The Effect of Competition on Moral Development: A Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to determine teachers' perspectives on school competition and its effects on moral development. The research is qualitative and employs the phenomenological methodology. Personal interviews using a semi-structured interview form were utilized to collect the data for the study. The research's study group consists of 12 teachers with advanced degrees who work in Van. Content analysis was used to analyze the research data. In accordance with the findings of the study, the participants equated Competition with the type of Competition with another and emphasized the negative aspects of Competition in the study. According to the findings of the study, Competition prevents students from realizing their full potential, skills, and talents. In addition, it disrupts friendships and causes students to experience emotional difficulties, which negatively impacts moral development. Although Competition in schools is viewed as a useful motivator, it causes students to experience stress.

1. Introduction

Individuals are more competitive with one another and with themselves as a result of advances in technology and social mobility. There are two types of competition, defined as the race to improve and achieve superior outcomes. One is competing with oneself, while the other is competing against someone else. Being competitive with oneself can be advantageous. This is due to the fact that when you compete with yourself instead of other people, you can evaluate yourself and your actions, which can be used to make you more successful. The second type of competition, competition with another, is frequently harmful and undesirable. People frequently associate competition with the second meaning, and many people experience the second type of competition in their daily lives. However, competing with others has numerous social, academic, and moral drawbacks.Because humans are social beings who require love and approval from others as much as they require food and water to survive.According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a sense of belonging and affection are among the most fundamental requirements for survival. During adolescence, a sense of belonging, loving, and being loved are achieved primarily through friendships. Therefore, it is beneficial for students to have supportive friendships during this time. Students with strong friendships are more socially and academically successful. In order for students to make friends and not feel alone (Bilgic, 2000; Ladd & Fiske, 2003; Polat, 2019), they must engage in group activities.Today, the friendly relations, which are vital for socializing, can be destroyed due to competition. Because establishing and developing a good friendship requires minimal competition (Öztürk, 2016). Although there are factors such as gender and personality in competitive attitudes and behaviors, competitive parental attitudes are more effective on children's

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competitive attitudes (Akkaya, 2008). In other words, parents' ambitions spark students' competitiveness (Khadjavi & Nicklisch, 2018). A child or adolescent competing with another is often deprived of peer support required for personality and moral development. When children cannot make friends, they experience psychological problems such as anxiety and depression. In addition, competition can disrupt moral development, this is because competition prevents the sense of belonging (Erden & Akman, 2012; Gilbert et al., 2009; Horney, 2020; Nelson & Dawson, 2017; Öztürk, 2016; Polat, 2019).

The system of values in the individual is formed within a developmental process. This process is also called moral development. According to Piaget and Kohlberg, moral development and cognitive development are parallel to each other. But some adults are cognitively mature but cannot grow morally. Because the progress of the calendar age is not enough for moral development. For moral development, experience and learning experiences should also be sufficient. The current conditions also positively or negatively affect the individual's moral development (Cantador & Conde, 2010).

For this reason, the adults in the school must have experiences that are as rich as possible in terms of values. According to Piaget, 11 years and later, and according to Kohlberg, 14 years and later is a period when an individual is cognitively ready to reach the highest moral level. Therefore, the individual needs a positive environment and appropriate models (Erden & Akman, 2012). Competitive educational environments today may hinder moral development and raise adults who are immature in terms of values for tomorrow. Because competitive parental attitudes, competitive teacher behaviors and the current system can not provide rich experiences to the adolescence period, which is important in terms of moral development, and negatively affect the moral development of the adult. In this period, the individual needs healthy friend relations, a correct parent and teacher attitude and behavior. Competition not only disrupts friendship relations but also damages the cooperation and solidarity that should be among friends by causing unwanted emotions such as grudge, hatred, jealousy, and anger. Moral maturation requires a positive environment, competition which can often be achieved in an environment where competition is as minimal as possible and with values-rich lives (Akkaya, 2008; Erden & Akman, 2012; Öztürk, 2016).

Nowadays, competition is transferred from teachers to students in the school environment and in families, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously.This is generally done so the student gains a good school by increasing academic success. In particular, children of parents with high competitive attitudes also have highly competitive attitudes (Akkaya, 2008). Although this situation sometimes provides academic success in the short term, there may be decreases in the long term. However, things that are as important as the decline of academic success can be damaged. The moral development of students can be seriously damaged by competition. Because competition can disrupt friendship relations. However, friendship relations are important for the life and social relations of the individual, especially the student. Friendship is where adolescents learn about life, and the experiences gained in the friendship relationship serve as a guide for later experiences (Polat, 2019). For the young person who does not yet know life, competition in friendship relationships, damaged by competition, can hurt the sense of belonging, love and being loved, and also lead him to believe that the world is full of unreliable people. A person who has problems trusting others may feel lonely, depressed, anxious and unhappy because he cannot establish closeness with others.In addition, the person turns into someone who constantly thinks about himself in his social relations, is self-centered, jealous, holds grudges and exhibits anti-social behaviors (Adler, 2010; Juffer, Stams & Ijezndoorn, 2004; Neves, 2018). Because in competition one person's victory is another's defeat, there is hostility in any intense competition (Horney, 2017). However, if students are competing with themselves, they will not see their friends as opponents, so friendship relationships will not be damaged by competition. For this reason, it is important to investigate the opinion of teachers, who have an important influence on the formation of a competitive environment or on the development of competition in another way (Polat, 2019). The aim of this research is to find out the teachers' opinion about the impact of competition in educational environment on students' moral development.

2. Methodology

2.1.Research Model

In this study, the phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. The phenomenological pattern is used in situations where individuals are aware but do not have in-depth and

detailed information about the phenomenon (Özet, 2014; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In the world we live in, phenomena appear in various forms. These can be any event, experience, perception, orientation, concept or situation. Although these phenomena are encountered daily, they may not be fully understood. Phenomenology is used to investigate the facts that the individual is not completely unfamiliar with but cannot fully perceive (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Competition is a phenomenon we encounter in daily life that some of us don't have in-depth and detailed information about. Thus, the phenomenology design was preferred for the study. In this study, teachers' "competition" phenomenon was examined in detail.

2.2. Research Sample

In phenomenological studies, the phenomenon is studied by working with a group or individual who has experienced the phenomenon in every aspect (Özet, 2014; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Therefore, the sample size varies between 3-4 people and 10-15 people. The sample must be a heterogeneous group (Özet, 2014). This research was designed in the phenomenological model. Since this study aims to determine teachers' opinions about the concept of "competition", the study group of the research was chosen by criterion sampling of purposeful sampling. Persons with research characteristics in the criterion sample are selected as the study group (Büyüköztürk et al., 2008). For this research, opinions were received from 12 teachers working at different levels, from various branches and receiving postgraduate education in their field.

Table 1. *Branches of The Teachers in the Study Group*

Teachers	Branch
T1	Mathematics Teacher
T2	School Counselor
T3	Classroom Teacher
T4	Science Teacher
T5	Social Studies Teacher
T6	English Teacher
T7	Preschool Teacher
T8	Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge Teacher
T9	Chemistry Teacher
T10	Painting Teacher
T11	Turkish Language and Literature Teacher
T12	Philosophy Teacher

According to Table 1, one of the teachers taught mathematics, one was a school counselor, one was a classroom teacher, one taught science, one taught social studies, one taught English, one taught preschool, one taught religious culture and moral knowledge, one taught chemistry, one taught painting, one taught Turkish language and literature, and one taught philosophy.

2.3. Data Collection Tools and Procedure

Personal interview is the primary tool in phenomenological studies (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Since this study is a phenomenological research, the research data were collected by personal interviews. The authors created the semi-structured interview form based on relevant literatüre and prior knowledge. Expert views were taken to set it in cemen.

2.4. Data Analysis

The data of the study were collected through personal interviews with 12 teachers participating in the study. The interviews lasted nearly 20 minutes. During the interview, a voice recorder was used with the participants' permission. One of the twelve participants expressed his opinions in writing because he refused to be recorded during the interview.The information in the semi-structured form and the recordings and were deciphered. The participants were represented as T and a number is given next to each participant's code.

Since this research tried to reveal the experiences and meanings of the teachers' views of theachers about competition, the content analysis technique was used for data analysis. The data collected through content analysis is summarized and interpreted under predetermined titles or themes. The data obtained can be organized according to the research questions or the information obtained during the data collection process

(Büyüköztürk vd., 2008; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In this study's content analysis, the primary categories were determined to be the questions asked of the participants about the competition.

2.5. Validity and Reliability

The following provision was made for the validity and reliability of the study:

- Experts were consulted while preparing the interview questions and form of the research.
- The questions on the form were attentively prepared regarding the general purpose and the sub-goals of the study.
- After the interview form was prepared, a pilot application was conducted with 4 teachers for content validity. According to the teachers, the number of questions is sufficient, and the questions are clear and understandable.
- During personal interviews, the participants were given enough time.
- Participants were warned by the researchers when they answered outside the scope of the question. In cases where the participants' statements were unclear, they were asked questions that required explanation.
- The data obtained in the study were coded independently by the researchers.
- After this process, Miles & Huberman's (2019) Reliability=consensus/ (consensus+disagreement) formula was used. With this formula, the number of consensus and disagreement of the researchers was determined.
- According to the authors (Miles & Huberman, 2019) , when the reliability exceeds 90 percent, the study's reliability is deemed to be provided. Providing a consensus (reliability) at this rate for this study was deemed adequate for the study's reliability.

2.6. Ethical

In this study, all rules stated to be followed within the scope of "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" were followed. Ethical Review Board Name: Van Yüzüncü Yıl University Ethics Committee. Date of Ethics Evaluation Decision: 25.05.2021 Ethics Assessment Document Issue Number: 2270.

3. Findings

In this section, the research findings are presented as subheadings of the questions posed to the participants.

3.1. Competition Description

Under this sub-heading, the participants were asked the following question: "How would you define competition?" Almost all of the participants defined competition as a race. Moreover, three competitionparticipants (T1, T4, T9) described competition as a race on academic success. Three competition participants (T3, T6, T10) described competition Competition to campaign for a tight rein on others or demonstrate strength or intellectual superiority over others. Three of the participants (T1, T7, T10) defined competition as trying to do better. Two of the participants (T2, T8) figured competition as an effort to be more successful than each other. One of the participants (T11) defined competition as a useful motivating force. Some of the participants' views were as follows:

> *"I think competition in schools means being the best in success and trying to be more successful than peers (T1)".*

> *"I define competition as a race among children for academic success. I only see it as a success because there is no evaluation of thinking skills in schools (T4)."*

> *"I see the competition as a struggle to be good, to try to show who does it better among people doing the same job (T7)."*

3.1. Competition Description

Under this sub-heading, the participants were asked the question: "Is competition necessary in educational settings? Why?". While the majority of the participants (T4, T7, T8, T9, T10, T12) stated that competitionin educational environments is not necessary for various reasons, other participants (T1, T2, T3, T5, T6, T11)

stated that although competition is necessary for some reasons, competition may have some negative effects. Therefore competition should be at a certain level.

Two of the participants (T4 and T9), who expressed the opinion that competition in educational environments is not necessary, said that competition causes learned helplessness in students with moderate or low academic success, thus not making an effort to be successful, and emotional dissociation among children.

In contrast, while one participant (T4) stated that the successful student did not share his lecture notes and information with his peers, another participant (T9) stated that although competition motivates good students, they do not exert more effort because they view themselves as competent, which causes them to remain below their potential despite their success.Two participants (T8 and T12) who stated that competition is unnecessary for the educational environment stated that competition causes negative emotions such as resentment, animosity, and jealousy among students. While another participant (T10) stated that competition stigmatized teachers and students, another participant (T7) argued that what must be done in educational environments is clear within the framework of the procedures, so competition is not required.

Four participants (T1, T5, T6 and T11) who stated that competition is necessary in the educational environment said that competition motivates students at the point of the study, but precaution should be taken in order to prevent negative feelings such as jealousy and hatred and that it does not harm friendship relations. In addition to these, one participant (T11) stated that competition is necessary for the student to see their own level of success. One participant (T2) said that although competition has positive aspects, if it is not carried out well, negative aspects can arise and in such a case, its disadvantages are more. While another participant (T3) said that people would try to do their best in competitive environments, he added that competition can be good or bad depending on its purpose. Some of the participants' views were as follows:

> *"I don't think it's necessary. I have been a teacher for 20 years, what I have observed is that only the successful students get the flavor of the competition. Others, the unsuccessful ones, feel a bit left behind. Only 30% of a class has competition and the others, ie 70%, say 'I can't be successful anyway' and lag behind. Especially high school students lag behind in terms of courses…. If the student enters the spirit of "I can't succeed, I can't compete", unfortunately this time he starts to quit. I also saw a handicap in successful students; … The student said, 'I am already successful. Even though I don't study, I'm already very successful in the classroom'. As such, he lags behind his performance (T9)."*

> *"Yes. I think it is necessary. Because without competition, students cannot see how successful they are and what they have achieved. Consequently, students cannot realize how hard to study and what to do. Interpersonal competition is necessary to develop important social skills, awareness, and self-education. This is because When the student sees someone better than himself, he can realize how inadequate he is, and in this way, he may need to study more (T11)."*

3.2. The Effect of Competition in School

Under this sub-heading, the participants were asked the following question: "What do you think reflections on competition in school?". While five participants (T1, T2, T5, T7 and T8) stated that competition had both positive and negative aspects, another five participants (T3, T4, T9, T10 and T12) stated that the reflections of competition on education are negative. Two participants (T6 and T11) stated that the reflections of competition on education are positive.

According to one of the participants (T1), competition motivates the student for academic success but hinders the formation of new friendships. According to another participant (T2), competition is to create alternatives because educational institutions compete with each other. On the other hand, competition has negative aspects; for example students from a low socioeconomic culture or with a low level of readiness cannot compete with their peers receiving good education. Students are labelled as 'academic' or not, 'bright' in competitive education too. According to another participant (T5), the reflections of competition on education are positive in terms of motivating the student and increasing their interest in the lesson; However, it is also a negative situation that it causes negative feelings such as grudge, hatred and jealousy among students.

Another participant (T7) stated that the reflections of competition on education are more positive, and that the competitive environment motivates and excites students. However, he added that sometimes the competitive

environment wears out the student emotionally. Another participant (T8) said that the reflections of competition on education are minimally positive and increase success, but mostly it has negative reflections and harms social relations, academic success and moral behaviors.

Four participants (T4, T9, T10 and T12)stated the reasons such as labeling the student as good or bad, hindering moral development, causing hatred and enmity among students, removing students with poor success from the competition, preventing cooperative behavior as negative reflections of competition. One of the participants (T3) said that there is no competition among students, but there is competition among parents and this reflects negatively on the educational environment. She stated that the competition among parents puts teachers under psychological pressure and reduces the efficiency of the teacher. She also added that there is a competition among teachers and this competition is an obstacle to teachers' collaborative work.

Two participants (T6 and T11) stated that competition is positive because it motivates students. In addition, one participant (T11) stated that competition is positive, but students do not compete with each other because they no longer have any concerns about being successful in educational environments. Some participant views on the subject are as follows:

> *"The positive reflections are very nice. Competition increases success in class. Competition increases interest in the lesson. Especially if a successful student answers a few questions correctly or a successful class gets high grades in a few exams, others are motivated. But if we think of it as a negative aspect, we can see that this can lead the student to ambition, cause jealousy or cause bad feelings, and sometimes we can see them. For example, I saw a student cry when she failed in class (T5)."*

> *"Children love the competitive environment. Kids love to fight each other, to compete, who won and who didn't. But some kids may be upset that their friend finished before they did. Some children may even cry because they do not understand this subject very well (T7)."*

> *"Competition is defined that students race each other to gain academic success (T9)."*

3.3. The Reflections of Competition on Moral Development

Under this sub-heading, the participants were asked the following question: "How would you evaluate the reflections of competition on moral development?". While almost all of the participants stated that competitionnegatively affects moral development, two participants (T1 and T11) said that there is no relationship between competition and moral development.

Three of the participants (T2, T9 and T10) who said that competition has negative effects on moral development stated that moral values cannot be given in a competitive environment. In addition, two participants (T3 and T9) said that competition disrupts peer relations and causes peer bullying. Three participants (T4, T5 and T12) stated that competition creates negative emotions such as jealousy, grudge and hatred, and the child becomes selfish and therefore does not share.One participant (T6) stated that moral development was negatively affected as competition led to behaviors such as cheating, crushing his friend, and seeing himself superior to others. Two participants (T7 and T8) stated that competition harms the child's self-esteem.

Two participants (T1 and T11) stated that they could not establish a relationship between competition and moral development. In addition, one participant (T1) stated that competition damaged the values necessary for new friendships, as it caused jealousy among some successful students in the classroom environment, and thus new friendships could not be established. Some participant views on the subject are as follows:

> *"Morally, the child becomes selfish. He learns not to share with his friend. If I share my knowledge, my friend will get ahead of me, he thinks. If there is something good, he does not direct his friend. He tries so that his friend does not hear, learn or know. Therefore, moral values such as sharing and tolerance are damaged. In addition, harmful emotions such as jealousy arise. Therefore, competition hinders moral development. Child becomes selfish. We don't want something like selfishness both in our daily life and in our education system. We want our students to learn to share, we want them to learn goodness (T4)."*

> *"I think that the effects of competition on moral development are not positive. As I said, when it turns into greed or when it turns into jealousy, unfortunately, competition can turn into immoral behavior such as not grading*

your friend, or sitting down and crying when his friend is successful. These can be negative when they turn into jealousy (T5)."

3.4. Competitive Learning Experiences and Moral Development

Under this sub-heading, the participants were asked the following question: "What kind of competitive experiences can we include in educational environments for moral development?". All of the participants made various suggestions.

Two participants (T2 and T7) suggested that the curriculum should be given according to the students' levels. In addition, a participant (T2) indicated that students should like the lesson, that schools should not be just a place for exam preparation, and that values-oriented studies should also be carried out. Two participants (T4 and T12) suggested that cooperative learning should be applied more in classrooms. In addition, one participant (T12) suggested that academicians and teachers should come together more to find solutions to school problems.

One participant (T1) suggested to teach values education/moral education in schools. To teach values, a different value should be taught each week, along with activities such as purchasing weekly magazines, creating weekly bulletin boards, reading stories to students about a determined value each week, and informing students about the value. Another participant (T3) suggested that nothing can be done in schools for moral values because parents constantly follow teachers negatively and interfere with their work, and therefore studies should be conducted on the psychological violence that parents inflict on teachers.

Another participant (T5) suggested that students be exposed to the biographies of successful and modest people, as well as successful and good friends in the real world. One participant (T6) suggested that students should feel a sense of accomplishment proportional to their level. Another participant (T8) suggested engaging in activities that foster self-love and self-awareness in students. She recommended encouraging students to compete with themselves. One of the participants offered various suggestions. He emphasized making efforts to discover the potential and talents in every child since primary school education. Instead of narrowing the school curriculum to focus on children's literacy, students explore lessons such as the arts and music. Moreover, primary school education should be "play based" like preschool education so that children explore a range of programs in self-expression skill. Primary school education should postpone literacy until 3rd Grade. Primary school teachers have assisting personnel at least for First and Second Grades. One of the participants (T10) suggested creating a climate of competition so that school administrators and families would be on a common platform. Another participant (T11) suggested that a student-centered education should be increased in practice and that the student would be able to socialize outside of school. Some of the participants' views were as follows:

"We cannot do anything in schools to prevent the harms of competition because we are faced with the parent barrier. The parent comes to school at the slightest warning we give to the child. They say you offended my child. Even when we send the child to the guidance service for a behavioral problem, they come the next morning and stand before us as to why you sent my child, there is no problem, and so on. Parents put serious psychological pressure on teachers. For the teacher to be beneficial to the student, studies can be carried out to prevent or reduce this psychological pressure from the parents (T3)."

"First of all, I want students to make peace with themselves. Students need to make peace with themselves and get to know themselves. We want him to think of the other party as someone else rather than because of ambition or someone who can turn him into competition at work and make peace with himself. Because most of the kids are offended with themselves. He competes with his peers because he doesn't like himself (T8)."

4. Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

According to the results of this study, which aims to determine the effect of competition in educational environments on the moral development of students, teachers have strong opinions about competition in schools. Some think it's bad and harms students' self-esteem, friend relationships, and sense of belonging. According to some theachers, competition in schools increases students' level of anxiety about their education, and so it causes learned helplessness. It causes negative emotions such as grudge, hatred and jealousy among

students. Besides, some think that competition causes undesirable behaviors such as lying, and cheating, this is because they consider that competition is the opposite of cooperation.

Some consider that it is both advantageous to students and necessary to their overall education. They think that competition in school inspires students and drives them to put forth their best effort. Competition attracts interest and passion within students. They consider that it is a useful motivating force. In addition, some theachers competition is important for the education system; but they state that competition in schools should be systematized, otherwise it will be benefical for students. However, the current education system and family attitudes are obstacles on the path to healthy competition, bringing out abilities, competencies, gifts, and creativity that may not have been uncovered through traditional classroom methods (Ignite School, 2019; Khadjavi & Nicklisch, 2018; ter Vrugte et all., 2015).

The theachers in the study defined competition as competition with another. Only one participant (T8) defined competition as the two types of competitions, with others and oneself. The theacher (T8) expressed her views according to both. The theacher (T8) stated*: "We don't want students to compete with others, because that damages students. However, we suggest students to compete with the self, because it helps students to develop in many aspects."* Although competition is categorized as self-competition and other-competition, many people associate it with other-competition, and select it (Apicella, Demiral & Mollerstrom, 2020; Bilgiç, 2000; Polat, 2019). How competition is defined is important. Because the equivalent of a concept in cognition is reflected in a person's behavior and relationships with others. Teachers' definition of competition with another person may be because they come across this type of competition in educational environments. The fact that teachers define competition as competition with another may also be a reason for them to talk more about the negativities of competition. Because the negative aspects of competition with another are more obvious than the positive aspects. On the other hand, self-competition is a springboard to be more successful (Gilbert et all., 2009; Horney, 2020; Öztürk, 2016). How competition in school is defined will shape students' mindsets and behaviours for the rest of their lives.

The majority of participants in the study stated that competition in educational settings generates negative emotions such as resentment, hatred, and jealousy, and that competition is unnecessary for educational settings due to issues with the acquisition of values necessary for social relationships. A participant (T4) who stated that competition caused an emotional separation among students claimed: *"A system dominated by rankings and grades makes 'failure' highly visible. A serious gap exists between the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and others in the competition This is not just an academic distance, but an emotional distance. The successful child neither shares his lecture notes with other students nor answers when the other student asks him about something he does not know. This type of behavior occurs. This causes emotional separation between children."* The participants, who stated that competition is necessary in educational environments, also stated that when not controlled, competition disrupts peer relations and causes various problems such as emotional problems. Studies in the literature have shown that competitive thoughts and behaviors are associated with depression, anxiety, stress and self-harm (Gilbert et al. 2009; Muñoz-Merino, 2014). In addition, it has been seen that overly competitive attitude harms peer relations (Sönmez, 2016).

According to the participants in the research, the reflections of competition on educational environments are predominantly negative. Although it is positive that competition motivates students academically, this motivation is only among successful students. Students with very good potential may be lost in the education process, even though they show medium and low level success. According to the teachers, if collaborative learning environments are provided, intermediate and low-level achievement students will reveal their existing potential and perhaps outperform the successful students. The participants stated that the level of awareness of every family in our country is not the same, that not every student has a similar socioeconomic background, and that the readiness level of each student is not the same, which eliminates the possibility of competing with better students and that the majority of students cannot be won in education. Competition in school prevents students from maximizing their true capabilities and potential. Besides the theachers stated that competition in the education system affects both social skills and academic standing in a harmful way. Successful students also stated that they consider themselves sufficient and remain below their potential. Studies in the literature show that successful students perform under their own success, and this is conceptualized as self-handicapping (Harris & Snyder, 1986; Midgley & Urdan 1995; Üzar Özçetin & Hiçduymaz, 2016; Zuckerman & Tsai 2005).

Participants in the study stated that competition negatively affects moral development. A participant (T6) who stated that competition has an aspect that negatively affects character development said: *Competition is negative if it pushes the student to misbehavior such as trying to beat his friend, cheating, and belittling his friend. It is certainly not moral. Of course, this will negatively affect him. It will affect the child's personality and the educational environment. So this creates problems among children. The feeling of 'you are better, I am worse' will also affect their personality morally. When we think about the competition at that point, it can be a bit of a problem."* In addition, the participants said that values such as sharing, tolerance, patience and respect are damaged when students compete with each other. In addition, they said that the self-esteem and perception of the person are negatively affected by the competitive environment. Therefore moral development is also negatively affected by this situation. They also stated that friendship relations, which are necessary for social life and form the basis of social life, are also negatively affected by competition. This result is similar to the literature. According to Piaget and Sullivan, the maintenance and quality of friendships are affected by the level of competition (Piaget, 1965; Sullivan, 1953). According to Adler (2010), the individual's desire to be the first and the desire to win make the person self-centered and anxious, leading to jealousy, grudge and hatred. In addition, it is thought that the negativities caused by competition will cause some mental problems later (Juffer et al., 2004).

To prevent the negative reflections of competition on moral development, it has been suggested to create environments in educational environments where students can express themselves and find the opportunity to get to know themselves. Ensuring that more student-centered practices are implemented in our educational environments will reveal the student's potential, and the negative reflections of competition will also decrease. It is considered important to implement more collaborative learning environments so that peer relations, which are an important tool in the child's socialization, are not adversely affected by competition. Because friendship relations that start with childhood affect his communication skills in his later life. Therefore, competition among children should be kept to a minimum (Öztürk, 2004; Sönmez, 2016). In addition, the expectations created for the student cause pressure on the student and lead the student to compete in a way that disrupts his peer relations and his own psychological health. Teachers who participated in the study suggested creating educational environments in the primary school's first, second, and third grades as a continuation of pre-school practices, as well as having a staff member assist the classroom teacher.

In the end, we were born with competitive natures, and it is clear that competition affects people in many ways (Sönmez, 2016; Verhoeff, 1997). Most of the participants in this study also expressed the negative effects of the competition they experienced in educational environments on moral development. Notwithstanding, if you take a long look at it, you will probably find out competition in the education system has both positive and negative aspects. It is important to remember that competition is not all bad, nor is it all good. Thus, when we should strike the correct balance, competition competitionwill be a healthy part of life to help us succeed (Ignite School, 2019; Tauer & Harackiewicz, 2004).

According to the experiences shared by the teachers, the competition with one another in schools is at the forefront. Instead, studies need to examine the direction and reflection of the individual's competition with himself. Examining this competition type of competition competitionin future studies will give us more information about competition in our current education system.

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