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SOCIOTROPIC TEACHERS VS AUTONOMIC TEACHERS IN TEACHER-STUDENTS RELATIONSHIP IN CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

Personality traits of managers and teachers are of great importance for the success of the management issues in all fields including education and for achieving the success targeted by the institution. In particular, education administrators have a great responsibility towards teachers, school staff, students and parents outside the school in the educational institution where he manages. Attitudes and behaviors of school administrators are important in fulfilling these responsibilities and personality traits determine these attitudes and behaviors. The sociotropic autonomic personality traits of education administrators and teachers are very important in terms of management in the school environment and are effective in all areas from conducting school activities to ensuring discipline in the school. In the study we aimed to determine whether sociotropic or autonomic teachers good at students-teacher relationships in school environment. We applied Sociotropy-Autonomy Scale (SAS) to determine the personality traits of 25 teachers working in various High Schools. After determining 4 sociotropic and 4 autonomic teachers, we asked a question to their students to find out which personality traits are good at students-teacher relationship. We reached the conclusion that sociotropic teachers can establish good relations with the students, however the autonomic ones are lack of communication skills, thus failing to establish effective relationship with the students at school environment.

Keywords: Sociotropic teachers; autonomic teachers; school management; classroom management; teacher-students relationship

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching is a universal endeavour. In order for the teaching-learning process to be effective, a very special relationship must be established between the teacher and the learner. The teacher should have the communication skills that will enable him / her to make these connections. Personality traits are of great importance in communication skills. Sociotropy and Autonomy personality traits are reported to be very important matter in establishing effective communication and thus in managing classroom (Kayalar, 2019).

1.1. Sociotropy-Autonomy Personality Traits

Sociotropic individuals organize their views and behaviors with dependence on others, passive and obedient attitudes in order to provide personal satisfaction. Sociotropy can be attributed to excessive commitment, acceptance, help and understanding in interpersonal relationships (Sato and McCann, 2000). Life satisfaction of sociotropic individuals is primarily related to their relationship with other people. In order to maintain their positive image, these people need to be cared, approved, loved and counted by the people they consider important (Gorski and Young, 2002, Kayalar, 2016). Sociotropic individuals are more suitable for group work than individual and independent activities (Barutçu and Öktem, 2003).

Autonomy is the ability to defend and increase one's independence and personal rights. It includes efforts to develop the interests and capacities of the individual. Autonomic individuals are success oriented and

control is very important for them. Individuals with autonomy traits are happy to manage their own activities, achieve their goals, control the events around them and achieve success (Beck, Epstein, Harrison & Emery, 1983; Robins, Bagby, Rector, Lynch and Kennedy, 1997). Individuals with predominant autonomic characteristics are generally concerned about the possibility of individual failure and behave to minimize the probability of failure in order to control their environment at the highest level (Peselow, Robins, Sanfilipo, Block and Fieve, 1992). Individuals with autonomic personality characteristics are prone to more independent and individual work (Barutçu and Öktem, 2003).

Serinkan and Barutçu (2006), in a study conducted with university students, aimed to determine the relationship between autonomic-sociotropic personality traits. As a result of the data analysis, it was found that there was a significant difference between female and male students according to the scores obtained from autonomy and sociotropy subscales, female students had higher sociotropy scores than male students and male students had higher autonomy scores than female students.

In a study carried out by Barutçu and Öktem in 2003, it was aimed to evaluate the personality traits for work and employee harmony. It was concluded that employees with sociotropic personality traits were more competent for group work, whereas those with autonomic personality traits were more competent for individual and independent works.

Individuals who are close to sociotropic personality should be loved, counted and approved by their colleagues and superiors in order to be happy and productive. Otherwise, they may tend to be depressed and fail as a result (Michael et al., 2001). Sociotropic personality also feels the need for social security (Engin and Cam, 2009; Öktem, Turgut & Tokmak, 2013). Sociotropic personality traits were examined in three dimensions: satisfaction anxiety, approval anxiety, and separation anxiety. On the other hand, those with autonomic personality traits that attach importance to success, independence and freedom have personality traits that control the environment and tend to be successful and independent (Sato and Gonzales, 2009). Depression tendencies are very low even when they fail or their independent behaviors are prevented (Balık, 2017; Erözkan, 2004; Özdel, Bostancı, Özdel and Oğuzhanoğlu, 2002). Dimensions of autonomic personality traits are personal achievement, freedom and loneliness.

Sociotropy Personality Traits

- *More in females
- *Concern about what other think
- *Dependency
- *Pleasing others
- *Easily persuaded
- *Negatively affected by criticism
- *Vulnerable to external contingencies and social pressures
- *Vulnerable to negative interpersonal events
- *Need for approval by others
- *Preference of affiliation
- *Higher stress
- *Fear of criticism
- *Social anxiety
- *Fear of rejection
- *Striving for meaningful social contact
- *Self-schema of sociality
- *Relational interdependence
- *Poor responsiveness to drug treatment
- *More reflective
- *Impeded by external directives and demands
- *Susceptible to persuasion

Autonomy Personality Traits

- *More in males
- *Perfectionism
- *Self-criticism *Self-endorsed
- *Self-regulated *Self-organized
- *Self-determined *Self-congruence,
- *Self-confidence *Self-schema of independence,
- *Need for control
- *Congruent with their values and interests
- *Fully assenting to the actions
- *Creative learning and engagement
- *Greater energy and vitality
- *Lower stress and higher well-being
- *More rewarding socialization and relationships
- *Open to and interested in self-exploration
- *Awareness of his or her values and feelings
- *Strong authorship and interest-taking
- *Indifferent to praise and criticism
- *Ability to direct their activities without external interference
- *Ability to keep their freedom of choice without constraint
- *Hardly persuaded

(Kayalar, 2016)

1.2. Teacher-Students Relationship

In education, the process of human relations and communication based on mutual respect and trust among school management, teachers, students and other staffs is the assurance of students' development and academic success. Good human relations and communication system established in schools will

ensure the education system to be effective. The first objective of the education system is to educate proper, honest, faithful, principled and hard-working students who will take over the management and job positions of tomorrow in the country.

When the teacher communicates with the students, it is important that he / she uses empathic language, tries to understand them and their emotions, and communicates without judging the students.

Some of the students have visual learning skills and some have auditory and some have kinaesthetic learning skills. It is important that the teachers use visual elements for the students who have visual learning skill; audio and music for those with auditory skills, and living-learning techniques for tactile learners. One third of the class is visual and one third is auditory and one third is tactile. It is difficult to communicate with the visual student using audio equipment.

One of the most important parameters of effective teacher training programs is communication skills. Teachers with strong communication skills can influence their students, motivate them, and solve disciplinary problems more easily. Students can easily overcome their problems with their parents and other education stakeholders with their communication skills and find solutions before the problems grow. The teacher will contribute not only to the prevention of problems, but also to the students to acquire an important skill that they can use throughout their lives. Teachers' role models, anger control, stress coping skills will play an important role in gaining new behaviours, attitudes and skills to students.

2. METHOD

In the study mix design method was used to obtain necessary data to determine the effect of sociotropy-autonomy personality traits of the teachers on teacher-students relationship in classroom environment. To determine sociotropic and autonomic teachers, Sociotropy-Autonomy Scale (SAS) developed by Beck et al (1983) was used, and to obtain students views about their teachers, face to face interview was done with the students. We asked an open ended question to the students “ How does your teacher behave you in classroom environment?” In this way both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. One of the qualitative research methods, Descriptive Model, was used in the study, which aims to reveal a situation that exists in teacher-student communication as well as details. Descriptive research identifies a given situation as precisely and carefully as possible. In the field of education, the most common descriptive method is screening because researchers summarize the characteristics of individuals, such as abilities, preferences, behaviors, groups or sometimes physical environments such as schools (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2014). Since descriptive or survey studies are intended to determine the current situation, such studies are usually carried out in the natural environment.

2.1. Research Group

The research group consists of 25 teachers working at various High Schools and their students in the city of Erzincan. After determining 4 sociotropic and 4 autonomic teachers, we added 20 students of these teachers to the study to find out whether sociotropic or autonomic teachers are better at establishing good communication and relationship with the students. Half of the students were male and the ages of the students ranged between 15 and 17.

2.2. Research Instrument

The scale was developed by Beck et al. In 1983 to measure sociotropy and autonomy personality traits. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Şahin, Ulusoy & Şahin (1993). The scale is a five-point Likert-type scale consisting of 60 items designed to measure two different personality traits. 30 of the items in the scale belong to the sociotropy and 30 of them belong to the autonomy subscale. The highest score that can be obtained from a sub-scale (30 items) is 120 (Savaşır and Şahin, 1997). High scores from the sub-tests indicate high sociotropic or autonomic personality traits. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for sociotropy is .89- .94, and .83- .95 for autonomy (Sato, 2003).

According to the factor analysis results of the scale, three factors were found for both dimensions. In the sociotropy subscale, disapproval anxiety (10 items), Separation Anxiety (13 items), Pleasing others (7 items) were determined. In the autonomy subscale, Personal success (12 items), Freedom (12 items) and

Loneliness (6 items) factors were found (Kaya, Aşti, Acaroğlu, Kaya & Şendir 2006). The Turkish version of the scale was used in this study.

3. FINDINGS

In order to achieve the desired efficiency in education, a positive classroom environment must be created. In classrooms where there are no negative student behaviours or where such problems are easily solved, students can feel themselves comfortable and safe and focus their attention on the lesson.

In our study, we tried to determine the behaviours and attitudes of sociotropic and autonomic teachers towards the students and which personality trait is efficient in establishing good relationship between teacher and students. For this reason we asked the students how their teacher behaves students in classroom environment. The replies and the statements of the students to the questions are as follows:

Student A, male, 15 years of age, at 10th grade, his teacher is sociotropic and female.

".. our teacher is behaving very friendly, and she never insults us. She always avoids making us sad. We have a good relationship with her, my parents also love her. We do what she asks, so I have passed her test..."

People communicate with others in order to be together, to understand them, to understand and influence themselves, that is, to socialize, and in this way they gain the opportunity to define their personalities (Koçel, 2010). It is very important that teachers can communicate with their students. Teachers who communicate effectively with their students understand and accept their students better and have positive feelings about them. Therefore, students develop more positive attitudes and behaviors towards their teachers and peers (Kısaç, 2007).

Student A, male, 16 years of age, at 11th grade, his teacher is autonomic and male.

"... My teacher is discipline oriented. He loses temper when we do not do our homework. He wants us to be successful and always asks us to obey the rules in the classroom..."

The main characteristics of autonomic teachers include self-esteem, success and discipline. Autonomic teachers are not affected by negative criticism and they do not avoid being criticised. The most important thing for them is that the students should be successful in their academic life.

Student A, female, 17 years of age, at 12th grade, his teacher is sociotropic and female.

"... my teacher is really someone just like a friend, an elder sister, a mom to us. She wants to know us, she never makes us have a hard time at the course. Only the weak point for her is that she hates being criticised and likes overpraised. She asks us what we think about her hair style and dress and her style to give course in the classroom..."

Sociotropic teachers become happy when they are praised with their appearances. On the other hand, they become upset and anxious when they are criticised of their appearance or behaviours. For this reason, they often make mistakes in behaviours and conversation with foreigners. They establish good friendships and relationships with the students and their parents. Good communication is more important for them than the discipline in classroom.

Individuals with advanced communication skills are expected to have the ability to evaluate and give meaning to warnings, criticisms or complaints directed against them (Özer, 1998). The majority of interpersonal problems are also based on communication. Healthy communication provides deep, meaningful and satisfying relationships for people; being unhealthy constitutes a source of distress that can go from deep feeling to isolation from people (Korkut, 1996; Erkan and Avcı, 2014).

In this context, it is possible to come across studies that show that students' relationships with their teachers predict their social and academic achievement (Hamre and Pianta, 2001; Lerner, Lerner & Zabski, 1985; Pianta, 1999). Particularly positive teacher student relationships allow them to develop and use their negotiation skills in difficult situations (La Paro, Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004; Pianta, 1999). On the other hand, the positive relationship between teachers and students is a protective factor in the social and academic development of children (Baker, 2006; Birch and Ladd, 1997; Pianta, Nimetz & Bennett, 1997; Valiente, Lemery-Chalfant, Swanson & Reiser, 2008). In particular, such relationships are perceived by teachers as low levels of conflict and dependence and high levels of intimacy. Students

of this kind of relationship with their teachers can see the teacher as a source of trust (Pianta, 1999). All these processes show that students have experienced positive changes in their behaviours as a result of effective communication between teachers and students. However, in education, listening, initiating the conversation, maintaining the conversation, asking questions, understanding the emotions in the group, expressing their feelings and so on. It is aimed to gain the characteristics of the students (Dilekmen, Başçı & Bektaş, 2008). Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that there are a number of characteristics that are desired to gain to the students first (Totan, Aysan & Bektaş, 2010). As a result, such behaviours of teachers can be a model and a basis for the development of the students' social competence skills (Rudasill and Rimm-Kaufman, 2009).

Effective communication skills of individuals are affected by many factors. One of the most important of these is undoubtedly their personality traits. However, although there are different approaches to its frequent use, scientific examination and explanation, there is no agreed general definition of the word personality (İnanç and Yerlikaya, 2008). Personality is a set of characteristics that distinguishes the individual from others, which the individual brings from birth and acquired afterwards. Our emotions, our abilities, our motives, our temperament, our social, physical-psychomotor and cognitive characteristics, our character and values, our beliefs, our attitudes, our opinions and so on. our characteristics make up our personality. Personality is a concept that encompasses all aspects of human behaviour (Senemoğlu, 2013).

4. RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS

One of the important elements of classroom management is teacher-student communication. This process, which is performed verbally and nonverbally, may cause the learning and teaching process to pass productively or the student to break from the process. Personality traits of the teachers have an important role in establishing communication and relationship with the students. Sociotropic teachers give the students opportunities to voice teachers themselves and join social activities in classroom and school environment, while autonomic teachers pay attention to the students' academic achievement and discipline rules. The student, who is addressed with expressions including positive values such as respect, love and tolerance, will feel valued in the classroom and his sense of belonging will develop. The student who sees himself as a part of the class will try to be active in cognitive, affective and other developmental processes. It is very difficult to say that the cognitive and affective development of the student who is excluded by the teacher in the classroom relations will develop in the desired way. Therefore, autonomic teachers should be very careful on social relationships among the students

While the teacher-student relationship in the elementary school years provides positive gains such as self-confidence, entrepreneurship, encouraging learning, respectability, it can also cause negative tendencies such as discrimination and prejudice (Başar, Doğan, Şener, Uzun & Topal, 2018). From this point of view, sociotropic teachers encourage students to appreciate self-confidence, friendship, communication and entrepreneurship, whereas autonomic teachers encourage them to learn and to be successful in academic aspects. Primary school years are periods of productivity and hard work in terms of personality development. Enjoying this period in an effective way does not only improve students' self-confidence but also encourages them to learn values such as dignity. The students gain entrepreneurship skills and values through self-confidence and self-esteem.

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