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Pre-Service Teachers' Teaching-Learning Conceptions and Their Attitudes towards Teaching Profession

HILAL BILGIN and NECDET AYKAC

Abstract

The aim of this study is to evaluate the teaching and learning conceptions of pre-service teachers and their attitudes towards teaching profession in terms of some variables. The study was designed as a relational survey model. The sample of the study consists of 406 first grade and senior university students, namely pre-service teachers, studying in Turkey. Criterion sampling method was applied in order to select the participants. Data of the study was collected through the "Teaching-Learning Conceptions Scale" and "Attitudes towards Teaching Profession Scale". Descriptive statistics, t-test, ANOVA and correlation analyses were used to analyze the data. In order to analyze the data, descriptive statistics, t-test, ANOVA and correlation analyses were used. According to the results obtained from this study, pre-service teachers' constructivist teaching and learning conception are higher than their scores of traditional conception. Moreover, pre-service teachers' teaching and learning conceptions do not differ significantly in terms of gender and grade variables, whereas they differ significantly according to their departments. In addition, pre-service teachers' levels of professional attitude can be regarded as positive and their attitudes towards teaching profession differ significantly in terms of gender, grade and department variables. Lastly, it was concluded that there was a positive correlation between pre-service teachers' constructivist teaching, learning conceptions, and their attitudes towards teaching profession while a negative relationship was observed between their traditional conceptions and professional attitudes.

Keywords: teaching-learning conceptions, pre-service teachers, professional attitudes, teaching profession.



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Introduction

A country is required to have a qualified labor force in the first place in order to be regarded as one of the developed countries. Undoubtedly, reaching a qualified human source is considered to depend on creating a qualified educational system. Also, the success of the educational system is considerably attached to the quality of the trained teachers. Teaching profession is described as a professional field of occupation which has not only social, cultural, economic, scientific, and technological dimensions, but also requires academic study and professional formation based on exclusive specialized knowledge and skills (Erden, 1998). When the variables identifying teachers' behaviors are investigated and analyzed within the scope of organizational behavior, it can be indicated that one of the factors determining teachers' behaviors is the attitude of the individual who is performing the teaching profession towards his profession. Attitudes, one of the indicators of behavior, are regarded as valuable for research and investigation (Ustuner, 2006).

In this context, it is really important that pre-service teachers who will be teachers in the near future, have developed positive attitudes towards teaching profession as a result of their teacher training education and by this way, they will be able to perform their professions affectively by internalizing a teaching and learning conception appropriate for the current educational system. Positive attitudes towards teaching profession will probably affect all the components related with the teaching profession when pre-service teachers begin teaching (Can, 2010). Pre-service teachers having positive attitudes towards teaching profession are assumed to be successful teachers in each and every sense. Hence, Celikoz and Cetin (2004) remarked that when pre-service teachers have positive attitudes towards teaching profession, they will be able to perform their jobs and conduct their duties thoroughly, develop creative-thinking and research skills, motivate students more easily, transfer verbal and non-verbal messages to students satisfactorily, use the time effectively, and lastly, they will probably be more open to new ideas. That's why it is necessary that pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession are investigated and their attitudes have changed from negative into positive where necessary (Semerci & Semerci, 2004). Higher education institutions which train teachers should have an objective to train successful, idealistic, and qualified teachers having effective teaching characteristics and positive attitudes towards teaching profession (Tekneci, 2010). From this aspect, it is quite important that pre-service teachers are trained well enough that they have both created their teaching and learning conceptions via their academic autonomy and also developed positive attitudes towards teaching profession.

The conceptions about teaching and learning can be defined as the preferences of teachers regarding the ways of teaching and learning (Chan & Elliot, 2004). In other words, teaching-learning conceptions refer to the beliefs held by teachers about their own educational applications (Chan, 2003). Generally, it can be identified that there are two main opposite teaching-learning conceptions in education (Schunk, 2008). These two opposite conceptions are called traditional and constructivist teaching and learning conceptions (Aypay, 2011). According to the traditional conception, one of the teaching-learning conceptions, teachers, being the unique source of information, transfer the information to students whereas students just receive this information without questioning (Ozden, 2003). Therefore, teachers having traditional conception apply teacher-oriented teaching strategies in their classes and regard students as the passive receivers of information (Chan & Elliot,

2004; Hosgorur & Apikoglu, 2013). On the other hand, according to constructivist conception, the other teaching-learning conception, information cannot be identified to be independent from the individual. Constructivist learning involves an active process in which individuals build up new meanings by combining new ideas with their existing information (Jones & Araje, 2002). For the sake of the quality of education, it is really important for teachers and pre-service teachers to recognize their conceptions about teaching and learning before beginning their professional lives. Furthermore, there may be changes in the teaching-learning conceptions of pre-service teachers, who will be teachers in the near future, in parallel with the developments taking place in the field of education.

As new approaches have emerged in the field of education in recent years, a transition from traditional education approach to constructivist approach has been experienced and thereby, important steps have been taken in transferring from teacher-oriented to student-oriented approach. Together with these changes and developments, it can be estimated that there might have occurred some changes in teaching-learning conceptions of teachers and pre-service teachers and as a result, in their attitudes towards teaching profession. That's why it can be stated that determining the teaching and learning conceptions of pre-service teachers and their attitudes towards teaching profession may help to predict their success and job satisfaction before they actually start as teachers. Also, it can contribute to the efforts to develop and enhance teaching profession. Therefore, the aim of this current study is to evaluate the teaching and learning conceptions of pre-service teachers and their attitudes towards teaching profession in terms of three variables. In accordance with this primary aim, the research questions below were tried to be answered throughout the study:

- What are the levels of pre-service teachers' teaching and learning conceptions?
- Do pre-service teachers' teaching and learning conceptions differ significantly in terms of gender, grade, and department variables?
- What are the levels of pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession?
- Do pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession differ significantly in terms of gender, grade and department variables?
- Is there a significant relationship between pre-service teachers' teaching and learning conceptions and their attitudes towards teaching profession?

Methodology

The research was conducted by using relational survey model (Karasar, 2005). Relational model is a research model type which aims to determine the existence of the simultaneous difference between two or more variables, or to indicate the degree of that difference (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Alken, 2003).

The population of this study consists of total 984 first grade and fourth grade university students, namely pre-service teachers studying in the Faculty of Education of Mugla Sitki Kocman University, Turkey, during the 2013-2014 academic year. The sample size was calculated as 276 for 95% confidence level. Taking into consideration that there might be a lower return rate or imprecise completion of scales, it was decided to apply the forms to 450 pre-service teachers studying in the departments of Turkish Language Teaching, Primary School Teaching, Social Sciences Teaching, Science Teaching, English Language Teaching, and German Language Teaching. Participants returned 406 valid forms and therefore the study

was conducted with these valid forms. In identifying the sample, criterion sampling method was applied and the criterion was that the participants should be studying in either first grade or fourth grade in the Faculty of Education. The reason why first grade and senior students were chosen was in order to reveal whether or not there is a significant difference in the teaching and learning conceptions of pre-service teachers and their attitudes towards teaching profession between their first and last years of undergraduate education. The distribution of pre-service teachers in terms of *gender*, *grade* and *department* variables is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic features of the participants

Variables	Categories	N	%
Gender	1. Female	241	59.4
	2. Male	165	40.6
Department	1. Turkish Language Teaching	83	20.4
	2. Primary School Teaching	90	22.2
	3. Social Sciences Teaching	75	18.5
	4. Science Teaching	54	13.3
	5. English Language Teaching	53	13.1
	6. German Language Teaching	51	12.6
Grade	1. First Grade	211	52.0
	2. Fourth Grade	195	48.0
Total		406	100.0

In this study, the data was collected through the “Teaching-Learning Conceptions Scale” and the “Attitudes towards Teaching Profession Scale”.

The Teaching-Learning Conceptions Scale, which was developed by Chan and Elliot (2004) and adapted into Turkish by Aypay (2011), is a 5-point, Likert-type scale consisting of 30 items. The confirmatory factor analysis results of the scale demonstrate that the scale has acceptable values (GFI .93; AGFI .91; RMR .50; RMSEA .54). The Cronbach’s Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the total scale was calculated as .84. Moreover, Cronbach’s Alpha internal consistency coefficient for the first dimension, namely constructivist teaching-learning conception was calculated as .88 and .83 for the second dimension, namely traditional teaching-learning conception (Aypay, 2011). For this study, Cronbach’s Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .82 for the total scale, .74 for the first dimension, and .84 for the second dimension.

The Attitudes towards Teaching Profession Scale, which was developed by Cetin (2006), is a 5-point, Likert-type scale consisting of 35 items, 15 of which are negative and 20 positive. The lowest score that can be gathered from this scale is 35, whereas the highest one is 175. Scores above 119 are regarded as positive attitude; scores in the range 92-119 as neutral, and scores below 92 as negative attitude towards teaching profession. The scale has three dimensions called as affection, value, and harmony, and both total points and dimensional points can be calculated. The Cronbach’s Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .95 for the total scale, .95 for the dimension of affection, .81 for the dimension of value, and .76 for the dimension of harmony. For this study, Cronbach’s Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .96 for the total scale, .95 for the dimension of affection, .91 for the dimension of value, and .81 for the dimension of harmony.

After determining that all the variables distribute normally via Kolmogrow Smirnov test, descriptive statistics, t-test for dual comparisons, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for comparisons of three or more variables, were used in order to evaluate the teaching and learning conceptions of pre-service teachers and their attitudes towards teaching profession in terms of gender, grade, and department variables. For significant F values, Scheffe test was used so as to determine the source of significant difference. The significance level was accepted to be .05 for all the statistical analyses. In addition, Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between the teaching and learning conceptions of pre-service teachers and their attitudes towards teaching profession. Correlation coefficient as an absolute value, ranging from 0.70 to 1.00 was considered as a high correlation, 0.69 to 0.30 as moderate correlation, and 0.29 to 0.00 as a low correlation (Buyukozturk, 2009).

Findings

In this section, the findings have been presented by statistical analyses of the data collected. Firstly, the levels of pre-service teachers' teaching and learning conceptions and their attitudes towards teaching profession with dual and multiple comparisons in terms of gender, grade and department variables are revealed. Then, it is aimed to determine to what extent pre-service teachers' teaching and learning conceptions and their attitudes towards teaching profession correlate with each other.

In order to determine the levels of pre-service teachers' teaching and learning conceptions, descriptive statistics regarding both dimensions of teaching and learning conceptions' were analyzed, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-service Teachers' Teaching and Learning Conceptions

Dimensions	n	M	S
Constructivist	406	51.96	6.96
Traditional	406	49.32	11.38

When Table 2 is investigated, it can be indicated that the scores of pre-service teachers' constructivist teaching and learning conception (M=51.96, S=6.96) are higher than their scores for traditional conception (M=49.32, S=11.38). Moreover, in order to determine whether or not pre-service teachers' teaching and learning conceptions differ significantly in terms of *gender* and *grade* variables, t-test was applied and the related results are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparisons of Teaching and Learning Conceptions in terms of Gender and Grade Variables

	Dimensions	Variables	n	M	S	sd	t	p
Gender	Constructivist	Female	241	52.47	6.35	404	1.77	.07
		Male	165	51.22	7.74			
	Traditional	Female	241	48.81	10.76		1.08	.27
		Male	165	50.06	12.24			
Grade	Constructivist	First grade	211	51.68	6.85	404	.85	.39
		Fourth grade	195	52.27	7.09			
	Traditional	First grade	211	49.82	10.52		.92	.35
		Fourth grade	195	48.77	12.25			

When Table 3 is analyzed, it can be stated that in terms of gender variable, there is no significant difference for pre-service teachers' constructivist teaching and learning conceptions ($t_{(404)} = 1.77$: $p > .05$), or for traditional conceptions ($t_{(404)} = 1.08$: $p > .05$). Moreover, it can be remarked that the scores of pre-service teachers' teaching and learning conceptions do not differ significantly in terms of grade variable for both of the dimensions (Constructivist conception; $t_{(404)} = .85$: $p > .05$ and traditional conception; $t_{(404)} = .92$: $p > .05$).

In order to examine whether or not pre-service teachers' teaching and learning conceptions differ significantly in terms of department variable, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied and the related results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Comparison of Teaching and Learning Conceptions in terms of Department Variable

Dimensions	Variable	n	M	S	sd	F	p	Difference
Constructivist	1. Turkish Lang.	83	52.38	6.95	5-400	4.21	.00	6-2
	2. Primary School	90	53.55	5.53				6-5
	3. Social Sciences	75	51.36	7.47				
	4. Science	54	50.48	5.90				
	5. English Lang.	53	53.75	8.86				
	6. German Lang.	51	49.07	6.21				
Traditional	1. Turkish Lang.	83	48.67	10.39	5-400	16.76	.00	5-1 6-1
	2. Primary School	90	48.34	10.75				5-2 6-2
	3. Social Sciences	75	51.17	12.04				5-3 6-3
	4. Science	54	50.90	9.60				5-4 6-4
	5. English Lang.	53	30.64	9.32				5-6
	6. German Lang.	51	57.74	9.08				

When Table 4 is investigated, it can be stated that the highest scores in the dimension of constructivist teaching and learning conception belonged to the pre-service teachers studying in English Language Teaching department ($M=53.75$, $S=5.53$), whereas pre-service teachers in German Language Teaching department had the lowest scores ($M=49.07$, $S=6.21$). Similarly, for the dimension of traditional teaching and learning conception, pre-service teachers studying in German Language Teaching department had the highest scores ($M=57.74$, $S=9.08$), while the lowest scores belonged to pre-service teachers of English Language Teaching ($M=30.64$, $S=9.32$). Moreover, it can be asserted that in terms of department variable, pre-service teachers' teaching and learning conceptions differ significantly for both of the dimensions (Constructivist conception; $F_{(5-400)}=4.211$: $p < .05$ and traditional conception; $F_{(5-400)}=16.760$: $p < .05$). According to Scheffe test applied so as to determine the source of significant difference, it was concluded that in the dimension of constructivist teaching and learning conception, there was a significant difference between German Language Teaching, and both Primary School Teaching and English Language Teaching. Moreover, in the dimension of traditional teaching and learning conception, the significant difference was observed to be between English Language Teaching Department and all the other departments, and also between German Language Teaching departments and all the others.

On the other hand, in order to determine the levels of pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession, descriptive statistics regarding all the dimensions of attitudes towards teaching profession were analyzed, and the results are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes towards Teaching Profession

Dimensions	n	M	S
Affection	406	81.36	19.68
Value	406	34.11	6.59
Harmony	406	18.27	4.77
Total	406	133.75	28.45

When Table 5 is investigated, pre-service teachers' professional attitude level can obviously be regarded as positive ($M = 133.75$, $S = 28.45$), since scores higher than 119 can be classified as positive according to the Attitudes towards Teaching Profession Scale. In addition, so as to determine whether or not pre-service teachers' professional attitudes differ significantly in terms of *gender* and *grade* variables, t-test was applied and related results are given in Table 6.

Table 6. Comparisons of Attitudes towards Teaching Profession in terms of Gender and Grade Variables

	Dimensions	Variables	n	S	S	sd	t	p
Gender	Affection	Female	241	84.58	19.01	404	4.05	.00
		Male	165	47.66	19.75			
	Value	Female	241	35.12	5.99	404	3.79	.00
		Male	165	32.64	7.15			
	Harmony	Female	241	18.97	4.58	404	3.62	.00
		Male	165	17.25	4.86			
	Total	Female	241	138.68	27.04	404	4.30	.00
		Male	165	126.56	29.00			
Grade	Affection	First grade	211	84.11	17.89	404	2.96	.00
		Fourth grade	195	78.38	21.09			
	Value	First grade	211	34.89	5.43	404	2.47	.01
		Fourth grade	195	33.28	7.58			
	Harmony	First grade	211	19.07	4.46	404	3.54	.00
		Fourth grade	195	17.41	4.95			
	Total	First grade	211	138.08	25.13	404	3.22	.00
		Fourth grade	195	129.08	31.04			

When Table 6 is analyzed, it can be asserted that in terms of gender variable, there is a significant difference both in the total scale ($t_{(404)} = 4.30$: $p < .05$) and the dimensions of professional attitudes (for affection, $t_{(404)} = 4.05$: $p < .05$; for value, $t_{(404)} = 3.79$: $p < .05$, for harmony, $t_{(404)} = 3.62$: $p < .05$). When the arithmetic means of females and males are investigated, it can be stated that the difference is in favor of the females. Furthermore, it can be remarked that in terms of gender variable, pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession differ significantly, not only for the total scale ($t_{(404)} = 3.22$: $p < .05$), but also for the dimensions of attitudes towards teaching profession (for affection, $t_{(404)} = 2.96$: $p < .05$; for value, $t_{(404)} = 2.47$: $p < .05$, for harmony, $t_{(404)} = 3.54$: $p < .05$). When the arithmetic means are investigated, it can be stated that the difference is in favor of first grade pre-service teachers.

Furthermore, in order to examine whether or not pre-service teachers' professional attitudes differ significantly in terms of department variable, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied and the related results are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Comparison of Attitudes towards Teaching Profession in terms of Department Variable

Dimensions	Variable	n	M	S	sd	F	p	Difference	
Affection	1. Turkish Lang.	8	80.17	19.93	5-400	8.34	.00	6-1	
	2. Primary School	9	82.59	17.99				6-2	
	3. Social Sciences	7	81.45	15.96				6-3	
	4. Science	5	83.24	15.29				6-4	
	5. English Lang.	5	91.70	19.03				6-5	
	6. German Lang.	5	68.29	24.74					
Value	1. Turkish Lang.	8	34.99	5.45	5-400	18.5	.00	6-1	
	2. Primary School	9	35.19	4.54				6-2	
	3. Social Sciences	7	33.60	5.67				6-3	
	4. Science	5	35.54	4.64				6-4	
	5. English Lang.	5	37.06	5.48				6-5	
	6. German Lang.	5	27.02	9.95					
Harmony	1. Turkish Lang.	8	17.85	4.80	5-400	4.79	.00	6-5	
	2. Primary School	9	18.05	4.46					
	3. Social Sciences	7	17.95	4.42					
	4. Science	5	19.24	4.05					
	5. English Lang.	5	20.55	4.65					
	6. German Lang.	5	16.45	5.65					
Total	1. Turkish Lang.	8	133.01	27.11	5-400	10.7	.00	5-1	6-1
	2. Primary School	9	135.83	24.52				5-3	6-2
	3. Social Sciences	7	133.00	23.76					6-3
	4. Science	5	138.02	20.95					6-4
	5. English Lang.	5	149.30	25.89					6-5
	6. German Lang.	5	111.76	38.78					

When Table 7 is investigated, it can be expressed that the highest scores for both the total scale (M=149.30, S=25.89), and all the dimensions, namely affection (M=91.70, S=19.03), value (M=37.06, S=5.48), and harmony (M=20.55, S=4.65), belong to the pre-service teachers from the English Language Teaching Department. However, pre-service teachers studying German Language Teaching have the lowest scores, not only in the total scale (M=111.76, S=38.78), but also for the dimensions of affection (M=68.29, S=24.74), value (M=27.02, S=9.95), and harmony (M=16.45, S=5.65). Furthermore, it can be asserted that in terms of the department variable, pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession differ significantly, not only for the total scale ($F_{(5-400)}=10.78$; $p<.05$), but also for the dimensions of affection ($F_{(5-400)}=8.34$; $p<.05$), value ($F_{(5-400)}=18.57$; $p<.05$), and harmony ($F_{(5-400)}=4.79$; $p<.05$). According to the Scheffe test, applied so as to determine the source of significant difference, it can be indicated that there is a significant difference between German Language Teaching and all the other departments, both in the total scale and the dimension of affection and value. Moreover, for the total scale, there is also a significant difference between English Language Teaching and both Turkish Language Teaching and Social Sciences Teaching. However, for the dimension of harmony, there is only a significant

difference between German Language Teaching and English Language Teaching departments.

In order to determine the relationship between the teaching and learning conceptions of pre-service teachers and their attitudes towards teaching profession, Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated, and the related results are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. The Relationship between Teaching-Learning Conceptions and Attitudes towards Teaching Profession

Teaching-Learning Conceptions	Constructivist Conception	Traditional Conception
Attitudes Towards Teaching (Total)	.363**	-.274**

* $p < .01$

When Table 8 is investigated, it can be asserted that there is a low, negative, and significant correlation between pre-service teachers' traditional teaching and learning conceptions, and their attitudes towards teaching profession ($r = -.257$, $p < .01$). However, the relationship between pre-service teachers' constructivist teaching and learning conceptions and their attitudes towards teaching profession was found to be moderate, positive and significant ($r = .363$, $p < .01$).

Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of this study was to evaluate the teaching and learning conceptions of pre-service teachers and their attitudes towards teaching profession in terms of three variables. Firstly, according to the results, it was asserted that the scores of pre-service teachers' constructivist teaching and learning conceptions were higher than their scores for traditional conceptions. Similarly, the studies of Aypay (2011) and Oguz (2011) concluded that pre-service teachers internalized constructivist teaching and learning conceptions more when compared to traditional conception. This result can be regarded as a positive indicator when the fact that a student-oriented constructivist approach has been attempted within the educational system in recent years. Moreover, it is obvious that pre-service teachers' taking a constructivist approach in the process of becoming teachers will surely play an important role in the quality and effectiveness of the educational process. In addition, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the teaching and learning conceptions of female and male pre-service teachers. In other words, it can be remarked that the genders of pre-service teachers did not have an effect on their teaching and learning conceptions. There are some studies in the literature (e.g., Ellez & Sezgin, 2002; Oguz, 2011; Ogurlu, 2015) which support this result, whereas there was one study (Aypay, 2011) which determined that teaching and learning conceptions differ significantly in terms of gender.

Another result obtained from this study is that in terms of department variable, both pre-service teachers' teaching and learning conceptions and their attitudes towards teaching profession differ significantly. Similarly, Bulut (2009) and Oral (2004) concluded in their studies that pre-service teachers' professional attitudes differ significantly in terms of their department. The results demonstrated clearly that for constructivist teaching and learning conception, pre-service teachers studying in the English Language Teaching Department had the highest scores, whereas pre-service teachers in the German Language Teaching

Department had the lowest. Similarly, the highest scores gathered from the Attitudes towards Teaching Profession Scale belonged to pre-service teachers from the English Language Teaching Department, while the lowest belonged to the German Language Teaching Department. The reasons why these findings were obtained might be because of the fact that students are required to achieve higher points in the University Entrance Exam for English Language Teaching when compared to all the other departments in the Faculty of Education. Additionally, pre-service teachers of English Language Teaching are more likely to be appointed to their profession than their peers from other departments. As appointment anxiety of pre-service teachers in English Language Teaching is lower when compared to other departments, they might have developed more positive attitudes towards their profession. Moreover, it can be regarded as a natural outcome that pre-service teachers studying in the English Language Teaching Department internalized constructivist teaching and learning conception more as a result of the fact that they were able to observe the application of active teaching methods and techniques of constructivist approach applied by their instructors as a part of language teaching.

The other important result obtained from this study is that the general attitude of pre-service teachers towards their profession was positive. This finding can be supported by the results of the studies conducted by Bedel (2008), Kaya and Buyukkasap (2005), Ustun, Erkan and Akman (2004). When the fact that it is required to love the profession, give value to it and develop positive attitudes towards it so as to perform the profession in a successful and effective way is taken into consideration, pre-service teachers participated in this study will probably be successful, effective and qualified teachers, who will put a great deal of effort into conducting their profession. In other words, it can be stated that developing positive professional attitudes is a prerequisite for pre-service teachers to be effective, qualified and successful teachers in the near future.

Furthermore, it was concluded from the study that in terms of gender, pre-service teachers' attitudes towards their profession differed significantly in favor of females, both for the total scale and the dimensions of affection, value, and harmony. In the literature, there similar studies were found promoting this result such as the studies of Capa and Cil (2000), Durmusoglu, Yanik and Akkoyunlu (2009), Oral (2004), and Terzi and Tezci (2007), since they also concluded in their studies that in terms of gender, pre-service teachers professional attitudes demonstrated a significant difference in favor of females. This condition can be said to be resulting from the fact that teaching profession is regarded as the most appropriate job for females due to social point of view on gender. Also, another factor pertinent for females to develop more positive attitudes towards teaching when compared to males might be because of their belief that they can maintain both their family lives and professional lives most suitably through teaching profession. Moreover, it was expressed in the study that first grade students' professional attitude scores were higher than those of senior students. This result can be regarded as conflicting because normally the expected result would be that senior students who had participated in courses and applications about the teaching profession for four years would have had more positive attitudes towards their professions when compared to their junior peers. However, reasons such as the fact that pre-service teachers have ever-mounting appointment anxiety (to be placed as teachers), or the teaching and learning process might not satisfy their

expectations, could have an effect in decreasing the level of positive attitudes of pre-service teachers towards their profession.

On the other hand, it was concluded that there was a positive correlation between pre-service teachers' constructivist teaching and learning conceptions and their attitudes towards teaching profession, whereas there was a negative relationship between teachers' traditional teaching and learning conceptions and their professional attitudes. According to these results, it can be asserted that constructivist teaching and learning conception is an important predictor for the attitude towards teaching as a profession. In other words, it was determined that the professional attitude scores of pre-service teachers who indigenized constructivist teaching and learning conception was higher, however, professional attitude scores of pre-service teachers having constructivist teaching and learning conception was lower. In that sense, it can be indicated that developing constructivist teaching conception for pre-service teachers, who are expected and required to demonstrate positive attitudes towards teaching profession, is indeed rather important.

When the results obtained from this study are evaluated, it can be recommended that the current structure of the Faculties of Education should be run through and enhanced by maintaining the necessary developments in order to provide opportunity for constructivist teaching and learning conception. Moreover, in order to eradicate the problem of appointment for teachers, which results in decreasing pre-service teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession, students should be accepted into Faculties of Education based on the needs and also situations for appointment should be enhanced. In addition, pre-service teachers are required to be provided with opportunity to experience active teaching methods and techniques which enable students to actively engage in learning and which are undoubtedly required for maintaining constructivist approach in classes. Lastly, further qualitative or quantitative studies should be conducted in order to reveal the factors which have an effect in pre-service teachers' developing negative attitudes towards teaching profession and steps should be taken so as to seek solutions to this problem.

Notes

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This study was presented as oral presentation in the 3rd National Curriculum and Instruction Congress organized by Gaziantep University.

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