

Research Article

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GROUP WORK TO DEVELOP THE SOCIAL SKILLS OF UNIVERSITY
STUDENTSÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN SOSYAL BECERİLERİNİ GELİŞTİRMEYE
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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the social skill levels of university students and examine the effectiveness of group work designed to increase social abilities by sharing knowledge and skills between students. The experimental group of the research consists of 11 students studying in the 3rd grade of Istanbul University – Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Health Sciences, Social Work department. In the first and last session of the 7-week studies, the data obtained from the pre-test and post-test study directed by applying the Social skills Inventory to the students is examined. The data of the research is evaluated in SPSS Statistics 22.0 program. Paired-Sample T-Test was applied in the processing and analysis of the data. The weekly reports of the group members are examined, and the descriptive analysis technique is used, along with receiving feedback from the group members at the end of the group study. When the pre-test and post-test scores of the members participating in the group activity, which is designed to improve the social skills of university students, is inspected, it leads to the conclusion that includes a significant difference in the social skill levels of the students. Thoughts of the group participants about the group study process also supported this conclusion. When the pre-test and post-test scores of the members who included in the group study that is structured to improve the social skills of university students is inspected, a significant difference in the social skill levels of the students is observed, while revealing that this group work increased the social ability levels of the student. In spite of the fact that there is a limited number of studies on this case, and it is expected that the study will contribute to the literature in this context, it is thought that it will be an example for group studies to be established during university education. In addition, it might be beneficial to apply group work based on social abilities for students to acquire the fundamental social skills necessary for social life and adapt to society in the best possible way.

Keywords: Group study, Social skills, Social work.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı üniversite öğrencilerinin sosyal beceri düzeylerinin belirlenmesi ve öğrenciler arasında bilgi ve beceri paylaşımında bulunarak grup üyelerinin sosyal becerilerinin artırılması için tasarlanan grup çalışmasının etkililiğini incelemektir. Araştırmanın deney grubunu İstanbul Üniversitesi-Cerrahpaşa Sağlık Bilimleri Fakültesi sosyal hizmet bölümü 3. sınıfta okuyan 11 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. 7 haftalık oturumların ilk ve son oturumunda öğrencilere Sosyal Beceri Envanteri uygulanarak yapılan ön-test ve son-test çalışması sonucundan elde edilen veriler incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın verileri SPSS Statistics 22.0 programında değerlendirilmiştir. Verilerin işlenmesi ve analizinde Bağımlı Örneklem T Testi (Paired-Simple T testi) uygulanmış olup grup üyelerinin haftalık raporları incelenerek betimsel analiz tekniği kullanılmıştır ve grup çalışmasının sonunda grup üyelerinden geri bildirim alınmıştır. Üniversite öğrencilerinin sosyal becerilerini geliştirmeye yönelik tasarlanan grup çalışmasına katılan üyelerin ön test ile son test puanları incelendiğinde öğrencilerin sosyal beceri düzeylerinde anlamlı bir farklılık olduğu görülmüştür. Grup üyelerinin grup çalışması süreci hakkındaki düşünceleri de bunu desteklemektedir. Üniversite öğrencilerinin sosyal becerilerini geliştirmeye yönelik tasarlanan grup çalışmasına katılan üyelerin ön test ile son test puanları incelendiğinde öğrencilerin sosyal beceri düzeylerinde anlamlı bir farklılık olduğunun görülmesi bu grup çalışmasının öğrencilerin sosyal beceri düzeylerini artırdığını ortaya koymuştur. Bu konuda sınırlı sayıda çalışma olduğu ve bu bağlamda çalışmanın literatüre katkı sağlayacağı beklenmekle birlikte üniversite eğitimi sürecinde yapılacak grup çalışmalarına örnek olacağı düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca üniversitelerde öğrencilerin toplum yaşamı için gerekli olan temel sosyal becerileri kazanmaları ve bulunduğu topluma en iyi biçimde uyum sağlamaları açısından sosyal becerileri temel alan grup çalışmalarının uygulanması faydalı olacaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler; Grup çalışması, Sosyal beceri, Sosyal hizmet.

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Individuals interact with other people while satisfying their bio-psycho-social needs, and also social skills are essential factors that accelerate this interaction (Yüksel, 1997). Social skills are the abilities that help to adjust to the environment individuals live in, which has an important place in establishing and maintaining good interpersonal relationships and establishing social goals (Sorias, 1986).

Social skills are considered as learned behaviors, and these are the skills that enable individuals to show positive reactions, prevent adverse reactions, allow interaction with other individuals, become socially acceptable, create an impact on the environment, include observable and unobservable cognitive and sentimental elements, along with the ability to act towards a goal. Most of the definitions of social skills have the following elements in common; (1) social skills as learned behaviors that will elicit positive reactions from others and prevent adverse reactions, enable interaction with others, and these are socially acceptable, (2) social skills as goal-directed behaviors that make an impact on the environment, (3) situation-specific social skills that vary according to the content, and (4) both certain observable behaviors and behaviours that include unobservable cognitive and emotional elements (Cartledge and Milburn, 1983). Akkök (1996), on the other hand, mentions the social abilities in six elements as follows: The skill of initiating and maintaining a relationship, ability to manage a task with a group, emotion-oriented skills, skills for coping with aggressive behaviors, skills for dealing with stressful situations, and problem-solving and planning skills.

Keçeoğlu (1997), argues that among the personality traits stated in Maslow's theory of self-actualization, many items are aligned with the characteristics of people who maintain social skills, such as interacting with other individuals, approaching other people with empathy, caring about autonomy, sympathy, and love for individuals, and acting naturally. Thus, self-actualizing individuals with positive and effective characteristics become those who can express themselves more readily and be sensitive in emotional and social terms (Yüksel, 1997). According to Greasham (2002), social skill acquisition brings various advantages. Those benefits include peer acceptance, academic achievement, self-concept, individuality concept, and school adjustment.

According to Kabasakal and Çelik (2010), social skills are an essential element that constitutes an individual's competence. If these skills are lacking, it is seen that individuals have problems in establishing emotional and social relationships, maintaining their relationships, and coping with these problems when they encounter adversity. People who lack social skills may face many difficulties such as communication difficulties and not adapting to society, especially in education life; additionally, family, school, and work environments are also affected by this deficiency—identifying the individual's lack of social skills, starting from an early age. Providing the necessary education helps overcome these difficulties (Albayrak Arın, 1999). If the person cannot acquire social skills naturally, these skills can be gained through various programs within the scope of social learning principles (Kelly, 1982).

Kelly (1982) and Michelson et al. (1981) concluded that social abilities are learnable behaviors. Bandura's (1986) social learning theory also supports this idea, stating that all behaviors other than some basic reflexes are learnable. In this matter, it might be beneficial to provide social skills training to every individual living in the society; however, this training carries great importance for individuals working in some occupational groups, especially in professions that are people-oriented, based on direct human relations, and providing consultancy services to improve family relations. In this subject, social skills training given to students in primary, secondary, and higher education institutions contributes to helping people by improving their interpersonal relationships (Yüksel, 1997). Hollander et al. (2003) emphasized that social skills should be integrated with planned health programs in schools. Avşar and Kuter (2007) underlined the importance of social ability education at primary and secondary education levels. Still, particular priority should be given to social skill education at higher education institutions.

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Social skills training is a tutoring and treatment method applied as an individual/group. It is based on behavioral techniques and the individual's performance for gaining social skills (Shepherd, 1983, as cited in Dikmeer, 1997). Goldstein (1981), on the other hand, stated that this training could also be used to change the cognitive evaluations of the individuals that cause problematic social behavior. Becker (1987) argues that the lack of social skills results from many factors such as negative self-structure, anxiety, and lack of knowledge about social rules (as cited in Yüksel, 1997). The cognitive social learning model defines social skill as the ability to use cognitions and behaviors together (Ladd and Mize, 1983). In the light of this information, behavioral/cognitive social learning models and drama were used in the preparation and implementation process of the group work.

Group work helps develop people's democratic communication skills and sense of partnership to make sense of our postmodern world. The group environment provides social analysis, helping to reveal both individual insight and partnership awareness (McNicoll and Lindsay, 2002). Group work has many benefits as an alternative to individual counseling services. Working in groups offers participants more learning advantages and perspectives. Participants can experience the feeling of sharing and belonging and receive different feedback from other participants in the group. It also allows the participants with an opportunity to learn indirectly by observing or listening to other participants in the group and to practice their newly learned skills (Masson et al., 2014). Attitude changes occur in the individual in the group process and they gain insight in line with their individual needs (Hortaçsu, 1998).

This study aims to increase the social skills of university students, which is beyond determining the social skill levels of the students; it is also crucial by being experimental in terms of aiming to increase the social skills of the students with the group work to be done. This group work will be beneficial for university students to acquire the fundamental social skills necessary for social life and adapt to society in the best way possible. In addition, even though there is a limited number of studies on this subject, and it is expected that the study will contribute to the literature in this context, it is thought that it will be an example for group studies to be applied during university education.

Social abilities are socially accepted and learned behaviors of the individual that facilitate the person's interaction with other people. Considering social skills with these features, have a structure that individuals can use throughout their lives, increase their quality of life and reach their goals, create changes in personal and psychological well-being levels, with this study including 3rd-year students of Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Health Sciences social work department. It was aimed to determine the students' status and increase the group members' social skills by sharing knowledge and skills among university students with the group work method. The sub-objectives of the research with the group work are as follows:

- Increasing the academic success, social relations, and social adaptation of university students along with the social skills gained.
- They are enabling university students to express their feelings and thoughts verbally and non-verbally by supporting their social-emotional development and to be sensitive to the senses and opinions expressed by others.
- It improves the participants' skills to display assertive behaviors by overcoming communication, anger control, empathy, and shyness.
- They give social skills to the group members to use in their professional lives and increase their quality of life.

METHODS

Model of the Study

In this study, which is conducted for testing the effectiveness of the group work designed to increase the social skills of the university students by sharing knowledge and skills, the pre-test&post-test experimental design without a control group,

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one of the quantitative research methods, is used. In this group study without a control group, a personal information form and scale is used, and pre-test&post-test studies are performed for each scale. After the pre-test, a group study consisting of seven sessions lasting 45-minute and continues for seven weeks was established; whether the study achieved its purpose is tested with post-test analyses. In addition, the opinions and thoughts of the group members on the group process in the personal information form is tested with the descriptive analysis technique. This group work was carried out under the supervision of a supervisor by the researcher who was continuing her Ph.D. education in Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa Department of Social Work. The researcher has not previously published a study as group work.

Study Group

The study group of this research consists of 11 students studying in the 3rd year of Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Health Sciences, social work department in the spring semester of 2018-2019 academic year and voluntarily participated in the study. Preliminary interviews were held with the students, and each student was informed about the subject of the group work, and each participant volunteered to participate in the group work. Group work was designed as seven sessions. In addition, 11 students who participated in the group work process did not participate in any group work although they had taken the "Social Work with Groups" course at the university before.

Table 1: Socio-Demographical Characteristics of Group Members

Age	Gender	Living Place
21	Female	Homestay
21	Female	Homestay
20	Male	Student House
20	Female	Student House
30	Female	Student Dormitory
21	Female	Homestay
22	Female	Student House
20	Male	Homestay
22	Female	Homestay
22	Female	Student Dormitory
22	Male	Student House

Data Collection Tools

The data of this research were obtained from 11 students studying in the 3rd year of Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Health Sciences, social work department in 2019 and voluntarily participated in the study. The session was held in the graduate classroom of Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Health Sciences. In this study, "Personal Information Form" and "Social Skills Inventory" are used, which were practiced as evaluation forms before and after the group work organized by the researchers.

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The Personal Information Form consists of four questions containing information about the age, gender, residence, and opinions and thoughts of the group members involved in the group work process. The Personal Information Form was applied to the group members as a pre-group evaluation form at the beginning of the group work and as a post-group evaluation form to the group members at the end of the group process.

The Social Skills Inventory in the study was given to the experimental group as a pre-test before the applications and as a post-test after the applications. Social Skills Inventory (SSI) was developed by Riggio (1986-1989) as a measurement tool consisting of 90 items and six subscales. Subscales include; (1) emotional expressivity, (2) emotional sensitivity, (3) emotional control, (4) social expressivity, (5) social sensitivity, and (6) social control. Each subscale consists of 15 items. A five-point Likert-type answer key was prepared for the items in the inventory. The lowest score in the key is 1, and the highest score is 5. The scores of some items in the inventory were calculated by reversing its point. A person can get the lowest 90 and the highest 450 points from the whole inventory as a total score. A minimum of 15 and a maximum of 45 points can be obtained from each subscale (Riggio, 1986).

Data Analysis

The data obtained after the pre-test and post-test applications with the "Social Skills Inventory" were analyzed in the computer environment in the SPSS Statistics 22.0 statistical program.

A relational scanning pattern is a screening approach that aims to determine the existence of variation among more than one variable. In this context, whether the variables change together; if there is a change, it aims to determine how it happens (Büyükoztürk et al., 2014; Karasar, 2011). In this matter, to test whether the difference between the mean of two related samples was significantly different from zero, the parametric test, the paired sample t-test, was used to test whether there was a difference between the measurements. Statistical power and effect size of parametric tests are higher than non-parametric tests. In addition, parametric tests are more resistant to first and second-type errors (Kartal, 2010). For parametric tests to be used in research, the data used should be obtained from equally spaced scales, the data should have a normal distribution, and the measurement tools should be valid and reliable (Akgül, 2005). Furthermore, the units that make up the sample should be chosen impartially from the population, independent from each other, and the sample size should not be less than 10 (Ural and Kılıç, 2005). Moreover, according to Akdağ (2011), if the number of subjects is $n \geq 10$, the group should show a normal distribution to apply the parametric test. If the Skewness - Kurtosis (normal distribution of the data) values are between -1 and +1, it can be said that the scores show a normal distribution, and parametric tests can be used (Büyükoztürk, 2011; George and Mallery, 2016). As a result of the Shapiro Wilk normality test performed in the light of this information, it was seen that the data collected from the scale were normally distributed, and the skewness and kurtosis values were between -1 and +1, and the parametric test was applied in the analysis.

During the group work process, weekly sessions were reported with the group members' permission, and the observation was transferred to the Word environment by the group leader. In the group sessions held once a week for seven weeks and 45 minutes, the weekly reports of each member's developmental stage were read and analyzed, and the obtained data were tested with the descriptive analysis technique.

Information of Ethics on Research

Due to the ongoing process of amending the Ethics Committee Regulation and data being collected in 2019 during the research data collection, no application could be made for the Ethics Committee Permission. According to the statement made

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in TR Index, backdated ethics committee approval is not required when research data before 2020 is used. Participants were also not provided with an informed consent document. Within the scope of this research, the necessary information was given to the students before the research process started on the elements to be considered and ethical sensitivities. The researchers gave detailed information to the participants about the purpose of the research and what it would be used for. In addition, it was explained to the participants that the interviews made to make the participants feel safe would not be used for purposes other than the purpose of the research and that their information such as name and identity would be kept confidential.

PROCESS AND SESSIONS

Before starting the group work, the students were informed before the study, after the interview. The students who participated in the group were given enlightened consent about the group work, and a group participation agreement was made with the members. Group work was planned, and 7 separate sessions were held. The members' emotional, cognitive, and social situations were examined on the determined themes every week, and the observed changes were reported on a weekly basis.

The first session is the introductory session. In this session, the group's aims were explained, and the group members' basic rules were determined. In order to meet the group members, warm-up and increase their motivation, a meeting game and a warm-up activity were executed. After the meeting, the group members were asked how they felt when they came to the group, their expectations and why they wanted to join it. At the end of the activity, the session was summarised, and the session was evaluated. The Social Skills Inventory was distributed to the members as a pre-test, and they were asked to fill it out. The session was concluded by reminding the subject and time of the next session.

The second session was held under "building trust" to develop a sense of trust and cooperation among members. First, the concept of trust was discussed with the members, then the game of tumbler was played in accordance with the theme of the session. The feedback was received from the members at the end of the game. The session was ended after the importance of trust in interpersonal relations was mentioned.

The third session was held under the theme of "communication and self-expression". To understand the importance of using body language, realizing the role of body language in communication and expressing oneself, an activity was held with the members and received feedback from the members at the end of the action.

The fourth session had the theme of "empathy". In this session, to see their ability to recognize emotions and interpret other people's feelings, the members were asked to choose pictures of people with different facial expressions and interpret the images by empathizing with these pictures. The participants were asked to note which person and the situation they empathized with while continuing their daily lives as homework, and the session was ended.

The fifth session was held to recognize the feeling of anger over the theme of "anger control" and minimize its adverse effects on social relations. Pen and paper were distributed to the members, and they were asked to write on the front side of the paper what situations they felt angry about, and on the other side how they reacted to this situation. In addition, they were asked which object and colour they compared anger to, and the answers given were discussed. This session aimed to make the members aware of the irrational beliefs behind their anger experiences and change their behaviour by helping them replace them with alternative expressions.

In the sixth session, the theme of "saying no" was handled to provide the members with the ability to say no. Members were asked to talk about situations in which they could not say no, and they were asked to perform these situations with another volunteer member and try saying no. The techniques of saying no paper was written on the board and each member was asked to choose a method and recap the situation they had enacted. In this session, it was tried to draw attention to how

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the members' requests could say no to and emphasize that it is not functional to behave in this way.

In the last session, members were told that this session was the last. The topics and activities of the previous 6 sessions were reminded, and the members were asked to evaluate the process. It was asked whether the group work met their expectations. The members were asked to fill in the Social Skills Inventory post-test.

RESULTS

In this section, the findings of the research are given. 72.7% of the group members participating in the study were female, and 27.3% were male. The average age is 21.9. 45.5% of the students live with their families, 36.4% live in the student house, and 18.2% live in the student dormitory.

The contribution of the group work to the group members was examined and open-ended questions were asked to the members. Accordingly, all of the participants stated that the process was beneficial.

I did not like to express myself and my thoughts in public, but I saw that I overcame this situation and gained awareness in this group work. I realized that before I do or say something, I start to think and make decisions that way. (G.T.,20)

In the first session, I thought that I was insufficient in expressing myself, but for now, I think that I do not have such an inadequacy. (R.A.,22)

The group process was much fun. Being able to say no and anger management sessions contributed to me. I realized that some things have changed in my life. (B.T.,20)

However, I chose this group work with my own willingness. I like it because it is practical. I think I have gained awareness and group harmony is good. (Ö.G.,21)

Data analysis was performed using SPSS Statistics 22.0. For the test used, the type 1 error was taken as 0.05, and the interpretations were made at the 95% confidence level. When the data were examined, the small number of group participants revealed the ability to use non-parametric tests. However, the "Social Skills Inventory" data has been tested to see if it assumes normality.

Table 1. Normality Test for Scale Data

		Kolmogorov-Smirnova		Shapiro-Wilk	
		Calculated Sta.	p-value	Calculated Sta.	p-value
SSI	Pre-test	,142	,200*	,975	,929
	Post-test	,149	,200*	,946	,595

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As it is known, Shapiro – Wilk test is more potent than Kolmogorov – Smirnov when testing normality in small sample diameters. For this reason, the data were tested with Shapiro Wilk, and it was seen that all of them met the assumption of normality ($p>0.05$). The use of the Pre- and Post-Process T-Test of the relevant assumption is ensured and does not necessitate the use of a non-parametric Wilcoxon Sign test.

The difference between the Social Skills Inventory administered to the participants and the first and last session of the group work was examined. Related to this, the analysis findings are given in Table 1.

Table 2. Social Skill Inventory Experimental Group Pre test-Post test Points Difference

Groups	N	\bar{x}	ss	min	max	p
Pre-test	11	3,1455	,22898	2,88	3,53	0,015
Post-test	11	3,2929	,20544	2,99	3,56	

N: Amount of sample, \bar{x} : Averages of the measurements individually, ss: standard deviation

There is a difference between the Social Skills Inventory experimental group pre-test&post-test scores. According to the descriptive statistics at the end of the measurement, the lowest value in both measurements is 2,88, and the highest value is 3,56. The difference in scores between the pre-test and the post-test was determined as $p=0,015$. Accordingly, there was a significant difference ($p<0.05$). According to the scale rating, it was seen that the members were in the maximum level of social skills score range after the group work. This shows that the group work process affects the increase in social skills.

DISCUSSION

According to the findings of this study, in which the effect of social skills group work on students' social ability level was examined, it was observed that there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the university students who participated in the social skill group study. This shows that the group work process has a positive effect on the social skill level of university students. The group members' opinions about the group work process also support this. Most of the group members stated that they participated in group work with the aim and expectation of improving their social skills. At the end of the process, they received feedback that concluded they improved their social skills and coped with their problems.

The group members did not see themselves as part of the group in the first stages; however, as the process progressed, the members became more attached to each other and the group leader. The group work, animation, relaxation exercises, games, and activities were fascinating.

In the sessions, the members attempted to listen and learn, understand, make suggestions, and receive support. "Our group" expressions were frequently expressed; thus, this situation made us think that group consciousness and cohesion were formed. The participants reported that most of the group members coped with a problem they encountered after the group session by applying what they learned in the session. It was observed that there are positive changes in the communication, empathy, anger control, and saying no skills of the members, and their awareness of the periodic changes in themselves has increased. After this study, in this sense, it is inspected that the members benefited significantly from group work. As a result of group work, it is also observed that they gave each other more positive feedback while evaluating each other in terms of

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communication skills. In addition to the scores obtained from the scale in the group work, the members also verbally discussed the group's contributions at the end of the group. In addition to having group experience, the group manager also had the opportunity to develop communication and empathy skills and experienced awareness of existence in the group as a group member.

In a study executed by LeCroy (1982), it was found that there were positive changes in the social skills of young adolescents who received training to improve their social skills. As a result, social skills training helped change teenagers' problematic behaviors. In a study conducted by Bulkeley et al. (1990), it was found that due to the training applied to improve the social skills of young adolescents, the individuals in the experimental group got high scores, and the training was practical. In a study executed by Vaughn and Lancelotta (1990) with students who were less accepted/excluded, it is mentioned that significant and positive results were obtained from students in the experimental group as a result of the social skills training applied. When the studies made in Turkey are examined, it is seen that there is a limited number of studies on social abilities. In research by Yüksel (1997), the effect of social skills training given to university students on students' social skill levels was observed. As a result of the findings, it was found that social skills training had a positive effect on the social skill level of students in general. A study conducted by Uzamaz (2000) examined whether social skills training affected adolescents' level of interpersonal relationships. In conclusion, it was found that social skills training increased the level of interpersonal relationships. Kocayörük (2000), primary education II. investigated the effectiveness of the social skills training program given to secondary school students with two-week drama training. Creativity, rehearsal, feedback and reinforcement, games, and role-playing techniques were included in the program. As a result of the analysis, it was found that the program was effective in the development of students' social skills. Koçak (2001) determined that a 10-session coping with social anxiety program based on a cognitive-behavioral approach and social skills training was effective in reducing social anxiety of high school students. In the study of Uzamaz and Guçray (2004) with adolescents, it was understood that social skills training provided positive developments in the interpersonal relations of the students in the experimental group. According to a study conducted by Gülaçtı (2009) with teacher candidate university students, the social skill levels of the students who participated in the social skills training program were found to be higher than those who did not, and it was observed that this education affected the students' social skills levels.

Şimşek (2011) revealed that the 10-session social skills group guidance program is effective in reducing the social anxiety level of adolescents. Kabasakal and Çelik (2010) found that the social skills training given to the students was effective on the students' teacher preferred social behavior, peer preferred social behavior, and school adjustment and the experimental group differed significantly from the control group for these sub-dimensions. Tagay et al. (2010) found that social skills training given in their study had a significant effect on students' social skill levels and this effect was maintained in the long term. The result of the research by Mercan and Yavuzer (2017) shows that social skills training integrated with the cognitive-behavioral approach is an effective method in reducing the social anxiety levels of adolescents. As a result of the monitoring study, it is seen that the effectiveness of the program continues in the 6-weeks. In the study made by Cebeci et al. (2020), which also revealed the effect of group work on university students, it was discussed that some group members had a decrease in their anxiety and hopelessness levels. Lastly, in the study conducted by Karaman et al. (2020) with university students studying in the social work department, it was observed that there was a positive increase in the personal development skills of the group members.

Almost all of these studies were conducted to enable the individual to adapt to society, establish healthy communication, and develop social relations. It shows that social skills training contributes to individuals with these traits. These studies and the experimental studies seem to support each other naturally.

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CONCLUSION

Yüksel (1997) mentioned that social skills training carries great importance for individuals working in some occupational groups, especially in professions that are human-oriented, based on direct human relations, and providing consultancy services to improve family relations. He is also emphasized that social work graduates are among the professions that need training. This group study investigated the social skill levels of social work students; when the pre-test and post-test scores of the scales applied to the group members were evaluated, conclusions revealed the necessity of group work to increase students' social skills.

When group work, in general, was observed, the social skill levels of the students increased at the end of seven weeks. In this context, it is thought that the social skills training that will be applied to the students from the social work department will contribute to helping people by improving their interpersonal relationships. It can be said that sufficient researches have been done on the subject apart from Turkey. However, the studies on social skills training in our country are limited. It can be said that the group studies conducted will be beneficial for the professionals who will work in this field, along with the group members. This study will probably contribute to the active implementation of social skills group work and the acceleration of these studies, especially in universities where university students will graduate from a human-oriented and human relations-based profession such as the social work profession.

As a result of the research findings, the following suggestions were made for future studies to increase the social skills of university students:

Creating course contents that will enable students to become aware of themselves, such as social skills acquisition in university education programs, and to apply them within the scope of psychological counseling and guidance services of universities is recommended.

Organising some activities such as games, drama, free time, music, and art activities to ensure the continuity of the social skills acquired by university students throughout their education is recommended.

It would be beneficial to conduct re-sessions and follow-up studies so that the positive results of the group work to improve university students' social skills become permanent. Organizing parallel programs for educators to increase the effectiveness of social skills group work and make students' gains at the end of group work permanent is also recommended.

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