

DETERMINING RELATIONAL AWARENESS LEVELS IN FRIENDSHIP OF VOCATIONAL SCHOOL STUDENTS IN TERMS OF THEIR DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

MESLEK YÜKSEKOKULU ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN ARKADAŞLIK İLİŞKİSİNDE FARKINDA OLMA DÜZEYLERİNİN DEMOGRAFİK DEĞİŞENLER AÇISINDAN BELİRLENMESİ

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ABSTRACT: Effective relation and relational awareness are the most important parameters for a society's success. Effective relation is established by the quality of relations among the individuals in a society. Relational awareness enables the individuals to better communicate and to continue their relations in a strong manner. This research has been conducted to determine whether the relational awareness levels vary due to the demographic characteristics of the students having education in vocational schools in Kırklareli University. Within the context of the research, the data obtained by use of relational awareness questionnaire have been subjected to t-test and one way ANOVA analyses. As a result of the research, it has been determined that the relational awareness levels of the students vary in terms of their demographic characteristics.

Key Words: Relational awareness, Kırklareli University, Vocational School Students, Demographic Characteristics, Relational Awareness Questionnaire

ÖZET: Bir toplumun başarıya ulaşabilmesinde en önemli parametreler etkin ilişki ve ilişkide farkındalıktır. Etkin ilişki bir topluluktaki bireylerin ilişkilerinin kalitesiyle belirlenir. İlişkilerde farkındalık, kişilerin iletişimlerini daha iyi kurmalarını, ilişkilerini güçlü bir şekilde yürütmelerini sağlar. Bu çalışma Kırklareli Üniversitesi'ne bağlı meslek yüksekokullarında öğrenim gören öğrencilerin ilişkide farkındalık düzeylerinin, bu öğrencilere ait demografik değişkenler açısından farklılık gösterip göstermediğini belirlemek amacıyla yapılmıştır. Çalışmada kişilerarası ilişkide farkındalık ölçeği kullanılarak elde edilen veriler t-test ve Anova analizlerine tabi tutulmuştur. Söz konusu analizler sonucunda farkındalık düzeylerinin öğrencilere ait demografik değişkenlere göre farklılık gösterdiği tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İlişkide farkındalık, Kırklareli Üniversitesi, Meslek Yüksekokulu öğrencileri, Demografik değişkenler, İlişkide farkındalık ilişkisi

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1. INTRODUCTION

The quality of a person's relationships determines the quality of that person's life. Relationship problems are in fact communication problems, in other words problems of thought exchange. These problems occur in various levels and in various aspects of life. The efforts made to solve the communication problems in relationships eventually improve the quality of life. The meaning of communication should be basically known well in order to solve the communication-dependent problems. The meaning of communication in Turkish actual dictionary is; "The transfer of feelings, thoughts and knowledge to other people by means of any possible way; declaration, correspondence." (TDK, 2008). According to Cuceloglu, 1997; communication is in a general manner the exchange of thoughts and feelings among people. Demirel, 2000 defines communication as; "Transmission (or transfer) of a thought and a feeling from one person to another by means of mimics and movements of hand, arm and head; verbal or written; and by making use of information and communication technologies, such as telephone, radio and television." According to Mısırlı, communication is a process in which the messages are mutually received and interpreted and thus lead to a result (Mısırlı, 2008). Baltas and his friends (2002) define communication as a process in which people consciously or unconsciously transfer their feelings and thoughts to any other people. Considering these definitions, communication may be in a general manner defined as the share of feeling, thought, image, expression, knowledge, skill and information between at least two people. According to Acıkgöz, 2003, the purpose of communication is to create a partnership of knowledge, thought and attitude between the sender and the receiver of the message. The most important feature of the communication is that there happens a feedback from the receiver of the message to the sender. Everybody tries to continue a life, that he or she satisfy his/her needs. Everybody wishes to have an education, to have a career, to provide his/her family with a satisfactory life and to grow his/her children in the best conditions. The most valuable experience of people to realise these purposes is the effective communication, which they build in their relationships. There are some inter-related issues, which are related with a behaviour occurs. The basic factor behind these issues is the need of people to build relationship with other people and with the external environment (Ure, 1996). It has been determined that building relationships and being in communication with other people and the external environment directly correlate with the variables such as physical proximity and the period of looking at other people's faces and it has also been determined that these variables have important effects on people to percept their relationships positive or negative (Akkurt, 1989; Ure, 1996).

Many of the problems, that people encounter may depend on their ineffective communication with their environment, the failure in expressing themselves and the misunderstanding among themselves. It is assumed that the students, having higher awareness levels suffer problems that stem from conflicts at minimum levels. Therefore, the dependent variable of this search is set as "the awareness level in relationships" and it is aimed to investigate whether the awareness levels of vocational school students in friendship relations vary due to the personal features of these students.

2. LITERATURE SEARCH

There are many studies about personal attributions, communication and awareness in relationship in the literature. Some of these studies are summarised below. In Kasatura's study, it is mentioned that in order to make people, who have negative interactions, communicate effectively, trust should be created among them. When the personal attributions of the adults, who communicated successfully with people around them, were examined; it was seen that these adults were self-confident and mentally and emotionally mature people (Kasatura, 1991). In other study it was found that the children, belonging to rich families had lower levels of complexes than the children belonging to poor families (Jersild A. 1978). In a study of Jones and his friends, it was determined that gender

had an effect on loneliness and men were found to suffer loneliness much more than women. In addition it was found that the character of the person had an effect on building communication, preventing building relationship and lessening social attractiveness (Jones WH. 1981). Individuals are forced to adapt to the fast social changes. The variety of relationships in social life and the wide content of them make the relations among people superficial. Thus people become strangers to the society (An, 1989). In his study, titled as “Psikolojik danışmada ve kişilerarası ilişkilerde kendini açmanın yeri” Ure mentioned that to open one’s own self to other people make inter-people communication easier and improve the level of empathy among people (Ure, 1996). Akkurt evaluated the variables of physical proximity, the period of looking at other people’s faces, the period of verbal communication and the level of inter-people relationships (Akkurt, 1989). In an other study the relational awareness levels of students, having education to be teachers, were investigated in terms of their gender, residence and the type of highschools they had been graduated from. 117 university students participated in the study. The Relational Awareness Scale of William E. Snell was used within the study. As a result there couldn’t be found a significant difference between the male and female participants in terms of relational-consciousness and relational-monitoring; but in term of relational-anxiety factor, it was found that female students developed higher relation and communication anxiety than the male students (Ure, 2001).

3. METHOD

The purpose of this research is to determine the relational awareness levels in friendship of students, having education at Vocational Schools of the University of Kırklareli and to investigate whether these levels differ significantly due to the demographic characteristics of the students. The research was conducted on the students, having education at the Vocational Schools of Pınarhisar, Vize, Babaeski, Social Sciences, Technical Sciences and Lüleburgaz. Data was collected from 290 students. Relationship Awareness Scale was used to collect data. This scale was developed and used by Dr. William E. Snell from the Department of Psychology in the University of Southeast State Missouri. The scale was used before in Turkey by Bozgeyikli (2001) for a master thesis, the title of which was “Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Kişilik Özellikleri ile Kişiler Arası İlişkilerde Farkında Olma Düzeyleri”. In this study, the original form of the scale has been used, and “friendship” term is added to some of the statements by the investigators. The alternatives to the statements were marked as; (1) I Strongly Agree, (2) I Agree, (3) I Am Neutral, (4) I Disagree, (5) I Strongly Disagree. By means of the demographic questions in the questionnaire form, data was collected about students’ gender; the types of the highschools, they had been graduated from; how they settled in their programmes; the educational states of their mothers and fathers; whether they had friends from the opposite gender; the number of friends from the same gender and where they lived before.

4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

As a result of the reliability analysis, Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient is calculated as 0,668. This value indicates that the scale is reliable in a medium level. After then, frequency analyses are made and the demographic characteristics of the sample are clarified. The means of the statements in the scale are calculated and thus the relational awareness levels in friendship of students are determined. And finally independent samples t-test and the One-Way ANOVA analyses are made to examine whether these levels vary due to the demographic characteristics.

4.1. The Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The demographic characteristics of the sample are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Demographic Variables	Category	N	%
Gender	Male	168	57,9
	Female	122	42,1
The Type of the Highschool	Highschool	107	36,9
	Vocational Highschool	157	54,1
	Anatolian Highschool	10	3,4
	Other	16	5,6
The Settlement in the Programme	By OSS	159	54,8
	By Vertical Settlement	131	45,2
The Educational State of Mother	Not Literate	9	3,1
	Primary School	132	45,5
	Secondary School	69	23,8
	Highschool	66	22,8
The Educational State of Father	University	14	4,8
	Not Literate	3	1,0
	Primary School	97	33,4
	Secondary School	75	25,9
The Residence	Highschool	93	32,1
	University	22	7,6
	Village	23	7,9
	Town	15	5,2
Number of Friends from the Same Gender	District	87	30,0
	City	165	56,9
	1	9	3,1
	2-5	106	36,6
Having a Friend from the Opposite Gender	6-10	50	17,2
	11 and above	125	43,1
	Have	239	82,4
	Have Not	51	17,6

4.2. Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

The descriptive statistics of the variables are given in Table 2. The mean of the relational awareness of students in their friendships is 2,46. This value indicates that the students have a significant level of relational awareness.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	Mean	Standart Deviation
I am very aware of changes in my intimate relationships..	1,50	0,799
I am very aware of what others think about my close friendships.	1,82	1,013
I usually feel quite anxious about my intimate friendships.	3,00	1,386
I reflect about my intimate relationships a lot.	1,85	1,216
I'm concerned about what other people think of my relationships.	2,28	1,390
It takes me time to get over my shyness in a new close relationship.	2,48	1,514
In general, I'm attentive to the nature of my close friendships.	1,54	0,907
I'm concerned about the way my intimate friendships are presented to others.	2,18	1,425
Intimate fiendships make me feel nervous and anxious.	3,58	1,466
I'm always trying to understand my close friendships.	1,46	0,869
I'm usually aware of others' reactions to my close friendships.	2,11	1,269
I am somewhat awkward and tense in intimate friendships.	3,98	1,408
I'm alert to changes in my intimate friendships.	1,62	0,927
I'm concerned about how my intimate friendship appears to others.	2,43	1,519
I feel nervous when I interact with a partner in an intimate friendship.	4,03	1,378
I'm very aware of reactions to my close friendships.	1,81	1,081
I usually worry about the impression my close friendships have on others.	2,93	1,478
I am more anxious about intimate friendships than most people are.	2,59	1,453
My thoughts sometimes drift toward the nature of my close friendships.	2,28	1,248
I'm usually alert to others' of what goes on in my close friendships.	2,23	1,312
I feel uncomfortable when I think about talking with an intimate partner.	2,65	1,495
I seldom think about the dynamics of my intimate friendships.	2,74	1,488
I sometimes wonder what others think about my intimate friendships.	2,22	1,324
I would feel inhibited and shy in an intimate friendship.	3,94	1,454
I think about my close friendships more than most people do.	1,91	1,219
I'm not usually attentive to what others think about my intimate friendships.	2,76	1,548
I would not be nervous about discussing issues with an intimate partner.	2,39	1,361
I usually spend time thinking about my close friendships.	1,96	1,195
I'm usually alert to others' reactions to my intimate friendships.	2,21	1,302
I would feel anxious in a new intimate friendship.	3,37	1,575
Mean of the Variables	2,46	0,404

4.3. Examining the Relational Awareness Levels of Students In Terms of Demographic Characteristics

In this section of the study, it will be determined whether the relational awareness levels of students significantly differ due to the demographic characteristics of the students, that are the gender, how they settled in their programmes, the educational state of mothers and fathers, the type of the highschool the students were graduated from, where the students lived before, the number of friends from the same gender and whether the students have friends from the opposite gender.

4.3.1. Analysis of Relational Awareness Levels in Term of Gender Variable

The results of the independent samples t-test are given in Table 3. When the variables are taken into consideration together, it is seen that the awareness levels of the female students are higher than the levels of male students.

Table 3: The Results of Independent Samples T-test of Gender Variable

Variables	Male Mean	Female Mean	t-value	p-value
I am very aware of what others think about my close friendships.	1,96	1,63	-2,745	,006
It takes me time to get over my shyness in a new close relationship.	2,64	2,25	-2,255	,025
I am very aware of changes in my intimate friendships.	1,79	1,39	-4,013	,000
I am very aware of reactions to my close friendships.	1,92	1,66	-2,022	,044
My thoughts sometimes drift toward the nature of my close friendships.	2,49	1,98	-3,577	,000

4.3.2. Analysis of Relational Awareness Levels in Term of How the Students Settled in Their Programmes

The results of the independent samples t-test are given in Table 4.

Table 4: The Results of Independent Samples T-test of the Variable, How the Students Settled in Their Programmes

Variables	OSS Mean	Vertical Movement Mean	t-value	p-value
Intimate friendships make me feel nervous and anxious.	3,77	3,34	2,472	,014
I am very aware of changes in my intimate friendships.	1,49	1,78	-2,573	,011
I'm usually alert to others' of what goes on in my close friendships.	2,43	1,99	2,871	,004

It is seen that the students, who settled in their programmes by vertically moving from highschool to the vocational school agree on the statements: "Intimate friendships make me feel nervous and anxious." and "I'm usually alert to others' of what goes on in my close friendships." more strongly than the students, who settled in their programmes by attending OSS and being successful. On the other hand, the students, that settled in their programmes by attending the OSS agree on the statement: "I'm very aware of changes in my intimate friendships." more strongly than the students that made a vertical movement from highschool to the vocational school.

4.3.3. Analysis of Relational Awareness Levels in Term of the Educational State of Students' Mothers

The results of the One-Way ANOVA analyses are given in Table 5. As a result of the analyses it is found that the degree of agreement of students on the statement: "I sometimes wonder what others think about my intimate friendships." differ due to the educational state of the mothers. But although the Scheffe test is done, it couldn't be found among which sub groups of the education state variable this difference occurs.

Table 5: The Results of One-Way ANOVA Analyses of the Variable, The Educational State of Mothers

Variables	F value	Sig. (p)
I sometimes wonder what others think about my intimate friendships.	3,007	0,19
I would feel inhibited and shy in intimate friendship.	2,498	0,43

The Levene statistic of the "shyness" variable is 11.017 and the significance value is ,000. Therefore the group variances are not assumed equal and Tamhane's T2 test is made as the Post-Hoc analysis. As a result, it is found that the shyness levels of the students, whose mothers were graduated

from the secondary schools ($X=4,42$) are lower than the students, whose mothers were graduated from the primary schools ($X=3,81$) and from the highschools ($X=3,77$).

4.3.4. Analysis of Relational Awareness Levels in Term of the Educational State of Students' Fathers

The results of the One-Way ANOVA analyses are given in Table 6.

Table 6: The Results of One-Way ANOVA Analyses of the Variable, The Educational State of Fathers

Variables	F value	P value
I'm concerned about what other people think of my relationships.	4,017	,003
I'm concerned about the way my intimate friendships are presented to others.	3,150	,015
I'm always trying to understand my close friendships.	2,525	,041
I would feel anxious in a new intimate friendship.	3,695	,006

It is found that students' levels of being concerned about what other people think of their relationships vary due to the educational state of their fathers. The Levene statistic is 2,918 and $p < 0,05$ and this p-value indicates that the group variances are not equal. Therefore Tamhane's T2 Test is made and it is found that the students, whose fathers were graduated from highschools ($X=2,15$) and from primary schools ($X=2,05$) concern other persons' thoughts more strongly than the students, whose fathers were graduated from the secondary schools ($X=2,80$). The Levene statistic of the variable; "I'm concerned about the way my intimate friendships are presented to others." is ,722 and $p > 0,05$ and this indicates that the group variances are equal. Therefore the Scheffe test is made and it is found that the students, whose fathers were graduated from the primary schools ($X=1,90$) have a higher level of concerning than the students, whose fathers were graduated from the universities ($X=2,95$). Although Post-Hoc analysis is made for the third variable; "I'm always trying to understand my close friendships", it couldn't be found between which sub groups the difference occurs.

As the result of the Tamhane's T2 test of the variable "I would feel anxious in a new intimate friendship.", it is found that the students, whose fathers were graduated from the primary schools ($X=2,91$) have a higher level of being anxious in a new intimate friendship than the students, whose fathers were graduated from the secondary schools ($X=3,65$).

4.3.5. Analysis of Relational Awareness Levels in Term of the Variable, Where the Students Lived Before

The results of the One-Way ANOVA analysis are given in Table 7. It is found that the awareness levels of students in relation with what other people think about their close friendships vary due to where these students lived before; but although the Scheffe test is made, it couldn't be found between which sub groups this difference occurs.

Table 7: The Results of the One-Way ANOVA Analysis of the Variable, Where the Students Lived Before

Variable	F value	p value
I am very aware of what others think about my close friendships.	3,026	,030

4.3.6. Analysis of Relational Awareness Levels in Term of The Number of Students from the Same Gender

The results of the One-Way ANOVA Analyses are given in Table 8.

Table 8: The Results of One-Way ANOVA Analyses of the Variable, the Number of Friends from the Same Gender

Variables	F value	p value
I'm usually aware of others' reactions to my close friendships.	3,064	0,028
I'm usually alert to others' of what goes on in my close friendships.	2,685	0,047

The Levene statistic of the variable; "I'm usually aware of others' reactions to my close friendships." is 4,366 and $p < 0,05$, and this indicates that the group variances are not equal. Therefore Tamhane's T2 test is made and it is found that the students, who have only one friend from the same gender ($X=1,22$) have higher levels of being aware of others' reactions to their close friendships than the students, who have 2-5 friends ($X=2,06$), 6-10 friends ($X=2,48$) and 11 and above friends ($X=2,06$) from the same gender.

The Levene statistic of the variable; "I'm usually alert to others' of what goes on in my close friendships." is 3,168 and $p < 0,05$, therefore Tamhane's T2 test is made. It is found that students, who have only one friend from the same gender ($X=1,22$) have higher levels of being alert to others' of what goes on in their close friendships than the students, who have 6-10 friends ($X=2,48$) and 11 and above friends ($X=2,06$) from the same gender.

4.3.7. Analysis of Relational Awareness Levels in Term of Whether Students Have Friends from the Opposite Gender

The results of the One-Way ANOVA analyses are given in Table 9.

Table 9: The Results of One-Way ANOVA Analysis of the Variable, Whether Students Have Friends from the Opposite Gender

Variables	Have Mean	Have Not Mean	t-value	p-value
It takes me time to get over my shyness in a new close relationship.	2,59	1,94	3,368	,001
I'm usually aware of others' reactions to my close friendships.	2,04	2,43	-2,022	,044
I would feel anxious in a new intimate friendship.	3,47	2,86	2,534	,012

When the Table 9 is considered, it is seen that it take students, who do not have friends from the opposite gender a longer time to get over their shyness in a new close relationship, than the students, who have friends from the opposite gender. In addition it is seen that the students, who do not have friends from the opposite gender would feel more anxious in a new intimate friendship than the students, who have friends from the opposite gender. It is also seen that students, who have friends from the opposite gender have higher levels of being aware of others' reactions to their close friendships, than the students, who do not have friends from the opposite gender.

4.3.8. Analysis of Relational Awareness Levels in Term of the Type of the Highschools, Which the Students were Graduated from

As a result of the One-Way ANOVA analyses, it is found that the awareness levels of the students do not vary due to the type of highschools they were graduated from.

5. RESULT AND CONCLUSION

As a result of this research, the relational awareness levels in friendship of the students, having education at vocational schools of the University of Kırklareli are determined and it is founded that these levels have significant differences in terms of the students' demographic characteristics. As a

result of the descriptive analyses it is found that the relational awareness levels in friendship of vocational school students are high. It is determined that the relational awareness levels of the female students are higher than the awareness levels of the male students.

Significant differences of relational awareness levels are determined between the students that settled in their programmes by attending OSS and the students that settled in their programmes by vertical movement from their highschools. The students, that vertically settled in their programmes from the highschools agree on the statements: "Intimate friendships make me feel nervous and anxious." and "I'm usually alert to others' of what goes on in my close friendships." more strongly. The students, who settled in their programmes by OSS agree more strongly on the statement: "I am very aware of changes in my intimate friendships."

The relational awareness levels of students present significant differences due to the educational state of their mothers. The students, whose mothers were graduated from secondary schools agree on the statement: "I would feel inhibited and shy in an intimate friendship." more strongly than the students, whose mothers were graduated from primary schools and highschools. Although it is determined that the agreement levels of students on the statement; "I sometimes wonder what others think about my intimate friendships." vary due to the educational state of the mothers, it couldn't be determined among which sub groups this difference occurs.

The relational awareness levels of students present significant differences due to the educational state of their fathers.. The students, whose fathers were graduated from the primary schools and highschools agree on the statement; "I'm concerned about what other people think of my relationships." more strongly than the students, whose fathers were graduated from secondary schools. The students, whose fathers were graduated from the primary schools agree on the statement; "I'm concerned about the way my intimate friendships are presented to others." more strongly than the students, whose fathers were graduated from the universities; and the students, whose fathers were graduated from the primary schools agreed on the statement; "I would feel anxious in a new intimate friendship." more strongly than the students, whose fathers were graduated from the secondary schools. Although it is determined that the relational awareness levels of the students vary significantly due to the variable; "I'm always trying to understand my close friendships.", it couldn't be found among which sub groups this difference occurs.

It is determined that the agreement degree of students on the statement; "I am very aware of what others think about my close friendships." differ due to where they lived before, but it can't be found among which sub groups this difference occurs.

It is determined that the relational awareness levels of students differ due to the number of friends from the same gender. The students, who have only one friend from the same gender agree on the statement; "I'm usually aware of others' reactions to my close friendships." more strongly than the students who have 2-5, 6-10 and 11 and above friends from the same gender. As well the students who have only one friend from the same gender agree on the statement; "I'm usually alert to others' of what goes on in my close friendships." more strongly than the students, who have 6-10 and 11 and above friends from the same gender.

The relational awareness levels of students are determined to differ due to whether these students have friends from the opposite gender. The students, who do not have friends from the opposite gender agree on the statements; "It takes me time to get over my shyness in a new close relationship." and "I would feel anxious in a new intimate friendship." more strongly than the students who have friends from the opposite gender. On the other hand, the students, who have friends from the opposite gender agree on the statement; "I'm usually aware of others' reactions to my close friendships." more strongly than the students, who do not have any friends from the opposite gender.

It is determined that the relational awareness levels of students do not differ significantly due to what type of highschools they were graduated from.

This research contributes to the related literature by determining which variables affect the relational awareness levels of students. It is recommended for other studies to make correlation analyses in order to determine the variables, with which the relational awareness variable is in relation

with; and to build regression models in order to determine which independent variables affect the relational awareness variable. Thus, it will be possible to enrich the literature.

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