


## An Examination of Gifted Students' Perceptions of Their Social-Emotional Skills and Peer Relationships \*

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### Abstract

Social-emotional skills are effective in the self-awareness and control of the individual's emotions. These skills should be evaluated together with peer relationships as they play an important role in the communication of the individual with other individuals around him/her. In this study, the social-emotional skill perceptions and peer relationships of gifted students were examined in the survey design. The study group consists of 216 gifted students who studied at Science and Arts Centers (SAC) in Turkey, where specially gifted students were selected through a national exam result, in the 2019-2020 academic year. The data were collected through The Scale of Perceived Social-Emotional Skills, The Friendship Qualities Scale, and the Personal Information Form. Results showed that there was a significant correlation between The Scale of Perceived Social-Emotional Skills and The Friendship Qualities Scale. In addition, this study found a significant correlation between the perceptions of social-emotional skills and the total scores of peer relations, conflict, help, and protection, which are sub-dimensions of peer relations.

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## INTRODUCTION

Each individual has different interests, skills, and competencies. Social-emotional skills, which are common in daily life, are also associated with working with others, reaching goals, and managing emotions (Primi, Santos, John & De Fruyt, 2016). Social-emotional skills can be improved and include factors such as academic performance, work performance, relationship quality, and satisfaction (Kuo, Casillas, Walton, Way & Moore, 2020; Poropat, 2009; Watson, Hubbard & Wiese 2000). John and De Fruyt (2014) define social and emotional skills as individual capacities manifested in consistent patterns of thought, emotion, and behavior (De Fruyt, Wille & John, 2015). Recent research findings in education, economics, psychology, and neuroscience show that these skills are as important as cognitive metrics such as intelligence in predicting various life outcomes (Kautz, Heckman, Diris, ter Weel & Borghans, 2014; Miyamoto, Huerta & Kubacka, 2015; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2015).

Each individual's academic and social personal characteristics can be different in the fields of science, technology, art, sports, and talent. Gifted students can outperform their peers in terms of knowledge and skills, that's why their differences should be taken into account. The literature emphasizes certain limitations in the education of gifted students according to their developmental characteristics, therefore it has been stated that educational opportunities should be created (Freeman, 2002; Sak et al., 2015). Education of gifted students in Turkey is carried out through different school and out-of-school programs. Science and Arts Centers (SAC/BILSEM in Turkish) are among the out-of-school institutions. Students who are identified as gifted are included in out-of-school programs in line with their interests and skills and receive support education with programs prepared specially for them. However, SACs do not accept applications outside the primary school period. In Turkey, there is a need for a sufficient number of institutions and staff to conduct educational activities for gifted students who continue SACs. The number of SACs forms a limitation for gifted students. Whereas gifted students may experience several problems if their potential is not noticed, and their characteristics are not taken into account (Saranlı & Metin, 2012). Even though it is crucial to identify gifted students' needs, and providing an access to institutions, and ensure the continuance of their education, students face several problems as a result of being unable to meet their needs emerging from their special abilities. Although they have special abilities, these students have different social-emotional needs since their mental, physical, and social-emotional development does not develop simultaneously (Preuss & Dubow, 2004). Due to these developmental characteristics, it is stated that they experience fear, anxiety, perfectionism, difficulty in peer relationships, loneliness, depression, and school mismatch (Peterson, Duncan & Canady, 2009). Gifted students also have to deal with low academic self-esteem, depression, and incompatibility with the classroom environment if they fail to meet the high expectations of their parents or teachers (Butt, 2010; Sak, 2014); Due to their intuitive and sensitive nature, they have difficulty in communicating with their surroundings (Stuart & Beste, 2008). Therefore, it is of utmost importance to provide positive support to gifted students' communication with their parents and peers for their social and emotional development.

Being gifted causes some psychological effects on the development processes of children. It is stated that the children experience some psychological problems with the recognition and diagnosis process (Renati, 2017). Nonsimultaneous development of gifted individuals causes them to stay under the gifted label; this situation differentiates the expectations of their families and environment. When a gifted individual cannot receive education in line with his/her interests and skills, he/she stays in a disadvantaged position. This situation decreases the satisfaction level for education and poses a risk factor for gifted children (Pfeiffer & Stocking, 2000). Gifted students may have social and emotional tendencies that may require special attention (Hollingworth, as cited in Saranlı & Metin, 2012). Although they are mentally competent, it is possible to find situations in which they do not consider themselves socially-emotionally and physically sufficient from time to time (Preuss & Dubow, 2004).

Gifted students' academic self-perception should be evaluated in detail in terms of their social skills and emotional health (Neihart, 2016). Needham (2012) pointed out that gifted students' social-emotional characteristics and academic performance can vary. For example, gifted students, whose feelings and thoughts can be similar to their peers, may display more sensitive behaviors on a particular subject (Needham, 2012). Some of them may be emotionally strong, while others may be more sensitive, however, their emotional development (Leana & Köksal, 2007) shows improvement when they are socially and emotionally supported, which attaches importance to the necessity of supporting the social-emotional development of these students. There is a common prejudice that gifted children are developmentally superior in all areas. However, it is stated that a gifted child may be superior to his/her peers in some developmental areas, average in some areas, and fall behind his/her peers in some areas as a result of nonsimultaneous development (Saranlı, 2017). Thus, gifted students should be monitored and supported not only academically but also socially and emotionally in terms of relationships with friends, family, and teachers. School life is a critical period in providing these supports.

According to Silverman (1993) school life is a very important period in terms of children's friendship relationships, and friendships make school life fun. Low peer acceptance, which occurs during or before school age, is associated with social cohesion problems in later years (Parker & Asher, 1987). Peer relationships involve risks although they develop and protect the individual. For example, the relationship with peers can provide a feeling of satisfaction and confidence to children or pose certain problems (Lansford, Criss, Pettit, Dodge & Bates, 2003). These problems can be associated with difficulties that children experience in many areas of their lives (Beyazkürk, Anliak & Dinçer, 2007). Social skills, emotional factors, and differences are possible predictors of peer relationships and have an impact on social acceptance. In summary, social skills have a direct or indirect effect on the development of peer relationships of a child. While students with high academic achievement are popular among their peers, those with lower levels of popularity in sociometric degrees are especially known to be subjected to peer rejection (Košir, Sočan & Pečjak, 2007). Children who are frequently exposed to peer rejection (Bloomquist & Schell, 2002) are often from a less popular group of students, have learning difficulties, and are at risk of leaving school (Frederickson & Furnham, 2001). However, children need to have emotion-based behaviors to establish healthier interpersonal relationships in their social settings (Spence, 2003).

It is clear that children who fail to establish positive relationships are less likely to respond appropriately to their environment and they experience certain difficulties in exhibiting contextual behaviors (Dinçer & Güneysu, 1997; Spence, 2003). Variables such as gender, number of siblings, age, socioeconomic level, and class can have an impact on all these processes. Relationships between siblings and children's behavioral problems are important. It has been stated that positive social behavior and social competence are linked to sibling relationships (Buist & Vermande, 2014). Hughes et al., (2018) stated that the sibling effect on social behaviors and relationships is positive. The positive nature of sibling relationships is negatively related to psychological adaptation problems such as externalization and internalization (Buist, Deković, & Prinzie, 2013). Sibling relationships in early childhood also have an impact on social development (Jenkins & Dunn, 2009). Social learning promotes the development of the social skills of siblings (Hughes & Leekam, 2004). Studies have shown a relationship between the quality of sibling relationships and social cohesion and emphasized that emotional support from a sibling leads to positive peer relationships and children's development of social cohesion (Buist & Vermande, 2014; Lamarche et al., 2006; Pike, Coldwell & Dunn, 2005). Besides, supporting the development of social-emotional skills is related to peer relationships and social interaction processes. Thus, in-school and out-of-school plans where the children can socially interact with their peers, conduct art and sports activities, and make academic and cultural sharing are also significant. Thus, it is thought that features such as school type, and level are significant in terms of

peer skills and social-emotional skills of the students. Tosuntaş Karakuş (2006) examined whether positive-negative social behavior scores of the adolescents in the 12-14 age group differed according to the school type. It was concluded that the difference obtained from negative social behavior scores was significant and students who received education in private schools showed less negative social behaviors. The difference in positive social behavior scores was found to be significant but it was emphasized that this difference was in favor of adolescents who continued private schools. In the study conducted with teachers working at the primary school level, Smith and Hoy (2007) examined the effect of school characteristics such as social structure, physical capacity, and other factors on the optimism of teachers. It was stated that the teachers were affected by the school characteristics and optimistic teachers were effective role models in students' success and relationships. In the study, it was emphasized that when the school's social organizational structures reflected trust and a positive climate, this situation was reflected in students' success and relationships. Kurz (2006) stated that there was a significant correlation between the number of students in the classroom and teachers' academic optimism and self-efficacy

As a result, the social and emotional needs of gifted students may differ, so the level of social-emotional needs should be determined according to various variables and support should be provided in school life and outside environments to meet these requirements. As with any individual, gifted students' perceptions of social-emotional skills are a variable that affects their interpersonal communication in different ways in school, home, and community life. For this reason, the requirements of social and emotional skills based on different environments should be determined and intervention plans should be prepared. When the needs of the students are determined, the problems they may experience in their social relations can be solved, determining the relationships between social-emotional skills perceptions and peer relationships can enable facilitating and supportive arrangements in the lives of gifted students. For example, it is stated that the families of children with strong communication skills trust their children and support them in terms of self-efficacy and parents who exhibit a more constructive attitude in communication with their children lead children to behave positively within the family. This study, which focuses on gifted students' school environment, social life, and peer relations is limited to social emotional skills and peer relations variables. The results are thought to contribute to expanding the understanding of parents, educators, and experts regarding the field of gifted education and gifted students. Since the secondary school level is a key transition period for the development of behaviors that facilitate later academic and career life (American College Test [ACT], 2008), this study decided to conduct with secondary school students. The examination of social-emotional skills in gifted students attending secondary school can also be considered as a significant aspect of this study.

This study was set out to investigate the relationship between the perceptions of social-emotional skills and peer relations of gifted secondary school students attending BİLSEMs. The answers to the following questions were sought:

For gifted secondary school students;

1. Is there a significant correlation between social-emotional skills perceptions and peer relationships (companionship, conflict, help, security, closeness)?
2. Do social-emotional skills perceptions differ according to gender, school type, class level, number of siblings, mother's level of education, father's level of education, and participation in out-of-school activities?
3. Do peer relations (companionship, conflict, help, security, closeness) differ according to gender, school type, class level, number of siblings, mother's level of education, father's level of education, and participation in out-of-school activities?

## METHOD

In this study, the survey model and correlational research model, which are quantitative research models, were used. A survey model is a model that tries to reveal the characteristics of the population. It can be said that this research is in the cross-sectional survey model, in which it is aimed to examine one section or sample of the population at a time. In addition, it can be said that the research was also designed as correlational research since it was also aimed to reveal the relations between the variables (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012).

## PARTICIPANTS

In this study, while determining the research sample, the purposive sampling method, one of the non-random sampling methods, was used. Büyüköztürk (2020) stated that purposive sampling provides an opportunity to create rich information situations and conduct more in-depth research by adhering to the purpose of the study. In this regard, the purposive sampling method was preferred in line with the purpose of the study. The participants were gifted students who attend BİLSEM in Gaziantep (11), Kahramanmaraş (4), Adana (10), Osmaniye (1), and Hatay (2) located in the Southeastern Anatolia and Mediterranean Regions of Turkey. 216 students in total were reached. 95 students (44%) received education in public schools and 121 students (56%) continued their education in private schools. The data were collected by the first author in the fall and spring semesters of the 2019-2020 academic year. Before the data collection phase, necessary permissions to use the data collection tools were granted from the researchers who developed the measurement tool, and then the necessary research permissions were granted from the ethical committee of the university where the study took place and from the Ministry of National Education. The demographic characteristics of the participants are included in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Sociodemographic Characteristics of Gifted Students

<i>Sociodemographic characteristics</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender		
Female	108	50
Male	108	50
Age		
< 11	68	31.5
12	56	25.9
13	48	22.2
> 14	44	20.4
Class		
5th Grade	60	27.8
6th Grade	52	24.1
7th Grade	53	24.5
8th Grade	51	23.6
Number of Children in the family		
1 child	61	28.2
2 children	95	44.0
> 3 children	60	27.8
Type of school		
Public	95	44
Private	121	56
Sum	216	100

## INSTRUMENTS

The Personal Information Form contains questions about demographic variables such as the age of the students, the class level, the type of school they are studying (Private/public), their participation in out-of-school activities (sporting activities, music and painting courses, cinema, swimming, etc.), gender, number of children in their family, and the level of education of their parents. All items on the scales used in the study were answered by the students.

### **PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM**

This form contains questions about demographic variables such as the age of the students, the class level, the type of school they are studying (Private/Public), their participation in out-of-school activities (sporting activities, music and painting courses, cinema, swimming, etc.), gender, number of children in their family, and the level of education of their parents. All data collection tools were answered by the students.

### **THE FRIENDSHIP QUALITIES SCALE (FQS)**

FQS was developed by Bukowski, Hoza, and Boivin (1994) for children and adolescents. It was adapted into Turkish by Erkan-Atik, Çoban, Çok, Doğan, and Karaman (2014). The scale was used in research for adolescents. The form consists of 22 items in five dimensions, which are companionship, conflict, help, security, and closeness. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients obtained from the scale range from .66 to .85 in the sub-dimensions. Cronbach Alpha internal reliability coefficient was obtained at .69 for the whole friendship qualities scale and for the subdimensions of the study, it was .74 for companionship, .78 for conflict, .70 for help, .71 for security, and .71 for closeness in this study. As the score for the entire scale with four items scored in reverse increases, the level of peer relationships increases positively. High scores obtained in the relevant dimension indicate that the level of the relationship is positive. The companionship dimension, one of the sub-dimensions, expresses the score of the time that the individual and their peers spend voluntarily together. The conflict dimension refers to the frequency of conflict between the individual and his/her friend. However, the size of the conflict was inverted coding. The increase in the score taken from the size of the conflict with the reversal means the reduction of the conflict. The dimension of help explains how to resist unfair situations, defend the just in case of injustice, and help the peer. The security dimension expresses the mutual confidence of the individual and their peers to overcome the problems together. The closeness dimension means emotional attachment to each other (Erkan-Atik et al., 2014).

### **THE SCALE OF PERCEIVED SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS (SPSES)**

This scale was developed by Baydan (2010) and consists of 21 items. The total variance explained by the sub-dimensions in the instrument tool consisting of four sub-dimensions: problem-solving, stress coping, communication skills, and skills that increase self-esteem is % 37.41. Cronbach Alpha internal reliability coefficient obtained in this study was .77 for the social-emotional skill perception scale. Baydan (2010) stated that the scale is available as a total score. In the 3-type Likert type measuring tool, he rated the substances as "*not suitable for me (1), partially suitable for me (2), and quite suitable for me (3)*". The lowest score is 21 points and the highest score is 63 points. Students whose total scores are below the group mean in the measuring tool are evaluated as insufficient in terms of social-emotional skill perception. Social-emotional skills perceptions of students whose scores are above the mean are expressed as sufficient.

## DATA COLLECTION

To reach secondary school students who have been identified as gifted, which constitutes the sample of the research, the required permissions to implement the study were granted from the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) responsible for the educational arrangements (issue, E.856071; date, 13.01.2020). Afterward, the managers of the institutions that participated in the study were

interviewed online and by phone. Necessary permissions were granted from the principals and families. The necessary information was given to the students with the help of guidance counselors. Instruments were applied individually and face-to-face to students who were willing to participate after providing necessary information about the research. The response time of the form applied by the researcher was between 15-20 minutes for each student on average.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

The data were processed into the SPSS 24 program and made ready for analysis. Normality assumptions, one of the leading assumptions to be met for the use of parametric tests, were examined in the scope of subdimension of both scales and total scores before the analysis of the data. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk significance tests referenced for univariate normality control were checked with  $p > .05$  and skewness and kurtosis values being between  $-1.5$  and  $+1.5$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Normal distribution test results were shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Results for Test of Normality**

Variables	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk			Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistics	df	Sig.	Statistics	df	Sig.		
SPSES Total	.088	216	.00	.972	216	.00	-.478	-.099
FQS Total	.077	216	.00	.980	216	.00	-.380	-.213
Companionship	.129	216	.00	.927	216	.00	.202	-.243
Conflict	.169	216	.00	.866	216	.00	-.871	.523
Help	.101	216	.00	.960	216	.00	-1.065	.589
Security	.115	216	.00	.938	216	.00	-.210	-.914
Closeness	.049	216	.20*	.978	216	.00	-.600	-.398

According to the information included in Table 2, it is stated that scores of subdimensions of both SPSES and FQS scales were significantly different from the normal distribution. It is difficult to obtain totally normal data while testing the normality of the data in social sciences. Thus, it is suggested not to adhere to only one test and examine normality in alternative ways. The mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis values of the data obtained from scales may be calculated and their conformity to normal distribution may be tested. George & Mallery (2010) stated that the values obtained from skewness and kurtosis variables being between the  $+2$  and  $-2$  range can be interpreted as showing normal distribution. Tabachnick & Fidell (2013) stated that these values should be between  $\pm 1.5$ . When examining the skewness – kurtosis coefficients of the sub-dimensions of SPSES and FQS, it can be said that the data show normal distribution.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scales was calculated, and the significant difference value was accepted as .05. Independent samples were used in the analysis of t-test parametric and two-category variables. One-Way Variance Analysis (ANOVA) was applied in the analysis of three or more category variables. In cases where the difference was significant, the source of the difference between the groups was determined through the Scheffe post hoc test. When the inter-group variances are equal, tests such as LSD, Bonferroni, Sidak, Scheffe, R-E-G-W-F, R-E-G-W-Q, S-N-K, Tukey, Tukey’s-b, Duncan, Hcohbergs’s GT2, Gabriel, Waller-Duncan, and Dunnet can be used and when the variances are unequal, Tamhane’s T2, Dunnett’s T3, Games-Howell, and Dunnett’s C tests can be used. The researcher should decide which post-hoc test to use in accordance with the study he/she is conducting. It was decided to use the Scheffe test in this study because it is not necessary to have an equal number of samples in the group and it is a reliable test that can keep Type I error under control when the number of the groups is high (Scheffe, 1999). The correlation between social-emotional skill perceptions and peer relationships was examined with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The descriptive values for measuring instruments are represented in Table 3.

**Table 3. Psychometric Properties for SPSES, FQS, and FQS Subscales**

Variables	n	M	SD	Min	Max	α
SPSES Total	216	53.35	4.98	41	63	.77
FQS Total	216	82.10	13.31	42	105	.69
Companionship	216	11.74	3.35	4	20	.74
Conflict	216	15.99	3.11	4	20	.78
Help	216	20.70	4.47	6	25	.70
Security	216	14.11	3.85	5	20	.71
Closeness	216	19.55	4.26	7	25	.71

According to the findings included in Table 3, it is seen that the SPSES scale mean scores of the gifted students is (53.35), FQS mean total scores is (82.10); (11.74) for companionship, (15.99) for conflict, (20.70) for help, (14.11) for security, and (19.55) for closeness. Because it is not possible to interpret the scores obtained from the scales separately, interpretations were made through paired comparisons.

**FINDINGS**

In this section, the findings of the research were presented. For readability, the article included only important and significant findings of the research. The first question of the study was examined with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and the results obtained can be seen in Table 4.

**Table 4. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables**

Variable	n	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. SPSES	216	53.35	4.98	-						
2. FQS Total	216	82.10	13.31	.24**	-					
3. Companionship	216	11.74	3.35	.11	.68**	-				
4. Conflict	216	15.99	3.11	.31**	.27**	-.04	-			
5. Help	216	20.70	4.47	.17**	.82**	.46**	.07	-		
6. Security	216	14.11	3.85	.21**	.80**	.43**	.12	.59**	-	
7. Closeness	216	19.55	4.26	.07	.79**	.49**	-.03	.58**	.53**	-

\*p< .05. \*\*p<.01.

According to Table 4, there was a significant correlation at p=.01 between the score of social-emotional skill perceptions and the sub-dimensions of peer relations conflict (r=.31), help (r=.17), closeness (r=.21), and peer relations total scores (r=.24).

The findings obtained as a result of the analyses carried out on the second question of the research are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5. Findings on Social Emotional Skills Perception Scores**

	Public		Private		t(214)	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
SPSES	52.58	4.99	53.95	4.91	-2.01	.04*	0.28

\*p< .05

According to Table 5, gifted students' social-emotional skill perception scores differed significantly regarding the type of school they were studied (t= -2.01; p<.05). Effect size independent variable indicates the variance explanation ratio of the independent variable in the dependent variable and the partial eta-squared (η<sup>2</sup>) was interpreted as .01 small, .06 moderate, and .14 large effect sizes



(Pallant, 2016). It can be said that the effect size of the significant difference obtained from the t-test is at a large effect level. It was determined that the difference in social-emotional skills perceptions according to gender, class level, number of siblings, mother's level of education, father's level of education, and participation in out-of-school activities was not significant (results that did not make sense were not included in the table).

The third question of the study requires an investigation of peer relationships for various independent variables. Therefore, the differences obtained in the t-test and ANOVA results were presented respectively in three sections: Table 6, Table 7, and Table 8.

**Table 6.** T-test Results of FQS Scores by Gender Variable

	Female		Male		t(214)	p	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
Closeness	20.28	4.44	18.81	3.96	2.569	.011*	0.35
FQS Total	84.19	13.63	80.01	12.69	2.329	.021*	0.32

\*p< .05

According to Table 6, peer relations scores of gifted students were found to be significant in the total score of peer relations and closeness sub-dimension in accordance with gender (t=2,329; p<.05, t=2,569; p<.05). The difference in closeness sub-dimension and FQS total scores was in favor of female students. It can be said that the effect size of the significant difference obtained from the t-test is at a large effect level.

**Table 7.** ANOVA Results by Class Level of FQS Scores

Measure	5th Grade		6th Grade		7th Grade		8th Grade		F (1, 214)	η <sup>2</sup>
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
FQS Total	80.36	9.41	81.59	13.69	87.11	12.87	79.47	16.00	3.664*	.05
Help	19.93	2.83	20.94	4.62	22.11	3.99	19.90	5.89	3.021*	.04
Closeness	20.00	3.36	19.02	4.78	21.11	3.78	17.94	4.56	5.620*	.07

\* p<.05

According to Table 7, when taking groups and their means at the sub-scales level into account, it is stated that ANOVA results caused a significant difference. It is seen that the effect size of significant difference obtained from ANOVA is small for FQS total, small for the help sub-dimension, and moderate for the closeness sub-dimension. Multiple comparisons were conducted among the scores of children in 5, 6, 7, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades for the sub-scales determined to be different according to ANOVA results and the multiple comparisons conducted were shown in Table 7.

**Table 7. Multiple Comparison Results**

Variables	Groups	M	p	Post Hoc Comparisons	p
FQS Total	5th Grade	80.36	.01*	5-6	.97
	6th Grade	81.59		5-7	.06
	7th Grade	87.11		5-8	.98
	8th Grade	79.47		6-7	.20
				6-8	.87
		7-8	.03*		
Help	5th Grade	19.93	.03*	5-6	.69
	6th Grade	20.94		5-7	.04*
	7th Grade	22.11		5-8	.10
	8th Grade	19.90		6-7	.60
				6-8	.69
		7-8	.09		
Closeness	5th Grade	20,00	.00**	5-6	.66
	6th Grade	19,02		5-7	.56
	7th Grade	21,11		5-8	.08
	8th Grade	17,94		6-7	.08
				6-8	.62
		7-8	.00**		

\*p < .05, \*\* p < .01

The result of the analysis carried out to determine whether peer relations showed a significant difference according to class level showed a difference in FQS total scores between those who attended 7th grade and 8th grade (F=3.664; p<.05). The difference was found in favor of 7th graders. The sub-dimension of help was observed to differ between 5th and 7th graders, but the difference was in favor of 7th graders (F=3.021; p<.05). In the sub-dimension of closeness, there was a difference between those attending the 7th grade and the 8th grade, and this difference was found to be significant in favor of the 7th graders (F=5.620; p<.05).

**Table 8. ANOVA Results by Number of Children of FQS Scores**

Measure	One child		Two children		Three children and above		F (1, 214)	η <sup>2</sup>
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Conflict	15.95	3.03	16.54	2.70	15.15	3.63	3.797*	.03

\*p<.05

It draws attention that there is a significant difference in the ANOVA results of means at groups and sub-dimension levels stated in Table 8. It can be said that the effect size of the significant difference obtained from ANOVA is at a small effect level. For the sub-scales in which differences were determined as a result of ANOVA, multiple comparisons were conducted among 1 child, 2 children, and 3 children and above scores and multiple comparisons conducted were shown in Table 8.

**Table 8. Multiple Comparison Results**

Variables	Groups	M	p	Post Hoc Comparisons	p
Conflict	One Child	15.95	.02*	1-2	.49
	Two Child	16.54		1-3	.36
	Three children and above	15.99		2-3	.02*

\*p < .05, \*\* p < .01

Table 8.1 included the results obtained when gifted students' peer relation scores were examined according to the number of children in the family. Conflict differed significantly between children growing up in families with two children and children growing up in families with three children or more, in favor of children growing up in families with two children (F=3.797; p<.05).

## DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

Gifted students' social-emotional skill perception scores were limited to those included in this sample, and it was concluded that there was a significant difference among the students' social-emotional skill perception scores according to the type of school they studied (public or private school). This difference was determined in favor of students attending private school. When peer relations were examined, it was concluded that there was a significant difference in the closeness and FQS total score according to the gender variable in favor of the females. When gifted students' peer relations were examined according to the number of siblings, it was determined that there was a significant difference in the conflict between those who grew up in families with two children and three children. It was determined that the correlation between social-emotional skill perceptions and peer relations of gifted students was positive ( $r=.24$ ) and significant ( $p<.01$ ).

Research investigating the interactions of gifted students with peers and family members for more accurate recognition of their social-emotional development is remarkable. Because friendship is an important phenomenon in all aspects of life. In case of friendlessness, the social-emotional development of the individual is negatively affected (Freeman, 2019). Gifted people who do not have a satisfactory level of friendship may experience social and emotional problems in school and their lives (Leyden, 2002). In this study, a positive significant correlation was found between the social-emotional skill perceptions of gifted students and peer relationships. Similarly, it was stated that there is a statistically significant correlation between the social support level perceived by the gifted students from their families, peers, and teachers and the social-emotional learning skills general scores (Elcik & Bayındır, 2015); social-emotional skill perception scores are high and there is a positive correlation between these skills and friendship quality (Sevgili-Koçak & Kan, 2019). Erol (2015) found a significant correlation between peer relationships of gifted adolescents and their subjective well-being and concluded that there is a significant correlation between peer commitments of these students and relationship satisfaction, life satisfaction, and positive feeling. Bapoğlu-Dümenci (2018) stated that the social skills education program is effective in communication, interaction, trust, and general peer relationships regarding the development of peer relationships in gifted children but it is not effective in the companionship dimension. In another study, it was stated that the program prepared to develop friendship relations of the gifted children positively affected the friendship skills of the gifted individuals (Uysaler, 2015). Yazgı (2019) concluded that gifted students have a significant and highly positive correlation between their high levels of cognitive awareness and social-emotional learning skills. Accordingly, the higher level of cognitive awareness is one of the factors contributing to the development of social-emotional learning skills in gifted students.

Research results for social support resources show that the individual receives the most important support from peers and family members. Levitt et al., (2005) examined the social support sources that affected the social cohesion of 782 students studying in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades and found that the students received the most important social support from their parents and friends. As social support increases, so does the level of adaptation during the transition to puberty. According to Rogers & Ross (1986), the harmony that exists between peer groups is then positively reflected in the social cohesion of individuals in adulthood. In summary, positive peer relations developed during adolescence also contribute positively to the social-emotional skills of individuals and their social cohesion in adulthood.

When peer relationships were examined in the study, a significant difference was determined in favor of females in the dimension of closeness (girl  $M=20.28$ , male  $M=18.81$ ) and FQS (girl  $M=84.19$ , males  $M=80.01$ ) by gender variable. Erol (2015) found that in peer relationships, students' self-opening (openness to communication) levels and commitment levels differed significantly as to gender and that the difference was in favor of female students, and similarly, Gross (2002) found that gifted female students had higher scores of closeness, help, trust, and loyalty than male students. Underwood &

Rosen (2009) noted that females had higher levels of friendship in adolescence than males at a recent age. The findings of this study were consistent with the research findings of Saferstein, Neimeyer & Hagans (2005). Saferstein et al., (2005) stated that females scored higher than males in the dimensions of closeness, conservation, and emotional attachment to friend relationships. This could be because those females adopt a more relational model of friendship in their relations, while males tend to be confrontational (Lee & Olszewski-Kubilius, 2006; Rudasill & Callahan, 2008).

Another result of the study is that the students differ significantly in peer relationships according to the class level. This difference is found between 7th grades ( $M=87.11$ ) and 8th grades ( $M=79.47$ ) in FQS total score and is in favor of 7th-grade students. Erdem (2019) compared the social media use, peer relations, and emotion regulation levels of secondary school students in his study and revealed a significant correlation in the sub-dimension of help in FQS, and the higher the class level of students, the higher scores the students receive in the sub-dimension of help. Peterson et al., (2009) stated that even if they experience great difficulties in their lives, they attempt to seek help from adults or their parents less. Every year in Turkey, students who succeed in a national exam in the transition to high education are placed in qualified upper secondary institutions. The fact that only 8th-grade students take this exam requires students to study more. In this case, students stay at home and move away from their peers and study. This may have been effective in lower peer relations of 8th graders than other groups.

According to the number of children in their families, the difference in peer relations of gifted students was determined between those who grew up in families with two children ( $M=16.54$ ) and three children ( $M=15.15$ ). Erol (2015) stated that there was no significant difference in peer relationships of gifted students according to the number of siblings and that children living in single-child or two-child households had higher family satisfaction scores than those with siblings 3 and older. Lapidot-Berman & Oshrat (2009) examined the attitudes of non-gifted children towards their gifted siblings based on their birth order and age difference variables. Non-gifted children do not like the arrogance of their gifted siblings; as the age difference between siblings decreases, the frequency of discussion increases. These findings are limited to secondary school-level gifted students who continue to BİLSEMs in the five cities where the research was conducted, and it should be considered that different results can be obtained when the research is carried out with different sample groups in other cities in Turkey.

As a result, this research has revealed an interaction between social-emotional skills and peer relations. It can be said that as social-emotional skills develop, peer relationships develop, and similarly, as peer relationships develop, social-emotional skills and social cohesion increase. According to the results of the research, it can be said that gifted students need to support their social-emotional skills to increase their relationships with their peers. Kulaksızoğlu (2007) stated that children's communication with their peers during adolescence is an important factor in their socialization. Accordingly, an individual who is accepted by his peers develops his social-emotional skills and his self-confidence. In the opposite cases, adolescents who are not accepted and excluded by their friends can be mostly introverted, have low self-esteem, and are disgruntled individuals. One of the points to be considered is that not all peer groups are positive attitudes during adolescence. The cooperation of parents and experts and teachers is also important in children's adolescence.

Lastly, some suggestions were included for further research and practices based on the findings obtained from the study. For further research, this study was conducted only with the gifted student group. Researchers can conduct studies that compare social-emotional skills and peer relationships of the students with normal development and gifted students. They can also design studies that include interventions that would increase in-class and out-of-class peer adaptation in the schools where co-teaching continues. Social-emotional learning experiences can be examined, and studies that include needs analysis in terms of social-emotional skills of the students with normal development and gifted students can be conducted by including families in these studies. In another study, the domestic social-

emotional support processes of the gifted students can be examined in terms of sibling relationships in line with grades, for example, the needs of a gifted student at primary school level and a gifted student at secondary school level, their sibling and peer interaction patterns, can be examined in line with social-emotional development characteristics using qualitative and quantitative research methods. Social participation levels of the gifted children in the schools where they continue their education with their peers with normal development can be examined, besides, a study that is based on a comparison of SAC social participation levels can contribute to the literature. Studies that examine the gifted students' priorities in peer relationships and their experiences regarding the process in line with their own opinions can be conducted. It is seen that the number of studies conducted on the peer relationship of gifted students regarding different age groups is insufficient in our country, studies on this subject can be conducted. Education programs regarding social-emotional skills and peer relationships can be created for the parents and teachers who have a role in raising gifted children and the effectiveness of these programs can be examined. The level of social-emotional skills and peer relationships of gifted students can be comparatively examined at the end of this education.

For practice, contents based on social skills and peer relationships as well as the areas gifted students receive education in SACs can be developed, and gifted students' developments can be supported in different aspects. Programs that will support domestic patterns from the early period can be developed for the parents of gifted students, education modules can be developed to enable teachers who work in SACs to receive education to better understand gifted students out of their branches in line with the age groups and to support social-emotional skills that will increase the quality of interaction. Programs that will support gifted students' transition between grades can be prepared; for supporting the inclusion of gifted students in co-teaching environments, applied education based on supporting social skills and emotional awareness levels of gifted students can be planned for the teachers who teach in general education institutions. Development of social-emotional and friendship skills can be examined in line with grade levels and mentorship processes can be planned in the schools/institutions where the gifted students graduate; this can be planned sustainably in web-based digital environments to support peer skills.

#### AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

This study has been produced from the master's thesis that was completed by the first author under the supervision of the second author.

- The first author took an active role in the research question, associating the need for the study with the results of the literature review, methodology, receiving official permissions, preparing the data collection instruments, and analysis, writing the findings, and converting them into a final report at the end of the implementation.
- The second author provided guidance in deciding the research question, methodologically planning, receiving permissions, collecting data, analyzing the findings, and discussion sections and contributed to finalizing the thesis.
- Both authors contributed to designing the article's content and writing in compliance with the writing rules of the journal. Both authors read and confirmed the final form of the article.

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