



CULTURAL COMPETENCE OF SOCIAL WORKERS BY PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS IN THE FOCUS OF EDUCATION

SOSYAL HİZMET UZMANLARININ MESLEKİ ÖZELLİKLERİNE GÖRE EĞİTİM ODAĞINDA KÜLTÜREL YETKİNLİKLERİ*

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Abstract

In this research, an adaptation study of the ASK (Attitude- Skill-Knowledge) Cultural Competency Self-Assessment Scale - Short Version (ASK Scale - Short Version), which can be used to measure the cultural competence of social workers, was carried out and the cultural competency of social workers were examined according to their professional characteristics. Convenience sampling method is applied and 303 voluntary social workers who graduated between the years of 2014 and 2020 participated to the study. Introductory Information Form, ASK Scale - Short Version and Intercultural Awareness Scale is used in the collection of data. The obtained data is analyzed with SPSS and AMOS software programs. As a result of the research, ASK Scale - Short Version is found as a valid and reliable measurement tool. It is concluded that cultural competence increases as the education level and occupational experience increase and cultural competency is differentiated in respect to knowing a foreign language and the frequency of needing supervision support.

Keywords: Cultural Competence, Social Work Education, Social Work Practice.

Öz

Bu araştırmada sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının kültürel yetkinliğinin ölçülmesinde kullanılacak ASK (Tutum-Beceri-Bilgi) Kültürel Yetkinlik Kendini Değerlendirme Ölçeği-Kısa Versiyonu'nun (ASK Ölçeği - Kısa Versiyonu) uyarlama çalışması yapılmış ve sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının kültürel yetkinlikleri mesleki özelliklere göre incelenmiştir. Araştırmada uygun örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmış ve 2014-2020 yılları arasında mezun olan 303 gönüllü sosyal hizmet uzmanı araştırmaya katılmıştır. Verilerin toplanmasında Tanıtıcı Bilgi Formu ve ASK Ölçeği - Kısa Versiyonu ile Kültürlerarası Farkındalık Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler SPSS ve AMOS paket programları ile analiz edilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda ASK Ölçeği - Kısa Versiyonu'nun geçerli ve güvenilir bir ölçme aracı olduğu belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca eğitim düzeyi ve mesleki deneyim süresi arttıkça kültürel yetkinliğin arttığı, yabancı dil bilme ve süpervizyon desteğine ihtiyaç duyma sıklığına göre ise kültürel yetkinliğin farklılaştığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kültürel Yetkinlik, Sosyal Hizmet Eğitimi, Sosyal Hizmet Uygulaması.

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Çalışmanın Amacı

Bu çalışmanın amacı ASK (Tutum-Beceri-Bilgi) Kültürel Yetkinlik Kendini Değerlendirme Ölçeği-Kısa Versiyonu'nun (ASK Ölçeği - Kısa Versiyon) uyarlama çalışmasını yapmak ve sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının kültürel yetkinliklerini bazı mesleki özelliklerine göre incelemektir.

Araştırma Soruları

Mevcut araştırmanın temel sorusu ASK Ölçeği - Kısa Versiyonu geçerli ve güvenilir bir ölçme aracı mıdır ve sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının kültürel yetkinlikleri bazı mesleki özelliklerine göre farklılaşmakta mıdır?

Literatür Araştırması

Uygulamalarda kültürel yetkinliğin kazanılması için sosyal hizmet eğitiminin önemine vurgu yapılmaktadır (Carpenter, 2016; Feize ve Gonzalez, 2018). Farklı gruplarla çalışma deneyiminde Sosyal Hizmet Eğitim Konseyi (Council on Social Work Education/CSWE, 2015), lisans ve lisansüstü sosyal hizmet programlarında çeşitliliğin ve farklılığın, müfredatlarda bütünleştirilmiş olmasını öngörmektedir. Bazı araştırmalar (Boyle ve Springer, 2001; Blackmon, 2019) sosyal hizmet okullarında kültürel yetkinlik için çokkültürlü ders içeriklerine ilginin arttığını; ancak kültürel yetkinliği değerlendirmede strateji ve yöntemlerin net olmadığını göstermektedir. Diğer yandan sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının, sınıflarda edindikleri teorik bilgiyi uygulamaya dönüştürebilmesinde saha uygulamalarına ilişkin düzenlemelere ve özellikle öğrencilerin bu uygulama ortamlarında çalışmaya hazır olmaları vurgulanmaktadır (Colvin, 2013; Blackmon, 2019). Bu bağlamda farklı kültürlerden müracaatçılara yönelik müdahalelere öğrencilerin dahil olması, mesleki uygulamalardaki kültürel yetkinliklerinin gelişmesi için süpervizyon desteği (Akarçay-Ulutaş, 2020) ve anadilleri dışında farklı bir dili bilmeleri önerilmektedir (Johnson, 1998; Proctocky, 2002; National Association of Social Workers/NASW, 2015; Akbaş, 2019). Diğer yandan sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının, mesleki uygulamalarında kültürel olarak yetkin olmaları ve böyle bir yetkinliği değerlendirmede onların kültürel yetkinliğini ölçmek de gerekmektedir. Dolayısıyla sosyal hizmet uygulamalarında uygulayıcıların kültürel yetkinliğini değerlendirmede kültüre özgü ölçme araçlarına ihtiyaç vardır (Boyle ve Springer, 2001; Jani vd., 2016). Türkiye'de sosyal hizmet uygulamalarında kültürel yetkinlik konusunda çalışmalar (Balı, 2001; Küçükkaraca, 2005; Özgür, 2009; Özgür, 2014; Uzunarslan ve Gökçearslan-Çifci, 2019; Akarçay-Ulutaş, 2020) bulunmaktadır. Ancak sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının kültürel yetkinliğini ölçen herhangi bir araştırmaya ve ölçme aracına rastlanmamıştır.

Yöntem

Bu araştırmada Türkiye'deki dört yıllık sosyal hizmet lisans programından yeni mezun, çalışan ya da çalışmayan, lisansüstü eğitime devam eden ya da etmeyen ve sosyal medya araçlarını aktif kullanan sosyal hizmet uzmanları bu araştırmanın evrenini oluşturmuştur. Örneklem seçiminde olasılıklı olmayan örnekleme yöntemlerinden uygun örnekleme kullanılmıştır. Gönüllü katılımcılara ulaşmada

üniversitelerin, mezunlara yönelik elektronik iletişim ve mail grupları kullanılmıştır. Online anket formuna ait link, bu gruplarda anahtar kişiler aracılığıyla paylaşılarak bu online gruplarda yer alan diğer sosyal hizmet uzmanlarına ulaşılmıştır. Toplam 303 sosyal hizmet uzmanı bu araştırmaya katılmıştır. Bu araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak kullanılan çevrimiçi anket formu üç bölümden oluşur: (i) Tanıtıcı Bilgi Formu, (ii) ASK (Tutum-Beceri-Bilgi) Kültürel Yetkinlik Kendini Değerlendirme Ölçeği-Kısa Versiyonu ile (iii) Kültürlerarası Farkındalık Ölçeği.

Sonuç ve Değerlendirme

Araştırma sonucunda sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının, sosyal hizmet uygulamalarında kültürel yetkinliğini değerlendirmek için ASK Ölçeği- Kısa Versiyonu'unun Türkçe formunun geçerli ve güvenilir bir ölçme aracı olduğu kanıtlanmıştır. Araştırmada, eğitim durumu ve mesleki deneyim süresi arttıkça kültürel yetkinliğin arttığı belirlenmiştir. Bunun yanı sıra yabancı dil bilme ve süper vizyon desteğine ihtiyaç duyma sıklığına göre kültürel yetkinliğin farklılaştığı bulunmuştur. Sonuç olarak sosyal hizmet öğrencileri için lisans eğitimlerinden başlayarak edindikleri bilgileri; beceri ve olumlu tutumlara dönüştürebilmelerinde ve kendilerini mikro, mezzo ve makro düzeydeki sosyal hizmet müdahalelerine hazır hissetmelerinde sahadaki uygulama deneyimleri önemlidir. Bu nedenle lisans ve lisansüstü eğitim sürecinde sahada, sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının farklı özelliklere sahip müracaatçılarla karşılaşmalarına olanak sağlanması ve çok kültürlü süper vizyon desteğine önem verilmesi gerekir. Ayrıca sosyal hizmet uzmanlarının müracaatçılarına mikro, mezzo ve makro düzeyde hizmet verebilmeleri için onları anlayabilmelerinin, onlarla iletişim kurabilmelerinin ve onların haklarını savunabilmelerinin önündeki dil engelini aşabilmeleri de önem arz eder.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is no agreed definition of cultural competence. The existence of multiple definitions of cultural competence in the literature (National Association of Social Workers/NASW, 2015; Sue et al., 1982) and the broad clientele of social work cause complexities in the conceptualization of cultural competence and the application of theory to practice (Buddington and Esmail, 2017; Melendres, 2016). Therefore, in evaluating the readiness of social workers for culturally competent practices, how social work education should be as well as how to measure and develop cultural competencies in these practices are discussed (Blackmon, 2019; Boyle and Springer, 2001; Jani et al., 2016; Krentzman and Townsend, 2008; Özgür, 2010).

Cultural competence for social work practice and education is generally conceptualized and measured on the basis of knowledge, skill, value / awareness / attitude (Boyle and Springer, 2001; Carpenter, 2016; Este, 2007; Lum, 1986; Manoleas, 1994; NASW, 2015; Ortega and Faller, 2011; Rothman, 2008; Weaver, 1999).

A specific knowledge base of cultural competence on social diversity and oppression in relation to race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other attributes can be used to offer culturally congruent and sensitive services at micro, mezzo and macro level interventions (Este, 2007; Lum, 1986; Manoleas, 1994; Rothman, 2008). Thompson (2013) states that the knowledge base of social work should be supported by skill base. Skill base in culturally competent practice refers to the practitioner's ability to utilize culturally appropriate methodologies and resources in order to work with clients from diverse background (Carpenter, 2016; Este, 2007; Lum, 2003; NASW, 2015). That practitioners have intrinsic values that reflect their willingness and commitment to work ethically and effectively with different client systems is related to congruent value / awareness base or attitude that serves as a foundation for effective social work practice (Este, 2007). In this context, cultural competence standards of NASW (2015) (ethics and values, self-awareness, cross-cultural knowledge and skills, service delivery, empowerment and advocacy, diverse workforce, professional education, language and communication, leadership to advance cultural competence) are important for empowering knowledge, skill and value base in preparation of social workers for culturally competent practices. These standards provide an important framework not only for the ethical / attitude / value base, but also for the knowledge and skill base in the preparation of social workers for culturally competent social work practice. Empowering the knowledge, skill and value base for culturally competent social work practice is essential (Jani et al., 2016; Walters and Wheeler 2000; Weaver, 1999).

Social workers who are not culturally competent may not primarily be aware of their cultural heritage and be sensitive to differences. This may cause them to have negative attitudes towards individuals from different backgrounds or not to make an effort to change these attitudes (Kohli et al., 2010). Thus, they may ignore the impact of their cultural background, experience, attitudes, values and

prejudices on social work practices (Potocky, 2002). These problems may also be reflected in the macro level practices of social workers (Marsh, 2014). Because of their prejudices or stereotypes, these social workers may not take the advocacy role in the development of policies and procedures by taking differences and variations into account. They may also not want to strive to explore the unique dynamics and networks peculiar to diverse and marginal groups. They may also find it difficult to define the limits of their competence and expertise in the face of problems of these clients (Potocky, 2002). A professional social worker should be able to defend the well-being of individuals, groups and communities regardless of their backgrounds or experiences. In the assessment of such a competence, it is required to measure the cultural competence of practitioners and develop / adapt culture-specific measurement tools. Even though there are many studies regarding culturally competent social work practices in Turkey (Akarçay-Ulutaş, 2020; Balı, 2001; Küçükkaraca, 2005; Özgür, 2009; Özgür, 2014; Uzunarslan and Gökçearsan-Çifci, 2019), there is no research and measurement tool found that measures the cultural competence of social workers.

2. WHY PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

It is not enough for social workers to only get to know clients and contemporaries with different backgrounds and experiences in order to perform culturally competent practices. Practitioners also need to expand their experience and understanding of working with different cultures. Besides, their social work knowledge must be translated into skills, which must be supported with effective policies and practices (Marsh, 2014). Social work education is important in gaining such competence in practice (Carpenter, 2016; Feize and Gonzalez, 2018).

2.1. Work Experience with Diverse Groups

According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 2015) and Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 2015), cultural competence is important in social work practices and in its education. CSWE (2015) expects that diversity and difference in social work practices for undergraduate and graduate social work departments and programs will be more integrated in to the curriculum in the near future. For instance, based on this vision, there are diversity-oriented courses recently incorporated to the master level social work programs in the United States, as well as in the Europe. A number of research (Blackmon, 2019; Boyle and Springer, 2001) shows that despite increased attention to multicultural contents for cultural competence in social work schools and recognition of its importance by practitioners, the strategies and methods for assessment of the cultural competence is still not clear. Assessments of educational outcomes includes generally academic or reflection papers, discussions in classes or field supervision, and the use of field recordings, role playing, and other experiential activities (Jani et al., 2016). There is also no clear consensus on what constitutes a good training program or how the outcomes of such training are to be empirically assessed (Boyle and Springer, 2001). Melendres'

(2016), study indicates that there are interconnected complexities and difficulties in the education of cultural competence, learning, understanding and execution of its practice.

According to NASW (2015), social workers should embrace cultural competence as a part of lifelong learning. In other words, what is expected from social workers in professional practice is practitioners' continuous learning and improvement of themselves. This is expressed by Thompson (2013) as "continuous professional development". Considering that cultural competence is a developmental process, social workers should not be limited to the knowledge which they have acquired in schools for cultural competence and their professional experience in current institutions in order to develop their cultural competencies. For continuous professional development, they must participate in activities (courses, seminars, workshops, etc.) that will contribute to the development of their cultural competencies, be open to innovations and increase their professional experience with diverse populations.

2.2. Supervision

Social work practice involves social workers engaged in practice with diverse and multicultural populations that range from an individual level to organizational level. Readiness of students to work in field practicum settings is important for social workers to be able to apply the theoretical knowledge they have acquired in classes (Blackmon, 2019; Colvin, 2013). Supervision support is important for every social worker who is experienced or not experienced in these practices in terms of both personal and professional development. However, supervision system may not work well in each human service organizations or the universities as in Turkey (Şahin-Taşgın, 2019; TFK, 2017). Hence, the fact that social work educators as also the supervisors in field practice ensure that students are involved in interventions for the client from different backgrounds plays an important role (Akarçay-Ulutaş, 2020). Culturally competent supervision can help to support clients in taking a proactive stance in evaluating their cultural issues at different stages of the process, and to assess the intersectionality of social class, power relations, identity, and oppressed groups (Lusk, Terrazas and Salcido, 2017).

2.3. Knowledge of a Second Language Other Than the Mother Tongue

Social workers should strive to learn a new language if several clients speak a different language for effective communication with the client in social work practices (Akbaş, 2019; NASW, 2015; Potocky, 2002). Many researches indicate that cultural barriers, such as limited language skills, may result in poor health conditions among immigrant groups, and therefore employing bilingual social workers in human service organizations is important to maintain good supervision and culture-specific health care interventions (Engstrom, Piedra and Min, 2009; Horevitz, Lawson and Chow, 2013; Liu, 2013).

2.4. Culture-Specific Measurement Tools

The struggle of social workers to end oppression, discrimination, poverty, and other social injustice problems experienced by the disadvantaged populations is closely related to the accessibility of these populations to social services (Weaver, 1999). Success in these services is depends on practitioners' cultural competency. Culture-specific instruments are needed to evaluate this competence of practitioners in these services (Boyle and Springer, 2001; Jani et al., 2016).

In this study, we aimed to adapt the ASK (Attitude- Skill-Knowledge) Cultural Competency Self-Assessment Scale- Short Version (ASK Scale- Short Version), which measures the knowledge, skill and attitude dimensions of cultural competence in social work practices bytaking the literature accumulation on cultural competence in social work practices into account. For this, we hypothesized that the Turkish form of the ASK Scale - Short Version is a valid and reliable instrument (hypothesis 1). Additionally, by focusing on social work education we aimed to examine the status of differentiation of the cultural competencies of social workers by professional characteristics. In this context, we hypothesized that the cultural competence scores of social workers in practices would differ by education level (hypothesis 2), a good level of knowledge of a second language other than the mother tongue (hypothesis 3), status of taking courses (hypothesis 4) and participation in any activity on cultural competence (hypothesis 5), status of needing supervision support (hypothesis 6), duration of professional experience (hypothesis 7), and frequency of needing a supervision support (hypothesis 8).

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Sampling and Participants

Social workers who are recent graduates of a four-year undergraduate social work program in Turkey, currently employed or not, continuing graduate education or not, and actively using social media tools constituted the population of this quantitative research. In addition to difficulties in reaching the participants, meeting with them face to face was also a difficulty due to the quarantine restrictions because of the corona virus. In the study, convenience sampling, one of the non-probabilistic sampling methods, was used and electronic communication tools, especially the mailing groups were used to reach the participants. The link of the online survey, including the electronic informed consent form was shared by key persons in the online platform and made available to other social workers. Before starting the data collection, the approval of ethics committee was taken. A total of 303 social workers participated to the study.

3.2. Data Collection Tools

The online survey consisted of three parts being used as the data collection tool in this study. In the first section, an introductory information form containing professional characteristics was applied. The second section comprise of the ASK Scale - Short Version to evaluate cultural competence.

Intercultural Awareness Scale constituted the last section to test the construct validity of this scale. It should be noted that ethics committee approval was obtained before applying the survey form to the participants in the study.

3.3. Introductory Information Form

Introductory information form consists of questions including professional characteristics of social workers such as education level, level of a second language other than the mother tongue, the status of participating in a course and any activity related to cultural competence, etc.

3.4. Validity and Reliability of ASK Scale - Short Version

ASK Scale - Short Version enables cultural competencies of social workers to be evaluated in terms of their attitude (A), skill (S) and knowledge (K) in social work practices. This scale consists of a total of 24 items, 8 in attitude dimension, 9 in skill dimension and 7 in knowledge dimension. Items in this 5-point Likert type scale are scored as (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. To examine the reliability of this scale developed by Leung and Cheung (2013), the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was found as .97 for the total scale, .93 for the attitude sub-dimension, .95 for the skill sub-dimension, and .92 for the knowledge sub-dimension (Leung and Cheung, 2013).

In this research, ASK Scale - Short Version was translated from English to Turkish separately by three translators for language validity. After 15 days, the scale was translated from Turkish to English by these translators. For the scale items, opinions of independent three social work educators who are field experts in the scale items were obtained. Accordingly, the expressions in the scale items that were difficult to understand were revised. In addition, a pilot study was conducted with 20 people, and the items in the scale that were not found understandable by the participants were identified and required corrections were made accordingly. Thus, the scale was made ready for practice and the language validity of the scale was ensured.

3.5. Intercultural Awareness Scale

The adaptation study of the Intercultural Awareness Scale (Rozaimie et al., 2011) into Turkish was conducted by Karabuğa-Yakar and Ecevit-Alpar (2017). The scale, which consists of 9 items and one dimension, is a 5-point Likert-type scale which is scored as (1) Totally Agree, (2) Agree, (3) Neutral, (4) Disagree, and (5) Strongly Disagree. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of this scale is .73, and the test-retest correlation coefficient is .89. Confirmatory factor analysis carried out for the validity of the scale show that the scale is one-dimensional and consists of nine items (Karabuğa-Yakar and Ecevit-Alpar, 2017).

3.6. Data Analysis

The normality of variables for independent groups was examined through the Shapiro-Wilk test, Q-Q plot, boxplot, and histogram. As the normality assumption doesn't hold, the descriptive statistics were represented with median (1st Quartile-3rd Quartile) for continuous variables. The frequencies and percentages were used for categorical variables. The Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis variance analysis were implemented to compare two and more than two independent groups, respectively. The Dunn-Bonferroni test was used for pairwise comparison when the statistical significance was observed in the Kruskal-Wallis variance analysis. For the validity of the test, the confirmatory factor analysis was applied in order to evaluate whether the data fit the theoretical structure or not. The related model fit indices of the confirmatory factor analysis were presented. Moreover, the divergent validity of ASK Scale - Short Version was examined by observing the relationship between ASK Scale - Short Version and Intercultural Awareness Scale via the Spearman's correlation coefficient. For the reliability, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were given for both total scale and sub-dimensions of scale. The statistical analysis was conducted in IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 23 and AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structures) version 23.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Professional Characteristics

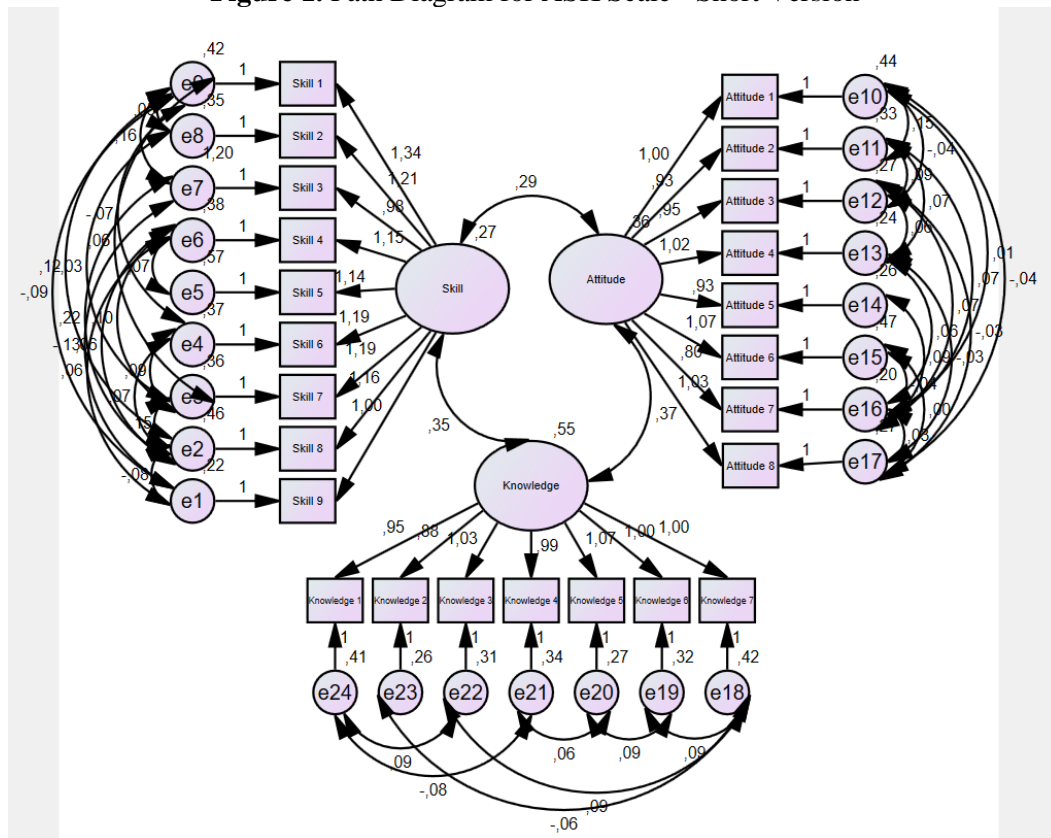
37% of the participants stated that they have more than 1 year (max. 6 years) of experience in working with diverse groups in this study. While 33% of them have experience of working with these groups for 1 year or less, 30% stated that they have no experience of working with these groups. In the research, 72.6% of the social workers mentioned that they do not have a good command of a second language other than their mother tongue, while 27.4% of the participants indicate that they have a certain level of a second language other than their mother tongue. 75.6% of the social workers expressed that they have never taken a lesson related to cultural competence. Whereas 24.4% stated that they took a course in relation to this issue, such as Anthropology, Sociology, Social Structure of Turkey, the Human Behavior and the Social Environment, Migration and Social Work etc. The majority of these individuals (87.8%) expressed that they did not attend any activity (seminar, course, etc.) related to cultural competence. 86.8% mentioned that they need supervision support, while 13.2% do not need supervision support. The rate of social workers who occasionally need supervisory support (60.5%) was higher than that of social workers who generally (21.3%) and rarely (18.3%) need this support.

4.2. Validity and Reliability of ASK Scale - Short Version

In this study, in order to test the first hypothesis, it was evaluated that whether the ASK Scale - Short Version is a valid and reliable instrument to adopt Turkish context. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

performed to determine the construct validity of the scale demonstrated that this scale consists of three sub-dimensions which are attitude, knowledge and skill, and 24 items as in the original scale (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Path Diagram for ASK Scale - Short Version



The fit indices as a result of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis show whether the collected data conform to the structure in the literature, or not. In this study, even though GFI and AGFI model fit indices resulted lower than the ones desired in the literature, the remaining model fit indices showed similar results with the literature. Thus, it can be stated that ASK Scale - Short Version is a valid inventory for Turkish context. (Table 1; Awang, 2015). The Cronbach alpha value was .95 for all items of this scale, .91 for the attitude sub-dimension, .88 for the skill sub-dimension, and .92 for the knowledge sub-dimension. These results pointed out that the Turkish form of this scale is highly reliable. The correlation between the Intercultural Awareness Scale being used to test the construct validity of the ASK Scale - Short Version, and the scores of this scale was found to be -0.229 ($p < 0.001$). Therefore, it occurred that both scales measure different structures, as expected.

Table 1. Fit Indices of ASK Scale - Short Version

Name of the category	Index name	Value
Absolute fit	RMSEA	.08
	GFI	.85
Incremental fit	AGFI	.79
	CFI	.92
	TLI	.90
	NFI	.89
Parsimonious fit	Chisq/df	2.97

4.3. Cultural Competence by Professional Characteristics in the Focus of Education

Mann Whitney U test was performed to determine cultural competence scores by education level (hypothesis 2), the status of having a good level of a second language other than mother tongue (hypothesis 3), and the status of taking courses (hypothesis 4) and participation in any activity on cultural competence (hypothesis 5), and the status of needing for supervision (hypothesis 6) in the research. The cultural competence scores differed by education level and the status of having a second language except for taking courses on cultural competence and the status of participation in any activity on this subject and needing supervision support. A statistically significant difference was found in the cultural competence total scores and the knowledge and skill sub-dimension scores of cultural competences, according to the education level ($p < 0.05$). As the education level increased, the total score of cultural competence and the scores of the knowledge and skill sub-dimension increased (hypothesis 1, Table 2). The results of the Mann Whitney U test conducted to test second hypothesis showed that a statistically significant difference by the status of having a second language other than mother tongue ($p < 0.05$). The total scale scores of social workers who speak a second language and the scores of the attitude and skill sub-dimensions of this scale were higher than these scores of those who do not speak a second language (hypothesis 2, Table 2).

Furthermore, in this study, Kruskal-Wallis variance analysis was implemented in the attitude, skill and knowledge sub-dimensions of cultural competence scores by the duration of professional experience (hypothesis 7) and the frequency of needing supervision support (hypothesis 8), and a one-way analysis of variance was conducted for the total scale. A statistically significant difference was found in the scores of the social workers' attitude ($p < 0.001$), skill ($p < 0.05$), and knowledge ($p < 0.001$) sub-dimensions of the scale and the total scale ($p < 0.001$) scores by the duration of professional experience. The total scale and knowledge, skill and attitude sub-dimension scores of social workers without professional experience resulted lower than the scores of social workers with professional experience (hypothesis 7, Table 2).

When the cultural competence scores were examined by the frequency of needing supervision support, a statistically significant difference was found in the attitude and knowledge sub-dimension scores of the scale ($p < 0.05$). Social workers who think they rarely need supervision support were found to differ in attitude and knowledge dimension scores of the scale. The attitude and knowledge dimension scores of these social workers were higher than those of social workers who think they usually and occasionally need supervision support (hypothesis 8, Table 2).

Table 2. Cultural Competence Scores of Social Workers by Professional Characteristics

Education Level							
	Undergraduate		Postgraduate		Test statistic	P value	
	Median (1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile	Median (1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile			
Attitude	4.50 (4.00-4.75)		4.63 (4.25-4.88)		1.688	0.091	
Skill	4.11 (3.67-4.67)		4.33 (4.00-4.78)		2.094	0.036	
Knowledge	4.00 (3.43-4.57)		4.29 (3.71-4.71)		2.391	0.017	
Total	4.21 (3.75-4.58)		4.42 (3.96-4.71)		2.307	0.021	
Status of having a good level of a second language other than mother tongue							
	Yes		No		Test statistic	P value	
	Median(1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile	Median (1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile			
Attitude	4.63 (4.25-4.88)		4.50 (4.00-4.75)		-2.251	0.024	
Skill	4.33 (3.78-4.67)		4.11 (3.67-4.67)		-1.962	0.05	
Knowledge	4.29 (3.57-4.71)		4.00 (3.43-4.57)		-1.861	0.061	
Total	4.33 (3.96-4.71)		4.21 (3.71-4.58)		-2.156	0.036	
Status of taking any courses related to cultural competence							
	Yes		No		Test statistic	P value	
	Median(1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile	Median(1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile			
Attitude	4.50 (4.00-4.88)		4.50 (4.00-4.75)		-1.015	0.310	
Skill	4.33 (3.67-4.78)		4.11 (3.67-4.56)		-1.881	0.060	
Knowledge	4.14 (3.43-4.71)		4.00 (3.43-4.57)		-1.020	0.308	
Total	4.33 (3.88-4.71)		4.17 (3.79-4.58)		-1.507	0.132	
Status of participating in any activity related to cultural competence							
	Yes		No		Test statistic	P value	
	Median(1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile	Median(1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile			
Attitude	4.50(4.00-5.00)		4.50 (4.00-4.75)		-1.566	0.117	
Skill	4.22 (3.67-5.00)		4.22 (3.67-4.56)		-1.472	0.141	
Knowledge	4.14 (3.57-5.00)		4.00 (3.43-4.57)		-1.535	0.125	
Total	4.29 (3.79-4.92)		4.21 (3.79-4.58)		-1.22	0.222	
Status of needing for supervision							
	Yes		No		Test statistic	P value	
	Median(1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile	Median(1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile			
Attitude	4.50(4.00-4.75)		4.63(3.94-4.94)		0.569	0.569	
Skill	4.22(3.67-4.67)		4.17(3.44-4.78)		-0.393	0.694	
Knowledge	4.00(3.43-4.57)		3.93(3.00-4.71)		0.046	0.964	
Total	4.21(3.79-4.63)		4.23(3.58-4.71)		0.016	0.987	
Duration of professional experience							
	None		1 year and less		More than 1 year	Test statistic	P value
	Median(1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile	Median(1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile	Median(1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile	
Attitude	4.25 (3.88-4.63)		4.50 (4.13-4.88)		4.63(4.25-4.88)		15.768 <0.001
Skill	3.89 (3.44-4.56)		4.22 (3.78-4.67)		4.22 (3.67-4.78)		8.423 0.015
Knowledge	3.71 (3.14-4.29)		4.07 (3.43-4.57)		4.14 (3.71-4.64)		12.365 0.002
Total	3.96 (3.54-4.46)		4.25 (3.79-4.63)		4.35 (3.96-4.73)		6.711 0.001
Frequency of needing supervision support							
	Usually		Occasionally		Rarely	Test Statistic	P Value
	Median(1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile	Median(1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile	Median(1st Quartile)	3rd Quartile	
Attitude	4.38 (3.94-4.75)		4.50(4.00-4.75)		4.69(4.25-4.88)		6.997 0.030
Skill	4.22 (3.72-4.67)		4.11(3.67-4.56)		4.22 (3.67-4.78)		1.776 0.412
Knowledge	3.93 (3.29-4.43)		4.00 (3.43-4.57)		4.29 (3.64-4.86)		7.100 0.029
Total	4.13 (3.75-4.52)		4.21 (3.79-4.54)		4.42 (3.90-4.81)		4.789 0.091

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

It was revealed that the Turkish form of ASK Scale - Short Version consists of 24 items with three sub-dimensions: attitude, skill and knowledge, as in the original scale (Leung and Cheung, 2013). Instruments, such as measuring tools validity and reliability of which have been proven in the present study can be effective to increase social workers' awareness of their own prejudices and to evaluate the changes in their attitudes when exposed to various contents (Carrillo, Holzhalb and Thyer, 1993).

One of the most important findings of this study was the differentiation of cultural competence by education level, and as the education level increased, cultural competence increased. The cultural competence of the graduate social workers and their skills and knowledge within the scope of this competence were higher than the social workers with an undergraduate degree. Sheu and Lent's study (2007) is parallel to this finding. The increase in cultural competence in social work practices found in line with the education level which may be related to the knowledge and skill that social work education provides to practitioners in general. In preparing future social workers for social work practices, it is important to integrate course contents related to cultural competence in the curriculum in social work education programs, as an up-to-date curriculum and professional development tool (Melendres, 2016). Holcomb-McCoy and Day-Vines's study (2004) shows that the courses on multiculturalism are effective in increasing the knowledge and competencies of school counselors. In Turkey, in some of the social work departments, the issues of diversity and distinctness are basically taught within the scope of theoretical course of "Human Behavior and Social Environment" as compulsory (Özgür, 2014). In addition, there are courses directly related to multicultural social work and cultural competence such as "Equality and Diversity in Social Work" at the undergraduate level. Besides, selective courses for differences such as gender, ethnicity, social class, disabled, elderly and young are included in the curriculum. In social work departments, there are course contents which integrate the theory and practice concerning social work practice based on differences and against oppression, discrimination and racism. However, the use of knowledge and skill in social work practice in Turkey and cultural competency model cannot be adequately explained to the students in social work education (Özgür, 2009). The systematic review study conducted by Akarçay-Ulutaş (2020) demonstrates that in Turkey, even though the availability of the courses devoted to clients from different backgrounds in the curriculum, these courses remain insufficient particularly to provide students with skill. The absence of difference is not only in cultural competence, but also in its attitude, skill and knowledge sub-dimensions according to the status of social workers who participated in the research have taken courses on cultural competence may be associated with this condition in social work education in Turkey. Moreover, the majority of students in this research expressed that they have not taken any courses on cultural competence although there are courses related to cultural competence in curriculum of almost every department of social work in Turkey. This result may be related to the inefficiency of the courses the students take in providing knowledge and skill, as stated by Akarçay-Ulutaş (2020). Considering that cultural competence is a

process (NASW, 2015), it cannot be expected this competence will be gained only in schools. Therefore, in the study, cultural competence was examined by the status of participating in any activity (such as a course, seminar or workshop) that could develop cultural competence, in addition to taking courses on cultural competence. There was no significant difference in cultural competence and in attitude, skill and knowledge sub-dimensions of cultural competence. This result may be related to the fact that most of the practitioners participating in the research did not attend such seminars and courses. This finding shows that individual effort and motivation of students to develop their cultural competencies are low.

In the research, the cultural competencies of social workers with no professional experience were significantly lower than the cultural competence of social workers with professional experience. Some studies (Begans, 2011; Teasley et al., 2005) are parallel with this finding. In the present study, the fact that the increase in cultural competence as the professional experience increases may be related to the social work practice experience that enables the integration of knowledge with skills and values (Alptekin et al., 2017).

Another important finding of this study was that the cultural competence of social workers who speak a good level of a second language was higher than the cultural competence of social workers who do not know a second language. It is possible for social workers who know the language of the client to understand these individuals better, to evaluate the needs of these individuals in a holistic manner and to perform interventions to meet their needs. The relationship between the status of having a good command of a second language and cultural competence is directly related to communication quality. According to Demir (2018), the most important skill for social workers who work with individuals from different cultures in access client information is effective communication during the interview process. Lum (2000) states that the first contact with clients takes place at the admission stage. Potocky (2002) states that it is important for social workers to be able to speak the language of these individuals, especially at the admission stage. Moreover, according to Günday and Aycan (2018), language cannot be considered apart from culture. Effective communication is possible with the use of language based on cultural context. In this manner, the ability of social workers to communicate effectively with their clients and to carry out culturally competent practices can be achieved by overcoming the language barrier. In this study, the majority of social workers (72.6%) stated that they do not speak a good level of a second language other than Turkish. The education of second or third language in social work departments in Turkey is among the selective courses. Hence, social work graduates may find it difficult to communicate effectively with clients who speak different languages, as they cannot speak any language other than their mother tongue at a good level.

NASW (2015) argues that when working with individuals from different cultural backgrounds, social workers should take the limits arising from cultural differences, bilateral relations, values, conflicts in expectations, defense mechanisms, privacy, and norms of behavior into account. In case of

ethical dilemmas on these issues, it is important to get supervision support (Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Social Workers/NLASW, 2016). It is also important that not only social workers with little experience, but all social workers are supported by supervisors who help them develop their professionalism. In this study, there was no difference in the cultural competence of the individuals and the knowledge, skill and attitude dimensions of the cultural competence by the need for supervision support. The fact that this difference did not occur was probably due to the fact that the majority of the participants (86.8%) of this study were those who thought they needed supervision support. However, newly graduated social workers may think that they do not need supervision in social work practices with diverse groups, by relying on their undergraduate or graduate education. In this research, in attitudes and knowledge dimensions, the cultural competence of social workers who think they rarely need supervision support was higher than the cultural competence of social workers who think they occasionally and generally need supervision support. A study from Turkey (Özgür, 2009) indicated that some social workers rely on undergraduate or graduate education as a source of information, causing them to never or rarely apply for supervision support. The emergence of this finding can be related to the lack of the courses related to the importance of multicultural supervision support in social work education and that there are no supervisors in human service organizations that can receive this support.

Additionally, social work practice and theory knowledge which focuses on assessing the cultural competence of working and non-working social workers is up-to-date in this research. That's why the participants of the research are limited only with the social workers who graduated between the years of 2014 and 2020, have no professional experience or professional experience of at most six years.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this research, Turkish form of ASK Scale - Short Version is found valid and reliable. The research has also shown that as the level of education and professional experience increases, the cultural competence of social workers increases. Field practicum settings are found important for social work students to transform the knowledge they have acquired starting from undergraduate education into skill and positive attitudes and to feel themselves ready for social work interventions at micro, mezzo and macro levels. Allowing social workers to meet clients from different backgrounds and attaching importance to supervision support in these practice areas during undergraduate and graduate education can be effective in improving the cultural competence of practitioners. Otherwise, as demonstrated in this study, the fact that social workers think that they are competent in working with diverse groups and that they assume that they need less supervision support may result in less individual efforts to expand cultural knowledge and perspectives. The fact that the rate of social workers who stated that they did not participate in any activity such as seminars and courses for the development of cultural competence was not high in this study may be evidence that these efforts were insufficient.

In the ability of practitioners to provide culturally competent services to clients who speak different languages, it is an important determinant for social workers to know their language. This research has also shown that social workers who have a good level of a language other than their mother tongue have higher cultural competence. In order for practitioners to serve their clients at micro, mezzo and macro levels in their social work practices, they need to be able to understand them, communicate with them, and overcome the language barrier that prevents them from defending their rights. Learning many languages can be surely difficult when there is a great deal of language diversity in human service organizations. However, all social workers having a good knowledge of English, which is a universal language today, are required for culturally competent social services.

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