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Analyzing student teachers' level of avoding uncertainty in terms of some variables

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Abstract

Avoiding uncertainty is an important part of cultural classifications of the societies in relation to the tolerance level for coping with uncertainty in the societies. The level of avoiding uncertainty which is defined as the disturbance level felt in dilemmas or uncertain, unknown and complicated conditions which create uncertainty for the individuals in the societies, organizations and institutions influences the behaviors, attitudes and preferences of the individuals within the society. Being one of the organizations which aim to maintain the societies, educational organizations are influenced by the society's general level of avoiding uncertainty. The purpose of this research is to analyze the student teachers' levels of avoiding uncertainty based on some variables. The research is a descriptive study which is based on general scanning model. The sample group of the research consists of 366 student teachers among the students of Necmettin Erbakan University Ahmet Keleşoğlu Faculty of Education in 2015-2016 academic year. The 'Avoiding Uncertainty Survey' which was developed by Korkut and Keskin (2015) and consists of 16 articles was used as the data collecting tool. In the data analysis, descriptive statistics, percentage, frequency, t-test, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used. As a result of the analyses, the general arithmetic average regarding the participants' levels of avoiding uncertainty was found as (Middle Level). No significant difference could be found in terms of gender, grade and department variables. Suggestions were developed based on the findings.

Key Words: *Uncertainty, Student Teachers, Level of Avoiding Uncertainty*

Öğretmen adaylarının belirsizlikten kaçınma düzeylerinin bazı değişkenler açısından incelenmesi

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Abstract

Toplumlarda belirsizlikle başa çıkmaya yönelik tolerans düzeyi ile ilgili olarak belirsizlikten kaçınma, toplumların kültür sınıflamalarının önemli bir parçasıdır. 'Toplumlarda, örgütlerde ve kurumlarda bireyler için ikilem veya belirsizlik yaratan belirsiz, bilinmeyen ve karmaşık durumlarda duyulan rahatsızlık düzeyi' olarak tanımlanan belirsizlikten kaçınma düzeyi toplulukların bir üyesi olarak bireylerin davranışlarını, tutumlarını ve tercihlerini etkileyebilir. Toplumların devamını sağlayabilme kapasitesine sahip kurumlardan/örgütlerden biri olarak eğitim örgütleri de toplumun genel belirsizlikten kaçınma düzeyinden açıkça etkilenmektedir. Bu araştırmanın amacı, öğretmen adaylarının belirsizlikten kaçınma düzeylerini bazı değişkenlere göre karşılaştırmaktır. Araştırma genel tarama modeline dayalı betimsel bir çalışmadır. Araştırmanın örneklem grubunu, 2015-2016 eğitim-öğretim yılında Necmettin Erbakan Üniversitesi Ahmet Keleşoğlu Eğitim Fakültesi öğrencilerinden 366 öğretmen adayı oluşturmaktadır. Veri toplama aracı olarak Korkut ve Keskin (2015) tarafından geliştirilen ve 16 maddeden oluşan 'Belirsizlikten Kaçınma Anketi' kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde betimsel istatistikler, yüzde, frekans, t-testi, Tek-Yönlü Varyans Analizi (ANOVA) analizi kullanılmıştır. Analizler sonucunda, katılımcıların belirsizlikten kaçınma düzeylerine ilişkin genel aritmetik ortalama (Orta Düzey) olarak bulunmuştur. Cinsiyet sınıf ve bölüm değişkenleri anlamlı fark bulunamamıştır. Bulgulara dayalı olarak öneriler geliştirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Belirsizlik, Öğretmen Adayları, Belirsizlikten Kaçınma Düzeyi*

Introduction

Every society has its own specific culture. The societies' specific values, norms and behavioral patterns are their most distinct characteristics that differentiate that society from other societies. According to Hofstede (1999), culture is the programming of the common mind which makes the people of a group different from others. And values are the fundamental element of culture. Values are the tendency to prefer certain conditions in the relationships with others. Values are the judgment that something is either good or bad, either dirty or clean, either moral or immoral, either logical or illogical. In a society, the relationships between people are influenced by the values which constitute the collective programming piece in the people's mind in that society. Cultural values vary in the societies but they are quite determined and fixed in time in a society. According to Kroeber and Parsons (1958), culture is the creation and transmission of the contents and values, opinions and other symbolic-meaningful systems as the factors in shaping human behavior. According to Kluckhohn (1951), culture consists of way of thinking, affectivity and reaction, creating distinguishing successes for human groups including the works which are communicated by major symbols or arranged by them; the main core of culture (i.e. coming from the history and chosen) which constitute the tradition and related values in particular, (Quoted. Zhe, 2015). Culture constitutes all of the material and spiritual factors which are produced by the human being within the history. Material factors are the tools and equipments, technology and all kinds of material factors which are used daily. The spiritual side, on the other hand, consists of language, religion, values, norms and traditions (Güvenç, 1994). "Culture is such a unity that constitutes material and spiritual values of a nation that they are all kinds of knowledge, interests, habits, value measures, public attitudes, opinions and mentalities and all patterns of behavior. Together, all these maintain a private life style which is common among all society members and distinguishes it from other societies (Turhan, 1959; Quoted.Aman, 2012)." According to Malinowski, culture is a means which plays a significant role in eliminating the needs and solving concrete problems. Culture has been

organized in the form of institutions. Culture has a biological, instrumental and connective function. There is no cultural waste. Nonfunctional things will be erased from the society life. They o not remain as wastes. What we call wastes are the social facts whose functions are ongoing even if little. Also, culture is based on biological needs. Culture primarily occurs based on meeting the biological needs and it gains a complicated structure in time (Quoted. Aman, 2012). It is quite simple to observe what is happening in an organization. For example, lack of leadership, short and narrow minded marketing understanding, ongoing pride based on past success; but culture comes out as a concept which is an effort to understand such things. Culture is both always a dynamic phenomenon which surrounds us and the routines, rules, norms, which guide limiting behaviors, and the constant legalized behaviors which establish the structures and are shaped with leadership behaviors and created by interactions with others (Schein, 2004).

Hofstede explains culture in four dimensions. The first dimension is the power distance. Power distance is the less strong individuals' acceptance of power inequality to some extent and considering it as normal in a society. In the cultures with higher power distance, individuals respect their seniors and avoid from criticizing them. In the countries with lower power distance, challenging the seniors is acceptable even if made with respect. The second dimension is collectivism and individualism which reflects the level of seeing a society as individual or group members. In the individualist societies, individuals are concerned with their own interests and close family interests. In the cultures with higher collectivism, group actions are defined rather than just the individuals' own actions. The third dimension is masculinity and femininity. Masculinity dominated values are defined as cultures which are expected to be assertive and competitive. On the contrary, in femininity dominated cultures, feminine values such as "a sincere atmosphere, position safety, physical conditions [and] security" are dominant. Fourthly, avoiding uncertainty is usually people's preference level of the structure against risk in a culture. In the cultures where avoiding uncertainty is higher, non-structured, uncertain or unpredictable conditions create worries. Besides that, the cultures where avoiding uncertainty is lower are found to be less aggressive, reflective, relatively tolerant and insensitive (Hofstede, 1984,2001.

Quoted. Bergiel, Bergiel and Upson , 2012; Minkov and Hoftede, 2011). Later on, "Confucius dynamism" concept which represent the contrary opinions of harmonizing with time in working life and daily life emerged as the fifth dimension of culture. This dimension means preferring to delay the reward against the instant reward as the long term focusing later on. And then, Minkov suggested three new dimensions. They are exclusionism-universality, tolerant-restrictive and monumentality-flexibility (Bergiel, Bergiel and Upson, 2012). Furthermore, the dimensions including autonomy against conservatism, equality against hierarchy and harmony against mastership (Schwartz, 2006) were obtained. Defined as a result of GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Event) research, nine cultural dimensions emerged: performance oriented, future oriented, gender equality, assertiveness, corporate partnership, in-group partnership, power distance, people oriented and avoiding uncertainty (Hofstede, 2006; Maleki, 2014; Voros and Choudrie, 2011).

Avoiding uncertainty is associated with a society's level of hesitation felt in the environments where cognition is insufficient or not open, complications and seen and changes are fast and unpredictable. The societies with Strong Avoidance of Uncertainty are harsher in protecting their belief codes and behaviors and they are intolerant against deviant persons and opinions. In the societies with Weak Avoidance of Uncertainty, there is a convenient environment maintained which is easier in application, more tolerant against principles and deviant behaviors (Hofstede, 1984; Terzi, 2004). Avoiding uncertainty is the feeling of the members of a culture to what extent it is threatened against uncertain or unknown situations: it is opposing harshness and having a culture which is more inclined to flexibility. An important side of the level of avoiding uncertainty in a society is the amount of trust between the citizens and the authorities. Weak Avoidance of Uncertainty means citizen competency; it is believed that ordinary citizens are likely to influence the authorities and there is a mutual trust between them to some extent. Strong Avoidance of Uncertainty implies leaving the decisions to the experts; the citizens and the authorities do not mutually trust each other (Hofstede, 1999). The cultures with higher inclination of avoiding uncertainty are inclined to create institutions to avoid risk. In the societies with lower inclination of avoiding

uncertainty, the individuals take risks more easily, they are tolerant to different behaviors and opinions (Altay, 2004). It could be said that different decisions taken by the societies are based on the cultural history of the societies. In the cultures with higher level of uncertainty, they can decide themselves, try new alternatives instead of existing options. As, the most recent conditions are more important, innovation is more potential than prejudice. In some cultures, people are more comfortable in an uncertain environment and they are somehow willing to underestimate risks or take risks. This way, they are less inclined to stress when compared to others. Thus, in the cultures with acceptance of uncertainty and post-money cultures; people are more inclined to take risky decisions and make the most out of them (Zhe, 2015). In the societies with higher level of avoiding uncertainty, people feel disturbed in unpredictable conditions due to the unwillingness to challenge authorities and rules. It can also be said that the societies with higher level of avoiding uncertainty are more inclined to bribery. For example, Turkey is classified as a power distance culture with higher level of avoiding uncertainty which always accepts the directives of its superiors without questioning them and reflected in the subordinates. (DiRienzo et al., 2007; Pellegrini & Scandura, 2006; Quoted. Rapp, Bernardi & Bosco, 2011). Excessive uncertainty creates unbearable stress in some societies. Societies seek the ways of avoiding that. The most obvious two fields are technology and law. There is a high anxiety about the future in the societies with higher level of avoiding uncertainty. The distance between the generations is high in these societies. The societies which show higher level of avoiding uncertainty are relatively inclined to exhibit more sensitivity. The cultures with lower level of avoiding uncertainty have lower stress levels and weaker superegos and they have higher level of accepting difference of opinion. In addition, the cultures with lower level of avoiding uncertainty are relatively more inclined to taking risks. In the research by Hofstede (1980) where he compared cultural characteristics, Turkey appears among the countries which avoid uncertainty ranked as high as the 85th. (Quoted. Terzi, 2004; Hofstede, 1984). The more the individuals' level of avoiding uncertainty increases in Turkish society, the higher the level of harmony with the professional bureaucracy organizational structures with the higher machine bureaucracy and hierarchical level will be. As the individuals' level of avoiding uncertainty

decreases in Turkish society, the level of harmony with the department structure and adhocratic structure will increase. Based on the propositions handled, it can be said that the individuals who have higher level of avoiding uncertainty feel the need for keeping themselves under assurance. This assurance could be a chain of rules or regulations (Yeloğlu, 2011).

The following positive and negative results can emerge from avoiding uncertainty based on the developed or developing countries and organizations: official and nonofficial rules are an emotional need to serve as a guide for behaviors, shaping, standardization and ritualizing institutions, implied models of organizations, using types of planning, sense of time, completeness and punctuality practice, hiding or showing the feelings, tolerating deviant opinions and behaviors (Hoftede, 1984). Hoftede (2010) explains the differences between strong avoidance of uncertainty or weak avoidance of uncertainty in term of avoiding uncertainty among the societies as follows (Quoted. Zhe, 2015): In Weak Avoidance of Uncertainty; Students are interested in open ended learning conditions and comfortable and good discussions while teachers can answer as "I don't know", the results depend on the skills of the person and teachers involve the parents in the plans/activities which are made about the students. In Strong Avoidance of Uncertainty; Students are interested in the comfortable and correct answers in the structured learning environments, teachers should answer all questions, the results depend on conditions or luck and teachers inform the parents.

The results to be obtained by the research which aim to determine the levels of avoiding uncertainty of the students of the faculty of education as the future teachers might serve as a guiding function for the makers and executers.

Purpose

This research aims to determine the levels of avoiding uncertainty of the students of the faculty of education. To this end, answers have been sought for the following questions:

1. What are the levels of avoiding uncertainty of the students of the Faculty of Education?

2. Do the levels of avoiding uncertainty of the students of the Faculty of Education significantly vary based on sex?
3. Do the levels of avoiding uncertainty of the students of the Faculty of Education show significant difference based on the grade variable?
4. Do the levels of avoiding uncertainty of the students of the Faculty of Education show significant difference based on the department variable?

Method

Having aimed to determine the opinions with regard to determining the levels of avoiding uncertainty of the students of the Faculty of Education, this research was executed by qualitative method. The research is in general scanning model.

Research Sampling

The research sampling was determined by simple random sampling. The sampling of this research consists of total 366 students who are studying at Necmettin Erbakan University Ahmet Keleşoğlu Faculty of Education Psychological Counseling and Guidance (PCG) (100); Middle School Physiques, Chemistry, Biology and Math's Teaching (PCBM) (32); German Language (20); Elementary School Math's Teaching (23); Science (59); Private Education (32); Preschool (35) and Classroom Teaching (65) departments in the academic year of 2015-2016. The demographic findings regarding the sampling group are given in Table 1.

Data Collection and Analysis

'Avoiding Uncertainty Survey' which was developed by Korkut and Keskin (2015) and consists of 16 articles was used as the data collection method. Descriptive statistics, percentage, frequency, t-test, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used in the data analysis.

Findings

Table 1. Demographic findings regarding the research sampling

Variables		N	%
	Female	282	77.0
Gender	Male	84	23.0
Total		366	100.0
	1st grade	32	8.7
	2nd grade	130	35.5
Grade	3rd grade	36	9.8
	4th grade	168	45.9
Total		366	100.0
	PCG Teaching	100	27.3
	Classroom Teaching (ct)	65	17.8
Department	Science Teaching (science)	59	16.1
	PCBM Teaching	32	8.7
	Preschool Teaching (ps)	35	9.6
	Private Education Teaching	32	8.7
	Elementary Math's Teaching.	23	6.3
	German Language Teaching	20	5.8
Total		366	100.0

282 of the participants were (77%) female, 84 of them (24%) male. When we look at grade based distributions, 32 students (9.7%) are first grade, 130 students (35.5%) second grade, 36 students (9.8%) third grade, 168 students (45.9%) are fourth grade. The students' grade based distributions were found as PCG Teaching 100 students (27.3%), Middle School Physic, Chemistry, Biology and Math's Teaching 32 students (8.7%), German Teaching 20 students (5.8%), Elementary School Math's Teaching 23 students (6.3%), Science 59 students (16.1%), Private Education 32 students (8.7%), Preschool 35 students (9.6%) and Classroom Teaching 65 students (17.8).

Table 2. Determining the level of difference in avoiding uncertainty of the students of the Faculty of Education based on sex.

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
s1	male	84	3,90	1,001	,109
	female	281	3,93	,898	,054
s2	male	84	2,20	1,220	,133
	female	282	2,09	1,167	,070
s3	male	84	3,94	,855	,093
	female	281	3,83	,929	,055
s4	male	84	2,40	1,309	,143
	female	282	2,24	1,166	,069
s5	male	84	4,44	,797	,087
	female	282	4,48	,814	,048
s6	male	84	3,74	,983	,107
	female	281	3,79	,984	,059
s7	male	84	3,74	1,152	,126
	female	282	3,89	1,008	,060
s8	male	84	3,90	1,188	,130
	female	281	4,30	1,030	,061
s9	male	84	3,94	,974	,106
	female	282	4,11	,882	,053
s10	male	84	3,35	1,092	,119
	female	281	3,32	1,097	,065
s11	male	84	2,38	1,191	,130
	female	282	2,59	1,126	,067
s12	male	84	2,33	1,068	,117
	female	282	2,68	1,059	,063
s13	male	84	2,46	1,197	,131
	female	282	2,59	1,088	,065
s14	male	84	1,86	1,110	,121
	female	282	1,97	1,028	,061
s15	male	84	3,88	,999	,109
	female	281	3,94	,964	,057
s16	male	84	2,17	1,139	,124

	female	281	2,34	1,020	,061

To questions Q5. "I want my opinions to be taken at the point of the steps and decisions to be taken1" and Q8. "Working/being hired at state schools is my priority"

Table 3. t-test result of the level of avoiding uncertainty of the students of the Faculty of Education based on sex

	sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Uncertainty	male	84	50.6429	6.40339	.69867
	female	275	52.0182	5.87551	.35431

The levels of avoiding uncertainty of the students of the Faculty of Education are at a medium level. There is no significant difference based on sex. Based on the opinions of the students who participated in the research, it was found that the female students' level of avoiding uncertainty is more than that of the male students.

Table 4. Anova analysis of the level of avoiding uncertainty students of the Faculty of Education based on grade variable

Grade	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
First	53.6563	32	5.19062
second	51.4154	130	5.61115
Third	50.6857	35	5.81970
Fourth	51.7531	162	6.48272
Total	51.6964	359	6.02228

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	169.451	3	56.484	1.565	.198
Within Groups	12814.454	355	36.097		
Total	12983.905	358			

There is no significant difference in the levels of avoiding uncertainty of the students of the Faculty of Education based on grades. Based on the opinions of the students who participated in the research, it was seen that the first grade students' levels of avoiding uncertainty were higher than those of the other grades.

Table 4. Anova analysis of the levels of avoiding uncertainty students of the Faculty of Education based on department variable

Departmt	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
pcg	50.9293	99	5.94405
ms	53.4412	34	6.59288
pcb	53.5000	32	4.34036
ps	51.9688	32	6.86968
ct	51.8308	65	5.60014
science	51.6140	57	6.63528
math's	49.4545	22	6.07671
german	51.4444	18	4.91363
Total	51.6964	359	6.02228

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	169.451	3	56.484	1.565	.198
Within Groups	12814.454	355	36.097		
Total	12983.905	358			

There is no significant difference in the levels of avoiding uncertainty of the students of the Faculty of Education based on departments. Based on the opinions of the students who participated in the research, it was seen that the levels of avoiding uncertainty of the middle school teaching, physics, chemistry, biology department students and preschool students were higher than those of the other departments.

Discussion and Result

The results which were obtained from the research that was made to determine how avoiding uncertainty is perceived by the students of the Faculty of Education as one of the differentiation characteristics existing between the cultures can be summarized as follows.

The levels of avoiding uncertainty of the students of the Faculty of Education are found at a medium level. There is no significant difference based on sex. Based on the opinions of the students who participated in

the research, it was seen that the female students' levels of avoiding uncertainty were higher than those of the male students. These results overlap with the research results of Korkut and Keskin(2015). In a research by Terzi (2004) which was made on the power distance and avoiding uncertainty perceptions of the university students, the student teachers' levels of avoiding uncertainty were found at "much" level, female student's avoiding uncertainty levels were found to be higher than those of the male students. According to the research by Hofstede (1984), the finding that Turkey has a high level of avoiding uncertainty is similar to the findings of this research. Similar results were found in a research which made by Korkut and Keskin (2015). Furthermore, it was concluded that the participants rather suggested working at 'state schools'. There is no significant difference in the levels of avoiding uncertainty of the students of the Faculty of Education based on grades. Based on the opinions of the students who participated in the research, it was seen that the first grade students' level of avoiding uncertainty was higher when compared to those of the other grades. There is no significant difference in the levels of avoiding uncertainty of the students of the Faculty of Education based on departments. Based on the opinions of the students who participated in the research, it was found that the levels of avoiding uncertainty of middle school teaching, physics, chemistry, biology department students and preschool education students were higher than those of the other departments.

Recommendations

Having been made on avoiding uncertainty, which is one of the cultural characteristics, this research could be made comparatively in larger universes by also considering other cultural characteristics.

Improving the students' creativity and assertiveness could enable reducing the levels of avoiding uncertainty to ordinary levels. Thus, there could be increase in searches other than the job demands which are considered as a guarantee such as being a public servant only.

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