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Learned Helplessness in Public Administration: The Cases of Samsun Metropolitan Municipality and San Diego City

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Abstract: Learned helplessness is a psychological and cognitive process and state of mind that an individual remains unresponsive to new stimuli due to past experiences of (perceived) failure, which subsequently prevents the learning. This situation can be observed in many environments; hence, it is possible to ebserve learned helplessness in the working life. In this context, the aim of the study is to identify factors that lead to learned helplessness among public sector employees. Specifically this article examines the relationship between the San Diego City and Samsun Metropolitan Muncipality employees' seniority level, position and demographic characteristics and their levels of learned helplessness. The survey results indicate that learned helplessness is correlated with the position, seniority, education and age of public sector employees; however gender was not correlated with helplessness.

Key Words: Learned Helplessness, Public Administration, San Diego City, Samsun Metropolitan Municipality.

1. Introduction

Learned helplessness is when an individual remains unresponsive because past events and experiences prevent subsequent learning. This is a state that can occur in many environments including the work environment. The state of helplessness that has adverse influence on the employee productivity is a substantial problem preventing adequately utilizing the human resources that are critical to entities. Attitudes and behaviors of learned helplessness can be observed in the public sector. However, available literature does not address this issue with regard to public administration. It is shown that learned helplessness lies behind many problems such as unwillingness to work; unwillingness to work and perform operations or tasks as a matter of form; inability to engage in new and innovative thinking and practices; and incapability to go beyond routine works and operation. Existence of these symptoms may indicate learned helplessness in the public sector.

The purpose of the study is to examine the learned helplessness level of the employees of the Metropolitan Municipality of Samsun and of the City Management of San Diego and to detect the relationship between learned helplessness and length of service, position and demographics.

First, we will give background information about the concept, emergence and development of learned helplessness. Later, we will compare the results obtained from the Metropolitan Municipality of Samsun and the City Management of San Diego.

2. The Concept of Learned Helplessness[1]

Learned helplessness is a process and state of mind in which previous experiences of percieved failure have a negative effect on further learning, which makes an organism unresponsive to new but similar stimuli. If the organism believes that the outcome of a situation will be independent of its response, the organism will fail to respond in order

[1] This section has been taken from Fatih Yüksel and Ahmet Özkiraz (2012), "The main problem of Turkish public administration: Learned helplessness", African Journal of Business Management Vol. 6(4).

to escape or avoid when it is faced with similiar problems due to learned helplessness. Similarly, when a person is faced with a situation to which he has previously been exposed to and was helpless to control the situation, this prior learned helplessness will interfere with the latter learning and performance.

Learned helplessness can also lead to a range of psychological disorders (Overmier, 2002:4). When an individual perceives that there exists no relation between his responses and the outcome (his control over the situation and the events), this perception will possibly affect his further responses (continuity of the uncontrollability). He will attribute the undesired outcome to internal, general and stable factors and this will lead to loss of self-confidence (Kümbül, 2006:62), and various sorts of psychological disorders –cognitive, motivational and emotional (Maier & Seligman, 1976). A person who is frequently exposed to negative outcomes tends to lose his belief and confidence that he may control situations. As a result, the suceptibilty to to depression and other motivational, coginitve and emotional disorders is likely to increase (Günay & Nursen, 2006:84).

There have been many studies published on this issue. Early studies were experiments with animals (Seligman & Maier, 1967). Later, findings of these animal studies were experientially tested on humans (Hiroto, 1974). The findings showed that, even though less striking compared to those with animals, a learned helplessness response was easily induced in humans when they were placed in situations where they felt an inability to change or terminate an undesirable situation. Hiroto (1975) further tested the frequency of the helplessness caused by uncontrollable situations. The experiment was carried out in four different ways on university pupils: First, the unescapable and also the controllable tone were given subsequent to the shuttle-box escape/avoid test. The second was an anagram (rearranging the letters of words) test in which the subjects were asked to produce new words through the letters already blended. Afterwards, solvable and unsolvable discrimination problems were used. Third, the unescapable and controllable

tone was given following an anagram-solving test. As for the fourth step, the unsolvable and solvable discrimination problems test was given following the shuttle-box escape/avoid test. With this four-step experiment, it was aimed to test learned helplessness in instrumental (to avoid the tone by an instrument) and cognitive (to produce meaningful words through blended letters) terms. The experiment had three main findings: First, the group that was exposed to the tone at an unavoidable level performed poorly in shuttle-box test whereas the group that had control over the tone performed well. This finding is in line with that of an experiment carried out on humans in 1974. Furthermore, the results of the learned helplessness experiments on humans share similarities with those on dogs, cats and rats. Second, it was detected that the group pretreated with four different insoluable problems performed poorly at anagram-solution compared to the control-group and avoidance-group. This finding shows that the cognitive tasks without any instrumental factor could lead to learned helplessness. Third, a certain relation between different sorts of helplessness was found. In other words, the performance of the group pretreated with unsolvable cognitive problems was debilitated at instrumental escape from the tone. Interestingly enough, this group became weakened to the same degree as the one pretreated with the instrumental avoidance test. Moreover, the group tested with the unavoidable tone performed as poorly as the subjects who were given four unsolvable discrimination problems at anagram-solution test. This experiment showed that the frequency of learned helplessness (i.e. reappearance of learned helplessness in various cases) may transform helplessness into a personality trait (Hiroto, 1975:311, 324-325). A helplessness experiment with an anagram test has been carried out in order to assess the situation of learned helplessness which follows helplessness with a short latency of 0-30 mins. and with a long latency of 2-6 hours. Consequently, all the subjects have been observed to be helpless. Subjects who were given the test following the short latency performed more poorly than those with the long tatency (Young & Allin, 1992:135). This shows that there will be a remission in

helplessness behaviours in the course of time following the event which led to helplessness (Yüksel, Özkiraz:1215).

Abramson and Seligman revised Hiroto's experiments becuase he did not make a distinction between personal helplesness and universal helplesness, and his experiments lacked a clear conclusion as to whether helplessness was general or specific, or, chronic or acute. Abramson and Seling's findings suggested that individuals attribute the existing situation to internal versus external factors. This attribution determines whether helplessness in the future will be chronic or acute, and if it will reduce self-esteem or not (Abramson & Seligman, 1978:49). When a person compares himself to the other people, he will attribute the situation which he is in to internal factors if his tendency to be exposed to this situation is higher than those of the others, on the other hand, if the tendency is identical and/or similar among all the people, then the attribution should be external. For example, if a student is the only one to fail a course whereas the rest of the class have all passed, he will attribute the outcome to his intellectual deficiency, and therefore, he will become personally helpless. However, if the most of the students have failed, then the student will attribute this situation to the fact that the examinations have been hard and that the teachers have given low marks to all the students, which is an example to universal helplessness. Actually, in each situation, there comes the attitude that studying will have no effect on the outcome, and thus, no more effort will be made to change it (Abramson & Seligman, 1978:52). Table 1 shows if a student attributes his low mark in Mathematics to his mental deficiency (internal, stable, personal) or if he attributes it to being tired (internal, instable, global) and to the fact that the exam has been unjust (external, instable, global), he will become unresponsive to his upcoming oral examination, thinking that the outcome will be completely independent of his response. However, so long as the student attributes the low mark to his lack of mathematical skills (internal, stable, personal) or to being fed up with Maths (internal, instable, personal) or

to the injustice of the examination, he will never be helpless in his oral examination (Abramson & Seligman, 1978:52, 57-58).

Table 1. Formal Properties of the Attribution Through An Example

	Internal		External	
Size	**Stable**	**Instable**	**Stable**	**Instable**
General Unsuccessful students	Mental Deficiency (Laziness)	Tiredness (What stupifies me is common cold)	Exam was not fair. (People are usually unsuccessful at these exams.)	Today is Friday the 13th. (Everbody has experimentally been tested out. It was difficult for anybody)
Specific Unsuccessful students	Deficiency of Mathematical Skills (Maths always bores me)	Getting fed up with Mathematical problems (Common cold rusts my arithmetical knowledge)	Maths exam was not fair. (People are usually unsuccessful at Maths exams)	Maths test was of the number 13. (All the test orders were mixed)

Source: Abramson & Seligman, 1978:57

3. Learned Helplessness in Public Administration[2]

Learned helplessness in organizations and work environment can occur due to individual characteristics and/or the culture and management approach adopted by the organization. An employee who is apathetic towards his work has adverse influence on the environment, giving rise to organizational learned helplessness. Learned helplessness that emerges organizationally is regarded as a disease, and treatment of this disease becomes important in terms of success of the organization (Kümbül, 2006:183).

In public administration systems, many problems can occur regarding employee's attitudes and behaviors such as unwillingness to work and effectively perform tasks; inability to engage in new and innovative thinking and practices; incapability to go

[2] This section has been taken from Fatih Yüksel, Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, Vol.6, March 2015.

beyond routine work and operations; being attached to conventional (traditional) methods; merely carrying out the orders; exerting effort as needed and not going beyond that; reluctance to develop oneself; low motivation; making an effort that is far below knowledge, skills and abilities required by the job. Such low performance at the job partly stems from the belief that the existing public system would not change, and/or one's own power would not be adequate to change it. Human capital is a critical resource of public administration and learned helplessness hinders the effective use human resources the public sector. This impact of learned helplessness on public administration effectiveness has not been investigated and might have a particularly significant negative impact on the development of developing countries.

Learned helplessness ultimately prevents organizational learning in public administration. As a precursor of organizational change, organizational learning is a critical process that helps organizations adapt to environmental changes and demands through change in behavior and acquisition of new knowledge (Espejo et al 1996:90-91; David, 1993:78-91). As such, the relationship between the organizational learned helplessness and the organizational learning and change becomes more apparent. Organizational learned helplessness is more likely to exist in organizations with large number of employees experiencing personal learned helplessness, and inhibit organizational learning. Change, innovation, adapting to the environment, efficiency, productivity, and achieving mission become more difficult in organizations with poor organizational learning. Thus, both individual and organizational adverse consequences of learned helplessness begin to occur (Yüksel, 2012:1220).

4. The Relationship between the Seniority, Position and Demographic Characteristics and the Helplessness

Since the literature includes few studies on learned helplessness in the work place, there is no available knowledge whether helplessness is related to seniority, position and

demographic characteristics. This study, for the first time, attempts to explore this relationship through survey data collected from the City of San Diego employees.

In view of the fact that learned helplessness is a state of mind in which an individual remains unresponsive to change situations and loses self-confidence because of previous failures which prevent subsequent learning, several predictions can be put forth on the expected relationship between the dependent and independent variables. First, seniority of the employee is expected to be positively correlated with learned helplessness in a work environment, as length of tenure in a job determines the number of opportunities for perceived failures and unresponsiveness, and increases the chances of experiencing/reinforcing learned helplessness. Thus, it is likely to observe differences in the level of learned helplessness based on the length of time an individual is employed in the public sector.

A similar prediction can be put forth about being in a management position. Those who are in a management position are expected to experience less learned helplessness than those who are not in a management position because they are more likely to control and change the existing conditions. Those who are not in a management position are expected to become more affected by unfavorable environmental conditions and to experience learned helplessness as they have less power to change the organization.

Finally it can be predicted that demographic factors including education, age and gender would impact learned helplessness. Education level, age and gender may result in differentiation in individuals' emotional capability of maintaining self-confidence, and generating alternative solutions to obstacles and problems. For example, differences may occur in the aforesaid activities as the education level or age increases.

5. A RESEARCH ON METROPOLİTAN MUNİCİPALİTY OF SAMSUN AND CİTY MANAGEMENT OF SAN DİEGO

5.1 Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the learned helplessness level of the employees of the Metropolitan Municipality of Samsun and of the City Management of San Diego and to detect the relationship between learned helplessness and length of service, position and demographics.

5.2 Method

The first part of the research has been conducted with 580 employees of the Metropolitan Municipality of Samsun. The participants have been selected from managers and non-managers working at various departments by simple random sampling method. We have picked 164 samples out of the target population. The 164-sample size is adequate at α = 0,05 sample size by p=0,5 q=0,5 8% sampling error.

The second part has been conducted with around 10.000 employees of the City Management of San Diego, California, USA. The participants have been selected from managers and non-managers working at various units by simple random sampling method. We have picked 151 samples out of the target population. The 151-sample size is adequate at α = 0,05 sample size by p=0,5 q=0,5 8% sampling error.

5.3 Data Collection and Data Analysis

There are various scales for measuring individual helplessness. However, no scale is available for measuring public servants' helplessness. Thus, we have developed a two-section, 5-point Likert-type scale based on the sorts and symptoms of helplessness in public servants and collected data by the scale. The first section includes personal details about length of service, post and demographics and the other comprises items for measuring helplessness. The two sections consist of 24 items in total. The data on San Diego was collected in the July 2013-April 2014 period.[3] The data on Samsun was collected in July 2014. The collected data was transferred to the SPSS.

5.4 Results

[3] We thank Dr. Yousef A. Ibrahim for his precious contribution to data collection.

Cronbach's alpha is 0,735 for the Metropolitan Municipality of Samsun and 0,880 for the City Management of San Diego. These values show the scale is highly reliable. Table 2 shows the frequency distribution of the participants' demographics.

Table 2. Frekansların Dağılımı

Position	Frekans	%
	San Diego - Samsun	San Diego - Samsun
Management	46 - 35	30,5 - 21,3
Non-Management	102 - 118	67,5 - 72,0
Missing	3 - 11	2 - 6,7
Total	151 - 164	100 - 100
Seniority		
0-5 years	24 - 27	15,9 - 16,5
6-10 years	34 - 25	22,5 - 15,2
11-15 years	36 - 17	23,8 - 10,4
16-20 years	15 - 24	9,9 - 14,6
21 years and above	42 - 54	27,8 - 32,9
Missing	0 - 17	0 - 10,4
Total	151 - 164	100 - 100
Education		
Primary	4 - 12	2,6 - 7,3
Secondary	24 - 51	15,9 - 31,1
College	78 - 93	51,7 - 56,7
Graduate	43 - 5	28,5 - 3,0
Missing	2 - 3	1,3 - 1,8
Total	151 - 164	100 - 100
Age		
25 and <	11 - 10	7,3 - 6,1
26-35	30 - 44	19,9 - 26,8
36-45	39 - 56	25,8 - 34,1
46-55	33 - 37	21,9 - 22,6
56 and >	38 - 12	25,2 - 7,3
Missing	0 - 5	0 - 3,0
Total	151 - 164	100 - 100
Gender		
Male	52 - 57	34,4 - 34,8
Female	95 - 100	62,9 - 61
Missing	4 - 7	2,6 - 4,3
Total	151 - 164	100 - 100

Table 2 shows that 21,3% of the participants from Samsun work at managing positions and 72% are non-managers whereas 30% of those from San Diego are at managing positions and 67% are non-managers. For the length of public service, the vast majority of 32,9% for Samsun and 27,8% for San Diego have served for over 21 years. 16,5% of the participants from Samsun and 15,9% of those from San Diego have served for 5 or less than 5 years. In other words, 73,1% of the participants from Samsun and 84% from San Diego have at least 5 years of seniority.

Table 3. Mean of Responses to Items

Maddeler	Mean	Std. Deviation
	San Diego - Samsun	San Diego – Samsun
md6	2,5396 - 2,4503	1,25840 - 1,24198
md7	3,3813 - 2,9189	1,10595 - 1,95359
md8	3,0719 - 2,8912	1,08775 - 1,23382
md9	2,8417 - 3,5338	1,26410 - 1,20326
md10	3,0504 - 2,9067	1,23549 - 1,23889
md11	2,4460 - 2,7517	2,04008 - 1,27823
md12	2,2590 - 2,7315	1,02390 - 1,18339
md13	2,9640 - 3,1208	1,10604 - 1,16197
md14	2,7698 - 3,0861	1,13774 - 1,22714
md15	2,5540 - 3,0667	1,20490 - 1,22976
md16	2,4604 - 2,9866	1,10510 - 1,13296
md17	2,4317 - 3,0199	1,18597 - 1,09830
md18	3,0791 - 3,2230	1,16136 - 1,22236
md19	2,8705 - 3,3667	1,19682 - 1,25006
md20	3,4820 - 3,4800	1,06562 - 1,19124
md21	2,8993 - 3,2583	1,25856 - 1,20810
md22	3,7266 - 3,6026	1,09548 - 1,21699
md23	3,8417 - 3,6291	,91096 - 1,18668
md24	3,1367 - 3,8344	1,19904 - 1,06727

The present research is the first to measure the level of learned helplessness in public employees. Thus, to what kind of helplessness the mean of the responses to the items will point is uncertain. However, it is possible to have a slight opinion about the level of learned helplessness through the participants' responses to the items. Helplessness increases as the mean of the responses to each item approaches 1 and it decreases as the mean approaches 5. The mean of the responses to all items shows that the mean is above 2,5 for the two samples–except for Item 11, 12, 16 and 17 for Samsun; and Item 6 for San Diego. The mean approaches 4, 'I disagree', if we take 'No idea' as 2,5 and we can suggest that no evident symptom of helplessness will emerge. The weighted response average approaching mean 2 will point to an explicit indication of helplessness. Overall average of all items is 2.93 for Samsun and 3.15 for San Diego. This result shows neither the employees of the Metropolitan Municipality of Samsun nor those of the City Management of San Diego suffer from sharp helplessness. However, the helplessness level in the personnel of Samsun is higher.

Factor mean of 'self-confidence in being influential at the office' is 3.47 for Samsun and 3.57 for San Diego; 'self-confidence in changing public administration system' is 2.86 for Samsun and 2.90 for San Diego; and 'desire to make an effort' is 3.01 for Samsun and 3.07 for San Diego. For the Samsun sample, 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices' is 2.70 and 'desire to participate in decision-making' 3.40. The averages show the longest distance from helplessness is in 'self-confidence in being influential at the office' and it is followed by 'desire to participate in decision-making', 'desire to make an effort', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system' and 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices', respectively. In other words, the biggest tendency to helplessness in the personnel of the Metropolitan Municipality of Samsun is in 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices' and the smallest is in 'self-confidence in being influential at the office'. As for the San Diego sample, the longest distance from helplessness is in 'self-confidence in being influential at the office' and it is followed by

'desire to make an effort' and 'self-confidence in changing public administration system', respectively. Thus, 'self-confidence in being influential at the office' is clearly bigger thann changing public administration system. The results show factor sequence of San Diego is similar to that of Samsun.

5.4.1 Factor Analysis

Factor analysis results show the KMO value is adequate as 0,759 for the Samsun sample but remarkably high as 0,913 for the San Diego sample. The diagonals of the anti-image correlation matrix are extremely higher than 0,5 saving Item 9 and 13 for the Samsun sample and Item 6 for the San Diego sample. Furthermore, the values close to 1 in some items point to a well-performed factor analysis. Item 9 and 13 for the Samsun sample and 6 for the San Diego sample was excluded from the analysis for a well-performed analysis since the diagonals of those items were less than 0,5.

Table 4. Total Variance Explained (Samsun Sample)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% Variance	Cumulative %	Toplam	% Variance	Cumulative %
1	3,984	23,433	23,433	3,984	23,433	23,433	2,124	12,493	12,493
2	1,910	11,234	34,667	1,910	11,234	34,667	2,124	12,491	24,985
3	1,330	7,823	42,490	1,330	7,823	42,490	2,043	12,016	37,001
4	1,218	7,163	49,652	1,218	7,163	49,652	1,653	9,722	46,722
5	1,090	6,412	56,065	1,090	6,412	56,065	1,588	9,342	56,065
6	,939	5,524	61,589						
7	,876	5,152	66,741						
8	,813	4,780	71,520						
9	,742	4,362	75,882						
10	,699	4,112	79,994						
11	,675	3,968	83,962						
12	,605	3,558	87,520						
13	,568	3,342	90,862						
14	,468	2,751	93,613						
15	,409	2,403	96,016						
16	,360	2,116	98,132						
17	,318	1,868	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 4 shows there are 5 factors with >1 eigenvalues and these factors explain 56.065% of total variance. Each factor's total variance explained percentage is 23.433%, 11.234%, 7.824%, 7.163% and 6.421%, respectively. Varimax factor rotation has been used

for naming each factor. Factor loadings are 12.493%, 12.491%, 12.016%, 9.722% and 9.342%, respectively. Factors are named by the rotation as follows:

Factor 1. 'Self-confidence in being influential at the office'

Factor 2. 'Self-confidence in changing public administration system'

Factor 3. 'Desire to make an effort'

Factor 4. 'Desire to search for alternative methods and practices' and

Factor 5. 'Desire to participate in decision-making'.

Table 5. Total Variance Explained (San Diego Sample)

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total		
1	8,196	45,532	45,532	8,196	45,532	45,532	3,849	21,382	21,382
2	1,819	10,104	55,636	1,819	10,104	55,636	3,798	21,099	42,481
3	1,096	6,087	61,723	1,096	6,087	61,723	3,463	19,241	61,723
4	,912	5,067	66,789						
5	,854	4,747	71,536						
6	,731	4,063	75,599						
7	,712	3,954	79,553						
8	,574	3,191	82,745						
9	,490	2,720	85,464						
10	,441	2,449	87,914						
11	,380	2,112	90,026						
12	,351	1,948	91,974						
13	,313	1,742	93,716						
14	,293	1,629	95,344						
15	,262	1,456	96,800						
16	,233	1,292	98,092						
17	,210	1,164	99,257						
18	,134	,743	100,000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 5 shows there are 3 factors with >1 eigenvalues and these factors explain 56,065% of total variance. Each factor's total variance explained percentage is 45,532%, 10,104% and %6,087%, respectively. Varimax factor rotation has been used for naming each factor. Factor loadings are 21,382%, 21,099% and %19,241 respectively. Factors are named by the rotation as follows:

Factor 1. 'Self-confidence in being influential at the office'

Factor 2. 'Self-confidence in changing public administration system'

Factor 3. 'Desire to make an effort'

Table 6. Component Transformation Matrix (Samsun Sample)

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
md22	**,837**	-,043	,073	,041	-,003
md23	**,784**	,117	,077	,102	-,077
md20	**,533**	,285	,375	-,247	,062
md21	**,512**	,147	-,498	,269	,159
md7	,124	**,758**	,169	,059	-,105
md6	,119	**,743**	,003	-,013	,118
md10	,002	**,643**	,176	,148	,099
md15	-,027	**,373**	,214	,207	,347
md18	,126	,219	**,712**	,165	,083
md19	,011	,191	**,690**	,302	,203
md24	,408	,095	**,541**	,132	-,063
md17	,095	-,063	,169	**,664**	,136
md8	,122	,245	,002	**,593**	-,422
md16	-,061	,206	,233	**,520**	,297
md14	,103	,292	,379	**,403**	,324
md12	,087	,198	-,116	,274	**,707**
md11	-,061	-,025	,147	-,037	**,676**

In Table 6:

Factor 1 is of Item 20, 21, 22 and 23,

Factor 2 is of Item 6, 7, 10 and 15,

Factor 3 is of Item 18, 19 and 24,

Factor 4 is of Item 8, 14, 16 and 17, and

Factor 5 is composed of Item 11 and 12.

Table 7. Component Transformation Matrix (San Diego Sample)

	Component		
	1	2	3
md23	**,871**	,187	,121
md22	**,851**	,191	,247
md24	**,757**	,176	,041
md20	**,697**	,208	,424
md21	**,682**	,176	,332
md19	**,548**	,328	,538
md10	,243	**,800**	,201
md8	,223	**,743**	,102
md11	,182	**,725**	,355
md12	,035	**,660**	,444
md9	-,128	**-,623**	-,116
md6	,208	**,592**	,300
md13	-,149	-,386	-,344
md16	,082	,218	**,742**
md17	,237	,169	**,730**
md15	,267	,301	**,699**
md18	,303	,339	**,659**
md14	,302	,433	**,450**

In Table 7:

Factor 1 is of Item 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24

Factor 2 is of Item 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13.

Factor 3 is composed of Item 14, 15, 16, 17 ve 18.

We have found the number of the factors is different in the two samples. However, 3 factors ('self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system' and 'desire to make an effort') in the San Diego sample have emerged in the Samsun sample as well.

5.4.2 Analysis of Factor Differences in Length of Service, Position and Demographics

We will analyze the potential differences between the factors and length of public service (seniority), position and demographics that may affect helplessness. Thus, we will discuss and assess the predetermined hypotheses en masse for all factors.

The predetermined hypotheses about the 5 factors are specified below. The hypotheses comprising the first three factors are about San Diego.

H_1 = There is a significant difference in in public servants working at different positions in terms of 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system', 'desire to make an effort', 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices' and 'desire to participate in decision-making'.

H_2 = There is a significant difference between public servants with different length of service in terms of 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system', 'desire to make an effort', 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices' and 'desire to participate in decision-making'.

H_3 = There is a significant difference between public servants with difference levels of education in terms of 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system', 'desire to make an effort', 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices' and 'desire to participate in decision-making'.

H_4 = There is a significant difference between employees in different age groups in terms of 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system', 'desire to make an effort', 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices' and 'desire to participate in decision-making'.

H_5 = There is a significant difference between male and female public servants in terms of 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system', 'desire to make an effort', 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices' and 'desire to participate in decision-making'.

Factor Differences in Position

We have performed T-test for determining whether there are differences between managers and non-managers in terms of the 5 factors. Analysis results of the Samsun sample have showed H_1 hypothesis is unconfirmed. The t-test results have showed there is no significant difference in the groups in terms of all factors. However, analysis results of the San Diego sample have confirmed H_1 hypothesis– suggesting there is a significant difference in public servants working at different positions in terms of the three factors–. According to Levene's test results, there is a significant difference in the groups in terms of all factors.

Factor 1; Sig. 0,779; Sig.2- tailed 0,172 in the Samsun sample,

Sig. 0,958; Sig.2- tailed 0,000 in the San Diego sample.

For the San Diego sample, Table 8 shows Factor 1 average of managers is higher than that of non-managers. Thus, managers rely more on their abilities to be influential at their positions and, as a result, the tendency to helplessness is bigger in non-managers. Non-managers rely less on their abilities to be influential at the office since they have fewer authorities than managers and they suffer unavoidably more from helplessness than managers.

Factor 2; Sig. 0,068; Sig.2- tailed 0,977 in the Samsun sample,

Sig. 0,099; Sig.2- tailed 0,000 in the San Diego sample.

For the San Diego sample, Table 9 shows Factor 2 average of managers is higher than that of non-managers. Thus, managers rely more on their abilities to change public administration system and non-managers' tendency to helplessness is bigger.

Factor 3, Sig. 0,292; Sig.2- tailed 0,277 in the Samsun sample,

Sig. 0,741; Sig.2- tailed 0,000 in the San Diego sample

For the San Diego, Table 10 shows Factor 3 average of managers is higher than that of non-managers. Thus, managers' 'desire to make an effort' is bigger than non-managers and non-managers are more prone to helplessness.

Factor 4, Sig. 0,827; Sig.2- tailed 0,432 in the Samsun sample

Factor 5, Sig. 0,986; Sig.2- tailed 0,583 in the Samsun sample

Factor Differences in Length of Service

We have used one-way ANOVA for determining whether there are differences between the seniority groups in terms of the 5 factors. Analysis results of the Samsun sample have showed H_2 hypothesis is unconfirmed. According to the one-way ANOVA results, there is no difference between the groups in terms of all factors. However, analysis results of the San Diego sample have confirmed H_2 hypothesis– suggesting there is a significant difference between length of service and 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system' and 'desire to make an effort'–.

Factor 1, F= 0,891; Sig. 0,471 in the Samsun sample

F= 4,369; Sig. 0,002 in the San Diego sample

For the San Diego sample, Table 11 shows there is a significant difference between the employees with 0-5 years of service and those with 6-10 years in terms of 'self-confidence in being influential at the office'. The employees with 0-5 years of service is 0,81454 points above those with 6-10 years. Thus, the employees with 6-10 years of service rely less on their abilities to be influential at their positions than those with 0-5 years of service, and they are more prone to helplessness. We have found no significant

differences between other seniority groups and 'self-confidence in being influential'. In other words, the employees with 0-5 years of service have less tendency to helplessness since they are relatively newer in public sector than those with 6-10 years of service and the level of helplessness will rise in response to the increase in the length of service. Thus, helplessness emerges in 6-10 years of service.

Factor 2, F= 0,852; Sig. 0,495 in the Samsun sample

F= 2,502; Sig. 0,045 in the San Diego sample

As is seen above, we have found a relationship between length of service and 'self-confidence in changing public administration system'.

Factor 3, F= 1,111; Sig. 0,354 in the Samsun sample

F= 3,324; Sig. 0,012 in the San Diego sample

For the San Diego sample, the employees with 0-5 years of service is 0,65222 points above those with 11-15 years of service in terms of 'desire to make an effort'. Thus, the employees with 11-15 years of service are less desirous to make an effort than those with 0-5 years of service and their level of helplessness is naturally higher. This result shows that the level of helplessness will rise in response to the increase in the length of service for some seniority groups.

Factor 4, F= 0,318; Sig. 0,865 in the Samsun sample

F= 0,719; Sig. 0,580 in the San Diego sample

Factor Differences in Level of Education

We have used one-way ANOVA for determining whether there are differences between the employees' levels of education in terms of the 5 factors. For the Samsun sample, analysis results have showed that H_3 hypothesis– suggesting there are significant differences between public servants with different levels of education in terms of 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'desire to make an effort', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system' and 'desire to participate in decision-making'– is unconfirmed. However, H_3 is confirmed in terms of 'desire to search for alternative

methods and practices'. As for the San Diego sample, analysis results have confirmed H_3 hypothesis– suggesting there is a significant difference between public servants with different levels of education in terms of 'self-confidence in being influential at the office' and 'desire to make an effort'–. However, H_3 is unconfirmed in terms of 'self-confidence in changing public administration system'.

Factor 1, F= 2,004; Sig. 0,116 in the Samsun sample

F= 9,568; Sig. 0,000 in the San Diego sample

The table of the San Diego sample shows there are significant differences between bachelors and high-school graduates, between post-graduates and high-school graduates, and between post-graduates and bachelors. Bachelors are 0,64468 points above high-school graduates, post-graduates 1,20849 points above high-school graduates and post-graduates 0,56382 points above bachelors. Thus, high-school graduates are less self-confident in being influential at their positions than bachelors and postgraduates. Furthermore, bachelors are less self-confident than post-graduates and are more prone to helplessness. We have found no significant differences in other education groups in terms of being influential at their positions. This results shows there is a significant relationship between the level of education and learned helplessness in some groups and; the higher the level of education the lower the level of helplessness.

Factor 2, F= 1,292; Sig. 0,279 in the Samsun sample

F= 1,096; Sig. 0,353 in the San Diego sample

Factor 3, F= 0,852; Sig. 0,495 in the Samsun sample

F= 2,887; Sig. 0,038 in the San Diego sample

The table of the San Diego sample shows there is a significant difference between post-graduates and high-school graduates in terms of 'desire to make an effort'. Post-graduates are 0,65709 points above high-school graduates. Thus, high-school graduates are less desirous to make an effort than post-graduates and they are more prone to

helplessness. We have found no significant differences in other groups in terms of 'desire to make an effort'.

Factor 4, F= 0,5221; Sig. 0,002 in the Samsun sample

The table of the Samsun sample shows there is a significant difference between bachelors and primary school graduates in terms of 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices'. Bachelors are 1,04122110 points above primary school graduates. Thus, primary school graduates are less desirous to search for alternative methods and practices than bachelors and they are naturally more prone to helplessness. We have found no significant differences in other education groups in terms of 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices'.

The results obtained in the two samples indicate that there is a relationship between some education groups and learned helplessness and helplessness will decrease as the level of education gets higher. Furthermore, their potential for being influential in public administration system increases correspondingly.

Factor 5, F= 0,215; Sig. 0,886 in the Samsun sample

Factor Differences in Age

We have used one-way ANOVA for determining whether there are differences between the age groups in terms of the 5 factors. Analysis results have showed that H_4 hypothesis– suggesting there are significant differences between different age groups in terms of 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system', 'desire to make an effort', 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices' and 'desire to participate in decision-making'– is unconfirmed. One-way ANOVA results show there are no significant differences in terms of all factors. However, the analysis results of the San Diego sample have confirmed H_4– suggesting there are significant differences between public servants in different age groups, in terms of 'self-confidence in being influential at the office' and 'desire to make an effort; and H_4 is unconfirmed in terms of 'self-confidence in changing public administration system'–.

Factor 1, F= 2,198; Sig. 0,072 in the Samsun sample

F= 5,482; Sig. 0,000 in the San Diego sample

The table of the San Diego sample shows there is a significant difference between those at the age of 56+ and of 26-35, and between 56+ and 36-45 in terms of 'self-confidence in being influential at the office'. The 56+ age group is 0,76316 points above the 26-35 age group and 0,83617 points above the 36-45 age group. Thus, the employees in the 26-35 and 36-45 age groups have weaker self-confidence in being influential at the office than the 56+ age group and they are more prone to helplessness. We have found no differences between other age groups and 'self-confidence in being influential at the office'. This result indicates that the employees in the 56+ age group believe they can be more influential at the office probably because they are closer to retirement than any other age group.

Factor 2, F= 1,244; Sig. 0,294 in the Samsun sample

F= 2,228; Sig. 0,69 in the San Diego sample

Factor 3, F= 0,852; Sig. 0,495 in the Samsun sample

F= 3,003; Sig. 0,020 in the San Diego sample

As for the San Diego sample, the 56+ age group is 0,57379 points above the 36-45 age group. In other words, the employees in the 36-45 age group are less willing to make an effort and suffer from higher helplessness than those in the 56+ age group. We have found no differences between other age groups and 'desire to make an effort'.

Factor 4, F= 0,318; Sig. 0,865 in the Samsun sample

Factor 5, F= 0,719; Sig. 0,580 in the Samsun sample

Factor Differences in Gender

We have performed T-test for determining whether there are differences between male and female employees in terms of the 5 factors. Analysis results have showed H_5 hypothesis –suggesting there are significant differences between male and female employees in terms of 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'self-confidence

in changing public administration system', 'desire to make an effort', 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices' and 'desire to participate in decision-making'– is unconfirmed. According to the T-test results, there are no significant differences between the two gender groups in terms of all factors. Similarly, analysis results of the San Diego sample have showed H_5 hypothesis is unconfirmed in terms of the 3 factors– 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system' and 'desire to make an effort'. Thus, gender differences have no determining roles in helplessness.

Factor 1, Sig. 0,059; Sig.2- tailed 0,988 in the Samsun sample

Sig. 0,144; Sig.2- tailed 0,805 in the San Diego sample

Factor 2, Sig. 0,072; Sig.2- tailed 0,669 in the Samsun sample

Sig. 0,264; Sig.2- tailed 0,947 in the San Diego sample

Factor 3, Sig. 0,726; Sig.2- tailed 0,251 in the Samsun sample

Sig. 0,953; Sig.2- tailed 0,627 in the San Diego sample

Factor 4, Sig. 0,269; Sig.2- tailed 0,650 in the Samsun sample

Factor 5, Sig. 0,157; Sig.2- tailed 0,503 in the Samsun sample

CONCLUSION

Response average of all items shows the mean of the Samsun sample is 2,93 whereas that of the San Diego sample is 3,15. Thus, the level of learned helplessness is higher in the Samsun sample and we have found no evident helplessness symptoms in the two samples.

Factor analysis has formed 5 factors in the Samsun sample and 3 in the San Diego sample. For the Samsun sample, the longest distance from helplessness is in 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', and it is followed by 'desire to participate in decision-making', 'desire to make an effort', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system' and 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices', respectively. In other words, the biggest tendency to helplessness in the personnel of the

Metropolitan Municipality of Samsun is in 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices' and the smallest is in 'self-confidence in being influential at the office'. As for the San Diego sample, the longest distance from helplessness is in 'self-confidence in being influential at the office' and it is followed by 'desire to make an effort' and 'self-confidence in changing public administration system', respectively. In other words, the employees of San Diego are more self-confident in being influential at the office than in changing public administration system. This result indicates that helplessness is attributed to public administration system rather than internal factors. In the context of the attribution theory, the employees attribute failure to external factors and, by this way, they avoid individual helplessness.

The factor analysis results as to whether there are differences in position, length of service, education, age and gender in terms of the 5 factors are as follows:

1. There is a significant difference between position and the three factors– 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system' and 'desire to make an effort'–. Thus, being a manager or non-manager affects learned helplessness.
2. There is a significant difference between length of service and the three factors– 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system' and 'desire to make an effort'–. Thus, length of service affects learned helplessness.
3. There is a significant difference between level of education and the three factors– 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'desire to make an effort' and 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices'–. Thus, level of education affects learned helplessness.
4. There is a significant difference between age and the two factors– 'self-confidence in being influential at the office' and 'desire to make an effort'–. Thus, age affects learned helplessness.

5. There is no significant difference between gender and the three factors– 'self-confidence in being influential at the office', 'self-confidence in changing public administration system' and 'desire to make an effort'–. Thus, gender has no effect on learned helplessness.
6. In the Samsun sample, we have found no significant difference between 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices' and position, length of service, age and gender. Similarly, there is no difference between 'desire to participate in decision-making' and position, length of service, age and gender. We have found a significant difference only between 'desire to search for alternative methods and practices' and education.

In conclusion, we have found no remarkable tendency to learned helplessness in the employees of the Metropolitan Municipality of Samsun and of the City Management of San Diego. However, we have confirmed the existence of a relationship between learned helplessness and position, length of service, education and age. Furthermore, we have found no sufficient evidence for the relationship between helplessness and gender.

Further studies should discuss learned helplessness more extensively at different institutions in different countries since the present research is the first applied study on the learned helplessness question in public administration.

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