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Research article

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Abstract

In this study, psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education in state high schools in řahinbey district of Gaziantep province were determined. It was also determined in the dimensions of hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy, which are sub-dimensions of teachers' psychological capital. The survey model was used in this study, which was designed in quantitative research method. "Psychological Capital Scale" was used to determine the psychological capital levels of teachers. The population of the study consists of 2179 teachers working in state high schools in řahinbey district in the 2020-2021 academic year. In the sample of the study, there are 163 teachers who voluntarily answered the online scale via internet. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistical methods. In the study, it was determined that the psychological capital levels of the teachers working in distance education are at good level. Also, it was determined that the sub-dimension of optimism has the lowest average and the sub-dimension of self-efficacy has the highest average. It can be stated that increasing the psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education will positively affect the working performance of teachers. Thus, it can be said that the distance education can be more efficient both for teachers and students.

Keywords: Distance education, Psychological capital, Positive psychology, Teachers

1. Introduction

It can be stated that the role of the teacher in raising an individual and a beneficial citizen to the society is important. It is essential that the teacher, who undertakes the main task in the success of education and training activities, have to be in a good level in terms of quality and performance in order to raise healthy societies (Erçetin, 2000). In this context, attitudes, motivations and psychological status of teachers in education and training processes are important. It can be stated that the new decisions in the field of education directly affect the teachers and the society. In today's pandemic process, there are developments affecting the education system and all teachers. The most important of these developments is distance education (Açıklan et al., 2021). Gökmen, Duman, and Horzum (2016) stated that the structure of the distance education system includes different variables. These are can be expressed as technological, social, psychological structures. As a result of these structures being compatible with each other, it can be predicted that distance education will be adopted by teachers and it will be successful. It is possible to state that the teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards distance education will be negatively affected when the structures mentioned here are missing or problematic. It can be stated that determining the level of psychological capital provides an opportunity to understand the effectiveness and performance of individuals in organizations (Çetin and Basım, 2012).

1.1. Distance Education

Distance education is defined as an education method that is planned in different places and times, and information is shared by printed or electronic communication tools (Erçetin and Açıkalın, 2016). Distance education, whose first application was realized by mail in 1728, has now been moved to online environments with the advancement of technology (İşman, 2008). It is stated that the concept of distance education was first included in the 1892 catalog of the University of Wisconsin. This concept was introduced in Germany by Otto Peters in the 1960s and 1970s, and then started to be used in France and other countries. According to İşman (2008), the distance education development in Turkey is divided into five groups as the teaching period via letters and the previous period before teaching letters, one-sided radio and tele-vision programs, double-sided radio and television programs and future technologies. The distance education has emerged as a concept in Turkey since 1923 (Booth, 2017). It is on the agenda in Turkey starting in 1927 and 1968, the Film, Radio and Television Training Center (FRITTC) by elementary, middle and continued with the publication of programs in educational content for students in high school (Fracture, 2014). Especially, after the 1970s, the distance education studies were carried out at high school level. The distance education in higher education started after 1980 with the attempts of Anadolu University Open Education Faculty. It is started to become as a part of education with the advances in communication technology in Turkey along with other countries in 2000s (Bozkurt, 2017). It can be stated that distance education differs from face-to-face education and there are some advantages and limitations of it. It is emphasized that distance education has benefits such as providing students with a rich educational environment, reducing education costs, and decreasing inequality of opportunity. On the other hand, it is stated that there are limitations such as preventing students from socializing, and not being able to understand the applied courses (Kaya, 2002). It can be said that the point distance education has come along with the developing technology has become more effective by advanced computer and network technologies (Balaban, 2012). The purpose of the practices in distance education is expressed as the ability of students to study their lessons in a synchronous or asynchronous way and benefit from the online materials independently (Ülkü, 2018). The distance education can reach a wider audience than traditional education, thanks to it has no exact location and time. It is beginning to become an education method that is used more than before with the development of technology today by removing the limitations of space and time (Dargut, Torun and Erdem, 2016). For this reason, it can be stated that it will be a much more widely used training method in the future (Boz, 2019).

The distance education with its own certain benefits and limitations, especially began to be used in the pandemic in Turkey. The pandemic was declared in 2019 because of the covid-19 disease that started in China and spread to the world. With the spread of the disease in many countries and in Turkey, the schools were closed, so the distance education was started. In addition, a process has been started in which synchronous and asynchronous training and online trainings are being provided via the Education Information Network (EIA) (Başaran, Doğan, Karaoğlu, & Şahin, 2020). It is stated that teachers who did not have experience in distance education until this date and who did not receive training on distance education in pre-service and in-service training were initially unprepared for this type of education (Tedmem, 2020). It is stated that teachers face difficulties in providing distance education skills and competencies (Potas et. al, 2022). In addition, it can be said that teachers who did not have distance education experience in the past have more difficulties to get used to distance education. From this point of view, the teachers began to see the distance education as an innovation and a challenge for them. There are positive and negative aspects experienced both by the students and the teachers in distance education. Özyürek, Begde, Yavuz, and Özkan (2016) stated in their study that there are problems in communication between teachers and students in distance education. In



addition, they stated that the system-related malfunctions caused many problems. There are also studies in which teachers' attitudes and perceptions towards distance education differ from each other. Gülbahar (2017) stated that teachers developed a positive attitude towards distance education. Gök (2011) stated in a study that the perception levels of lecturers in distance education with internet access and the perception levels were in a medium level. It was stated that the variables of gender and the status of the institution did not differ significantly in the attitudes towards distance education. Also, the previous knowledge about distance education was effective (Ateş and Altun, 2008). It is expressed that the teachers in distance education should be flexible in accordance with the structure of it and they should have the ability to adapt to the conditions of the students and situations. It can be predicated that teachers assume a consultant role rather than a knowledge transfer role in distant education. It is possible to state that the teachers' psychological capital levels can be different in distance education and face-to-face education.

1.2. Psychological Capital

It is expressed that the components of psychological capital are effective to form the capital and the components interact with each other (Luthans, Youssef and Avolio, 2007). The foundations of psychological capital are based on positive psychology and positive organizational behavior approaches. Positive psychology as a concept is firstly introduced by Maslow in 1954. The opinions are expressed on the necessity of focusing on positive characteristics as well as focusing on negative aspects of psychology (Akin, 2020). Positive psychology is an approach that focuses on the happiness and personal development of the individual. Seligman and Schulman (1986) stated that positive psychology is about the construction of positive personal characteristics and attitudes by focusing on them. Positive organizational behavior is an approach that focuses on the development of the positive behavior of the individual within the organization. Luthans (2002) defines positive organizational behavior as an element that can be measured in organizations to increase their performance with applications for human resources and for their psychological capacities. Also, it can express some concepts such as well-being, resilience, hope, and courage in positive organizational behavior.

In positive organizational behavior, four different capitals that provide competitive advantage are emphasized and these are classified as traditional economic, human, social and positive psychological capital. Psychological capital is defined as the positive aspects and characteristics of the individual (Erkuş & Fındıklı, 2013). Erkmen and Esen (2012) found that psychological capital and negative situations were evaluated in the opposite direction; however, the positive situations have a correct relationship with psychological capital. Psychological capital is expressed as the psychological development state of the individual and it consists of four elements as striving for the sake of completing challenging goals and having self-confidence, being optimistic about achieving future goals, finding alter-native solutions in case of difficult situations and being resistant to problems. Psychological capital is not about what individuals know, but about how they see and define themselves (Luthans and Youssef, 2004). At this point, psychological capital consists of the dimensions of hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy by focusing on the question of "who are you" (Luthans and Youssef, 2004). The features of the dimensions will be explained below.

1.3. Hope

Hope is expressed as the capacity to be motivated towards goals, thoughts around a goal or taking action for a goal and being determined to continue this action (Snyder, Anderson and Irving, 1991). Accordingly, it can be stated that there are two dimensions in the dimension of hope, willpower and path power. While willpower is an energy that enables the individual to

focus on his goal, path power refers to alternative ways developed to achieve that goal. According to Synder (2000), negative emotional reactions may occur because of the difficulties, but the reactions of people with high and low level of hope are not the same. People with high level of hope can react more harmoniously and positively to any obstacles. It is expressed that people who can achieve this are more efficient in terms of organization than others in their jobs (Peterson and Luthans, 2003). It is stated that individuals who have high level hope in achieving their goals display more determined stance compared to individuals with low level hope.

1.4. Optimism

Tiger (1979) defines optimism as the attitude or mood that the desired things for the benefit of the future will occur. According to Seligman (1998), optimism is a way of expressing oneself and optimistic people explain negative events by associating them with external factors. Seligman and Schulman (1986) revealed the positive effect of the increase in the level of optimism on the working life in their research on the psychological capital levels of employees. Similar to this result, Seligman (1998) stated that the level of optimism contributes positively to the outcomes of working life. Luthans and Youssef (2004), while optimists temporarily interpret unpleasant events; on the other hand, they stated that pessimists interpret unpleasant events permanently and optimists reinforce their self-confidence by taking a share of it when they reach positive results. Similarly, they explained that individuals who are optimistic mostly think of positive situations in the face of an event, while those who are not optimistic think of negative situations. They also stated that optimism in psychological capital should have a realistic quality that does not hesitate to take responsibility.

1.5. Resilience

Psychological resilience is defined as a factor that makes it easier for an individual to manage stress in adverse situations and conditions (Luthans, 2002). The resilience of individuals in an organization is expressed as not giving up in the face of failure or negative consequences and being able to struggle with them. It can be expressed that there are some concepts that can increase psychological resilience by affecting it. These concepts are skills, abilities, positive thinking and self-control. Accordingly, individuals with resilience can approach a negative situation more harmoniously (Luthans, Youssef and Avolio, 2007). It is indicated that individuals with a high level of psychological resilience are individuals who have flexible thinking ability and are able to overcome problems faster than the other. In addition, it is stated that these individuals are more efficient and have higher performance in their work environment. It was found a positive correlation between work performance and psychological resilience, and it was stated that the increase in psychological resilience could occur with an increase in other dimensions of psychological capital (Akçay, 2011). It has also been observed that individuals with high psychological resilience are more responsible and efficient (Akdemir and Açı, 2017).

1.6. Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is expressed as self-belief about the actions that a person can take in future situations (Çınar, 2001). The process of creating self-efficacy consists of revealing positive emotions and progressing one's confidence towards achieving the goals. It is stated that individuals with high self-efficacy choose more challenging tasks, strive for their goals, and have higher motivation in the face of obstacles (Luthans and Youssef, 2004). In addition, individuals with high self-efficacy are less determined and more successful in their jobs. It is indicated that individuals with low self-efficacy can give up quickly and fail more (Gardner



and Pierce, 1998). It is stated that individuals' self-efficacy is an expression that they are also open to improvements. The fact that individuals have self-efficacy does not mean that they are against innovations (Akin, 2020). There are studies that reveal teachers' psychological capital levels in terms of different variables. It has been determined that these studies were carried out by considering variables such as age, gender, branch, and graduation degree. It has also been found that there are studies examining teachers' attitudes, perceptions and opinions regarding distance education. Studies focusing on teachers' psychological capital levels in distance education could not be found among the studies. The aim of this study is to determine the psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education. For this purpose, the following questions were sought in the study:

1. What are the psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education?
2. What are the psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education in the sub-categories of hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy?

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This research was designed using descriptive survey model, one of the quantitative research methods. Descriptive models are widely used to reveal and define the characteristics of a given situation (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2017). According to Karasar (2012), descriptive survey model is defined as a research approach that describes an event as it is. Since the level of psychological capital of teachers working in distance education was described in its current form, this model was considered appropriate. Ethics committee approval was obtained for the research from Hacettepe University with the decision numbered 35853172-600 on 08.12.2020.

2.2 Participants of the Study

The population of the study consists of 2179 teachers working in distance education in official secondary education institutions in Şahinbey central district of Gaziantep province in the academic year 2020-2021. The sample of the study, on the other hand, consists of teachers who were determined with the random sampling method at a 95% confidence level with 0.05 sampling error (Erdoğan and Yazıcıoğlu, 2004). The descriptive statistics information regarding sampling is included in Table 1.

Table 1. *The distribution of teachers working in distance education*

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	83	50.9
Female	80	49.1
Total	163	100

As shown in Table 1, 50.9% of the distance education teachers participating to the study are male and 49.1% are female. The total number of teachers was determined to be 163.

2.3. Data Collection Tools and Process

The data collection tool used in the study consists of two parts. In the first part, the demographic information of the teachers was asked. In the second part, "Psychological Capital Scale" developed by Luthans, Avolio, Avey and Norman (2007) and adapted into Turkish by Çetin and Basım (2012) was used to measure the psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education. The scale consists of four dimensions as hope, optimism, self-efficacy, and psychological resilience, and there are six items for all dimensions. The scale scores in Likert format are positioned between "1 = strongly disagree" and "5 = strongly agree". The criteria were determined based on the "Positive psychological capital scale: validity and reliability study" conducted by Tösten and Özgan (2004), "1.00-1.79 = I do not agree at all", "1.80-2.59 = Slightly agree", "2.60-3.39 = I am undecided", "3.40- 4.19 = Strongly Agree", "4.20-5.00 = Fully Agree". As Kelekçi and Yılmaz (2015) determined in their study, the results were handled at five levels. These are "very high" for 4.20 points and above, "good" for 3.40-4.19 score range, "medium" for 2.60-3.39, "low" for 1.80-2.59, and "very low" for 1.00-1.79. The validity and reliability analysis of the scale was performed by Çetin and Basım (2012) and Erkmen and Esen (2012). According to these analyzes, the Cronbach Alpha coefficients of the sub-dimensions of the scale are 0.67 for optimism, 0.81 for hope, 0.68 for psychological resilience and 0.85 for self-efficacy. In addition, the total Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0.91. The confirmatory factor analysis and goodness of fit values for the validity of the scale were found as ($\chi^2 / df = 1.80$; RMSEA = 0.046; CFI = 0.93). These analysis results reveal that the scale is a reliable and it is a valid data collection tool. Since the reliability value of the scale is over 90%, the psychological capital scale can be expressed as a highly reliable scale. The scale was transferred to the online environment, and teachers were reached over the internet and thus the data were collected.

Due to the fact that the data were taken during the pandemic, they were collected via online form. Before beginning the online data collecting form, a form outlining the aim of the study and the procedure of the tool in detail was used and consent of the participants was asked to involve in the research. Participants were assured that the information obtained from them would be kept confidential, and that the information obtained would only be used for this research, which they could discontinue at any time.

2.4. Data Analysis

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 22.0) package program was used to analyze the data collected in the study. Psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education were determined using descriptive statistical methods. The teachers' levels of hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience were analyzed by looking at the arithmetic mean and standard deviation. The significance level was taken as 0.05 in the analyzes.

3. Findings

In this section, the findings showing the psychological capital levels and sub-dimensions of the teachers working in distance education are included. The arithmetic means and standard deviations of the teachers working in distance education regarding the psychological capital and sub-dimensions are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Analysis of teachers working in distance education regarding their psychological capital levels

Sub-dimensions	\bar{X}	Sd
Hope	3.63	.80
Optimism	2.68	.62
Resilience	2.98	.72
Self-efficacy	3.91	1.05
Total	3.56	.80

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the teachers have total psychological capital levels ($\bar{X} = 3.56$) and they are at a good level. In the hope dimension ($\bar{X} = 3.63$), it was found to be at good level, in the optimism dimension ($\bar{X} = 2.68$) at a medium level, in the resilience dimension ($\bar{X} = 2.98$) at a medium level, and in the self-efficacy dimension ($\bar{X} = 3.91$) with a good level. The findings regarding the psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education are given in Table 3.

Table 3. The psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education in the dimension of hope

Items	\bar{X}	Sd
These days, I am fulfilling my business goals that I have set for myself.	4.49	.51
There are many ways to solve any problem	3.04	.93
I can come up with a lot of solutions if I am stuck in a bottleneck while working.	3.13	.94
Right now, I consider myself very successful at my job.	3.69	1.16
I am currently following my business objectives strictly.	4.40	.50
“I can think of many ways to achieve my current business goals.	3.11	.91
Total	3.63	.80

When Table 3 is examined, it is revealed that the psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education in the dimension of hope are at a good level ($\bar{X} = 3.63$). It was determined that the item with the lowest mean in this dimension was “There are many ways to solve any problem” and the item with the highest mean was “I am fulfilling the business goals I have set for myself these days”. The findings regarding the optimism level psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education are given in Table 4.

Table 4. *The psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education in the dimension of optimism*

Items	\bar{X}	Sd
In this workplace, things never work the way I want them to.	1.36	.50
When there are uncertainties in my job for me, I always want the best.	4.47	.50
If something is going to go wrong for me in my job, it goes that way.	1.36	.50
I always see the good side of things about my job.	1.47	.50
I am optimistic about what will happen to me in the future regarding my job.	1.47	.50
I approach my job as there is something	3.91	1
Total	2.68	.62

According to Table 4, the average level of psychological capital in the dimension of optimism of the teachers working in distance education was determined as medium ($\bar{X} = 2.68$). In this dimension, the item with the lowest mean was “If something is going to go wrong for me in my job, it goes that way” and the item with the highest mean is “When there is uncertainty for me in my job, I always want the best”. The findings regarding the psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education in the dimension of psychological resilience are given in Table 5. The findings regarding the psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education in the dimension of psychological resilience are given in Table

Table 5. *The psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education in the dimension of resilience*

Items	\bar{X}	Sd
Because I had difficulties before, I can overcome difficult times in my job.	1.64	.57
Usually, I handle stressful things in my job in a calm manner.	1.71	1.08
When I encounter a problem in my job, I'm having trouble getting over it.	1.41	.51
If I have to, I am self-sufficient at my job.	4.24	.71
I feel like I can handle a lot of things in my job.	3.78	.42
I usually deal with difficulties at my job somehow.	2.04	1.09
Total	2.98	.72

According to Table 5, the average level of psychological capital level in the dimension of psychological resilience of teachers working in distance education is at a medium level ($\bar{X} = 2.98$). In this dimension, the item with the lowest mean is “When I encounter a problem in my job, I have trouble getting over it” and the item with the highest mean is “If I have to, I am self-sufficient in my job”. The findings regarding the psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education in the dimension of self-efficacy are included in Table 6.

Table 6. *The psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education in the dimension of self-efficacy*

Items	\bar{X}	Sd
I feel confident while presenting information to a group of colleagues.	4.16	.77
In my field of work, I am confident in setting goals.	4.44	.62
I am confident in explaining my own work area in meetings attended by management	3.84	.37
I feel confident trying to find a solution to a long-term problem	4.33	.56
I am confident in contributing to discussions about the organization's strategy	3.49	.76
I feel confident in contacting people outside the organization to discuss problems.	3.20	.89
Total	3.91	1.05

When Table 6 is examined, it is determined that teachers working in distance education have psychological capital levels in the self-efficacy dimension ($\bar{X} = 3.91$). In this dimension, the lowest mean item was revealed as "I trust myself when contacting people outside the organization to discuss problems" and the item with the highest mean was "I am confident in setting goals/objectives in my field of study".

5. Conclusion and Discussion

In this study, psychological capital levels of teachers working in distance education was determined along with its sub-dimensions of hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy. According to the results of the study, the psychological capital levels of the teachers working in distance education were found to be at a good level. Hope and self-efficacy dimensions, which are sub-dimensions of psychological capital, were found to be at a good level, and optimism and psychological resilience dimensions were determined at medium level. In other studies determining psychological capital levels of teachers and the level of hope, optimism, resilience and self-efficacy sub-dimensions, these levels were found to be at a good and very high level (Akdemir and Aan, 2017; Akman, 2016; Kaya, Balay and Demirci, 2014). When the psychological capital levels of teachers were examined in total and in sub-dimensions, it was determined that the levels of teachers working in distance education differed and were at a lower level. The emergence of this result can be attributed to the lower level of teachers' awareness and competencies regarding distance education before the pandemic process. As stated by Luthans and Youssef (2006), the sub-dimensions of hope and self-efficacy appear at

a good level and the dimensions of optimism and resilience at a medium level; all sub-dimensions of psychological capital are related to each other. The individuals with high self-efficacy or hope level show their optimism and resilience in the organization. It is in contradiction with the idea that it can be implemented. It can be expressed that hope and self-efficacy levels put similar results in this study. Betz (2000) found that there is a positive relationship between hope and self-efficacy in his study. Accordingly, it can be stated that a consistent result was reached. It is expressed as a feature that resilience shows its effect in negative situations and provides a more constructive approach when faced with problems in business life. Optimism, on the other hand, is to be in a more positive approach and not to be discouraged by difficulties (Luthans, 2002). At this point, it is possible to state that resilience and optimism are dimensions that interact with each other. The difference between the distance education competencies of the teachers can be stated as a reason for the fact that the two dimensions expressed here are at a medium level in distance education teachers. It can be concluded that increasing the level of psycho-logical capital, which is stated to be an important variable in the efficiency of organizations, also in teachers working in distance education will contribute to school organization and productivity. Akman (2016) stated that teachers' hopes and optimism reveal themselves like the butterfly effect as in the chaos theory. Accordingly, increasing the psychological capital of teachers emerges as a situation that will affect both teachers and students. At this point, trainings and seminars about distance education can be organized and teachers' participation can be expected so that teachers can adopt distance education and make this process more efficient. Another factor that can increase the psychological capital levels of teachers regarding distance education can be stated as the access and participation of students to lessons. For this, it is important that students can access distance education. In addition, students' participation and activity in distance education can be evaluated as effective in achieving a better point in teachers' psychological resilience and optimism. In the dimension of self-efficacy, learning and applying the use of different tools, techniques and methods that can be used in distance education can be effective for teachers to reach a better point. It can be stated that the result of the hope dimension is related to the teachers' being affected by the pandemic process.

5.1 Recommendations

More comprehensive studies may be suggested to researchers who will study on the psychological capital of teachers in the future to work on the difference in psychological capital levels of teachers in distance education. By adding different variables to the study, results can be obtained about how and in what direction these variables affect teachers' psychological capital in distance education. In addition, qualitative studies may also be recommended to reveal and analyze the reasons why teachers' psychological capital levels differ among dimensions.

5.2 Ethical Text

“In this article, the journal writing rules, publication principles, research and publication ethics, and journal ethical rules were followed. The responsibility belongs to authors for any violations that may arise regarding the article. " Ethics committee approval within the scope of the research is given. It has been taken from the Hacettepe University ethics committee with the decision numbered 35853172-600 on 08.12.2020. There is no conflict of interest between the authors. The contribution rate of the first author to the article is 50%, and the contribution rate of the second author to the article is 50%.

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