

Full Length Research Paper

Analysis of anger management in terms of social skills

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Accepted 27 January, 2012

Aim of this study is to examine anger management in terms of social skills. The study was carried out with 514 undergraduates, 214 of whom were females and 300 of whom were males. "State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory" and "Social Skills Inventory" were used as data collection tool. Pearson's product-moment coefficient technique and the multiple linear regression analysis have been used for statistical analysis of the study. As a result of the study, it is determined that there is a low level of negative correlation between trait anger and emotional sensitivity, emotional control, social sensitivity, social control. There is a low level of negative correlation between anger-in and emotional expressivity, emotional sensitivity, emotional control, social sensitivity, and social control, a low level of negative correlation between anger-out and emotional sensitivity, emotional control, social expressivity, social sensitivity, social control and a low level of positive correlation between anger control and emotional expressivity, emotional sensitivity, social expressivity, social sensitivity. Moreover as whole, social skills predict trait anger, anger-in, anger-out and anger control significantly.

Key words: Anger management, trait anger, anger expression, emotional sensitivity, social control, anger control, social skill.

INTRODUCTION

It is an important need for humans to communicate and continue this communication with their environments (Erdoğan and Korkmaz, 1990; Kaya, 2010; Yüksel, 2009). Humans establish social relations and interact with their environment to satisfy this need (Çetinkaya, 2009). In this interaction process, building healthy relationships can only be possible by acquiring adequate social skills (Avşar, 2004; Deniz, 2002). Social skills form the basis of proper interpersonal relationships and can be defined as learnt, socially acceptable, effective, goal-oriented behaviors changing according to social content, including certain observable and non-observable cognitive and emotional elements which receive positive and prevent negative reactions from others and enable communication with other people (Yüksel, 1997).

Segrin (2001) defined social skills as the ability of building appropriate and effective relationships with other people. On the other hand, the fact that Bacanlı (1999) emphasized that self-regulation is a sub-factor of social skill indicates that social skill is an important factor for

adaptation. People having social skills can communicate, understand and pay attention to other people by effectively expressing themselves (Akkök, 1996; Tuna, 2009). Social skills can be defined as learnt behaviors used by the people to receive or gain reinforcement from their environments in interpersonal situations (Kelly, 1982). It can be stated that the individuals who developed social skills adapt to the society by showing behaviors such as building good relationships, respecting the opinions and rights of other people and paying attention to group norms.

Emphasizing that social skill has six sub-dimensions; Riggio (1986) introduced a theoretical explanation. These dimensions are as follows:

Emotional expressivity: This dimension measures an individual's non-verbal communication skills, particularly the skills of sending emotional messages. An emotional expressive individual is lively and cheerful and can influence other people with these skills. Example: 'I often laugh loudly'

Emotional sensitivity: This dimension involves the skills of receiving and interpreting non-verbal communications

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of other people. Emotional sensitive individuals fully and accurately interpret emotional implications of other individuals. Example: 'I am interested in knowing what makes the people happy'.

Emotional control: This dimension involves the skills of regulating and controlling emotional and non-verbal reactions of the individuals. This structure also includes the skills of combining certain emotions with abilities and to conceal these emotions under a mask. Example: 'I can conceal my real emotions from anyone'

Social expressivity: This dimension involves verbal expressivity and individuals' skills of building social communication with each other and taking part in communication. A social expressive individual is outgoing and social; or he/she has the skills of starting or changing the direction of a conversation about any subject. Example: 'I am generally the one who first starts the dialogues'.

Social sensitivity: This dimension refers to the skills of interpreting verbal communications of other people. Social sensitive individuals pay attention to social norms while showing social behaviors and they are conscious to behave in harmony with the environment. Example: 'I am considerably influenced by the people who have a pessimistic attitude'.

Social control: This dimension refers to playing social roles and indicating oneself socially. The individuals with a developed social control skill behave in harmony with the environment in any social situation; they are self-comfortable and can easily adapt to social situations. Example: 'I am comfortable with all kinds of people'.

Social skill, which is an important factor in an effective communication and interpersonal relationships (Deniz, 2002) has individual characteristics (Sandhya-Rani et al., 2011). The fact that an individual cannot acquire and develop adequate social skills might lead to failures in his/her relationships and adaptation to the environment. This situation can be emphasized as inadequate social skills. This inadequacy causes negative emotions in individuals. Anger can be considered as one of these negative emotions.

The concept of anger is one of the important moods such as love, liking and fear, which determine the daily life of an individual (Duran and Eldeleklioğlu, 2005; Kırmızı, 2008). This concept has significant effects on many issues such as interpersonal relationships and effective communication, psychological health, professional and academic development and properly showing attributed roles. Anger is defined as a momentary emotional reaction that has cognitive and behavioral dimensions, which appears in stimulating situations such as threatening, frustration and verbal assault by triggering of repressed emotions (Chaplin, 1985; Güleç et al.,

2005). Although anger is a natural reaction like other emotions, (Akdeniz, 2007; Akdoğan, 2007; Duran and Eldeleklioğlu, 2005) its process of turning into a behavior can be explained with a complicated psychological structure. Anger is a form of reaction an individual shows to defend him/her or to warn the individual him /her faces (Bıyık, 2004; Demirkan, 2003).

There are two types of anger, which are state anger and trait anger. State anger appears due to a certain situation and the degree of anger varies according to the degree of assault, unfairness or frustration perceived by the individual. On the other hand, trait anger is defined as perceiving many situations or environments boring or frustrating and as a result, experiencing state anger more often (Deffenbacher et al., 1996; Spielberger, 1991; Spielberger et al., 1983).

Individuals show various reactions to perceived and experienced anger according to type of stimulus and the cognitive structures they have (Uslu, 2004). While some individuals prefer to repress their anger, to use anger-in or control the anger, some individuals try to show their anger and to use anger-out (Kısaç, 1999).

The emotion of anger is considered as an important factor for psychological health and social adaptation. Ramirez and Andreu (2006) stated that anger appeared when an individual's freedom is restricted, when an individual is accused and when a promise made to him/her is not kept. Similarly Baltaş and Baltaş (2004) reported that the situations like frustration, encountering an arbitrary attitude and being attacked are among important reasons for anger social skill of an individual is an important factor in anger control and reflecting this emotion in behavior. Previous studies (Clay et al., 1993; Coles et al., 2002; Greene et al., 1994; Güleç et al., 2005) emphasized that the individuals with high levels of anger could not properly communicate with their social environment, that they showed tendency of violence and sometimes showed depressive symptoms by developing an inner anger since they could not deal with life events. It was found that the young people who were raised in a family environment where the parents have a distant, rejective and often humiliating attitude using an ineffective punishment method, had difficulties in decision-making and expressing their ideas and that they had high levels of anger (Garbarino, 1999).

If the problems are solved by conflict, perturbation and quarrel in a family, the child would use the same method while solving problems. Angry attitude of the parents affect the behavior of the child. Being raised in such an environment causes the child to experience anger, fear and sorrow emotions. A child whose stress level increases in family conflicts might show similar behaviors when he/she encounters similar situations in his/her life (Grych et al., 1992).

Researches revealed that (Dahlberg, 1998; Kahraman, 2000) the adolescents who were exposed to domestic violence showed anger, depression and somatic

complaint behaviors. Nugent and Champling (1997) investigated the relationship between anger, violence, aggression and delinquency and found that anger often triggered aggressive behavior. The researchers emphasized that there was a relationship between aggression and anger. It was emphasized that psychological support and psychodrama were effective in decreasing or elimination of aggressive behavior (Duran et al., 2005; Duy, 2003; Karataş and Gökçakan, 2009). Anger, which is generally considered as a negative emotion, can be associated with concepts such as rage, violence, aggression and bullying. The level of anger and the way it is expressed can create a problem for the individual who experiences these emotions and also for the individuals he/she communicates with. Anger has physiological, cognitive and behavioral dimensions (Kısaç, 1997).

The studies which emphasized that anger can turn into a behavior through learning (Avcı, 2006; Burger, 2006; Kısaç, 1997) pointed out to the importance of mimicry and imitating a model (Duran et al., 2005; Yöndem and Bıçak, 2008). The effect of social environment on these kinds of emotional reactions is also important in terms of acquisition and development of social skill (Korkut, 2004; Tekinsav-Sütçü, 2006). If negative emotional reactions appear as a result of lack of social skill, these kinds of skills can be taught and developed.

It was stressed that anger, particularly trait anger behaviors were related with physiologic complaints, cardiovascular and blood pressure disorders and somatic complaints (Bongard and Al'Absi, 2005) in addition to deterioration of psychological health (Batıgün-Durak and Şahin, 2003; Borst and Noam, 1989). It can be stated that anger is related with social skill as much as somatic complaints. Based on this view, the present study aimed to investigate the relationship between anger management and social skills. In addition, the study analyzed if social skills significantly predicts anger management.

METHODS

Research model and participants

General survey model is used in this research. General survey models are the scanning arrangements on the whole universe which consisted of many elements or on a sample or a group from that universe in order to get a general idea of the universe (Büyüköztürk et al., 2010; Karasar, 1994). The sample set of the research was taken from several faculties of Selçuk University in Konya/Turkey by random set sampling method. The participants were 514 (214 female and 300 male) who participated in the research voluntarily. The mean age of the participants was 20.40 years (between 18 to 25 years old) with a standard deviation of 1.80 years.

Instruments

The trait anger and anger expression scale (TAAES)

The TAAES is developed by Spielberger et al. (1983) and used to determine anger levels expressed by people. The scale was

translated and adapted into Turkish by Özer (1994). The first 10 items of the scale measure trait anger, the other 24 items point out individuals' anger expression styles (that is, anger-in, anger-out, and anger control). The scale is a 4-point likert-type scale. The internal consistency coefficients of the scale were found to be 0.79 for trait anger dimension, 0.84 for anger control, 0.78 for anger-out and 0.62 for anger control (Özer, 1994). Higher scores on trait anger indicate higher anger levels; higher scores on anger-in scale indicate higher levels of suppressed anger; higher scores on anger-out sub-scale indicate easier anger expression; and higher scores on anger-control sub-scale indicate better anger control (Savaşır and Şahin, 1997).

Social skills inventory (SSI)

The SSI developed by Riggio (1986), revised by Riggio (1989), and adapted to Turkish participants by Yuksel (1997) was used to obtain data related to the social skills of participants. The SSI is a 90-item Likert-type inventory of self-report to measure basic social skills. The SSI consists of six subscales. Reliability studies of SSI were performed by the Retest method and the reliability coefficients for subscales varied between 0.80 and 0.89. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the social skill subscales varied between 0.56 and 0.82. The parallel form validity of the SSI was tested with the self-monitoring scale (SMS) which was adapted to Turkish by Bacanlı (1997). The correlation coefficients among SSI subscales and SMS varied between -0.21 and 0.57.

Data collection and analysis

SPSS 15.0 program was used in order to evaluate the data which were collected from scales employed in the research. The Pearson correlation coefficient technique was used to determine the relationship between anger and anger expression with social skills. Multiple regression analysis was used to search if social skills significantly explain the trait anger, and anger expression (Table 1).

RESULTS

In this research, Pearson product moment correlation technique was used to explain the relationship between trait anger and anger expression with social skills and the results were given in Table 2. The results of the multiple regression analysis of social skills explaining the trait anger and anger expression were given in Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6.

It is clear from the Table that there was a positive relationship between emotional expressivity and the scores of anger control ($r= 0.18, p<0.01$), while there was a negatively significant correlation between emotional expressivity and anger-in ($r=-0.27, p<0.01$). There was a negative correlation among emotional sensitivity scores and trait anger ($r=-0.17, p<0.01$), anger-in ($r= -0.11, p<0.01$) and anger-out ($r= -0.13, p<0.01$) scores; while there was a positive and significant correlation between emotional sensitivity and anger control ($r= 0.23, p<0.01$). The relationship among emotional control and trait anger ($r= -0.33, p<0.01$), anger-in ($r= -0.26, p<0.01$) and anger-out ($r= -0.27, p<0.01$) was negatively significant. There was a positive correlation among social expressivity and anger control ($r= 0.20, p<0.01$); while there was a

Table 1. Descriptive statistics.

Variable	n	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standart deviation
Emotional expressivity	514	20	67	37.99	7.86
Emotional sensitivity	514	26	69	47.26	8.81
Emotional control	514	23	69	42.40	7.69
Social expressivity	514	22	71	42.96	8.74
Social sensitivity	514	22	69	44.04	7.99
Social control	514	15	68	37.48	7.61
Trait anger	514	11,00	40,00	27.90	5.82
Anger-in	514	11,00	32,00	23.23	3.86
Anger-out	514	9,00	32,00	23.07	4.12
Anger control	514	8,00	31,00	18.26	4.55

Table 2. Correlations between social skills and anger.

Variable	Trait anger	Anger-in	Anger-out	Anger control
Emotional expressivity	-0.08	-0.27**	-0.08	0.18**
Emotional sensitivity	-0.17**	-0.11*	-0.13**	0.23**
Emotional control	-0.33**	-0.26**	-0.27**	0.06
Social expressivity	-0.07	0.03	-0.13**	0.20**
Social sensitivity	-0.26**	-0.22**	-0.21**	0.11*
Social control	-0.25**	-0.33**	-0.18**	0.07

**p<0.01.

Table 3. Multiple regression analysis on trait anger.

Variable	R	R ²	R ² _{ch}	F	Df	B	β	p
Constant						39.01		0.00**
Emotional expressivity						0.10	0.14	0.01**
Emotional sensitivity						-.04	-.06	0.24
Emotional control	0.39	0.15	0.14	15.31**	6/507	-.24	-.31	0.00**
Social expressivity						.01	.14	0.01**
Social sensitivity						-.07	-.01	0.08
Social control						-0.11	-0.14	0.01**

*p<0.05, **p<0.01.

negatively significant correlation between social sensitivity and anger-out ($r = -0.13$, $p < 0.01$). There was a negative correlation among social sensitivity scores and trait anger ($r = -0.26$, $p < 0.01$), anger-in ($r = -0.22$, $p < 0.01$) and anger out ($r = -0.21$, $p < 0.01$) while there was a positive and significant correlation between social sensitivity and anger control ($r = 0.11$, $p < 0.01$). There was a negative correlation among social control scores and trait anger ($r = -0.25$, $p < 0.01$), anger-in ($r = -0.33$, $p < 0.01$) and anger out ($r = -0.18$, $p < 0.01$).

As seen in Table 3 in general terms, specific contribution of social skills is significant on trait anger ($R^2 = 0.15$, $F_{(6/507)} = 15.31$, $p < 0.01$). This result indicates that social

skills explain 15% of total variance in trait anger. According to the standardized regression coefficient (β), significance order of precursor variables on trait anger is as follows: emotional control ($\beta = -0.31$, $p < 0.01$), emotional expressivity ($\beta = 0.14$, $p < 0.01$), social expressivity ($\beta = 0.14$, $p < 0.01$) and social control ($\beta = -0.14$, $p < 0.01$).

As seen in Table 4 in general terms, specific contribution of social skills is significant on anger-in ($R^2 = 0.18$, $F_{(6/507)} = 30.44$, $p < 0.01$). This result indicates that social skills explain 18% of total variance in anger-in. According to the standardized regression coefficient (β), significance order of precursor variables on anger-in is as follows: social expressivity ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$), social

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis on anger-in.

Variable	R	R ²	R ² _{ch}	F	Df	B	β	p
Constant						30.44		0.00**
Emotional expressivity						-0.09	-0.18	0.00**
Emotional sensitivity						-0.02	-0.03	0.52
Emotional control	0.43	0.18	0.17	18.91**	6/507	-0.08	-0.16	0.00**
Social expressivity						0.13	0.29	0.00**
Social sensitivity						-0.03	-0.06	0.25
Social control						-0.10	-0.20	0.00**

**p<0.01.

Table 5. Multiple regression analysis on anger-out.

Variable	R	R ²	R ² _{ch}	F	Df	B	β	p
Constant						29.60		0.00**
Emotional expressivity						0.06	0.10	0.05*
Emotional sensitivity						0.01	0.01	0.82
Emotional control	0.29 ^a	0.09	0.08	8.01**	6/507	-0.14	-0.25	0.00**
Social expressivity						-0.00	-0.01	0.91
Social sensitivity						-0.04	-0.08	0.19
Social control						-0.04	-0.07	0.25

*p<0.05,**p<0.01.

Table 6. Multiple regression analysis on anger control.

Variable	R	R ²	R ² _{ch}	F	Df	B	β	p
Constant						24.54		0.00**
Emotional expressivity						0.08	0.14	0.01**
Emotional sensitivity						0.01	0.19	0.00**
Emotional control	0.28 ^a	0.08	0.07	7.39**	6/507	0.09	0.15	0.01**
Social expressivity						0.05	0.10	0.07
Social sensitivity						0.02	0.03	0.56
Social control						0.02	0.03	0.65

**p<0.01.

control ($\beta=-0.20$, $p<0.01$), emotional expressivity ($\beta=-0.18$, $p<0.01$), and emotional control ($\beta=-0.16$, $p<0.01$).

As seen in Table 5 in general terms, specific contribution of social skills is significant on anger-out ($R^2=0.09$, $F_{(6/507)}=29.60$, $p<0.01$). This result indicates that social skills explain 18% of total variance in anger-out. According to the standardized regression coefficient (β), significance order of precursor variables on anger-out is as follows: emotional control ($\beta=-0.25$, $p<0.01$), and emotional expressivity ($\beta=-0.10$, $p<0.05$).

As seen in Table 6 in general terms, specific contribution of social skills is significant on anger control ($R^2=0.08$, $F_{(6/507)}=24.54$, $p<0.01$). This result indicates that social skills explain 18% of total variance in anger control. According to the standardized regression

coefficient (β), significance order of precursor variables on anger-in is as follows: emotional sensitivity ($\beta=0.19$, $p<0.01$), emotional control ($\beta=0.15$, $p<0.01$), and emotional expressivity ($\beta=0.14$, $p<0.01$).

DISCUSSION

Data analysis revealed some findings. It was found that there was a low, negative correlation between trait anger and emotional sensitivity, emotional control, social sensitivity and social control. In addition, it was found that social skills significantly predicted trait anger as a whole and that emotional control, social control and emotional expressivity sub-dimensions significantly explained trait

anger. This indicates that the individuals with high level of social skills experience the emotion of trait anger less often. In other words, the attitude of controlling anger is related with social skills. For this reason, social skill is an important factor in anger control. Anger is an emotional reaction that is shown in situations of pressure, frustration, disappointment, offence, fear and failure of satisfying one's rights and expectations (Kulaksızoğlu, 2001). Anger has cognitive (Duran et al., 2005) and behavioral dimensions (Köknel, 1997) and it is important in terms of sending messages in interpersonal communication. Trait anger refers to perceiving many situations or environments boring or frustrating and as a result, experiencing state anger more often (Özer, 1994; Spielberger, 1991; Spielberger et al., 1983). An individual who comfortably and effectively use social skills encounters less problems in his relations with the environment since he/she can convey his/her emotions, opinions and desires to the environment as required (Albayrak-Arın, 1999). For this reason, the individuals having the skills of receiving and interpreting non-verbal communication from others (Yüksel, 2009) (emotional sensitivity); regulation and controlling of non-verbal reactions (emotional control); interpreting verbal communication of others (social sensitivity); and behaving in harmony with the social situation (social control) (Riggio, 1986) might be expected to experience less trait anger.

It was found that there was a low negative correlation between anger-in and emotional expressivity, emotional sensitivity, emotional control, social sensitivity and social control. It was found that social skills significantly predicted anger-in sub-dimension as a whole and that social expressivity, social control, emotional expressivity and emotional control sub-dimensions significantly explained anger-in. This result indicates that as individuals' level of social skills increase; they use less anger-in. Anger-in refers to keeping one's anger to himself/herself and not expressing it (Duran et al., 2005; Özer, 1994; Spielberger, 1991; Spielberger et al., 1983). Social skills involve using the ability of building appropriate and effective relationships with other people. The individuals with adequate social skills can effectively express themselves (Kelly, 1982; Segrin, 2001). Although anger-in seems to be a desired social trait, expressing an individual's anger in an appropriate manner is a desired characteristic in terms of the psychological health of the individual. For this reason, the individuals with high social skills might be expected to use less anger-in.

There was a low negative correlation between anger-out and emotional sensitivity, emotional control, social expressivity, social sensitivity and social control. It was found that social skills significantly predicted anger-out sub-dimension as a whole and emotional control and emotional expressivity sub-dimensions significantly explained anger-out. This result indicates that the individuals with low level of social skills use anger-out more. Anger-out refers to expression of anger (Özer,

1994; Spielberger, 1991; Spielberger et al., 1983). When the expression of anger is manifested in an improper manner, it can harm the environment (Köknel, 1997). It can be stated that properly exteriorized anger is goal-oriented. It is generally socially acceptable and it can be stated that it can provide gain to the individual in the long term (Baltaş et al., 2004). Anger is related with poor communication skills (Korkut, 2002). Socialization of the individual is one of the important steps of development processes (Orçan, 2008). As a result, it can be stated that it contributes to the adaptation of the individual both in internal and environmental aspects. In this aspect, the individuals with high social skills can express themselves more comfortably, they pay attention to the emotions and behaviors of other people and they can regulate their own behaviors according to the emotions and behaviors of other people. For this reason, the fact that the individuals with high social skills have less anger-out behavior might be associated with their higher levels of the skills of understanding other people's emotions, regulating their own emotions and having communication skills.

There was a low positive relationship between anger control and emotional expressivity, emotional sensitivity, social expressivity and social sensitivity. It was found that social skills significantly predicted anger control sub-dimension as a whole and that emotional sensitivity, emotional control and emotional expressivity sub-dimensions significantly explained anger control. Anger control refers to the effort of controlling one's anger (Özer, 1994; Spielberger, 1991; Spielberger et al., 1983). Failure of controlling anger and inappropriate exteriorization of anger takes place in the form of aggression and violence, which gives the biggest harm to the individual himself/herself. According to Baltaş and Baltaş (2004) when appropriately used, anger provides mental and physical strength and contributes to adaptation.

Korkut (2002) reported that although anger is a natural emotion, it has a function of self-protection which triggers protection of the boundaries and correcting unfairness. Social skill sub-dimensions which were found to be positively related with anger control are emotional sensitivity, the skills of receiving and interpreting other people's non-verbal communications. Emotional control refers to the skills of an individual to regulate and control his/her emotional and non-verbal reactions. Social expressivity refers to an individual's skills of establishing social communication and taking part in communication (Tuna, 2009). Social sensitivity refers to the skills of interpreting other people's verbal communications (Riggio, 1986). Anger control sub-dimension refers to controlling one's anger and giving an appropriate reaction. The individuals who have the aforementioned social skills can be expected to control their anger more since they have the skills of understanding other people's emotions and opinions, regulating their own emotional reactions and having high levels of communication skills.

A general analysis of the study findings revealed that

the trait anger, anger-in and anger-out behavior of the individuals having high levels of social skills decreased; while their anger control behaviors increased. This result indicates that the individuals having high levels of social skills might have a positive emotion of anger and form of expressing anger. For this reason, concentrating on social skills might be influential in guidance and psychological counseling activities involving anger management.

Conclusion

It can be stated that revising the activities at schools in such a way to enhance the activities to develop social skills within the framework of the guidance programs currently applied at schools might be effective in decreasing violence and aggression cases at schools, which recently increased.

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