

ARAŞTIRMA

DOES EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AFFECT COMMUNICATION SKILLS? AN APPLICATION ON NURSING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The aim of this study is to examine the effect of emotional intelligence on communication skills.

Methods: The implementation part of this study has been carried out with the students of nursing department who receive education at a public university. The data collected from 323 students analyzed. As data collection technique, survey was used. While the "Emotional Intelligence Scale" was used to measure the students' emotional intelligence levels; "Communication Skills Scale" was used to measure communication skills. In the analyses of data descriptive, reliability, correlation and multiple regression analyses were used.

Results: As a result of the analyses which have been carried out, correlations between subdimensions of emotional intelligence and communication skills were positive and medium level. Moreover, subdimensions of emotional intelligence perception explained 44.5% of the total variance on communication skills. On the regression model, when t-test results were analyzed, increase in the levels of participants' self-emotion appraisal, other's emotion appraisal, and use of emotion and regulation of emotion increase perception of communication skills statistically. The relative order of significance of predictive variables on the level of communication skills were other's emotional appraisal, use of emotions, self-emotion appraisal and regulation of emotions.

Conclusion: This study is determined the effect of emotional intelligence on communication skills among nursing students. Designing education programs is recommended in respect of emotional intelligence and communication skills topic for nursing department students.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence; Communication Skills; Nursing Student

ÖZET

Duygusal Zeka İletişim Becerilerini Etkiler mi? Hemşirelik Öğrencilerinde Bir Uygulama

Amaç: Bu çalışmanın amacı duygusal zekanın iletişim becerileri üzerindeki etkisini incelemektir.

Yöntem: Araştırmanın uygulama kısmı Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinde eğitim gören hemşirelik bölümü öğrencileri üzerinde yürütülmüş ve 323 kişiden elde edilen veriler değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışmada anket yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada, öğrencilerin duygusal zeka düzeylerini ölçmek için "Duygusal Zeka Ölçeği" kullanılırken; iletişim becerilerini ölçmek için "İletişim Becerileri Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde ise tanımlayıcı analizler, güvenilirlik, korelasyon ve çoklu regresyon analizleri kullanılmıştır.

Bulgular: Yapılan analizler sonucunda duygusal zekanın alt boyutları ile iletişim becerisi arasındaki korelasyonlar olumlu yönde ve orta düzeydedir. Duygusal zekâ algısı alt boyutları iletişim becerisi üzerindeki toplam varyansın %44.5'ini açıklamaktadır. Regresyon modelinde, t-testi sonuçları incelendiğinde, katılımcıların kendi duygularını değerlendirme, başkalarının duygularını değerlendirme, duyguları kullanma ve duyguları yönetme düzeylerinin yükselmesi iletişim becerileri algılarını istatistiksel olarak artırmaktadır. Yordayıcı değişkenlerin iletişim becerisi üzerindeki önem sırası, başkalarının duygularını değerlendirme, duyguları kullanma, kendi duygularını değerlendirme ve duyguları yönetme şeklindedir.

Sonuç: Bu çalışmada hemşirelik öğrencilerinde duygusal zekanın iletişim becerileri üzerinde etkisi olduğu belirlenmiştir. Duygusal zeka ve iletişim becerileri konuları ile ilgili olarak hemşirelik bölümü öğrencilerine yönelik eğitim programlarının oluşturulması önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Duygusal Zeka; İletişim Becerisi; Hemşirelik Öğrencisi

INTRODUCTION

Communication can be described as a process of transferring information from a person,

group or an organization (sender) to another person, group or organization (receiver) (Greenberg 2001). Communication has a

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dynamic structure and in the process of communication, people configure their meanings, experiences in a way which led them use their knowledge and comments (Cüceloğlu 1992). Communication skill is expressed as listening effectively and responding, the sensibility towards verbal and non-verbal messages (Korkut 2005). In other words, communication skill is the ability to sort out ascriptions and assessments relating to personality and the messages coming from the other side and to get the core of the message (Özer 1995). Communication skills are needed to perform the act of communication, to maintain it and to get content from it effectively (Erözkan 2013). Because it is expressed that people with developed communication skills can deal with the problems they face in their lives sturdily, develop more satisfactory relations and can be more successful in their social lives (Cüceloğlu 2004).

In addition to communication skills, emotional intelligence is also an important factor in interpersonal relations. According to this; emotional intelligence includes the abilities to cope with a person's own emotions and others, to make distinctions among these emotions and to use this information which guide the person's ideas and actions (Salovey and Mayer 1990). Goleman expressed in 1995 adopting Slovey and Mayer's description that emotional intelligence requires abilities that can be categorized as self-consciousness, regulation of emotion, empathy and managing the relations (Wong and Law 2002). In other words emotional intelligence, states the abilities to regulate a person's own and others positive and negative emotions, to internalize emotions in the mind, to understand emotions, to express and define them (Matthews et al. 2004). According to Serrat (2010) people with high emotional intelligence know themselves quite well and they can feel others' emotions as well. Also, these people are kind, tough and optimistic (Serrat 2010).

Mayer and Slovey base emotional intelligence on four factors. These are; 1) verbal and non-verbal appraisal and emotional expression, 2) self and other's emotion appraisal, 3) emotional information designed to regulate intellectual and emotional development and 4) ability to form emotions which help problems be solved (Jordan et al. 2002). Bar-On examines emotional regulation in five categories as personal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management and general mood (Stys and Brown 2004).

Studies which are carried out on the emotional intelligence show that emotional intelligence is related to communication. Andersan and Guerrero (1998) have expressed that communication exists in the nature of emotional intelligence and presented 6 principles showing that how much communication is needed for the process of emotional experience. These are; a) development of emotions like communicational actions, b) emotional expression is formed via the process of socialization, c) communication is the fundamental component asserting information, d) schemas affect how and when emotions are transferred, e) emotional expressions are the specialties of emotional expression' nature and f) emotions affect them by forming other emotions (Jorfi et al. 2011).

Emotional intelligence is rather significant for healthcare professionals. Because these professions require professionals to communicate directly and they provide services through teamwork and use emotional intelligence (Aslan and Özata 2008). Therefore professions like nursing which requires communication with patients' emotional intelligence and communication skills are important. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of emotional intelligence on communication skills in nursing students at a public university. The main starting point of this study is the limited number of studies examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and communication skills on nursing students in Turkey.

METHODS

Type of Study: This study is a descriptive research.

Population and Sample: The population of the study consists of students in nursing department at Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University. In this study, the sample selection method was not used and the all universe was included in the study. The period of the data collection was between January 5-20, 2016. A total of 323 useable questionnaires were obtained. Students that did not want to participate in the study and had absenteeism in the period of data collection, was excluded from the study. In addition, students, who agreed to participate in the study but could not fully answer the survey questions, left it out of the scope of study. Thus participation rate determined as 58.7%.

Ethical Issues: This study was allowed by Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Faculty of

Health Science. Potential participants were given a document explaining that participation was voluntary and the collected data would be used solely for scientific purposes.

Data Collection Tools: “The Emotional Intelligence Scale” was development by Wong and Law (2002) and validity and reliability into Turkish were made by Bal ve Gül (2017). The scale consists of 16 items in total and 4 subdimensions (self-emotion appraisal, other’s emotion appraisal, and the use of emotion and regulation of emotion). Measurements are made using a five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree). Increased scores indicate that participants have high levels of emotional intelligence. In the study, the cronbach alfa reliability coefficients of emotional intelligence were found to be 0.89. Bal and Gül (2017) found a value of 0.91 for the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients.

The scale of “Communication Skills” was development by Korkut (1996). This scale consists of 25 items; questions are assessed using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1=never, 5=always). The highest score is 125 and the lowest score is 25 for scale. Increased scores indicate that individuals evaluate communication skills positively. Cronbach’s alpha value of this study was calculated as 0.89. Korkut (1996) found a value of 0.80 for the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients.

Data Analysis: All statistical analyses were performed using the Statistical Package for Social Science. Descriptive, reliability, correlation and multiple regression analyses were used to evaluate the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

When the distribution of participants according to various demographic characteristics is examined, it is found that 66.9% of the students were female and 33.1% of them were male. While 52.0% of the students were 18-20 years old, 43.1% of them were 21-23 years old. 22.3% of the participants were first grade, 25.1% of them were second grade, 26.9% of them were third grade and 25.7% of them were fourth grade. 53.9% of the students expressed that they reside in dormitories and 26.6% of them that they live in student houses with their friends. Moreover, 89.8% of the students expressed that they were unemployed.

The main statistics relating to study variables in Table 1, it stands out that the other’s emotion appraisal (4.00±0.68) got the highest average and the regulation of information (3.58±0.90) got the lowest average among the emotional intelligence’s subdimensions. This situation shows that students were moderately emotional intelligence levels. In addition to, it can be said that communication skills perceptions of the students (4.13±0.44) was high level. Erigüç et al. (2014) has determined that nursing students’ levels of emotional intelligence evaluated as low and their levels of communication skills evaluated as high.

The results of the correlation analysis show a positive and medium level relationship between the subdimensions of emotional intelligence (0.299≤r≤0.433). A positive and medium level relationship has been detected between communication skills and the subdimensions of emotional intelligence (0.410≤r≤0.526).

Table 1. The Relationship between Mean Scores of Emotional Intelligence and Communication Skills Scale Relating Nursing Students

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Communication skills</i>	<i>Self-emotion appraisal</i>	<i>Other’s emotion appraisal</i>	<i>Use of emotion</i>	<i>Regulation of emotion</i>
1. Communication skills	4.13	0.44	1	0.448**	0.526**	0.510**	0.410**
2. Self-emotion appraisal	3.97	0.75	0.448**	1	0.354**	0.433**	0.299**
3. Other’s emotion appraisal	4.00	0.68	0.526**	0.354**	1	0.329**	0.319**
4. Use of emotion	3.87	0.75	0.510**	0.433**	0.329**	1	0.353**
5. Regulation of emotion	3.58	0.90	0.410**	0.299**	0.319**	0.353**	1

SD, standard deviation

** Correlation is significant 0.01 (two-tailed)

Lee and Guo (2013) has determined that communication skills and clinical sufficiency increase and stress levels in clinical applications decrease as the level of emotional intelligence increases among nursing students. Highly meaningful correlation between the communication skills and emotional intelligence has been detected and it has a suggestion has been made to instructional program of emotional intelligence in order to develop the communicational skills in the study of Nikbakhsh et al. (2013). It has been found out that there is a positive meaningful correlation between the communicational skills and emotional intelligence in the study of Mafi and Asefzadeh (2014) carried out on nurses. Also, Jorfi et al. (2014) have stated that there is a positive relation between the level of emotional intelligence and effectiveness of the communication. It has been found out that there is a positive meaningful relation between students' levels of emotional intelligence and communication skills in the study of Erigüç et al. (2014). It has been determined that there is a positive, strong relation between the emotional intelligence and the communication skills in the study of Kuzu and Eker (2010). According to this study students' point averages of communication skills increase as their point averages of emotional intelligence increase.

It has been detected that there is a positive relation on a meaningful level between the emotional intelligence and the academic success level in the study of Taşlıyan et al. (2015). According to this result, is possible to express that students' academic success level will increase as

their emotional intelligence and communication skills increase. It appears that the studies carried out support our findings by showing that there are a positive meaningful correlation between the level of emotional intelligence and the communication skills.

Multiple regression analysis carried out in order to reveal the effects of the subdimensions of emotional intelligence (self-emotion appraisal, other's emotion appraisal, regulation of emotion, use of emotion) on communication skills. In the regression models created, the Durbin Watson coefficient is less than 2.5 and the variance inflation value (VIF) is less than 10, which indicates that there is not any autocorrelation and multicollinearity problem (Hair et al. 1998).

The statistical estimates of the regression model shows that the model is meaningful and usable ($p < 0.01$). Subdimensions of the emotional intelligence explain 44.5% of the total variance for the communication skills. All four dimensions of emotional intelligence have positive relations with the communication skills. In the regression model, an examination of the t-test results, which show the significance of the regression coefficient, reveals that increasing participants' perceptions of their emotional intelligence subdimensions statistically increases their communication skills ($p < 0.01$). According to standardized regression coefficient (β), the relative order of significance of predictive variables on the level of communication skills are other's emotional appraisal ($\beta = 0.327$), use of emotions ($\beta = 0.274$), self-emotion appraisal ($\beta = 0.166$) and regulation of emotions ($\beta = 0.160$).

Table 2. Multiple Regression Analysis Between Emotional Intelligence and Communication Skills

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>β</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>VIF</i>
(Constant)	1.977	0.135		14.630	0.000	
Self-emotion appraisal	0.098	0.028	0.166	3.471	0.001	1.332
Other's emotion appraisal	0.213	0.030	0.327	7.059	0.000	1.242
Use of emotion	0.162	0.029	0.274	5.669	0.000	1.353
Regulation of emotion	0.079	0.023	0.160	3.481	0.001	1.224
<i>R = 0.452 R² = 0.445 Durbin Watson = 1.747</i>						
<i>F = 65.482 p < 0.001</i>						

Criterion: Communication skills

In a study conducted by Çetinkaya and Alparslan (2011) reported that 28.3% of the communication skills can be explained by dimensions of emotional intelligence which are four independent variables. Also in the study conducted by Taşlıyan et al. (2015) reported that 31.2% of the variability in communication skills can be explained by the dimensions of emotional intelligence. These results show that level of

emotional intelligence has an effect on the communication skills.

An effective communication between the patient and healthcare professional is important for health and welfare of the patient and for high quality service delivery of medical care. For this reason, communication principles are thought and evaluated as a core component of clinical practice (Epstein and Hundert 2002) in England in the

scope of health education during and after undergraduate education (Brown 2008). An effective communication between the patient - healthcare worker occurs via the ability to give an appropriate answer by detecting patients' emotional problems (Reynolds and Scott 1999). Effective communication is the key of the profession of nursing and it is one of the most important needs of patients (Sadeghi et al. 2013). Communication skill is a behavior which helps needs be expressed and helps interpersonal purposes be achieved (Mirzaee et al. 2010). Communication with the patient is a clinical ability and using effective communication skills is an inseparable and humanitarian part of healthcare professionals (Nasiripour et al. 2012). For this reason, communicating effectively is a vital matter for nursing (Mahani and Salehi 2014). Nurses should be individuals who acknowledge and regulate their emotions, can empathize with the patient, can motivate oneself, have high power of empathy and communicate effectively in other words, they are required to have developed emotional intelligence (Erigüç et al. 2014). As a result, emotional intelligence is a factor which effects the communication directly (Mahani and Salehi 2014).

CONCLUSION

Emotional intelligence is one of most common abilities used for the development of social and communication skills (Khodarahmi et al. 2013). The importance of evaluation and

development of emotional intelligence in nursing enabling to raise nurses who make overtures being sensible towards patients' emotional needs as well as their physiological needs, has been proved the studies carried out (Akerjordet and Severinsson 2004; Reeves 2005). Moreover, it has been stated that communication is highly important for recognizing, understanding and controlling emotions for this reason, act of forming curriculum pursuant to the purpose is needed in order to develop the students' who have selected the occupation of nursing communication skills and emotional intelligence during their education (Smith et al. 2009).

In conclusion, this study was determined the effect of emotional intelligence on communication skills for nursing students. In addition to, a quite high regression coefficient was found in the study. Increasing in the quality of health services, the level of satisfaction of service providers, the level of job satisfaction among health professionals are important issues in health institutions. For this reason, it is considered that should be given the education programs to nursing, health management etc. students about the topics such as emotional intelligence and communication skills affecting the work environment in health institutions.

The results of this study have limitations because they cannot be generalised to cover all students of nursing department. The sample used in this study consisted of nursing students who receive education in a public university in Turkey.

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