

## The Relationship between the Perceptions of the Fairness of the Learning Environment and the Level of Alienation

Çağlar ÇAĞLAR\*

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### Abstract

*Problem Statement:* The phenomenon of justice, which is defined as conformity to what is right and legal, is conceptualized into three aspects: *distributive justice*, *procedural justice* and *interactional justice* in educational organizations. The more students perceive their learning environment to be fair, the more they enjoy their school life. Otherwise, they experience dissatisfaction and alienation. Having such components as powerlessness, normlessness, isolation, and meaninglessness, the concept of alienation refers to a situation where the student is indifferent to the place he is in, i.e. the school.

Considering that all educational activities mainly aim to intentionally change learner behaviors, it is apparent that any negative attitudes like a feeling of alienation towards the school will considerably obstruct the **educational organizations' ability to achieve their goals**. Therefore, it is important for schools to identify the school-related factors underlying the **students' feelings of alienation at the school and to alleviate their adverse effects**. Some of the factors causing the feeling of alienation stem directly from the procedures in educational organizations. It is believed that the perception of fairness regarding the learning environment is one of the factors.

*Purpose of Study:* The purpose of this study was to determine the **students' level of alienation** and to investigate the relationship between their levels of alienation and their perceptions of a fair learning environment.

*Methods:* This survey study was conducted on 952 student teachers, of whom 509 were female and 443 were male. The researcher investigated both the correlation between **students' perceptions of a fair learning environment** and the actual, experienced alienation, and whether these

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\* Asst. Prof. Dr., Adiyaman University Faculty of Education, Turkey, ccaglar@adiyaman.edu.tr

variables differ significantly in terms of gender, type of program, grade and time of program. The data were collected using the "Personal Information Form," the "Fair Learning Environment Questionnaire" and the "Student Alienation Scale."

*Finding and Results:* Results indicated that students' perceptions of fairness and their level of alienation differ significantly in terms of gender, type of program, grade and time of program. Perception of fairness is a significant predictor of their feelings of alienation.

*Conclusions and Recommendations:* Based on the research findings, it can be suggested that creating a fairer learning environment may decrease the feeling of experienced alienation. Involving students in administrative decisions, arranging events to increase student-faculty interaction, as well as extensively using objective measurement and evaluation procedures **may improve students' perceptions of fairness regarding the learning environment. Improving students' perceptions of fairness can be said to have a positive impact on their feelings about school.**

*Keywords:* Higher education, learning environment, fairness, alienation

The phenomenon of justice, which is defined as conformity to what is right and legal, and something that distributes to people what they deserve (TDK, 2009), is a concept with significant consequences both for individuals and society. The direct effect of justice on the behaviors of workers in an organization necessitates the attempt to enhance organizational efficacy, which is an indication of the degree of achieving the goal, to concentrate on the phenomenon of justice. From this perspective, in educational institutions, where individual dimension is more sensitive than institutional dimension, the informal side is heavier than the formal side and the effect area is wider than the authorization area (Bursalioğlu, 1994), the perception of justice is fast becoming more important than in other organizations.

#### *Organizational Justice*

Organizational justice refers to perceptions regarding the extent to which workers in an organization are treated fairly and the consequences caused by these perceptions. A number of approaches regarding organizational justice define the concept as composed of three aspects: distributive, procedural and interactional (Bies, 2001; Greenberg, 1990; Özmen, Arbak & Özer, 2007).

Distributive justice is the workers' perceptions of whether the sources of the organization are distributed fairly or not (Folger & Konovsky, 1989). A similar process of judgment is experienced in the classroom. Students can judge how fair the teacher's evaluation is by comparing their exam scores with the score that they have expected or that they think they deserve, or with other students' scores (Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004b). If the student believes that his actual score does not correspond with how much he invested, he is likely to judge it as an example of unfair distribution. Being exposed to distributive injustice may cause psychological stress in

students, can be perceived as directly or indirectly grievous, or can influence students to participate in behaviors which they believe will restore justice (Lizzio, Wilson & Hadaway, 2007).

Procedural justice refers to how decisions about the distribution of sources are made. Procedural justice means the equal treatment to all shareholders during procedures like refraining from under- or over-payment, involving shareholders in decision-making, and informing shareholders about results (Colquitt & Chertkoff, 2002). **In terms of education, procedural justice refers to teachers' policies about student behaviors, their approaches in classroom management and evaluating student performance (Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004a).** Procedural justice involves not only the rules and procedures about how to grade student performance but also policies about instructional services, how the exams are done, learner behaviors with deceptive intentions, and cheating (Rodabaugh, 1996).

Interactional justice emphasizes interpersonal relations (Bies, 2001), as well as the quality of these relations and especially the relationship between authorities and other people. Interactional justice in the classroom refers to judgments about how fair the teachers are in their communication and behaviors with students (Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004a). If a faculty member acts in accordance with the principles of interactional justice, that means he treats every student equally while acting as a resource or facilitator without any discrimination. Students generally pay attention to **the smallest details about interactional justice that affect their behaviors. A faculty's actions regarding interactional justice not only affect the student on target but also other students witnessing that action, thus causing the learning environment to be perceived as unfair in general (Rodabaugh, 1996).**

Because of the missions of school, they are organizations where organizational justice must be at its highest level (Titrek, 2010). If the value systems in a school can be formed as a lifestyle, by taking democracy and human rights as a basis, it may be possible to make important contributions in assisting students to gain democratic attitudes and behaviors with the help of hidden curriculum (Akar-Vural & Gömleksiz, 2010). **A suitable classroom environment and a teacher with appropriate attitudes, expertise, and behaviors allow students to develop their critical thinking skills (Tanriverdi, Ulusoy & Turan, 2012).**

**There is a large body of research which investigated students' perceptions of fairness in the learning environment (Chory-Assad, 2002, 2007; Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004a, 2004b; Houston & Bettencourt, 1999; Lizzio, et al., 2007; Mauldin, 2009; Özer & Demirtaş, 2010; Paulsel & Chory-Assad, 2005; Rodabaugh & Kravitz, 1994; Rodabaugh, 1996; Tata, 1999; Tomul, Çelik & Taş, 2012; Walsh & Maffei, 1994).**

**A significant relationship has been found between teachers' fairness towards students and positive outcomes. Teachers' fair treatment of students enhances learner motivation and performance (Rodabaugh & Kravitz, 1994), quality of learning outcomes (Walsh & Maffei, 1994), learner-teacher interaction (Lowman, 1984; as cited in Houston & Bettencourt, 1999), and learner satisfaction and achievement (Marsh & Overall, 1980).**

When students perceive their exam scores, the way the teacher instructs, or the way the teacher communicates as unfair, they are quite likely to develop a directly aggressive stance and hostile attitudes towards the teacher, or a resistance against demands from the teacher (Chory-Assad & Paulsel, 2004b; Paulsel & Chory-Assad, 2005). If the students believe that most of the teachers are fair, school experiences tend to be satisfactory. The belief that teachers are not fair in general, however, would cause a considerable amount of dissatisfaction (Rodabaugh, 1996). One possible outcome of this dissatisfaction would be indifference towards the school or a feeling of alienation from the school.

#### *Alienation*

Alienation can be defined from various perspectives such as a feeling of detachment in a desired or expected relationship (Case, 2008), the distrust one feels for other people or society, and the feelings of powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-alienation caused by social, institutional or interpersonal problems (Seeman, 1959), or the detachment of a person from himself, his yield, his natural and social milieu and then being predominated by them (Tolan, 1981). Alienation in education is characterized by an estrangement of individuals from knowledge, learning and relevant procedures; increased meaninglessness of these processes for individuals; decreased attention to the learning process and the gradual transformation of the learning process into a more boring and unpleasant state (Sidorkin, 2004).

Though research on alienation defines different dimensions of the concept, it seems more functional for the educational organizations to define four dimensions of alienation including powerlessness, normlessness, isolation and meaninglessness (Brown, Higgins & Paulsen, 2003; Mau, 1992; Sanberk, 2003).

Powerlessness refers to the lack of control by an individual on the products he yields and on the results of the instruments he used in this process (Seeman, 1959), and the situations where, though having high aspirations, an individual has weak expectations for achieving them. Those students who wish to achieve better grades but show poor academic achievement suffer from feelings of powerlessness more often than their peers (Mau, 1992). When students believe that they are directed by administrators, teachers, other staff at school and the system in general, they tend to withdraw themselves from schooling when they believe they have little chance of determining their academic future at school on their own (Brown et al., 2003).

Normlessness means a disapproval of the necessity of the actions deemed necessary to achieve goals (Seeman, 1959). Normlessness in terms of schooling refers to a rejection by a student of the decisions and rules that concern him and that are made by the school administration and teachers (Mau, 1992). This situation may cause the students to ignore the rules about the learning environment. Students experiencing feelings of normlessness say what the school administers and teachers want to hear and believe that breaking school rules and regulations is an appropriate behavior as long as they are not detected (Brown et al., 2003).

Isolation refers to a lack of friendship ties or minimal participation in the organizational environment (Seeman, 1959). Isolation can be experienced both when the individual withdraws himself from society and because others exclude him (Yılmaz & Sarpkaya, 2009). **Isolation defines such feelings** as estrangement from school, friends, and teachers, and failure to integrate with or belong to the school (Erjem, 2005). Students who perceive themselves isolated do not embrace school goals, thus they do not find them valuable (Rafalides & Hoy, 1971).

Meaninglessness refers to an individual's failure to find his actions meaningful. It can be defined as a feeling caused by a person's failure about what to believe (Tezcan, 1991). Meaninglessness refers to a failure to establish a connection between now and the future (Manneheim, 1954, as cited in Mau, 1992). Students may sometimes feel suspicious about why they have to participate in activities in school. Such students perceive a limited connection in terms of the relevance of what they learned during activities at school for their future life (Brown et al., 2003).

Major factors that cause and intensify alienation at school include students' lack of control over their life, lack of autonomy, lack of a feeling of pride in academic achievement, failure to establish a connection between school learning and actual life, teachers' being intolerant, poor parental awareness and authoritarian school rules (Kunkel, Thompson, & Mcelhinney). There is well-documented literature which has investigated the level of alienation in educational organizations (Bayhan, 1995; Calabrese, 1987; Çağlar, 2012; Çelik, 2005; Çivitçi, 2011; Duru, 1995; Liu, 2010; Kunkel et al., 1973; Sanberk, 2003; Taylor, 1999; Trent, 2001; Valverde, 1987; Wiseman, Emry & Morgan, 1988).

Individuals feeling a considerable amount of alienation from their organization gradually isolate themselves from their social milieu, develop ignorance about their environment and go into their shells (Eryılmaz & Burgaz, 2011). It is observed that alienation has a considerable impact on organizations in general and schools in particular. **Educational organizations' failure to adapt to the needs of the times and social changes** causes the services they provide to gradually turn into a set of meaningless and useless activities. Incompatibility between school activities and actual life outside the school, as well as deterioration in the sense of interconnection, develop negative attitudes towards the school over time. Considering that all educational activities mainly aim to intentionally change learner behaviors, it is apparent that any negative attitudes like alienation towards schools will considerably obstruct the ability of educational organizations to achieve their goals. Therefore, it is important for schools to identify any school-related factors underlying the students' feelings of alienation at school and to alleviate their adverse effects. Some of the factors causing feelings of alienation stem directly from procedures in educational organizations. It is believed that a perception of fairness regarding the learning environment is one of the factors. The purpose of this study was to determine **students' perception of fairness regarding their learning environment and to investigate the relationship between their perception of fairness and their levels of alienation.**

## Method

This study was designed as a descriptive and associative survey model. In this respect, this study aimed to analyze the relationship between **students' perceptions** of the fairness of the learning environment and their feeling of alienation, and also to investigate whether these variables differ significantly in terms of gender, program, grade and time of program.

### Participants

The population of the study is comprised of 2600 undergraduate students studying at Adıyaman University School of Education. The sample of the study included 960 students selected from all programs using a stratified sampling technique. All students in the sample were administered the data collection instruments. After eight incomplete or defective forms were discarded, the remaining 952 forms were taken into further analysis. Descriptive statistics about the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1.

#### *Descriptive Statistics About The Participants*

Variables		Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Gender	Female	509	53.5
	Male	443	46.5
Program	Science	115	12.3
	Math	137	14.3
	Preschool	61	6.4
	Guidance	135	14.2
	<b>Sınıf</b>	261	27.4
	Social studies	160	16.8
	Turkish language	83	8.7
Grade	1 <sup>st</sup>	259	27.2
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	233	24.5
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	242	25.4
	4 <sup>th</sup>	218	22.9
Time of program	Day program	611	64.2
	Night program	341	35.8

### Data Collection

*Personal Information Form:* This form was designed to collect information about participating students' gender, type of program, grade and time of program (day or night).

*Fair Learning Environment Questionnaire:* The "Fair Learning Environment Questionnaire" was developed by Lizzio et al. (2007) to measure how the university students perceive the fairness of their learning environment. The validity and reliability studies of the questionnaire for Turkish were done by Özer and Demirtaş (2010). The analysis produced a two-factor structure in accordance with the original construct with explaining the 44.71 % of the total variance [*Factor 1: 35.82, Factor 2: 8.89*]. Internal consistency of the scale was estimated to be .87 for the entire questionnaire [*Factor 1= .81; Factor 2= .76*]. In the present study, the internal consistency coefficients for the questionnaire were estimated to be .79 for the first factor, .64 for the second factor, and .82 for the entire questionnaire. Descriptive statistics on the scale of justice are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.  
Descriptive statistics on the scale of justice

Dimensions	<i>n</i>	# of items	The lowest total score	The highest total score	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Respectful partnership	952	9	9	39	2,46	0,72
Systemic fairness	952	6	6	30	2,68	0,79
Total	952	15	15	69	2,55	0,66

*Student Alienation Scale:* "Student Alienation Scale (SAS)" was developed by the Çağlar (2012) to measure students' feelings of alienation. SAS is composed of 20 items under four factors: powerlessness (six items), normlessness (five items), isolation (five items), and meaninglessness (four items). The KMO value was found to be .91 and the Bartlett Test of Sphericity value was found to be 5226.28 ( $p = .000$ ), and SAS was found to explain 53.56 % of total variance [*Factor 1= 16.17; Factor 2= 13.07; Factor 3= 13.06; Factor 4= 11.25*]. The internal consistency coefficients for SAS were estimated to be .79 for first factor, .75 for second factor, .76 for third factor, .76 for the fourth factor, and .86 for the entire scale. The internal consistency coefficients estimated for the present study for SAS were found to be .83 for the entire scale, .77 for the powerlessness factor, .68 for the normlessness factor, .67 for the isolation factor, and .71 for the meaninglessness factor. Descriptive statistics on the scale of alienation are presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

*Descriptive Statistics on The Scale Of Alienation*

Dimensions	N	# of items	The lowest total score	The highest total score	M	SD
Powerlessness	952	6	6	30	3,02	0,88
Normlessness	952	4	4	20	2,90	0,97
Isolation	952	5	5	25	2,82	0,88
Meaninglessness	952	5	5	25	3,13	0,99
Total	952	20	25	100	2,38	0,67

*Data Analysis*

Frequency and percentage as descriptive statistics were used to analyze the independent variables distributions. The perception level of students on alienation and fairness of learning environment, mean and standard deviation were also used as descriptive statistics. As the data set was found, a normally distributed **independent samples t test was used to analyze whether students' scores differed** significantly in terms of gender and program time variables. Also, in order to test whether their scores differed significantly in terms of type of program and grade variables, a One Way ANOVA test was used, followed by a LSD post hoc test to find the source of difference. To test the effects of independent variables on dependent variables, a multiple linear regression analysis was done. In order to analyze obtained points, the following intervals were used. These are (1.00-1.79) very low-level, (1.80-2.59) low-level, (2.60-3.40) moderate-level, (3.41-4.21) high-level and (4.22-5.00) very high-level.

## Results

*Fair Learning Environment Perceptions and Alienation Level according to Gender*

The results of the t-test to find whether students' fair learning environment perceptions and alienation levels differ significantly according to gender are presented in Table 4.



Table 4.

*The Results of the t Test Find Students' Fair Learning Environment Perceptions And Alienation Level According to Gender*

Dimension	Gender	n	M	SD	t	p
Fair learning environment perceptions	1.Female	509	2,68	0,67	3.139	.002*
	2.Male	443	2,48	0,65		
Respectful partnership	1.Female	509	2,52	0,72	2.328	.020*
	2.Male	443	2,41	0,71		
Systemic fairness	1.Female	509	2,77	0,82	3.413	.001*
	2.Male	443	2,60	0,74		
Alienation	1.Female	509	2,88	0,65	-4.810	.000*
	2.Male	443	3,08	0,67		
Powerlessness	1.Female	509	2,92	0,86	-4.005	.000*
	2.Male	443	3,15	0,89		
Normlessness	1.Female	509	2,77	0,94	-4.681	.000*
	2.Male	443	3,06	0,99		
Meaninglessness	1.Female	509	2,97	0,99	-5.592	.000*
	2.Male	443	3,32	0,95		

\*p<.05

Significant differences were found between students' scores from the total fair learning environment scale [ $t_{(950)} = 3.139$ ;  $p < .05$ ], and from the respectful partnership [ $t_{(950)} = 2.328$ ;  $p < .05$ ] and systemic fairness [ $t_{(950)} = 3.413$ ;  $p < .05$ ] subscales according to gender. An analysis of the mean scores revealed that while female students perceive the learning environment to be moderately fair ( $M = 2.68$ ), male students perceive the learning environment to be less fair ( $M = 2.48$ ).

While no significant difference was established in an isolation subscale of the student alienation scale, significant differences were found in total alienation scores [ $t_{(950)} = -4.810$ ;  $p < .05$ ], and powerlessness [ $t_{(950)} = -4.005$ ;  $p < .05$ ], normlessness [ $t_{(950)} = -4.681$ ;  $p < .05$ ] and meaninglessness [ $t_{(950)} = -5.592$ ;  $p < .05$ ] subscales according to gender. Though both groups have moderate levels of feelings of alienation, male students' means from the total alienation scale, and powerlessness, normlessness and meaninglessness subscales were significantly higher than those of female students. This means female students experience less alienation compared to male students.

*Fair Learning Environment Perceptions and Alienation Level according to Type of Program*

The results of the ANOVA test to find whether students' fair learning environment perceptions and alienation levels differ significantly according to type of program are presented in Table 5.

Table 5.  
*The Results of the ANOVA Test to Find Students' Fair Learning Environment Perceptions And Alienation Level According to Program*

Dimension	Program	N	M	SD	F	P	Difference (LSD)
Fair learning environment perceptions	Science	115	2,45	0,69	3.996	.001*	1<2, 1<3
	Math	137	2,71	0,62			2>4, 2>6,
	Preschool	61	2,74	0,65			3>4, 3>6,
	Guidance	135	2,48	0,65			
	<b>Sınıf</b>	261	2,61	0,65			5>6
	Social studies	160	2,44	0,67			
	Turkish language	83	2,48	0,65			
Respectful partnership	Science	115	2,35	0,75	5.300	.000*	1<2, 1<3,
	Math	137	2,68	0,68			2>4, 2>5,
	Preschool	61	2,65	0,79			3>4, 3>6,
	Guidance	135	2,40	0,70			
	<b>Sınıf</b>	261	2,52	0,69			5>6
	Social studies	160	2,31	0,73			
	Turkish language	83	2,37	0,66			7<2,
Isolation	Science	115	3,00	0,88	3.298	.003*	1>2, 1>3,
	Math	137	2,71	0,77			2<6, 2<7
	Preschool	61	2,64	0,80			3<6, 3<7
	Guidance	135	2,75	0,89			4<7
	<b>Sınıf</b>	261	2,74	0,85			5<1, 5<6,
	Social studies	160	2,91	0,98			
	Turkish language	83	3,03	0,88			

\*p<.05

While significant differences were observed according to the type of program in the total fair learning environment, in the perception scores [ $F_{(6, 945)} = 3.996$ ;  $p < .05$ ], respectful partnership [ $F_{(6, 945)} = 5.300$ ;  $p < .05$ ] and isolation [ $F_{(6, 945)} = 3.298$ ;  $p < .05$ ] subscales, no significant differentiation was observed in other dimensions. The post hoc analysis revealed that the means of students from math and preschool programs from the fair learning environment scale in total and from the respectful partnership subscale were significantly higher than those of students from social studies and science programs.

Isolation scores of students from the Turkish teaching program and the science teaching program were found to be significantly higher than those of students in the preschool and math programs.

*Fair Learning Environment Perceptions and Alienation Level according to Grade*

The results of the ANOVA test to find whether students' fair learning environment perceptions and alienation levels differ significantly according to grade are presented in Table 6

Table 6.

*The Results of the ANOVA Test to Find Students' Fair Learning Environment Perceptions And Alienation Level According to Grade*

Dimension	Grade	N	M	SD	F	p	Difference (LSD)
Fair learning environment perceptions	1 <sup>st</sup>	259	2,72	0,68	11.716	.000*	1>3, 1>4
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	233	2,61	0,64			
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	242	2,48	0,67			
	4 <sup>th</sup>	218	2,39	0,61			
Respectful partnership	1 <sup>st</sup>	259	2,61	0,74	7.094	.000*	1>2, 1>4
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	233	2,52	0,69			
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	242	2,37	0,71			
	4 <sup>th</sup>	218	2,35	0,70			
Systemic fairness	1 <sup>st</sup>	259	2,88	0,83	13.476	.000*	1>3, 1>4
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	233	2,76	0,79			
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	242	2,64	0,78			
	4 <sup>th</sup>	218	2,44	0,67			
Alienation	1 <sup>st</sup>	259	2,83	0,68	8.938	.000*	1<3, 1<4
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	233	2,93	0,62			
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	242	3,04	0,64			
	4 <sup>th</sup>	218	3,13	0,68			

Powerlessness	1 <sup>st</sup>	259	2,83	0,89	8.914	.000*	1<3, 1<4
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	233	2,96	0,86			2<4
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	242	3,13	0,87			
	4 <sup>th</sup>	218	3,19	0,86			
Normlessness	1 <sup>st</sup>	259	2,69	0,97	8.388	.000*	1<3, 1<4
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	233	2,87	0,90			
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	242	2,99	0,98			
	4 <sup>th</sup>	218	3,11	1,00			
Meaninglessness	1 <sup>st</sup>	259	2,87	0,92	13.304	.000*	1<3, 1<4
	2 <sup>nd</sup>	233	2,86	0,86			2<4
	3 <sup>rd</sup>	242	2,79	0,89			
	4 <sup>th</sup>	218	2,74	0,84			

\*P&lt;.05

According to grade, variable significant differences were observed in students' scores from the entire fair learning environment scale [ $F_{(3, 948)} = 11.716$ ;  $p < .05$ ] and from the respectful partnership [ $F_{(3, 948)} = 7.094$ ;  $p < .05$ ] and the systemic fairness [ $F_{(3, 948)} = 13.476$ ;  $p < .05$ ] subscales. While 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders perceive the learning environment to be moderately fair, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders perceive it to be poorly fair.

In terms of alienation, while no significant difference was established in the isolation subscale, significant differences were found between student's means obtained from the entire alienation scale [ $F_{(3, 948)} = 8.938$ ;  $p < .05$ ], and the powerlessness [ $F_{(3, 948)} = 8.914$ ;  $p < .05$ ], normlessness [ $F_{(3, 948)} = 8.388$ ;  $p < .05$ ] and meaninglessness [ $F_{(3, 948)} = 13.304$ ;  $p < .05$ ] subscales. The post hoc analysis revealed that 3<sup>rd</sup> graders' and 4<sup>th</sup> graders' means from the entire scale and the powerlessness, normlessness and meaninglessness subscales were significantly higher than 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. Though students across four grades experience moderate levels of alienation, it can be said that the level of alienation increases as the grade level increases

#### *Fair Learning Environment Perceptions and Alienation Level according to Time of Program*

The results of the t-test to find whether students' fair learning environment perceptions and alienation levels differ significantly according to the time of program are presented in Table 7.

Table 7.

*The Results of the t Test to Find Students' Fair Learning Environment Perceptions And Alienation Level According to the Time of Program*

Dimension	Time of Program	n	M	SD	t	P
Fair learning environment perceptions	1.Day program	611	2,50	0,65	-	
	2.Night program	341	2,66	0,67	3.588	.000*
Respectful partnership	1.Day program	611	2,41	0,72		
	2.Night program	341	2,57	0,71	-3.378	.001*
Systemic fairness	1.Day program	611	2,63	0,77		
	2.Night program	341	2,79	0,80	-2.915	.004*
Alienation	1.Day program	611	3,01	0,67		
	2.Night program	341	2,91	0,65	2.081	.038*
Powerlessness	1.Day program	611	3,07	0,87		
	2.Night program	341	2,94	0,89	2.165	.031*
Normlessness	1.Day program	611	2,95	0,99		
	2.Night program	341	2,82	0,92	1.975	.044*

\*p<.05

According to the type of schooling variable, significant differences were found between students' scores from the entire fair learning environment scale [ $t_{(950)} = -3.588$ ;  $p < .05$ ], and the respectful partnership [ $t_{(950)} = -3.378$ ;  $p < .05$ ] and systemic fairness [ $t_{(950)} = -2.915$ ;  $p < .05$ ] subscales. Night schooling students perceive the learning environment to be moderately fair while day schooling students perceive the learning environment to be poorly fair.

In terms of type of schooling, while no significant difference was observed between students' mean scores from isolation and meaninglessness subscales, significant differences were found between students' scores from the entire alienation scale [ $t_{(950)} = 2.081$ ;  $p < .05$ ], and the powerlessness [ $t_{(950)} = 2.165$ ;  $p < .05$ ] and normlessness [ $t_{(950)} = 1.975$ ;  $p < .05$ ] subscales. An analysis of the significant differences via post hoc tests revealed that, although both groups of students experienced moderate levels of alienation, day schooling students' means from the entire alienation scale, and the powerlessness and normlessness subscales were significantly higher than those of night schooling students.

#### *Correlation between Fair Learning Environment Perceptions and Alienation Level*

The results of the analysis to find whether students' fair learning environment perceptions significantly predict their levels of alienation are presented in Table 8.

Tablo 8.

*The Results of Analysis to Find Whether Students' Fair Learning Environment Perceptions Significantly Predict Their Levels of Alienation.*

	Variables	B	Standart	Beta	t	p	r
Alienation	Constant	84.922	1.498		56.701	.000	
	Respectful	-.736	.070	-.357	-	.000	-.470
	Systemic fairness	-.563	.096	-.200	-5.842	.000	-.402
	R = .498(a)	R <sup>2</sup> = .248		R <sup>2</sup> <sub>adj</sub> = .247			
	F <sub>(2, 949)</sub> = 156.796	P = .000					

Bivariate correlation analyses between predictive variables and alienation revealed a negative moderate level of significant correlation ( $r=-.47$ ) between respectful partnership and alienation and a negative moderate level of significant correlation ( $r=-.40$ ) between systemic fairness and alienation. Combined together, respectful partnership and systemic fairness were significantly and moderately correlated with alienation ( $R= .498$ ,  $R^2= .25$ ,  $p<.01$ ), and explained about 25 % of the variance in alienation. When the t test results regarding the significance of regression coefficients were examined, respectful partnership and systemic fairness were found to be significant predictors of alienation.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study revealed that students' perceptions of fairness and levels of alienation significantly differed according to their gender, type of program, grade and type of schooling. It was found that the perception of fairness had a predictive impact on feelings of alienation.

In terms of gender variables, female students perceived the learning environment to be moderately fair, fairer than male students. Though there are findings regarding fairness perceptions which indicate no differentiation between genders (Lizzio et al., 2007; Mauldin, 2009), this finding is consistent with those of Özer & Demirtaş (2010) and Tomul, Çelik & Taş (2012). Both research studies found that more female students perceive the learning environment to be fairer than male students. This finding can be associated with female students' expectations and conformity. Though there is a legally equal situation in terms of gender roles in society, females are imposed some inequalities in having access to educational opportunities. This can cause lower levels of expectations among female students, which in turn may cause the learning environment to be perceived to be relatively fairer.

Female students experienced less alienation than male students. While this finding contradicts some research findings about alienation (Çelik, 2005; Williamson and Cullingford, 1998), it corresponds with the results of similar studies (Brockner

&Adsit, 1986; Donnerstain, 1988; Jackson & Grabski, 1998). Less prevalence of alienation among female students may be related to their expectations from the school. Social inequalities about gender roles cause females to benefit from educational opportunities less often, which may cause female students to be content with whatever possibilities they have obtained and thus develop lower levels of expectations.

In terms of type of program, students enrolled in math and preschool programs perceived their learning environment to be moderately fair, and fairer than students enrolled in social studies and Turkish language teaching programs. The relatively fairer perceptions of students from math and preschool programs compared to students from social studies and Teaching Turkish programs may stem from the attitudes and evaluation methods of the academic staff in these programs. Considering that academic staffs from the educational sciences department teach in every program in the faculty and the impact of faculty administration is similar **across different programs, this difference can be said to be caused by each program's own academic staff who teach most of the courses.**

In terms of grade variables, it was found that as the grade level increases, **students' perceptions of a fair learning environment decrease.** This finding is **consistent with the finding by Özer & Demirtaş (2010).** This differentiation can be because during the first years, the freshmen are not informed and experienced enough to adequately evaluate the learning environment and the academic staff; however, in the following years, they become more informed and experienced. As the grade level increases, students get more experienced, thus gaining enough data to make reasonable judgments.

Though students across four grades experience moderate levels of alienation, it can be said that the level of alienation increases as the grade level increases. Considering that negative outcomes and experiences increase the feeling of alienation, as the grade level increases, quantitatively negative feelings and experiences also increase. Therefore, the increase in negative experiences may increase feelings of alienation.

In terms of type of schooling, students studying at night programs were found to perceive the learning environment to be moderately fair, while students at day schooling perceived the learning environment to be poorly fair. This difference is most likely to stem from requirements for admission to the day and night schooling. That night schooling students are admitted to the university with lower scores from university entrance exams, are regarded as equivalent to the day schooling students when they graduate, and have fewer expectations with regard to these scores may be some reasons for this difference. As the day students have higher expectations about programs that they have won with higher admission scores, they may perceive the learning environment to be less fair.

Also, it was found that day schooling students experienced more alienation compared to night schooling students. This difference can be a result of day **schooling students' higher expectations** from the faculty as a result of being admitted

to their programs with higher scores. Failure to satisfy students' higher expectations may increase their level of alienation.

Analyses of the individual items concerning the extent to which students perceive the learning environment to be fair provide clear ideas. To illustrate, 70% of the students either strongly disagree or partially agree with the item about the **consideration of students' opinions in the decision-making process** in faculty. Similarly, 74% of the students think that while some improvements are made concerning faculty, **students' opinions are never or partly considered**.

Analyses of students' levels of alienation revealed that about two-thirds of the students do things they find wrong for the sake of completing school and believe that though they find the procedures senseless and meaningless, they must endure them. This finding suggests that though teacher training institutions try to provide student teachers with democratic traits, they themselves have not yet internalized these traits enough.

For student teachers to be able to create a fairer learning environment, acting as a more democratic, integrative and caring teacher in their future classes is possible as long as they gain the necessary skills. Considering that these skills are gained through experience, the learning environment they are trained in as teachers becomes more important. Though it is desired that students at schools of education are trained to be teachers of future who perceive the learning environment within the faculty to be exceedingly fair and experience less alienation, the results of the present study show that that level has not yet been achieved.

Based on the findings of this research, it can be said that turning the learning environment into a fairer place can decreased the experienced alienation. Thus, some of the possible actions to be taken to make the learning environment fairer are presented below:

- **Caring about the students' views on the administration and faculty**, thus making the student representation and consultancy procedures more functional to involve the students in faculty administration.
- Arranging activities within each program in certain intervals to increase student-faculty interaction. Providing settings based on mutual trust where students can request for their expectations from academic staff.
- Extensive use of objective measurement and evaluation procedures across the faculty that will decrease possible biased judgments and endure credibility.



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### **Öğrenme Ortamına İlişkin Adalet Algısı İle Yabancılaşma Düzeyi Arasındaki İlişki**

#### **Atıf:**

- Çağlar, C. (2013). The Relationship between the Perceptions of Fairness of the Learning Environment and the Level of Alienation. *Eğitim Araştırmaları - Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 50, 185-206.

### (Özet)

*Problem Durumu:* Hak ve hukuka uygunluk, herkese hakkı olanı verme olarak tanımlanan adalet olgusu, bireysel olduğu kadar toplumsal yaşam açısından da önemli sonuçlar doğuran bir kavramdır. Belirlenen amacı gerçekleştirmek üzere kurulan örgütlerin etkiliği, örgütte var olan adalet ile yakın ilişkilidir. Adaletin, örgütteki bireylerin davranışlarını etkiliyor oluşu, amacı gerçekleştirme derecesi olan örgütsel etkililiği artırma çabalarının, adalet olgusu üzerinde yoğunlaşmasını zorunlu kılmaktadır.

Örgüt içinde bulunan bireylere ne kadar adil davranıldığına ilişkin algılar ile bu algıların yarattığı sonuçları ifade eden örgütsel adalet kavramı, eğitim örgütlerinde; dağıtımsal, işlevsel ve etkileşimsel olmak üzere üç boyutlu olarak kavramsallaştırılmaktadır.

Öğrenciler, öğrenme ortamını adil algıladıkları ölçüde, okul yaşantılarından doyum sağlamakta, tersi durumda doyumsuzluk ve yabancılaşma duygusu yaşamaktadırlar. Güçsüzlük, kuralsızlık, soyutlanmışlık ve anlamsızlık boyutlarından oluşan yabancılaşma kavramı, öğrencinin bulunduğu ortama, okuluna karşı kayıtsızlık gösterdiği bir durumu tanımlamaktadır.

Eğitim etkinliklerinin temel amacının öğrenci davranışlarındaki değişim olduğu göz önünde tutulduğunda, okula ilişkin gelişen yabancılaşma gibi olumsuz tutumların, eğitim örgütlerinin amaçlarını gerçekleştirmede önemli sorunlar üreteceği açıktır. Bu nedenle öğrencilerin okulda yaşadıkları yabancılaşma duygusunun altında yatan etkenlerden okula ilişkin olanlarının belirlenebilmesi ve bu duygunun olumsuz etkilerinin azaltılabilmesi okullar açısından önemlidir. Yabancılaşma duygusuna yol açan etkenlerin bir bölümü doğrudan eğitim örgütlerinde bulunan süreçlerden kaynaklanmaktadır. Okullardaki öğrenme ortamına ilişkin adalet kavramının bu etkenlerden biri olduğu düşünülmektedir.

*Araştırmanın Amacı:* Bu çalışmada öğrencilerin yaşadıkları yabancılaşma duygusunun düzeyi ile okuldaki öğrenme ortamına ilişkin algılanan adalet algısı arasındaki ilişkinin belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır.

*Araştırmanın Yöntemi:* Tarama modelindeki bu çalışma, 509'u kadın, 443'ü erkek olmak üzere 952 eğitim fakültesi öğrencisinin katılımı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmada, öğrencilerinin öğrenme ortamına ilişkin algıladıkları adalet algıları ile yaşadıkları yabancılaşma düzeyi arasındaki ilişkinin belirlenmesi, her iki düzeyin; cinsiyet, program, sınıf ve öğrenim türü değişkenlerine göre farklılık gösterip göstermediği incelenmiştir. Araştırmada veri elde etmek için, "Kişisel Bilgi Formu", "Adil Öğrenme Ortamı Ölçeği" ve "Öğrenci Yabancılaşma Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır.

*Araştırmanın Bulguları:* Araştırma bulguları, öğrencilerin adalet algıları ve yabancılaşma düzeylerinde, cinsiyet, program türü, sınıf ve öğrenim türü değişkenleri açısından farklılaşmalar olduğunu, adalet algısının yabancılaşma duygusu üzerinde yordayıcı bir etki yarattığını göstermektedir. Cinsiyet değişkeni açısından; kadın öğrenciler öğrenme ortamını orta düzeyde ve erkek öğrencilere oranla daha adil algılamakta ve erkek öğrencilere oranla daha az yabancılaşma

duygusu yaşamaktadırlar. Bu durum kadınların toplumsal yaşamdaki rolleri ile ilişkilendirilebilir.

Program değişkeni açısından; matematik ve okul öncesi programlarında okuyan öğrencileri, öğrenme ortamını orta düzeyde, sosyal bilgiler ve Türkçe programlarında okuyan öğrencilere oranla da daha adil algılamaktadırlar. Bu durum, programlarda görev yapan alan öğretim elemanlarının davranışları ve öğretmenliğe atanma koşulları ile ilişkilendirilebilir.

Sınıf değişkeni açısından; sınıf düzeyi yükseldikçe öğrencilerin, öğrenme ortamına ilişkin adil algılama düzeyleri azalırken, yabancılaşma düzeyleri artmaktadır. Bu durum okul ortamında geçirilen süre ve bu süre içinde yaşanan deneyimler ile ilişkilendirilebilir.

Öğrenim türü değişkeni açısından; ikinci öğrenimde okuyan öğrenciler, öğrenme ortamını orta düzeyde adil olarak algılamakta, normal öğretimde okuyan öğrenciler düşük düzeyde adil algılamaktadırlar. Yabancılaşma düzeyi açısından normal öğrenim öğrencileri, ikinci öğrenim öğrencilerine oranla daha fazla yabancılaşma yaşamaktadırlar. Bu durum, öğrencilerin programlara giriş koşulları ve buna bağlı beklenti düzeyleri ile ilişkilendirilebilir.

Öğretmen adaylarının gelecekte, kendi sınıflarında daha adil bir öğrenme ortamı oluşturmaları, daha demokratik, katılımcı ve öğrencilerini önemseyen bir yaklaşım sergilemeleri ancak gerekli becerileri edinmeleri ile gerçekleşebilir. Bu becerilerin yaşantılar yoluyla kazanılacağı göz önüne alındığında yetiştikleri ortamlar önem kazanmaktadır. Eğitim fakültesinde okuyan ve geleceğin öğretmenleri olacak öğretmen adaylarının fakülte ortamını daha yüksek düzeyde adil olarak algılamaları ve daha düşük düzeylerde yabancılaşma duygusu yaşamaları istenen bir durum olmasına rağmen araştırma bulguları henüz bu noktaya ulaşamadığını göstermektedir.

*Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Öneriler:* Araştırma bulgularına dayanarak, öğrenme ortamının daha adil hale getirilmesinin yaşanan yabancılaşma duygusunu azaltabileceğini söyleyebiliriz. Buradan hareketle öğrenme ortamının daha adil algılanmasına dönük olarak yapılabilecek bazı etkinlikler şunlar olabilir;

- Fakültenin yönetim sürecinde, öğrenci görüşlerinin önemsenmesi, onların okul yönetimine katılımlarını sağlamak amacıyla, öğrenci temsilcilikleri ve danışmanlık sistemleri daha işlevsel hale getirilebilir.
- Öğrenci- öğretim elamanı etkileşimini arttırmak amacıyla belirli aralıklarla programlar düzeyinde etkinlikler düzenlenebilir. Bu etkinliklerde öğrencilerin öğretim elamanlarından beklentilerini açıkça paylaşabilecekleri güvene dayalı ortamlar sağlanabilir.
- Öğretim elamanlarının öğrenci başarılarını değerlendirirken oluşabilecek yanlı davranışları azaltabilen ve hesap verilebilirliği sağlayan değerlendirme biçimleri fakülte düzeyinde yaygınlaştırılabilir.

*Anahtar Sözcükler:* yüksek öğretim, öğrenme ortamı, adalet, yabancılaşma.