüksek olduğu anlamına gelmektedir. Öğretmen lisesinden mezun olmayanlar ( $M= 3.46$ ,  $SD= .46$ ) ve olanlar ( $M= 3.62$ ,  $SD= .49$ ) arasında da istatistiki olarak belirgin bir farklılık,  $t(223)= -2.45$ ,  $p= .01$ , bulunmakta olup bu akademik bağlılık seviyesinin öğretmen lisesinden mezun olmayanlarda daha yüksek olduğu anlamına gelmektedir. Bununla birlikte, KPSS sınavına girmeyi planlayanlarla ( $M= 3.51$ ,  $SD= .46$ ) karşı grup ( $M= 3.61$ ,  $SD= .51$ ) arasında belirgin bir farklılık olmamıştır. Son olarak, MAA ve KE bakımından, bağımsız örneklem t-testi gruplardan herhangi ikisi arasında herhangi bir belirgin farklılık açığa çıkarmamıştır.

Üçüncü soruyu irdelemek için, cinsiyet, yaş, sınıf statüsü, öğretmen lisesinden mezun olma, ve öğretmen olmayı planlamanın öğretmen adaylarında akademik bağlılık, MAA ve KE'yi belirgin olarak öngörüp görmediğini anlamak için çoklu regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır.

Akademik bağıllık bakımından, regresyon analizinin sonuçları bağımsız değişkenlerin varyansın 7%'sini açıkladığını ve modelin akademik bağıllığı yordadığını ( $R^2 = .07$ ,  $F(6,218) = 3.60$ ,  $p < .005$ ) belirtmiştir. Cinsiyet ( $B = .19$ ,  $t = 2.35$ ,  $p < .05$ ) ve öğretmen olmayı planlama ( $B = -.25$ ,  $t = -3.20$ ,  $p < .005$ ) modele katkı yaparken yaş ( $B = -.001$ ,  $p = .93$ ), sınıf statüsü ( $B = -.012$ ,  $p = .06$ , KPSS sınavına girmeyi planlama ( $B = .14$ ,  $p = .06$ ) ve bir öğretmen lisesinden mezun olmanın bir katkısı olmadığı ( $B = .11$ ,  $p = .09$ ) bulunmuştur.

MAA bakımından, bağımsız değişkenler varyansın 5%'ini ve modelin öğretmen adaylarının mesleki araştırma ve adanmışlığının yordayıcısı olduğunu ( $R^2 = .05$ ,  $F(6,218) = 2.45$ ,  $p = .03$ ) açıklamıştır. Sınıf statüsü ( $B = -.21$ ,  $t = -2.44$ ,  $p < .05$ ) modele belirgin katkı yaparken, cinsiyet ( $B = .24$ ,  $p = .12$ ), yaş ( $B = -.01$ ,  $p = .69$ ), öğretmen olmayı planlama ( $B = .18$ ,  $p = .21$ ), KPSS sınavına girmeyi planlama ( $B = -.17$ ,  $p = .21$ ), ve öğretmen lisesinden mezun olmanın ( $B = .17$ ,  $p = .21$ ) bir katkısı olmadığı bulunmuştur.

Son olarak, KE bakımından, bağımsız değişkenler varyansın 6%'sini ve modelin öğretmen adaylarının kapanma eğiliminin yordayıcı olduğunu ( $R^2 = .06$ ,  $F(6,218) = 2.99$ ,  $p < .01$ ) göstermiştir. Yaş ( $B = .08$ ,  $t = 3.62$ ,  $p < .01$ ) modele belirgin katkı yaparken cinsiyet ( $B = .21$ ,  $p = .21$ ), sınıf statüsü ( $B = -.04$ ,  $p = .63$ ), öğretmen olmayı planlama ( $B = -.04$ ,  $p = .78$ ), KPSS sınavına girmeyi planlama ( $B = -.21$ ,  $p = .14$ ) ve bir öğretmen lisesinden mezun olmanın ( $B = .14$ ,  $p = .35$ ) bir katkısı olmadığı bulunmuştur.

## **Tartışma**

Bu araştırmanın ana amacı öğretmen adaylarının akademik bağıllığı ve mesleki araştırma ve adanmışlık (MAA) ve kapanma eğilimi (KE) şeklinde iki boyutu bulunan kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe adanmışlığı arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Korelasyon analizinin genel sonuçları akademik bağıllık ve MAA arasında güçlü bir negatif ilişki olduğunu belirtmiş olup bu bağıllık arttığında MAA'nın azalacağı anlamına gelmektedir. Bununla birlikte, akademik bağıllık ve KE arasında bir ilişki bulunmamıştır. Bu çalışmanın sonucu daha önceki bulgularla

aynı çizgidedir (Watt & Richardson, 2008; Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010; Watt ve diğ., 2014) ve yüksek bağlılığa sahip öğretmen adaylarının alternatif kariyerler aramasının daha az beklendiğini ve kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe adanmışlıklarının daha mümkün olduğunu belirterek güncel literatüre katkı yapmaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın katılımcılarının adanmışlık seviyesi nötr durumdadır – ne yüksek ne düşük – bu öğretmen adayları için adanmışlığın kalıcı bir sonuç olmaktan çok bir kristalizasyon süreci olmasının beklendiğinin delili olabilir (Hong ve diğ., 2018). Hong ve diğerleri (2018) ile mutabakat içinde, kariyer tercihine adanmışlığın zaman içinde giderek geliştiği olgusu hesaba katılarak (Reilly & Orsak, 1991; Aryee ve diğ., 1994), güncel öğretmen eğitimi programı kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe güçlü bir adanmışlık tesis edememektedir ve adaylar henüz eğitim alanında bir kariyer arama kararını almamışlardır. Bu durumun nedeni Türkiye’deki öğretmenlik kariyerinin durumu olabilir. Öğretmenlik kariyerinin düşük sosyal statüsü Türk öğretmen adaylarının başlıca kaygısıdır (Kavanoz & Yüksel, 2017). KPSS sınavına girmenin planlanması öğretmen adaylarının öğretime adanmışlığını yordamamakla birlikte, öğretmenlik kariyeri KPSS sınavını geçerek atandıkları takdirde devlet memuru olarak yüksek derecede iş güvenliği sağlamaktadır (Kılınç & Mahiroğlu, 2009). Bu durum muhtemelen öğretmen adaylarında gelecekteki kariyerleri hakkında bir belirsizlik ve şüphe yaratmakta olup bir kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe orta düzeyde adanmışlık sonucu oluşturmaktadır.

Cinsiyet bakımından, cinsiyetin bağlılığın yordayıcısı olduğu bulunmuştur. Ayrıca, kadınlar ve erkekler değişik bağlılık seviyeleri göstermişlerdir. Kadın öğretmen adaylarının erkeklerden daha fazla akademik bağlılık gösterdikleri açığa çıkmış olup bu daha önceki araştırmalarla desteklenmektedir (örn. Amir ve diğ., 2014; Oga-Baldwin & Nakata, 2017; Ayub ve diğ., 2017; sağlam & İlkiz, 2018). Aksine, cinsiyetin kariyer tercihinde yordayıcı olmadığı açığa çıkmış durumda ki bu Blustein ve diğerlerinin (1989) ve Balın’ın (2008) bulguları ile tutarlı, ancak Jin ve diğerleri’nin (2009) bulguları ile tutarsızdır. Bu çelişki katılımcıların farklı eğitim seviyelerinden kaynaklanabilir. Bu çalışmada katılımcılar lisans öğrencileriyken Jin

ve diğeri'nin (2009) çalışmasında katılımcılar lisans üstü öğrencilerdi. Muhtemelen lisans üstü öğrencileri lisans öğrencileri ile karşılaştırıldığında kariyer tercihlerine daha güçlü bir adanmışlık tesis etmiş bulunmaktadırlar.

Gibson ve Slate'in (2010) aksine, bağlılık seviyesi ve öğretmen adaylarının yaşı arasında bir ilişki bulunmamıştır. Bu tutarsızlık bağlılıkta önemli bir rol oynadığı için farklı demografik karakteristiklere ilişkin olabilir (Gibson & Slate, 2010). Gibson ve Slate'in katılımcıları değişik yaşlarda birinci yıl mahalle okulu öğrencileriyken, bu çalışmada katılımcılar yaş aralığı 19-40 olan ve eğitimlerinin son iki yılında bulunan öğretmen adaylarıydı. Ayrıca, Blustein ve diğeri (1989) ile tutarlı olarak, yaşı bir fonksiyonu olarak, daha yaşlı öğrenciler daha sonraki eğitimlerinde muhtemelen kariyer tercihlerini sınırlayıp sonuç olarak kendi kariyer tercihlerine adanmaktadırlar. Benzer şekilde, öğretmen adaylarının yaşı arttıkça, bu bireyler bir kariyer yolu seçme ve buna bağlı kalma eğiliminde olmaktadır. Ek olarak, Blustein ve diğeri (1989) ile mutabakat içinde, öğrencilerin sınıf statüsü arttıkça adanmışlık seviyelerinin arttığı açığa çıkmıştır. Aslında, eğitimlerinin son yıllarındaki öğrencilerin daha düşük MAA seviyeleri bulunmakta ve kariyer tercihlerine adanma eğilimleri göstermektedirler. Sonuçlar aynı zamanda öğretmen olma planı bulunanların bulunmayanlara göre daha bağlı olduğunu açığa çıkarmaktadır ki bu önceki çalışmalarla tutarlıdır (örn. Tornsey ve diğ., 2019; Appleton ve diğ., 2008; Klem & Connell, 2004). KPSS sınavı öğretmen adaylarının akademik bağlılığını veya kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe adanmışlığını yordamadığı için öğretmen adaylarının öğretmen olmayı planlamalarını engelleyebilecekse de, öğretmen eğitim programları öğretmen adaylarını kariyer hedeflerini düzenlemeye ve bağlılıklarını ve bir kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe adanmayı teşvik etmek için bu hedeflere doğru planlar yapma yolunda cesaretlendirmelidirler.

Son olarak, Başaran-Aksu (2007) ve Kılcan ve diğeri (2014) ile farklılaşarak, öğretmen lisesinden mezun olanlar başka liselerden mezun olanlara göre daha düşük bağlılık seviyesine sahip olup öğretmeye adanmışlık seviyelerinde bir farklılık bulunmamıştır. Sonuçlar öğretmen liselerinin öğrencilerin bir kariyer tercihi olarak

öğretmenliğe adanmışlıklarını arttıramadığını ve öğrencilerin bağlılığını ve öğretime adanmışlıklarını teşvik etme hususunda iyileştirilmeleri gerektiğini işaret etmektedir.

### **Çıkarım**

Öğretmen adaylarının akademik bağlılıkları ve bir kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe adanmışlıkları arasındaki ilişki araştırılmış ve belirgin bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Bu çalışma bu ilişkiyi ve öğretmen adaylarının akademik bağlılıkları ve bir kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe adanmışlıklarında rol oynayan ilgili yordayıcıları inceleyerek literatüre teorik katkı yapmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın diğer bir önemli katkısı üniversite öğrencisi bağlılık envanteri ve kariyer tercihlerine adanmışlık ölçeğinin teyit edici etken analizi çalışması olup her iki envanter için Türk örneğinde düşük etken yüklemelerine sahip maddeler tespit edilerek Türkiye envanterlerinde envanterlerin benimsenmesi için bir dayanak sağlanmıştır. MAA alt ölçeğindeki madde 8 ve 15 ve KE alt ölçeğindeki madde 7, ayrıca USEI'den bilişsel alt ölçekteki madde 11 gelecekteki çalışmalarda dikkate alınmalı ve yeniden değerlendirilmelidir.

Ülkelerin ve özellikle Türkiye'nin öğretmen eksiklikleri ve yüksek değişim oranı problemleri ile uğraştıkları güncel durum esas alındığında, öğretmen adaylarının adanmışlığına dikkat etmek önemli bir konudur. Bu bağlamda, uygulama için bir çıkarım olarak, öğretmen adaylarını bir kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe adanmışlıklarını arttırmak için öğretmen eğitimi programları daha etkin bağlanmaya teşvik etme ortamı sağlamak zorunludur.

### **Sınırlılıklar ve Öneriler**

Bu çalışmanın güçlü yanları ile birlikte bazı sınırlılıkları da bulunmaktadır. İlk sınırlılık bu çalışmanın sadece bir kamu üniversitesinde sadece öğretmen adayları ile yapılmış olmasıdır. Genellemeler yapmak için, diğer kamu ve özel üniversitelerde yeni çalışmalar yürütülebilir ve öğretmen adaylarının bir kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe bağlılığı ve adanmışlığı bakımından üniversiteler arasında

karşılaştırmalar yapılabilir. Aslında, özel üniversitelerin muhtemelen farklı dinamikleri olduğu düşünülmektedir (Gunuc ve diğ., 2019). Böylece, geniş kapsamlı katılımcıların dahil edilme bulguları genellemede yardımcı olabilir.

İkinci sınırlılık örneklemin görece küçük olmasıdır. Bu çalışmanın örneklemini 225 öğretmen adayı olmuştur. Gerçekte, üniversite bir dönem boyunca kapalı kaldığı için COVID-19 pandemisi örneklem sayısını arttırmayı güçleştirmiştir. Sonradan çevrim içi veri toplama daha zor olmuştur. Soru formlarının doldurulması gönüllülük esasına dayandığı için cevap oranı çok düşük olmuştur. Popülasyonun fakülteyi temsilini iyileştirmek için daha büyük bir örneklem kullanılabilirdi.

Ayrıca, Eğitim fakültesindeki her bölüm için küçük örneklem nedeniyle değişik bölümlerdeki öğretmen adayları arasında bağlılık ve öğretime adanmışlık seviyesinde herhangi bir farklılık olup olmadığını araştırmak için analize bölümleri dahil etmek mümkün olmamıştır. Farklı bölümlerdeki öğretmen adayları farklı bağlılık ve adanmışlık seviyelerine sahip olabileceklerinden, mevcut durumu daha iyi kavrayabilmek için öğretmen adaylarının bağlılık ve eğitime adanmışlık seviyelerini farklı eğitim bölümlerine göre değerlendirmek üzere bir çalışma yapılması tavsiye edilir. Ayrıca, bu çalışma nicel olduğundan, bu tür çalışmaların niteliğinin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkabilecek bazı sınırlılıklar bulunabilir. Öğretmen adaylarımızın öğretmenlik mesleğine ne ölçüde adanmış kabul edildiği hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinmek için nitel araştırma gerekebilecektir. Görüşmeler yürütmek veya odak grupları oluşturmak gibi nitel sorgulamalar daha belirgin ve kültüre özgü yordayıcı faktörlerin belirlenmesini sağlayabilecektir.

Öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenliğe adanmışlık seviyesinin nötr – ne yüksek ne düşük – olduğu olgusuna ilişkin olarak, mevcut durumu daha iyi kavramak ve öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenliğe adanmışlığını arttırmaya yol açan etkin değişiklikler yapmaya yardımcı olmak için öğretmen eğitimi programlarının öğretmen adaylarının profesyonel kimlik formasyonunu ne ölçüde teşvik ettiğini araştırmak faydalı olabilir.

## **Sonuç**

Bu çalışma bir kamu üniversitendeki öğretmen adaylarının akademik bağlılığını ortaya çıkarmak ve bağlılık ve bir kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe adanmışlık arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemeye ışık tutucu bir çalışma olarak kabul edilebilir. Öğretmen eğitimi programlarının hedefi iyi notlar elde edilmesinin ötesinde (Kaplan & Flum, 2009) olup öğretmenlik mesleğine adanmışlık gibi kişisel gelişim öğelerini de kapsamaktadır. Bununla birlikte, ikinci hedef eğitim araştırmacıları ve uygulayıcıları tarafından sıklıkla ihmal edilmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma aracılığı ile, yazarlar eğitsel bağlamlarda daha fazla adanmışlığa ilişkin araştırmayı teşvik etmeyi ve (özellikle yüksek öğretim sektöründeki) eğitim profesyonellerinin dikkatini bu konuya çekmeyi ummaktadırlar.

Genel olarak, bu çalışma öğretmen adaylarında akademik bağlılığın ve bir kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe adanmışlığın önemini ve öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğine adanmışlığının akademik bağlılıkları ile ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Sonuçların pratik çıkarımları bulunmaktadır, çünkü eğitsel ve danışman psikologlara, aynı zamanda, politika yapıcılara ve eğiticilere öğretmen adaylarının bir kariyer tercihi olarak öğretmenliğe adanmışlıklarını teşvik etmeye çalıştıklarında akademik bağlılığa vurgu yapmalarını salık vermektedir.

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### YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : SEYEDHOSSEIN  
Adı / Name : KALATI  
Bölümü / Department : Eğitim Bilimleri, Eğitim Yönetimi ve Planlaması / Educational Sciences, Educational Administration and Planning

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