

Investigation of Prospective Teachers Attitudes Towards the Study of Individuals with Neurodiversity in Terms of Various Variables

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Abstract:

Neurodiversity, viewed as a more inclusive idea beyond a disease and emphasizing the individual in assessing various developmental contexts, is defined as a viewpoint claiming that the human brain and mind exhibit countless variations, with each person of the human species developing unique neurocognitive functions. At the same time, neurodiversity highlights that there is no absolute truth or singular ‘normal,’ and it has begun to supplant the term “disability” in recent national and international literature; this concept is influencing every scientific field and associated disciplines addressing mental health, reframing neurological conditions and various developmental processes as not being a disease or deficiency, thus alleviating heavy burdens imposed on both individuals and society. One of these disciplines is the field of education, including the field of teacher training. The industrial revolution and the rapid industrialization it brought with it have led to an increase in the rates of neurodiversity as a result of occupational accidents, in addition to neurodiversity caused by birth. Over time, this increase has resulted in the inclusion of individuals with neurodiversity as a disadvantaged group in the employment policies of nations. Although the participation of individuals with neurodiversity in the labor force supports them to increase their quality of life and integrate with society, it still cannot prevent them from facing problems in many topics. One of these problems is the negative attitudes and prejudices in society towards the work of individuals with neurodiversity. One of the most powerful ways to turn these negative attitudes and prejudices into positive ones is education. Education is a way of shaping societies and transferring existing social characteristics to future generations. This orientation and transfer is realized by teachers, who are one of the most dynamic parts of the society and act as the locomotive of education, who basically act with the need to help and teach. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between the teaching profession and the attitudes formed in society towards the work of individuals with neurodiversity. The aim of this study is to examine the attitudes of pre-service teachers towards the work of individuals with neurodiversity

in terms of various variables. The study group of the research consisted of 665 pre-service teachers studying in various teaching branches at Marmara University Faculty of Education in the 2022–2023 academic year. In this study, since it is aimed to determine the attitudes of pre-service teachers towards the work of individuals with neurodiversity in terms of different variables, the general survey model was used in the descriptive survey model. In the collection of research data, the “Attitude Scale Towards the Work of People with Disabilities” (ESAS) developed by Aycan, Z. (2005) was used. The data obtained were analyzed according to the variables of age, gender, marital status, the branch of teaching to be graduated and whether there is a relative of an individual with neurodiversity in the family, and the findings obtained were discussed in the context of further research.

Keywords:

Prospective Teachers, Neurodiversity, Attitudes Towards the Study of Individuals with Neurodiversity, Attitude Scale Towards the Study of Individuals with Neurodiversity.