

Examining Psychological Hardiness Levels of Primary School Teachers According to Demographic Variables

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine psychological hardiness levels of teachers according to demographic variables such as gender, branch, age, seniority, and years in current school variables. A total of 369 teachers employed in 12 primary schools in Ankara province participated in the study. Personal Views Survey III-R" was used to gather data. Independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to analyze data. Results revealed that hardiness levels of primary school teachers were not significantly related to their gender, branch, age, seniority, and years in current school. This finding reveals the need for further research which contributes well to the understanding of relationships between teacher psychological hardiness and other variables emphasizing especially organizations' psychological side such as stress, coping with stress, mobbing, burnout, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction.

Keywords: Primary school, teacher, psychological hardiness

İlköğretim Okulu Öğretmenlerinin Psikolojik Dayanıklılık Düzeylerinin Demografik Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı, ilköğretim okulu öğretmenlerinin psikolojik dayanıklılık düzeylerinin cinsiyet, branş, yaş, mesleki kıdem ve görev yapılan okuldaki hizmet süresi gibi demografik değişkenler açısından incelenmesidir. Araştırmaya Ankara il merkezinde yer alan 12 ilköğretim okulunda görev yapan toplam 369 öğretmen katılmıştır. Araştırmada veri toplamak amacıyla Psikolojik Dayanıklılık Ölçeği III-R kullanılmıştır. Araştırma verilerinin analizinde t-testi ve tek yönlü varyans analizi (ANOVA) kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçları, ilköğretim okulu öğretmenlerinin psikolojik dayanıklılık düzeylerinin cinsiyet, branş, yaş, kıdem ve görev yapılan okuldaki hizmet süresi gibi demografik değişkenlerle ilişkili olmadığını göstermektedir. Bu bulgu, öğretmenlerin psikolojik dayanıklılığı ile stres, stresle başa çıkma, yıldırmaya, tükenmişlik, örgütSEL bağıllılık ve iş doyumu gibi örgütün daha çok psikolojik yönüne vurgu yapan kavramlar arasındaki ilişkilerin anlaşılmasına yönelik daha fazla araştırmaya ihtiyaç duyulduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: İlköğretim okulu, öğretmen, psikolojik dayanıklılık

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Son yıllarda, iş stresi ile ilişkili bazı kişilik özellikleri araştırmacıların ilgisini çekmektedir (Azeem, 2010; Maddi, Harvey, Khoshaba, Persico ve Brow, 2006; Pienaar, Rothmann ve van de Vijver, 2007). Bunlardan biri, örgütlerde yaşanan stresle mücadeleyi sağlayan ve stresin olumsuz etkilerini azaltan bir kişilik özelliği olarak psikolojik dayanıklılıktır (Crowley, Hayslip ve Hobdy, 2003; Lambert ve Lambert, 1999; Maddi, 2006; Maddi ve Khoshaba, 1994). İlgili alanyazında psikolojik dayanıklılık kavramıyla ilgili daha fazla çalışma yapılması ve bu kavramın farklı değişkenlerle ilişkisinin derinlemesine incelenmesi gerektiği yönünde genel bir eğilim olduğu söylenebilir (Hannah ve Morrissey, 1986; Harrisson, Loiselle, Duquette ve Semenic, 2002; Maddi ve Khoshaba, 2001). Hem yurtdışında hem de yurt içinde yapılan araştırmalar, öğretmenlerin okulda strese maruz kaldıklarını ve aşırı yorgunluk yaşadıklarını göstermektedir (Austin, Shah ve Muncer, 2005; Boyle, Borg, Falzon ve Baglioni, 1995; Burchielli ve Bartram, 2006; Capel, 1991; Dick ve Wagner, 2001; Erçetin, Hamedoğlu ve Çelik, 2008; Platsidou ve Agaliotis, 2008; Tsiaakkiros ve Pashiardis, 2006). Öte yandan, psikolojik dayanıklılığın stresin olumsuz etkilerini azaltabileceğini ileri sürlmektedir (Harrisson vd., 2002; Lambert ve Lambert, 1999). Bu bağlamda, öğretmenlerin okulda aşırı stres ve yorgunluğa maruz kaldığını ortaya koyan araştırma bulgularının, öğretmenlerin psikolojik dayanıklılık düzeylerini inceleyen çalışmaların önemini artırdığı düşünülebilir. Bununla birlikte, özellikle cinsiyet ve yaşı gibi demografik değişkenlerle psikolojik dayanıklılığın ilişkisinin incelendiği araştırmalarda birbirile örtüşmeyen sonuçların elde edildiği görülmektedir (Chan, 2003; Hannah ve Morrissey, 1986; Shepperd ve Kashani, 1991). Bu durum, psikolojik dayanıklılıkla demografik değişkenler arasındaki ilişkilere odaklanan daha fazla araştırmaya ihtiyaç duyulduğunu göstermektedir. Öğretmenlerin yaşıları, mesleki kıdemleri ve görev yaptıkları okuldaki hizmet süreleri arttıkça okula ilişkin süreç ve prosedürlere yönelik daha derinlemesine bir farkındalık geliştirmeleri ve yaptıkları işi daha fazla benimsemeleri sonucu psikolojik dayanıklılık düzeyleri artabilir. Nitekim Maddi ve diğerleri (2006), yaş ile psikolojik dayanıklılık arasında düşük düzeyde de olsa pozitif yönde bir ilişki olduğunu ortaya koymuşlardır. Harrisson ve diğerleri (2002) ise hemşireler arasında yaptıkları bir çalışmada, hizmet süresi ile psikolojik dayanıklılık arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olmadığını bulgulamışlardır. Sonuç olarak, demografik değişkenlerle psikolojik dayanıklılık arasındaki ilişkileri inceleyen araştırma sonuçlarının oldukça çelişkili sonuçlar ürettiği görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda, öğretmenlerin cinsiyet, branş, yaşı, mesleki kıdem ve görev yapılan okuldaki hizmet süresi değişkenlerine göre psikolojik dayanıklılıklarına ilişkin algılarının incelendiği bu araştırmmanın sonuçlarının, psikolojik dayanıklılık kavramının daha net bir biçimde anlaşılmasına yardımcı olarak okulda yaşanan stresle mücadeleye yönelik politika yapıcılar için önemli bir veri kaynağı olabileceği düşünülmektedir.

Bu araştırma tarama modelinde betimsel bir çalışmадır. Araştırmanın evrenini Ankara ili merkez ilçelerinde görevli öğretmenler oluşturmaktadır. Bu evrenden basit seçkisiz örneklemeye yoluyla 12 ilköğretim okulundan seçilen toplam 369 öğretmen araştırmaya katılmıştır. Bu öğretmenlerin 195'i (%52.8) erkek, 174'ü (%47.2) kadındır. Araştırmaya katılan öğretmenlerden 150'si (%40.7) sınıf, 219'u (%59.3) branş öğretmenidir. Araştırmada kullanılan veri toplama aracı üç bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölümde cinsiyet, yaşı, branş, mesleki kıdem ve görev yapılan okuldaki hizmet süresi gibi demografik değişkenlere ilişkin kişisel bilgi formu yer almıştır. İkinci bölümde, öğretmenlerin psikolojik dayanıklılık düzeylerini tespit etmek amacıyla 'Psikolojik Dayanıklılık Ölçeği III-R' sunulmuştur. Psikolojik Dayanıklılık Ölçeği III-R (Personal Views Survey III-R), Maddi ve Khoshaba (2001) tarafından geliştirilmiş, Durak (2002) tarafından Türkçeye uyarlanmıştır. Ölçek, bireyin kendisine ve yaşamına ilişkin inançlarını ifade eden 18 maddenin temsil ettiği bağlanma, kontrol ve güçlük olmak üzere üç alt boyuttan oluşmaktadır. Likert tipinde ve 0-3 arasında puanlanan ölçeğin maddeleri "0 = hiç doğru değil" ve "3 = çok doğru" şeklinde derecelendirilmiştir. Ölçeğin geçerlik ve güvenirlilik çalışmalarında, altı maddenin madde toplam korelasyonları .20'nin altında çıktıgı için bu maddeler ölçekte atılmıştır. Geri kalan 12 maddenin madde toplam korelasyonları .23 ile .50 arasında değişmiş ve ölçeğin iç tutarlık katsayı .68 olarak hesaplanmıştır (Durak, 2002).

Verilerin analizinde SPSS 15.0 programı kullanılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin psikolojik dayanıklılık düzeylerinin cinsiyet ve branş gibi iki kategorili değişkenlere göre farklılığının analizinde bağımsız gruplar için t-testi; yaşı, mesleki kıdem ve görev yapılan okuldaki hizmet süresi değişkenlerine göre farklılığın test edilmesi için ise tek yönlü varyans analizi (ANOVA) kullanılmıştır. Analizlerde hata payı .05 olarak alınmıştır.

Araştırma bulguları, ilköğretim okulu öğretmenlerinin psikolojik dayanıklılık düzeylerinin cinsiyet [t (367) = .016, $p > .05$], branş [t (367) = -1.089, $p > .05$], yaş [F (2, 366) = .479, $p > .05$], mesleki kıdem [F (3, 365) = .485, $p > .05$] ve görev yapılan okuldaki hizmet süresi [F (2, 366) = 1.498, $p > .05$] değişkenlerine göre anlamlı bir farklılık göstermediğini ortaya koymaktadır.

Araştırma sonuçları öğretmenlerin psikolojik dayanıklılığa ilişkin algılarda demografik değişkenlerin belirleyici bir unsur olmadığını göstermektedir. Bu noktada, psikolojik dayanıklılık kavramının daha etkili bir biçimde çözümlenebilmesi için konuya ilişkin daha detaylı çalışmalarla ihtiyaç duyulduğu söylenebilir. Özellikle farklı örneklem gruplarında, farklı araştırma yöntem ve teknikleriyle yapılacak daha detaylı araştırmaların konuya yönelik farklı bakış açıları sunabileceği düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca, psikolojik dayanıklılık kavramının stres, stresle başa çıkma, yıldırmaya, tükenmişlik, örgütsel bağlılık ve iş doyumu gibi örgütün daha çok psikolojik yönüne vurgu yapan kavramlarla ilişkisini daha derinlemesine irdeleyen araştırmaların yapılması gerektiği söylenebilir. Son olarak, psikolojik dayanıklılığın stresle başa çıkmada önemli bir kişilik özelliği olarak görüldüğü (Crowley vd., 2003; Maddi, 2006; Maddi ve Khoshaba, 1994) ve öğretmenlerin eğitim-öğretim uygulamalarını etkili bir biçimde gerçekleştirilebilmeleri için stresle baş etmeleri gerektiği düşünüldüğünde, öğretmenlerin psikolojik dayanıklılıklarını artıracak okul merkezli özgün uygulamalara ihtiyaç duyulduğu söylenebilir.

INTRODUCTION

People have spent a large part of their time in organizations. Certain negative characteristics of the psycho-social working environments of organizations caused workers to go through stress (Albertsen, Nielsen, & Borg, 2001). When the stress in the working environment has been accompanied by the stress in one's private life, a more unfavorable condition emerges for both the individual and the organization (Cemaloğlu, 2007; Çobanoğlu, 2005; Mearns & Cain, 2003). Sabuncuoğlu and Tüz (2001) highlighted that stress in the workplace had a negative effect on organizational performance, and led to absenteeism as well as behavioral disorders, anxiety, depression, and burnout among workers.

In recent years, some personality traits associated with job stress have attracted the attention of researchers (Azeem, 2010; Maddi, Harvey, Khoshaba, Persico, & Brow, 2006; Pienaar, Rothmann, & van de Vijver, 2007). One of them has been psychological hardiness that enables to cope with the stress experienced in organizations and that reduces the negative effects of the stress (Crowley, Hayslip, & Hobdy, 2003; Lambert & Lambert, 1999; Maddi, 2006; Maddi & Khoshaba, 1994). Relevant literature generally suggested that more research should be conducted on the subject of psychological hardiness, and its relationship with different variables should be investigated in detail (Hannah & Morrissey, 1986; Harrisson, Loiselle, Duquette, & Semenic, 2002; Maddi & Khoshaba, 2001). Judkins and Ring (2005) argued that the determination of the psychological hardiness levels of the workers was an important step for coping with stress.

Both international and national studies demonstrated that teachers were exposed to stress at school and experienced excessive fatigue (Austin, Shah, & Munger, 2005; Boyle, Borg, Falzon, & Baglioni, 1995; Burchielli & Bartram, 2006; Capel, 1991; Dick & Wagner, 2001; Erçetin, Hamedoğlu, & Çelik, 2008; Platsidou & Agaliotis, 2008; Tsiaikiros & Pashiardis, 2006). On the other hand, it was suggested that psychological hardiness might reduce the negative effects of stress (Harrisson et al., 2002; Lambert & Lambert, 1999). Within this context, it might be thought that the research findings revealing that teachers were exposed to excessive stress and fatigue at school have increased the importance of the research on the psychological hardiness levels of teachers. However, it was obvious that some contradictory results were found in the studies investigating the relationship between psychological hardiness and certain demographic variables, gender and age being in the first place (Chan, 2003; Hannah & Morrissey, 1986; Shepperd & Kashani, 1991). This referred the need for more research focusing on the relationship between psychological hardiness and demographic variables. As a teacher's age, seniority, and years in current school increase, his/her psychological hardiness level may augment because s/he develops a deeper awareness concerning the processes and procedures related to school, and internalizes his/her job more. As a matter of fact, Maddi et al. (2006) revealed that there was a positive, though low, relationship between age and psychological hardiness. In a study conducted on nurses, Harrisson et al. (2002) found that there was no significant relationship between seniority and psychological hardiness. All in all, it was seen that the studies investigating the relationship between demographic variables and psychological hardiness yielded contradictory results. In this regard, it has been thought that the results of the present study, which examines the psychological hardiness perceptions of teachers by such variables as gender, branch, age, seniority, and years in current school, may be an important data source for policymakers intending to cope with the stress at school by helping to understand the concept of psychological hardiness more clearly.

Psychological Hardiness

Being a combination of the personality traits that have a positive effect on the health, performance, and mood of an individual by reducing the negative effects of the stressful condition s/he is in, psychological hardiness has been subject to many studies conducted in recent years (Maddi et al., 2006, Sezgin, 2012). The review of the related literature indicated that psychological hardiness was composed of three dimensions: commitment, control, and challenge (Lambert & Lambert, 1999; Lambert, Lambert, & Yamase, 2003; Maddi, 2006; Maddi et al., 2006; Maddi & Khoshaba, 1994; Maddi & Khoshaba, 2001; Morrissey & Hannah, 1986). *Commitment* might be defined as an individual's making sense of the daily events s/he experiences by playing an active role in such events (Maddi, 2006). Individuals with a high commitment level make the events they experience interesting and important for themselves (Maddi & Khoshaba, 1994). *Control* refers to the situation where an individual believes that s/he may affect the events taking place in his/her life and maintains his/her behaviors in this direction. Individuals with a high control perception believe that they may affect the emergence of events through their efforts (Maddi & Khoshaba, 1994). *Challenge* is about the belief that change is a stimulus that matures people, rather than a threat (Lambert et al., 2003; Maddi & Khoshaba, 1994; Maddi, 2006). It may also be defined as an individual's regarding his/her positive or

negative experiences as an opportunity for his/her improvement (Maddi, Wadhwa, & Haier, 1996). It could be argued that the above-mentioned three dimensions were associated with the positive attitudes that an individual had towards the problems s/he encountered in the daily life (Maddi & Khoshaba, 1994).

Recent research on psychological hardiness indicated that it was generally associated with burnout (Azeem, 2010; Chan, 2002), psychological fatigue (Zakin, Solomon, & Neria, 2002), social interest and alienation (Leak & Williams, 1989), job satisfaction (Judkins & Rind, 2005) mental health (Maddi & Khoshaba, 1994), and job stress (Harrisson et al., 2002; Judkins & Rind, 2005; Lambert & Lambert, 1999).

Some research results demonstrated that psychologically hardy individuals coped with stress more effectively and might come to no harm when they were in a condition full of stress (Azeem, 2010). In addition, individuals with a high level of psychological hardiness preferred to be influential on human relations, and thought that they might be successful and had a positive effect on outputs when they made efforts (Maddi et al., 2006). Supporting this idea, Lambert et al. (2003) argued that psychological hardiness, which involved the dimensions of commitment, control and challenge, played a crucial role in the elimination or reduction of the stress experienced, and that those workers who had a low level of challenge and regarded change as a threat go through alienation. According to Terzi (2005), psychologically hardy individuals were better at coping with stress. Moreover, psychologically more hardy individuals might press the events in a valorous and highly motivated manner, and attempted to turn threats into opportunities and succeed even in risky conditions (Maddi et al., 2006). The commitment held by hardy individuals made them more courageous and motivated when dealing with daily events, and enabled them to be more effective in their jobs (Leak & Williams, 1989). In this regard, psychological hardiness might minimize the stress experienced by individuals, or protect them from the negative effects of the high stress in the workplace. An individual who encountered a stressful condition or had to be in a stressful environment might reduce his/her stress and minimized the negative effects of the stress by displaying a more constructive and problem-solving focused behavior instead of avoiding such situation. Furthermore, those individuals who managed a stressful situation successfully showed fewer disease symptoms (Klag & Bradley, 2004). Supporting this idea, Harrisson et al. (2002) argued that individuals with a higher level of hardiness had a better perception of the environment they were in and demonstrated fewer symptoms of such problems as anxiety, worry, and depression.

It has been well known that teaching is a stressful profession (Capel, 1991). The excessive stress experienced by teachers in their job affected them negatively, and caused them to experience emotional fatigue and burnout (Kokkinos, 2007; Mearns & Chan, 2002). Chan (2002) suggested that there was a negative relationship between high psychological hardiness and burnout level among teachers, and mentioned that psychologically more hardy teachers might be more successful in coping with stress and stressful situations. Sezgin (2012) highlighted that an intense job stress made it difficult for teachers to profess effectively, and emphasized that the improvement of the psychological hardiness of teachers was important for preventing or minimizing the stress and the burnout experienced. In this regard, teachers needed to cope with stress in order to succeed in job and perform educational activities at school effectively.

Psychological hardiness may stand as an important factor for teachers to evade stress in the school environment and protect themselves against the negative effects of stress. Thus, it is thought that more attention should be focused on psychological hardiness as a characteristic that protects teachers against the physical and mental health problems likely to be experienced as a result of alienation, burnout, and excessive stress. Therefore, the current study aimed at investigating whether the psychological hardiness levels of teachers varied significantly by gender, branch, age, seniority, and years in current school.

METHODOLOGY

Research Model

This study was designed in survey model. Karasar (2009) states that studies constructed in survey model mainly aim to describe an existing situation. The present study investigated the psychological hardiness levels of primary school teachers by gender, branch, age, seniority, and years in current school.

Sample

This research consisted of teachers employed in the central districts of Ankara province. Research participants were 369 teachers chosen from 12 primary schools through simple random sampling. Of the research participants, 195 (52.8%) were male, and 174 (47.2%) were female. 150 (40.7%) of the research participants were primary school teachers while 219 (59.3%) were branch teachers. The age range of the

research participants was 21 to 62. The age average was found to be 33, and the standard deviation was 7.5. The review of the seniorities of the research participants showed that the seniority range was 1 year to 42 years, the average seniority was 9.5 years, and the standard deviation was 7.6. It was determined that years in current school varied between 1 year and 22 years, the average for years in current school was 4.3 years, and the standard deviation was 4.1.

Instrumentation

The data collection tool used in the study consisted of three sections. The first section included "*Personal Information Form*" regarding demographic variables such as gender, age, branch, seniority, and years in current school. The second section included 'Personal Views Survey III-R' aimed at determining the psychological hardiness levels of teachers.

Personal Views Survey III-R: This survey was developed by Maddi and Khoshaba (2001) and adapted into Turkish by Durak (2002). The survey was composed of three sub-dimensions (commitment, control, and challenge) represented by 18 items expressing the beliefs of the individual concerning him/her and his/her life. It was a Likert-type scale scored between 0 and 3. The items of the survey were graded with 0 referring to "not true at all" and 3 referring to "very true". Since the item-total correlations of six items were found to be below .20 during the investigation of the validity and reliability of the survey, these items were removed from the survey. The item-total correlations of the remaining 12 items varied between .23 and .50 while the internal consistency coefficient of the survey was found to be .68 (Durak, 2002).

It is seen that the concept of psychological hardiness has been examined in one or more dimensions in the studies conducted on psychological hardiness. It has been determined that the concept has been focused on in a single dimension in some studies (Durak, 2002; Morrissey & Hannah, 1986; Terzi, 2005) while it has been studied in three different dimensions (commitment, control, and challenge) in some others (Klag & Bradley, 2004; Maddi & Khoshaba, 1994). The review of the studies conducted on this subject in Turkey (Durak, 2002; Motan, 2002) demonstrates that psychological hardiness is not divided into the dimensions provided in its original version. Sezgin (2012) examines psychological hardiness in a one-dimensional structure by showing this situation as a reason, and acts based on the total score calculated. In this regard, the present study dealt with the concept of psychological hardiness in a one-dimensional structure in line with the related literature. In addition, a reliability analysis was performed on the 18-item survey form. 6 items whose item-total correlations were found to be below .20 (the items 2, 5, 9, 12, 13, and 14) were removed from the survey. Finally, 12 items remained in the survey, and the internal consistency coefficient was found to be .66.

Data Analysis

The SPSS 15.0 program was used in data analysis. The independent groups t-test was used for analyzing the variation of the psychological hardiness levels of the teachers by such two-category variables as gender and branch while one-way ANOVA was used for testing the variance of the psychological hardiness levels of the teachers by age, seniority, and years in current school. The margin of error was taken as .05 during the analyses.

RESULTS

The Comparison of Psychological Hardiness Levels by Gender

The results of the t-test performed for determining the variation of the psychological hardiness levels of the primary school teachers participating in the study by gender are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The results of the t-test for the variation of the psychological hardiness levels of teachers by gender

Gender	n	\bar{X}	S	t	sd	P
Male	195	1.66	.47	.016	367	.99
Female	174	1.66	.47			

As can be seen from Table 1, psychological hardiness levels of primary school teachers do not significantly differ by gender [$t(367) = .016, p > .05$]. In other words, it is reasonable to say that the psychological hardiness perceptions of female and male teachers are at the same level.

The Comparison of Psychological Hardiness Levels by Branch

The results of the t-test performed for determining the variation of the psychological hardiness levels of the primary school teachers participating in the study by branch are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The results of the t-test for the variation of the psychological hardiness levels of teachers by branch

Branch	n	\bar{X}	S	t	sd	P
Primary school teacher	150	1.63	.47			
Branch teacher	219	1.68	.46	-1.089	367	.28

Table 2 mirrors that the psychological hardiness levels of primary school teachers do not significantly vary by branch [$t (367) = -1.089, p > .05$]. In other words, it can be said that the psychological hardiness perceptions of primary school teachers and branch teachers are at quite a close level.

The Comparison of Psychological Hardiness Levels by Age

The results of the one-way ANOVA performed for determining the variation of the psychological hardiness levels of the primary school teachers participating in the study by age are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The results of the one-way ANOVA for the variation of the psychological hardiness levels of the teachers age

Age	n	\bar{X}	S	F	p
21-30	182	1.64	.46		
31-40	127	1.66	.45	.479	.62
41 and over	60	1.70	.53		

Table 3 indicates that the psychological hardiness levels of primary school teachers do not significantly vary by age [$F (2, 366) = .479, p > .05$]. In other words, it can be said that the psychological hardiness perceptions of primary school teachers from different age groups are at quite a close level.

The Comparison of Psychological Hardiness Levels by Seniority

The results of the ANOVA performed for determining the variation of the psychological hardiness levels of the primary school teachers participating in the study by seniority are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The results of the one-way ANOVA for the variation of the psychological hardiness levels of the teachers by seniority

Seniority (year)	n	\bar{X}	S	F	p
1-5	132	1.66	.46		
6-10	110	1.64	.45		
11-15	57	1.61	.49	.485	.69
16 and over	70	1.71	.51		

As can be seen from Table 4, psychological hardiness levels of primary school teachers do not significantly vary by seniority [$F (3, 365) = .485, p > .05$]. It refers that teachers with different seniorities perceive psychological hardiness at a similar level.

The Comparison of Psychological Hardiness Levels by Years in Current School

The results of the ANOVA performed for determining the variation of the psychological hardiness levels of the primary school teachers participating in the study by years in current school are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. The results of the ANOVA for the variation of the psychological hardiness levels of the teachers by years in current school

Years in current school	n	\bar{X}	S	F	P
1-5	265	1.63	.46		
6-10	69	1.74	.47	1.498	.23
11 and over	35	1.66	.53		

Table 5 shows that the psychological hardiness levels of primary school teachers do not significantly vary by years in current school [$F (2, 366) = 1.498, p > .05$]. Although the perceptions of teachers employed in the

current school for 11 years or more were higher than the other two groups, the difference was not statistically significant.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

Examining the psychological hardiness levels of primary school teachers in terms of demographic variables, the present study revealed that gender, branch, age, seniority, and years in current school did not create any significant difference in the psychological hardiness levels of the teachers. In other words, the psychological hardiness levels of the teachers were not found to be associated with demographic variables.

The first finding of the present study, which examined the psychological hardiness levels of teachers in terms of different variables, is that gender is not a significant determinant of the psychological hardiness levels of teachers. In other words, female and male teachers have similar psychological hardiness perceptions. Relevant literature includes a line of studies with similar findings (Chan, 2003; Sezgin, 2009, 2012). On the other hand, there are also some studies presenting different findings (Hannah & Morrisey, 1986; Shepperd & Kashani, 1991). This finding obtained from the present study can be explained with the fact that the roles played by teachers in their job do not vary by gender. It is thought that the fact that female teachers and male teachers go through similar processes and practices in being appointed to and maintaining a position may be influential on the emergence of this finding. However, psychological hardiness may be regarded as a kind of defense mechanism that is employed by individuals in order to get rid of the negative conditions they experience with the lowest level of harm possible, protect their health, and maintain their job performance and positive mood (Maddi et al., 2006). In this regard, it is understandable that the female teachers and the male teachers who share the same stressful and intense working environment within schoolhouse have similar psychological hardiness perceptions. It may be argued that the presentation of contradictory findings by the studies in the literature dealing with this subject (Chan, 2003; Hannah & Morrisey, 1986; Sezgin, 2009, 2012; Shepperd & Kashani, 1991) requires further research on this subject.

Another finding obtained from the study is that branch does not lead to a significant difference in the psychological hardiness levels of teachers. In other words, primary school teachers and branch teachers have similar psychological hardiness perceptions. This finding is seen to be in parallel with the research findings provided by Sezgin (2009, 2012). Sezgin (2012) highlights that when the ages, learning needs, and difficulties of students are taken into consideration, primary school teachers may be expected to have higher psychological hardiness levels. In addition, it is known that primary school teachers may encounter extra workload (e.g. teacher with the authority of a principal) and may have to offer educational service in combined classes and in regions with more disadvantages in terms of social facilities. Within this context, primary school teachers may be expected to have a higher level of psychological hardiness in comparison to branch teachers. Nevertheless, research results may be considered understandable when it is taken into account that the research sample had a relatively homogenous structure and included teachers working at schools not involving practices such as teacher with the authority of a principal and combined classes. In this regard, there is a need to collect deeper data concerning the subject through studies to be carried out with different sample groups.

The third finding of the study is that the psychological hardiness levels of teachers in different age groups do not vary significantly. This finding is in parallel with the findings of Chan (2003) and Sezgin (2009, 2012) revealing that there is no significant difference between the psychological hardiness levels of teachers by age. However, the research findings provided by Harrisson et al. (2002) contradict with the findings of the present study. Sezgin (2012) argues that the classroom management and teaching skills of teachers will improve in parallel with the increase in age, which may have a positive effect on psychological hardiness perceptions. In that respect, it may be considered an interesting finding that teachers from different age groups have similar psychological hardiness perceptions. Thus, it is possible to suggest that there is an urgent need for further research in order to make sounder comments on this subject.

The fourth finding of the study is that seniority does not bring about a significant difference between the psychological hardiness levels of teachers. In other words, the teachers with different seniorities have similar psychological hardiness perceptions. This finding is in parallel with the research findings provided by Harrisson et al. (2002) and Sezgin (2009). On the other hand, this finding is open to interpretation from different perspectives. As a matter of fact, beginning teachers may not develop a sufficient level of commitment to their profession and their organizations in a short time. The beginning teachers may encounter certain difficulties in internalizing organizational principles. That is supported by some national and international studies (Duran, Sezgin, & Çoban, 2011; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Yeşilyurt & Karakuş, 2011; Yılmaz & Tepebaş, 2011) revealing that teachers encounter some difficulties in their early years in

profession. Another study on this subject (Korkmaz, Saban, & Akbaşlı, 2004) reports that most of beginning teachers have a difficulty in accommodating to profession and showing an effective performance. In this sense, beginning teachers may be expected to be psychologically less hardy. However, the findings of the present study do not seem to be in parallel with these arguments. Deeper research should be conducted on this subject in order to make sounder comments in this matter.

The last finding of the study is that the psychological hardiness levels of teachers do not vary significantly by years in current school. Teachers may be expected to internalize their school more and develop more awareness concerning school processes and rules as their years spent in current school increases. In addition, it is likely that teachers with longer years in current school know the social-cultural environment of the school better and find more effective solutions to the problems encountered. The careful review of the research findings demonstrates that although the teachers with longer years in current school are psychologically more hardy than others, the difference is not statistically significant. Thus, the above-mentioned research finding is not in parallel with the expectations.

Findings of the current study demonstrate that demographic variables are not the determinants of psychological hardiness perceptions of teachers. Thus, findings refer to the need for further research which contributes well to the understanding of relationships between teacher psychological hardiness and other variables emphasizing especially organizations' psychological side such as stress, coping with stress, mobbing, burnout, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. It is thought that further research to be conducted with different sample groups by using different research methods and techniques may offer different perspectives in regard to the subject. Finally, it is possible to argue that unique activities aimed at improving the psychological hardiness of teachers are needed when it is taken into account that psychological hardiness is considered an important personality characteristic for coping with stress (Crowley et al., 2003; Maddi, 2006; Maddi & Khoshaba, 1994) and teachers must cope with stress in order to conduct the educational activities effectively.

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