

THE EFFECTS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TRAINING ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' CONFLICT RESOLUTION, EMPATHY AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS

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This study has analyzed and compared emotional intelligence training on high school students' conflict resolution, empathy, and leadership skills. Emotional intelligence (EQ) is one element in a broad spectrum of skills that enable high school students to create value for their community and themselves. Since Salovey and Mayer's (1990) seminal article on the concept, and its popularization in a social science book of the same name (Gibbs 1995; Goleman 1995), emotional intelligence has emerged in several different models and measures. Matthews et al. (2002) outlined three contexts for the study of emotional intelligence: psychometric, theoretical, and applied. The focus of this study is on measurement and applied use of emotional intelligence by giving a special training as after school activities.

This study was conducted at two different high schools in Turkey in which 959 students were involved. The first study site was in Samsun where 282 students had participated in the experimental and control groups. On the other hand, in the second site, İstanbul, 677 students had participated. Data were collected using two instruments; Conflict Resolution Skills (Akbalık, 2004) and Bar-on Emotional Intelligence Assessment (Bar-On, 2004). The assessments were given to the participants in the experimental and control groups before and after the emotional intelligence oriented training called "Geniş Açı." Test scores were conducted in SPSS by taking score means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations, using demographic variables received from the personal information sheets.

The study revealed that there is considerable room for improvement in the emotional skills of the students in high schools. Additionally, this study showed that emotional intelligence influenced significantly the conflicts resolution, empathy and leadership skills comparing to control groups. The large number (%81) of the participants' conflict resolution skills had changed after the emotional intelligence oriented training. More importantly, their empathy skills had improved 78%. Furthermore, in their leadership skills, the participants' skills were upgraded 73%.