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The effects of positive psychological capital and negative feelings on students' violence tendency

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Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to determine the effects of psychological capital and negative feelings of students on their violence tendency. A sample of 745 high school students agreed to participate in this study. For each scale, the exploratory factor analysis and the confirmatory factor analysis were performed. Then, the sum of each scale was taken and the data were analysed using the structural equation approach. The results of this study show that students' psychological capital reduces their violence tendency through their reduced negative feelings such as anxiety, stress and burnout. It would be beneficial for school managers and teachers to invest in strengthening psychological capital levels of their students if they want to reduce their violence tendency.

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1. Introduction

Violence, which is expected to decline with level of development of societies, is observed to continue from the past to the present day. Today, it is experienced in its primitive form, like it was in the past, as well as in a variety of ways through the use of technology. In this context, violence is a serious threat to human rights. Violence continues to exist as one of man's social problems in developed and developing countries of 21st century (WHO, 2002).

There are many causes of violence so it should be dealt with within a bio-psycho-social integrity. Its biological causes include genetics, hormones, physical and mental illnesses causing cognitive changes (Baltas, 2000). It is considered that its psychological causes encompass the gains of violence, parental attitudes, frustration, actuation,

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ensuring control and power, being dependent / needy and failure to learn communication and conflict resolution skills (Ogel, Tari & Yilmazcetin-Eke, 2006). Among social reasons are tolerance to violence in society, that it is seen as a problem solving method, inadequacy of family education, media influence, gender roles, life distress, migration and globalization (Kizmaz, 2006).

During adolescence, a period of rapid development, many new responsibilities and the requirement for creating an identity, which will lead to conflicts, emerge. Conflicts arise internally as well as with the society. These conflicts emerge in an adolescent as a revolt against society. At the same time, it is a period when risk-taking behaviour is observed the most. In such a case, an adolescent may feel insignificant, believe s/he can destroy everything that makes his/her life negative using violence, and use violence when faced with problems. As an adolescent feels insignificant and his/her belief in how much this will remain unchanged grows, the intensity of violence may be increased (Gelbal, 2006; Guney, 2008; Ozgur, Yorukoglu & Arabaci, 2011).

Increase in the tendency to violence seems to be concerned with changing social structure. Karasu (2008) suggests that social control may weaken and relationships may become shallow with urbanization, which may have an impact on violence and criminal behaviour. Presence of problems in urban areas, including environmental pollution, heavy traffic, transportation difficulties, survival anxiety, unemployment, high cost of services, economic crises, negatively affects the mental health of individuals, leading to increased tendency to violence and crime rates (Karasu, 2008). In addition, serious gaps are formed between social classes in terms of consumption, and tendency to violence based on urban distribution problem becomes widespread (Harvey, 2003).

Previous studies also associated aggression and violence with developmental features of adolescence. Gordon (1999) stated that adolescents may act reactive specifically when faced with frustration and not being understood, perceive authority figures as hostile and thus show tendency to violence.

Other results from previous research include the fact that violence is seen more in the early and mid-adolescent age group, that males are more prone to violent behaviour, and that hyperactivity, low self-concern, depression and anxiety enhance violent behaviors (Kapci, 2004). In the case of affective disorders, e.g. depression, etc. and some personality disorders (especially borderline personality disorder), violent behaviour is often observed in the form of self-harm and suicide.

Risk factors related to violence can be community-acquired or be associated with personal characteristics. Being involved in a bully peer group, academic failure, social loneliness and rejection are mentioned among personal risk factors in tendency to violence (Debarbieux, 2009).

According to Flannery (1997), tendency to violence is much more common among adolescents who use anger, violence as a means of coping while solving problems. Individuals with violent behaviors may often have problems with controlling their feelings. They can be easily hurt by others and may think that they can solve problems through violence and gain prestige.

1.1. Psychological Capital and Tendency to Violence

Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2006) defined positive psychological capital as a positive psychological development of an individual. Positive psychological capital is concerned with "who an individual is" and "who s/he can be" in developmental sense (Luthans, Youssef & Avolio, 2006).

The concept of psychological capital has emerged as a result of studies on positive psychology and positive organizational school, its reflection on the school environment, and particularly positive organizational behavior research (Luthans et al., 2006). Luthans, Youssef and Avolio (2006) concluded that positive psychological capital is the concept, which emerged as a branch of positive organizational behavior, and which best meets its properties. Psychological capital is a concept resulting from a combination of a person's characteristics open to development, such as self-efficacy, hope, optimism, resilience, and it makes more sense than the whole consisting of these characteristics.

Although positive psychological capital consists of self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience, the concept makes more than the sum of all these dimensions (Luthans et al., 2006). Self-efficacy is defined as trusting oneself that one can perform challenging tasks (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998); hope as being patient on the road to objectives to succeed and being able to reconsider options where necessary (Snyder, 2002); optimism as having positive thoughts that one can be successful now and in the future (Luthans et al., 2006); resilience as being strong against

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