COMMUNİCATİON SKİLLS AND EMPHATİC TENDENCY: PHYSİCAL EDUCATİON AND FİNE ARTS STUDENTS

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Abstract

The researchers aimed to determine the communication skills and emphatic tendency in the 200 students of Physical Education School (n_{girl}=50, n_{boy}=50) and Fine Arts Faculty (n_{girl}=50, n_{girl}=50). Communication Skills Assessing Scale and Emphatic Tendency Scale were used as instruments in the study. The researchers gave information about the aim and scope of the study to the students, and then they completed the scales in the classrooms. The scores of communication skills for physical education and fine arts students were: $x_{boy=}$ 71,80±12,07; $x_{boy=}$ 56,42±9,99 and $x_{girl=}$ 68,24±12,18; $x_{girl=}$ 59,16±11,33 respectively. It meant a significant difference at p< 0,001. Emphaty skills scores for physical education and fine arts students were: $x_{boy=}$ 70,86±12,28; $x_{boy=}$ 62,52±11,49 and $x_{girl=}$ 69,16±12,35; $x_{girl=}$ 64,46±11,18 respectively. It meant a significant difference at p< 0,001 for boys and p< 0,05 level for girls. As a general result, the scores of physical education and fine arts students for communication skills were x= 62,99±10,89; x=58,51± 9,08 and they are x= 70,67±10,06 and x=64,18± 9,34 for emphaty skills (p< 0,01). As a result there were significant differences between physical education and fine arts students considering communication and emphaty skills, both for sex. We think that the more frequency of physical education students' participation in sports settings where many social relations are provided give them more oppurtunity to develope and improve their communications skills when compared with fine arts students. Yet, future research on this subject is suggested.

Keywords: undergraduate students, physical education, fine arts and, communication, emphaty.

Purpose

For over 200 years, the notion of responsivity to the experiences of another has been discussed by social theorists, and from the beginning the multidimensional nature of this phenomenon has been recognized. Smith (1759), for instance, made the initial differentiation between instinctive sympathy (or empathy), which he described as a quick, involuntary, seemingly emotional reaction to the experiences of others, and intellectualized sympathy, or the ability to recognize the emotional experiences of others without any vicarious experiencing of that state. Spencer (1870), a hundred years later, drew the same distinction, and this instinctive / intellectual, or cognitive / emotional partitioning of empathy has continued to this day.

Research efforts since the turn of this century, moreover, have almost exclusively focused on either one or the other aspect of the empathic process. While the earliest treatments dealt primarily with the emotional side of the empathy coin-- devoted primarily to explaining how the "sharing" of emotions came about (McDougall, 1908; Lipps, 1926) -- the emphasis since then clearly has been on the more cognitive aspects of the phenomenon.

The writing of both Mead (1934) and Piaget (1932) contributed heavily to this shift. The appearance, at roughly the same time, of two influential cognitive approaches greatly affected the character of subsequent research efforts devoted to empathy. The large body of work concerned with "accuracy of perception" of others (e.g., Dymond, 1949; 1950) was an outgrowth of the cognitive orientation to empathy. Likewise, the attention given to the study of empathy within the counseling setting -- in which it is usually considered to be an experiencing of others' feelings "as if" they were your own -- assumes a clear cognitive, relatively non-emotional definition of empathy.

Recent years have seen an increased interest in emotional empathy, and concomitantly, increased movement towards an integration of these two research traditions. The belief appears to be growing that the cognitive and affective components of empathy comprise an interdependent system in which each influences the other, and which never can be fully understood as long as research efforts concentrate on one aspect to the relative exclusion of the other (Deutsch and Madle, 1975; Feshbach, 1976; Hoffman, 1977). Some evidence demonstrating the predictive superiority of considering both cognitive and emotional aspects of the empathy process is already available (e.g., Coke, Batson, & McDavis, 1978; Iannotti, 1979).

The concept of empathy has been the subject of considerable research. Scholars have attempted to define empathy in different ways. Empathy is often confused with other forms of caring such as sympathy or pity. However, in its most precise form, empathy is much more than all of those. It is a specific set of attitudes and behaviors that separates it from many other forms of "caring." (Chung, Bemak, 2002; Rogers, 1951). Carl Rogers (1951) defined empathy as the ability to perceive the client's world with unconditional positive regard and respect. Scholars have also described empathy as "more than just an intellectual identification; empathy must be accompanied by feeling." (Spiro et al., 1993). Empathy has been defined as the ability to "see the world as others see it, be nonjudgmental, understand another's feelings and communicate the understanding." (Wiseman, 1996). Hoffman (2000): "feelings that are more congruent

with another's situation than with [one's] own situation"

The use of empathy has also been assessed as a communicative strategy in pharmacy practice. Researchers evaluated an educational intervention consisting of a 20-hour continuing education course on empathy (Lilja, Larsson, 2000). The course was aimed at improving the level of empathy in a sample of 75 staff pharmacists. The participants completed questionnaires before and after the course. Interactions between staff and patients were video-recorded before and after training in one community pharmacy. The researchers define empathy as the ability to behave in a caring manner toward a patient while demonstrating to the patient that his feelings are understood. This was assessed cognitively through questionnaires and behaviorally through the use of videotapes. Pharmacists were observed on videotape by several trained researchers and various behavioral criteria were used to assess empathy. The results from both questionnaires and videos indicated that after the course there were small increases in both the pharmacist's capacity to show empathy and in some aspects of the empathic behaviors displayed.

Researchers Monahan, Edmunds (2000) have also attempted to illustrate the effect of instruction on empathic learning. Their purpose was twofold: (1) to measure empathy skills before and after a communications course and (2) to compare the applicability of 2 reliable instruments used to measure empathy in pharmacy students. At the beginning of the semester, 100 students enrolled in a communications course completed 2 paper tests recognized through psychometric data as being reliable measurements of cognitive and emotional aspects of empathy, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) and the Balanced Emotional Empathy Scale (BEES). Two tests were used to determine whether one test offered any advantages over the other. At the end of the semester, the tests were again administered to determine differences between the pretest and posttest scores. Dependent *t* tests were used to assess whether there were any significant changes in the pretest and posttest BEES and IRI scores. There was no significant change in the pretest or posttest BEES scores (p = 0.156). However, students, scored higher on the posttest IRI administered following the educational intervention (p = 0.014).The impact of training on empathic communication in nurses was also studied using a quasi-experimental design investigating the purpose of measuring the effectiveness of training on teaching nurses empathy for their interactions with patients (La Monica, 1986). Only the nurses (150) working in medical and surgical units, outpatient clinics, operating rooms, obstetric units, and the psychiatric unit were included. The nurses were distributed randomly into either an intervention group or control group and given a 3-part pretest questionnaire. The first section of the questionnaire asked for background characteristics. The second section presented sample cases common in surgery and medical units that were determined to be appropriate for nurses. The third section of the questionnaire asked questions based on the Empathic Tendency Scale. The intervention group was then educated about empathic communication. Afterward, the same questionnaire was administered to both the intervention and control groups. The results showed that empathic skills were developed in the intervention group as a result of empathy training.

Professions differ in terms of the levels of communication skills they require. Although communication skills are of basic importance for professions based on human relations, they are not that important for professions based on technical content. Accordingly, it should be considered as normal the difference between people who have different tendencies of vocations in aspect of communication skills. In Turkiye there are some researchs on undergraduate students' empathic tendency and communication skills from different departments and faculties; Cevahir et al (2008) on midwifery students, Duru (2002) in candidate teachers, Yılmaz and Akyel (2008) in physical education and sport (PE)candidate teachers, Toy (2007) in several departments. While there are some educational research conducted by scholars in the fields of communication arts, pharmacy, and nursing that focuses on empathy, there is limited data on the emphatic tendency and communication skill of undergraduate physical education and sport students. Thus this study aimed to determine the emphatic tendency and communication levels of PE and Fine arts (FA) students and compare them according to their sex and departments.

Methods

The participants were 200 students of Physical Education School (n_{girl}=50, n_{boy}=50) and Fine Arts Faculty (n_{girl}=50, n_{girl}=50). The instruments in the study were Communication Skills Assessing Scale (CSAS) and Emphatic Tendency Scale. Communication Skills Assessing Scale (CSAS) with 25 items developed by Korkut (1996). Each item has five choices between "always" and "never". The total point is 100, the least point is 0. The validity(0.58= and reliability(0.76) study of the scale were done the same researcher. The permission for the study was gotten from the rectorship. We applicated the scales in classrooms after giving information about the scope and procedure of the study. Only the students who were volunteer participated in the study. The students didn't indicated their names. Emphatic Tendency Scale with 24 items was developed by Dökmen (1988). The validity (0.68) and reliability (0.82) study of the scale were done by the same researcher.

Findings

The scores of communication skills for physical education and fine arts students were: $x_{boy=}$ *71,80±12,07*; $x_{boy=}$ *56,42±9,99* and $x_{girl=}$ *68,24±12,18;* $x_{girl=}$ *59,16±11,33* respectively. It meant a significant difference at p< 0,001. Emphaty skills scores for

physical education and fine arts students were: $x_{boy=}$ *70,86±12,28*; $x_{boy=}$ *62,52±11,49* and $x_{girl=}$ *69,16±12,35;* $x_{girl=}$ *64,46±11,18* respectively. It meant a significant difference at p< 0,001 for boys and p< 0,05 level for girls. As a general result, the scores of physical education and fine arts students for communication skills were *x= 62,99±10,89*; *x*=58,51± 9,08 and they are *x= 70,67±10,06* and *x=64,18± 9,34* for emphaty skills (*p< 0,01*).

Discussion

Empathy is the process of setting yourself instead of someone else's place and comprehending everything from his point of view, Understanding and feeling his senses and thoughts correctly and conveying this state to him. That's why empathy appears to be a significant variable in educational activities. Especially, spreading the sporting activities into the society. Physical educators have high emphatic skills, emphatic levels and their qualifications, research ability and production abilities are becoming important peculiarities. Sports activities that are applied by educators of high emphatic skills and tendency levels, qualified, researcher and productive are important to spread sports activities into the society. Cevahir et al (2008) was carried out a study as a descriptive and comparative one, with the aim of evaluating the empathic skills of the students of the Midwifery Department of Sakarya University School of Health. The universe of the study comprised 130 students who had been having education in the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades of the Midwifery Department of Sakarya University School of Health Sciences, and the sampling comprised 110 students who had been able to take part in the study. As the means of data collecting, a 22-question survey form containing the questions about the individual information about the students and questions about "empathy", and the "Empathic Skill Scale B-Form" which Dökmen (1988) had put into application by testing the validity and reliability for our country. In the evaluation, percentage, Students 't' Test, Mann-Whitney U Test were employed. The average of the empathic skill points of the students included in the study was found to be 135.35 ± 17.6. And the average empathic skill points with respect to the grades were determined to be 146.79 ± 16.21 for the 1st Grade, 128.63 ± 14.10 for the 2nd Grade, 129.60 ± 18.77 for the 3rd Grade, and 135.88 ± 15.74 for the 4th Grade. The difference has been determined for empathic skills of midwifery students according to their classes in progress in this study. It's determined that empathic skills of student in 1st class that contains general and occupational lessons intensively and 4th class that contains sanity lesson are better than others. In consequence of the study empathy and communication lessons should be continued in intermediate classes due to low empathic skills and comprehensive study should be made for this issue.

Duru (2002) in a study aimed to examine the difference between empathic tendency scores of the students (candidate teachers) in groups in terms of some psychosocial variables. Data was collected Interpersonal Reactivity Index and Personal Information. The sample consisted of a total 402 students (248 female and 154 male) from different departments of the faculty of education. The results show that empathic tendency is significantly related to gender, perceived the orientation of personal value, and perceived responsibility level. In addition, perspective taking, empathic concern and personal distress are significantly related some psychosocial variables. The findings were discussed in the context of literature.

In another study, Yılmaz and Akyel (2008) aimed to find out empatic tendency level of physical education candidate teachers in terms of different variables. The groups studied on was set up from 196 students of Ahi Evran University, School of Physical Education, Physical Education and Sport Teaching Department. In this descripte study, "Em patic Tendency Scale" developed by Dökmen (1988) has been used as a means of datum collector. Aritmetic mean, standart deviation have been used in data analysis, t test in double data comparisons and one way variance analysis in multiple comparissons. As a result of this study it has been found out that the empatic tendency level points of physical education candidate teachers are high and there are no differentiation according to the examined variants.Toy (2007) aimed to understand the vocational differences according to students' field, education and gender, to determine the relationships between communication skills and some psychological and demographical variables, to compare students' emphatic skills and also to compare students' communication skills again by controlling effects of personal traits, which are in correlation with communication skills significantly. In this research for which the data from 410 students were collected, Personal Information Form, Communication Skills Inventory, Emphatic Skill Scale-B Form and NEO Five Factor Personality Inventory-TR were used as scaling instruments. As a result of statistical analyses, it has been found that in communication skills students of law faculties have been better than students of engineering faculties and females have been better than males. It has been also proven that when the effects of personal traits are controlled, the differentiation still exists in the case of law faculty students, while the gender influence disappears (Toy 2007).In our study there is a significant difference in communication and empathy levels between PE and FA students for both sexes. It can be the result of the sport settings that provide the students many interpersonal interactions and communication oppurtunities. It is an expected outcome as a result of this that the emphatic tendency level of PE students is better than those in FA faculty. Communication is the first condition of emphaty. Empathy originated from the Greek word "empatheia," which means to understand others by entering their world (Chung, Bemak, 2002). To enter others world requires communication first. Yet, the results can not be generalized and further research is needed.

Table 1 Comparison of Physical education and Fine arts Students according to sex.

	N	Mean	Sd	t	P
Communication					
Physical Education Male-Fine Arts Male	50	71,80	12,07		
	50	56,42	9,99	6,938	0,000*
Communication					
Physical Education Female-Fine Arts Female	50	68,24	12,18		
	50	59,16	11,33	3,858	0,000*
Empathy					
Physical Education Male- Fine Arts Male	50	70,86	12,28		
	50	62,52	11,49	3,505	0,001*
Empathy					
Physical Education Female- Fine Arts Female	50	69,16	12,35		
	50	64,46	11,18	1,994	0,049*
Communication					
Physical Education (Total)-Fine Arts (Total)	100	62,99	10,89		
	100	58,51	9,08	3,159	0,002*
Empathy					
Physical Education (Total)-Fine Arts (Total)	100	70,67	10,06		
	100	64,18	9,34	4,726	0,000*

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