

## An Experimental Study towards Young Adults: Communication Skills Education

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### Abstract

*Problem Statement:* Located in each discipline, communication also bears a huge importance in the health sector. Communication with patients and relatives require more moderate and friendly because of their sensitive situation. Developing communication skills of students in health sciences will be able to communicate effectively with patients. In addition, this study is believed to students' relations will be strengthened with both team members in business life and other individuals in social life. For this reason, it has been considered that an andragogy-based communication skills education that will be organized for young adults would be useful as a guide for further studies.

*Purpose of the Study:* In this research, it has been examined if the communication skills education to be given to university students will have effect on the level of their ability of expressing their emotions and empathetic tendencies that have important role in communication skills of young adults.

*Method:* Experimental method has been utilized in this research. Pretest-posttest single-group pattern of this method constitutes of the model of research. The research has been carried out with 199 first-grader students from a university in autumn semester of 2012-2013 educational year. Empathetic tendency and emotional expression scales have been applied to the students, then an andragogy-based planned communication skills education constituting of 12 sessions has been given to them after a week,

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and then the same scales have been re-applied to them after 15 days from the completion of those sessions.

*Findings:* Both of empathetic tendencies and the levels of expressing the emotions of women and ones being able to establish efficient communication within the family have been found to be higher. A positive, medium-level and significant relationship has been observed between students' empathetic tendencies and levels of expressing their emotions. After the educations, both of the students' mean empathetic tendency scale scores and mean scores of emotional expression scale have shown statistically significant increase.

*Conclusion and Recommendations:* In this research, it has been concluded that the communication skill educations given to the students in order for them to be able to successfully adapt to the necessities and obligations of the life and to cope up with them efficiently have improved the functional communicational skills of young adults. In parallel with this result, in order to ensure healthier and stronger beginnings of work life after university, communication skills educations can be prepared for students in universities for personal development.

*Keywords:* Adult education, communication, empathetic tendency, emotional expression, university students

## Introduction

Communication is a dynamic process, and it is an ongoing activity that has no beginning or end (Samovar, Porter, McDaniel, & Roy, 2015). Nowadays, communication and education are two non-separable concepts. The main reason of that originates from that the unique way of fulfilling the objectives of education is to establish the connection (Deryakulu, 1992). That the adult learners differ from children has been accompanied by that the learning needs of this segment and the communication to be established with them in learning environment were different, and it also provided the literature with the concept "andragogy" that differs from classic pedagogic approach and contains a perspective differing in terms of philosophic foundations.

Issues such as rapidly developing world and environment, technological and innovative structuring, penetration of information and communication technologies into lives of people, sociocultural adaptation problems of adults, who are forced to live in different cities because of educational purposes or sociopolitical problems, and globalization increase the awareness of young adults in university towards communication. University life is a colorful period, in which the students socialize and develop themselves in terms of knowledge, culture and communication, rather than an environment, where the students continuously attend classes. The main skill, which will help young adult with coping up with certain responsibilities that they will face when living with many different peoples coming from different

environments and cultures and the differences that they face with in their university lives in terms of social and personal aspects, is the communication skill. Littlewood (1981) has emphasized that the development of their communication skill could be possible only when they have sufficient motivation and opportunities for expressing their identities and establishing communication with the people in environment. For this reason, the learning atmosphere providing the student with sense of confidence and giving value to the individual is important. Even if the teacher offers various stimulators, he/she has no direct control on students. The role of teacher should be to coordinate the activities in the way giving better communication skills to students (Littlewood, 1981).

Recognizing the psychology, physical structure and social-status senses of adults, namely recognizing the adults as a whole, will ensure the better figuration of educational activities that are crucial from individual and social aspects and the communications to be established in those educational activities. Within this context, communication is seen as one of the fundamental disciplines that the adult education is in close relationship with, and the functionality of the communicational skills for human is clearly understood. But, in literature research that has been made, it has been observed that the “adult education” and “communication in adult education” cases have been ignored in our country, and that the education events organized especially for adults were still exhibiting pedagogic character. For this reason, it has been considered that an andragogy-based communication skills education that will be organized for young adults would be useful as a guide for further studies. Moreover, it has been examined if the communication skills education to be given to the university students has effect on the level of their ability of expressing their emotions and empathetic tendencies that have important role in communication skills of young adults.

In recent years, the researches about high importance of communication skills have been carried out more frequently. Communication is a multifaceted concept within the many disciplines of interest. Located in each discipline, communication also bears a huge importance in the health sector. Services provided in hospitals is people-oriented. The effectiveness and quality of care is related to the ability with effective communicate skills. All these reasons require to establish proper communication. Health professionals spent most of their time contact with the patients and relatives. Communicate with patients and relatives require more moderate and friendly because of their sensitive situation. Therefore, it is expected that communication skills of health professionals must be effective. Communication skills are not only a personal flair, it has a great importance for including techniques that can be taught. Developing communication skills of students in health sciences will be able to communicate effectively with patients. In addition, this study is believed to students' relations will be strengthened with both team members in business life and other individuals in social life.

## Method

### *Research Design*

The experimental method has been used in this research. The single group pretest-posttest pattern of this method constitutes the model of the research. In single group pretest-posttest model, independent variable is applied to a group, and analyses are done before and after the application. If there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the group from pretest and posttest from assessment tools of the model, then it is accepted that the application is effective (Balci, 2004; Karasar, 2002).

### *Research Sample*

The study group of this research has been constituted from 214 first-grader health college students of a university in autumn semester of 2012-2013 educational year. But, because the ones not regularly attending the sessions and the lacking surveys have been excluded, 199 students have been involved in this research. Empathetic tendency and emotional expression scales have been applied to the students, then an andragogy-based planned communication skills education constituting of 12 sessions has been given to them after a week, and then the same scales have been re-applied to them after 15 days from the completion of those educations, and the difference has been statistically analyzed.

Before initiating the sessions, the students have been divided into 4 groups in order to execute interactive education. In sessions, the presentation of structured information about the communication skills, role playing based on the scenario and life about the skill, and giving homework about the skill have been involved. In first session, information about the communication skill education program, the progress of group, and attendance to the sessions has been shared, and the empathetic tendency and emotional expression scales have been applied to the students. In further sessions, the activities such as introduction in communication, greeting, being able to deliver the acceptance and respect, being able to use the language, being able to use the effective listening skill, being able to express the positive and negative feelings via "I" language, being able to realize the language of space and colors, being able to use the body language effectively and accurately in interpersonal relationships, to be able to empathize with others and empathetically response in "you" step, being able to control the anger, being able to realize the obstacles on communication, being able to have a constructive and cooperation-based attitude, being able to realize the main feelings in communication process and being able to express his/her own feelings accurately have been involved. In final session, the feelings about the group life have been shared, and the assessment of program has been executed together with students.

### *Research Instrument and Procedure*

In this research, personal information form, which consists of 10 questions and examines socio-demographic characteristics and intra-family relationships,

Empathetic Tendency Scale consisting of 20 questions, and Emotional Expression Scale consisting of 15 questions have been utilized.

*Empathetic Tendency Scale* has been developed by Dokmen (1988) in order to measure the individuals' potential to develop empathy in their daily lives. Dokmen (1988) has developed empathetic tendency scale from the theoretical foundation of his "Hierarchic Empathy Order Model". A Likert-type scale has been prepared, and almost half of empathetic tendency scale questions consisting of 20 items have been written in negative form in order to balance the tendency to say "yes". In scale, there are degrees from 1 to 5 next to every item. Individuals express to what extent they agree with that item by marking one of the numbers from 1 to 5.

*Emotional Expression Scale* has been developed by King and Emmons (1990) and adapted into Turkish by researcher. It is utilized in order to measure the general emotional expressions. The items of scale consisting of 16 items and being based on Likert-type rating are about the tendency to express the emotions involving positive, negative and closeness. The scale provides information about emotional expressions in interpersonal relationships and those independent from interpersonal relationships. The scale has been rationally structured in the way based on real expression behaviors. The items have been written in the way containing both of positive and negative emotions. The items are answered between 1 and 7. 1 indicates that the person does not agree with the item at all, while 7 indicates that the person completely agrees with the item. High scores in Emotional Expression Scale indicate that our emotional expression tendency is high.

#### *Validity and Reliability*

Empathetic Tendency Scale has been applied to the group of 70 university students twice with 3 weeks interval, and the correlation between the scores obtained from both of them, test's repetition reliability coefficient, has been found to be .82. The correlation between the scores obtained from odd- and even-number items of the scale has been found to be .86. By Dokmen, the "Sub-Scale of Understanding the Emotions" of Edwards Personal Preference Scale and the Empathetic Tendency Scale have been applied to a group of 24 persons, and the correlation between the scale scores has been found to be .68 (Dokmen, 1988).

The lowest correlation between the items of original Emotional Expression Scale has been found to be .06, while the mean correlation has been found to be .18. The highest one has been calculated to be .59. Mean value of the scale scores has been found to be 4.6 (in 7-point Likert), the standard deviation to be .76, and alpha reliability coefficient to be .78.

#### *Data Analysis*

The data analysis has been carried out via IBM SPSS 21.0 package software. Before the statistical analyses, the competence of the scores obtained from empathetic tendency and emotional expression scales to normal distribution has been determined via Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk Tests. As a result of performed analyses, it has been seen that the scores had normal distribution. For this

reason, parametric tests have been used in statistical analyses. Student's t-test has been used for comparing the means of two samples and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) has been used to test differences between two or more means.

## Results

89.9% of 199 students having mean age of  $19.47 \pm 1.66$  are female. Academic average of the students is  $2.61 \pm 1.16$ . When the educational status of their families is examined, it is seen that majority of parents were graduated from elementary school (69.3% of mothers and 55.3% of fathers). Of the students, 84.4% have stated that they had nuclear family, and 84.9% have stated that his/her opinion is asked when a decision is being made within the family. In Table 1, it is represented if the scores of students from empathetic tendency and emotional expression scales vary depending on certain variables.

**Table 1.**

*Assessment of Students' Scores from Empathetic Tendency and Emotional Expression Scales by Gender and Family Relations*

Scales	N	$\bar{x} \pm S$	d.f	t	P	
Gender						
Female	173	72,96±8,70	197	4,711	,000	
Male	26	67,38±9,49				
Empathetic Tendency Scale	Is your opinion asked when a decision is made within the family?					
	Yes	169	72,84±8,85	197	2,27	,024
	No	30	68,83±9,10			
	Can you discuss your problems with your family members?					
	Yes	181	72,66±8,93	197	2,172	,031
	No	18	67,88±8,60			
How is your relationship with people in generally?						
Good	187	72,79±8,79	197	3,539	,001	
Bad	12	63,58±7,64				
Emotional Expression Scale	Gender					
	Female	173	74,73±12,78	197	3,011	,003
	Male	26	61,84±14,47			
	Is your opinion asked when a decision is made within the family?					
	Yes	169	74,22±12,47	197	2,91	,004
	No	30	66,46±18,03			
Can you discuss your problems with your family members?						
Yes	181	73,66±12,97	197	2,019	,045	
No	18	66,88±18,87				
How is your relationship with people in generally?						
Good	187	73,82±12,83	197	3,197	,002	
Bad	12	61,08±20,56				

The students' empathetic tendency and level of emotional expression vary between the genders significantly [ $t_{(197)}=4.71$ ,  $p<.01$ ;  $t_{(197)}=3.01$ ,  $p<.01$ ]. Both of women's empathetic tendency and emotional expression levels are more positive than those of men. The students' empathetic tendency and level of emotional expression significantly vary depending on if their opinion is asked when a decision is made within the family [ $t_{(197)}=2.27$ ,  $p<.05$ ;  $t_{(197)}=2.91$ ,  $p<.01$ ]. Both of the empathetic tendency and the emotional expression levels of students stating that their opinion is asked when a decision is made within the family have been found to be higher. A statistically significant difference has been found between the empathetic tendency and emotional expression levels of students and their opportunity to discuss with their families about the problems of students [ $t_{(197)}=2.17$ ,  $p<.05$ ;  $t_{(197)}=2.02$ ,  $p<.05$ ]. Both of the empathetic tendency and the emotional expression levels of students stating that they can discuss their problems with their families have been found to be more positive. A statistically significant difference has been found between the empathetic tendency and emotional expression levels of students and general goodness of interpersonal relationships [ $t_{(197)}=3.54$ ,  $p<.01$ ;  $t_{(197)}=3.20$ ,  $p<.01$ ]. Both of the empathetic tendency and the emotional expression levels of students stating that their relationship with people is generally good has been found to be higher.

The representation of students' emotional expression levels by the region they live in is given in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

*Assessment of Students' Emotional Expression Levels by Regions*

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	P
<b>Between Groups</b>	4906,651	6	817,775	4,876	,000
<b>Within Groups</b>	32201,740	192	167,717		
<b>Total</b>	37108,392	198			

Analysis results indicate that there is a significant difference between the regions in terms of the students' emotional expression levels [ $F_{(6-192)}=4.88$ ,  $p<.01$ ]. According to the results of LSD test performed in order to determine between which groups the interregional differences are; it has been determined that the emotional expression levels of students living in Marmara ( $\bar{X}=79.60$ ), Aegean ( $\bar{X}=74.21$ ), Mediterranean ( $\bar{X}=73.07$ ), Black Sea ( $\bar{X}=72.61$ ) and Central Anatolia ( $\bar{X}=74.18$ ) regions were more positive than that of students living in Eastern Anatolia ( $\bar{X}=60.40$ ) and Southeastern Anatolia ( $\bar{X}=65.52$ ).

The analysis printout of the calculation of relationship between Emotional Expression Scale and Empathetic Tendency Scale is presented in Table 3.

Table 3.

*Correlation between Emotional Expression and Empathetic Tendency Scales*

		Emotional Expression Scale	Empathetic Tendency Scale
Emotional Expression Scale	Pearson	1	.391
	P		.000
	N	199	199

In Table 3, it can be seen that there is a medium-level, positive and significant relationship between the students' emotional expression levels and empathetic tendency levels ( $r=0.391$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Accordingly, it can be stated that the more emotional expression skill the students have, the more empathetic tendency they have.

The results of t-test performed in order to determine the significance of the difference between pretest and posttest mean scores of Empathetic Tendency Scale and Emotional Expression Scale are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.

*t-test Results of Mean Scores of Empathetic Tendency Scale and Emotional Expression Scale*

Empathetic Tendency Scale	N	$\bar{x}\pm S$	d.f	t	P
Pretest	199	72,23±8,98	198	9,470	,000
Posttest	199	78,68±6,79			

  

Emotional Expression Scale	N	$\bar{x}\pm S$	d.f	t	P
Pretest	199	73,05±13,69	198	9,804	,000
Posttest	199	82,47±7,19			

The mean score of students from Empathetic Tendency Scale before the education increased from  $72.23\pm 8.98$  to  $78.68\pm 6.79$  after it [ $t_{(198)}=-9,470$ ,  $p<0.001$ ]. The mean score of Emotional Expression Scale increased from  $73.05\pm 13.69$  to  $82.47\pm 7.19$  [ $t_{(198)}=-9,804$ ,  $p<0.001$ ]. This result indicates that the education given was effective. Moreover, of the students, 91% have stated that the education given has contributed to their interpersonal relations positively, and 94% have stated that they have carried the concepts such as body language, empathy, and I language into effect in their daily lives.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Gender is about to live the emotions. In our study, it has been observed that both of empathetic tendency and emotional expression levels of women are more positive than men. Researches have shown that there are differences between the genders in terms of limiting the emotions, and that men limit their emotions more than women (King & Emmons, 1990; Polce-Lynch, Myers, Kilmartin, Forsmann-Falck, & Kliever 1998). Women are more successful in self-expression, establishing communication, and recognizing various stimulators, and this fact shows itself from the babyhood. Girls start to speak earlier than boys. Moreover, it has been shown in researches that



girls learn how to read and write in school earlier than boys, and girls are more successful in learning foreign language. Moreover, in a study on empathy, the photographs showing different moods such as happiness, sadness, loathing, and being scared have been shown to women and men, and the subjects have been asked to state the emotion that has been represented in photo. While every subject has accurately identify the expressions in photos, it has been observed in functional magnetic resonance imaging that limbic regions of men, which is the emotion center of the brain, were not active while identifying the emotion, and that the women have felt a little sadness and their limbic regions were active while stating that the expression in photo is sadness, therefore they could establish direct empathy with the person in photo (Karaismailoglu, 2015). Emotional expressions may be a function of the gender roles that are culturally expected.

Empathy has become a concept, of which importance is gradually increasing nowadays. Empathy is the ability to be sensitive to and communicate understanding feelings of people (Arnolds & Boggs, 2015). Rogers (1970) has defined the empathy as the process of putting oneself into the place of other and seeing the events from his/her eyes, feeling and understanding the emotions and opinions of other person accurately and reporting that situation to him/her. The foundation of empathy, which makes people feel that they are understood and given importance within the society, is laid firstly in family environment (Eisenberg, 1982). Also in our study, it has been found that the empathetic tendency levels of the students stating that their opinions are asked when a decision is made within the family and that they can easily discuss their problem with their family were higher. Moreover, the quality of communication of adolescents, who developed close relations with their parents and gained recognition, significantly affects their relations that they establish in their social lives (Updegraff, Madden-Dertrich, Estrada, Sales, & Leonard, 2002).

In our study, the emotional expression levels of students having good intra-family relations were found to be higher. In performed studies, it has been determined that sharing the emotions are effective on arranging the social interactions (Keltner & Haidt, 1999) and development and continuance of close relationship by increasing the recognition of the person by others (Collins & Miller, 1994). Individuals who can feel valued and communicate effectively in the family they can be happier. In addition, it is taught to these individuals can get more satisfaction from doing something and realize themselves and expressing their feelings more comfortable.

In Turkey seems to be different family structures due to economic, social, cultural and regional differences. Due to these differences in family structure, there are also noteworthy differences that family relationships and child rearing attitudes. In a country-wide research carried out by Family Investigation Institution (1995), it has been determined that as the number of children increased, and the educational status of mother decreased, and in underdeveloped regions, the perspective that the child should not be given the right to speak and being strict is necessary for children discipline strengthens. In other studies carried out in our country, it has been observed that children in Eastern and Southeastern areas had less voice than children in other areas (Family Investigation Institution, 1995), that the children in lower socio-economic levels think they are loved by their parents less and punished by

them more (Guneysu, 1982), and, as the educational status of mother decreases, they apply more pressure on their children and exhibit stricter attitude in intra-family relations (Sendogdu, 2000). In our study, the emotional expression levels of students living in Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia have been found to be lower than that of students living in other regions. This situation can be explained with that socio-cultural factors are closely related with low educational status and life-style of the society, and child-raising perspective and methods.

Blatt and Carolyn (1993) have examined how the students recognize the communication skills that teachers utilize. At the end of research, the empathy level teachers respecting the students and their level of supporting students have been found to be higher. In that research, it has been stated that empathy constitutes the foundation of interpersonal relations. In our study, it can be seen that there is a medium-level, positive and significant relationship between students' emotional expression levels and empathetic tendency levels. Accordingly, it can be said that, as the emotional expression skill increases, then the empathetic tendency establishment skill also increases. In an experimental study of Nerdrum (1997) carried out in order to determine the long-term efficiency of communication skill educations, it has been revealed that the empathetic skills of the group receiving communication education were better and getting much better as the time passes. In another research, a group of medical school students have been given communication education, while control group has not been given any communication education. At the end of research, it has been found that the communication skills of the individuals that have received communication skill education were higher than individuals that have not (Barry, Robb, & Graham, 1992). Researchers have asserted that interpersonal skills could be part of the entire health training programs (Alofisan, Al-Alaiyan, Al-Abdulsalam, Siddiqui, Hussain, & Al-Qahtani, 2016). In our study, it has been determined that the communication skill education given had positive effects on interpersonal communication levels of the students.

Adulthood is generally accepted as maturity period. According to Allport (1970), one of the qualifications of the mature character is to be able to establish warm connections in both of close and general relationships with others. At the end of study, it can be concluded that the communication skill education given to students in order for them to be able to adapt successfully to the necessities and obligations of the live ad to be able to cope up with them effectively has increased the functional communication skills of the young adults. In parallel with the findings obtained from the research, some suggestions can be offered. University is an environment that is suitable for individuals to culturally and socially develop themselves. Students getting into the university will have to establish social relations with other individuals regardless of their department or future branch. In order to ensure the healthier beginning of professional lives of these individuals after the university, communication skill programs can be prepared in universities for personal development purpose. In order to assess the education program developed by the researcher, comparative researches can be carried out on students studying in deferent department or on young adults that are not attending the university education. The long-term effects of positive improvement observed in students participating into the education can be examined. While selecting the optional courses in universities, the courses providing communication skills can be included.

The communication skill levels of instructors, who should be a model for university student from all aspects, can be analyzed. The individuals, who can establish successful communications and hence have healthy interpersonal relationships and who have gained problem-solving skill, are thought to be better parents. In order to meet this condition of a healthy society, conferences on communication skills can be organized for public, and social support can be received from the media.

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## Genç Yetişkinlere Yönelik Deneysel Bir Çalışma: İletişim Becerileri Eğitimi

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### Özet

*Problem Durumu:* Üniversite yaşamı, gencin sadece derslere girip çıktığı bir ortamdan ziyade sosyalleştiği, bilgi, kültür ve iletişim bakımından kendini geliştirdiği son derece renkli bir dönemdir. Genç yetişkinlerin üniversite yaşamlarında farklı çevre ve kültürlerden gelen pek çok insanla bir arada yaşarken kişisel, kültürel ve sosyal güçlüklerle başa çıkabilmelerinde yardımcı olacak temel beceri, etkili iletişim

becerileridir. Ayrıca, teknolojik gelişmelerin artan hızı, insanların yaşam biçimlerini ve kişilerarası ilişkilerini de derinden etkilemektedir. Bu nedenle nitelikli insan gücünün yetiştirilmesi için eğitim ve iletişim olanaklarının genişletilmesi, bütün dünyanın üzerinde özenle durduğu temel konulardan biri haline gelmiştir. Yetişkinlere verilecek eğitimlerde yetişkinlerin psikolojileri, fizyolojik yapıları ve sosyal statü anlayışları ile birlikte yetişkini bir bütün olarak tanımak kadar kurulacak iletişimin de iyi desenlenmesi çok önemlidir. Son yıllarda çalışma yaşamında iletişim becerilerinin çok önemli olduğuna ilişkin araştırmalara daha fazla rastlanmaya başlamıştır. Her disiplinde yer alan iletişim, sağlık sektöründe de çok büyük bir önem taşımaktadır. Hastalarla ve hasta yakınlarıyla kurulan iletişim, hastanın hassas durumu nedeniyle daha ılımlı ve samimi bir iletişimi gerektirir. Bu nedenle de sağlık çalışanlarının iletişim becerilerinin etkili olması beklenir. Bu çalışma ile sağlık yüksekokulunda öğrenim gören öğrencilerin iletişim becerilerinin geliştirilmesi sayesinde öğrencilerin hastalarla etkili iletişim kurabilecekleri düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca, etkili iletişim becerileri eğitimi ile öğrencilerin hem iş yaşamlarında ekip üyeleriyle hem de sosyal yaşamdaki diğer bireylerle ilişkileri güçlenebilecektir. Ayrıca, yapılan literatür çalışmasında özellikle ülkemizde “yetişkin eğitimi” ve “yetişkin eğitiminde iletişim” olgularının göz ardı edildiği, özellikle yetişkinlere yönelik düzenlenen eğitim etkinliklerinin halen pedagojik bir nitelik gösterdiği gözlemlenmiştir. Bu nedenle, genç yetişkinlere verilecek andragojik temelli bir iletişim becerileri eğitimi araştırmasının daha sonraki yapılacak çalışmalar açısından yol gösterici olması bakımından yararlı olacağı düşünülmüştür.

*Araştırmanın Amacı:* Araştırmada üniversite öğrencilerine verilecek iletişim becerileri eğitiminin öğrencilerin iletişim becerilerinde önemli rolü olan empatik eğilim ve duyguları ifade etme düzeylerine etkisinin olup olmadığı incelenmiştir.

*Araştırmanın Yöntemi:* Araştırmada deneysel yöntem kullanılmıştır. Bu yöntemin, ön test-son test tek gruplu deseni araştırmanın modelini oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu 2012-2013 eğitim-öğretim yılı güz yarıyılında bir üniversitenin birinci sınıfında öğrenim gören 214 sağlık yüksekokulu öğrencisi oluşturmaktadır. Ancak oturumlara düzenli katılmayan ve eksik bırakılan anketlerin araştırma kapsamından çıkarılması nedeniyle 199 öğrenci araştırmaya dahil edilmiştir. Öğrencilere empatik eğilim ve duyguları ifade ölçekleri uygulanmış, bir hafta sonra 12 oturumdan oluşan andragojik temelli planlı bir iletişim becerileri eğitimi verilmiştir. İlk oturumda iletişim beceri eğitimi programı, grubun işleyişi ve oturumlara devam konusunda bilgilendirme yapılmış ve öğrencilere empatik eğilim ve duyguları ifade ölçekleri uygulanmıştır. Sonraki oturumlarda ise; iletişimde temel kavramlar, iletişimin öğeleri, etkin dinleme becerisini kullanabilme, olumlu ve olumsuz duyguları ben dili ile ifade edebilme, mekan ve renklerin dilinin farkına varabilme, kişilerarası ilişkilerde beden dilini doğru ve etkili kullanabilme, başkalarıyla empati kurabilme ve sen basamağında empatik tepki verebilme, öfkeyi kontrol edebilme, iletişim engellerinin farkına varabilme, yapıcı ve işbirliğine dayalı tutum sergileyebilme, iletişim sürecinde temel duyguları fark edebilme ve kendi duygularını doğru bir şekilde ifade edebilme gibi etkinliklere yer verilmiştir. Son oturumda da grup yaşantısı ile ilgili duygular paylaşılmış, öğrencilerle birlikte programın değerlendirilmesi yapılmıştır. Eğitimlerin tamamlanmasından 15 gün sonra aynı ölçekler tekrar uygulanmış ve aralarındaki fark istatistiksel açıdan değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırmada verilerin analizi IBM SPSS 21.0 paket programı

kullanılarak yapılmıştır. İstatistiksel analizler yapılırken parametrik testler kullanılmıştır.

*Araştırmanın Bulguları:* Yaş ortalamaları  $19,47 \pm 1,66$  olan 199 öğrencinin akademik ortalamaları  $2,61 \pm 1,16'$  dir. Ailelerinin öğrenim düzeyleri incelendiğinde öğrencilerin anne ve babalarının büyük çoğunluğunun ilköğretim mezunu (annelerinin % 69,3'ü, babalarının ise %55,3'ü) olduğu görülmektedir. Öğrencilerin %84,4'ü çekirdek aile yapısına sahip olduklarını, % 84,9'u aile içerisinde herhangi bir karar alınacağı zaman kendi fikirlerinin de alındığını ifade etmişlerdir. Öğrencilerin empatik eğilim ve duyguları ifade etme düzeyleri incelendiğinde kadınların hem empatik eğilim, hem de duyguları ifade etme düzeyleri erkeklere göre daha olumludur ( $p < .01$ ). Aile içerisinde etkili iletişim kurabilen öğrencilerin hem empatik eğilim, hem de duyguları ifade etme düzeyleri daha yüksek bulunmuştur ( $p < .05$ ). Doğu ve Güneydoğu bölgelerinde yaşayan öğrencilerin duygularını ifade etme düzeyleri diğer bölgelerde yaşayan öğrencilere göre daha düşük çıkmıştır ( $p < .01$ ). Öğrencilerin duyguları ifade etme düzeyleri ile empatik eğilim düzeyleri arasında orta düzeyde, pozitif ve anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu görülmektedir ( $r = 0.391$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Eğitimlerden sonra öğrencilerin hem empatik eğilim ölçeği puan ortalamaları hem de duyguları ifade ölçeği puan ortalamalarında istatistiksel olarak bir artış gözlenmiştir. Eğitimlerden sonra öğrencilerin empatik eğilim ölçeği puan ortalamaları  $72,23 \pm 8,98'$  den,  $78,68 \pm 6,79'a$  [ $t_{(198)} = -9,470$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ]; duyguları ifade ölçeği puan ortalamaları ise  $73,05 \pm 13,69'$  dan,  $82,47 \pm 7,19'a$  [ $t_{(198)} = -9,804$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ] yükselmiştir.

*Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri:* Araştırmada, öğrencilerin hem sosyal hem de mesleki hayatlarında kişilerarası ilişkilerinde daha rahat etmeleri ve karşılaştıkları sorunlarla etkin bir biçimde başa çıkabilmeleri amacıyla öğrencilere verilen iletişim becerileri eğitimi programının, genç yetişkinlerin işlevsel iletişim becerilerini artırdığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Araştırmadan elde edilen bu sonuç doğrultusunda şu öneriler getirilebilir: Üniversite, bireylerin kendilerini kültürel ve soysal anlamda geliştirmeleri için uygun bir ortamdır. Üniversiteye giren öğrenciler, okudukları bölüm ne olursa olsun, yapacakları iş ne olursa olsun diğer bireylerle sosyal ilişkiler kurmak zorunda kalacaklardır. Bu bireylerin üniversite sonrası hayata atılmalarının daha sağlıklı ve sağlam olmasını sağlamak için üniversitelerde kişisel gelişim adına iletişim becerileri programları hazırlanabilir. Araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan eğitim programını değerlendirmek adına farklı bölümlerde öğrenim gören öğrencilere yönelik karşılaştırmalı araştırmalar yapılabilir. İyi iletişim kurabilen ve böylece kişilerarası ilişkileri sağlıklı ve problem çözme becerisini bu anlamda kazanabilmiş bireylerin daha iyi ebeveynler olacakları düşünülür. Sağlıklı bir toplum için gerekli olan bu koşulun sağlanabilmesi için halka yönelik iletişim becerileri konusunda konferanslar düzenlenebilir, medyadan da bu konuda sosyal destek alınabilir.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* yetişkin eğitimi, iletişim, empatik eğilim, duyguları ifade etme, üniversite öğrencileri