

Investigation of the Levels of Belonging to the School of Individuals Taking a University Education

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ABSTRACT

Aim: This study aims to determine how the level of belonging to the school is shaped by individuals studying in different faculties of Kyrgyzstan Turkey Manas University.

Material and Methods: Scanning method was used in the research. This research is descriptive and inferential study. The study group of this research consists of 114 female and 97 male participants studying in the Departments of Veterinary, Communication, and Sports Sciences of Kyrgyzstan Turkey Manas University in the 2020-2021 academic year. The study was based on voluntary participation criteria. Personal information form prepared by the researcher and The Scale of Belonging to School were used to collect data. The personal information form consists of questions such as gender, department of education, mother's education level, father's education level, hobbies you enjoy, social facility adequacy and monthly income level. In addition, in order to determine the participants sense of belonging to the school; A 5-point Likert-type "Sense of Belonging to School Scale" consisting of 18 items developed by Goodenow (1993) and adapted into Turkish by Sarı (2015) was used. The obtained data were evaluated in computer environment using SPSS 26.0 statistical program.

Results: It was concluded that there was no significant difference in the variables of gender, department, mother's education level, father's education level and the hobbies you enjoy, but there was a significant difference in the variables of monthly income and social facility adequacy.

Conclusion: It has been concluded that the social facility adequacy and monthly income level variables are the determining factors in shaping the level of belonging to the school of university students.

Keywords: Sense of belonging to the school, Social life, Education

INTRODUCTION

Belonging is a need that can be satisfied with interpersonal relationships, and each person feels the need for belonging at different levels. Some people need more attention and social bonding, while others, and some people feel less needed. Likewise, some people try to satisfy this need for attention, love, and social bonding very often, while others may engage in less social contact¹.

There are many views in the literature that belonging is a basic human need^{2,3,4,5,6}. Satisfying the individual's need for belonging, communication with other individuals, and social and emotional bonds formed with individuals, perceiving other individuals, being aware of their feelings and needs, and thinking about them affects the individual's psychological health and well-being^{3,7,8,9,10}.

A high sense of belonging, which increases the functionality of an individual, is associated with both psychological and social functionality¹¹. The needs of love, respect, attachment, and importance brought by the sense of belonging constitute an important place for the psychological health of the individual. Lack of a sense of belonging can negatively affect the psychological well-being of an individual. Situations that cause a sense of not belonging, such as feeling rejected, isolated, or alienated, can be identified. These situations can also cause the individual to experience some adaptation problems³.

It is clearly observed that meeting the belonging needs of individuals in adolescence and young adulthood is an important problem, and it should be taken into account that individuals may need a higher level of belonging during these periods^{12,13}. The most important element of satisfying the need for belonging is the quality of the individual's relationships with people. For this reason, the stronger the

foundation of a relationship, the higher the possibility of fulfilling that person's need to belong.

People have a strong need to belong. For this reason, basic instincts such as reproduction, reproduction, and survival cannot be fulfilled in the case of social rejection and exposure to loneliness. Considering this, it can be said that social rejection, as an obstacle to meeting the need for belonging, ignores the functional purpose of many human activities and strikes the human spirit¹⁴. Organic bonds formed with various segments of society entitle the individual to membership in the society to which they belong.

The experience of belonging is said to be associated with important psychological processes. Children who experience a sense of relatedness have a stronger inner resource. They perceive themselves as more competent and autonomous, and they have high intrinsic motivation. Students with a sense of belonging have more positive attitudes towards school, classroom work, and teachers and peers. They like school more and feel more committed to school. They are more involved in school activities and put more effort into their education¹⁵.

Developing positive attitudes and behaviors towards school is considered one of the important issues in the field of education, especially since the impact of education on academic results is important. The sense of belonging to the school and belonging to the school, which is an important affective emotional state that students are expected to have towards their school¹⁶. Students with a high sense of belonging to school do not have negative emotions such as school phobia or loneliness, and as a result, the rate of absenteeism from school is low; states that independence, positive social behaviors, and intrinsic motivation are at high levels¹⁷.

It is stated that university students are in a critical period in terms of eliminating their sense of belonging in a healthy way¹⁸. It can be said that people who feel insecure and rootless have lost their sense of belonging¹².

Society has set certain limits and set criteria for what individuals should and should not do in many areas, or how to do them. In this context, individuals who know the wishes of society and act accordingly are accepted by society. Otherwise, they are exposed to exclusion from society¹⁹.

From this point of view, the main purpose of the study is to determine how the level of belonging to the school of individuals who receive university education is shaped.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research Design: The study was descriptive in nature, and the level of belonging to the school of individuals studying in Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, and Manas University were investigated.

In this study, the model of research was created by considering the "screening model". Screening models are research models that aim to identify a condition that has existed in the present in the way that it has. The event, person, or object that is the subject of their research is attempted to be depicted in its original context. There is no reason to change or affect these conditions in any way²⁰.

Study Group: The study group of this research in the school is constituted of students studying between the years 2019-2020 at Kyrgyzstan-Turkey Manas University in the fields of veterinary, communication, and physical education.

Data Collection Tools: The "Personal Information Form" developed by the researcher was used to determine the demographic characteristics of the university students participating in the research. This form consists of questions such as gender, department of education, mother's education level, father's education level, sports branch, do you find school facilities adequate, monthly income of your family. Since the data had to be collected during the Covid-19 pandemic process, they were collected by sending them to the e-mail addresses of the students via Google forms. Data were transferred from Excel format to SPSS package program.

In order to determine the level of sense of belonging of the participants to the school; A 5-point Likert-type "Sense of Belonging to School Scale" consisting of 18 items, developed by Goodenow²¹ and adapted to Turkish by Sari²², was used. This scale (Not at all True, Not True, Undecided, True, Completely True) consists of 13 positive and 5 negative items (3, 6, 9, 12, and 16). 13 items that determine the level of school commitment of students are calculated with the correct scoring method and 5 negative items that evaluate the size of students' rejection are calculated with the reverse scoring method. As a result; by adding these two sub-dimensions, the total sense of belonging to the school score is calculated. High scores obtained as a result of scoring gave the result that students have a high sense of belonging to the school. The lowest score that can be obtained in the school commitment score is 13, and the highest score is 65. The lowest score that can be obtained in rejection scoring is 5, and the highest score is 25. The lowest score that can be obtained in the

total score of belonging to the school is 18, and the highest score is 90. In addition, since the scoring in the rejection dimension is reversed, high scores indicate a low level of rejection.

Analysis of the Data: In order to provide descriptive information about the individuals participating in the study, the data of the study were evaluated in the SPSS 26 program. In order to determine the type of analysis suitable for the analysis of the data, it was first decided whether the data were normally distributed or not by looking at the Skewness and Kurtosis values. Skewness and Kurtosis values between +2.0 and -2.0 indicate that the data are normally distributed²³. Since the data of the study showed normal distribution, t-test was used for pairwise comparisons and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for multiple comparisons. In statistical analysis, the level of significance was chosen as $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Table 1: Shows the Skewness and Kurtosis Values of the Obtained Data

| | | Statistic | Std. Error | |
|------|----------------------------------|-------------|------------|--|
| DL | Mean | 12,2701 | ,23893 | |
| | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | Lower Bound | 11,7991 | |
| | | Upper Bound | 12,7412 | |
| | 5% Trimmed Mean | 12,1943 | | |
| | Median | 12,0000 | | |
| | Variance | 12,046 | | |
| | Std. Deviation | 3,47069 | | |
| | Minimum | 5,00 | | |
| | Maximum | 22,00 | | |
| | Range | 17,00 | | |
| | Interquartile Range | 4,00 | | |
| | Skewness | ,384 | ,167 | |
| | Kurtosis | ,065 | ,333 | |
| LCS | Mean | 48,3175 | ,45203 | |
| | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | Lower Bound | 47,4264 | |
| | | Upper Bound | 49,2086 | |
| | 5% Trimmed Mean | 48,5669 | | |
| | Median | 50,0000 | | |
| | Variance | 43,113 | | |
| | Std. Deviation | 6,56605 | | |
| | Minimum | 26,00 | | |
| | Maximum | 65,00 | | |
| | Range | 39,00 | | |
| | Interquartile Range | 7,00 | | |
| | Skewness | -,770 | ,167 | |
| | Kurtosis | 1,237 | ,333 | |
| TLCS | Mean | 65,9431 | ,59501 | |
| | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | Lower Bound | 64,7702 | |
| | | Upper Bound | 67,1161 | |
| | 5% Trimmed Mean | 66,2064 | | |
| | Median | 67,0000 | | |
| | Variance | 74,702 | | |
| | Std. Deviation | 8,64300 | | |
| | Minimum | 37,00 | | |
| | Maximum | 90,00 | | |
| | Range | 53,00 | | |
| | Interquartile Range | 10,00 | | |
| | Skewness | -,527 | ,167 | |
| | Kurtosis | ,923 | ,333 | |

DL: Denied Level, LCS: Level of Commitment to School, TLCS: Total Level of Commitment to School

Table 2: Personal Data of Study Participants

| | | f | % |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------|-------|
| Gender | Female | 114 | 54,0 |
| | Male | 97 | 46,0 |
| | Total | 211 | 100,0 |
| Department | 1 | 86 | 40,8 |
| | 2 | 67 | 31,8 |
| | 3 | 58 | 27,5 |
| | Total | 211 | 100,0 |
| Mother's Education Level | Illiterate | 1 | ,5 |
| | Elementary School | 6 | 2,8 |
| | Secondary School | 43 | 20,4 |
| | High School | 47 | 22,3 |
| | University | 114 | 54,0 |
| Total | 211 | 100,0 | |
| Father's Education Level | Illiterate | 3 | 1,4 |
| | Elementary School | 3 | 1,4 |
| | Secondary School | 70 | 33,2 |
| | High School | 50 | 23,7 |
| | University | 85 | 40,3 |
| Total | 211 | 100,0 | |
| Hobby | Travelling | 52 | 24,6 |
| | Sports | 70 | 33,2 |
| | Music | 38 | 18,0 |
| | Entertainment | 9 | 4,3 |
| | Other | 42 | 19,9 |
| | Total | 211 | 100,0 |
| Social Facility Adequacy | Yes | 163 | 77,3 |
| | No | 21 | 10,0 |
| | Partly | 27 | 12,8 |
| | Total | 211 | 100,0 |
| Monthly Income | Good | 37 | 17,5 |
| | Middle | 155 | 73,5 |
| | Low | 19 | 9,0 |
| | Total | 211 | 100,0 |

Table 3: shows the study participants' averages for Total Level of Commitment to School, Level of Commitment to School, and Rejection Level.

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | X | SS |
|------|-----|---------|---------|-------|------|
| RL | 211 | 5,00 | 22,00 | 12,27 | 3,47 |
| LCS | 211 | 26,00 | 65,00 | 48,32 | 6,57 |
| TLCS | 211 | 37,00 | 90,00 | 65,94 | 8,64 |

RL stands for Rejection Level, LCS stands for Level of Commitment to School, and TLCS stands for Total Level of Commitment to School.

Table 4: compares the participants' total level of commitment to school, level of commitment to school, and rejection level scores according to gender variable.

| | Gender | N | X | SS | X1-X2 | SH | t |
|------|--------|-----|-------|------|-------|------|---------|
| RL | Female | 114 | 11,69 | 3,07 | 1.26 | 0.47 | 2.656** |
| | Male | 97 | 12,95 | 3,79 | | | |
| LCS | Female | 114 | 48,40 | 6,07 | 0.17 | 0.90 | 0.185 |
| | Male | 97 | 48,23 | 7,14 | | | |
| TLCS | Female | 114 | 66,58 | 7,87 | 1.38 | 1.19 | 1.159 |
| | Male | 97 | 65,20 | 9,46 | | | |

RL stands for Rejection Level, LCS stands for Level of Commitment to School, and TLCS stands for Total Level of Commitment to School, *p<0.05, **p<0.01

In Table 4, it is seen that while there is a p<0.01 significance difference between the gender rejection scores of the participants, there is no difference at p>0.05 significance level in terms of level of commitment to school

and total level of commitment to school scores.

Table 5: Comparison of Total Level of Commitment to School, Level of Commitment to School and Rejection Level Scores of the Participants According to Department Variable

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean of Squares | F | p |
|------|----------------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-------|------|
| RL | Between Groups | 45,761 | 2 | 22,880 | 1,916 | ,150 |
| | In Group | 2483,841 | 208 | 11,942 | | |
| | Total | 2529,602 | 210 | | | |
| LCS | Between Groups | 96,241 | 2 | 48,120 | 1,117 | ,329 |
| | In Group | 8957,484 | 208 | 43,065 | | |
| | Total | 9053,725 | 210 | | | |
| TLCS | Between Groups | 136,430 | 2 | 68,215 | ,912 | ,403 |
| | In Group | 15550,888 | 208 | 74,764 | | |
| | Toplam | 15687,318 | 210 | | | |

RL: Rejection Level, LCS: Level of Commitment to School, TLCS: Total Level of Commitment to School, *p<0.05, **p<0.01

According to Table 5, there is no significant difference in the participants' total level of commitment to school, level of commitment to school, and rejection levels based on the variable of the department in which they study.

Table 6: Comparison of Total Level of Commitment to School, Level of Commitment to School and Rejection Level Scores of the Participants According to Mother's Education Level Variable

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean of Squares | F | p |
|------|----------------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-------|------|
| RL | Between Groups | 93,988 | 4 | 23,497 | 1,987 | ,098 |
| | In Group | 2435,614 | 206 | 11,823 | | |
| | Total | 2529,602 | 210 | | | |
| LCS | Between Groups | 256,712 | 4 | 64,178 | 1,503 | ,203 |
| | In Group | 8797,013 | 206 | 42,704 | | |
| | Total | 9053,725 | 210 | | | |
| TLCS | Between Groups | 515,441 | 4 | 128,860 | 1,750 | ,140 |
| | In Group | 15171,877 | 206 | 73,650 | | |
| | Total | 15687,318 | 210 | | | |

RL: Rejection Level, LCS: Level of Commitment to School, TLCS: Total Level of Commitment to School, *p<0.05, **p<0.01

According to Table 6, it is seen that there is no significant difference in the total level of commitment to school, level of commitment to school, and rejection level scores of the participants, according to the mother's education level.

Table 7: compares the participants' total level of commitment to school, level of commitment to school, and rejection level scores based on the father's education level variable.

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean of Squares | F | p |
|------|----------------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-------|------|
| RL | Between Groups | 89,264 | 4 | 22,316 | 1,884 | ,115 |
| | In Group | 2440,338 | 206 | 11,846 | | |
| | Total | 2529,602 | 210 | | | |
| LCS | Between Groups | 96,636 | 4 | 24,159 | ,556 | ,695 |
| | In Group | 8957,089 | 206 | 43,481 | | |
| | Total | 9053,725 | 210 | | | |
| TLCS | Between Groups | 237,339 | 4 | 59,335 | ,791 | ,532 |
| | In Group | 15449,979 | 206 | 75,000 | | |
| | Total | 15687,318 | 210 | | | |

RL: Rejection Level, LCS: Level of Commitment to

School, TLCS: Total Level of Commitment to School, *p<0.05, **p<0.01

According to Table 7, there is no significant difference in the total level of commitment to school, level of commitment to school, and rejection level scores of the participants, according to the father's education level.

Table 8: compares the participants' total level of commitment to school, level of commitment to school, and rejection level scores according to Hobbies Variable.

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean of Squares | F | p |
|------|---------------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-------|------|
| RL | BetweenGroups | 75,904 | 4 | 18,976 | 1,593 | ,177 |
| | InGroup | 2453,697 | 206 | 11,911 | | |
| | Total | 2529,602 | 210 | | | |
| LCS | BetweenGroups | 192,428 | 4 | 48,107 | 1,118 | ,349 |
| | InGroup | 8861,297 | 206 | 43,016 | | |
| | Total | 9053,725 | 210 | | | |
| TLCS | BetweenGroups | 110,232 | 4 | 27,558 | ,364 | ,834 |
| | InGroup | 15577,085 | 206 | 75,617 | | |
| | Total | 15687,318 | 210 | | | |

RL: Rejection Level, LCS: Level of Commitment to School, TLCS: Total Level of Commitment to School, *p<0.05, **p<0.01

According to Table 8, it is seen that there is no significant difference in the total level of commitment to school, level of commitment to school and rejection level scores of the participants according to the variable of hobbies.

Table 9: Comparison of Total Level of Commitment to School, Level of Commitment to School, and Rejection Level Scores of Participants Based on Their Answers to the Question "Do you find our school's social facilities adequate?"Variable

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean of Squares | F | p | Difference |
|-------|---------------|----------------|-----|-----------------|--------|------|------------|
| RL | BetweenGroups | 142,079 | 2 | 71,040 | 6,189 | ,002 | 1<2, 2<3 |
| | InGroup | 2387,523 | 208 | 11,478 | | | |
| | Total | 2529,602 | 210 | | | | |
| LCS | BetweenGroups | 1059,077 | 2 | 529,539 | 13,777 | ,000 | 1>2, 2<3 |
| | InGroup | 7994,648 | 208 | 38,436 | | | |
| | Total | 9053,725 | 210 | | | | |
| TLC S | BetweenGroups | 2007,827 | 2 | 1003,913 | 15,265 | ,000 | 1>2, 2<3 |
| | InGroup | 13679,491 | 208 | 65,767 | | | |
| | Total | 15687,318 | 210 | | | | |

RL: Rejection Level, LCS: Level of Commitment to School, TLCS: Total Level of Commitment to School, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, 1:yes, 2:no, 3:partly

When Table 9 is examined, when the answers given to the question "Do you find our school's social facilities adequate" of the total level of commitment to school, level of commitment and rejection level scores of the participants are compared, it is seen that those who say no at the level of rejection have a higher score than those who say yes, and those who say partly than those who say no; It is seen

that those who say yes at the level of commitment to school have higher scores than those who say no, those who say partly than those who say no, those who say yes at the level of total commitment to school have higher scores than those who say no, and those who say partially have a higher score than those who say no.

Table 10: Comparison of Total Level of Commitment to School, Level of Commitment to School, and Rejection Level Scores of Participants Based on Monthly Income Variable

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean of Squares | F | p | Difference |
|------|---------------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-------|------|------------|
| RL | BetweenGroups | 100,323 | 2 | 50,162 | 4,295 | ,015 | 1>2 |
| | InGroup | 2429,279 | 208 | 11,679 | | | |
| | Total | 2529,602 | 210 | | | | |
| LCS | BetweenGroups | 269,540 | 2 | 134,770 | 3,191 | ,043 | 2>3 |
| | InGroup | 8784,185 | 208 | 42,232 | | | |
| | Total | 9053,725 | 210 | | | | |
| TLCS | BetweenGroups | 595,537 | 2 | 297,768 | 4,104 | ,018 | 2>3 |
| | InGroup | 15091,781 | 208 | 72,557 | | | |
| | Total | 15687,318 | 210 | | | | |

RL: Rejection Level, LCS: Level of Commitment to School, TLCS: Total Level of Commitment to School, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, 1:good, 2:middle, 3:low

When Table 10 is examined, when the total level of commitment to school, level of commitment, and rejection level scores of the participants in the study are compared according to their monthly income, it is found that those with a good income level at the level of rejection have higher scores than those with a medium income level, and those with a medium income level at the level of total commitment to school have higher scores than those with a low income level (p<0.01).

DISCUSSION

The research conducted is evaluated in the light of the literature information according to the variables taken into consideration.

It was concluded that while there was a significant difference between the rejection level scores of the research group according to the gender variable, there was no significant difference in the level of commitment to school and total level of commitment to school scores. As a matter of fact, Gencer²⁴ and Altinsoy²⁵ concluded in their studies that students' sense of belonging to school does not differ according to gender. In the same way, Sari¹⁶ stated that the differences between the averages of the groups were not statistically significant as a result of the independent groups t-test conducted to examine the students' sense of belonging to the school according to gender, but the averages of the female students were higher in the total scores of the School Belonging and Sense of Belonging to the School Scale, but it was lower in the feeling of rejection subscale. Similarly, Yüksek²⁶ found that male students experience alienation from school at a higher rate than female students. In Alaca's²⁷ study, it was also found that female students had higher averages than male students in the scores of the Sense of Belonging to

School Scale, and the differences between the averages were statistically significant; compared to male students, it was concluded that female students felt more belonging to their school both on the basis of total and sub-dimensions. While these results support our study, Niemi and Hotulainen concluded that female students' sense of belonging to school is lower than male students' sense of belonging²⁸. Whether it is found to be higher in female students or male students, it is clear that the sense of belonging to the school is very important for all students. It is an undeniable fact that students who do not feel adequately connected to their school and who do not see themselves as valuable and respected members of the school community face a plethora of behavioral and academic risks.

The individual who feels supported and included in his environment; will feel happy and good and will perform better at school^{29,35,36}.

According to the department variable of the research group, it was concluded that there was no significant difference in the level of commitment to school and the level of rejection. However, Yüksel found significant differences between high school types and commitment to school, sense of rejection and sense of belonging to school in his study to determine the level of school belonging of secondary school students³⁰. Likewise, Gökdal and Thoughtli conducted a study with students studying in different types of high schools and concluded that the high school type with the highest sense of belonging and lowest rejection score was the science high school; the type of high school with the lowest sense of belonging to the school and the highest sense of rejection was vocational high school^{30,37,38}. These results do not show parallelism with our study.

It was concluded that there was no significant difference in the level of commitment to school and level of rejection scores of the research group according to the variables of mother's education level and father's education level. Contrary to our study, there are studies in the literature that detect significant differences between the education level of parents and students' sense of school belonging scores. Alaca²⁷ and Özgök³¹ found in their studies that as the education level of the parents increases, the level of belonging of the students to the school increases. Similarly, Yıldız³² concluded in his study that as the education level of the parents increased, the belonging scores of the students also increased and the rejection scores decreased. Likewise, Erdoğan and Yüzbaş³³ reported that the school commitment of adolescent individuals or children whose parents have an education level below the secondary school level has shown a downward trend.

It was concluded that there was no significant difference in the scores of the level of commitment to school and the level of rejection according to the variable of your hobby that you like to do the most, according to the hobbies you like to do. When the literature was examined, there were no studies related to the hobbies enjoyed.

When the level of commitment to school and the level of rejection were compared according to the variable of "Do you find our school's facilities sufficient" of the research group, it was found that those who said no at the level of

rejection had higher scores than those who said yes, and those who said partly than those who said no; it was concluded that those who said yes at the level of commitment to school had higher scores than those who said no, and those who said partly than those who said no and that those who say yes at the level of total school commitment have higher scores than those who say no, and those who say partially have a higher score than those who say no. Studies show that many factors can be effective on students' sense of belonging to school. One of them is the physical facilities in terms of facilities, buildings, materials, gardens, etc. in the school. Inadequate sports areas in schools and the scarcity of places to rest have a negative impact on students' feeling comfortable and safe³⁴. It can be expected that student satisfaction is high in schools that are equipped in these respects.

When the level of commitment to school and the level of rejection scores of the research group were compared according to the monthly income level variable, it was found that those with a good income level had higher scores than those with a medium level of rejection. It was concluded that those with a medium income level at the level of school engagement have higher scores than those with a low-income level, and those with a medium income level at the level of total school engagement have a higher score than those with a low-income level. These results show parallax with the results obtained by Gencer²⁰. In contrast to our findings, Alaca²⁷, Özgök³¹ and Yıldız³² discovered significant differences in favor of students with higher monthly family incomes than other groups.

CONCLUSION

Students' participation in extracurricular activities at school will increase students' sense of belonging to the school positively by strengthening both student-student communication and teacher-student communication. The process of improving physical facilities in schools should be handled in coordination with the development of the psychological atmosphere, and special policies should be followed to improve school belonging.

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