

## RESEARCH ON THE EMPATHY SITUATIONS OF THE TRAINERS ACCORDING TO DIFFERENT PROFESSIONS

BAŞTUĞ GÜLSÜM<sup>1</sup>, TAŞĞIN ERDAL<sup>2</sup>, LÖK SEFA<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Selçuk University- School of Physical Education and Sport, TURKEY

<sup>2</sup> Selçuk University- Institute of Health Sciences, TURKEY

### ABSTRACT

In this study, it has been aimed to determine empathic skill levels of trainers and see whether or not empathic skill levels differ with regard to personal variables. The research staff consisted of 30 trainers, 30 class teachers, 30 bankers working in customer services, 30 policemen, 30 lawyers and 30 doctors excluding psychiatry, in total 180 people. In the study, introductory information form was used as to determine socio-demographic features of the subjects and The Scales of Empathic Skill-B Form developed by U. Dökmen (1989) was used as to evaluate empathic skill.

At the end of the study, a meaningful relation has been found between empathic skills and marital status. Regarding empathic skills of trainers, bankers, class teachers, policemen, lawyers and doctors excluding psychiatry; it has been found that empathic skills of class teachers, lawyers and bankers are much higher in comparison to the empathic skill of trainers, policemen and doctors.

**KEY WORDS:** Empathy, Trainer, Doctor, Police, Teacher.

### INTRODUCTION

Empathy is the process of individual's understanding other's feelings and thoughts truly, feelings other's emotions and conveying this situation to him (R.J. Tamborini et al., 1990). Empathy's happening completely depends on some factors: To put yourself into other's place, to consider events from other's viewpoint, to understand truly and feel other's feelings and thoughts, to express that you understand him (R. Koestner et al., 1990). We can arrange some advantages of showing empathy as in: Empathy is an important skill for cognitive, ethical development and psychological health. -Empathy is to express the relation and clarity among people. -Empathy help relations, communication increase and stops conflicts. -Empathy increases the chance of being successful in daily and work life. -Empathy make the person get on well with different one or others from different culture (D. Goleman, 2003).

According to H.M. Davis, (1994), People who have skill of showing empathy are more successful in interpersonal relations. People feel that they are being understood and cared about when others show empathy to them. Being understood and cared about by others comfort the individual. So the individual feeling that he isn't being judged or criticized feel relaxed. Empathy isn't only an activity that is useful for the one being showed empathy but also important for the one showing empathy. People having empathic tendency and skills experience less conflicts with others and loved and wanted more (U. Dökmen, 1989). It is

argued that empathy is a skill that sharpens critical thinking and visualization beside it is one of the center components of the emotional intelligence. Including both cognitive and emotional dimension, empathic behavior's cognitive dimension expresses understanding how others feel and its emotional dimension expresses emotional communication with others (K. Cotton, 2001). People sometimes prefer to show their feelings in several ways rather than words. To understand what others feel, firstly it is necessary to understand body language telling many things implicitly including posture, intonation which are non-verbal expressions. This kind of perception is seen more in sports (L. Wispe, 1996). Being a sub-section of sports and exercise science trying to find answers to the questions related to human behaviors in sports environment, sports psychology (D.L. Gill, 1986) is from the sections that trainer communicating directly to the athlete should know. While a trainer is trying to train many athletes for the performance, he should know their personal features, internal worlds, their exposure levels to stress (L. Wispe, 1996).

In the light of these data, the aim of this study is to examine empathic skill levels of trainers according to the different professions.

### METHOD

The population of the study is consisted of 30 trainers, 30 class teachers, 30 bankers from customer services, 30 polices, 30 lawyers and 30 doctors excluding psychiatry, 210 people in all working in Konya in 2009.

**Table 1: The demographic features of the subjects**

Variables		n	%
gender	male	71	% 39.7
	female	109	% 60.3
age	21-31	65	% 36.0
	32-41	88	% 49.7
	42-52	27	% 14.3
marital status	married	132	% 74.2
	unmarried	48	% 25.8
number of child	1 child	41	% 37.7
	2 children	47	% 42.3
	3 children	23	% 18.3
total		60	%100

As data collection tool, the scale of empathic skill b-form developed by Dokmen was used in order to determine the emphatic skill levels of the subjects. The scales of empathic skill b-form is based on 6 problems. 12 empathic reactions for each of these 6 problems, 72 reactions in all, are presented to the subject in written. The form of the subject who marks one of the 6 irrelevant sentences in the scale isn't evaluated. Empathic skill score's being high refers to a high empathic communication skill, its being low refers to a low empathic communication skill. The maximum score is 219 and the minimum score is 66 that one can take in The scales of Emphatic Skill B-Form. The validity and reliability of The Scales of Empathic Skill-B Form was done by U. Dökmen, (1989). The

scale was applied to a group of 80 people twice with 3-week interval; the repetition reliability of the scale done over the scores of 64 subjects was found 91.

Statistical analysis; percentage and frequency values were taken depending on the variables in the data analysis, ANOVA test and t test were used.

## RESULTS

As seen in table 2, no significant difference has been found between the number of child and empathic skills ( $p>0.05$ ). When the average values were examined, the empathic skill levels of trainers who have one child have been found to be higher than the ones who have 2 and 3 children.

**Table 2: Examining the empathic skill levels according to the variables of the number of child**

number of child	N	average	Std. Dev.	f	p
1 child	41	139.12	16.17		
2 children	47	136.19	15.78		
3 children	23	131.66	15.33	1.362	0.252

As seen in table 3, a significant relation has been determined between empathic skill and marital status ( $p<0.05$ ). In comparisons carried out, the

empathic skill level of married trainers has been found to be higher than the ones unmarried.

**Table 3: examining empathic skill levels according to the marital status variable**

marital status	N	average	Std. Dev.	t	p
married	132	135.61	15.22		
unmarried	48	129.39	12.59	6.401	0.01

As seen in table 4, no significant difference has been found between empathic skills of the subjects and their professions ( $p>0.05$ ). But when the average values were examined, the highest

empathic skill level is of class teachers (136.40) and the average of trainers (132.43) has been found to be low.

**Table 4: The analysis of the relation between empathic skills of the subjects participated in the research and their professions.**

Jobs	N	average	Std. Dev.	f	p
Trainer	30	132.43	14.36	0.732	0.600
Banker	30	136.26	18.0		
Teacher	30	136.40	16.39		
Doctor	30	131.53	15.92		
Police	30	131.66	14.77		
Lawyer	30	135.43	7.22		
Total	180	133.95	14.79		

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study where empathic skills of trainers were investigated according to the different professions, empathic skills were examined according to the gender, age, marital status, number of child, kind of profession variables.

No significant relation has been found between gender and empathic skill but empathic skills of females have been determined to be higher than males'. According to a research by B. Murray, (1998), women are more successful than men in showing empathy. Besides, men may be as successful as women through education. In another study, girls have been found to have higher empathic skill than boys. The empathic skills of female teacher candidates have been found to be higher than males'. This finding shows similarity with the findings of the research (N. Eisenberg et al., 2001; S. Schireman and V.K. Gundy, 2000).

According to the age variable, the empathic skills of the subjects in 32-34 age group have been found to be higher than other age groups. The empathic skills of the students were examined according to the age groups and university group has been found to have higher empathic skill than high school group (Hatcher et al., 1994). In a different study, it has been determined that the empathic tendency of students doesn't change through psycho-drama empathic skills increase through education (U. Dökmen, 1989).

When empathic skills were examined according to the variable of number of the child, the subjects having one child has been found to have higher empathic skills than the ones having 2 and 3 children. In a study about empathy, empathy has been determined to have a negative relationship with anger and aggression, but to have a positive relationship with well social behaviors (J. Strayer and W. Roberts, 2004).

A significant relation has been found between empathic skill and marital status ( $p < 0.05$ ). The empathic skills of married subjects have been found to be higher than unmarried ones. Empathy is seen as a sign of moral development and it is reported that more empathic children are less aggressive, more helpful and have more developed moral

beliefs. The researches show that empathy is related to well social behaviours such as sharing and helpfulness, internalizing the moral values and making and keeping good friendships. Empathic skills' being low is associated with problematic behaviours especially aggressiveness (V. Del Barrio et al., 2004). Examined according to the job variable, empathy skill level has been found to be high in class teachers, bankers and lawyers but low in trainers, police and doctors excluding psychiatry. The teacher candidates taking 12-week Human Relations and Communication lesson have been found to have higher problem-solving and empathic skill levels than the ones not taking this lesson (T.F. Karahan et al., 2006). Teachers who can't show empathy cause students' motivation decrease by focussing mostly on whole group, subject and schedule and neglecting students' feelings. Empathic tendency has been determined to increase the relationship with roommates (P. Kremer, 1991) and academic performance (E. Jackson, 1986). In a study done over the relation between empathy, anxious and conflict tendency, the individuals having more conflicts in interpersonal relations were found to have low empathic tendency and on the other hand individuals having low conflicts were found to have higher empathic tendency (M. Pişkin, 1989). The ones having inherently a low communication level were found to learn empathy slower than the ones having a high one (R.F. Dalton and L.M. Sundblad, 1998). Borke also stressed in his study that interpersonal interaction and communication increased with empathy (F. Öztürk et al., 2004). J.A. Brown et al., (2007) found in their studies that the students having a good economical condition had higher empathic skills. S. Keen, (2006), found that the ones reading more books had higher social awareness and empathic skills. D.J. Solove, (2006), found that the people who read more were more empathic and more successful in tests about social awareness and understanding.

**In conclusion**, in this study where the empathic skills of trainers were examined according to the different professions, class teachers and bankers have been found to have high empathic skills and doctors, trainers and police have been found to have

low empathic skills. Considering that empathy is a teachable skill, it is thought that in-service training programs are necessary to develop trainers' empathic skills.

## REFERENCES

- BROWN, J.A, SAUTHER, J.A., LITTVAY, L., 2007,** *Attitude and Change: Conditioning in the Business School Environment.* <http://www.fma.org/SLC/Papers/AttitudeandChange>.
- COTTON, K., 2001,** *Developing Empathy In Children and Youth, School Improvement Research Series,* online: [www.lyrics.com](http://www.lyrics.com).
- DALTON, R.F., SUNDBLAD, L.M., 1998,** *Using Principles Of Social Learning In Training For Communication Of Empathy,* *Journal Of Counseling Psychology,* 54: 12.
- DAVIS, H. M., 1994,** *Empathy : A Social Psychological Approach,* WCB, Brown Publishers, Madison, Wisconsin, 3-163: 176-201.
- DEL BARRIO V., ALUJA A., GARCÍA L.F., 2004,** *Bryant's Empathy Index for children and Adolescents : psychometric properties in the Spanish Language.* *Psychology Rep.* 95 (1): 257-62.
- DÖKMEN, Ü., 1989,** *Measuring empathy through a new model and developing it with psychodrama.* *Journal of Ankara University Education Sciences,* 21 (1-2), 155-190.
- EISENBERG, N., ZHOU, Q.V., KOLLER, S., 2001,** *Brazilian Adolescents' Prosocial Moral Judgment and Behavior : Relations to Sympathy, Perspective Taking, Gender Role Orientations, and Demographic Characteristics,* *Child Development,* 72 (20): 518-534 .
- GILL, D.L., 1986,** *Psychological Dynamics of Sports.* Champaign: Human Kinetics Publishers.
- GOLEMAN, D., 1996,** *Why is emotional intelligence more important than IQ?* Istanbul: existence publications.
- HATHCHER, S.L., NADEAU M.S., WALSH, L.K., REYNOLDS, M., GALEA, J., MARZ K., 1994,** *The Teaching of Empathy For High School and College Students: Testing Rogerian Methods With The Interpersonal Reactivity Index.* *Adolescence,* 29, 116: 961-974.
- JACKSON, E., 1986,** *Internal Empathy, Cognitive Labeling, and Demonstrated Empathy,* *Journal of Humanistic Education and Development,* 24, 3: 104-115.
- KARAHAN, T.F., SARDOĞAN, M.E., GÜVEN, M.Ç., ÖZKAMALI, E., DICLE, A.N., 2006,** *The effect of Human Relations and Communication Course on the Conflict Resolution and Empathic Skill Levels of Prospective-Teachers' Education,* 23: 127-136.
- KEEN, S., 2006,** *Empathy and the Novel.* Member Publications. Oxford.
- KREMER, P., 1991,** *Two Approaches to Teaching Accurate Empathy to Undergraduates: Teacher Incentive and Self-Directed,* *Journal of College Student Development,* 32: 69-75.
- KOESTNER, R., FRANZ, C., WEINBERGER, J., 1990,** *The family origins of empathic concern: A 26-year longitudinal study,* *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 58(4): 709-717.
- MURRAY, B., 1998,** *Does Emotional Intelligence Matter In The Workplace?* American Psychological Association, 29, 7.
- ÖZTÜRK, F., KOPARAN, Ş., HAŞIL, N., EFE, M., ÖZKAYA, G., 2004,** *Examining empathy situations of trainers and referees.* *Journal of Sportsmeter Physical education and Sports Sciences,* 2 (1): 19-25.
- PIŞKIN, M., 1989,** *The relation between empathy, anxiety and conflict tendency.* *Journal of Ankara University Education Sciences,* 2, 8: 112-131.
- SCHIERMAN, S., GUNDY V.K., 2000,** *The personal and Social Links Between Age and Self-reported Empathy,* *Social Psychology Quarterly,* 63 (2): 152-174.
- SOLOVE, D.J., 2006,** *Does Reading Literature Give You More Empathy?* *Concurring Opinions,* 23.
- STRAYER, J., ROBERTS, W., 2004,** *Empathy and Observed Anger and Aggression in Five-Year-Olds,* *Social Development,* 13, 1: 1-13.
- TAMBORINI, R.J., STIFF, C.H., 1990,** *Reacting to Graphic Horror: A Model of Empathy and Emotional Behavior,* *Communication Research,* 17, 5: 616-640.
- WISPE, L., 1996,** *The Distinction Between Sympathy and Empathy: To Call Forth A Concept, A Word Is Needed,* *Journal Of Personality and Social Psychology,* 50, 2: 12.