

PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS TEACHING PROFESSION AT TRAKYA UNIVERSITY

Yildirim Bayazit
Trakya University

Abstract. The aim of this study was investigate prospective teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession at the Education Faculty at Trakya University with respect to the gender and disciplines. In the present study, the data was collected from 120 prospective teachers from Science and Technology Education and Computer and Instructional Technology Education departments as well as from pedagogical formation certificate program students graduated from Faculty of Arts and Sciences. The data was collected by the „Attitude Measurement Scale for Teaching Profession“ developed by Ustuner (2006). The findings revealed that female prospective teachers had more positive attitude towards teaching, and science education and formation students' attitudes were more positive than that of computer education students.

Keywords: attitudes towards teaching, gender, disciplines, teaching profession, prospective teachers

Introduction

Teaching is a profession that requires being willing and enthusiastic about educating people. To be able to perform this profession effectively, one of the necessary qualifications might be to enjoy the profession and to have a positive attitude towards it (Tanel, Sengoren, & Tanel, 2007). Papanastasiou (2002) defines attitude as a person's positive or negative emotional tendency towards objects, people, places, cases, and ideas (cited in Capri & Celikkaleli, 2008).

Attitude towards a profession has an effect on success and satisfaction (Cakir, 2005; Terzi & Tezci, 2007), especially when that profession is teaching (Durmusoglu, Yanik & Akkoyunlu, 2009). Rimm-Kaufmann & Sawyer (2004) state that teachers' attitude influences their behaviors and practices in classes. A qualified teacher should not only have professional knowledge and skills, but also have positive attitude towards teaching (Cetin, 2006). When teacher candidates develop positive attitude towards teaching, they can perform their profession more effectively, motive their students easily, develop creative thinking, and be more open to new ideas (Celikoz & Cetin, 2004). When it is taken into account that the

quality of the teaching is up to the teacher, and the quality of the teacher is up to whether (s)he has a positive attitude towards the profession, it becomes clear why it is important to understand teachers' attitudes towards the profession.

There are several studies in the literature on prospective teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession (Bulut, 2009; Cakir, 2005; Capa & Cil, 2000; Pehlivan, 2008; Capri & Celikkaleli, 2008; Demirtas, Comert, & Ozer, 2011; Durmusoglu, Yanik, & Akkoyunlu, 2009; Kaya & Buyukkasap, 2005; Sen & Gogus, 2010; Tanel, Sengoren, & Tanel, 2007; Ustun, Erkan, & Akman, 2004). Some of these studies were conducted to investigate the level of the attitudes towards the teaching profession; some examined the relationship between the gender and the attitude while some others were conducted to examine whether program and/or disciplines made any difference on attitudes.

Studies in the literature on prospective teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession reveal that prospective teachers generally had positive attitude towards the teaching profession (Kaya & Buyukkasap, 2005; Ustun, Erkan, & Akman, 2004; Pehlivan, 2008; Terzi & Tezci, 2007; Bulut, 2009; Ozder et al., 2010). Pehlivan (2008) and Ustun, Erkan, and Akman (2004) found that prospective teachers' attitudes towards teaching were high. In their study Dogan & Coban (2009) concluded that their study findings indicated positive attitude of prospective teachers toward teaching profession. In another study on classroom teacher candidates, Ilter and Koksalan (2011) stated that prospective teachers generally had positive attitude towards teaching, but their attitude scores were not that high.

With respect to the effect of the gender on the attitude towards teaching, several studies in the literature indicate that female prospective teachers had higher positive attitude (Capri & Celikkaleli, 2008; Ilter & Koksalan, 2011; Dogan & Coban, 2009; Bozdogan, Aydin, & Yildirim, 2007; Pehlivan, 2008; Tekerek & Polat, 2011; Gokce & Sezer, 2012; Saglam, 2008; Terzi & Tezci, 2007). There are also studies indicating gender difference in favor of females in the sub dimensions of the attitude scales (Kaya & Buyukkasap, 2005; Capa & Cil, 2000). Additionally, in Gurbuz and Kisoglu (2007)'s study on faculty of arts and science students and education faculty students, gender difference was found in favor of education faculty students. In a study by Durmusoglu, Yanik, and Akkoyunlu (2009) on Turkish and Azerbaijani prospective teachers, gender difference was found in Turkish group in favor of females.

There are also studies in the literature revealing no gender differences with respect to the attitude towards teaching (Tanel, Sengoren, & Tanel, 2007; Demirtas, Comert, & Ozer, 2011; Bulut, 2009; Ozder, Kanedrali, & Zeki, 2010). At this point it should be stated that in some studies gender difference was found only in some sub-dimensions of the attitude scales (Kaya & Buyukkasap, 2005; Capa & Cil, 2000). More specifically, although Capa and Cil (2000) found no gender difference, they also underlined that female students had higher attitude scores with respect to the „like“ and „respect“ sub-dimensions of the attitude scale. Similarly, although

Sen and Gogus (2010) found no significant gender difference between the attitude scores of education faculty and faculty of arts and sciences students, they concluded that gender did make a difference among each group in favor of females. In another study by Gurbuz and Kisoglu (2007), gender difference was found only among education faculty students, but not among faculty of arts and science students.

When it comes to the effect of the program and/or disciplines on prospective teachers' attitudes towards the profession, the literature also reveals different results. Some of the studies in the literature concluded that there was no difference with respect to the program/disciplines (Cakir, 2005; Capri & Celikkaleli, 2008; Demirtas et al., 2011; Gurbuz & Kisoglu, 2007). On the other hand, some other studies indicated that there was found a significant difference among attitude scores of prospective teachers from different branches (Bulut, 2009; Ozder et al., 2010; Gokce & Sezer, 2012; Terzi & Tezci, 2007; Sen & Gogus, 2010). More specifically, in those studies, Bulut (2009) found that prospective teachers' attitude scores in social studies were higher than that of science teaching students; Ozder et al. (2010) found that early childhood education students' attitudes were higher than that of primary education students; Gokce and Sezer (2012) concluded that among 15 different branches, the highest attitude scores were belonged to the early childhood education students while the lowest scores were belonged to French teaching students; Terzi and Tezci (2007) found that social studies students had higher attitude scores than that of science and mathematics teaching students; and Sen and Gogus (2010) concluded that prospective teachers from faculty of arts and sciences enrolled in Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program had higher attitude scores than that of students from education faculty.

When it is taken into account that having positive attitude towards teaching as future teachers is vital, it might be understood why prospective teachers' attitudes towards teaching is worth examination. In order to improve prospective teachers' attitudes towards teaching and the quality of teaching, it should be the first step to examine their attitudes (Capa & Cil, 2000). Considering the importance of prospective teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession, in this study, our aim was to examine the effect of gender on attitude, and investigate whether there were any differences among different disciplines.

Methods

In order to examine prospective teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession, in this study, we tried to answer the following research questions:

- 1) Is there a significant difference in the mean attitude scores for female and male prospective teachers?
- 2) Is there a significant difference in attitude scores for Computer and Instruction Technology, Science and Technology, and Pedagogical Formation students?

In this study, in order to examine the prospective teachers' attitudes towards the profession, the data was collected from 120 prospective teachers from science education and computer education (CEIT) departments as well as from pedagogical

formation certificate program including students graduated from faculty of arts and sciences. The data was collected by the "Attitude Measurement Scale for Teaching Profession" developed by Ustuner (2006). This scale was a 5 Likert-type measurement scale with 34 items. The scoring was 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for not sure, 2 for disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree. Ustuner (2006) stated that the KMO value of the scale was .91, the Bartlet test value was 7835, and the inconsistency value was .93 indicating that this one-dimension scale was reliable and valid for use. Terzi and Tezci (2007)'s study also indicated that the scale was reliable and valid, and could be used without any modifications on the items.

As stated before, in this study, the data was collected from 120 prospective teachers including science education and computer education students, and pedagogical formation program students. Among the participants, 72.5% was female (87 students) and 27.5% was male (33). Computer education students were 15.8% of the participants while 31.7% of the participants were from science education department and 52.5% of them were from the pedagogical formation course. Among the 87 female participants, 49 were pedagogical formation students, 29 were science education students, and 9 were computer education students. Among the 33 male participants, 14 of them were pedagogical formation, 9 were science education, and 10 were computer education students.

The prospective teachers from the science teaching and computer technologies program were in their last year of four-year program. Those programs raise prospective teachers for secondary school education. The prospective teachers from the pedagogical formation class were science-education faculty graduates, and were taking the formation course at the faculty of education to be able to become teachers at secondary schools.

The data was collected through the survey during the spring semester in 2012–2013 academic year, and was analyzed quantitatively. The survey was administered during the last week of the semester in class hours. Demographic information of the participants is given in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The distribution of the participants according to their gender and disciplines

	Gender	
	f	%
Female	87	72,5
Male	33	27,5
Total	120	100

	Discipline	
	f	%
CEIT	19	15,8
Formation	63	52,5
Science and Technology	38	31,7

Results

Prospective teachers' attitudes towards the profession with respect to the gender

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the attitude scores for females and males. As seen from the Table 2 below, the independent samples t-test results indicated that the mean score (X) for females was 114,8 while it was 110 for males. The results revealed a significant difference in favor of females ($t=1,96$, $p<.01$).

Table 2. T-test results with respect to the participants' gender

Gender	N	X	S	SD	t	P
Female	87	114,83	11,4	118	1,96	,001
Male	33	110,00	13,4			

Prospective teachers' attitudes towards the profession with respect to the discipline

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to examine the attitude scores of the participants from different disciplines (CEIT, Science & Technology, and Pedagogical Formation Program). As seen from the Table 3 below, the ANOVA test results indicated a significant difference among the participants' attitudes towards the teaching profession with respect to their disciplines ($F_{(2-117)} = 13,66$).

Table 3. ANOVA test results with respect to the participants' disciplines

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Between Groups	3354,46	2	1677,232	13,664	,000	
Within Groups	14361,527	117	122,748			
Total	17715,992	119				

In order to examine the difference among the groups, post-hoc comparisons using the Scheffe test was administered. Scheffe-test results indicated that the mean scores of pedagogical formation students ($X= 117,60$, $N= 63$) and science and technology students ($X= 112,12$, $N=38$) were higher than that of computer education students ($X= 102,68$, $N=19$). Table 4 indicates that formation and science department students' attitudes towards the teaching profession were more positive than that of computer education students.

Table 4. Scheffe test results with respect to participants' disciplines

(I) Department	(J) Department	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Science	Ceit	9,44737*	3,11298	,012	1,7290	17,1658
	Formation	-5,47160	2,27565	,060	-11,1139	,1707
Ceit	Science	-9,44737*	3,11298	,012	-17,1658	-1,7290
	Formation	-14,91896*	2,89979	,000	-22,1088	-7,7292
Formation	Science	5,47160	2,27565	,060	-1707	11,1139
	Ceit	14,91896*	2,89979	,000	7,7292	22,1088

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, the attitude of prospective teachers towards the teaching profession at Trakya University Education Faculty was examined in terms of gender and disciplines. The results indicated that the mean score of females was significantly higher than that of males, and thus females had higher positive attitude towards the profession. Several studies in the literature also indicate similar results (Capri & Celikkaleli, 2008; Ilter & Koksalan, 2011; Dogan & Coban, 2009; Bozdogan, Aydin, & Yildirim, 2007; Pehlivan, 2008; Tekerek & Polat, 2011; Gokce & Sezer, 2012; Saglam, 2008; Terzi & Tezci, 2007). More specifically, Terzi and Tezci (2007) found that girls had significantly higher attitudes towards teaching compared to males. This finding is not surprising since teaching profession has always been regarded as a female profession. Additionally, the natural characteristics of females might have an effect on their attitudes.

Our findings also revealed a significant difference on prospective teachers' attitudes from different disciplines. More specifically, Science and Technology and Pedagogical Formation students' attitudes were found more positive than that of Computer and Instructional Technology students. The literature indicates different results with respect to the effect of program/disciplines on attitudes towards teaching. Some of the studies in the literature conclude that there is no difference with respect to the program/disciplines (Cakir, 2005; Capri & Celikkaleli, 2008; Demirtas et al., 2011; Gurbuz & Kisoglu, 2007) while some others indicate significant differences. To give an example, in Sen and Gogus (2010)'s study, prospective teachers from faculty of arts and sciences enrolled in Pedagogical Formation Certificate Program had higher attitude scores than that of students from education faculty. In our study, while formation students had higher attitude scores than that of CEIT students, there was no statistical difference between the attitudes scores of formation students and science students. This finding might be explained with the idea that CEIT graduates generally prefers

to work at market, and they do not want to work as teachers. The finding that formation students' and science and technology students' attitudes were higher than that of CEIT students might be explained with the idea that their final aim was to become teachers.

To conclude, in order to educate prospective teachers with positive attitudes towards teaching profession, their attitudes should be examined and new ways to improve their attitudes should be suggested. If gender has a significant effect on prospective teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession in favor of females, it is suggested that male prospective teachers' attitudes should also be increased. Further studies should be conducted to understand why Computer and Instruction Technology students' attitudes were not that high as the students from other disciplines. For more generalizable results, further studies should be conducted at different universities.

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Assist. Prof. Dr. Yildirim Bayazit

 Trakya University
Education Faculty
Edirne, Turkey
E-mail: bayazity@gmail.com