



PERCEPTION OF 'EDUCATION' AS A POSITIVE SUPPORTIVE FACTOR IN TERMS OF BIG FIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS

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Abstract:

Education is a systematic approach carried throughout a defined period of time. Throughout this process, it is aimed to teach, learn and exchange knowledge and abilities in certain places supplied with required equipment. In this general definition of education, it can be said that there has been a lot of changes and evolution in education as in every concept of the process. The main elements in these changes seems technological developments and it effects not only school conception but also education itself. This study aims to investigate and define the perceptions of the students towards education. The participants have been selected randomly from different levels and along with the demographic factors the related analysis has been carried in SPSS program. Along with a questionnaire, the participants are also asked to make their own definition of 'education'. Education is handled as not a learning teaching process only, but as a social place where some behaviors are acquired along with the knowledge. At this point the relation between big five personality factors and positive support factors are evaluated in the concept of the study. The findings are evaluated according to the related literature and the gathered data is analyzed in SPSS program. The reliability analysis show that the questionnaire is highly reliable (Cronbach-alpha=.879). The collected data are applied to MANOVA and correlation tests along with the descriptive analysis.

Keywords: big five personality factors, education, positive support factor

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1. Introduction

The education itself is a term and concept aiming to form intentional and systematic changes in the behavior of the students and this process has also effects over the society (Naziev, 2017). The system has continuously changed, and it is important to have adapted modern, effective techniques and methods into the education policies to have a powerful education outcome. The schools on the other hand are generally considered as boring and time-wasting places (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2013). The students tend to ditch the school and spend their times at different places such as PlayStation cafes and cinemas etc. (Kabapınar & Gümüşsoy, 2019). It is not a national problem, but an international problem and every nation has been trying to find their own way of solution to overcome this problem (Revell, 2002) (Veresova & Mala, 2016). In order to develop a positive attitude towards schools, experts prepare and apply programs such as (European Commission, 2014). Positive support programs are one of them and the schools are tried to convert into places to attract the students. There are different elements to compose and support a positive behaviour attitude in schools. These are: school administrator support, staff support, training and professional development, consistent approach and teaming (Pinkelman, McIntosh, Berg, & Strickland-Cohen, 2015). Besides these key elements there are other factors needed to be considered to provide a positive support climate in school and classroom (Komb, 2012). The first element is to develop and reinforce classroom rules and norms are important. The other element is promoting positive peer relationships and in order to achieve this a teacher should notice and reinforce casual positive interactions at first. The teacher should give importance to relationship-building activities and games. The students' relationship will encourage positive interactions between the students. The best way to achieve this is by long-term projects (Pinkelman, McIntosh, Berg, & Strickland-Cohen, 2015). The other way is short and simple games helping students to get to know each other better (Veresova & Mala, Attitude Toward School and Learning and Academic Achievement of Adolescents, 2016). Another element that needed to be considered is the social dynamics of the classroom. Being able to identify the students who have trouble getting along with others or the students having lots of friends and understand the relationship between them is important to have a positive school environment (Syukur, 2016). These components become a bigger picture and help to develop a better student-teacher relationship. These elements make the students feel less nervous and therefore the learning- teaching process becomes more effective than ever (Syukur, 2016).

These elements make students feel safe and respected both emotionally and physically and with the help of this, students are able to focus better on learning. The whole process that is explained can be defined as positive support factors that is to be developed by school administrators, teachers, families and students.

The study holds another element called 'big five personality traits' and it has become popular recently in academic studies. Big five personality traits include five elements, and these are: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and

neuroticism (Lim, 2020). If a person has a high level of openness, s/he is an inventive and if the level of openness is low it means the person is consistent. If a person has a high level of conscientiousness, it means the person is efficient and if the level is low it means the person is an easy-going character. An outgoing person has high levels of extraversion and if the level is low it means the person likes to be in solitary. The other personality trait is agreeableness and if the level is high it means the person is compassionate. The person is detached when the level of agreeableness is low. The nervous character can be interpreted as low levels of neuroticism and if the level of high it means the person is confident (Lim, 2020)

The studies examined the relation between the academic motivation and big five personality traits showed that there is a meaningful relation. In their study Komarraku, Karau and Schmeck (2009) applied five factor inventory and academic motivation scale to 308 undergraduates. They found that there is a strong and positive relation between conscientiousness and academic success of the participants. The other factor of the big five traits, openness, was also effective in increasing the intrinsic motivation. This means that the curious students have more fun while learning. Another study conducted by Soric et al. (2017) and they found that conscientiousness is closely and highly related to the academic achievements of the high school students. The study emphasizes that the relation is higher if the school environment is focused on product assessment process. Another study is examined this relation at university level and the result was found same in that study. The most related personality trait is conscientiousness trait (Hakimi, Hejazi, & Lavasani, 2011). Marcela referred to the studies of previously mentioned researchers and conducted a study on the effects of learning strategies and personality traits over the academic achievement of university students (2015). It was found that there is a strong correlation between the learning strategies and big five personality traits. Openness and conscientiousness are the two high level related elements of the academic success.

The big five personality traits and positive support factor are two important factors of education among many. The teachers need them to analyze the situation better and the students need them to know themselves better. Either way, they help to form a better and effective education climate. These researches and samples, the main problem sentence of this study emerges from the question: "Do the students consider 'education' as a positive factor in their life?" and if this conception is affected by their personality traits. From this point the study has established to examine the relationship between personality traits and perception of 'education' from the point of the university students at Sinop, Gerze. The study also wants to find answers for the following research questions: Is there any relation between personality traits and gender? Is there any relation between personality traits and degree of education? The research is carried via Big Five Personality Traits questionnaire and a personal information form. The study is important to define the relationship of the students with education and their attitudes towards education. The big five personality traits may show the reasons of differences between students' perceptions and it helps to develop a better environment for teaching and learning.

2. Literature Review

The term big five personality traits generally are subject to studies of psychological factors such as loneliness, addiction and risk attitudes. The relationship between personality traits and school has a role in defining the achievements, learning styles and academic achievement. Wild and Alvarez (2020) conducted a study among 5,863 students at university and the multivariate analysis show that female students have higher scores at extraversion and openness scales than male students. Another study is conducted to predict academic achievement in adolescents in the frame of maturity, intelligence and personality (Morales-Vives, Camps, & Duenas, 2020). It was found that the main predictor of the achievement is the intelligence. The other traits are conscientiousness and openness which are found effective in academic success of the participants. Another study is carried by Brusio et al. (Brusio, Stefaniak, & BolqLinda, 2020). They aimed to examine the effect of big five personality traits over learning strategies. It is found that the high level of openness, conscientiousness and extraversion is a symbol of having a more skilled employment in learning strategies.

There are some big scale studies carried on and one of them is carried by Andersen et al. (Andersen, Gensowski, Ludeke, & John, 2020). They carried a survey among 135,389 school students from Grade 4 to 8 to examine the changing relationship between the big five traits and academic success. They found that academic success is strongly related to conscientiousness at all levels. Age is found as an important factor and in strong relationship with emotional stability. Other study related to learning approaches and big five personality traits was carried by Zhang (2003). This study found that conscientiousness and openness are two strong factors in predicting the success among the participants. Openness predicts the approach of learning. Feyter et al (2012) try to unveil the factors of big five personality traits and academic performance. It is found that there is a positive but indirect effect of neuroticism at lower self-efficacy levels. The study shows that there is a strong correlation between the conscientiousness and positive academic performance. Another study was directed by Raza and Shah (2017). They examined the association between personality traits and academic motivation. They conducted a survey study among 320 students and the results showed that openness, conscientiousness and neuroticism had a positive effect on academic success while agreeableness had an insignificant effect. The academic success is demanded by all graders and their families. On the way of predicting the academic success big five traits are an important element and the study revealed that conscientiousness is positively related with it.

The other factor is school as a positive support factor and the studies show that school connectedness is one of the major protective elements for both boys and girls (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). The factors improving the positive behaviours of the students are defined as follows:

- Adult Support: School staff are the adults that the students share most of their times. They can give their time, interest, attention and emotional support.

- Belonging to a Positive Peer Group: A positive group can change the negative attitudes to positive. A network of students having positive behavior could improve the perspectives of other students, too.
- Commitment to Education: The students believing that the school has an important role for their future are more engaged in the learning and teaching activities. The students are more eager in involving the school activities.
- School Environment: the physical surrounding of the school is effective on the psychological climate of the students.

The positive support factors in schools have proactive features (Bal, 2015). Positive climate of the school affects the commitment of not only students but also teachers, manager and even parents. They believe that they can change the things in a more positive direction when there is a unity and support among the participants. The positive support factor elements are applied to schools and it is found that they improved academic achievement of the students along with the behavioral outcomes (Nocera, Whitbread, & Nocera, 2014). When there is a positive climate in the school, it is easy to say that there is a decline in the numbers of victimization, criminal cases, discrimination and dropping out (Payne, 2015).

The students are key elements in applying the positive support factor elements, but the main effective results are gathered when the teachers embrace these applications and volunteer to present them at their lessons and attitudes (Sardina, 2012). That's why it is important to build a system with the teachers and managers. A sample of this kind of system can be seen at New Zealand. The steps are defined as: culturally responsive teaching, caring relationships, creating a supportive learning environment, encouraging reflective thoughts and action, facilitating shared learning, providing sufficient opportunities to learn (Rohan, 2017). At the end of these studies it is possible to list of the things to build positive behavior support and these are:

- 1) An agreed upon and common approach to discipline,
- 2) A positive statement of purpose,
- 3) Positively stated expectations for all students and staff,
- 4) Procedures to teach these expectations to students,
- 5) A continuum of procedures to encourage and sustain these expectations,
- 6) A continuum of procedures to discourage rule-violating behavior,
- 7) Procedures to monitor and evaluate the discipline system on a regular and frequent basis.

The literature is examined in depth and it is found that there is not a study carried on the big five personality traits and perception of education in Turkish context. The literature review is carried in English and Turkish contexts and the Big Five Personality Traits effect over the perception of school as a positive support factor is examined in this study.

3. Material and Method

The study is carried in basic sampling technic and the data collection instruments were delivered in online and paper formats. The data collection process was carried between August 10 and October 1, the participants are 283 (%39.2 Male and %60.8 Female) university students who are currently registered students in a program in different universities. The data were applied Normality test and the results show that the data show normal distribution (Kurtosis= .058; Skewness=-.228).The data can be said having a normal distribution. Along with the descriptive analysis MANOVA and Correlation analysis were applied to the data. The questionnaire was applied to 300 participants but 7 (seven) of the collected forms are not included in this research because they did not complete the questionnaire.

3.1. Data Collection Instruments

3.1.1. Personal Information Form

The personal data information items are prepared by the researches and it compose of questions such as gender, attendance of Erasmus program and education level. The personal information form also includes an open-ended question in which the participants write their own definitions of 'education'. The participants were expected to complete the given sentence begins as 'For me Education is...'.and then the results will be grouped under positive or negative attitudes towards education. The grouping process was carried by three different language teacher and also one consultant in the field of education. At the end of the grouping there are four different attitudes towards education concept, and they are positive as supportive element of life (n=182), negative as a barrier in front of the participants (n=46). The other groups are neutral (n=47). In this group participants give a formal definition or make their own definitions of education. The last group is the ones who have no idea about education, and there are only eight (n=8) of them in the study.

3.1.2. Big Five Personality Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed by Tatar (2017, 51-61). There are 50 items in the questionnaire and the participants give answer to the items as their perception of themselves. The items are gathered from the International Personality Pool (IPIP). The answers range from 1 to 5 and 1 means 'Not Appropriate at All' and 5 means 'Very Appropriate'. The questionnaire explained % 35.58 of the total variance by five factors. The study showed that the questionnaire met the basic psychometric requirements. the questionnaire was applied to students in associate and bachelor's degrees. The total number of the participants were 283 and the Cronbach-alpha value of the questionnaire was found as .879 and it means that the questionnaire has a high reliability.

4. Results and Discussion

The data was analyzed in SPSS program and the descriptive analysis of the data is given at Table 1. It is seen from the table that the total number of the participants is 283. The male group consists of %39.2, (n=111) and the female group consists of %60.8 (n=172) the total participants. The degree of the participants composes of associate (n=123; %43.5) and bachelor (n=160; %56.5) degrees. The %44.5 of the participants (n=126) are from 1st grade, %24.4 of them (n=69) are from 2nd grade, %17 of them (n=48) are from 3rd grade and %14.1 of them (n=40) are from 4th grade. Majority of the participants have positive attitudes (n=182; %64.3).

Table 1: Descriptive of the Participants

		n	%
Gender	Male	111	39.2
	Female	172	60.8
Degree	Associate	123	43.5
	Bachelor	160	56.5
Grade	1st grade	126	44.5
	2nd grade	69	24.4
	3rd grade	48	17
	4th grade	40	14.1
Attitudes	Negative Attitudes	46	16.3
	Positive Attitudes	182	64.3
	Neutral	47	16.6
	Not Have Any Idea	8	2.8

The main aim of the research paper is to define if there is a relation between the big-five personality traits and their attitudes towards education. In order to examine this relation, the data was analyzed, and the results were given at Table 2. The results show that there is not any relation between attitudes and big five personality traits ($p=.253$; $p>.05$).

Table 2: The Relationship between Big five Personality Traits and Attitudes of the Participants

Variiances	N	r	p
Attitudes	283	.068	.253
Big Five Personality Traits			

The study aims to answer the question that: “Is there any meaningful difference between attitudes towards education and big five personality traits according to gender?” and the related data results were given in Table 3.

Table 3: MANOVA Table of Big-Five Traits and Education According to Gender

	Wilks' λ	F	sd	p	η^2
Attitudes	.084	.066	1	.797	.058
Extraversion	2.766	6.539	1	.011	.722
Agreeableness	.011	.035	1	.852	.054
Conscientiousness	.564	1.208	1	.273	.195
Emotional Stability	4.364	8.873	1	.003	.843
Intellect	.719	2.517	1	.114	.353
Gender*All of the Variables	.942	2.850	6	.010	.903

(n=283; male=111, female=172; p=.010, p<.05)

The results at Table 3 show that there is a meaningful difference between the attitudes towards education and big five personality traits in terms of gender (Wilks' λ =.942; $F_{(2,995)}=3.602$; $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.903$). The eta square value is the value that show the degree of the effect between groups. In this result it is seen that eta value has a high value ($\eta^2=.903$). To Cohen (1998) if the η^2 is equal to .01 it is a small effect point and if it is equal to .06 it has medium effect and if it has a value equal to .14 and higher the effect value is big. The result is statistically meaningful, and the eta value is observed highly effective that's why the post-hoc analysis is carried, and the related results were given at Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4: The Difference between male and female participants at extraversion sub-scale

	n	Mean	Mean Difference	std	p
Male	111	3.249	.035	.062	.011
Female	172	3.047	-.035	.050	

Table 4 shows that the difference at extraversion sub-scale is meaningful between male and female participants. The male ones have higher extraversion values than female ones. The mean difference shows that the male participants having high extraversion points also have positive attitude towards the term 'education'.

The other meaningful result is at emotional stability sub-scale and the related results were given at Table 5 below.

Table 5: The difference between male and female participants at emotional stability sub-scale

	n	Mean	Mean Difference	std	p
Male	111	3.081	.254	.067	.003
Female	172	2.827	-.254	.053	

It can be seen from the table that the male participants have higher mean values than female ones. The male participants who have higher values at emotional stability sub-scale also have positive attitudes towards the term 'education' ($p=.003$; $p<.05$).

The other research question is: "Is there any meaningful difference between attitudes towards education and big five personality traits according to degrees of the participants?" In order to examine this difference MANOVA test is applied to the gathered data and the results of the analysis is given at Table 6.

Table 6: MANOVA Table of Big-Five Traits and Education According to Degrees

	Wilks' λ	F	sd	p	η^2
Attitudes	4.269	3.416	1	.066	.453
Extraversion	.147	.340	1	.560	.089
Agreeableness	3.019	9.896	1	.002	.880
Conscientiousness	1.420	3.059	1	.081	.414
Emotional Stability	.002	.003	1	.954	.050
Intellect	2.595	9.300	1	.003	.860
Grade*All of the Variables	.012	3.795	6	.000	.886

(n=283; Associate=123; Bachelor=160)

The results at Table 6 show that there is a meaningful difference between the attitudes towards education and big five personality traits in terms of degrees (Wilks' λ =.012; $F_{(2,995)}=3.416$; $p<.05$, $\eta^2=.886$). When the results are examined in detail it is seen that the eta value is also high ($\eta^2=.886$) and it means the degrees of the participants have an important effect on the attitudes towards education. The meaningful ones are observed at agreeableness ($p=.002$) and intellect ($p=.003$) traits. The detailed analysis of the traits is given at Table 7 and Table 8. At Table 7 results of the interaction between the agreeableness and the degree of the participants is given.

Table 7: The Difference Between Associate and Bachelor Degree Participants at Agreeableness Sub-scale

	n	Mean	Mean Difference	std	p
Associate	123	3.718	-.208	.050	.003
Bachelor	160	3.926	.208	.044	

The results show that participants from bachelor's degree have higher mean scores than associate degree and the bachelor's degree participants have more positive attitude towards education than associate degree participants ($p=.003$; $p<.05$).

Table 8: The Difference Between Associate and Bachelor's Degree Participants at Intellect sub-scale

	n	Mean	Mean Difference	std	p
Associate	123	3.562	-.193	.048	.002
Bachelor	160	3.755	.193	.042	

The post-hoc results at Table 8 show that there is a meaningful difference between associate and bachelor's degree participants. The bachelor's degree participants have higher mean scores than the bachelor ones and they have more positive attitude towards education than the associate degree participants ($p=.002$; $p<.05$).

5. Conclusion

The study aims to define the perceptions of the students towards school and to find the relation between their personality traits and attitudes towards school. In order to collect

data a questionnaire was applied to university students in Sinop-Turkey. To define the attitude of the students, they are asked to define the term 'education' from their point of view and their definition is analyzed and grouped by three different language teachers. The results showed that the participants had three different attitudes and they are positive, negative and neutral. The first group thinks that education is a supportive factor in their career and have elements that help them to get a better life. The second group who have negative attitude towards education think that it is a barrier in front of the things they want to do. They evaluate education as years spent for no meaningful reason. The main thing they complain is that education takes their years and at the end of the process they are not sure of having a job. The last group having neutral attitudes towards school wrote that they had no idea, or they gave a definition from dictionary and there is nothing emotional or personal content of their definition.

The data was applied correlation test to define the relation between the attitudes and the big five personality traits and it was found that there is not any meaningful relation between two items. It means that the personality traits do not have any factor in forming the attitudes of the participants. The personality traits explain the continuity of the students, the academic success of the university or college students but in this study the attitudes do not seem related. The other research question is to examine the role of gender and the attitudes and the gender are examined along with the big five personality traits. The results showed that there is a strong relation. The male participants having high points at extraversion scale also have positive attitudes. Although there is no meaningful relation at overall points the sub-scales give meaningful correlations. The male participants have higher scores although the difference between the female ones are low. Male participants have higher scores at emotional stability item also. The difference between genders is found in other studies (Weisberg, DeYoung, & Hirsh, 2011) and it can be explained in terms of cultural roles. The traits change when the cultural content changes. The difference in this study can be explained with Turkish culture's expectations from men and women roles. Men are supposed to be extravert and emotionally stable. This cultural demand is a changing concept that's why there is a small difference between the genders.

The other item is to examine difference between the big five personality traits and the degree of the participants. It is found that the scores at the bachelor's degree are higher than the associate degree. The universities in Turkey accept students according to their scores from Higher Education Entrance Exam. The students who take high scores at Higher Education Entrance Exam generally have good scores at high schools and their continuing education. The high scores do not mean that the school has a positive environment, but the students have positive attitude towards education. These findings are also supported by other studies (Smidt, 2015). The study supports that if the levels of agreeableness and intellect traits are high than the positive attitude towards the school is also high. The study has implication in terms of having a small number of participants and it is necessary to study the effect of culture in deep. On the other hand, the study is

important in having a general opinion on the relation between personality traits and attitudes towards school.

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