



The Effect of Social-Emotional Learning Program on Social-Emotional Skills, Academic Achievement and Classroom Climate

Hanife Esen Ayy n, Assist. Prof. Dr.,  anakkale Onsekiz Mart University, hanifeesen@comu.edu.tr

 0000-0001-9363-7083

 iğdem Şahin Taşkın, Prof. Dr.,  anakkale Onsekiz Mart University, csahin@comu.edu.tr

 0000-0002-6341-5380

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Abstract

This research aimed to examine the effects of “You Can Do It! Education” and “Emotional and Social Development” which are social-emotional learning programs, on fourth-grade students’ development of social-emotional skills, academic achievement, and perceptions of the classroom climate in Turkey. A mixed methods research design was used to investigate the effectiveness of the programs. Fourth-grade students were randomly assigned to the groups. Two classes in YCDI! Education and ESDP are taught each week. Thus, each program was applied for 8 weeks in the experimental groups. Besides, elementary teachers conducted their regular Turkish lessons for the control and experimental groups. Reflective diaries were kept and observations were made by the researcher during the experiment to explain the findings in detail. The results indicate that You Can Do It! Education program had a positive effect on students’ social-emotional skills, academic achievement, and classroom climate perceptions in contrast to the Emotional and Social Development Program. Findings will contribute to the development of elementary students’ social-emotional learning in national and international contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

Social-emotional skills are an important aspect of human life because such skills facilitate not only relationships with others but also our ability to manage our own emotions (Lopes, Salovey, & Straus, 2003). Social-emotional learning refers to the development of social-emotional skills that enable children to learn effectively (Weissberg, Resnik, Payton, & O'Brien, 2003). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2013) defined the SEL concept as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Research has shown that social-emotional learning programs effectively reduce problematic behaviors, increase active participation and academic achievement at all education levels, from preschool through high school (Diekstra, 2008; Greenberg et al., 2003; Weissberg, Kumpfer, & Seligman, 2003; Zins Bloodworth, Weissberg and Walberg, 2004). Such programs help students curb unfavorable behaviors while improving their social-emotional skills and enabling academic achievement (Adelman & Taylor, 2000; Greenberg et al., 2003; Payton et al., 2008). These findings demonstrate that social-emotional skills are of great importance in the learning-teaching process (Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards, 2013; Senemoğlu, 2011). Although the development of social-emotional skills is considered important in the preschool period as well as in other educational stages, many children seem to enter into elementary schools without having acquired these skills (McClelland, Morrison, & Holmes, 2000; Peth-Pierce, 2000; Raver & Knitzer, 2002). They have difficulty in expressing themselves, controlling their emotions (e.g. anger), listening, sharing their belongings, and cooperating (Türnüklü, 2004). This leads to a decrease in their academic and social achievements and an increase in violence and negative habits, conflicts between individuals as well as behavioral disorders (Baydan, 2010; Türnüklü, 2004). Research in Turkey has revealed the presence of undesirable behaviors that frequently occur in schools, such as communication problems between students, conflict, physical violence tendencies, verbal violence, vandalism, psychological violence, social nonconformity, alcohol and substance abuse, and disinterest in classes (Eken, 2014; Mutluoğlu & Bulut-Serin, 2010; Öğülmüş, 2006; Türnüklü, 2004; Uğurlu, Doğan, Şofortakımcı, Ay, & Zorlu, 2013). These problems stem in part from schools' lack of focus on a program that addresses social-emotional skills in a systematic manner (Cohen, 1999; Türnüklü, 2004). Today, there are many social-emotional learning programs aimed at improving children's social-emotional skills and making them happy and successful individuals, such as You Can Do It! Education (Bernard, 2008, 2013; Vernon & Bernard, 2019; Yamamoto, Matsumoto & Bernard, 2017), Responsive Classroom (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2004), I Can Problem-Solve (Shure, 2001), Head Start (Hambidge et al., 1976) and Strong Start (Berry-Krazmien and Torres-Fernández, 2007). An examination of relevant literature indicated that research in Turkey mostly focuses on the cognitive levels of students while overlooking their social-emotional development and well-being. There are a limited number of studies on the social-emotional development of elementary school students in Turkey (Baydan, 2010; Diken et al., 2011; Küçükkaragöz & Erdoğan, 2017), which indicates that researchers have not adequately investigated students' social-emotional development (Türnüklü, 2004). You Can Do It! Education (YCDI!) program has a focus on teaching social-emotional skills (confidence, persistence, organization, getting along, resilience) that contribute to student wellbeing and achievement in language acquisition. In various countries, YCDI! Education has proved to be an effective program that focuses on students' social-emotional capacities, motivations, and academic achievement in language acquisition, science, history, and math (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012; Bernard, 2006; Bernard & Walton, 2011; Brown, 1999; Pina, 1996). Due to an awareness of the importance of individual life and the widespread use of social-emotional learning programs in schools in other countries, Turkey began to recognize social-emotional learning. Thus, the Emotional and Social Development Program (ESDP) is incorporated into elementary and secondary schools in Turkey as a selective course (Board of Education, 2012). This program is of great importance since it is the first social-emotional learning program incorporated into schools by the Board of Education. This curriculum has been developed previously for gifted students and its effectiveness has not been

evaluated for regular students. Accordingly, implementing this curriculum for regular students will provide us with information about the effectiveness of the curriculum for the first time. Besides, this study also examines the influence of the YCDI! Education program (Bernard, 2008) and ESDP on elementary students. YCDI! Education can contribute to the development of academic skills (Bernard, 2017) as well as social-emotional learning wellbeing (Bernard & Walton, 2011). This feature of the program differs from other social-emotional learning programs. In this study, the effects of the development of social-emotional skills on academic achievement for reading comprehension skills are analyzed. Many studies have indicated the relationship between social-emotional skills and language skills (Bracket, Rivers, Reyes and Salovey, 2012; Doyle ve Bramwell, 2006; Foster, Lambert, Abbott-Shim, McCarty ve Franze, 2005; Jones, Brown ve Hoglund, 2010; Jones, Brown ve Aber, 2011; Lonigan, Bloomfield, Anthony, Bacon, Phillips ve Samwel, 1999; Rivers ve Brackett, 2011; Wilson, 2015). Examining closely, these studies revealed that social-emotional learning programs are effective on language development. Based on this research, investigating the influence of social-emotional learning programs on students' reading achievement is of great importance.

Researchers also indicated that social-emotional learning programs provide a positive classroom climate (Aviles, Anderson, & Davila, 2006; Battistich, Schaps, Watson, & Solomon, 1996; Cohen, 1999; Collie, Shapka & Perry, 2012; Denham, 2006; Greenberg et al. 2003; Klein, 2002; Linares et al. 2005; Lopes & Salovey, 2004; Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1993). Accordingly, this study also examined the effects of social-emotional learning programs on students' perceptions of classroom climate. In this research YCDI!Education was adapted into to Turkish language and culture for the first time and its effectiveness was investigated. Also, the effectiveness of ESDP was evaluated for regular students. Besides, this research examines the relationship between social-emotional skills and classroom climate for the first time in Turkey. Based on these explanations, the aims of this research were determined as follows:

AIMS OF THE STUDY

1. To explore whether YCDI! Education and ESDP effect fourth-grade students' social-emotional skills
2. To explore whether YCDI! Education and ESDP effect fourth-grade students' academic achievement
3. To explore whether YCDI! Education and ESDP effect fourth-grade students' perceptions of classroom climate

METHOD

RESEARCH DESIGN

For this study, the data collection process involved a mixed-methods approach consisting of both qualitative and quantitative research data collection techniques (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Clark, 2011; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The research was designed in a nested mixed method. The nested mixed-method design involves more than one type of data (Creswell & Clark, 2011). It allows researchers to test the interventions or programs applied (Creswell, 2014). Regarding the research aims, a nested mixed method design is considered appropriate for this research. An experimental research design was applied in this study. Besides, reflective diaries were also administered to understand the implementation of the programs in depth. The experimental phase and the observation process are further described in the procedure.

PROCEDURE

A pretest-posttest control group design was used in this study. This experimental design is frequently used in education and psychology. It consists of at least two groups, one for the experimental and one for the control group (Büyüköztürk et al. 2009; Büyüköztürk, 2011; Howitt and

Cramer, 2010; Karasar, 2006). This design provides statistically strong findings to the researchers in testing the effect of the experiment on the dependent variable. It is a powerful design that allows interpreting the findings in the context of cause and effect (Büyüköztürk, 2011). For this reason, this design was administered in this research. Accordingly, the research was carried out in three different fourth grade classes of a school in Çanakkale, Turkey. After selecting the school, students were assigned to one of the three groups: YCDI! Education, ESDP, and a control group. In experimental studies to ensure internal validity, the sample should be selected randomly (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006). However, in this study non-random sampling was used. Since students were previously assigned to the classes by the school administration, these classes were assigned as experimental and control groups. But, before identifying the groups, the information about students' achievements, abilities, and attitudes was obtained through meetings with the school principal and teachers. Thus, three classrooms that are similar in terms of students' achievements, abilities, and attitudes were identified as Experimental Group I (EG I), Experimental Group II (EG II), and control groups. Accordingly, the differences in groups were reduced. The researchers applied a pre-and post-test group design in this study to examine the effects of YCDI! Education and the ESDP on students' social-emotional skills, academic achievement, and classroom climate perceptions. Two classes in YCDI! and ESDP are taught each week. The duration of each class was 40 minutes. Thus, each program was applied for 8 weeks (16 lessons) in the experimental groups. However, for the control group, teachers conducted their regular Turkish lessons. Detailed information about the experimental procedure can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Experimental Procedure

	EG I	EG II	Control Group
SEL Program	YCDI! Education	EDSP	None
Implementer	Researcher	Researcher	-
Duration	8 weeks	8 weeks	-
Turkish lessons implementer	Elementary Teacher	Elementary Teacher	Elementary Teacher
Observation weeks of Turkish lessons	2 nd , 5 th , and 8 th	2 nd , 5 th , and 8 th	2 nd , 5 th , and 8 th

Experimental Group I (EG-I) consisted of 12 female students and 15 male students, Experimental Group II (EG-II) consisted of 14 female students and 14 male students and the Control Group consisted of 10 female students and 15 male students. Elementary teachers instructed Turkish language classes, and one of the researchers taught the social-emotional learning programs. To prevent teachers from applying different practices in the Turkish classroom, the same daily plan was implemented. The teachers and researchers planned the Turkish lessons together. To determine students' social-emotional learning levels, the Social-Emotional Learning Skills Scale, the What Is Happening in This Class? scale and the Turkish Course Achievement Test were applied in all of the groups before and after the experimental phase.

During the experimental procedure, the researchers carried out three observations of the Turkish lessons for each experimental and control group during the second, fifth, and eighth week of the experimental process. Thus, the experimental and control groups were monitored to determine whether the teachers were teaching the same subjects using the same teaching methods for the Turkish lessons. The researchers observed the teachers' and students' activities and behaviors as non-participating observers. To prevent teachers and students from being affected by the researchers during non-participating observations, the researchers met with them several times before the experimental phase. The researchers explained to the participants that their names would not be identified and that the information the researchers gathered through the observations would only be used for research purposes. The first part of the observation form was structured to monitor the coordination among the experimental groups, the events realized during the lessons, the time spent on

the activities, and the role of the students. The second part involved the contents presented in the social-emotional learning lessons that were reflected in the Turkish lesson.

SAMPLE

The participants constituted fourth-grade elementary students in Çanakkale/Turkey during the fall semester of the 2015- 2016 academic year. One school participated in the research. The experimental and control groups were randomly assigned.

DATA COLLECTION

READING ACHIEVEMENT TEST

To investigate and gain a better understanding of the comprehension skills of fourth-grade students, the researchers used an achievement test developed by the author. The achievement test included 21 items with four options. The item analysis method was applied to ensure the success of the test. The internal consistency coefficient of KR-20 for 21 items was calculated as 0.880. This finding indicated that the instrument was reliable (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2005).

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING SKILLS SCALE

In this study, the researchers used the Social-Emotional Learning Skills Scale, developed by the authors, to determine the social-emotional skills of third and fourth graders. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis results revealed a valid and reliable 27-item scale. The sub-factors are relationships among friends, success, self-management, perceptions of friendship, impulse control, self-confidence, and persistence. Goodness of fit indices of the scale are $\chi^2 = 501.49$, $df = 303$, $RMSEA = 0.038$, $NFI = 0.92$, $NNFI = 0.96$, $CFI = 0.97$, $GFI = 0.92$ and $AGFI = 0.90$. These indices revealed that the scale showed a good and excellent level of fit. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the Social-Emotional Learning Skills Scale is .856 for the entire scale.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THIS CLASS? SCALE

This scale, which was developed by Fraser, Fisher, and McRobbie (1996) and adapted by authors to apply to Turkish language and culture, aims to determine how students perceive the classroom climate in a learning environment. Based on the results of the confirmatory factor analysis, the scale's goodness of fit indices are $\chi^2 = 2883.90$, $RMSEA = 0.05$, $NFI = 0.92$, $NNFI = 0.96$, $CFI = 0.96$, $GFI = 0.81$ and $AGFI = 0.79$. These indices revealed that the scale showed a good and excellent level of fit. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was applied for the reliability of the scale. The Cronbach's alpha was calculated as being between .75 and .93.

REFLECTIVE DIARIES

A reflective diary is a means to record a researcher's experience during an experimental process. The elementary purpose of reflective diaries is to assess one's teaching practices, and diary entries typically focus on a researcher's individual experiences and subjective judgments. Reflective elements that are important for social-emotional learning have been identified based on the purpose of the research. Accordingly, data collected through the reflective diaries were used to explain the data derived from the experiment in depth.

OBSERVATION FORM

Based on the purpose of this research, simultaneous processing of the same subjects in the Turkish program in the experimental and control groups participating in the research was important in terms of controlling for the experimental application. In addition, the researchers examined the Turkish program in terms of applying the lesson plans of the classroom teachers and the role of the teacher and the students in the classroom. Specifically, the researchers observed the similarities and differences between the groups. Their application of observation served as a two-dimensional structure that dealt with the technical and content properties of the program. The first part of the

observation form was structured to monitor the co-ordination among the experimental groups, the activities carried out in the lessons, the time taken for the activities, and the role of the students. In the second part, the contents presented in the social-emotional learning lessons were reflected in the Turkish program, and the student's reactions to the social-emotional items were discussed.

DATA ANALYSIS

The researchers examined the normality of the data set to determine whether statistical tests could be used. Therefore, the skewness and kurtosis coefficients of the data obtained from the pre-test and post-test were calculated, histogram and Q-Q graphs were examined and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied to the data. As a result of the analyses performed, the researchers found that a normal distribution of the data set existed. Thus, parametric tests were also used in this research. What Is Happening in This Class Scale, the Social-emotional Learning Skills Scale, and the Turkish Course Achievement Test were used as pre-tests to determine the levels of the groups before beginning the experimental phase. A variance analysis was applied to the data to determine whether the groups had similar pre-test scores. The findings showed that there was no significant difference between the pre-test scores of the groups. Dependent two-sample t-tests were applied to compare the pre-test and post-test scores of the groups.

The researchers applied deductive content analysis to examine the data obtained from the reflective diaries and observations. This type of analysis implies that researchers should examine the concepts they want to see in the available data (Patton, 2002). The findings obtained from the experimental phase are supported by reflective diaries. Regarding the observation data, elementary codes and categories were developed according to the purpose of the research. In the first part, observations were compared to determine if the texts they worked on in the Turkish program in the experimental and control groups were the same. In addition, the groups were compared, taking into account the extent to which the classroom teachers supported participation in the class and the interest of the students in the classroom. In the second part of the analysis, the data obtained from the observations were interpreted in consideration of how the social-emotional skills are applied in a Turkish lesson in terms of the teacher and students.

FINDINGS/RESULTS

FINDINGS RELATED TO SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING SKILLS

A dependent two-sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test groups' Social-Emotional Learning Skills Scale scores (Table 2).

Table 2. *Dependent Two Sample t-Test Results for Social-Emotional Learning Skills Scale*

		YCDI!						EDSP						Control					
		N	X	Sd.	df	t	p	N	X	Sd.	df	t	p	N	X	Sd.	df	t	p
Relationship	Pre-test	27	2.28	.37	26	-.447	.658	28	2.93	.11	27	3.091	.005*	25	2.66	.18	24	4.766	.000*
	Post-test	27	2.32	.26				28	2.46	.80				25	2.34	.28			
Success	Pre-test	27	2.39	.46	26	3.999	.000*	28	2.96	.10	27	3.999	.002*	25	2.77	.18	24	1.141	.265
	Post-test	27	2.86	.23				28	2.70	.38				25	2.69	.33			
Self-management	Pre-test	27	2.15	.31	26	5.514	.000*	28	2.85	.20	27	4.585	.000*	25	2.68	.26	24	-.102	.920
	Post-test	27	2.64	.28				28	2.52	.36				25	2.69	.39			
Perception of Friendship	Pre-test	27	2.20	.53	26	3.651	.001*	28	2.89	.15	27	3.116	.004*	25	2.58	.32	24	.935	.359
	Post-test	27	2.61	.32				28	2.65	.36				25	2.47	.43			
Impulse Control	Pre-test	27	2.15	.55	26	3.066	.005*	28	2.83	.33	27	2.837	.009*	25	2.67	.31	24	.747	.462
	Post-test	27	2.62	.49				28	2.50	.48				25	2.56	.59			
Self-confidence	Pre-test	27	1.91	.36	26	2.651	.013*	28	2.53	.36	27	2.485	.019*	25	2.15	.39	24	-.503	.619
	Post-test	27	2.24	.43				28	2.25	.44				25	2.21	.345			
Persistence	Pre-test	27	2.10	.51	26	3.750	.001*	28	2.83	.21	27	3.622	.001*	25	2.57	.28	24	.000	.999
	Post-test	27	2.56	.34				28	2.45	.48				25	2.57	.22			
Social-Emotional Learning Skills Scale	Pre-test	27	2.19	.25	26	-3.962	.001*	28	2.85	.08	27	.748	.461	25	2.60	.06	24	.765	.452
	Post-test	27	2.40	.19				28	2.81	.28				25	2.56	.23			

As exhibited in Table 2, a significant difference was observed between the means of the pre-test scores and the post-test scores of YCDI! [$t(26) = -3.962, p < 0.05$]. The findings from the t-test based on the responses of YCDI! to the sub-factors of the Social-emotional Learning Skills Scale are as follows: success, [$t(26) = -3.999, p < 0.05$] self-management [$t(26) = -5.514, p < 0.05$] perception of friendship [$t(26) = -3.651, p < 0.05$] and impulse control [$t(26) = -3.066, p < 0.05$]. These findings also show a significant difference. However, a close examination of the findings revealed that the difference is found in favor of the pre-test. Self-confidence shows that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores based on the result of [$t(26) = -2.651, p < 0.05$] as well as persistence [$t(26) = -3.750, p < 0.05$]. Regarding the reflective diaries, it is noteworthy that the students in YCDI! had problems with impulse control during the first week. Findings from the reflective diaries also showed that while the students in YCDI! noted that they did not have the right to speak in the first weeks and they did not want to be criticized, they showed signs of being angry and also cried. However, in the following weeks, this behavior considerably lessened. In addition to these findings, when the findings obtained by the researcher from the reflective diaries are evaluated, it is noteworthy that the students in the Experimental I group had problems with impulse control in the first weeks. For example, it was observed that students resorted to verbal violence and mocked each other when another student intervened while a student was speaking. However, in the following weeks, verbal violence or mockery was rarely encountered, as they became conscious of respecting different opinions. This finding seems to support the finding that the impulse control skill obtained as a result of the experimental application increased. This indicated that findings support the results of the self-management skill, which expresses that the individual controls the emotions, thoughts, and behaviors among the sub-factors of the Social-Emotional Learning Skills Scale of YCDI!. Overall, YCDI! Education contributes to the development of the social-emotional skills of the students in EG-I in many dimensions. There is no significant difference found between the pre-test post-test of experimental group II regarding the Social-Emotional Learning Skills Scale [$t(27) = .748, p < 0.05$]. This shows that the ESDP did not affect school students' development of social-emotional skills. Findings from the reflective diaries also supported the problem of verbal violence, ridicule, and annoyance in the classroom. For example, during the programs of the experimental groups, the findings demonstrated that the students were impatient and intolerant towards each other. Accordingly, when the findings of the Social-Emotional Learning Skills Scale of ESDP were examined based on the sub-factors of impulse control and relationship among friends, it became apparent that these skills were not sufficiently developed because of the experiment. When reviewing the findings, no significant difference was found between the mean of the pre-test scores of the control group and the mean of the post-test scores for the control group ($t(24) = .765, p < 0.05$). The observation data revealed that YCDI! had a significant increase in-class participation and in self-expression behaviors when compared to the other groups. Besides, although during the first two observations, a student in different friend groups did not welcome students from other friend groups, their behavior changed in the following weeks in YCDI! Also, students in the YCDI! group started to use more positive language during communication with friends and the teacher.

FINDINGS RELATED TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Findings obtained as a means to answer the third research question are presented in this part of the research. A dependent two-sample t-test was applied to the scale to determine whether a significant difference existed between the pre-test and post-test scores obtained from the Reading Achievement Test of YCDI!, ESDP, and the control group (Table 3).

Table 3. *Dependent Two-Sample t-Test Results for Reading Achievement Test*

	YCDI!						ESDP						Control					
	N	X	Sd.	df	t	p	N	X	Sd.	df	t	p	N	X	Sd.	df	t	p
Pre-test	27	10.77	4.40	26	-2.41	.003*	28	15.25	3.60	27	-.485	.632	25	12.72	3.28	24	-.986	.334
Post-test	27	12.85	4.27				28	15.50	3.31				25	13.64	4.04			

The findings demonstrated a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of YCDI! [$t(26) = -2.410, p < 0.05$]. This indicated the reading achievements of the students in YCDI! significantly increased. As the data in Table 3 illustrated, the researchers did not find a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of ESDP [$t(27) = -.485, p < 0.05$] and the control group [$t(24) = -.986, p < 0.05$]. Based on the observations, the programs in YCDI!, ESDP, and the control group were very similar to each other in terms of the practice of the program. In this respect, it was determined that the practice of the program plan did not affect the data obtained from the experimental groups concerning academic achievement because of the experiment.

FINDINGS RELATED TO CLASSROOM CLIMATE PERCEPTIONS

The researchers performed a dependent two-sample t-test to determine whether a significant difference existed between the pre-test and post-test scores obtained from YCDI!, ESDP, and the control group for the What Is Happening in This Class? scale (as shown in Table 4).

When examining the findings, the researchers observed a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the students in YCDI! [$t(26) = -3.122, p < 0.05$]. In addition, the findings regarding the subscales of the What Is Happening in This Class Scale indicated that there were no significant differences between the teachers' support [$t(26) = 1.141, p < 0.05$] and participation [$t(26) = -.102, p < 0.05$]. However, a significant difference was evident in student cohesiveness [$t(26) = -2.551, p < 0.05$]; investigation [$t(26) = -3.116, p < 0.05$]; task orientation [$t(26) = 2.701, p < 0.05$]; cooperation [$t(26) = -3.523, p < 0.05$]; and equity [$t(26) = -2.393, p < 0.05$]. In addition to these findings obtained from the experiment, when the findings in the reflective diaries were examined, the researchers assessed the demands of the students in YCDI! to participate in classes and activities had increased significantly since the first weeks. Reflective diaries revealed that students are willing to participate in lessons actively in the experimental group I. However, as Table 4 illustrates, no significant difference existed between the pre-test and post-test scores of ESDP [$t(27) = -1.499, p < 0.05$]. Similarly, there was no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group [$t(24) = -2.644, p < 0.05$]. This finding indicated that the classroom climate perceptions of the students in ESDP and the control group did not change. Moreover, when reviewing the reflective diaries, the researchers found that the students in ESDP did not express a willingness to participate in the activities, did not participate in the activities, and did not cooperate with the majority of the other students participating in the activities.

Table 4. *Dependent Two Sample t-Test Results for What is Happening in This Class? Scale*

		YCDI!					ESDP					Control							
		N	X	Ss.	Sd.	t	p	N	X	Ss.	Sd.	t	p	N	X	Ss.	Sd.	t	p
Student Cohesiveness	Pretest	27	2.37	.39	26	2.551	.017*	28	2.65	.31	27	1.765	.089	25	2.61	.34	24	1.236	.228
	Posttest	27	2.58	.41				28	2.58	.35				25	2.51	.36			
Teacher Support	Pretest	27	2.77	.18	24	1.141	.265	28	2.37	.39	27	1.384	.178	25	2.48	.36	24	.745	.463
	Posttest	27	2.69	.33				28	2.44	.34				25	2.43	.37			
Participation	Pretest	27	2.68	.26	24	-.102	.920	28	2.09	.44	27	4.349	.000*	25	2.37	.38	24	.954	.349
	Posttest	27	2.69	.39				28	2.35	.31				25	2.28	.38			
Investigation	Pretest	27	2.30	.48	26	3.116	.004*	28	2.30	.48	27	3.116	.004*	25	2.64	.40	24	1.787	.087
	Posttest	27	2.79	.87				28	2.79	.87				25	2.46	.38			
Task Orientation	Pretest	27	2.73	.24	26	2.701	.012*	28	2.59	.38	27	1.965	.060	25	2.70	.37	24	1.205	.240
	Posttest	27	2.83	.23				28	2.71	.23				25	2.59	.40			
Cooperation	Pretest	27	2.34	.51	26	3.523	.002*	28	2.26	.45	27	2.797	.009*	25	2.37	.52	24	.145	.886
	Posttest	27	2.66	.32				28	2.45	.42				25	2.35	.46			
Equity	Pretest	27	2.62	.33	26	2.393	.024*	28	2.48	.42	27	2.154	.040*	25	2.61	.38	24	.653	.520
	Posttest	27	2.79	.29				28	2.64	.30				25	2.54	.46			
What Is Happening in This Class	Pretest	27	2.15	.26	26	3.122	.004*	28	2.65	.20	27	1.499	.145	25	2.43	.26	24	2.644	.054
	Posttest	27	2.38	.35				28	2.71	.194				25	2.59	.33			

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings indicated that there was a significant difference between the averages of the pre-test and post-test scores in EG-I for the Social-Emotional Learning Skills Scale, the What Is Happening in This Class? scale and the Reading Achievement Test associated with YCDI! Education. Notably, the researchers determined that YCDI! Education has a positive effect on students' social-emotional learning skills, academic achievements, and classroom climate perceptions. This supports the findings of previous research on YCDI! Education (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012; Bernard, 2004, 2006, 2008; Bernard & Walton, 2011). This study also demonstrated that YCDI! Education contributes to fourth-graders' development of achievement, self-management, perception of friendship, impulse control, self-confidence, and persistence. On the other hand, it did not increase the students' skill of developing friendships in this research. Establishing healthy relationships with a child is a part of social development (Beyazkürk, Anliak, and Dinçer, 2007). Meriç (1999) described *friendship relations* as a means of social reinforcement. Thus, the dimension of relationships among friends has an important contribution to social-emotional development (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, and Walberg, 2004). In particular, it is evident that friendship relations have changed positively due to a decrease in aggressive and timid behavior at the school level (Balkıs, Duru, & Buluş, 2005; Uşaklı, 2006). Parental attitudes and cultural characteristics also affect children's ability to develop friendships (Bayhan & Işıtan, 2010). Researchers have presented various classifications regarding the influence of parent attitudes on children, including hot-caressing, democratic, authoritarian and repressive family attitudes (Baumrind, 1991; Büyüksahin & Çelikkaleli, 2010). The most common parental attitudes in Turkey are mutual commitment, emotional dependence, interventionism, comparison with others, and excessive protection (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2005). Spera (2005) stated that children who are educated with democratic and balanced family attitudes are better able to develop friendships than children who experience other family attitudes. For instance, Çeçen (2008) stated that children who are raised in authoritarian, inconsistent, and protective families feel lonelier. In this respect, it is possible that this finding obtained from the relationships among friends dimension differs from the results of other research on the program because of the cultural structure and family attitudes in Turkey. As a result, relationships among friends are seen as a part of social acceptance; during adolescence, in particular, children aged 12-14 want to make friends of the same sex (Akin & Ceyhan, 2005; Bayhan & Işıtan, 2010; Demir & Kaya, 2008). The researchers recognised that this was the case for the students who participated in this study. For this reason, they are considered to have regarded friendship from a somewhat limited point of view. Therefore, considering their age group and developmental characteristics, no significant difference existed due to parents' approach to their friends' relations with their children and their different interpretations of friendship.

According to international research, YCDI! Education has a positive effect on the academic achievement of students (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012; Bernard, 2017; Bernard & Walton, 2011; Yamamoto, Matsumoto & Bernard, 2017). For example, persistence, organization, and the ability to get along with others influence students' academic achievement and homework performance. Moreover, students' success in school increases when their self-confidence increases. In studies focusing on the relationship between social-emotional learning and academic achievement, the relationship between literacy and social-emotional development has been noteworthy (Ashdown & Bernard, 2011; Pollek, 2010). A language is an important tool for communication, self-expression, and information access (Board of Education, 2015). Therefore, in terms of social-emotional development, the success of the language lesson is thought to be in the foreground compared to the other lessons. The findings obtained from this research indicate that YCDI! Education contributes to students' reading

achievement. Research conducted in recent years has emphasized that focusing on cognitive development alone is not sufficient to achieve success (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg and Walberg, 2004). This study will contribute to the increased academic achievement of the widespread implementation of social-emotional learning programs so that students feel happier in school, love school and their friends, and perform well in their lessons.

Based on a detailed examination of the findings, YCDI! Education has positive effects on the classroom climate perceptions of school students in terms of the student cohesiveness, research, task orientation, equality, and cooperation dimensions. Moreover, it is understood that there is no significant difference in the teacher support and participation dimensions. Teachers are expected to support learning in terms of students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral development (Christenson, 2004). It is also known that the children who receive support from their teacher are more willing to participate in class (Özdemir & Sezgin, 2011). Thus, it can be assumed that the lack of significant differences in the dimensions of teacher support and participation in this study is related to teachers' inadequate support of children's participation (Fredrick, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Classroom climate has an important role in the learning-teaching process because it is based on the relationship between teachers and students (Norris, 2003). The findings showed that YCDI! Education effectively leads to positive classroom climate perceptions. Previous research on different social-emotional learning programs revealed that social-emotional learning skills cause students to have a more positive perception of the classroom climate. Thus, it is easier for the teachers of these students to provide effective classroom management and develop the students' social-emotional learning skills (Littell et al., 2005; Norris, 2003).

The findings also revealed that there are no significant differences between the pre-test and post-test score averages for the Social-Emotional Learning Skills Scale, the What Is Happening in This Class? scale and the Turkish Achievement Test wherein the ESDP is applied. This indicates that the ESDP does not affect students' social-emotional learning skills, academic achievements, and classroom climate perceptions. A close examination of the ESDP curriculum showed that the preparation phase of the curriculum considered gifted and talented students. However, the Board of Education (2012) stated that the curriculum is also applicable for all students. Yet, previous studies have not investigated the effects of ESDP on students who are regularly developing. Thus, the findings revealed that ESDP does not contribute to the development of social-emotional learning skills, academic achievements, and the classroom climate perceptions of students with normal mental potential. This indicated that ESDP has been developed primarily for gifted and talented students; therefore, a significant difference was not discovered for students who have normal mental potential. Literature has shown that gifted and talented students need to be supported more socially and emotionally because they are different from students with normal mental potential (Moon, 2004). This reveals that students of average mental potential have different social and emotional needs compared to students who are gifted and talented. Moreover, the preparation of the curriculum requires specialists of curriculum development, measurement, and evaluation, knowledge of the subject area, a subject-area teacher as well as other aspects (Demirel, 2011). However, the analysis of ESDP showed that the preparation phase of the curriculum involved experts on gifted and talented students, but it did not involve the school teachers (Board of Education, 2012). In that regard, it is important for school teachers who have knowledge about and experience with the developmental characteristics of school students, who know their interests and needs, and who can identify their social-emotional problems to take part in the working group. Therefore, the activities prepared within the scope of the program do not come across as suitable for students of average mental potential.

LIMITATIONS

This research was carried out with 4th-grade primary students. Studies with other grade levels of primary school may yield more comprehensive results. In addition, the experimental intervention of this study was carried out for 8 weeks to keep the maturation effect under control. Experimenting in longer periods will contribute to the examination of the long-term effects of the social-emotional learning programs.

IMPLICATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers have the following suggestions:

- The ESDP should be reorganized so that students with regular mental potential can excel in the development of social-emotional skills.
- Investigating the effectiveness of the ESDP in different age groups with regular mental potential will support the findings from this research.
- Implementing YCDI! Education to students from different age groups from preschool to high school education in Turkey will give us detailed information about the program's effectiveness
- Research that focuses on the relationship between YCDI! Education and other courses such as mathematics, science, and social studies will also contribute to the field in terms of examining the relationship between social-emotional development and cognitive development in more detail.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

- The first author has made substantial contributions to the conception and design, acquisition of data as well as the analysis and interpretation of the data,
- The second author has made substantial contributions to the conception and design as well as the analysis and interpretation of the data.

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