EXTENDED SUMMARY

The purpose of this research is to develop a valid and reliable attitude scale to measure teacher candidates’ attitudes towards Special Education lessons. For this purpose, the relevant literature review was conducted. As a result, a scale with 34-items in the items pool was formed. Draft scale was presented to expert opinion and necessary adjustments, based on the experts’ feedbacks were made. As a result, 33-item draft scale was formed. The draft scale was applied to 171 teacher candidates, studying in the departments of Primary School Teaching, Turkish Teaching and Educational Sciences at Kafkas University, in the fall semester of 2014-2015 academic year.

The validity of the scale was completed in two stages. First, expert opinion was taken for the content validity. Second, for the construct validity, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were performed. The results of the exploratory factor analysis were shown that the scale, which was consisted of 15 items, fit under the three factor categories. It was determined that factor load values ranged between .549 and .779, and 52.971% of the total variance was explained by exploratory factor analysis. The result of the exploratory factor analysis was also shown that the data collection tool was the construct validity. Additionally, the results of the exploratory factor analysis and the distribution of the items were analyzed in terms of the content. As a result of this process, the factors were named. Three items, which were located in the first factor, were named as “believing”. Seven items, which were located in the second factor, were named as “negative attitude”. Finally, five items, which were located in the third factor, were named as “caring”.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (DFA) was used to test the results of the AFA analysis. According to the result of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (DFA), compliance index values were as follows: NNFI=0.92; IFI=.93; CFI=.93; RMSEA=.056; GFI=.91; AGFI=.87; RMR=.061; SRMR= .069. When these index values were compared to the critical values, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (DFA) compliance index values were found to be verifying the three-factor structure as a result of exploratory factor analysis.

Reliability analysis was also conducted to test the reliability of the scale. As a result, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient for the whole scale was .823. Reliability coefficient, which is related to the three subscales, was also calculated. For the first factor it was .634, for the second factor it was .783, and finally for the third factor it was .760. This result showed that believing, negative attitude and caring subscales were “fairly reliable” and the whole scale was “extremely reliable”. Additionally, independent samples t-test was applied between the lower group consisting of the 27% who got the lowest scores and the upper group consisting of 27% who got the highest scores. Spearman Brown correlation coefficient and Split-Half correlation coefficient values for two-half test reliability was also calculated. Spearman Brown correlation value was .790 and Guttman Split-Half value was .790. Lastly, corrected total substance correlations of each item were calculated. It was seen that corrected total substance correlations of each item ranged between 0.264 and 0.594.

As a result of these analysis reports, the scale might considered to be valid and reliable instrument to determine teacher candidates’ attitudes towards Special Education lessons. When related literature was reviewed, there have been only a number of studies related to special education. In addition to these studies, it might be considered that the present study developed an attitude scale for Special Education, may contribute to the education field. Therefore, it might be considered to contribute to special education field of attitude scale development studies towards the special education lesson of teacher candidates.