

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Classroom teacher candidates' self-leadership behaviour

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**The aim of this research is to determine classroom teacher candidates' self-leadership behaviour. The survey method is used in this research. The population of the research consisted of 272 senior students studying at the faculties of education at primary classroom teaching departments at four universities (Ağrı Ibrahim Cecen University, Cumhuriyet University, Firat University and Kilis 7 Aralık University) in Turkey. The sample of the research has randomly been chosen and consisted of 262 (83%) students. Statistically a meaningful difference at the 0.05 level is found when distributing the collected data about self-award and cueing, the sub-dimensions of the measure, to universities. The self-leadership behaviour has kept steady at the level of "Generally" and should be advanced to the level of "Always".**

**Key words:** Self-seadership, self-leadership behaviour, classroom teacher candidates.

## INTRODUCTION

Classroom teachers have a great impact and influence on training individuals. In Turkey, children spend most of their time beside their parents with classroom teachers. Children are educated and trained by the same classroom teachers nearly for five years. Thus, classroom teachers are always remembered and never forgotten in life. Having such an impact on training individuals, the determination of classroom teacher candidates' self-leadership behaviour has been considered to be an important research subject.

Many definitions about leadership exists (Hernon and Rossiter, 2006: 260-264) and the construct of self-leadership is different from traditional leadership theories (Haisten, 2008). Self-leadership is primarily about individual and personal development; it is a learned behavior (Dolbier et al., 2001: 469-472). Self-leadership was firstly appeared and developed by Manz. Self-leadership is the process of the individual's self-motivation and self-guidance for individual and organisational achievement

(Manz, 1986: 585-588). The possession and improvement of classroom teachers' self-leadership have been regarded to be of utmost importance in increasing the quality of education and training. Self-leadership is not a characteristics that only managers possess, but also one that is looking for the answers of what-why and how and the period of self-direction. (Manz, 1986: 585-588). This behaviour is also a requisition for teachers during students' guidance and management in classrooms.

Self-leadership is the effect that individuals use to control their own behaviour and notions (Manz, 1986: 586-587; Manz and Sims, 1980: 362-364; Neck and Houghton, 2006: 274-280). Self-leadership focuses on both behaviour and cognitive skills and in addressing any discrepancies from standards. Attention is also given to the appropriateness of the standards and on what should be done and why, in addition to how it should be done (Godwin et al., 1999: 153-156). In this respect, classroom teachers' self-leadership behaviour should be improved.

Behaviour-focused self-leadership includes using action-oriented strategies and methods to achieve duties that are hard or are neither enjoyable nor motivating. Sims and Manz (1996) have identified various kinds of

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behavior-focused self-leadership strategies including, self-evaluation, self-reward, self-goal setting self-observation and self-punishment, cueing strategies and rehearsal.

Before the attempt to change a behaviour, a person should know what she/he is doing or has been doing. Self-observation necessitates to increase self-awareness and to determine when, why, and how to behave under certain conditions. After raising self-awareness through observation, self-evaluation helps to determine the degree to which particular behaviour is positive or negative, desirable or undesirable, and necessary or unnecessary (Boss and Sims, 2008: 142-144).

Self-goal settings create deadline for a desired end-state. In order to provide motivation and influence toward any objective, a goal should be self-assigned rather than set by someone else. The most critical and broad aspect of self-leadership is observed in the research on goal setting (Locke and Latham, 2002: 705-710). Managers can especially enhance this part of self-leadership by encouraging active participation in self-goal setting. Self-reward, no matter how small, is a way of congratulating oneself after accomplishing a goal. The reward must be concrete and precious for the individual since it contributes to adequate feedback for the action.

On the other hand, self-punishment including self-criticism (Ongen, 2006: 794-796) which is not expected to facilitate the process of improvement. Cueing strategies control the external environment in order to encourage desirable behaviour and reduce undesirable or ineffective ones. While trying to achieve a goal, cueing can involve in changes of environmental conditions such as rearranging desk placement to reduce visual distraction or to supply with reminders such as making lists, taking notes, or other types. Rehearsal, the final self-leadership strategy, helps individuals to enhance their ability to perform desirable behaviour and to eliminate undesirable ones.

A manager who videotapes her/himself during an important presentation can eliminate "um's" and "uh's" as well as reinforce the positive effects of a sincere smile. Rehearsal is practice and practice of any activity can lead to increased performance. Again managers can help develop self-leadership in subordinate employees by encouraging rehearsal of key tasks and behaviour (Boss and Sims, 2008: 140-149).

### The aim of the research

This research aims to determine classroom teacher' candidates self-leadership behaviour. In this respect answers to the following questions are searched:

Among the classroom teacher' candidates studying at Agri Ibrahim Cecen University, Cumhuriyet University, Firat University and Kilis 7 Aralik University;

- 1) Is there a difference in behaviour-focused strategies (self-reward, self-punishment, self-observation, cueing)?
- 2) Is there a difference in natural reward strategies (Thought-focus on natural reward)?
- 3) Is there a difference in positive thought model strategies (Dreaming about desired achievement performance for a determined objective, talking to oneself, evaluating thought/ supposition)?

### METHODS

The survey method is used in this research. The population of the research is made up of 272 senior students studying at the faculties of education at primary classroom teacher departments in four universities (Agri Ibrahim Cecen University, Cumhuriyet University, Firat University and Kilis 7 Aralik University) in Turkey. The sample of the research is randomly chosen and is consisted of 262 (83%) students. The students' distribution to universities is given in Table 1.

A measure is used in order to determine classroom teacher' candidates self-leadership behaviour. The Turkish version of the self-leadership measure (Self-leadership questionnaire) has been developed by Anderson and Prussia (1997:120-143) and later used in confirmatory analysis studies by Houghton and Neck (2002:672-692), is adapted by Tabak et al. (2009).

The self-leadership measure is a five-stepped Linkert type (Frequency level 1: Never, 2: Rarely, 3: Sometimes, 4: Generally, 5: Always) consisting of 29 items. The measure is three-dimensional and 8 sub-factored. These factors are Behaviour-Focused Strategies (self-reward, self-punishment, self-observation, cueing), Natural-Reward Strategies (Thought-focus on natural reward), and Positive-Thought Model Strategies (Dreaming about desired achievement of determined objective, talking to oneself, evaluating thought/ supposition).

### FINDINGS

The research findings collected from four universities are given under three sub-headings: Behaviour-Focused Strategies, Natural-Reward Strategies and Positive-Thought Model Strategies.

#### Behaviour-focused strategies

Behaviour-focused Strategies are self-reward, self-punishment, self-observation, and cueing. There are three items in the self-reward measure. From the data collected by the use of this measure, a meaningful difference is found statistically at the 0.05 level. The difference among teacher candidates at Agri Ibrahim Cecen University (Mean: 3.39, Std. Deviation: 1.09) and Firat University (Mean: 3.96, Std. Deviation: 0.96) is observed by the use of the Sheffe t-test (Table 2). The ANOVA findings related to self-punishment are given in Table 3.

According to the data related to the findings for self-punishment at four universities, a meaningful difference is not found statistically at the 0.05 level (Table 3). When

**Table 1.** The distribution of research population and sample to universities in Turkey.

Universities	Population	Sample	%
Agri I.C.	97	77	79.4
Cumhuriyet	83	69	83.1
Firat	50	42	84.0
Kilis 7 Aralık	42	38	90.5
Total	272	226	83.1

**Table 2.** ANOVA findings related to self-reward.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	9.922	3	3.307	3.392	0.019
Within Groups	216.461	222	0.975		
Total	226.383	225			

**Table 3.** ANOVA findings related to self-punishment.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between groups	0.840	3	0.280	0.515	0.673
Within groups	120.749	222	0.544		
Total	121.589	225			

being unsuccessful, teacher candidates at universities generally punish themselves with behaviour such as "Getting angry with her/himself". ANOVA findings related to self-observation are given below (Table 4).

According to the data related to the findings for self-observation at four universities, a meaningful difference is not found statistically at the 0.05 level (Table 4). Teacher candidates at universities generally have a tendency to observe themselves. ANOVA findings related to cueing are given below (Table 5).

According to the data related to the findings for cueing at four universities, a meaningful difference is found statistically at the 0.05 level (Table 5). The difference is observed among teacher candidates at Agri Ibrahim Cecen University (Mean: 3.08, Std.Deviation: 1.08) Cumhuriyet University (Mean: 3.73; Std.Deviation: 0.89) and Kilis 7 Aralık University (Mean: 3.01; Std.Deviation: 1.13) by the use of the Sheffe t-test.

### Natural reward strategies

Natural Reward Strategies are related to thought focusing on natural rewards. The findings related to this are given in Table 6.

According to the data related to the results for Natural Reward Strategies at four universities, a meaningful difference is not found statistically at the 0.05 level (Table

6). Teacher candidates at universities generally responded to the subject.

### Positive thought model strategies

Positive Thought Model Strategies are dreaming about a desired achievement performance for determined objective, talking to oneself, and evaluating thought/supposition. Findings related to dreaming about desired achievement performance for a determined objective are given in Table 7.

According to the data related to the findings for dreaming about desired achievement performance for a determined objective at four universities, a meaningful difference is not found statistically at the 0.05 level (Table 7).

Teacher candidates at universities generally responded and focused on this subject. ANOVA findings related to talking to oneself are given in Table 8. According to the data related to the findings for talking to oneself at four universities, a meaningful difference is not found statistically at the 0.05 level (Table 8).

It is generally responded at all universities. ANOVA findings related to evaluating of thought/supposition are given in Table 9. According to the data related to the findings for evaluating of thought/supposition at four universities, a meaningful difference is not found

**Table 4.** ANOVA findings related to self-observation.

	<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Between groups	0.872	3	0.291	0.845	0.471
Within groups	76.413	222	0.344		
Total	77.286	225			

**Table 5.** ANOVA findings related to cueing.

	<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Between groups	21.728	3	7.243	7.066	0.000
Within groups	227.556	222	1.025		
Total	249.284	225			

**Table 6.** ANOVA results related to natural reward strategies.

	<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Between groups	1.562	3	0.521	0.894	0.445
Within groups	129.342	222	0.583		
Total	130.904	225			

**Table 7.** ANOVA results related to dreaming about desired achievement performance for a determined objective.

	<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Between groups	1.562	3	0.521	0.894	0.445
Within groups	129.342	222	0.583		
Total	130.904	225			

**Table 8.** ANOVA findings related to talking to oneself.

	<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Between groups	2.420	3	0.807	0.912	0.436
Within groups	196.366	222	0.885		
Total	198.787	225			

**Table 9.** ANOVA findings related to evaluating of thought/supposition.

	<b>Sum of squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Between groups	2.420	3	0.807	0.912	0.436
Within groups	196.366	222	0.885		
Total	198.787	225			

statistically at the 0.05 level (Table 9). The teacher candidates enrolled in the research preferred to respond as “generally”.

## Conclusion

Classroom teachers have a great impact on their nation’s

guidance and educational system. Thus, classroom teachers are expected to improve their self-leadership behaviour. Self-leadership is the achievement for self-motivation and self-guidance. In this research, the present state of classroom teacher candidates' self-leadership behaviour is determined.

Self-leadership behaviour is grouped under three categories: (1) Behaviour-Focused Strategies (self-reward, self-punishment, self-observation, cueing), (2) Natural Reward Strategies (Thought-focus on natural reward) and (3) positive thought model strategies (Dreaming about desired achievement performance for a determined objective, talking to oneself, evaluating thought/ supposition).

When comparing the ANOVA findings related to Behaviour-focused Strategies, it is remarkable that self-reward among teacher candidates at Ağı Ibrahim Cecen University and Firat University embarks on a difference on behalf of the teacher candidates at Firat University. Furthermore, a difference in cueing between the teacher candidates at Ağı Ibrahim Cecen University and Cumhuriyet University is observed on behalf of the ones at Cumhuriyet University and those between the students at Firat University and Kilis 7 Aralık University on behalf of the ones at Firat University.

Especially, it can be said that with the use of behaviour-focused strategies while students' negative and undesired behaviour leading to unsuccess is suppressed, positive and desired behaviour leading to achievement is encouraged (Houghton and Neck, 2002: 673; Neck and Houghton, 2006, 272). A meaningful difference between the universities in all the other dimensions is not found statistically. At universities, classroom teacher candidates concentrate on the "Generally" alternative from the 4 out of 5 grade pointed (3.41-4.20) measure.

In this case, further activities should be prepared and developed in order to improve classroom teacher candidates' respond alternatives from "Generally" to "Always". The basic assumption of self-leadership is that advantage of classroom teacher candidates has not been taken sufficiently in schools. Therefore, when given the opportunity to manage themselves, classroom teacher candidates would be able to use their capacities completely on behalf of themselves and their schools.

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