

An Analysis of Writing Dispositions of 6th Grade Students in terms of Different Variables

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Article history

Received:

04.02.2014

Received in revised form:

01.04.2014

Accepted:

17.04.2014

Key words:

writing; writing disposition;
writing disposition scale.

This research was conducted with an aim to analyze the writing dispositions of the 6th grade students in terms of different variables. The research was carried out based on the descriptive survey model. The participants of the research are composed of a total of 672 students as 342 male students and 330 female students from Ankara, Balıkesir, Bartın, Adana, and Kayseri. The research data were obtained by the application of “Personal Information Form” developed by the researchers and “Writing Disposition Scale” developed by Piazza and Siebert (2008) and adapted to Turkish by İşeri and Ünal (2010). For the evaluation of the data, percent, frequency, average scores, t-tests of the independent groups, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and post-hoc tests as Scheffe and Dunnett-C, Kruskal-Wallis-H and Mann-Whitney-U tests were applied. As a result of the findings obtained, it was found out that the dispositions of the 6th grade students vary by gender, monthly income of the family, home city, frequency of reading books and whether they read a periodical on a regular basis whereas such writing dispositions of the 6th grades did not vary by GPA (grade-point average) and whether the family bought a newspaper for home on a regular basis..

Introduction

Language usage is of vital importance to human beings because of their social needs such as expressing their thoughts, understanding other human beings and communicating with them. From past to present, human beings generally express themselves by two ways: speaking and writing. Although human beings confidently express themselves by speaking in everyday life, they have difficulty in coming up with something to tell when it comes to writing or even if they come up with something to tell, they still find it difficult to express themselves in writing. Undoubtedly, the myths about writing have substantially contributed to this great challenge encountered in the sphere of writing. The majority of people including some educators believe in the myth that writing well cannot be taught and that writing skills develop naturally (Graham & Harris, 1997). This belief is a fallacy although it has received a general acceptance.

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“A cliché often heard about the writing skills is that writing is a complex task and this is certainly true” (Rijlaarsdam & Van Den Bergh, 2005, p. 3). “Written expression is a sophisticated, complex and challenging process which requires a number of skills” (Walker et al., 2005, p. 175). The reason why writing is perceived as a complex process may be due to the fact that writing is divided into three dimensions as cognitive, affective and kinesthetic. As much as this process is practically concerned, writing primarily requires carrying out various activities such as thinking, making observations and reading as well as eliminating and organizing the ideas in a certain order for the purpose of the subject and finally putting down such ideas on a paper to express them in writing. “Due to the fact that the act of writing includes such skills as reading, thinking and proper expressions and also such an activity is challenging, the students tend to avoid from this type of activity” (Ungan, 2007, p. 462).

What is Disposition?

Disposition is a complex and psychological term. Several researchers have described this concept from different perspectives. “A disposition is a tendency to exhibit frequently, consciously, and voluntarily a pattern of behaviour that is directed to a broad goal” (Katz, 1993, p. 2). “Disposition is a term that is gaining popularity across many fields of study to describe how human variables can converge with skill to influence performance in a given situation” (McClenny, 2010, p. 3).

Writing Disposition and Related Studies

The writing disposition as a term linked up a connection between disposition and writing. When the terms “writing” and “disposition” are considered together, we encounter the term of “writing disposition”. “It involves a student’s willingness to persist with confidence throughout the entire process of writing and reflects a triadic relationship between cognitive variables, affective factors, and social context” (McClenny, 2010, p. 9).

Studies towards the writing disposition have gained popularity after development of a writing dispositions scale by Piazza and Siebert (2008). İşeri and Ünal (2010) adapted writing dispositions scale developed by Piazza and Siebert (2008) into Turkish. After that, several studies towards the writing disposition in the context of Turkish courses have started to increase. Baş and Şahin (2013), Baş (2012), Baş and Şahin (2012), Baysal et al. (2012), İşeri (2010), Ünal (2010) have investigated the writing disposition from different perspectives on different samples.

Baş and Şahin (2013) investigated elementary school students’ writing dispositions from different variables. It is found that elementary students’ perceptions towards writing disposition were in low level. Baş (2012) investigated the correlation between elementary students’ reading attitudes and their writing dispositions. He found that there was a positive correlation between those variables. Baş and Şahin (2012) analysed the correlation between secondary school students’ reading attitudes, writing dispositions and academic success in their study. They stated that there was a positive significant correlation between students’ reading attitudes, writing dispositions and academic success in Turkish course. Baysal et al. (2012) researched the effect of problem based learning on writing dispositions of fifth grade students taking social studies lessons. They found

that problem based learning had a significant effect on students' writing dispositions. Ünal (2010) examined the writing disposition of fourth and fifth grade elementary school students in his research. He concluded that students' writing dispositions were favorable. İşeri (2010) evaluated sixth grade students' writing dispositions in terms of different variables in his study.

Methodology

The study was carried out according to the descriptive research design. In this design, situations are only described. In this study, survey model – one of the basic types of descriptive methods – was applied by the researchers. According to Karasar (1991), survey models are research approaches to describe a past or current situation. The survey model was preferred in this research for the purpose of providing a description for the writing dispositions of the 6th grade students in terms of different variables.

Participants

The research was conducted on the 6th grade students from Adana, Ankara, Balıkesir, Bartın and Kayseri (different cities in Turkey). Participants of the study is composed of a total of 672 students as 342 male students and 330 female students, of whom 197 students from Ankara, 60 students from Balıkesir, 91 students from Bartın, 97 students from Adana and 227 students from Kayseri. Distributions of participants based on the city and gender are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Distributions of participants based on city and gender

Gender		Cities					Total
		Ankara	Balıkesir	Bartın	Adana	Kayseri	
Male	N	106	28	47	47	114	342
	gender %	31.0%	8.2%	13.7%	13.7%	33.3%	100%
	city %	53.8%	46.7%	51.6%	48.5%	50.2%	50.9%
	Total %	15.8%	4.2%	7%	7%	17%	50.9%
Female	N	91	32	44	50	113	330
	gender %	27.6%	9.7%	13.3%	15.2%	34.2%	100%
	city %	46.2%	53.3%	48.4%	51.5%	49.8%	49.1%
	Total %	13.5%	4.8%	6.5%	7.4%	16.8%	49.1%
Total	N	197	60	91	97	227	672
	gender %	29.3%	8.9%	13.5%	14.4%	33.8%	100%
	city %	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Total %	29.3%	8.9%	13.5%	14.4%	33.8%	100%

Instruments

Two instruments were used in this study. One of them is the personal information form developed by researchers of the study. It was used to obtain the personal information of the 6th grade students. The personal information form includes such details as the city, gender, grade point average, monthly income of the family, the frequency of reading a book, whether any

newspaper was bought regularly to be read at home, whether any periodical was read on a regular basis and the frequency of reading books.

The Writing Dispositions Scale (WDS), developed by Piazza and Siebert (2008) and adapted to Turkish by İşeri and Ünal (2010), was used to determine the writing dispositions of the 6th grade students. Piazza and Siebert (2008) defined WDS as a kind of a tool to measure the emotional conditions for writing. This scale consists of three sub-dimensions as confidence, continuity and ambition. Cronbach alpha reliability for the scale is entirely .893 (Piazza & Siebert, 2008). This value shows that the scale is reliable (Şencan, 2005). İşeri and Ünal (2010) stated that WDS, for which adaptation processes were carried out on 3533 students, was valid and reliable as a result of both exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses and this version of the scale was applicable in Turkey. The adaptation of WDS to Turkish consisted of 21 items. Numbers of items in the adaptation was different from the original scale because of the cross-cultural variety and its application in different education environments (İşeri & Ünal, 2010). Students were asked to choose one of the options as “I Completely Disagree, I Disagree, I Am Uncertain, I Agree, I Completely Agree” for each item. The minimum score possible to be obtained from the scale is 21 and the maximum score is 105.

Data Collection Process

The forms were sent by mail to the cities where participants were. The executives were provided with the necessary information about the application of the forms. The students were informed that they should not leave any item unanswered and they were expected to provide their point of views sincerely. The students were asked to choose the most appropriate option about them as “I Completely Disagree, I Disagree, I Am Uncertain, I Agree, I Completely Agree” for each item.

Analysis of Data

The data collected were entered in SPSS program and ANOVA was carried out for the variables of the city, grade point average, monthly income of the family, and T-test was performed for the variables of the gender, whether any newspaper was bought regularly to be read at home and whether any periodical was read on a regular basis. Scheffe test was carried out where the parametric conditions were provided in ANOVA analysis and Dunnett-C test was carried out where such conditions could not be provided. Only for the variable of the frequency of reading a book, Kruskal-Wallis-H Test was performed instead of ANOVA due to the fact that 2 out of 5 groups scored under 30 and the significant difference between the groups was analyzed by Mann-Whitney-U Test by means of matching the groups in two pairs. In addition, the percent, frequency and mean were also used.

Results

In this section, the results of analysis of the writing dispositions of the 6th grade students in primary school based on the variables of the gender, grade point average, monthly income of the family, city where the student lives, whether any newspaper was bought regularly to be read at home, whether any periodical was read on a regular basis and the frequency of reading a book are shown in the tables below.

Table 2. t-test results of writing dispositions scores based on gender

Gender	N	\bar{X}	sd	df	t	p
Male	342	3.26	.83	670	6.580*	.000
Female	330	3.65	.73			

p<.05

In Table 2, a significant difference between the mean scores of the writing dispositions of the female students (3.26) and the mean scores of the writing dispositions of the male students (3.65) can be seen [t(670)=6.580, p<.05]. This finding can be interpreted as there is a significant correlation between the writing disposition and gender.

Table 3. Descriptive scores of the writing disposition based on grade point average

GPA	N	\bar{X}	sd	Min. Score	Max. Score
1	8	2.9702	.85219	1.62	4.00
2	29	3.4204	.78267	1.76	5.00
3	142	3.4561	.72972	1.29	4.95
4	218	3.5116	.82015	1.19	5.00
5	162	3.4956	.92701	1.00	5.00
Null	113	3.3363	.68749	1.29	4.62
Total	672	3.4561	.80889	1.00	5.00

In Table 3, the descriptive scores of the writing disposition for grade point average can be seen. Accordingly, the highest mean score was obtained as 3.51 for the students whose grade point average was 4 whereas the lowest mean score was obtained as 2.97 for the students whose grade point average was 1. While the students whose grade point average was 2 and those who did not write were below the general average, the students whose grade point averages were 3 and 5 were found to have a writing disposition above the general average. The results of ANOVA test carried out with regards to the significant difference between the scores are given in the following table.

Table 4. ANOVA results of the writing disposition based on grade point average

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p
Between Groups	4.417	5	.894	1.371	.233
Within Groups	434.571	666	.653		
Total	439.043	671			

In Table 4, there is no significant difference between the writing scores of the students based on grade point average [F=1.371, p>.05].

Table 5. Descriptive scores of the writing disposition for the monthly income of the family

Income (TL)	N	\bar{X}	sd	Min. Score	Max. Score
0-500	81	3.6408	.66232	1.86	4.86
501-1000	244	3.5373	.79815	1.19	5.00
1001-1500	145	3.4187	.75817	1.24	4.95
1501-2000	106	3.4299	.80387	1.19	5.00
2000+	96	3.1796	.95440	1.00	5.00
Total	672	3.4561	.80889	1.00	5.00

In Table 5, the distributions and scores of the monthly income of the students' families are provided. Accordingly, the highest mean score (3.64) was obtained from the group with a monthly income of 0-500 TL and the lowest mean score (3.17) was obtained from the group with a monthly income of 2000 TL and above. The mean scores were (3.53) for the group with a monthly income of 501-1000 TL, (3.42) for the group with a monthly income of 1501-2000 TL and (3.41) for the group with a monthly income of 1001-1500 TL, respectively. These results indicate that the income does not change in parallel with the scores of the writing disposition. The results of ANOVA test carried out with regards to the significant difference between these scores are given in the following table.

Table 6. ANOVA results of the writing disposition for the monthly income of the family

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p	Significant Difference
Between Groups	11.988	4	2.997	4.681	.001*	5<1, 5<2
Within Groups	427.055	667	.640			
Total	439.043	671				

Table 6 indicates that the scores of the writing dispositions of the students resulted in a significant difference based on the monthly income [$F_{(4-667)}=4.681$, $p<.01$]. In this respect, the scores of the writing dispositions of the students subject to a significant difference based on the monthly income. Based on the results of Dunnett C test carried out to determine which groups had a variance between them, it was found out that the scores of the writing dispositions of the group with an income of 2000 TL and above were lower compared to the scores of the writing dispositions of the groups with an income of 0-500 TL and 501-1000 TL.

Table 7. Descriptive scores of the writing disposition for the cities

Cities	N	\bar{X}	sd	Min. Score	Max. Score
Ankara	197	3.2884	.80757	1.19	4.90
Balıkesir	60	2.9968	.84011	1.00	4.81
Bartın	91	3.3647	.90644	1.29	5.00
Adana	97	3.6318	.61888	1.95	4.90
Kayseri	227	3.6847	.74384	1.19	5.00
Total	672	3.4570	.80922	1.00	5.00

Table 7 indicates the distributions and scores of the participants based on the cities. In this respect, Kayseri (3.68) has the highest mean score of the writing disposition. The cities subsequent to Kayseri are Adana (3.63), Bartın (3.36), Ankara (3.28) and Balıkesir (2.99), respectively. In addition, the highest mean scores were observed in the participants from Kayseri and Bartın whereas the lowest mean scores were observed in the participants from Balıkesir. The results of ANOVA test carried out with regards to the significant difference between these scores are given in the following table.

Table 8. ANOVA results of the writing disposition for the cities

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p	Significant Difference Dunnett C
Between Groups	33.816	4	8.454	13.915*	.000	5>1, 5>2, 5>3,
Within Groups	405.227	667	.608			4>1, 4>2,

Total	439.043	671
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Table 8 indicates that there is a significant difference between the scores of the writing dispositions of the students based on the cities [$F_{(4-667)}=13,915$, $p<.01$]. Based on the results of Dunnett C test carried out to determine the variance between the groups, the scores of the writing dispositions of the students in Kayseri were found to be higher than those of the students in Ankara, Balikesir and Bartın whereas the scores of the writing dispositions of the students in Adana were found to be higher than those of the students in Ankara and Balikesir.

Table 9. T-Test results of the writing dispositions scores based on whether any newspaper bought regularly

	N	\bar{X}	sd	df	t	p
Yes	320	3.51	.81	670	1.656	.098
No	352	3.40	.81			

$p<.05$

Table 9 shows t-test results of the writing dispositions scores based on whether any newspaper is bought regularly to be read at home. In this respect, the scores of the writing dispositions did not represent a significant difference based on whether any newspaper was bought regularly to be read at home [$t_{(670)}=1.656$, $p>.05$]. This finding may be interpreted as there is no significant correlation between the writing disposition and whether any newspaper was bought regularly to be read at home.

Table 10. T-Test results of the writing disposition scores based on whether any periodical read on a regular basis

	N	\bar{X}	sd	df	t	p
Yes	281	3.53	.84	670	2.218	.027*
No	391	3.39	.78			

$p<.05$

Table 10 shows t-test results of the writing disposition scores indicating the significant difference based on whether any periodical was read on a regular basis. It can be seen that there is a significant difference between the scores of the writing disposition based on whether any periodical was read on a regular basis [$t_{(670)}=2.218$, $p<.05$].

Table 11. Descriptive scores of the writing disposition based on frequency of reading a book

Frequency of Reading a Book	N	\bar{X}	sd	Min. Score	Max. Score
Everyday	206	3.6607	.84545	1.29	5.00
Every Few Days	305	3.4793	.72076	1.19	5.00
Once a Week	123	3.2745	.76352	1.19	4.90
Once a Month	27	2.9347	.80619	1.24	4.10
Once a Year	11	2.2944	1.07430	1.00	4.14
Total	672	3.4561	.80889	1.00	5.00

Table 11 shows the distribution of the writing disposition scores based on the frequency of reading a book. It can be seen that the mean and maximum scores increase as the frequency of reading a book increases. In addition, it is quite significant that the majority of the students stated that they read a book every day or every few days. It is probably a result of the reading hours

scheduled in schools. The results of Kruskal-Wallis H tests carried out to determine whether this difference in the scores was significant are given in the following table.

Table 12. Kruskal-Wallis H results of the writing disposition based on frequency of reading a book

Frequency of Reading a Book	N	Rank Average	df	χ^2	p	Significant Difference
Everyday	206	392.36	4	47.413	.000	1>2, 1>3, 1>4,
Every Few Days	305	336.79				1>5, 2>3, 2>4,
Once a Week	123	286.71				2>5, 3>5,
Once a Month	27	215.85				
Once a Year	11	135.27				
Total	672	392.36				

In Table 12, the scores of the writing disposition indicate a significant difference based on the frequency of reading a book [$\chi^2 (4) = 47.413, p < 0.1$]. This finding may be interpreted as there is a positive correlation between the writing disposition and the frequency of reading a book. Based on the results of Mann Whitney U test carried out on the paired combinations of the groups to determine which groups have between-group significant difference, the mean scores of the group reading a book everyday are higher than all the other groups, the mean scores of the group reading a book every few days are higher than those reading once a week, once a month and once a year whereas the mean scores of the group reading a book once a week are higher than those reading once a year.

Conclusions

In this study in which the writing dispositions of the 6th grade students in secondary school have been analyzed in terms of different variables, it was concluded that the writing dispositions of the students varied based on the variables of the gender, monthly income of the family, home city, whether any periodical was read on a regular basis and the frequency of reading a book. However, the writing dispositions of the students did not vary based on the variables of the grade point average and whether any newspaper was bought regularly to be read at home.

The scores of the writing disposition indicate a significant difference in favor of the female students when analyzed in terms of gender. This condition may have resulted from the fact that the female students are more inclined to express their feelings and ideas and the fact that they are more emotional. Gelbal (2008) reached a conclusion that the girls were more successful in verbal courses such as Turkish. Tüfekçioğlu (2010) stated that the writing dispositions of the students indicated a significant difference based on gender and the writing dispositions of the female students were higher than those of the male students. İşeri (2010) found out in his study where he evaluated the writing dispositions of the 6th grade students based on different variables that the writing dispositions of the female students were higher than those of the male students. Ünal (2010) ascertained in his study in which he analyzed the writing dispositions of the 4th and 5th grade students that the writing dispositions of the female students were higher than those of the male students. So the result according to gender is parallel with the results of İşeri (2010), Tüfekçioğlu (2010) and Ünal (2010).

The scores of the writing dispositions of the 6th grade students do not represent a significant difference in terms of grade point average. On the other hand, Özbay and Zorbaz (2012), Özbay et al. (2011) and Yılmaz (2011) have found a significant difference in terms of grade point average in their researches towards students' writing education.

The scores of the writing disposition in terms of the monthly income of the family represent a significant difference in favor of the groups whose income is 2000 TL and above whereas they represent a significant difference against the groups whose income is between 0-500 TL and 501-1000 TL. Çelik (2012), Sallabaş (2009), Arıcı and Ungan (2008) stated that the socioeconomic status plays an important role on the written expression of the students.

The scores of the writing disposition in terms of the city represent a significant difference in favor of the students in Kayseri and against the students in Ankara, Balıkesir and Bartın whereas they represent a significant difference in favor of the students in Adana and against the students in Ankara and Balıkesir. Although more detailed researches on the reason of this condition are required, the individual differences between the teachers employed and the students receiving education in the schools retained as a sample can be considered to be a factor for this result.

The scores of the writing disposition do not represent a significant difference based on whether any newspaper was bought regularly to be read at home, however they show a significant difference based on whether any periodical was read on a regular basis in favor of those who read such periodicals on a regular basis. It can be concluded that the periodicals would support the reading skills and consequently support the writing skills more considering the fact that the periodicals are subscribed voluntarily by the student although the newspapers are bought at the request of the parents.

The scores of the writing disposition represent a significant difference based on the frequency of reading a book and it was found that the scores of the writing disposition increased as the frequency of reading a book increased. As Baş (2012) stated, there is a strong correlation of high level between the reading attitude and the writing disposition. Koçak (2005) stated that reading habits have a positive influence over the writing expression.

Recommendations for Further Research

It is recommended that different studies be conducted on writing dispositions of the 6th grade students to compare with the results of this study. The studies about writing dispositions were generally quantitative. It is also recommend that qualitative and mixed methods research towards the writing disposition could be conducted to look from different perspectives.

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