

# Attitudes of Prospective EFL Teachers toward Teaching Profession

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Keywords:</b> attitude, EFL learner, EFL teacher, prospective teacher, teaching profession</p> <p><b>DOI:</b> <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v6i2.1120">http://dx.doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v6i2.1120</a></p>	<p><i>This study aimed to investigate Saudi Pre-service EFL teachers' attitudes toward the teaching profession. Viewpoints of Forty-two student teachers enrolled in the "Practicum" course offered by Najran University were investigated. Results of gathered data analysis showed that the attitudes of participating subjects were positive due to many factors. Among these factors is their belief that the EFL teaching profession is one of the most popular professions in Saudi Arabia. They seemed sure that EFL teaching as a noble, prestigious, and interesting profession would make them proud of themselves as teachers of English. In addition, their hope to be able to try applying their gained pedagogical and academic knowledge from teacher training courses at university significantly affected their positive attitudes. Therefore, the majority of them believed that with some kind of professional commitment, they would be successful EFL teachers.</i></p>
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## 1. Introduction

It is a fact that the nation's fortune and capital are in the hands of its brilliant and competent teachers who can provide children and youth with the important skills to compete in this modern workplace and labor market. Well-qualified and committed teachers usually make the difference between success and failure students. Therefore, well-equipping pre-service teachers with positive attitudes toward the teaching profession are important before allowing them to join it. Apart from constant updating and refining of knowledge and skill of prospective teachers, teacher preparation programs should pay attention to developing positive attitudes within them toward their future profession (Htang, 2017). Training materials have to concentrate on trainees' feelings, behaviors, and commitment to this profession that will result in their attitudes towards the teaching profession and so if these

attitudes are made positive, their teaching performance will unavoidably be better and their efforts will be fruitful (Chakraborty & Mondal, 2014).

The importance of investigating teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession is stemmed from the fact that they are the cornerstone of the educational system and their traits in addition to their behavioral patterns have a significant role in their decision to join the teaching profession (Shaheen, Kashif, Daud, & Tariq, 2016). Furthermore, understanding the kind of their attitudes is the key step to improving education quality because they have a great influence on their students' learning and meanwhile influence their job satisfaction (Senthilkumaran & Muthaiah, 2017).

On the other hand, teachers with positive attitudes toward teaching can change their learners' attitudes towards learning into positive ones. Teachers with negative attitudes always frustrate students and negatively affect their achievement and innovation. In other words, teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession as a whole impose positive or negative consequences on the overall education process (Metin, Acisli, & Kolomuc, 2012).

Teaching is not like any other profession. It is a complex activity carried forward to select learning for students and cause it by them. It is, on one hand, a professional pursuit and on the other hand, it is a process for facilitating learning. As a profession, teaching is devoted to planning, conducting, and improving the educational processes in schools and colleges (Mehmood, Akhter, & Ch, 2013). Apart from controlling the processes of learning and teaching by planning for and carrying out the lessons, evaluating students, maintaining classroom discipline, and ensuring students' participation in classroom activities, teachers should be friendly, flexible, tolerant, and of humorous personalities that positively affects the whole classroom atmosphere (Hotaman, 2010).

An attitude is usually reflected by the individual's way of conduct, which in turn indicates his kind of personality (Andronache, Bocoú, Bocoú, & Macri, 2014). That is, the teacher's acceptable kind of Behaviour strongly reflects his interest in his job and proves that his attitude toward it is positive. The teacher's aggressive behavior is sometimes caused by his disinterest in the job he performs and then causes his negative attitude toward the whole profession and might be toward colleagues and students.

With regard to prospective EFL teachers anywhere, it can be argued that if have a positive attitude towards their teaching profession, they will surely generate their students' positive attitude towards them as teachers, towards the foreign language they are learning, and towards the completely educational process. Student-teacher communication in English will be more efficient, and they will be more successful in diversifying and personalizing varied learning contexts. Given the importance attached to positive attitude worldwide, the present study aims to examine the level of attitude of Saudi prospective EFL teachers towards the teaching profession, which is still an under-researched area in Saudi Arabia.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1. Importance of Studying Prospective Teachers' Attitudes**

Educational administrators worldwide have to promote the teaching profession and increase its respect and appreciation among community members. One way of doing so is by recruiting well-qualified and competent teachers for this profession. Along with testing their knowledge in the subject area, they should test their attitudes towards teaching as a

profession. Teachers with positive attitudes always look at this profession as respectable, noble, and honorable no matter how their financial gains are. Teachers of positive attitudes do not often think much of wages. The moral gains and the sense of building nations and producing community intellectuals are of greater importance.

Reality has proved that teachers with negative attitudes do not succeed in teaching and reshaping the intellects of their learners, which is the most important component in the whole process of education. They consider themselves job seekers but not professionals. Job seekers care to deal with teaching as a means to earn living only. They take the teaching profession as a dump field where they just walk in and accept any salaries until they find a profitable job (Adaeze, 2011).

Besides, teachers' attitudes toward the teaching profession not only influence their teaching practices and the strategies by which they cope with the challenges in their daily professional life but also influence their well-being (Agcam & Babanoglu, 2016). To put it in a different way, recruiting teachers with negative attitudes toward the teaching profession is dangerous because it is likely that their teaching practices will not promote a collegial and collaborative work environment. Most of them, if not all, will be irresponsible and so they will not train students to hold their responsibilities for their learning.

An attitude is comprised of mental, emotional, and behavioral reactions developed within the individual according to his experience, knowledge, feeling, and motives. The attitude of any prospective teacher is normally shaped by many factors like Parents; future in the teaching profession; salaries; profession-esteem degree; structure and content of training programs; changes in social, and cultural, and economic circles (Atabey, 2021). Therefore, in charge of teacher-recruiting people have to check the attitude of teachers in light of the impact of these factors on them before allowing them to join the profession. Furthermore, low salaries and the unappreciated teaching profession, for instance, are repellent factors that cause the negative attitude of most teachers who leave the teaching profession after a short time of joining. Thus, it is important for prospective teachers, before recruiting, to be aware of and satisfied with the merits and demerits of the profession they are going to join before and during their preparation process.

Furthermore, teachers' efficacy in teaching is always positively associated with their attitudes, sentiments, concerns about the teaching profession, collaboration, and managing behavior (Nagase, Tsunoda & Fujita, 2020). Stakeholders of pre-service teacher training programs should keep informing teacher trainees about what is so-called emotional distress that is a kind of mental suffering where a person finds himself surrounded by various stressors, and when he discovers that the teaching profession is very socially demanding.

Moreover, understanding the prospective teacher's reasons for the choice of the teaching profession sheds light on his attitude towards the teaching profession. Defining all or some of these reasons can help developing teacher preparation programs implemented at the colleges of education. Such programs are assumed to provide students teachers with knowledge and experience; enable them to be independent individuals, creative, take responsibility for career choices, and most important have positive attitudes towards the profession they have chosen (Sener, 2015).

One more important fact that ascertains the need to study the teachers' attitudes is the fact that teachers play a pivotal role in teaching and learning processes. Teachers who have a negative attitude toward their profession are unable to give detailed explanations about concepts related to the subject matter they are teaching. They also frustrate students and cause their loss of interest in learning. In comparison, teachers who have positive attitudes usually practice good mastery over their subject matter, command the respect of their students and gain their attention as long as they have a sense of intimate belonging to the teaching profession (Omolara & Adebukola, 2015). In addition, there is a relationship between Attitudes toward teaching and professionalism in teaching. The relevance of teacher professionalism stems from the fact that the teaching profession is an important factor affecting the quality of education and community. Therefore, the discovery of the relationship between teachers' occupational professionalism and their attitudes towards the profession is thought to be helpful for policymakers to develop regulations for teachers' occupational professionalism (Korkmaz & Unsal, 2020).

## **2.2. Factors Affecting Attitudes of Prospective Teachers toward Teaching Profession**

The attitude of teachers toward the teaching profession has always been at the center of a hot debate because of its effect not only on the development of students' intellect but also on the prosperity and progress of nations. Researchers are interested in studying the attitude of pre or in-service teachers toward the teaching profession because of the important role that attitude plays in the teacher's teaching performance in and outside the classroom. None ignores that frustrated or not highly motivated teachers would practice teaching carelessly without much attention just for the sake of salary, and so much of their performance will be incomplete and lacks innovation.

While studying the teacher's attitude toward the teaching profession, researchers pointed out many factors that might affect the development of his positive or negative attitude. For instance, some of these studies indicated that the teacher's marital status and type of institution influence his attitude toward the teaching profession (Rani, 2016). Another study showed that the teacher's gender is effective in developing positive attitudes toward teaching. Female teachers usually have more positive attitudes than male ones (Sener, 2015). Moreover, prospective teachers who intended to work in private sector schools had more positive attitudes than peers who are expected to work in public sector schools (Kinyota & Kavenuke, 2019).

There is also a significant positive correlation between extraversion, conscientiousness, openness, and personality, whether agreeableness or neuroticism, and his self-efficacy belief (Üstüner, 2017). In addition, the teacher-training program, qualification, gender, associated institution whether public or private, place of work, and experience were noticed as important factors affecting the teacher's attitude toward the teaching profession (Zaidi, 2015). Experience is another factor that plays a significant role in the teacher's attitude toward teaching. Attitudes of experienced teachers, i.e. in-service teachers were better than the attitudes of inexperienced teachers, i.e. pre-service ones (Singh & Biswal, 2018). Furthermore, conscientious personality and work experience can positively predict primary the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession (Odo, Onah, Ujoatuonu, Okafor, Chukwu, Juliet, Nwifo, Karat & Mefoh, 2021).

On the other part, many studies concluded that many factors do not make any significant difference in the teacher's attitude toward the teaching profession. For example, it was indicated that the teacher's gender and residential background have no significant role in his attitudes positive-negative (Rani, 2016). School graduation, gender, and academic achievement, i.e GPA, were also of no great impact on the teacher's attitudes toward the teaching profession (Sener, 2015; Kinyota & Kavenuke, 2019). A teacher's self-concept does not enhance his attitudes toward his profession, too (Sivakumar, 2018; Sahu & Kaushik, 2020) showed that such relation does not exist.

In short, teaching is a rewarding profession and the teacher's biggest reward is his feeling that he is participating in changing the lives of students for the better. It is not the profession where everyone succeeds. Only teachers with positive attitudes toward the teaching profession can succeed because their attitudes make them patient, prepared, flexible, open-minded, and strong.

### **2.3. Purpose of the Study and Questions**

The main purpose of the present study is to investigate the attitudes of Saudi prospective EFL teachers towards the teaching profession. It mainly aims to answer these two questions:

1. What is the level of Saudi prospective EFL teachers' attitude toward the teaching profession?
2. Are there any significant differences in the attitude of Saudi prospective EFL teachers' toward the teaching profession due to their accumulative grades (GPA) at university?

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1. Research Design**

The present study utilized a quantitative-descriptive design. Perez & Alieto (2018) argue that an investigation is described as descriptive if it intends to describe a phenomenon. Thus, the present study is regarded as descriptive because it aims to characterize the respondents' attitudes towards the English language teaching profession. Moreover, a descriptive study involves the gathering, computing, and tabulating of data relevant to prevailing conditions or trends. In addition, the present study is deemed non-experimental because no utilization of treatment nor intervention is involved.

### **3.2. Participants**

The study group consisted of purposefully selected 42 male student teachers. They were all enrolled in a Practicum course for English language teaching offered to final-year students at the department of English language at Najran University. Their accumulative grades at university (GPA) were ranging from excellent (n=10), very good (n=08), good (n=12), and fair (n=12) as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** The demographic information of the participants

	<b>Accumulative Grade (GPA)</b>	<b>N.</b>	<b>Proportion</b>
<b>1</b>	Excellent	10	24%
<b>2</b>	Very good	08	20%
<b>3</b>	Good	12	28%
<b>4</b>	Fair	12	28%
<b>Total Number</b>		<b>42</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **3.3. Instrumentation**

The instrument used for data collection in the present study was a questionnaire using an Attitude Scale toward the teaching profession developed, validated, verified, and first used by Htang (2017). Nevertheless, some slight modifications were to be made to suit the Saudi community. It comprised of two sections; section A and B. Section aimed to obtain demographic information of prospective EFL teachers mainly their ratings at university. Section B included 30 items distributed to five aspects namely career choice, attitudinal development, professional commitment, professional pride and professional expectation to identify the attitudes of all participants towards the teaching profession. Six items were in each subscale.

Each item in each subscale was scored 1-5 on a five-point-Likert scale where (5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= undecided, 2= disagree, and 1= strongly disagree). Therefore mean scores that were between (1.00-1.79), (1.80-2.59), (2.60-3.39), (3.40-4.19), and (4.20-5.00) showed strongly disagree, disagree, unable to decide, agree, and strongly agree responses respectively.

### **3.4. Data Collection and Analysis**

At the end of the last session of the course, the online questionnaire link was sent to participants via the WhatsApp group. Participants were asked to respond immediately during the session and choose the response that represents their conviction with each item. When reaching the end of the questionnaire, they were to click the submit link and fortunately all of them responded to the questionnaire and submitted their answers with a 100% return rate.

After complete submission, the collected data were imported into SPSS Statistical software. Mean scores and standard deviations for each item, each subscale, and the overall questionnaire were calculated. In order to find out whether there were significant differences in the attitudes of prospective EFL teachers towards the teaching profession due to their accumulative grades, (Excellent, very good, good, and fair), ANOVA was used.

## **4. Findings**

### **4.1. Findings on the First Question**

To answer the first question in accordance with participants' overall level of attitude toward the teaching profession, the mean score of the whole questionnaire was extracted. It was (M=3.87) and the standard deviation was (SD=0.342) reflecting a high level of participant's attitude toward the teaching profession.

To gain a clear picture of the sources or causes of participants' attitudes high level, the mean score and standard deviation of each item in each subscale were calculated.

#### **4.1.1. Findings on Participants' Career Choice**

In order to identify the most effective reasons of the prospective EFL teachers for the choice of teaching, as a future profession, mean scores and standard deviations of all items, in the first subscale, were calculated. Results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Mean scores and standard deviations of participants' responses to career choice reasons

N	Item	M	SD	Agreement
1.	I chose teaching profession because teaching children makes me feel pleased.	4.14	0.84	Agree
2.	I chose teaching profession because it was my childhood dream.	3.86	1.14	Agree
3.	I chose teaching profession because it is popular among professions.	3.62	1.06	Agree
4.	I chose teaching profession because it is easily available.	3.24	0.98	Neutral
5.	I chose teaching profession because my marks in General Secondary Certificate Examination were low.	2.10	1.08	Disagree
6.	I chose teaching profession because of the compulsion and persuasion of friends and relatives.	1.76	0.76	Strongly disagree
<b>Mean score of all mean score</b>		<b>3.12</b>	<b>0.36</b>	

Results in Table 2 reveal a moderate agreement (M=3.12) by participant prospective EFL teachers on the reasons that caused them to choose teaching as their future profession. However, the pleasure that they expect to feel when teaching children was the most effective cause for their choice (M=4.14). Their desire to fulfill their childhood dreams (M=3.86) was also significant in their decision to be teachers after graduation. The popularity of teaching among other professions (M=3.62) and its availability for them after university (M=3.24) played a significant role in their choice, too. Nevertheless, their low marks in the General Secondary Certificate Examination (M=2.10) and the compulsion of parents and the persuasion of friends to choose the teaching profession (M=1.76) were not highly effective in their choice and so had very little effect on their attitude toward the teaching profession.

#### 4.1.2. Findings on Participants' Attitudinal Development

In order to identify the prospective EFL teachers' most effective reasons that affected and developed their strong attitude toward the teaching profession, mean scores and standard deviations of all items in the second subscale were calculated. Results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Mean scores and standard deviations of participants' responses to attitudinal development factors

N	Item	M	SD	Rank
7.	I like and have an interest in the teacher training courses offered at universities.	4.24	0.82	1
8.	I believe in my ability to apply my pedagogical and academic knowledge I gained from teacher training courses at university.	4.14	0.78	2
9.	I became fond of the teaching profession after microteaching or practicum that was offered by the university.	4.05	0.96	3
10.	I chose the teaching profession because becoming a schoolteacher makes me happy.	4.05	0.79	4
11.	I became fond of teaching because of the guidance and instruction of the teacher educators and university academic supervisor.	4.00	1.08	5
12.	I chose the teaching profession because I will be able to apply the professional teaching knowledge and skill I gained through the teacher training courses I had.	3.66	0.84	6
<b>Mean score of all mean score</b>		<b>4.02</b>	<b>0.68</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 3 shows participants' strong agreement (M=4.02) on the factors that affected and consequently developed their positive attitude toward the teaching profession. Their interest in teacher training courses at university (M=4.24) was the most significant factor that developed their attitude toward the teaching profession. Their abilities to apply their pedagogical and academic knowledge gained at university in teaching contexts (M=4.14), the microteaching classes they observed at university (M=4.05), and the happiness they would get when others call them teachers (M=4.05) were also significant in developing their attitudes. Furthermore, the guidance and instruction they obtained from the cooperating teachers or teacher educators and university academic supervisors (M=4.00) were effective in creating this high attitude. However, they were nearly doubtful about their ability to apply their knowledge and skills in real situations (M=3.66) and so it was the least effective cause in comparison with other factors included in the subscale.

#### 4.1.3. Findings on Participants' Professional Commitment

In order to identify the prospective EFL teachers' most effective reasons for their professional commitment level when becoming teachers, mean scores and standard deviations of all items in the third subscale were calculated. Table 4 presents the results.

**Table 4:** Mean scores and standard deviations of participants' responses to professional commitment reasons

N	Item	M	SD	Agreement
13.	When I become a teacher, I will try to be an honest and outstanding teacher.	4.66	0.48	S. agree
14.	When I become a teacher, I will try to improve my students' academic achievement and enhance their lives.	4.57	0.50	S. agree
15.	When I become a teacher, I will keep working even when I meet difficult conditions.	4.14	0.78	Agree
16.	When I become a teacher, I will try to improve the education of underdeveloped areas especially bordered and remote areas.	4.05	0.85	Agree
17.	When I become a teacher, I would like to work in any place not only in my native place or the place I reside in.	4.00	1.13	Agree
18.	When I become a teacher, I will not look for a highly earning job even if teaching profession does not financially satisfy me.	3.67	1.05	Agree
<b>Mean score of all mean score</b>		<b>4.18</b>	<b>0.56</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Table 3 shows prospective EFL teachers' strong agreement (M=4.18) regarding why to be committed to their profession. Responses show that they strongly agree on the fact that they will be honest and outstanding teachers (M=4.66), and they will do their best to improve their students' academic achievement and lives (M=4.57). Whereas, they agreed on keeping working as teachers even when they meet difficult conditions (M=4.14) and keep trying to improve the education of underdeveloped areas especially bordered and remote areas (M=4.05). Thus, they do not mind working in any place not only in their native places or the place where they reside (M=4.00). However, responses proved that they will not stop looking for a high-earning job even if the teaching profession does not financially satisfy them (M=3.67).



#### 4.1.4. Findings on Participants' Professional Pride

Responses of prospective EFL teachers indicated that their sense of professional pride highly contributes to generating their positive attitudes towards the teaching profession. Mean scores and standard deviations of their responses to all items in the fourth subscale were extracted. Results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5:** Mean score and standard deviations of participants' responses to professional pride sources

N	Item	M	SD	Agreement
19.	I believe that teaching is a noble profession.	4.48	0.59	S. agree
20.	If I become a teacher, I will feel pride to identify myself as a teacher among friends and colleagues.	4.43	0.67	S. agree
21.	I believe that teaching is a prestigious profession.	4.33	0.65	S. agree
22.	If I become a teacher, I think that I will never regret having chosen the teaching profession.	4.29	0.71	S. agree
23.	I believe that teaching is not a boring profession.	4.29	0.99	S. agree
24.	If it is up to me, I would recommend teaching profession for everyone.	2.19	1.11	Disagree
<b>Mean score of all mean score</b>		<b>4.00</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Results in Table 3 reveal participants' high level of agreement ( $M=4.00$ ) on the factors that make them proud of their teaching profession. Factors that were strongly agreed on involve looking at themselves as members of a noble profession ( $M=4.48$ ), feeling proud when introducing themselves as teachers to others ( $M=4.43$ ), and feeling that they are members of a prestigious profession ( $4.43$ ). Moreover, their strong beliefs that teaching is not a boring profession ( $M=4.29$ ) and their belief that being a teacher will never make them regret for their choice ( $M=4.29$ ) also contributed significantly to their sense of pride as teachers. However, the majority of them did not agree with the fact that they will recommend the teaching profession to anyone ( $M=2.19$ ).

#### 4.1.5. Results on Participants' Professional Expectations

Prospective EFL teachers' professional expectations play a significant role in fostering their positive attitudes toward the teaching profession. To identify participants' expectations of their enrollment in the teaching profession, mean scores and standard deviations of their responses to all items in the fifth subscale were extracted. Results are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6:** Mean score and standard deviation of all participants' responses to what expectations they like to achieve

N	Item	M	SD	Agreement
25.	I believe that the teaching profession will develop my character and personality.	4.14	0.65	Agree
26.	If I become a teacher, I will have the opportunity to contribute to the welfare of society.	4.14	0.78	Agree
27.	I believe that the teaching profession will bring me a venerable position in society.	4.10	0.62	Agree
28.	I believe that I will be satisfied if I become a teacher.	4.10	0.88	Agree
29.	I believe that working as a teacher can guarantee my future life.	4.05	0.79	Agree
30.	The earning rates of the teaching profession will keep me financially satisfied.	3.57	0.91	Agree
<b>Mean score of all mean score</b>		<b>4.02</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Results in Table 6 indicate participants' strong agreement in accordance with their professional expectations of being EFL teachers. Their ability to develop their characters and personalities is the first thing they highly expect to achieve via joining the teaching profession (4.14). The ability allowed to them to contribute to the welfare of their societies was their second expectation (M=4.14). Achieving venerable positions in their communities and satisfaction in their lives were their third and fourth impressive expectations (M=4.10). Their expectations to guarantee their future lives (M=4.05) and being financially satisfied (M=3.57) were the least expectations of joining the teaching profession. That is, earning rates of the teaching profession might not ensure their future lives and be enough for their life expenses.

A comparison between the mean scores of the questionnaire's five subscales was made in order to understand the effectiveness of each one on prospective EFL teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession. Results are presented in table 7.

**Table 7:** Mean scores and standard deviations of all subscales

N	Subscales of the Attitude toward Teaching Profession Scale	M	SD	Agreement
1.	Professional Commitment	4.18	0.562	Agree
2.	Attitudinal Development	4.02	0.677	Agree
3.	Professional Expectation	4.02	0.509	Agree
4.	Professional Pride	4.00	0.353	Agree
5.	Career choice	3.12	0.364	Neutral
<b>Mean score of all mean score</b>		<b>3.87</b>	<b>0.342</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Mean scores of all subscales in Table 7 show that prospective EFL teachers' attitude was highly affected by the beliefs about their ability to be professionally committed (M=4.18). Factors of attitudinal development (M=4.02) and professional expectation (M=4.02) were in the second and third ranks regarding their effect on EFL teachers' positive attitudes towards teaching. Sources of their professional pride were in the fourth rank (M=4.00) while reasons for the choice of teaching profession were the least effective in prospective EFL teachers' attitudes.

#### 4.2. Results on the Second Question

In order to answer the second question regarding the existence of significant differences between Saudi prospective EFL teachers due to their accumulative grades at university (GPA) i.e. Excellent; very good; good and fair, ANOVA was used. Table 8 shows the results.

Table 8: Results of ANOVA regarding the differences between participants' levels of attitudes toward the teaching profession

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.300	3	0.100	0.842	0.480
Within Groups	4.511	38	0.119		
Total	4.811	41			

Data analysis in Table 8 shows that there are no statistically significant differences between the levels of the attitude of Saudi prospective EFL teachers due to their accumulative grades at university.

## **5. Discussion**

This study aimed to ascertain the level of attitude of Saudi prospective EFL teachers toward the teaching profession. Therefore, (42) EFL student teachers were asked to fill in a 30 - item questionnaire on five main aspects. Analysis of their responses showed that their attitude toward the teaching profession was positive. The mean score of their responses' to the whole questionnaire was (M=3.87). This result largely corroborates the result of Somblingo & Alieto (2020) that proves the respondents' tendency to be English language teachers because of their hope to use English in various social dimensions. This positive attitude can be attributed to two main facts as stated by Wessels, Trainin, Reeves, Catalano, & Deng (2017). First, the fact that English is a recognized language in their communities generates within them a feeling that teaching English will make the recognized, too. In addition, their enthusiasm for teaching is still untested. In other words, they have not yet experienced the challenges and barriers English Language teachers often meet in their real classrooms.

Meanwhile, their enthusiasm toward the teaching profession was the main factor in their positive attitude. This enthusiasm can be attributed to their beliefs that teaching is a noble, prestigious, and interesting profession. Consequently, they will do their best, to be honest, and outstanding teachers. Besides, they will feel pride when introducing themselves to others as teachers. Being commitment and honest, they think that they can improve the achievement of their EFL learners and enhance their lives.

Data also showed their disagreement with ideas like, their low marks in the General Secondary Certificate Examination, besides the compulsion and persuasion of their families and relatives as major reasons for their teaching profession choice. This finding corroborates the finding of Al Balushi (2018) with regard to the causes of teachers' positive attitudes. First, being a teacher might be one's childhood dream and so joining the profession of teaching when becoming matures might fulfill such a dream. Second, being a teacher is not a complicated task. Success in a standardized and specialized test in education is the only requirement for being a teacher. This result is also, in agreement with what Agcam & Babanoglu (2016) have come up with in accordance with the real experience in teaching. Prospective EFL teachers have not yet experienced teaching in realistic contexts. They also have not faced external circumstances such as stress, parental interference in education, indifference to students' education, and student misbehaviors. They have not practiced teaching with heavy workloads where they do not find time to enjoy themselves, too.

Moreover, findings have shown that prospective EFL teachers' positive attitude is mostly caused by their beliefs that the EFL teaching profession contributes to humankind's creation, and so it is one of the noblest professions. Hence, they think that joining such a professional will make them love, be proud of, be satisfied with and willingly perform this noble profession (Chakraborty & Mondal, 2014). The power they think they will have as teachers to influence all other variables about education contributes to their high levels of attitudes (Güneyli & Aslan, 2009). Nevertheless, Awan (2015) expresses some fears with regard to the continuity of this positive attitude claiming that it declines as soon as prospective EFL teachers find themselves in real classroom settings where a gap between theoretical and practical kinds of knowledge is experienced. Real classrooms will show the actual difference between the role they are expected to play and the reality of the actual work setting. Therefore, continual

training during the in-service stage is important to keep these attitudes as positive as possible.

Furthermore, the study has revealed no significant differences between prospective EFL teachers due to their accumulative grades at university. This result can be seen in agreement with the findings of Haddad (2019), which showed that there were no statistically significant differences in English language teachers' attitudes toward teaching English due to: education, gender, years of experience, and marital status. The result can be explained in light of a set of facts. First, all participants were Saudis and so they were all of similar background culture. Their visions of the teaching profession are approximately the same. Second, they are all graduates of mostly similar schools and subjected to the same educational regime, regulations, and curriculum. Third, their viewpoints about teaching were highly affected by their observations of their schoolteachers' ways of teaching and class management. Moreover, EFL teaching and teachers are highly admired and appreciated by members of Saudi communities. Besides, wages of Saudi teachers and faculty members are nearly equal with some slight differences. Therefore, being an EFL teacher in Saudi Arabia is favorable and so Saudi EFL teachers' attitudes are positive in comparison with teachers in other countries.

In brief, participant prospective EFL teachers' high and positive attitude toward the teaching profession can be explained in light of these two facts, as stated by Somblingo & Alieto (2020). First, they prefer to be English language teachers because they think that they can help their future learners to learn English fluently. Second, they could realize the importance of English, as a language, all over the world and so being teachers of this language will bring them fame and a sense of pride that they are teachers of a global language. Besides, the information and knowledge they gained from enrollment in the professional development program offered by the university in the form of practicum courses played as an opportunity for self-improvement. Their positive attitudes were enhanced. This result can be in agreement with the result of Alzahrani & Nor (2021) regarding the effect of professional development programs

## **6. Conclusion**

There is no doubt that the education system and mainly teachers, play significant roles in community development and prosperity. Qualified individuals are the fruits of a good education system and well-qualified teachers. An EFL teacher to perform his teaching job successfully has to love and willingly perform it. In the present study, attitudes of Saudi prospective EFL teachers were assessed. Analysis of gathered data revealed that a majority of those prospective EFL teachers have adopted a positive attitude towards their future profession. Differences in their accumulated averages at university were insignificant. A set of causes for such a high and positive attitude were deduced. However, there is a kind of fear that this attitude changes when they find themselves in real contexts at school. Therefore, more studies should be carried out to ascertain these attitudes towards the teaching profession. More training programs should be offered for pre-service teachers for the sake of making education environments clearer. Healthy and useful communication processes should be established between teacher trainees and their instructors to bridge the gap between provided theoretical and practical kinds of knowledge. Viewpoints and beliefs of prospective EFL teachers are not enough to allow them to be teachers. In- service EFL

teachers should meet prospective teachers and inform them about the problems they need to know regarding the classroom environment. Moreover, education environments in schools where EFL prospective teachers go for practice within the scope of School Experience (Practicum) should be arranged in a way that will be suitable for prospective teachers to love the profession and form positive and realistic attitudes towards it.

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