



## RESEARCH

# Effect of Encounter Group Application Integrated with Psychodrama Techniques on Codependency

*Psikodrama Teknikleri ile Bütünleştirilmiş Etkileşim Grubu Uygulamasının Karşılıklı Bağımlılık Üzerindeki Etkisi*

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### Abstract

The present study aimed to investigate the impact of encounter group application, integrated with psychodrama techniques, on codependency. In the present study, the nested design method, a mixed design, was utilized. The present study is a quasi-experimental study with control group, where pre-test, post-test and follow-up test measurements were conducted. The study group randomly included 28 female junior and senior pre-service psychological counselors and 14 were included in the control group and 14 in the study group. The quantitative study data were collected with Composite Codependency Scale and focus group interviews were conducted to collect the qualitative study data. An encounter group application, which was integrated with psychodrama techniques, was implemented with the study group for 14 sessions. No intervention was conducted with the control group. As a result of the conducted analyzes, the quantitative findings demonstrated that experimental study was effective in reducing codependency, self-sacrifice and suppression of emotion scores. However, it was not effective in reducing interpersonal control scores. It was found that the qualitative study findings were similar to the quantitative findings

**Keywords:** Codependency, psychodrama, encounter group.

### Öz

Bu araştırmada psikodrama teknikleri ile bütünleştirilmiş etkileşim grubu uygulamasının karşılıklı bağımlılık üzerindeki etkisini incelemek amaçlanmıştır. Bu araştırmada, karma desenlerden, iç içe desen yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Bu araştırmada ön-test, son-test ve izleme ölçümü yapılan deney ve kontrol grubundan oluşan yarı deneysel bir çalışma yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu, 14'ü deney, 14'ü kontrol grubuna tesadüfi olarak atanan 28 kadın psikolojik danışman adayından oluşmaktadır. Bu araştırmanın nicel verilerini toplamak için Bileşik Karşılıklı Bağımlılık Ölçeği kullanılmış; nitel verileri toplamak için odak grup görüşmesi yapılmıştır. Deney grubuna toplam 14 oturumluk psikodrama teknikleri ile bütünleştirilmiş etkileşim grubu uygulaması yapılmıştır. Kontrol grubuna hiçbir işlem uygulanmamıştır. Yapılan analizler sonucunda, nicel bulgular deneysel çalışmanın karşılıklı bağımlılık, kendini feda etme ve duyguları bastırma puanlarını azaltmada etkili olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Ancak kişilerarası kontrol puanlarını azaltmada etkili olmadığını ortaya koymuştur. Nitel bulguların, nicel bulgularla benzerlik gösterdiği görülmüştür..

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Karşılıklı bağımlılık, psikodrama, etkileşim grubu.

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**INVESTIGATION** of the relationships between women and men is still a topic of interest for researchers today as it was in the past. Several psychological dynamics that affect the gender relations are mentioned in the literature. It was observed that codependence, which is one of these dynamics, is not a well-known concept. The concept of codependence (Brown 1994), which first appeared in the field of alcoholism counseling between 1950 and 1960, was generally associated with alcoholism (Krestan and Bepko 1990). This concept has been basically used to describe the dysfunctional relationship of alcoholic individuals and their spouses (Lindley et al. 1999). Later, the content of this concept was expanded and used to describe other individuals (spouses, lovers or other important ones), who were related and influenced by a drug user (Hughes-Hammer et al. 1998, Friel and Friel 2010). Codependency, used to describe dysfunctional relations and all dynamics of these relations until recently (Lindley et al. 1999), was observed to exist independent of substance abuse (O'Brien and Gaborit 1992).

Codependency is described as one who has let another person's behavior affect him or her, and who is obsessed with controlling that person's behavior (Beattie 2012). Codependency implies the process of losing one's identity by excessively focusing on another individual or the relationship with another individual (Krestan and Bepko 1990). Codependent individuals respond to the problems, pain, behavior, in short, the lives of others (Beattie 2012), they establish a strong bond with their partners, even though they are subjected to stress and suffering and ill-treatment in the relationship (Noriega et al. 2008) and they feel responsible when their partners are unhappy. In other words, they live for others (Morgan 1991, Hogg and Frank 1992). It is not difficult to predict that codependence could be easily accepted in a relationship. However, these behaviors or habits could lead to and maintain destructive and dysfunctional relationships (Beattie 2012). It could even sabotage the subjective well-being of the individuals (Reilly 1998). Thus, codependence was transformed into a phenomenon used to describe the personality traits of individuals with an unhealthy relationship (Bauer 2001).

Although men could also be codependent theoretically, codependence is almost exclusively attributed to women (Anderson 1994). The positive correlation between traditional female roles and codependence (Roehling et al. 1996, Dias 2002, Dear and Roberts 2002) could have suggested that women could have a tendency for codependent relationships when compared to men. In several cultures, women are expected to surrender and dedicate themselves to men (Chodorow 2007). In brief, their codependence is supported. Dependence is not interpreted as a problem but as a relationship (Dowling 1994). It was observed that codependency is not only associated with female gender, but also with occupational groups that support other individuals.

The high codependency levels among psychologists, registered nurses, family physicians and social workers (Martsolf et al. 1999) demonstrate that not only the help-seekers (clients, patients, etc.), but also the professionals who provide assistance are at risk of codependence. It was reported that behind the fact that women in dysfunctional families prefer professions such as nursing, psychotherapy or law lies their dissatisfied needs (Norwood, 1993) and family problems are the main determinant of high levels of codependence levels in these groups (Martsolf et al. 1999).

The fact that women are found psychologically less healthy when compared to men (Loring and Cowan 1997), one in four women are in search of psychological help due

to codependence (Noriega et al. 2008), the possibility that individuals who care about individuals with problems and work with these individuals could be codependent as well (Beattie 2012) suggests that female psychological counselors may face the risk of codependence. Thus, professional counseling for pre-service psychological counselors, whose future occupation would focus on providing assistance to other individuals, in the control of codependence is quite important. The professional assistance methods in codependency recommended in the literature include self-help groups (Bobgan and Bobgan 1991), group therapy (Strakes 1997, Edmundson et al. 2000), family therapy (Kohlhepp 1998), psycho-education (Gemmel 1999), creative art therapy (Johnson 1990) and psychodrama (Mendelsohn 1997). In the present study, it was considered that an encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques that would be attended by pre-service female counselors could be effective on codependence and would be an exemplary application. Furthermore, it was anticipated that the present study would add to the scarce number of applied studies due to the fact that most previous studies on codependency were descriptive in nature in Turkey (Ançel and Kabakçı 2009, Ançel et al. 2012, Mukba 2013).

## Method

### *Research Design*

The present study is a mixed-design study that utilized both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Among mixed designs, the nested design method (Creswell and Plano-Clark 2014), where qualitative findings are frequently used to strengthen the comprehensibility of the empirical findings. The main research questions of the present study were as follows: a) Is there a significant difference between the codependence scores of the study group members, who participated in the encounter group, integrated with psychodrama techniques? b) How do the data obtained with the focus group interviews conducted with the study group members who participated in the encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques application explain the codependence scores?

The present study is a quasi-experimental study with control group and including pre-test, post-test and follow-up test measurements. In order to analyze the effectiveness of the encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques while collecting the quantitative study data, the Composite Codependency Scale (Marks et al. 2012) was used. Qualitative data were collected with focus group interviews to obtain the experimental group participant views on the integrated encounter group process. Before the experimental study, Composite Codependency Scale (Marks et al.2012) was applied as the pretest to both experimental and the control groups. The experimental group then joined the encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques for 14 sessions; No intervention was conducted with the control group. The Composite Codependency Scale (Marks et al. 2012) was used as the posttest for both experimental and control groups at the end of the empirical procedure. After two months, the scale was reapplied in order to obtain the follow-up measurements. Furthermore, focus group interviews were conducted with the experimental group members immediately after the end of the empirical procedure.

## **Sample**

The Composite Codependency Scale (Marks et al.2012) was applied by the author to 20-25 years old 170 female junior, senior and graduate students in Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling at Inonu University, Faculty of Education during the 2014-2015 academic year and a brief information was provided about the group that would be opened within the context of the study. Seventy-seven students volunteered to participate in the study. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted on the data collected with the above-mentioned scale and it was determined that the data exhibited normal distribution.

Fourteen volunteering students that included 11 students who scored one standard deviation point over the mean score in the pretest and 3 students who scored one standard deviation point under the mean score to act as a model were included in the experimental group, and 14 students who met the experimental group criteria were included in the control group. The study group consisted of 14 students in the experimental group. All participants who participated in the empirical study were assigned to groups (experimental and control) by random sampling method. Individual interviews were conducted with 14 students selected from the experimental group to decide whether they were suitable for the group and to provide information about the group process. The interviews aimed to learn the purpose of participation in the group and to exclude those who could not participate in the group activities, in psychiatric treatment or receiving other psychological assistance. After the interviews, 14 students who were assigned to the control group and 14 students who were assigned to the control group were determined.

Independent groups t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the experimental and control group pre-test scores. It was determined that there were no significant differences between interpersonal control subscale ( $t = .06, p = .95$ ), self-sacrifice subscale ( $t = 1.08, p = -.29$ ), suppression of emotions subscale ( $t = .72, p = .47$ ) and total mean scores ( $t = .23, p = .82$ ) in Composite Codependency Scale. It was determined that 7 students were juniors, 6 were seniors in the experimental group. The graduate students who volunteered for the study were excluded since they did not meet the study criteria and were not assigned to any group.

## **Measures**

### **Composite Codependency Scale (CCS)**

The initial item pool of CCS, developed by Marks et al. (2012) was created by selecting 28 items from four measurement instruments, namely the Holyoake Codependency Index (Dear et al. 1990), which measures codependence, Spann-Fisher Codependency Scale (Fischer et al. 1991), Codependency Assessment Tool (Hughes-Hammer et al. 1998) and Codependent Questionnaire (Roehling and Gaumond 1996). The 28-item scale was applied to a total of 301 adults with a mean age of 35.9 ranging between 18 and 70 years. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, a 19-item scale was obtained with factor loads that ranged between .54 and .75. CCS, which has three sub-dimensions and 19 items, is a 5-point Likert-type scale (1: I completely disagree; 5: I completely agree) (Marks et al. 2012). The interpersonal control subscale measures the self-belief of the individual in controlling the behavior of others and to resolve the problems of others. The self-sacrifice subscale of the CCS measures the individual's

neglect of her or his own needs to meet the needs of others. The suppression of emotions sub-scale measures low level of awareness about one's emotions or deliberately suppression of these emotions by the individual until they overwhelm the individual (Dear Roberts and Lange 2004). The scale was adapted to Turkish language by Ulusoy (2015). As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, it was decided to exclude two items and a scale that included 17 items and factor loads between .36 and .73 was obtained. After confirmatory factor analysis, it was observed that the scale item factor loads varied between .32 and .86. The fit indexes were calculated as  $\chi^2/sd=1.39$ ,  $p=.00$ ,  $RMSEA=.04$ ,  $SRMR=.07$ ,  $GFI=.91$ ,  $AGFI=.88$ ,  $NFI=.76$  and  $CFI=.92$ . It was found that Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients were between .61 and .76 for the subscale and total scores in CCS, test-retest correlation values for the subscales and total score varied between .60 and .66 (Ulusoy 2015).

### **Semi-Structured Interview Form**

Most semi-structured interviews used when it is necessary to collect specific information from the participants include predetermined open-ended questions (Merriam 2013). The semi-structured interview form was developed by the authors and used in focus group interviews. Expert views were obtained to determine whether the questions were comprehensible. The interview form was finalized based on the expert views. This form includes questions that aimed to obtain feedback from the experimental group participants on how they were affected by the process, whether their self-perceptions changes, and what they observed in their lives. The form included three questions on self-sacrifice, suppression of emotions and interpersonal control dimensions of codependency and two questions on the impact of the application on their real-life experiences.

### **Procedure**

The encounter group sessions, integrated with psychodrama techniques aimed to reduce codependency, were initiated on October 2014 and ended on January 2015. Fourteen sessions, which lasted between 120 and 210 minutes, were held at least once, maximum twice a week. After the consent of the members of the group was obtained, sound recording was conducted after the second session.

### **Theoretical Framework of the Application**

Encounter groups focus on personal growth, development and progress via interpersonal communication and relationships (Rogers 2003). The encounter groups do not entail pre-determined goals and the group leader attempts to create an environment where members could experience and convey their emotions rather than guiding the members (Schutz 1994). Psychodrama includes three stages: warm up, acting and sharing (Karp 2013). In psychodrama, five instruments including the scene, the protagonist, the director, therapeutic assistants or auxiliary egos, and audience (Moreno 1946). Encounter groups integrated with psychodrama techniques were preferred in control of codependency since they allow the use of various techniques (Schutz 1994) and psychodrama or role playing is used as an auxiliary technique in several encounter groups (Lieberman et al. 1973).

### **Sessions and Session Content**

Certain sessions in the empirical study were only based on interaction, certain sessions included psychodrama plays in addition to interaction. The experimental group was

terminated with 11 members. No application was conducted with the control group. Detailed information on the sessions is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Interaction group application integrated with psychodrama techniques session content**

Sessions	Session content
First session	In this session the members of the group were introduced to each other, information was provided about psychodrama, the group objective was shared, and the group rules were determined.
Second session	In this session, the play of trust that aimed to establish trust among the group members (the non-blinded group member guiding a blinded member) was played. Through this play, the emotions experienced by the members for being in the group (anxiety, excitement, curiosity) were determined.
Third session,	In this session, it was decided to play the protagonist play by an emotionally ready group member. The protagonist play addressed the conflict created by controlling the other individual (friends) in bilateral relationships. Through this play, the participants realized that making others to accept one's own reality prevented healthy communications.
Fourth session	In this session, it was decided to play a protagonist-oriented play with a member who wanted to check the social networks. However, it turned into a protagonist play where the protagonist wanted to be accepted by others and feared to do something wrong in the society. In this play, the participants noticed that trying to read other people's minds prevented acting independently.
Fifth session,	In this session, members portrayed the roles in the Little Red Riding Hood study (the little red riding hood, hunter, grandmother, wolf) that represent the relationships between the roles of savior, oppressor and victim in codependent relationships, and re-portrayed the same roles by changing the story as they wish (after making changes to the characteristics of the role). Via this play, the participants realized that the roles in the story were similar to the roles in daily life and these roles were flexible.
Sixth session,	In this session, the decision of a member to stay in the group and the violation of the attendance rule were discussed. Furthermore, a play on the inability of a warmed-up member to establish trust-based relationships with other people was played. When interacting within the play, the participants realized that the message given by the parents that others should not be trusted was decisive.
Seventh session,	In this session, a group play, where sacrifice, control and hidden emotions were used as bus stop names, was played. In this play, all members examined the correlation between the real life and these bus stops and how they were affected by these bus stops.
Eighth session	In this session, the group members remained silent and the members were asked to divide into groups of two, and then six, and to share the things they needed to share in the group, and finally to express their needs individually to the whole group. In this session, members realized their emotions and thoughts that prevented them from expressing themselves.
Ninth session	Since the silence continued in this session, a play based on placing the question "How much did you benefit from the group?" on a line was played. Then, the group newspaper play that allowed to report the group events was played. The group agenda included the news about the group member, who wanted to quit the group in the sixth session, but decided to remain, and hesitated to express herself. In this session, the participants realized that the discussion about self-expression anxiety ended the silence in the group and contributed to the group development.
Tenth session	In this session, the fact that the member, who stated that she could not express herself in the previous session, thought that she was judged by other group members led to a conflict in the group. In this session, the participants realized the similarities and dissimilarities between the conflicts in the group and the real life, and that the conflicts could be resolved with a constructive attitude.
Eleventh session	In this session, the protagonist play about a member, who stated that she felt nothing for a few sessions, was played. Through this play, the participants realized that over-sacrifice led to

	neglecting their own needs and in turn they felt intense anger. In this session, two members (due to the rule of dismissal of those who did not attend two consecutive sessions from the group), said farewell to the other members and the leader, and left the group.
Twelfth session	In this session, the protagonist play about a member, who wanted to study a dispute with her father, was played. In this play, the participants noticed that the efforts to change others were both tiring and in vain and the self-change was beneficial. Participants were also reminded that the group would be terminated, and a member was dismissed from the group for the same reason (due to the rule of dismissal of those who did not attend two consecutive sessions from the group).
Thirteenth session	In this session, first, a protagonist play about a member who experienced problems in current relationships, then a protagonist game about a member who experienced an internal conflict about meeting the needs of others or her own needs, were played. In these plays, the participants realized that abandoning the self-guilt due to the injustice they faced in childhood would facilitate experiencing the current emotions and a balance could be established between others' and their own needs.
Fourteenth session	In the final session, group members shared their emotions about leaving the group and they wrote a letter about what they had achieved during the process and what they planned to do in the future. The magical mirror play, where everyone told everything that the group should know/hear, was played and everyone said goodbye.

### ***Statistical Analysis***

#### **Quantitative Analysis**

The quantitative experimental and control group data were analyzed with SPSS 15.0 statistics software. In order to use a parametric test, the data should be obtained from the minimum interval scale and exhibit normal distribution (Can 2014). Shapiro-Wilk test was used to determine whether the pretest, posttest and follow-up measurements in study and control groups exhibited normal distribution and it was determined that mean test scores exhibited normal distribution. Thus, two-factor ANOVA for repeated measures parametric test was used to determine whether the difference between the codependence scores of the students in experimental and control groups was significant.

#### **Qualitative Analysis**

Content analysis was conducted on the qualitative data collected with the focus group interviews conducted with the experimental group. Content analysis could be described as an effort to reduce the collected qualitative material to qualitative data in order to reach a specific consistency and meanings. The meanings obtained in content analysis are generally called themes (Patton 2014). In content analysis, coding could be translated as data analysis. Coding means the qualification of the data, in other words, entitlement of the data (Punch 2014). In the first stage of content analysis, the data are coded. In the second stage, the themes under which the codes would be grouped in categories are obtained. In the third stage, the data are organized under codes and themes to obtain a systematic framework (Yıldırım ve Şimşek 2006). The expert opinion of an external researcher was consulted after the data was coded and the themes were identified. An external auditor's assessment of the accuracy of the findings obtained in the research is one of the validity strategies used in qualitative research (Creswell 2013). The required editing was conducted on the codes and themes based on the expert opinion.

## Results

In parallel with the research design, the data are presented under two headings of qualitative and quantitative findings. Statistical analysis conducted on pre-test, post-test and follow-up test measurements for the experimental and control groups is presented under the heading of quantitative findings and the findings of the content analysis conducted on the data collected with focus group interviews conducted with the experimental group are presented under qualitative findings.

### *Quantitative Results*

Mean and standard deviation of the Composite Codependency Scale scores of the students in the experimental and control groups were calculated before deciding whether the difference between these scores was significant. The mean and standard deviation of the pre-test, post-test and follow-up test Composite Codependency Scale, Interpersonal Control Sub-scale, Self-Sacrifice Sub-scale, and Suppression of Emotions Sub-scale scores of the students in the experimental and control groups are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2. Composite Codependency Scale scores of the experimental and control groups**

Variables	Groups	Pretest			Posttest			Follow-up test		
		N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Total Composite Codependency Scale score	Experimental	14	55.50	8.54	11	38.54	5.08	11	40.63	6.40
	Control	14	54.78	7.48	14	50.64	7.93	14	48.43	5.41
Interpersonal Control Sub-scale	Experimental	14	15.00	2.48	11	11.63	2.29	11	11.54	2.80
	Control	14	15.07	3.24	14	13.35	3.07	14	12.28	2.58
Self-Sacrifice Sub-scale	Experimental	14	24.50	4.50	11	16.00	2.49	11	18.00	2.68
	Control	14	22.70	4.23	14	21.64	5.07	14	21.36	3.50
Suppression of Emotions Sub-scale	Experimental	14	16.00	3.53	11	10.90	2.55	11	10.90	2.30
	Control	14	17.00	3.76	14	15.64	2.37	14	15.00	2.57

Data presented in Table 2 demonstrated that the mean total Composite Codependency Scale, Interpersonal Control Sub-scale, Self-sacrifice Subscale and Suppression of Emotions Sub-Scale posttest and follow-up test scores of the experimental and control groups were low when compared to the mean pretest scores. The significance of the difference between the mean pretest, posttest and follow-up measurement scores was tested with two-factor ANOVA for repeated measures. In experimental and control groups, it was observed that the interactional (common) effects of iterative measurement factors on codependence scores [ $F(2,46)=8.125, p<.01$ ] were significant. In other words, the codependence scores of the experimental and control groups differed when compared to pre-experiment scores. In experimental and control groups, it was observed that the interactional (common) effects of repeated measures factors on interpersonal control scores were not significant [ $F(2,46)=2.254, p>.05$ ]. In other words, the interpersonal control scores of the experimental and control groups did not differ after the experiment.

In experimental and control groups, it was observed that the effects of repeated measures factors on self-sacrifice scores were significant [ $F(2,46)=13.351, p<.01$ ]. In other words, the self-sacrifice scores of the experimental and control groups differed after the



experiment. In experimental and control groups, it was observed that the interactional (common) effects of repeated measures factors on suppression of emotions scores were significant [ $F(2,46)=4.447, p<.05$ ]. In other words, the suppression of emotions scores of the experimental and control groups differed after the experiment.

### ***Qualitative Results***

Content analysis was conducted on the data collected with focus group interviews. Content analysis revealed five themes on expressing emotions, self-sacrifice, controlling others, differences in self-assessments, and the impact on real life. These five themes were compared before and after the experimental study.

#### **Style of Expressing One's Emotions: From Subversion to Constructiveness**

Before the experimental study, the style of expressing one's emotions was categorized in three categories: subversive expression, ability to express and inability to express. It was observed that three participants could not express their emotions, one expressed her emotions superficially, and the remaining participants expressed their emotions constructively. After the experimental study, it was observed that there was a positive change in the styles of expressing their emotions, and the main theme of the style of expressing emotions only included the constructive expression category. It was observed that the participants expressed their emotions in the most constructive way by respecting their counterparts (f.3) and with comfort (f.3). Below, a quote that reflects the category of constructive emotion expression is presented:

After the play about H.P., I started to consider myself. I made an opening with a friend I was angry with. I expressed my emotions. But she did not respond. She may disagree with me, I respected that, I realized I reached a new level of maturity. (Y.Ç.)

#### **Self-Sacrifice: Changing Emotions and Thoughts**

Before the experimental study, the theme of sacrifice included two categories: thoughts and behavior. Before the experimental study, several participants thought that they were responsible for everything and that sacrifice was a requirement, they could not refuse the demands for sacrifice and sacrificed themselves through appeasements. Only three participants stated that they sacrificed rarely or never. After the experimental study, it was observed that there was a positive change in self-sacrifice, and the theme of sacrifice included three categories: change in thoughts, change in behavior, and awareness. It was observed that the thoughts of the participants changed so that they no longer felt responsible for everything and they expected to be accepted without self-sacrifice. It was observed that the most frequently expressed behavioral changes were acting selective in self-sacrifice (f: 3) and the most frequently stated awareness was over-sacrifice (f: 3). Below, a quote that reflects the category of changes in students' self-sacrifice behavior is presented:

I have noticed cases where sacrifice is profitable... Sometimes the situation gets better, improves, and finally becomes beneficial. But there are times when it tires and hurts me. Now, I prefer to stand back from self-sacrifice when it makes me tired and challenges me. (H.K.)

#### **Controlling Others: Altered and Non-altered Behavior**

Prior to the experimental study, the theme of controlling others included on the behavior category. It was observed that the most frequent behavior was to remind others what to do (f: 4). After the experimental study, it was observed that there was a change in the theme of controlling others; it included two categories of altered and non-altered

behaviors. Being insistent with others, reminding others what to do, giving advice to others and warning others were among the non-altered behaviors. However, it was observed that the most frequent change in the behavior of the participants was to respect the preferences of others (f: 3). Below, quotes that reflect the categories of altered and non-altered behavior in controlling others are presented:

...For example, a friend of mine was going to make the bed of another friend, she asked if she would get mad if I make her bed. She left it unmade and she says if she would get angry at me for making the bed. I said to her, let her make her bed... She prefers it that way. If it is not my responsibility, I say it is her or his choice. I say, I could do so much. (R.T.)

I always have the need to control my loved ones. For instance, there is something they need to do, but they could not. I tell them do it for a few times. For example, she is not studying for the test. Why don't you study, if you don't such and such would happen. This happened before the group, and it still happens. (N.K.)

### **Self Assessments: From Negative to Positive**

Before the empirical study, the self-assessment theme included two categories: positive and negative self-assessments. While only two participants mentioned positive self-assessment attributes, all others mentioned negative self-assessment attributes. The self-assessment attributes mentioned by the participants included considering themselves powerful and self-satisfied, and the most common negative self-assessment attributes were self-doubt and being easily offended (f: 2). After the experimental study, it was observed that there was a change in the theme of self-assessment, and only positive self-assessment attribute category remained. It was observed that the most frequently expressed self-assessment attribute was being not afraid to be offended (f: 2). Below, a quote that reflects the category of positive self-assessment attributes is presented:

I was too afraid of being criticized at first. When I was criticized, I was immediately offended. Towards the end of the group, I realized that I was no longer afraid of it when my friends said something... I realized that the criticism was not so scary (T.Ç.)

### **Real Life Experiences: Changes in Physical Health, Communications and Personal Status.**

Prior to the experimental study, participant statements on real life situations were grouped under three categories: physical health, communications and personal status. It was observed that the most frequently expressed item on communications was lack of active listening (f: 2), and the most commonly expressed personal status was mind reading (f: 3), and one participant stated that she experienced bruxism and headaches related to the physical health category. After the experimental study, it was observed that there was a positive change in the real life experiences of the students, and the theme of change in real life experiences then included the categories of change in physical health, change in communications, and change in personal status. The most frequently expressed changes in communications were active listening, development in empathy skills, and openness to different ideas (f: 2), and the most common change in personal status was appears a reduction in reading others' minds (f: 3). Only one group member, who previously stated that she experienced bruxism and headaches prior to the experimental study, now stated that these complaints decreased. Below, a quote that reflects the category of change in communications is presented:

...I realized to feel empathy for others. I realized that empathy is hard when I put myself in the position of the person I interact and when I speak for him or her or play his or her role.

Now, I put myself in her or his place, and I really learned how to put myself in her or his place. I can feel my emotions and thoughts, and I can differentiate them. (H.K.)

## Discussion

One of the main objectives of the present study was to determine the effectiveness of the encounter group implementation integrated with psychodrama techniques on codependency of female pre-service psychological counselors. The study findings demonstrated that the codependence levels of the female pre-service psychological counselors, who participated in the encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques, significantly decreased, and the decrease was also observed in the follow-up measurements. Literature review demonstrated that group therapy was the most popular method in codependency interventions. Previous studies reported both success (Sheets 1988, Edmundson et al. 2000) and failure (Strakes 1997) of group therapy in reducing codependency. In the literature, no previous study tested the effectiveness of encounter groups on codependency. The present study demonstrated that in addition to group therapy, encounter groups could have an impact on codependency.

The present study findings revealed that the interpersonal control levels of the female pre-service psychological counselors, who participated in the encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques, did not decrease when compared to female pre-service psychological counselors, who did not participate in the application. The idea that the codependent individual would continue the codependence relationship with another individual when a codependent relationship ends (Beattie 2012) reveals the continuity of the codependency relationships. The fact that interpersonal control did not exhibit a significant decrease after the experimental procedure suggested that there may be a strong variable that reinforces the continuity of codependent relationship. Codependent women feel desperate and control the environment as much as they can while dealing with despair. The more they control, the more secure and less desperate they feel (Reilly 1998). These statements demonstrate that women cannot give up interpersonal control easily. Furthermore, the fact that only a few plays were played and only a few statements were made on interpersonal control in the present study suggested that the length of group studies was not sufficient to change the interpersonal control variable.

The study findings demonstrated that the self-sacrifice levels of the female pre-service psychological counselors, who participated in the encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques, decreased significantly, and the decrease was also observed in the follow-up measurements. According to Bepko and Krestan (1998) women are taught to sacrifice themselves for love and approval. In short, women are expected to be overly devoted and remain in this role. However, Blatner (2002) argued that roles can be abandoned or replaced with other roles. In a psychodrama group study with women, it was found that women could expand their roles other than feminine ones by playing opposite roles of a male or a father and could experience more satisfactory interpersonal relationships (Genç 2006). The present study findings were consistent with those reported by Genç (2006) since roles such as a father and a man represent roles that do not reflect self-sacrifice.

In the present study, both protagonist and group plays were frequently played where the group members realized that they had learned the over-sacrificing roles in their

families and they could change this over-sacrificing role when necessary. These plays were considered to be effective in reducing the level of self-sacrifice among group members who portrayed both the role of the protagonist and auxiliary roles.

The study findings demonstrated that the suppression of emotions levels of the female pre-service psychological counselors, who participated in the encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques, decreased significantly, and the decrease was also observed in the follow-up measurements. Literature review revealed a single study where psychodrama was used in codependency intervention and was effective on expressing emotions. The present study findings and the findings of the study, which reported that psychodrama had a significant impact on expression of emotions and self-expression (Mendelsohn 1997), were consistent.

Yalom (2002) underlined that interpersonal learning is an important remedial factor in encounter groups. In the present study, it is considered that the group provided an environment where members could express their emotions easily, psychodrama was a catalyst that activated emotions, and thus encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques was effective on suppressing the emotions in the encounter group.

Another objective of the study was to determine the views of female pre-service psychological counselors, who participated in the encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques, on the change in their codependence scores. The findings obtained in focus group interviews conducted with female pre-service psychological counselors, who participated in the encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques, were consistent with the quantitative findings.

It could not be argued with certainty that the qualitative finding that the present study was not effective on interpersonal control since certain female pre-service psychological counselors, who participated in the encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques, stated that their certain behavior to control others had changed and other behavior did not change. The focus group interview findings demonstrated that there was a partial change in the interpersonal control variable. In fact, the quantitative findings on interpersonal control variable demonstrated that there was a decrease in interpersonal control scale scores, however the change was not significant. Thus, it can be suggested that the quantitative finding, which reflected a partial decrease in interpersonal control variable, and the qualitative finding, which reflected that the reduction was not significant, were similar.

The feedback by the female pre-service psychological counselors, who participated in the encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques, that they expressed their emotions constructively seemed to support the qualitative findings that the present study was effective on suppression of emotions. The feedback by the female pre-service psychological counselors, who participated in the encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques, that their views and behavior on self-sacrifice have changed and they gained awareness seemed to support the qualitative finding that the present study was effective on self-sacrifice.

Furthermore, the feedback by the female pre-service psychological counselors, who participated in the encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques, on the impact on real life demonstrated that there were positive changes in their physical health, relationships and personal status based on their self-assessments. The feedback by the female pre-service psychological counselors that participation in the encounter

group integrated with psychodrama techniques led to both positive self-assessments and had positive effects on their real lives could be interpreted as the bonus achievements in the experimental study. It was reported that the psychodrama process led to multidimensional learning (cognitive, emotional, behavioral and relational) (Kellermann 2013), contributed to the solution of emotional problems of individuals, helped develop the sense of self (Blatner 2005), and individual's self-awareness and awareness about others (Verhofstadt-Denève 2013). In conclusion, the quantitative and qualitative study findings demonstrated that the encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques was effective on reducing codependency. However, its impact on interpersonal control, one of the three sub-dimensions of codependency, was not significant.

This research is limited to female students studying in Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling at İnönü University during the 2014-2015 academic year. The experimental procedure is limited to interaction group application integrated with psychodrama techniques. Quantitative data are limited to the data obtained from the scale used in the study. Qualitative data are limited to the data obtained from the interview conducted within the scope of the research.

In future group studies, it could be recommended to increase the number of sessions that would include interventions to reduce the interpersonal control levels of the participants, to add placebo groups to the study and control groups, and to include an auxiliary leader. Furthermore, the effectiveness of encounter group integrated with psychodrama techniques could be tested with parent and couple groups, who obviously are more experienced. It could be recommended to future researchers to conduct quantitative studies to acquire comprehensive knowledge on the nature of codependency and qualitative studies that would investigate the codependency of male subjects based on various variables. Considering the fact that the number of studies conducted in Turkey on codependence are limited, future studies could investigate the correlation between Turkish culture and codependence. Furthermore, it could be suggested that further studies that would raise awareness on controlling others, self-sacrifice and suppression of emotions levels of pre-service psychological counselors during the applied courses they take in undergraduate education could be functional.

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