

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Relationship Between Teachers' Professional Attitudes and the Student-Centered Teacher Behaviors

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### Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to determine the perception levels of teachers towards professional attitudes and student-centered teacher behaviors and to reveal whether there is a significant relationship between these perceptions. In addition, it was tried to determine whether the relationships between teachers' perceptions of professional attitudes and perceptions of student-centered teacher behaviors was statistically significant according to teachers' personal variables. The study is a quantitative research and has been carried out in correlational scanning model. The sample of the research was composed 302 teachers who were employed in the primary and secondary schools chosen by random sampling method in 2018-2019 academic year in the central district of Bolu province. As a measurement tool in research were used 'Professional Attitude Scale' developed by Özgür (1994) and 'Teacher Behaviors in the Classroom' developed by Büyüköztürk, Kılıç, Karadeniz and Karataş (2004). For the Analysis of data were used Mean, standard deviation, Mann Whitney U test, Kruskal Wallis and Spearman Rho correlation analysis. According to the results of the study, it was found that teachers' professional attitude was at medium level. there was a significant difference between teachers' professional attitudes and gender variable, and no significant difference was found in education level, age, seniority and branch variables. Teachers' views on student-centered teacher behaviors in the classroom were at medium level. There were significant differences between teachers' student centered behaviors in terms of gender, age and branch, and there was no significant difference in terms of education level and seniority. It was concluded that there was a positive and moderate level relationship between teachers' professional attitudes and teachers' student-centered behaviors

**Keywords:** Teacher, Professional attitude, Student-centered teacher behaviors.

## Introduction

It is a known fact that the basic element of the education system is the teacher and when compared to other elements, the teacher has more power to influence with the help of personal and professional characteristics. The teacher has an indispensable importance in the education system. No matter how well the goals or objectives are determined in education and training activities, no matter how effectively the scope and gains of the course are selected and organized, It does not seem possible to get the desired result from education as long as they try to be carried out in the hands of teachers who do not have the desired goals and understandings and do not show enough effort and endeavor (Sünbül, 2001). It is very important to do this profession lovingly and willingly in order to achieve success in the teaching profession, which requires knowledge, skill as well as patience, dedication and continuous work behavior (Aşkar and Erden 1987).

The cognitive and affective perceptions of individuals with positive or negative qualities, congenital or acquired later, brings out the concept of attitude that has a guiding effect on their behavior. According to İpek and Bayraktar (2004), attitude is an individual's demeanour, which can be positive or negative, towards any object, situation or event that is addressed, whereas. According to Papanastasiou (2002), it can be defined as the emotional tendency of an individual towards objects, events, people, places and thoughts, either positively or negatively. Attitude, which can be defined as a tendency to think, feel and behavior, can be thought to have an important place in the formation of the phenomenological field of people. This situation is important in forming people's perception of facts or events. Attitude according to Allport (1935), "It is an emotional and mental preparedness that is the result of life and experiences, that has the power of directing or dynamically influencing the behavior of the individual against all objects and situations to which it is related " defines as. Based on Allport's (1935) emphasis that the attitude is formed as a result of the life and experiences of the individual, it can be said that the attitude can be learned or change over time. Teachers' experience they have gained in their professional lives over time, uploading some cognitive and emotional attributes related to their professions and the reflection of these uploads on their behavior over time are also related to their attitudes towards their professions. As a matter of fact, teachers' attitudes towards their professions are one of the strongest determinants of their professional behavior (Allport, 1935 ; Can, 1987 ; Çeliköz and Çetin, 2004; cited in Demir and Gelişli, 2018).

Teachers' attitudes towards their professions are generally related to their love of their professions, their commitment to their professions, their awareness of the importance and necessity of their professions in society, and their belief that they are obliged to constantly improve themselves in today's fast development and change while performing their profession (Temizkan, 2008). They are teachers who have an important role in the development and upbringing of children who are the future of society (Argon and Koçak, 2019). Teachers' attitudes towards their profession are of great importance in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the teaching profession. The positive attitude of teachers towards their profession has an important effect on job satisfaction, which plays a big role in teachers' successful fulfillment of their profession (Durmuşoğlu, Yanık and Akkoyunlu, 2009).

Achieving the goals of an education system is only possible by achieving the desired goals in classrooms, one of the most important subsystems of that education system. Classes' achievement of the specified goals is related to the activities carried out in the classroom. At this point, the main element is the teacher. In-class behavior displayed by the teacher in the classroom environment is of importance. Student-centered teacher behavior in the classroom; It is the behavior of the teacher who designs learning-teaching activities in line with these principles by focusing the individual development and differences of students. Viewed from this perspective, the teacher has made it a goal for all students in his classroom to be able to learn and develop, and by being sensitive towards his students, he tries to be concerned with the feelings and needs they feel they lack. In particular, he is most importantly a trusting and trusted class leader who observes the personal differences, cognitive, affective and kinesthetic levels of his students, organizes learning activities that may be appropriate for them, supports, encourages and rewards the desired behaviors of students.(Can, 2004). Various studies have shown that teachers' behaviors in classroom are closely related to students' behaviors in various dimensions. For example, as Başar (2001) quotes from some research Thompson (1993) results, the personal orientation of the teacher is one of the important parameters affecting student orientation. There is a positive relationship between the teacher's love of his job, his devotion to his job, and the student's observing him and modeling himself with this feature, and it has been observed that there is a positive relationship between the teacher's commitment to his lesson and the student's commitment to the lesson. Teachers' positive expectations towards their students can affect students' behavior (cited in Üstüner, 2006).

In this context, it can be said that teaching is not sufficient only with having competencies related to cognitive and psycho-motor fields such as knowledge and skills, however, it is a profession that includes competencies in the affective field such as attitude and understanding. Teachers' gaining positive values and attitudes about their profession is as important and effective as their knowledge. Because students are affected by the teacher's attitude and behavior. The teacher's thoughts, emotional reactions, personality and habits affect the student. Most of the time, the student pays attention to the way the teacher explains the subject, his lesson and his approach towards the students rather than the subject he tells, and is affected by the teacher's interpretation of events (Varış, 1988; cited in Bozca, 2015).

When the variables that determine teachers' behaviors in the classroom are analyzed within the framework of organizational behavior, it is seen that one of the main factors in determining teacher behaviors is the quality of the attitude towards the profession of the individual who is doing the teaching profession (Üstüner, 2006). Positive or negative attitudes of teachers towards their professions are reflected in teachers' behaviors and classroom environment and in the personality development of their students; It is effective in teacher-student relationships and in guiding teachers' professional behaviors (Semerci and Semerci, 2004; Ayık and Ataş, 2014). When the studies in the related field are examined; Özer and Gelecek (2008), Duran (2009), Çeliköz, Seçer, Sarı, Çetin and Büyüктаşkapu (2010), Şahin (2010) on teachers' professional attitude levels, Bozca (2015) on the relationship between teachers' professional attitudes and job satisfaction, Sözer (2015) on teachers' sociological profiles and professional attitudes of teachers, Demir and Gelişli (2018) on the relationship between teachers' professional attitudes and extracurricular time for their professional duties, Çakmak (2019) on the relationship between professional attitudes and communication skills. There is no direct study on the relationship between teachers' professional attitudes and student-centered teacher behaviors in the classroom. Thus, it is important to

investigate and examine the relationship between teachers' attitudes towards their profession and student-centered teacher behaviors, as the quality of classroom teacher behavior is an important factor that affects the achievement of the educational system's goals, and attitudes are one of the determinants of behavior in the examination of individuals' behavior (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1999).

### **Purpose of the Study**

In this study, it is aimed to determine the perception of teachers towards professional attitudes and student-centered teacher behaviors and to reveal whether there is a significant relationship between these perceptions. In this direction, answers to the following sub-questions were searched:

1. What are the opinions of teachers about their professional attitude and their student-centered behavior?
2. Teachers' perception levels towards professional attitudes and student-centered teacher behaviors; Does it show a significant difference according to gender, education level, age, seniority and branch?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the teachers' professional attitudes and their perceptions about student-centered teachers' behaviors?

## **Method**

### **Research Model**

The research is a descriptive study conducted in correlational scanning model, one of the quantitative research methods. Correlational scanning model; It is a method used to determine the relationship level of variables in a situation with at least two variables (Balci, 2011).

### **Universe and Sample**

The study group of the research consists of teachers working in Bolu central district official primary and secondary schools in the academic year of 2018-2019. Since it was not possible to reach the whole universe, the disproportionate random sampling technique was used to determine the teachers to be included in the sample, and teachers working in 10 primary schools and 10 secondary schools were selected with this technique. In the study, it was tried to reach all 620 teachers and feedback was provided from 320 teachers. Since 18 of the returned scales were filled incompletely, 302 scales were evaluated. The sample size was calculated as 288 for a 95% confidence level. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), it has been determined that the scales returning represent the universe. 49% of the teachers participating in the study are female (n = 148), 51% are male (n = 154); 47% of them work in primary schools (n = 142) and 53% in secondary schools (n = 160). % 3 of the participating teachers are associate degree (n= 10), % 86 are undergraduate (n= 258), % 11 are postgraduate education graduates (n= 34); % 22 of them have seniority of 0-10 years (n= 66), % 47 of them 11-20 years (n= 142), % 31 of them 21 years or more (n= 94).

## **Data Collection Tools**

The personal information form developed by the researcher was used to determine teachers' personal variables such as gender, age, educational status, seniority, and branch. In the study, "Professional Attitude Scale" was used to determine teachers' professional attitudes, and "In-classroom Teacher Behaviors Scale" was used to determine teachers' attitudes towards student-centered behavior in classroom. The occupational attitude scale was developed by Özgür (1994). In the scale, there are a total of 33 items, 20 of which are positive and 13 of which are negative items. They are arranged in a mixed order, and the scale consists of one dimension. The reliability (Cronbach alpha) of all items of the scale was 0.89. In this study, the Cronbach alpha value, which is the internal consistency coefficient of all items, was calculated as 0.893.

The classroom teacher behavior scale was developed by Büyüköztürk et al. (2004) and consists of 27 items and one dimension. The overall reliability (Cronbach alpha) of the scale was 0.90. In this study, Cronbach alpha value was calculated as 0.94 in total.

All of the scales used in the study are 5-point Likert, and the professional attitude scale ranges from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree', and the in-classroom teacher behavior scale is 'Almost never' to 'Almost always'. Score intervals for the professional attitude and classroom teacher behavior were set as "Strongly disagree / Almost never 1.00–1.79", "Disagree/Rarely 1.80–2.59", "Undecided /Sometimes 2.60–3.39", "Agree/ Usually 3.40–4.19", "Strongly agree/'Almost always' 4.20–5.00".

## **Data Analysis**

During the process of collecting research data, the permissions of the scales used firstly were obtained via e-mail, the survey forms were distributed to the voluntary teachers on basis by visiting the schools after obtaining the permissions of the Bolu Governorship and the Bolu Provincial Directorate of National Education, and after they were answered, they were collected from the schools. In the study, The data obtained during the analysis process were analyzed in computer environment, the distribution of the data was examined with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and it was determined that it did not show a normal distribution ( $p < .05$ ). Nonparametric tests were used in the analysis of data that did not show normal distribution. In analyzing the data, the arithmetic mean and standard deviations were determined and interpreted to determine the teachers' opinions about their professional attitudes and student-centered behaviors in the classroom. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine whether gender and branch variables differ significantly, and Kruskal Wallis was used to determine the level of differences in education, age and seniority variables. Spearman Rho correlation analyzes were used to determine whether there is a significant relationship between teachers' professional attitudes and student-centered behaviors in the classroom.

## Finding

### Findings Regarding with Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Attitudes and Student-Centered Teacher Behavior In Classroom

**Table 1.** Teachers' perceptions of professional attitudes and student-centered behaviors in the classroom

Scale	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss
Professional attitudes	302	3,98	0,45
Teachers behaviours in classroom	302	4,01	0,48

As seen in Table 1, teachers' perceptions of professional attitude ( $\bar{X} = 3.98$ ) are at the level of "I agree".

Teachers' perceptions of teacher behavior in the classrom were found to be at the 'Generally' level ( $\bar{X} = 4.01$ ).

### Findings According to Personal Variables

Findings on whether there is a significant difference between teachers' personal variables such as gender, education level, age, seniority, and branch variables will be included in this section.

### Findings Regarding the Gender Varia

**Table 2.** Mann-Whitney u results relating the evaluation of teachers' perceptions of professional attitudes and student-centered behaviors in the classroom according to gender

Scale	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	Rank sum	U	p
Professional attitudes	Female	148	161,78	23943,5	9874,5	,045*
	Male	154	141,62	21809,5		
Teachers behaviours in classroom	Female	148	166,15	24589,5	9228,5	,004*
	Male	154	137,43	21163,5		

\* p < .05

When Table 2 is examined, a significant difference was found in the perceptions of teachers towards professional attitude ( $U = 9874.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ) according to the gender variable. It has been found that female teachers' perception scores ( $\bar{X} = 161,78$ ) are higher than male teachers' perception scores ( $\bar{X} = 141,62$ ), and it can be said that female teachers have more positive professional attitudes than male teachers.

When Table 2 is examined, it was found that the gender variable also creates a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of teacher behaviors in-classroom ( $U = 9228.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ). It was observed that female teachers ( $\bar{X} = 166.15$ ) had higher perception scores of teacher behaviors in the classroom than male teachers ( $\bar{X} = 137.43$ ).

### Findings Regarding the Educational Level Variable

**Table 3.** *Kruskal-wallis results for the evaluation of teachers' perceptions of professional attitudes and student-centered behaviors in the classroom according to educational level*

Scale	Level of education	n	Mean Rank	sd	X <sup>2</sup>	p	Significant difference
Professional attitudes	Associate degree	10	173,10	2	1,507	,471	-
	Undergraduate degree	258	149,03	2			
	Postgraduate degree	34	163,91	2			
Teachers behaviours in classroom	Associate degree	10	167,55	2	2,813	,245	-
	Undergraduate degree	258	153,86	2			
	Postgraduate degree	34	128,87	2			

\* p < .05

When Table 3 is examined, teachers' perception scores towards professional attitude (X<sup>2</sup>[sd=2, n=302]=1.507, p>.05) and perception scores for teacher behaviors in the classroom (X<sup>2</sup>[sd=2, n=302]=2.813, p>.05), wasn't significant difference between education levels.

### Findings Regarding the Age Variable

**Table 4.** *Kruskal-wallis results regarding the evaluation of teachers' perceptions of professional attitudes and student-centered behaviors in the classroom according to age*

Scale	Age	N	Mean Rank	sd	X <sup>2</sup>	p	Significant difference
Professional attitudes	21-30	30	145,12	3	1,174	,759	-
	31-40	132	146,94	3			
	41-50	98	158,37	3			
	50 over	42	154,38	3			
Teachers behaviours in classroom	21-30	30	188,42	3	8,382	,039*	21-30 and 31-40
	31-40	132	138,94	3			
	41-50	98	155,35	3			
	50 over	42	155,62	3			

\* p < .05

When Table 4 is examined, there was no significant difference in the attitude of teachers (X<sup>2</sup>[sd=3, n=302]=1.174, p>.05) according to the age variable.

According to Table 4, it was determined that teachers' perception scores of teacher behaviors in the classroom (X<sup>2</sup> [sd=3, n=302]=8.382, p<.05) show a statistically significant difference according to the age variable. According to the results of the Mann-Whitney U test conducted to determine between which groups the determined differences were, it was found that these differences were between the ages of 21-30 and 31-40, and the average values of those in the 21-30 age group were higher.

## Findings Regarding the professional Seniority Variable

**Table 5.** *Kruskal-wallis results regarding the evaluation of teachers' perceptions of professional attitudes and student-centered behaviors in the classroom according to seniority*

Scale	Professional seniority	n	Mean Rank	sd	X <sup>2</sup>	p	Significant difference
Professional attitudes	0-10	66	147,98	2	0,072	,965	-
	11-20	142	151,23	2			
	21 over	94	151,18	2			
Teachers behaviours in classroom	0-10	66	165,23	2	4,165	,125	-
	11-20	142	140,36	2			
	21 over	94	155,59	2			

\* p < .05

When Table 5 is examined, there was no significant difference between the perception points  $X^2$  [ $sd = 2, n = 302$ ] = 0.072,  $p > .05$ ) towards the professional attitudes of teachers of different seniority and their perception scores towards teacher behaviors in the classroom  $X^2$ [ $sd=2, n=302$ ]=4.165,  $p > .05$ ).

## Findings Regarding the Branch Variable

**Table 6.** *Mann-Whitney u results for the evaluation of teachers' perceptions of professional attitudes and student-centered behaviors in the classroom according to the branch variable*

Scale	Branch	N	$\bar{X}$	Rank sum	U	p
Professional attitudes	Primary sch. teacher	142	159,64	22669,5	10203,5	,127
	Secondary sch. teacher	160	144,27	23083,5		
Teachers behaviours in classroom	Primary sch. teacher	142	177,47	25201,0	7672,0	,000*
	Secondary sch. teacher	160	128,45	20552,0		

\* p < .05

When Table 6 is examined, there was no significant difference was found in teachers' perceptions of professional attitudes ( $U = 10203.5, p > .05$ ) according to the branch variable. However, it is seen that the average of primary school teachers' attitudes towards their profession ( $\bar{X} = 159.64$ ) is higher than the average of secondary school teachers ( $\bar{X} = 144.27$ ). A statistically significant difference was observed in the perception scores of the teachers about teacher behaviors in the classroom ( $U = 7672.0, p < .05$ ). It can be said that primary school teachers ( $\bar{X} = 177, 47$ ) exhibit more student-centered positive classroom behaviors compared to secondary school teachers ( $\bar{X} = 128,45$ ).



## Findings on the Relationship Between Teachers' Perceptions of Professional Attitudes and Student-Centered Teacher Behaviors in the classroom

**Table 7.** Correlation analysis results for teachers' perceptions of professional attitudes and student-centered behaviors in the classroom

	Teachers behaviours in classroom
Professional attitudes	r = ,314*

\*\* p<.01

According to the correlation analysis in Table 7, it can be said that there is a moderately positive significant relationship between the teachers' perceptions of professional attitude and their perceptions of teacher behavior in the classroom ( $r=.314$ ;  $p<.01$ ).

## Result, Discussion and Suggestions

According to the results of the research, it was concluded that teachers' opinions about their professional attitudes were at the level of "I agree", and their opinions about student-centered teacher behavior in classroom were "generally" at the level. In this context, it can be said that teachers' professional attitudes and student-centered teacher behaviors are at a medium level. It can be said that teachers have a positive attitude towards professional attitude and student-centered teacher behavior. When the studies in the related field are examined; Özer and Gelen (2008), Duran (2009), Çeliköz et al. (2010), Şahin (2010), Bozca (2015), Demir and Gelişli (2018) in their research have found that teachers have a positive perception of their professional attitude. The results of the research are consistent with the findings in the literature. This situation may have been caused by the teachers not having enough time to fulfill their duties and to devote time to their professional development. It should not be forgotten that it is an undeniable fact that teachers who love and willingly do their profession have a great impact on student success, school effectiveness and productivity.

When the teachers' findings on professional attitude and student-centered teacher behavior in the classroom were examined, it was concluded that female teachers had more positive professional attitudes than male teachers. According to the statistics published by the Ministry of National Education Strategy Development Directorate in 2018, the total number of teachers was 1 030 130, 632 871 of the teachers were female and 397 259 were male. According to the data, approximately 60% of the teachers were female teachers. (MEB, 2018). Most of the teachers working within the Ministry of National Education are women, and the number of female students (176 289) in education faculties is almost double the number of male students (86 931) in higher education information system statistics (YÖK, 2018). In this context, it can be said that the teaching profession is a highly preferred profession for women and they have a more positive attitude towards the teaching profession than male teachers, as it is among the ideal professions. The results of the studies of Kahraman (2008), Bozca (2015), Sözer (2015), Emre (2017), Demir and Gelişli (2018) in which female teachers have more positive professional attitudes than male teachers coincide with the results of this study.

It was concluded that the educational level variable of teachers did not make a significant difference regarding their perceptions of professional attitudes and student-centered teacher behaviors in the classroom. It can be said that educational level does not have a significant and determining effect on teachers' professional attitude. Korkmaz (2009), Bozca (2015) and Emre (2017) concluded that there is no significant difference in teachers' professional attitudes according to their education level. This situation is consistent with the results of the research.

When the findings on professional attitudes and student-centered teacher behaviors according to the age variable of teachers are examined; There was no statistically significant difference in professional attitude according to the age variable. Bilgin (1996), Bozca (2015) and Şahin (2010) could not find a significant difference in terms of the age variable in their studies, and it is parallel to the research result. However, it was observed that there was a statistically significant difference between the student-centered teacher behaviors of the teachers according to the age variable. The differences are between the teachers between the ages of 21- 30 and 31-40, and the average values of those in the 21-30 age group are higher. This may be due to the fact that teachers, who are at the beginning of their profession, have more interest and orientation towards their students since they do not suffer from professional deformation and their in classroom behaviors are more student-centered.

It was concluded that there was no significant difference in the professional attitudes of teachers according to the seniority variable. Dalğan (1998) and Şahin (2010) reached the conclusion that the seniority of teachers does not have a significant difference towards teachers' professional attitudes, and it coincides with the research results. When the effect of seniority variable on teachers' perceptions of teacher behaviors in classroom was examined, no statistically significant difference was found.

There is no difference in teachers' perceptions of professional attitudes according to the branch variable. However, it has been observed that the average values of primary school teachers' attitudes towards their profession are higher than the secondary school teachers. Korkmaz (2009) and Bozca (2015) concluded that primary school teachers have a more positive view than secondary school teachers. It can be said that this difference is due to the fact that the teachers in the research sample are from different regions. On the other hand, it was observed that the perceptions about teacher behavior in classroom created a statistically significant difference according to the effect of the branch variable. It can be said that primary school teachers exhibit more effective student-centered behaviors in classroom. The research findings of Büyüköztürk et al., (2004), Güven and Demirhan (2006) and Çakır (2015) in the literature coincide with this study finding. The reason for the difference between secondary school and primary school teachers is that the primary school teachers can deal with a single class for a long time compared to the secondary school teachers, and the primary school teachers have more communication and interaction with children, increasing the teacher's belonging to the class and adopting the students. In this case, it can be said that the teacher affects the ability of the children to see their skills, attitudes and deficiencies better and to show student-centered behavior towards this.

There is a moderately positive and significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of professional attitudes and student-centered teacher behaviors in the classroom. In this case, it can be interpreted that as teachers' positive perceptions and love towards their profession increase, their perceptions and efforts towards student-centered teacher behaviors in the classroom will also

increase. Or, on the contrary, it can be said that in schools where teachers' positive attitudes towards their profession are low, student-centered teacher behavior in the classroom will also be weak. According to the research results, the following suggestions can be made:

- Renewing the guidance lessons in secondary schools in terms of content and bringing them back as lesson hours at classroom level in order to improve the student-centered teacher behaviors of the secondary school teachers,
- Developing scientific activities and practices within the scope of the curriculum in order to give university students a positive attitude and behavior towards their profession, providing teachers with training and practices that increase their professional attitudes and motivation with in-service training and activities,
- Making policies and studies that increase the value and importance of the teaching profession in society by the Ministry of National Education,
- Counseling teachers who will work in the teacher candidacy system should be selected from teachers who have effective behavior and skills in their field, so that prospective teachers receive training and assistance from them.

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