

Teachers' Automatic Thoughts

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Abstract: In this study it was aimed to analyze automatic thoughts of teachers from the aspect of variables of gender, marital status, institution they teach or work for, service period, status of receiving inservice training, the settlement they've taught or worked for the longest period, sports playing, artiness, styles of communication. Subjects were 215 randomly chosen teachers teaching at primary and secondary educational institutions in province center of Erzurum-Turkey within the 2008-2009 academic (school) year. Data regarding automatic thoughts of teachers was obtained through Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire (ATQ) which was designed by Hollan and Kendal (1980) and adapted to turkish first by Aydın ve Aydın (1980) and then by Şahin and Şahin (1992) to measure the occurrence the frequency of automatic negative thoughts associated with depression. It is a 30-item with 1-5 score margin likert type scale (ATQ-30). Personal and professional data about participant teachers obtained through personal information form which was developed by the researchers. For statistical analysis of data obtained. t-test, one way variance analysis (ANOVA) and multiple regression analysis tests were applied. It can be affirmed that above mentioned assumed precursor variables couldn't predict nonfunctional attitude scores of teachers at a significant level.

Introduction

Automatic thoughts are repetitive, automatic self-statements that individuals always say to themselves in certain situations. They can be positive or negative. Psychological problems develop when an individual's automatic thoughts are consistently negative (Franklin, 2002)

In related literature, eleven irrational beliefs or opinions have been defined. Some of those beliefs and opinions are stated below :

- Past experiences are the determinants of today's behaviors of an individual. Things/events having strong effects on our past lives will definitely have similar effects in future life.
- Some people are evil-minded and baleful and that's why they deserve to be blamed and punished.
- Unhappiness is caused by external factors which individuals have little control of.
- I must be liked and approved by everyone in society.
- I must be perfectly successful, efficient and competent to consider myself as a "gem".

• There are the definite and perfect solutions to human problems. If they cannot be found, the result is disaster (Ellis, 1962; Ellis, 1973; Jones, 1982; Dryden ve Ellis, 1988).

Having positive thoughts plays important role for mental health. It is widely believed that those thoughts are developed within childhood period. Individuals who cannot develop proper cognitive behavioral skills within socialization process, develop feeling of helplessness, fail to succeed academically and socially and tend to develop negative automatic thoughts and depression. Positive automatic thoughts are important attributes that give an individual the opportunity arranging negative feelings and behaviors such as; anxiety, depression, anger, loneliness and poor self-worthiness (Güloğlu ve Aydın, 2007).

In a study conducted by Çiçek, Tatari, Kasap and Karairmak (2009) on university students, a positive relation between psychological symptoms and automatic thoughts of students was found at a significant level. Furthermore, it was also revealed within the scope of the same study that females' automatic thoughts are higher than that of the males at a significant level.

In one of his studies, Özgüven (1999) revealed that frequency of negative automatic thoughts and dysfunctional attitudes observed in crisis cases are significantly higher than other cases. Özgüven (1999) revealed in his study that negative automatic thoughts and dysfunctional attitudes were significantly higher when compared to control group. Moreover, falling apart of the family; losing someone dearest; experiencing mental traumas; verbally, physically and sexually have been or being harrassed and having committed suicide before are asserted to be the risk factors in developing negative automatic thoughts.

It was also emphasized that automatic thoughts ascertain long term thoughts and attitudes; not the immediate behaviors. Frequency level of automatic thoughts and dysfunctional attitudes in crisis cases are observed to be significantly higher compared to other cases. Furthermore, there are those finding which have revealed that people having dysfunctional attitudes tend to be more depressive and anxious (Palabıyıköglu et al. 1995; Azizoğlu 1993; Tschacher 1996). In two other different studies it was also revealed that improper automatic thoughts and dysfunctional attitudes should be accepted as a risk factor for crisis rather than be considered as the result of crisis (Abramson, L.Y., Seligman, MEP., Teasdale, J.D. 1978; Peterson and Seligman 1984).

Karahan, Sardoğan and Özkamalı (2006) revealed in their study that individuals with poor social competence expectancy and with dysfunctional attitudes and negative automatic thoughts, needs more psychosocial support than the others. It is attained as result that automatic thoughts do not vary in accordance with gender. In the study conducted by Bulut (2007) there was found a negative relation between life satisfaction and negative automatic thoughts of guidance counselors; whereas a positive relation was found between avoidance and negative automatic thoughts.

Problem Statement

In this study it was aimed to analyze automatic thoughts of teachers from the aspect of different variables. The following question is tried to be answered in parallel with this purpose.

“Do the automatic thoughts of teachers differentiate in accordance with the variables of gender, marital status, institution they teach or work for, service period, status of receiving inservice training, the settlement they've taught or worked for the longest period, sports playing, artiness, styles of communication ?”

Method

Population and Sampling

Population of this study consist of the teachers teaching at primary and secondary educational institutions in province center of Erzurum-Turkey within the 2008-2009 academic (school) year. 215 teachers were chosen randomly out of the population as the sample of the study.

Data Collection

Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire (ATQ)

Data regarding automatic thoughts of teachers was obtained through Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire (ATQ) which was designed by Hollan and Kendal (1980) and adapted to turkish first by Aydın ve Aydın (1980) and then by Şahin and Şahin (1992) to measure the occurrence the frequency of automatic negative thoughts associated with depression. It is a 30-item with 1-5 score margin likert type scale (ATQ-30). It can be applied to both teenagers and adults.

Internal consistency cronbach alfa reliability coefficient of the original questionnaire was found as .94, .89, and .91 in turn; split half reliability coefficient for depressive group was found as $r=.91$, and for

nondepressive psychopathological group was found as $r=.59$ and for other patients as $r=.87$. Internal consistency cronbach alfa reliability coefficient of the adapted questionnaire was found as .93, .95, .94, .89 and .91 in turn; split half reliability coefficient for depressive group was found as $r=.91$, and for nondepressive psychopathological group was found as $r=.59$ and for other patients as $r=.87$. Re-test test reliability was found as $r=.77$.

Correlation of the original form of the questionnaire with Beck Depression Inventory was found as .87 and the correlation with MMPI-D scale was found as .85. Correlations of the adapted form of the questionnaire with Beck Depression Inventory was found as .75, .70, .87 and the correlation with MMPI-D scale was found as .85. Correlation of the adapted form with Multiple Depression Scale was found as .60 whereas its correlation with Dysfunctional Attitude Scale was found .27. Each item of the scale is viewed one by one and all 30 items were found to have validity discriminate between depressed and nondepressed subjects (Şahin ve Şahin, 1992).

Personal Information Form

Teachers of the sample group were given Personal Information Forms developed by the researchers concerning information about the variables of gender, marital status, institution they teach at, service period, status of receiving inservice training, the settlement they've taught for the longest period, sports playing, artiness, styles of communication. Personal and professional data about participant teachers obtained through this form.

Data Analysis

SPSS 16.0 packaged software was used for statistical analysis of data obtained. t-test, one way variance analysis (ANOVA) and multiple regression analysis tests were applied.

Findings

Findings Regarding Automatic Thought Scores of Teachers In Accordance With Their Genders

t-value, standard deviation and mean values of automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with their gender were given in table 1 below :

Gender	n	\bar{X}	sd	t	p
Female	100	44,51	12,82	-1.764	.079
Male	115	47,86	14,76		

sd: 213 $p>0.05$

Table1. t-Value, Standard Deviation And Mean Values of Automatic Thought Scores of Teachers In Accordance With Their Gender

As seen in table 1 above, there was found a significant difference between automatic thought scores of male and female teachers ($t_{213}=-1.764, p=.079$).

Findings Regarding Automatic Thought Scores of Teachers In Accordance With Their Marital Status

t-value, standard deviation and mean values of automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with their marital status were given in table 2 below :

Marital Status	n	\bar{X}	sd	t	p
Single	65	47,04	14,22	0.513	.608
Married	150	45,98	13,88		

sd: 213 p>0.05

Table 2. *t-Value, Standard Deviation And Mean Values Of Automatic Thought Scores Of Teachers In Accordance With Their Marital Status*

As seen in table 2 above, there was found a significant difference between automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with their marital status ($t_{213}=0.513$, $p=.608$).

Findings Regarding Automatic Thought Scores of Teachers In Accordance With The Type Institution They Teach In Or They Work For

Standard deviation and mean values of automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with the type of institution they teach in or they work for were given in table 3 below :

	Type of Institution They Teach At	n	\bar{X}	sd
Automatic Thoughts	Primary Education	92	45.73	14.68
	Secondary Education	106	46.43	13.70
	Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü	17	48.52	11.92
	Total	215	46.30	13.96

Table 3. *Standard Deviation And Mean Values of Automatic Thought Scores of Teachers In Accordance With The Type of Institution They Teach At*

The results of variance analysis (ANOVA) applied in order to determine significance of the difference between automatic thought scores of teachers regarding the type of institution they teach at are shown in table 4 below :

Automatic Thoughts	Source of The Variance	Sum of Squares	s d.	Mean of Squares	F	p
	Inter-groups	115.337	2	57.668	.294	.746
	In-groups	41618.012	212	196.311		
	Total	41733.349	214			

Table 4. *Variance Analysis (ANOVA) Applied In Order To Determine Significance of The Difference Between Nonfunctional Attitude Scores of Teachers Regarding The Type Institution They Teach At*

As seen in table 4, there was found no significant difference between automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with the type institution they teach at ($F_{(2,212)}=0.294$, $p=.746$).

Findings Regarding Automatic Thought Scores of Teachers In Accordance With Their Service Period

Standard deviation and mean values of automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with their service period were given in table 5 below :

	Service Period	n	\bar{X}	Sd
Automatic Thoughts	1-10 years	122	45.36	13.52
	11-20 years	81	48.27	14.40
	21-30 years	12	42.58	14.76
	Total	215	46.30	13.96

Table 5. Standard Deviation And Mean Values of Automatic Thought Scores of Teachers In Accordance With Their Service Period

The results of variance analysis (ANOVA) applied in order to determine significance of the difference between automatic thought scores of teachers regarding their service period are shown in table 6 below :

Automatic Thoughts	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	s d.	Mean of Squares	F	p
	Inter-groups	588.276	2	294.138	1.516	.222
	In-groups	41145.073	212	194.081		
	Total	41733.349	214			

Table 6. The Results of Variance Analysis (ANOVA) Applied In Order To Determine Significance of The Difference Between Nonfunctional Attitude Scores of Teachers Regarding Their Service Period

As seen in table 6, there was found no significant difference between automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with their service period ($F_{(2,212)} = 1.516, p = .222$).

Findings Regarding Automatic Thought Scores of Teachers In Accordance With The Status of Receiving Inservice Training

Standard deviation and mean values of automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with the status of receiving inservice training were given in table 7 below :

	Status of Receiving Inservice Training	n	\bar{X}	sd
Automatic Thoughts	Never received	32	47.90	15.53
	Received only once	67	44.89	13.35
	Received twice	18	50.61	16.86
	Received three times and more	98	45.94	13.27
	Total	215	46.30	13.96

Table 7. Standard Deviation And Mean Values of Automatic Thought Scores of Teachers In Accordance With The Status of Receiving Inservice Training

The results of variance analysis (ANOVA) applied in order to determine significance of the difference between automatic thought scores of teachers regarding the status of receiving inservice training are shown in table 8 below :

Automatic Thoughts	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	s d.	Mean of Squares	F	p
	Inter-groups	561.339	3	187.113	.959	.413
	In-groups	41172.010	211	195.128		
	Total	41733.349	214			

Table 8. The Results of Variance Analysis (ANOVA) Applied In Order To Determine Significance of The Difference Between Automatic Thought Scores of Teachers Regarding The Status of Receiving Inservice Training

As seen in table 8, there was found no significant difference between automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with the status of receiving inservice training ($F_{(3,211)} = 0.959, p = .413$).

Findings Regarding Automatic Thought Scores of Teachers In Accordance With The Settlement They've Taught o For The Longest Period

Standard deviation and mean values of automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with the settlement they've taught o for the longest period were given in table 9 below :

	The Settlement They've Taught o For The Longest Period	n	\bar{X}	sd
Automatic Thoughts	Village	19	52.21	15.70
	Town	29	45.96	13.24
	City	60	45.65	12.58
	Metropolis	107	45.71	14.50
	Total	215	46.30	13.96

Table 9. Standard Deviation And Mean Values of Nonfunctional Attitude Scores of Teachers In Accordance With The Settlement They've Taught oFor The Longest Period

The results of variance analysis (ANOVA) applied in order to determine significance of the difference between automatic thought scores of teachers regarding the settlement they've taught for the longest period are shown in table 10 below :

Automatic Thoughts	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	s d.	Mean of Squares	F	p
	Inter-groups	729.557	3	243.186	1.251	.292
	In-groups	41003.792	211	194.331		
	Total	41733.349	214			

Table 10. The Results of Variance Analysis (ANOVA) Applied In Order To Determine Significance of The Difference Between Nonfunctional Attitude Scores of Teachers Regarding The Settlement They've Taught For The Longest Period

As seen in table 10 above, there was found no significant difference between nonfunctional attitude scores of teachers in accordance with the settlement they've taught or worked for the longest period ($F_{(3,211)} = 1.251, p = .292$).

Findings Regarding Automatic Thought Scores of Teachers In Accordance With Sports Playing

t-value, standard deviation and mean values of automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with sports playing are given in table 11 below :

Sports Playing	n	\bar{X}	sd	t	p
Playing Sports	91	46.73	13.69	0.390	.160
Not Playing Sports	124	45.98	14.20		

sd: 213 p>0.05

Table 11. t-Value, Standard Deviation And Mean Values of Nonfunctional Attitude Scores of Teachers In Accordance With Sports Playing

As is seen in table 11 above, there was found no significant difference between automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with sports playing ($t_{213}= 0.390, p=.160$).

Findings Regarding Automatic Thought Scores of Teachers In Accordance With Artiness

t-value, standard deviation and mean values of automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with artiness are given in table 12 below :

Artiness	n	\bar{X}	sd	t	p
Sanatla Uğraşanlar	168	46.82	13.70	1.043	.298
Sanatla Uğraşmayanlar	47	44.42	14.86		

sd: 213 p>0.05

Table 12. t-Value, Standard Deviation And Mean Values of Nonfunctional Attitude Scores of Teachers In Accordance With Artiness

As seen in table 12, there was found no significant difference between automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with artiness ($t_{213}= 1.043, p=.298$).

Findings Regarding Automatic Thought Scores of Teachers In Accordance With Their Style of Communication

t-value, standard deviation and mean values of automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with their style of communication are given in table 13 below

Perceived Communication Style	n	\bar{X}	sd	t	p
Olumlu Algılayanlar (insancıl, yapıcı ve anlayışlı)	179	45.83	13.84	-1.101	.272
Olumsuz Algılayanlar (eleştirel, yargılayıcı, duyarsız)	36	48.63	14.51		

sd: 213 p>0.05

Table 13. t-Value, Standard Deviation And Mean Values of Nonfunctional Attitude Scores of Teachers In Accordance With Their Style of Communication

As seen in table 13, there was found no significant difference between automatic thought scores of teachers in accordance with their style of communication ($t_{213}= -1.101, p=.272$).

Findings Regarding Precursor Variables of Nonfunctional Attitude Scores of Teachers

The results of multiple regression analysis applied to determine the nonfunctional attitude score predictive strength of the variables of gender, marital status, type of institution they teach at or work for, service period, status of receiving inservice training, sports playing, artiness and perceived type of communication are given at table 14 below :

Precursor Variables	Predictive				
	B	Error	β	t	p
Gender	3.112	1.947	.111	1.599	.111
Marital Status	-.736	1.159	-.049	-0.635	.526
Type of institution they teach at or work for	1.234	1.627	.055	0.758	.449
Service Period	1.880	1.727	.081	1.088	.278
Status of receiving inservice training	.097	.884	.008	0.109	.913
En Uzun Süreyle Görev Yapılan Yerleşim Yeri	-1.263	1.029	-.088	-1.228	.221
Sports playing	.123	2.070	.004	0.059	.953
Artiness	-2.277	2.411	-.068	-0.944	.346
Perceived Communication Style	2.362	2.647	.063	0.892	.373
	R=.197	R ² =.039	F ₍₉₋₂₀₅₎ =0.916		p=.512

Table 14. The Results of Multiple Regression Analysis Regarding Precursor Variables of Nonfunctional Attitude Scores of Teachers

Considering the findings obtained from table 14, it can be affirmed that assumed precursor variables of gender, marital status, type of institution, service period, status of receiving inservice training, sports playing, artiness and perceived communication styles couldn't predict nonfunctional attitude scores of teachers at a significant level ($R=0.143$, $R^2=0.039$, $F_{(9-205)}=0.916$, $p=.512$). This finding demonstrates that all those assumed precursor variables could only explain 3,9% of variance of the nonfunctional attitude scores of the teachers. Results of independent t-test applied have confirmed that gender ($\beta=-.111$) is the strongest variable to predict nonfunctional attitude scores of teachers yet without being at significant level ($t=-1.599$, $p=.111$) whereas other variables couldn't predict nonfunctional attitude scores of teachers at significant level.

Discussion

Considering the findings obtained from table 14, it can be affirmed that assumed precursor variables of gender, marital status, type of institution, service period, status of receiving inservice training, sports playing, artiness and perceived communication styles couldn't predict nonfunctional attitude scores of teachers at a significant level. This finding demonstrates that all those assumed precursor variables could only explain 3,9% of variance of the nonfunctional attitude scores of the teachers. Results of independent t-test applied have confirmed that gender ($\beta=-.111$) is the strongest variable to predict nonfunctional attitude scores of teachers yet without being at significant level ($t=-1.599$, $p=.111$) whereas other variables couldn't predict nonfunctional attitude scores of teachers at significant level.

Negative automatic thoughts' not varying significantly from the aspects of variables of this study, demonstrates their having almost no effect on varying them from. According to Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT) theory, individuals inherit most of the opinion/belief structures leading their lives in their childhood period, imitating the persons they've perceived to be respectful (Corey, 2001). This assumption makes the reserchers to think that participative teachers developed automatic thoughts in their childhood period and that marital status, type of institution, service period, status of receiving inservice training, sports playing, artiness and their communication styles have had no effect on developing or changing automatic thoughts in their adulthood period.

Overall score margin obtained from automatic thought scale is 30-150. Considering this range, there are those automatic thoughts of teachers at a certain level despite its not varying in accordance with above mentioned variables. Karahan, Sardoğan and Özkamalı (2006) revealed in their study that individuals with poor social competence expectancy and with dysfunctional attitudes and negative automatic thoughts, needs more psycho-social support than the others. Negative automatic thoughts are ascertained to be significantly higher in crisis cases than other cases. There are also findings obtained, revealing that people having nonfunctional attitudes tend to be more depressive and anxious (Palabıyıköğlü ve ark 1995; Azizoğlu 1993; Tschacher 1996). Considering the scores obtained pertaining automatic thoughts together with automatic thoughts score range, it can be inferred that teachers may need psycho-social support to a certain extent and that they might experience some problems with social competence expectancy and tend to experience crisis as well as their becoming depressed and anxious to a certain extent.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Considering the findings obtained from table 14, it can be affirmed that despite teachers' having negative automatic thoughts, assumed precursor variables of gender, marital status, type of institution, service period, status of receiving inservice training, sports playing, artiness and perceived communication styles couldn't predict nonfunctional attitude scores of teachers at a significant level. Results of independent t-test applied have confirmed that gender ($\beta=-.111$) is the strongest variable to predict nonfunctional attitude scores of teachers yet without being at significant level ($t=-1.599$, $p=.111$) whereas other variables couldn't predict nonfunctional attitude scores of teachers at significant level. Overall score margin obtained from automatic thought scale is 30-150. Considering this range, there are those automatic thoughts of teachers at a certain level despite its not varying in accordance with above mentioned variables.

Going through literature review, it has been ascertained that automatic thoughts result from erroneous cognitive schemas formed within the childhood period of an individual and that it may cause some certain psychological problems afterwards. Considering those assignments, following recommendations could be suggested :

1. Particular inservice training programs should be arranged in order to raise teachers' awareness on automatic thought, its sources and its effects. Different effective authorities such as Guidance Research Centers (GRC) and guidance counselors should be made use of in this studies.
2. Informative education pertaining automatic thoughts should be given to families.
3. Studies on automatic thoughts and their effects in life can be conducted in educational faculties on behalf of prospective teachers.
4. Confirming teachers with negative automatic thoughts, necessary therapeutic studies could be conducted.

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