THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESERVICE PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY AND PROACTIVE PERSONALITY[*]

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Abstract

Teachers today can influence their environment and events through their behavior, therefore, each teacher's teaching style has an impact on students' academic achievement. The effective design of learning environments and systematic guidance of students depend on teachers' efficacy and personality traits. The aim of this study is to determine the relationship between preservice physical education teachers' self-efficacy and proactive personality traits. Study group consists of 386 physical education students (122 women and 264 men) of four universities in the spring semester of 2015/2016. Data were collected using a Personal Information Form developed by the researcher, an Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES) and a short version of the Proactive Personality Scale (SPPS). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, t-test, One-Way ANOVA and Tukey multiple comparison test. Participants reported moderate levels of self-efficacy and low levels of proactive personality. Male participants had significantly lower social status scale scores than female participants. An interesting result was that self-efficacy decreased with age. Fourth-grade students' academic self-efficacy and sub-scale scores were statistically lower than those of first-, second- and third-grade students. Sports engagement were found to have no effect on participants' academic self-efficacy and proactive personality. Another interesting result was that participants' academic self-efficacy decreased along with an increase in grade point average (GPA) scores. Participants' proactive personality scores decreased with an increase in their academic self-efficacy scores. Future studies are warranted to assess the correlation of academic self-efficacy and proactive personality with different variables.

Keywords: Academic self-efficacy, preservice physical education teacher, proactive personality

INTRODUCTION

Given the fact that teachers today can influence their environment and events through their behavior, it is evident that each teacher's teaching style has an impact on students' academic achievement. The effective design of learning environments and systematic guidance of students depend on teachers' efficacy and personality traits. Teachers should have not only high levels of self-efficacy but also personality traits that are consistent with teaching. One of these traits is proactive personality.

Self-efficacy is one of the most important concepts of Albert Bandura's social learning theory. He defines self-efficacy as an individual's perceived ability to take necessary actions in order to successfully perform a task (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is also related to the individual's belief in his or her ability to effectively perform the tasks that are needed to be accomplished in order to cope with possible challenges. Therefore, self-efficacy refers, in a way, to how much effort and determination the individual is willing to invest in a task to overcome challenges (Alabay, 2006).

According to Bandura (1997), there are four sources of self-efficacy beliefs. One of these sources is academic self-efficacy, which is defined as an individual's belief in his or her ability to successfully perform an academic task (Schunk, 1991; Solberg et al., 1993; Zimmerman, 1995). In other words, it refers to students' self-perceived competence in accomplishing academic tasks at a desired level in the learning-teaching process (Bong, 2003, p. 412).

A draft prepared by the Ministry of National Education (MNE) classifies physical education teaching efficacy under seven criteria, some of which are "athletes know about health and sports safety practices," "athletes develop psycho-social skills" and "athletes nurture national feelings" (MNE, 2004). We can see that the importance of professional competencies that physical education teachers (PETs) should have in the Turkish education system has been and will be emphasized for many years. PETs should first have a high sense of self-efficacy beliefs in teaching to be able to create an effective and successful teaching-learning environment, which therefore depends in part on their academic self-efficacy beliefs (Akkoyunlu, Orhan & Umay, 2005). Training teachers to develop teaching efficacy beliefs and attitudes defined by the MNE and introducing those teachers to the education system will definitely improve the quality of physical education courses and help students develop the desired skills in the context of general education (Ünlü & Aydos, 2010).

The concept of proactive personality, which is often addressed by the personal development literature, has received increasing attention with regard to the ability of individuals to develop desired skills and abilities. A proactive person is defined as one who can control a situation and make the appropriate move before a problem arises rather than afterwards (Webster's Medical Dictionary). According to the Encarta World English Dictionary, a proactive person is one who has the ability to take charge of events and effectively deal with them rather than passively reacting to them. All in all, a proactive person can be defined as one who actively takes part in events and comes up with appropriate solutions by anticipating possible problems before they actually arise. People with proactive personality are more likely to show initiative and take action at work (Siebert et al. 1999). It is of great significance for PETs to be individuals with proactive personality who can take initiative to deal with challenges, seek out opportunities for development and have high levels of self-determination and intrinsic motivation to achieve goals in order to provide students with an effective learning environment (Gupta & Bhawe, 2007).

Proactive people also overcome the problems that they face and take individual responsibility to make an influence on the world (Crant, 2000). Such properties are necessary for PETs who play a major role in the regulation of the educational environment. Overall, PETs should be able to carry out a risk analysis, assume control and responsibility in the right place at the right time and learn from their success and failures to be able to anticipate any issues that might arise while planning their lessons, and teaching and assessing their students. Today's information revolution and explosion is an indication of the need for people with proactive personality because physical education courses

taught by teachers with proactive personality traits can encourage students to develop those traits as well.

In this context, the domain of proactive personality encompasses people, organizations, culture, society and the global world (Covey, 2015). It can, therefore, be stated that academic self-efficacy and proactive personality are the two most important concepts for preservice physical education teachers (PPETs) who are in that domain and have a difficult task of teaching physical skills. The aim of this study is to examine PPETs' academic self-efficacy and proactive personality and to determine the relationship between them.

METHOD

Sample

The study group consists of 386 PPETs (122 women and 264 men) of four universities in the spring semester of 2015/2016.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a Personal Information Form developed by the researcher, an Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES) and a short version of the Proactive Personality Scale (SPPS).

Short Version of Proactive Personality Scale (SPPS)

Originally developed by Bateman and Crant (1993), revised by Claes, Beheydt and Lemmens (2005) and adapted to the Turkish language by Akın et al. (2011), the SPSS consists of 10 items on a 7-point Likert-type scale. Higher scores indicate higher levels of proactive personality. There are no reverse-scored items. The linguistic equivalence of the scale ranges from .74 to .90. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to further examine the construct validity of the factors on the original scale. The one-dimensional proactive personality model was supported by the analysis, demonstrating a high goodness-of-fit index ($x^2 = 47.91$, N = 332, Sd = 29, p = 0.01502). The overall fit index of the model was as follows: RMSEA = .044, NFI = .99, CFI = .99, IFI = .99, RFI = .97, GFI = .97, AGFI = .95 and SRMR = .033. The factor loadings of the items ranged from .60 to .75. The internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha coefficient) of the SPPS was α = 0.86, indicating that the reliability of the items was high. The item-test correlations for the items ranged from .52 to .66.

Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES)

Developed by Ekiri (2012), the ASES consists of 33 items on a 5-point Likert-type scale (ranging from "strongly agree = 5" to "strongly disagree = 1"). The scale has 3 sub-scales; social status (10 items), cognitive applications (19 items) and technical skills (4 items).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20. Normality of data distributions was tested using Shapiro-Wilk W Test for normality at a significance level of 0.05. When data were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$), independent t test and One-way ANOVA were used for statistical comparisons between groups. When the one-way ANOVA test showed statistically significant differences, data were evaluated using Tukey's (HSD) and Tamhane's tests, when homoscedasticity was verified or not, respectively. When data were not normally distributed ($p<0.05$), Kruskal Wallis-H and Mann Whitney U tests were used for statistical comparisons between groups. Standardized z values were given for Mann Whitney U Test as the unit numbers were more than 20. When the Kruskal Wallis-H test showed statistically significant differences, a post-hoc multiple comparison test was performed to determine which groups differed significantly from one another. Spearman's Correlation Coefficient was used to investigate the relationship between variables that were not normally distributed. A significance level of 0.05 was used to denote statistical significance.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Demographic Characteristics

		n	**%**
Gender	**Woman**	122	31.61
	Man	264	68.39
	Total	386	100
Grade Level	**1**	212	54.92
	2	59	15.28
	3	42	10.88
	4	73	18.91
	Total	386	100
Sports Engagement	**Yes**	185	47.93
	No	201	52.07
	Total	386	100
University	**ODÜ**	73	18.91
	KTÜ	109	28.24
	OMÜ	133	34.46
	MARMARA	71	18.39
	Total	386	100

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Demographic Characteristics and Score Distribution

	n	Mean	Median	Min	Max	ss
Proactive Personality Scale Total Score	386	54,8	57	10	70	10,3
Social Status Sub-Scale Score	386	29,66	29	12	48	6,63
Cognitive Applications Sub-Scale Score	386	52,96	53	20	91	12,25
Technical Skills Sub-Scale Score	386	11,96	12	4	20	3,27
Academic Self-Efficacy Scale Total Score	386	94,58	94	41	159	20,01
Age	385	21,17	21	12	32	2,37
GPA Scores	365	2,76	2,87	0,5	3,9	0,58

The arithmetic means of participants' SPPS and ASES scores are 54.8 and 94.58, respectively.

Table 3. Independent T Test Results Regarding the Difference in Scale Scores between Male and Female Participants

n		Gender						Independent T Test	
		Mean	Median	Min	Max	Sd	t	p	
Social Status Sub-Scale Score	Woman	122	31.14	31	16	48	6.2	3.003	**0.003**
	Man	264	28.98	29	12	44	6.73		
	Total	386	29.66	29	12	48	6.63		
Cognitive Applications Sub-Scale Score	Woman	122	53.63	53	23	91	11.29	0.736	0.462
	Man	264	52.64	52.5	20	83	12.68		
	Total	386	52.96	53	20	91	12.25		
Academic Self-Efficacy Scale Total Score	Woman	122	97.15	98.5	49	159	18.65	1.719	0.086
	Man	264	93.39	93	41	144	20.54		
	Total	386	94.58	94	41	159	20.01		

There is a statistically significant difference in social status scores between male and female participants [t = 3.003, p < 0.05], indicating that the former have significantly lower social status scores than the latter. However, there is no statistically significant difference in SPPS scores between male and female participants (p > 0.05).

Table 3. Continued

n			Gender					Mann Whitney U Test		
		Mean	Median	Min	Max	Sd	Mean Rank	z	p	
Proactive Personality Scale Total Score	**Woman**	122	56.07	57.5	13	70	8.75	202.91		
	Man	264	54.22	56	10	70	10.91	189.15	-1.128	0.259
	Total	386	54.8	57	10	70	10.3			
Technical Skills Sub-Scale Score	**Woman**	122	12.38	12	4	20	3.21	206.74		
	Man	264	11.77	12	4	20	3.28	187.38	-1.592	0.111
	Total	386	11.96	12	4	20	3.27			

There is no statistically significant difference in other scores between male and female participants (p > 0.05).

Table 4. One Way ANOVA Test Results Regarding the Difference in Scale Scores between Grade Levels

n			Grade Level					One Way ANOVA	
		Mean	Median	Min	Max	Sd	F	p	
Social Status Sub-Scale Score	1	212	30.91	31	17	48	6.17		
	2	59	28.97	29	16	44	6.51	7.478	**0.001**
	3	42	29.21	30	15	41	6.73		
	4	73	26.86	26	12	44	7.12		
	Total	386	29.66	29	12	48	6.63	1-4	
Cognitive Applications Sub-Scale Score	1	212	55.67	56	23	91	11.68		
	2	59	53.22	53	20	79	13.17		**0.001**
	3	42	48.52	49	20	74	11.76		
	4	73	47.41	47	26	70	10.97		
	Total	386	52.96	53	20	91	12.25	1-3 1-4 2-4	
Academic Self-Efficacy Scale Total Score	1	212	99.19	100	52	159	18.55		
	2	59	94.1	93	42	138	21.73		**0.001**
	3	42	88.98	93	41	127	19.08		
	4	73	84.78	82	43	127	19.18		
	Total	386	94.58	94	41	159	20.01	1-3 1-4 2-4	

There is a statistically significant difference in ASES scores between grade levels [F(3.382)

= 11.579, p < 0.05]. Similarly, there are statistically significant differences in sub-scale scores between grade levels: [F(3.382) = 7.478, p < 0.05] for social status, [F(3.382) = 11.103, p < 0.05] for cognitive applications and [H = 25.012, p < 0.05] for technical skills. According to these results, fourth-grade students have significantly lower social status scores than first-grade students; fourth-grade students have significantly lower cognitive applications scores than first- and second-grade students; third-grade students have significantly lower cognitive applications scores than first-grade students; fourth-grade students have significantly lower academic self-efficacy scale total score than first- and second-grade students; third-grade students have significantly lower academic self-efficacy scale total score than first-grade students; and fourth-grade students have significantly lower technical skills scores than first- and second-grade students.

Table 4. Continued

n		Grade Level						Kruskal Wallis H	
		Mean	Median	Min	Max	Sd	Mean Rank	H	p
Proactive Personality Scale Total Score	1	212	54.11	57	10	68	11.41	190.83	
	2	59	55.36	57	14	68	8.98	194.9	
	3	42	55.62	55.5	36	70	6.93	183.37	1.392	0.707
	4	73	55.9	58	19	70	9.5	205.97	
	Total	386	54.8	57	10	70	10.3		
Technical Skills Sub-Scale Score	1	212	12.61	13	5	20	3.19	215.1	
	2	59	11.92	12	4	20	3.78	195.28	
	3	42	11.24	11	4	16	2.92	169.61	25.012	**0.001**
	4	73	10.51	10	4	16	2.69	143.09	
	Total	386	11.96	12	4	20	3.27		4-2 4-1

The Mann Whitney U test reveals no statistically significant difference in SPPS scores between grade levels [H = 1.392, p > 0.05].

Table 5. Independent T Test Results Regarding the Difference in Scale Scores in Terms of Sports Engagement

n		Sports Engagement						Independent T Test	
		Mean	Median	Min	Max	ds	t	p	
Cognitive Applications Sub-Scale Score	Yes	185	53.55	53	20	91	13.01		
	No	201	52.41	52	20	81	11.51	0.903	0.367
	Total	386	52.96	53	20	91	12.25		
Academic Self-Efficacy Scale Total Score	Yes	185	94.64	94	42	159	20.92		
	No	201	94.52	94	41	144	19.2	0.057	0.955
	Total	386	94.58	94	41	159	20.01		

Table 5. Continued

n		Sports Engagement						Mann Whitney U Test			
		Mean	Median	Min	Max	Sd	Mean Rank	z	p	
Proactive Personality Scale Total Score	Yes	185	55.79	57	13	70	9.47	202.89	-1.588	0.112	
	No	201	53.9	57	10	70	10.95	184.86			
	Total	386	54.8	57	10	70	10.3				
Social Status Sub-Scale Score	Yes	185	29.22	29	12	48	6.34	186.76	-1.139	0.255	
	No	201	30.07	30	15	47	6.88	199.7			
	Total	386	29.66	29	12	48	6.63				
Technical Skills Sub-Scale Score	Yes	185	11.87	12	4	20	3.35	191.56	-0.329	0.742	
	No	201	12.04	12	4	20	3.19	195.28			
	Total	386	11.96	12	4	20	3.27				

The results show statistically significant difference in neither ASES nor SPPS scores between participants engaging in sports and those not engaging in sports ($p > 0.05$).

Table 6. Correlation Test Results Regarding the Relationship between Age and Scale Scores

		Proactive Personality Scale Total Score	Social Status Sub-Scale Score	Cognitive Applications Sub-Scale Score	Technical Skills Sub-Scale Score	Academic Self-Efficacy Scale Total Score
Age	r	0.077	-.118*	-.166**	-.174**	-.166**
	p	0.131	0.021	0.001	0.001	0.001
	n	385	385	385	385	385

The correlation between age and social status scores is weak and negative, and statistically significant ($r = -0.118$). Social status scores decrease with age. The correlation between age and cognitive application scores is weak and negative, and statistically significant ($r = -0.166$). Cognitive application scores decrease with age. The correlation between age and technical skill scores is weak and negative, and statistically significant ($r = -0.174$). Technical skill scores decrease with age. The correlation between age and academic self-efficacy scale total score is weak and negative, and statistically significant ($r = -0.166$). Academic self-efficacy scale total score decreases with age. The correlation between age and proactive personality scale total score is statistically insignificant ($p > 0.05$).

Table 7. Correlation Test Results Regarding the Relationship between GPA and Scale Scores

		Proactive Personality Scale Total Score	Social Status Sub-Scale Score	Cognitive Applications Sub-Scale Score	Technical Skills Sub-Scale Score	Academic Self-Efficacy Scale Total Score
GPAs	**r**	0.086	-.206**	-.358**	-.128*	-.298**
	p	0.101	0	0	0.014	0
	n	365	365	365	365	365

The correlation between GPA scores and social status scores is weak and negative, and statistically significant (r = -0.206). Social status scores decrease with an increase in GPA scores. The correlation between GPA scores and cognitive application scores is weak and negative, and statistically significant (r = -0.358). Cognitive application scores decrease with an increase in GPA scores. The correlation between GPA scores and technical skill scores is weak and negative, and statistically significant (r = -0.128). Technical skill scores decrease with an increase in GPA scores. The correlation between GPA scores and academic self-efficacy scale total score is weak and negative, and statistically significant (r = -0.298). Academic self-efficacy scale total score decreases with an increase in GPA scores. The correlation between GPA scores and proactive personality scale total score is statistically insignificant (p > 0.05).

Table 8. Correlation Test Results Regarding the Relationship between Scale Scores

		Proactive Personality Scale Total Score
Social Status Sub-Scale Score	**r**	-.277**
	p	0
	n	386
Cognitive Applications Sub-Scale Score	**r**	-.302**
	p	0
	n	386
Technical Skills Sub-Scale Score	**r**	-.259**
	p	0
	n	386
Academic Self-Efficacy Scale Total Score	**r**	-.318**
	p	0
	n	386

The correlation between proactive personality scale total score and social status sub-scale score is weak and negative, and statistically significant (r = -0.277). Social status sub-scale score decreases with an increase in proactive personality scale total score. The correlation between proactive personality scale total score and cognitive applications sub-scale score is weak and negative, and statistically significant (r = -0.302). The latter decreases with an increase in the former. The correlation between proactive personality scale total score and technical skills sub-scale score

is weak and negative, and statistically significant (r = -0.259). The latter decreases with an increase in the former. The correlation between proactive personality scale total score and academic self-efficacy scale total score is weak and negative, and statistically significant (r = -0.318). The latter decreases with an increase in the former.

DISCUSSION

Some studies argue that academic self-efficacy does not differ by gender (Obuz, 2009; Tabancalı & Çelik, 2013; Çakır, Kan & Sünbül, 2006; Oğuz, 2012; Alemdağ, 2015; Alemdağ, Öncü & Yılmaz, 2014; Küçük Kılıç & Öncü, 2013). Similarly, this study found no gender difference in academic self-efficacy. On the other hand, Biricik (2015), Er and Gürgan (2011), and Azar (2013) reported that women had higher levels of academic self-efficacy beliefs than men while Akbay (2009), Durdukoca (2010), and Özsüer, İnal, Uyanık and Ergün (2011) reported the opposite result. In this study, male participants had statistically significantly lower social status sub-scale scores than did female participants. Female participants studying in the departments of physical education and sports had higher academic self-efficacy scores than did male participants studying in the same departments, which might be due to the fact that the former are better at adapting to social conditions, and learning and applying what they have learned to real life situations than the latter. It might also be due to the fact that women have a more active role in social and professional life than they did in the past.

Participants' ASES scores significantly differed by grade level. Contrary to expectations, fourth-grade students had low ASES scores, which might be due to the fact that they spend considerable time studying to pass the KPSS (Public Personnel Selection Examination) and therefore study the day before exams and that they are concerned about employment prospects and financial security. However, some studies report the opposite trend. Alemdağ (2015), Satıcı (2013), Oğuz (2010) and Yalmancı et al. (2014) found that fourth-grade students had high ASES scores, which was attributed to the fact that they had a longer period of education.

Similar to the results of Küçük Kılıç and Öncü's study (2014), participants' scores did not significantly differ by sports engagement, which might be due to the fact that PPETs actively participated in sports either directly or indirectly at some point in their lives. However, Balyan et al. (2009), and Baştuğ and Kuru (2009) reported that students engaging in sports had higher levels of self-efficacy than those not engaging in sports. The lack of significant effect of sports engagement on participants' scores may be due to the scope of this study.

Age was only significantly correlated with social status sub-scale scores. The latter increased with the former. Alemdağ (2015) reported a correlation between age and academic self-efficacy, with older students having higher levels of academic self-efficacy. This difference between age groups might be due to experience and accumulation of knowledge.

Lastly, the correlation between GPA scores and social status sub-scale scores was found to be weak and negative, and statistically significant. The latter decreased with an increase in the former. This result can be interpreted as indicating that students primarily focusing on academic achievement make little time to socialize. There was also a statistically significant correlation between GPA scores and technical skills sub-scale scores. The latter decreased with an increase in the former, which might also be due to the fact that students spend considerable time on courses. The correlation between GPA scores and academic self-efficacy was also found to be negative and statistically significant, which was not surprising considering the fact that students generally study the day before exams.

Participants' proactive personality scores did not significantly differ by gender, age, grade level, sports engagement and GPA scores. However, there was a negative and statistically significant correlation between proactive personality scale total score and academic self-efficacy scale total score. The latter decreased with an increase in the former. There are no studies on proactive personality in preservice physical education teachers to compare these results. We can therefore state that these variables are not central to the scope of this study.

CONCLUSION

Participants reported moderate levels of self-efficacy and low levels of proactive personality. Male participants had significantly lower social status scores than did female participants. Academic self-efficacy decreased with age, which we believe is an interesting finding. Fourth-grade students' academic self-efficacy and sub-scale scores were statistically lower than those of first-, second- and third-grade students. Sports engagement was found to have no effect on academic self-efficacy and proactive personality. Another interesting result was that participants' academic self-efficacy decreased along with an increase in GPA scores. Participants' proactive personality scores decreased with an increase in their academic self-efficacy scores. We believe that further studies are needed to analyze the correlation of academic self-efficacy and proactive personality with different variables.

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