

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Prospective teachers' engagement in educational research

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Research in education is one of the most striking issues in the field. Prospective teachers need to be motivated to do research during their education. Thus, when they become teachers, they can design research projects to search for some alternative ways for getting better results in their professional life. Therefore, in this study, it is aimed at investigating the attitudes of the prospective teachers attending the ELT Department at a Turkish University toward research in education and orienting them to do research during undergraduate education in order to increase their motivation and self-confidence. In the study, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. Survey method was used to evaluate quantitative data in the study through two questionnaires. One was used to investigate their attitudes toward research. The other was administered after they completed 14-week course in which they had engaged in some research tasks. The questionnaires were analyzed with statistical program. The prospective teachers' attitudes were observed in the classroom and the observed attitudes were reported. Observation reports were used as qualitative data.

**Key words:** Research engagement, educational research, motivation, self-confidence.

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## INTRODUCTION

Research in education is a broad term referring to different activities. In *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* by Richards and Schmidt (2002), the term "research" is defined as the study of an event, problem or phenomenon using systematic methods in order to understand it better and to develop principles and theories about it. In addition to this simple definition of the term, more comprehensive definitions of the term are also offered: research is a systematic process of collecting and analyzing data that will investigate a research problem or question, or help researchers obtain a more complete understanding of a situation; the goal of research is, thus, to describe, explain, or predict present and future phenomena (Tavakoli, 2012); in the most profound sense research means trying to find answers to questions, an activity

everyone does all the time to learn more about the world around them (Dörnyei, 2007). Within the research process, the researcher will be at the heart of changes and improvements in the field while understanding and developing principles and theories. To understand the full implications of the research, the researcher will also need to appreciate the decisions that the researcher needs to make, possible alternatives to those decisions, and the consequences of the results and conclusions by judging the quality of the research and the possibility of generalizing it to the setting (Best and Kahn, 2006). In this respect, the researcher is responsible for taking the charge of a long process and daunting mission.

Research is claimed to be time-consuming and challenging and, if the results are not consistent with what was hoped, it can also be frustrating (Mackey and

Gass, 2012; Nunan and Bailey, 2009). However frustrating the process is, teachers and teacher educators can be renewed by the results of the research they have conducted. In this sense, research may highlight some confusing issues under discussion, guide to find solutions to the possible problems in education process, and leads to educational progress. Principally research in classroom environment examines the interaction of the teacher with students (Brown and Rogers, 2002; Barkhuizen, 2009). Such an evaluation of interaction may provide opportunities to teachers to verify the teaching and learning atmosphere in certain intervals. Borg (2010) claims research is often promoted as a powerful form of professional development for teachers. The argument behind these views is that educational research contributes to the improvement of educational progress and development. If so, research may lead to some changes in educational practices in positive manner and motivates teachers.

Research in education can be implemented in different ways. There are many ways of conducting research both inside and outside the classroom: searching on the internet, reading published studies, evaluating books in the field, designing new teaching models, giving talks on the field, collecting data in the classroom, observing in the classroom, reflecting on teaching process, reading books, redesigning existing ideas, getting students' ideas, investigating students' needs and attitudes, attending conferences and seminars, and etc. Brown (1988) classifies research types in two categories: primary research and secondary research. Primary research is the first hand research during which the researcher gathers the data; secondary research deals with the data from previously conducted research. Types of research in terms of the sources either primary or secondary may vary regarding the purpose of the researcher. In this wide spectrum, any topic which is intended to be searched by the researcher may provide benefits to the field related with the intended topic and may highlight the issues under debate. Therefore, imposing the idea of conducting research through any of those ways on teachers and prospective teachers may provide them a space to gain experience, to further their knowledge in the field, and to expand their learning and teaching skills. Thus, they may become more innovative and creative in their teaching practices through more guidance provided for doing research.

Newell and Cunliffe (2003) assert that some of the most profound changes in attitude and viewpoint take place during a student's undergraduate years. So forming a profession's attitudes toward research during undergraduate study is a prerequisite for influencing his/her professional experience and for being a systematic researcher. Despite such requirement, what is largely encountered in the literature is teachers' deficient engagement in research. Borg (2006) asserts that teacher research is clearly not a widespread activity.

Many similar studies focus on the same issue by pointing out the inadequate engagement of teachers in research and their perception of research as isolated from the actual teaching practices (Crookes and Arakaki, 1999; Rainey, 2000; McNamara, 2002; Bulut, 2011). Additionally, the literature indicates that there is actually lack of research on teachers' engagement in research. Despite such research gap, there is growing recognition that research is the fundamental component of education to promote safe and dynamic teaching and learning activities.

Therefore, mobilizing teachers' research activities can be initiated during undergraduate process. This endeavour may provide many benefits to teachers for being good researchers to reach some values: awareness on teaching issues, high expectation, development of mentoring abilities, professional recognition, motivation, high self-esteem and self-confidence, and etc. Among these values, motivation, high self-esteem, and self-confidence which are the essential forces for sustaining productivity in teaching practices are the qualifications of a good researcher as well as of a successful teacher. But if the teacher loses her/his interest, s/he becomes demotivated and loses commitment (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2012). To prevent demotivation and to increase commitment, teachers need to be renewed and improved professionally. Professional achievement can be sustained through certain vigorous and innovative approaches to education such as research. Research activities can foster teachers' commitment to the profession and increases their professional motivation.

Dörnyei (2007) stresses that a good researcher is self-disciplined and has strong curiosity and common sense about the research topic; thus s/he can gain creative thinking. Attaining such benefits in the teacher training process is a longitudinal effort and leads to some alterations in the manners of prospective teachers. Thus, through conducting research, academic learning and achievement of prospective teachers can also be potentially triggered and increased. Actually those notions are not concrete manners and cannot be directly observed, but they can be valued and evaluated through some implementations during the education process. For that reason, this study was carried out to investigate the attitudes of prospective teachers attending ELT department toward research in education and to orient them to do research in their education process. Through those aims it is assumed that the prospective teachers could be motivated, become autonomous individuals, and increase their self-confidence as good researchers. By orienting them in research tasks, in the study some answers were sought to the questions "Does research motivate prospective teachers in their academic life?" and "Does research lead to autonomous learning by increasing their self confidence?" This research study is also assumed to highlight some theoretical issues and can be taken as a sample study for the field.

## METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

In the study, both qualitative and quantitative methods as mixed methods research designs were used. Survey method was used to evaluate quantitative data in the study. Qualitative research design was descriptive in nature. Observation reports were used as qualitative data. For collecting quantitative data, two questionnaires developed by the researcher were administered on the prospective teachers. One was used to investigate their attitudes toward the benefits of research in education. The other was administered after they completed 14-week course in which they had engaged in some research processes. The second questionnaire was used to search out whether their attitudes toward research changed and whether they benefitted from research activities in terms of autonomy and self-confidence after implementing some research activities. The questionnaires were prepared by the researcher and initially piloted. The questionnaires were administered to a sample of participants. The ambiguous items were checked and revised, and then administered to the participants. The reliability coefficients (Cronbach's) were found out to be .83 for the first questionnaire and .89 for the second one. After getting data about the prospective teachers' attitudes toward research in education through the first questionnaire, the negative attitudes were treated in the classroom environment through some research tasks. The prospective teachers' attitudes were also observed in the classroom and the observed attitudes were reported.

### Participants

The participants in this study were 24 fourth year prospective teachers attending English Language Teaching Department at a Turkish University. All fourth year prospective teachers wanted to participate in the research process, and then they signed the student assent form. The participants were nearly at the same age level (about 20s); therefore, the variable 'age differences' were not evaluated in the study. In addition, the ELT departments are mostly preferred by female student teachers in Turkey, so female and male student numbers are not identical; therefore, in the present study, no indication was made about how female and male student teachers perceived benefits of research. In this study, nineteen students were female and five students were male.

The participants previously took a research course as the requirement of the second year curriculum. But the content of the course is just limited with the theoretical topics on research. In other words, the prospective teachers could not find adequate opportunities to carry out research activities. Therefore an elective methodology course was offered to those prospective teachers. The study was carried out in this course in which the whole class participated. The main concern of the course was to have the prospective teachers to engage in extensive research process actively while dealing with the methodological topics.

### Procedure

The study was carried out in three stages:

- *Initial stage*: the attitudes of the participants toward research were investigated through a 25-item questionnaire prepared by the researcher.
- *Second stage*: this stage took 14-week course time. The participants were assigned some research tasks in this process. At the beginning of the term, the prospective teachers were informed about the course schedule. A pack in which course topics with supplementary materials of each week took place was prepared and handed out to them. They were to get prepared for the course by following the schedule in the pack. But their main task was to

engage in research processes actively for the topics each week. They were guided to carry out both primary research and secondary research. For primary research data collection, they carried out classroom observation during the course time and prepared reflection checklists after the course time. For secondary research data collection, they searched on the internet, read and evaluated published studies related with the topic of each week before and after the course time. They shared their experiences in the classroom. At the end of each course session, 15 minute-discussion sessions were provided for the participants to reflect their ideas on the topic in the classroom. They discussed their classroom observation data with each other. They tried to give some feedback about the missing and ambiguous points. They also shared their ideas about how they collected information about the topic in the classroom from secondary research sources. Each participant kept a dossier in which they collected their observation reports, reflection checklists, and published studies they read. In these sessions, some supplementary materials such as published articles dealing with the topics of the course sessions were also provided for the participants.

- *Last stage*: after 14-week course implementation, another questionnaire comprising 21 items and some open ended questions was administered on the participants to evaluate whether they benefitted from this research process. As an additional data collection tool, observation reports, which were kept during the course hours, were also evaluated.

### Data analysis

The findings of this study, as mentioned before, were evaluated through both qualitative and quantitative analyses. For the analysis of the data gathered through the questionnaires, percentile values were calculated and displayed in separate tables.

### Initial stage data

The participants were questioned through a questionnaire at the beginning of the treatment process. The questionnaire searched out the prospective teachers' attitude toward research. The participants' responses to the items in the questionnaire are displayed in Table 1.

As displayed in the table, some items were designed in positive manner and some in negative manners. Items 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25 question the benefits of research as a whole. Items 2, 3, 8, 12, 17 were designed in negative manners. Nearly half of the participants admitted the usefulness of research in education and 81% declared research should be part of ELT programs, still most of them did not support the idea that doing research contributes to improvement of prospective teachers. But more than half (67%) agreed research contributes to learning process as a learner. This view signifies that those prospective teachers perceived themselves as learners not as teacher candidates, so all information could be conveyed by their lecturers as indicated in item 16. Similarly, nearly half declared research could be used to develop problem solving skills (item 7); and by reading research studies (item 9) and searching out the sources of the field (item 14), nearly half

**Table 1.** The prospective teachers' attitudes toward research.

	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Disagree (%)
Research is essential for education	52	11	37
Research is difficult for prospective teachers	81	10	9
Research is NOT so necessary for prospective teachers	42	18	40
Research should be part of ELT programs	81	7	12
Prospective teachers should do research to improve their knowledge	39	22	39
Research contributes to learning process	67	4	29
Research should be used to develop problem solving skills	51	18	31
Doing research is time consuming	92	4	4
I like reading research studies in my field	50	34	16
I am eager to participate in research projects	37	26	37
Research contributes to teaching practice	42	48	10
I do NOT think research would help me learn more	31	28	41
Research increases motivation	33	20	47
Searching the sources for the field may be productive	54	22	24
Self-efficacy in the courses may be boosted after doing research	44	47	9
I want the faculty members to search for me and share the sources with me	92	4	4
I do NOT believe I can learn through research	47	26	27
Doing research before the class time may foster better understanding	54	19	27
Instead of devoting time to research, I prefer being instructed in the classroom	87	6	7
Doing research may foster autonomous learning	50	28	22
Doing research requires assistance	72	9	19
Research before the class time leads to positive attitude towards the course	51	9	40
While doing research I can develop my linguistic knowledge	37	29	34
Research provides me a space to practice academic integrity	19	64	17
I can gain research experiences by doing research during my education process and become a good researcher in the future	53	18	29

admitted the contribution of research to productivity. Once again, as learners they agreed on the usefulness of research, but as prospective teachers they did not support the positive aspect of research. Most of them (81%) declared research is a difficult process for prospective teachers and nearly all (92%) perceived research as time consuming.

When they were questioned about the benefits of research in terms of its contribution to teaching practice, high motivation, high self-efficacy, linguistic progress, autonomous learning, and etc., the responses of the participants (less than half) to those items capitulated low percentile values (items 11, 13, 15, 20, 23). Although the issues such as motivation, self-efficacy, linguistic knowledge, autonomy did not get high percentile values by the prospective teachers, more than half acknowledged that research before the class time would lead to better understanding, positive attitude toward the course, and experience enlargement for being a good researcher in the future. But those encouraging insights about the research were not supported by the prospective teachers for engaging in research projects in education process. Alternatively, they preferred being instructed in the

classroom instead of devoting time to research (87%). They also declared that instead of doing research individually they wanted the faculty members to search for themselves and share the sources with them (item 16). They mostly supported the idea that doing research requires assistance (item 21).

### **Second stage data**

As mentioned in the procedure section of the study, each participant kept a dossier in which they collected their observation reports, reflection checklists, and published studies they read. During the discussion sessions, they shared their experiences in the classroom. At the beginning of the 14-week program, the criteria for evaluating the participants' performances given below were determined:

- The relatedness of the research material to the topic
- Their efforts to apply critical analysis for the research material
- Their negotiation during the discussion sessions

- Their capability of reflecting the research results
- Their volunteer attitudes toward research

In the sessions each week, the researcher observed the participants, reported their performances, and evaluated according the criteria above. It was reported that most of the participants researched properly and well-prepared for the discussion sessions. Although they could not cope with the written documents well at the beginning of the sessions, they gradually tried their best to accomplish their tasks. When they were assisted by the researcher, they increased their keen interest to take place in discussion sessions. Sometimes, they criticized some of the research studies in negative way while negotiating with each other. But some unexpected results appeared; for instance, when they could not access to the appropriate internet sites, they got frustrated and brought worthless materials to the classroom. Besides, some participants complained about the time they consumed for finding the appropriate materials. The brief summary of the data from the observation reports is introduced in the following points:

- They got used to preparing themselves before the course time and reflecting their research findings in the classroom.
- They were voluntarily sharing their ideas with their classmates and having discussions on the issue they had searched for.
- They were taking their place in the classroom in a well organized way.
- Their performance levels in terms of both classroom discussions and exam sessions got increased.
- Since they had to present their findings and ideas in English, they did not have any hesitation to speak in the classroom, that is, their anxiety levels got lowered and they gained self-confidence.
- On the base of the findings on the related issue, they declared novel ideas and perspectives during the course time.

When the reflection checklists and observation reports the participants kept were examined at the end of the 14-week program, it was deduced that they found such activities hard, because they could not prepare such documents well. But in oral discussions, they were better while reflecting their ideas in written form.

### ***Last stage data***

After gathering the initial data through the first questionnaire, it was seen that although some of the prospective teachers acknowledged positive aspects of doing research, they did not volunteer to engage in research, because they did not consider the benefits of doing research in terms of fostering motivation, self-efficacy,

autonomy, linguistic growth, and etc. To defeat such obscurity, those prospective teachers were guided to do research before, during, and after the course time each week. As mentioned earlier, they were responsible to investigate and read the published studies in the field of language teaching methodology, discuss the gathered data through such studies in the classroom, make observation about their classmates' behaviours in the course time to learn how to observe learners in learning process, and how to evaluate the class performance for fourteen weeks. To check whether such application was useful for the prospective teachers, another questionnaire was administered to them at the end of the 14-week course period. The responses are displayed in Table 2.

When their general ideas about research were questioned, most of them (78%) stated that research increases autonomous learning; 57% declared research leads to self-esteem and motivates learner (89%). Nearly all admitted (92%) research is a pathway for learners to find their own way and leads to high self-confidence (75%). More than half (56%) agreed on the assistance of research to orient learners into the academic world.

The prospective teachers' attitudes after completing research process were also investigated through 10 items. They stated that they felt themselves well organized (89%), self-confident (82%), more controlled (97%), highly regarded (79%), autonomous (76%) and highly motivated (91%). Although they admitted they did not feel themselves confused (63%) and exhausted (51%), they perceived the research process as a tiring process (52%).

Having being exposed to research process, the prospective teachers felt that their performance levels got increased during the course time (92%). Another striking point was that they felt themselves more motivated in the course (96%). Due to high motivation level, they had positive attitude toward the course (91%), and most of them became eager to participate in classroom discussions (79%). Such high levels of motivation and positive and volunteer attitude caused their anxiety levels to decrease (89%).

To provide the prospective teachers more space to reflect their ideas, some open-ended questions were asked. The responses of the participants to the open ended questions in the questionnaire are presented below:

- What is research?: While defining research, most of the participants focused on the similar matters such as gaining experiences, furthering knowledge, expanding skills, gaining problem solving skills, undertaking creative ideas, searching and evaluating field related sources, and so on. These definitions of research by the participants reveal that they appreciated the meaning and significance of research.

- What are the advantages of conducting research for a

**Table 2.** The prospective teachers' ideas about research after the treatment.

	Yes (%)	No (%)	No idea (%)
<b>Research</b>			
Increases autonomous learning	78	12	10
Leads to high self-esteem	57	29	14
Motivates learners	89	-	11
Directs learners to find their own way	92	4	4
Leads to self-confidence	75	9	16
Provides a space to orient into the academic world	56	12	32
<b>After completing research, I feel myself</b>			
Well-organized	89	7	4
Confused	31	63	6
Tired	52	32	16
Exhausted	49	51	-
Self-confident	82	2	16
Controlled	97	-	3
Highly regarded	79	4	17
Motivated	91	-	9
Autonomous	76	11	13
Coherent	47	12	41
<b>During the course time</b>			
My performance gets increased	92	4	4
My anxiety gets lowered	89	11	-
I personally get more motivated	96	-	4
I have positive attitude towards the course	92	4	4
I am eager to participate in classroom discussions	79	14	7

prospective teacher?: The prospective teachers stated that, through research, they could attain the essential sources and develop themselves on the related topic and they could get the chance of revising and examining what has been done. For them, research is a key to reach the sources for practicing academic reliability.

- Should prospective teachers conduct research? Why?: Nearly all participants (98%) admitted that research is useful for prospective teachers and they stated research is the developmental stage which should be practised by prospective teachers to develop themselves professionally. However, they added that research is a difficult and time consuming process for prospective teachers.

- Should prospective teachers read published studies? Why?: Nearly all declared that reading published studies related with their study topics broadens the views of prospective teachers, and thus they can easily access to the recent developments in the field of education.

- How should a prospective teacher collect information?: 98% declared that the best and easiest way of collection information on any topic is realized through the internet

search.

Some sample responses to those open-ended questions are given below:

*"...research as a whole is the route for finding solutions to the problems and gaining experiences..."*

*"...now I can easily expand my skills through research and evaluate what has been done in the field..."*

*"... when I was offered to carry out research, I felt irritated, but now I am not thinking so...I believe I can do research in my field..."*

*"..the more teachers are engaged in research, the more conscious they become..."*

*"researching something and evaluating it makes my professional horizon wide..."*

*"...when I have a question in my mind, I know that the internet is the best source to find the answers..."*

*" ...now I have learnt how to deal with research in my field, language teaching...I think we should be offered alternative tasks to carry out research, though it is a bit difficult..."*

*"learning new things from other parts of the world through different studies makes me more self-assured..."*

*"I know I declare my ideas more professionally after*

*reading the published studies in language teaching and learning.*

All those encouraging attitudes toward the research were also observed and reported in the classroom. During 14-week application, the participants were repeatedly being interviewed informally in or after the course time about how they felt themselves and asked to make self-evaluation. Each time, they declared they did well and felt themselves better than the previous sessions. To perform better, they said they were trying to do their best. Through the interaction and discussion with their classmates before, during, and after the course time, they claimed they learnt new things and their perspectives changed positively. They asserted research was a daunting task and time consuming for them at the beginning of the treatment period, but by time they got habits of searching and became more systematic while engaging in research. They stated such practice guided them to be good researchers during the undergraduate study and could carry out research projects after they become teachers of English. But few of them complained of limited access to the sources through the internet and library research. And few declared it costs much to access to some sources. To find solutions to such problems they were guided and directed about how to do research without spending much money and time. Sometimes they could not reach to the reliable and consistent sources. Therefore, such issue were discussed in the classroom and they were given feedback both by the lecturer and their classmates. All those tendencies of the prospective teachers signify their autonomous behaviours.

## DISCUSSION

When the responses to the items in the first and second questionnaires are compared, it can be clearly noticed that the prospective teachers' negative ideas about conducting research and implementing research tasks were replaced with positive ones in the second questionnaire. They reflected the benefits of doing research. Thus, they became aware of their attitudes before and after the treatment. In this sense, their awareness about the benefits of research was increased. For instance, they did not believe the positive impacts of research on such issues as motivation, self-confidence, autonomy, and self-esteem. But by being engaged in the research process for 14 weeks, they defeated such negative beliefs and devoted themselves to the beneficial aspects of the research process.

The first questionnaire results, as consistent with the statements of Crookes and Arakaki (1999), Rainey (2000), and Borg (2006), display the prospective teachers were not so enthusiastic to engage in research by claiming the difficulty of engagement. Besides, they did not initially believe in the necessity of research

engagement. And they preferred being instructed by their faculty staff instead of devoting much time to research. Such an outcome may have emerged due to the fact that they had engaged in limited research tasks before they were exposed to the elective course designed in this study. But, after 14-week implementation, they valued the encouraging aspects of research engagement in terms of individual development, knowledge gain, raising self-confidence, autonomy and motivation.

The responses of the prospective teachers at the beginning of the implementation were not totally negative in manner; that is, they supported the advantages of research but they did not participate in such a process. They did not aware of the affective domains of research engagement. For instance they had no idea about how research could help the prospective teachers increase self-confidence, motivation, autonomy, self-efficacy, and etc. For defeating such attitudes it was a prerequisite to engage them in research process and make them gain some experiences by research practices. So at the end of the treatment process, they gained some positive insights about the productive aspects of conducting research during education process in terms of self-confidence, autonomy, motivation. As consistent with the views of Newell and Cunliffe (2003), in this study, some profound changes in the attitudes of prospective teachers took place during their undergraduate years. All those constructive attitudes were reported in both classroom observations and in the findings of second questionnaire.

As for the research questions of the study "Does research motivate prospective teachers in their academic life?" and "Does research lead to autonomous learning by increasing self-esteem and self confidence?", the research findings provided encouraging answers to the questions. Through the classroom observation reports and second questionnaire it was reported that as Borg (2010) states, as a powerful form of professional development for teachers, research contributed to high level of motivation of the prospective teachers in the academic life and led to autonomous learning by boosting self-confidence. The common view among the participants also reflected that research contributes to professional development by increasing positive attitude to the field. Additionally, the general picture of the results denotes that the participants had a genuine and strong curiosity about the research topics, became more disciplined while sharing their own findings, reflected creative thinking, and had common sense about their tasks; in other words, they obtained the common characteristics of a good researcher as defined by Dörnyei (2007).

The general perspective of the study reflects the affirmative and constructive aspects of research engagement in undergraduate study. Those research activities can normally be taken as part of regular teaching and professional development processes. Despite its small-scale form, the study represents an academic form of inquiry which many teachers and prospective teachers

may take as a sample model. To wrap up, this research study can be directive for imposing the importance of research as a compensatory practice on prospective teachers. Thus research practices can be appreciated as systematic inquiries which lead to furthering knowledge and experience, expanding practice skills and problem solving abilities, undertaking creative duties, and attaining, revising, and evaluating field related sources for the developmental stage of professional talent for prospective teachers.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study was carried out to investigate research perceptions of prospective teachers and to orient them to research activities in undergraduate program. The results indicate that there are many benefits of carrying out research tasks during undergraduate education. Regarding the research results, it can be stated that participating in research process provides opportunities to prospective teachers to evaluate their own development. Thus, systematic participation in the research leads to promotion in terms of both teacher achievement and student achievement. Teacher educators need to impose the benefits of conducting research on prospective teachers and lead them to design research. Thus, prospective teachers may get the opportunity of involving in research process and increasing awareness about how to conduct research. As a prospective teacher, s/he may appreciate the importance of research (or may not) and prepare her/himself for the future to recognize the difficulties students encounter during education process and try to find solutions to the possible problems.

Additionally, research affects the decisions a teacher will make about what and how to teach, how to systematize the decisions about teaching procedure, what classroom techniques to be used, and how to make modification when required. For all those decisions, a teachers' background knowledge about research is as important as her/his pedagogical content knowledge. By being exposed to some research tasks and practices, prospective teachers can be well prepared for their future occupation to encourage themselves while organizing teaching issues. Thus, potential eagerness to engage in research as a teacher can be triggered and inspired through understanding the role of research in renovating professional development.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study has some limitations. The most important limitation is that the study was carried out in a

limited time with a specific group. Further studies could be replicated as a longitudinal study with larger samples. One limitation is related with research methods; in this study, the benefits of research perceived by the prospective teachers were investigated through qualitative and quantitative data sets, but those were mostly relied on self-reports of the participants. A further study can be carried out to determine the actual performance levels based on external evaluation. One more limitation of the study has no evaluation of gender differences. Finally, the quantitative results of the present study are limited to only percentile values. For that reason, in further research, deeper statistical analyses could be carried out with different prospective teachers attending the ELT departments in Turkey and in other countries to compare their attitudes toward research in terms of training facilities, curriculum applications, educational settings, and so on.

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