

The Effects of Life Skills Psychoeducation Program on Divorced Women's Self-actualization Levels

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ABSTRACT Society's smallest unit and a social institution of the family in this age every day for various reasons loses its functions and as a result of this, in the world, in Turkey as well as in TRNC, the divorce rate has been influenced. Divorce is a severe life event in human life causing a concussion. The fundamental aim of this research is to examine the effects of Life Skills Psychoeducation Program on divorced women's self-actualization levels. Research results show that life skills were not effective on the psychoeducation program's participants using their time well but their self-actualization and taking support from lower scales of self-actualization from within (inner directed support) have increased significantly. The researchers have not come across any similar work to this one on the divorce process and post-divorce process directed at adults in TRNC and Turkey.

INTRODUCTION

A family, which is made up of a social system and behavior patterns, comprises of members that are emotionally attached to each other who share a common past and meets the needs of both family members and the family itself (Sabatelli and Bartle 1995).

This institution, which is a small sample of the society actually strives to adapt itself to these ever changing roles and functions both structurally and functionally. Together with the social and emotional support that the couples give each other, the institution of marriage helps the couples feel much better emotionally and physically. In addition, psychological needs such as fulfilling sexual desires, love, to be loved, affection as well as social needs like solidarity and the need to feel secure and having economic security allow the couples to live in the same environment (Surerbicer 2008).

Even though the notion of divorce has started to seem like an individual issue due to this rapid change, it also causes social issues in this aspect. On the other hand, the marriage of couples that fail to meet each other's needs in this process starts to lose its meaning (Ozdemir et al. 2006) and starts to exhaust the couples emotionally. It is known that divorce is a big disaster for both parties but that the woman is influenced more than the man during this process.

Researchers who have worked on the issue of divorce indicated that divorce, in addition to

having a legal dimension, has a connection between its economic and social dimensions and that this process starts prior to the period of physical separation and continues even after the legal process is finalized (Timur 2008). According to Kitson (1992), among the main causes of divorce in individuals with high socio-economic status, are lack of communication, incompatibility and not getting along. On the other hand, for individuals with lower socio-economic status, main causes of divorce include mostly physical or emotional abuse, problems related to sharing responsibilities regarding the household, economic problems, and alcohol or gambling addiction of the spouse. Researchers like Sbarra et al. (2015) focused on at-risk populations is beginning to shed light on the processes that explain why and how marital separation and divorce are associated with ill health.

The rate of divorce which started to increase in European countries starting with 1900s, later started to increase in developing countries in the following years as well. Among the main causes of the increase in divorce rates are increased individual liberty on the part of women, and increased participation of women in the labor force, and decreased influence of religion on daily life practices and all of these have caused the institution of marriage to lose its functions (Preston and McDonald 1979; Givens and Hirschman 1994). In addition, the changing perception regarding traditional values, easier legal process for divorce, decreased negative public percep-

tion of divorced couples and decreased social pressure on divorced couples and the conflicts have been brought about by transformation of intra-family relationships (Jones 1997; Adams 2004).

In addition, based on data from years 2008-2012 in TRNC, a total of 6600 people got married during these 5 years and 3490 people got divorced while 3225 kids were left behind with only one parent. On average, 1320 people got married per year and 698 people got divorced and 645 kids became the children of a divorced family. These children usually had to live with a single parent. Based on data from the last 5 years, ratio of average number of divorces per year to the average number of marriages per year was forty-nine percent. Looking at TRNC in general, it is seen that divorce rates are the highest in Lefkosa and Girne where the rate is fifty-eight percent (mahkemeler.net). In addition to frustrations and feelings of guilt that influence the individual's quality of life negatively, the other effects of divorce are loneliness, lack of self-confidence, depression and lack of communication.

One of the main principles of Roger's theory of Client Centered Therapy, is the principle of self-actualization (Kuzgun 1986). Rogers observed during his individual and group consultancy sessions, a trend among his students to converge towards a unity and integrity. This power is the self-actualization power. According to Rogers, self-actualization is the final step of social evolution and is the final and most basic purpose of psychotherapy (Bakircioglu 2000). Although such acts of more or less public self-witnessing are strictly representational, they do mediate otherwise unseen aspects of oneself: certain characteristics and features, particular (often preferred) expressions, and emotions (Deuze 2015).

According to Maslow's theory of the Hierarchy of Needs, the self-actualization process for the individual evolves from birth till death. Starting from the lowest level, physiological needs including need for security, need to belong and need for affection would be met inside the family to a certain level (Ozugurlu 2013). In the next stage, the individual is motivated for behavior aimed at meeting the needs at a higher level. The individual who is satisfied in one level, would feel more free and better and eventually bring out his/her all inner potential (Erden and Akman 2000). During this period, women would demonstrate a lifestyle where they follow the authority,

or in other words, obey men. The main feature of this position is acceptance of authority.

During this period (Bilgin 2001) women show a tendency to obey their husband and act in line with his rules. The most prominent features of this position are acceptance of male authority, lack of rationalist thinking, acceptance of information without judging its validity, and adopting others' words as if they are one's own. This position means security both in the physical and emotional sense for most women. Later on, the need to love and to be loved, which are two basic needs for humans, emerge as the need for romantic love with sexual needs in the background and turns into physiological experience. Once the individual is able to meet this need in his/her relations with others in the society, he/she reaches the fifth need, which is the need for 'self-actualization' (Ozugurlu 2013). From a cultural perspective, authentic experience has brought autonomy and independence to the individual as a result of the need to live, meet one's own needs and express one's own feelings. This has started to disrupt the family system, which is made up of self-regulating systems (Will 2012).

In TRNC, especially after 1974, with the changing cultural structure and culture, commonalities among traditions and knowledge have decreased and profound changes have been observed in gender relationships and family structure. The changes in the roles of man and woman brought about by marriage, and their failure to adapt to these changes have resulted in disruption of the balance in the family and caused the couples to experience problems like, conflicts, arguments and incompatibility. In this regard, according to data from DIE and mahkemeler.net, divorce rates have increased by sixty percent across TRNC. It was observed that family members and especially women were unable to deal with the psychological, social and economic problems they experienced.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to develop a psychoeducation program aimed at improving the self-actualization levels of divorced women and to test the influence of this program.

Problem Statement

Does the Life Skills Psychoeducation program have a statistically significant influence on the self-actualization levels of divorced women?

Survey Questions

This study seeks answers to the questions below.

- ♦ Does the *Life Skills Psychoeducation program* have a statistically significant influence on the *self-actualization* levels of divorced women?
- ♦ Does the *Life Skills Psychoeducation program* have a statistically significant influence on the *time competence* scale of *self-actualization* levels of divorced women?
- ♦ Does the *Life Skills Psychoeducation program* have a statistically significant influence on the *inner directed support* scale of *self-actualization* levels of divorced women?
- ♦ Does the *Life Skills Psychoeducation program* have a statistically significant influence on the following *inner directed support* sub-scales of *self-actualization* levels of divorced women including *self-actualizing value, existentiality, feeling reactivity, spontaneity, self-regard, self-acceptance, capacity for intimate contact, nature of man-constructive, synergy and acceptance of aggression*?

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

This is an experimental study based on pre-test, post-test and observation test study designs with experiment and control groups (Buyukozturk 2002). In the study, the Split-Plot test, which is a special form of analysis of variance, Mann Whitney U Test, percentile test, average and t-test analyses were used.

The design, preparation and pilot administration stages of the Life Skills Psychoeducation Program were included the following. Weekly sessions, each lasting 150 minutes were held for a total of ten weeks and eight weeks later, and an observation test was administered. In the study, first the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) levels of the groups were determined using pre-testing and then an experiment and control group were formed. While the experiment group was administered for the Life Skills Psychoeducation program, no program was administered to the control group. Two months after the completion of the experimental phase, POI was administered

once again to divorced women in the control group and the experiment group as a measurement of reobservation.

Creation of the Experiment and Control Groups

One hundred fifteen volunteers were selected randomly from among divorced women living in TRNC and were administered the Personal Orientation Inventory and Personal Information Form during face-to-face interviews. Then, of the 35 volunteer women who had low self-actualization scores, 16 were placed randomly in the study group and 19 were placed randomly in the control group. The general structure of the study group is given below.

Sociodemographic Features of the Study Group

In the age group of 36-70 years, 46.15 percent of the subjects had undergraduate or higher education, 46.15 percent were artist-artisan and workers, 25.64 percent were civil servants or teachers, 28.21 percent had a single child, 30.77 percent had two children and 23.07 percent had no children. 35.89 percent had income between 0-2000, 25.64 percent had an income between 2001-3000 and 28.21 percent had an income of 3001 and above while 56.41 percent of them were in the 19-26 years age group, 23.07 percent were in the 27-35 years marriage age group. 33.3 percent were divorced during the 1-5 years of their marriage and 23-27 percent were divorced after 16-25 years of marriage.

Social Structure of the Study Group and Descriptive Features of the Study Group

After dating 61.53 percent got married, fifty-one percent experienced domestic violence during marriage, thirty-three percent received psychological support during and after the divorce period and 48.71 percent could divorce through consensual divorce.

Social Structure of the Study Group and Decision-making Features of the Study Group

At the beginning of their marriage, 35.89 percent of the subjects stated that their disagreements started and 23.07 percent of the subjects stated that their disagreements started in the middle of their marriage period, while 61.53 percent

stated they themselves wanted to divorce and 21.58 percent stated they did not get alimony. To the question, “*do you consider marrying again?*” 33.33 percent said yes and 41.02 percent said they were undecided.

In experimental studies, prior to the study process, the subjects must be equal in terms of the conditions other than the study variable. For this purpose, self-actualization levels of experiment and control groups were compared prior to the study process and are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of the average self-actualization pre-test scores of study and control groups

	<i>Study pre-test</i>	<i>Control pre-test</i>	<i>t p>0.05</i>
Self-actualization	86.7	89.3	0.7
Time competence	14.8	14.1	0.8
Inner directed support	71.9	75.3	1.0

As can be seen here, there is no statistically significant difference between the pre-test average scores of the study and control groups for the self-actualization scale and its sub-scales.

Data Collection Tools

Data collection tool used was the Personal Information Form developed by the researcher and the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI).

Personal Orientation Inventory (POI)

The main purpose of POI, which was developed by E. Shostrom (1968) based on the theories of Rogers and Maslow, the pioneers of humanistic psychology, and adapted to Turkish by Kuzgun (1973), is to measure the self-actualization level of the individual. The inventory consists of 150 pairs of behavior or value comparisons. In addition to two basic tests, namely time competence (23 items) and inner directed support (127 items), the inventory was created based on different combinations of the 150 items. It comprises 10 sub-tests. The Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) is a measurement tool that gives a single score, which is the sum of major and sub-scale scores. The sum of the scores of Time Competence and Inner Directed Support gives the total self-actualization score (Kuzgun 1973).

The definitions of two major scales that make up the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) are given as follows;

1. Time Competence (Z): Living the current time more fully, being able to connect more meaningfully, the past and future to current time, being realistic regarding future goals, and being able to look back at one's past without any negative feelings like remorse (23 items).
2. Inner Directed Support (D): Being minimally dependent on the external environment, being self-sufficient and behaving in accordance with internal value systems (127 articles). Inner directed support sub-scales (Oner 1997; Kuzgun 2005) include self-actualizing value (26 items), existentiality (32 items), feeling reactivity (32 items), spontaneity (18 items), self-regard (16 items), self-acceptance (26 items), nature of man-constructive (16 items), synergy (9 items) and acceptance of aggression (25 items), and capacity for intimate contact (26 items). There is also a scoring tool used for scoring the scale.

To test the reliability of the scale, in 1964, Shostrom administered the Personal Orientation Inventory two times one after the other to 650 students from Los Angeles State Vocational School and determined the reliability of the scale to be 0.91 and 0.93 (Akbas 1989).

In his reliability test, Akbas (1989) administered the Personal Orientation Inventory two times with a one-week interval to 47 high school students. The reliability test revealed a correlation score of 0.85 for the “Time Competence” scale and 0.82 correlation score for the “Inner Directed Support” scale. The total correlation score was found to be 0.85.

Personal Information Form

The personal information form comprises 45 questions about different demographic features of the subjects such as demographic features of divorced women, their education levels, social support and their responsibilities in life, their marriage and divorce ages, reason for divorce and time it took to complete the divorce process.

Designing and Preparation of the Program

During the preparation of the Life-Skills Psychoeducation Program, the psychoeducation/guidance group practice developed by ASGW

(Association for Specialist in Group Work 2000) was taken into account. During the preparation of the life skills psychoeducation program, the eight phases of Brown (2004) were followed as shown next. First, the group's goals were determined, the target audience was decided on, targets and expected outcomes were determined, literature was reviewed again, strategies and materials were selected and finally an evaluation was made in the last phase.

Program Content

Psychoeducational groups are important and complementary factors for therapy groups using Dialectic Behavioral Therapy (DBT, Marsha M. Linehan 1993) and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT, Ellis 1994; Glasser 1965; Beck 1987), and the theoretical perspective. These two theories are used very commonly in psychoeducation groups. DBT therapy is a unique and structured synthesis of the humanist perspective that emphasizes therapeutic cooperation, cognitive-behavioral techniques, and the Buddhist awareness meditation (Brown, 2013). The program that was developed was organized based on the Knowledge (B), Art (S), Science (B), Skills (B) and Techniques (T) (BSBBT-KASST) model and was developed based on the Cognitive Behavioral Theory.

The techniques used in the psychoeducation program that was developed included psychological consultancy with the main group, group guidance method and psycho-drama method.

Also, with the homeworks assigned, a connection was established between sessions and the goal has been to apply these skills to daily life.

During the implementation phase of the program, psycho-drama warm-up games that helped increase intra group interaction and allowed subjects to learn about their feelings and gain awareness, as well as psychological consultancy with the group and exercises were administered. The other techniques used included imagination, relaxation exercises, meditation, role playing, behavioral model, self-improvement practices, mirroring, empty chair, self-practicing and similar techniques. The psychoeducation group session comprised four phases, namely introduction, work, process and final phase. In the introduction phase, the previous session was reviewed and homeworks were discussed. The homeworks

were reviewed in the group to see what the participants have done since the last session, what type of behavior they developed and what type of awareness they gained. Then the subject of the day was summarized and the session was started (Furr 2000; DeLucia-Waack 2006). The session themes and activities of the program are given as follows.

Session 1: Developing the group and meeting

Session 2: Becoming aware of emotions

Session 3: Communication skills

Session 4: Dealing with stress

Session 5: Developing self-confidence

Session 6: Assertiveness, aggressive and submissive behavior

Session 7: Conflict resolution and reconciliation skills

Session 8: Human/Women and Children's Rights and Freedom

Session 9: Re-planning the future

Session 10: Finalization

The following activities were mostly held during the sessions. Especially content that allows the individual to improve his/her self-awareness and life skills and increase his/her self-actualization levels was used. Accordingly, the subjects that would improve effective communication, reconciliation and problem solving skills, which would enable divorced women to develop positive attitude towards themselves and their environment were taken into account. In addition, the goal was to equip the subjects with the skills needed for handling stress, which is one of the main issues of modern life, and assertiveness, which is required for dealing with challenges in life, that would allow them to make healthy decisions and demonstrate creative and productive behavior. The purpose of the study was to allow the individual to get to know him/herself better with improved awareness of emotions, to improve self-respect and self-confidence with rights and liberties, to improve "*now and here*" awareness, and to improve self-actualization levels of divorced women with re-planning of future

Data Analysis

Data related to independent variables in the personal information form and the Personal Orientation Inventory was analyzed using SPSS 17 (Statistical Package for the Social Science). For resolving the study problem, the Split-Plot model was used to see whether the assumptions of

the parametric tests were met and Levene's test was used to see whether the variance of pre-test and post-test distribution scores is homogenous. In cases where the variances of both groups are homogenous, the Split-Plot method was used and when the assumptions of the parametric tests were not met, Mann Whitney U Test was used for analysis. Significance level was determined to be $p < 0.05$.

FINDINGS

1. Findings and Comments Related to Level of Influence of Life Skills Psychoeducation Program on the Self-actualization Levels of Divorced Women

The averages and standard deviations of the scores obtained by study and control groups from the Personal Orientation Inventory (POI) before and during the study and during observation period were calculated and it was seen that both groups had homogenous variances [$LF = 0.642$, $p > 0.05$]. After realizing that variances were similar, data were analyzed using Split-Plot method and results are summarized in Table 2.

As can be seen in Table 2, when the group's main influence is taken into account independent from the scores, a statistically significant difference was observed between the pre-test and post-test score averages of study and control groups [$F(1-33) = 4.22$, $p < 0.05$]. When the measurement's main influence is taken into account independent from the group variable, a statistically significant difference was observed between the self actualization pre-test and post-test scores of study and control groups [$F(1-33) = 8.38$, $p < 0.05$]. This finding, when the groups are analyzed separately, shows that the self-actualization levels of divorced women has in-

creased as a result of the life skills program administered to them. Measurement $\bar{X}$ group influence, which shows the influence of the study was found to be statistically significant [$F(1-33) = 16.96$, $p < 0.05$]. In other words, the experiment that was administered resulted in a statistically significant difference on behalf of the study group. Approximately thirty-four percent of the variance observed in inner directed support scores can be explained as the influence of the program. It is seen that the program had a high level of ($\eta^2 = .34$) influence ($.14 < \eta^2 < .$).

2. Findings and Comments Related to Level of Influence of Life Skills Psychoeducation Program on the Time Competence Sub-scale of the Self-actualization Levels of Divorced Women

The averages and standard deviations of the scores obtained by study and control groups in relation to the time competence sub-scale of the self-actualization major scale before and during the study and during observation period were calculated and it was seen that both groups had homogenous variances [$LF = 0.333$, $p > 0.05$]. Scores were tested using the Split-Plot method and the results are summarized in Table 3.

As can be seen in Table 3, when the group's main influence is taken into account independent from the scores, no statistically significant difference was observed between the time competence pre-test and post-test score averages of study and control groups [$F(1-33) = 0.346$, $p > 0.05$]. When the measurement main influence is taken into account independent from the group variable, no statistically significant difference was observed between time competence pre-test and post-test levels of study and control groups [$F(1-33) = 0.265$, $p > 0.05$]. This finding, when the groups

Table 2: Results of the analysis of variance for self actualization pre-test, post-test and observation-test scores for study and control groups

Variance source	KT	sd	KO	F	p	Eta-square (η^2)
Inter-group D/K	1032.77	1	1032.77	4.22	.05 *	.11
Error	8082.31	33	245.00			
Intra-group	906.46	1	906.46	8.38	.007*	.20
Score(Pre/Final						
Group Score	1834.46	1	1834.46	16.96	.000*	0.34
Error	3569.47	33	108.16			

* $P < 0.05$

are analyzed separately, shows that the time competence levels of divorced women has not increased as a result of the life skills program administered to them.

3. Findings and Comments Related to Level of Influence of Life Skills Psychoeducation Program on the Inner Directed Support Sub-scale of the Self-actualization Levels of Divorced Women

The averages and standard deviations of the scores obtained by study and control groups in relation to the inner directed support sub-scale of the self-actualization major scale before and during the study and during observation period were calculated and it was seen that both groups had homogenous variances [$LF = 0.630, p > 0.05$]. Scores were tested using the Split-Plot method and the results are summarized in Table 4.

As can be seen in Table 4, when the group main influence is taken into account independent from the scores, no statistically significant difference was observed between the inner-directed support pre-test and post-test score averages of study and control groups [$F(1-33)=3.77, p > 0.05$]. When the measurement main influence is taken into account independent from

the group variable, a statistically significant difference was observed between inner-directed pre-test and post-test levels of study and control groups [$F(1-33)=8.73, p < 0.05$]. This finding, when the groups are analyzed separately, shows that the inner directed support levels of divorced women has increased as a result of the life skills program administered to them. Measurement group influence, which shows the influence of the study was found to be statistically significant in terms of the inner directed support scores [$F(1-33)=19.43, p < 0.05$]. In other words, the experiment that was administered resulted in a statistically significant difference on behalf of the study group. Approximately thirty-seven percent of the variance observed in inner directed support scores can be explained as the influence of the program. It is seen that the program had a high level of ($\eta^2=.37$) influence ($.14 < \eta^2 < .$).

In conclusion, one can argue that the life skills psychoeducation program administered to divorced women had a statistically significant influence on their inner directed support levels.

DISCUSSION

According to study findings, self-actualization levels of divorced women who participated

Table 3: Results of the analysis of variance for time competence sub-scale of the personal orientation inventory pre-test, post-test and observation-test scores for study and control groups

<i>Variances ource</i>	<i>KT</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>KO</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Eta-square (η²)</i>
Inter-groupD/K	39.602	1	39.602	3.46	.071	0.95
Error	376.770	33	11.417			
Intra-group	11.191	1	11.191	2.65	.112	.075
Scores(Pre/Final						
Group score	8.448	1	8.448	2.00	.166	.057
Error	138.895	33	4.209			

*p >0.05

Table 4: Results of the analysis of variance for inner directed sub-scale of the personal orientation inventory pre-test, post-test and observation-test scores for study and control groups

<i>Variance source</i>	<i>KT</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>KO</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Eta-square (η²)</i>
Inter-groupD/K	667.89	1	667.89	3.77	.061	.10
Error	5836.2	33	176.85			
Intra-group	716.223	1	716.223	8.73	.006*	.21
Score(Pre/Final						
Group score	1593.9	1	1593.9	19.43	.000*	.37
Error	2706.2	33	82.00			

*p< 0.05

in the 10-week Life Skills Psychoeducation Program increased significantly. No increase was observed in the self-actualization levels of the divorced women in the control group. Self-actualization, which was measured using Personal Orientation Inventory has two major scales. These are the "time competence" and "inner directed" scales. While the psychoeducation program administered resulted in a significant increase in the *inner directed support* major scale and the sub-scales of *self-actualizing value*, *existentiality*, *feeling reactivity*, *spontaneity*, *self-acceptance*, *nature of man-constructive*, *acceptance of aggression* and *capacity for intimate contact*, it resulted in no change in *time competence* major scale and sub-scales of *self-regard* and *synergy*. On the other hand, no variance was observed between the scores of study and control groups in terms of *time competence* scale after the program.

Looking at the results in general, it is seen that the self-actualization levels of divorced women in the study group increased significantly after the life-skills program. Based on Maslow's (2011) definition, it can be argued that following the program, positive life view and positive self-identity was observed in the subjects.

One can argue that following the program, due to increased self-awareness on the part of the divorced women in the study group, these women had developed skills that made them more self-sufficient. According to Cassel and Reiger (2000), the individual can improve his/her self-actualization level with the emotional development within the individual, improvement in interpersonal relations, cognition based goals and targets and goal oriented struggle processes. According to this view, which supports the findings of this study, one can argue that an individual's own emotions, thoughts and experiences can serve as the best guide as to how the individual can relate to a specific situation and that self-actualization can be best attained through doing active work. In the literature, there are findings that are similar to the findings of this study. For example, Barnette (1989) studied the influence of "development groups", one of the group psychological consultancy methods, on self-actualization levels. As a result of this study carried out on graduate students it was seen that the 12-week development program had a positive influence on the study group and that these gains continued even five months after the study.

Another study was carried out by Sackett (1998) who found that psychological consultancy facilitated the process of self-actualization.

On the other hand, *time competence* average scores of the study group subjects have increased but the increase has not been statistically significant. The results of this study are identical to the results of the study carried out by Araci (2007). In Araci's (2007) study, which was based on Sufi tales and cognitive behavioral approaches, the change in self-actualization and inner directed pre-test and post-test results were statistically significant in the study group while the results were not statistically significant for the time competence sub-scale. According to other study findings at hand, McVicar and Hermon (1983) too demonstrated an increase in the self-actualization levels of middle aged women following the intervention program they designed with the purpose of supporting these women's psychological development. Following a psychological consultancy study he carried out with young people at the orphanage, Topses (1988) found significant positive behavior changes with regard to self actualization. In their studies, Akbas (1989), Yazici (1992), Çelik (1993), and Bolkan (2015) showed significant changes in the *self-actualization* and *inner directed support* major scales of the individual and no change in the *time competence* major scale.

Study findings at hand with regard to sub-scales of the study, are similar to the findings of the study by Foulds and Hannigan (1976), Kincaid (1977), Barnette (1989), Bilgi (2009) and Bolkan (2013). According to the definition by Shostrom (1973), inner directed support is an indicator of whether or not the individual acts in line with his/her own principles. Those who receive support from the outside determine their behavior under the influence of others and continue their lives as dependent on those people.

The results of the study regarding the major scale of *time competence*, and sub-scales of *self-regard* and *synergy* are similar to study findings by Yüce (1987), Prosnic (1999) and Sungur (2008). In his study that he carried out with senior year candidate teachers, Sungur (2008) found no statistically significant change in terms of self-actualization, time competence and inner-directed support levels. In his study, Yüce (1987) found that the influence of psychological consultancy on self-actualization levels of college students was not statistically significant. Prosnic (1999)

also found that the variance between Gestalt Therapy, self-actualization and peak experiences is not statistically significant. On the other hand, Baruchello (2015), states that Gestalt psychology can work qua descriptive science of cognitive phenomena at large.

Findings of most studies carried out in relation to the major scale of time competence do not seem to be statistically significant. The variance between the average pre-test and post-test scores for the time competence major scale was found to be = 1.50 (pre-test score for study group was = 14.81 and post-test score for study group was = 16.31). Even though the time competence average scores of the study group showed an increase, this variance was not statistically significant ($\eta^2 = .057$; $0.01 < \eta^2 < .06$). Findings of the studies carried out by Yüce (1987), Prosnic (1999), Sungur, (2008) and Bolkan (2013) are similar to the findings of this study with regard to time competence major scale. Another study that supports the findings of this study with regard to this major scale was carried out by Vitters who studies the scales of self-actualization and enjoying life as a whole. The frequency of positive emotions and negative emotions turned out to be an indicator of subjective wellbeing. A positive correlation was found between objective wellbeing and being open to experiences and it was seen that there is a correlation between self-actualization and being open to experience and wellbeing (Vitters 2004). Similar correlation results were found by Tefera (2015).

CONCLUSION

As a result of the study, in general, positive results were obtained on behalf of the study group with regard to the sub-scales of self-actualization. In other words, one can argue that individuals who attain self-actualization are able to internalize their own behavior patterns and develop skills that allow them to live with as minimum peer pressure as is possible. Statistically significant changes on behalf of the study group were observed with regard to sub-scales of *self-actualizing value*, *existentiality*, *feeling reactivity*, *spontaneity*, *acceptance of aggression* and *capacity for intimate contact*. These factors tend to disrupt interpersonal relations. As a personal trait, the concept of commitment is not viewed as a desirable feature of human relations.

According to these findings, one can argue that individuals who attain self-actualization experience changes in their abilities to internalize their own values and behavior patterns, to live a life free of social pressure to the extent possible, to rely on secret powers and to realize them. According to the findings of the study again, no significant change was observed in the *time competence* major scale and sub-scales of *self-regard* and *synergy*.

In conclusion, according to the findings of the study, it is believed that individuals with tendency to achieve life-long self-actualization have certain major tendencies. Accepting one's self, others and nature as they are, perceiving truth as it is and adapting one's self to the environment, being able to establish profound interpersonal relations and enjoying life are indicators of the process of self-actualization. In addition, other indicators that show that the individual is developing include being independent from one's environment and demonstrating an autonomous life, being creative, having a democratic life perspective, being spontaneous, dealing with problems other than one's own problems and being able to assume responsibility. In this regard, the researchers can argue that being able to distinguish means and ends, being able to establish a unique life, resisting social patterns, and going beyond a certain culture and having a sense of non-hostile, dry humor are indicators that an awareness has developed in the individual.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, one can argue that individuals (divorced women) can attain higher levels of self-actualization and higher quality of life to the extent that their life skills are improved. Based on the findings of this study, the researchers have come up with the recommendations given below:

Recommendations for Institutions and Organizations

- ♦ Life skills psychoeducation program can be administered via units to be established as part of institutions and organizations that provide psychological and social services, to divorced women to help them cope with the problems they would face before and after the divorce process.

- ♦ Life skills psychoeducation program can be administered to allow women in the divorce process to overcome their trauma more quickly.

Recommendations for Researchers

- ♦ The effectiveness of the psychoeducation program used in the study was tested only on divorced women. It can be adapted and administered also to divorced men, adolescent kids aged 16 and above of the divorced couples and to adults. With this study, it is also possible to help the individuals improve their life skills and to test its reflections on the individuals in the next family system.
- ♦ The influence of life-skills psychoeducation program on a big scale of time competence and sub-scales of self-regard and synergy can be retested as no significant variance was observed in these scales in this study. The program can be revised for this purpose.
- ♦ Other researchers who will carry out a similar study are recommended to use a placebo group in addition to study and control groups.
- ♦ Observation phase of the study can be repeated in the long-term to test how long the effect of the program lasts.

Recommendations for Practitioners

- ♦ Having the specialists who will implement the program to get practical training prior to program implementation would increase effectiveness and efficiency of the program.
- ♦ Because the program is intense and its events are detailed, it is recommended to have 180-minute sessions instead of 150-minute sessions. This might increase the effectiveness and long-term effect of the study.
- ♦ The eighth session titled “Rights” and the ninth session “My Future” were decided to be the main and urgent needs of women in dealing with the problems brought about by marriage. Thus holding these two sessions for two weeks in a row is believed to help the participants better improve their skills in this area and help increase the program’s effectiveness. Accordingly, the first week of the eighth session covers topics

like considering basic rights and freedoms within the context of current issues, while the second week covers topics like how problems faced by women in this area can be solved and which support units can be contacted and how they can be contacted.

- ♦ The first week of the ninth session covers topics like ‘who am I?’, ‘my past-now’ and ‘my future and my goals’, while the second week covers topics like occupational applications, occupational development and ‘what kind of a partner should I choose?’

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