

INVESTIGATING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE AND STUDENT RELATED SOCIAL STRESS

ÖĞRETMENLERİN PSİKOLOJİK DAYANIKLILIKLARI İLE ÖĞRENCİ KAYNAKLI SOSYAL STRESLERİ ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİNİN İNCELENMESİ

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Abstract

Stress is known as one of the most important factors affecting teachers' performance thus knowing the source of the stress is important in terms of coping with stress and increasing teacher resilience. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the resilience and student-related social stress levels of teachers working at the preschool primary, secondary, and high school levels in terms of different variables. Conducted on the basis of the correlational survey method this study consisted of 454 teachers randomly selected among the teachers of various subjects working in Diyarbakır. In this study "Resilience Scale for Adults" and "Teacher Social Stress Scale-Student Related" were used as data collection instruments. The findings showed that teachers' student-related social stress score is 3.33 while teachers' resilience score is 3.79. A negative significant relationship was observed between teachers' student-related social stress and psychological resilience. Teachers' psychological resilience significantly differs in terms of gender variable while teachers' student-related social stress significantly differs in terms of the school location. This study provides important data about the relationships between resilience and student-related social stress, thus the results are considered to contribute not only to teachers but also to the preservice teachers.

Keywords: student-related social stress, resilience, teacher, student, stress

Öz

Öğretmenlerin çalışma performanslarını etkileyen önemli unsurlardan bir tanesi stres olarak kabul edildiğinden stres unsuru olarak düşünülen faktörlerin kaynağını bilmek stresle baş edebilme ve öğretmen dayanıklılığını artırma yönelik etkinliklerin işe koşulması açısından önem arz etmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, okul öncesi, ilk, ortaokul ve lise gibi okul kademelerinde çalışan öğretmenlerin psikolojik dayanıklılıkları ile öğrenci kaynaklı sosyal stres düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkiyi farklı değişkenler açısından incelemektir. İlişkisel tarama modelinde yürütülmüş olan bu çalışmaya, Diyarbakır iline bağlı farklı okul kademelerinde ve çeşitli branşlarda görev yapan ve rastgele seçilen toplam 454 öğretmen dâhil edilmiştir. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak "Yetişkinler için Psikolojik Dayanıklılık Ölçeği" ve "Öğretmenler için Öğrenci Kaynaklı Sosyal Stres Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler neticesinde öğretmenlerin öğrenci kaynaklı sosyal stresinin ortalaması 3.33, psikolojik dayanıklılığının ortalaması ise 3.79 olduğu bulunmuştur. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin öğrenci kaynaklı sosyal stresleri ile psikolojik dayanıklılıkları arasında negatif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu saptanmıştır. Öğretmenlerin cinsiyet değişkenine göre psikolojik dayanıklılık düzeylerinde anlamlı bir farklılık gözlenirken okulun bulunduğu yer değişkenine göre ise öğretmenlerin öğrenci kaynaklı sosyal stres düzeylerinde anlamlı farklılık olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Bu çalışma farklı okul kademesinde görev yapan öğretmenlerin psikolojik dayanıklılıkları ile öğrenci kaynaklı sosyal stres düzeylerine ilişkin önemli bulgular sağlamaktadır. Bu yüzden çalışma sonuçlarının hem öğretmenlere hem de öğretmen adaylarına katkıda bulunacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: öğrenci kaynaklı sosyal stres, dayanıklılık, öğretmen, öğrenci, stres

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INTRODUCTION

Known as one of the common problems of the current age stress appears to negatively affect public health. Affecting individuals from different parts of society, stress has taken place in modern life as a problem that mankind has to deal with in their lives. What stress means as an element that affects many people's lives? Stress refers to the emotional and spiritual tension caused by some problems (Grace, 2005). Stress is a phenomenon that affects people's behavior, professional performance, and communication with colleagues (Aydm & Kaya, 2016).

Current research has shown that teaching is a profession with the highest level of stress. (Aydm & Kaya, 2016; Engelbrecht, Oswald, Swart & Eloff, 2003; Kebbi, 2018; Stiglbauer & Zuber, 2018, Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Crowded classes, schools with inadequate equipment and materials, social violence, basic curriculum reforms that do not go along with professional development, determination of teacher achievement according to the scores of students in the central examinations, weak communication and relations with students, students-related crime and discipline incidents and lack of wages sources are accepted as the main causes of the teacher stress (Ajayi 2016; Hanushek & Rivkin 2006; Pehlivan, 1995). Besides, some environmental conditions and personal characteristics also put teachers at risk of chronic stress leading to exhaustion. Environmental risk factors include lack of administrative support, increased workload, class management issues, inadequate support from managers and parents, lack of confidence, and non-supportive relationships with colleagues (Gibbs & Miller 2014; Gu & Day 2007; Montgomery & Rupp, 2005). These factors can lead to emotional exhaustion, negative feelings towards others, and loss of success at teachers (Maslach et al. 2001). What is more, teachers under stress are less likely to be satisfied with their work and feel a commitment to the school as an organization (Nagar, 2012) while they are more likely to leave from the profession earlier (Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

One of the most important reasons that lead teachers to experience stress is the job dissatisfaction caused by problems related to the student's misbehavior (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Burke, Greenglass & Schwarzer, 1996; Friedman & Schnurr, 1995; Ingersoll, 2003; McCormick & Barnett, 2011). The student's misconduct is defined as behaviors that disrupt the learning-teaching process or prevent the regular proceeding of the class (Finn, Fish & Scott, 2008). Many negative behaviors such as being late for class, verbal abuse or disrespect towards teachers, disobeying instructions, bullying, gang activity, gun or drug possession, rape, theft are examples of students' misconduct (Bru, Stephens & Torsheim, 2002). The fact that taking a considerable amount of time to deal with students' misconduct prevents the full realization of teaching and learning activities (Aloe et al. 2014). Arising due to these erroneous behaviors, weak student-teacher relationship reduces the emotional support perception of the students and increases the negative behaviors such as conflict in the classroom (Boyle, Borg, Falzon & Baglioni, 1995; Bru et al. 2002). To sum up, the teachers coping with students-related stress and misconduct of students affect not only the behavior itself but also the classroom environment and student-teacher relationship (Marzano, Marzano & Pickering, 2003).

Student Related Social Stress is linked to the interaction with student-teacher in the work environment (Taddei et al. 2019), and it undermines the teachers' performance, job satisfaction, and motivation (McCormick & Barnett, 2011; Veldeman, van Tartwijk, Brekelmans, & Wubbels, 2013). Besides, student-related social stress interferes with teachers' teaching activities which in turn leads to teachers' burnout (Robers, Zhang, Truman, & Snyder, 2012; Aloe, Shisler, Norris, Nickerson, & Rinker, 2014). Thus teachers need to know the sources of stress to cope with student-related stress. However, it is not enough to know the

factors that cause stress in teachers. Thus, it is vital to know the factors increasing the resilience to cope with stressful situations too. Resilience is a balance between the ability of the individual to cope with difficult situations and stress. As related to many factors, there is no complete and consistent conceptual definition of resilience but various studies suggest some alternative expressions (Gu & Day, 2013).

The most common definition of resilience is the process of adaptation to stress sources such as distress, trauma, tragedy, threats or family problems, serious health problems, problems in the workplace, and financial situations (American Psychologists Association [APA], 2010). Resilience is defined as on one hand overcoming the difficulties, on the other hand, improving the ability to develop social, academic, and professional competence despite stressful situations (Howard & Johnson, 2004). This definition is quite alike the definition of teachers' resilience. Teachers' resilience is related to the effectiveness of education, job satisfaction, and the quality of the training process (Gu & Day, 2013). Betlman et al. (2011) explained teachers' resilience in four ways: (1) a quality that allows teachers to maintain their commitment to teaching practices despite challenging conditions and repeated setbacks; (2) to overcome environmental stress factors and potential risks; (3) endeavor to achieve school goals even in adverse conditions; (4) quickly and effectively gain strength against stress. Howard and Johnson (2004) describe the resilient teachers as the ones having a strong sense of being able to control every situation; taking lessons from past failures and overcoming the negative experiences.

It is stated that teachers with a high level of resilience will be more successful in their work-life due to their being self-reliant, hopeful, and optimistic about the future and therefore they will be exposed to less stress (Crossman & Haris, 2006). Teachers with a high level of resilience can handle stressful situations at the same time meeting the needs of students (Gu & Day, 2013). Therefore, supporting teachers' job satisfaction, maintaining their commitment to the profession, and creating a supportive school environment help teachers to be more resilient by reducing the teachers' stress level. Resilience and stress result not only from personality characteristics but also from environmental conditions. Besides, teachers who are exposed to less stress contribute to the academic and social achievement of students by improving the teaching process (Day et al. 2006). In summary, determining the level of stress and resilience of teachers is important in terms of contributing to both effective teaching and learning process and students' holistic development. Although the concepts of resilience and stress have been examined by many researchers before, there are limited number of studies that examine these two concepts altogether. For instance, Rizqi (2017) investigated the resilience and stress levels of teachers who have more than five years of teaching experience and found that supportive organizational and favorable social relations decrease the teachers' stress level and increase the resilience of teachers. Richards et al. (2016) investigated the resilience, exhaustion, and stress levels of 174 primary school and 241 secondary school teachers with the help of a questionnaire conducted cross-sectional and found that teachers' resilience is an important variable for reducing teachers' stress and exhaustion. On the contrary, Hastings & Bham (2003) stated that teachers' concerns about children's misbehavior were found to be associated with increased stress, and teachers are constantly exposed to the demand of managing classrooms successfully and helping children's learning (Gibbs & Miller, 2014). This in turn leads to developing some kind of resilience to prevent the decision of leaving the profession (Klassen & Anderson, 2009). As seen from the studies in the literature, there is not a kind of study investigating the relationship between the resilience and student-related social stress levels of teachers working at different school levels. Thus, this study is believed to be one of the studies determining the resilience and student-related stress levels of teachers, filling the gaps related to these concepts in the

literature, and providing data for the upcoming and prospective studies on resilience and stress levels of teachers.

In line with these reasons, this study aims to determine the relationship between the resilience and student-related social stress levels of teachers working at the preschool, primary, secondary, and high school levels in terms of different variables. With this general aim, the following research questions were investigated:

1. What are the teachers' psychological resilience and student-related social stress levels?
2. What kind of relationship does exist between teachers' psychological resiliency and student-related social stress?
3. Is there a significant difference between teachers' psychological resiliency and student-related social stress in terms of gender variable?
4. Is there a significant difference between teachers' psychological resiliency and student-related social stress in terms of school location?

METHOD

Research Design

This study is conducted based on the correlational survey method as it aims to investigate the relationship between teachers' psychological resilience and student-related social stress. A correlational survey is a research design used to describe the relationship and the nature of the relationship between two or more variables (Brink & Wood, 1998).

Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of teachers working in state schools of Diyarbakır in the 2018-2019 academic years. The sample of the study consisted of 454 teachers randomly selected among the teachers of various subjects. The mean of the participants' age was determined to be 33.9. The distribution of the teachers in relation to gender and school level was presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The distribution of the teachers in relation to gender and school level

		N	%
Gender	Female	224	49.3
	Male	230	50.7
School Level	Preschool	22	4.9
	Primary School	56	12.3
	Secondary School	281	61.9
	High School	95	20.9
Experience	1-5 years	163	35.9
	6-10 years	107	23.6
	11-15 years	85	18.7
	16-20 years	62	13.7
	21 years and above	37	8.1
Total		454	100.0

Data Collection Tools

In this study “Resilience Scale for Adults” and “Teacher Social Stress Scale-Student-Related” were used as data collection instruments.

Resilience Scale for Adults (RSA): The Resilience Scale for Adults was developed by Friberg et al. (2003), and the preliminary version of the scale was comprised of five dimensions: personal competence, social competence, family coherence, social support, and personal structure. Friberg et al. (2005) in their following study divided the dimension of personal competence into two dimensions and named them as ‘perception of self’ and ‘planned future’ and put forward a construct comprised of 33 items and six dimensions. The dimensions of personal structure (3,9,15,21) and planned future (2,8,14,20) consist of four items; the dimensions of family coherence (5,11,17,23,26,32), and perception of self (1,7,13,19,28,31) and social competence (4,10,16,22,25,29) consist of six items and the dimension of social support (6,12,18,24,27,30,33) consists of seven items. In the study of adaptation to Turkish culture, Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of dimensions were calculated between .66 and .81 for the students' sample and between .68 and .79 for the employees' sample. Moreover, Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of the total scale were calculated as 0.86 for both students and employees altogether (Basım & Çetin, 2011). In this study, Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of RSA were calculated between .50 and .74 for dimensions and .90 for the total of the scale.

Teacher Social Stress Scale-Student Related (TSSSSR): Teacher Social Stress Scale-Student Related developed by Taddei et al. (2017) and adapted to Turkish culture by İlhan and Kinay (2018). The original scale form consists of 18 items and four dimensions named “verbally aggressive”, “dislike behaviors”, “awkward reactions” and “demanding requests”. High scores obtained on the scale means high social stress. In the adaptation study to Turkish culture, as the factor structure was not confirmed with fit indexes obtained via CFA thus EFA was used to determine the factor structure appropriate for the Turkish sample. EFA analysis showed that TSSSSR consists of a single factor structure and Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was calculated as 0.94 (İlhan & Kinay, 2018). In this study, Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficients of TSSSSR was calculated as .94.

Raines-Eudy (2000: 126) stated that reliability coefficients above .50 are accepted as reliable so the two scales used in this study and their dimensions were found to be reliable.

Data Collection

Data collection instruments were applied to the branch teachers working in various school levels located in the province of Diyarbakır in the 2018-2019 academic year. The data were collected in a way that the teaching and learning process would not be interrupted in December 2018. Replicated data collection instruments were applied to volunteer teachers working in randomly selected schools. The data obtained from the teachers were examined and 454 questionnaires that were found to be filled completely were processed into the SPSS program and then analyzed.

Data Analysis

In this study, frequency and percentages were calculated for descriptive statistics of the sample. For the first research question mean and standard deviation values and for the second research question, Pearson Correlation Coefficients were calculated. Independent samples t-test was used to determine whether there is a significant difference between teachers' psychological resilience and student-related social stress in terms of gender variable and one way ANOVA was used to determine whether there is a significant difference between teachers' psychological resilience and student-related social stress in terms of the school

location. .05 degree of significance was used in the analysis. In the case of a statistically significant difference, the Scheffe test was used to determine the source of the difference, and the effect size was calculated to determine the degree of relationship between the variables. Green and Salkind (2016) stated that eta-square value between .01-.06 was interpreted as small, between .06-.14 as moderate, and .14 and over as large. SPSS program was used for the analysis.

FINDINGS

Mean and standard deviation values related to teachers' psychological resilience and student-related social stress were presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Mean and standard deviation values related to teachers' psychological resilience and student-related social stress

	N	\bar{X}	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Sd
Social stress	454	3.33	1.00	7.00	1.31
Personal structure	454	3.73	1.00	5.00	.77
Planned future	454	3.79	1.00	5.00	.81
Family coherence	454	3.79	1.00	5.00	.72
Perception of self	454	3.83	1.00	5.00	.67
Social competence	454	3.70	1.00	5.00	.70
Social support	454	3.88	1.00	5.00	.75
Total Score of Psychological Resilience	454	3.79	1.00	5.00	.57

As seen in Table 2, the mean values of teachers' student-related social stress scores were observed to be 3.33. As for mean values of teachers' psychological resilience scores was observed to be between 3.70-3.88 for the sub-dimensions and to be 3.79 for the whole scale score. Findings related to what kind of relationship exists between teachers' psychological resilience and student-related social stress were presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The results of Pearson Correlation Coefficients analysis related to the relationship between teachers' psychological resilience and student-related social stress

	Personal structure	Planned future	Family coherence	Perception of self	Social Competence	Social Support	Total Score of Psychological Resilience
Student-related social stress	-.050	-.052	-.054	-.111*	-.164*	-.105*	-.118*

*p<.05

As seen in Table 3, a significant negative correlation was found between teachers' psychological resilience and student-related social stress. In addition, a significant negative correlation was observed between all sub-dimensions of teachers' psychological resilience and student-related social stress, however; the correlation observed in the sub-dimensions of "personal structure", "planned future" and "family coherence" was determined to be not significantly different. Findings related to whether there is a significant difference between

teachers' psychological resilience and student-related social stress in terms of gender variable, were presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The results of Independent Samples t-test analysis related to the relationship between teachers' psychological resilience and student-related social stress in terms of gender variable

	Gender	N	\bar{X}	Sd	Df	t	p	Effect size
Student-related social stress	Female	224	3.21	1.31	452	1.891	.059	.021
	Male	230	3.44	1.30				
Psychological resilience	Female	224	3.88	.53	452	3.108	.002*	
	Male	230	3.71	.60				

*p<.05

As seen in Table 4, a significant difference was not observed between teachers' student-related social stress in terms of gender variable. However, a significant difference was observed between teachers' psychological resilience in favor of female teachers but eta square value shows that this significant difference has a small effect. Findings related to whether there is a significant difference between teachers' psychological resilience and student-related social stress in terms of school location, were presented in Table 5.

Table 5. The results of one way ANOVA analysis related to the relationship between teachers' psychological resilience and student-related social stress in terms of location of the school variable

	Location of School	N	\bar{X}	Sd	F	p	Effect size	Scheffe
Student-related social stress	1.City center	336	3.21	1.22	6.014	.003	.026	1-3
	2.District center	49	3.47	1.33				
	3. Village	69	3.79	1.61				
Psychological resilience	1.City center	336	3.80	.55	1.490	.226		
	2. District center	49	3.86	.66				
	3. Village	69	3.69	.60				

As seen in Table 5, a significant difference was not observed between teachers' psychological resilience in terms of the school location. However, a significant difference was observed between teachers' student-related social stress in terms of school location but eta square value shows that this significant difference has a small effect. As for the mean values, the highest mean related to teachers' student-related social stress was determined to be belonging to the teachers working in schools located in villages.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this part of the study, the findings have been discussed in line with the literature. First of all, teachers' student-related social stress and psychological resilience scores were investigated. The findings showed that teachers' student-related social stress score is 3.33 which is lower than the moderate level and teachers' resilience score is 3.79 which is higher than the moderate level. These findings are thought to result from the fact that the majority of the teachers' professional experience ranges from one to ten years and the mean of the teachers' age was 33.9. Henry et al. (2011) stated that teachers are less stressed and more

resentful in their first years of professional careers. Hannah and Morrisey (1987); Kaner, Bayraklı and Güzeller (2011) also found in their studies that as people get older, their resilience level decreases, and stress level increases.

Secondly, the relationship between teachers' student-related social stress and psychological resilience was investigated. The findings showed that there is a negative significant relationship between teachers' student-related social stress and psychological resilience, which is consistent with the studies in the related literature (Çevik, Doğan & Yıldız, 2016; Malkoç & Yalçın 2015; Richards et al. 2016; Rizqi, 2017). For example; Richards et al. (2016) found that resilience was an important factor in reducing teachers' stress and exhaustion. Rizqi (2017) found that supportive organization and favorable social relations decrease the teachers' stress level and increase their resilience. Malkoç and Yalçın (2015) found that stress coping skills predict resilience. One of the most important reasons that teachers experience stress is their professional dissatisfaction resulting from problems related to the student's erroneous behavior. Thus, as the teachers' resilience level increase, teachers are expected to cope better with students' misbehaviors, to be less affected by adverse conditions in work environments, to be more successful in dealing with the difficulties, to show higher job satisfaction, and experience less stress (Polat & Özdemir, 2018). As a result, a negative relationship between teachers' student-related social stress and psychological resilience could be an expected result.

Thirdly, the study investigated the significant difference between teachers' student-related social stress and psychological resilience in terms of gender variable. Findings showed that there is not a significant difference between teachers' student-related social stress in terms of gender variable while there is a significant difference between teachers' psychological resilience in favor of female teachers. These findings show consistency with the results of related studies in the literature (Akpınar, 2013; Hannah & Morrisey 1986; Şanlı, 2017; Reimer, 2002). Akpınar (2013) and Şanlı (2017) did not find any significant difference between the stress level of male and female teachers in their studies. However, Önder and Gülay (2008), Hannah and Morrisey (1987) in their studies found that resilience levels differ significantly in terms of gender variable. In these studies, gender was stated to be a critical factor contributing to the development of resilience as well as women are more resilient than men. However, it was also reported that resilience changes according to cultural characteristics (Juma & Simitra, 2014; Mousavi & Askari, 2010). In societies that pay more attention to men's education, as girls have to cope with difficulties from an early age, they grow as more resilient individuals when they have a profession (Mousavi & Askari, 2010). As a result, the fact that female teachers have a higher level of resilience can be explained by the cultural characteristics of gender concept in our country.

Finally, the study investigated whether there is a significant difference between teachers' student-related social stress and psychological resilience in terms of the school location variable. Findings showed that there isn't a significant difference between teachers' psychological resilience in terms of school location while there is a significant difference between teachers' student-related social stress in terms of the school location. The teachers working in the village were determined to have the highest level of student-related social stress which is supported by Girgin (1995), Öztürk (1995), Abel and Sewell (1999), Yerlikaya (2000). In these studies, factors like poor working conditions, the distance of schools to the city center, the difficulty of being the only teachers in the classrooms which have various students from the different grade, failure to cope with the students' misbehaviors, lack of tools, lack of student-teacher-parent relationship, low socioeconomic and cultural structure of school and students' family, increase the teachers' stress level. Therefore, the teachers

working in the village tend to have a higher level of stress due to the aforementioned variables.

The results of this study are hoped to guide the teachers to conduct educational activities effectively and be the least affected by the stressful, difficult, and negative conditions they come across. In addition, the results of the study are considered to contribute not only to teachers but also to the candidate teachers. Many teacher training programs generally provide the competence of teaching at school but do not provide any competence on how to cope with student-related social stress and how to be more resilient. Teacher training programs, however, should help candidate teachers to gain competence such as completing paperwork, joining groups, and dealing with students' misbehaviors (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). Preparing candidate teachers for the realities of school life and helping them to gain real-life experiences in schools will increase their resilience level (Richards et al. 2016). Therefore, including the educational goals related to increasing resilience level to teacher training programs, will help new teachers to manage their stress and exhaustion better. In addition, it is recommended in-service training programs to be more effective for reducing the teachers' student-related social stress level and for contributing resilience level of teachers working in the school as well as strengthening the relations between universities and educational institutions for the implementation of results into practice.

While this research provides important data about the relationships between resilience and student-related social stress, there are a few limitations to be considered in the research. Firstly, as the sample of the study consists of teachers working in the districts of Diyarbakır, the results may not reflect the resilience and student-related social stress levels of teachers working in other regions of Turkey. Secondly, the teachers' student-related social stress levels and resilience may change over time; a longitudinal study following the teachers throughout the year can be conducted in order to obtain more durable findings.

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