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The effects of pre-service teachers' interpersonal relationship dimensions on their attitudes towards the teaching profession

Aysem Seda Onen ^{a*}, Fatma Merve Ulusoy^a

^a *Education Faculty, Hacettepe University, Ankara, 06800, Turkey*

Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine the effects of interpersonal relationship dimensions of pre-service teachers on their attitudes towards teaching. The sampling of the study consisted of 230 pre-service teachers studying at Hacettepe University, Education Faculty during the 2011- 2012 academic year. "The Scale of Interpersonal Relationship Dimensions" (Imamoglu and Aydin, 2009) and "The Scale of Attitudes towards Teaching" (Cetin, 2006) were used as data collection tools in the study. The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of "SIRD" was found to be between 0.78 and 0.85. The reliability coefficient of "SATT" was determined to be 0.95.

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1. Introduction

One of the traditional topics of studies on teacher training is the behaviors that teachers should have attained. The question on whether teaching is a branch of science or art has been a matter of discussion among various communities, where both views have supporters. According to the supporters of teaching as art, such qualifications as skills, love, creativity and inspiration have great importance, whereas the supporters of teaching as science value knowledge and skills. Both views make sense in their own terms. In practice, it is very easy to meet in common terms as they talk about different concepts. While one group is talking about characteristic features, the other group mentions knowledge and skills. These two views meet in the conclusion that teaching requires some characteristic features along with skills and knowledge. Although it is difficult to teach characteristic features, skills and knowledge could be taught (Yuksel, 2001). According to Sullivan (1953), personality is a product of interpersonal relationships that could not be analyzed at the absence of relationship situations and could only be revealed at the presence of other people (Adapted by Genctan, 1998). Plutchik (1997) defines interpersonal relationships as the styles of feeling, thought and behavior in the relationships of individuals with others. Interpersonal relationships play an important role in human life. Relationship is the behaviors displayed by an individual towards another individual or towards other individuals (Leary, 1957; Adapted by Gocener, 2010). Interpersonal style is the major behavioral attitude and personality pattern displayed by an individual within various relationships and situations,

* Ayşem Seda Onen. Tel.: 0312 297 67 83; fax: 0312 297 86 00

E-mail address: aysemseda@gmail.com

different from his/her behaviors in certain situations. It is inevitable for an individual's personality style to affect his/her harmonious attitudes in their interpersonal interactions (Kiesler, 1983).

Individuals are affected by their relationships in their daily lives, which also affects the other party. These relationships with others lead to the construction of interpersonal relationship styles, which directly affect individuals' life qualities as well as their satisfaction (Gocener, 2010). It is one of the basic requirements of human beings to interact with others and develop interpersonal relationships. Initiating, developing and continuing interpersonal relationships have important and positive contributions to the psychological states of individuals along with understanding others and willing to be understood by them. That is why, it is important to emphasize that an individual's success or failure in an interpersonal relationship positively or negatively affect his/her psychological wellness states (Erozkan, 2009; Gocener, 2010). The qualifications of pre-service teachers depend on their attitudes towards teaching as a profession as well as their competence in their fields. Attitude is the positive or negative emotional tendency of an individual towards a certain object, situation or event, people, places and ideas (Papanastasiou, 2002; Ipek & Bayraktar, 2004). The attitude of an individual towards a profession directly affects his/her achievement or satisfaction regarding that profession. When the profession is teaching, attitudes become more important (Capri & Celikkaleli, 2008).

A pre-service teacher with positive attitudes towards his/her profession would appreciate the profession and do his/her best to accomplish the mission. Pre-service teachers with negative attitudes would reflect this on his/her behaviors in teaching, which would affect the whole education system and students in particular. According to Sunbul (2003), teachers are role models for their students. Students attain attitudes and values in line with the connections they make through their interactions with their peers and adult role models in line with their motivations. Therefore, attitudes of pre-service teachers towards teaching not only affect themselves but also have great impressions on their students in general. Interpersonal relationship dimensions are among important factors to be analyzed when doing research on attitudes of pre-service teachers towards their profession. Although there are many research studies in the literature on teaching profession, none of them speak about the affects of interpersonal relationship dimensions of pre-service teachers on their attitudes towards teaching. This study aims to determine the effects of pre-service teachers' interpersonal relationship dimensions on their attitudes towards their profession.

2. Method

2.1. Sampling

The sampling of the study consists of 230 pre-service teachers studying at Hacettepe University in turkey within the 2011 – 2012 academic year. Participating pre-service teachers are students of IT Education (ITE), Physics Education, Math Education, Chemistry Education and Biology Education departments. The sampling of the study was determined according to the convenience sampling model.

2.2. Data collection tools

2.2.1. The scale of interpersonal relationship dimensions (SIRD)

The scale, which aims to reveal pre-service teachers' interpersonal relationship dimensions, was developed by Imamoglu and Aydin (2009) in order to evaluate and determine the interpersonal relationships. It is has a 5-point Likert-type pattern. It consists of 53 items with four factors. Based on the cultural structure, the scale was constructed in such a way to reveal the statements of the individuals living in the current structure and has a characteristic to allow for group and individual application. The structural validity of SIRD, which was developed through content analysis technique, was tested via the basic components method and concluded with a structure of four factors. These factors were named as approval, empathy, trust for others, and emotional awareness, explaining the 36.04% of the total variance with medium-level relations to each other. The reliability analysis concluded that the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients of SIRD were between .78 and .85, while test-repetition test values changed between .62 and .96.

2.2.2 The scale of attitudes towards teaching (SATT)

The scale to be used with the aim of determining the attitudes of pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching was developed by Cetin (2006) in 5-point Likert-type. The scale consists of 35 statements with three factors named as love, value and coherence. The structural validity of the scale was analyzed through factor analysis, which concluded with factor loadings changing between 0.48 and 0.80. The Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) value was calculated to be 0.95 and the internal consistency coefficient calculated for the reliability study concluded with a Cronbach Alpha value of $\alpha=0.95$.

3. Findings

3.1. Findings related to the interpersonal relationship dimensions

The average scores of participating pre-service teachers obtained the Scale of Interpersonal Relationship Dimensions and their standard deviations were calculated via SPSS 15 in order to evaluate their interpersonal relationships and determine their dimensions. Findings are summarized on Table 1.

Table 1. Analysis of pre-service teachers' scores of the scale of interpersonal relationship dimensions according to the type of education programs they attend

Interpersonal relationship dimension		ITE (n=48)	Math (n=42)	Biology (n=46)	Physics (n=46)	Chemistry (n=48)	Total (n=230)
Empathy	\bar{x}	3.43	3.55	3.40	3.57	3.39	3.47
	sd	.55	.47	.51	.43	.42	.48
Approval dependence	\bar{x}	3.31	3.41	3.27	3.46	3.23	3.33
	sd	.41	.45	.40	.34	.39	.40
Trust for others	\bar{x}	3.23	3.34	3.13	3.28	3.19	3.23
	sd	.383	.41	.48	.44	.43	.43
Emotional awareness	\bar{x}	3.31	3.39	3.25	3.49	3.20	3.33
	sd	.44	.39	.40	.55	.45	.46

As Table 1 displays the average scores of pre-service teachers obtained from the scale are different according to their academic program types. In order to determine these differences according to the academic program types ANOVA, single direction variance analyses were conducted. The results of this analysis are displayed on Table 2.

Table 2. Single-direction variance analysis made according to the academic program types of pre-service teachers on their average scale scores

Interpersonal relationship dimensions	Source of Variance	Sum of squares	sd	Average of squares	F	p
Approval dependence	Intergroup	1.584	4	.396	2.42	.04
	Intragroup	36.734	225	.163		
	Total	38.317	229			
Emotional Awareness	Intergroup	2.481	4	.620	2.99	.02
	Intragroup	46.619	225	.207		
	Total	49.100	229			

As Table 2 displays, the analysis concluded that there are significant relationships between the dimension scores of pre-service teachers for Approval Dependence and Emotional Awareness [$F_{(4-225)} = 2.42$ and 2.99 , $p < .05$]. In other words, the interpersonal relationship scores of pre-service teachers changed in these factors according to their academic program types. In order to determine the academic programs that this difference is observed the Sheffe test was applied. According to the results, significant relationship was found between the average scores of pre-service teachers studying at Physics education and Chemistry Education within Approval Dependence and Emotional Awareness factors.

3.2. Findings related to the attitudes towards teaching

Attitudes of pre-service teachers towards teaching were compared according to their types after the analysis of the average scores obtained and their standard deviations, which was displayed on Table 3.

Table 3. The analysis of attitude scores of pre-service teachers according to their academic program types

Academic Program Type	N	\bar{x}	sd
ITE	48	3.40	.764
Math	42	3.72	.685
Biology	46	3.34	.621
Physics	46	3.64	.681
Chemistry	48	3.49	.643
Total	230	3.51	.689

Table 3 displays that pre-service teachers of math had the highest attitude score averages in terms of their attitudes towards teaching while that of the biology teachers were the lowest. This difference was analyzed through ANOVA for determining any possible statistical significance and the results were displayed on Table 4.

Table 4. Single-directional variance analysis of attitude scores of pre-service teachers regarding the attitudes towards teaching

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Average of Squares	F	p
Intergroup	4.572	4	1.14	2.46	.046
Intragroup	104.439	225	.464		
Total	109.011	229			

As seen on Table 4, the single-directional variance analysis concluded that there are significant differences between the average scores of pre-service teachers according to their program types in terms of their attitudes towards teaching [$F_{(4-225)} = 2.46, p < .05$]. Sheffe test was administered in order to determine the specific program types resulting with this difference. The results showed that there were significant differences between the attitude scores of pre-service teachers of math and that of the pre-service teachers of biology.

3.3. Findings related to relationship scanning

The research also sought answers to the question on a potential relationship between the Scale of Interpersonal Relationship Dimensions and the Scale of Attitudes towards Teaching. Therefore, the numeric values obtained from the data collection tools were summarized on Table 5.

Table 5. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) values for the scale of attitudes towards teaching and the scale of interpersonal relationship dimensions participated by pre-service teachers

		Attitudes towards teaching	Empathy	Approval dependence	Trust for others	Emotional awareness
Attitudes towards teaching	r	1	.126	.154(*)	.068	.133(*)
	p	.	.056	.019	.302	.044
Empathy	r	.126	1	.359(**)	.447(**)	.434(**)
	p	.056	.	.000	.000	.000
Approval dependence	r	.154(*)	.36 (**)	1	.439(**)	.569(**)
	p	.019	.000	.	.000	.000
Trust for others	r	.068	.44(**)	.439(**)	1	.457(**)
	p	.302	.000	.000	.	.000
Emotional awareness	r	.133(*)	.43(**)	.569(**)	.457(**)	1
	p	.044	.000	.000	.000	.

* 0.05 significance level. ** 0.01 significance level.

Table 5 concludes that there are significant and positive relationships between pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching and interpersonal relationships within the Approval Dependence and Emotional Awareness dimensions ($r = .154$, $r = .133$; $p < .01$).

4. Conclusion and Discussion

The analysis made at the end of the study showed that physics teachers scored highest in the Scale of Interpersonal Relationship Dimensions within the Approval Dependence and Emotional Awareness factors. Approval Dependence factor is related to valuing other people's views, attitudes and values rather than cultural values in terms of relationships of individuals. The high score of pre-service teachers of physics do not act selfishly in a self-centered manner and act according to the opinions of other individuals. Similarly, Emotional Awareness implies individuals valuing the emotions of others rather than the emotions of their own. Therefore, pre-service teachers of physics display an attitude that is away from self-centered manners and close to the emotional tendencies of others, taking the behaviors and feelings of others in priority. The Trust for Others factor was rather high for pre-service teachers of math. There are significant and positive relationships between pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching and interpersonal relationships within the Approval Dependence and Emotional Awareness dimensions looking at the relationship between their scores from the two scales applied. It was determined that, as the attitudes of pre-service teachers towards teaching improved, their personality moved away from a self-centered and emotional state.

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