Investigation of PE and Sports Teachers' Professional Identity Perceptions in Terms of Some Demographic Variables

Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Öğretmenlerinin Mesleki Kimlik Algılarının Bazı Demografik Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi

ABSTRACT

Professional identity perceptions of Teachers' affect their educational views, behaviors, emotions and decisions. This study aims to determine the level of PE and sports teachers' perceptions of professional identity and to examine whether these perceptions are differentiated by demographic variables. The research was conducted using the survey model in quantitative research method. The research was conducted with 312 PE and sports teachers in Isparta in the 2022-2023 academic year. The data for the survey was collected using a personal data form and a scale of perception of professional identity for PE and sport teachers. To analyze the data obtained, frequency, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, kurtosis and skewness values were calculated. Since the data were not normally distributed, non-parametric analyses were used. To determine the difference between variables, the Mann Whitney U test was used for pairwise comparisons and the Kruskal Wallis-H test for multiple group comparisons. Effect sizes were also calculated. The results showed that PE and sport teachers' perceptions of professional identity were very high. In addition, it was found that PE and sport teachers' perceptions of professional identity differed significantly according to the variables of age, years of service, school type, and participation in professional development activities.

Keywords Professional Identity Perception, PE and Sports Teacher, Teacher Education

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ÖZET

Öğretmenlerin mesleki kimlik algıları, onların eğitimsel görüşlerini, davranışlarını, duygularını ve kararlarını etkilemektedir. Bu çalışma; beden eğitimi ve spor öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik algılarının düzeyinin belirlenmesini ve bu algılarının demografik değişkenler tarafından farklılaşıp farklılaşmadığını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma, nicel araştırma yönteminde tarama modeli kullanılarak yürütülmüştür. Araştırma, 2022-2023 eğitim öğretim yılında Isparta'da yer alan 312 adet beden eğitimi ve spor öğretmeni ile yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri, Kişisel Bilgi Formu ve Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Öğretmeni Mesleki Kimlik Algısı Ölçeği kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Elde edilen verileri analiz etmek amacıyla frekans, aritmetik ortalama, standart sapma, basıklık ve çarpıklık değerleri hesaplanmıştır. Veriler normal dağılım göstermediği için parametrik olmayan analizler kullanılmıştır. Değişkenler arasındaki farklılaşmayı belirlemek amacıyla ikili karşılaştırmalarda Mann Whitney U Testi, çoklu grup karşılaştırmalarında ise Kruskal Wallis-H Testi kullanılmıştır. Bunun yanında etki büyüklükleri de hesaplanmıştır. Sonuç olarak, beden eğitimi ve spor öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik algılarının çok yüksek düzeyde olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bununla beraber, beden eğitimi ve spor öğretmenlerinin mesleki kimlik algılarının yaş, görev yılı, okul türü, mesleki gelişim faaliyetlerine katılım değişkenlerine göre anlamlı farklılık gösterdiği bulgulanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Professional Identity Perception, PE and Sports Teacher, Teacher Education

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are considered to be one of the most important elements of a country's education system. They are the ones who assume the primary responsibility for educating people by successfully implementing the general and specific objectives of the education system. However, the quality of the education system is measured by the quality of teachers (Mathur, 2001). At this point, teachers' competencies, effectiveness, and professional development come to the fore (Shobha, 2022). In the literature, there are many factors associated with these characteristics of teachers. Some of these factors are self-efficacy belief (Klassen & Tze, 2014), teacher personality (Buela & Joseph, 2015), emotional intelligence (Bala, 2017), cognitive competence (Bardach & Klassen, 2020), job satisfaction (Halder & Roy, 2018), professional experience (Podolsky et al, 2019), curriculum literacy (Akyıldız, 2020) and motivation, which is a complex concept that includes demand, desire, need, drive and interest (Kılıç,

2019; Bakker & Bal, 2010). In addition to these factors, another noteworthy concept is teachers' perception of professional identity (Pillen et al., 2013; Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

Professional identity perception can be expressed as the behaviors, beliefs and values that will define oneself in the profession one performs (Slay & Smith, 2011). In the context of education, although teachers' professional identity has been defined in various ways, a standard definition has not yet been made (Rodrigues & Mogarro, 2019; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004). However, there are definitions made by some authors. For example, Lamote and Engels (2010) state that it refers to the process of seeing oneself as a teacher; that it develops within the social environment when teachers enter the profession; and that it also includes the teacher's beliefs about teaching activities. Fomunyam (2016) explains teachers' professional identity as the beliefs that guide their actions and practices inside and outside the school. Hanna et al. (2020) defined it as a concept that defines teachers' professional roles, develops in a social environment, and affects teachers' behaviors, beliefs, feelings, and thoughts. At this point, although it is seen that different definitions are included in the literature, Beijaard et al. (2004) stated some basic features for a better understanding of teachers' perceptions of professional identity. These can be listed as follows: "(1) professional identity is a process of continuous reshaping and never stops developing with professional experiences and learning; (2) professional identity is formed due to the interrelationship between teachers' educational practices and beliefs, their personal characteristics and the school-environment in which they teach; (3) teacher's professional identity may consist of sub-identities and they are compatible with each other; and (4) teachers' efforts to ensure professional development throughout their professional life".

Researchers note that although there is no clear definition of teachers' professional identity, there is a consensus on the importance of this issue. For example, teachers' perception of their professional identity has an impact on teachers' actions related to designing lesson plans, implementing strategies, enriching, and developing curricula, evaluating the learning process, communicating and collaborating with colleagues. In addition, it is stated that the importance teachers give to their professional development affects their educational philosophy, teaching competencies, teaching performance, willingness to learn about new practices for the teaching process, their tendency to stay in the teaching profession, and their skills and willingness to cope with educational changes. Moreover, it is associated with self-efficacy, motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment to teaching, which are other qualities of effective teaching (Dalby, 2017; Cyrino, 2016; Palmér, 2016; Chong et al., 2011; Mockler, 2011; Wagoner, 2011; Day et al., 2005; Hammerness et al., 2005; Beijaard et al., 2004; Korthagen, 2004; Beijaard et al., 2000). In addition, it is emphasized that the perception of professional identity is not only limited to the effectiveness and competence in the development and implementation processes of teachers at the beginning of their career, but also plays an important role in the planning, programming, and implementation of teacher education (Lamote & Engels, 2010). For these reasons, it is important to examine teachers' perceptions of professional identity.

In the literature, studies examining teachers' perception of professional identity were generally conducted with teachers of foreign language, mathematics, physics, etc. and prospective teachers in these branches (Ambusaidi & Alhosni, 2023; Dilek & Atlas, 2022; Rodrigues & Mogarro, 2019; Cameron & Grant, 2017; Dalby, 2017; Cyrino, 2016; Izadinia, 2013; Abednia, 2012; Ni & Guzdial, 2012). However, Keating et al. (2017) emphasized that there are very few studies examining PE and sport teachers' perceptions of professional identity. In addition, it was seen that the relevant Turkish literature is limited to studies conducted with PE and sport teachers (Çalı, 2021) and prospective PE and sport teachers (Al Bayati, 2023; Kozak et al., 2020; Uçar, 2020; Saylam et al., 2007). However, it is noteworthy that PE and sports teachers are different from other teachers due to role differences in the school and classroom environment. This is because PE and sports courses provide students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development through physical movements, and for this reason, the lessons are taught in the gym or garden, not in the classroom. These educational activities continue both inside and outside the school. In this process, PE and sports teachers dress differently than other teachers. In addition, it is stated that PE and sports teachers may be seen as low status or insignificant because the PE course is not suitable for the hierarchical structure of the school, and it is a non-exam course. For these and similar reasons, PE classes and PE teachers are perceived as marginalized by other educational stakeholders. In this case, PE and sports teachers become isolated and marginalized. This can often lead to teachers feeling like second class teachers, feeling that their contribution to the main purpose of schools is less important, distancing themselves from the social context of the school and negatively affecting their professional identity. Ultimately, it may result in a negative impact on teacher efficacy and effectiveness (Amorim & Silva, 2022; Erbas, 2021; Simonton et al., 2021; Şenel et al., 2019; Gaudreault et al., 2016a; Gaudreault et al., 2016b; Raymond, 2016; Richards et al., 2014; Kougioumtzis et al., 2011; Eldar et al., 2003; Curtner-Smith, 2001; Hendry, 1975). In this context, since the perception of professional identity is affected by the social environment, is shaped in a dynamic process, and shows continuous development, it is important to examine PE and sport teachers' perceptions of professional identity and to examine which variables affect it. Thus,

it is thought that this study will contribute to the related literature on the professional identities of PE and sport teachers.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore physical education and sport teachers' perceptions of professional identity and to find out whether there is differentiation in these perceptions. Based on this goal, the following research problems were searched for answers

1. What is the level of PE and sport teachers' perceptions of professional identity?

2. Do PE and sport teachers' perceptions of professional identity differ according to their demographic characteristics?

METHOD

Research Model

The current study was designed using a quantitative research method and a survey model. Survey model is research in which researchers use data collection tools such as questionnaires, tests, and scales to describe the opinions, perceptions, behaviors, attitudes or characteristics of a sample or population (Creswell, 2012; Fraenkel et al., 2015).

Participants

The participants in this study were determined according to "easily accessible case sampling", which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. The participants consisted of 312 PE and sports teachers working in private and public secondary and high schools in Isparta province in the 2022-2023 academic year.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variables		Frequency (f)	Percent%
Gender	Female	147	47,1
	Male	165	52,9
Age	25-30	68	21,8
	31-40	87	27,9
	41-50	104	33,3
	51-60	53	17,0
Marital Status	Single	99	31,7
	Married	213	68,3
Education Level	Bachelor's degree	206	66,0
	Master's degree	106	34,0
Years of Service	1-10 Year	120	38,5
	11-20 Year	161	51,6
	21+	31	9,9
School Type	Public School	215	68,9
	Private School	97	31,1
Professional Development	No	121	38,8
	Yes	191	61,2
Total		312	100

Data Collection Tools

The data of the study were collected through quantitative research techniques. Personal Information Form and PE and Sports Teacher Professional Identity Perception Scale (PESTPIPS) were used in the study.

Personal Information Form

This form developed by the researchers consists of questions about PE and sports teachers' gender, age, marital status, education level, years of service, school type they work in and whether they participate in activities related to professional development.

Professional Identity Perception Scale

The "PE and Sports Teacher Professional Identity Perception Scale" (PESTPIPS) developed by Çalı (2021) was used to measure the professional identity perceptions of PE and sports teachers. This scale measures PE and sports teachers' perceptions of professional identity in a 5-point Likert format (1= Strongly Disagree and 5= Strongly Agree) with 9 items. The scale has 2 sub-dimensions; "Self-Belonging" (4 items) and "Professional Belonging" (5 items). The Self Belonging sub-dimension measures the extent to which the teacher finds himself/herself suitable for his/her profession, his/her emotional attachment to the profession and his/her efforts towards his/her angel. The Professional Belonging sub-dimension measures the value that the teacher shows to his/her profession and his/her

professional development. There are no reverse coded items in the scale. The mean scores that can be obtained from the scale vary between 1-5. An increase in the mean score obtained from the scale indicates an increase in the perception of professional identity (Table 2). The reliability of the scale was determined by Cronbach Alpha (Cr α) internal consistency coefficient, and it was reported to be 0.74 for self-belonging sub-dimension, 0.80 for professional belonging and 0.88 for the whole scale. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to determine the validity of the scale and because of the analysis, it was reported that the fit indices were CMIN/DF=1.20; GFI=0.96; AGFI=0.93; CFI=0.97; RMR=0.06; SRMR=0.0461; NFI=0.90; RFI=0.85; RMSEA=0.035. At this point, it is stated that the scale is valid and reliable. Within the scope of the research, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was found to be 0.77 for the self-belonging sub-dimension, 0.71 for professional belonging and 0.85 for the whole scale.

Table 2: Evaluation Intervals of the Scores Received from the PE and Sports Teacher Professional Identity Perception Scale

Score Ranges	Level of Professional Identity Perception
1 – 1,89 points	Very Low
1,9 – 2,69 points	Low
2,7 – 3,49 points	Medium
3,5 – 4,29 points	High
4.3 – 5 points	Very High

Data Collection Process

First, the ethics committee approval document was obtained with the decision of the Suleyman Demirel University 20.09.2023 numbered 68/4. Then, permission to use the scale was obtained by contacting the authors. To collect the data of the study, the voluntary participation consent form, personal information form and PE and sports teacher professional identity perception scale were sent to the teachers via Google Forms and the data were obtained.

Statistical Analysis

SPSS version 23.0 was used to analyze the data obtained. Prior to data analysis, missing or incorrect responses were checked. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Within the scope of descriptive analysis, frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, kurtosis, and skewness values of the data were calculated. To examine whether the data were normally distributed or not, both kurtosis and skewness values and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results were analyzed (Table 3). Since the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test result was $p<0.05$ and the kurtosis and skewness values were not in the range of +1 and -1, it was found that the data were not normally distributed (Büyüköztürk, 2019; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Non-parametric analyses were used because the data were not normally distributed. In inferential analyses, difference analyses were used. Mann Whitney U Test was preferred for comparing paired groups. Kruskal-Wallis Test was used for the comparison of multiple groups. The analysis was performed at a significance level of $p<0.05$. If the Kruskal-Wallis test analysis showed a statistically significant difference, the Mann Whitney U-test was used and pairwise comparisons were made between groups. However, in multiple group comparisons, as the number of groups to be compared increases, the amount of error also increases. To prevent this error, Bonferroni correction was used. Bonferroni correction is made according to the value obtained from the formula "significance level / number of groups". Accordingly, $p<0.0167$ for the comparison of groups of 3 and $p<0.0125$ for the comparison of groups of 4 were taken into consideration. To calculate the magnitude of the significance of the Mann Whitney U Test, "r effect size statistic" was preferred and reported as ($r>0.1$ small, $r>0.3$ medium and $r>0.5$ large). Eta squared $η^2$ value was used to calculate the size of the significant difference of the Kruskal-Wallis Test. Eta square $η^2$ effect size is reported as (0.01 small, 0.06 medium and 0.14 large) (Cevahir, 2020; Büyüköztürk, 2019; Tomczak & Tomczak, 2014; Ellis, 2010).

Table 3. Skewness and Kurtosis Values of Variables

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis	p
Self-Belonging	-2,047	7,734	0,000**
Professional Belonging	-2,037	6,155	0,000**
Total	-2,430	9,255	0,000**

*p<0,05 **p<0,01

FINDINGS

Table 4 presents the arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the overall perception and sub-dimensions of PE and sport teachers' professional identity.

Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation Values of Variables

Variables	Male (165)		Female (147)		Total (312)	
	$\bar{X}$	SS	$\bar{X}$	SS	$\bar{X}$	SS
Self-Belonging (1-5)	4,319	0,721	4,455	0,549	4,384	0,648
Professional Belonging (1-5)	4,315	0,753	4,405	0,607	4,357	0,689
Total (1-5)	4,317	0,698	4,431	0,536	4,371	0,629

When the arithmetic means and standard deviation values of PE and sports teachers are examined in Table 4, it is seen that in the sub-dimension of self-identity ($\bar{X}$= 4,384 ± 0,648), in the sub-dimension of professional identity ($\bar{X}$= 4,357 ± 0,689) and in total ($\bar{X}$= 4,371 ± 0,623). These values show that PE and sports teachers' perceptions of professional identity are at a very high level.

The test results for whether there is a significant difference in the total professional identity perception and sub-dimension scores of PE and sports teachers according to gender variable are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Mann-Whitney U Test Results by Gender

Variables	Group	N	Mean Ranking	Mean Total	U	p
Self-Belonging	Female	147	164,90	24240,00	10893,00	0,114
	Male	165	149,02	24588,00		
Professional Belonging	Female	147	161,43	23730,50	11402,50	0,357
	Male	165	152,11	25097,50		
Total	Female	147	165,52	24331,00	10802,00	0,095
	Male	165	148,47	24497,00		

*p<0,05 **p<0,01

The results of the analysis presented in Table 5 showed that there was no significant difference by gender between the mean scores for self (U= 10893.00, p>0.05), professional (U= 11402.50, p>0.05) and total (U= 10802.00, p>0.05). This finding suggests that female and male PE and sport teachers have similar perceptions of their professional identity.

Table 6 presents the test results on whether there are significant differences in PE and sport teachers' overall perception of professional identity and its sub-dimensions by marital status variable.

Table 6. Mann-Whitney U Test Results According to Marital Status Variable

Variables	Group	N	Mean Ranking	Mean Total	U	p	r
Self-Belonging	Single	99	172,08	17036,00	9001,0	0,034*	0,12
	Married	213	149,26	31792,00			
Professional Belonging	Single	99	153,16	15163,00	10213,0	0,652	
	Married	213	158,05	33665,00			
Total	Single	99	167,22	16554,50	9482,5	0,152	
	Married	213	151,52	32273,50			

*p<0,05 **p<0,01

As a result of the analysis in Table 6, it was determined that there was a significant difference in the sub-dimension of self-belonging (U= 9001,0, p<0,05) according to the marital status variable. When the rank averages were taken into consideration, it was seen that the difference was in favor of single PE and sports teachers. The effect size of the self-belonging sub-dimension was found to be "small" (r=0.12).

Table 7 presents the test results on whether there are significant differences in PE and sport teachers' overall perceptions of their professional identity and its sub-dimensions according to their educational status.

Table 7. Mann-Whitney U Test Results According to Education Level Variable

Variables	Group	N	Mean Ranking	Mean Total	U	p	r
Self-Belonging	Bachelor's degree	206	158,11	32570,50	10586,50	0,654	
	Master's degree	106	153,37	16257,50			
Professional Belonging	Bachelor's degree	206	167,82	34571,00	8586,0	0,002*	0,17
	Master's degree	106	134,50	14257,00			
Total	Bachelor's degree	206	163,67	33716,00	9441,00	0,050	
	Master's degree	106	142,57	15112,00			

*p<0,05 **p<0,01

As a result of the analysis presented in Table 7, we see that the means of professional belongings (U= 8586.0, p<0.01) differ significantly by the educational level variable. When looking at the rank averages, we see that the significant difference is at the undergraduate level. The effect size (r=0.17) of the sub-dimension of professional belongings was found to be "small".

Table 8 presents the test results on whether there are significant differences in PE and sport teachers' overall perceptions of their professional identity and its sub-dimensions by type of school.

Table 8. Mann-Whitney U Test Results According to School Type Variable

Variables	Group	N	Mean Ranking	Mean Total	U	p	r
Self-Belonging	Public School	215	142,97	30738,50	7518,50	0,000**	0,22
	Private School	97	186,49	18089,50			
Professional Belonging	Public School	215	145,69	31323,50	8103,50	0,001**	0,18
	Private School	97	180,46	17504,50			
Total	Public School	215	141,69	30463,50	7243,50	0,000**	0,24
	Private School	97	189,32	18364,50			

*p<0,05 **p<0,01

As a result of the analysis in Table 8, it was found that there was a significant difference in self- belonging (U= 7518,50, p<0,01), professional belonging (U= 8103,50, p<0,01) and total (U= 7243,50, p<0,01) scores according to school type. When the rank averages were considered to determine this difference, it was seen that the significant difference was in favor of private schools in all dimensions. This finding can be said that PE and sports teachers working in private schools have higher perceptions of professional identity than public school teachers. However, it was observed that the effect sizes of the variables were "small" for self-belonging (r=0.22), professional belonging (r=0.18) and total (r=0.24), respectively.

Table 9 presents the test results on whether there is a significant difference between PE and sport teachers' overall perception of professional identity and its sub-dimensions according to the professional development variable.

Table 9. Mann-Whitney U Test Results According to the Variable of Participation in Professional Development Activities

Variables	Group	N	Mean Ranking	Mean Total	U	p	r
Self-Belonging	No	121	148,91	18018,00	10637,0	0,228	
	Yes	191	161,31	30810,00			
Professional Belonging	No	121	141,01	17062,50	9681,5	0,015*	0,13
	Yes	191	166,31	31765,50			
Total	No	121	142,43	17234,50	9853,5	0,028*	0,12
	Yes	191	165,41	31593,50			

*p<0,05 **p<0,01

As a result of the Mann-Whitney U Test in Table 9, a significant difference was found between the mean scores of professional belongings (U=9681.50, p<0.05) and total (U=9853.50, p<0.05) according to the professional development variable. When the rank averages were taken into consideration to determine this difference, a significant difference was found in favor of the yes answer. In terms of effect sizes, professional belonging (r=0.13) and total (r=0.12) were found to be "small".

Table 10 presents the test results on whether there are significant differences in PE and sport teachers' overall perceptions of professional identity and sub-dimensions by age variable.

Table 10. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results According to Age Variable

Variables	Group	N	Mean Ranking	Sd	X^2	p	$\eta2$	Significant Difference
Self-Belonging	25-30 [a]	68	187,83	3	48,433	0,000**	0,14	a>c, a>d, b>c, b>d, c>d
	31-40 [b]	87	185,99					
	41-50 [c]	104	144,30					
	51-60 [d]	53	91,83					
Professional Belonging	25-30 [a]	68	185,19	3	26,930	0,000**	0,07	a>c, a>d b>c, b>d, c>d
	31-40 [b]	87	174,56					
	41-50 [c]	104	146,90					
	51-60 [d]	53	108,87					
Total	25-30 [a]	68	194,33	3	48,881	0,000**	0,14	a>c, a>d b>c, b>d, c>d
	31-40 [b]	87	181,87					
	41-50 [c]	104	143,84					
	51-60 [d]	53	91,17					

*p<0,05 **p<0,01

When Table 10 is examined, it is seen that the scores of PE and sports teachers' self-belonging (x2 (3) = 48,433, p<0,05), professional belonging (x2 (3) = 26,930, p<0,05) and total (x2 (3) = 48,881, p<0,05) differed significantly according to age variable. The effect sizes of the significant differences were found to be "large" for self-belonging and total (η2= 0.14) and "medium" for professional belonging (η2= 0.07). To determine between which groups there was a significant difference, Mann Whitney U test was conducted, and the rank averages were taken into

consideration. As a result of the test, it was seen that self-belonging, professional belonging and total scores were in favor of 25-30 years old and 31-40 years old.

Table 11 presents the test results on whether there are significant differences in PE and sport teachers' overall perceptions of professional identity and its sub-dimensions by the variable of years of service.

Table 11. Kruskal-Wallis Test Results According to Year of Service Variable

Variables	Group	N	Mean Ranking	Sd	X^2	p	η2	Significant Difference
Self-Belonging	1-10 Year [a]	120	172,52					
	11-20 Year [b]	161	158,23	2	23,923	0,000**	0,07	a>c, b>c
	21 Year+ [c]	31	85,52					
Professional Belonging	1-10 Year [a]	120	172,83					
	11-20 Year [b]	161	156,68	2	20,063	0,000**	0,05	a>c, b>c
	21 Year+ [c]	31	92,35					
Total	1-10 Year [a]	120	177,70					
	11-20 Year [b]	161	155,62	2	29,641	0,000**	0,08	a>c, b>c
	21 Year+ [c]	31	79,00					

*p<0,05 **p<0,01

When Table 11 is examined, it is seen that the scores of PE and sports teachers' self-belonging (x2 (2) = 23,923, p<0,05), professional belonging (x2 (2) = 20,063, p<0,05) and total (x2 (2) = 29,641, p<0,05) differed significantly according to the year of service variable. The effect sizes of the significant differences were found to be "medium" for self-belonging (η2= 0,07) and total (η2= 0,08), and "small" for professional belonging (η2= 0,05). To determine which groups were significantly different, a Mann Whitney U-test was performed, and rank-averaged values were taken into account. The results of the test showed that the significant difference in self-affiliation, professional affiliation and total scores was in favour of teachers with 1-10 years and 10-20 years of service.

DISCUSSION

The first aim of the study was to explore PE and sport teachers' perceptions of their professional identity. The results showed that PE and sport teachers' self-concept, professional belonging and overall professional perception were at a very high level. These findings indicate that PE and sport teachers see themselves as suitable for their profession, have a high sense of belonging to their profession, and are in professional development and effort. Studies in the literature indicate that PE and sport teachers' perceptions of professional identity are very high (Gupo & Patena, 2022; Çalı, 2021; Liu, 2011; Beijaard, 1995). At this point, it can be said that our findings overlap with the literature. This situation may be influenced by the fact that most of the PE and sport teachers have a sportive background, have been educated about the sportive branch, have acquired a sportive branch, have developed physical skills and capacities, and their perceptions towards their bodies. Because the fact that the profession practiced by PE and sports teachers is based on practice and that they have a sportive background may affect their perception of professional identity by making them feel close and suitable for the profession (Çalı, 2021; González-Calvo et al., 2021; Virta et al., 2019; Dowling, 2006).

The second aim of the study is to investigate whether PE and sport teachers' perceptions of their professional identity differ according to their demographic characteristics. In the study, it was found that PE and sport teachers' perceptions of self-belonging, professional belonging and total professional identity did not differ according to gender. This finding shows that PE and sport teachers have similar levels of professional identity perceptions and gender is not a factor in professional identity perception. When the studies in the literature are examined; it can be said that they partially overlap with the findings of the current study (Al Bayati, 2023; Aliakbari & Sadeghi, 2022; Çalı, 2021; Uçar, 2020; Fletcher, Mandigo, & Kosnik, 2013). However, some studies show that there are results indicating that the perception of professional identity is in favor of women. For example, Çalı (2021) reported that there was a difference in favor of women in the self-identity dimension of PE and sport teachers. However, there are also studies stating that the perceptions of professional identity of prospective PE and sports teachers are in favor of women (Kozak et al., 2020; Saylam et al., 2017). The reasons for this situation include the beliefs of female teachers that they love the teaching profession, that it is perceived as a female profession, that they prefer it for intrinsic reasons, that raising, caring and developing children is attributed to women, and that they can carry out their profession and family life together (Kozak et al., 2020; Karakaş et al., 2018; Balyer & Özcan, 2014; Oram, 1996).

Another finding of the study was that PE and sport teachers' perception of professional belonging and total professional identity did not differ according to marital status. However, there was a significant difference in favor of single teachers in the dimension of self-belonging. This finding shows that single teachers find themselves more

suitable for the profession, are more emotionally attached and make more effort than married teachers. In the study conducted by Çalı (2021) on PE and sports teachers, it was found that there was no significant difference in the perception of self-belonging, professional belonging and total professional identity. On the other hand, Girgin and Şahin (2019) found that married teachers have difficulties. At this point, it can be thought that teachers cannot focus enough on their profession due to the duties and responsibilities that being married imposes on family life.

In the study, a significant difference was observed in favor of bachelor's degree graduates in the professional belonging dimension of PE and sports teachers. This finding can be expressed as that teachers with bachelor's degree give more value and strive for professional development more than teachers with master's degree. Despite this finding, no difference was observed in the perception of self-belonging and total professional identity, and it is seen that teachers have similar levels of professional identity perceptions. In the study conducted by Çalı (2021), it was stated that there was a significant difference in favor of bachelor's and master's degree in the self-belonging sub-dimension of PE and sports teachers, a significant difference in favor of master's degree in the professional belonging sub-dimension, and a significant difference in favor of master's degree in total professional identity perception. On the other hand, there are also studies in the literature stating that teachers' perception of professional identity does not differ according to educational status (Özakyüz, 2023; Aliakbari & Sadeghi, 2022). It can be said that our findings partially overlap at this point. However, our expectation was that the perception of professional identity would be in favor of master's degree. However, in the study conducted by Aktan (2020), while it is stated that teachers think that postgraduate education provides their professional development, it is also stated that they think that postgraduate education is not sufficiently valued. In addition, Katılmış (2013) stated that teachers' participation in postgraduate education is low in our country. At this point, it is thought that postgraduate education is not the only option for professional development, there may be many training options such as seminars, in-service training, etc. and it may be due to the results that postgraduate education is not sufficiently valued.

Another finding of the study was that there was a significant difference in favor of PE and sports teachers working in private schools in the dimensions of self-belonging, professional belonging and total professional belonging. This finding shows that PE and sports teachers working in private schools find themselves more suitable for their profession, feel that they belong to the profession, make more effort, and have higher professional development compared to teachers working in public schools. Like our research findings, Dilek and Atlas (2022) reported that foreign language teachers working in private schools had a higher perception of professional identity than their colleagues working in public schools. These findings can be explained as follows: It is stated that teachers' perceptions of professional identity are formed in personal, social, and cultural environments and are constantly changing and transforming throughout their working life (Davey, 2013). In this context, teachers' perceptions of professional identity can be influenced by the educational system and the sociocultural and institutional structure in the school environment (Suarez & McGrath, 2022; Mockler, 2019; Sachs, 2005; Borich, 1999). For example, in a study conducted by Karagöl and Demirdağ (2023), it was found that increasing teachers' perceptions of school culture increased their perceptions of professional identity. In addition, there are studies indicating that the school culture perceptions of teachers working in private schools are higher than those working in public schools (Yavuz & Yılmaz, 2012; Fırat, 2007). In addition, the opportunities and supports provided by schools to teachers are also important. At this point, private schools stand out. The limited opportunities in public schools compared to private schools may limit the fulfillment of the duties of public-school teachers (Demirhan et al., 2014; Jenkinson & Benson, 2010; Mirzeoğlu et al., 1996). For example, it has been found that PE and sports teachers working in private schools have higher motivation (Uğraş, 2018), job satisfaction (Karaca & Balcı, 2011), job satisfaction (Çelik, 2010), professional personality competencies (Demir et al., 2015) and unlimited career levels (Türkmen, 2012) than public school teachers. In addition, PE and sports teachers working in private schools experience less burnout than public school teachers (Karakaya, 2019). It is thought that these findings may support our results.

In the study, it was observed that PE and sport teachers who participated in activities related to professional development had significantly higher levels of professional belonging and total professional identity. This finding shows that PE and sport teachers who participated in professional development activities have higher efforts towards professional development and value judgments about the profession. On the other hand, there was no significant difference in the self-belonging dimension, indicating that the teachers saw themselves as suitable for the profession at a similar level. In a study conducted by Eirín-Nemiña (2018), it was concluded that participation in learning communities for professional development strengthens PE and sport teachers' perceptions of professional identity. Similarly, Tsybulsky and Muchnik-Rozanov (2023) reported that participation in an online project-based pedagogical training program had a positive effect on pre-service teachers' professional identity. At this point, it can be said that our findings overlap. However, the reason why there is no differentiation in the dimension of self-belonging according to professional development may be related to the reasons for choosing teaching, since the dimension of self-belonging refers to finding oneself suitable for the profession, seeing oneself

as a teacher and expressing emotional attachment. Because, in a study conducted by Kozak et al. (2020), it was reported that there was a significant positive relationship between the ideal (dream of becoming a teacher) and consciousness (finding oneself suitable for being a teacher), which are the sub-dimensions of the reasons for choosing teaching, and preprofessional teacher identity levels of prospective PE and sports teachers. In addition, no significant difference was found in the self-belonging dimension in the variables of participation in professional development and educational status in our research findings. This finding shows that seeing oneself as a teacher and finding oneself suitable for the profession is not related to professional development and educational status. This shows that personal factors may be effective in choosing teaching. It is thought that the results can explain our findings regarding the lack of a significant difference in the dimension of self-belonging.

In the study, it was observed that PE and sport teachers with 1-10 years of service and 11-20 years of service had significantly higher perceptions of self-belonging, professional belonging and total professional identity than PE and sport teachers with 20 years of service or more. This result shows that PE and sports teachers with fewer years of service feel closer to their profession, see themselves as suitable for their profession, value their profession and show high effort to perform their profession. In addition, when the mean scores obtained from the scale are analyzed, it is seen that the mean scores of professional identity perception decrease as the years of service increase. However, similar findings are also observed in teachers' ages. The perception of professional identity of PE and sport teachers aged 25-30 and 31-40 is higher than that of older PE and sport teachers. These findings may be since PE and sport teachers try to adapt to the profession in the first years of their profession, want to prioritize their development and are idealistic. However, as the age and years of service increase, it is seen that teachers begin to move away from their profession. It is thought that as time progresses, PE and sports teachers' interest in teaching may decrease and burnout level may increase. When the literature is examined; like the findings of our study, there are studies showing that the perception of professional identity of teachers in different branches is in favor of teachers with less years of service (Aliakbari & Sadeghi, 2022; Dilek & Atlas, 2022; Keskin & Zaimoğlu, 2021; İlgör, 2019; Ying, 2018; Yirmibeş, 2017). This shows that age and years of service can be effective on the perception of professional identity (Sachs, 2005; Coldron & Smith, 1999). On the other hand, there are limited studies indicating that the perception of professional identity of teachers in different branches does not differ according to their years of service (Çalı, 2021; Uçar-Çelebi, 2018). At this point, it can be said that our findings overlap with the literature. It is suggested that future studies should examine the reasons why the perceptions of professional identity of teachers with older age and more years of service are lower than those of younger teachers and teachers with fewer years of service.

RESULT

As a result, it was seen that PE and sport teachers' perceptions of professional identity were at a very high level. However, it was determined that the perceptions of professional identity of PE and sports teachers who were younger, had less years of service, worked in private schools and participated in professional development activities had higher perceptions of professional identity. However, it was observed that the perception of professional identity did not differ according to gender.

STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

This study has strengths and limitations. The first strength of the study is the use of the professional identity perception scale specific to PE and sports teachers developed by Çalı (2021). The second strength is that it is among the limited number of studies in the literature that examine the professional identity perceptions of PE and sport teachers. In this respect, it is thought that the research will expand the literature. Apart from these strengths, the study has some limitations. The first limitation of the research is that causality cannot be ensured with the data obtained since the research was designed in the survey model and the data were collected in a certain time. The second limitation is that the generalizability of the research is limited since the participants in the study were determined from a single province by using convenience sampling.

SUGGESTIONS

✓ This research was conducted with PE and sports teachers in private and public schools in Isparta province. To increase the generalizability of the survey results, it is recommended that future surveys should be conducted in different provinces and regions and that participants should be identified using a probability sampling method.

✓ In this study, data were obtained in a certain period by using a survey model. It is recommended that future studies use longitudinal methods over a longer period of time to better understand the development of professional identity.

✓ The study was designed using a quantitative research method. To obtain deeper information about PE and sports teachers' perceptions of professional identity, it is recommended to design studies in qualitative research method or mixed research method.

✓ In our research findings, it was determined that the perceptions of professional identity of PE and sports teachers with more years of service and older age were lower than the group with less years of service and younger age. It is recommended that future research should investigate the possible reasons for this situation and interventions should be made.

✓ In our research findings, it was determined that the perceptions of professional identity of PE and sports teachers working in public schools were lower than those working in private schools. In future studies, it is recommended to investigate the possible reasons for this situation and to make interventions on teachers working in public schools.

✓ It was observed that the perception of professional identity of PE and sport teachers was higher in PE and sport teachers who participated in professional development activities. Therefore, it is recommended that educational stakeholders who are responsible for the development of teachers should encourage teachers for professional development activities.

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