EXAMINATION OF OCCUPATIONAL RESILIENCE BELIEFS OF IN-SERVICE AND PRE-SERVICE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT VARIABLES[1]

Research Article

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Abstract

Occupational resilience contributes teachers to adapt difficult conditions of teaching, to deal with obstacles and to maintain professional commitment. The purpose of this research is to compare the occupational resilience beliefs of early childhood education teachers and pre-service teachers. In accordance with this purpose, whether there is a significant difference between the occupational resilience beliefs of teachers and pre-service teachers, whether there is a significant difference in the occupational resilience beliefs of teachers according to their seniority and whether there is a significant difference in the occupational resilience beliefs of pre-service teachers according to type of university, the relational screening model has been used. The data is collected from 275 participants via Occupational Resilience Beliefs Scale for Teacher Candidates. As the results of statistical analysis, there is a significant difference in the occupational resilience beliefs of early childhood education teachers and pre-service early childhood education teachers in favor of early childhood education teachers. On the other hand, there is no significant difference in the occupational resilience beliefs of teachers according to their seniority. There is no significant difference in the occupational resilience beliefs of pre-service teachers according to the type of university. The findings are discussed in the framework of the relevant literature.

Keywords: resilience, occupational resilience, early childhood teacher, pre-service early childhood teacher

1. Introduction

The term resilience (psychological endurance) is firstly used in the 1950s to define individuals who can survive despite of struggling experiences in their lives. Resilience means the matter of flexibility in Latin, coping with stress, regaining strength, spirituality, and sense of humor (Garmezy, 1993). Psychological endurance is the capability and the process of adapting successfully despite of the risky, difficult and compelling situations (Yates, Egeland, & Sroufe, 2003). Psychological endurance defined as pushing back to the negative factors of life and got power, develop and survive against the stressful factors (Masten, 2001).

Psychological endurance (resilience) is the process of building positive consequences from the interaction of risk factors and protective factors and occurs as the adjustment to the changes when faced with difficulties (Karaırmak, 2006). Risk factors may come from the factors related with individual (negative life events, chronic illness, stress, alcohol use, hyperactivity), family (illness or death of family members, communication problems among family members, poverty, violence) and environment (economic difficulties, violence, living in a place where there is a high crime rate, lower rate of school attendance, political violence) (Gizir, 2007; Atik, 2013). Protective factors (self-esteem, positive self-perception) are the factors that remove or eliminate the negative effects of risk factors (Iwaniec, 2006; Masten & Reed, 2002; as cited in Arslan, 2015). Protective factors consist of internal and external factors. Internal factors are divided into two categories which are biological (general health, general predisposition, gender, temperament) and psychological (cognitive capacity, coping ability, personal characteristics) factors. External factors are the factors that come from within the family (home environment, parental attitudes) and outside of the family (teachers, peers, and supportive adults such as youth leaders) (Atik, 2013). In addition, the term positive result is used for effective and healthy adaptation and developmental process of an individual despite of the environmental factors (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998).

It is argued that the common personal traits of psychologically resilient people are having effective problem-solving strategies, good relationships with their environment, accepting difficulties in life and aiming to cope with them, and having the power to control their own lives (Thompson, Arnkoff, & Carol, 2011). According to this view, highly resilient people engage in daily routines and pursue their jobs, keep their lives under their own control and perceive unexpected changes as a chance to develop. On the other hand, people with low level of resilience feel alone, show external locus of control, and resist to change (Klag & Bradley, 2004; Maddi & Khoshaba, 1994).

Occupational resilience is a sub-category of psychological resilience. Occupational resilience in teaching is very important because the first five years are seen as sensitive years of teaching. Approximately 50% of teachers give up teaching within the five years (Gallant & Riley, 2014). Psychological resilience in teachers includes capacity, process, and result components. From a professional development perspective, teachers who can successfully manage these components have excitement, motivation, and satisfactory results (Beltman, 2015; as cited in Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley, & Weatherby-Fell, 2016). Teachers' occupational resilience belief is defined as the belief to adapt to be a teacher despite of the difficulties, to deal with obstacles, and to maintain your commitment to the profession (Tagay & Demir, 2016). Teachers' resilience depends on the interaction of ideas, actions, relationships, and challenges. Teachers interactions with others and actions (such as problem-solving) act as a bumper that protects their thoughts from negative effects (Greenfield, 2015).

The factors affecting occupational resilience beliefs of teachers are divided into two categories as positive and negative factors. Stress, prior experiences of teachers, bureaucratic delays, lack of communication in the school environment and alienation, burnout, perception of low job satisfaction are examples for negative factors (Sezgin, 2012). In contrary, positive factors are support from colleagues, powerful and supportive managers, support from family and friends, student - teacher relationships, having an aim in life, hope, problem solving, reflecting and refreshing, self-efficacy, professional development, stress factors, and the ways used to diminish stress (Major & Savin-Baden, 2011).

Pre-service teachers learn ideals through their education; until they observe the real practices in their internship. When they face with the real practices, the level of their occupational resilience may decrease (Goldstein, 2005). The factors influencing occupational resilience of pre-service teachers are grouped in three categories. These are prior experiences of pre-service teacher, belief in doing a good job, uncertainties and perturbations (Thieman,

Marx, & Kitchel, 2014). İn-service and pre-service teachers use personal sources (such as motivation, social and emotional abilities) and coping strategies (such as problem solving, time management, protecting the balance between job and life) and gain adaptive and self-supportive strategies (such as job satisfaction and eagerness to do their job) in order to diminish negative effects of difficulties (Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley, & Weatherby-Fell, 2016).

One of the main aims of teacher education programs is to raise and graduate qualified educators who maintain satisfaction, motivation, excitement, and entertainment through the years. Some teachers maintain the quality through years whereas the others give up within the five years of teaching. Supporting psychological resilience in teacher education focuses on personal and environmental sources, strategies and results, and practices in teacher education (Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley, & Weatherby-Fell, 2016).

The occupational resilience of early childhood teachers is influenced from positive emotions (such as happiness, social commitment, and relationships, flexibility, being open to development) and negative emotions (such as unhappiness, feeling in depressed, stress). Positive emotions affect occupational resilience positively whereas negative emotions affect it negatively (Mei-Ju, Hsing-Ming, & Ho-Tang, 2016). Every year many teachers decide to give up teaching. The main reasons behind it are severe workload and stress (Barmby, 2006). The occupational resilience beliefs of early childhood teachers have an influence on the psychological resilience in children (Bouillet, Ivanec, & Milje, 2014). Hence, when we support early childhood teachers' positive emotions, it will affect children's psychological resilience positively.

In the world, there are two diverse views toward occupational resilience beliefs of early childhood teachers. According to Miljević-Riñički, Bouillet, & Cefai (2013), early childhood teachers feel themselves insecure, anxious, under pressure and often get ill due to the high-stress level. According to the opponent view, early childhood teachers feel good, make healthy decisions, and maintain a healthy life when compared with the other occupations (Ylitapio-Mäntylä, Uusiautti, & Määttä, 2012). From that point, it can be said that early childhood teachers' occupational resilience levels may change according to different cultures.

In Turkey, when we consider difficult economic conditions, natural disasters, and terrorism, the value of psychological resilience gains importance. Due to the lack of studies that address this topic in Turkey, there is a need for the study in which the aim is to compare the level of occupational resilience beliefs of in-service and pre-service early childhood teachers. In this context, it is thought that this research will contribute to the existing literature via comparing in-service early childhood teachers according to seniority and pre-service early childhood teachers according to the type of the type of university (state and private).

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to compare resilience of in-service and pre-service early childhood education teachers and to examine resilience according to different variables. Throughout the research, answers were searched for the questions:

1. Is there a statically significant difference between the resilience of in-service and pre-service early childhood teachers?
2. Is there a statically significant difference between the resilience of in-service early childhood teachers according to working time (seniority)?
3. Is there a statically significant difference between the resilience of pre-service early childhood education teachers according to the type of university enrolled (state or private)?

1.2. Limitations

1. The pre-service teachers in the study group are limited to 128 university students who enrolled in senior classes of 2 state and 2 private universities' early childhood education department in Istanbul.
2. The in-service teachers in the study group are limited to 147 volunteer early childhood education teachers.
3. Data collection is limited with 2016-2017 March and April months.
4. Findings are limited with the data gathered via "Occupational Resilience Beliefs Scale for Teacher Candidates".

2. Methodology
2.1. Research Design

In order to compare the resilience beliefs of in-service and pre-service early childhood education teachers and to examine their resilience according to different variables, Comparison Type of Relational Screening Model was used. Relational Scanning Models are research models which aim to find out the presence and/or degree of interchange between two or more variables (Karasar, 2016).

2.2. Study Group

The study group of the research is pre-service early childhood education teachers from two state and two private universities who are in their senior year and in-service early childhood teachers. The reasons behind choosing these universities were their location (all the universities in the study group were in Istanbul) and easy accessibility for the researchers. Based on the principle of volunteerism, 128 senior pre-service early childhood education teacher – 16 from Boğaziçi University, 46 from Marmara University, 37 from Kültür University, 29 from Maltepe University and 147 in-service early childhood education teachers participated in this research. The total population of the participants is 275.

2.3. Instrument

Occupational Resilience Beliefs Scale for Teacher Candidates is used as the data collection tool.

2.3.1. Occupational Resilience Beliefs Scale for Teacher Candidates

Occupational Resilience Beliefs Scale for Teacher Candidates was developed by Tagay and Demir (2016) to assess the occupational resilience of pre-service teachers. Validity and reliability analysis of the scale was done while developing that scale. Occupational Resilience Scale (ORS) consists of 26 items and single factor. Participants of the study were 272 university students, 168 (61.8%) female and 104 (32.8%) male. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were used to test the construct validity of the scale. It was found in construct validity studies that the scale consists of a single factor. It also showed that the model had high fit indices. Internal consistency coefficient was assessed by Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. The resulting coefficient was .93. In test re-test reliability study, Occupational Resilience Scale for Teacher Candidates was applied to 78 students enrolled in education faculty three weeks apart. The Pearson correlation coefficient between the scores obtained from the two applications was counted as .76. These values obtained as a result of the analysis applied to the data show that the occupational resilience beliefs scale developed for pre-service teachers is a valid and reliable scale (Tagay & Demir, 2016).

Cronbach alfa internal consistency coefficients for the study group are .97 for in-service teachers and .94 for pre-service teachers.

It is a 5-point Likert type of scale which consists of Strongly Disagree (1), Mildly Agree (2), Moderately Agree (3), Mostly Agree (4), Completely Agree (5) options. This scale has a single factor and includes no reverse item. High points taken from the scale means higher occupational resilience beliefs. The minimum point can be taken from the scale is 26 whereas the maximum point is 130 (Tagay & Demir, 2016).

2.4.Data Collection

Data was collected from senior pre-service early childhood education teachers from Marmara University, Kültür University and Maltepe University in their mandatory courses. Before fulfillment of the scale, pre-service teachers were informed by the researchers. Answering the scale took approximately 15 minutes. Boğaziçi University senior pre-service early childhood teachers had no mandatory course. Data from the university was collected online.

2.5.Data Analysis

Data is analyzed through statistical packet program. In order to assess whether the data is normally distributed, normality test analysis is done. It was seen that the data is normally distributed (p>.05). To assess whether there is a meaningful difference between resilience of in-service and pre-service early childhood teachers, whether there is a meaningful difference between resilience beliefs of in-service early childhood teachers according to working time (seniority), and whether there is a meaningful difference between resilience beliefs of pre-service early childhood education teachers according to the type of university enrolled (state or private), independent groups t-test is done.

3. Results

The results of the statistical analyses performed are given in accordance with the sub-purposes of the research. Table 1 shows the results of independent t-test analysis of whether there a meaningful difference between resilience beliefs of in-service and pre-service early childhood teachers.

Table 1. *Resilience beliefs of in-service and pre-service early childhood teachers*

	N	Mean	SD
In-service Early Childhood Teachers	147	110.9388	16.35447
Pre-service Early Childhood Education Teachers	128	104.9922	13.61940

**p<.01

Table 1 indicates the results of independent samples t-test which was conducted to see whether there is a significant difference between the resilience beliefs of in-service and pre-service early childhood education teachers. According to the results, the difference between the means of the resilience beliefs of pre-service and in-service early childhood teachers is statically significant (t (273)= 3,248; p=,001). This difference is in favor of in-service early childhood teachers ($\mu_{in-service}$= 110.9388; $\mu_{pre-service}$= 104.9922).

Table 2 shows the results of the independent t-test analysis of whether there a meaningful difference between the resilience beliefs of in-service early childhood teachers according to working time (seniority).

Table 2. *Resilience beliefs of in-service early childhood teachers according to working time (seniority)*

		N	Mean	SD	t	p
Occupational Resilience	1-5 year	71	108.7324	16.82342	-1.589	.114
	6 years and above	76	113.0000	15.73531		

Table 2 indicates the results of independent samples t-test which was conducted to see whether there is a significant difference between the resilience beliefs of in-service early childhood education teachers who had 1-5 years and 6 years and above seniority. According to the results, there is no statistical significance according to seniority ((t (145)= -1.589; p= .114).

Table 3 shows the results of independent t-test analysis of whether there a meaningful difference between the resilience beliefs of pre-service service early childhood teachers according to the type of university enrolled (state or private).

Table 3. *The resilience of pre-service early childhood teachers according to the type of university enrolled (state or private)*

		N	Mean	SD	t	p
Occupational Resilience	State	62	104.9355	13.15590	-.045	.964
	Private	66	105.0455	14.14152		

Table 3 indicates the results of independent samples t-test which was conducted to see whether there is a significant difference between the resilience beliefs of pre-service early childhood education teachers who enroll in state and private universities. According to the results, there is no statistical significance according to the type of university enrolled (state or private) (t (126)= -.045; p=.964).

4. Discussion

According to the results of the comparison of occupational resilience beliefs of in-service and pre-service early childhood education teachers;

1. There is a difference between the occupational resilience beliefs of in-service and pre-service early childhood education teachers. This difference is in favor of in-service teachers. In other words, occupational resilience beliefs of in-service early childhood education teachers found higher than pre-service early childhood education teachers'.

Teachers ' relationships with others, and actions (problem-solving, etc.) act as a bumper to protect their thoughts from negative effects (Greenfield, 2015). Early childhood education teachers feel themselves better, make healthy decisions, and pursue a healthy life when compared with the other groups of the society (Ylitapio-Mäntylä, Uusiautti, & Määttä, 2012). Being more experienced and having their own classrooms might contribute in-service teachers to have higher occupational resilience beliefs.

In southern Taiwan, there is a study related to positive and negative emotions, occupational resilience, and job stress conducted with 312 in-service early childhood education teachers. It was found when positive emotions are positively correlated with occupational resilience whereas negative emotions and job stress is negatively correlated with occupational resilience (Mei-Ju, Hsing-Ming & Ho-Tang, 2016). In Croatia, according to the study conducted with 191 in-service early childhood education teachers who pursue their master education, occupational resilience beliefs of early childhood teachers found high. Therefore, it was found that these teachers with high occupational resilience beliefs tend to support children's resilience more (Bouillet, Ivanec & Milje, 2014). The findings in the literature are similar to the findings of the study in terms of higher occupational resilience beliefs of in-service early childhood education teachers.

Pre-service early childhood teachers' lower occupational resilience beliefs may come from the undergraduate courses that are not taken yet, negative concerns about employment after graduation, only the designated practice days and times in a class that doesn't belong to, internships in the classroom teachers' expectations and student life material and spiritual challenges. Pre-service early childhood teachers see the ideal practices during their education, but they face with the real practices in their practicum. This conflictive situation releases their resilience (Goldstein, 2005).

According to the research conducted in Trakya University Education Faculty with 309 pre-service teachers, it is found that there is a positive relationship among resilience, social support, coping strategies, and well-being. Entrance to university is a difficult process in terms of living apart from family, adapting to a new place, and increased responsibilities (Malkoç ve Yalçın, 2015). Another research conducted in Missouri University Education Faculty with 10 senior pre-service teachers examined the factors affecting resilience via interviews. According to the findings, pre-service teachers' willingness and experiences to learn and to teach, not knowing how and what kind of activity plans they will prepare, fear of getting burned-out syndrome, the difficulty of the first week of being a teacher, and fear of providing inadequate education influence resilience of pre-service teachers (Thieman, Marx ve Kitchel, 2014).

In this research, it is found that in-service early childhood teachers' occupational resilience beliefs are higher than pre-service early childhood teachers' occupational resilience beliefs. This finding is compatible with the relevant literature.

2. There is no difference between the occupational resilience beliefs of in-service early childhood education teachers according to their working time (seniority). Another word, the seniority of teachers does not influence the occupational resilience beliefs of in-service early childhood education teachers.

According to the study conducted in Ankara with 347 class and branch teachers from 15 schools, teachers' occupational resilience beliefs do not differentiate according to their age, seniority, gender, and branch (Sezgin, 2012). According to the study conducted in Australia by Bowles ve Arnup (2016) with 160 primary and secondary school teachers, there is not found a difference among in-service teachers according to their seniority and gender. The finding of this research is consistent with the relevant literature.

However, according to the study conducted by Mansfield, Beltman, Broadley ve Weatherby-Fell (2016), the first 5 years of teaching are the sensitive years. 40-50% of teachers leave from their work within the first 5 years of their career. This finding is consistent with the relevant literature.

3. There is no statistical significance among the occupational resilience beliefs of pre-service early childhood education teachers according to the type of university enrolled (state or private). Another word, pre-service early childhood education teachers'

occupational resilience beliefs do not differentiate according to the type of university enrolled (state or private).

When the literature is examined, no research has found on the occupational resilience beliefs of the pre-service early childhood teachers according to the type of university enrolled (state or private). In this research, the study group has some common qualities such as taking education in the same city (Istanbul) and the same program (4 years of early childhood education). Although they are from different state and private universities, the common features of the pre-service teachers may contribute them to have similar occupational resilience beliefs.

4.1. Suggestions

4.1.1. Suggestions for Institutions and Organizations

- It is found that pre-service early childhood education teachers' occupational resilience beliefs are lower than in-service early childhood education teachers' occupational resilience beliefs. In order to increase the occupational resilience beliefs of pre-service early childhood education teachers, it is suggested for universities to add a course related with occupational resilience development.
- In order to support pre-service early childhood teachers' occupational resilience beliefs, it is suggested to provide some supportive activities, seminars, and practice-based educations.

4.1.2. Suggestions for Researchers

- In this study, in-service teachers' occupational resilience beliefs are compared according to their seniority. It is suggested to examine the occupational resilience beliefs of in-service teachers according to different variables such as the type of the school (state and private) they work in, city they work in, gender, age, socio-economic status, the type of university they graduated from, whether there is a student with special needs in the class, and class size.
- In this study, the occupational resilience beliefs of pre-service early childhood education teachers are compared according to the type of the university they enroll. It is suggested to examine their occupational resilience beliefs according to different variables such as the city where the university is located, gender, age, socio-economic status, in which year they started to university after graduation from high school, academic success, and grade.
- This study is conducted only with pre-service and in-service early childhood education teachers. It is suggested for the researchers to conduct a study with pre-service and in-service teachers from different branches and compare their occupational resilience beliefs.
- It is suggested to study the same topic within different universities, different cities, and larger study group.
- It is suggested to examine the occupational resilience beliefs of pre-service and in-service early childhood teachers through longitudinal studies. These kinds of longitudinal studies contribute to compare the occupational resilience beliefs of early childhood teachers within the time pass.

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ENDNOTES

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