

Evaluation of the Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Friendship Quality in Terms of Different Variables¹

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Abstract

It is a known fact that the individuals, whose social and emotional aspects are developed, are more productive in their working lives. Emotional intelligence levels of individuals also reflect in their bilateral relations. Hence, it is expected that there will be a meaningful relationship between emotional intelligence levels with reliable and high-quality friendships. In this study, the effects of emotional intelligence levels of university students on the quality of friendship were analyzed. The sample consists of 538 students (242 female and 296 male) studying at Adana Science and Technology University and ukurova University. A face to face questionnaire, which was prepared to determine to what extend the friendship quality of students was affected by emotional intelligence levels, was applied. The questionnaire includes emotional intelligence scale (EQ-NED) and friendship quality scale (FQUA) questions in addition to the questions created for determining demographic characteristics. Reliability analyses of the scales used in the study were performed and Cronbach's alpha value of EQ-NED scale was found as 0.791 while Cronbach's alpha value of FQUA scale was found as 0.890. As a result of the correlation analysis, it was concluded that there was a statistically significant relationship between the emotional intelligence levels and friendship quality of the university students. According to the genders of the students participating in the study it was observed that the emotional intelligence level of the female students was higher compared to the male students. It was determined that the emotional intelligence levels of the students did not differ according to the age variable and there was a significant difference between the emotional intelligence of the "health sciences" students and "science" and "social sciences" students according to the fields of education.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Friendship Quality, ANOVA, Independent Sample t test

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Duygusal Zekânın Arkadaşlık Kalitesine Etkisinin Farklı Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi

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Öz

Sosyal ve duygusal yönleri gelişmiş bireylerin çalışma hayatlarında daha üretken oldukları bilinen bir gerçektir. Bireylerin duygusal zekâ düzeyleri ikili ilişkilerine de yansımaktadır. Dolayısıyla güvenilirliği ve kalitesi yüksek arkadaşlık ilişkileri ile kişilerin duygusal zekâ düzeyleri arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olması beklenmektedir. Bu çalışmada üniversite öğrencilerinin duygusal zekâ düzeylerinin arkadaşlık kalitesi üzerine etkisi incelenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın örneklemini, Adana Bilim ve Teknoloji Üniversitesi ve Çukurova Üniversitesi'nde öğrenim gören, 242' si kız 296' sı erkek olmak üzere 538 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Üniversite öğrencilerinin arkadaşlık kalitesinin duygusal zekâ seviyelerinden ne derece etkilendiğini tespit etmek amacıyla yüzyüze anket uygulanmıştır. Ankette demografik özelliklerin belirlenmesi amacıyla oluşturulan soruların yanı sıra duygusal zekâ ölçeği (EQ-NED) ve arkadaşlık kalitesi ölçeği (FQUA) kullanılmıştır. Çalışmada kullanılan ölçeklerin güvenilirlik analizleri yapılmış, EQ-NED ölçeğinin Cronbach's alpha değeri 0,791 ve FQUA ölçeğinin Cronbach's alpha değeri 0,890 olarak bulunmuştur. Yapılan korelasyon analizi sonucunda, üniversite öğrencilerinin duygusal zekâ düzeyleri ile arkadaşlık kalitesi arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin cinsiyetlerine göre, kız öğrencilerin duygusal zekâ düzeyinin erkek öğrencilerden daha yüksek olduğu görülmüştür. Ayrıca öğrencilerin duygusal zekâlarının yaş değişkenine göre farklılık göstermediği belirlenmiş ve eğitim alanlarına göre de "sağlık bilimleri" öğrencileri ile "fen" ve "sosyal bilimler" öğrencilerinin duygusal zekâları arasında anlamlı bir farklılık olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Duygusal Zekâ, Arkadaşlık Kalitesi, ANOVA, Bağımsız Örneklem t testi

Introduction

Although the advanced technology that the digital world offers to make life easier reduces the importance of emotions which are the essence of being human, the biggest guide is the emotions and feelings in determining the individual's own life adventure and managing its inner journey. Managing emotions is of great importance in many issues such as the formation of personality, maintaining the existence of individuals and controlling the events that are going on in their lives. It is a well-known fact that people, who have developed social and emotional aspects, are more successful in finding solutions to problems in academic and professional life and are more productive in their working lives. This situation reveals the importance of emotional intelligence (EQ) together with cognitive intelligence (IQ).

The concept of emotional intelligence was first put forward by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and they explain emotional intelligence as follows: "Emotional Intelligence includes the ability to engage in sophisticated information processing about one's own and others' emotions and the ability to use this information as a guide to thinking and behavior." After Salovey and Mayer, Daniel Goleman (1995) made emotional intelligence more popular with its book titled "Emotional Intelligence". According to Goleman, emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and manage your own emotions, and those of the people around you as well as social skill (the ability to make friends) and this definition significantly coincide with the concepts explained by Salovey and Mayer (Locke, 2005). Bar-On (1997) listed the emotional intelligence model as intrapersonal skills, interpersonal skills, adaptation, stress management and general mood. According to Cooper and Sawaf (2003), emotional intelligence is a reflection of people's reactions to events, their emotions, life and work energies. In their study, Ciarrochi et al (2000) suggested that emotional intelligence is related to satisfaction with life and the quality of interpersonal relationships as well as self-esteem, empathy and extraversion. In their study, Ciarrochi et al (2001) found that emotional intelligence is higher in women compared to men and emotional intelligence has a positive relationship with the satisfaction received from social supports, social support satisfaction amount and mood management.

The high level of emotional intelligence of individuals reflects in the quality of the friendship relations that they establish. Establishing a friendship with more reliable individuals and having long term relations with these individuals are also in line with their emotional intelligence. Establishing and maintaining healthy and trustworthy friendships requires high level of emotional intelligence. If individuals have low level of emotional intelligence, they are negatively affected in terms of their relationships with others. Humans feel the need to establish friendships from the very beginning of their lives. The concept of friendship relations arising from this need continues its existence throughout the individual's life. The form and functioning of the friendship theory are very related to the characteristics of individuals. In fact, the ability of individuals to establish friendship is a characteristic specific to the individual like many other characteristics of them. Among the sources that feed this characteristic, the emotional intelligence of the individual is also very important.

Friendship is an explanatory variable in sociology literature concerned with the interpersonal and contextual influences where an individual's behavior or attitude is attributed to the influences of their peers (Kandel, 1978). A friendship between two individuals brings together the interaction with other relationships formed through various social networks. Therefore, when it comes to the social structures that individuals are a member of, their social conditions and universities, the education they receive significantly affects their choices and preferences (Nas, 2017).

In the first chapter of this study, a general introduction was made about the subject of the study. After the first chapter, general information was provided about the literature in the second chapter. In the third chapter of study, material and method used in the study were introduced. In the findings chapter of the study, analysis results were given and in the last chapter, the results were interpreted, and a final evaluation was presented.

Literature

Ergin (2000) investigated the relationship between the emotional intelligence level of the university students and 16 personality characteristics. A relation was determined between the sixteen personality characteristics

measured by the scale used for measuring personality characteristics and the dimensions measured by the emotional intelligence scale and it was revealed whether this relationship differentiated in terms of gender and department variables.

In the study conducted on university students by Schutte et al (2001), it was concluded that the students, which had high levels of social skill, had higher levels of emotional intelligence, exhibited more cooperative behaviors, were more successful in close emotional and social relations.

Erginsoy (2002) examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationship styles. The effect of age, gender, education level and department variables on the subject was discussed. The study was applied to a sample group consisting of 432 students studying at Atatürk University. In this study, it was found that there was a relationship between emotional intelligence levels and interpersonal relationships of the university students, the level of education (being in the 1st and 4th class) affected the style of emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationship, the averages of the students varied according to the department and gender, the age variable was not effective.

Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal (2006) analyzed the relationship between emotional intelligence, anxiety, depression and mental, social and physical health with the students of the University of Malaga. As a result of the study, people with high emotional intelligence achieved had more positive results in terms of physical functioning and social role, better mental and general health perception, better mental state and lower body pain perception. Girgin (2009) examined the emotional intelligence levels of university students in terms of different variables. As a result of his study, no difference was observed between emotional intelligence level and gender. Significant differences were determined between emotional intelligence and factors such as the number of close friends, being happy with their professions, having positive opinions about life and the ability to solve the problems faced in their daily lives.

In the study performed by Taşlıyan, Hırlak and Harbalıoğlu (2015), emotional intelligence levels of university students and the relationship between their communication skills and academic achievement levels were investigated. As a result of the study, there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence levels and communication skills

and academic achievement. In addition, it was put forward that the level of emotional intelligence differed significantly according to the gender variable.

Akın and Akın (2015) carried out their study on a sample group consisting of 271 university students. As a result of the study, they found that there was a positive relationship between friendship quality and subjective happiness.

Nas (2017) performed a study in the universities hosting individuals from different socio-cultural and economic structures. As a result of the study, it was determined that students paid more attention to certain characteristics and they didn't attach much importance to some characteristics while choosing their friends in universities which are the biggest public and social areas where friendships are established. The students included in the study suggested that gender and ethnicity differences were not determinants when establishing friendships. On the other hand, they emphasized that they wanted to establish friendship with believing students.

Kharimah, Prasetyawati and Sary (2017) concluded that there was a positive relationship between depression and friendship quality. According to their findings, they suggested that high friendship quality was associated with higher depressive symptoms and low friendship quality was associated with low depressive symptoms in adolescents. Lin (2018) examined the relationship between positive perception, deliberative belief and friendship quality with structural equation modeling. The sample of the study consisted of 302 university students studying in Taiwan. The results suggested that increasing the positive perception of students and implementing the deliberative pedagogy could improve the quality of friendship.

Methodology

In this study which is in general screening model, the aim is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and the friendship quality of university students. The sample consists of 538 students (242 female and 296 male) studying at Adana Science and Technology University (ASTU) and Çukurova University (CU). They were selected by using convenience sampling method which is a non-probabilistic sampling method

and a face-to-face questionnaire was applied. In addition to the questions prepared to determine the demographic characteristics of the students in this questionnaire, the EQ-NED Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Ergin, İşmen and Özabacı (1999) by using the approaches of Salovey and Mayer (1990), and the FQUA Friendship Quality Scale developed by Thien, Razak and Jamil (2012) and adapted into Turkish by Akın, Karduz Adam and Akın (2014) were used regarding the emotional intelligence and friendship quality.

The EQ-NED scale addresses the concept of emotional intelligence in three sub-dimensions: defining one's own emotions, defining others' emotions and guiding the emotions. A scale was prepared in 3-blocks by including 1 question in each of these sub-dimensions and by laying emphasis on separate events with different emotions in each block. This scale, which has 36 expressions in each sub-dimension, consists of 108 items. When conducting EQ-NED scale, a 4-point Likert type measurement tool was used which included the following expressions; "1- I never do that", "2- I occasionally do that", "3- I mostly do that" and "4- I always do that". The direction of scoring varies in inversely asked questions. FQUA scale addresses the quality of friendship in four sub-dimensions: safety, closeness, acceptance and help. In this scale, there are 21 items in total and these items are evaluated with 6-point measurement tool (1 = I Totally Disagree; 6 = I Totally Agree).

The statistical calculations made in this study were performed with the help of IBM-SPSS Statistics 24 package program. In addition to presenting the descriptive statistics of the data obtained from the questionnaires, the analysis results obtained from parametric statistical tests are also included in the study. The total score averages of EQ-NED and FQUA scales, score averages of their sub-dimensions and comparison of the genders of the students included in the study were determined with independent sample t test while the comparison of the departments of the students was made with one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Findings

The demographic data belonging to the university students participating in the study are presented in Table 1. The questionnaire was conducted on

538 individuals in total. 242 (45%) of these individuals were female, 296 (55%) were male. 165 (30.7%) were the students of Adana Science and Technology University and 373 (69.3%) were studying at Çukurova University. 231 (42.9%) of these students were studying in the field of Science, 286 (53.2%) in the field Social Sciences and 21 (3.9%) in the field of Health Sciences. While 497 (92.37%) of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 25, 12 (2.2%) were under the age of 18 and 29 were over the age of 25.

Table 1. Distribution Regarding Demographic Characteristics of Participants

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Level</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>Age(years)</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	Female	242	45	Age Range	Under 18years	12	2,2
	Male	296	55		18 - 21 years	367	68,2
Educational Field	Sciences	231	42,9		22 – 25 years	130	24,2
	Social Sci.	286	53,2		26 – 30 years	21	3,9
	Health Sci.	21	3,9		31 – 36 years	6	1,1
University	ASTU	165	30,7		Over 36 years	2	0,4
	CU	373	69,3				

Reliability analyses of the scales used in the study were performed and Cronbach's alpha value of EQ-NED scale was found as 0.791 while Cronbach's alpha value of FQUA scale was found as 0.890. The reliabilities of the sub-dimensions of the FQUA scale were also calculated separately and Cronbach's alpha values were found as 0.790 for Safety, 0.784 for Closeness, 0.779 for Acceptance and 0.792 for Help. Regarding a relationship between the friendship quality of university students and emotional intelligence, the correlations between the total score average obtained from the emotional intelligence scale and all sub-dimensions of the friendship quality scale were analyzed. In this study, the correlation between the total score average of the EQ-NED and the total score average of the FQUA was found as = 0,182 , and a statistically significant relationship was found at 0.05 significance level. Likewise, the correlation between the total score average of the EQ-NED scale and the sub-dimensions of the FQUA scale was examined and the values were found as $r = 0,209$ for safety, $r = 0,127$ for closeness, $r = 0,082$ for acceptance and $r = 0,093$ for help. Between the total score average of emotional intelligence and the

sub-dimensions of the friendship scale, a statistically significant relationship was observed at a significance level of 0.05 despite of the low level of other dimensions except for acceptance dimension.

Whether the averages of the responses received from the female and male students in the EQ-NED and FQUA scales were equal, was tested by the independent sample *t* test (Table 2). First of all, the equality of the variances of the responses that the female and male students gave to the expressions in the scales was tested with the Levene test and then the results of the *t* test were examined. As a result of the analyses, the *p* values of the *t* tests obtained for all dimensions were examined and it was found that all of them were under the significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis that the genders of the students do not have an effect on their responses to the expressions used in the scales was rejected. The average scores of the female and male students in the EQ-NED and FQUA scales and in the sub-dimensions of the FQUA scale were examined and it was concluded that the average of the female students was higher compared to the male students.

Table 2. Evaluation of the friendship quality scale factors and emotional intelligence according to gender

	Gender	N	\bar{x}	ss	t	p
Safety	Female	242	4,058	0,831	2,470	0,014
	Male	296	3,863	1,000		
Closeness	Female	242	4,761	0,873	3,216	0,001
	Male	296	4,501	0,982		
Acceptance	Female	242	4,907	0,869	3,744	0,000
	Male	296	4,596	1,025		
Help	Female	242	4,747	1,086	5,207	0,000
	Male	296	4,212	1,261		
FQUA score	Female	242	4,519	0,689	4,338	0,000
	Male	296	4,235	0,807		
EQ-NED score	Female	242	2,821	0,285	3,914	0,000
	Male	296	2,719	0,316		

One-way variance analysis (ANOVA) was performed to determine whether the age of the students had an effect on the students' responses to the expressions included in the EQ-NED and FQUA scales (Table 3). The

homogeneity of variances regarding age groups, which is one of the prerequisites of ANOVA test, was tested by using Levene test and it was observed that the variances were homogeneous. As seen in Table 3, p values were bigger than 0.05 for all dimensions and therefore the variables did not vary according to age groups.

Table 3. Evaluation of the friendship quality scale factors and emotional intelligence according to gender

	Age (Years)	N	\bar{x}	s.s	F	P
Safety	18 - 25 years	509	3,953	0,935	0,308	0,735
	26 - 36 years	27	3,870	0,925		
	Over 36 years	2	4,375	0,530		
Closeness	18 - 25 years	509	4,630	0,950	0,812	0,445
	26 - 36 years	27	4,395	0,817		
	Over 36 years	2	4,500	0,236		
Acceptance	18 - 25 years	509	4,746	0,968	0,562	0,571
	26 - 36 years	27	4,546	1,021		
	Over 36 years	2	4,875	0,177		
Help	18 - 25 years	509	4,460	1,209	0,209	0,811
	26 - 36 years	27	4,309	1,362		
	Over 36 years	2	4,333	0,471		
FQUA score	18 - 25 years	509	4,370	0,772	0,575	0,563
	26 - 36 years	27	4,212	0,727		
	Over 36 years	2	4,500	0,168		
EQ-NED score	18 - 25 years	509	2,767	0,310	0,478	0,620
	26 - 36 years	27	2,710	0,243		
	Over 36 years	2	2,817	0,118		

Whether there was a statistically significant difference in the students' responses to the expressions included in the EQ-NED and FQUA scales in terms of their educational fields were tested by using ANOVA test (Table 4). When the results were analyzed, it was seen that the educational fields of the students did not make any difference for the total score averages and all the sub-dimensions of the FQUA scale but a difference was observed for the total score average of the EQ-NED scale ($p = 0.006 < 0.05$). Scheffe test, which is one of the post-hoc tests, was used to determine the reason of this difference. As a result of this test, it was observed that there was a difference between the emotional intelligence of the Health Sciences

students and the students of Sciences ($p = 0,046 < 0,05$) and Social Sciences ($p = 0,011 < 0,05$) and there was not a difference ($p=0,335>0,05$) between the students of Social Sciences and Sciences.

Table 4. Evaluation of the friendship quality scale factors and emotional intelligence according to educational field

	Educational Field	N	\bar{x}	s.s	F	p
Safety	Sciences	228	3,968	0,908	0,289	0,749
	Social Sciences	293	3,928	0,897		
	Health Sciences	17	4,081	1,665		
Closeness	Sciences	228	4,574	0,975	0,430	0,651
	Social Sciences	293	4,651	0,900		
	Health Sciences	17	4,637	1,218		
Acceptance	Sciences	228	4,722	0,936	0,139	0,870
	Social Sciences	293	4,753	0,982		
	Health Sciences	17	4,647	1,225		
Help	Sciences	228	4,443	1,216	0,085	0,919
	Social Sciences	293	4,453	1,200		
	Health Sciences	17	4,569	1,447		
FQUA scores	Sciences	228	4,353	0,774	0,066	0,936
	Social Sciences	293	4,367	0,735		
	Health Sciences	17	4,417	1,213		
EQ-NED scores	Sciences	228	2,749	0,298	5,113	0,006
	Social Sciences	293	2,789	0,309		
	Health Sciences	17	2,559	0,302		

Conclusion

It is a known fact that most of momentary mood changes experienced by people in the flow of life are related to stress. Many situations such as heavy working hours, professional concerns, economic difficulties and psychological problems are just a few of the concerns that individuals experience in their lives. However, peaceful, happy and healthy individuals are vital for societies and future generations. The biggest problem of this era that individuals experience in their lives probably results from the complete self-commitment to academic achievement and occupational satisfaction by not paying attention to keeping their souls peaceful. Giving a break in the flow of life, creating quality times and sharing this time with

people are very important factors for the motivation of emotions. The people whom individuals work with, have a conversation and share their happiness and sadness in their academic or professional life are their friends who are the closest to them. Therefore, individuals increase their life qualities and life energies without even realizing it by concentrating on those closest to their own personalities, emotions and souls when choosing their friends that they spend the most of the day with.

In this study, the effect of emotional intelligence levels of university students on friendship quality was analyzed. As a result of the findings, it was concluded that there was a statistically significant relationship between the emotional intelligence levels and friendship quality of the university students. When the average of the emotional intelligence scores of the participants were analyzed according to gender, it was observed in parallel with the studies in the literature (Ciarrochi, 2000; Ciarrochi, 2001; Erginsoy, 2000; Kırtıl, 2009; Köksal and Gazioğlu 2007; Taşlıyan, Hırlak and Harbalıoğlu 2015; Tsaousis and Nikolaou, 2005) that there is a difference between the female and male students in favor of female students. This situation is an expected result because it is known that women mostly behave more emotionally to the events they experience compared to men while men behave more realistically compared to women (Üncü, 2007). When the average of the emotional intelligence scores was examined according to the age of the participants, no significant difference was found. When the average of the emotional intelligence scores of the participants was analyzed according to their fields of education, it was observed that there was a difference between the emotional intelligence of the Health Sciences students and the students of Sciences and Social Sciences and there was not a difference between the students of Social Sciences and Sciences.

For the students who take a step into university life after high school education, friendships established with trust are a very important part of their lives. In this study, a significant relationship between emotional intelligence of individuals and friendship quality was identified. In this context, it is foreseen that establishing friendship by giving priority to emotional intelligence will produce more positive results in the lives of individuals.

It is advisable that university students give importance to social activities in order to improve the quality of their friendships. Taking part in artistic and sportive activities within the universities, being part of student clubs is very important in acquiring new friendships and socializing. Reliability, acceptance, cooperation and self-confidence among students are directly related to activities in this manner. At this point, universities also have duties.

Each university should create social areas and encourage students in order to develop social levels and establish friendship links as well as education lives of students.

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