

Investigation of Learned Resourcefulness Level of Teachers According to Some Variables

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ABSTRACT The aim of the present study was to investigate the levels of learned resourcefulness of teachers who work in mainstream schools and in schools for children with learning difficulties or disabilities according to some variables. The sample size consist of a total of 340 teachers made up of 174 who worked in SEN schools and 166 who worked in mainstream schools participated voluntarily in this research. To collect information about socio-demographic of teachers "Personal Information Form" prepared by the investigator and "Rosenbaum's Learned Resourcefulness Scale" were used in this study. The results of this study showed that there were no found significant differences between learned resourcefulness, gender, marital status, school type and age groups of teachers, while there were significant differences between learned resourcefulness, exercise hour and the environment they live.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is generally accepted as one of the most stressful jobs compared to other professions (Mcshane and Von 2005). Schools are accepted as the most stressful areas in our society and because of this reason, stress is perceived as a serious psychological health problem which teachers have to cope with. Recently, a lot of studies have been conducted abroad about stress of teachers undergo and the ways to cope with it (Lazuraz 2006; Kokkinos and Davazoglou 2009; Eichinger 2000). Stress is defined as "a state of tension that arises from an actual or perceived demand that calls for an adjustment or adaptive behaviour" (Olson et al. 1989; Forlin 1996). The critical difference between positive and negative stress depends on how an individual perceives the stress-generating event or environment and how he or she copes with it (Arslan et al. 2009). Many studies have reported

sources of teacher stress. These studies indicate that the main sources of stress facing teachers are: teaching pupils who lack motivation, maintaining discipline, time pressures and workload, coping with change, being evaluated by others, dealings with colleagues, self-esteem and status, administration and management, role conflict and ambiguity, and poor working conditions (Travers and Cooper 1996; Benmansour 1998; Pithers and Soden 1998).

Teachers are not a homogeneous group; they are faced with different challenges, demands, and rewards depending on the type of school they work in (public or private, urban or rural), whether the students are in college or in kindergarten, whether the students have special educational needs (SEN) or not, and so on (Kokkinos and Davazoglou 2009). High stress levels in special educators result in various adverse organisational phenomena such as job dissatisfaction, burn-out and eventually leaving the field of teaching or transferring to mainstream schools (Lazuras 2006). In a Stress Survey for Special Educators, teachers reported feeling unable to cope with the stresses ensuing from dealing with students in special educational needs. Miller reported that special education teachers who left the profession were significantly higher in perceived stress than those who stayed in the field (Miller et al. 1999).

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Learned resourcefulness has been defined as “an acquired repertoire of behavioural and cognitive skills with which the person is able to regulate internal events such as emotions and cognitions that might otherwise interfere with the smooth execution of a target behaviour” (Rosenbaum 1990). In the management of everyday life demands, resourceful individuals make use of positive self-instructions, apply problem-solving methods, delay immediate gratification, and recognize that it takes considerable effort to regulate and minimize the negative impact disruptive events have on their functioning. Resourcefulness has been shown to start developing in early childhood through one’s interaction with parents, teachers, and significant others and to become stable by early adulthood (Zauszniewski et al. 2002; Kennet 1994; Rosenbaum 1990).

Learned resourcefulness is an important factor in depression and psychological disorders to facilitate the mental health of the person (Chung et al. 2012), relevant studies are carried out on the subject in many different areas (Cowden et al. 2014; Zauszniewski et al. 2014). Personality is a term including whole interests, attitudes, skills, physical appearances, speech style and orientation of people. In addition to this, personality is unique and a whole with harmony (Yanbasti 1990) is a combination of hereditary characters and developmental effects. In other words, personality is a consistent correlation factor which associates the innate features and learning obtained after birth and differentiates the people from the others (Kaya 2003). In contrast, the more highly resourceful participants drew on many coping strategies, not just one, to deal with their pain, such as diverting attention, reinterpreting pain, and coping self-statements (Kennet et al. 2008). Rosenbaum suggests that high resourceful individuals, using their self-control skills, can minimise the negative effect of stress on their performance (Rosenbaum 1990). According to Eroglu et al. (2014), a key feature of learned resourcefulness is that individuals cope effectively with difficult life events, believe in their capacity to deal with problems, and avoid negative thinking about a situation beyond their control.

Thus, the aim of this study was to investigate the levels of learned resourcefulness of teachers who work within mainstream and schools for children with learning difficulties or disabilities, according to some variables.

METHODOLOGY

This study is made up of teachers working in the cities of Kutahya, Bilecik, Bursa, Isparta and Antalya in the 2012-2013 academic year. A total of 340 teachers participated voluntarily in the study. The breakdown of the sample size shows that 174 teachers worked in schools for children with learning difficulties or disabilities while 166 teachers worked in mainstream schools, were randomly selected for the study. The “Personal Information Form” that was developed by the researcher to collect data about the socio-demographic traits of the teachers, and “Rosenbaum Learned Resourcefulness Scale” were used as the data collection tool.

Learned Resourcefulness Scale (LRS), was developed by Rosenbaum (1980) and adapted into Turkish by Siva (1991) and Dag (1991) was employed as the data collection instrument. The scale measures to what extent an individual uses the cognitive coping strategies that he can use and their self-control abilities. This measure, which consists of 36 Likert type articles and 5 options, was implemented at the schools after taking the necessary precautions. The options are “Very undescriptive of me”, “A little descriptive of me”, “Mostly descriptive of me”, “Descriptive of me” and “Very descriptive of me”. The grading is from 1 to 5. However, items of 4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 16, 18, 19, 21, 29, 35 are marked reversely. The points that are going up refer to the high levels of self-control abilities (Dag 1991). Each individual can get a score between 36 and 180 from the scale. Higher scores point to higher levels of self-control skills, that is, a more frequent employment of the coping strategies represented in the scale (Rosenbaum 1980).

As a statistical tool, SPSS packet program was used to analyze the data at the level of $\alpha=0.05$ meaningfulness. In order to determine the levels of perceived learned resourcefulness of the teachers, measures of mean and standard deviation were calculated. Besides this, In order to determine whether the levels of perceived learned resourcefulness of teachers differ with respect to the variables of gender, age, marital status, the environment they live in, exercise hour and school type; independent t-test, One-way ANOVA and Kruskal-Wallis test were employed. In order to determine the differences between groups, Tukey HSD was performed as the second level test.

RESULTS

When the levels of perceived learned resourcefulness of the participant 340 teachers are reviewed, it was seen that the mean score was 121.44 and the standard deviation was 17.21 (Table 1).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

	<i>N</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>
Learned resourcefulness	340	81	176	121.44	17.22

The minimum score that can be obtained from the scale is 36, whereas the maximum is 180 and the median is 108. In this research, on the other hand, the minimum score obtained by the participants was 81 while the maximum score was 176. In general, we could say that teacher's levels of learned resourcefulness are above the average.

The results of One-way ANOVA test showed that there were not found significant differences between learned resourcefulness and age groups of teachers (F_{339} ; .607; $p>0.05$) (Table 2). Accordingly, it can be said that there is not a significant difference between age groups, levels of learned resourcefulness is declining at age of 20s and 50s, while it is rising up in the middle age in this study.

Table 2: Variance analysis results regarding to learned resourcefulness and age

<i>Groups</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
20-24	34	119.47	15.99	.607	.725
25-28	64	120.58	18.91		
29-33	103	123.28	16.55		
34-37	53	121.79	15.84		
38-43	42	122.79	20.42		
44-49	21	117.90	12.98		
50+	23	118.39	17.82		
Total	340	121.44	17.22		

* $p<0.05$

The results of One-way ANOVA test showed that there were no significant differences between learned resourcefulness and marital status of teachers (F_{339} ; .603; $p>0.05$) (Table 3). It could be interpreted that married people have higher levels of learned resourcefulness as opposed to engaged and divorced people, although there was no significant difference between the groups.

Table 3: Variance analysis results regarding to learned resourcefulness and marital status

<i>Groups</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Married	255	121.88	17.45	.603	.548
Single	77	120.55	16.33		
Divorced	8	115.88	19.08		
Total	340	121.44	17.22		

* $p<0.05$

The results of this study showed that learned resourcefulness of female and male according to gender were found insignificant ($t_{0.05:337} = 1.777$, $p>0.05$). Learned resourcefulness level of female ($M = 122.79 \pm 17.90$) was higher than male ($M = 119.43 \pm 16.07$), while there were no significant differences between female and male (Table 4).

Table 4: t-test results regarding to learned resourcefulness and gender

<i>Groups</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Female	198	122.79	17.91	1.777	.76
Male	141	119.43	16.07		

* $p<0.05$

The results of this study showed that there were significant differences between learned resourcefulness and the environment they live (F_{339} ; 3.651; $p<0.05$). According to the environment they live, the average and standard deviation of the person are the village ($M = 121.96 \pm 12.69$), county ($M = 128.14 \pm 16.48$), city ($M = 119.62 \pm 17.48$), and in metropolitans ($M = 125.76 \pm 16.93$) as indicated. Accordingly, learned resourcefulness levels of living in county ($M = 128.14 \pm 16.48$) was significantly higher than those living in the city ($M = 119.62 \pm 17.48$) ($p < 0.05$) (Table 5).

The results of this study showed that there were found significant differences between learned resourcefulness and exercise hour (χ^2 ,

Table 5: Variance analysis results regarding to learned resourcefulness and environment

<i>Groups</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Village	25	121.96	12.69	3.651	.013*
County	36	128.14	16.49		
City	238	119.62	17.49		
Metro-politan	41	125.76	16.94		
Total	340	121.44	17.22		

* $p<0.05$

7.340; $p < 0.05$). Accordingly, learned resourcefulness levels of teachers who exercise 2-4 hour ($M = 123.63 \pm 15.85$) and 4-8 hour ($M = 126.73 \pm 21.40$) in a week were significantly higher than 8 hour and above ($M = 103.67 \pm 13.91$) ($p < 0.05$) (Table 6).

Table 6: Variance analysis results regarding to learned resourcefulness and exercise hour

Groups	N	Mean	Sd	χ^2	Sig.
None	2	117.50	14.85	7.340	.028*
2-4	101	123.63	15.85		
4-8	26	126.73	21.40		
8- +	6	103.67	13.91		
Total	135	123.25	17.37		

* $p < 0.05$

The results of this study showed that learned resourcefulness of teachers who work in mainstream and schools for children with learning difficulties or disabilities (SEN) schools according to school type were found insignificant ($t_{0.05;338} = .861$, $p > 0.05$). Learned resourcefulness level of teachers in mainstream schools ($M = 122.26 \pm 18.64$) were higher than teachers in SEN schools ($M = 120.65 \pm 15.75$), while there were no significant differences between teachers in the both groups (Table 7).

Table 7: t-test results regarding to learned resourcefulness and school type

Groups	N	Mean	Sd	τ	Sig.
Main-stream	166	122.26	118.65	.861	.390
SEN	174	120.65	15.75		

* $p < 0.05$

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to investigate the levels of learned resourcefulness of teachers who work in mainstream and SEN schools. The levels of learned resourcefulness of the teachers are reviewed. From the mean score of 121.44 it is obvious that the teachers' levels of learned resourcefulness are above average. This finding is significant given the fact that individuals with high learned resourcefulness are capable of coping with negative feelings, of self-control and of overcoming everyday problems in their daily life. The results of the study showed that there were no significant differences between

learned resourcefulness and age groups of teachers. One could say that levels of learned resourcefulness are declining at age of 20s and 50s, while there is not a significant difference between age groups. But, in Keles's study, it was observed that the level of perceived learned resourcefulness goes up as age increases (Keles 2012). This difference between both studies could be explained by a very narrow age range in our study.

The results of study indicated that there were no significant differences between learned resourcefulness and marital status of teachers. This could be interpreted that married people have higher levels of learned resourcefulness according to engaged and divorced people, while there was no a significant difference between the groups. Some studies support this finding (Sari 2004; Aydin 2005; Keles 2012). The reason for this could be explained that married people, who overcome the problems easily, are more successful in coping with stress compared to engaged and divorced people. Another finding is that learned resourcefulness of female and male according to gender was found insignificant. Similar results were found in Sertbas's study (2014). The gender of teachers' is not an important factor on level of learned resourcefulness in this study, while it was related to level of learned resourcefulness in other studies (McWhirter 1997; Cakir 2009; Keles 2012).

The results of this study showed that there were significant differences between learned resourcefulness and the environment they live in. Accordingly, learned resourcefulness levels of participants living in county were significantly higher than those living in the city. It can be explained by people living in cities experience more stress factors, and the challenges of city life as opposed to the people living in the county. The results showed that there were significant differences between learned resourcefulness and exercise hour. Accordingly, learned resourcefulness levels of teachers who exercise 2-4 hour and 4-8 hour in a week were significantly higher than 8 hour and above. The beneficial effects of exercise on human health are noted in several studies. A considerable amount of research reveals that resourcefulness is an important and key predictor of adopting healthy lifestyle habits (Birkimer 1993; Kennet and Nisbet 1998; Levesque 2003).

In addition, learned resourcefulness of teachers who work within mainstream or schools for

children with learning difficulties or disabilities (SEN) were found insignificant. Learned resourcefulness level of teachers in mainstream school was higher than teachers in SEN, while there were no significant differences between teachers' in mainstream or SEN. This situation can be explained by teachers working in SEN schools are exposed to more stress, and the difficulties of working life. Some studies support this finding (Cherkes and Fiminan 1982; Lazuras 2006). Job stress scores by special education teachers were higher than the ones given by general educators. In practical terms, these findings call for attention to the fact that special education teachers tend to experience higher levels of job stress than their colleagues in general education.

CONCLUSION

The present study looked at the levels of *learned* resourcefulness of teachers who work in mainstream and SEN schools. When teachers' learned resourcefulness level were analyzed according to gender, marital status, school type and age, it was found that the gender, marital status, school type and age of teachers are not an important factor on level of learned resourcefulness in this study. When teachers' learned resourcefulness level were analyzed according to the environment they live in and exercise hour, it was found that the environment they live in and exercise hour of teachers are an important factor on level of learned resourcefulness in this study.

In conclusion, level of learned resourcefulness of teachers who working in stressful environments has been affected by several factors. Therefore learned resourcefulness is an important personal quality that helps individuals cope with difficulties in daily life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

More studies are needed about teachers who work in schools for children with learning difficulties. It should be investigated that how many years teachers served in this profession and types of school. Additionally, next study can be done in a wider geographical area.

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