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Examining Pre-Service Physical Education Teachers' Departmental Satisfaction and Academic Performance: Vocational Personality Approach

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the current study was to examine the role of vocational personality in physical education pre-service teachers' satisfaction and academic performance. The Holland's Theory of Personalities in Work Environments was the theoretical framework for the current study. According to this theory, there are six vocational personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional. The participants consisted of 131 pre-service physical education teachers in Turkey. The findings revealed that social people tended to be satisfied with studying in the department of physical education; however, no significant relationship between social scores and academic performance existed, which means that higher social scores did not contribute to higher levels of academic performance. The best predictor of academic performance was found to be conventional personality type, which suggests that orderly, systematic and precise pre-service teachers tend to show higher levels of academic performance. Based on these results, the department of physical education seems to be an ideal department for those possessing social and conventional personality types.

Keywords: *physical education, vocational choice, Holland's theory, personality, departmental satisfaction*

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are key to quality education. They are the ones who guide and conduct the learning activities (Demirel, 2008; Ulucan, Turkcagar, & Bekir, 2012). Physical Education teachers in educational institutions are among the most important teachers that help schools achieve their targets and educate students for the future. In physical education unlike the other fields of education, 'learning to move and learning by movement' are considered as the main basis. In other words, physical education is educating people through physical movement (Tamer & Pulur, 2001).

Physical education teachers receive a 4-year formal education in universities before they become a teacher in Turkey. Physical Education and Sport Colleges admit their students through a series of special ability tests. Every college has a unique special ability exam and they admit students based on certain criteria. Students are asked to submit their highest University Entrance Exam score, secondary education achievement score and a CV showing their personal sport history when they apply to the college.

Special ability exams, in general, consist of two stages assessing physical ability. In the first step, candidates' motor skills are tested in a pre-eliminative and time restricted competition. In the second step, the candidates who successfully completed the first step enter again a time restricted competition called coordination path consisting of physical moves and measure the speed, balance and swiftness of the candidates (Sevimli, Cam, Dinc, Dikici & Durusoy, 2010).

The purpose of the physical education courses in the schools are to develop students' self-esteem, self-control, swift decision, cooperation, attention, courage, justice, discipline, enthusiasm, friendship, companionship, abiding rules, mutual respect, honest relations, environmental awareness and

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protection of health together with developing their motor skills (Yavas & İlhan, 1997). While performing their curricular and extracurricular duties and responsibilities, physical education teachers help the education of the students in a health, build the sportive sub-structure of the country, run the sportive activities in the schools, create opportunities for sportive activities and equip the students with sportive techniques and abilities. Therefore, the importance and necessity of physical education teachers in schools is increasing (Pehlivan, 1992). On the other hand, physical education teachers have some difficulties and problems while performing their duties.

One important problem that Turkish physical education teachers face is the lack of course equipment. Especially schools in towns and rural areas have this problem as they do not take sport fee from the students. Another problem of running Physical Education courses are the insufficient sizes and unsuitable infrastructure of the areas allocated for these courses (Ozsaker & Orhun, 2005).

One of the other common problems of physical education courses in schools is the lack of changing rooms. While male students change their clothes in the classrooms the female students often use the restroom for this purpose. In addition, some physical education teachers state that they are not supported by the school managers. One of the most frequent complaints is about the weekend training activities. They complained that while school managers at the beginning of the term approve the weekend training programs later they did not endorse them on time (Yavas & İlhan, 1997). Physical education teachers sometimes have problems due to the preparation of national holiday ceremonies which requires constant rehearsals. It seems that the preparation of students for national holiday ceremonies the responsibility of physical education teachers only (Öncü & Güven, 2011).

Not only Turkish physical education teachers experience many problems in the workplace but also physical education teachers in different countries have problems in their profession, which seem to influence their job satisfaction, burnout level and motivation. One study conducted in Greece (Koustelios, Theodorakis, Goulimaris, 2004) revealed that phsical education teachers' job satisfaction is mainly influenced by 'job itself' followed by 'supervision' and 'working conditions', whereas burnout is influenced by 'personal accomplishment' and 'emotional exhaustion'. Another study conducted with with Greek physical education teachers revealed that role conflict and role ambiguity were found to be significant predictors of job satisfaction (Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2005).

Low remunerations, and bureaucratic and role limitations were found to be related to physical teacher burnout level in Israel (Fejgin, Ephraty & Ben-Sira, 1995). In a more recent study conducted in Israel (Fejgin, Talmor & Erlich, 2005) revealed that the more the teachers believe that the structural and the social aspects of at the workplace are incongruent with job work, the more likely that they will be burned out. Physical education teachers in Belgium reported more emotional exhaustion when they are less autonomously motivated (Berghe, Cardon, Aelterman, Tallir, Bansteenkiste, & Haerens, 2013).

It seems obvious from the literature that physical education has a number of problems in the work place. Such problems seem to have an important influence on their satisfaction with their job. Researchers seem to have examined a number of factors (school managers, working conditions, lack of equipment etc.) that produce problems and influence the physical education teachers' job satisfaction and burnout level. In addition, the main focus seems to have been given on in-service teachers rather than the pre-service teachers.

Since the pre-service teachers are the teachers of the future, their satisfaction with their future profession or department should deserve attention. Thus, it is important to examine the pre-service physical education teachers' satisfaction with their future profession and department. It is also worth examining which factors affect their satisfaction level.

The pre-service teachers' departmental satisfaction and the factors that affect it have been studied in a number of studies in Turkey (Perkmen & Sahin, 2013; Cevik, Perkmen, Alkan & Shelley, 2013; Perkmen, 2012). For example, personality was found to be significantly related to satisfaction with

studying in the department of instructional technology (Perkmen & Sahin, 2013) and music education (Cevik, Perkmen, Alkan & Shelley, 2013). While conventional and realistic people were found to be satisfied with studying in the department of instructional technology, artistic and social people were satisfied with the department of music education. Both these two studies were grounded in the Holland's Theory of Personalities in Work Environments. It seems clear that the Holland' theory offer a useful framework for examining the pre-service teachers' departmental satisfaction. Thus, the researcher of the current study used this theory as a framework in the current study to examine the pre-service physical education teachers' departmental satisfaction.

Holland's Theory stresses the importance of personality fit in vocational satisfaction (Holland, 1997). Workers tend to be satisfied with their job if it fits their personality. In other words, people should work in professions that fit their personality. For example, people with social personality traits should work in environments that require social and communication skills like the profession of teaching. People with investigative personality traits should enter a profession that requires analytical and mathematical skills like engineering. According to Holland, there are six personality types: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional. In addition, there are six work environments with the same names (Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising and Conventional). The central postulation of this theory is that there should be a fit between a person's personality and the work environment he/she works in. For example, people with Realistic personality traits should work in Realistic work environments; Conventional people should work in Conventional environments. There is a perfect fit if a social person works in a social work environment. However, there is little or no fit if this person works in a realistic work environment. The characteristics of personality types and work environments are presented in Table 1.

After examining this table, the researcher of the current study hypothesized that the profession of physical education fits people with realistic, social and conventional people. Thus, people possessing these personality traits can be expected to be satisfied with this profession. Since the current study was conducted with the pre-service teachers, the researcher hypothesized that the pre-service teachers having realistic, social and conventional traits are more satisfied with their department and show higher levels of academic performance than those possessing investigative, enterprising and artistic personality traits.

Guided by Holland's Theory, the current study attempts to address four research questions:

1. What are the personality characteristics of pre-service physical education teachers?
2. Are they satisfied with becoming a pre-service physical education teacher in the future?
3. Is there a significant relationship among their vocational personality, satisfaction and academic performance?
4. Which variables make a significant contribution to the prediction of academic performance?

METHOD

Participants

The participants included 113 pre-service physical education teachers (36 female, 77 male) enrolled in the department of physical education at Balıkesir University, Turkey. Forty-one participants were freshmen, 23 sophomores, 20 juniors, and 29 seniors. The participants were asked to complete a survey during a regular class session. Participation was voluntary. The researcher explained the purpose and significance of the study to the participants. Those willing to participate filled out the research instrument. The response rate was 80%.

Research Instruments

Data for the current study was collected through a survey which consists of three sections. The first section of the survey was designed to gather the participants' demographic information. The second section was intended to measure their satisfaction with studying in the department of physical education. The third section consisted of a scale in which the participants indicated their level of interests for 30 different types of vocational activities.

Table 1. Characteristics of Holland's Personality and Environmental Types (Swanson & Fouad, 1999)

Type	Self-Concept and Values	Potential Competencies	Typical Work Activities and Environments
Realistic	Emotionally stable, Reliable, Thrifty, Persistent, Shy, Modest, Uncomfortable talking about self, Traditional values	Mechanical ability and ingenuity Problem solving with tools, machines Psychomotor skills Physical strength	Job with tangible results Operating heavy equipment Using tools Fixing, building, repairing
Investigative	Independent, Self-motivated, Reserved, Introspective, Analytical, Curios, Task oriented, Original, Creative, nonconforming	Scientific ability Analytical skills Mathematical skills Writing skills Perseverance	Ambiguous or abstract tasks Solving problems through thinking Working independently Scientific or laboratory settings Collecting and organizing data
Artistic	Independent, Nonconforming, Self-expressive, Intuitive, Sensitive, Emotional, Impulsive, Drawn to aesthetic qualities	Creativity, imagination Verbal-linguistic skills Musical ability Artistic ability	Creating artwork or performing Working independently Unstructured, flexible environments that allow self-expression
Social	Humanistic, Idealistic, Ethical, Concerned for welfare of others, Tactful, Cooperative, Generous, Kind, Friendly, Cheerful, Understanding, Insightful	Social and interpersonal skills Verbal ability Teaching skills Ability to empathize with and understand others	Teaching, explaining, guiding Solving problems, leading discussions Educational, social service and mental health organizations
Enterprising	Status conscious, Ambitious, Competitive, Sociable, Energetic, Popular, Aggressive, Adventuresome	Verbal skills related to speaking, persuading, selling Leadership skills Resilience, high energy, optimism Social and interpersonal skills	Selling, purchasing, leading Managing people and projects Giving speeches and presentations Financial, government and political organizations
***C**onventional*	Conscientious, Persevering, Practical, Conservative, Orderly, Systematic, Precise, Accurate, Careful, Controlled	Efficiency, organization Management of systems and data Mathematical skills Attention to detail, perfectionism Operation of office machines	Organizing office procedures Keeping records and filing systems Writing reports, making charts Structured organizations with well-ordered chains of command

To gather demographic information, the participants' gender and grade level were asked in the first section of the survey. In addition to demographic information, their grade point average (GPA) and scores in the university entrance exam (UEES) and department entrance exam (DEES) were obtained from the student affairs office. In order to obtain these scores, the participants were asked to write their names and gave permission to the researcher to use them in this section of the survey.

The participants' satisfaction was measured through the Faces Scale (Kunin, 1955). The participants were asked to check the box under the face that would best reflect their satisfaction with choosing the department of physical education to study in the university. Scores on this scale ranged from 1 to 6, with higher scores showing higher levels of satisfaction (Figure 1).

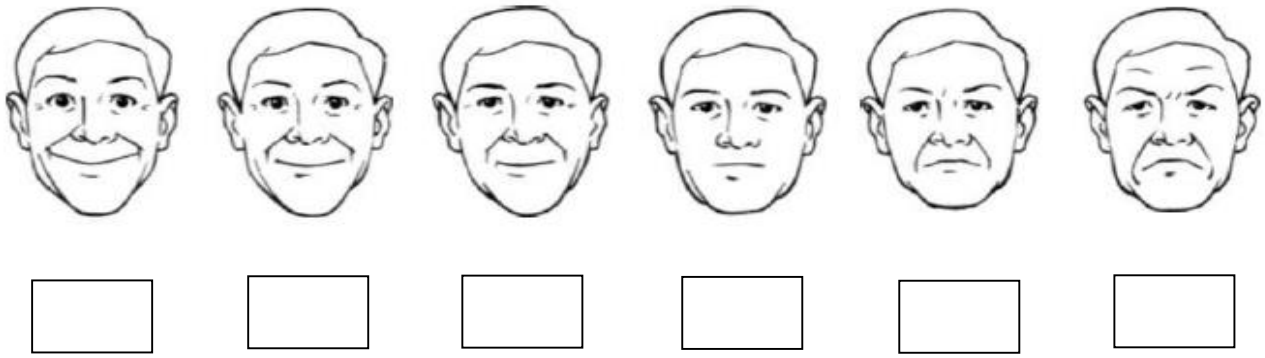

Figure 1. Faces Scale (Kunin, 1955)

The participants' vocational personality was measured through a scale titled "Vocational Interests Scale" (Cevik, Perkmen, Alkan & Shelley, 2013; Perkmen & Sahin, 2013). The scale is made up of 30 items with 5 items in each dimension of personality. Examples of the items included "Trying to fix mechanical and electrical devices" (Realistic), "Trying to understand a scientific theory" (Investigative), "Playing a musical instrument" (Artistic), "Helping others in difficulty" (Social), "Leading a group" (Enterprising), and "Organizing and planning activities" (Conventional). The participants indicated their response on a 5-point scale ranging from "I do not like it at all" to "I like it very much". The participants' scores in each dimension of personality was summed and divided by the number of items. Thus, the scores in each dimension of personality ranged from 1 to 5, with higher scores showing a higher reflection of personality in the respective dimension. For example, if a person receives 4.5 point in social dimension of personality, it means that he/she reflects the social personality type to a high degree. (Cevik, Perkmen, Alkan, & Shelley, 2013) reported high cronbach alpha values of each dimension of personality in their study.

Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the interests scale was found to be 82. The subscale coefficient values were .76 for Realistic, .71 for Investigative, .72 for Artistic, .78 for Social, .73 for Enterprising, and .80 for Conventional. These findings indicated a fairly high internal consistency for the overall scale and its associated subscales.

FINDINGS

As Table 2 reveals, the participants' highest score was social (M = 4.30, SD = .58) and lowest score was enterprising (M = 3.05, SD = .71). As indicated by the range scores and standard deviation, there was high variability in the participants' scores in all dimensions of personality. t test analysis revealed that the artistic personality scores of female students (M = 3.92, SD = .619 were statistically higher than the male students (M = 3.34, SD = .62). There was no statistically significant difference between male and female p-service teachers in the other dimensions of personality.

Table 2. Pre-service Teachers' Vocational Personality Scores

Personality Type	Range	M	SD
Realistic	1 - 5	3.39	.86
Investigative	1 - 5	3.38	.86
Artistic	1.8 - 5	3.52	.64
Social	2 – 5	4.30	.58
Enterprising	1.4 – 4.4	3.05	.71
Conventional	1 – 4.8	3.27	.85

The pre-service physical education students' departmental satisfaction ranged from 3 to 6 with a mean of 5.44 (SD= .80). 60% of the students chose the face that corresponds to the maximum score of 6 points. Their academic performance ranged from .71 to 3.69 with a mean of 2.59 (SD = .44). The results of MANOVA did not reveal any significant difference between male and female students in terms of their departmental satisfaction and academic performance; however, it showed that the departmental satisfaction of senior pre-service teachers (M = 5.03, SD = 1.05) were statistically lower than that of the freshman (M = 5.54, SD =.67) and sophomore (M = 5.87, SD = .36) pre-service teachers.

Results presented in Table 3 revealed that satisfaction was only correlated with social personality type scores. Performance as measured by the students' overall Grade Point Average (GPA) was found to be significantly correlated with Investigative, Conventional personality types and department entrance exam scores. Artistic personality type scores were found to be negatively correlated with the department entrance exam scores.

Since the senior students have more experience and knowledge regarding their profession than the other students, the correlation analysis was conducted separately for these students. The results presented in Table 4 revealed that satisfaction was not related to any type of personality. Academic performance was found to be moderately correlated with the investigative and conventional type scores and department entrance exam scores.

Table 3. Relationships among the Variables for the Whole Sample

		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
1	Realistic	-	.18**	.13	.16	.02	.30**	.09	-.06	.03	.03
2	Investigative		-	.12	.09	.02	.15	.36**	.14	.13	.19*
3	Artistic			-	.05	-.02	.23*	-.08	-.27**	.10	.11
4	Social				-	.06	.26	.18	-.03	.22*	.10
5	Enterprising					-	-.01	.13	-.01	.00	.06
6	Conventional						-	.02	.00	.08	.33**
7	UEES							-	.00	.14	.03
8	DEES								-	-.03	.31**
9	Satisfaction									-	.13
10	Performance										

Table 4. Relationships among the Variables Only for the Senior Students

		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**
1	Realistic	-	.45*	.40*	.16	.40*	.33	.15	-.10	-.07	.09
2	Investigative		-	.12	-.01	.05	.41*	.19	.09	.02	.53**
3	Artistic			-	.02	.10	.38*	-.35	-.21	.14	.00
4	Social				-	.04	.05	.00	-.29	.07	-.09
5	Enterprising					-	.15	-.07	-.13	-.20	-.20
6	Conventional						-	.02	-.23	.09	.54**
7	UEES							-	.52**	-.06	.39*
8	DEES								-	-.01	.24
9	Satisfaction									-	.26
10	Performance										

Since more than one variable were positively correlated with the academic performance, stepwise regression analysis was carried out for the whole group to examine which variables makes a unique contribution to predicting academic performance. All of the personality variables, UEES, DESS and satisfaction served as the predictor variables while academic performance was the dependent variable in the regression analysis. The results revealed that only Conventional dimension of personality ($\beta = .41$, $p < .01$) and DESS ($\beta = .31$, $p < .01$) made a significant contribution to predicting academic performance. Conventional dimension of personality accounted for 18% of variance in academic performance and DESS accounted for additional 9% of variance above and beyond conventional. These two variables, collectively, accounted for 27% of variance in the academic performance.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

Guided by Holland's theory of personalities in work environments, the main purpose of the current study was to examine the relationship between vocational personality and departmental satisfaction. The results revealed that the pre-service teachers were, in general, social and satisfied with their department (Perkmen, Cevik, & Alkan, 2012). Social personality type scores were found to be positively related to satisfaction but not academic performance. Academic performance was found to be related to conventional and investigative personality type scores and department entrance exam score. Based on this study and other studies (Fejgin, Talmor & Erlich, 2005) it seems clear that person-environment fit is very important to have satisfaction with the profession of teaching physical education.

To begin with, consistent with the theoretical predictions and previous research findings (Perkmen & Sahin, 2013) the pre-service physical education teachers were interested most in social activities like guiding other people, working for a charity, helping others in difficulty. In addition, there was a relationship between social scores and departmental satisfaction. It seems that the department of physical education fits people with social personality traits. Thus, those who would like to study in this department should think about if they possess social personality traits. Although being social seems to lead to departmental satisfaction, it does not contribute to higher levels of academic performance.

The best predictor of academic performance was found to be conventional scores in this study. Conventional people are orderly, systematic, precise, accurate, careful and controlled (Swanson & Fouad, 1999). It seems that possessing these personality traits is very important in the department of physical education. Thus, those who would like to study in this department should think about if they possess conventional personality traits. They can ask themselves "am I an organized, orderly, systematic, precise, accurate, careful and controlled person?" "Do I like doing things in systematic ways?" Responses to these questions may guide people when thinking about if the physical education fits their personality.

Besides the conventional and social dimensions of personality, artistic dimension of personality should deserve attention. The participants' artistic scores were found to be negatively related to their department entrance exam scores. The physical education department does not seem to fit people with artistic personality traits. Based on the findings of the current study, it appears that this department fits people with social and conventional traits but does not fit those with artistic personality traits.

The significant relationship between department entrance exam scores and academic performance was noteworthy. It seems that the exam used to select the students for this department is a good predictor of academic success. Thus, the physical education departments in different universities and countries may use this exam when selecting their students.

It should be noted that the current study was conducted in one university and departmental satisfaction was measured only one item. Thus, it is difficult to generalize its findings to other settings. Future researchers might replicate this study in different universities with a larger number of

participants to overcome this limitation. In addition, it makes more sense to conduct a similar study with in-service physical education teachers in the workplace. Since they are teachers, they possess more knowledge and experience about what is means to be a physical education teacher. Studies conducted with in-service teachers might shed more light into the role of personality in vocational satisfaction.

Despite a number of limitations, the current study has a number of implications for the candidates of physical education department and faculty members working in this department. Those who would like to study physical education may fill out the Vocational Interests Scale to understand if their personality fits this department. Scale items especially in the social and conventional dimensions of personality may give them valuable ideas regarding if physical education is an ideal department for them to study. Faculty members can administer the Vocational Interest Scale to their students to learn about their personality. This helps the faculty members understand why some students are successful and satisfied why some not.

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