



WRITING DISPOSITION OF STUDENT CONVICT AND PRISONERS ATTENDING DISTANT EDUCATION SECONDARY EDUCATION SCHOOLⁱ

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Abstract:

The aim of the present study is to examine the writing disposition of convicts and prisoners in Silivri Penal Institution Compound who study at Open Education Secondary School based on various variables. In the present study, "Writing Disposition Scale" that includes 21 5-point Likert type items, developed by Piazza and Siebert (2008) and adapted to Turkish by İşeri and Ünal (2010) was used as data collection tool. To conduct the study in survey model, approval of Ministry of Justice General Directorate of Penal Institutions and Detention Houses Office of Adult Education was obtained and the scale was applied to a total of 350 students who were inmates at Silivri Penal Institutions nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and Silivri Open Penal Institution. The data collected in the study, namely the writing dispositions of convicts and prisoners who attend Distant Education Secondary School, were analyzed with SPSS 22 software based on the variables of the type of offense, marital status, age and the penal institution of the prisoner. Based on the findings of the present study, it was determined that there was no significant correlation between the students' writing disposition and marital status based on passion and continuity dimensions, and that the level of confidence of single individuals was higher than married individuals based on the dimension of confidence. There was no significant correlation between the writing disposition of the students and their age, penitentiary institution and type of offense.

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1. Introduction

The Ministry of National Education is responsible for conducting education and instruction activities. Formal and non-formal education is organized institutionally by this ministry. The Ministry conducts education and instruction in penal and detention facilities in the framework of Open Primary Education Schools.

The name of the Open Primary Education School, which started to serve in 1998-1999 academic year, was changed to "Distance Education Secondary School" with the Regulation on the Amendment on the Regulation of the Open Primary Education School by the Ministry of National Education on 21/07/2012. In the system that operates under the General Directorate of Lifelong Learning, the targets of the education and instruction activities are depicted as *"to provide education-instruction opportunities for adults who were unable to graduate from secondary education and excluded by the system due to the age limits in formal education everywhere and under every condition with the principles and techniques of distance education, and thus, to raise the level of education and culture in the society, to enable citizens to acquire a profession and to contribute to the economy and to prepare them for higher education"*.

Distance Education Secondary School is a system where convicts and detainees could attend the school in prison. Penitentiary institutions are places where people who are thought to have committed crimes or committed crimes are hold. Education and instruction activities of prisoners and detainees in these locations are carried out in line with the Circular 46/1 on the Education and Development Activities of Young and Adult Convicts and Detainees published in 2007 by the General Directorate of Penal and Detention Institutions. General education policies are expressed in the above-mentioned circular as follows:

1. The necessity and the benefits of education and instruction for the material and spiritual development of convicts and detainees have been accepted all over the world. These activities are the most effective means of correction, as well as being a suitable experience for the discipline and order required by the regime of the institution.
2. It is expected from education-oriented studies that convicts and detainees should adapt correct behavior, attitudes values and acquire ethical values that would prevent recidivism, rendering the institutional life more similar to normal life, facilitating adaptation of these individuals to the society after their release, and

making them patient, resistant and calm against external events and provocations.

Education in penal institutions is conducted in line with the aforementioned circular and aims to release convicts and detainees into the society healthy and educated, to facilitate their adaptation to society and to prevent recidivism. *"Regardless of the age of the offender, the aim of the contemporary prison is to assess the offender as a human with physical, mental and social aspects to become a member of the society. This is achieved by correction work in the prisons. The basic principle in correction is to avoid giving physical and mental pain to the convict, to provide healthy nutrition and maintain the convict's mental health, to improve the convict's skills and abilities, to provide work and work space, to provide solutions for the convict's social problems"* (Köknel, 2001: 356).

The curriculum implemented in formal education is also valid in the Distance Education Secondary School, which is the first step of the education of convicted prisoners. The writing skills training, which is one of the four basic language skills in Turkish language course, which is one of the basic courses in this system, is of special importance because it is the basic tool of communication for convicted prisoners. *"Since writing plays an important role in conveying permanence and cultural values and the act of writing provides a human-specific condition, it is imperative to give importance to writing activities in every field as a requirement"* (İşeri, 2010: 107).

2. Literature Review

In organizations where the use of communication tools such as the Internet and mobile phones is prohibited, convicts and detainees communicate with the outside world and the administration in writing. This could be seen as one of the indicators of the significance of the present study. Sever (2004: 24) defined writing as a mode of expressing what we hear, think, plan, and experience in writing and a way of communication with others and expressing ourselves similar to talking. As described in the above definition, writing is one of the basic ways with which convicts and detainees express themselves. The interest and motivation of convicts and detainees in writing demonstrates their willingness to write, that is, their disposition for writing. *"Disposition"* is defined as *"intentional orientation, inclination, tendency to like, desire or do something"* (TDK, 2005: 605). *"The disposition to write is the condition of liking to write, to be inclined to write, or to want to write"* (Uçgun, 2014: 228). Literature review revealed that the studies on the writing disposition aimed to determine the writing dispositions of the students in formal education (İşeri and Ünal, 2010; Tüfekçioğlu, 2010; Uçgun, 2014, Şahin and Baş, 2013; Çeçen and Deniz, 2015). There were no studies in the literature that

aimed to determine the writing disposition of Distance Education Secondary School (DESS) students in penitentiary institutions. Based on the predetermined significance of writing in prisons, the development of the writing skills of the students in penitentiary institutions and the improvement of their writing disposition could be considered as a dynamic that provides social harmony by paving the way for healthy communication. Within the scope of the present study, the following research questions were established:

1. What are the writing disposition levels of DESS student convicts and detainees?
2. Is there a significant difference between the writing disposition levels of DESS student convicts and detainees based on their type of offense?
3. Is there a significant difference between the writing disposition levels of DESS student convicts and detainees based on their marital status?
4. Is there a significant difference between the writing disposition levels of DESS student convicts and detainees based on their age?
5. Is there a significant difference between the writing disposition levels of DESS student convicts and detainees based on the penitentiary institution they stay?

3. Material and Methods

In the study, the survey model was used. "*An event, individual or object is attempted to be defined within the existing conditions and as is. No attempt is made to alter or influence these in any way. What is important is to be able to observe and determine the target situation*" (Karasar, 2012: 77). Following the approval of the General Directorate of Penal Institutions for implementation of the scale, individual appointments were made with the penitentiary institutions and the scale forms were applied at the classrooms in the institution during class hours.

3.1. Study Group

A total of 350 Distance Education Secondary School students in Silivri 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 penal institutions and Silivri Open Penal Institution were included in the study group.

Table 1: Demographical characteristics of the participants

AGE	n	%
18-25 age group	76	21,7
26-35 age group	169	48,3
36-45 age group	88	25,1
46 and over	17	4,9
Total	350	100,0
OFFENSE	n	% Yüzde
Murder	36	10,3
Injury	40	11,4
Narcotics	70	20,0
Sexual offenses	29	8,3
Robbery, usurpation, looting	141	40,3
Financial and information	17	4,9
Organization and gang related	17	4,9
Total	350	100,0
MARITAL STATUS	n	% Yüzde
Married	148	42,3
Bachelor	202	57,7
Total	350	100,0
PENAL INSTITUTION	n	% Yüzde
Silivri 1	32	9,1
Silivri 2	41	11,7
Silivri 3	53	15,1
Silivri 4	35	10,0
Silivri 5	44	12,6
Silivri 6	49	14,0
Silivri 7	57	16,3
Silivri 8	22	6,3
Silivri Open	17	4,9
Total	350	100,0

Based Table 1, it can be observed that 22% of the DESS students were 18-25 years old, 48% were 26-35 years old, 25% were 36-45 years old and 5% were 46 years old or older. 10% of the DESS student prisoners were convicted with murder, 11% with injury, 20% with drug possession, 8% with sexual crimes, 40% with robbery-usurpation-looting, 5% were convicted with with organizational and gang-related offenses. 42% of the students were married and 58% were single; 9% were held at Silivri 1, 12% at Silivri 2, 15% at Silivri 3, 10% at Silivri 4, 13% at Silivri 5, 14% at Silivri 6, 16% at Silivri 7, 6% at Silivri 8, and 5% were held at Silivri Open penal institutions.

3.2. Data Collection Tool

The "Writing Disposition Scale" developed by Piazza and Siebert (2008) and adapted to Turkish by İşeri and Ünal (2010) was used as the data collection tool in the study to determine the writing disposition of the students.

3.3. Findings on the Reliability of the Scale

To test the reliability of the 21 statements in the scale on writing disposition, Cronbach's alpha analysis was conducted. In the final analysis, Co. Alpha coefficient was 0.92. The coefficient obtained indicated that the scale was very reliable. As a result, it was determined that no items were needed to be excluded from the scale.

3.4. Findings on Scale Validity

Following the reliability analysis, factor analysis was performed to test the construct validity of the 21-item scale.

As a result of factor analysis, 3 sub-dimensions were identified. These dimensions were the dimension of confidence, passion and continuity. In factor analysis, the KMO sampling fitness coefficient was determined as 0.85. This coefficient is an indication that 350 utilized application forms were sufficient to establish the factor construct. Furthermore, the dimensions obtained in the Bartlett test result ($p = 0,01$, $p < 0,05$), in which the significance of the factor constructs are tested were found to be structurally significant. Tall scale items are positive and there were 11 items in the passion dimension, 6 items in the confidence dimension and 4 items in the continuity dimension.

The 3 obtained dimensions explained approximately 51% of the total variance. It is expected that the explained variance should be 50% or more in similar studies. It was determined that the confidence dimension explained 17% of the total variance and internal consistency was 0.74. The percentage of variance explained by the continuity dimension was 11% and the internal consistency was 0.71. The percentage of variance explained by the passion dimension was determined as 23% and the internal consistency was 0.84. In short, it was observed that the reliability and construct validity of 21 statements about writing disposition were provided.

Table 2: Writing disposition construct validity

Statement	Factor Load	Dimension	Explained Variance	Internal Consistency
Writing Disposition 1	,742	Confidence	17%	0,74
Writing Disposition 2	,477			
Writing Disposition 3	,639			
Writing Disposition 4	,757			
Writing Disposition 5	,765			
Writing Disposition 6	,775			
Writing Disposition 7	,646	Continuity	11%	0,71
Writing Disposition 8	,786			
Writing Disposition 9	,774			
Writing Disposition 10	,559			
Writing Disposition 11	,773	Passion	23%	0,84
Writing Disposition 12	,722			
Writing Disposition 13	,775			
Writing Disposition 14	,774			
Writing Disposition 15	,810			
Writing Disposition 16	,775			
Writing Disposition 17	,820			
Writing Disposition 18	,782			
Writing Disposition 19	,708			
Writing Disposition 20	,813			
Writing Disposition 21	,653			

3.5. Data Analysis

Study data were analyzed with SPSS 21 data analysis software. T-test was used to test the significance of the correlation between two data variables and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the relationship between more than two variables. The results of analysis are tabulated and interpreted.

4. Results

The findings on the sub-problem of the study identified as "*What are the writing disposition levels of DESS student convicts and detainees?*" are presented in Table 3:

Table 3: Writing dispositions of DESS student convicts and detainees

Scale	n	Mean	S.d.	Min.	Max
Writing Disposition	350	3,50	0,67	1,32	4,56

Based on the Table 3, it was determined that the mean student writing disposition score was 3.5 ± 0.67 , the score of the participant with the lowest writing disposition was 1.32, and the score of the participant with the highest writing disposition was 4.56.

The findings on the second sub-problem of the study identified as "*Is there a significant difference between the writing disposition levels of DESS student convicts and detainees based on their type of offense?*" are presented in the table below:

Table 4: Examination of writing dispositions of DESS student convicts and detainees based on the type of offense

Scale	Dimension	Offense	n	X	s.d.	F	p
Writing Disposition	Passion	Murder	36	3,65	0,68	1,26	0,28
		Injury	40	3,73	0,88		
		Narcotics	70	3,30	0,80		
		Sexual offenses	29	3,61	1,02		
		Robbery, usurpation, looting	141	3,54	1,02		
		Financial and information	17	3,42	1,12		
		Organization and gang related	17	3,38	1,06		
		Confidence	Murder	36	3,53		
	Injury		40	3,60	0,96		
	Narcotics		70	3,31	0,82		
	Sexual offenses		29	3,29	0,85		
	Robbery, usurpation, looting		141	3,48	0,83		
	Financial and information		17	3,61	0,93		
	Organization and gang related		17	3,47	0,89		
	Continuity		Murder	36	3,61	0,92	1,39
		Injury	40	3,95	0,99		
		Narcotics	70	3,73	0,84		
		Sexual offenses	29	3,59	0,99		
		Robbery, usurpation, looting	141	3,71	0,91		
		Financial and information	17	4,16	0,99		
		Organization and gang related	17	3,98	0,95		

Analysis of variance was conducted to determine whether writing dispositions of the DESS student convicts and detainees differed based on the type of offense they committed. To identify the groups with differences, Sidak paired comparison test was implemented. Findings demonstrated that the offenses committed by the participants did not affect the dimensions of passion, trust and continuity. It was observed that the writing disposition levels of the participants who committed the offenses of murder, drug possession, sexual crimes, robbery, financial crimes, and organizational crimes

were similar ($F_1 = 1,26$, $F_2 = 0,88$, $F_3 = 1,39$, $p > 0,05$). It was determined that the offenses committed by the participants were not effective on their writing dispositions ($p > 0,05$). The findings on the third sub-problem of the study identified as "Is there a significant difference between the writing disposition levels of DESS student convicts and detainees based on their marital status?" are presented in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Examination of writing dispositions of DESS student convicts and detainees based on their marital status

Scale	Dimensions	Marital Status	n	X	s.d.	t	p
Writing Disposition	Passion	Married	148	3,47	0,92	-0,73	0,47
		Bachelor	202	3,55	0,96		
	Confidence	Married	148	3,31	0,89	-2,64	0,01
		Bachelor	202	3,56	0,81		
	Continuity	Married	148	3,68	1,01	-1,24	0,21
		Bachelor	202	3,81	0,85		

T-test analysis was conducted to determine whether the writing disposition of DESS student convicts and detainees differed based on their marital status. Based on the findings, it was determined that there was no significant correlation between the dimension of passion levels based on the marital status of the participants and passion dimension levels of the single and married individuals were similar ($t = -0,73$, $p > 0,05$).

It was determined that that there was no significant correlation between the dimension of continuity levels based on the marital status of the participants and passion continuity levels of the single and married individuals were similar ($t = -1,24$, $p > 0,05$).

It was determined that the marital status of the participants was effective on mean confidence dimension scores ($t = -2,64$, $p < 0,05$). It was found that the reason for the difference was due to the fact that the levels of confidence dimension of single individuals were higher than the married individuals. The confidence levels of single individuals were higher than that of married individuals.

The findings on the fourth sub-problem of the study identified as "Is there a significant difference between the writing disposition levels of DESS student convicts and detainees based on their age?" are presented below:

Table 6: Examination of writing dispositions of
 DESS student convicts and detainees based on age

Scale	Dimension	Age	n	X	s.d.	F	p
Writing Disposition	Passion	18-25 age group (1)	76	3,49	0,84	1,02	0,38
		26-35 age group (2)	169	3,49	1,01		
		36-45 age group (3)	88	3,51	0,91		
		46 and over (4)	17	3,91	0,75		
	Confidence	18-25 age group (1)	76	3,53	0,82	2,17	0,09
		26-35 age group (2)	169	3,47	0,84		
		36-45 age group (3)	88	3,29	0,86		
		46 and over (4)	17	3,78	1,02		
	Continuity	18-25 age group (1)	76	3,71	0,78	2,33	0,07
		26-35 age group (2)	169	3,80	0,93		
		36-45 age group (3)	88	3,61	0,96		
		46 and over (4)	17	4,22	1,05		

Variance analysis was conducted to determine whether the writing dispositions of DESS student convicts and detainees differed based on age. To identify the differentiating groups, Sidak paired comparison test was conducted. Based on the findings, it was found that participant age was not effective on the dimensions of passion, confidence and continuity, and the participants who were 18-25, 26-35, 36-45 and 46 years old or older had similar writing disposition levels ($F_1 = 1,02$, $F_2 = 2,17$, $F_3 = 2,33$, $p > 0,05$). In short, it was found that the participants' age did not affect their writing disposition ($p > 0,05$).

The findings on the fifth sub-problem of the study identified as "Is there a significant difference between the writing disposition levels of DESS student convicts and detainees based on the penitentiary institution they are held?" are presented below:

Table 7: Examination of writing dispositions of DESS student convicts and
 detainees based on the penal institutions they were held

Scale	Dimension	Prison	n	Mean	s.d	F	p	Paired comparison
Passion		Silivri 1	32	3,44	1,06	0,85	0,56	
		Silivri 2	41	3,71	0,93			
		Silivri 3	53	3,66	0,87			
		Silivri 4	35	3,37	0,95			

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	Silivri 5	44	3,42	1,29		
	Silivri 6	49	3,36	0,84		
	Silivri 7	57	3,51	0,75		
	Silivri 8	22	3,55	0,57		
	Silivri Open	17	3,75	1,15		
Confidence	Silivri 1	32	3,27	0,85	1,51	0,15
	Silivri 2	41	3,61	0,87		
	Silivri 3	53	3,59	0,88		
	Silivri 4	35	3,34	0,92		
	Silivri 5	44	3,41	1,00		
	Silivri 6	49	3,26	0,77		
	Silivri 7	57	3,66	0,61		
	Silivri 8	22	3,25	0,74		
	Silivri Open	17	3,46	1,10		
	Continuity	Silivri 1	32	3,73		
Silivri 2		41	3,87	0,96		
Silivri 3		53	3,91	0,89		
Silivri 4		35	3,72	0,89		
Silivri 5		44	3,54	1,10		
Silivri 6		49	3,76	0,84		
Silivri 7		57	3,73	0,87		
Silivri 8		22	3,67	0,82		
Silivri Open		17	3,88	1,06		

Analysis of variance was conducted to determine whether the writing disposition of DESS student convicts and detainees differed based on the penal institution they stay at. Sidak paired comparison test was implemented to identify the differentiating groups. Based on the findings, the penitentiary institution where the participants were held did not affect the dimensions of passion, trust and continuity. It was determined that writing disposition levels of the participants in Silivri 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and Silivri Open penal institutions were similar ($F_1 = 0,85$, $F_2 = 1,51$, $F_3 = 0,64$, $p > 0,05$). Accordingly, it was determined that the writing disposition levels of participants were not influenced by the penal institutions they stayed ($p > 0,05$).

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The writing disposition of distance education secondary school student convicts and detainees was examined in the present study. As a result, it was found that the mean

writing disposition level of the students was $3,5 \pm 0,67$, the score of the participant with the lowest writing disposition was 1.32, and the score of the participant with the highest writing disposition score was 4.56. This suggested that students had a moderate level writing disposition. Çeçen and Deniz (2015) found that the perceptions of writing disposition of secondary school students were "moderate". İşeri (2010) and Ünal (2010) reached the conclusion that the writing disposition perceptions of the first grade primary school students were moderate. It could be argued that the findings of the present study that the student convicts had a moderate level writing disposition perception was consistent with the results of other studies. The fact that writing disposition of the students was moderate, not low could be attributed to the fact that writing skills are one of the basic means of communication in penitentiary institutions. In institutions where communications tools such as mobile phones and the Internet are restricted, writing skill could be considered as a significant tool. The fact that writing disposition was not at a high level could be attributed to the fact that the writing skill used as a communication tool was under control. All letters, etc. written by convict students are read by the reading commissions. It could be considered that this fact might have affected the writing disposition perception. Contrary to the findings of the study, Baş and Şahin (2013) determined that the perceptions of writing disposition by primary education students were generally low.

Based on the study results, it was concluded that the types of offenses committed by the students did not influence their writing disposition scores. There was no significant correlation between the passion and continuity dimensions in the writing disposition scale based on the marital status of the convict DESS students, however the marital status of the participants was effective on the mean confidence dimension score. It was observed that levels of confidence dimension of unmarried individuals were higher than the married individuals. Communications are conducted in writing in penitentiary institutions where tools such as mobile phone and internet are prohibited. This could demonstrate the significance of writing in such an environment. The fact that single individuals tend to write at a higher level of confidence than married ones can be related to the reading of the letters written by the spouses of the married individuals into the penal execution commission letter reading commissions and also to the letters sent to them after they are checked. The higher writing disposition levels of single individuals when compared to married ones could be related to the fact that the letters of married individuals to their spouses or those their spouses write for them are read by institutional reading commissions. The low writing disposition confidence levels of married individuals could be related to the fact that the confidential issues they would share with their spouses would be known by third parties. Study findings

demonstrated that there was no significant correlation between the writing disposition of the students and their age and the penitentiary institution they were held.

6. Recommendations

In recent years, penal institutions are considered as not only spaces where convicts and detainees are held but also spaces where education and instruction are experienced intensively. When it is considered that writing skills are the main tool of communication in these education and rehabilitation activities, creative writing and writing skill courses should be organized for convicted or detained students and serious steps should be taken to develop their writing skills.

To improve the writing dispositions of married individuals in confidence dimension, it was considered that if they are provided writing education courses, they would benefit from healthy communication with their spouses and children living outside.

Expressive writing is a therapy method developed by psychologist James W. Pennebaker. Many studies have demonstrated that expressive writing could often have beneficial effects in psychological and physical health care (<http://clinicaltrialsfeeds.org/clinical-trials/show/NCT00385346>). Based on these findings, it could be argued that the physical and mental health of the students could improve by increasing their writing dispositions with expressive writing studies that would be organized for convicted and detained students and that recidivism would be prevented after their release.

Founded in 1971 in the United States, the PEN Prison Writing Program believes in the restorative, rehabilitative power of writing, and provides writing education through skilled writer teachers for hundreds of prisoners throughout the country. The program provides an environment in which convicts and detainees could freely express themselves and encourages the use of the written word as a legitimate form of power. The program also sponsors an annual writing competition among convicts and detainees, publishes a free writing manual, and provides individual counseling (<http://pen.org/about/programs/prison-writing>). The program called Minnesota Penitentiary Writing Workshop allows the convicts and detainees to work on fiction, such as story, children's literature, fantasy literature, and article writing, poetry reading, oral history narration (<http://www.mnprisonwriting.org/who-we-are.html>). If programs like the writing program established in the United States are also implemented in Turkey, it could be considered that the convict and detainees could live the rest of their free lives as rehabilitated individuals.

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