

# Pre-Service Teachers' Views about Teacher Behaviours Observed in the Classroom

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## Abstract

The purpose of the study is to explore the opinions of third year pre-service teachers studying in the department of primary education about the teacher behaviours exhibited or observed in the classes or lessons when they were elementary, secondary and high school students. The research has adopted a descriptive approach with 61 third year pre-service teachers, 49 females and 12 males, attending the undergraduate program of primary education at a state university. The data of the study were collected via an interview form consisting of three open-ended questions. In addition, clinical interviews were carried out with five participants selected randomly among the pre-service teachers who volunteered and were available. The responses and explanations of participants written for each open-ended question were examined and they were grouped according to their content, similarities, and affinity. The categorized responses were tabulated in different columns considering the total number of the female and male pre-service teachers who wrote the answers and percentages of the categorized responses to the total responses. Considering the pre-service teachers' opinions about the teacher behaviours which must not be exhibited in the classrooms, it can be determined that for students classrooms are the environments in which they are not treated respectfully. When the pre-service teachers' memories related to what they witnessed or observed in the classrooms or lessons during their primary, secondary, and high school years -that is the third question of the study- were examined, there is some evidence supporting/verifying the answers written for the first and second questions. It is recommended in the study that the views stated by the participants should be considered and some of them should be used.

**Keywords:** pre-service teacher views, classrooms, teacher behaviours

## 1. Introduction

An ideal teacher is the person who lives what he teaches personally. According to Plato, Socrates did not give too much information and make too long speeches like the sophists (teachers and educators who visited places and offered young men an education in return for fee). During his talks with his students, Socrates taught them by asking question after question in order to expose contradictions in their thoughts and assertions by leading them to puzzlement and then to guide them to solid conclusion, to use critical thinking, reasoning and logic. A teacher must guide the student's interest not in his personality but, what s/he must actualize independently is to guide students' interest in his own potential action and behaviour. The teacher is neither a moral model nor an authority, s/he plays the role of a midwife who delivers a baby (Pieper, 2012, pp. 114-115).

According to Kant, education and upbringing which connects the human nature to rules is a period of submitting discipline, socialization, civilizing, and moralization and a teacher is not only someone who "gives information" but also "a tutor". The teacher who transfers knowledge teaches for school; the tutor teaches to survive (Pieper, 2012, pp. 116-119). Aristotle, the world's greatest ancient philosopher and scientist, was the teacher of a Macedonian commander, known as Alexander the Great in history, between 342-335 B.C (Hart, 2018, p.118) and he could be given as an example to a tutor. It is stated that some philosophers such as Kant, Schiller, Fichte, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche approached the teacher, a prototype whose morality came into prominence, as a philosopher, a tutor, an artist, a scholar, or a poet (Pieper, 2012, pp. 116-119).

According to researchers (Abazaoğlu, Yıldırım & Yıldızhan, 2014), teachers are one of the most important components of education and training. Teachers are the building blocks of the nation's future. They prepare the children to the future with the consciousness of lifelong learning. This important duty on the shoulders of the teachers makes them become more qualified and competent. The teacher is an individual who is constantly open to learning and shares his/her knowledge. These following qualifications of teachers describe their both scientific and artistic sides. The teacher must be a person who reads, investigates, follows, and inquires scientific developments about his profession, transfers knowledge to real life /practice and must be well-equipped.

It has become obligatory for teachers in recent years to be open to development, focus on lifelong learning, and to gain knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values permanently according to the current needs. Considering individual differences in the teaching profession and thus creating different learning environments for students with different learning needs, planning activities that will develop creative, analytical, and critical thinking skills, and providing students learning environments where they can communicate effectively and express their ideas are important and necessary to reach the determined targets (Sadi, 2019, p. 45).

Teachers at any stage must always guide, support, and take responsibility while raising innovative and productive individuals. Teachers are expected to prepare well-structured and consistent lesson plans to encourage students to learn or keep them engaged in learning and to implement them according to their purposes. Teachers must know and investigate different and effective learning strategies and use them at a proper time and place to cope with the problems/challenges they encounter during the implementation of the plans and to meet student needs. Teachers must inform students with their feedback during the process. Especially, they must become a guide-facilitator for the integration of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (MEB, 2018; Sadi, 2019, pp. 45-47).

Altıntaş and Görgen (2014) in their studies stated that elementary school teachers were not successful in class management and planning and they had difficulty with using time and voice effectively. In another study, the pre-service teachers stated that they did not find themselves qualified about class management and providing student participation (Demirtaş, Cömert & Özer, 2011). Some positive regulations have been made in terms of five basic dimensions of teaching in order to build teaching as profession in Turkey; however, it is asserted that these are not adequate (Güven, 2010).

In a study carried out by (Sadi, 2019, p. 47) it is stated that teachers' willingness, effective support, and contributions are very important while preparing environments for students where they can express themselves easily, ask questions, feel that their opinions are paid attention, search with their peers and reach information, and communicate well.

Today, teachers are educated in the teacher education programs of education faculties at universities in line with the programme targets as well as being qualified and well-equipped. Teachers, equipped with the general competencies of teaching profession, have their students acquire science process skills and guide them to learn learning.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore the opinions of third year pre-service teachers studying in the department of primary education about the teacher behaviours exhibited or observed in the classes or lessons when they were elementary, secondary and high school students.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research Design

The research is a descriptive study. Descriptive research is a research method that describes, and explains the characteristics of the population and phenomenon that usually exists (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2018, pp. 47-48). Identification of some students groups' achievements, behavioural description of teachers, directors, or consultants, parental attitudes, and presenting school's physical conditions can be given as an example to descriptive studies carried out in education (Büyükoztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2013, p.22).

### 2.2 The Study Group

A total of 61 third year pre-service teachers, 49 females and 12 males, studying in the undergraduate program of primary education of an education faculty in a state university in the spring term participated in the study. The average age of female participants was 22, and the male participants' average age was calculated 24.

### 2.3 Data Collection

The research data were collected via interview form consisting of three open-ended questions developed by the researcher after receiving an expert opinion. Three open-ended questions asked to the participants were presented in the findings section in quotation marks as the title of tables related to the responses of each question. The first question belongs to the Table 1, the second question to the Table 2, and the third question to the Table 3. The questions were developed in such a way to support one another. The participant responses might be the teacher behaviours that come to their minds first, that most impressed them, that they most wanted to see, or that most left a trace. Considering the fact that the open-ended questions developed in the study must provide this, it was thought that without sorting them out, the participants could write and express their opinions easily and freely. Especially, it was supposed that question “asked to the participants “Do you have any memories that you experienced, observed or witnessed and that you want to share with us during your primary, secondary, and high school years? If there are, can you please write down?” would provide the data to support the first and second question. Out of 61 pre-service teachers who stated their opinions about the teacher behaviours experienced/observed in the classes or lessons, clinical interviews were carried out with five participants selected randomly among those who volunteered and were available (Clement, 2000; Baki, Karataş & Güven, 2002; Gökurt & Soylu, 2013; Eryılmaz Toksoy & Akdeniz, 2015). Considering that the participants would feel uncomfortable and would not approve being recorded, recording devices were not used during the interviews. The opinions stated during the clinical interviews were written and thus recorded by the researcher before continuing with the next interview.

### 2.4 Data Analysis

The participants’ written responses to each open-ended question and the explanations were examined and they were grouped regarding their content, similarities, and affinity. The categorized responses were tabulated in different columns considering the total number of the female and male pre-service teachers who wrote the answers and percentages of the categorized responses to the total responses. At the end of each table, necessary interpretations and explanations about the data included in the table were made. In addition, the three pre-service teachers’ opinions which were revealed and considered important during the clinical interviews carried out with five pre-service teachers were presented in the findings of the research under a relevant title.

**3. Results**

*3.1 Findings and Interpretations*

Table 1. Pre-service teachers’ responses to the question “In your opinion how should a teacher behave generally in the class or lessons?”

<i>Written responses</i>	<i>Respondents</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentages according to all responses (%)</i>
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>		
A teacher should be willing and well-prepared for the lesson. S/he should keep the students engaged in the lesson and benefit from technology and materials	19	4	23	13.1
When necessary, a teacher should be helpful, guiding and childlike and teach according to the student’s level and needs	18	4	22	12.6
A teacher should be tolerant	16	3	19	10.9
A teacher should not discriminate between the students. S/he must treat them equally and fairly	19	-	19	10.9
A teacher should love students	13	4	17	9.8
A teacher should be smiling	14	3	17	9.8
A teacher should be sincere and frank.	11	5	16	9.2
A teacher should pay attention to the students’ opinions and show respect	15	1	16	9.2
A teacher mustn’t be very rude, strict, pressuring, tyrant, and authoritative	6	4	10	5.7
A teacher should be a good communicator, speak effectively, well-groomed, neat and clean	8	1	9	5.2
A teacher should be patient and must have students question everything	6	-	6	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>100</b>

A pre-service teacher could have written such expressions and more for the first question as “A teacher should be tolerant, smiling, sincere, frank, and love students”. The number of the responses in Tables 1 and 2 are more than the number of participants therefore these must be accepted normal. It is viewed when Table 1 is examined that 23 participants’ opinions about an ideal teacher including being willing and well-prepared for the lesson, keeping the students engaged in the lesson, and benefiting from technology and materials took the first place. Another important finding is that the response “when necessary, a teacher should be helpful, guiding and childlike and teach according to the student’s level and needs” took the second place and it was written by 22 teachers. It was determined that the responses written by 19 pre-service teachers “A teacher should be tolerant and should not discriminate between the students. Teacher should treat them equally and fairly” took the third and the fourth places. 17 participants wrote “teacher should be smiling and love student,” and 16 participants wrote “a teacher should pay attention to the students’ opinions and show respect and be sincere and frank”.

Table 2. Pre-service teachers' responses to the question "In your opinion what behaviour (s) does a teacher never exhibit in the classroom environment or lessons?"

<i>Written responses</i>	<i>Respondents</i>		<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentages according to all responses (%)</i>
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>		
A teacher must not offend students	31	8	39	19.9
A teacher must not discriminate between the students. Teacher must act equally and fairly	25	4	29	14.8
A teacher should not be rude and authoritative and teacher must not shout	20	4	24	12.2
A teacher must certainly keep away from violence	15	5	20	10.2
A teacher should not use slang words or expressions. Teacher must be respectful	16	3	19	9.7
A teacher should offer an opportunity for students to express their feelings and opinions. He should not tease them	13	1	14	7.1
A teacher must not bring his private life to class	11	2	13	6.6
A teacher must establish good communication with every child	8	-	8	4.1
A teacher must not be unorganized and unprepared	5	2	7	3.6
A teacher must not lie	4	1	5	2.6
A teacher must teach considering the level of students and use the board	4	1	5	2.6
A teacher must not touch the student	2	2	4	2.0
A teacher must not compare the students with one another	4	-	4	2.0
A teacher must not talk and play on his mobile	1	2	3	1.5
A teacher must care all lessons	2	-	2	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>100</b>

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the response "a teacher must not offend students" was written by 39 teachers and took the first place. Due to the response written by the students, it could be deduced that student are usually exposed to verbal insult and they were offended. The statement "a teacher must not discriminate between the students. Teacher must treat them equally and fairly" took the second place and it was written by 29 pre-service teachers (47.5%), which is significant in terms of its prevalence-rate. The expression "must not shout" included in the statement "a teacher should not be rude and authoritative and teacher should not shout" reveals an argument that students are usually warned loudly by their teachers and gives information about the class management. The statement "a teacher must certainly keep away from violence" could be the evidence that the pre-service teachers (20) were exposed to violence from their teachers during their primary, secondary, and high school years.

Considering the statements "a teacher should not use slang words or expressions. Teacher must be respectful" written by 19 pre-service teachers and "a teacher must offer an opportunity for students to express their feelings and

opinions and does not tease them” by 14 teachers, it could be stated that classes are still the environments in which respectful behaviours are not exhibited.

The statement “a teacher must not bring his private life to class” is another way of exhibiting inappropriate behaviour. A teacher who brings his personal life to class does wrong not only to himself but also to his family and thus causing negative opinions in students’ minds. Students are not expected to keep secrets or be reticent. Such behaviours by the teachers as offending students, not treating them equally and fairly, being rude and strict, having tendency towards violence, being disrespectful, and bringing their personal life to the class could affect students’ levels of attachment to teachers and school negatively and lead to academic failure.

Table 3. Pre-service teachers’ responses to the question “Do you have any memories you want to share which you have experienced, observed, and witnessed in the class or lessons during your primary, secondary, and high school years? If there are, can you please write?”

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Content</i>	<i>Female (49)</i>	<i>Male (12)</i>	<i>Total (61)</i>	<i>%</i>	
Those writing their memory	Positive	Drawing interest-getting support	3	3	6	9.8	
		Good communication-facilitating	1	2	3	4.9	
		Affection, tolerance, and respect	1	1	2	3.3	
		Motivating	1	-	1	1.6	
	Negative		Being exposed to violence-being battered	13	3	16	26.2
			Offending	7	-	7	11.5
			Discrimination-Not treating equally	4	-	4	6.6
			Rudeness, strictness, lack of interest and disrespect	4	-	4	6.6
			Not teaching	2	1	3	4.9
			Being unqualified	2	-	2	3.3
Those who did not write their memories			11	2	13	21.3	
Total			49	12	61	100	

The memories written were classified into two groups in terms of negative and positive content and presented in Table 3. 82% of the participants wrote and shared their memories for the third question. When the pre-service teachers’ memories experienced, witnessed or observed in the classrooms or lessons during their primary, secondary, and high school years (the responses to the third question of the study) are examined, it can be stated that evidence-proofs were gathered verifying-supporting the responses written for the first and second questions. It is significant that a total of 59.1% of pre-service teachers shared memories including negative elements which could be classified into groups such as “exposure to violence-battering (26.2%)” “offending (11.5%)”, “discrimination-lack of equal treatment (6.6%)”, and “rudeness, toughness, lack of interest, and disrespect”. Moreover, 19.6% of the

pre-service teachers included positive memories about their teachers. The positive memories shared by the pre-service teacher included “drawing interest, -getting support (9.8%)”, “good communication-guidance (4.9%)”, “affection, tolerance, and respect (3.3%)” and “motivating (1.6%)”. Although the researchers told the participants that the opinions and memories they would share and write could involve important data, it is thought-provoking that 13 pre-service teachers left the third question blank. The reason why the participants did not answer the question at high levels (21.3%) is that they were indecisive about sharing their memories, the explanations made were not convincing and adequate, or the open-ended questions were asked at a time interval when they were not available.

### *3.2 Pre-Service Teachers' Views Revealed during the Clinical Interviews*

Clinical interviews were carried out with five pre-service teachers randomly selected among the participants. It was decided that due to being important and interesting among the opinions given, three participants' original views were shared.

*A teacher must treat everyone, that is, all students equally. S/he must not be the teacher of his/her child, in other words, s/he must not teach his/her children.*

*I think that a teacher must not contact or touch the student.*

*A teacher must not play on his/her mobile phone or talk because a student can think that s/he is not paid attention and s/he is not valuable for his/her teacher.*

The original views of the three teachers verify and support the pre-service teachers' opinions obtained via open-ended questions and presented in tables before.

## **4. Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions**

The pre-service teachers' responses to the general behaviour of a teacher in the classroom or lessons were grouped via content analysis. The responses include the following: A teacher should “be willing and well-prepared for the lesson, keep the students engaged in the lesson and benefit from technology and materials”, “be helpful, guiding and childlike and teach considering student's level and needs when necessary”, “be tolerant”, not discriminate between the students and treat them equally and fairly”, “love students”, “be smiling, “sincere and frank”, and “pay attention to the students' opinions and show respect”. The responses were written by 23, 22, 19, 19, 17, 17 and 16 participants, respectively.

The participants' following responses to the behaviours that a teacher must not exhibit—do in a classroom setting and lessons are important: A teacher must “not offend students”, “not discriminate between the students but treat them equally and fairly”, “not behave rudely, authoritatively, aggressively, strictly and shout a lot”, and “certainly keep away from violence”. The responses generally written may indicate that students were insulted and offended by their teachers (39), they were discriminated (29), they were warned quite loudly (24), and they were exposed to teacher violence during their primary, secondary, and high school years (20). Considering the following opinions such as “not using slang words or expressions and being respectful (19)”, “offering an opportunity for students to express their feelings and opinions and not tease them (14)” and “not bringing his private life to class (13)”, it can be detected that classrooms are not the places in which students are not treated respectfully.

It was understood that 82.0% of the pre-service teachers wrote their memories and shared them. When the pre-service teachers' memories which they experienced, witnessed or observed in the classrooms or lessons during their primary, secondary, and high school years (the responses to the third question of the study) are examined, it can be viewed that evidence-proofs were gathered verifying-supporting the responses written for the first and second questions. For example, it is interesting that a total of 59.1% of pre-service teachers shared memories including negative elements which could be classified into groups such as “exposure to violence-battering (26.2%)” “offending (11.5%)”, “discrimination-lack of equal treatment (6.6%)”, and “rudeness, toughness, lack of interest, and disrespect”. In addition, 19.6% of the pre-service teachers involved positive memories about their teachers.

When the tables presenting the responses to the research questions are examined, it can be stated that the pre-service teachers' opinions about the expected and wanted teachers behaviours to be exhibited in the classes or lessons overlap and support the opinions shared in previous studies (Meb, 2008; Işık, Çiltaş & Baş, 2010; Abazaoğlu, Yıldırım & Yıldızhan, 2014; Koç 2014; Sadi, 2019, s. 47).

It can be deduced from the study that the teacher behaviours which the pre-service teachers do not want to be exhibited or find negative are in fact kinds of behaviours which could affect students' levels of attachment to teachers and school negatively and lead to academic failure.

The recommendations of the study were offered based on the participant views and some of them were used. Teachers should be smiling, tolerant, and sincere; they should love their students. Teachers must come to the classes well-prepared and willingly. They must keep the students engaged in the lesson and benefit from technology and materials. When required, teachers should be a guide and facilitator, know how to act like a child, and teach considering the level and needs of the students. Teachers must not be rude, aggressive, strict, bully, oppressive, and authoritative. They must not shout and use slang language. They must keep away from violence and reject it with their statements and actions. Teachers must always be respectful under any condition. Teachers should have good communication skills, speak effectively and clearly and should be well-groomed, neat and tidy. Teachers should be patient; they should teach students to think, use their intelligence, and question anything. Teachers must offer an opportunity for students to express their opinions and feelings, they must listen to them carefully and they must not offend and tease them. Teachers should not bring their private life into the classroom or lesson. Teachers should not discriminate between the students and they should treat them equally and fairly.

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