



THE EFFECTS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION TRAINING PROGRAMME ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

In this research, the effect of conflict resolution training program on university students' conflict resolution skills was examined. To form the experiment and control groups, "Conflict Resolution Behavior Determination Scale" was applied to 135 students who are studying at European University of Lefke, Guidance and Psychological Counselling Department and those who got the highest score were selected. The research was conducted with 31 students which 16 of them were in experiment and 15 of them were in control group. The pretest-posttest design with control group was used in the research. Conflict Resolution Behavior Determination Scale which was adapted by Koruklu (1998) was used to gather data. This scale is a self-assessment scale and its application time is approximately 20 minutes. Conflict resolution training was given to 16 students in the experiment group but nothing was done for the students in control group. This training had 9 sessions and each session lasted almost 50 minutes. "t-test" and "two way analysis of variance for repeated measures" were used for the meaning of the difference between groups' points in data analysis. After 1 week completing the conflict resolution training which was given to the experimental group, "Conflict Resolution Behavior Determination Scale" was applied to both groups as posttest. The results showed that the program was effective and the students' who are in control group conflict resolution skills rose as constructive reaction. Findings were discussed in consideration of information in literature.

Key words: conflict resolution, conflict resolution training program, group guidance

Introduction

Conflict is not an action which is only for human. All living creatures prefer to spend time with others in order to continue their lives. Because of being a social living creature, humans have conflict as a result of tensions which happen from having relation and interacting with others. It is generally seen that conflicts happen when people's needs, impulses and requests are contrary to each other. In some conflict situations, perceptions of people who are in conflict are different from each other so their discourses and behaviors differ from each other. These different point of views sometimes cause conflicts. While conflicts happen in social environments, they may happen among students too. Additionally there may be conflicts between student and teacher, teacher and teacher, teacher and parent, and teacher-director (Türnüklü, 2002).

In a school, each student has different skills, interest, value, personality, and socio-cultural features. These students who have different features have to spend their time together in school environment. While these features of students cause the emergence of different thoughts, they may cause to have conflict with each other. For this reason a significant portion of time and energy which should be spent for education, is spent for conflict which happens between students (Glasser, 1990).

Conflict is the unavoidable fact of the organizational life (Okotoni, 2003). Conflict may happen because of scarce resources' sharing, division of labor, different position, aim, value, and perception among labor (Şimşek, Akgemici and Çelik, 2001). Training director should see the conflicts happen in education organizations as a resource of constructive and creative movement instead of destroying, ignoring, and accepting that there is no conflict. Factors like communication problems, organizational



structure, personality, and human factors or limited resources in schools may cause conflict (Mirzeoğlu, 2005).

Since the conflicts are inevitable in daily life, it is important to show constructive reactions to the conflicts, because students show different reactions to the conflicts they have. Therefore constructive conflict resolution approach can be provided with only understanding the nature of the conflict and learning conflict resolution principles and stages. It can be said that the conflict and disagreement are directed mainly in 2 ways when they reflect to the adults from the students. First of them is the effect, intervention, pressure and supervision which are directed by an adult (teacher, principal or parent) about the problem students have. The other way is the effect, intervention, and self-supervision which are directed by the student himself or herself about the problem. Primarily these approaches can simply be classified as discipline (teacher-centered) and self-discipline (student-centered) (Johnson ve Johnson,1992).

Using traditional methods based on punishment and reward for resolution of conflicts happen among students is not enough to provide a systematic and peaceful environment at school. Therefore help should be given to the students to develop their skills which are necessary for solving their conflicts constructively before turning into violence for an effective school environment. Moreover these skills which are necessary for life, is going to provide students opportunities to focus on learning (Öner, 2000).

Effective learning can be provided in a safe and disciplined school environment. In order to provide this environment, there should be mutual communication to prevent behaviors including violence and vandalism, to educate students who are self-supervision and can take responsibility, to improve the quality of the relationships in the school. A safe school environment can be provided by conflict resolution training programs which include empathy, unconditional acceptance and mutual respect (Lane veWhirter, 1992).

The Aim of the Research

The aim of this research is to present if the conflict resolution training program which was applied to first grade Guidance and Psychological Counselling students is effective on solving their conflicts by using constructive conflict resolution methods instead of using destructive resolution method.

Method

In this chapter, information about research design, study group, data gathering tool, general purpose of conflict resolution training program and data analysis is given.

Research Design

In this research, pretest-posttest experimental design with control group was used to test the effect of Conflict Resolution Training Program on first grade university students' conflict resolution skills. Groups and transactions in research design were given in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Design

Groups	Pre-test(CRBDS)	Transaction	Post-test(CRBDS)
Experimental Group	X	CRTP 9 Weeks	X
Control Group	X	X

X: Conflict Resolution Behavior Determination Scale(CRBDS)

CRTP: Conflict Resolution Training Program

.....:No Transaction



In order to examine the effect of conflict resolution training program which intend to bring students to positive conflict resolution skills, randomly determined experimental and control groups were formed. As it is seen in Table 1, conflict resolution training program was applied to experimental group during 9 weeks but there had not been any action to the control group. Before and after the training program, the conflict resolution behaviours of experimental and control groups were measured by Conflict Resolution Behavior Determination Scale (CRBDS).

In order to determine whether the experimental transaction is effective, whether the difference between the average points which are attained from the difference points T test and two way analysis of variance for repeated measures (split plot) (Büyüköztürk, 2001) were used. After 1 week completing the conflict resolution training which was given to the experimental group, “Conflict Resolution Behavior Determination Scale” was applied to both groups as posttest.

This design provides direct control in the procedure of random group forming and also provides measuring the procedure’s effect more sensitively by using the subjects’ point differences between pre-test and post-test in evaluating the effect of the experimental procedure.

Study group

The study group of the research is 135 students who were studying at Guidance and Psychological Counselling department at European University of Lefke Education Faculty in 2012-2013 school year and applied conflict resolution scale.

From 135 students who were chose as conflict behavior oriented, experimental group of 16 people and control group of 15 people were formed randomly from 31 students with the ones who got the highest score and who wanted to join the study voluntary. The experimental group of 16 students was formed with 8 boys and 8 girls and the control group of 15 students was formed with 8 boys and 7 girls.

Data Collection Tools

As data collection tools “Conflict Resolution Behavior Determination Scale” adapted by Koruklu (1998) was used in the research. This scale is a self-evaluation scale and the application time is 20 minutes. CRBDS consists of 24 items and has 5 point Likert type assessment option. The scale is graded on certain rating ranging from 1-5. In terms of conflict resolution behavior (1) stands for “never appropriate”, (2) stands for “quite appropriate”, (3) stands for “appropriate”, (4) stands for “mostly appropriate” and (5) stands for “very appropriate”.

It was asked from the respondents to state what degree the conflict situation in each item is appropriate by using 5 Likert grading. For the validity of CRBDS, the scope and structure validity was examined. The experts’, who works at European University of Lefke, Guidance and Psychological Counselling Department, opinions were asked for the scope validity. For the scale’s structure validity, the factor analysis was examined and KMO value of KMO and Bartlett’s Test was found as 0,600. $P < 0,000$ because the difference is significant, the sample number is enough for factor analysis.

When the Scree Plot had been examined, it was seen that the scale tend to be 3 dimensional. When the rotated matrix had been examined, the third, fourth, eleventh and seventeenth questions were seen as comorbid so they were removed from the scale. Factor loadings were determined by the result of Rotated Component Matrix.

The lowest loading value is 430 and the highest loading value is 763 in factor 1. In factor 2, the lowest loading value is 811 and the highest loading value is 888. The lowest loading value of factor 3 is 440



and the highest loading value is 834. Each item's own factors and given loading values are examined as over 40.

The reliability of CRBDS was examined by test-retest method. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of factor 1 was found as 0, 86, 0,913 for factor 2 and 0, 84 for factor 3. The general institution and reliability co-efficient of the scale was found as 0, 84. These results show that reliability of the scale is enough to use in the research.

Data Collection

Before and after the training program, the conflict resolution behaviours of experimental and control groups were measured by Conflict Resolution Behaviour Determination Scale (CRBDS). After 1 week completing the conflict resolution training which was given to the experimental group, "Conflict Resolution Behaviour Determination Scale" was applied to both groups as post-test.

Data was collected in fall semester of 2012-2013 school year as it is explained above. CRBS was applied to 135 students. The information about the goal of the research was given, and it had been said to the students that they are free to join the research or not and assurance was given them that the collected data will not be used for purposes other than research. Reassuring environment was tried to be provided.

Procedure

The experimental group attended 50 minutes duration, 9 sessions conflict resolution training program adapted by Koruklu (1998) once a week. The students from the experimental group attended the program voluntary.

The goal of the program is providing information about conflict resolution behaviour, to gain communication skills and learning the steps of conflict resolution.

The general goals and objectives of the program are as below;

1. Providing students to learn what the conflict concept is.
2. Helping students to realize that conflict is a natural part of the life which is found in the core of the life.
3. Helping students to realize the conflicts they have and the behaviour of conflict resolution. And to give positive insight about conflict resolution.
4. Helping students to have information about constructive and destructive conflict resolution behaviours.
5. Providing students an opportunity to benefit from their communication skills in conflict resolution.

At the first session of the program, students have been met and the goals, objectives, and rules of the group were explained generally. The rules such as privacy, no arguments or fight, listening to each one were talked. Members were encouraged to share their some characteristics. At the second session, it is provided to understand the importance of the conflict in our lives and to see the conflict resolution behaviours and the effects of these behaviours on conflict. At the third session, the emphasize was on what are the factors which block communication between people and cause conflicts and the difference between you language and me language and gaining skills for using me language.

At the fourth session, it is provided for students to understand the active listening skill and to realize the importance of this skill on the relationship between people and conflict resolution. The goal of the fifth session was to ensure understanding the emphatic thinking and the body language and its importance on relationship between people and conflict resolution. At the sixth session, help was



given to the students about understanding the importance of recognizing and expressing the feelings, distinguishing the feelings from the thoughts and acting consciously by being aware of thoughts on relationship between people and conflict resolution. The purpose of the seventh session was; understanding the first step of the conflict resolution procedure. At the eighth session, the understanding of that the anger is a normal feeling the conflict resolution procedure and how to cope with this feeling without using violence were provided for students. The summary of the all learnt things were done at the ninth session. Also it is provided to understand the last three steps of the conflict resolution procedure, to gain the skill of conflict resolution by the eight steps of conflict resolution procedure and evaluating the students' gain about group living.

Data Analysis

The data collected from pre-test and post-test was analysed by SPSS-WINDOWS 17.00 packaged software. T-test and two factor analysis of variance for mixed measures (Split-Plot ANOVA) were used to test the experimental and control groups' conflict levels at the beginning.

Two factors analysis of variance for mixed measures was used to test the efficiency of the experimental procedure which was applied at the end of the experimental procedure depending on the procedure group of unrelated measurements and depending on the time that the two-factor repeated measures in a mixed pattern (Büyüköztürk, 2002). 0,05 confidence level was taken as criterion in interpretation of results.

Findings

Descriptive statistics about the experimental and control groups' pre-test and post-test conflict resolution scores were presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics about the experimental and control groups' pre-test and post-test conflict resolution scores

Groups	measures	n	x	Ss
Experimental Group	pre-test	16	101,06	12,64
	Post-test	16	103,94	10,55
Control Group	pre-test	15	96,73	14,12
	Post-test	15	93,67	13,73

As it is seen in table 2, while the conflict resolution average scores of the students who are in the experimental group were 101,06, it increased to 103,93 after the procedure. The conflict resolution average scores of the students who are in control group decreased 93,66 from 96,73.

When it is looked at the descriptive statistics, as expected an increase of 2.87 points is observed as the arithmetic between the pre-test and post-test average scores of the experimental group. A decrease of 3,06 points is observed as the arithmetic between the pre-test and post-test average scores of the control group.

However the differences observed between the experimental and control groups' pre-test and post-test average scores were tested by two-way variance analysis for repeated measures (Split-Plot Repeated Measures) (Büyüköztürk, 2001) to test whether the differences are significant and they were presented in table 3.

Table 3 Comparison of Experimental and Control Groups' conflict resolution Scores acquired from the pre-test and post-test

Variance source	Kareler T	Sd	KO	F	P	Etakare
Intergroup						
Group(experimental/Control)	825,13	1	825,13	2,59	,118	0,082
error	9232,800	29	318,37			
Intergroupmeasurement(Pre-Post)	,142	1	,142	,015	,902	0,014
Group x measurementinteraction	136,65	1	136,65	14,82	,001	0,014
Error	267,34	29	9,21			
total	10,058					

As a result of variance analysis about conflict resolution scores taken from pre-test and post-test by control and experimental groups, it was observed that the difference [F (2-29)= ,015, p>,092] between both experimental-control groups (Experimental x Control) [F (1-29) = 2,59, p>,118] and the measurements (pre-test x post-test) is not significant but the effect of Group x Measurement interaction. [F (1-30) = 14.82, p <, 00] has been observed to be significant. According to the etakare analysis results it has been observed that conflict resolution scale is highly successful and the procedure was found to be significant. Also it can be said that the experimental procedure is effective.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION and SUGGESTIONS

In this research, the effect of conflict resolution training on university first graders' conflict resolution skills was examined. It has been proved that the performed analyses were effective and the students' in the experimental group conflict resolution skills were increased. This change in the experimental group is the result of the given conflict resolution training program which is effective on gaining constructive conflict resolution skills.

The findings acquired in this research support the findings of research which examine conflict resolution skills training programs developed for university students to gain constructive conflict resolution skills for primary-school students (Çoban, 2002; Richards, LaneveGaron,2003),forhigh-schoolstudents(Woody, 2001), andforuniversitystudents(Hughes, 1991; Palmer ve Roessler, 2001; Kavalcı, 2001).

The findings of this research show that if conflict resolution training program is applied at schools, with an understanding of why conflict happens at schools the violence will be decreased. It has emerged with analysis results thatthe conflict resolution training program applied to the experimental group show constructive conflict resolution skills in students.

When the research conducted abroad and in Turkey are analysed, it is seen that conflict resolution programs applied on different sample groups are effective on gaining cooperative conflict resolution skills and support the findings of this research (Breunlin& Ark. 2002; Cunningham, 1998; Durant& Ark. 2001; Dysinger, 1993; Graves& Ark. 1997; Inger, 1991).

As a result of these findings, proves supporting the hypothesis of “there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test average scores of the students in the experimental group who applied to conflict resolution training program and pre-test and post-test average scores of the students in the control group” have been obtained. At the end of the applied “Conflict Resolution Training Program”, it has been seen that the students' scores taken from the conflict resolution scales increased significantly. According to the research findings, it can be said that “Conflict Resolution Training Program” is effective on university first graders to gain conflict resolution skills.



Based on the data obtained from this study, the following recommendations can be presented: When Conflict resolution training program, which was used in this research and proved its effectiveness on gaining constructive conflict resolution skills, is used alone, it is sufficient to provide effective conflict resolution skills.

However in order to develop more constructive and effective relationship between students, in addition to this training other programs about aggression, problem solving and coping with anger can be applied.

It can be worked with schools at different level and more students in terms of generalizing the research data to larger samples. Also conflict resolution training can be got into the program in order to apply at counselling hours for all students to take advantage of this training. Conflict resolution programs should be applied to teachers, managers, and parents to prevent the increasing of violent event. In order to transfer the skills wanted to gain by conflict resolution training program to the daily life, the frequency of applications should be increased and extended because to have difference in students' behaviours, there should be a consequent both at school and home. In order to provide this consequent, meetings with parents should be conducted to give information about studies related to conflict programs. The conflict resolution scale used in this research is an appropriate training program for primary school level. Research prepared under the training program has been prepared according to the level of university students. However for lower level students, program content appropriate to their development property can be prepared and it can be applied after developing a new program and testing its effectiveness.

Monitoring studies can be done at specific intervals in order to understand whether the effect of conflict resolution skill training is permanent for future research about this subject. In this study, there has not been an application to the control group, while an application had been done to the experimental group. The sessions of the applied program can be more detailed, the number of the events can be increased and the content can be developed.

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