EXAMINING THE QUALITIES OF THE HOMEROOM TEACHER/STUDENT
RELATIONSHIP.


A MASTER'S THESIS


BY


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THE PROGRAM OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
BILKENT UNIVERSITY
ANKARA


MAY 2012

# DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to a number of individuals, without whom I would never have been able to arrive at this point.

My parents for being bonkers enough to let me roam free at the age of 16 just to see what was going to happen next; who knew it would end up in a career?

Jeff Bower and Margaret Waterhouse of Woldgate College in the U.K. Jeff for being crazy enough to give me a job in the first place, and Maggs for helping me understand that being a form tutor is really the best part of what we do. Her passion and dedication to her students has always been an inspiration for me.

Finally, Khadijah. I could not have done this without you.

EXAMINING THE QUALITIES OF THE HOMEROOM
TEACHER/STUDENT RELATIONSHIP.


The Graduate School of Education

of

Bilkent University


by


Simon Williams


In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

EXAMINING THE QUALITIES OF THE HOMEROOM TEACHER/STUDENT
RELATIONSHIP.
Supervisee: Simon Williams

May 2012

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction.

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Asst. Prof. Dr. G. McDonald

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction.

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ABSTRACT

EXAMINING THE QUALITIES OF THE HOMEROOM TEACHER/STUDENT
RELATIONSHIP

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May 2012

The purpose of this case study was to examine the characteristics of the

student/homeroom teacher relationship at the Turkish Private School (TPS) in

Ankara, Turkey. The research questions focussed on examining the qualities of the

student/homeroom teacher relationship at TPS and the role that homeroom teachers

played in an evolving pastoral care programme. The participants consisted of 142

predominantly Turkish students enrolled in grades six through eight in the 2010 –

2011 academic year and 151 predominantly Turkish students during the 2011 – 2012

academic year. Sixteen of the students in these grades were from a different cultural

background. Homeroom teachers were predominantly international, mostly from a North American background, although there were a significant number of Turkish homeroom teachers. The questionnaire used to gather data consisted of 36 closed ended questions designed to illicit a response and specify the level of agreement or disagreement on a symmetric agree or disagree scale. The questionnaire used was adapted from 'A measure to assess student-instructor relationships' (Creasey, Jarvis, & Knapcik, 2009). The questionnaire was administered in May 2011, September 2011 and January 2012. Examination of the overall data suggests that the pastoral care programme at TPS is an effective one, with most students feeling connected to their homeroom teachers. Levels of anxiety were generally low. Homeroom teachers at TPS felt connected to their students and were working closely with their students to reduce stress and anxiety, however, the trend in the data seems to suggest a decrease in connectedness and an increase in anxiety over the academic year. The findings of this research suggest that the pastoral care programme at TPS could undergo a number of changes, to live up to its full potential.


Key words: homeroom teacher, student/teacher, relationships, Turkey, pastoral care, connectedness, anxiety, middle school guidance counsellor.

ÖZET


BAŞLIK


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Mayıs 2012

Bu vaka örneği araştırmasının amacı Ankara'da bir özel Türk okulunda öğrenci/sınıf öğretmen ilişkisinin özelliklerini araştırmaktır. Araştırma soruları TPS'teki öğrenci/sınıf öğretmenlerinin özelliklerinin çalışılması ve gelişen bir duygusal destek programında sınıf öğretmenlerinin rolü üzerine odaklanmıştır. Katılımcılar, 2010-2011 okul yılında altıncı sınıftan sekizinci sınıfa kadar olan sınıflardaki, çoğunluğu Türk öğrencilerden oluşan 142 kişi ve 2011-2012 okul yılında, çoğunluğu Türk olan 151 öğrencidir. Bu sınıflardaki öğrencilerin onaltısı farklı kültürlerden gelmektedir. Sınıf öğretmenlerinin, önemli sayıda bir kısmı Türk olmakla beraber, genellikle uluslarası öğretmenler olup çoğu Kuzey Amerika'dan gelmiştir. 36 kapalı uçlu sorudan oluşan anket cevap almayı ve simetrik bir aynı

fikirde ve aynı fikirde olmayan ölçek üzerinde anlaşma ve karşıtlık derecesini belirlemekte kullanılmıştır. Kullanılan anket 'öğrenci-öğretmen ilişkisini ölçümü' nden (Creasey, Jarvis, & Knapcik, 2009) uyarlamıştır. Anket, Mayıs 2011, Eylül, 2011 ve Ocak 2012'de uygulanmıştır. Bütün verinin analiz edilmesi sonucunda, TPS'teki duygusal yardım programının etkili olduğu, öğrencilerin çoğunun öğretmenlerine bağlı hissettikleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Endişe düzeyi genellikle düşük çıkmıştır. TPS'teki sınıf öğretmenleri, öğrencilerine bağlı hissetmektedirler ve öğrencilerle yakın çalışmanın stres ve kaygıyı azalttığını düşünmektedirler. Bununla birlikte verideki eğilim, akademik yıl ilerledikçe, bağlılıkta azalma ve endişede artışa işaret etmektedir. Bu araştırmanın bulguları göstermektedir ki, TPS'teki duygusal destek programının, tam gücüyle çalışabilmesi için, bir takım değişiklikler yapılması gerekebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: sınıf öğretmeni, öğrenci/öğretmen, ilişkiler, Türkiye, duygusal destek, bağlılık, endişe, orta okul rehber öğretmeni.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

Traditionally, teachers were viewed as transmitters of knowledge. They introduced their pupils to the information, skills, values and forms of behaviour that civilised societies had accumulated over several centuries (National Education Association, 1992). However, as societies evolved, so did the demands on teachers, from just being transmitters of information to becoming care givers, responsible for the development of the whole child within the educational environment. Teachers were trained to address the individual and collective social, emotional and academic needs of students in their care (Best, 2007). Pastoral care systems were also designed and implemented in school systems around the world to better meet the needs of the whole child (Carroll, 2010).

There are many variations in how pastoral care programmes are implemented in different schools as there seems to be no set model that is applicable to all educational systems (Calvert, 2009). In fact, researchers have debated the exact definition of a pastoral care programme (Pattison, 1993 as cited in Carroll, 2010). However, past research does agree that effective pastoral care programmes can greatly improve a child's academic, social and emotional experiences at school (Ang, Chong, Huan, Queck & Yeo; 2008; Best, 2007; Jones & Harrison, 1997). Central to pastoral care programmes around the world is the role of homeroom

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teachers (hereafter referred to as HRTs), who have been defined by some researchers as the cornerstone of a school community (Jones & Harrison, 1997). As pastoral care systems continue to evolve and grow, the role of the HRT is changing and becoming increasingly central to a school community (Liu & Barnhart, 1999). Administrators and parents rely on HRTs to support students as they go through their schooling years (grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, February 23, 2012), and the pupils themselves, having more responsibility for their own learning, rely on the guidance provided by the HRT in order to succeed (Griffiths & Sherman, 1991). The exact nature of this relationship between the HRT and students is difficult to define and there appears to be no single model, though research points to the relationship being warm, positive and non-judgemental (Best, 2007). It was the aim of this study to examine the relationship between the HRT and students, and the role of the HRT in an evolving pastoral care programme in a private, international school in Turkey.

## Background

Historically, the creation of the house system within boarding schools in the U.K. during the 1950s demonstrated that a culture of care for students could be developed within the boarding school system (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988). As students who were living away from home generally had little contact with parents or family, the head of house or house master/mistress would take on the responsibility for the health, well-being and social growth of those in his or her charge. This system was used widely in the private school sector and is extolled in many of the most famous books written

about private schooling – such as *Goodbye Mr Chips, Tom Brown's Schooldays* and Enid Blyton's *Mallory Towers* series (Garner, 2008). Lang (1999) highlighted the application of the public (and predominantly boarding) school model to state secondary schools after World War II, and the development of complex pastoral systems in secondary schools in the 1970s as a significant phase in the evolution of pastoral care as we know it today.

The need for the implementation of pastoral care programmes was also based on recognition of the fact that children spend up to ten hours hours a day, five days a week, for the majority of the year in school. As mandatory schooling was implemented in many countries around the world, teachers and other school personnel became the second most important (in some cases, even the primary) care givers in the lives of young people, and are now considered to be in an ideal position to observe and provide guidance (Best, 2007).

The concept of pastoral care, which first gained prominence in the United Kingdom (U.K.) and then spread to the rest of the world, has had varied definitions, requirements and components (Calvert, 2009). Section one of the 1988 Education Reform Act in the U.K. formalized the pastoral care duties of teachers and schools. This act stated that it should be the duty of all educators to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and to prepare such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (Education Reform Act, 1988).

In other countries, such as the United States (U.S.), pastoral care comes under the premise of counselling services, though the ultimate goal of supporting students and helping in their individual development remains the same. Schools in the U.S. are obligated to provide counselling services to students in the 12 to 18 age range. This is normally done by specialists, who have no teaching responsibilities, and is done outside of the classroom context. The focus of such counselling is the individual self-development of the student (Wahlstrom & Ponte, 2005).

In Turkey, the national educational system recognized the need to not only educate students in academics, but to also develop good people and good citizens (Dogan, 1998). In the mid 1950s, Turkey thus implemented counselling in schools, based largely on the American model, though at the time, counsellors were generally advising students only on career and educational choices. They were therefore more like college counsellors than those providing support on academic, social or emotional issues (Dogan, 1998).

The counselling system in Turkey has now been implemented for over 50 years, to the point that there are elementary and secondary school counsellors assigned to public schools (Dogan, 1998). The role of these counsellors grew as well, to also provide corrective and remedial support to students (Kuzgun, 1991, cited in Dogan, 1998), until in 2000, the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MEB) introduced mandatory guidance hours as part of the school day. To meet these requirements, activities and programs are developed to be taught by HRTs, generally classroom teachers (Dogan, 1998), under the supervision of the school guidance counsellor

(Erguner-Tekinalk, Leuwerek, & Terzi, 2009).

Past research (Calvert, 2009) suggests that there is no single model of pastoral care that is all encompassing. Support to students is provided in a variety of different ways, sometimes done by HRTs and at other times done by guidance counsellors (Wahlstrom & Ponte, 2005). Different school systems use varied models of pastoral care that are best suited to societies' individual needs. Independent schools modify and adapt these models to cater to their unique student populations (Johnson, 2009). While there may be no consensus on one model of pastoral care, past research documents the benefits of an effective pastoral care programme and the importance of the homeroom teacher (HRT) in the educational experience of students. Ang, et al. (2008) suggested that a good HRT/student relationship can help negate negative peer influences. Jones and Harrison (1997) found that an involved and concerned HRT could be vital to a student's academic and social well-being. Bryk and Driscoll (1988) did research on building school communities and found that homeroom teachers and pastoral care systems can help create "feelings of belongings" for the students.

**Problem**

The role of the HRT can be a central element to a student's social and academic growth and well-being. Research indicates that students who have a good relationship with their homeroom teacher attain greater academic and social success

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than students who do not (Liu & Barnhart, 1999). Jones and Harrison (1997) likened the HRT to a cornerstone of the school community.

Research in Turkey suggests that establishing an effective guidance programme in school and building collaborative relationships amongst stake holders has been difficult. Whilst the MEB has set guidelines, the implementation of these policies is still in its early days, and not without difficulties, as the exact roles and responsibilities of the guidance counsellors have not been well defined (Erguner-Tekinalk, Leuwerek, & Terzi, 2009).

Within the Turkish context, no model seems to exist in past research on how a pastoral care programme should be implemented in private, international schools. The Turkish Private School (TPS) in Ankara, Turkey, has implemented a pastoral care programme to meet the academic, social and emotional needs of every child enrolled in the school. This programme is also in keeping with the MEB guidelines on counselling. The HRTs are considered to be an integral part of this programme of pastoral care by the school administration as they meet with their students on a daily basis, and also implement the activities and lesson plans for the personal and social education (PSE) curriculum that are designed by the guidance counsellors, in keeping with MEB regulations (grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, February 23, 2012).

Given that the TPS itself is a relatively young school (founded in 1993), and that it was only in the 2010 – 2011 academic year that it came into the fold of the Turkish

MEB, the pastoral care programme at the TPS is constantly changing and evolving as teachers, counsellors and administrators make enhancements to the programme in an effort to reach out to the needs of all students. This is especially true for the grades six through eight cohort, for whom the pastoral care programme is considered to be a key component of the educational experience (grade six through eight principal, personal communication, February 21, 2012). However, no previous research has been done on the pastoral care programme at the TPS. Additionally, research on the characteristics of the HRT/student relationship, considered to be the primary basis for the pastoral care programmes by Jones and Harrison (1997), in the international school context appears to be limited.

## Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the characteristics of the HRT/student relationship at the TPS. The role of the HRT as an integral part of the pastoral care programme at the TPS was also examined. Models of best practice, as stated in research, were considered so that changes, if necessary, may be made to the TPS' programme of pastoral care, to better address the needs of the whole grade six through eight student body.

## Research questions

The main questions studied during this research were:

1.      What are the qualities of the relationship that a HRT has with his/her students

at the TPS, in terms of connectedness and does this vary dependent upon:

- Gender

- Grade level

- Student nationality HRT nationality

2. What are the qualities of the relationship that a HRT has with his/her students at the TPS, in terms of anxiety and does this vary dependent upon:

- Gender

- Grade level

- Student nationality HRT nationality

3. How do the principal and guidance counsellor perceive the relationship of the HRT with his/her students?

4. What expectations do the principal and guidance counsellor have of the HRT's role at the school?

## Significance

Pastoral care is a holistic approach by which the school attempts to meet the personal, social, emotional and intellectual needs of every pupil, in order that each might participate fully and gain maximum benefit from everything that the school has to offer (Hamblin, 1978). Countries like the U.K. have developed major policy changes regarding children and their care over the last few years in recognising the central role of counselling and a pastoral care programme (Every Child Matters,

2003). The Turkish Republic has also implemented guidance activities and the personal and social education curricula to meet the needs of the whole child (Erguner-Tekinalk, et al. 1998).

Homeroom teachers are often considered to be the most important component of pastoral care programmes, and are seen as being key to building school communities (Bryck & Driscoll, 1988; Jones & Harrison, 1997). Liu and Barnhart (1999) proposed that the relationship that exists between students and HRTs is an intimate one, and that it contributes positively to the learning environment. This is supported by the work of Creasey, Jarvis and Knapcik (2009), who found that positive teacher/student relationships are an important component for success at school.

The pastoral care programme at the TPS and its central role in grades six through eight has been a way for administrators and teachers to reach out to the needs of all students. The characteristics of this HRT/student relationship could be viewed through this lens. This study thus aimed to examine the relationship between the HRTs and their students, as perceived by the students and the HRTs themselves, focusing on grades six through eight. The role that an HRT plays in the implementation of the pastoral care programme for grades six through eight at the TPS was also examined.

# Definition of terms

**TPS:** Turkish Private School

**HRT:** Homeroom Teacher. A term widely used across in the U.S.A. The homeroom teacher is considered to provide pastoral care for their students (Webster's Online Dictionary).

**MEB:** The Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Turkey (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı).

**Pastoral care:** A holistic approach by which the school attempts to meet the personal, social, emotional and intellectual needs of every pupil, in order that each might participate fully and gain maximum benefit from everything the school has to offer (Glasgow City Council Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers, Circular 6, April 2004).

**PSE:** Personal and Social Education. A planned programme to help children and young people develop fully as individuals, as members of families and social and economic communities (grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, March 7, 2012).

**House system:** The word 'house' refers only to the grouping of pupils. Historically

associated with public schools in the United Kingdom (Garner, 2008).

**TPS MSLT:** Middle School Leadership Team at the TPS. Comprising of three grade coordinators, the middle school counsellor and both the international and Turkish grade six through eight principals.

**Feelings of belonging:** Described, for middle school students, as the ability to connect with and receive support and guidance from peers and/or teachers, as well as being involved in school activities (Nichols, 2006).

**Connectedness:** Connectedness may be described as becoming close to others. Connectedness is a students' response to feelings of relatedness and belonging (Karcher, Holcomb & Zambrano, 2006).

**Anxiety:** The quality or state of being anxious; uneasiness or trouble of mind about some uncertain event; solicitude, concern. (Oxford English Dictionary).

# CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As the role of education has developed from transmitting knowledge to a more student centred approach, catering to students' academic, social and emotional needs, researchers have highlighted the importance of relationships between students and teachers (Best, 2007). The existence of a good teacher/student relationship allows students to feel connected to the school and the community, and to feel valued as members of it (Kim, Solomon, & Roberts, 1995). According to Riley (2009), the development of the teacher/student relationship lessens anxiety, which is a psychological and physiological state brought on by stress. This leads to a greater level of student enjoyment of the school and so helps to develop a greater feeling of belonging to the school community. Riley (2009) went on to draw attention to those students who feel a great deal of anxiety; he noted that this anxiety can be lessened by mutual interdependence and the development of the teacher/student relationship. Creasey, Jarvis and Knapcik (2009) found that students who felt connected to their teachers did better academically.

In fostering better teacher/student relationships and to cater to the needs of the whole child, many systems of education have included pastoral care programmes into their curriculum (Carroll, 2010). While there seems to be no consensus on what a pastoral care programme looks like (Calvert, 2009) or even its definition (Pattison, 1993 as cited in Carroll, 2010), researchers agree that effective pastoral care programmes can greatly improve a child's schooling experience, and thus contribute towards

becoming a better citizen in years to come (Ang, Chong, Huan, Queck & Yeo; 2008; Best, 2007; Jones & Harrison, 1997). Hamblin (1978) stated that pastoral care was a holistic approach to meet the personal, social, emotional and academic needs of all students. The Glasgow City Council defined pastoral care as promoting and safeguarding the health, welfare and safety of pupils, working in partnership with parents, support staff and other professionals, providing advice and guidance to pupils on issues related to their education and contributing towards good order and the wider needs of the school (Glasgow City Council Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers, 2004).

The homeroom teacher (HRT) is central to the pastoral care programme; Jones and Harrison (1997) described the HRT as the corner stone of a school community. Bryk and Driscoll (1988) underlined the importance of the diffuse role of the HRT and how it extends beyond the academic needs of the student. The HRT provides an anchor and support for the students, which is essential to the students academic and social well-being (Jones & Harrison, 1997). As the HRT is the main point of contact, students develop a greater sense of belonging within the community (Gewertz, 2007). This not only has a direct impact on the academic progress of the student, but this increase of intimacy is shown to have a positive impact on students' engagement and personalisation (McClure, Yonezawa, & Jones, 2010). Despite the change in perception between students in middle and high school towards the need for a HRT, somebody 'in loco parentis' can help negate a certain amount of negative peer influence (Ang et al., 2008). Lander (2009) agreed and identified that the personal relationship between the student and the HRT can contribute to eradicating the

insidious culture of bullying. Additionally, according to Lander (2009), the HRT can

assist in conflict resolution, not only between students, but also act as a mediator in

conflicts arising between a student and another teacher.

HRTs can increase the students' feelings of belonging in their class time by using

discussions and activities that allow for shared activities which strengthen social

relationships. Discussions and debate on ethical and moral issues allow for a greater

understanding of self, as students gain a deeper awareness of their own place within

their community (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988).

Previous studies provide no formalised or consistent research methodology in which

the HRT can build a relationship with his or her students (Johnson, 2009). However,

in most models of pastoral care, HRTs meet their students daily, for a slightly longer

time period than other teachers, and are therefore able to monitor the general health

and well-being of those in their care, as well as inquiring into the general life of the

students outside of the school (Liu & Barnhart, 1999). For students, this contact time

with a teacher who is, in essence, *'in loco parentis'* (Best, 2007) allows for the

building of a stronger relationship between the teacher and the student.

Past findings indicate that both quality and quantity of time are important factors in

how effectively an HRT and student can build a positive relationship (Jones &

Harrison, 1997; Zhang & McGrath, 2009). However, there seems to be no

prescribed time period suggested by researchers for the HRT and students to meet.

Gewertz (2007) advocated a model in which the HRT and students meet four times a

week, for 45 minute blocks. Jones and Harrison (1997) suggested daily meetings in

the morning, stating that the morning contact time between the HRT and the student could be more important than the teaching that takes place during the day. Jones and Harrison (1997) however, did not give details as to the amount of time devoted to this each morning. Researchers have also advocated that HRTs move up through the grades with their students throughout the students' compulsory educational experience (McClure, et al. 2010).

In the international school context no research was found that examined the HRT/student relationship, although, Zhang and McGrath (2009) pointed to a difference in the quality of the time that students spent with local and international teachers, suggesting that local teachers may have stronger relationships with their students than the more transient international teachers. Ang, et al. (2010) highlighted that teacher/student relationships depend on the setting in which these are to occur. Researchers stated that in schools in Asia, there is less time for purposeful teacher-student engagement and that students in such cultures may receive less individual time from their teachers.

Researchers do agree on the qualities of an effective HRT. Best (2007) stated that an HRT should be warm, non-judgemental and positive. Kim, et al. (1995) suggested that in addition to warmth, support and kindness are the vital personal qualities a HRT should possess. These qualities, combined with the desire to build a community of care through classroom activities and moral discourse helps students to participate as members of the wider school community (Lui & Barnhart, 1999).

In order to implement pastoral care programmes more effectively, Gewertz (2007) recommended that HRTs be trained to advise students both academically and on personal and emotional issues. Johnson (2009) suggested that without proper training, meaningful relationships between students and teachers would not be built. There appears to be debate on the matter of HRTs advising students, however, Williams and Wehrman (2010) put forth that guidance counsellors have been specifically trained to advise students on emotional and social issues, and it is these trained professionals who are in the best position to advise students, as opposed to HRTs. This is contrary to the work of Gewertz (2007), who advocated that HRTs could, with proper training, advise and guide students on academic, personal and emotional issues.

In terms of counselling students then, there appear, at the most basic level, to be two different models regarding who is in the best position to advise students (Wahlstrom & Ponte, 2005). In the American model, it is guidance counsellors who have time allocated to meet with the students in their care, and monitor these students' emotional, social and academic well-being. HRTs may exist in pastoral care or advisory programmes but the primary keeper of information about students is the counsellor. In the model followed by other educational systems, such as the one in the U.K. and in the Netherlands, it is the homeroom teacher (HRT) who is the primary keeper of information and who is trained to work with the students in all aspects (Best, 2007; Jones & Harrison, 1997; Wahlstrom & Ponte, 2005).

The Turkish model is based loosely on the American system, and the role of the

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guidance counsellor is relatively new (introduced in the 1950s), and under much debate (Dogan, 1998). Past research suggests that the role of the guidance counsellor in the Turkish context has not been defined clearly, and there is confusion amongst school staff as to who is best placed to advise students (Erguner-Tekinalk, Leuwerek, & Terzi, 2009). Erguner-Tekinalk et al. (2009) also point out that the profession of guidance counselling has no formally recognized requirements in Turkey. However, they cite previous research that stated that the majority of teachers in Turkey agreed that the current programme of counselling was more effective than the old clinical model that was retro active rather than pro active (Nazlı, 2002 in Erguner-Tekinalk, et al. 2009). No research was found on the role of the HRT in Turkish private, international schools in the available literature.

Regardless of which model is followed, and whether it is the HRT or the guidance counsellor who is the primary keeper of information about the students, there seems to be little debate in research about the value of building a school community and the ease with which the HRT/student relationship can contribute positively to this community. The building of a school community (Deal & Peterson, 1999) can encompass many differing facets. Bryk and Driscoll (1988) identified three components of a school community which they believe are the core elements to school organisation:

1. Values which are shared by the school community.

2. Shared activities.

3. Social relationships that embody an ethic of caring.

Bryk and Driscoll (1988) go on to point out that the importance of school traditions are key to a school's culture and its community. The idea that the strength of a school community can help attach students to the school is echoed by Kim, et al. (1995) who stated that when common goals can be worked towards and achieved, students would feel valued and have a greater sense of belonging. Bryk and Driscoll (1988) stated that the improvement of a school community is beneficial to students as it provides meaning. Their research indicated a significant decrease in negative aspects of student behaviour such as class cutting, dropping out, absenteeism and classroom disorder. There was also a significant increase in students' mathematics scores as well as students' general academic success when improvements in building a school community were being implemented. Other research suggested that this feeling of community can even mitigate the negative effects of socio economic status (Konishi, Hymel, Zumbo, & Li, 2010).

Ellerbrock and Kiefer (2010) highlighted the benefits of the house system as a model for building a school community. Implemented during the overhaul of the education system in the U.K during the 1950s, the house system has proven to be a strong element of pastoral care within a school, allowing for plenty of inter house competition and rivalry, as well as building social interactions and camaraderie (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988). This can involve a diverse range of events including sporting activities as well as competition in chess, drama, essays, and debating. Bryk and Driscoll (1988) stated that these common goals help to form smaller communities within the organisation and help to create feelings of belonging within the students.

In conclusion, then, it can be said that strong HRT/student relationships have a positive impact on a student's academic and emotional well-being. Such supportive relationships not only increase the students' sense of belonging to the school community but also enhance academic success, and promote social growth. A strong relationship between the student and the HRT can also negate some of the more negative aspects of school life, and reduce student anxiety. Thus, researchers agree that strong relationships between the HRT and students are beneficial to the academic, social and emotional well-being of the student. However, there appears to be no single, universally accepted model for pastoral care programmes in secondary schools and there is debate on the role and function of the HRT.

# CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

## Research design

As the aim of this research was to examine the relationship between students and

their homeroom teachers (hereafter referred to as the HRTs), a case study design was

thus chosen (Creswell, 2007). This illustrated a general 'instance in action' of a

bounded system (Alderman, Kemmis, & Jenkins, 1980), and allowed the

observation, in a real context, of the relationship between students and their

homeroom teachers at the Turkish Private School (TPS).

This research also produced secondary qualitative data, the use of which allowed an

exploration of the role of the grade six through eight TPS HRTs in implementing the

pastoral care programme. Questionnaires, school documentation, policies and

personal observation were used to identify themes.

## Context

The Turkish Private School (TPS) is a private, international school located in Ankara,

the political and administrative capital of Turkey. The school caters to the academic

needs of students from the age of four through eighteen from the local population, as

well as the children of the faculty who work at the local university, various embassies

and other industries. At the start of the 2010 - 2011 school year, the TPS also

became an accredited Turkish Ministry of National Education (MEB) school. Thus, work to align the international aspects of the school with national MEB requirements was an ongoing transformation at the time of this research.

Although the school is defined as being an international school, the majority of the students who attend are Turkish or are international Turks, those who are Turkish by citizenship but have lived abroad for a significant portion of their schooling. The instructional language is English, with the exception of Turkish social studies and Turkish language classes.

The secondary school is housed in one complex of joined buildings, accommodating students from grades five through twelve. Students in grades six through twelve and their teachers come under the purview of the TPS secondary school and under one principal, whose official title is Associate Director General of Secondary School (Figure 1). Students of grade five, also housed in this building, are part of the elementary school, and are administered by a different principal. These fifth grade students share only a physical space with the secondary school.

Figure 1: Command structure at the TPS

*Assistant Manager ** Manager
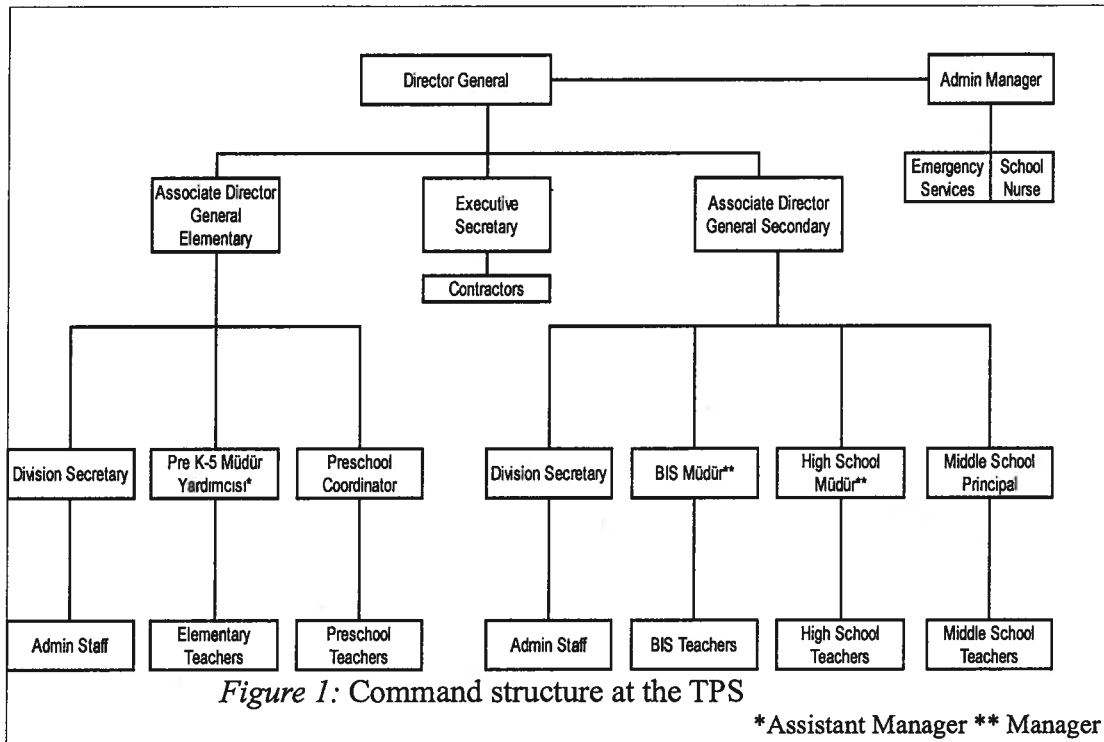
The secondary school is divided into two further units, the high school, which consists of grades nine through twelve, and the middle school, which is comprised of grades six through eight. These two divisions operate separately within the secondary school at the TPS, and have different academic timetables. A new middle school building was completed in the 2010 - 2011 academic year; while it is attached to the secondary school, most grade six through eight students have classes only in this new building. To a large extent, teachers only teach in one division.

The grade six through eight principal is effectively in charge of all aspects of grades six through eight, although under the rules of the MEB, he is only there to administrate for the international students. The Turkish students fall under the care of the Turkish grade six through eight manager (Müdür), as shown in Figure 1. They both work closely with the grade six through eight guidance counsellor, who

oversees the emotional health of the student body along with the grade coordinators. However, there was no written job description or outline of duties and responsibilities for either the grade six through eight principal, the Turkish grade six through eight manager or the grade six through eight guidance counsellor within TPS available for the staff employed during the academic year 2011 – 2012.

The job description for HRTs (Appendix A) was last revised in 2008 and is available to teachers on page 15 of the the TPS Secondary School Teachers Guide 2011 – 2012 (Costigan, 2011). The positions of both the grade six through eight and grade nine through twelve guidance counsellors are omitted from the published the TPS command structure as those roles were not in existence when the command structure was initially drawn up in 2009 (Figure 1). This command structure is part of the Emergency Quick Response Guide which is present in every room of the school. It contains teacher instructions and processes for eventualities such as biochemical incidents, physical assaults, and earthquakes. It was last updated on the 1st September 2009.

## Participants

The participants consisted of all grade six through eight students in the academic years of 2010 – 2011 and 2011 – 2012. Students in grade eight during the 2010 – 2011 academic year were only given the questionnaire once, as in the following academic year, these students had moved on to grade nine. Additionally, grade six students in the 2011 – 2012 academic year were not given the questionnaire in the

previous academic year as, at the time, these students were still part of the elementary school.

All student respondents are from households that have sufficient annual income to pay the school fees. The parents are generally professionals such as doctors, leaders of industry and university professors. The majority of the students are cared for appropriately with no signs of neglect, and most come from stable family backgrounds and enjoy a privileged lifestyle (grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, February 23, 2012). The students participate in a plethora of activities outside school, including private tennis coaching, film making and skiing. There are few instances of bullying or theft within the school, and the students are generally polite and well mannered.

In the 2010 – 2011 academic year there were 142 students in grades six through eight (Table 1), aged 11 to 14. Nine of these students were not Turkish students (Table 2) and thus were considered to be international students. There were 151 students enrolled in grades six through eight in the 2011 – 2012 academic year (Table 1). Sixteen of the students in these grades were from a different cultural background (Table 2).

Table 1

*Number of students grades six through eight, 2010 - 2012*

| Number of students 2010 - 2011 | Total | Females | Males | Number of students 2011 - 2012 | Total | Females | Males |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 6 | 41 | 19 | 22 | Grade 6 | 47 | 22 | 25 |
| Grade 7 | 58 | 24 | 34 | Grade 7 | 46 | 19 | 27 |
| Grade 8 | 43 | 16 | 27 | Grade 8 | 58 | 24 | 34 |
| Total | 142 | 59 | 83 | Total | 151 | 65 | 86 |

Table 2

*Nationality of students grades six through eight, 2010 – 2012*

| Nationality of students 2010 - 2011 | Total | Nationality of students 2011 - 2012 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| American | 3 | American | 9 |
| | | American/Italian | 1 |
| Finnish | 1 | Finnish | 1 |
| German | 2 | German | 2 |
| Iranian | 1 | Iranian | 1 |
| Japanese | 1 | Kazakhstani | 1 |
| South African | 1 | Norwegian | 1 |
| Turkish | 133 | Turkish | 135 |
| Total | 142 | Total | 151 |

TPS is a private school, with a small international student population. The international students frequently enter and leave the school as they are dependent upon the career demands of their parents or guardians. Thus, there are changes in students numbers at each grade level from year to year, as students leave and new students join the TPS community. This accounts for the differences in student numbers given in Tables 1 and 2.

Grades six through eight were divided into three approximately even sections (A, B, C) at each grade level (Table 3) for both academic years under study. Division into sections was based on citizenship, as all international students are placed in the same section (Section A) for ease of scheduling. The division of students was done by the grade six through eight principal as well the grade six through eight guidance counsellor, who also took inter-student relationships and gender equality into consideration. As students at these grade levels at the TPS are not tracked academically, streaming by ability was not a consideration in students being placed in different sections.

Table 3

*Division of students into sections, grades six through eight, 2010 - 2012*

| 2010 - 2011 | Section A | Section B | Section C | 2011 - 2012 | Section A | Section B | Section C |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 6 | $n = 13$ Females: 5 Males: 8 | $n = 12$ Females: 6 Males: 6 | $n = 13$ Females: 7 Males: 6 | Grade 6 | $n = 17$ Females: 7 Males: 10 | $n = 15$ Females: 7 Males: 8 | $n = 15$ Females: 8 Males: 7 |
| Grade 7 | $n = 18$ Females: 9 Males: 9 | $n = 20$ Females: 8 Males: 12 | $n = 20$ Females: 7 Males: 13 | Grade 7 | $n = 16$ Females: 7 Males: 9 | $n = 16$ Females: 7 Males: 9 | $n = 14$ Females: 5 Males: 9 |
| Grade 8 | $n = 13$ Females: 4 Males: 9 | $n = 17$ Females: 6 Males: 11 | $n = 11$ Females: 6 Males: 7 | Grade 8 | $n = 18$ Females: 9 Males: 9 | $n = 20$ Females: 8 Males: 12 | $n = 20$ Females: 7 Males: 13 |

Once assigned, students remain in that section for the entire school year. Students also remain with their class fellows within a particular section throughout the day. The only exceptions to this occur when students have chosen a different foreign language course, or when international students separate from the Turkish students in their homeroom for social studies and Turkish language.

Each section is assigned a homeroom teacher (HRT), who meets with the students on a daily basis, for 15 minutes before classes begin. The HRT, also a subject teacher at that grade level, meets with the students for a longer 40 minute personal and social education (PSE) lesson once a week on Tuesdays, as well as teaches that class at least two subject periods during the week. The description of roles and responsibilities of the HRT, as defined in 2008 by Costigan, are given in Appendix A (Costigan, 2011).

During the first round of data collection in the 2010 - 2011 academic year, only students from grades six through eight participated in this study. For the second and third rounds of data collection in the 2011 - 2012 academic year, the participants were the TPS students of grades six through eight and their administrators.

Teachers of the grades six through eight cohort are predominantly Turkish although there are a significant number of international staff, mostly from a North American background. The HRTs for the grades six through eight student body come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and are all certified to teach (Table 4).

Table 4

*Nationality of HRTs during the 2011 – 2012 academic year*

| Nationality of grade six through eight HRTs | Number of HRTs |
| --- | --- |
| American | 2 |
| Canadian | 1 |
| Nigerian | 1 |
| Singaporean | 1 |
| Turkish | 4 |

# Instrumentation

A questionnaire was used as the main instrument of data collection (Appendix B). This was adapted from 'A measure to assess student-instructor relationships' (Creasey, Jarvis, & Knapcik, 2009). This instrument was designed, tested and validated by Creasey, Jarvis and Knapcik (2009) on college students in the U.S. It was used in this study because of its relevance to examining the characteristics of the HRT/student relationship and its simplicity of language. Permission was received from the developers of this instrument for it to be adapted and used. The adaptation involved change of terminology (changing instructor to homeroom teacher), changing the seven point Likert scale to a five point Likert scale and replacing 17 questions used by Creasey, Jarvis and Knapcik (2009) that were not applicable to this study. These questions were replaced by other distractor question that were still on the topic of homerooms but were not part of the study. These distractor questions were used to prevent students from feeling that they were answering variations of the same question numerous times. As well, to encourage students to answer truthfully, care was taken to vary the response required by the use of both positive and negative statements, as done in past research (Atkinson, 2010).

The questionnaire (Appendix B) consisted of 36 closed ended questions designed to illicit a response and specify the level of agreement or disagreement on a symmetric agree or disagree scale. The range of one to five is designed to capture the intensity of their feelings for a given question (Burns & Burns, 2008).

Due to the age of the students in the study, a five point Likert scale was used, instead of the original seven. This gave students the sufficient choice over the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with a question being asked. A five point Likert scale provided a list of responses to the given questions and did not discriminate unduly on the basis of how articulate the respondents were due to their age or that most of the respondents' second language was English (Wilson & McLean, 1994).

Out of the 36 close ended questions, 19 focused on connectedness and anxiety, as related to the relationship between the students and their HRTs. The remaining 17 questions were distractors, asking students general questions about the TPS pastoral care programme.

Using this questionnaire, the scoring of the two categories was as follows: Student connectedness to homeroom teacher items: Questions 3, 6, 11, 12, 17, 21, 23, 29, 30, 35, and 36 (Appendix B). Higher scores denoted stronger feelings of connectedness and lower scores on this scale communicated avoidance or a tendency to eschew a close relationship with the HRT (Creasey, Jarvis, & Knapcik, 2009).

Student anxiety to homeroom teacher items: Questions 4, 5, 7, 8, 22, 25, 31, and 34 (Appendix B). Higher scores reflected a generalized anxiety regarding a relationship with the HRT, whereas lower scores reflected less threatening perceptions of this affiliation, thus seeing the HRT as parental or a figure of friendship rather than a figure of absolute authority (Creasey, Jarvis, & Knapcik, 2009).

Qualitative data, in the form of semi-structured interviews, was collected from the grade six through eight principal and the grade six through eight guidance counsellor. The questions asked were based on the main research questions of this study, and were designed by the researcher to gain an understanding of the grade six through eight principal and guidance counsellor's perceptions of the role of the HRT within the pastoral care programme. The questions asked are given later in this section. Follow-up interviews were held with both the grade six through eight principal and guidance counsellor to gain clarification of points raised during the initial interview.

**Method of data collection**

Permission was sought from parents (Appendix C) for students' participating in the study before administration of the questionnaire (Appendix B). The questionnaire had been approved by the MEB to ensure that the questions being asked were specific, age appropriate, and suitable for the research being carried out. This is also a requirement of Turkish law.

Student questionnaire responses were collected at three different intervals over the course of two academic years (2010 - 2012). Data were first collected in May 2011, near the end of the 2010 - 2011 academic year, when students were familiar with their HRT, having worked together for nine months (Table 5). The same questionnaire was administered in September 2011, at the start of the next academic year, when the students had been promoted to the next grade level, HRTs had

changed and a new cohort of grade six students had joined the middle school. The last set of data was collected in January 2012, when the students had had five months to become familiar with their 'new' HRT. These three significant months allowed data collection at varying intervals to identify emerging patterns.

These data, in the form of questionnaire responses, were collected from all students in grades six through eight. The student questionnaire (Appendix B) remained the same for all students participating throughout the data collection period.

Table 5

*Number of complete questionnaire responses returned by time of year conducted*

| Month Conducted | Number of completed responses returned |
|---|---|
| End of May 2011 (Academic Year 2010 -2011) | 126 |
| Beginning of September 2011 (Academic Year 2011 -2012) | 140 |
| Beginning of January 2012 (Academic Year 2011 -2012) | 128 |

As the questionnaire did not ask for the names of the students or their HRTs, guarantees of confidentiality, anonymity and non-traceability were present in the research. The students were made aware that the questionnaire was only to be used for their perception towards the questions asked and as such, the issue of non-maleficence was addressed.

The student questionnaire (Appendix B) was administered for the whole grade six

through eight cohort during three of their weekly PSE lessons. Students were asked to go to the TPS main auditorium and sit in their homeroom groups. The auditorium is a lecture hall with a stage at one end of the space and seating which rakes upwards towards the back end of the hall. They were asked to complete the questionnaire by circling the number that most closely corresponded to their opinion of that question. HRTs were present only at the beginning and assisted the researcher by handing out the questionnaires. Once they had been given to the students the HRTs left the hall and returned to their homerooms, thus minimising the impact that the HRTs' presence may have had of influencing student responses. As the students completed the questionnaires, they were brought to the edge of the stage and placed according to year group. Students then returned to their homerooms.

Semi-structured interviews were held with the guidance counsellor and the grade six through eight principal. The themes for the interview were as follows:
•How do the principal and guidance counsellor perceive the relationship of the HRT with his/her students?
•What expectations to the principal and guidance counsellor have of the HRT's role at the school?

### Method of data analysis

Only results from questionnaires that had complete information regarding gender and nationality were analysed. As these data were examined to see if student gender or nationality had an effect on the relationship between the student and HRT,

questionnaires that did not include this information were not used in data analysis. This resulted in 18 incomplete questionnaires over the data collection period being discarded. Students absent on the day of data collection also did not complete the questionnaires. A total of 412 questionnaires thus were collected, with complete data from 394.

A five point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire as past research suggested that a Likert scale yields valid estimates of true attitudes (Roberts, Laughlin & Wedell, 1999). This allowed students to feel that they had a range of answers to choose from, as used by Atkinson (2010). For data analysis, responses of numbers 1 and 2 were given a value of '1'. Responses of 4 and 5 were given a value of '0'. This was done to convert student answers into either positive or negative responses. As neutral items are avoided in Likert scales, students responded to any question by circling the midpoint 3 were not counted in the final data analysis as this indicated that the student neither agreed or disagreed with the question asked, as suggested by Roberts, Laughlin and Wedell (1999).

Some students circled the area between the numbers, indicating that their intensity of agreement or disagreement fell between two of the numbers offered. These responses were counted and given a value most appropriate to the numbers on either side. For example, if a student responded to a question by circling the area between 1 and 2 a value of '1' was given; conversely, a response between 3 and 4 was given a value of '0'.

The data collected shows the number of students who gave a positive response for each question. In reporting the data, the number of students who responded with a positive response are referred to in terms of the level of connectedness and anxiety experienced by the group. This allowed for examination of trends in the data. Thus, these data were not used to analyse the degree to which individual students agreed or disagreed with the questions asked, but to identify the number of students who agreed or disagreed.

These data were examined separately in the two areas of focus, connectedness and anxiety that the questionnaire was designed to elicit trends from the responses of the students. The responses for all questions asked were converted into electronic format and this information was then organised into three categories

•Student gender.
•Turkish or international student.
•Turkish or international HRT.

Responses were totalled and turned into percentages in the two areas of focus. These percentages were used to identify trends in the numbers of students who agreed or disagreed with the question asked over the data collection period. Means were used to further define trends, and standard deviations were calculated to deduce differences in the data.

To determine whether differences in responses were statistically significant, standard deviation (SD) was used. Generally, if the difference between the means is greater than the standard deviation, the difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Interviews from the grade six through eight guidance counsellor and the grade six

through eight principal were examined to determine emerging themes given earlier in this chapter. These themes were then compared to data obtained from the students. This identified any similar trends between student responses and those of other stakeholders to determine strengths of the pastoral care programme at the TPS.

# CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

With the aim of examining the relationship between the homeroom teachers (HRTs) and the students, data for this research were collected in the form of questionnaires completed by students from grades six through eight over the course of two academic years. The questionnaire was first given out in May 2011, at the end of the 2010 - 2011 academic year. It was then given out in September 2011, at the start of the 2011 - 2012 school year, and then again in January 2012, five months into the school year (Table 5).

As these data were collected over the course of two school years, the student body changed from the first time data were gathered to the next two data collection periods. In September 2011, there was a new cohort of grade six students who were asked about their relationships with their HRT. These grade six students were new to the pastoral care programme, having never previously had a HRT. Similarly, grade eight students from the 2010 - 2011 school year had moved up to grade nine, and were therefore excluded from the second round of data collection. Thus, while the total number of students who responded to the questionnaire at all three data collection periods remained approximately the same, about one third of the students who completed the questionnaire in September and January 2011 were different from those who completed it in May 2011.

In this questionnaire, which used a five point Likert scale to capture responses,

circling a '1' or '2' answer meant that students agreed or strongly agreed with the statement asked whereas a '4' or '5' indicated that the student disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. A '3' was not included in the final response, following the work of Roberts, Laughlin and Wedell (1999), who suggested that respondents who circled the midpoint 3 to any question indicated that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the question asked.

For the purposes of analysing these data, responses of numbers '1' and '2' were given a value of '1'. Responses of '4' and '5' were given a value of '0'. In these data, presented in this chapter, 'positive' corresponds to the number of students who agreed with the statement asked, and therefore had marked either a '1' or a '2' in the questionnaire. 'Negative' corresponds to the percentage of students who disagreed with the statement asked.

The statements asked were organized around two themes: connectedness and anxiety. Results from the student responses over the entire data collection period are thus presented by these themes.

The questionnaires collected generated data that could then be examined to elicit detailed information on how students felt at the three different data collection periods. However, for the purposes of this case study, only the broader trends and their implications will be examined as this gives a good overview of the HRT/student relationship at the Turkish Private School (TPS).

## Connectedness

Questions 3, 6, 11, 12, 17, 21, 23, 29, 30, 35 and 36 were related to connectedness

and asked students whether their relationship with their HRT was a source of comfort

to them. These questions are given in Table 6.

Table 6

*Questions relating to connectedness (adapted from Creasey, Jarvis & Knapcik, 2009)*

| Question Number | Question |
| --- | --- |
| 3 | My homeroom teacher is always concerned with the needs of his or her students. |
| 6 | It's not difficult for me to feel close to my homeroom teacher. |
| 11 | I feel comfortable sharing my thoughts with my homeroom teacher. |
| 12 | I find it relatively easy to get close to my homeroom teacher. |
| 17 | It's easy for me to connect with my homeroom teacher. |
| 21 | I am very comfortable feeling connected to my homeroom teacher. |
| 23 | I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my homeroom teacher. |
| 29 | I could tell my homeroom teacher just about anything. |
| 30 | I feel comfortable depending on my homeroom teacher. |
| 35 | If I had a problem in a class, I know I could talk to my homeroom teacher. |
| 36 | I know my homeroom teacher could make me feel better if I had a problem. |

These data relating to relationship connectedness were analysed, generally for all

students grades six through eight, and then further examined to see if grade level,

gender, nationality of the student, and nationality of the HRT was a factor in feelings

of connectedness when dealing with the HRT.

*Figure 2:* Results for students' positive responses to questions relating to connectedness throughout the three data sessions
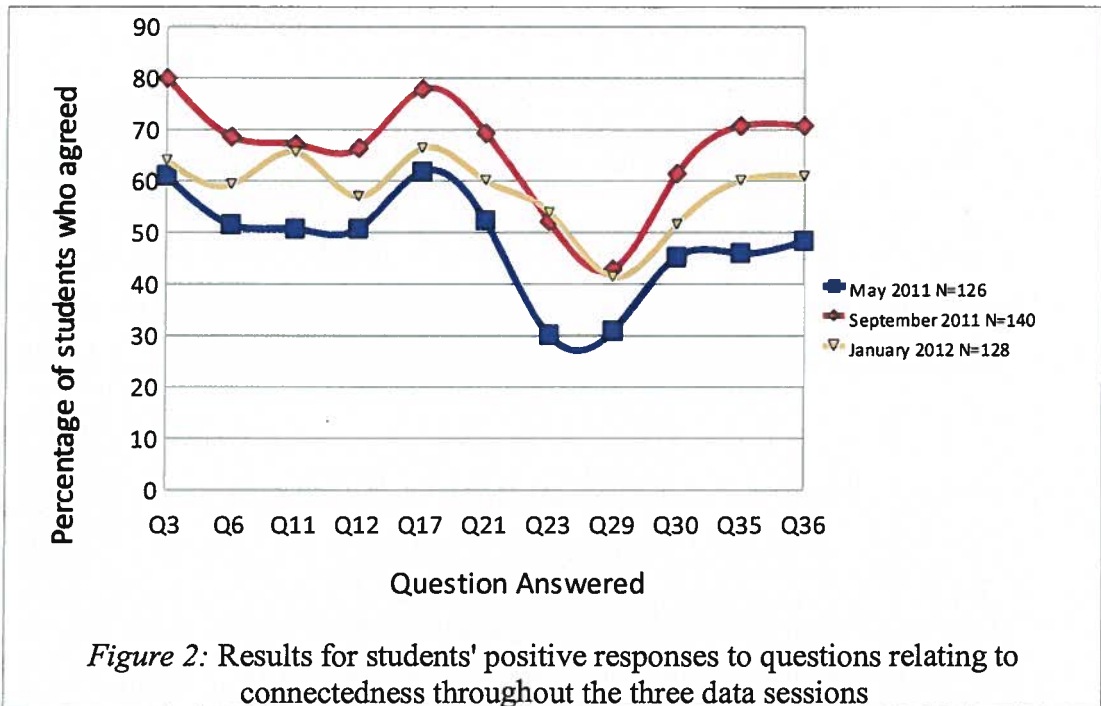
Table 7

*The mean percentage of students' responding positively to questions relating to connectedness*

|  | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|
| May 2011 | 48.12 | 10.17 |
| September 2011 | 66.10 | 10.72 |
| January 2012 | 58.24 | 7.21 |

As can be seen from Figure 2 and Table 7, students reported changing levels of connectedness with their HRT over the data collection period. The questionnaire was first given at the end of the 2010 - 2011 school year, when students had worked with their HRT for an entire year. Table 7 shows that 48.12% of students felt a bond with their HRT in May 2011, as measured by responses given to questions in Table 6. However, as can be seen in Figure 2 responses to questions 23 and 29 indicate lower feelings of connectedness on these aspects; these questions measured how comfortable students were in talking to their HRT about their problems. Students felt

hesitant in sharing problems and concerns with their HRT whereas they were more comfortable sharing thoughts, as shown by question 11.

The questionnaire was given to students again in September 2011, at the start of the next academic year, when students had been assigned new HRTs. There was also a new cohort of grade six students and a cohort of grade eight students from the previous year that were no longer included in the data collection, as they had moved up to grade nine. Responses to the second data collection set again indicated that students generally felt more connected to their HRT in September 2011 as compared to the first data collection period in May 2011, though the difference is not statistically significant (Table 7). None of the students remained with the same HRT from the previous academic year. The lowest responses again remain questions 23 and 29, that ask whether students would feel comfortable in discussing problems or concerns with their HRT.

Data were collected for a third time in January 2012, when students had worked with their HRTs for five months. At this point, an average of 58.24% of students reported being connected with their HRT, although this was lower than they did in September 2011. The difference, however, is not significant. Question three, which asked students about whether their HRT was concerned about their (student) needs, showed the greatest decrease. By contrast, responses to question 23, relating to the student willingness to discuss problems and concerns with their HRT had increased slightly. This was the only aspect that students reported a greater degree of connectedness in over the entire data collection period.

These data were then examined by grade level, to see if students from any particular

grade level were reporting being more connected to their HRT at the three different

points of data collection.

Table 8

*The mean percentage of students' positive responses by grade level for all three data*

*sessions on questions relating to connectedness*

|           | Grade | Mean  | SD    |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|
| May 2011  | 6     | 68.53 | 11.53 |
| Sept 2011 | 6     | 71.74 | 10.82 |
| Jan 2012  | 6     | 70.66 | 6.62  |
|           |       |       |       |
| May 2011  | 7     | 37.88 | 9.90  |
| Sept 2011 | 7     | 57.40 | 10.00 |
| Jan 2012  | 7     | 64.67 | 10.94 |
|           |       |       |       |
| May 2011  | 8     | 40.33 | 11.87 |
| Sept 2011 | 8     | 70.40 | 12.35 |
| Jan 2012  | 8     | 42.49 | 6.51  |

The data in Table 8 shows that grade six students consistently expressed feeling more

connected than grade seven or eight students with their HRTs through out the data

collection period, as can be seen from the means of the percentage of students who

responded positively to questions relating to connectedness in all three data

collection periods (Table 8). Grade six students felt most connected to their HRT in

September 2011, with an average of 71.74% of students answering positively to the

questions asked. The levels of connectedness, as reported by grade six students, were

slightly lower in May 2011 and January 2012, with the difference not being

statistically significant.

Grade seven students reported feeling the least connected with their HRTs in May 2011, with an average of 37.88% of students who responded positively to the questions asked. Grade seven students began the next academic year feeling significantly more connected to their HRT, as compared to in May 2011. This connectedness with the HRT continued to increase up to the third data collection point, in January 2012, when, on average, 64.67% of students felt connected to their HRTs, although the increase in levels of connectedness reported by the students is not statistically significant between September 2011 and January 2012. The increased levels of connectedness are of note as grade seven males reported feeling more anxious with their HRTs as compared to females throughout the data collection period, as shown later in Figure 8.

In May 2011, grade eight students felt low levels of connectedness with their HRT, with an average of 40.33% of students agreeing with the questions asked (Table 8). It may have been that the stress of entrance examinations as well as expectations of high achievement that are placed upon these students at the end of the school year, caused students to be more anxious and less connected to their HRTs. In September 2011, the new cohort of grade eight students began the year feeling more positive and comfortable with their HRT, when, on average, 70.40% of students responded positively to the questions relating to connectedness, making the increase in levels of connectedness statistically significant between May and September 2011. However, these grade eight students then reported significant decrease in the levels of connectedness between the September 2011 and January 2012 collection. The responses to questions in this category indicate that in January 2012, an average of

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57.51% students were not comfortable around their HRT. This is of concern as the students of the eighth grade, which in the TPS is the most stressful year of the grade six through eight period and requires greatest levels of support from both parents and teachers, may not not have been comfortable enough with their HRTs to seek and receive that support and guidance.

**Connectedness by gender**

These data were then organised to see if student gender was a factor in how connected students felt with their HRTs. Results of the questionnaires from three periods of data collection for all grade levels are given in Table 9. The percentages given in Table 9 are organised by gender, and reflect how many females and males agreed with the questions as asked in Table 6.

Table 9

*The percentage of students' positive responses by student gender for all three data sessions on questions relating to connectedness*

| May 2011 N=126 | Q3 | Q6 | Q11 | Q12 | Q17 | Q21 | Q23 | Q29 | Q30 | Q35 | Q36 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 63.79 | 56.9 | 51.72 | 53.45 | 67.24 | 62.07 | 31.03 | 36.2 | 43.1 | 53.45 | 53.45 | 52.04 | 11.28 |
| Male | 58.82 | 47.06 | 50.00 | 48.53 | 57.35 | 44.12 | 29.41 | 26.47 | 47.06 | 39.71 | 44.12 | 44.79 | 10.02 |

| September 2011 N=140 | Q3 | Q6 | Q11 | Q12 | Q17 | Q21 | Q23 | Q29 | Q30 | Q35 | Q36 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 85.07 | 70.15 | 68.66 | 67.16 | 71.64 | 64.18 | 50.75 | 41.79 | 58.21 | 70.15 | 73.13 | 65.54 | 11.7 |
| Male | 75.34 | 67.12 | 65.75 | 65.75 | 83.56 | 73.97 | 53.42 | 43.84 | 64.38 | 71.23 | 68.49 | 66.62 | 10.69 |

| January 2012 N=128 | Q3 | Q6 | Q11 | Q12 | Q17 | Q21 | Q23 | Q29 | Q30 | Q35 | Q36 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 70.31 | 57.81 | 70.31 | 59.38 | 65.63 | 64.06 | 60.94 | 45.31 | 50 | 65.63 | 68.75 | 61.65 | 8.13 |
| Male | 57.81 | 60.94 | 60.94 | 54.69 | 67.19 | 56.25 | 46.88 | 37.5 | 53.13 | 54.69 | 53.13 | 54.83 | 7.8 |

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It can be said that male students generally reported being less connected to their HRTs than female students in May 2011 (Table 9), with an average of 44.78% of male students responding positively to the questions asked, as compared to 52.03% of female students. However, the difference in responses of male and female students in May 2011 is not statistically significant. At the start of the next academic year, in September 2011, this trend had changed to the point where males felt a similar level of connectedness with their HRTs as female students, although males, as compared to females, felt it was less easy to get close to their HRTs, as shown by responses to questions 3, 6, 11 and 12. In January 2012, there was a greater difference in the level of connectedness that males and females felt for their HRTs, although the difference remains statistically insignificant.

When examining the trend over the data collection period for each gender, it can be seen that in September 2011, male students felt significantly more connected to their HRTs, with an average of 66.62% of male students responding positively to the questions asked, as compared to in May 2011. In January 2012, an average of 54.83% males reported feeling comfortable with their HRT in responses to questions asked. This was lower than responses given in September 2011, however the difference is not statistically significant.

In May 2011, an average of 52.03% of female students felt comfortable and connected to their HRTs. However, as indicated by responses to questions 23 and 29, females expressed reluctance to share their problems or concerns with the HRT. At the start of the next academic year, in September 2011, females were more positive

about communicating and feeling connected with their HRTs, when an average of 65.53% of female students responded to the questions positively. This is in keeping with other data, that suggests that students start off the school year with a more positive attitude. In January 2012, females reported being slightly less connected to their HRT, when, on average, 61.64% students responded positively to the questions asked. There is, however, no statistical difference in the responses of female students to the questions relating to connectedness over the data collection period.

These data were then examined by grade level, to see if gender at any particular grade level was a factor in connectedness with the HRT, at the three different points of data collection. These data (Appendix D) are shown graphically in Figures 3 to 5.



*Figure 3:* The average percentage of grade six students' positive responses organised by student gender for all three data sessions on questions relating to connectedness
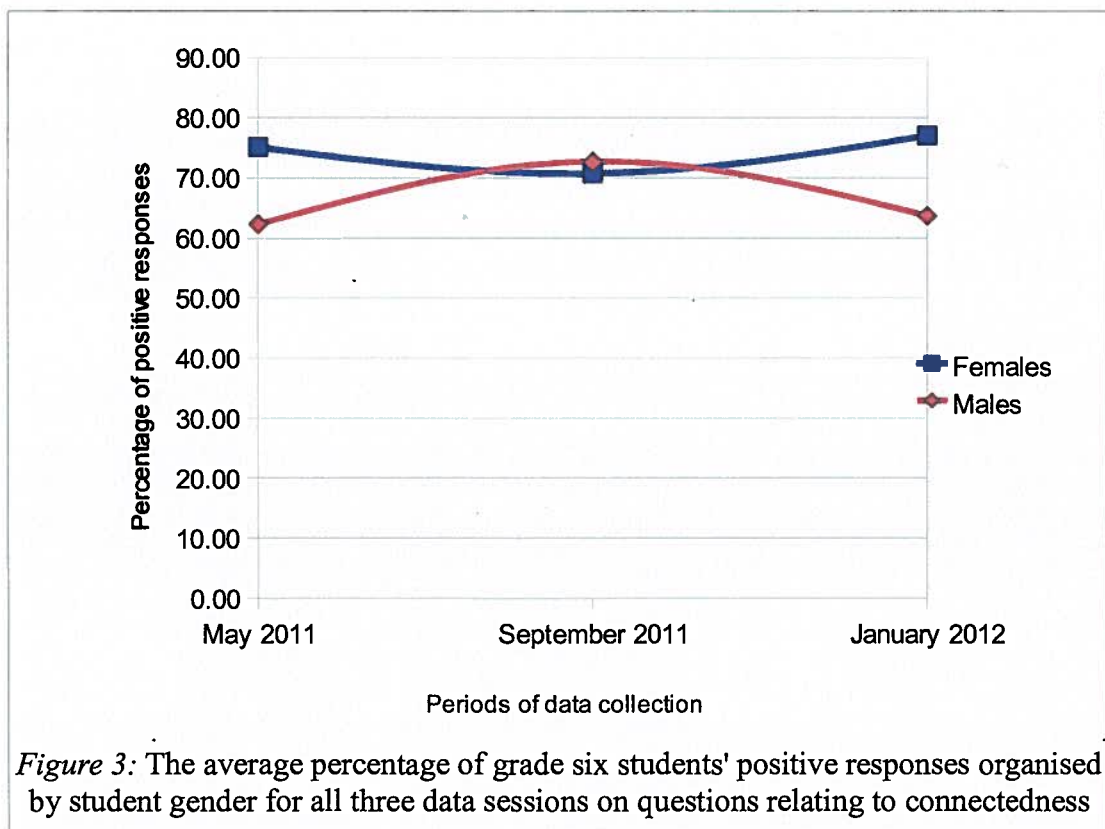
These data in Figure 3 show that grade six students generally felt more connected to

their HRTs than grade seven students (Figure 4), who in turn were closer to their HRT than grade eight students (Figure 5). Grade six males felt most connected to their HRT at the start of the new academic year, in September 2011, whereas females at this point felt least connected with their HRT (Figure 3). It is perhaps unsurprising that females from grade six felt more comfortable with HRTs at the end of the school year and five months into it, than at the very start of the year, when they had just been assigned their first HRT. However, this goes against the general trend of the other two grade levels as shown in Figures 4 and 5.



*Figure 4:* The average percentage of grade seven students' positive responses organised by student gender for all three data sessions on questions relating to connectedness
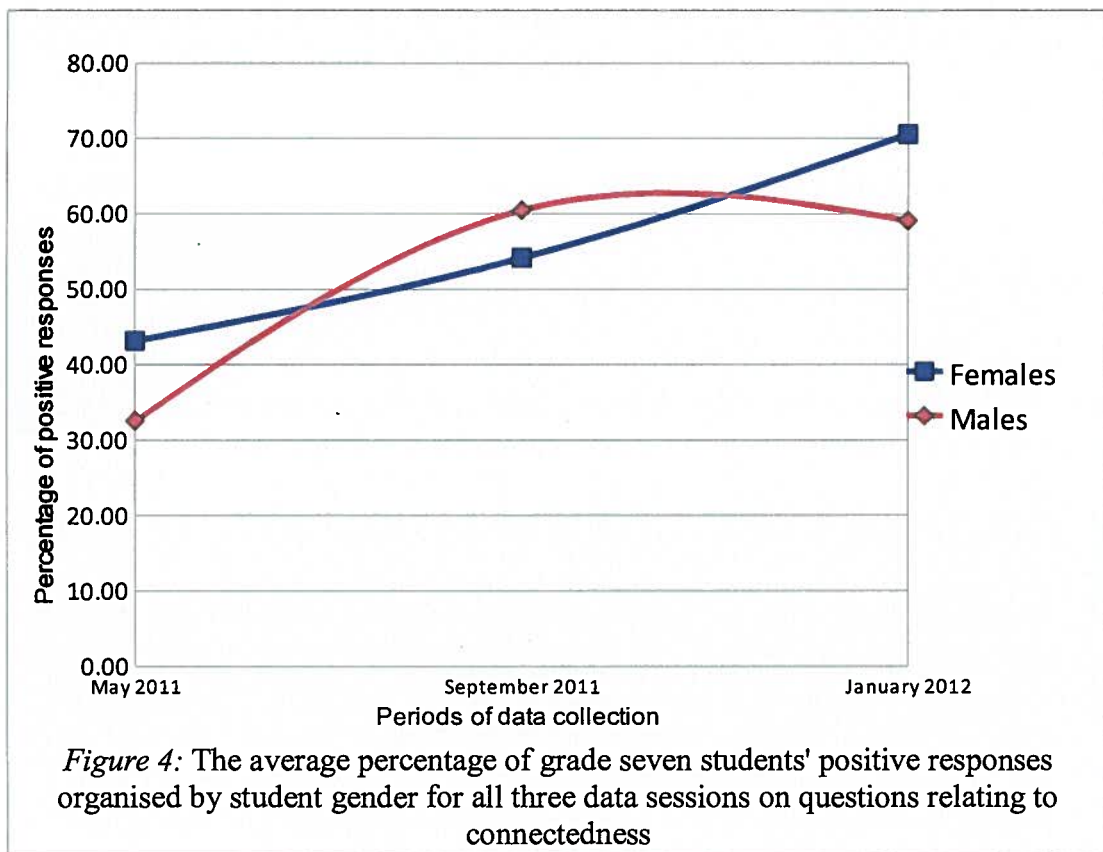
Grade seven females reported a greater degree of connectedness to their HRT than males of the same grade in Figure 4, similar to the trend seen amongst grade six students in Figure 3. Grade seven females too felt less comfortable with their HRTs

at the start of the academic year than in January 2012. Males at this grade level do not show the same increase in levels of connectedness with their HRTs from September 2011 to January 2012 as females. It is unknown whether this trend of rising connectedness between the HRT/female students, as perceived by the students, would continue to increase until June 2012.



*Figure :* The average percentage of grade eight students' positive responses organised by student gender for all three data sessions on questions relating to connectedness
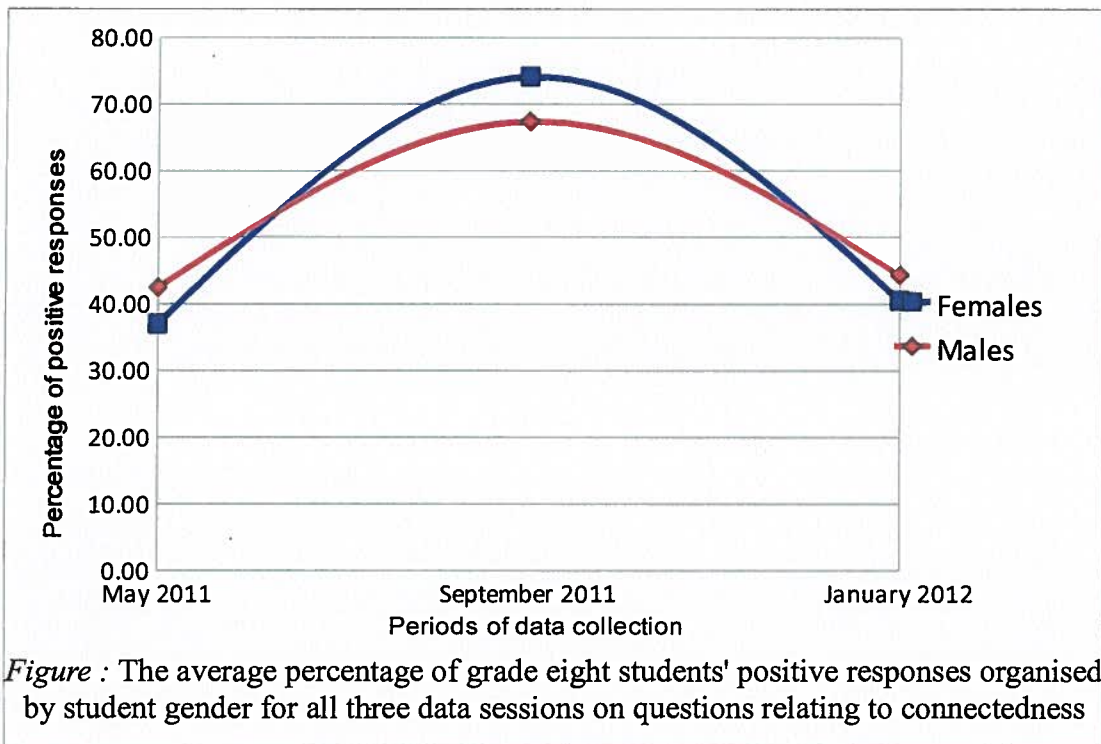
In grade eight, females and males reported a very similar level of comfort with their HRT over the entire data collection period, as is indicated by their responses to the questions given in Figure 5. Both males and females at this grade level felt more connected with their HRT in September 2011, at the start of the school year, than at any other data collection point. There was a decrease in comfort level that grade eight males and females felt with their HRT, as these data from January 2012 indicate. This is of concern, as stresses for students at this grade level increase tremendously over the course of the school year due to pressure from both the school and from parents to succeed in the high school entrance examinations. It would be

hoped that the students would see their HRT as a mentor to help support them.

**Connectedness and student nationality**

The data were then analysed to see if student nationality was a factor in how connected students felt with their HRTs. The percentages in Table 10 are organised by nationality, and reflect how many students, either Turkish or international agreed with the statements as asked in Table 6.

Table 10

*The percentage of students' positive responses organised by student nationality for*

*all three data sessions on questions relating to connectedness*

| May 2011 N=126 | Q3 | Q6 | Q11 | Q12 | Q17 | Q21 | Q23 | Q29 | Q30 | Q35 | Q36 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turkish n=106 | 63.21 | 51.89 | 52.83 | 50.00 | 62.26 | 52.83 | 32.08 | 33.02 | 44.34 | 46.23 | 50.94 | 49.06 | 9.49 |
| International n=20 | 50.00 | 50.00 | 40.00 | 55.00 | 60.00 | 50.00 | 20.00 | 20.00 | 50.00 | 45.00 | 35.00 | 43.18 | 12.66 |
| September 2011 N=140 | Q3 | Q6 | Q11 | Q12 | Q17 | Q21 | Q23 | Q29 | Q30 | Q35 | Q36 | Mean | SD |
| Turkish n=120 | 82.50 | 70.83 | 68.33 | 66.67 | 79.17 | 70.00 | 57.50 | 45.00 | 61.67 | 72.50 | 72.50 | 67.88 | 9.86 |
| International n=20 | 65.00 | 55.00 | 60.00 | 65.00 | 70.00 | 65.00 | 20.00 | 30.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 55.45 | 14.99 |
| January 2012 N=128 | Q3 | Q6 | Q11 | Q12 | Q17 | Q21 | Q23 | Q29 | Q30 | Q35 | Q36 | Mean | SD |
| Turkish n=113 | 62.83 | 60.18 | 67.26 | 57.52 | 64.60 | 61.95 | 53.98 | 41.59 | 53.10 | 59.29 | 62.83 | 58.65 | 6.76 |
| International n=15 | 73.33 | 53.33 | 53.33 | 53.33 | 80.00 | 46.67 | 53.33 | 40.00 | 40.00 | 66.67 | 46.67 | 55.15 | 12.42 |

*Note.* The *n* values give the number of students who were Turkish or international by citizenship.

It is important to note that for these data given in Table 10, students self-categorisation as either Turkish or international was used to determine nationality.

This may have meant students who were dual nationals categorised themselves as international students (rather than Turkish) when answering the questionnaire and vice versa. There was no way to verify student responses on whether they were international or Turkish, or indeed dual national citizens, as the questionnaire was confidential.

Data presented in Table 10 show that Turkish students generally feel more connected to their HRT than international students. This was especially true for the first two data collection sessions, in May 2011 and September 2011. Encouragingly, by January 2012, international students were also more connected with their HRTs in certain areas than in May 2011. However, the differences in the means of percentage of international and Turkish students in questions relating to connectedness over the entire data collection period are not statistically significant.

In May 2011, both international and Turkish students reported relatively low levels of comfort with their HRT on questions 23 and 29. For both these questions, 20% of international students responded positively in May 2011, while, for Turkish students the positive responses were 32.08% and 33.02% respectively. These questions asked about whether students would discuss problems and concerns with the HRT and if they felt they could share anything with the HRT. These were the only two questions that asked if students would share their problems, as opposed to general thoughts and feelings, and while students felt comfortable around their HRT, it is of note that students would not share non-academic problems with their HRTs, and thus not see them as 'in loco parentis'. When these data for connectedness were examined over

all, the values reported for questions 23 and 29 are lower than for other questions, indicating that students did not feel comfortable in sharing problems with their HRTs, irrespective of grade, gender or nationality.

In September 2011, both international and Turkish students reported higher levels of comfort with their HRTs, as compared to responses in May 2011 and January 2012, however the increase for both international and Turkish students is not statistically significant. It is important to note that at this highest point of student comfort with the HRT, an average of 67.88% of Turkish students and 55.45% of international students report feeling connected to their HRT, which indicates that the TPS pastoral care programme and the HRTs are able to reach out to a majority of students in their care. More research would need to be done to identify the needs of the remaining students who reported lower levels of connectedness with their HRT.

In January 2012, Turkish student responses indicate a fall in comfort levels with their HRT in all questions asked, although the decrease is not significant. This could be for a variety of reasons including students taking the HRT for granted, or the HRTs strictly enforcing school policies and applying consequences.

International students in January reported an increase in connection with their HRT, as can be seen by responses to questions 3, 17, 23, 29 and 35, which are all centred around the ability to talk to the HRT about non-academic issues, although the overall average for positive responses to questions in this category by international students is slightly lower than it was in September 2011 due to lower responses in other

questions.

These data were then examined by grade level, to see if student nationality at any particular grade level, was a factor in how connected students felt to their HRT at the three different points of data collection. This is shown in Table 11

Table 11

*The mean percentage of students' positive responses organised by student nationality and grade level for all three data sessions on questions relating to connectedness*

| | | | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Grade 6** | May 2011 | Turkish (*n*=31) | 73.9 | 9.4 |
| | | International (*n*=8) | 47.73 | 20.78 |
| | September 2011 | Turkish (*n*=39) | 71.79 | 10.32 |
| | | International (*n*=7) | 71.43 | 19.16 |
| | January 2012 | Turkish (*n*=38) | 68.9 | 6.84 |
| | | International (*n*=6) | 81.82 | 11.68 |
| | | | Mean | SD |
| **Grade 7** | May 2011 | Turkish (*n*=38) | 37.8 | 11.78 |
| | | International *n*=10) | 38.18 | 8.74 |
| | September 2011 | Turkish (*n*=46) | 60.28 | 10.25 |
| | | International (*n*=5) | 30.91 | 22.56 |
| | January 2012 | Turkish (*n*=29) | 68.03 | 12.25 |
| | | International (*n*=6) | 48.48 | 13.85 |
| | | | Mean | SD |
| **Grade 8** | May 2011 | Turkish (*n*=37) | 39.8 | 11.02 |
| | | International (*n*=2) | 50 | 38.73 |
| | September 2011 | Turkish (*n*=35) | 73.51 | 12.39 |
| | | International (*n*=8) | 56.82 | 18 |
| | January 2012 | Turkish (*n*=46) | 44.27 | 6.25 |
| | | International (*n*=3) | 37.73 | 38.45 |

*Note.* The *n* values give the number of students who were Turkish or international by citizenship.

The data in Table 11 show that grade six Turkish students report decreasing levels of connectedness to their HRT over the data collection period, whereas the grade six

international students reported becoming more connected to their HRTs over the same period. For grade six Turkish students, the differences in the average level of comfort, as indicated by responses to the questions in this category over the data collection period, are not statistically significant. Responses from the international students show a significant increase in the level of connectedness that they reported feeling between May 2011 and January 2012. It must be noted, however, that the grade six student body had changed between May 2011 and January 2012, which may account for the difference.

Grade seven Turkish students reported that they felt the least connected to their HRT towards the end of the 2010 – 2011 school year as compared to other data collection points, reporting an average of 37.8% positive responses to questions in this category (Table 11). This comfort level increased significantly between May 2011 and September 2011, and reached its highest level in January 2012. There is a significant difference between the levels of connectedness reported by Turkish students between May 2011 and the other two data collection points, with levels of connectedness being lowest in May 2011. However, grade seven students in May 2011 had moved up a grade level in the 2011 – 2012 academic year, which may account for the difference in data.

The data in Table 11 show that international students in the seventh grade reported the lowest levels of connectedness to their HRTs in September 2011 than at the other two data collection points, although the difference in levels of connectedness are not statistically significant. International students at this grade level reported the highest

level of connectedness with their HRTs in January 2012, when on average 48.48% of these students agreed with the questions asked.

Table 11 shows that for eighth grade Turkish students, levels of connectedness were significantly higher in September 2011 than in May 2011. However, these students then report a statistically significant decrease in these levels of connectedness between the HRT and the students between data collected in September 2011 and January 2012.

International students in grade eight also felt most connected to their HRTs in September 2011 as compared to the other two data collection points. The high standard deviation for grade eight international students in January 2012 may be because there were only three international students at this grade level at that time. The lower levels of connectedness in January 2012 for both Turkish and international students could be because of higher levels of stress faced by these students, possibly caused by the approaching high school entrance examinations (grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, March 7, 2012).

# Connectedness and HRT nationality

These data were then organised to see if the HRTs' nationality was a factor in how connected students felt with the HRT. The numbers given in Table 12 reflect what percentage of students with international HRTs and Turkish HRTs agreed with the statements as asked in Table 6.

Table 12

*The percentage of students' positive responses organised by teacher nationality for all three data sessions on questions relating to connectedness*

| May 2011 N=126 | Q3 | Q6 | Q11 | Q12 | Q17 | Q21 | Q23 | Q29 | Q30 | Q35 | Q36 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| International n=82 | 67.07 | 51.22 | 56.10 | 52.44 | 67.07 | 57.32 | 26.83 | 31.71 | 39.02 | 46.34 | 51.22 | 49.67 | 12.38 |
| Turkish n=44 | 50.00 | 52.27 | 40.91 | 47.73 | 52.27 | 43.18 | 36.36 | 29.55 | 56.82 | 45.45 | 43.18 | 45.25 | 7.47 |

| September 2011 N=140 | Q3 | Q6 | Q11 | Q12 | Q17 | Q21 | Q23 | Q29 | Q30 | Q35 | Q36 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| International n=80 | 82.50 | 71.25 | 72.50 | 71.25 | 82.50 | 71.25 | 56.25 | 41.25 | 61.25 | 75.00 | 78.75 | 69.43 | 11.73 |
| Turkish n=60 | 76.67 | 65.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 71.67 | 66.67 | 46.67 | 45.00 | 61.67 | 65.00 | 60.00 | 61.67 | 8.96 |

| January 2012 N=128 | Q3 | Q6 | Q11 | Q12 | Q17 | Q21 | Q23 | Q29 | Q30 | Q35 | Q36 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| International n=77 | 75.32 | 63.64 | 66.23 | 61.04 | 74.03 | 61.04 | 58.44 | 45.45 | 51.95 | 67.53 | 64.94 | 62.69 | 8.35 |
| Turkish n=51 | 47.06 | 52.94 | 64.71 | 50.98 | 54.9 | 58.82 | 47.06 | 35.29 | 50.98 | 49.02 | 54.9 | 51.51 | 7.15 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | Overall Mean = 56.70 | | |

*Note.* The *n* values give the number of students who had Turkish or international HRTs.

It should be noted here that the numbers of Turkish students was roughly equal in each two of the three homerooms in each grade level as all the international students

were grouped together in one homeroom, (Section A) with an international HRT for ease of scheduling. However, some students in the two remaining classes may have described themselves as being international as previously discussed.

The data in Table 12 show that students with Turkish HRTs felt less connected than students with international HRTs over the entire data collection period, although the difference in levels of connectedness reported by students who had international HRTs and those that had Turkish HRTs is not statistically significant.

It can be seen from the data in Table 12 that students with international HRTs felt the least connectedness to their HRTs in May 2011. Levels of connectedness as indicated by positive responses to the questions asked were greatest in September 2011, when on average 69.43% of students agreed with the questions asked, although the increase in connectedness is not significant. Levels of connectedness decreased to an average of 62.69% of students agreeing with the questions asked in January 2012.

Students with Turkish HRTs reported a similar trend, with levels of connectedness also greatest in September 2011 and lowest in May 2011. Again, the differences in levels of connectedness throughout the data collection period are not significant, as indicated by students' positive responses to questions in this category.

These data further suggest HRT nationality was not a significant factor in students feeling comfortable in sharing non-academic problems with their HRT, or depending on their HRT, as shown by responses to question 23, 29 and 30 throughout the data

collection period. Following the general trend on the data, responses to questions 23, 29 and 30 also show greater trust in the HRT in September 2011 though this was still lower than responses to all the other questions asked at this point. It is noteworthy that both students with Turkish HRTs and those with international HRTs seem less comfortable in sharing problems as compared to aspects asked by other questions, indicating perhaps that students do not want to share their concerns with their HRTs, irrespective of the HRTs' nationality.

In January 2012, when students reported lower levels of connectedness than they had previously given in September 2011, there was an increase in the responses given for question 23 by both students with international and those with Turkish HRTs. This is positive, as question 23 asked students if they felt they could discuss problems and concerns with their HRT. Only students with an international HRT felt increased confidence in their ability to tell their HRT just about anything (question 29).

It is important to note that an overall average of 56.7% of all students felt comfortable with their HRTs over the entire data collection period. This means there are students in grades six through eight at the TPS who did not report having a very strong relationship with their HRT. As is indicated by responses to questions 23 and 29, some students also said that they would not consider going to their HRT, irrespective of HRT nationality, with a non-academic problem or concern.

These data were then examined to see if HRT nationality was a contributing factor in how connected students at different grade levels felt with their HRT, at the three

different points of data collection. The data in Table 13 show whether the HRT is

Turkish or international and the number of students who have either a Turkish or

international HRT.

Table 13

*The mean percentage of students' positive responses organised by HRT nationality and grade level for all three data sessions on questions relating to connectedness*

|  |  | HRT Nationality | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 6 | May 2011 | Turkish ($n$=15) | 53.33 | 11.93 |
|  |  | International ($n$=24) | 78.03 | 12.37 |
|  | September 2011 | Turkish ($n$=29) | 67.71 | 10.60 |
|  |  | International ($n$=17) | 78.61 | 13.48 |
|  | January 2012 | Turkish ($n$=26) | 63.29 | 6.74 |
|  |  | International ($n$=18) | 81.31 | 10.02 |

|  |  | HRT Nationality | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 7 | May 2011 | Turkish ($n$=13) | 36.36 | 9.79 |
|  |  | International ($n$=35) | 38.44 | 15.35 |
|  | September 2011 | Turkish ($n$=18) | 45.45 | 7.78 |
|  |  | International ($n$=33) | 63.91 | 12.23 |
|  | January 2012 | Turkish ($n$=11) | 56.20 | 17.64 |
|  |  | International ($n$=24) | 68.56 | 10.10 |

|  |  | HRT Nationality | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 8 | May 2011 | Turkish ($n$=16) | 44.89 | 13.35 |
|  |  | International (n=23) | 37.15 | 13.10 |
|  | September 2011 | Turkish ($n$=13) | 70.63 | 14.92 |
|  |  | International ($n$=30) | 70.30 | 12.78 |
|  | January 2012 | Turkish ($n$=14) | 25.97 | 8.61 |
|  |  | International ($n$=35) | 49.09 | 9.11 |

Note. The n values give the number of students who had Turkish or international HRTs.

As shown by the data in Table 13, grade six students report having a greater level of

connectedness with HRTs who were international than with the Turkish HRTs,

although the difference is only significant in January 2012. Levels of connectedness

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for grade six students who had Turkish HRTs was highest in September 2011, and lowest in May 2011, though the differences are not significant. For grade six students with international HRTs, levels of connectedness were lowest in May 2011, and continued to increase throughout the data collection period.

For grade seven students, overall levels of connectedness increased throughout the data collection period, irrespective of HRT nationality. In September 2011, students with international HRTs reported significantly greater levels of connectedness with their HRTs as compared to students with Turkish HRTs, although the difference is small. Following the trend, grade seven students with international HRTs reported increasing levels of HRT/student connectedness with there being significant difference between May 2011 and January 2012.

Grade eight students reported low levels of connectedness to their HRTs irrespective of HRT nationality in May 2011. There was no significant difference between levels of connectedness reported by students who had international HRTs as compared to those who had Turkish HRTs at this point.

All grade eight students reported higher levels of connectedness with their HRTs in September 2011, with no significant difference in responses of students with Turkish HRTs as compared to those with international HRTs. However, grade eight students with an international HRT showed an overall significant increase in the levels of connectedness between data collected in May 2011 and September 2011. Levels of connectedness decreased as reported by grade eight students in January 2012,

irrespective of HRT nationality. Students with Turkish HRTs felt significantly less connected to their HRTs in January 2012, as compared to September 2011. At this point, students with Turkish HRTs also felt significantly less connected to their HRTs as compared to students with international HRTs.

In summary then, looking at the broad trends presented in these data, approximately half the students formed a positive connection with their HRT but were not always comfortable about talking to the HRT about their problems or concerns. Students across all grade levels felt a greater level of connectedness to their HRT at the beginning of the year, but as the academic year progressed students tended to feel less connected to their HRTs, with the exception of grade six international students.

These data suggested that HRT nationality was not an important factor in students feeling able to share non-academic problems. However, international students and Turkish students generally report a far closer relationship with international HRTs than with Turkish HRTs.

# Anxiety

The questionnaire incorporated a number of questions related to anxiety. Questions 4,

5, 7, 8, 22, 25, 31 and 34 (Table 14) asked students whether their relationship with

their HRT was a source of concern. These data relating to relationship anxiety were

analysed for all students in grades six through eight, to see if age, gender, nationality

of the student, or nationality of the HRT was a factor in student anxiety about their

relationship with their HRT.

Table 14

*Questions relating to anxiety (modified from Creasey, Jarvis & Knapcik, 2009)*

| Question Number | Question |
|---|---|
| 4 | I occasionally worry that I will lose my homeroom teachers' respect. |
| 5 | I worry a lot about my interactions with my homeroom teacher. |
| 7 | My homeroom teacher makes me doubt myself. |
| 8 | I am nervous around my homeroom teacher. |
| 22 | I'm scared to show my thoughts around my homeroom teacher; I think he or she will think less of me. |
| 25 | I'm afraid that if I shared my thoughts with my homeroom teacher that he or she would not think very highly of me. |
| 31 | I worry that I do not measure up to my homeroom teachers' standards. |
| 34 | I often worry that my homeroom teacher does not really like me. |

Results from all three data collection periods were examined to identify trends.

Figure 6 gives details of student responses throughout the data collection period for

questions relating to anxiety.

*Figure 6:* Results for students' positive responses to questions relating to anxiety throughout the three data sessions.
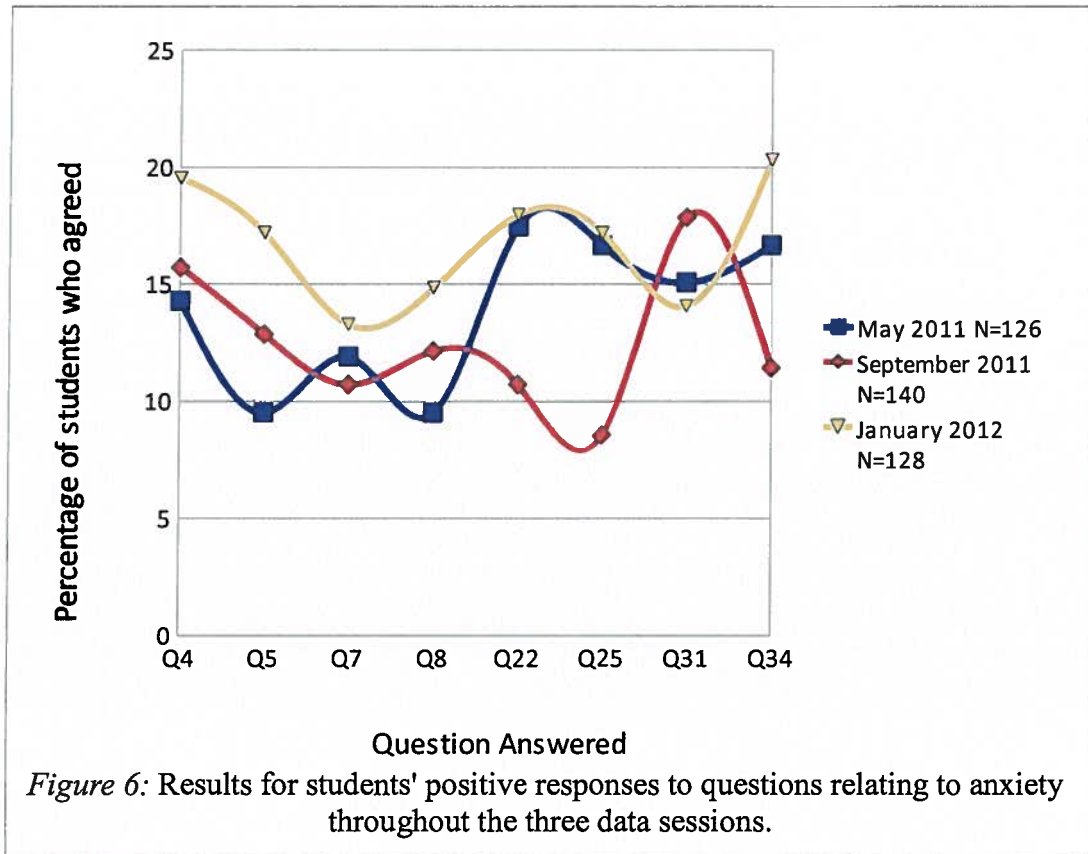
Table 15

*The mean percentage of students' responding positively to questions relating to anxiety*

|                | Mean  | SD   |
|----------------|-------|------|
| May 2011       | 13.89 | 3.21 |
| September 2011 | 12.50 | 2.98 |
| January 2012   | 16.80 | 2.54 |

As can be seen from Figure 6 and the data presented in Table 15, less than 17% of students reported any level of anxiety about their relationship with their HRT over the entire data collection period. The questionnaire was first given at the very end of the 2010 - 2011 academic year in May 2011, when students had worked with their HRTs for the entire year. Table 15 shows that an average of 13.89% of students responded positively to the questions asked meaning that they had some anxiety with

their HRTs. As can be seen by Figure 6, responses to questions five and eight in May 2011 were slightly lower than for other questions, indicating that students were less anxious about interactions with their HRT and not as nervous around their HRT, as compared to other questions, such as losing the respect of the HRT. This may indicate that while students were not worried about being in the presence of the HRT, they were less certain about what the HRT thought of them or how they measured up to the standards set by the HRT.

As can be seen from Figure 6, the average responses for all questions relating to anxiety from the second data collection period in September 2011 were lower than in May 2011, with an average of 12.50% of students responding positively to the questions asked. It may be that HRTs began the year in a positive way, spending time with their students to ensure that the day to day school systems were functioning correctly such as helping with problems of timetabling, locker allocations and giving out text books. This quality of time spent with the students can help to develop stronger relationships (Jones & Harrison, 1997; Zhang & McGrath, 2009). From these data, it can be seen that from the beginning of the year students were less wary of showing their thoughts (question 22) and were not worried about what the HRT would think when they (students) expressed themselves. Students were less concerned about the HRT liking them at this point as well, as indicated by responses to question 34.

It is interesting to note, however, that in September 2011, even though, on average all students reported less anxiety than at other times, they felt slightly more nervous

around their HRT and were concerned about HRT/student interactions, as indicated by questions five and eight. The responses to question 31 in September 2011 perhaps indicate that HRTs may have introduced their own standards and those of the school community to the grade six students and reinforced them to the grade seven and eight students.

The questionnaire was then given again to students in January 2012, after students had been with their HRT for five months. Anxiety about students' relationships with their HRTs was highest at this point, with an average of 16.80% of students answering positively to the questions asked. However, responses to question 31 in January 2012 were lowest as compared to other data collection points, indicating that students were less worried about measuring up to the standards of their HRTs five months into the school year.

Responses to question 34 indicate that more students were concerned in January 2011 that their HRT didn't like them (20.31%) when compared to the responses in September (11.43%). Similarly, some students were more afraid to share their thoughts with the HRT, as indicated by responses to questions 22 and 25, in January 2012 than they were five months earlier. Other questions indicate similar increases in anxiety levels, with the exception of question 31, where students in January 2012 said they were less worried about measuring up to their HRTs' standards than in September 2011.

The data were then examined by grade level, to see if students from any particular

grade level were reporting more feelings of anxiety at the three different points of

data collection.

Table 16

*The mean percentage of students' positive responses by grade level for all three data*

*collection sessions on questions relating to anxiety*

|            | Grade | Mean  | SD   |
|------------|-------|-------|------|
| May 2011   | 6     | 11.54 | 3.88 |
| Sept. 2011 | 6     | 9.01  | 2.79 |
| Jan. 2012  | 6     | 16.48 | 3.79 |
|            |       |       |      |
| May 2011   | 7     | 11.46 | 5.34 |
| Sept. 2011 | 7     | 16.42 | 4.44 |
| Jan. 2012  | 7     | 15.36 | 6.28 |
|            |       |       |      |
| May 2011   | 8     | 19.23 | 5.82 |
| Sept. 2011 | 8     | 11.63 | 7.35 |
| Jan. 2012  | 8     | 20.61 | 5.72 |

The data in Table 16 shows that generally, grade six students felt the lowest levels of

anxiety about their relationship with their HRTs, as compared to grade seven or eight

students. Grade seven students reported feeling more anxious about their relationship

with their HRT than grade six or eight students in September 2011, with an average

of 16.42% of students agreeing with the questions asked, as compared to 9.01% for

grade six students, and 11.63% for grade eight students. It can also be seen in Table

16 that students from grade eight reported a higher level of anxiety about their

relationship with their HRT at the end of the 2010 – 2011 school year, as compared to

students of grade six and seven. 19.23% of the grade eight students, on average,

agreed with the questions asked, as compared to 11.54% of grade six students and

11.46% of grade seven students. While the difference in anxiety levels of grade eight students, and those from grade six and seven is not statistically significant, it could be that grade eight students were more anxious because of the upcoming high school entrance exam (grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, March 7, 2012), and that this general stress translated into feelings of anxiety towards the HRTs.

Students from grade six reported the lowest levels of anxiety in September 2011, with an average of 9.01% of students agreeing with the questions asked. As seen in Table 16, these levels reported of anxiety increased significantly between September 2011 and January 2012, when an average of 16.48% of students reported having anxiety about their relationship with their HRT.

Grade seven students reported feeling the least anxious about their relationship with their HRT in May 2011, at the end of the academic year. Levels of anxiety about the HRT were highest in September 2011; these data do not explain reasons for this, as grade seven students are already used to pastoral care programme at the TPS from their previous year. A different HRT cannot explain the higher stress that grade seven students reported in September 2011, as grade eight students also had different HRTs, and did not state feeling as anxious as grade seven students at the same time period. Grade seven students reported feeling less anxious in January 2012 about their relationship with their HRT as compared to in September 2011, although the difference is not significant.

Grade eight students, who had reported their lowest levels of anxiety in September 2011, became more anxious about their relationship with their HRT as the year progressed. An average of 20.61% of student agreed with the questions asked in January 2012, as compared to 11.63% in September 2011, although the difference is not statistically significant. In May 2011, students reported similar levels of anxiety to those in January 2012; however, it must be noted that the students who responded to the questionnaire in May 2011 were not the same as those who participated in this research in January 2012.

The data in Table 16 suggest that most grade six through eight students generally had little anxiety about the relationship they had with their HRT, although as the 2011 - 2012 school year progressed, the levels of anxiety increased. Students reported being comfortable enough with their HRTs to share their thoughts and they did not worry about the HRT thinking less of them. Students were not anxious about losing the respect of HRTs, though this confidence decreased over the data collection period. Students reported that, in their perception, HRTs did not make them doubt themselves and they (the students) did not worry about the HRT not liking them, which is a positive indicator of the strength of the student HRT relationship.

It is important to note, however, that there was still a minority of students in grades six through eight who suffered anxiety as they considered their relationship with their HRT, and that the numbers of students who were reporting feeling anxious with the HRTs in all three grade levels increased. This should be examined further as the pastoral care programme at the TPS aims at reaching out to all of its students.

**Anxiety and gender**

These data were then organised to see if student gender was a factor in relationship anxiety with HRTs. The percentages given in Table 17 are organised by gender, and reflect how many females/males agreed with the statements as asked in Table 14. It is worth noting that there were the same number of male and female HRTs in both the 2010 - 2011 and the 2011 - 2012 academic years.

Table 17

*The percentage of students' positive responses organised by student gender for all three data sessions on questions relating to anxiety*

| May 2011 N=126 | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 17.29 | 8.62 | 6.90 | 1.72 | 15.52 | 12.07 | 13.79 | 17.24 | 11.64 | 5.52 |
| Male | 11.76 | 10.29 | 16.18 | 16.18 | 19.12 | 20.59 | 16.18 | 16.18 | 15.81 | 3.41 |

| September 2011 N=140 | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 20.90 | 11.94 | 4.48 | 11.94 | 14.93 | 4.48 | 8.96 | 5.97 | 10.45 | 5.7 |
| Male | 10.96 | 13.70 | 16.44 | 12.33 | 6.85 | 12.33 | 26.03 | 16.44 | 14.39 | 5.62 |

| January 2011 N=128 | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Female | 18.75 | 4.69 | 9.38 | 10.94 | 12.50 | 14.06 | 10.94 | 12.50 | 11.72 | 4 |
| Male | 20.31 | 29.69 | 17.19 | 18.75 | 23.44 | 20.31 | 17.19 | 28.13 | 21.88 | 4.8 |

From these data (Table 17), it can be seen that in May 2011, at the end of the 2010 – 2011 school year, females reported less concern over their relationship with the HRT than males. An average of 11.64% of females agreed with the question asked, whereas 15.81% of male students responded positively, although the difference

between males and females in May 2011 is not statistically significant. According to responses for questions 7, 8 and 25, more males stated that they felt that the HRT created feelings of doubt, that they (the male students) were nervous around the HRT and were afraid to share their thoughts with the HRT as compared to females. These data collected from students did not ask for the gender of their HRT; therefore it cannot be said if the higher levels of anxiety reported by the males were linked to HRT gender. According to these data from May 2011, females were more likely to worry that they would lose their HRTs' respect than males, as can be seen by responses to question four.

These data from September 2011, from the start of the 2011 - 2012 school year, had a slightly different set of respondents, due to new HRTs, incoming grade six students, and grade eight students who had moved to the next grade level. These data again suggest that more males than females felt that their HRT made them doubt themselves, as can be seen by responses to question seven, that show that an average of 16.44% of male students felt this worry as compared to 4.48% of female students. Males reported being more comfortable sharing their thoughts with the HRT in September 2011 with an average of only 6.85% of male students agreeing with question 22 as compared to 19.12% in May 2011. At the start of the 2011 - 2012 school year, males reported having more anxiety than females about measuring up to the HRTs' standards and whether their HRT liked them, as can be seen by responses to questions 31 and 34.

An average of 20.90% of females were worried about losing their HRTs' respect at

the start of the school year, as compared to 10.96% of male students. Additionally, 14.93% of female students were nervous about sharing their thoughts with the HRTs than an average of 6.85% male students, as seen by responses to question 22. Interestingly, females reported being most anxious about sharing their thoughts at the end of the 2010 - 2011 school year, when they had spent an entire year with their HRT, with an average of 15.52% of female students agreeing with the question asked, as compared to data from September 2011 and January 2012. Conversely, an average of 6.85% males responded positively to question 22 in September 2011 than in May 2011, at the end of the school year, when, on average, 19.12% of male students reported this worry. Unlike males, females were not worried about what their HRT thought of them (questions 22 and 25), and females' feelings of self worth were less related to the HRT than males' (questions 7 and 34).

The data in Table 17 shows that anxiety for males was lowest in September 2011 as compared to in May 2011 and January 2012. Anxiety about the relationship with the HRT increased for male students from September 2011 to January 2012, as indicated by responses to seven out of the eight questions in this category. This increase in anxiety for male students is not statistically significant. Males, however, reported less anxiety in January 2012 about measuring up to HRT standards than in September 2011, as can be seen by responses to question 31.

Female students too reported the lowest anxiety levels in September 2011, as compared to in May 2011 and January 2012. although the levels on anxiety reported by female students were similar throughout the data collection period. Females, in

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January 2012, were also far more anxious about the respect that the HRT had for them than in September 2011. It is noteworthy that there is a significant difference between the anxiety reported by male and female students in January 2012, when anxiety about the relationship with the HRT was highest for male students.

These data were then examined by grade level, to see if gender at any particular grade level was a factor in anxiety about HRT relationships at the three different periods of data collection. These data (Appendix E) are represented graphically in Figures 7 to 9.



*Figure 7:* The average percentage of grade six students' positive responses organised by student gender for all three data sessions on questions relating to anxiety
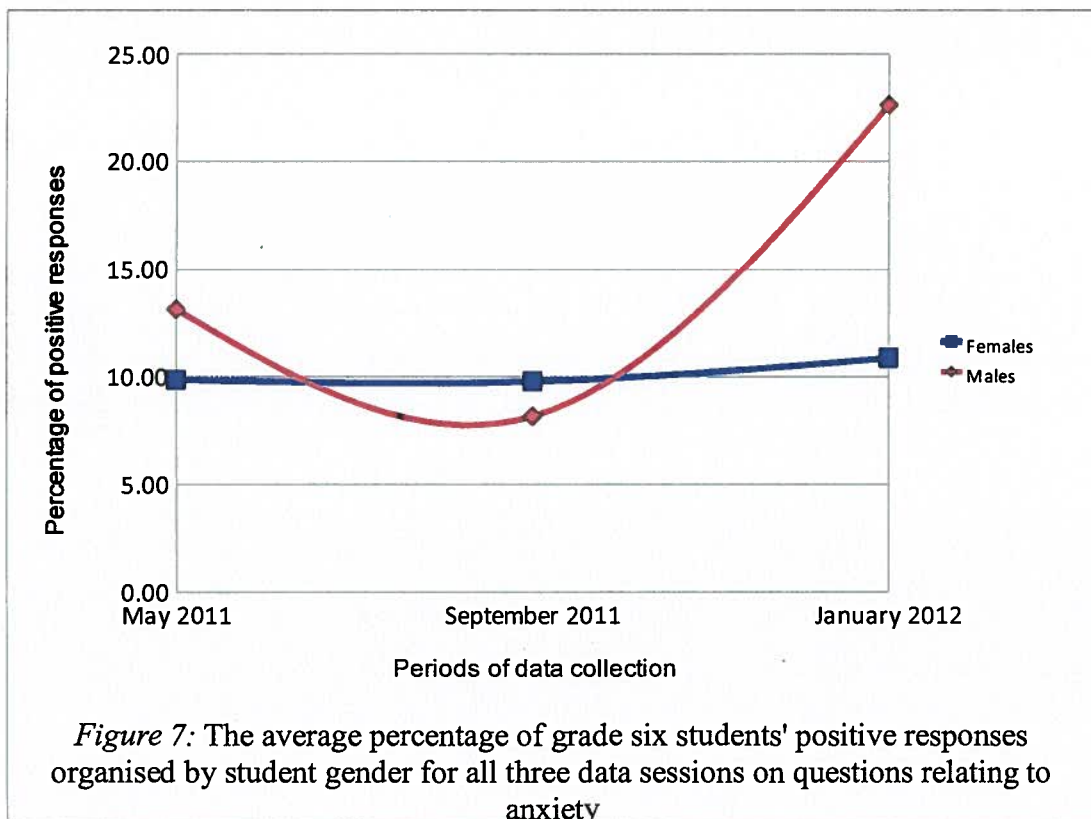
For grade six students, anxiety levels increased for both sexes from September 2011 to January 2012 (Figure 7), however the increase was greater for male students as compared to female students. Grade six females showed similar levels of anxiety for

all three data collection periods. On the other hand, grade six male students reported lowest anxiety at the start of the school year, in September 2011. As can be seen from Figure 7, anxiety faced by grade six male students was lower than that of female students in September 2011.



*Figure 8:* The average percentage of grade seven students' positive responses organised by student gender for all three data sessions on questions relating to anxiety
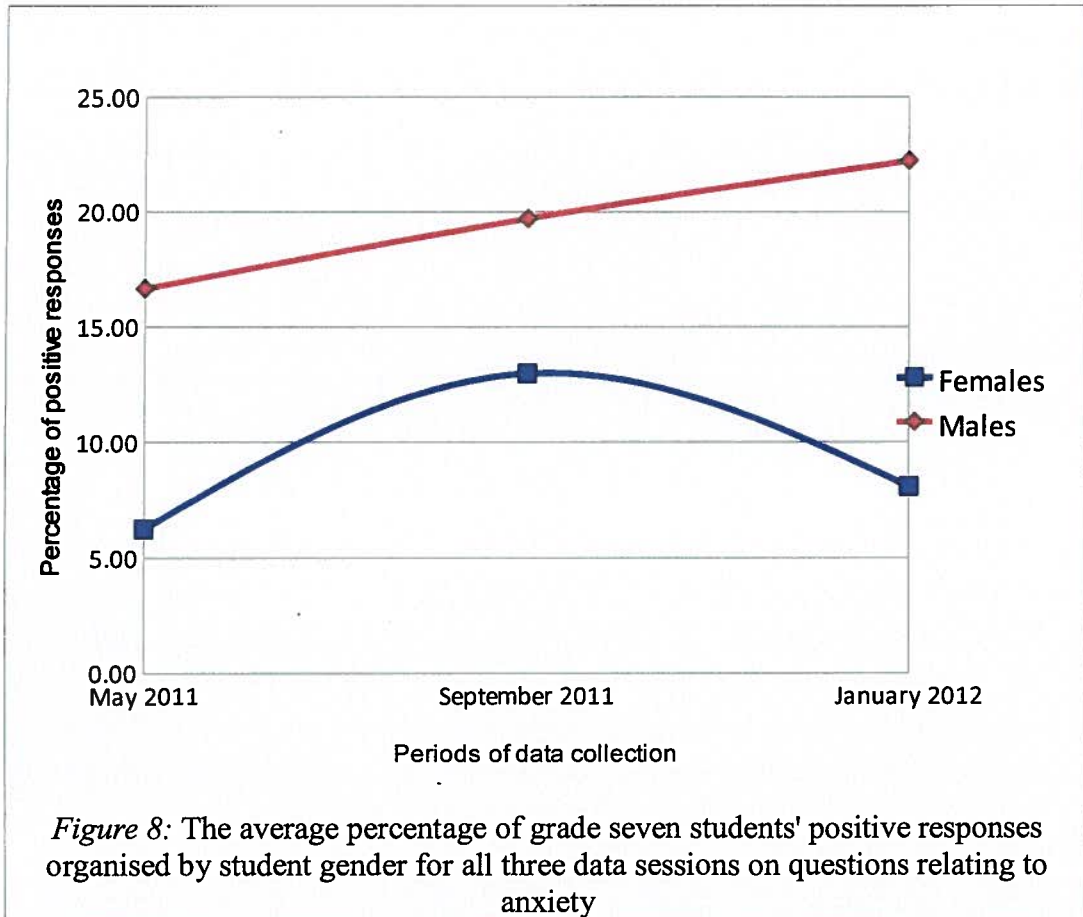
For grade seven, males also reported feeling more anxious with their HRT than females at all three periods of data collection. Stress about HRT relationships was greater for grade seven males than it was for grade six males. There was a steady increase in this anxiety level throughout the data collection period, with grade six males reporting the most anxiety in January 2012, five months into the school year. Anxiety levels for grade seven females were lower than those reported by grade six females, and although levels of anxiety were higher in September 2001 than in May

2011, the level had decreased by January 2012.



*Figure 9:* The average percentage of grade eight students' positive responses organised by student gender for all three data sessions on questions relating to anxiety
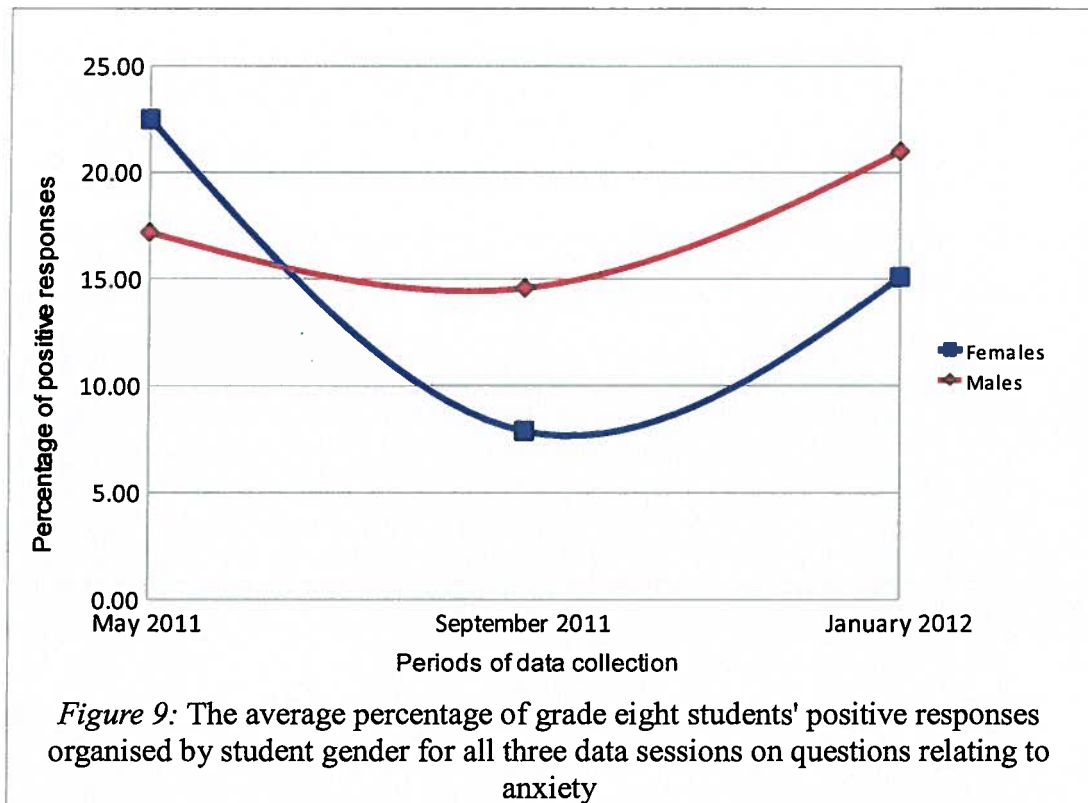
Grade eight females reported being more anxious than grade six and seven females over the entire data collection period. Grade eight males, too, reported relatively high levels of anxiety throughout the data collection period, as compared to grade six and seven males. Similar to grade eight females, male students felt least anxious about their relationship with the HRT in September 2011, at the start of the academic year. Anxiety levels for both male and female grade eight students increased from September 2011 to January 2012.

**Anxiety and student nationality**

These data were then organised to see if student nationality was a factor in relationship anxiety with HRTs. The percentages in Table 18 are organised by nationality, and reflect how many students of different nationalities agreed with the statements as asked in Table 14.

Table 18

*The percentage of students' positive responses organised by student nationality for all three data sessions on questions relating to anxiety*

| May 2011 N=126 | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turkish n=106 | 16.04 | 11.32 | 12.26 | 9.43 | 18.87 | 18.87 | 15.09 | 17.92 | 14.98 | 3.62 |
| International n=20 | 5.00 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 | 5.00 | 15.00 | 10.00 | 8.13 | 4.58 |

| September 2011 N=140 | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turkish n=120 | 17.50 | 11.67 | 11.67 | 14.17 | 10.00 | 9.17 | 17.50 | 10.83 | 12.81 | 3.24 |
| International n=20 | 5.00 | 20.00 | 5.00 | 0.00 | 15.00 | 5.00 | 20.00 | 15.00 | 10.63 | 7.76 |

| January 2012 N=128 | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Turkish n=113 | 18.58 | 17.70 | 14.16 | 15.93 | 17.70 | 16.81 | 12.39 | 23.01 | 17.04 | 3.16 |
| International n=15 | 26.67 | 13.33 | 6.67 | 6.67 | 20.00 | 20.00 | 26.67 | 0.00 | 15.00 | 9.92 |

*Note.* The *n* values give the number of students who were Turkish or international by citizenship.

Again, as with all these data on student nationality, it is important to note that for these data given in Table 18, students self-categorisation as either Turkish or

international was used to determine nationality. This may have meant students who were dual nationals categorised themselves as international students (rather than Turkish) when answering the questionnaire and vice versa.. There was no way to verify student responses on whether they were international or Turkish, or indeed dual national citizens as the questionnaire was confidential.

These data gathered and sorted by student nationality indicate that Turkish students were generally more anxious about their interactions with their HRTs than their international peers, although the difference between the levels of anxiety between international and Turkish students is not statistically significant throughout the data collection period.

In May 2011, an average of 14.98% of Turkish students responded positively to the questions asked. Data from September 2011, at the start of the new academic year shows that this anxiety had decreased, when an average of 12.81% of Turkish students reported overall anxiety about their relationship with the HRT. Data from January 2012 indicates that anxiety amongst Turkish students about their relationship with their HRTs was at its highest, with an average of 17.04% of students responding positively to these questions. However, these differences are not statistically significant.

International students indicated increasing levels of anxiety about their relationship with their HRTs throughout the data collection period. In January 2011, an average of 15.00% of international students responded positively to the questions asked,

although anxiety reported by international students was less than that reported by Turkish students at the same time.

An important difference between international and Turkish students in January 2011 was that no international student from grade eight felt that the HRT did not like them, whereas this was a concern for 23.01% of the Turkish students (question 34). These data were then examined by grade level, to see if nationality at any particular grade level, was a factor in anxiety about HRT relationships at the three different periods of data collection.

Table 19

*The percentage of students' positive responses organised by nationality and grade level for all three data sessions on questions relating to anxiety*

**Grade 6**

| | | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May 2011 | Turkish ($n$=31) | 19.35 | 12.90 | 9.68 | 9.68 | 6.45 | 16.13 | 12.90 | 12.90 | 12.5 | 4.02 |
| | International ($n$=8) | 12.50 | 0.00 | 12.50 | 12.50 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 25.00 | 0.00 | 7.81 | 9.3 |
| September 2011 | Turkish ($n$=39) | 10.26 | 12.82 | 5.13 | 15.38 | 7.69 | 7.69 | 7.69 | 2.56 | 8.65 | 4.1 |
| | International ($n$=7) | 0.00 | 2.56 | 2.56 | 0.00 | 2.56 | 0.00 | 2.56 | 5.13 | 1.92 | 1.81 |
| January 2012 | Turkish ($n$=38) | 23.68 | 21.05 | 21.05 | 10.53 | 15.79 | 13.16 | 10.53 | 15.79 | 16.45 | 5.02 |
| | International ($n$=6) | 16.67 | 16.67 | 0.00 | 16.67 | 16.67 | 16.67 | 50.00 | 0.00 | 16.67 | 15.43 |

**Grade 7**

| | | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May 2011 | Turkish ($n$=38) | 7.89 | 5.26 | 10.53 | 7.89 | 18.42 | 13.16 | 13.16 | 18.42 | 11.84 | 4.87 |
| | International ($n$=10) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 | 20.00 | 10.00 | 10.00 | 20.00 | 10.00 | 7.56 |
| September 2011 | Turkish ($n$=46) | 23.91 | 10.87 | 21.74 | 19.57 | 17.39 | 15.22 | 23.91 | 8.70 | 17.66 | 5.74 |
| | International ($n$=5) | 0.00 | 20.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 20.00 | 5.00 | 9.26 |
| January 2012 | Turkish ($n$=29) | 24.14 | 13.79 | 6.90 | 17.24 | 13.79 | 3.45 | 17.24 | 17.24 | 14.22 | 6.5 |
| | International ($n$=6) | 50.00 | 16.67 | 16.67 | 0.00 | 33.33 | 33.33 | 16.67 | 0.00 | 20.83 | 17.25 |

**Grade 8**

| | | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May 2011 | Turkish ($n$=37) | 21.62 | 16.22 | 16.22 | 10.81 | 29.73 | 27.03 | 18.92 | 21.62 | 20.27 | 6.13 |
| | International ($n$=2) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0 |
| September 2011 | Turkish ($n$=35) | 17.14 | 11.43 | 5.71 | 5.71 | 2.86 | 2.86 | 20.00 | 22.86 | 11.07 | 8 |
| | International ($n$=8) | 12.50 | 25.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 25.00 | 12.50 | 37.50 | 0.00 | 14.06 | 14.07 |
| January 2012 | Turkish ($n$=46) | 10.87 | 17.39 | 13.04 | 19.57 | 21.74 | 28.26 | 10.87 | 32.61 | 19.29 | 8 |
| | International ($n$=3) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0 |

*Note.* The $n$ values give the number of students who were Turkish or international by citizenship.

In grade six, as seen from these data in Table 19, international students were more concerned about measuring up to the HRTs' standards in May 2011 and in January 2012 than in September 2011, as indicated by responses to questions in this category. Anxiety levels for both international and Turkish students for grade six students were lowest in September 2011, at the start of the academic year. However, the anxiety levels of international students were lower than that of Turkish students, with an average of 1.92% of international students answering positively to the questions asked, as compared to 8.65% of Turkish students who agreed with the questions. Anxiety levels regarding their relationship with their HRT rose for both Turkish and international students by January 2012, to the point where anxiety levels became almost equal.

Grade seven international students reported higher levels of anxiety than their Turkish counterparts for three of the eight questions in May 2011. Questions 8, 22 and 34 relate to nervousness around the HRT, the HRTs' opinion of them, and concern that the HRT does not like them. However, Turkish students showed greater levels of anxiety than the international students for the remaining questions.

These data collected from September 2011 indicated that grade seven international students were generally not anxious about their relationship with their HRT, as an average of just 5.0% of international students agreed with the questions asked. By contrast, an average of 17.66% of Turkish students responded positively to the questions asked. However, the difference in responses of international and Turkish students is not statistically significant. By January 2012, levels of anxiety amongst

international students had increased to being more than that of the Turkish students, although the high standard deviation in responses for international students means that the difference in reported anxiety levels between Turkish and international students is not significant.

In May 2011, grade eight international students reported no anxiety about their relationship with the HRT. By contrast, an average of 20.27% of grade eight Turkish students indicated that they felt anxious about the relationship with their HRTs. It must be noted, however, that there were only two international students in May 2011 in grade eight, which may account for the data in Table 19. At the start of the academic year, grade eight international students felt anxious about their relationship with their HRT. Turkish students, however, at the same time, showed lower levels of anxiety than those reported in May 2011, which were in turn lower than those reported for international students in September 2011.

By the end of the data collection period, international grade eight students reported that they had no concerns or worries about their relationship with their HRT, which is positive. Again, this may be because of the small number ($n = 3$) of international students in grade eight in January 2012. Conversely, Turkish students' anxiety levels increased from September 2011 to January 2012 in all aspects apart from questions four and 31, which asked about how worried students were about losing their HRTs' respect and whether students measured up to the HRTs' standards (Table 19). Although levels of anxiety change throughout the data collection period for all students in grades six through eight, there were no statistically significant differences

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in the data showing the effect of student nationality and the student grade level on the levels of anxiety faced by students about their relationship with their HRT.

**Anxiety and HRT nationality**

These data were then analysed to see if the HRT's nationality was a factor in the HRT/student relationship. These data given in Table 20 reflect what percentage of students with international HRTs and Turkish HRTs agreed with the statements as asked in Table 14.

Table 20

*The percentage of students' positive responses organised by teacher nationality for all three data sessions on questions relating to anxiety*

| May 2011 N=126 | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| International n=82 | 13.41 | 8.54 | 10.98 | 4.88 | 17.07 | 18.29 | 12.20 | 15.85 | 12.65 | 4.51 |
| Turkish n=44 | 15.91 | 11.36 | 13.64 | 18.18 | 18.18 | 13.64 | 20.45 | 18.18 | 16.19 | 3.08 |

| September 2011 N=140 | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| International n=80 | 16.25 | 12.50 | 11.25 | 6.25 | 8.75 | 8.75 | 20.00 | 16.25 | 12.5 | 4.68 |
| Turkish n=60 | 15.00 | 13.33 | 10.00 | 20.00 | 13.33 | 8.33 | 15.00 | 5.00 | 12.5 | 4.63 |

| January 2012 N=128 | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| International n=77 | 16.88 | 11.69 | 9.09 | 11.69 | 16.88 | 15.58 | 15.58 | 12.99 | 13.8 | 2.85 |
| Turkish n=51 | 23.53 | 25.49 | 19.61 | 19.61 | 19.61 | 19.61 | 11.76 | 31.37 | 21.32 | 5.69 |

Note. The *n* values give the number of students who had Turkish or international HRTs.

It is noteworthy that more students from grades six through eight at the TPS had an international HRT (as opposed to a Turkish one) over the data collection period.

These data in Table 20 suggest that those students who had a Turkish HRT were generally more concerned about their relationships with their HRT than those students with an international HRT in May 2011 and January 2012. Anxiety levels of students with a Turkish HRT increased from September 2011 to January 2012, although this increase is not statistically significant. There was an increase in the number of students who felt that their Turkish HRT did not like them from September 2011, when only 5.0% of students reported this concern as compared to 31.37% in January 2012. Students with Turkish HRTs reported being more nervous around their HRT than students with an international HRT (question eight) throughout the data collection period. Similar responses on questions five and seven indicate that students were more worried about their interactions with their HRT, if the HRT was Turkish, and that Turkish HRTs caused students to doubt themselves more than their international counterparts. Exceptions to this increase in anxiety were responses for questions eight and 31, where students with Turkish HRTs reported being less nervous around their HRTS and being less anxious about measuring up to the HRTs standards in January 2012 as compared to September 2011.

Whilst HRT nationality was not an influencing factor for students levels of connectedness to their HRT (Table 13), these data presented show a significant difference in anxiety levels between students with an international HRT and those with a Turkish HRT nationality in January 2012.

It can be seen that for all sessions, anxiety levels of students with international HRTs remained fairly consistent. Levels of anxiety were lowest in September 2011 at the start of the 2011 - 2012 academic year when, on average, 12.5% of students with

international HRTs responded positively to the questions asked. Anxiety levels regarding the relationship with their Turkish HRTs was greatest in January 2012, when an average of 21.32% of students with Turkish HRTs agreed with the questions asked. However, the difference in anxiety levels for students with Turkish HRTs and those with international HRTs is not statistically significant throughout the data collection period.

These data were then examined to see if HRT nationality was a contributing factor in anxiety about HRT relationships at different grade levels, at the three different periods of data collection.

Table 21

*The percentage of students' positive responses organised by HRT nationality and grade level for all three data sessions on questions relating to anxiety*

| | | HRT Nationality | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 6 | May 2011 | Turkish ($n$=15) | 20.00 | 13.33 | 13.33 | 20.00 | 6.67 | 13.33 | 20.00 | 13.33 | 15.00 | 4.71 |
| | | International ($n$=24) | 16.67 | 8.33 | 8.33 | 4.17 | 4.17 | 12.50 | 12.50 | 8.33 | 9.38 | 4.31 |
| | September 2011 | Turkish ($n$=29) | 6.90 | 13.79 | 6.90 | 17.24 | 10.34 | 10.34 | 10.34 | 6.90 | 10.34 | 3.69 |
| | | International ($n$=17) | 11.76 | 11.76 | 5.88 | 5.88 | 5.88 | 0.00 | 5.88 | 5.88 | 6.62 | 3.77 |
| | January 2012 | Turkish ($n$=26) | 23.08 | 26.92 | 23.08 | 7.69 | 23.08 | 15.38 | 11.54 | 23.08 | 19.23 | 6.82 |
| | | International ($n$=18) | 22.22 | 11.11 | 11.11 | 16.67 | 5.56 | 11.11 | 22.22 | 0.00 | 12.50 | 7.72 |

| | | HRT Nationality | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 7 | May 2011 | Turkish ($n$=13) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 15.38 | 23.08 | 15.38 | 0.00 | 7.69 | 23.08 | 10.58 | 10.02 |
| | | International ($n$=35) | 8.57 | 5.71 | 8.57 | 2.86 | 20.00 | 17.14 | 14.29 | 17.14 | 11.79 | 6.19 |
| | September 2011 | Turkish ($n$=18) | 27.78 | 16.67 | 22.22 | 38.89 | 22.22 | 11.11 | 22.22 | 0.00 | 20.14 | 11.48 |
| | | International ($n$=33) | 18.18 | 9.09 | 18.18 | 6.06 | 12.12 | 15.15 | 21.21 | 15.15 | 14.39 | 5.06 |
| | January 2012 | Turkish ($n$=11) | 54.55 | 18.18 | 9.09 | 36.36 | 9.09 | 9.09 | 27.27 | 36.36 | 25.00 | 16.66 |
| | | International ($n$=24) | 16.67 | 12.50 | 8.33 | 4.17 | 20.83 | 8.33 | 12.50 | 4.17 | 10.94 | 5.87 |

| | | HRT Nationality | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade 8 | May 2011 | Turkish ($n$=16) | 25.00 | 18.75 | 12.50 | 12.50 | 31.25 | 25.00 | 31.25 | 18.75 | 21.88 | 7.47 |
| | | International ($n$=23) | 17.39 | 13.04 | 17.39 | 8.70 | 26.09 | 26.09 | 8.70 | 21.74 | 17.39 | 6.97 |
| | September 2011 | Turkish ($n$=13) | 15.38 | 7.69 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 7.69 | 0.00 | 15.38 | 7.69 | 6.73 | 6.42 |
| | | International ($n$=30) | 16.67 | 16.67 | 6.67 | 6.67 | 6.67 | 6.67 | 26.67 | 23.33 | 13.75 | 8.25 |
| | January 2012 | Turkish ($n$=14) | 0.00 | 28.57 | 21.43 | 28.57 | 21.43 | 35.71 | 0.00 | 42.86 | 22.32 | 15.48 |
| | | International ($n$=35) | 14.29 | 11.43 | 8.57 | 14.29 | 20.00 | 22.86 | 14.29 | 25.71 | 16.43 | 5.87 |

*Note.* The *n* values give the number of students who had Turkish or international HRTs.

The data presented in Table 21 show that grade eight students who had a Turkish HRT report a statistically significant decrease in levels of anxiety felt between data collected between May 2011 and September 2011.

These data in Table 21 show that for all grade six students, anxiety levels about the HRT/student relationship had increased from September 2011 to January 2012, irrespective of the HRTs' nationality. Anxiety levels were at their lowest for both students with international and Turkish HRTs in September 2011 as compared to in May 2011 and January 2012, although the differences are not statistically significant. Responses for question 34 for the data collected in January 2012, show that no student with an international HRT worried that the HRT did not like them. By contrast, 23.08% grade six students with Turkish HRTs had concerns about this issue.

Grade seven students with Turkish HRTs felt the least anxious at the end of the 2010 - 2011 school year. Anxiety levels increased at the start of the next academic year, and then continued to increase till January 2012, when the last set of data was collected, although the difference in anxiety levels is not statistically significant. It is interesting to look at responses for question 34, regarding whether students worried that the Turkish HRT did not like them. In September 2011, this was not a concern for any student with a Turkish HRT, but five months later, this worried 36.36% of the students. Grade seven students with Turkish HRTs were also more worried about

losing the respect of their HRT in January 2012, as compared to previous data collection periods, as indicated by responses to question four.

Grade seven students with international HRTs indicated that they were less worried about their relationship with their HRT when compared with their class fellows who had Turkish HRTs (Table 11) in September 2011 and January 2012. Levels of anxiety in students with international HRTs increased from May 2011 to September 2011, and decreased when measured in January 2012 although the difference in anxiety is not statistically significant.

For grade eight students with Turkish HRTs, there was an increase in anxiety amongst students about interactions with the HRT, increased levels of self doubt caused by the HRT, increased levels of nervousness, concerns over the HRT opinion of students as well as concern that the HRT did not really like them, as indicated by responses to questions 5, 7, 8, 25 and 34, from September 2011 to January 2012. Student anxiety was lowest in September 2011, with no student with a Turkish HRT expressing anxiety for questions 7, 8 and 25 in September 2011. In January 2012, students with Turkish HRTs expressed an overall increase in anxiety about their relationship with their HRT as compared to September 2011, although the difference is not statistically significant. However, all students with Turkish HRTs said that they were no longer anxious about losing their HRTs' respect nor were they worried that they would not measure up to their HRTs' standards (questions 4 and 31) in January 2012.

Contrary to the trends in grade six and seven, grade eight students with international HRTs were more anxious than others in their grade level with Turkish HRTs in September 2011, the start of the new school year. An average of 13.75% of students with international HRTs responded positively to the questions asked, as compared to 6.73% of students with Turkish HRTs, although the difference is not statistically significant. However, in January 2012, students with international HRTs on average were less worried about their relationship with their HRT as compared to those students with Turkish HRTs. Anxiety levels as shown by questions 7, 8, 22 and 25 also increased by January 2012 for students with international HRTs.

Thus, it could be summarised that levels of student anxiety increased for all students from the beginning of the academic year where levels of anxiety were low until the third data collection period in January 2012, though still remaining under 25%. Student concern that their HRT did not really like them increased as the year progressed. Males generally reported higher levels of anxiety and were more nervous when around their HRT than the females. Females were twice as concerned about losing their HRTs respect than the males. Generally Turkish students were more concerned with losing their HRTs respect than the international students although these levels of anxiety did increase in both the Turkish students and the international students as the year progressed. The exception to this was in May 2011 when no international student felt that their HRT did not like them.

Students with a Turkish HRT were generally more concerned with their relationship with their HRT than those with an international HRT.

## Qualitative data

In order to collect qualitative data from the grade six through eight principal and the guidance counsellor, semi-structured interviews were conducted that focused upon the questions given in Appendix F. The interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes. Both the grade six through eight principal and guidance counsellor were asked for clarification on certain issues after the initial interviews.

When asked what expectation the administration had of the HRTs' role, both the principal and the guidance counsellor felt that the HRT was responsible for the students in their homeroom and was the contact person for the pastoral care programme. They both felt that the HRT should not only know the students academically but also from a social perspective, who their friends were, parental and family relationships and to know the students' developmental needs. In the follow-up interview, the principal stated that the HRT was the cornerstone to the school's community.

When asked how these expectations were clarified to HRTs, both the guidance counsellor and the principal stated that these expectations were clearly outlined in the secondary teachers guide (Appendix A); however, the principal and guidance counsellor agreed that these expectations were not always being followed. The principal mentioned that the HRTs and the principal had a meeting at the beginning of the year to outline expectations of the HRT and that there should be a middle school teachers meeting once a month. The guidance counsellor stated that the

expectations that the TPS administration had for HRTs were not effectively communicated to these teachers (grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, February 23, 2012).

During the follow up interview, the grade six through eight guidance counsellor stated that she felt that the expectations of the teachers were dependent upon the age group of the students, indicating that younger students wished for a teacher who cared for their students. As they matured, she felt that students wanted teachers who were proficient and professional in their duties, and that any respect expected from the teacher should be earned.

When asked about the relationship between the HRTs and the students of grade six through eight, the guidance counsellor said that it was an expectation of all HRTs to not only be aware of students academic development but also their social, emotional and personal needs, although this was not an explicit function of the HRTs' roles and responsibilities as stated in the Secondary School Teacher's Guide (Costigan, 2011).

The guidance counsellor said that it was to be expected that students were connected to their HRTs at the beginning of the year, and felt that it was natural for students to become anxious towards the end of the year when exams were approaching. She stated that the homeroom time that students received every morning was not a MEB requirement but that some Turkish schools had 'circle time' to begin their day. Research on the circle time approach develops a classroom (and school) climate in which children are listened to, respected and helped by adults and peers. As a result

of this, they are more likely to feel valued as individuals, and experience a sense of self-worth (Rosenburg, 1965 as cited by Miller, 2007).

When asked what support or training was provided to achieve the expectations of the HRT, both the guidance counsellor and the principal stated that there was no training provided except the meeting at the beginning of the year. The guidance counsellor said that training was needed as, in her opinion, HRTs were generally not comfortable in their roles.

# CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the homeroom teacher (HRT) and the students, and to examine the role the HRT plays in an evolving pastoral care programme for the sixth through eighth grade cohort at the Turkish Private School (TPS), a private school in Ankara, Turkey. The study involved all students in grades six through eight over two academic years (2010 – 2012), as well as their HRTs, guidance counsellor and the grade six through eight principal.

These data were collected using a questionnaire over three different data collection sessions, at the end of the academic year in May 2011, again in September 2011 at the start of the new school year and finally, five months later, in January 2012 (Table 5). The questionnaire (Appendix B) was adapted from 'A measure to assess student-instructor relationships' (Creasey, Jarvis & Knapcik, 2009), which was validated using responses given by American college students. These researchers found that positive teacher/student relationships were significantly correlated to the students' academic achievement.

The study being presented here differed from that done by Creasey, Jarvis and Knapcik (2009) as it involved much younger students. Additionally, this study did

not examine the connection, if any, between teacher/student relationships and academic achievement, focusing instead on examining the characteristics of the HRT/student relationship in a private school in Turkey.

The questionnaire contained 36 closed ended questions, of which 19 questions were centred on two areas of focus; connectedness and anxiety (Appendix B). These remaining questions were still on the topic of homerooms but were designed to be distractors and were not used in this study. This was done to prevent students from feeling that they were answering variations of the same question numerous times. A five point Likert scale was used in order to determine students' strength of feeling for each question. The data were then converted so that it offered either a positive or a negative response to a given statement. These data were organised by grade, student gender, student nationality and finally by HRT nationality to see whether there was any relationship between these factors and the students' relationship with their HRT.

Qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews that were held with the grade six through eight guidance counsellor as well as the administrative principal of that particular cohort (Appendix F).

# Discussion of the findings

The aim of this study was to answer two main research questions regarding the qualities of the HRT/student relationship at the TPS and to examine the role of the HRT in an evolving pastoral care programme. A pastoral care programme addresses domains beyond the classroom by attempting to meet of the needs of the whole child (Best, 2007). It has been noted by Best (2007) that children who experience difficulties at home and in school may sometimes receive too little help, too late. Pastoral care programmes are designed to help students overcome these difficulties (Best, 2007).

The pastoral care programme at the TPS is implemented by the HRTs (grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, February 23, 2012). The HRT is often considered to be the cornerstone of the pastoral care programme and is at the heart of each class (Jones & Harrison, 1997). Liu and Barnhart (1999) have identified that the intimate relationship that exists between the HRT and the students contributes to a positive learning environment. Past studies suggested that the onus of creating a positive relationship with the student rests upon the teacher (Barry & King, 1993, in Leitão & Waugh, 2007; Krausel, Bochner & Duchesne, 2006; McInerney & McInerney, 2006; Smeyers, 1993). A teacher who is pro-active in demonstrating positive feelings such as understanding, warmth, trust, respect and closeness towards the students increases the likelihood of building a stronger relationship (Barry & King, 1993, in Leitão & Waugh, 2007). Previous studies also indicated that a positive teacher/student relationship and the ability to connect with teachers is an important component for

success at school (Creasey, Jarvis & Knapcik, 2009). Best (2007) suggested that such a relationship would need to be warm, positive and non-judgemental to be successful. It is therefore important to examine the relationship between the TPS HRTs and their students, as this relationship forms the basis of an effective pastoral care programme.

**Student Perceptions of their Relationships with the HRTs.**

Examination of the overall data from the questionnaires suggest that the pastoral care programme at the TPS is an effective one, with most students feeling connected to their HRTs (Figure 2). Table 7 shows that over 50% of students reported being connected to their HRTs over the entire data collection period. This is positive, for as research suggests, a strong relationship between a student and his/her teacher may contribute to a student's success in school (Jones & Harrison, 1997; Creasey, Jarvis & Knapcik, 2009). Similarly, levels of anxiety, while increasing through the data collection period, (Figure 6) were low, with less than 17 % of students reporting anxiety about their relationship with their HRT at any data collection point (Table 15). It could be then, that the strength of the HRT/student relationship was keeping levels of anxiety low for students, as suggested by Riley (2009).

In examining the patterns of how connected the TPS students from the sixth through eighth grade felt to their HRT, results in Table 8 show that when students started off the new academic year (September 2011), with a new HRT, the levels

of connectedness were at their highest, and correspondingly, levels of anxiety were low as compared to data collected in May 2011 and January 2012 for students of grades six and eight (Table 16). This suggests that these students felt most comfortable with their HRT when the relationship had just started. There could be many reasons for this, such as the HRTs spending more time getting to know their students and showing more overt interest in them at the beginning of the academic year, than at the end. It could also be that students started the year on a positive note, connecting more readily to the teacher, as shown by the data in Table 8. At the TPS, the academic year starts with HRTs helping students become familiar with their academic timetables, school policies and locker assignments.

As this study considered students' perceptions of how close they felt to their HRT, it may be that students welcomed the attention of the HRT at the start of the year more and thus felt closer to their HRT. Students may thus be more aware of their HRTs' administrations at the start of the year than later on. Zhang & McGrath (2009) stated that it was not just the amount of time spent with a student that had a positive impact upon the teacher/student relationship but also the quality of the time spent.

This research does not make clear why students of the seventh grade felt most anxious about the relationship with the HRT at the start of the academic year and felt lower levels of connectedness in September 2011 as compared to students in other grade levels, as shown by data in Tables 8 and 16.

These data show that levels of connectedness decreased when measured in January 2012 as compared to September 2011 (Figure 2). The fact that students at the TPS report feeling less connected to their HRT five months into the school year is noteworthy. Results gathered show that in May 2011, at the end of the previous academic year, fewer students felt connected with their HRTs than at any other data collection period (Table 7). While it is true that data from May 2011 involved a different cohort of grade six though eight students and their HRTs, and therefore cannot be used to define the trend of connectedness between HRTs and students, this may still show a pattern of students reporting lower levels of connectedness with their HRT as the academic year progressed.

This is of concern as connectedness between students and their HRTs should, in theory, be increasing with the passage of time. Jones and Harrison (1997) found that student HRT relationships are strengthened over time. In fact, they advocated that the HRT should remain with the same students over the course of their compulsory education as more good quality contact time allows for stronger relationships between students and HRTs. This is not current practice at the TPS as HRTs change every year, working with different students on a yearly basis.

The fact that TPS students reported lower levels of connectedness with their HRTs as the year progressed, as shown in Figure 2, is noteworthy, as students and teachers were expected to be most comfortable with each other after an extended period of time.

The exact reasons for students feeling relatively lower levels of connectedness with their HRT as the year progressed, as shown in Figure 2, cannot be ascertained from these data. It could be hypothesised that as the students had worked with their HRT for an extended period of time, they had become so comfortable in their relationship so as to become blasé about it, and therefore reported lower levels of connectedness. Students' perceptions on how interested their HRT was in them may have changed, as the interest that the HRT displayed (in students) may have become more covert, as compared to the start of the year. Also, the HRT may no longer be a novelty and so be 'taken for granted' by students.

No research, specific either to Turkey or from other countries, was found to support the hypothesis that students would report feeling less connected to their HRT (or indeed any teacher) after having worked with them over an extended period of time. The grade six through eight guidance counsellor attributed the lower levels of connectedness felt by students to increased exam anxiety (grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, March 7, 2012). According to her, students may feel less connected to the school if they felt that they might not be attending TPS the following year (because of not succeeding in the end of year/entrance exams).

It must also be noted, that these reported lower levels of connectedness, as given in Table 8, are as perceived by students and not necessarily an indicator of how strong the relationship between the HRT and the students actually is. Additionally,

it must be emphasised that the relatively lower levels of connectedness reported by students in May 2011 do not indicate that the majority of students felt unconnected to their HRT. Rather, as indicated by the grade six through eight guidance counsellor (personal communication, February 23, 2012), other influences, such as end of year stress and less overt attention by the HRT towards individual students, may have lead to students perceiving their relationship with their HRT to be less close than before.

Given that students reported feeling most connected to their HRT at the start of the academic year, when the relationship had just started, it may be put forth that the current TPS practice of HRTs changing on an annual basis was appropriate in this context. However, no research was found advocating this practice and Reid (2010) does show that teacher turnover can significantly lower students' academic performance. This, when combined with the suggestions of Jones and Harrison (1997), that advised HRTs staying with a student for the duration of the student's academic career, would then suggest that the current TPS practice of changing HRTs every year may need to be reconsidered. It is unclear, however, whether a HRT who moved up with his or her students through out the schooling years, as suggested by Jones and Harrison (1997), would change this pattern of HRT/student connectedness decreasing with the passage of time.

These data collected for this study, although generally positive as shown by data in Table 8, indicate that in the domain of connectedness, there were two areas in which students reported lower levels of comfort. Questions 23 and 29 asked

students whether they could discuss problems and concerns with their HRTs and if they could share anything with their HRT (Table 6). These data suggest that most students, irrespective of grade level or nationality, did not feel as comfortable talking to their HRTs about their problems and concerns as they did sharing thoughts and opinions (Figure 2). This hesitation to share problems and concerns may indicate that positive relationships, suggested to be vital by Creasey, Jarvis and Knapcik (2009), are not being built between the HRT and the student to the highest degree that is possible.

Social Penetration Theory argues that relationships are formed gradually, involving self disclosure by all parties concerned (Altman & Taylor, 1987). When this occurs, a relationship of mutual trust and understanding develops, which is an important factor in forming a relationship (Collins and Miller, 1994). However, this theory was not specifically formulated for the teacher/student relationship, and it could be said that teachers not sharing their problems with their students is part of what it means to be professional within the teaching domain.

That students are hesitant to share their problems with their HRTs, as shown in Figure 2, is however noteworthy. A strong HRT/student relationship should enhance students' willingness to seek help with problems (Yablon, 2010) and the lower levels of students' perceptions regarding their ability to share problems with their HRTs could be an indicator of a HRT/student relationship that is not very strong.

However, it is possible that within the TPS context, students may have other sources of support available to them, such as parents or siblings, and therefore would not consider HRTs as adults to whom they would go for help, with more personal problems. The grade six through eight guidance counsellor stated that in her experience of working with the TPS families, parents were very closely involved with the everyday lives of their children, and it could be that students did not feel the need to discuss problems with their HRTs as their own parents were supporting them. This was in keeping with past research done by Tekin (2011), who found that Turkish parents were very involved in the education and lives of their children in order to help them succeed. As most students at the TPS are Turkish, this may explain responses to questions 23 and 29 as shown in Table 9 are generally lower than other responses as fewer students would consider going to their HRT with personal problems.

The data relating to the degree of connectedness that students reported feeling towards their HRTs indicated that generally, females felt more connected to their HRTs than males (Table 9). The reasons for this are not clear as this study did not examine the effects of the HRT gender in the HRT/student relationship. It is thus not possible to determine whether males working with the four male HRTs reported higher feelings of connectedness than those working with the five female HRTs in the 2011 - 2012 academic year, as the questionnaires were anonymous. According to Reichert and Hawley (2010), however, teacher gender need not be a hindrance in males forming meaningful relationships with their teachers. Reichert and Hawley (2010) also suggested that males in single sex schools form more

meaningful relationships with their teachers than males who attend coeducational schools, irrespective of the gender of the teacher. Thus, it could be that the lower levels of connectedness that males reported as shown in Table 9 are a consequence of being a male student in a coeducational school.

With perceived levels of connectedness between the HRT and students decreasing between September 2011 and January 2012 (Table 7), it is perhaps not surprising that the reported levels of anxiety faced by the students about their relationship with their HRT are seen to increase over the same period (Table 15). However, the differences in the levels of connectedness and anxiety between September 2011 and January 2012 are not significant. Past research suggests that stronger connectedness to school resulted in lower emotional distress and anxiety in adolescents (Wilkinson-Lee, Zhang, Nuno, & Wilhelm, 2011). While these past researchers did not examine anxiety specifically relating to the HRT/student relationship, it could be hypothesised that lower levels of connectedness may be related to anxiety about HRT relationships in this study.

Hamre and Pianta (2001 in Ang et al. 2010) suggested that student perception of negative feelings in the teacher/student relationship, such as lack of nurturance and critical feedback, adversely affect how students function. Other researchers have documented that a strong relationship between the teacher and student can alleviate stress, reduce anxiety and promote academic success (Ang et al., 2008; Riley, 2009). However, whilst the grade six through eight guidance counsellor saw a connection between levels of anxiety and connectedness, it cannot be

conclusively stated that the lower levels of connectedness in this study are directly and only correlated to the higher levels of anxiety. Also, while Ang et al. (2008) and Riley (2009) suggest that student anxiety can be reduced by a strong teacher/ student relationship, it cannot be said that lower feelings of connectedness with the HRT cause students' anxiety. It must also be emphasised that while anxiety about their HRT/student relationship felt by students was seen to increase through the 2011 - 2012 academic year (Table 15), the levels of anxiety were still less than 25%, as shown in Figure 6.

The data gathered in May 2011, at the end of that academic year, suggested that students felt relatively higher levels of anxiety about their relationship with their HRT (and lower levels of connectivity) than at the beginning of the new academic year in September 2011 (Tables 16 and 8). It could be expected that students would face generally higher levels of anxiety in school at the end of the academic year with final exams approaching (grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, March 7, 2012). This was seen to be especially true for students of grade eight (Figure 9), who were about to take their entrance exam for the TPS high school.

Anxiety levels that increased throughout the first semester, as shown in Table 15, too may not be surprising, as stress for students would be expected to increase through the school year as workload and exam pressure increased. In the follow-up to the interview, the grade six through eight guidance counsellor mentioned that for some grade eight students, the anxiety begins right at the start of their

grade eight academic year and continues to increase as the entrance exam to ninth

grade, held annually in May, comes closer. As parents also are closely involved

and want their children to succeed in these entrance exams, this may contribute to

more grade eight students feeling anxious. It would seem then, that the increasing

levels of anxiety that students reported feeling through out the school year may be

related to school issues and was not directly linked with the relationship that

students had with their HRT.

It is interesting to note that males generally report feeling more anxious about

their relationship with their HRT (Figures 7, 8 and 9) and less connected than

females to their HRTs through out the data collection period at all grade levels

(Figures 3, 4 and 5). It is not possible to discern whether this higher level of

anxiety is directly and only related to the correspondingly lower levels of

connectedness reported with the HRT or influenced by other factors such as

student gender. However, a study conducted by Baldwin, Harris and Chambliss

(1997) suggested that the general experience of stress during adolescence was

consistent across gender and there was no evidence to suggest one gender being at

greater risk than the other for developing psychological symptoms of stress. As

stated previously, it could be then, that the greater levels of anxiety being reported

by males are a function of being a male student in a coeducational school, as

suggested by Reichert and Hawley (2010).

Findings of this study suggest that student or HRT nationality was not a

consideration for students' willingness to share non-academic problems (Tables

10 and 12), although fewer international students indicated that they would share their problems with their HRT, as compared to Turkish students (Table 10). Additionally, students with Turkish HRTs were more concerned about their relationship with their HRT than students with an international HRT (Table 12).

This seems to suggest that there are cultural influences to the relationship, which may have had an impact on these data collected. Past research indicates that Turkish society is collectivist, as compared to the US which is more individualistic (Grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, March 7, 2012; Gregoriadis & Tsigilis, 2007; Stockton & Güneri, 2011). In collectivist societies, there is a greater emphasis on forming close and positive relationships (Beyazkurk & Kesner, 2005), and it would therefore not be surprising that the students, who are mainly Turkish, would be more worried about their relationship with another Turkish person, than with an international HRT, as indicated in Table 19. Given the collectivist nature of this society, Turkish students may assume that the teacher is a friend, and therefore have more anxiety about their relationship with their teacher than international students, who perhaps may not see their teachers in the same light. Work done by Aukrust et al. (2003, as cited by Beyazkurk and Kesner, 2005), showed that Turkish parents emphasised the importance of having close and positive relationships with their teachers at school to their children more than parents in the U.S., Norway or Korea. This greater emphasis on the teacher/student relationship may thus also generate more anxiety for Turkish students as compared to students from other cultural backgrounds. It is unknown, however, whether Turkish students have

greater anxiety about their relationships with all their teachers or just their HRT, as compared to international students. Further research would be needed, examining teacher/student relationships in both the Turkish and international school context.

Overall, the results obtained from this study suggest that most students are comfortable with their relationship with their HRT. There appears, however, to be hesitation on the part of the students in discussing problems with HRTs. These data suggest that levels of connectedness decreased through the course of the academic year, with anxiety levels about the relationship that students had with their HRT increasing, the reasons for which could not be ascertained.

It can thus be said that the HRT/student relationship at TPS is strongest at the start of the academic year (Table 7), and that ways need to be found in which this can be maintained and built upon. This would not only enhance feelings of community and a greater sense of belonging within the whole school, but also help connect teachers and students with each other, for the benefit of the students' school experience.

In summary, the data gathered seem to suggest that a majority of students report feeling connected to their HRT (Table 7), with low levels of anxiety about their relationship with their HRT (Table 15). However, the ability to connect with the HRT seemed to decrease with the passage of time, which is contrary to previous

research (Lui & Barnhart, 1999; Yablon, 2010). Zhang and McGrath (2009) suggested that it is the quality of time that the student and HRT spend together, and not the quantity that makes the difference. Conversely, it may be the case that HRTs were unable to create relationships with students that were truly meaningful and nurturing, as suggested by Barry and King (1993 in Leitão and Waugh 2007). It may also be the case that the higher levels of anxiety that students reported about their relationship with their HRT as the year progressed were linked to the reduced levels of comfort that the students were feeling with their HRTs or stress from school in general, as suggested by the grade six through eight guidance counsellor. These are not conclusive findings, however, as there may be other influences, such as Turkish students' expectations of their teacher being different from international students' due to cultural differences (Aukrust et al., 2003, as cited by Beyazkurk and Kesner, 2005). Additionally, this study does not make clear whether connectedness and anxiety are related. More research would need to be conducted in order to ascertain if there is a relationship between how connected students felt to their HRT and the reported levels of anxiety about their relationship with the HRT.

**The HRTs role as perceived by the administrators**

At the TPS, there are two administrators directly working with the HRTs to establish a cohesive pastoral care programme for grades six through eight. The guidance counsellor's responsibilities include student welfare, and designing the Personal and Social Education (PSE) curricula, that is then taught by the HRTs to the students on a weekly basis. The grade six through eight principal is the overall

administrator in charge, to whom all grade coordinators, HRTs, and teachers of these grade levels report (Figure 1).

During the interviews, both the grade six through eight principal and the guidance counsellor felt that the HRTs were the cornerstones of the school community, echoing the findings of Jones and Harrison (1997). HRTs were thought to be the primary point of contact and were responsible for the academic and social growth of the students. The administration expected the HRTs to deliver the weekly PSE lesson, take attendance and induct new TPS students into a class (grade six through eight principal, personal communication, February 21, 2012; grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, February 23, 2012). HRTs were also to know about students' academic, social, emotional and personal needs (grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, March 7, 2012).

Whilst the administration felt that HRTs were an integral part of the school community, any academic or social problems that come to their attention are immediately to be referred to the guidance counsellor (Appendix A). It is worth mentioning here that according to the Secondary School Teacher's Guide (Costigan, 2011), all concerns relating to the emotional health of a student are to be passed immediately to the guidance counsellors, which may lead to the idea that HRTs were not to get involved in such issues. This was reiterated by the guidance counsellor, who stated that HRTs needed to inform her about any concerns, and that it was then the guidance counsellor's responsibility to address

the problem (grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, March 7, 2012). Such issues are normally kept confidential, and not communicated back to the HRTs or the rest of the teaching staff. It is therefore unclear whether and if HRTs may help students' academic and social growth, given that HRTs may not have access to the information needed to provide individualised support.

Research suggests that there is an ever present underlying tension that exists between guidance counsellors and other school personnel regarding the confidentially of information about students (Williams & Wehrman, 2010). These researchers stated that guidance counsellors are trained to develop a trusting relationship with students so that the student may feel safe, and that this training separates the counsellors from the teachers and administration (Mitchell et al. 2002, in Williams & Wehrman, 2010). In contrast, Gewertz (2007) stated that HRTs can be trained to advise students on academic and personal issues. Additionally, Jones and Harrison (1997) also recommend that the HRT be the primary keeper of information about a student and be the first point of contact, as it is the HRT who meets with the student daily and therefore could monitor progress and behaviour of a student more effectively.

Researchers in Turkey have suggested that guidance counsellors have a poor record of demonstrating their effectiveness (Astramovich, Coker, & Hoskins, 2005 in Erguner-Tekinalk, Leuwerek, & Terzi, 2009; Stockton & Güneri, 2011). They suggested that the responsibilities of guidance counsellors in Turkish

schools are often not clearly defined and that this creates further confusion between teachers and administrators as to who is to address issues related to students. However, as this research was all done in public schools in Turkey; it is unclear whether these observations are appropriate for a private, international school such as the TPS.

The administration has not attempted to clarify which of the models considered here, whether it is the HRT or the guidance counsellor, who is to be the primary resource for the student, is followed by the TPS philosophically. However, under present circumstances, HRTs perhaps cannot be asked to advise students on academic and personal issues as they have received no training in this matter, which could also explain why the Secondary School Teacher's Handbook (Costigan, 2011) requires issues of such nature to be reported immediately to the guidance counsellors.

Additionally, in a collectivist culture such as Turkey, as explained by Gregoriadis and Tsigilis (2007), there may be hesitation to let others know about individuals' problems, outside of immediate family. This may be a reason why HRTs are not involved in discussions about problems that students may be facing.

According to the grade six through eight guidance counsellor, HRTs are expected to be aware of students' development and needs in all areas, and to inform and coordinate these needs with the relevant people. This may give HRTs the

impression that while they are to be aware of student needs, any concerns must be forwarded on, and not dealt with by the HRT him/herself. HRTs may therefore not closely involve themselves with the emotional, social or academic problems of students and, as a consequence, perceive their role to be less central or important to a student's school experience.

While both administrators stated that the expectations and responsibilities of the HRTs were in the school guide, the guidance counsellor suggested that these were not being followed. The description given in the 2011 Secondary School Teacher's Guide (Costigan, 2011) is exactly the same as that written in 2008 and has not been changed or modified since, despite annual updates to the Teacher's Guide itself. This may account for the lack of clarity about the exact role and responsibilities of the HRT, as these roles have evolved and been enhanced since the description was initially written in 2008.

According to research done by Bolman and Deal (2008), successful organizations must have clearly stated goals and responsibilities that are communicated to all stakeholders regularly. The researcher's own observations suggest that far more is asked of HRTs in meetings, via email, and through "off the record" communications than is stated in the Secondary School Teacher's Guide (Costigan, 2011). While Bolman and Deal (2008) recognize the value of informal communications such as email and "off the record" meetings, they still emphasize the need for responsibilities and expectations to be clear and well documented.

Interestingly, while the Secondary School Teachers Guide (Costigan, 2011) lists the responsibilities of the HRT, these are the same for the entire school, grades six through twelve (Appendix A). The responsibilities are therefore quite general as the HRT programme for grades nine through twelve was far less involved, and less was expected of those HRTs than from grade six through eight HRTs. It may be then, that HRTs for grades six through eight struggled with the exact nature of their responsibilities in terms of pastoral care, as a great deal extra was asked of them in meetings and via internal school communications.

While informal contacts and exchanges helped resolve issues, it is nevertheless important for any organization's success to have stated goals and objectives, with responsibility appropriately and clearly disseminated (Bolman & Deal, 2008). That the HRTs roles and responsibilities were not written specifically for grades six through eight in any school documentation may have lead to confusion as to what exactly the HRTs' role was, and resentment at being given extra responsibilities. Clearly defined job descriptions and rules can ensure predictability, reliability and uniformity (Mintzberg, 1979, as cited by Bolman and Deal, (2008).

As stated by the principal, the HRTs met for an hour at the start of the academic year. However, this meeting was not for training purposes and the time was spent discussing operational matters for the first day of school (grade six through eight principal, personal communication, February 21, 2012). Given that every academic year brings new teachers to the TPS community, and that every year,

there are these and other veteran TPS teachers who become HRTs for the first time, it is contrary to research examined that these teachers are not trained or even given accurate instructions for their scope of operations (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Gewertz, 2007).

Carroll (2010) goes so far as to suggest that pastoral care is needed for teachers before they can be an effective part of a pastoral care group. Although scheduled monthly meetings are held for all middle school teaching staff, no time is generally allocated for the HRTs to meet and discuss issues relating to students. During the meeting time, upcoming events and the role of the HRT (and all other teachers) in these events are communicated verbally by the administration. This top down dissemination of information was effective in that all teachers were kept aware of upcoming events and duties, and that a uniform message was delivered to the staff, as advocated by Bolman and Deal (2008). However, these meetings were often cancelled to accommodate parent/teacher nights, information evenings for parents or for other external reasons (grade six through eight principal, personal communication, February 21, 2012).

Both administrators admitted that no training was provided to the HRTs (grade six through eight principal, personal communication, February 21, 2012; grade six through eight guidance counsellor, personal communication, February 23, 2012). Pastoral care training may include how to deal with bullying, as suggested by Rigby (2011), appraising the mental health of students (Bostock, Kitt & Kitt, 2011) and assessing student needs and counselling (D'Rozario, Khoo & Soong,

1992). Research done by Gewertz (2007) in inner city schools in New York where the implementation of a successful pastoral care programme caused dramatic improvements in schools, showed that distributed counselling was an effective tool for building effective HRT/student relationships. Resources, such as advisory skills training and a coach/mentor to work with teachers also contributed greatly to the programme's success.

It could be then, that with proper training, HRTs may enhance the pastoral care programme at TPS, by forming close connections with students in their care and help in reducing anxiety faced by students. Previous research suggests that training HRTs in pastoral care skill is a vital component of making the pastoral care programme a success (Gewertz, 2007; Johnson, 2009).

In summary, past research focuses on building a community of care, to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child, (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Ellerbrock & Kiefer, 2010; Gewertz, 2007). These all indicate that an effective HRT can have a significant impact on the academic and social well-being of a student, and their place within a school community. This relationship reduces anxiety and stress for the students and gives each student a better chance to succeed during these formative years.

The TPS has a pastoral care programme that enables HRTs to spend 15 minutes a day with their students, at the very start of the day. HRTs also spend a further 40

minutes a week delivering the Personal and Social Education programme as set by the guidance counsellor. The data collected from the student questionnaires suggest that this time was being used to build meaningful relationships amongst the students and teachers, as indicated by most students. This is supported by Jones and Harrison (1997) who said that time spent with students helps strengthen the relationship between them and the teacher, and helps develop feelings of belonging amongst the students. However, given that an aim of an effective pastoral care programme is to address the needs of all students, the programme at the TPS could be modified and developed so that the varying needs of even more students could be met.

Reasons why the TPS pastoral care programme may not be meeting the needs of the entire student body may be because of a lack of clarity, guidance and training provided to the HRTs, all of which are important components of an effective pastoral care programme (Bolman & Deal, 2008; Carroll, 2010; Gewertz, 2007; Johnson, 2009). It may be that the time that HRTs were spending with their students was not being used, as suggested by Zhang and McGrath (2009), to help all students create feelings of belonging.

Additionally, it is the tradition at the TPS that guidance counsellors are the primary keepers of information about students' social and personal growth, and emotional well-being. Jones and Harrison (1997) recommend a different model in which the HRT is the primary keeper of information about a student and be the first point of contact. It is unknown which model is best suited to the particular

needs of students at TPS. However, changes such as these may be considered for

the pastoral care programme at the TPS to achieve even greater success by

reaching out to the needs of all students.

## Implications for practice

The findings of this research suggest that the pastoral care programme at TPS,

although effective in a number of ways, leaves room for improvement in some

areas. Some suggestions are thus made below, that may further enhance the

pastoral care programme at the TPS.

The administration should revise the Secondary School Teachers Guide (Costigan,

2011), possibly writing a separate one for teachers of grades six through eight, so

that HRTs of these grades specifically are aware of their responsibilities. These

are greater than those of grades nine through twelve HRTs due to the age of the

students. This guide should clearly define the role and responsibilities of the HRTs

and guidance counsellor, as recommended by Bolman & Deal (2008) and Johnson

(2009). The expectations, based on past research and centred around the

philosophy, ethos and cultural norms specific to the TPS, could be laid out

explicitly, leaving as little room for doubt as possible. There should be a system in

place ensuring that all teachers read and understand the school's duty of care

towards its students and that these responsibilities are upheld.

HRTs should be trained in the essential elements that research suggests make for an effective pastoral care programme. This is supported by research done by Gewertz (2007), Jones and Harrison (1997) as well as Best (2007), who suggest that trained HRTs are a vital component of an effective pastoral care programme. All HRTs need to be trained in issues such as special educational needs, inclusion, child protection as well as understanding moral and legal responsibilities, managing information and understanding channels of communication between all stakeholders ("Guidance for Qualified Teacher Standards"). Training could be provided by having on site coaches and school based workshops (Gewertz, 2007), or by going to courses that train teachers in the function of pastoral care. It may be beneficial for the school to invite a specialist in this field to the TPS to make the training available to all teachers who are interested in the pastoral care programme.

The continuity in the pastoral care programme should be kept in place for at least one cycle of the grade six through eight programme with no changes in school policy for issues such as the length of the home room time period. A three year time period is the minimum suggested as this would also allow further study of how an incoming sixth grader perceives his or her experience with the pastoral care programme over the course of his/her sixth through eighth grade educational career. Administrators and HRTs should implement the same policies consistently across all three grades as suggested by Mintzberg (1979, as cited by Bolman and Deal, 2008).

# Implications for further research

It is clear from the findings of this study that more research could be done to examine the elements of an effective pastoral care programme, not only at the TPS but also in the greater context of international education in Turkey, as cultural influences have an effect on the dynamics of a HRT/student relationship.

It is recommended that a longitudinal study over three years, following a group of students through the grades six through eight be carried out. Such a study would bring clarity on how levels of connectedness to the HRT and anxiety change during the school year and over an extended period of time. It could be that the results reported in this study are simply the baseline levels of connectedness and anxiety that students in this context report feeling. A longitudinal study would enable researchers to highlight any major changes in student relationships and anxiety levels throughout each year and over the three year period.

Research could also examine why HRTs at the TPS were reporting some concern about their interactions with their students. The research would involve examining the exact nature of the concerns, as well as looking at whether nationality or gender of the HRT was a factor.

Research on the relationship, if any, of the HRT/student relationship on student academic performance at the TPS could be done as previous research has indicated that a stronger relationship between the HRT and the student leads to greater academic success (Creasey, Jarvis & Knapcik, 2009; Jones & Harrison,

1997).

Greater in-depth analysis by an external researcher, of HRTs' views and working practices should be undertaken so that data is not just based upon students' perceptions of current norms but come from a less unbiased source.

Research may also be carried out in other private international schools in Turkey that implement pastoral care programmes, to examine different models of pastoral care within the Turkish context. This could lead to a model of a pastoral care programme that is ideally suited to Turkish culture, and its view on relationships between parents, students, teachers and administrators.

Pastoral care programmes in the international school context outside of Turkey may be studied to gain an understanding of how teachers and students build relationships across cultures.

Research on levels of connectedness or anxiety between students and subject teachers in Turkey could also be carried out. Comparisons could then be made between the HRT/student relationship and relationships that students have with other subject teachers.

Research could also be carried out on the parent-child relationship in schools similar to the TPS, where parents are very involved in their child's' education.

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This relationship could be correlated to the students' need for teachers to be '*in loco parentis*' in the academic environment.

## Limitations

There are a number of limitations for this study that must be addressed. The following paragraphs briefly discuss the most important of these limitations.

The questionnaire measured student and HRT perceptions of their relationship with each other. While these perceptions may be indicators to how strong the HRT/student relationship is, it could be that HRT/students relationships are different than perceived. This study also did not examine the effects of the HRT gender in the HRT/student relationship.

These data were used collectively and mostly not question by question. This means that only broad trends were examined and discussed in this research, with less attention given to individual questions and their implications.

A large amount of data was generated by the student questionnaires. However, data about the HRTs' perception of their relationships with their students as indicated by responses to questionnaires was not considered. HRTs were not interviewed by the researcher, himself a TPS teacher, as this may have been too intrusive. Interviews could have provided more in-depth data and answers to

questions that arose from the questionnaire results. Only views of the grade six through eight principal and guidance counsellor were used to assess the role of the HRT in implementing the pastoral care programme at the TPS; other administrators and board members were not interviewed for their opinions about the pastoral care programme.

This study did not measure the actual practice of the HRTs as it was felt that the presence of the researcher (himself a TPS teacher) would be too intrusive and would have caused the HRTs distress.

The study did not measure the effectiveness of the administration in guiding the HRTs against stated goals and the philosophy of the school. Information was only gathered through interviews with the grade six through eight guidance counsellor and principal. The effectiveness of the administration was not examined as the researcher himself was part of the school community and did not wish to comment upon the effectiveness of the administration.

The study did not gather opinions or viewpoints from other stakeholders, such as parents, as it was felt that the guidance counsellor and the six through eight grade principal represented the needs of the wider TPS community. However, parents could have contributed information on Turkish culture. Additionally, information on parental care and their relationships with their children could have been gathered, to better understand the pastoral care needs of students at the TPS.

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**Revised at 9/25/08**

## GRADE COORDINATOR/HOMEROOM TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

### GRADE COORDINATOR

1. To oversee the general academic well being of the students in that grade level.
➢ Meet with students on a regular basis, especially those struggling in one or more areas – homework/organisation/study habits etc.

➢ Establish induction programmes for students within their grade especially for brand new students to the school.

➢ Make teachers aware of extended absence.

2. To liaise with the teachers at that grade level.
➢ Chair Grade level meetings especially for <u>Special Events</u>.(with the teachers)

3. Meet with the secondary school principal and the counsellor to discuss concerns pertaining to the students and/or the secondary school programme and to discuss action that needs to be taken.
➢ Regular meetings with the Principals and Counsellor.

4. To monitor and give feedback regarding the overall curriculum and co-curricular programme for their grade level, including the PSE programme.
➢ Liaise with Secondary School Principal.

➢ Liaise with counsellor as the PSE Coordinator

5. To organise grade level trips and special events e.g. grade 8 graduation.

6. To assist the homeroom teachers with the coordination of the student portfolios and students led conferences in the middle school.(Grade 6-8 only)

Issues related to the following must be passed to the counsellor immediately:
▪ Family Issues (separation/neglect/bereavement/divorce.)

▪ Behaviour/Discipline Issues

▪ Relationship Issues

▪ Social Adaptation Problems – including bullying.

▪ Observations of extreme attitude/mood changes.

(sic)

# APPENDIX B

## Student Questionnaire adapted from 'A measure to assess student-instructor relationships' (Creasey, Jarvis, & Knapcik, 2009)

I am (Please circle)    Female    Male

Are you a BIS student? (Please circle)    Yes    No

My Homeroom teacher is (Please circle)    International   Turkish

| # | PLEASE CIRCLE A NUMBER 1 – 5 THAT REFLECTS YOUR OPINION | Strongly Agree | | | | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I wish my homeroom teacher were more concerned with the welfare of students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2 | My homeroom teacher checks my planner every week. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | My homeroom teacher is always concerned with the needs of his or her students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4 | I'm occasionally worry that I will lose my homeroom teachers respect. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | I worry a lot about my interactions with my homeroom teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | It's not difficult for me to feel close to my homeroom teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7 | My homeroom teacher makes me doubt myself. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | I am nervous around my homeroom teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9 | My homeroom teacher always makes sure that the school notices are read out. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10 | My homeroom teacher seems to only appreciate certain students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11 | I feel comfortable sharing my thoughts with my homeroom teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12 | I find it relatively easy to get close to my homeroom teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13 | Sometimes my homeroom teachers mood is unpredictable. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14 | My homeroom teacher always communicates in English. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15 | My homeroom teacher always takes attendance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16 | I prefer not to show my homeroom teacher how I truly think or feel. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17 | It's easy for me to connect with my homeroom teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18 | I get uncomfortable when my homeroom teacher tries to get too friendly with students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19 | My homeroom teacher uses my planner to communicate with my parents. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20 | It makes me mad that my homeroom teacher does not seem to pay attention to the needs of his or her students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21 | I am very comfortable feeling connected to my homeroom teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22 | I'm scared to show my thoughts around my homeroom teacher; I think he or she will think less of me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23 | I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my homeroom teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24 | I don't feel comfortable opening up to my homeroom teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25 | I'm afraid that if I shared my thoughts with my homeroom teacher that he or she would not think very highly of me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26 | I do not often worry about losing the respect of my homeroom teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27 | My homeroom teacher always notices if I have not had my planner signed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28 | If I were to get into trouble in a class, I do not think my homeroom teacher would be very motivated to help me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29 | I could tell my homeroom teacher just about anything. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30 | I feel comfortable depending on this my homeroom teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31 | I worry that I won't measure up to my homeroom teachers' standards. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32 | I worry that my homeroom teacher does not really care for his or her students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33 | My homeroom teacher always teaches the same PSE lesson as others in my grade. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 34 | I often worry that my homeroom teacher doesn't really like me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 35 | If I had a problem in a class, I know I could talk to my homeroom teacher. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 36 | I know my homeroom teacher could make me feel better if I had a problem. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

# APPENDIX C

**Permission letter sent to the parents of students in grades six through eight at the Turkish Private School 2010 – 2012.**

Dear Parents,

Here at the TPS we take the responsibility of the care, safety and education of your child very seriously. As Homeroom teachers we are always seeking to develop and enhance our professional practice. Later this year I will be conducting an anonymous survey to ascertain your child's opinion of the pastoral care programme to see if we can improve.

If you do not wish your child to be involved in this survey please notify me as soon as possible.

Thank You,

Mr. Williams

# APPENDIX D

## The average percentage of students positive responses organised by student gender and grade level for all three data sessions on questions relating to connectedness.

**Grade 6**

|  |  | Q3 | Q6 | Q11 | Q12 | Q17 | Q21 | Q23 | Q29 | Q30 | Q35 | Q36 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May 2011 | Females (*n*=19) | 78.95 | 73.68 | 78.95 | 73.68 | 84.21 | 78.95 | 57.89 | 63.16 | 84.21 | 78.95 | 73.68 | 75.12 | 8.18 |
|  | Males (*n*=20) | 70.00 | 80.00 | 70.00 | 70.00 | 85.00 | 60.00 | 35.00 | 40.00 | 70.00 | 45.00 | 60.00 | 62.27 | 16.18 |
| September 2011 | Females (*n*=23) | 91.3 | 69.57 | 69.57 | 69.57 | 73.91 | 69.57 | 56.52 | 56.52 | 69.57 | 78.26 | 73.91 | 70.75 | 9.54 |
|  | Males (*n*=23) | 78.26 | 69.57 | 73.91 | 78.26 | 91.3 | 82.61 | 60.87 | 39.13 | 65.22 | 82.61 | 78.26 | 72.73 | 14.03 |
| January 2012 | Females (*n*=23) | 86.96 | 73.91 | 78.26 | 73.91 | 78.26 | 73.91 | 69.57 | 65.22 | 73.91 | 86.96 | 86.96 | 77.08 | 7.3 |
|  | Males (*n*=21) | 61.9 | 76.19 | 76.19 | 61.9 | 71.43 | 71.43 | 61.9 | 42.86 | 57.14 | 61.9 | 57.14 | 63.64 | 9.82 |

**Grade 7**

|  |  | Q3 | Q6 | Q11 | Q12 | Q17 | Q21 | Q23 | Q29 | Q30 | Q35 | Q36 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May 2011 | Females (*n*=24) | 54.17 | 54.17 | 45.83 | 45.83 | 58.33 | 58.33 | 20.83 | 20.83 | 29.17 | 41.67 | 45.83 | 43.18 | 13.85 |
|  | Males (*n*=24) | 45.83 | 16.67 | 37.5 | 29.17 | 41.67 | 37.5 | 20.83 | 25 | 33.33 | 37.5 | 33.33 | 32.58 | 8.9 |
| September 2011 | Females (*n*=25) | 76.00 | 60.00 | 68.00 | 48.00 | 56.00 | 52.00 | 36.00 | 24.00 | 48.00 | 60.00 | 68.00 | 54.18 | 15.01 |
|  | Males (*n*=26) | 61.54 | 65.38 | 53.85 | 57.69 | 80.77 | 69.23 | 57.69 | 46.15 | 53.85 | 65.38 | 53.85 | 60.49 | 9.44 |
| January 2012 | Females (*n*=17) | 64.71 | 76.47 | 82.35 | 70.59 | 82.35 | 70.59 | 76.47 | 41.18 | 58.82 | 76.47 | 76.47 | 70.59 | 12.06 |
|  | Males (*n*=18) | 66.67 | 61.11 | 72.22 | 61.11 | 72.22 | 66.67 | 38.89 | 33.33 | 61.11 | 55.56 | 61.11 | 59.09 | 12.49 |

**Grade 8**

|  |  | Q3 | Q6 | Q11 | Q12 | Q17 | Q21 | Q23 | Q29 | Q30 | Q35 | Q36 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May 2011 | Females (*n*=15) | 60.00 | 40.00 | 26.67 | 40.00 | 60.00 | 46.67 | 13.33 | 26.67 | 13.33 | 40.00 | 40.00 | 36.97 | 15.88 |
|  | Males (*n*=24) | 62.5 | 50 | 45.83 | 50 | 50 | 37.5 | 33.33 | 16.67 | 41.67 | 37.5 | 41.67 | 42.42 | 11.76 |
| September 2011 | Females (*n*=19) | 89.47 | 84.21 | 68.42 | 89.47 | 89.47 | 73.68 | 63.16 | 47.37 | 57.89 | 73.68 | 78.95 | 74.16 | 14.02 |
|  | Males *n*=24) | 87.5 | 66.67 | 70.83 | 62.5 | 79.17 | 70.83 | 41.67 | 45.83 | 75.00 | 66.67 | 75.00 | 67.42 | 13.54 |
| January 2012 | Females (*n*=24) | 58.33 | 29.17 | 54.17 | 37.50 | 41.67 | 50.00 | 41.67 | 29.17 | 20.83 | 37.50 | 45.83 | 40.53 | 11.35 |
|  | Males (*n*=25) | 48.00 | 48.00 | 40.00 | 44.00 | 60.00 | 36.00 | 40.00 | 36.00 | 44.00 | 48.00 | 44.00 | 44.36 | 6.8 |

# APPENDIX E

## The average percentage of students positive responses organised by student gender and grade level for all three data sessions on questions relating to anxiety.

**Grade 6**

| | | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May 2011 | Females (n=19) | 21.05 | 5.26 | 10.53 | 5.26 | 0.00 | 10.53 | 15.79 | 10.53 | 9.87 | 6.56 |
| | Males (n=20) | 15.00 | 15.00 | 10.00 | 15.00 | 10.00 | 15.00 | 15.00 | 10.00 | 13.13 | 2.59 |
| September 2011 | Females (n=23) | 17.39 | 13.04 | 4.35 | 13.04 | 8.70 | 4.35 | 8.70 | 8.70 | 9.78 | 4.5 |
| | Males (n=23) | 0.00 | 13.04 | 8.70 | 13.04 | 8.70 | 8.70 | 8.70 | 4.35 | 8.15 | 4.31 |
| January 2012 | Females (n=23) | 21.74 | 4.35 | 13.04 | 13.04 | 8.70 | 13.04 | 8.70 | 4.35 | 10.87 | 5.69 |
| | Males (n=21) | 23.81 | 38.10 | 23.81 | 9.52 | 23.81 | 14.29 | 23.81 | 23.81 | 22.62 | 8.35 |

**Grade 7**

| | | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May 2011 | Females (n=24) | 4.17 | 0.00 | 4.17 | 0.00 | 12.50 | 8.33 | 8.33 | 12.50 | 6.25 | 4.98 |
| | Males (n=24) | 8.33 | 8.33 | 16.67 | 16.67 | 25.00 | 16.67 | 16.67 | 25.00 | 16.67 | 6.3 |
| September 2011 | Females (n=25) | 24.00 | 12.00 | 8.00 | 20.00 | 20.00 | 8.00 | 8.00 | 4.00 | 13 | 7.33 |
| | Males (n=26) | 19.23 | 11.54 | 30.77 | 15.38 | 11.54 | 19.23 | 34.62 | 15.38 | 19.71 | 8.58 |
| January 2012 | Females (n=17) | 17.65 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 17.65 | 5.88 | 11.76 | 11.76 | 8.09 | 7.66 |
| | Males (n=18) | 38.89 | 27.78 | 16.67 | 27.78 | 16.67 | 11.11 | 22.22 | 16.67 | 22.22 | 8.91 |

**Grade 8**

| | | Q4 | Q5 | Q7 | Q8 | Q22 | Q25 | Q31 | Q34 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| May 2011 | Females (n=15) | 33.33 | 26.67 | 6.67 | 0.00 | 40.00 | 20.00 | 20.00 | 33.33 | 22.5 | 13.77 |
| | Males n=24) | 12.50 | 8.33 | 20.83 | 16.67 | 20.83 | 29.17 | 16.67 | 12.50 | 17.19 | 6.47 |
| September 2011 | Females (n=19) | 21.05 | 10.53 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 15.79 | 0.00 | 10.53 | 5.26 | 7.89 | 7.96 |
| | Males (n=24) | 12.50 | 16.67 | 8.33 | 8.33 | 0.00 | 8.33 | 33.33 | 29.17 | 14.58 | 11.36 |
| January 2012 | Females (n=24) | 16.67 | 8.33 | 12.50 | 16.67 | 12.50 | 20.83 | 12.50 | 20.83 | 15.1 | 4.42 |
| | Males (n=25) | 4.00 | 24.00 | 12.00 | 20.00 | 28.00 | 32.00 | 8.00 | 40.00 | 21 | 12.42 |

# APPENDIX F

**Semi-structured questions asked to the grade six through eight guidance counsellor and the grade six through eight principle.**

•How do the principal and guidance counsellor perceive the relationship of the HRT with his/her students?

•What expectations to the principal and guidance counsellor have of the HRT's role at the school?