

Determination of the Emotional Requirements of University Students

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ABSTRACT

This study has been planned and performed in order to determine the emotion requirements of university students. The data for the study has been obtained by the survey made of 'Emotion Requirement Scale' which was taken by 224 students that are studying in Karabuk University School of Physical Education and Sports in the 2013-2014 school year. It is a descriptive study. In the 'Approaching End' the highest calculated averages in terms of emotion requirement were 'Emotions help people keep up with life' and 'I think it is important for me to discover my emotions' In the 'Avoidance End', the highest calculated averages were 'When I experience strong emotions, I am sometimes scared of the things that I can do' and 'Staying away from emotional situations helps me sleep well at night'. It has been determined that there is a significant difference ($p < 0,05$) in the opinions of the students on the emotion requirements when the person is of emotional personality.

Keywords: Emotion requirement, university student, avoidance, approaching

INTRODUCTION

Emotions are rather effective on the decisions and choices made in daily life. While the cognitive intelligence allows one to think about the details in his aims and plans, emotions are the power required to choose these aims (Jensen, 1998). Although many researchers tried to define emotions, all of them assigned different definitions to it (Izard, 1992; Solomon, 1993; Safran & Greenberg, 1991; Simith & Lazarus, 1990). Frijda (1988) defined emotion as 'a passive movement preparation and natural motion control in order to continue relations depending on the fact of being ready for change or depending on the environment or/and inner elements.' On the other hand, emotion has been defined by Smith and Lazarus as 'An organized reaction mechanism which provides coordination in order to experience physiological, perceptual, empirical, cognitive and other variations in both a sensational and a spiritual way.'

Elements such as physical changes, emotional expressions (both oral and non-oral) and movement styles accompany emotions (Çeçen, 2006). According to the fundamental emotions theory; emotions are seen as discrete systems and each individual emotion provides the adaptation in the person-environment process. Also, every discrete fundamental emotion is believed to have its own intellectual evaluation such as physiological activity, action tendency and expression. According to dimensional approaches on the other hand, emotional circumstances are more related with each other rather than being independent (Özbayrak, 2006).

One cannot think of himself separate from his emotions and isolate them. One can, however, enhance his skills in order to control his emotions to serve the right purposes. Emotions such

as peace, anxiety and excitement, without being aware, effects one's way of looking at life, morale level and performance. Emotions are important for people and if they can be managed as required, they can increase a person's performance to a great extent (Akin, 2004).

The main function of emotions is to adapt to the nature, environment and society. Moreover, people need emotions in order to continue their life, increase their social relations and live a quality life (Dökmen, 2004).

The need for emotions is described as the general motivation level for people to either approach or escape situations or activities which involve emotions for them or others. The requirement for emotions involves the desire for people to understand the emotions of both themselves and others. Emotions are effective in shaping one's decisions and behavior. If people find emotions disturbing, then they won't want to experience that and try to understand other's emotions. Also, if people don't see emotions as productive, they might avoid approaching them. Hence, people tend to show differences in approaching and escaping emotional activities. This is directly related to their requirement of emotions (Duyan at all, 2011). Studies on students' emotions and emotional awareness levels (Ciarrochi at all., 2005; Greenberg, 2002; Kuyumcu & Güven, 2012; Kuzucu, 2006; Smith & Smith, 1995) have been reached through a literature search, however, there was no study which researched in a detailed manner the emotion requirements of university students and the factors which effect these.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The population of this study, which aims to determine the emotion requirements of university students, is made up of students studying in Karabuk University Physical Education and Sports High School. Sampling has been done in the study and 224 students have been picked by random sampling method.

Survey has been used as a data gathering method in the study. The survey is made of two parts. While questions about the demographic specifications of the students' are asked in the first part, the second part consists of the 'Emotion Requirement Scale' developed by Maio and Esses (2001), which has been modified to Turkish by Duyan and his friends (2011).

The emotion requirement scale is a two dimensional measurement tool made up of 26 items which reflects the state of either 'avoidance' or 'approaching' about emotions. While the items 3,4,5,6,7,13,15,17,18,19,20,24 and 26 are items which belong to the approaching subscale, the items 1,2,8,9,10,11,12,14,16,21,22,23 and 25 belong to the avoiding subscale. The people who took the survey were asked to comment on the statements in the items, ranging from 'I don't agree at all -3' to 'I completely agree +3', making a total of six levels. Hence, the range of points one can get from a subscale is something between -39 and +39, while in total it is something between -78 and +79 in the Emotion Requirement Scale. The higher the result indicates the higher motivation of people approaching emotions, and the lower the result indicates that the motivation of approaching emotions is lower (Duyan, Uçar, and Kalafat, 2011).

The demographic specifications of the participants have been given as frequency and percentage distributions and each item in the Emotion Requirement Scale has been described with arithmetic mean and standard deviation values in addition to the percentage distributions. Moreover, in the comparison of the scale units and personal specifications of the university students, t-tests have been applied for two groups while variance analysis has been applied for groups more than two. On the other hand, the reliability analysis for the

scale has been determined by the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. In this case, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient has been calculated as 0,798.

RESULTS

The distribution of the students according to their personal specifications has been given in Table 1. According to this, out of the 224 students which form this sample, %53,6 of them are first grade, %15,6 of them are second grade, %24,6 of them are third grade and %6,3 of them are fourth grade students, and while %42,4 of them are female, %57,6 of them are male. %11,2 of the fathers and %3,1 of the mothers of the students are university graduates, and %18,8's monthly wage is either minimum wage or lower. Amongst the students who participated in the survey, %62,5 of them stated that they didn't receive any environmental education before university and %80,8 of them stated they didn't receive any environmental education during university. %31,3 of them stated that their source of information on environment are TV, radio and other mass media, while %34,8 of them stated that their source of information is their family.

Table 1. The Distribution of Participants According to their Personal Specifications

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Number (f)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Grade	1	120	53,6
	2	35	15,6
	3	55	24,6
	4	14	6,3
Sex	Female	95	42,4
	Male	129	57,6
Father's education status	Illiterate	16	7,1
	Primary School	66	29,5
	Secondary School	51	22,8
	High School	66	29,5
	University	25	11,2
Mother's education status	Illiterate	36	16,1
	Primary School	79	35,3
	Secondary School	63	28,1
	High School	39	17,4
	University	7	3,1
Monthly income	Minimum Wage (846 TL)	42	18,8
	847-1000 TL	28	12,5
	1001-1250 TL	30	13,4
	1251-1500 TL	49	21,9
	1501 TL and over	75	33,5
<i>Total</i>		224	100,0

Table 2 shows the distribution of some personal specifications of the students according to their emotional statuses. According to this, %78,6 of the students stated that they are emotional. %24,1 of them stated that they have troubles expressing their emotions to their family, %11,6 to their boy/girlfriends and %11,2 to their other friends. %41,1 of the participating students stated that they are feeling lonely, while %11,2 of them stated that they feel lonely every day. It has been determined that %93,3 of the participant's parents are alive.

Table 2. The distribution of some personal specifications of the students according to their emotional statuses

Status of being emotional	Yes	176	78,6
	No	48	21,4
The environment in which you have difficulty expressing your emotions	Family	54	24,1
	Boy/Girlfriend	26	11,6
	Friends	25	11,2
	I don't have difficulties	119	53,1
The status of feeling lonely	Yes	92	41,1
	Every day	25	11,2
	Once a week	22	9,8
	Once every two days	13	5,8
	Once a month	32	14,3
	No	132	58,9
Mother and father living status	Both of them are alive	209	93,3
	Father alive, mother dead	3	1,3
	Mother alive, father dead	12	5,4
Total		224	100,0

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics related to the students' opinions on the 'approaching' end of the emotion requirement scale. The highest averages in terms of emotion requirement in the approaching end were 'Emotions help people keep up with life' ($\bar{x}=3,82$) and 'I think it is important for me to discover my emotions' ($\bar{x}=3,71$), while the lowest averages were 'I equip my bedroom with pictures and posters that are emotionally important for me' ($\bar{x}=3,22$) and 'I get the feeling I need to cry from time to time' ($\bar{x}=3,29$). The overall mean for the approaching end which covers all the items was calculated as $\bar{x}=3,54$, which can be regarded as the middle point.

Table 3. The descriptive statistics related to the students’ opinions on the ‘approaching’ end of the emotion requirement scale

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	s.d.	
	%	%	%	%	%	%		
I regularly feel that I need to experience strong emotions	15,2	12,1	26,3	21,0	13,4	12,1	3,42	1,55
Emotions help people keep up with life	10,3	10,7	22,8	20,1	15,2	21,0	3,82	1,60
I am a very emotional person	13,4	13,4	21,0	21,4	15,6	15,2	3,58	1,60
I think it is important for me to discover my emotions	12,1	13,4	20,5	18,3	16,5	19,2	3,71	1,64
I stay close to situations in which I hope to feel strong emotions	11,6	15,6	21,0	23,7	13,8	14,3	3,55	1,55
We should show toleration to our emotions	9,8	13,8	24,1	24,6	9,8	17,9	3,64	1,54
Strong emotions are generally beneficial	12,5	13,4	29,9	23,2	11,2	9,8	3,37	1,44
Experiencing emotions help contribute to people’s lives	11,6	13,8	23,7	22,8	13,8	14,3	3,56	1,54
It is important for me to be aware of my emotions	9,4	12,1	27,7	20,1	14,3	16,5	3,67	1,52
It is important for me to know what others are feeling	11,6	12,1	24,1	21,4	11,6	19,2	3,67	1,60
I like to fiddle with my emotions	12,9	13,4	25,9	18,3	13,4	16,1	3,54	1,59
I get the feeling I need to cry from time to time	15,2	17,9	25,4	19,2	8,5	13,8	3,29	1,58
I equip my bedroom with pictures and posters that are emotionally important for me	17,0	17,9	24,6	18,8	10,7	11,2	3,22	1,56
General							3,54	1,21

1: I totally disagree.....6: I totally agree

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics related to the students’ opinions on the ‘avoiding’ end of the emotion requirement scale. The general mean which includes all the items is calculated as $\bar{x}=3,09$, which is below medium level in the 6 point Likert scale. Items which have a higher average than the others are ‘When I experience strong emotions, I am sometimes scared of the things that I can do’ ($\bar{x}=3,51$) and ‘Staying away from emotional situations helps me sleep well at night’ ($\bar{x}=3,30$), while the ones with the lower average are ‘I find strong emotions hard to get over, so I try to avoid my emotions’ ($\bar{x}=2,88$) and ‘It is embarrassing for someone to reveal their emotions’ ($\bar{x}=2,71$).

Table 4. The descriptive statistics related to the students' opinions on the 'avoiding' end of the emotion requirement scale

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	s.d.	
	%	%	%	%	%	%		
When I look at the past, I can see that I have a tendency of being scared of feeling my emotions	24,6	13,8	21,9	22,8	6,7	10,3	3,04	1,60
I have trouble telling people that are close to me that I love them	25,9	13,4	25,4	20,1	6,7	8,5	2,94	1,55
I find strong emotions hard to get over, so I try to avoid my emotions	25,4	17,4	24,1	17,9	6,7	8,5	2,88	1,55
I don't prefer to experience both the decline and rise of emotions	16,5	14,7	30,8	21,4	4,9	11,6	3,18	1,50
I don't know how to deal with my emotions, hence I avoid my emotions	21,4	13,4	31,3	19,6	5,4	8,9	3,01	1,49
Emotions are dangerous- they have a tendency to put me in situations I don't want to be in	23,2	16,1	23,2	25,9	3,1	8,5	2,95	1,50
It is always a mistake for a person to act according to their emotions	13,8	17,0	29,9	24,1	4,5	10,7	3,21	1,44
It is embarrassing for a person to reveal their emotions	29,5	17,9	25,0	13,8	7,6	6,3	2,71	1,51
People function better when they don't feel strong emotions	17,0	13,8	26,3	25,4	7,6	9,8	3,22	1,49
I wish I could feel emotions less	17,9	18,3	25,0	20,1	7,6	11,2	3,15	1,55
Staying away from emotional situations helps me sleep well at night	15,2	16,1	26,3	21,0	8,5	12,9	3,30	1,55
When I experience strong emotions, I am sometimes scared of the things that I can do	13,8	14,7	23,2	17,0	17,0	14,3	3,51	1,61
I would prefer to be someone who acts according to their logic and feel very little emotion	12,9	24,6	26,8	20,1	4,9	10,7	3,12	1,46
General							3,09	1,04

1: I totally disagree.....6: I totally agree

In the study, the opinions of the students on their requirement for emotion have been compared with their demographic specifications; it was found that the variables such as grade, sex, father's education, mother's education, monthly income, status of receiving environmental education before university, status of receiving environmental education during university, source of information about environment, status of expressing emotion and status of feeling lonely don't have a significant difference ($p > 0,05$). On the other hand, the opinions of the students on the emotion requirements with respect to their status of being an emotional person showed a significant difference ($p < 0,05$). When the t-test results are analyzed in Table 5, one can see that the emotion requirement levels of students who identify themselves as emotional ($\bar{x} = 3,48$) are higher than the students who identify themselves as non-emotional ($\bar{x} = 3,21$).

Table 5. The Comparison of the Opinions of Students on the Emotion Requirements with Some Personal Specifications

Variable	Group	\bar{x}	s.d.	t	p
Status of being emotional	Yes	3,48	1,13	2,006	0,048*
	No	3,21	0,93		
Sex	Female	3,32	1,13	0,001	0,999
	Male	3,31	0,94		
Age	18-20	3,04	1,16	2,477	0,062
	21-22	3,36	0,93		
	23+	3,49	0,99		
Grade	1	3,24	0,99	0,799	0,496
	2	3,33	1,11		
	3	3,37	1,05		
	4	3,66	0,98		
Father's educational status	Illiterate	3,00	1,51	0,604	0,660
	Primary School	3,35	1,04		
	Secondary School	3,23	0,89		
	High School	3,38	0,98		
	University	3,42	0,98		
Mother's educational status	Illiterate	3,16	1,17	0,328	0,859
	Primary School	3,35	1,01		
	Secondary School	3,33	0,83		
	High School	3,38	1,15		
Monthly income	University	3,13	1,32	1,601	0,175
	Minimum wage (846 TL)	3,53	1,06		
	847-1000 TL	3,00	1,19		
	1001-1250 TL	3,22	0,88		
	1251-1500 TL	3,19	0,96		
	1501 TL and over	3,42	1,01		
No	3,33	0,99			

* $p < 0.05$

DISCUSSION

In the study, the opinions of the students about emotion requirements don't show a significant difference according to gender. This finding is also supported by Dil and Aykanat's studies (2013).

Although the opinions of students on emotion requirements don't show a significant difference according to age and grade, it has been determined that as age and grade increase, the requirement for emotions also increases. In the study done by Dil and Aykanat (2013), there hasn't been any significant difference between the emotion requirement scale averages and the ages of students studying in the school of nursing. According to the research done by Bar-On (1999) on 3831 people; emotional intelligence increases in a certain rate as age increases. The similarity between the findings suggests that together with age, people start to become more emotional.

More than half of the students who have been accepted to the research (%78,6) have stated that they are an emotional person. Mayer and Salovey (1997) has suggested that an individual at a young age learn emotion strategies such as how to express some of their emotions, how to deal with these emotions, suppress them and even completely deny them. On the other hand, in a research done by Kaygusuz (2002) in order to determine the problem areas of university students, it has been determined that students have intense problems in emotionality and human relations. The findings, together with youth and adolescence, suggest that big differences in emotions occur and tendency towards emotions increase.

%24,1 of students stated that they have difficulties expressing their emotions to their family, %11,6 of them to their girl/boyfriends and %11,2 of them to their other friends. When an individual faces a rewarding or punitive or a stimulant which motivates him, that individual experiences either positive or negative emotions and expresses them (Kervanci, 2008). As a matter of fact, there are studies in the literature which support this finding. In the study conducted by Dil and Aykanat (2013); %45,9 of the school of nursing students which participated in the research stated that they have troubles expressing their emotions and when they fail to express their emotions, they feel anger, sadness and excluded. According to Mayer and Salovey (1997); individuals which are successful emotionally have information on expressing their emotions and revealing them and the ability to understand these emotions. In the research done by Culha and Dereli (1987), it is emphasized that there is a tendency of an increasing communications problem in Turkey. In the research, the communications problem was not being able to tell emotions and thoughts clearly. On the other hand, in the study done by Yesilyaprak (1986), it has been determined that high school and university students have emotion expression problems such as not being able to talk in public, being shy to be friends with the opposite gender and not being able to share problems with parents. All of these data give the impression that there are emotional situations where individuals can't figure out and express themselves. In reality, by opening their emotions and sharing it with others, the individual gets hold of a cognitive control over negative and challenging situations which leads them to the emotional acceptance state. An individual, who sincerely shares their emotions, realizes that feeling these emotions doesn't have a negative effect, that it is normal to feel them and relaxes. This relaxation improves the self-confidence of the individual (Oksuz, 2012)

Emotions guide an individual to be ready for action, to set his priorities and make his plans happen (Frijda, 1994; Safran & Greenberg, 1991). Elements such as physical changes, emotional statements (oral and non-oral) and movement types accompany emotions (Çeçen, 2006). In the approaching end, the highest calculated averages in terms of emotion

requirement were 'Emotions help people keep up with life' ($\bar{x}=3,82$) and 'I think it is important for me to discover my emotions' ($\bar{x}=3,71$), while the lowest ones were 'I equip my bedroom with pictures and posters that are emotionally important for me' ($\bar{x}=3,22$) and 'I get the feeling I need to cry from time to time' ($\bar{x}=3,29$). The general mean which includes all the items on the approaching end was calculated to be $\bar{x}=3,54$, which is around the middle point of 3,5. On the other hand, the general mean which includes all the items in the avoidance end of the 'Emotion Requirement Scale' is below the middle point. In the avoidance end, the highest calculated averages were 'When I experience strong emotions, I am sometimes scared of the things that I can do' ($\bar{x}=3,51$) and 'Staying away from emotional situations helps me sleep well at night' ($\bar{x}=3,30$), while the ones with the lower average are 'I find strong emotions hard to get over, so I try to avoid my emotions' ($\bar{x}=2,88$) and 'It is embarrassing for someone to reveal their emotions' ($\bar{x}=2,71$). Smith and Smith (1995), in the intercultural study they conducted in order to determine the most frequently expressed emotion; determined that the most frequently expressed emotion words in Turkish were love, hate, crying, hurting, missing, passion, sadness, anger, laughing and fear, whereas in England they were determined to be happiness, sadness, anger, depressed, hate, joy, confused, jealousy, excited, bored and fear.

CONCLUSION

In this study which was done to determine the emotion requirements for university students; Variables such as grade, sex, father's education, mother's education, monthly income, status of receiving environmental education before university, status of receiving environmental education during university, source of information about environment, status of expressing emotion and status of feeling lonely don't have a significant difference ($p>0,05$), although it showed a significant difference ($p<0,05$) with respect to their status of being an emotional person. In the 'Approaching End' of the Emotion Requirement Scale, the highest calculated averages in terms of emotion requirement were 'Emotions help people keep up with life' ($\bar{x}=3,82$) and 'I think it is important for me to discover my emotions' ($\bar{x}=3,71$). In the 'Avoidance End', the highest calculated averages were 'When I experience strong emotions, I am sometimes scared of the things that I can do' ($\bar{x}=3,51$) and 'Staying away from emotional situations helps me sleep well at night' ($\bar{x}=3,30$). These suggestions can be made with regard to the data obtained from this research:

1. Lectures on emotion management can be added to the syllabus in order to allow university students to freely express their emotions and gain experience in this field,
2. Programs can be developed in order to earn practical and solution-oriented emotional sufficiency skills for the students to use in their daily lives or emergencies, and the effectiveness of these programs can then be researched,
3. The Emotion Requirement Scale used in this study has been tested on the students studying in Karabuk University School of Physical Education and Sports. The same scale can be applied to more students from different departments.

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