

# EFFECT OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION PSYCHOEDUCATION PROGRAMME ON THE SECONDARY SCHOOL SIXTH GRADE STUDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS VIOLENCE AND THE LEVEL OF AGGRESSION

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of conflict resolution psychoeducation programme on the secondary school sixth grade students' attitude towards violence and the level of aggression. In order to examine the effect of conflict resolution psychoeducation programme on the secondary school sixth grade students' attitude towards violence and the level of aggression, quasi-experimental pattern with pre-test-post test control group was used. The study group of the research consists of 20 students. Among this group of 20 students, 10 students formed experimental group and 10 students formed control group. To choose the students to the conflict resolution psychoeducation programme, "Aggression Scale" developed by Gültekin (2008) was applied. The Conflict Resolution Psychoeducation Programme consisted of 8 sessions. It was applied throughout 8 weeks including 8 sessions, each lasting 40 minutes. No studies were led with the control group. In the study, "Attitudes toward Violence Inventory" which was developed by Blevins (2001) and adapted to Turkish by Balkıs, Duru and Buluş (2005) was used as data collecting tool. It was tested whether there are meaningful differences among pre-tests and post tests of Experimental and Control Groups by using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test. At the end of the research of conflict resolution psychoeducation programme, no meaningful differences were observed on the aggression levels of students in the experimental group. Nevertheless, it was observed that the scores of attitude towards violence were decreased. No meaningful difference was observed on the scores of students in the control group aggression and attitude towards violence.

**Keywords:** Conflict resolution, aggression, attitude towards violence

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## INTRODUCTION

Schools are the social environment where interpersonal interaction is highly experienced. Students are in constant contact with the individuals around them. Since the way of thinking, beliefs and values of each individual might be different from the others, to keep in contact occasionally causes conflicts (Taştan, 2010). The occurrence of interpersonal conflicts is natural and inevitable at schools where students spend certain parts of a day in the same time and place (Tümüklü, Kaçmaz, İkiz & Balcı, 2009). Students have been experiencing conflicts on the issues about whom they would sit together, which game they would play, when they would talk, when they would listen (Johnson & Johnson 1995).

Some students start school by already gaining qualifications on emotional and social skills in the family whilst some start school without gaining those skills. Ungained emotional management and social skills may cause interpersonal conflicts and disagreements in classrooms and schools (Türnüklü, 2004). Furthermore, the first period of adolescence starting in the ages 12-14, for this period being a term that attitudes of individuals exceed and their emotions turn upside down (Temel & Aksoy, 2010) experiencing interpersonal conflicts have been becoming almost inevitable in this age group. The general definitions of conflict are set up on the inconsistency among the ideas, emotions or actions of individuals and groups (Bullock & Foegen, 2002). Conflict can be defined as compelling a group or individual to prefer a certain option and the corruption of their decision making system at the end of this compelling (Taştan, 2010). Conflicts can occur when one or more individuals disagree on a subject or the needs of persons contradict each other (Öner, 2006). Conflicts have been formed and maintained by the attitudes and reactions performed by the parties towards each other and actualized by verbal or non-verbal communication (Folger, Poole & Stutman, 2013). When students experience case of conflict, they generally react with attitudes like using physical or verbal violence, abstaining, ignoring or self-reproach. (Schrumpf, Crawford & Bodine, 2007). The number of violence events are increasing at schools (Johnson & Johnson, 1995), educators and adults express that the number of

students who are aggressive, use violence and have communication problem are increasing (Schrumpf et al., 2007). On the research done by Collins, McAlleavy & Adamson (2004); 40% of students in primary school, 30% of students after primary schools express that they experience bullying, in another research done, 36 % of students on primary/ secondary levels ,26 % of students on secondary institutions suffer from physical hits and kicks have been observed (Whitney & Smith, 1993). Whenever the literature of our country is examined, in a study conducted on the 4th and 5th grades by Kapıcı (2004), 44% of the students express their mates sometimes push them, 20% express their mates kicks or slaps them from time to time, 29% of them express their mates sometimes make rude jokes on their bodies, 18% of them express that they expose their hair or ears being pulled by their mates. Durmuş & Gürkan (2005), in their study they examined the tendency of high school students towards violence and aggression, has observed mass fight incidents among various groups of students at school in violence and aggression incidents pointed out by students in 70.1 % rate, happening outside the borders of schools, concluded by students getting injured. In a study conducted by Çınkır & Kepenekçi (2003), educators have expressed that bullying is extensively used at schools and according to them students face mostly being pushed as physical bullying.

In this study conducted by Taşar (2019), at least one of the two students was found involved in the violence event. On the other hand, Kubar & Kırıl (2019); on their studies, reached the conclusion that 79.5% of the students were exposed to violence and they were exposed to physical violence the most. In a study conducted in Italy, it was found that the most frequently reported form of victimization was psychological violence (77%), then physical (52%), and these forms of violence were mostly applied by peers. (Longobardi et al., 2019). Galal, Emadeldin & Mwafy (2019), on the other hand, concluded that the prevalence of bullying behavior among adolescent students in the Egyptian countryside was high.

According to the report of Turkish Grand National Assembly Research Commission, it has been stated that 22% of students studying at secondary education during 2006-2007 educational year faced physical violence, 35,5 % of them applied physical violence (TBMM Araştırma Komisyonu Raporu, 2007).

Violence prevention and conflict resolution programmes teach students alternative methods to violence while resolving their interpersonal and personal problems (Peterson & Skiba, 2000) and conflict resolution peer mediation programmes have been generally urged as a way to decrease violence experienced and destructive leded conflicts at schools (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). Scrumpf et al. (2007), stated that conflict would not be positive or negative in itself, instead of that, chosen actions would convert conflict into competetion that enables to demolish the castles or to struggle that enables to grow up. If students from the school environment learn about the nature of conflict, conflict resolution reactions and strategies, they can resolve the conflicts derived from differences among them constructively (Taştan, 2010).

Violence experienced among people generally emerges because of conflicts being directed by aggressive and destructive ways. Thence, the fundamental way of reducing and preventing violence is to have the students gain managing interpersonal conflicts by constructive-peaceful-restorative methods (Tümüklü et al., 2009). Also conflict resolution education programmes reduce aggression by teaching solution of conflicts, offering concrete samples and demonstrating the children how to act (Akgun & Araz, 2014). Also researches conducted demonstrate that conflict resolution education programme raises the students' conflict resolution skills (Ateş, 2014; Çavuş-Kasik, 2012), is effective to gain on constructive conflict resolution skills (Akgun & Araz, 2014; Uysal, 2006) and increases positive conflict resolution skills (Akça, Korkmaz & Alkal, 2018; Taştan, 2004). On a study conducted on 6-year-old-children studying at preschool education institutions, Conflict Resolution and Mediation education has been observed as effective on decreasing destructive attitudes, increasing constructive attitudes (Koruklu & Yılmaz, 2010). Also, a meaningful decrease on the aggression

scores of students who have taken creative drama based conflict resolution education programmes (Gündoğdu, 2009), similarly, conflict resolution education programmes are effective on decreasing the tendency of aggressive behaviours on conflict resolutions that students come across (Uysal, 2006) Also an experimental study conducted by Akgun & Araz (2014), showed that the conflict resolution education programme decreases the reactive and proactive aggression levels of students. A study conducted by Cunningham et al. (1998) demonstrates that the student mediation programme decreases physically aggressive play ground attitude from 51% to 65% rate.

Grossman, Neckerman, Koepsell, Liu & Rivara (1997), on their studies, expressed that violence prevention programme providing a moderately observed reduction on physically aggressive attitude. Also in a study, in which researches the effects of against violence education programme on conflict methods, violence tendency and violent behaviours of students, it was found that getting this education forms a positive effect on conflict resolution skills and reduces the violence tendency of students, however not makes a meaningful difference on violence behavior scores (Uysal & Temel, 2006; as cited in Akgün & Araz, 2010).

Conflicts occur at schools in becoming constructive conflict resolution and that enable growing via physchoeducation programmes, it is thought to be useful in creating a more peaceful school environment. This study matters importance to reduce the violence tendencies and aggression levels of the sixth grade students, resolve their conflicts by using constructive conflict resolution methods and thus to provide contribution to the evolution of the students.

In addition to this, to prevent the aggression and violence incidents at schools, it will have important contribution as an inhibitor, protector, preventor counselling and pyshological consultation services. Ministry of Education by expressing that the number of incidents like violence, aggression, bullying have arisen, hence in order to provide the students to continue their schools in a safe enviroment and to achieve the desired success from the education system, have requested pyschosocial intervention services from the pyschological counselors for the students who are exposed to

and/or enforce violence, aggression (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2006).

The results of this study composing the contents of preventive counselling and psychological counselling programmes will be prepared by psychological counsellors, are expected to be guiding as regards to the reduction of aggression and violence at schools. In direction of this information, the purpose of this study is to examine the effects of conflict resolution psychoeducation programme on the attitude of secondary school sixth grade students towards violence and levels of aggression.

In the direction of this information, the aim of the study is to examine the effect of conflict resolution psychoeducation program on the attitudes of middle school sixth grade students towards aggression and violence. Depending on the purpose, the following hypothesis will be tested.

1. "Aggression" pretest and posttest difference scores significantly differ in favor of the experimental group.
2. "Attitude Toward Violence" pretest and posttest difference scores differ significantly in favor of the experimental group.

## METHOD

In this study, quasi-experimental pattern with pre-test post-test with control group was used. Quasi-experimental models are important alternatives when it is not possible to carry on real experiments (Karasar, 2014). The study group of the research consists of 20 students. Among this group of 20 students; 10 students compose experiment group, 10 students compose control group. For student

selection to Conflict Resolution Education Programme, Aggression Scale developed by Gültekin (2008) was applied.

Before starting the research, Aggression scale was applied on experiment and control groups. Following that, while giving 10 sessions of Conflict Resolution Skills Education to the experiment group, no procedure was applied to the control group. At the end of the education programme Aggression Scale and Attitudes Toward Violence Inventory were applied on experiment and control groups

## STUDY GROUP

This study was carried in a secondary school in Konya in 2017-2018 education in academic year. For student selection to Conflict Resolution Education Programme, aggression scale developed by Gültekin (2008) was applied. Data collection tool (Aggression Scale) was applied to 40 students. Study group of the research consisted of 20 students. From this group of 20 students, 10 students composed experiment group, 10 students composed control group.

Among the students whom scale was applied to, 20 students, especially those with the high aggression scores, were selected. Among the selected 20 students, 10 volunteer students who would continue to sessions and accept the rules of the group took part in experiment group, the rest 10 students took part in control group. All the students in the experiment group were 12-year-old 6th-grade students. Among the experiment group 8 of them were boys and 2 of them were girls, among those students in the control group 9 of them were boy one of them one was a girl.

Table 1. The results of Mann-Whitney U Test related to Aggression Test Scores of Experiment and Control Group

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank	U	P
Experiment	10	10.35	103.50	48.500	.909
Control	10	10.65	106.50		

When Table 1 is analyzed, no meaningful difference was observed among Experiment and

Control (U: 48.500  $p > .05$ ) group in the results of analysis.

## DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

### AGGRESSION SCALE (AS):

The Aggression scale which was prepared to determine the aggression levels of students was developed by Gültekin (2008). Scale consisting of 15 items comprises triple likert (always, sometimes, never) type. As a result of factor analysis applied to the scale, the common variance factor of items in the scale were observed to vary between 0.25 and 0.66. For the structural validity of the scale Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was applied. As a result of the CFA analysis, for the accordance beneficence indexes (chi-square=346,68 sd=87,  $p < 0.01$ , GFI=0.95, AGFI=0.96, CFI=0.97, S-RMR=0.03 and RMSEA=0.04) were provided model-data accordance for the tested model. For the reliability practice, alpha internal consistency coefficient and re-test test method were used. The alpha internal consistency coefficient obtained over 1233 datas was found as 0.82. For the re-test test method, scale was applied to 75 persons every three weeks and Pearson Correlation Coefficient was found as 0.64. (Gültekin, 2008) In the result of exploratory factor analysis done for the structure validity of the scale, it was determined that the items were gathered in one factor and the factor loads were in an acceptable gap. As a result of the analysis, Aggression Scale can be considered as a valid and reliable measuring tool to determine the aggression levels of elementary education second level students (Gültekin, 2008).

### ATTITUDES TOWARD VIOLENCE INVENTORY (ATVI):

Attitudes toward Violence Inventory which was developed by Blevins (2001) and adapted into Turkish by Balkıs et al. (2005) is one-dimensional and consists of 11 items that describes the students' attitudes towards violence. It is a quadruple likert type (1- disagree, 4-totally agree) scale. The high scores obtained from the scale demonstrate that the attitude of the student towards violence is high. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale .737 and those total item correlations were observed varying between .39 and .53 Factor analysis was applied to test the structure analysis of the scale. As a result of the analyzes, factor loads were observed getting together on an 2.943

eigenvalue single factor that explained the 36,8% of the variance.

## PROCESS

Conflict resolution psychoeducation programme consists of 8 sessions. Programme consisting of 8 sessions was applied to the experiment group each in 40 minutes, throughout 8 weeks. No studies were conducted by the control group. Before starting to apply the education programme, Aggression Scale and Attitude Towards Violence Inventory were applied to experiment and control groups as pre-test. After completion of the education programme Aggression Scale and Attitude towards Violence Inventory were re-applied as the post-test.

As a summary, following goals and achievements were included in sessions.

1st Session: Forming the group, having knowledge related to conflict and nature of conflict, Meeting with group members, setting goals, determining the rules necessary to be followed in the group, having information about the purpose and content of the conflict resolution education program.

2nd Session: Providing students to create a general awareness through their emotions. Comprehending how emotions effect the attitudes. In conflict disagreement conditions, comprehending self emotions and other persons emotions.

3rd Session: Building effective listening and effective communication skills, providing students to comprehend the attitudes restraining active listening and empathizing during the conflict and daily life, to help to gain the skill of listening in order to sense the emotions, to gain the ability of distinguishing emotions and events.

4th Session: Creating the consciousness about getting angry or losing one's temper is natural, however it is unacceptable to harm ourselves or others. Raising consciousness related to things would be done in anger management.

5th Session: Understanding the concept of conflict, comprehension of what conflict means in human life, perception of the results of the reactions to the conflicts, perception of the ways of conflict resolution.

6th session: Understanding Brainstorming (idea storming) method, perception of how each of the conflict resolution ways will affect the outcome of the conflict.

7th session: Understanding the steps of conflict resolution. Applying learned skills in group environment. How to solve the problems we experienced, understanding the steps of conflict resolution. Applying learned skills in group environment.

Gaining the ability to use the last 4 steps of the conflict resolution process:

1-Gaining the ability to tend towards the future and then trying to understand what happened in the past.

2-Gaining the ability to develop options

3-Gaining the ability to determine the applicable options

4-Gaining the ability to have fair deals which will satisfy both sides.

8th session: Consolidation of the problem solving skills learned. General evaluation of the conflict resolution training program application (by the chairperson and participants) and finalizing of sessions.

While creating Conflict Resolution Psychoeducation Programme gain and activities in

five sources were used. (Taştan, 2010; Akgün & Araz, 2010; Türnüklü et al., 2009; Schrupf, et al., 2007; Çoban, 2013).

#### DATA ANALYSIS

Because scores taken from the measurements by the samples participated in experiment and control groups for the data analysis did not have a normal distribution, non parametric analyzes were used (Bayram, 2009). In order to test whether there was a meaningful difference or not among the aggression levels of experiment and control groups, unrelated groups Mann Whitney U test was used.

Also by using Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test, it was checked whether there was a meaningful difference in experiment and control groups or not among pre-test and post-test. The data analysis was done by SPSS 22.0 package programme.

#### FINDINGS

The results of Wilcoxon signed ranks test related whether the aggression levels of experiment group participants showed a meaningful difference before and after the experiment are given on Table 2.

Table 2. The Results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Pre Test Post Test of Experiment Group

Post Test- Pre Test	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank	z	p
Negative Row	7	5.50	38.50	-1.904	.057
Positive Row	2	3.25	6.50		
Equal	1				

The results of the analysis show that there is no meaningful difference in scores of aggression scale between experiment group participants scores before and after the experiments ( $z=-1.904, p>.05$ ).

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test results related whether control group participants' aggression levels show a meaningful difference before and after experiment are given on Table 3.

Table 3. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test Results of Aggression of Control Group Pre-Test and Post Test

Post Test- Pre Test	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank	Z	p
Negative Row	5	5.50	27.50	-1.338	.181

Positive Row	3	2.83	8.50		
Equal	2				

The results of analysis, show that there is no meaningful difference between the aggression scale scores of control group participants before and after the experiment ( $z=-1.338, p>.05$ ).

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test results related whether experiment group participants' levels of attitude towards violence levels show a meaningful difference before and after experiment are given on Table 4.

Table 4. The Results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test on Experiment Attitude Towards Violence Pre-Test and Post Test

Post Test- Pre-Test	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank	z	p
Negative Row	9	5.72	51.50	-2.449	.014
Positive Row	1	3.50	3.50		
Equal	0				

The results of analysis show that there is a meaningful difference between attitude towards violence scale scores of the experiment group participants before and after the test, ( $z=-2.449, p<.05$ ). When rank average and sums of the difference scores were considered, this observed difference is seen in favor of negative rows namely pre-test scores. According to this score, it can be

said that Conflict Resolution Programme has an important effect on reducing the attitudes of participants towards violence.

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test results related whether control group participants' levels of attitude towards violence levels show a meaningful difference before and after experiment are given on Table 5.

Table 5. The results of Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test on Control Group Attitude Towards Violence Pre test and Post Test

Post Test- Pre Test	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank	Z	p
Negative Row	6	5.50	33.00	-1.248	.212
Positive Row	3	4.00	12.00		
Equal	1				

The results of analysis, show that there is no meaningful difference between the aggression scale scores of control group participants before and after the experiment ( $z=-1.248, p>.05$ ).

#### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is; to examine the effect of conflict resolution physchoeducation programme on the secondary school sixth grade students' attitude towards violence and the level of aggression. As a result of this research no meaningful difference was observed on the aggression levels of the samples participated the conflict resolution pyschoeducation experimental group. However, the scores of attitude towards violence were observed to decrease. As to

summarize, conflict resolution psychoeducation programme was effective on the reduction of the students' attitude towards violence. Also in a similar study parallel to our research findings, taking against violence education programme, created a positive effect on conflict resolution skills of students, reduced the violence tendency of students, however it was found that it created no meaningful difference on violence attitude scores (Uysal & Temel, 2006; as cited in Akgün & Araz, 2010).

Additionally, it was found that negotiation (problem solving) and peer mediation training were not effective on reducing the aggressive attitude of the students (Ergül, 2008), coping with violence education was not an effective method on reducing violence attitudes (Yorgun, 2007).

Ergül (2008), on his study conducted on ninth grade students, explained that negotiation (problem solving) and peer mediation training was not effective on reduction of aggressive levels of students, the participants of the study experienced difficulty while controlling aggression impulse because of they were in puberty, they did not have any education from their families about controlling their aggression impulses.

When similar studies were examined, it was observed that, there was meaningful reduction on aggression scores of students who had taken creative drama-based conflict resolution education programme (Gündoğdu, 2009), conflict resolution programme was effective on reduction of tendency of applying aggressor attitudes while resolving conflicts (Uysal, 2006) and it reduced the reactive and proactive aggression levels of the students (Akgun & Araz, 2014). Rossman et al. (1997) expressed on their studies that violence prevention programme provided a moderately observed reduction on physically aggressive attitudes. Based on this information, there were various findings towards whether it is effective or not on reduction of aggressive behaviours of students.

In our study, although conflict resolution psychoeducation programme formed from 8 sessions were not effective on the aggressive attitudes of the students, it provided a reduction on their attitude towards violence. By reason of the participants of the study are in the first period of adolescence (12-14-year-old) and these ages being the times individuals exaggerated on behaviors, when emotions being turned upside down (Temel & Aksoy, 2010), it is thought that longer trainings would be effective.

Furthermore, for the families also on the behalf of exposing example behaviours towards children on the conflicts experienced at home, it is thought that giving parenting education regarding conflict resolution would create positive impacts. When it is examined from this point of view, more effective results can be maintained by expanding the content of psychoeducation programme consisting of 8 sessions, increasing the number of sessions and also adding peer mediation. Additionally, by giving conflict resolution education both students and their families in paralel in future work, results can be examined.

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