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## ABSTRACT

This study examines student-teachers' attitudes concerning participation in classroom discussion, investigating their tendencies to initiate classroom discussions and how they would motivate their own students in the future to participate in classroom discussions. The participants, Turkish student-teachers, completed questionnaires that investigated: their attitudes toward motivating students to participate in classroom discussions; their tendencies, as prospective teachers, to motivate their elementary school students to participate in the discussions. Data analysis indicated that most of the teaching staff members were authoritarian regarding classroom discussions and did not motivate students to participate freely in discussions. Since they perceived students negatively when students asserted ideas contrary to their own beliefs, students could not have any open discussions with them. Despite this, student teachers believed they would create more democratic circumstances for their students when they began teaching in their own classrooms. In general it was found that the educational level of the student-teacher's father and personality influenced student participation in classroom discussion. (Contains 15 bibliographic references.) (SM)

**Attitudes of Student-Teachers  
[toward] Participation [in] Classroom Discussions**

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# ATTITUDES OF STUDENT-TEACHERS PARTICIPATION CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS

## ABSTRACT

In this paper, it is aimed to finding out the attitudes of student-teachers for participating classroom discussion. Also the tendency of those candidate classroom teachers, towards the classroom discussions has been taken into consideration. For this purpose, a scale of attitude has been developed for classroom discussions and it has been given to 112 (one hundred and twelve) students attending the fourth class at the Faculty of Education, Trakya University. Besides, a relation survey has been executed for getting some independent variables affecting the attitude of teaching staff and students during classroom discussions

*Key Words:* The Tendency of the Student-Teachers for Participation Classroom Discussion.

Personality of the Teaching Staff, Teachers for Motivating the Students to Participate

Formal education is the basic source of getting an individual to obtain democratic behavior, autonomous scientific meditation and critical, creative, productive, sensitive and multidimensional adequacy. The educational context principally needs to be suitable for the development of these behaviors in order that individual who is a member of formal education can easily obtain the behaviors assumed above. Therefore, generated conditions in the classroom by teachers for getting students to specify themselves and motivating them for learning are the most important influential way; especially in the teacher training organizations, those conditions are noteworthy.

It is well known that a student who has not got the chance of specifying him/herself and participating any discussion freely can not be expected to create autonomous discussion circumstances. Since s/he may not know how to generate it.

In our country-Turkiye-, the attitudes of the teachers have been observed in the ways of the teachers' evaluation themselves and of the evaluation by the students. In accordance with the finding, the teachers are determined mostly as the authoritarian people (Ertürk, 1979) who behave according to some common situations, train the students with the information in the books, are affected by the political authorities and are deficient in leading to their environment (Akyüz, 1978).

Besides, in the researches, it was seen that there has been harmony in the researches for primary schools (Fidan, 1986); but in the researches, no inconsistency was observed (Kavak, 1986).

The research findings demonstrate that the attitudes of the teachers in the classroom have always been effective on the students' learning capacity. The teachers' personalities have usually been effective on the students' personalities. Especially, both verbal and nonverbal communications between the teacher and the student influence the students' school achievement and personalities. When a teacher accompanies with the students, the students get more attack when a teacher behaves in an authoritarian way, the students do not have adaptation to the studies in the school.

The attitudes of the teachers, of course, may cause troubled deviations for the students; and this situation may only cause the students to study enough not more. On the other hand, the attitudes of the teachers may have an influence on the students in respect of affection, regard, and sympathy. In that case, the students may be involved in extra studies voluntary. Besides, if the teachers generate the suitable discussions related to the subjects during the class time, the

achievement level of the students get increased (Unal, 1991). The quality of teaching services depends mostly on the teachers' responsibilities for the class (Özçelik, 1987). There have been four main attributes which the students prefer in respect of the teachers' personality are affection, patience, tolerance and interest (Hamacheck, 1972). The students of the sympathetic teachers have been found out as being creative and oriented in scientific subjects. Those teachers represent emotional sources for the students and are interested in the students systematically; in addition to these, they behave as independent individuals (Akyıldız, 1991).

The quality of administrator-teacher communication in a primary school has direct or indirect influence on both teacher-student communication and actualization the school aims. In any organization, the communication among different groups cannot be isolated from the general communication of the organization. In educational organizations, generating a democratic atmosphere and actualizing the aims in a most effective way depend on a dual communication.

In teacher-student communication researches, such results were found out: teacher-student communication has been affected negatively- when the classroom atmosphere is not appropriate in respect of the students' expectancy (Açıköz, 1989); the students cannot communicate well with the teachers and administrators because the teachers and the administrators do not have democratic attitudes (Bayraktar, 1991); in teacher-student communication, the teachers do not behave appropriately in respect of the students' expectancy (Bolat, 1990). In another research, it is stated that to defect teacher-student contradictions with appropriate communication in the classroom, the concepts "students' teacher" and "teacher's students" as students" and "the students who behave as teachers" with a dual communication (Fiera, 1990).

In the faculties of education- which are teacher training organizations- participation of the students in the classroom discussions is the requirement of that kind of education. However, in the faculties of education, the factors such as inadequate number of the teaching staff, the crowded classes, the quality of the teaching staff can be effective on the level and quality of the participation of the students to classroom discussions.

## **Aim**

The aim of this study is to find out how the fourth- year students from classroom student-teachers are motivated for participating the classroom discussions, the tendency of classroom student-teachers towards this participation, and in what respect they will motivate the students in future when become teachers.

**The Research Model:** The survey method was applied in this research. After the relevant literature had been investigated out, the theoretical part of this study was established.

**Population and Sample:** The population of this study is the fourth-year students who were the members in the second term of 1998-1999 academic year in the classroom teachers' department in the Faculty of Education at Trakya University (in Edirne). The samples are the students who were in the classroom on the day when the questionnaire was given (140 samples).

### **Data and Data Collection**

The questionnaires executed for the student are the data of this study. The questionnaire involves two part; the first part, includes personal information and the second part includes Likert-typed 22 questions with 5 choices and 5 questions with two choices- yes, no-. The questions were asked to determine the attitudes of teaching staff for motivating the students to participate the classroom discussions, the tendency of the students towards the classroom discussions and the tendency of those students as prospective classroom teacher to motivate the primary education students to participate the classroom discussions.

### **Scale Development**

After the relevant literature was investigated for this research, a Likert-type scale including 22 items with 5 choices was developed depending on the theoretical approaches. 3 items of the scale were omitted as a result of item analysis and 19 items were omitted as a result of the factor analysis, it was determined that the scale consists of 3 infra-dimensions.

Therefor, the items in the scale can be grouped as 4 items for the tendencies of the students towards participation classroom discussions; 8 items for the attitudes of the teachers for motivating the students towards classroom discussions; 7 items for the tendencies of the prospective classroom teachers for motivating the students to be involved in classroom discussions in the primary school.

As a result of reliability analysis, Alpha correlation coefficients were determined as: the attitudes of the teachers for motivating the students towards the classroom discussions is .78; the tendency of the students for participating classroom discussions is .80; the tendency of the

students as the prospective classroom teachers for motivating the students towards the classroom discussions in the primary school is .79; the reliability coefficient of the scale as a whole is .78.

**Table 1**

**Unidimension Rotated Component Matrix for the 19 Items of the Scale of Attitude for Participating the Classroom Discussions**

*The tendencies of the student-teachers as the prospective classroom Teachers for motivating the students to participate the classroom discussions (I) Reliability Coefficients Alfa = .79*

*Items Analysis  
Item-Total  
Factor-Coefficient  
I II III*

29. Including the primary education students to the decisions related to the lesson plan	<b>.80</b>	.002	.002
30. Including the primary education students to the classroom rules determination	<b>.73</b>	.002	.002
31. Accepting the students frank criticisms of the teacher's decision	<b>.76</b>	.002	.003
32. The effect of discussing the teacher's ideas in the primary education within the classroom in respect of the teacher's efficiency over the students *	<b>.40</b>	.10	-.44
34. Respecting the students' proposals for correcting the decisions taken by the teacher	<b>.83</b>	.00	.00
35. Giving the students opportunity to choose the friends for working cooperatively	<b>.50</b>	.11	.22
36. Giving opportunity to the students to criticize the proposal put forward by each student	<b>.69</b>	.002	.21

*The attitudes of the teaching staff for motivating the student-teachers towards the classroom discussions (II)  
Reliability Coefficients Alfa .78*

15. Operating the ideas put forward against the teaching staff's ideas by the students as pressure	.13	<b>.70</b>	.00
16. Evaluating the parallel ideas for the advantages of the students	.14	<b>.36</b>	.14
17. Giving opportunity to the students to declare their own ideas freely*	.00	<b>.75</b>	.17
18. Being conceived as disrespected individuals by the staff	.00	<b>.67</b>	.23
19. Imposing confidence on the students to declare their own ideas			

about the fields in which they are not interested *	-.21	.67	.00
20. Making students feel the teaching staff's trouble when the decisions which have not been approved are declared by the students	.13	.66	.00
21 When appropriate ideas for the staff are declared, approving them immediately	.10	.37	.20
22. Supporting the students to declare their own ideas *	.00	.70	.00

*The tendency of the student-teachers for participation classroom discussions (III) Reliability Coefficients Alfa .80*

23. Declaration of the ideas by the Students although they are against the ideas of the teaching staff *	.10	.12	.78
24. Declaration of the ideas by the Students only when they are asked by the teaching staff *	.13	.15	.66
25. Hesitation of the students for declaring their ideas due to the fact that the teaching staff may operate it for the disadvantage of the students	.00	.24	.76
26. Hesitation of the students for disproving the teaching staff's idea	.00	.00	.80

*Alpha Reliability Coefficient of attitude scale for participating classroom discussions is .78  
(\* ) Score is reversed.*

**Table 2**  
**The Correlation Matrix Between the Dimensional Structures of Attitude Scale for Participation Classroom Discussions**

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>II</i>	<i>III</i>
The attitudes of the student-teachers as the prospective classroom teachers for motivating the students to participate the classroom discussions ( <b>I</b> )	1.00		
The attitudes of the teaching staff for motivating the student-teachers towards the classroom discussions ( <b>II</b> )	.09	1.00	
The tendencies of the student-teachers for participating the classroom discussion ( <b>III</b> )	.07	.27 **	1.00

**\*\* is significance (Pearson Correlation) on the level of .01**

### **Findings and Evaluation**

The data collected through the questionnaire are grouped under four leading in this study such as personal information, the attitudes of the teachers for motivating the students participate



classroom discussions, the tendencies of the students for participating the classroom discussion, and the tendencies of the students as the prospective classroom teachers for motivating the students to participate the classroom discussions in primary school.

### **Personal Information**

Of the students involved in the research, %50.9% (57) is female, 49.1 (55) is male. 5.4 % of the students are at the ages of 18-20; 68.8 % of the students are at the age of 21-23, and 22.3 % of them are at the age of 24-26. The families of 29.5 % students live in villages and of 70.5 % students live in cities. The educational level of the students' parents are the mothers of the 21.4 % students and the fathers of the 8.9 % students do not have any diplomas; the mothers of the 63.4 % students and the fathers of the 13.4 % students are graduates of primary school; and the fathers of the 15.2 % students are the graduates of high school.

### **The Attitudes of the Teaching Staff for Motivating the Student-Teachers to Participate the Classroom Discussions**

The results of relevant to this point were obtained as: The attitudes of teaching staff, in the faculty of Education at Trakya University, for motivating the students to participate the classroom discussions have been determined with 8 questions. The analysis of the responses according to the highest percentages and arithmetic average were determined as followings: when the students state opposite ideas for the teacher's own ideas, the teaching staff operate it as pressure (66.9%); when a parallel idea is asserted, the teaching staff evaluate it for the advantage of the students (68.8%); the teaching staff conceive it as disrespect when the students disprove the ideas of the teaching staff (%62.5%); the teaching staff do not impose on the students confidence for declaring their own ideas on their professional fields (59.8%); the staff also make the students feel their trouble when the ideas which are not approved by them are declared (56.25% ); when appropriate ideas for the staff are declared, the staff approves it immediately (75.9% ); and the teaching staff do not support the students to declare their own ideas in a related way (63.4%).

Consequently; the teaching staff in that department usually motivate the students to participate discussion on the parallel of his own ideas and do not give the students opportunity to explain their own ideas freely. In that case, it is possible to state that the students get education based on learning by heart and on limited conditions because they do not have the chance of analyzing the subjects. In some sense, critical, scientific and creative considerations for the students can not be obtained in such a circumstance which can be named authoritative. As a result

of this circumstance, it can be too much optimism to hope these students to develop critical; scientific and creative considerations on their students when they begin to teachers' profession.

### **The Tendencies of the Student-Teachers for Participating the Classroom Discussions**

The tendencies of the student-teachers for participating the classroom discussions were determined with four attitude questions. It was observed that the students are less voluntary for stating their ideas which are opposite of the teaching staff's ideas. A significant part of the students (36.6%) are less voluntary for stating opposite ideas, but they mostly declare their own ideas about the subjects when they have been asked by the staff (52.7%) mostly and always. On the other hand, it was determined that the vast majority of the students (50.9%) are reluctant for participating the discussions depending on the fact that the teaching staff can operate it against them and for putting forward ideas that will disprove the propositions of the teaching staff (52.7%) sometimes and mostly.

To sum up, we can assert that the students from classroom teacher's department have passive attitudes within the classroom, are reluctant for having opposite or disapproving discussions, and have tendencies to agree all concepts and ideas of the teaching staff in order to pass the class without having any trouble.

### **The Tendencies of the Student-Teachers as the Prospective Classroom Teacher for Motivating the Students to Participate the Classroom Discussions in a Primary School**

The attitudes of the students from classroom teachers' department on how to motivate the students to participate classroom discussions in a primary school, when they become teachers, were tried to determine with 7 questions. More than half of the students agree on the idea that the rules related to the classroom circumstances and to course plan need to be specified with students.

They also share the ideas that they will generate suitable conditions for their students to criticize their teachers' own decisions, discussing the rules in the classroom will not have negative influences on the teachers' authority over the class, and the decisions can be improved in the dimensions of the students' proposals. Besides, they also state that the students should have freedom for choosing their friends to study collectively and each proposal needs to be discussed in the classroom. As a result of those responses it was specified that the students have more democratic and participating attitudes than the teaching staff for the classroom activities. However, it may not be certain that those students will have the same attitudes after they begin

teaching profession; we can easily assert that the students have more idealist and optimistic attitudes in the pre-service duration.

In addition to those, within the research, other investigated points are those: the students who are prospective classroom teachers were asked if the teaching staff are adequate, have scientific attitudes, behave the students as regardful individuals. They were also asked if they appropriate the personality of the teaching staff or they see them as models for their future life. All these points were investigated to determine if there were any significant discriminations among the responses given for 3 factors in respect of each variable. As a result of those independent factors, significant discriminations were determined between the factor related to the tendencies of the students for participating the classroom discussions and the factor related to the tendencies of the teaching staff for motivating the students towards the discussions.

### **The Factors Affecting the Attitudes of the Teaching Staff for Motivating the Student-Teachers Towards the Classroom Discussions**

As a result of the responses given by the students, it was also determined that the attitudes of the teaching staff display differences according to the independent variables about adequacy of the teaching staff, having scientific attitude and behavior, approving the personality, appreciating the teaching staff as models and respecting the students.

**Table 3**

#### **The Independent Variable Effecting the Attitude of the Prospective Classroom Teachers to Participate in Classroom Discussions**

<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>N</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>D.F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Significant</i>
Approving the personality of the teaching staff	N1	16	24.56	4.33	110	.88	-3.82	.000
	N2	96	29.34	4.68				
Appreciating the teaching staff as models	N1	10	23.46	4.16	109	.74	-3.84	.000
	N2	101	29.25	4.63				
Respecting the students as regardful individuals by the teaching staff	N1	22	25.72	4.66	110	.97	-3.46	.001
	N2	90	29.37	4.72				
The scientific behavior and the attitude of the teaching staff	N1	21	24.00	4.58	110	.67	-5.40	.000
	N2	91	29.73	4.34				
Being satisfied with the teaching staff	N1	38	25.84	4.81	110	.36	-4.75	.000
	N2	74	30.10	4.31				

*N1: Yes, N2: No*

As a result of the responses, we can state that the students who are prospective classroom teachers agree on the idea that the teaching staff who are adequate in their professions, have

scientific attitudes and behaviors and regard the students are more motivating for the students to participate the classroom discussions. But the teaching staff who have opposite properties handicap the students to participate the classroom discussions.

### **The Attitudes of the Student-Classroom Teachers to Participate in the Classroom Discussions**

Within the research, it was seen that the variable about the attitude of the teaching staff for assuming the students as regardful individuals has affected the tendencies of the students for participating the classroom discussions during the class.

**Table 4**  
**The Independent Variable Affecting the Attitudes of the Prospective Classroom Teachers for Motivating the Students to Participate Classroom Discussion**

<i>Independent Variable</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>D.F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Significant</i>
Respecting the students as regardful individuals	N1	22	10.63	2.82	110	.11	-2.89	.039
	N2	90	12.38	3.67				

*N1: Yes, N2: No*

It is seen that the students who are regarded more can easily participate the classroom discussions although they assert ideas against the ideas of the teaching staff.

### **The Independent Variables Affecting Cooperatively the Factors of Classroom Discussions**

Within this research, a step by step multi regression analysis was done in order to determine if the variables about the students' age groups, sexuality, fathers' education, mothers' education, education level, location, family income and the variables about the teaching staff's adequacy, scientific behavior and attitude, behaving the students as regardful individuals and approving the personality of the teaching staff and seeing then as models affect the three factors.

As a result of the analysis, it was seen that the factors about approving the personality of the teaching staff and the education level of the fathers collectively affect the tendencies of the prospective teachers towards the classroom participation the classroom discussions (F1). Besides, the variables about scientific behavior and attitude of the teaching staff and approving the personality of the teaching staff affect collectively the tendencies of the teaching staff for motivating the students to participate the classroom discussions (F2). Those variables are independent and do not influence each other; but they affect collectively the factor.

It was determined that the tendencies of the prospective classroom teachers for motivating their students to participate the classroom discussion are affected depending on the variables about the lower education level of the fathers and higher level of approving the teaching staff. While one unit variance in the variable (factor) about approving personality of the teaching staff caused to 3.774 times changing in F1, one unit variance in the variable (factor) about fathers' education caused to 675 times changing in F1.

**Table 5**  
**The Regression Analysis Results: F 2 Effect of the Variables about Approving the Personality of the Teaching Staff and Scientific Attitude and Behavior of the Teaching Staff**

<i>Model</i>	<i>Beta Coefficient</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Significant</i>
Fixed coefficient of the equation	23.697	10.38	.000
Approving the personality of the teaching staff	3.774	3.19	.002
Father's Education	-.675	-2.00	.048

*Multi Regression Model : Factor 1 = 23.697 + 3.774 - .675*  
*Significance test of the regression model F: 6.279 p < .01*

The influence of the variables about the lower education level of the fathers and approving the personality of the teaching staff on the attitude of the prospective classroom teachers for motivating the students to participate the classroom discussion may depend on the many reasons.

However, the lower education level of the fathers is mostly seen in the families from lower classes and peripheral districts. Besides, lower education level manifests the reality of the authoritarian family in a patriarchal society. An individual who has grown up in such a family may not have the ability of stating himself very well. On the other hand, it can be stated that the effect of the teaching staff whose personalities have approved at the university may be dominant on the attitude of the student towards the classroom discussions in his teacher profession. However, the source of the approving the personality of the teaching staff may be ideological or sensible. In that case, the ideological or sensible factors which base approving the personality may be the source of the attitude of the candidate teachers towards the classroom discussions; the variables about fathers' education and approving the personality collectively affect the attitude of the candidate teachers towards the classroom discussion during the teacher profession.

It was observed that the level of the scientific attitude and behavior of the teaching staff and the level of approving other personalities collectively affect the attitude of the prospective teachers towards the participation the classroom discussions .

One unit variance in the scientific attitude and behavior of the teaching staff caused to 4.579 times changing in F2 and one –unit variance in the variable about approving the personality caused to 3.374 times changing in F2. To sum up, the level of the attitudes of the prospective classroom teachers for participating classroom discussions can be observed in the variables about having scientific attitudes and having approved personality.

**Table 6**  
**The Regression Analysis Results : F 2 Effect of the Variables about Approving the Personality of the Teaching Staff and Scientific Attitude and Behavior of the Teaching Staff**

<i>Model</i>	<i>Beta Coefficient</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Significant</i>
Fixed coefficient of the equation	14.062	4.88	.000
Scientific attitude and behavior of the teaching staff	4.579	3.90	.000
Approving the personality of the teaching staff	3.374	2.57	.013

*Multi regression model: Factor 2= 14.062+4.579+3.374*  
*Significance test of the regression model F: 14.002 p<.01*

Approving the personality of the teaching staff or scientific attitude and behavior of the teaching staff do not have any individual influence on the attitudes of the students for participating classroom discussions.

**Table 7**  
**Relation Matrix of the Independent Variables Effecting Classroom Discussion Variables**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>I*</i>	<i>II*</i>	<i>III*</i>	<i>IV*</i>	<i>V*</i>
Adequacy of the teaching staff <b>I</b>	1				
Scientific attitude and behavior of the teaching staff <b>II</b>	.52**	1			
Respecting the students <b>III</b>	.31**	.34**	1		
Approving the personality of the teaching staff <b>IV</b>	.30**	.26**	.31**	1	
Appreciating the teaching staff as models <b>V</b>	.31**	.48**	.25**	.48**	1

(\*) *Sperman's Correlation rho coefficient*

(\*\*) All values are significance on the level of .01

A relation survey in this research was also executed in order to determine if there have been any relationships among the 5 variables which were used as independent variables. A direct significant relationship among the responses for these 5 independent variables about approving

personality of the teaching staff, regarding the student, and adequacy of the teaching staff have influence on the attitudes of the students towards the classroom discussions.

## CONCLUSION

As a result of the data analysis obtained in this research; it was seen that most of the teaching staff at the classroom teachers' department do not have adequate scientific attitudes, and are not adequate in respect of their profession; besides they do not have perfect teacher attitudes that can be accepted as models by the students. The staff are mostly authoritarian in respect of classroom discussions and do not motivate the students to participate the discussions freely. Since the students are conceived negatively when they assert ideas against the teaching staff, they can not have any discussions with the teaching staff or put forward opposite ideas. Despite these negative results, those students claim that they will generate more democratic circumstances for their students when they begin to work as teachers. But it is well known that the candidate teachers are more idealist and symptomatic during the pre-service duration. Because of the inadequate educational practice during the pre-service, the candidate teachers' who begin to work with only theoretical knowledge tend to be more authoritarian and more personal in professional aspect (Celep, 1997). Besides the variables about the scientific attitude and behavior of the teaching staff and approving the personality affect the tendencies of the students towards the participation the classroom discussions; and also, the variables about the education level of the teaching staff affect the attitudes of the students for participating the classroom discussion.

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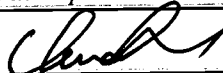
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