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ARAŞTIRMA

Açık Erişim

An Experimental Study: Does the Transactional Analysis Theory-based Psycho-education Program Affect Students' Communication Skills?

DeneySEL Bir Çalışma: Transaksyonel Analiz Kuramına Dayalı Psiko-eğitim Programının Öğrencilerin İletişim Becerilerine Etkisi Var mıdır?

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ABSTRACT

Transactional analysis theory has emerged as a psychotherapy approach that includes individual and group applications and draws attention to individuals' communication with both themselves and others. In this study, the effects of an 11-session transactional analysis theory-based psycho-education program on the communication skills of Turkish undergraduate students doing their major in social services and consultancy department was examined. The participants of the study were selected through criterion sampling, which is one of the purposeful sampling methods. The study was carried out with 16 participants, 9 females and 7 males, who took part in the research voluntarily. "Personal Information Form" and "The Communication Skills Scale" were used as data collection tools. The present study is quantitative. The research design was a single group pretest-posttest model which is one of the weak experimental research designs. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test, one of the non-parametric tests, was used for data analysis. Based on the results, it can be said that the 11-week psycho-education program, which was designed to increase the communication skills of the students, had a significant effect on increasing the communication skills of the students.

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ÖZET

Transaksyonel Analiz kuramı bireysel ve grup uygulamalarını içeren, bireylerin hem kendileriyle hem de diğerleriyle olan iletişimlerine dikkat çeken bir psikoterapi yaklaşımı olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu çalışmada, transaksyonel analiz kuramına dayalı olarak hazırlanan 11 oturumluk psiko-eğitimin sosyal hizmet ve danışmanlık bölümünde öğrenimlerine devam eden üniversite öğrencilerinin iletişim becerilerine etkisi incelenmiştir. Çalışma araştırmaya gönüllü olarak katılmak isteyen amaçsal örnekleme yöntemlerinden olan ölçüt örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilen 9 kadın 7'si erkek olmak üzere 16 kişiyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak Kişisel Bilgi Formu ve İletişim Becerileri Değerlendirme Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın deseni, zayıf deneysel araştırma tasarımlarından olan tek gruplu ön test- son test modeline göre tasarlanmıştır. Verilerin çözümlenmesinde non-parametrik bir test olan Wilcoxon İşaretili Sıralar testi kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlara göre uygulanan psiko-eğitim programının çalışmaya katılan deneklerin iletişim becerilerini anlamlı bir şekilde artırdığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu sonuca göre, öğrencilerin iletişim becerilerini artırmaya yönelik oluşturulan on bir haftalık psiko-eğitim programının, öğrencilerin iletişim becerilerini artırmada önemli bir etkisinin olduğu söylenebilir.

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INTRODUCTION

Some problems inevitably occur in interpersonal communications as a result of the complexity of interpersonal relationships in today's world. Effective communication with the people around one person can be accepted as a prerequisite for the protection and maintenance of the mental health of individuals. According to Yüksel-Şahin (1997), individuals with high communication skills can both protect their mental health and contribute to society at a higher level. Otherwise, when individuals cannot establish sincere and warm relationships with their social environment, the loneliness they experience may lead them to a dreary life. In case of insufficient communication, more serious problems can be observed in some individuals. According to Weiten et al (2016), if communication, one of the important aspects of daily life, does not take place effectively, the individual cannot get satisfaction in his life. Thus, individuals need to acquire some skills such as interpersonal communication skills to cope with the communication problems they experience. For Korkut (2005), effective communication skills, which have a facilitating role in interpersonal relationships, become even more important for those who have to confront other individuals and spend more time with them a requirement of their profession. For example, those who work in social services need to know and apply communication skills to work with individuals, families, and communities with various needs (Gökçearslan-Çiftçi & Altınova, 2017).

To understand the communication skills fully and clearly, it is crucial to understand the concept of communication skills and what interpersonal communication is. There are various definitions of communication (Cüceloğlu, 2016; Dökmen, 1996; Fiske, 2010). According to Weiten et al (2016), communication is the mutual exchange of meaningful messages. Similarly, communication is defined as transferring emotions, thoughts, or information to others in any way imaginable (Türk Dil Kurumu [Turkish Language Institute], 2019). Similarly, interpersonal communications are defined as a psycho-social process in which more than one individual mutually shares their experiences, knowledge, thoughts, and feelings (Kaya, 2015). Communication skills, essential for healthy interpersonal communication, include empathy, I-language, being trustworthy, overcoming conflict, active listening, appropriate self-disclosure, respect, sending a full and single message, using non-verbal behaviors and verbal communication effectively, speaking concretely, and being transparent (Barger, 1990; Gürüz & Eğinli, 2008; Weiten, Yost-Hammer & Dunn 2016; Voltan-Acar, 2009; Yüksel-Şahin, 2017; McKay et al., 2006). Moreover, listening to others effectively, being sensitive to both verbal and non-verbal messages, and responding effectively can be defined within the scope of communication skills (Baker & Shaw, 1987; Egan, 1994 as cited in Korkut, 2005).

Understanding the relationship between people will allow communication skills to be used more functionally. According to Siyez (2015), the foundations of Transactional Analysis (TA), developed to understand human relationships, were laid by Berne (1964) and developed by Harris (1973) (as cited in Geldard & Geldard, 2013). TA theory has emerged as a psychotherapy approach that includes individual and group applications and draws attention to the communication of individuals both with themselves and with others (Kılıçarslan, 2018). Since Berne's views about humans were different from classical psychoanalysis, he established the TA theory. With a positive view of human beings, the basic assumptions of TA theory are as follows (Akkoyun, 1998):

1. Human beings are valuable.
2. Everybody can think.
3. Everybody decides on the person they want to be in their life.

In the TA theory, the three ego states that individuals possess affect their communication styles directly. Berne advocates that all individuals possess three ego states: the Parent, the Child, and the Adult. The child's ego state consists of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that contain signs of the individual's childhood experiences. They act according to their emotions and decide without thinking. They are rebellious, weak, and dependent. The adult ego state objectively handles the facts and makes decisions. They can change their decisions according to the information they gather. They are flexible and regulative. The parent ego state is supportive, restrictive, dominant, harsh, and critical (controlling). They are the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that we borrow from others to deal with life. Filled with certain instructions and rules in the first five years of life, this tape continues to play until the end of life (Akkoyun, 1998; Geldard & Geldard, 2013; Mckay et al., 2006; Nelson-Jones, 1982). We use the three ego states in our daily life. The ego state we are in affects both our behaviors and communication styles (Mckay et al., 2006). TA explains communication as the processes occurring between ego states (adult, child and parent). Handling these processes one by one provides a clear understanding of interpersonal communication and it argues that even a tiny change in any of these processes leads to significant differences in interpersonal relationships (Akkoyun, 1998). According to TA, all communications that result from the interaction of ego states occur in three ways complementary, cross, and ulterior.

Complementary (parallel) communication, occurs in the natural flow of healthy individual relationships, which happens when a message sent from one self-state to the other person's self-state receives the response from the expected ego state. Thus, the person meets the expectations of the person they communicate with. Complementary (parallel) communication ensures the continuity of the communication. Although individuals are satisfied with the complementary communication, they may be confronted with unwanted and dangerous behaviors. As long as the communication is complementary (parallel), the communication continues regardless of the subject and no matter which ego states it occurs. In cross (closed) communication, which causes the communication to break, individuals receive reactions from the individuals they are in contact with, that is, from ego states other than the ego states they expect. In cross-communication that causes difficulties in all areas of life (marriage, love, business, friendship, and so on.), communication ends if both or one of the parties do not change their ego state. In ulterior communication, in which two self-states of two people or one of them are communicating at the same time, two different inconsistent messages emerge as psychological and social (Akkoyun, 1998; Berne, 2019; Mckay et al., 2006; Geldard & Geldard, 2013; Siyez, 2015). Therefore, individuals, unable to use their ego states under their conditions and expectations, cannot be considered to have healthy communication.

According to TA, there are three issues to be accomplished for effective communication and they are as follows respectively: the person must (1) comprehend his expectations, (2) be able to choose the appropriate communication processes to meet these expectations, (3) be able to apply this communication process effectively (Akkoyun, 1998). Hence, individuals who are not aware of their expectations cannot choose the appropriate communication processes in their relationships. These individuals may not be able to engage in effective communication even if they know their communication skills. As a matter of fact, according to Dökmen (1996), to behave empathically in interpersonal communication, it is necessary to use ego states to the control adult ego state. In interpersonal communication, the individuals who cannot use one of the ego states (child, adult and parent) appropriately for the situation they are in cannot engage in healthy communication. Similarly, Akkoyun (1993) states that if the individual receiving the message feels good and responds from the adult ego state,

sincere respect can be assured. According to Geldard and Geldard (2013), all individuals make a decision about which ego to use with others in interpersonal communication. This choice has a direct impact on the results and quality of the individual's communication. The fact that individuals learn and understand TA both increases their awareness of the consequences of their behavior and enable them to gain more insight into the way they communicate. In addition, transactional analysis is a suitable model for young people because it deals with the relationships individually and explains them in a simple and comprehensible way.

In this context, TA theory offers a very effective model for social service workers to understand the healthy and unhealthy reactions of both themselves and their counselees, and to provide more effective services. Prospective social service workers who learn the TA theory can be in a healthier communication with themselves and with other individuals, as they will know which ego state to use by taking into account their expectations, environment, and conditions to engage in effective communication.

Scrutinizing the literature, it can be seen that there are quite a lot of studies that address Transactional Analysis (TA) and communication skills together (Akkoyun,1993; Alisinanoğlu & Köksal, 2000; Çam, 1999; Dökmen, 1996; Zengin, 2019). However, no experimental studies about the effect of Transactional Analysis training on communication skills have been discovered. As a result, it is important to examine the effect of Transactional Analysis, known to be associated with communication skills, on the communication skills of social service workers who provide services in various fields to individuals, groups, families, and society for them to provide these services with higher quality. It is thought that the data obtained in the present research and the suggestions developed based on the data will contribute to the field experts who work on communication skills. In addition, the present research is thought to contribute to the literature as it deals with communication skills in terms of Transactional Analysis. For this reason, the effect of Transactional Analysis training on communication skills was examined in the present research conducted with Turkish university prospective social service workers. In the study, the answer to the following question was sought.

1. Does the Communication Skills Psycho-Education Program, based on some concepts of Transactional Analysis Theory, affect the communication skills of Turkish undergraduate Social Services and Consultancy students?

METHOD

This research examining the effect of the Communication Skills Training Program, which was prepared based on Transactional Analysis Theory, on the communication skill levels of Social Services and Consultancy students was designed according to the single group pretest-posttest model, one of the experimental research designs (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Since the number of volunteers to participate in the present research was 26, a control group could not be formed.

Table 1. Research model

Groups	Pretest	Experiment	Posttest
Experimental Group	TCSS	Transactional Analysis-based Psycho-education	TCSS

Participants

The group of the present research consisted of a total of 16 Social Services and Consultancy students, 9 female and 7 male, selected via criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods. Moreover,

the participants were undergraduate students at a small-scale public university in South-East Turkey during the 2017-2018 academic year and taking the Interpersonal Relations and Effective Communication course. The participants' ages ranged from 19-23. During the selection of the participants, notices were posted on the faculty notice board and verbal announcements were made during the required classes. "The Communication Skills Scale (TCSS)" and "Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)" were conducted with 26 individuals who had applied for the training. Three applicants with high scores on the Beck Depression Inventory were advised to consult the necessary authorities after being interviewed. Among the rest of the 23 applicants, 16 individuals with low TCSS scores were chosen.

Ethical Statement

Ethical approval for the collection and publication of data was granted by the Ethics committee of the University where the study was conducted (18062020/50). In the study, the informed consent forms of the participants were obtained and all the explanations regarding voluntary participation were made. The individuals were ensured to withdraw from the study at any time they deserved.

Data Collection Tool

The Communication Skills Scale (TCSS). The scale, with 25 items in 5-point Likert type, was developed to measure how individuals evaluate their communication skills. The scores that can be obtained from the scale range from 25 to 125. The increase in the scores obtained from the scale shows that people's evaluations of their communication skills are positive. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be .80, and the reliability coefficient was found as .76 in studies conducted with adults. According to the factor analysis results, the scale consists of a single factor (Korkut, 1996).

Process

First of all, to determine the students who were going to participate in Transactional Analysis based Communication Skills Training, verbal permissions were obtained from the administrators of the department where the study was going to be conducted, and then, the necessary announcements were made to the students both orally and in a written form. The TCSS and BDI were conducted with the students who applied for the training. The aim of conducting the Beck Depression Inventory was to prevent applicants who were out of the scope of such training. Individuals with some mental/psychological problems could apply for such training. Based on the interviews carried out and the Beck Depression Inventory results, three individuals were advised to consult the necessary authorities. The rest of the applicants were informed about the place, duration, and date of the sessions. Among the rest, 16 individuals with low TCSS scores were chosen. Furthermore, the necessary information was given to 7 applicants who were not included in the group.

Communication Skills Training Program based on Transactional Analysis consisted of 11 sessions in total. Each weekly session was 90 minutes on average. Various sources were used in creating the program (Mckay et al., 2006; Dökmen, 1996; Nelson-Jones, 1982; Akkoyun, 1998; Geldard & Geldard, 2013; Siyez, 2015; Voltan-Acar, 2009; Voltan-Acar, 2012; Yüksel-Şahin, 2017; Kulaksızoğlu, 2003; Berne, 2019). The learning objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To grasp the importance of being aware of expectations in communication
2. To realize ego states
3. To be able to choose appropriate ego states in communication

4. To be able to use appropriate ego states in communication
5. To be able to apply communication skills from the Transactional Analysis perspective

The learning objectives of the program that has an awareness-raising aspect with their behavioral and cognitive elements, the content, and educational practices are presented below:

Session 1:

- Learning Objectives:
1. Grasps group rules.
 2. Realizes the working process of the group.

Activity: We become a group

Duration: 90 min.

Process: First of all, there was an introduction phase. Then, the points about the purpose of the group and its members, the rules and the functioning of the group, the importance of the attendance to the sessions except for compulsory cases, and confidentiality were clarified and emphasized. In the introduction phase, "The Name Tag" game (Kulaksızoğlu, 2003) was used. After the group members compromised on the rules, the group leader had the group members sign the agreement regarding the group rules. It was explained to the group members that this agreement had no legal basis.

Session 2:

- Learning Objectives:
1. Grasps the importance of Transactional Analysis (TA) in communication.
 2. Realizes types of ego states used in communication.

Activity: Hello: TA

Duration: 90 min.

Process: The first session was summarized. The Transactional Analysis Theory was presented with its general framework. The members were asked which ego states they used during the meeting activity when the rules were formed. The responses to each question were evaluated by group members. Then, they were asked to think whether their expectations affected the ego states they had chosen. The members were asked whether any members would like to complete the sentence orally "I wish I said that too, then the groups ended like that". The session ended with the evaluation of the session.

Session 3:

- Learning Objectives:
1. Realizes child ego state.
 2. Gives examples of child ego states he/she uses in daily life.

Activity: Meet, Find and Apply: Child Ego State

Duration: 90 min.

Process: During the third session, information was given about the child's ego state. Then, the participants were asked to find the child's ego states in the distributed forms containing the examples of all three ego states. After the evaluation, the group members made regard to the answers, the natural child and the adaptive child constituting the child's ego state were emphasized. Exercises on the subject

were done. An assignment was given before the session ended. The members were asked to write the child ego states they use in their daily lives on a piece of paper and bring them to the other session.

Session 4:

- Learning Objectives:
1. Realizes parent ego state.
 2. Realizes parent ego states he/she uses in daily life.
 3. Distinguishes between parent ego states examples.

Activity: Meet, Find and Apply: Parent Ego State

Duration: 90 min.

Process: After summarizing the previous session and reviewing the assignments, the parent ego state was presented to the participants. In the forms distributed by the group leader, the members were asked to find out the parent ego states in the examples containing all three types of ego states. After the parent ego state was understood thoroughly, the members were informed about the nurturing parent state and the critical (controlling) parent state. With the role-playing method, they were asked to find out the nurturing and critical (controlling) ego states in the examples given. Homework was assigned before the session ended. When they realized that they used parent ego states in their daily lives, they were asked to write them down on a sheet and bring it to the other session. After the session was evaluated, it was ended.

Session 5:

- Learning objectives:
1. Realizes adult ego state.
 2. Realizes adult ego state he/she uses in daily life.

Activity: Meet, Find and Apply: Adult Ego State

Duration: 90 min.

Process: After a volunteer member made the summary of the previous session, the experiences of the group members regarding their homework on the parent ego states were discussed. Information was given about the adult ego state. Using the brainstorming technique, the differences between the adult ego state from the other two ego states were discussed. Afterward, the members were asked to find out the expressions of the three ego states from the examples in the forms distributed. The answers were evaluated by all the group members. Later, each group member was asked to make three sentences about the three ego states based on their experiences with the group. Homework was given before the session ended. Whenever they realized that they used adult ego states in their daily lives, they were asked to write them down on a sheet and bring it to the other session.

Session 6:

- Learning Objective:
1. Distinguishes between the three ego states using behavioral clues.
 2. Discusses with his/her friends the right and wrong ego states used in daily life.

Activity: The Right Ego-The Right Communication

Duration: 105 min.

Process: A volunteer member made a summary of the previous session. Assignments were discussed and evaluated. The behavioral clues (expressions, gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice) used in identifying the right ego states were highlighted. The members were asked to think about where and under what conditions they used different ego-states when considering their daily lives. After the discussions, the effects of choosing the right or wrong ego in communication were analyzed with a series of exercises based on the lives of the members.

Session 7:

Learning Objective: 1. Comprehends the communication classifications based on Transactional Analysis Theory.

Activity: Ego States Interact

Duration: 105 min.

Process: Previous topics were summarized and the homework was reviewed. Conceptual information and sample situations were given regarding the complementary, cross, and ulterior communications that cover all communications within the scope of Transactional Analysis Theory. Going over the previous sessions, the members' bilateral speeches were written and these were discussed within the scope of complementary, cross, and ulterior communication. Later, the members were asked to classify the communication in 6 examples (by drawing figures as well) distributed within the form as a complementary, cross, and ulterior. After the answers were evaluated by the group members, the session ended.

Session 8:

Learning Objectives: 1. Discusses empathy and respect in terms of Transactional Analysis.
2. Applies ego states that lead to healthy communication.

Activity: Empathy and Respect Through Transactional Analysis.

Duration: 105 min.

Process: After the summary of the previous session was made, examples of empathy and respect skills were discussed within the scope of Transactional Analysis. Then, they were asked to find out which ego state examples written on the board they would react to with empathy and respect. After eliciting the answers of the members, ego states that opened the way for healthy communication were shared. For example, if your elderly mother asks for a respectful response from your parent's ego state, and you react from your adult or child's ego state, cross-communication may occur, which may cause the communication to break.

Session 9:

Learning Objectives: 1. Understands transparency and self-disclosure in terms of Transactional Analysis.

2. Reacts appropriately to the three ego states in situations that require transparency and self-disclosure.

Activity: Transparency and Self-disclosure: From TA Perspective

Duration: 105 min.

Process: The members were asked to react to the examples of transparency and self-disclosure by considering the expectations and conditions of three ego states. Then, the reactions from which ego states they were appropriate for the expectations and conditions were emphasized. For example, it was underlined whether a social service worker would harm the communication with a crying counselee by disclosing himself/herself through the child's ego state in the interview.

Session 10:

Learning Objectives:

1. Evaluates nonverbal behaviors in terms of Transactional Analysis.
2. Evaluates empathically safe behaviors in terms of Transactional Analysis.
3. Responds to non-verbal behaviors with appropriate ego states.
4. Gives an empathic safe response by choosing the appropriate ego state to the given examples.

Activity: Nonverbal Behaviors and Empathic Safe Behavior: From Transactional Analysis Perspective.

Duration: 105 min.

Process: The purpose of the session was to deal with nonverbal behaviors and empathic safe behavior from the TA's perspective. The ego states of the individuals with different postures in the photographs prepared in advance were evaluated. Then, the members were matched in pairs using the role-playing technique. They were asked to react with appropriate ego states to their non-verbal reactions. The possible consequences of the empathic safe behaviors were emphasized when the appropriate ego state was chosen. They were asked to choose the appropriate ego state from the Transactional Analysis perspective and give empathic safe responses to the three examples given. For example, it was highlighted from which ego state a counselee who had not done his homework should convey this situation. At the end of the exercises, the members were reminded that the next session was going to be the last.

Session 11:

Learning Objectives:

1. Realize his/her emotions and thoughts regarding termination.
2. Realize the effect of Transactional Analysis on communication skills.

Activity: We are falling apart

Duration: 90 min.

Process: In this session, a summary of other sessions was made by the leader. The members were asked to what extent they achieved their behavioral goals and realized their feelings about the termination of the session. In the termination session, the exercise of "Writing a Letter" (Voltan-Acar, 2004) was used. Then, "The Communication Skills Scale" that had been conducted before the sessions was applied again and the session was terminated.

Data Analysis

The data obtained in the present research was analyzed via the SPSS-25 statistical analysis program. Since the number of sampling was under 30 and the data did not meet the normal distribution criterion, Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test, a non-parametric test, was used for the data analysis (Can, 2016).

RESULTS

The results obtained in the study are presented in the tables below. Descriptive statistics regarding the scores of the students' pre-/post-experiment on the communication skills scale are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group students

	N	X	Ss	Lowest	Highest
Pre-test	16	85.2	11.7	61	105
Post-test	16	92.3	8.8	76	107

According to Table 2, the pre-test means the score is 85,2, while the post-test mean score is 92,3. While the lowest score in the pre-test is 61, the highest score is 105. It is seen that the highest score in the post-test is 107 whereas the lowest score is 76.

Table 3. Wilcoxon signed ranks test results of pre and post tests

Post-test / Pre-test	N	Rank Mean	Rank Sum	Z	P
Negative Ranks	1	1.5	1.5	-3.204*	,001
Positive Ranks	13	7.9	103.5		
Equal	2				

According to the results of the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test, conducted to determine whether there was a difference between the communication skills scores of 16 university students participating in the transactional psycho-education program to increase their communication skills scores, a statistically significant difference was observed between the pre-program and post-program scores of the university students participating in the program [$z=-3204$, $p<0.05$]. Considering the rank sums of the difference scores, the difference observed in favor of the positive ranks indicated that the program had a significant effect on communication skills.

DISCUSSION

The results of the research show that the psycho-education program based on the transactional theory, which was applied to enhance the communication skills of the students who continued their education in the social service and consultancy department, increased their communication skills significantly. This result is in line with the studies conducted with adolescents and adults to increase their communication skills based on different approaches and with different content (Aydın-Şengül & Topçuoğlu Ünal, 2018; Bek & Akhunlar-Turgut, 2015; Gökçearsan-Çiftçi & Altınova, 2017; Korkut, 2005; Nerdrum, 1997; Yüksel-Şahin, 2017; Yüksel – Şahin;1997). Since these studies did not deal with communication skills in terms of transactional analysis, it was not possible to compare the results obtained from the present research with the results obtained from these studies. Although it did not allow direct comparison in terms of its results, similar results were found in studies related to the subject of the present research. Çam (1999) found in his study that ego states were the dependent variable, and communication skills training positively affected the scores of the adaptive child, critical (controlling) parent, nurturing parent, and adult ego state. Alisinanoğlu and Köksal (2000) found a significant relationship between ego states and the empathy skills of young people in their study. In her study, Zengin (2019) determined that ego states should be used in a balanced way according to the conditions for communication to progress in a healthy way. Therefore, it is remarkable that this program, which dealt with the conditions, expectations, selection of the appropriate ego state, and understanding of human relations in communication, which has an experiential aspect, contributed significantly to the communication skills of the participants. The fact that social service workers, who are heavily in contact with other individuals due to their profession,

understand and communicate with both themselves and other individuals will ensure a healthier communication. Thus, their services will be more realistic and efficient.

In social services, such factors as the reasons for the counselee to come to the interview, the quality of the requested service, and the legal status of the institution directly affect the professional relationship that the social service worker has with the counselee while performing his/her profession. In addition, effective communication with their counsees is critical and an indispensable element for social service workers to achieve success in their work (Artan & Kumbasar, 2017). Therefore, besides the communication courses that they already take to teach effective communication methods to prospective social service workers who continue their education, programs based on transactional analysis can be applied.

Understanding ego states, one of the important concepts of Transactional Analysis Theory, enables the individual to discover personality parts. To be able to communicate effectively, it may not be enough for the individual to understand and react accordingly to the other person. Social service workers' use of Transactional Analysis in their communication with the counselee means that they are aware of the ego states that make up their personality, and they can communicate by considering the needs and expectations of both themselves and their counsees. Therefore, providing such psycho-education programs to students at social service can directly affect the quality of their professional services and contribute to their personality development and communication skills.

It is a known fact that one of the duties of social service workers is to be a model by using effective communication skills in their communication with their counsees. As a matter of fact, according to Walker (2008), the counsees may think that they are not understood properly and not heard sufficiently due to the difficult events they have experienced. From this point of view, effective communication of the social service worker with the counselee may remove such beliefs of the counselee and positively affect the quality of the interviews. Therefore, by using this program that was found to have a significant effect on communication skills or similar programs based on Transactional Analysis Theory, the communication skills of social service workers can be promoted.

Since there were not enough candidate participants in the present research, a control group could not be formed. Therefore, a single group pretest-posttest model, one of the weak experimental designs, was used. For this reason, researchers should also consider external mediating variables such as date/time and maturity that threaten internal validity (Johnson & Christensen, 2014) and evaluate the results.

As a result, to be a competent social service worker, psycho-education programs should be exploited to develop important communication skills and criticism. The present research was conducted with the prospective social service workers, therefore, the results obtained can be generalized to similar groups. In the studies carried out with different groups, different results can be obtained.

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Author Contribution

This study was conducted by all the authors working together and cooperatively. All of the authors substantially contributed to this work in each step of the study.

Conflict of Interest

It has been reported by the authors that there is no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Statement

The study was approved by the Siirt University Ethics Committee on June 18, 2020 (No: # 50 / 2020-06-18). In addition, consent forms were obtained from all participants included in the study.

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