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Analyzing Disciplinary Punishments in High Schools in terms of Different Variables in Turkish Education System*

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the disciplinary behaviors displayed at secondary education institutions located in Turkey and the disciplinary punishments imposed for those behaviors. The study made an attempt to reveal how disciplinary punishments imposed at high schools were distributed by different variables and whether those punishments varied by year, school type, gender, grade, and province. That was a historical study because it focused on six semesters between the years 2006 and 2009. That was also a descriptive quantitative study as it revealed the disciplinary punishments imposed at the above-mentioned schools. Research data were analyzed via SPSS package. Physical violence behaviors are the most frequently seen disciplinary behaviors at schools. In addition, teachers impose punishments, which should normally be inflicted in the last resort, in the first place. In consideration of the research results, it is recommended to provide teachers with in-service training on the subject of approach to disciplinary problems, to enable them to change their approaches to disciplinary behaviors, and to make pre-service teachers take courses about conflict management during their education at faculties of education.

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Keywords:
Discipline, disciplinary behaviors, disciplinary problems, classroom management.

Introduction

The word of discipline originally derives from the Latin word disciplina. Meaning the teaching of disciples, disciplina refers to training and education in a particular doctrine (Shepherd, 1993). According to Türk Dil Kurumu Sözlüğü (The Dictionary of the Turkish Language Association", discipline means "strict order", "body of measures taken for making people complying with the general behaviors and thoughts of the community they live in", or "the state of obeying the laws or order-related written or non-written rules of a community in a meticulous and careful manner"(TDK 2010).

Knowledge and education have maintained their importance through the human history. Educational goals have been set for both students and teachers in order to ensure the spread and improvement of knowledge (Psunder, 2005). Individuals need to be educated so that they can be a mature member of the society contributing to the improvement of culture. The cultivation of mature individuals is the objective of education in the democratic and modern world (Uljens, 2001). Knowledge should be presented in an interactive and communicative environment. This is because; children may get bored easily and not acquire satisfactory level of knowledge if a single method is employed. This cannot be achieved without discipline.

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The biggest problem encountered at schools is lack of discipline, which continues to be one of the most common troubles of teachers (Charles, 1989; Edwards, 1993; Elem, & Rose, 1995;Orhun, 2009; Psunder, 2005;).

Classroom management, discipline, and order are important for educators and citizens in many countries (Ben-Peretz, 1998). There is no universal definition about school discipline and its objectives, but there are some different definitions (Blandford, 1998). Discipline is implemented according to student behaviors, the personal experiences of teachers, teaching methods, and social norms (Dull, 2004).

In regard to the concept of discipline in educational environments, C. M. Charles made a definition reflecting the facts of classroom. According to Charles (1981), discipline can be defined in various ways including classroom management, classroom control and keeping the classroom in order, and is regarded as the most important responsibility of a teacher. For Charles, discipline is the most important and most fundamental concept that makes a teacher what s/he is or brings him/her to failure. Kindsvatter (1978) associates discipline with student behaviors in the classroom, and defines discipline as a set of classroom rules. According to Feldhusen (1978), any behavior that prevents a teacher from teaching is a disciplinary problem. Emmer et al. (1989) state that disciplinary problem emerges when the behavior of a student prevents the activities of teacher or some students. To Shrigley (1979), any psychologically or physically hazardous behavior that prevents the activity of teaching is a problem behavior. Disciplinary problem refers to any behavior that prevents teacher from teaching and others from learning, leads to psychological and physical insecurity, and causes harms to qualification. What this definition suggests is that teachers have as much part as students in the emergence of positive behaviors expected (Levin & Nolan, 2007). In a classroom, learning cannot be achieved without discipline. Discipline is mandatory to ensure classroom integrity (Cangemi & Khan, 1980). Without discipline, it is impossible to create a positive and productive classroom environment.

Searches for milder ways of maintaining school discipline started in the second half of the twentieth century. To this end, various discipline models were tried and developed. The objective was to not only provide aids supporting teachers in overcoming the negative behaviors of students, but also improve success by creating a more supportive classroom environment, enabling teachers to establish better communication with students, and helping teachers to develop better organizations. Among those attempts, the most influential ones were the Reality Therapy developed by William Glasser (1969), the Democratic Teaching suggested by Rudolf Dreikurs (1971), the Effectiveness Training introduced by Thomas Gordon (1974), and the Assertive Discipline put forward by Lee Canter (1976).

Although the basic focus of all these models is bringing better discipline to the classroom environment, there are some differences among them. An important issue of disagreement among these models is the degree of control which a teacher must have over the behaviors of students and the extent to which students must be given autonomy in this context. On the basis of this matter, it is possible to classify discipline models into three disciplinary approaches (Burden, 1995; Lewis, 1997; Wolfgang, 1999; Wolfgang, Bennett, & Irvin, 1999; Wolfgang &Wolfgang, 1995).

The first approach is the one most influential on Thomas Gordon (1974). It involves minimum teacher control. This approach is based on the philosophy that students are capable of controlling their own behaviors. The second approach confers the reasonability for controlling the undesirable behaviors of students to both students and teacher. This approach is based on cooperation between these parties. Teacher and students collectively decide on the sanctions to be imposed in regard to the results of undesirable student behaviors. These ideas are put forward by William Glasser (1969) and Rudolf Dreikurs et al. (1971). These studies reflect many democratic ideas on the subject of discipline. The approach that supports teacher intervention most strongly is the third one. This approach is based on the philosophy that since students are not capable of making and implementing the most appropriate decisions for them, such decision-making authority must be exercised by their teacher. The role of teacher involves choosing proper behaviors in order to strengthen the most appropriate behavior and eliminate undesirable behaviors. When an undesirable behavior emerges, teacher stops the undesirable behavior and directs student to desirable behavior. These ideas are found in Lee Canter (1976). In this approach, teacher makes decisions on behalf of students. This is the strongest intervention made by the teacher (Psunder, 2005). The principle of disciplinary intervention is

to establish a sound balance between the negative result of an inappropriate behavior and the positive result of an appropriate behavior (Marzano, Marzano & Pickering, 2003).

In consideration of the foregoing, disciplinary behavior can be defined as any behavior that prevents course activities from achieving their goals, causes harm to the person displaying it, to his/her friends, or to his/her teacher, and disrupts the physically and psychologically positive classroom environment. For many teachers, it is a stressful task to prevent disciplinary problems in the classroom and create a behavioral change (Fields, 1986; Hart, Wearing & Conn, 1995; Oswald & Adey, 1993; Lewis, 2001; Oswald, Johnson & Whitington, 1997). This is why; discipline cannot be held separate from teaching (Wagner, 1983). An undisciplined teaching is tiring, demoralizing, and destined to failure. The more effective education is, the fewer disciplinary problems there are (Wagner, 1983).

Physical violence took an important place in the education of children in the 19th and 20th centuries. Undoubtedly, it was the most widely accepted method in maintaining school discipline in those times (Middleton, 2008, 253). However, the situation is favorably some different today. The present study confirms it, too. According to Check (1979), 21% of teachers solve disciplinary problems by using physical violence while 79% overcome these problems without resorting to physical violence. 36% of middle school teachers and 4% of primary school students use physical violence. Male teachers (29.1%) resort to physical violence more than female teachers (15.6%). The teachers with a master's degree and a doctoral degree (18.7%) resort to physical violence less than the teachers with a bachelor's degree (21.7%). Experienced teachers use physical violence less than inexperienced teachers. Physical violence is banned in Europe, Japan, Israel, Ireland, Russia, China, Turkey, Iceland, Puerto Rico, 28 US States, and many metropolises of the USA. The United States of America and Canada are the only industrialized nations that welcome physical violence at schools (Partin, 2009). According to a study covering the 1994-1995 period, 94% of the parents living in the USA and 52% of the parents living in Canada turned to physical violence (Larzelere & Kuhn, 2005).

From 1969 to 2000, discipline was the most important problem of education. In the following four years, it ranked second after economic problems. Recent research shows that the discipline problem became third after economic problems and overcrowded school problems. The percentage of those who considered discipline a big problem was 17% in 2002, but went down to 10% in 2005 (Rose & Gallup, 2005).

Every classroom environment contains individuals with different backgrounds. It is not logical to expect for these individuals to display the desirable behaviors at the same level (Öztürk, 2008). In general, teachers prefer short and simple strategies in preventing disciplinary problems (Bear, 1998). However, when problem behaviors start to be solved, the effects of preferred short-term and long-term management strategies should be evaluated. Short-term strategies aim for students to give up inappropriate behaviors, to start displaying appropriate behaviors, or to maintain appropriate behaviors. The focus of long-term strategies is preventing problems (Emmer & Evertson, 2009). Behavioral problems may continue despite all these measures taken (Wasicsko & Ross, 1982). In this case, teacher may resort to different ways of intervention. There is not a single method for intervention (as for prevention). There are different ways of intervention that can be used in different situations. However, there are some common intervention methods to be used by every teacher (Palardy & Palardy, 1987). Among intervention methods are non-verbal techniques including making eye contact, touching, and physical closeness; verbal warnings including ignoring, asking questions, warning by name, and recalling rules; talking outside the classroom; and resorting to school disciplinary rules (Öztürk, 2008). Non-verbal strategies are advantageous in that they prevent the further disturbance of the order in the classroom. Moreover, these strategies provide students with an opportunity to exhibit the favorable behaviors expected from them (Levin & Nolan, 2003). When the above-mentioned ways of prevention and intervention are used, most of behavioral problems disappear or can be coped with effectively.

There are many reasons behind disciplinary problems. Problems continue until these reasons are revealed. All possible and available information should be obtained about a student in order to diagnose his/her problem. Teachers may detect behavioral problems based on the information they get from psychological files. According to some critics, it is just a waste of time to diagnose these problems because most of them do not have their roots in school. However, these problems may be overcome through some efforts made in school (Palardy & Palardy, 1987).

Attracting attention to the disciplinary rights of students, Lewis (1997) attributes a special importance to the rights of children because they, live in a democratic state, and have the right to be exposed to the disciplinary mentality that is to prepare them to be the citizen of future. Lewis (1997) analyzed student discipline policies and codes in order to determine the disciplinary approach preferences implemented in classrooms in 200 primary schools and 100 secondary schools in Australia. Lewis found out that teacher-focused disciplinary approach was the most frequently employed one. In a survey study conducted in 2001, Lewis examined the effect of encouraging student responsibility on the role of discipline in the classroom in 21 primary schools and 21 secondary schools. The results of that study indicated that besides other things, the increased use of oppressive discipline by teachers drew the attention of students.

Various studies demonstrate that the basic reasons for the most serious problems encountered at schools today are disciplinary problems. Another important finding of these studies is that teachers are unprepared for coping with these kinds of behaviors, which affects learning negatively (Nelson, Martella, & Galand, 1998). In the past two years, violence at schools has turned into a national matter (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). According to Cotton (1990), while half of the time is allocated for learning in the classroom, most of the other half is allocated for dealing with disciplinary problems.

Today, discipline is an important factor that affects education provided at educational institutions in Turkey. The Ministry of National Education published and put into force "Regulations Regarding Primary Education Institutions" dated 27/08/2003 MoNE 2010) and numbered 225 and "Awards and Disciplinary Regulations Concerning Secondary Education Institutions" dated 19/01/2007 and numbered 26408 in order to ensure discipline and constitute a particular standard at primary education and secondary education institutions in Turkey (MoNE 2013). The official website of the Ministry of National Education clearly indicates the punishments to be imposed for particular behavioral problems pursuant to the Awards and Disciplinary Regulations Concerning Secondary Education Institutions.

The sanctions to be imposed on students for the undesirable behaviors they display within the borders of school are established by written rules of law in the Turkish Education System. These rules limit the intervention of teachers in in-school and in-class undesirable behaviors. The action to be taken by a teacher for a student who displays an undesirable behavior is to apply to school administration with a petition and to request for such student to be punished.

This study aimed at revealing the distribution of disciplinary punishments imposed at high schools by various variables. To this end, an attempt was made to answer the below-mentioned questions:

1. How are the disciplinary punishments imposed at high schools distributed?

2. Do the disciplinary punishments imposed at high schools vary by year, school type, gender, grade, and provinces?

3. How are the disciplinary punishments imposed at high schools distributed by the types of behaviors requiring disciplinary punishments?

Methodology

That was a historical study because it focused on six semesters between the years 2006 and 2009. That was also a descriptive quantitative study as it revealed the disciplinary punishments imposed at the above-mentioned schools (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, Demirel, 2008).

Study Group

The present study was carried out at secondary education institutions located in two provinces (i.e. Kastamonu and Karabük) situated in the Black Sea Region of Turkey. Study group contained 4 high schools from Kastamonu province (2 general high schools and 2 vocational high schools) and 4 high schools from Karabük province (2 general high schools and 2 vocational high schools).

The reason for selecting school from Kastamonu and Karabük provinces was easy to reach the schools and gather the data for the researcher**. Both general high schools and vocational high schools were included in the study group in order to see the differences between general high schools and vocational high schools.

The total number of students receiving education at the schools included in the study group during the period under examination was 4948. Of these students, 2762 were from Kastamonu, and 2186 were from Karabük. 2834 were from vocational high schools while 2144 were from general high schools. Of the students included in the study group, 327 (6.60%) received disciplinary punishments. Of those students who received disciplinary punishments, 3.35% were general high school students while 3.25% were vocational high school students. Since the reviewed documents did not contain the distribution of total numbers of students by gender and grade, total numbers were not indicated by gender and grade in the present study.

Science high schools and Anatolian teacher training high schools, which provided academic education and had a very high success level across the country (Akşam Gazetesi 2013), were also included in the study group (one from each of the above-mentioned provinces), but it was found out that no disciplinary punishment was imposed at those high schools during the semesters under examination. Two science high schools and 2 Anatolian teacher training high schools were not included in analyses in case they could have a negative effect on analysis results.

Table 1 gives the distribution of the students included in the study group and receiving disciplinary punishments based on independent variables.

Table 1: The distribution of the study group by independent variables

	Gender		School Type		Grade			
	Female	Male	General High School	Vocational High School	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
n	52	275	166	161	106	101	107	13
%	15.9	84.1	50.8	49.2	32.4	30.9	32.7	4.0

84.1% of the study group consisted of male students, 50.8% consisted of general high school students, and 4.0% consisted of the 12th grade students.

Instrumentation

The archives of the high schools included the study group were reviewed to determine the types of punishments received by students as well the types of behaviors requiring punishment in order to answer the issues indicated in the research problem.

Data were collected through the review of school disciplinary punishment books related to the past 3 years. The number of students receiving disciplinary punishments was 110 for each year in average. Definite figures are given in table 3. It was seen that the average number of disciplinary punishments per year made up 2.20% of the total number of students.

Data Analysis

Based on the achieve review, disciplinary punishments were examined by the types of behaviors. It was seen that disciplinary punishments were imposed on 60 different types of behaviors. As is seen in table 2, those types of behaviors were grouped by the types of behaviors requiring punishment found in the literature. Then, differences among variables were investigated via SPSS 11 package. Crosstabs were created via SPSS 11 package. Since data had been grouped, differences were examined through Pearson's chi-square test.

Findings

Data were analyzed via SPSS 11 package, and the below-mentioned findings were obtained.

Table 2: The distribution of disciplinary punishments imposed at high schools

TYPES OF BEHAVIORS	DESCRIPTION
Undesirable behaviors towards school employees	Disobeying teacher, insulting teacher, disrespecting teacher, opposing commissioned officer.
Immoral disciplinary behaviors	Displaying inappropriate behaviors, using foul language, exhibiting immoral behaviors, appearing in an improper condition, groping, molesting friends.
Falsification and forgery in official documents	Falsifying attendance form, annihilating attendance form, forging attendance form, falsifying examination document, making out false documents, putting exam paper in the file though one does not sit for the exam.
Physical violence	Injuring and insulting, fighting, being involved in a fight, seizing, making serious jokes, slapping in the faces of friends and cutting their hair with scissors, causing a fight, displaying provocative behaviors, threatening and pounding, abetting, bringing knife, pocket knife, etc. to the school.
Not fulfilling the responsibilities	Absconding from school, extending leave without obtaining permission, leaving dormitory at night without obtaining permission, not fulfilling the duties assigned, attending a ceremony late, skipping lessons, being absent from school, receiving a text message during the lesson, going to the areas prohibited for students, not obeying the rules, violating the dress code, not attending a ceremony without gaining permission, behaving irresponsibly, acting against the rules of good manners, bringing a stranger to the school.
Negative communication, threat, and swearing	Lying, brickbat, insulting, disturbing the peace of dormitory, threatening, blackmailing, swearing, treating with contempt, preventing the fulfillment of duties assigned by the school by threatening and pressuring.
Using addictive drugs	Going about with those who drink alcohol, using addictive drugs, keeping cigarettes available.
Undesirable IT behaviors	Publishing images on Internet, shooting without permission, hiding IT tools in school fixtures.
Preventing course activities	Disturbing the order of classroom, exhibiting inappropriate behaviors, preventing teaching a lesson, copying from somebody, copying by threat, damaging course tools and materials.

The distribution of disciplinary punishments imposed at high schools: It was found out that 327 disciplinary punishments were imposed at the high schools included in the study group during the 6 semesters under examination. Those punishments involved 60 different behaviors. The determined types of behaviors were collected in the below-mentioned 9 main groups in accordance with the literature (Table 2).

Table 3: The distribution of the types of behaviors requiring disciplinary punishments by various variables

VARIABLE			Undesirable behaviors towards school employees	Immoral disciplinary behaviors	Falsification and forgery in official documents	Physical violence	Not fulfilling the responsibilities	Negative communication, threat, and swearing	Using addictive drugs	Undesirable IT behaviors	Preventing course activities	Total
Academic Year	2006/2007	n	8	8	4	48	6	2	20	3	6	105
		%	42.1	57.1	16.7	42.5	15.4	9.5	36.4	30.0	18.8	32.1
	2007/2008	n	4	2	1	29	16	6	24	4	14	100
		%	21.1	14.3	4.2	25.7	41.0	28.6	43.6	40.0	43.8	30.6
	2008/2009	n	7	4	19	36	17	13	11	3	12	122
		%	36.8	28.6	79.2	31.9	43.6	61.9	20.0	30.0	37.5	34.1
School Type	Genera	n	4	10	2	73	26	6	25	7	13	166
	High School	%	21.1	71.4	8.3	64.6	66.7	28.6	45.5	70.0	40.6	50.8
	Vocational	n	15	4	22	40	13	15	30	3	19	161
	High School	%	78.9	28.6	91.7	35.4	33.3	71.4	54.5	30.0	59.4	49.2
Gender	Male	n	18	11	23	89	29	18	48	9	30	275
		%	94.7	78.6	95.8	78.8	74.4	85.7	87.3	90.0	93.8	84.1
	Female	n	1	3	1	24	10	3	7	1	2	52
		%	5.3	21.4	4.2	21.2	25.6	14.3	12.7	10.0	6.2	15.9
Grade	9th Grade	n	5	2	5	43	4	4	28	4	11	106
		%	26.3	14.3	20.8	38.1	10.3	19.0	50.9	40.0	34.4	32.4
	10th Grade	n	4	5	11	31	20	7	6	2	15	101
		%	21.1	35.7	45.8	27.4	51.3	33.3	10.9	20.0	46.9	30.9
	11th Grade	n	10	6	8	35	12	5	21	4	6	107
		%	52.6	42.9	33.3	31.0	30.8	23.8	38.2	40.0	18.8	32.7
	12th Grade	n	0	1	0	4	3	5	0	0	0	13
		%	0.0	7.1	0.0	3.5	7.7	23.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
Province	Kastamonu	n	5	6	14	44	27	14	38	10	19	177
		%	26.3	42.9	58.3	38.9	69.2	66.7	39.1	100.0	59.4	54.1
	Karabük	n	14	8	10	69	12	7	17	0	13	150
		%	73.7	57.1	41.7	61.1	30.8	33.3	30.9	0.0	40.6	45.9
Type of punishment	Warning	n	1	0	0	1	3	0	3	0	1	9
		%	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.9	7.7	0.0	5.5	0.0	3.1	2.8
	Reprimand	n	3	3	1	11	17	11	23	4	11	85
		%	15.8	21.4	4.2	9.7	43.6	52.4	41.8	40.0	34.4	26.0
	Short-Term	n	15	11	23	98	19	10	29	6	14	225
	Suspension	%	78.9	78.6	95.8	86.7	48.7	47.6	52.7	60.0	43.8	68.8
	Debarment	n	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	**0**	6	8
	by Leaving Certificate	%	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.8	2.4
Total		n	113	55	39	32	24	21	19	14	10	327
		%	34.6	16.8	11.9	9.8	7.3	6.4	5.8	4.3	3.1	100

As can be seen from Table 2 the examination of the disciplinary punishments imposed in six semesters (three academic years) reveals that 34.1% of 327 punishments were imposed during the 2008-2009 academic year. Physical violence was the type of behaviors on which most disciplinary punishments were

imposed (42.5% [48] in the 2006-2007 academic period). Pearson's chi-square test was carried out in order to determine whether there was any significant difference between years and the types of behaviors requiring disciplinary punishment. The test demonstrated a significant difference between the two ($\chi^2_{(16)} = 53.30$) at the level of p<.05 (P<.00).

The examination of the distribution of the types of behaviors requiring punishment by school types shows that 49.2% of punishments were imposed at vocational high schools while 50.8% were inflicted at general high schools. While 91.7% of cases of falsification and forgery in official documents took place at vocational high schools, only 8.3% of such cases occurred at general high schools. While 78.9% of cases of undesirable behaviors towards school employees took place at vocational high schools, 21.1% of such cases occurred at general high schools. While 35.4% of cases of physical violence took place at vocational high schools, 64.6% of such cases occurred at general high schools. While 71.4% of cases of negative communication, threat, and swearing took place at vocational high schools, 28.6% of such cases occurred at general high schools. Pearson's chi-square test was carried out in order to determine whether there was any significant difference between the types of high schools and the types of behaviors requiring disciplinary punishment. The test demonstrated a significant difference between the two ($\chi^2_{(8)} = 46.55$) at the level of p<.05 (P<.00).

84.1% of disciplinary punishments were imposed on male students, and 15.9% were imposed on female students. However, no disciplinary behavior was found to be displayed by female students more in comparison to male students. Not fulfilling the responsibilities was found to be the most frequent behavior requiring disciplinary punishment among female students (25.6%). Pearson's chi-square test was carried out in order to determine whether there was any significant difference between gender and the types of behaviors requiring disciplinary punishment. The test demonstrated no significant difference between the two ($\chi^2_{(8)} = 12.52$) at the level of p<.05 (P<.13).

32.4% of disciplinary punishments were received by the 9th grade students, and 4.0% were received by the 12th grade students. The most frequent punishments imposed on the 9th grade students were using addictive drugs (50.9%) and physical violence (38.1%). 52.6% of the cases of undesirable behaviors towards school employees took place among the 11th grade students. 42.9% of the cases of immoral disciplinary behaviors took place among the 11th grade students. Pearson's chi-square test was carried out in order to determine whether there was any significant difference between grade and the types of behaviors requiring disciplinary punishment. The test demonstrated a significant difference between the two ($\chi^2_{(24)} = 69.21$) at the level of p<.05 (P<.00).

While 54.1% of disciplinary punishments were imposed in Kastamonu, 45.9% were inflicted in Karabük. While the cases of undesirable behaviors towards school employees (73.7%) and physical violence (61.1%) came to the forefront in Karabük, the cases of not fulfilling the responsibilities (69.2%) and negative communication, threat, and swearing (66.7%) were in the forefront in Kastamonu. Pearson's chi-square test was carried out in order to determine whether there was any significant difference between provinces and the types of behaviors requiring disciplinary punishment. The test demonstrated a significant difference between the two ($\chi^2_{(8)} = 36.01$) at the level of p<.05 (P<.00).

68.8% of disciplinary punishments involved short-term suspension, 26.0% involved reprimand, and 2.4% involved debarment by leaving certificate. Pearson's chi-square test was carried out in order to determine whether there was any significant difference between the types of punishments and the types of behaviors requiring disciplinary punishment. The test demonstrated a significant difference between the two ($\chi^2_{(32)} = 101.43$) at the level of p<.05 (P<.00).

Among the types of behaviors requiring disciplinary punishment, the most frequent one was physical violence (34.6%), which was followed by using addictive drugs (16.8%). The least frequent type of behavior was undesirable IT behaviors (3.1%).

Discussion

Results illustrated that discipline, as one of the most important problems encountered at educational institutions across the world, is a serious problem (also in Turkey) requiring special attention in order to improve the quality of education. According to the findings of the present study, the most frequent type of disciplinary behaviors encountered at schools is physical violence. Teachers resort to physical punishments. Turkish laws prevent teachers from subjecting students to physical violence, and contain severe sanctions. Most of the studies focusing on physical punishments divide physical punishments into such categories as very serious punishments, the punishments not involving swearing, and traditional punishments (DeVoe, Peter,. Kaufman,, Ruddy, Miller, Planty, 2002; U.S., 1998; Oplatka, Atias, Miri, 2007). For example, according to Baumrind, Larzelere & Cowan,. (2002), 65% of the meta-analyses of Gershoff involve quite serious physical punishments based on his own measurements. Examples included vaguely defined punitive discipline (6% of studies), combined measurements measuring the frequency and intensity of physical punishment (29%), and physical punishments involving severe violence (31%) including slapping (7 studies), beating (3 studies) or battering, and causing bruises and cuts (1 study). Psunder (2005) conducted among 55 primary school teachers and 245 primary school students from 6 different primary schools in Slovenia demonstrated that teachers and students grouped disciplinary problems similarly.

Research findings demonstrate that 49.2% of disciplinary punishments were imposed at vocational high schools, and 50.8% were inflicted at general high schools. Although there was no difference between the types of high schools by the disciplinary punishments imposed, a difference was found between the types of high schools by the types of behaviors requiring disciplinary punishment.

In the present study, the comparison of disciplinary punishments by school types shows that disciplinary behaviors vary between vocational high schools and general high schools. The most frequently encountered disciplinary behavior is physical violence at general high schools. The disciplinary behaviors coming to the forefront at vocational high schools are falsification and forgery in official documents, using addictive drugs, and undesirable behaviors towards school employees. This finding shows that school type is associated with the undesirable behaviors displayed.

It is evident that one of the reasons for disruption at schools is physical violence. Those teachers who frequently resort to physical violence are seen to be more authoritative, dogmatic, inexperienced, aggressive, and nervous than their colleagues. The teachers who were exposed to physical violence during their childhood use physical violence against their students more. Disciplinary problems are more common at schools where physical violence is used more frequently in comparison to the schools where the use of physical violence is less frequent. Although recent research shows that there has been a decrease in the use of physical violence, the data of US Department of Education report that 233,000 students were exposed to physical violence in the years 2006 and 2007. All in all, this study revealed that physical violence affected teachers and students negatively, and increased violence further (Partin, 2009).

Result revelaed that the types of disciplinary punishments did not vary by gender. However, 84.1% of disciplinary punishments were imposed on male students and 15.9% were imposed on female students. In other words, male students displayed behaviors requiring disciplinary punishment more than female students. This finding does not show parallelism with the findings of the studies carried out in other countries (Pulkkinen & Pitkänen, 1993; Tenenbaum & Ruck, 2007; McFadden, Marsh, Price, and Hwang, 1992). A study examined race and gender as demographic variables assuming that the races and genders of students could affect the attitudes of teachers and administrators about disciplinary decisions. McFadden, Marsh, Price, and Hwang (1992) reported that male students committed crimes requiring disciplinary punishment more than did female students. Through analyses, they found out that different disciplinary punishments were imposed depending on race and gender. Similarly, the ratio of imposing physical punishments (beating) on male students was the highest among all cases of referring to disciplinary body.

People think differently in regard to what is called an appropriate behavior according to gender. Pulkkinen and Pitkänen (1993) carried out a longitudinal study to examine overt aggression from 8-years-old to 26-years-old. Evaluating aggression cases about direct and indirect physical, verbal, and facial aggression reported by peers and teachers at 8-years-old level, 12 items were used for determining two measures of overt aggression: (1) score stated by peers; and (2) teacher assessment. At 14-years-old level,

those scores were calculated based on the answers given by peers and teachers to a single question: "who attacks, teases, and tells unfavorable words against others without any reason?" Results showed that teachers considered male students more aggressive than female students (Pulkkinen & Pitkänen, 1993). These kinds of attitudes shape the thoughts about what is acceptable for each gender. Another study reported that teachers were in a tendency to describe a specific physical aggressive behavior more inappropriate when such behavior was displayed by female students (in comparison to when such behavior was displayed by male students) (Condry & Ross, 1985). These results demonstrate that teachers may give more serious reactions to the aggression displayed by female students, and may impose more severe disciplinary punishments for such aggressive behaviors exhibited by female students. This is because; the behaviors of female students are perceived to be more inappropriate and contradictory than what is expected.

The examination of disciplinary punishments by grades showed that the types of punishments varied by grades. The 12th grade students encountered the smallest number of punishments. This finding can be interpreted in two ways: (1) Since these students were final year students, school administration may have had a more tolerant attitude towards them in terms of punishments; (2) As the ages of students increased, they became more prone to obey the school rules. Another noteworthy finding is that as grade became higher, the cases of preventing course activities decreased. Excepting 12th grade, as grade increased, tendency for immoral disciplinary behaviors increased.

A study carried out in the United States of America (Public Agenda, 2004) focused on 725 medium school and high school teachers and 600 families. According to the findings of that study, 97% of teachers and 78% of families argued that a school should be well-disciplined if the goal was improvement. In addition, 93% of teachers and 88% of families thought that it was the duty of school to teach rules to children in order to cultivate good citizens. However, school discipline policies do not work to that end today. For instance, 78% of teachers state that problem students who must have been expelled from school were not expelled actually. Teachers who are not knowledgeable and experienced on the subject of conflict management resort to disciplinary punishment straightaway.

Teachers who are not qualified enough about special abilities have more difficulty in coping with the increasing number of disciplinary problems (Marr, Audette, White, Ellis & Algozzine, 2002). Routine problems, disciplinary concerns, and inability to fulfill demands constitute an important communication problem for pre-service teachers and recently appointed teachers (Hogelucht and Geist, 1997, 1). Tulley and Chiu (1995) concluded that the most effective strategy of prospective teachers was adopting a humanistic behavior, and their most ineffective strategy was displaying authoritative attitudes. Those students who were exposed to any disciplinary action were seen to create fewer disciplinary problems in the classroom (Holmes-Lonergan, 2003).

Public Agenda (2004) demonstrated that 77% of teachers told that they could conduct a more effective teaching if they did not deal with problem students that much. Likewise, 43% of families said that their children would be more successful at school if teachers did not deal with disciplinary problems. 78% of teachers said that they were aware of the rights of students, and families would seek their rights through legal channels if any negative situation took place. 49% of teachers told that they were accused when they took a wrong disciplinary action, and 52% stated that those kinds of problems resulted from teachers who were tolerant about discipline. 69% of teachers and 72% of families said that they would seek their rights when a disciplinary punishment was imposed.

Some studies have been conducted in order to put forward solutions to disciplinary problems emerging at primary education institutions. For example, Check (1979) administered 956 questionnaires to primary school and middle school teachers working at public schools and religious schools in the United States of America. 561 of those questionnaires were included in analysis. According to the result of that study, disciplinary problems were more severe and higher in quantity in comparison to the past. Primary school and middle school teachers told that they encountered more disciplinary problems in comparison to their colleagues at high schools. More experienced teachers were seen to experience fewer problems. Most of those who answered questionnaires accused families of triggering problems. Approximately 62% of the teachers participating in the study stated that disciplinary problems were more frequent in comparison to 5

years ago. 25% of the teachers thought that there was no increase in the number of disciplinary problems. More than half of the teacher attributed the reasons for problems to families. 39% blamed society, 3% blamed teachers, and 3% blamed students (Check, 1979).

Disciplinary techniques were seen to be teacher-centered in a study conducted in Slovenia on 245 6th grade and 8th grade students and 55 primary school teachers giving education to 11 to 14-years-old students (Psunder, 2004). According to the results of a study prepared in Australia and conducted on 5521 students in Israel and China (Lewis, Romi, Katz & Qui, 2007), the approaches of teachers to disciplinary events in the classroom affected the reactions of students to their schools and teachers.

Suggestions

Teachers play one of the most important roles in preventing disciplinary problems emerging from differences in the classroom environment. Thus, teachers should have certain characteristics. Firstly, teachers should make plans well, and develop alternative plans (Levin & Nolan, 2003). Teachers may prevent behavioral problems if they feel themselves comfortable in the classroom environment, are aware of the capacities of their students, provide students with interesting activities that are suitable for their capacities, establish rules together with rules, enable the rules to be internalized by students, do time planning well, avoid treating students as if they were adults, and love and respect their students (Palardy & Palardy, 1987).

If teachers are provided with an in-service training on approaches to disciplinary problems, their attitudes towards disciplinary behaviors may change. Another finding of the present study is that punishments, which normally need to be imposed in the last resort, are employed in the first place. The fact that 327 disciplinary punishments were imposed at 8 schools in 6 semesters is really thought-provoking. In this regard, pre-service teachers should be trained on the subject of conflict management.

The study indicated that discipline matter should be focused on by educational institution employees as a whole by taking into account child rights but not adopting a punishment-centered approach.

Although 2 science high schools and 2 Anatolian teacher training high schools were included in the study group at the beginning of the study, it was found out that no disciplinary punishment was imposed at those high schools in the semesters under examination. Those schools provided academic education and had the highest success level across the country. This shows that disciplinary problems are not encountered at schools that focus on success. Therefore, it can be assumed that disciplinary behaviors may disappear if teacher and administrators enable students to focus on success.

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