

An investigation of the relationships between achievement goals, self-deception, and submissive behavior

(Ba arı yönelimleri, kendini aldatma ve boyun e ici davranı arasındaki ili kilerin incelenmesi)

Ahmet AKIN*

Sakarya University, Sakarya, Turkey

Abstract: The aim of this study is to examine the relationships between achievement goals, self-deception, and submissive behavior. Participants were 412 university students from Sakarya University, Turkey. 2X2 Achievement Goal Orientations Scale, Self-deception Subscale of Two Dimensional Social Desirability Scale, and Submissive Acts Scale were used as measures. Results showed that learning-approach goals related positively and performance-avoidance goals negatively to self-deception. Also learning-avoidance and performance-approach/avoidance goals associated positively with submissive behavior. Results from structural equation modeling showed that the model fitted well ($\chi^2 = 2.45, p = .293, GFI = 1.00, AGFI = .99, CFI = 1.00, NFI = .99, RFI = .95, IFI = 1.00, and RMSEA = .021$). The model delineated that self-deception was predicted positively by learning-approach and negatively by performance-avoidance goals. On the other hand, learning-avoidance and performance-approach/avoidance goals predicted submissive behavior positively.

Keywords: Achievement goals, self-deception, submissive behavior, structural equation modeling

Öz: Bu ara tırmada ba arı yönelimleri, kendini aldatma ve boyun e ici davranı arasındaki ili kiler incelenmi tir. Ara tırma Sakarya Üniversitesi'nde ö renim gören 412 üniversite ö rencisi üzerinde yürütülmü tür. Ara tırmada 2X2 Ba arı Yönelimleri Ölçe i, iki Boyutlu Sosyal İstenirlik Ölçe i'nin Öz-aldatma alt Ölçe i ve Boyun E ici Davranı lar Ölçe i kullanılmı tir. Bulgular ö renme-yakla ma yöneliminin kendini aldatmayla pozitif, performans-kaçınma yöneliminin ise negatif ili kili oldu unu göstermi tir. Ayrıca ö renme-kaçınma ve performans-yakla ma/kaçınma yönelimleri boyun e ici davranı la pozitif ili kili bulunmu tur. Yapısal e itlik modelinden elde edilen uyum indeksleri modelin kabul edilebilir uyum iyili i de erleri üretti ini göstermi tir ($\chi^2 = 2.45, p = .293, GFI = 1.00, AGFI = .99, CFI = 1.00, NFI = .99, RFI = .95, IFI = 1.00$ ve $RMSEA = .021$). Model kendini aldatmanın ö renme-yakla ma yönelimi tarafından pozitif, performans-kaçınma yönelimi tarafından negatif yordandı nı göstermi tir. Öte yandan ö renme-kaçınma ve performans-yakla ma/kaçınma yönelimleri boyun e ici davranı ı pozitif yordadı mı tir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Ba arı yönelimleri, kendini aldatma, boyun e ici davranı , yapısal e itlik modeli

Introduction

The achievement goal theory has developed within a social-cognitive framework and “is emerging as a useful construct for understanding how people develop, attain, or demonstrate competence in learning and performance (Zweig & Webster, 2004, p. 232). Ames (1992) defines achievement goals as an “integrated pattern of beliefs, attributions, and affect that produces intentions of behavior” (p. 261). Generally researchers have proposed two achievement goals; learning goals (are also known as tasks goals or mastery goals) and performance goals (are also known as ego involved or ability goals) (Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck & Leggett 1988; Nicholls, 1984).

These two different goal orientations relate to important differences in behavior (Nicholls, 1989). Students who adopted learning goal orientation are interested in learning new skills and improving their understanding and competence (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Students who orient towards performance goals on the other hand, are more concerned with social comparisons, proving their ability, and receiving desirable or avoiding negative judgments about their performance. These students focus on doing better than others, outperforming all other students, and avoiding appearing unable (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

However, a new model that suggests that performance goal orientation might be divided into two parts has been developed: Performance-approach and performance-avoidance goal orientations (Elliot & Church, 1997; Middleton & Midgley, 1997). According to this new model, students with performance-approach goal orientation try to demonstrate more performance and to prove that they are skilled, whereas students with performance-avoidance goal orientation act to avoid being seen as incompetent. Some studies have indicated that performance-avoidance goal orientation causes maladaptive behaviors, while performance-approach goal orientation does not (Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996).

Along with performance goal orientation, some researchers (Conroy, Elliot, & Hofer, 2003; Elliot, 1999; Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot, & Covington, 2001; Elliot, & Trash, 2001; Pintrich, 2000a, b) have recently claimed that learning goal orientation may have two components, approach and avoidance, and have developed the 2X2 achievement goal orientations model. This model includes four achievement goal orientations: Learning-approach goal orientation (LPGO), learning-avoidance goal orientation (LVGO), performance-approach goal orientation (PPGO), and performance-avoidance goal orientation (PVGO). According to the 2X2 achievement goal orientations model, students who adopt LVGO focus on avoiding the situations by not completely learning the subject matter, forgetting what they have learned, misunderstanding the subject matter, not being able to take control over learning tasks, and making errors. Empirical proof of this new model was obtained and the model was confirmed through confirmatory factor analysis (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Finney, Pieper, & Barron, 2004).

Self-deception is an unintentional propensity to portray oneself in a favorable light, manifested in positively biased but honestly believed self-descriptions. Research has demonstrated that individuals high in self-deception tend to be well adjusted, ignore minor criticisms, and have high confidence in themselves (Paulhus, 1991). In the case of self-deception, people provide an overly positive view of themselves because they lack the self-sight necessary to provide a realistic self-description. Researches (Dunning, Meyerowitz, & Holzberg; 1989; Greenwald, 1980; Ross, 1989) suggest that self-deception plays a role not only in one’s perception of the present self, but also in the perception of the past and future selves. One reason this finding is important is because there is evidence to suggest that those

who expect positive outcomes are more likely to set higher goals for themselves. Furthermore, they are more likely to pursue those goals more vigorously even in the face of setbacks (Bandura, 1989). Similarly, Taylor and Brown (1988), in an integration of the literature, conclude that self-deception promotes psychological adjustment as well as “higher motivation, greater persistence, more effective performance, and ultimately, greater success” (p. 199).

A submissive behavior means that one person shying away from saying what he/she really mean and not seeking to achieve his/her needs, particularly when someone else has conflicting needs. Submissive behavior may be viewed as non-hostile, non-coercive behavior that involves taking into consideration the power, authority, or feelings of others, while denying or not standing up for one's own feelings and beliefs (Deluty, 1979, 1981, 1985). In parallel, a submissive person is a shrinking violet, avoiding upsetting others either because they fear them or they fear to hurt their feelings. When things go wrong, the submissive person is likely to assume that they are to blame in some way and accept culpability when singled out by other people. This person will typically suppress their feelings and repress memories of being dominated, particularly early triggers that led them to their submissive state (e.g. to see self as inferior to others, thinking that others look down on the self, and tendencies to behave submissively) (Gilbert, Cheung, Grandfield, Campey, & Irons, 2003).

The Present Study

Although many studies have investigated the relationships between achievement goals and a number of educational and psychological variables, there is no research on the relationships between achievement goals, self-deception, and submissive behavior. Thus, the aim of this research is to examine the relationships between achievement goals, self-deception, and submissive behavior. In this research, it was hypothesized that, LPGO will be related positively to self-deception and negatively to submissive behavior and LVGO will be related positively both self-deception and submissive behavior. Also it was hypothesized that, PPGO and PVGO will be associated negatively with self-deception and positively with submissive behavior.

Method

Participants

Participants were 412 university students enrolled in various undergraduate programs at the Sakarya University, Turkey. 182 of the participants (44%) were males and 230 (56.%) were females. A large majority of the students (88%) were between 17 and 21 years of age, mean 20.3 years.

Measures

2X2 Achievement Goal Orientations Scale (Akin, 2006). This scale is a 26-item self-report scale using a 5-point Likert (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) and has four sub-scales: Learning-approach goal orientation (LPGO; eight items, e.g., “I like school work that I’ll learn from”), learning-avoidance goal orientation (LVGO; five items, e.g., “I do my best to avoid making mistakes”), performance-approach goal orientation (PPGO; seven items, e.g., “It is important for me to perform better than others”), and performance-avoidance goal orientation (PVGO; six items, e.g., “I worry about the possibility of getting

bad grades”). Internal consistencies were .92, .97, .97, and .95 and the three-week test-retest reliability estimates were .77, .82, .84, and .86, for LPGO, LVGO, PPGO, and PVGO respectively.

A score for each dimension is assessed by summing the total score of the questions for each dimension.

Self-deception Subscale of Two-dimensional Social Desirability Scale. This subscale (Akin, 2008c) contains 13 Likert-type items and the participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with each statement on a 5-point scale (e.g., “I am very confident of my judgments”). Alpha reliability of this scale was .95 and the test-retest reliability coefficient was .79.

Submissive Acts Scale (SAS). To assess submissive social behavior, the Submissive Acts Scale (SAS, Gilbert & Allan, 1994) is used. It contains 16 items and the participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement with each statement on a 5-point likert scale ranging from this is a “very bad description of me” to “this is a very good description of me” (e.g., “Even if I don’t like it, I do things just because other people are also doing them” and “I allow other people to criticize and let me down and do not defend myself”). Higher scores indicate more submissive social behavior (Gilbert & Allan, 1994). SAS was adapted to the Turkish population by ahin and ahin (1992). Alpha reliability of the Turkish version for the university sample was .74.

Results

Descriptive data and inter-correlations

Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations for the variables used in the analyses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations of the variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. LPGO ^a						
2. LVGO ^b	.33**					
3. PPGO ^c	.07	.31**				
4. PVGO ^d	-.09	.45**	.53**			
5. Self-deception	.40**	.01	.02	-.22**		
6. Submissive behavior	.01	.33**	.26**	.39**	-.09	
Means	31,15	16,25	18,92	16,53	43,46	39,31
Standard deviation	4,51	4,05	5,65	4,70	6,22	10,06

Note. ^aLPGO = Learning-approach goal orientation, ^bLVGO = Learning-avoidance goal orientation, ^cPPGO = Performance-approach goal orientation, ^dPVGO = Performance-avoidance goal orientation.

**p < .01.

As can be seen in Table 1, LPGO ($r=.40$) was positively and PVGO ($r=-.22$) negatively related to self-deception. On the other hand LVGO ($r=.33$), PPGO ($r=.26$), and PVGO ($r=.39$) were positively associated with submissive behavior.

Structural equation modeling

The model was examined via structural equation modeling (SEM), employing LISREL 8.54 (Jöreskog & Sorbom, 1996). Figure 1 presents the results of SEM analysis, using maximum likelihood estimations. The model fitted well ($\chi^2 = 2.45$, $df = 2$, $GFI = 1.00$, $AGFI = .99$, $CFI = 1.00$, $NFI = .99$, $RFI = .95$, and $RMSEA = .021$) and also accounted for 19% of the self-deception and 31% of the submissive behavior variances.

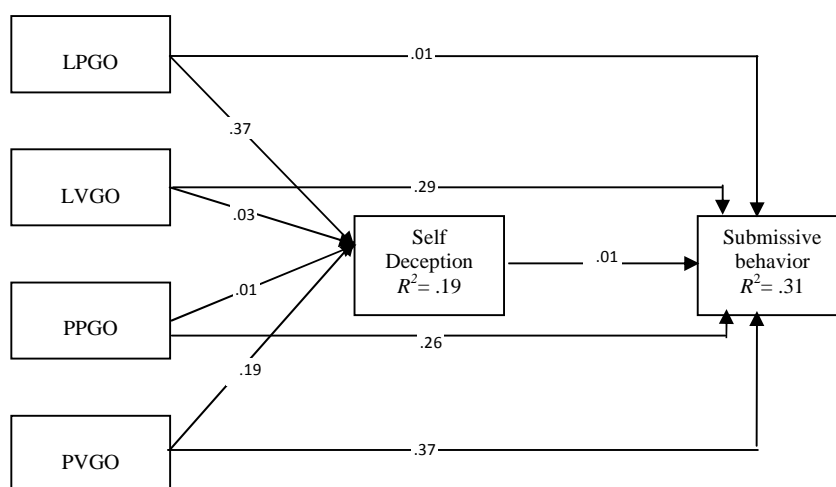


Figure 1
Path analysis between achievement goals, self-deception, and submissive behavior

The standardized coefficients in Figure 1 clearly showed that self-deception is predicted positively by LPGO (.37) and negatively by PVGO (-.19). However LVGO (.29), PPGO (.26), and PVGO (.37) predicted submissive behavior in a positive way.

Discussion and Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the relationships between achievement goals, self-deception, and submissive behavior. Findings have demonstrated that there are significant relationships between these variables. To examine the hypothesis model, structural equation modeling was used. The fit indexes indicated that its formulation was psychometrically acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The structural model demonstrated that self-deception is predicted positively by LPGO and negatively by PVGO and that submissive behavior is predicted positively by LVGO, PPGO, and PVGO.

Research on achievement goals (Akin, 2008a, 2008b, 2010, Ames & Archer, 1988; Meece, Blumfeld, & Hoyle, 1988; Roeser, Midgley, & Urdan, 1996) generally demonstrated that LPGO have relations with adaptive variables in aspects of psychology and education and that LPGO result in an increase in positive emotions and a decrease in negative emotions (Dykman, 1998; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; Linnenbrink, Hruda, Haydel, Star, & Maehr,

1999; Linnenbrink, Ryan, & Pintrich, 1999). In addition, these students believe that effort is a primary cause of success and more likely to believe that they can eventually develop the necessary competency needed for future success (VandeWalle, Cron, & Slocum, 2001). Students who adopt LVGO on the other hand, experience worries such as not learning the subject matter exactly or completely forgetting them (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Finney et al., 2004). Therefore, when compared to a learning approach, it is a less adaptive achievement goal orientation. Nevertheless students with PPGO and PVGO not only consider social comparisons to be important, but tend to evaluate their performance in relation to those of other individuals as well. And after this comparison, they tend to feel that they are valuable or worthless (Ames & Archer, 1988; Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

Self-deception has been linked to a variety of positive outcomes including adjustment. Hogan (1991, p. 905) suggested that, there is a large and replicated literature showing that well-adjusted people have positively biased self-images; consequently, well adjusted people tend to ignore minor criticisms, discount their failures, and avoid negative thoughts, and expect to succeed in most of their undertakings. In addition to when it was considered that, the submissive behavior was found correlated positively with maladaptive psychological variables, such as depression (Allan & Gilbert, 1997; Cheung, Gilbert, & Irons, 2004; Gilbert & Allan, 1994; O'Connor, Berry, Weiss, & Gilbert, 2002; Öngen, 2006), social anxiety, guilt, and fear of negative evaluation (Gilbert, 2000), isolation, self-judgment (Akın, 2009) results of this research seem understandable.

In conclusion, this research reports that achievement goals affect self-deception and submissive behavior directly. Students performed high in LVGO, PPGO, and PVGO are more likely to adopt a submissive orientation than are students performed high in LPGO. On the other hand, students performed high in LPGO are more likely to fall into self-deception than are students performed high in PVGO.

However that the samples presented here are limited to university students restricts the generalizability of the findings. For that reason, it is also important to investigate the variables studied in this research on other sample groups other than university students. Besides, even though structural equation modeling suggests results related to causality, it is difficult to give a full explanation related to causality among the variables examined in the research, because correlational data were used. Also further research investigating the relationships among achievement goals, self-deception, submissive behavior and other psychological constructs are needed, to reinforce the findings of this study.

References

- Akın, A. (2006). 2X2 Ba arı Yönelimleri Ölçe i: Geçerlik ve güvenilirlik çalı ması. *Sakarya Üniversitesi E itim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 12, 1-13.
- Akın, A. (2008a). Self-compassion and achievement goals: A structural equation modeling approach. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 31, 1-15.
- Akın, A. (2008b). Self-efficacy, achievement goals, and depression, anxiety, and stress: A structural equation modeling. *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 3(5), 725-732.
- Akın, A. (2008c). *Sosyal stenirlik Ölçe i: Geçerlik ve güvenilirlik çalı ması*. I. Ulusal E itimde ve Psikolojide Ölçme ve De erlendirme Kongresi, 14-16 Mayıs, Ankara.
- Akın, A. (2009). Self-compassion and submissive behavior. *Education and Science*, 34(152), 138-147.

- Akin, A. (2010). Achievement goals and academic locus of control: A structural equation modeling approach. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 38, 17-31.
- Allan, S., & Gilbert, P. (1997). Submissive behavior and psychopathology. *British Journal of Psychopathology*, 36, 467-488.
- Ames, C. (1992). Classrooms: Goals, structures, and student motivation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 84(3), 261-271.
- Ames, C., & Archer, J. (1988). Achievement goals in the classroom: Students' learning strategies and motivation processes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80(3), 260-267.
- Bandura, A. (1989). Regulation of cognitive processes through perceived self-efficacy. *Developmental Psychology*, 25, 729-735.
- Cheung, M. S. P., Gilbert, P., & Irons, C. (2004). An exploration of shame, social rank and rumination in relation to depression. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 36, 1143-1153.
- Conroy, D. E., Elliot, A. J., & Hofer, S. M. (2003). A 2X2 achievement goals questionnaire for sport: Evidence for factorial invariance, temporal stability, and external validity. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 25, 456-476.
- Deluty, R. H. (1979). Children's Action Tendency Scale: A self-report measure of aggressiveness, assertiveness, and submissiveness in children. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 47, 1061-1071.
- Deluty, R. H. (1981). Assertiveness in children: Some research considerations. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, 10, 149-155.
- Deluty, R. H. (1985). Consistency of assertive, aggressive, and submissive behavior for children. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49(4), 1054-1065.
- Dunning, D., Meyerowitz, J. A. & Holzberg, A. D. (1989). Ambiguity and self-evaluation: The role of idiosyncratic trait definitions in self-serving assessments of ability. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 57, 1082-1090.
- Dweck, C. S. (1986). Motivational processes affecting learning. *American Psychologist*, 41, 1040-1048.
- Dweck, C. S., & Leggett, E. (1988). A social-cognitive approach to motivation and personality. *Psychological Review*, 95, 256-273.
- Dykman, B. M. (1998). Integrating cognitive and motivational factors in depression: Initial tests of a goal-orientation approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74, 139-158.
- Elliot, A. J. (1999). Approach and avoidance motivation and achievement goals. *Educational Psychologist*, 34, 169-189.
- Elliot, A. J., & Church, M. A. (1997). A hierarchical model of approach and avoidance achievement motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(1), 218-232.
- Elliot, A. J., & Covington, M. V. (2001). Approach and avoidance motivation. *Educational Psychology Review*, 13(2), 73-92.

- Elliot, A. J., & Harackiewicz, J. M. (1996). Approach and avoidance goals and intrinsic motivation: A mediational analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70, 461–475.
- Elliot, A. J., & McGregor, H. (2001). A 2X2 achievement goal framework. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 80, 501–519.
- Elliot, A. J., & Trash, T. M. (2001). Achievement goals and the hierarchical model of achievement motivation. *Educational Psychology Review*, 13(2), 139–156.
- Finney, S. J., Pieper, S. L., & Barron, K. E. (2004). Examining the psychometric properties of the Achievement Goal Questionnaire in a general academic context. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 64, 365–382.
- Gilbert, P. (2000). The relationship of shame, social anxiety and depression: The role of the evaluation of social rank. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 7, 174–189.
- Gilbert, P., & Allan, S. (1994). Assertiveness, submissive behavior, and social comparison. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 33, 295–306.
- Gilbert, P., Cheung, M. S. P., Grandfield, T., Campey, F., & Irons, C. (2003). Assessment recall of threat and submissiveness in childhood: Development of a new scale and its relationship with depression, social comparison, and shame. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 10, 108–115.
- Greenwald, A. G. (1980). The totalitarian ego: Fabrication and revision of personal history. *American Psychologist*, 35, 603-618.
- Hogan, R. (1991). Personality and personality measurement. In M. D. Dunnette & L. M. Hough (Eds.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 873-919). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structural analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 6, 1–55.
- Jöreskog, K. G., & Sorbom, D. (1996). *LISREL 8 reference guide*. Lincolnwood, IL: Scientific Software International.
- Linnenbrink, E. A., & Pintrich, P. R. (2002). Achievement goal theory and affect: An asymmetrical bidirectional model. *Educational Psychologist*, 37(2), 69-78.
- Linnenbrink, E. A., Hruda, L., Haydel, A., Star, J., & Maehr, M. (1999, April). *Student motivation and cooperative groups: Using achievement goal theory to investigate students' socio-emotional and cognitive outcomes*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada.
- Linnenbrink, E. A., Ryan, A. M., & Pintrich, P. R. (1999). The role of goals and affect in working memory functioning. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 11, 213-230.
- Meece, J. L., Blumfeld, P. C., & Hoyle, R. K. (1988). Students' goal orientations and cognitive engagement in classroom activities. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 80(4), 514-523.
- Middleton, M., & Midgley, C. (1997). Avoiding the demonstration of lack ability: An under-explored aspect of goal theory. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 89, 710–718.
- Nicholls, J. (1984). Achievement motivation: Conceptions of ability, subjective experience, task choice, and performance. *Psychological Review*, 91, 328-346.

- Nicholls, J. G. (1989). *The competitive ethos and democratic education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- O'Connor, L. E., Berry, J. W., Weiss, J., & Gilbert, P. (2002). Guilt, fear, submission, and empathy in depression. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 71*, 19–27.
- Öngen, D. E. (2006). The relationships between self-criticism, submissive behavior, and depression among Turkish adolescents. *Personality and Individual Differences, 41*, 793–800.
- Paulhus, D. L. (1991). Measurement and control of response bias. In J. P. Robinson, P. R. Shaver, & L. S. Wrightsman (Eds.), *Measures of personality and social psychology attitudes* (pp. 17-59). New York: Academic Press.
- Pintrich, P. R. (2000a). An achievement goal theory perspective on issues in motivation terminology, theory, and research. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25*, 92–104.
- Pintrich, P. R. (2000b). Multiple goals, multiple pathways: The role of goal orientation in learning and achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 92*(3), 544–555.
- Roeser, R., Midgley, C., & Urdan, T. (1996). Perceptions of the school psychological environment and early adolescents' psychological and behavioral functioning in school: The mediating role of goals and belonging. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 88*, 408-422.
- Ross, M. (1989). Relation of implicit theories to the construction of personal histories. *Psychological Review, 96*, 341-357.
- ahin, N. H., & ahin, N. (1992). Adolescent guilt, shame, and depression in relation to sociotropy and autonomy. *The World Congress of Cognitive Therapy*, Toronto, June 17–21.
- Taylor, S. E., & Brown, J. D. (1988). Illusion and well-being: A social-psychological perspective on mental health. *Psychological Bulletin, 103*, 193-210.
- VandeWalle, D., Cron, W. L., & Slocum, J. W. (2001). The role of goal orientation following performance feedback. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*, 629-640.
- Zweig, D., & Webster, J. (2004). Validation of a multidimensional measure of goal orientation. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science, 36*(3), 232-243.

About the Author

*Ahmet AKIN is currently employed at Sakarya University, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Sciences.

Address: Sakarya Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Hendek/SAKARYA

e-mail: aakin@sakarya.edu.tr

Tel: 0 264 614 10 33/225