

## An Overview of the Professional Attitude Levels of Physical Education Teachers

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### ABSTRACT

Those pursuing a career in physical education must possess a range of competencies, including movement and coordination. The attitudes of those engaged in or preparing to engage in the teaching profession can be influenced by several factors. Within the mentioned, the present study aims to ascertain the extent to which the professional attitudes of physical education teachers are influenced by factors such as gender, level of education, length of experience, and whether the individual has an educator within their family. The study employed a relational survey model, which is descriptive and serves to illuminate the current situation. The study population comprised 168 physical education teachers (female N = 96; male N = 72) in public schools affiliated with the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Ministry of National Education. The research analyses indicate that most teachers possess a positive professional attitude ( $X=66.2857$ ). No significant differences were observed in the professional attitude scores of teachers according to gender or level of education. Teachers with 19 years of experience and those with no family history of teaching demonstrated the highest attitude scores. The attitude of professional physical education teachers can be considered satisfactory.

**Keywords:** attitude, professional attitude, teacher attitude, physical education teacher

### INTRODUCTION

Two significant theoretical issues related to teachers are attitudes towards teaching and teachers' professional performance (Al Harthy et al., 2013). The multifaceted nature of teaching encompasses several dimensions, including cultural, scientific, economic, and social aspects. Teachers represent the most vital educational resource employed in education and training activities (Aina et al., 2013; Uluğ et al., 2011). In the field of education, the term "teachership" is defined as a concept that describes a specific status, functions, and relationships that constitute a position within a given institution, as well as the specific behaviors required by the holder of that position (Yazıcılar Özçelik et al., 2020). As with all professions, teaching has specific requirements and qualifications. These include sufficient scientific and cultural knowledge in teaching and the ability to keep up with the latest information and technological developments in related disciplines.

The defining characteristic of a profession is its capacity to offer material or immaterial advantages to individuals or to demonstrate skills acquired through education. An individual's occupation serves to fulfill both their own needs and the specific demands of society. Consequently, the social division of labour is defined by a set of skills shaped by explicit and implicit regulations (Aydilek, 2019). The profession offers psychological benefits, including individual fulfillment, life satisfaction, and economic freedom.

Each teaching field necessitates a distinct body of knowledge, which demands an exhaustive comprehension (Şişman & Acat, 2003). Physical education and sports teachers can communicate effectively with students on various issues affecting individuals (Şen & Koçak, 2022). "Physical education" encompasses a miscellaneous activity, including games, sports, and gymnastics, conducted in environments that safeguard individuals' physical and mental well-being per established rules (İnal, 2005). Prospective physical education teachers must cultivate positive attitudes towards their studies, as these significantly impact children's developmental domains, particularly their psychomotor abilities (Dinçer, 2019).

Since the early 20th century, attitudes have constituted a prominent concept in social psychology, representing a research topic for those seeking to comprehend social transformation (Briño et al., 2019). Over time, the concept of an attitude has been defined in several academic disciplines, including psychology and education. In psychological terms, an attitude can be conceptualized as a phenomenon that can be understood from a psychological perspective disposition expressed by evaluating a particular entity in favor or against it to some

degree (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). In essence, an attitude can be defined as an individual's evaluation of another person, position, concept, or object. Furthermore, as postulated by Kocabaş and Erdem (2019), it can be conceptualized as a positive or negative phenomenon. This refers to a tendency of beliefs, emotions, and behaviors toward an object, situation, or person, a consequence of past experiences.

Individuals' attitudes towards their profession have positively influenced their performance. This also applies to teaching (Aktop & Beyazgül, 2014). Teachers' psychological characteristics, particularly their attitudes, influence their pedagogical approaches and interactions with their students and colleagues (Asthana et al., 2024).

Attitudes toward teaching are significant in forming behaviors and styles among those pursuing or practicing the profession (Sünbül & Arslan, 2009). The prevailing perceptions and dispositions about the educator can affect the teaching practices of current or prospective teachers and the wider society (Gülsoy, 2010). Suja (2007) proposes that an individual's attitude, level of interest in their profession, and teaching experience can influence their commitment to their role.

In order to facilitate education and training in all aspects, teaching qualifications must be evaluated and improved. As stated by Çağlar (2013), professional education has a significant impact on the formation of individuals' attitudes towards their profession, creating a favourable environment for this development. Teachers' professional development has been demonstrated to exert a considerable effect of the aforementioned factors on a variety of parameters, including student enthusiasm, pedagogical approaches, communication abilities, the structuring of content and lesson preparation, student participation in the classroom, teacher assurance and subject expertise (Maende, 2012).

In addition to qualities such as interest, caring, confidence, self-reflection, diligence, job satisfaction, communication skills, sportsmanship, and teaching skills, cognitive and emotional abilities facilitate learning from one's and others' experiences. These characteristics, among other things, are closely related to professional attitudes (Healer, 2015). Research indicates that positive attitudes toward one's profession can facilitate greater creativity, research, and effectiveness in transferring these characteristics to students (Gülsoy, 2010).

Napper-Owen et al. (2008) posit that the pedagogical competencies of highly qualified physical educators are developed as a consequence of the experiences gained by such individuals in the context of the traditional physical education teacher education (PEET) program, as well as in the context of alternative professional education pathways. Fehintola (2014) asserts that a proficient educator should evince a penchant for perfectionism in their pedagogical practices in a conventional classroom environment. This suggests that teachers should adopt an attitude that facilitates positive transformation by the tripartite taxonomy of learning; the aforementioned domains are categorized as cognitive, effective, and psychomotor.

Physical education teachers endeavor to facilitate students' psychomotor, social, and physical development, encourage the formation of fitness habits, identify individual sports skills, train athletes, and cultivate physical health and sports awareness. Those who do not demonstrate a professional and objective approach and instead teach solely for their personal abilities, interests, or financial gain are less likely to be effective in raising high-achieving students (Dinçer, 2019).

A critical examination of the existing sources of information in this field reveals many domestic and foreign studies conducted to ascertain the level of attitudes toward the teaching profession. However, a significant proportion of these studies pertain to pre-service teachers. The studies revealed that, in comparison with other groups, pre-service teachers displayed a relatively high level of professional commitment (Dhara et al., 2021; Kuyumcu & Kaya, 2020; Senthilkumaran, Muthaiah, Ömür & Nartgün, 2013). Some studies identified the positive or negative attitude toward the teaching profession as moderate (Bhargava & Pathy, 2014; Duran, 2009) or low (Kinyota & Kavenuke, 2019; Odike & Nnaekwe, 2018).

Enhancing the efficacy of physical education and sports teachers in all aspects of development is important. This is contingent upon cultivating favorable attitudes toward teaching (Wagner & Imanuel, 2014). Teachers must possess positive professional attitudes to comprehend and respond to students' diverse ways of learning effectively, facilitating their optimal learning and enabling them to realise their academic and personal goals. Furthermore, they must exemplify the fundamental qualities of professionalism, including intelligence and organisational skills.

In conclusion, the effects of attitude on achievement and motivation (Aksoğan & Özdemir, 2022, p. 209) demonstrate the importance of a positive attitude for success in the teaching profession. Therefore, this study is

significant in supporting positive attitudes about the teaching profession. The study shed light on the attitudes of physical education and sports teachers, who orientated teaching and offered recommendations to enhance their positive attitude levels.

The aim of the current study is twofold: first, to ascertain the attitudes of physical education and sports teachers regarding their teaching practice; second, to examine whether their professional attitudes differ according to various variables, including sex, degree level, teaching experience and whether other teachers are present in the family. In addition to the primary research question, which is "What is the level of professional attitudes of physical education teachers?" the following sub-question was posed:

1. Is there a difference in attitudes towards teaching according to gender?
2. Does the level of education of physical education instructors affect their professional conduct?
3. Does physical education teachers' time in the profession affect their attitudes toward teaching?
4. It would be beneficial to ascertain whether other teachers in the family affect physical education teachers' attitudes.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Design

This study aims to ascertain the extent to which physical education and sports teachers exhibit professional attitudes, considering the influence of various demographic variables. This study employed a descriptive methodology. Descriptive studies are concerned with the characteristics of a given population (Groves et al., 2012). In contrast to experimental studies, which test hypotheses, descriptive studies aim to generate hypotheses and, therefore, have specific aims and research questions (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2016). The research was approved by the Girne American University Ethics Committee and conducted by the ethical institutional requirements of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) Ministry of National Education.

### Participants

The study was conducted with 168 physical education and sports teachers, 72 male and 96 female, employed in public schools in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), who participated voluntarily.

### Data Collection Tools

The personal information form for educators comprises nine queries covering gender, age, type of secondary education completed, educational level, income bracket, length of service, type of educational institution employed at, preferred sports branch, and presence of other family members as teachers.

The PETPAS (Attitude Scale Towards the Physical Education Teaching Profession), developed by Ünlü (2011), comprises 23 items and a two-factor structure. The first factor consists of 13 sentences containing positive expressions, defined as the "Love for the Profession" dimension, and the second is the "Profession Orientation" dimension. It comprises 10 sentences containing negative expressions defined as "anxiety". The scale had a minimum score of 23 and a maximum score of 115. The interval coefficients were used to evaluate the scale scores, resulting in the categorisation of scores as "very low attitude" for the 23-41 range, "low attitude" for the 42-60 range, "moderate attitude" for the 61-79 range, "high attitude" for the 80-98 range, and "very high attitude" for the 99-115 range.

### Analysis of Data

Since a normal distribution was observed in scores for both professional attitude and a significant number of multiple intelligence categories, it was deemed appropriate to employ parametric tests, which are known to yield more precise results.

## FINDINGS

**Table 1. Findings on demographic characteristics**

		N
<b>Gender</b>	Male	72
	Female	96
<b>Education level</b>	Bachelor degree	138
	Master/PhD	30

	N	
<b>Work experience</b>	Below 3 year	54
	4-8 year	21
	9-13 year	39
	14-18 year	15
	Over 19 year	39
<b>Teacher in the family</b>	Yes	75
	No	93

**Table 2. Findings on professional attitude score**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Attitude Total	168	66,2857	5,92381

The physical education teachers' average score towards their profession was 66.29, indicating a moderate attitude.

**Table 3. Average professional attitude scores of PE teachers by gender**

	F	P	t	Df	P 2-tailed	Mean diff.	Std. Dev. diff.
Homogeneous variance	4,442	0,037	-0,64	166	0,522	-0,594	0,925

The independent variables t-test analysis revealed that the mean attitude score of female physical education teachers towards their profession ( $x=66.03$ ,  $SD=5.18$ ) was not significantly different from that of male physical education teacher respondents ( $x=66.63$ ,  $SD=6.82$ ) ( $p=0.522$ ).

**Table 4. Average professional attitude scores of PE teachers by education level**

<b>Group Statistics</b>				
	Education level	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Attitude Total	Bachelor degree	138	66,59	5,710
	Master/PhD	30	64,90	6,754

According to the findings, there is no substantial discrepancy in mean scores for professional attitude between university graduate educators and postgraduate or doctoral graduates ( $p=0.211$ ).

**Table 5. Average professional attitude scores of PE teachers by profession**

**Multiple Comparison**

Tukey HSD

(I) Profession Süresi	(J) Profession	Mean diff. (I-J)	Std. err.	P
Below 3 year	14-18 year	8,400*	1,531	,000*
	4-8 year	4,971*	1,773	,044*
9-13 year	19 yıldan fazla	-5,429*	1,420	,002*
	14-18 yıl	8,400*	1,594	,000*

	3 yıldan az	-8,400*	1,531	,000*
14-18 year	4-8 yıl	-4,971*	1,773	,044*
	9-13 yıl	-8,400*	1,594	,000*
	19 yıldan fazla	-10,400*	1,594	,000*
Over 19 year	4-8 yıl	5,429*	1,420	,002*
	14-18 yıl	10,400*	1,594	,000*

\*. 0.05 significant difference in the level

One Way ANOVA and Tukey analyses were conducted to determine if there is a significant difference in average professional attitude scores between groups. According to the results, teachers who have been in the profession for 14-18 years ( $x=58.60$ ,  $SS=2.90$ ) have significantly lower average professional attitude scores than other teachers. There is no need for improvement in this text.

According to the results, the average professional attitude scores of teachers who have been in the profession for 14-18 years ( $x=58.60$ ,  $SS=2.90$ ) were significantly lower than those of other teachers. However, teachers who have been in the profession for more than 19 years exhibit higher professional attitude scores than teachers who have been in the profession for 4-8 years and 14-18 years. No statistically significant differences were identified between the teacher groups with less than 3, 4-8, and 9 -13 years tenure.

**Table 6. Average professional attitude scores of PE teachers by being a teacher in the family**

Group Statistics		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Attitude Total	No	75	67,92	5,637
	Yes	93	64,97	5,849

In consequence of the independent variables, t-tests carried out to investigate whether being related to a teacher has a significant impact on attitudes towards physical education teachers found that the average professional attitude scores of those who do not have a teacher in their family ( $x=67.92$ ,  $SD=5.64$ ) were found to be significantly different from those of individuals who have a teacher in their family ( $x=64.97$ ,  $SD=5.85$ ) ( $p=.001$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The 23-item Vocational Attitude Scale for Physical Education Teachers was utilized to quantify professional attitudes. The research findings disclosed that physical education instructors held a moderate attitude, with average attitude scores not particularly high. Erbas's (2014) study demonstrated that physical education teachers possess moderate attitudes toward teaching.

Gender can influence both anxieties and expectations. The study data were scrutinized using the t-test, and no substantial variation was observed in the professional attitude scores of the teachers still pursuing their profession based on gender.

The review of a similar study reached the same conclusion; no significant difference between the sexes in terms of their attitudes toward teaching (Özder, Konedralı, & Zeki, 2010; Yaşar Ekici, 2014; Yuvacı, 2015; Özcan & Nakip, 2016; Gökteş, 2017; Muszkieta et al., 2019; Zembat et al; Demir & Arabacı, 2021; Korucuk & Havadar, 2023). On the contrary, several studies have indicated that male and female participants hold diverse attitudes towards the profession (Çapri & Çelikkaleli, 2008; Aydın & Sağlam, 2012; Gökçe & Sezer, 2012; Eroğlu, 2013; Bakırcı, 2015; Türkeli et al., 2017). However, based on these researches, it could be suggested that the professional attitudes of teachers remain the same regardless of their gender.

Another variable under examination is the education level of physical education instructors. No statistically significant difference was observed in the professional attitude scores between undergraduate teachers and those holding master's or doctorate degrees. Pepe, Turan, and Bahadır (2015) reached a comparable conclusion in their research.

After analysing the data collected from participating teachers, it is evident that those with 14-18 years of experience exhibited lower professional attitudes than their peers. Nevertheless, teachers with more experience demonstrated the highest averages in professional attitudes. The study found that the professional attitude scores of physical education teachers with over 19 years of experience were markedly higher than those with 14-18 and 4-8 years of experience. This finding concurs with Pepe et al.'s (2015) research, which suggests that teachers with 1-5 years of service have higher professional attitude scores than those with 16-20 years of service. Additionally, the study conducted by Yuvacı (2015) did not identify a notable statistical relationship between the professional attitudes under examination.

The question of whether having a family member who is a teacher significantly affects the score for professional attitude was also investigated using the data from the study. The analysis revealed that teachers who did not have another teacher in their family displayed a significantly higher score for professional attitude than those who did. This could be linked to depersonalisation within the family or the sharing of problems. On the contrary, a loved one's attitude towards their profession is anticipated to be more favourable. A study investigating this variable could not be found. However, it is believed that the high continuation of family occupations in children within the cultural structure may contribute to this outcome.

The findings of this study indicate primary limitation to the generalization of these results is for a more detailed analysis of attitude tests administered to physical education teachers. The extant literature on professional attitudes primarily focuses on other branches, and most of the extant studies on professional attitudes have been conducted on pre-service teachers. Some of the hypotheses tested in this study have not been adequately investigated before; the lack of previous research on physical education teachers and the sample size being affected due to pandemic conditions limited the study. A further limitation is the lack of consideration of socioeconomic status and cultural and other prejudices. In addition to these constraints, there is no central database archiving all scientific articles in Turkey, hindering reliable data availability.

## CONCLUSION

The present study evaluated the professional attitudes of physical education teachers working in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus to establish a significant relationship between the variables.

The results of this study indicate that attitudes toward physical education and sports among teachers of physical education and sports are influenced by several factors. The teaching professions were not dissimilar based on gender or education level but varied depending on the years of service and if another teacher was in the family. It can be argued that teachers' attitudes towards their profession tend to increase as the number of years in service rises. The level of attitude in the first few years of service is moderate and subsequently decreases. Over time, the experience can bring about positive gains such as enhanced knowledge, skill development, and acknowledgment in the professional environment.

A favourable disposition towards the tutoring profession can enhance the norms of education by developing a sense of duty, professional capability, and sapience into the requirements and problems of scholars.

Roh (2002) observes that physical education teachers encounter many challenges in the classroom. These challenges could foster negative attitudes toward teaching physical education. As a result, furnishing teachers with supplementary information that cultivates constructive attitudes may prove beneficial.

It can be conjectured that physical education teachers' attitudes abide by accepted standards, and as a result, the children receive quality education and are nurtured adequately. However, some teachers may have a disparity between their attitudes and professional competence. In addition to their expertise, teachers should display appropriate behavior, modify their methods to suit different learning scenarios and maintain their enthusiasm for learning and teaching (Dinçer, 2019).

The achievement of the recognition that physical education deserves is directly related to the extent to which teachers in this field uphold their profession. Hence, it is crucial to utilize micro-teaching techniques predominantly to foster positive attitudes within the training process of aspiring teachers.

Certain characteristics can help an individual make appropriate decisions in life: understanding oneself, recognizing feelings, needs, and objectives, and understanding one's desires and aversions. Knowledge of oneself also better equips one to choose a profession and develop a constructive attitude towards teaching.



The function and significance of physical education remain undetermined. Tannehill et al. (1994) argued that a constellation of ongoing changes at the nexus of politics, economics, and institutional structures alongside the prevailing currents of contemporary trends will shape the trajectory of education. The overarching direction will define and shape how physical education is conceptualized and perceived and whether it can be integrated into the total education curriculum. It is of the utmost importance that administrators and the general public know the potential benefits of physical education. It thus falls upon physical educators' shoulders to ensure this potential is actualized.

In line with the results obtained, it is recommended that analyses be carried out with a larger sample. Different variables, such as socio-economic level, should be considered for the analysis of the research hypotheses. Furthermore, physical education teachers should be trained about the relationship between attitude and achievement. Finally, the results of the research in the field should be shared.

### Conflicts of Interest

The researcher has no financial conflicts of interest, professional affiliations, or ethical complications that could compromise this research's integrity, objectivity, or validity. All study aspects were conducted independently, according to the relevant ethical guidelines and standards.

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