



Idiographic Analysis of an Emotion-Focused Therapy-Based Psychoeducation Program with Undergraduate Students in Turkey

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Abstract

In this study, the researchers propose a complementary methodological approach to determine how much participants may benefit from a psychoeducation program based on emotion-focused therapy (EFT). We designed the project as a multiple quantitative case study conducted with eight participants enrolled at a university in the Eastern Mediterranean region of Turkey. All participants were undergraduates in a psychological counselling and guidance program in the 2018–2019 spring semester. We collected research data through the repertory grid technique, which is a semi-structured interview method. We detected the distance between the elements (*actual self*, *ideal self*, *me before the psychoeducation program started*) by calculating the standardized Euclidean distance coefficient. Our findings showed that the distance between the elements of *actual self* and *me before the psychoeducation program started* was significant. Findings at the phenomenon level showed that the psychoeducation program applied in this study was successful. Findings indicated that therapeutic success could be measured through the idiographic findings at the individual level.

Keywords University students · Emotion-focused therapy · Repertory grid technique · Psychoeducation program

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Introduction

Young adulthood is a period in which a young individual transitions from high school to university life. In this period, young people are expected to fulfil their academic responsibilities, become autonomous individuals by learning to be independent from their families, acquire professional competence, attain economic independence, and establish intimacy in their emotional relationships (Arnett 2000; Baker et al. 1985; Erikson 1968; Fassig 2003; Roisman et al. 2004). University students encounter many economic, social, and emotional difficulties and problems while they are trying to fulfil their developmental tasks and academic responsibilities (Adams et al. 2016; Allgower et al. 2001; Hurst et al. 2013). In the related literature, studies on the problems of university students showed that young adults experience more emotional, academic, and economic problems during this period (Erkan et al. 2012; Kaygusuz 2002; Topkaya and Meydan 2013). Universities offer a variety of professional services to help students cope with these difficulties and problems.

Psychological counselling and guidance is a professional field that provides many services for the problems and needs of university students. Considering the seriousness of the problems of university students, the efficiency of these services is important (Atik and Yalçın 2010; Erkan et al. 2012). To begin this study, we examined the current problems of university students through the Problem Screening Inventory (PSI). This inventory is used to identify problems faced by university students in their physical learning environments, university and faculty services, teaching–learning processes, future work life, family relationships, social and friendship relationships, and personal perceptions and emotional conditions (Ersay and Yazçayır 2014). The results of our analysis showed that the students had higher scores in the personal perception and emotional condition dimension compared to the other six dimensions. In the university period, which is between adolescence and adulthood, young people try to adapt to changing economic, academic, and social conditions in addition to the problems of identity formation that started in adolescence. In this transition period, students may experience emotional problems (Allgower et al. 2001; Hunt and Eisenberg 2010).

Services addressing the problems of university students could be conducted as individual or group practice. Psychoeducation programs are one of the ways to help university students with their emotional problems. In the related literature, various psychoeducation programs have been developed based on many theoretical approaches, and their effectiveness has been tested through application to the emotional problems and needs of university students (Altunbaş 2014; Kuzucu 2006; Şahan-Yılmaz and Duy 2013; Şahin 2018). However, in the literature, no psychoeducation program has been developed based on emotion-focused therapy (EFT) for young adults. Unlike other studies, we aim in this study to develop an original psychoeducation program based on EFT to help university students cope with the emotional problems they experience. EFT is a therapeutic approach that focuses on increasing the awareness of emotion, enhancing the regulation of emotion and transforming emotion (Greenberg 2004, 2006, 2015). EFT is based on the premise that emotions make human experiences meaningful, and it focuses on these meanings in

a closer and more mindful way (Paivio and Greenberg 1995). With this focus, the therapy process directs the therapist and the client to strategies that encourage the awareness, acceptance, expression, use, regulation, and transformation of emotions (Greenberg and Paivio 1997). The goals of EFT are to strengthen individual self-respect, regulate emotional effects, and create new meanings for an individual's experiences (Greenberg 2016; Paivio 2013). The EFT approach emerged with these goals as a neo-humanistic, experimental approach revised in terms of the modern theories of emotion and emotional neuroscience (Damasio 1999; Greenberg and Watson 2006; Izard 2002; Lazarus 1991; Ledoux 1996). We constructed this study according to the three stages of EFT process (Greenberg 2016; Greenberg and Watson 2006). In line with these stages, our purposes were to connect group leader and members at the beginning of the psychoeducation process and to increase the emotional awareness of the members. Sessions at this stage explore when and against what participants experience some specific emotions, and improve the vocabulary repertoire used for expressing emotions. The second stage is aimed at recalling and exploring group members' non-adaptive emotions. For this purpose, there are sessions to recognize primary and secondary emotions, adaptive and non-adaptive emotions, and mediator emotions. In the last stage, the purpose is to transform non-adaptive emotions with new meanings by changing them through healthy adaptive emotions. In the sessions at this stage, certain strategies can be applied to transform emotions through the use of other specific emotions.

So far, psychoeducation programs have been tested with a pre-test and post-test study in classic experimental designs (Pedhazur and Schmelkin 1991). When researchers consider the findings presented in experimental designs, they can see that these findings prioritize internal validity (Brewer and Crano 2000; Pedhazur and Schmelkin 1991). The effect of the experimental program on the dependent variable becomes clearer to the extent that the confounding variable is controlled (Marczyk et al. 2005). Internal validity may decrease due to several factors. For example, if assignment to experimental and control groups is not performed randomly in quasi-experimental studies, the confounding variables that might affect the results cannot be controlled (Heppner et al. 2008; Marczyk et al. 2005). However, compared to other research designs (e.g. field studies), both experimental and quasi-experimental studies prioritize internal validity more than external validity (Marczyk et al. 2005; Rosnow and Rosenthal 2013). Despite this, these research designs do not yield information about an individual in a group; rather, they emphasise the mean scores (Heppner et al. 2008; Rosnow and Rosenthal 2013). The basic motivation behind this study was to find out how much each individual benefitted from counselling services in the group setting. Researchers can examine hypotheses for these changes through empirical or evaluative studies. However, such studies do not provide information about an individual's personal development in counselling where the individual is at the centre. For this reason, it may be good to determine how a member of the group progresses in line with the goals of the group.

According to Bartholomew (1993), an individual develops an identity by testing the similarity or uniqueness of core elements (actual self, social self and ideal self) compared to other individuals. A person's "self" consists of many elements including the actual self (cognitive representation of the present self), social self (cognitive representation of others' thoughts of oneself), and ideal self (cognitive

representation of desired change). An individual constantly compares these three core elements in terms of similarity with others, and through this constant comparison, the individual can construct a unique identity (Bartholomew 1993; cited in Sanberk 2020). Within the framework of the voluntary principle, we included participants who had difficulties recognizing, expressing and regulating emotions in the psychoeducational program. Participants were expected to overcome these difficulties after this program. In other words, the participants should expect to be closer to their ideal selves. At the same time, participants may want to be closer to a person who can recognize, express, and organize their emotions in terms of these features. In this regard, we tested the following hypotheses in this study:

1. The *actual self* element would be positioned closer to the *ideal self* element than to the element of *me before starting the psychoeducation group*.
2. Group members would see themselves (*actual self* after the intervention) as more distant from a person they knew who could not recognize, express, or regulate their emotions (second purpose of the study).
3. Group members would position themselves closer to a person they knew who recognized, expressed, and regulated their emotions.

Method

Design

We designed this study as a multiple quantitative case study. We tested the hypotheses of the study through the repertory grid technique (RGT), which is a semi-structured interview technique. The RGT was developed by Kelly (1955) in order to reveal the personal structures that individuals use regarding the persons, events or objects that are important in their lives. Researchers may use this technique to gain insight into how a person interprets his personal circumstances, the world, or a smaller part of the world (Fransella et al. 2004; Jankowicz 2005). When practicing the technique, the researcher gives the participant a form with a repertory grid; this grid provides different role definitions or elements that are supposed to have special meaning for the participant. For each role definition, participants are asked to write the name of a person whom they know and view as appropriate for that definition. Then, the researcher asks participants to compare the elements, and in this way, the personal structures of the individual are determined. Ultimately, each element is ranked in terms of the individual structures that have been revealed. As a result of this process, a mental map is formed to provide significant information about the way a person interprets and constructs the subject in question (Fransella et al. 2004; Jankowicz 2005). Through the RGT, researchers may investigate the level of benefit for the participants in a group from an experimental intervention at the individual level in experimental and/or quasi-experimental studies. The RGT enables more complicated analyses (Bell 2003, 2004; Caputi et al. 2012). However, based on the information that is involved or that we planned to present in this study, we were selective in choosing the facilities provided by the technique.

Participants

The participants consisted of students enrolled in the first, second, third, and fourth year of the undergraduate program in Psychological Counselling and Guidance in the Department of Educational Sciences at a university located in the Mediterranean region of Turkey. We obtained ethics approval from a university scientific research and publication ethics committee also located in the Mediterranean region of Turkey. The research also complied with the ethical principles of the World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association 2018). Researchers took all precaution to protect the confidentiality of participants. We included participants who were volunteers and were capable of giving informed consent in the study.

At the end of the 2018–2019 fall semester, the Problem Screening Inventory (PSI) was administered to 225 students through an online form to identify the students' problems. In our inclusion criteria, participants in the psychoeducation program needed to meet these conditions: (a) they needed to have high scores in the personality perception-affection sub-scale, and (b) they could not be attending individual or group therapy at the same time. In addition, the mean scores of the participants from the Global Severity Index of the Brief Symptom Inventory were also taken into consideration. Researchers provided information about the psychoeducation program to all students who had high scores from the personality perception-affection sub-scale. Forty-five students volunteered to participate in the psychoeducation program. Researchers administered the Socio-demographic Form and the Brief Symptom Inventory to these students.

While forming the study group for the research, we checked whether or not the participants had any pathologies by examining the Brief Symptom Inventory's Global Severity Index mean scores. Brief Symptom Inventory's Global Severity Index of the Global Severity Index score has no cut-off point. Higher mean scores on the Global Severity Index indicate that the respondent's distress level is high. Mean scores approaching 4 indicate high levels of distress, while scores approaching 0 indicate low levels of distress. We evaluated the mean of Global Severity Index score for each participant using the following scoring: *not at all* (0 point), *a little bit* (1 point), *moderately* (2 points), *quite a bit* (3 points), and *extremely* (4 points). Participants with mean scores of 2 or higher were not included in the study. In addition, students who continued individual or group therapy were not included in the study. We identified a total of 33 students who met the inclusion criteria.

Of the students identified as meeting the inclusion criteria, 12 agreed to participate: 10 females and two males, all between the ages of 18 and 23. Once the psychoeducation program started, four participants (three females and one male) withdrew from the study, and eight participants (seven females and one male) completed the study in the psychoeducation group. The mean age of the group members ($N=8$) was 21.5. All group members were undergraduates, with 3 at the 3rd-grade and 5 at the 4th-grade levels. The socioeconomic status was considered medium for six group members and high for two group members. Four group members lived with their families and four lived in student housing.

Measures

Data were collected through the Problem Screening Inventory (PSI, Ersay and Yazçayır 2014) and the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI, Derogatis 1993; Şahin and Durak 1994). In addition, information about gender, age, class level, economic status and accommodation type of the group members was collected with the socio-demographic form. We evaluated the level of benefit for the participants in the psychoeducation program based on an emotion-focused therapy approach using the Repertory Grid Form.

The Problem Screening Inventory (PSI)

The Problem Screening Inventory developed by Ersay and Yazçayır (2014) includes a total number of 54 items for seven sub-problem areas and uses a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *I totally disagree*, 5 = *I totally agree*). Higher scores indicate more problems. The exploratory factor analyses performed by Ersay and Yazçayır (2014) investigated the factor structure for each sub-scale by performing confirmatory factor analyses on the responses obtained from the second student group. The confirmatory factor analysis results showed that the structures of the seven sub-scales in the PSI were confirmed. These sub-scales are physical learning environment, university/faculty services, teaching–learning process, future work life, family relationships, social/friendships relationships, and personal perception and emotional condition. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients of the scores on the subscales of the inventory were determined to be 0.78, 0.68, 0.64, 0.77, 0.71, 0.75, and 0.76 respectively. In this study, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients were calculated to be 0.74 for physical learning environment, 0.75 for university/faculty services, 0.74 for teaching–learning process, 0.77 for future work life, 0.73 for family relationships, 0.74 for social/friendships relationships, and 0.73 for personal perception and emotional condition.

The Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI)

The inventory developed by Derogatis (1993) and adapted to Turkish by Şahin and Durak (1994) is composed of 53 items with responses given on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale was constructed to investigate the items covering psychiatric symptoms and complaints in nine different dimensions (somatization, obsessive–compulsive, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, anger–hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation and psychoticism). The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient for the nine dimensions of the BSI ranged between 0.71 and 0.85. Test–retest reliability for the nine symptom dimensions ranged from 0.68 to 0.91, and for the three Global Indices from 0.87 to 0.90. Correlations between the BSI and SCL-R-90 were 0.92 to 0.99 (Derogatis 1993). According to results of the factor analysis of the validity of the Turkish form of the BSI, the inventory had a 5-factor structure including anxiety, depression, negative self-respect, somatization, and hostility. Results for reliability showed that the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the test ranged between 0.95 and 0.96. The Cronbach's alpha internal

coefficients obtained for the scores on the subscales were 0.87, 0.88, 0.87, 0.75 and 0.76 respectively (Şahin and Durak 1994). Each dimension can be evaluated separately. In addition, the BSI includes a global index of distress, the Global Severity Index, which is considered the most sensitive indicator of the respondent's distress level. Higher mean scores of the Global Severity Index indicate that the respondent's distress level is high.

The Psychoeducation Program

Before the psychoeducation program was developed, the researchers in this study reviewed the theoretical knowledge and previously conducted quasi-experimental studies on this issue. After the literature review, the psychoeducation program was developed to identify young adults' primary and secondary emotions, awareness of adaptive and non-adaptive emotions, expression of emotions, and formation of new stories by accessing new and healthy emotions. The program was composed of 10 sessions that lasted 120 min. Sessions were held once a week. Methods such as warm-up plays, imagination, case examples and role playing were used in the sessions.

The psychoeducation program included the following topics: getting to know each other, exploring when and against what some specific emotions are experienced, improving vocabulary knowledge used for expressing emotions, recognizing primary and secondary emotions, recognizing adaptive and non-adaptive emotions and the mediator emotions, experiencing strategies for transforming emotions through some specific emotions, and ending the psychoeducation process. The program was conducted by an expert with a master's degree in the field of psychological counselling and guidance, who performed group psychological counselling practices (the first author of this study). The sessions were conducted under the supervision of an expert who was experienced in preparing psychoeducation programs and who had knowledge, skills, and experience about the practice topics (the fourth author of this study).

Procedure

After the psychoeducation program, each participant filled in the Repertory Grid Form prepared by the researchers via interviews conducted by the second author of this study. The elements used in this Repertory Grid Form were identified by the researchers. Hence, the seven elements were:

- Actual self
- Ideal self
- Social self
- Normative self
- Me before the psychoeducation group started
- A person I know who cannot recognize, express and regulate his/her emotions
- A person I know who can recognize, express and regulate his/her emotions

After the psychoeducation program, participants' personal constructs about their improvements were elicited through the comparison of these elements. This comparison was done using the *triadic comparison method*. At this stage, the participant was asked the following question: "Which two are alike and differ from another element?" or "Which element on the card differs from the other two?". The responses given by participants (the personal structures they applied for) were recorded on the form (Appendix 1). This procedure was repeated for each of the seven elements. In the last phase, participants ranked each element from 1 and 5 according to each construct pair (Appendix 2). In this way, the data required for repertory grid analysis were compiled by the third author of this study.

Results

The first hypothesis of the study, the distance between the actual self and ideal self elements, can be detected by calculating the Euclidean distance coefficient. We used Idiogrid 2.4, a computer-based data analysis program based on Slater's (1977) explanations, to calculate the standardized Euclidean distance coefficient (Grice 2008). Accordingly, if the distance between the actual self and ideal self was less than 0.68, it indicated that the individual's eigenvalue, or self-respect, was high. A Euclidean distance of 0.68 to 1.07 between these two elements indicated medium-level eigenvalue. A Euclidean distance greater than 1.07 indicated low eigenvalue (Bartholomew 1993; as cited in Sanberk 2020). Table 1 demonstrates the findings about the participants' eigenvalue.

An analysis of Table 1 shows that Participant-6 positioned the actual self and ideal self elements closest to each other ($d=0.50$). This finding indicates that Participant-6 had a high eigenvalue. Participant 8 also had high eigenvalue and positioned actual self and ideal self close to each other ($d=0.57$). These participants were followed by Participant-4 ($d=0.72$) and Participant 1 ($d=0.85$), who had a medium-level eigenvalue. The other four participants had eigenvalues higher than the reference value ($d > 1.07$) between the actual self and ideal self elements. Hence, it was found that Participant-3 ($d=1.08$), Participant-7 ($d=1.08$), Participant-2 ($d=1.14$) and Participant-5 ($d=1.26$) had low eigenvalues.

Table 1 Euclidean distance coefficients between the participants' actual self and ideal self elements

Participants	Euclidean distance coefficient
Participant-1 (F)	0.85
Participant-2 (F)	1.14
Participant-3 (F)	1.08
Participant-4 (F)	0.72
Participant-5 (F)	1.26
Participant-6 (F)	0.50
Participant-7 (F)	1.08
Participant-8 (M)	0.57

F Female, MMale

Table 2 shows that the participants who demonstrated the greatest improvement were Participant-4 ($d=1.28$) and Participant-1 ($d=1.11$). In other words, these participants positioned the actual self element farthest from the “me before the psychoeducation program” element. These participants were followed by Participant-3 ($d=0.98$) and Participant-2 ($d=0.71$) respectively. On the other hand, Participant-5 ($d=0.42$), Participant-8 ($d=0.36$), Participant-7 ($d=0.34$), and Participant-6 ($d=0.28$) demonstrated relatively less improvements.

Table 3 shows that Participant-4 ($d=0.36$) and Participant-5 ($d=0.41$) positioned the actual self element closest to a person who can regulate his/her emotions element. In contrast, Participant-8 ($d=1.02$) and Participant-1 ($d=0.95$) positioned themselves most distant to a person who can regulate his/her emotions element. While Participant-4 ($d=0.44$) and Participant-1 ($d=0.62$) positioned themselves closest to a person who cannot regulate his/her emotions element, Participant-7 ($d=1.34$) and Participant-8 ($d=1.22$) positioned themselves most distant to the same element.

Discussion

We aimed to help young adults recognize, express, and regulate their feelings through a psychoeducation program based on emotion-focused therapy. Unlike authors who analysed quantitative measurements in the literature, we analysed how much the participants, who were undergraduates at a university in the Eastern Mediterranean region of Turkey, benefited from psychoeducation at an individual level, using the repertory grid technique to examine the relationships between their perceptions of self before and after the program.

First, the primary finding of the study demonstrated the distance between the participants’ actual self and ideal self. In other words, the purpose was to find out how the participants perceived themselves in terms of recognizing, expressing, and regulating their emotions. This finding indicated that the four participants positioned the actual self element close to the ideal self element; the distance between other participants’ ideal self and actual self was found to be high. Hence, at the end of

Table 2 Euclidean distance coefficients of the participants between the actual self element and me before starting the psychoeducation element

Participants	Euclidean distance coefficients
Participant-1 (F)	1.11
Participant-2 (F)	0.71
Participant-3 (F)	0.98
Participant-4 (F)	1.28
Participant-5 (F)	0.42
Participant-6 (F)	0.28
Participant-7 (F)	0.34
Participant-8 (M)	0.36

F Female, M Male

the psychoeducation program, half of the participants perceived themselves close to the ideal self element in terms of recognizing, expressing, and regulating emotions, and the other half perceived themselves at least somewhat distant. Individuals' self-respect is strengthened when they develop emotional awareness in a safe and supportive environment, explore non-adaptive emotions, and transform new meanings by changing non-adaptive emotions to healthy adaptive emotions (Greenberg 2010a, b). In this framework, we found the psychoeducation program contributed to the strengthening of participants' self-respect; at the end of the program, by positioning their actual self close to the ideal self, half of the participants indicated they had begun to perceive themselves as people who can regulate their emotions. We found participants who perceived themselves partly distant from their ideal self had high expectations about emotion regulation for both themselves and the psychoeducation process. Despite high expectations, individuals with a low perception of reality have relatively lower motivation and satisfaction levels (Aydın 1991; Chiandotto et al. 2007), which might have caused the participants to perceive their efforts about emotion regulation as low or ineffective.

Second, the distance between the actual self and me before the psychoeducation program started elements was also analysed. The Euclidean distance coefficients mentioned here are university students' perceptions about themselves in terms of recognizing, expressing, and regulating their emotions after the psychoeducation program was completed. The analysis showed that two participants demonstrated high levels of improvement, two participants medium levels of improvement, and two participants low levels of improvement. Accordingly, each participant benefitted from the psychoeducation process to different degrees, indicating that the psychoeducation program had different levels of effects on recognition, expression, and regulation skills. This finding about the psychoeducation program developed for young adults is in line with other findings in the literature which suggest such programs increased recognition, expression, and regulation of emotions (Altunbaş 2014; Çeçen 2002; Demir and Gündoğan 2018; Erden-Çınar and Eminoglu 2020; Gülgez and Gündüz 2015; Kuzucu 2006; Şahan-Yılmaz and Duy 2013; Şahin 2018). Emotion-focused therapy was originally developed as an

Table 3 Euclidean distance coefficients between the participants' actual self and a person I know who can/can't recognize, express, and regulates his/her emotions elements

Participants	Euclidean Distance Coefficients	
	A person who cannot regulate his/her emotions	A person who can regulate his/her emotions
Participant-1 (F)	0.62	0.95
Participant-2 (F)	1.17	0.82
Participant-3 (F)	0.91	0.74
Participant-4 (F)	0.44	0.36
Participant-5 (F)	1.09	0.41
Participant-6 (F)	0.97	0.86
Participant-7 (F)	1.34	0.70
Participant-8(M)	1.22	1.02

F Female, M Male

approach to couples' therapy, but therapists began using it in individual counselling in response to the growing awareness of the importance of emotions in psychological counselling and understanding of emotion as a fundamental source for changes in the structure of self and therapeutic changes (Greenberg 2015). However, the related literature has no findings concerning the effects of psychoeducation and group counselling programs based on emotion-focused therapy. These findings indicate that through psychoeducation, emotion-focused therapy, which focuses on understanding the role of emotions in psychotherapeutic change and learning to regulate emotions, enabled significant changes in individuals.

Finally, the third finding of the study revealed the distances between the actual self element and a person I know who cannot recognize, express, and regulate his/her emotions and a person I know who can recognize, express, and regulate his/her emotions elements. Analysis indicated that seven participants positioned the actual self element closer to a person I know who can recognize, express, and regulate his/her emotions element compared to a person I know who cannot recognize, express, and regulate his/her emotions element. While a person who can recognize, express, and regulate emotions represented the features and behaviours the participants wanted to possess in their ideal self, a person who cannot recognize, express, and regulate emotions represented the person the participants did not want to become. Where the participants positioned themselves relative to these two people they know is of importance; according to the emotion-focused therapy approach, how emotions are experienced, expressed, and regulated is a process that is managed socially. This process is reflected through various verbal and nonverbal signals (Greenberg 2015; Greenberg and Johnson 1988). This approach leads to therapeutic changes through individuals' giving meanings to interpersonal experiences and focusing on these meanings closely and carefully (Paivio and Greenberg 1995). Hence, in line with the knowledge and skills gained in the psychoeducation process, participants might identify people able to regulate their emotions effectively by focusing on experiences in interpersonal relationships, and they could identify their attitudes and behaviours and thus demonstrate similar behaviours. Similarly, they might identify the attitudes and behaviours of people who cannot recognize, express, and regulate emotions and try to avoid these behaviours. The majority of participants positioned their actual self closer to people who can regulate their emotions effectively, which is an indicator of this conclusion.

Conclusions, Limitations and Recommendations

The literature includes a limited number of studies that utilized the repertory grid technique (Walker and Trenoweth 2017; Walker et al. 2012). Our findings showed that the psychoeducation program enabled university students to improve their skills in recognizing, expressing, and regulating emotions, and the repertory grid technique provided in-depth data about each participant; as a result, the program was assessed with high internal validity. In other words, the present study showed that therapeutic success could be measured through the repertory grid technique as well as through standard

measures. The psychoeducation program developed in this study was designed to improve young adults' emotional awareness and their ability to explore non-adaptive emotions and to regulate their emotions by changing non-adaptive emotions into healthy adaptive behaviours. Hence, our findings showed that the self-assessment of young adults' recognizing, expressing, and regulating these emotions improved over the course of the psychoeducation program process. However, it would not be appropriate to generalize the change (or improvement) in a group member to the program. Moreover, the change in any particular group member may not have occurred as a result of the content of the program. This change may have occurred due to the group leader's therapeutic style, approach and therapeutic relationship. Along with these confounding variables, the study did not control for other variables such as the client's recovery expectation (motivation), non-counselling factors (the client's life frame). All these variables (or non-specific effect factors) are strongly associated with the counselling outcome. As a matter of fact, general (common, non-specific) effect factors play a more determinative role on change or therapeutic success than the effect factors specific to psychotherapy and/or counselling theories (Duncan et al. 2010). Although the design of this study (the repertory grid technique) mediates the achievement of findings that other research designs cannot provide, it has its weaknesses. In this study, we obtained in-depth findings with high internal validity. However, since the study has an idiographic character, the generalizability of the information obtained as a result of the research is poor. Therefore, it should be taken into consideration that the findings represent only the persons or participants in this study. Experimental and quasi-experimental designs have low representational power and focus on internal validity. Despite this, when a comparison is made, since experimental and quasi-experimental studies pay attention to group mean values, they enable more generalizable results compared to data obtained through the repertory grid technique. Ideally findings obtained from experimental designs should be crosschecked with findings obtained from the repertory grid technique. Such a crosscheck could not be done in this study, which could be considered a limitation. Based on this limitation, researchers conducting experimental and quasi-experimental studies in the future should utilize the repertory grid technique to support findings obtained through other measurement methods. It would be appropriate to use the methodological approach in this study in conjunction with a typical pre- and post-pattern approach with a control condition, making it possible to review the consistency between statistical values obtained through group comparison and idiographic findings obtained as in this study.

Seven out of the eight participants who completed the psychoeducation program were females. Future researchers should work to balance gender distribution. A study conducted in the psychological counselling centres of universities indicated that university counselling centres in Turkey mainly provide psychological counselling services and devote less time to preventive and developmental services (Gizir 2010). Psychological counselling centres need to offer various preventive and developmental intervention services and programs that consider the developmental needs of university students to meet their academic and developmental needs (Atik and Yalçın 2010; Gizir 2010). The psychoeducation program developed in this study could be used as a preventive intervention for university students who have difficulties recognizing, expressing, and regulating emotions, at psychological counselling centres in Turkey.

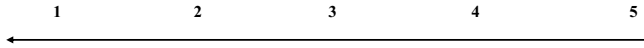
Appendix 1

Name Surname:

Similar	Actual self	Ideal self	Social self	Normative self	Me before the psychoeducation group started	A person I know who can recognize, express and regulate his/her emotions	A person I know who cannot recognize, express and regulate his/her emotions	Different

Appendix 2

Name, Surname:



Negative	Actual self	Ideal self	Social self	Normative self	Me before the psychoeducation group started	A person I know who can recognize, express and regulate his/her emotions	A person I know who cannot recognize, express and regulate his/her emotions	Positive

Declarations

Conflict of Interest The authors declared that they have no conflict of interest.

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