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## An investigation of social self-efficacy expectations and assertiveness in multi-program high school students

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find out multi-program high school students' social self-efficacy expectation and assertiveness levels. The results were compared according to gender, kind of high school program, grades, participation to activities, having a sport licence and family income level. A total of 618 multi-program high school students participated to the research. Social Self-Efficacy Expectation Scale and Rathus Assertiveness Inventory were used. The significant differences were identified between the participants' social self-efficacy expectation scores according to gender, grades, participation to activities and having a sport licence. No statistically significant differences were found between the mentioned variables and the participants' assertiveness scores. Moreover, positive relationships were established between family total income and assertiveness scores and social self-efficacy expectation scores.

*Keywords:* Self-efficacy; social self- efficacy expectation; assertiveness; high school students; multi-program high school.

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### 1. Introduction

Social self-efficacy is defined as individual's own judgement regarding his or her capacity to perform a specific task successfully by organizing necessary activities (Senemoğlu, 1998). Social self-efficacy can also be defined as individual's self-expectation regarding the exhibited performance depending on individual skill in interpersonal relationships (Akkök, 1999). Social self-efficacy is defined as a belief activating individual's motivation and cognitive resources and it develops as a result of individual's evaluations regarding his or her life experiences as well (Aysan, 2003; Harmanlı, 2003). Social self-efficacy expectation is an important factor helping an individual to evaluate him/herself as successful in his/her social relationships (Bilgin, 1996).

Covering more than information and skill, it includes individual's using his/her capacity effectively (Bandura, 1993).

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Another concept included in this study is assertiveness. Accepted as a form of communication, assertiveness is defined as “person’s protecting his/her own rights without sneering and damaging those of others’, and expressing his/her thoughts\*, emotions and beliefs in a direct, honest and proper way” (Kısaç, 1999; Yeşilyaprak, 1999). Being able to establish healthy interpersonal relationships is accepted to be a social skill. Accepted as a social skill, assertiveness plays an important role in interpersonal relationships as well (Deniz, 1997).

Bandura’s self-efficacy model provides a very useful conceptual framework to explain how student attitudes make it easy or difficult to make use of the research skills or acquisitions (Montcalm, 2000). According to social cognition theory, an individual’s behaviours are formed not by environmental factors or characteristics of the person exhibiting the behaviour alone contrary to what stated in many theories but as a result of the triple effect of the interaction between environmental factors, the cognitive structure and other characteristics of the person performing the behaviour, and the behaviours themselves. The environment which individuals live in influences their expectations, the goals they set for themselves and their self-perceptions, and these expectations, goals and perceptions influence behaviours and behaviours influence the environment shaping expectations, goals and perceptions. Consequently, while an individual is shaped by the environment which s/he lives in on the one hand, s/he also shapes her/his environment on the other hand (Kocaekşi, 2005; Koruç, 2005).

The environment where children and teenagers spend most of their time is the school environment. For this reason, the type of instruction realized in schools, the level of teacher-student and student-student relationships, school resources and facilities offered to students are expected to contribute to students’ social self-efficacy and assertiveness levels.

Multi-program high schools in one of which the research study was conducted are those which are opened in accordance with the Turkish National Education Basic Law under the guidance of development plans, government programs, and objectives, principles and policies agreed in National Education Councils by considering small dwelling units’ educational needs at secondary level, student potentials, educational costs, educational economies, workplaces suitable for skill training, and physical capacities. In multi-program high schools, both programs preparing students for higher education and those preparing for vocation, life and business fields are given. It was thought to be important to investigate into the variables affecting the social self-efficacy and assertiveness levels in these types of schools in which different curricula are given under the same roof to students having similar developmental characteristics but different aims, interests, orientations and expectations.

The purpose of this research study is find out multi-program high school students’ social self-efficacy expectation and assertiveness levels. The obtained results were compared according to kind of high school program, gender, grades, participation to activities, having a sport licence and family income level.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1. Population and sample*

The population of the study is composed of the students of “Kocaeli Multi-program High School” attached to the province of Sakarya. And the sample consists of 618 volunteer students enrolled in the programs given at general high school, super high school, industrial vocational high school, trade high school, girls’ vocational high school and religious vocational high school under the administration of the multi-program high school.

### *2.2. Data collection instruments*

Multi-program high school students were administered the 12-item personal information form prepared by the researchers, the Social Self-Efficacy Expectation Scale developed by Bilgin (1999) for the age group of 14 -18 and the Rathus Assertiveness Inventory designed by S. Rathus for the age group of 14 - 16 (Ömer, 1997) and the Turkish adaptation of which was made by Voltan (1980). The Social Self-Efficacy Expectation Scale is compsed of total 40

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items. It is a five-point scale. Participants are expected to mark one of the boxes numbered “always (5 points)-often (4 points)-sometimes (3 points)-seldom (2 points)-never (1 point)”. Social self-efficacy expectation level increases as the points obtained from the scale increase and decreases as the points decrease. However, Rathus Assertiveness Inventory is an inventory which includes 30 items. It is a question-type one and has no time limitation. It includes both positive and negative statements. Positive statements are calculated between ‘fits very well’ (6 points) and ‘does not fit at all’ (1 point), and negative statements are calculated in the contrary way. The extreme extending toward timidity is 30 points and that extending toward assertiveness is 180 points.

### 2.3 Data analysis

The obtained data were evaluated by using SPSS 13.00 statistical program. In between-groups comparisons, Kruskal Wallis was used for the variables not indicating normal distributions and having more than two groups, and Mann-Whitney U test for those having two groups. For the variables having two groups and indicating normal distribution, independent samples t- test was used to indicate the difference between groups and for those having more than two groups and homogenous variances one-way analysis of variance was used.

### 3. Findings

To the study volunteered a total of 618 students enrolled in a multi-program high school with the age mean of  $16.05 \pm 1.2$ . However, some of the participants were observed not having made any markings on questions related to some of the variables. This case explains the differences observed between the total numbers of participants in some analyses.

Comparisons of social self-efficacy expectation (ssee) scores and assertiveness scores of the participants were summarized in the following tables.

Table I. Comparison of ssee scores of the participants according to gender by using t- test.

Gender	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	P
Female	252	120.2	19.7	-3.024	<b>0.003</b>
Male	366	125.5	22.5		

Following the comparison of ssee scores of females and males in Table 1, ssee scores of males were found to be higher at statistically significant level ( $p < 0.01$ ).

Table 2. Comparison of assertiveness scores of the participants according to gender by using mann–whitney u test.

Gender	N	Mean rank	p
Female	252	294.3	
Male	366	319.2	0.088

Comparing the assertiveness scores of females and males in Table 2, no statistically significant difference was found.

Table 3. Comparison of ssee and assertiveness scores of the participants according to the kind of high school program by using kruskal-wallis test.

High School Program	n = 616	Mean rank for ssee	Mean rank for assertiveness
General High School	316	317.1	317.1
Super High School	58	314.4	359.1
Industrial Vocational High School	162	297.9	286.2
Trade High School	19	304.4	248.2
Girls' Vocational High School	34	315.1	294.8
Religious Vocational High School	27	253.6	291.4
p		.552	0.060

Comparing the ssee and assertiveness scores of the participants according to the kind of high school program in Table 3, no statistically significant difference was found.

Table 4. Comparison of ssee scores of the participants according to their grades by using one-way analysis of variance.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Between Groups	3120.87	2	1560.43	3.3	<b>.03</b>
Within Groups	281852.2	612	460.54		
Total	284973	614			

In the comparison of SSEE scores of the participants according to their grades in Table 4, a statistically significant difference was found ( $p < 0.05$ ). In the pair-wise comparisons of SSEE scores of the participants from different grades by using LSD test, statistically significant differences were identified between the 9th and 11th grade SSEE scores ( $t = -5.53$ ) and the 10th and 11th grade SSEE scores ( $t = -5.25$ ) ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 5. Comparison of assertiveness scores of the participants according to their grades by using kruskal-wallis test.

Grade	n	Mean rank	p
9.	290	298.5	.205
10.	189	305.9	
11.	137	331.2	
Total	616		

In the comparison of assertiveness scores of the participants according to their grades in Table 5, no statistically significant difference was found.

Table 6. Comparison of ssee and assertiveness scores of the participants according to participation to sport, course and camp by using mann-whitney u test.

	Participation to sport, course, camp, etc.	N	Mean rank	P
ssee	Yes	189	347.7	<b>0.000</b>
	No	427	291.1	
Assertiveness	Yes	189	309.7	0.912
	No	427	307.9	
Total		616		

Participants were compared in Table 6 according to if they participate to any activity such as sport activities, course and camp in addition to physical education and sport lessons. The ssee scores of the students giving “yes” answer were found to be higher at statistically significant level than those given “no” answer ( $p < 0.001$ ). However, in the comparison of the assertiveness scores of the participants, no statistically significant difference was found between those giving “yes” and those giving “no” answer.

Table 7. Comparison of ssee scores of the participants according to having a sport licence by using t test.

Sport Licence	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	P
Yes	137	129.3	19.1	3.77	<b>0.000</b>
No	481	121.5	21.9		
Total	618				

In the comparison of ssee scores of the participants according to having a sport licence in Table 7, the scores of those having a sport licence were found to be higher at statistically significant level ( $p < 0.001$ ).

Table 8. Comparison of the assertiveness scores of the participants according to having a sport licence by using mann –whitney u test.

Sport Licence	n	Mean rank	p
Yes	137	317.8	
No	481	307.1	0.536
Total	618		

Following the comparison of assertiveness scores according to having a sport licence in Table 8, no statistically significant difference was found between the students' assertiveness scores.

Table 9. The correlation coefficients regarding the relationships between the participants' SSEE and assertiveness scores and total family income

	Total Family Income	
ssee	r = .121	p<0.005
Assertiveness	r = .132	p<0.005

When the relationships between the participants' income levels and ssee and assertiveness scores were examined in Table 9, there appeared a positive relationship both between total family income and ssee scores ( $r = 0.121$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ) and between total family income and assertiveness scores ( $r = 0.132$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ).

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

In the comparison of SSEE scores of the multi-program high school students made in regard to gender, ssee scores of male students were found to be statistically higher. Story et al. (2001), in their study investigating the relationship between behaviours with respect to physical activity and bodybuild and gender, found no difference between social self-efficacy and gender, and similarly, Öztürk et al. (2005), in another study conducted on racket sportsmen aged between 9-13, found no statistically significant difference between social self-efficacy expectation and gender. The findings obtained in this study are consistent with those obtained in the above mentioned studies.

In the study, a statistically significant difference was found between ssee scores and grades of the participants. In the pair-wise comparisons of ssee scores of the students from different grades, statistically significant differences were found between the 9th and 11th grade SSEE scores in favor of the 11th grades, and between the 10th and 11th grade ssee scores in favor of the 11th grades. Tiler (1995) investigated the relationships between college years and social self-efficacy expectation levels and found that social self-efficacy control scores of all the first year college students were lower than those of the students studying their other years.

When the students participating to the study were compared with respect to having a sport licence, ssee scores of those having a sport licence were found to be statistically higher. As known, to have a sport licence individuals have to train regularly in any branch of sport attached to a sport club, and participate in sports contests. Ryan and Dzewaltowski (2002), in their study investigating the effects of different types of physical activities on social self-efficacy expectations of the 6th and 7th grade students, found that physical activity increased the students' self-confidence, and also found statistically significant differences with respect to making friends, overcoming obstacles and sociability. Again Paog and McAuley (1992), in their study entitled "Determining Targets, Self-Efficacy and Exercise Behaviour", found that exercise is related to self-efficacy at important level and doing exercise develops social self-efficacy. Zulkadiroğlu (2002), in the study investigating the effect of three-months basic exercise training in individuals aged between 11-13 on their social self-efficacy expectation levels, found a significant difference between the arithmetic means of the post-test social self-efficacy expectation scores and those of the pre-test social self-efficacy expectation scores. These results support our study. Similarly, Hoffstetter (1990), Spence and Blanchard (2001) and Buckner (2000) reported that regular exercise, social learning and sport activities have positive effects on social efficacy expectations.

No statistically significant differences were found when students' assertiveness scores were compared according to gender, kind of high school program, grades, involving in activities and being a licenced sportsman. Becet (1989), Uğurluoğlu (1996), İşmen and Yıldız (2005) did not find any relationship between assertiveness and gender. Also, the

study entitled “Characteristics of Entering and Graduating University Students in terms of Self-Esteem, Assertiveness and Locus of Control: A Longitudinal Study” by Yeşilyaprak (1997) revealed positive improvements at significant level in the end of the education process in terms of three variables. While these findings support our research in terms of social self-efficacy expectation, they do not show consistency with those obtained from assertiveness when taken the grades variable. On the other hand, Tekin et al. (2006) found that participation to physical exercises in free times has some positive effects on depression and assertiveness. In another study, Tekin and Akandere (2006) determined significant difference the assertiveness levels of between students who are doing and not doing sports. The results of these studies overlap with the findings obtained. As known, adolescence is one of the most sensitive periods of life during which an individual has communication problems, tries to form an identity, and perceives his/her environment differently. When assertiveness is considered as a characteristic which adolescents are still developing, that the findings obtained regarding assertiveness do not overlap with the present literature can be explained. However, the findings obtained from the study are important in terms of determining the variables which might be related to adolescents’ assertiveness.

Another finding obtained in the study is the relationship between family total income and assertiveness and social self-efficacy expectation scores. While Bilgin (1999) emphasizes that socio-economic and cultural levels of students prevent them from reflecting the facts regarding their self-acceptance, Lewellyn and Stephen (2003), in their study entitled “The Relationship between Family Structure and Adolescent Self-Efficacy”, found a significant relationship between the variables of race, academic performance, income and family support and self-efficacy. Yılmaz (2000) found that the place where the biggest part of life is spent, obtaining permission to talk in the lesson, making friends with the opposite sex, having difficulty in expressing emotions and family type had an effect on assertiveness level. Also, it was found that there was a positive relationship between students’ monthly family income and their assertiveness levels. Similarly in this study, a significant positive relationship was found between family monthly income and social self-efficacy and assertiveness.

In conclusion, the findings obtained from the study appear to support the opinion that during the socialization process of the adolescents enrolled in different educational programs such as general high school, super high school, industrial vocational high school, trade high school, girls’ vocational high school and religious vocational high school, people, groups and mass communication means with which they are in interaction, associations and institutions of which they are members, and social and sport activities in which they are involved play an important role in their social self-efficacy expectations. Moving from this point it can be thought that educational programs should include sports activities in addition to vocational and cultural activities, enable teenagers to acquire social competency in addition to vocational and academic competency, help to form an intellectual and self-confident society.

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