Chapter 7

Revisiting the Relationships between Turkish Prospective Teachers’ Thinking Styles and Behaviors Fostering Creativity

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to reexamine the relationship between Turkish prospective teachers’ thinking styles and creativity fostering behaviors. In the study, 182 Turkish prospective teachers were participated. The Thinking Styles Inventory (TSI) and Creativity Fostering Teacher Index Scale (CFTIS) were administered to participants. An exploratory factor analysis, zero order and partial correlation, linear and quadratic trend analysis were conducted on the data. The results indicated that Type I thinking styles are a more powerful predictor for creativity fostering behaviors than Type II thinking styles. Prospective teachers’ implicit opinions about creativity negatively predicted to CFTIS. Relationship between Type I and Type II thinking styles, and creativity fostering behaviors were positively significant in the results of quadratic trend analysis; however, the relationship between implicit opinions about creativity and creativity fostering behaviors were negatively significant in the analysis. The results obtained from the study were discussed based on previous studies.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter evaluates relationships between certain variables using a sample of prospective teachers from the faculty of education at one university in Turkey. The relationships include three constructs: The first construct involves prospective teachers’ thinking styles (Type I and Type II thinking styles). The second construct reflects upon fostering creative teacher behaviors. Finally, the third construct discusses an implicit theory of creativity, a six-factor structure of, “What do you think of creativity?”

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BACKGROUND

The concept of creativity is an important topic that has been studied by scientists for a long time. The question, “What is creativity?” has been asked countless times. In 1950, Guilford inspired scientists, among members of the American Psychology Association, to work on the subject of creativity among members. Then, in various conducted studies focusing on creativity, psychometric approaches became dominant (Alder, 2004; Lubart & Georgsdottir, 2004; Sternberg, 2006). Sungur (1997) stated that the literature of creativity developed in three different ways. The first way focused on the recognition of a creative personality or the definition of an individual. The second focused on the improvement of or the restraints on creativity. The third focused on the development of education and creativity.

The Turkish Ministry of National Education (TMNE, 2006) set up six teacher efficacy domains. These domains implicitly require teachers who can improve students’ creativity. In addition, TMNE (2004) added the development of creative thinking as a basic skill for primary school curriculum. However, the literature is limited about what the teachers know about the role of creativity in learning and their perceptions of creativity. Collectively, this paper is designed to determine relationships between the Turkish prospective teachers’ thinking styles and behaviours fostering creativity and perceptions of creativity. For this reason, the following paragraphs were organized around a description of the thinking styles, fostering creativity and an implicit theory of creativity to present the importance and the purpose of this study.

The first construct involves thinking styles. Thinking styles are an individual’s preferred way of using his/her abilities and processing data (Sternberg, 1997). Thinking styles affect not only one’s form of creativity but also one’s outlook and path in life. There are various theories regarding thinking styles in the appropriate literature; one is the theory of mental self-government developed by Sternberg (1988). The Thinking Styles Inventory (TSI), developed by Sternberg (1997) based on the theory of mental self-government, has been used frequently by researchers. The theory of mental self-government delineates 13 thinking styles that fall along five dimensions of mental self-government as follows (Zhang, 2004a):

1. Functions (Involving Legislative, Executive, and Judicial Styles):
   a. Legislative Style: One prefers to work on tasks that require creative strategies; one prefers to choose one’s own activities.
   b. Executive Style: One prefers to work on tasks with clear instructions and structures and prefers to implement tasks with established guidelines.
   c. Judicial Style: One prefers to work on tasks that allow for one’s evaluation of self and other people.

2. Forms (Involving the Hierarchical, Monarchic, Oligarchic, and Anarchic Styles):
   a. Hierarchical Style: One prefers to distribute attention to several tasks that are prioritized according to the personal value of the tasks.
   b. Monarchic Style: One prefers to work on tasks that allow complete focus on one thing at a time.
   c. Oligarchic Style: One prefers to work on multiple tasks in the service of multiple objectives, without setting priorities.
   d. Anarchic Style: One prefers to work on tasks that would allow flexibility as to what, where, when, and how one works.