



The Relationship Between Profession Choice Motivations and School Alienation States of Prospective Physical Education Teachers: An Examination of Gender Differences

Research Article

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the present study was to evaluate the relationship between profession and field choice motivations and school alienation states of prospective physical education and sports teachers in terms of gender. Participants were 174 (106 men, 68 women) prospective physical education and sports teachers attending Ege University Faculty of Sports Sciences. Data were collected using the Motivation Scale on Teaching Profession and Field Choice and the Student Alienation Scale. The canonical correlation analyses produced two significant functions indicating that intrinsic field choice motivation, meaninglessness, extrinsic field choice motivation and weakness were predictive for male prospective teachers. For female prospective teachers, extrinsic field choice motivation, meaninglessness, intrinsic profession choice motivation and weakness were predictive. As a result, intrinsic motivation factors decreased alienation for women while extrinsic motivation factors increased alienation levels for men. The resulting gender differences in our findings are discussed in relation to how academic fields and professions are gendered by society.

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Keywords:

Profession and Field Choice; Motivation; Alienation; Physical Education; Gender Differences.

Introduction

In modern societies, it is extremely important that individuals receive suitable education to develop personal skills and choose the correct profession for themselves in order to be successful and productive in their professional lives (Brown 2002). A report published by UNESCO (2015) states that professional training and the educational systems designed in this field have utmost significance and that this quality is directly influenced by the quality of teachers. In addition, the report mentions the critical role assumed by the teacher in raising future generations and discovering and shaping individuals' skills. Moreover, the results of

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academic studies highlight the importance of well-educated labour to improve the quality of today's educational institutions as well as the systems they implement. For these reasons, the motivation of individuals with special abilities in this field must be promoted so that they can choose teaching as a profession (OECD 2005). Richardson and Watt (2006) state that in addition to individuals' continuing the profession of teaching, their motivation to choose this profession must be studied as well. Motivation, after all, is one of the most critical elements to encourage individuals to be enthusiastic about working and inspired to reveal their potential (Sinclair 2008).

Motivation, which is shaped by the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic conditions and plays an important role in the generation, control and maintenance of human behaviour (Martin & Briggs 1986), can be defined as the attempt to reach a specified target or to avoid something undesirable (Keller 1983). Among the forms of motivation, intrinsic motivation is defined as the voluntary effort made by an individual to bring about the joy of accomplishment in his/her interests or in line with his/her competencies; whereas extrinsic motivation refers to an act performed under the influence of such factors as family, friend circle and social environment (Myers 2004). Studies about motivation to choose teaching as a profession have found that intrinsic sources like academic knowledge and skills, interest in teaching and opportunities to work with children and contribute to society; and extrinsic factors such as the social environment, job security, and possibility to spend time with family are extremely influential (Pohlmann & Möller 2010; Richardson & Watt 2006; Watt & Richardson 2007). In short, both intrinsic motivations shaped by individuals' own desire and extrinsic motivations influenced by the environment have considerable effects on preference of teaching as a profession (Ekinci 2017).

The education received by individuals who choose teaching as a profession can improve their attitudes towards the profession and help them discover their interest and abilities in the field (Yazıcı 2009). In this respect, attitudes are a psychological variable that affect the motivations for a behaviour (Anderson 1988). When choosing teaching as profession, an individuals' attitudes toward the profession are as important as their other aspects of motivations. Studies report that when prospective teachers develop negative attitudes they feel that they fail to realize themselves do not make friends or continue existing friendships and criticize others. They have negative feelings like regret after their actions, which in turn causes them to have problems with the educational institution they attend (Karahan et al. 2006). In other words, individuals with these negative attitudes feel weak, have problems following rules and isolate themselves from society; that is, they experience alienation.

Marshall (1999) defines alienation as an individual moving away from other individuals, the environment, a process or an action in its broadest sense; and in terms of educational processes, it is defined as instructional activities losing their value and meaning to the individual, a lack of conformity with school rules and moving away from his/her academic career objectives (Hascher & Hagenauer 2010). An individuals' feelings of alienation from school, which cause them to be reluctant to reveal their abilities in the field of education or put forth any goal-oriented efforts (Tucker-Ladd 1989), may manifest in different forms such as weakness, anomy, meaninglessness and isolation in the school environment (Mau 1992). Among these forms of alienation, weakness refers to an individual's lack of self-control over his/her behaviour and the outcomes of this behaviour and meaninglessness refers to failing to connect the present and the future and feeling doubtful about the usefulness of what is learnt at school while practicing the profession (Mackey 1974; Mau 1992). In addition, anomy is a loss of respect for school rules because high expectations from the school environment are not satisfied and individuals' behaving opposite of those rules; and isolation is individuals' maladaptation to social relations within the school environment and becoming lonely by refusing social values (Seeman 1959).

In the literature, alienation from school is frequently examined in relation to class participation, academic achievement, peer, family and teacher support, and in studies investigating the relationship of alienation with motivation, researchers often focus on amotivation and level of participation in school activities (Morinaj et al. 2017). Moreover, studies report that decreased levels of intrinsic motivation negatively affect the time students spent at school and their interest in the field (Gottfried et al. 2001; OECD 2004). In this respect, it is important to examine the relationship of alienation state with intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivation other than amotivation and it should be evaluated in terms of the education of prospective teachers who play a critical role in social structures.

Considering the above facts, the aim of the present study is to examine the relationship between profession choice motivations and school alienation of prospective physical education and sports teachers, in terms of gender.

Method

Research Design and Participants

The present quantitative study was conducted using a correlational model, which aims to investigate the degree to which two or more variables are related. The study sample was created using a non-probability purposive sampling method and consisted of prospective Physical Education and Sports Teachers studying at the Ege University Faculty of Sports Sciences. The participants were 174 prospective teachers, 106 (60.9%) males and 68 (39.1%) females. The mean age of the participants was 21.50 (SD = 2.90).

Measures

Motivation Scale on Teaching Profession and Field Choice: The Motivation Scale on Teaching Profession and Field Choice was originally developed by Mayr (1998) and adapted to Turkish by Atav and Altinoğlu (2013). The scale was intended to reveal intrinsic and extrinsic motives affecting prospective teachers in their choice of teaching profession and their major at university and consists of 21 items and 4 subscales. The subscales are intrinsic field choice motivation (3 items), extrinsic field choice motivation (6 items), intrinsic profession choice motivation (8 items) and extrinsic profession choice motivation (4 items). Cronbach's alpha of the subscales ranged from .73 to .85 (Atav & Altinoğlu 2013).

Student Alienation Scale: Developed by Çağlar (2012), the Student Alienation Scale measures university students' negative attitudes towards school and activities at school together with their psycho-social dimensions and consists of 20 items and 4 sub-scales. The subscales are categorized as weakness (6 items), anomaly (5 items), isolation (5 items), and meaninglessness (4 items). Cronbach's alpha of the subscales range between .74 and .86 (Çağlar 2012).

Procedures

The questionnaire form to for data collection consisted of three sections: an explanatory text providing preliminary information (researchers, aim of the study, ethical considerations and instructions), an information form covering participants' demographic information (age, gender, grade) and the measurement scales. In order to have a homogenous group of participants, the data collection program was designed to consider the students' grade levels. In line with this program, prospective teachers were given 15 minutes each to answer the items on the questionnaire form in the face-to-face interviews held collectively. Items on the forms were answered by the participants within this time period in a classroom environment.

Data Analyses

After the questionnaire forms used in the study were numbered from 1 to 185, the data on the forms were entered into the SPSS 24.0 program manually. In the second step, eleven forms which contained bad

data, including repetitive responses and blank items, were excluded from analysis. Following this sorting, data from a total of 174 questionnaire forms were analysed. Canonical correlation analysis were used in the study to determine the relationship between profession and field choice motivations and school alienation states among prospective physical education teachers. Canonical correlation analysis was carried out for the overall sample group ($n = 174$) as well as separately for male ($n = 106$) and female ($n = 68$) participants to reveal the correlations within the data overall and based on gender.

Findings

Four canonical pairs were created for all sample groups to determine the relationship between profession and field choice motivations and school alienation states of prospective physical education and sports teachers. The level of significance for these correlations was set at $p \leq .05$. The results showed that the first two canonical functions were significant using the overall data ($p \leq .05$; see Table 1).

Table 1. Canonical correlation results pertaining to variable pairs

		Wilk's Lambda	df	Canonical Correlation	Canonical R ²	P
Overall	U1-V1	.675	16000	.437	.190	.00
	U2-V2	.834	9000	.374	.139	.00
	U3-V3	.970	4000	.165	.027	.27
	U4-V4	.997	1000	.058	.003	.45
Female	U1-V1	.519	16000	.537	.288	.00
	U2-V2	.730	9000	.408	.166	.02
	U3-V3	.875	4000	.292	.085	.08
	U4-V4	.957	1000	.207	.042	.10
Male	U1-V1	.667	16000	.459	.210	.00
	U2-V2	.845	9000	.326	.106	.05
	U3-V3	.946	4000	.232	.053	.24
	U4-V4	1.00	1000	.009	.000	.93

Table 2. Canonical-cross loads and redundancy index rates pertaining to sample groups in the scope of the first significant canonical function

Profession and Field Choice Motivation	Overall (n=174)		Male (n=106)		Female (n=68)	
	Canonical	Cross	Canonical	Cross	Canonical	Cross
Intrinsic field choice	-.870	-.380	-.801	-.368	.288	.155
Extrinsic field choice	.020	.009	-.227	-.104	-.745	-.400
Intrinsic profession choice	-.640	-.280	-.758	-.348	-.037	-.020
Ext. profession choice	.175	.076	.024	.011	-.722	-.388
Redundancy Analysis						
Shared Variance		.299		.317		.290
Redundancy		.057		.067		.084
Student Alienation	Canonical	Cross	Canonical	Cross	Canonical	Cross
Weakness	.603	.264	.819	.376	.298	.160
Anomy	.701	.306	.733	.337	-.385	-.207
Isolation	.442	.193	.242	.111	-.083	-.044
Meaninglessness	.977	.427	.901	.414	-.749	-.402
Redundancy Analysis						
Shared Variance		.501		.520		.201
Redundancy		.096		.110		.058

In the first significant canonical function, intrinsic field choice motivation (overall/canonical = $-.870$, cross = $-.380$; male/canonical = $-.801$, cross = $-.368$) and meaninglessness (overall/canonical = $.977$, cross = $.427$; male/canonical = $.901$, cross = $.414$) were predictive of profession and field choice motivation and alienation states respectively for overall and male sample groups (see Table 2).

In the first significant canonical function, female participants' loads were higher on extrinsic field choice motivation in terms of profession and field choice within the scope of relation (canonical = $-.745$, cross = $-.400$) and in meaninglessness in terms of alienation states (canonical = $-.749$; cross = $-.402$; see Table 2).

In the second significant canonical function, extrinsic field choice motivation was predictive of profession and field choice motivation for the overall and male sample groups (overall/canonical = $-.945$, cross = $-.353$; male/canonical = $-.898$, cross = $-.293$), while intrinsic profession choice motivation was predictive for the female group (canonical = $.879$, cross = $.359$). Weakness was predictive of school alienation states for all sample groups (overall/canonical = $.783$, cross = $.293$; male/canonical = $.516$, cross = $.168$; female/canonical = $-.846$, cross = $-.345$; see Table 3).

Table 3. Canonical–cross loads and redundancy index rates pertaining to sample groups in the scope of the second significant canonical function

Field and Profession Choice Motivation	Overall (n=174)		Male (n=106)		Female (n=68)	
	Canonical	Cross	Canonical	Cross	Canonical	Cross
Intrinsic field choice	-.119	-.045	.257	.084	.730	.298
Extrinsic field choice	-.945	-.353	-.898	-.293	.552	.225
Intrinsic prof. choice	-.498	-.186	-.335	-.109	.879	.359
Extrinsic prof. choice	-.725	-.271	-.690	-.225	.179	.073
Redundancy Analysis						
Shared Variance	.420		.365		.411	
Redundancy	.059		.039		.068	
Student Alienation	Canonical	Cross	Canonical	Cross	Canonical	Cross
Weakness	.783	.293	.516	.168	-.846	-.345
Anomy	-.075	-.028	-.162	-.053	-.362	-.148
Isolation	.122	.046	-.176	-.057	-.695	-.283
Meaninglessness	-.182	-.068	-.417	-.136	-.626	-.255
Redundancy Analysis						
Shared Variance	.167		.124		.431	
Redundancy	.023		.013		.072	

Discussion

The present study aimed to determine the relationship between profession and field choice motivation and school alienation states of prospective physical education and sports teachers in terms of gender. In this part of the study, the two significant canonical correlations are interpreted on the basis of their internal dynamics.

Studies examining students' field choices for university education have found that competitive attitudes and risk-taking behaviours vary by gender. In these studies, men adopt a competitive and rational attitude and are influenced by factors such as the prestige of the field, status and possible income, whereas women make their choices based on an emotional attitude independent of extrinsic rewards (Alon & Di Prete 2015; Arcidiacono et al. 2012; Beutel & Marini 1995; Eccles 2007; Gneezy et al. 2003; Montmarquette et al. 2002). Moreover, motivational studies in the related literature show that women have higher intrinsic academic and

field choice motivations (Ardenska et al. 2016; Konrad, Ritchie, Lieb & Corrigan 2000; Saban 2003) and lower levels of school alienation (Apriyanti 2016; Erbas 2014; Hadjar et al. 2015; Klomegah 2006; Şimşek & Akdemir 2015; Williamson & Cullingford 1998) than men. Findings about extrinsic field choice motivation from the first and second functions in the present study are similar to the results of these studies. Our findings show that motivation which affects extrinsic field choice motivation influences male participants in a negative way in terms of weakness (see Table 3) while positively affecting female participants in terms of meaninglessness (see Table 2).

One reason why extrinsic motivation may be related to the weakness experienced by male participants is that societal status is attributed to physical education and sports teaching is perceived negatively compared with other fields of teaching (Armour & Jones 1998; Hendry 1975; Macdonald 1995), which may have negatively affected men's competitive attitudes and expectations of status. When the goals set by individuals or their fields of interest are ignored by society and their achievements are trivialized by their environment, individuals may experience weakness related to alienation from school (Mackey 1974; Mau 1992; Oerlemans & Jenkins 1998; Seeman 1959).

As for female participants, their low commitment to extrinsic rewards in field choice (Beutel & Marini 1995; Eccles 2007) may mean that they can act more independently and autonomously when making this choice. This autonomy could help individual cope with situations like failure to realize future plans and goals (Fromm 2005) and factors such as failure to relate school activities with one's future life and one's own actions not being for himself/herself (Brown et al. 2003; Seeman 1959), which are included among the reasons for meaninglessness.

In addition, the societal stereotype of teaching as a feminine profession (Carrington 2002; Dunder & Lewis 1999; Hatch 1999; Lortie 2002; Montecinos & Nielsen 1997) may help women identify themselves with the fields of teaching and attribute more meaning to educational activities than men, which can support their motivation. On the other hand, Fromm (2005) highlights that a safe and advantageous social environment is needed to eliminate meaninglessness. In this respect, the fact that female prospective teachers, unlike males, do not experience pressures from the social environment like status, income and extrinsic reward allows them to think they are more safe and free when choosing their field, which, in turn, eliminates the state of meaninglessness. Considering all these factors, while negative effects like insufficient extrinsic support and field status at the socio-physiological level may cause male prospective teachers to experience weakness; females' ability to act independent of extrinsic factors may prevent meaninglessness in the educational activities in which they participate.

Another finding in the present study is that male prospective teachers' low intrinsic field choice motivation levels negatively affect meaninglessness (see Table 2). As for females, on the other hand, positivity in the intrinsic profession choice motivation decreases the perception of weakness (see Table 3). In their research, Ardenska et al. (2016), Konrad, Ritchie, Lieb & Corrigan (2000) and Saban (2003) concluded that intrinsic factors such as interest, curiosity and confidence in abilities play a role in shaping field choice motivation, but have less influence on male prospective teachers compared to females. This can be interpreted as evidence that men attach more importance to extrinsic factors when making decisions. After all, within the structure of traditional societies, men are given such roles as having high status, earning income and maintaining the family, which are all related with power (Eccles 2007; Konrad, Corrigan, Lieb & Ritchie 2000; Lacy et al. 1980; Montecinos & Nielsen 1997). Also, in addition to the distress experienced by individuals during adolescence and early adulthood, expectations from these individuals to make critical decisions for the future may cause them to become more anxious and experience meaninglessness (Fromm 2005). In this regard, the traditionally presumed power-related roles for men may make male prospective physical education

teachers more anxious when choosing a field. It may be that male prospective teacher's experience meaningfulness as a reflection of ignoring such factors as interest, curiosity and ability because of this anxiety.

When the results of studies concerning gender differences are evaluated in terms of intrinsic profession and field choice motivation, it can be seen that men prefer to receive education in rational fields like engineering, mathematics and informatics, unlike women who choose professions such as teaching, nursing etc. which assume more nurturing roles (Alon & Di Prete 2015; Gabay-Egozi et al. 2015). From this general point of view, men engaged in teaching education, which is considered by society to be a feminine profession (Dundar & Lewis, 1999; Hatch 1999), may lose interest and curiosity in the education provided in the field and educational activities. This could increase male prospective teachers' level of meaningfulness, which occurs as a result of questioning the necessity and future functionality of learning experiences at school (Mau 1992). On the contrary, when women choose feminine professions involving emotional and nurturing characteristics (Jacobs et al. 1998; van de Werfhorst et al. 2003), this may support intrinsic profession choice motivation and prevent them from experiencing weakness. While weakness is defined as low level of control and influence of the individual on his/her own actions in relation to school alienation; related studies in the field report that individuals experiencing this feeling believe that their lives are highly influenced by extrinsic factors and have to cope with feelings of frustration and reluctance (Mackey 1974; Oerlemans & Jenkins, 1998; Seeman 1959). Furthermore, academic research reveals that women have high intrinsic motivation when choosing teaching as a profession (Erten 2014; Saban 2003). In fact, it may be that the intrinsic motivation of female prospective teachers, who make their choice according to their interest, will and curiosity increases their confidence in self-control over their behaviours. In other words, by experiencing personal identification in profession choice, prospective female physical education teachers may feel they are more confident and have more voice in school activities and therefore weakness is eliminated in women.

Conclusion

Considering these findings, the lack of extrinsic factors that affect motivation positively such as family, friend circle and social support in male prospective teachers causes them to feel less self-control over their behaviours and actions and to feel weakness in terms of school alienation in the scope of education in the field. In addition, decreases in curiosity, interest and the perception of competency in the field leads to failure to relate school experiences with real life in male prospective teachers, causing meaningfulness in terms of participation in educational activities. In other words, male prospective teachers need intrinsic motivation for attributing meaning to learning activities at school and extrinsic support to feel competent in educational activities.

As for female prospective teachers, the fact that the effect of the social environment and society on their field choice is low allows them to make their choices meaningful through educational activities. On the other hand, the fact that teaching involves positive perceptions for women promotes female prospective teachers' intrinsic motivation to be beneficial to their society in this profession and increases their perceptions of pedagogical competency.

In terms of profession and field choice, raising individuals in the field they are interested in and curious about by breaking the taboos concerning the role of gender attributed by society will decrease their tendency to alienate from school and increase potential for academic and professional productivity. Including qualitative opinions of participants in future studies would help clarify these gender differences in profession and field choice motivations of prospective physical education and sports teachers.

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