The Effect of Turkish Geography Teacher's Personality on His Teaching Experiences

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Abstract: It is aimed in this study to determine to what extent the geography teachers at high schools reflect their personality on their teaching experiences. It has been observed by researchers that teachers with different personalities affect their students in different ways. The personal characteristics of a teacher play a significant role in determining the limits of his studies and affect his teaching experiences. Those who remain indifferent to activities and undetermined in planning have a negative effect on both classroom relations and each student's character development. Survey model was used in the study. The paper was formed through a questionnaire on 198 teachers, and showed that teachers reflected their personalities on their teaching experiences as their ages and seniority increased. The personal assets the teachers found in themselves were self-confidence, discipline, tidiness, justice and job-satisfaction.

Key words: Teaching personality, teaching experiences, academic behaviours.

INTRODUCTION

Personality is, in a sense, self-expression of one to the outer world. An individual starts shaping his personality from birth through his interaction with numerous variables; that is, he lays the foundations of his own life. In our modern social life, a healthy personality development enables the individual to perform his social role effectively, to lead an organized and happy life and to gain a meaning in the society. Schools, a social institution, are the main environmental factors effective in the development of personality. Teachers and parents are the ones who influence the student most. The studies up to now have showed that the personality of a teacher surely affect his students (Aydın, 1998). Especially in the studies carried out in the classroom environment, it is observed that students, while evaluating their teachers, pay more attention to their personalities than their professional characteristics and thus adopt them as their own behaviours (Tan, 1992, Soner, 1995, Lewis, 2000).

The information, skills and habits a student receives during the primary school years through interaction with his environment have great influence on his future educational life. Therefore, a student has to be provided with faultless educational environment by allowing a classroom atmosphere that encourages their personal development. In such an atmosphere, the personality and behaviours of a teacher are vital elements. Every student should be able to improve and recognize himself, and gain social skills in this appropriate learning environment. In all the activities, the individual traits of every student must be included, their self-confidence must be improved, and they should be helped to accept that there will always be different

ideas (Unlenen, 1983, Joyce and Weil, 1986). Especially Soloman and Corbit (1974) state that the reactions that might closely affect learning are related to other relevant reactions (teaching experiences), and that they interact with personality depending on age. These responses first appear at primary school level and are mostly formed as self-expression to outer reactions (Domjan, 2003). Teachers who direct these mutual reactions are said to have vital impact on the learning of the students and this impact is shaped with the personalities of the teachers. These traits are determined by Cruickshank and Bainer (1995) to be willingness, sincerity and humour, reliability, expectation of optimum success, encouragement and supportiveness, discipline and adaptability/flexibility.

In this regard, the personality a teacher reflects into the classroom environment in the light of these variables affects his teaching and directive academic behaviour. This developmental perspective the teacher follows might involve positive concepts that are formed in the personalities of students with the outer markers. However, these very high concepts of personality are tend to be less positive and more varied as they grow up, because the personality of students can be more adaptable to outer markers and might yield to interaction. Thus, the academic personality of a student in his academic success becomes predictable (Guay et al., 2003, Alvidrez and Weinstein, 1999, Tuan and Wang, 2000).

Many recent study focus on the effects of the interaction between students and teachers in classroom environment, which is hardly surprising. The result of a decade's study which shows that teachers can merge into the student's personal effective circle in the classroom indicates that the concepts of "teacher", classroom

organisation and curriculum are changing. These studies, as well as being transferred through structuring as pedagogic attention, also attract the attention to student-teacher relation. The sincerity of the teacher in his relations with the students individually is found to be the prerequisite for his classroom performance, professional love and better self-expression. The teacher cares not only for the feelings, efforts and performances of his students but also for their success, expectations and values. These types of binds with the teacher are thought to be particularly strong thanks to the numerous roles the teacher assumes (Furrrer and Skinner, 2003). In this way, teachers see learning as a natural process, and thus teaching is conceived as a process to ease and guide learning. Therefore, the presuppositions and beliefs of teachers about learners and learning affect their behaviours and applications at school, in the classroom (McCombs and Whisler, 1997). For this reason, a teacher should highlight individual productivity, organize the activities related to rationality, well-determine the effective circle of individual capacities and perform academic behaviours accordingly. A teacher who sees the development of self-capacity as his primary mission will focus on the effects of teaching and learning in everything he does; thus, the role of teaching stages in directing learning that is shaped with the effect of personality for all the teachers will be emphasized. These variables presented by the teacher after being shaped by his personality become the main determinants of the student and the learning environment. Here, the teacher is not only a concrete model with his personality but also a guide to direct the personality development in academic behaviours.

Aim and Purpose of the Research

This study aims to determine whether- according to which variables the personalities of teachers stand out in their teaching experiences.

To this end, the following questions are answered:

1-Do teachers reflect their personalities on teaching depending on their gender?

2-What is the level of the reflection of personality on teaching experiences depending on age?

3-Depending on the length of service, which teaching experiences are the most effected by personality?

4-Which are the personal traits that teachers find dominant in themselves?

Method of Research

This study was carried out in accordance with the survey model as a questionnaire application. The working set of the study is composed of 198 geography teachers at high schools in Istanbul in 2005-2006 education periods. In order to collect the data, literature scanning was carried out first and then a questionnaire form was developed as a result of a pre-interview. The first section of the questionnaire is composed of questions about personal traits; the second is composed of those about behavioural characteristics, and the third

Table 1. Personal Characteristics of the Teachers in the Sample

Characteristics	f	%
Gender		
Female	111	56, 1
Male	87	43, 9
Age		
25 and less	47	23, 7
26-35	73	36, 8
36-45	56	28, 3
46-55	16	8, 0
56 and more	6	3, 2
Length of Service		
0-5 years	44	22, 2
6-10 years	72	36, 4
11-15 years	44	22,2
16-21 years	23	11,6
21 years and more	15	7,6
n=198		

is composed of those about the behaviours of the teachers during their classroom activities (mastery learning).

As seen in Table 1, almost half of the teachers are female (47,7%), while the rest are male (52,3%). According to the age variable, more than half (57,7%) are at or below 35, while the rest (45,3%) are at and above 36. according to the length of service the ones working for 0-10 years are 56,4%, while those working for 11-21 years are 43,6%. SPSS 11,5 package program was used to analyze the data. In the analysis of the data, statistical frequency, percentage and one-way variance calculations were used.

Result of Research

In this study, to what extent geography teachers reflect their personalities on the learning environment in teaching aspect was tried to be determined. According to the analysis having been carried out, no significant difference in the teachers' reflection of personal characteristics was found ($p>0,05$).

According to the age variance of the teachers, as a result of one-way variance test carried out on the teachers who try to enable the students to feel the success-satisfaction by giving encouragement and self-confidence in class, a significant difference was determined ($p<0,05$).

As seen in Table 2, as a result of variance analysis on increasing the success-satisfaction of students by giving encouragement and self-confidence in class according to the age variance, F value (2,999) was found to be significant at $p<0,05$ level. As a result of the LSD test carried out to determine among which groups there is a significant difference, it was determined that there is a significant difference at $p<0,05$ level in favour of those who always try to enable the students to feel the success-satisfaction by giving encouragement and self-confidence in class (n=56, ort=2,87) at 36-45 ages, (n=56, ort=2,63) at 26-35 ages, and (n=47, ort=2,67) at 25 and below. As the age increases, this ratio is still high as can be seen as (n=56, ort=2,87) at 36-45 ages.

Table 2. Enabling Students to Feel the Success-Satisfaction by Giving Encouragement and Self-Confidence in Class According to the Age Variance

Source of Variance	Sum of Square	Sd	Mean Square	F value	p
Inter-groups	2,522	4	0,630	2,999	0,021
In-groups	30,270	193	0,280		
Total	32,792	197			

Table 3. Making the Students Feel That Teachers Can Always Give Socio-Economical Reinforcements, According to the Length of Service Variance

Source of Variance	Sum of Square	Sd	Mean Square	F value	p
Inter-groups	3,213	4	0,803	3,081	0,018
In-groups	37,552	193	0.261		
Total	40,765	197			

Table 4. Specific Values Showing Certain Personal Characteristics of Teachers

(Specific Sample Traits)	Always		Sometimes		Never	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Self-confidence	156	78,7	41	20,7	1	0,6
Discipline	120	60,3	67	33,7	12	6,0
Sincerity	152	76,7	36	18,2	10	5,1
Being fair	149	75,2	45	22,8	4	2,0

According to the length of service variance, as a result of one-way variance analysis carried out to determine whether there is a significant difference with respect to the fact that teachers make students feel that they can always give them reinforcement, as seen in Table 3, F value (3,081) was found to be significant (sd=4,193, p<0,05).

As seen above, as a result of one-way variance analysis carried out about making the students feel that teachers can always give reinforcements according to the length of service variance, a significant difference was determined at p<0,05 level. As a result of the LSD test carried out to determine whether there is a significant difference among the groups in these ideas that differentiate according to the length of service, a significant difference at p<0,05 level was found in favour of teachers with 16-21 years of service (n=23, ort=2,70) who make students feel that they can always give reinforcement to them. In the analysis, teachers with 0-5 years of service had (n=44, ort=2,53); those with 6-10 years of service had (n=72, ort=2,50); those with 11-15 years of service had (n=444, ort=2,52), while those with 25 years and above service had (n=15, ort=2,53) ratios.

This finding shows parallelism with the values of reflecting the personality that change according to the age variance of the teachers. It is also seen that the age average of the teachers of this service duration (16-21 years) is between 35-45 ages. In Table 4, the personal characteristics that teachers see in themselves the most are given.

These expressions that depend on personality were determined as specific dominant personal traits. With these articles, it is aimed to determine to what extent the teachers are aware of their own personalities and to what extent they reflect these traits on their teaching in the classroom; and it is supposed that these dominant traits will somehow be reflected onto the student. It is thought that a teacher who has self-confidence will expect his student to be self-confident as well or will adapt his academic and managerial behaviours in such a way to develop this confidence.

Discussion

In the study, no significant difference between sexes was found with respect to demonstrating personal traits in the teaching environment according to sexes. According to Kuçukahmet (1989), in a study carried out to determine to what extent a teacher is effective on the development of students' personality, it was established that the teacher makes a permanent effect on the personality and memory of the students by reflecting his own personality on teaching. It is also a fact that this effect (which is also parallel to our study) doesn't change according to sexes.

In the study, it was found that teachers of 36-45 ages give more confidence and enable them to their own achievements more than other age groups. The personality of a teacher is very important in the academic interaction that evolves in teaching experiences. Ausbel, Flanders and Hamachek defined the four main personal traits a student would like to see in a teacher as sincerity, patience, tolerance and attention (Oktay, 1994). It is almost impossible to provide teaching experiences that haven't been affected by the personality of the teacher. No matter how much scientific content information involves, those who shape and make them meaningful are subjective beings. In this transferring process, different teachers reflect their personal traits on their teaching experiences at different levels. Nevertheless, the fact that the teacher tries to enable the students to feel the success-satisfaction differentiates from the other traits significantly (2, 999), according to the age variance. This situation develops parallel to the increase in the age factor, and might be considered as an indicator of the fact that the teachers try hard to merge their personal trait- the feeling of confidence- into the teaching experiences.

In the study, the teachers with 16-21 years of service showed by making the students feel that they can always give encouragement to students that they are following the improvement of their students in every aspect. According to the length of service variance, the subject of making students feel that they can always give them the socio-psychological reinforcements (patience, sincerity, tolerance and attention) differentiated in favour of teachers with 16-21 of service duration as parallel to the age variance. The willingness of the teachers in giving these reinforcements is thought to be due to the need for testing the personal characteristics and mutual expectation, because in every act of students, they would like to be appreciated by their teachers and they have a need for refreshing confidence. Therefore, continuing these reinforcements ceaselessly and under control is the thing that shapes the personalities of the students.

In the study, the dominant personal traits of teachers were determined to be self-confidence 78,7%, discipline 60,3%, satisfaction from being busy with students 76,7% and being fair 75,2%. It is also seen that the personal traits teachers reflect on their teaching experience most are self-confidence, discipline, sincerity and being fair. Some findings to this end state that the personal traits of teachers are the most important variances affecting their teaching experiences (Tan, 1992).

A teacher, being aware of the importance of his profession, should be able to control the reflections of his personal traits on his teaching experiences while furnishing the students with necessary information and skills. For this purpose, they should be aware of their profession and have a professional perspective.

The following suggestions are formed in this regard:

1-In the light of the findings, teachers should observe the behaviours of his peers and be a model for students with their behaviours, because students are tend to imitate those whom they love, accept and adopt.

2-Teachers should be able to reflect their own personalities that act as a reinforcement agent in forming and perpetuating positive behaviours in students onto the learning environment.

3-A teacher should never forget that he is a model for his students and for the society, and thus, accordingly, act and talk coherently.

4-A teacher should never have prejudices either towards students or to other people, should have a vision, and should be respectful to his own personality as well as to other people.

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