School Alienation: Gender, Socio-economic Status and Anger in High School Adolescents

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate school alienation in relation to state-trait anger and socio-demographic variables (e.g., gender and socio-economic status). In this research, survey method has been used. The sample consisted of 300 female and 298 male high school students who came from different socio-economic levels. The participants’ mean age is 17.6 years. To collect data a “Personal Information Form”, “the State-Trait Anger Scale” and “the Student Alienation Scale” were used. Multivariate analysis of variance was used to determine gender, socio-economic level and state-trait anger differences on the students’ alienation used as dependent variables. When there were significant multivariate effects (Wilks’ Lambda criterion) separate analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted on each dependent variable to determine the source of the effect. The level of significance was set at p < .01. The results indicate that there is a significant difference between students’ school alienation and state-trait anger.

Keywords

School Alienation, Powerlessness, Meaninglessness, Normlessness, Social Estrangement, Anger, Socio-Demographic Variables.

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According to Seeman (1959), alienation consists of five dimensions: self-estrangement, powerlessness, social isolation, meaninglessness and normlessness. Later, he added as the sixth component to the theoretical frame as cultural estrangement (Seeman, 1972). From Seeman’s perspective, alienation appears through these different dimensions. Seeman’s (1959) five dimensions were somewhat modified by Mackey (1977) and Mau (1992). They applied the Seeman’s model to adolescent populations in school contexts. The dimensions of alienation can be explained as follows. Self-estrangement has its roots in classical philosophy and taps humanistic ideas mostly related to a discrepancy between the actual and idealized self. This dimension manifests itself in adolescents who suffer from lower self-esteem and feel bored with life in which they perceive no purpose. Powerlessness reflects fatalism, pessimism, and a perception of losing control over one’s own life. This dimension is similar to the psychological notion of external locus of control. Social isolation is salient to youths who perceive a lack of intimate relationships such as with friends, thus leading to a feeling of loneliness. Normlessness can be defined as a belief that socially disapproved behaviors may be used to achieve culturally defined goals (LaCourse, Villeneuve, Claes, 2003).

The purpose of this study is to investigate school alienation in relation to state-trait anger and socio-demographic variables (gender, socio-economic status). This study conducted on Seeman’s alienation framework which slightly differentiated from Mau’s (1992). On the other hand, Mau’s four dimensions of the alienation (self-estrangement, powerlessness, normlessness, social isolation) are used as dependent variables.

**Method**

**Sample**

In this study, survey method was used. The sample consisted of 300 female and 298 male high school students who came from different socio-economic levels. The participants’ ages ranged from 17 to 19 (Mean = 17.6).

**Measurement**

To collect data a “Personal Information Form”, “the State-Trait Anger Scale” and “the Student Alienation Scale” were used. All of
the scales were administered by the researcher during a one-hour course. Students were given information about the purpose of the study and style of the response on the answer sheet. The scales’ psychometric characteristics can be summarized as follows:

Personal Information Form: Age, sex, income and class level were asked. The State-Trait Anger Scale: The Trait Anger scale assesses an individual’s disposition to experience anger in different situations. The Trait Anger scale has alpha reliability coefficients ranging between .82 and .89. The Anger Expression scale has demonstrated high internal consistency, with alpha coefficients between .70 and .84. Studies have demonstrated almost no correlation between the Anger-In and Anger-Out scales in the samples of high school and college students. Test-retest reliability coefficients range between .64 and .86 (Spielberger, 1988). This scale adopted into Turkish by Özer (1994). His findings showed that the Turkish version of this scale is highly reliable and valid. In this research, the Trait Anger and Anger Expression Scale has an alpha reliability coefficients of .87.

The School Alienation Scale: It is developed by Sanberk (2003) based on Mau’s modified Seeman’s alienation framework. After using factor analysis, Sanberk found that the School Alienation Scale consisted of four dimensions: Powerlessness, Meaningfulness, Normlessness, and Social Isolation. The scale’s reliability is .79. For subscales, reliability coefficients are .45, .72, .73, .77, respectively. Test re-test correlation is .77. Sanberk reports that the scale’s psychometric characteristics are satisfactory. In this research, reliability coefficients for the scale is .78 and .51, .74, .76 ve .68, respectively for the subscales.

Results

Multivariate analysis of variance was used to determine gender, socio-economic level and state-trait anger differences on the students’ alienation dependent variables. When there were significant multivariate effects (Wilks’ Lambda criterion), separate analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted on each dependent variable to determine the source of the effect. The level of significance was set at p < .01. The results indicate that there is a significant difference between students’ school alienation and state-trait anger. Thereby, school counseling services should be more careful to prevent alienation and anger.
Kaynakça/References


