

Prospective Teacher's Communication Skills Level: Intellectual, Emotional and Behavioral Competencies

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ABSTRACT The purpose of this study is to determine the level of intellectual, emotional, behavioral and general communication skills of teacher candidates. The relational screening method was used as the research method. 1706 prospective teachers formed the sample group for this study in Turkey. Data were collected through Communication Skills Inventory (CSI). The prospective teachers' general communication skills and intellectual, emotional and behavioral skills are at a moderate level. On the other hand, gender socio-economic level and settlement are not one of the factors influencing prospective teachers' communication skills level. Prospective teachers' level of emotional competence is dependent on the university where they were educated but differ according to vocational education programs. It also differs in terms of the type of education, perceived parents' attitude, and perceived friendship relationships.

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is the information age and therefore an education age. Therefore, our age is referred to as the information age (Karadag and Caliskan 2009). As the characteristics of the age in which we live and the environment that surrounds us have become more complex, so have the facets involved with the nomenclature. Therefore, the field of communication continues to adopt an infinitive look such as one that (Piji Kucuk 2011; Erkan and Avci 2014) brings us to the conclusion that a life without communication can no longer be imagined. Communication is a multidisciplinary concept that is relevant to all scientific fields. Therefore, there are many definitions, which have many common elements in the literature (Bozkurt-Bulut 2004; Karagoz and Kosterelioglu 2008; Tozoglu and Bayraktar 2014). Communication (Nural 2006) can be defined as the "process of sharing emotions or opinions between two or more persons and rendering their meanings common." Cagdas (2006) points out that not all conversation among people can be defined as communication. The process of com-

municating (Sayers et al. 1993) is a complex and time consuming process. Using communication processes efficiently can only happen through comprehending these processes properly and through increasing the level of competence. In this context, communication competencies (Iyamu and Iseguan 2009) refer to the competencies that must be possessed by the speaker in order to establish efficient communication.

Communication Competencies and Teacher

In fact, education occurs automatically anywhere where communication is taking place (Sirin and Izgar 2013). Individuals (Saunders and Mills 1999; Cuhadar et al. 2014) rely on the foundation of school as an institution. On the other hand, communication is at the center of this foundation. Therefore, communication skills are a basic prerequisite for developing the understanding of learning and teaching. Communication (Akpınar 2009; Ekici 2009) is also the jugular vein of a school. It is essential to use communication processes for the purposes of creating an efficient class environment, controlling undesired behaviors, and for successful learning-teaching processes. Those interpersonal communication skills (Kane et al. 2004; Tucker et al. 2008; Çetinkaya 2011; Kayabasi and Akcengiz 2014), which is one of the competencies for teaching as a vocation, are basic key elements in the teaching profession. In other words communication

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skills are considered as one of the many skills that must be possessed by prospective teachers. In this context (Kucukkaragoz et al. 2013; Tunceli 2013) communication is a key element in education, and in learning-teaching processes. A teacher's communication-related competencies directly affect the students' behavior and their way of learning. From the perspective of learning-teaching processes (Saunders and Mills 1999) teaching can be described as the conveyance of a message by the teacher to a student or a classroom in the most efficient way, sending the appropriate message, and incorporating the resulting messages into common pedagogic knowledge and understanding.

There are many researches that prove the importance of the interaction between the teacher and the student (Robinson et al. 1980) and the effect of this interaction on the results of the educational processes. According to the studies (Van Dalen et al. 1999), teachers' communication skills are more effective than their general application skills for the purposes of teaching-learning processes. Moreover, a teacher's communication competency is a powerful factor in efficient learning and education (Iyamu and Iseguan 2009). One dimension of rendering efficient education is teacher-group interaction and teacher-student interaction (Kane et al. 2004). Communication (Kucuksuleymanoglu et al. 2014) is the process of sharing emotions, information, opinions, attitudes and skills in order to create a behavioral change. Be it advertent or inadvertent, a behavioral change happens in every act of communication. Therefore, teachers must be aware of the best method of interpersonal communication with each student (Hughes 2005) in order to assist them on a one-to-one basis in developing, organizing, and creatively expressing their opinions. In addition to teaching the curriculum (Yondem and Bicak 2008), a teacher's communication skills will be a model for the students, resulting in their development of positive personal characteristics.

In summary, all people communicate. However, communication becomes even more important when it concerns teachers. In the field of education, creation of efficient learning-teaching processes is absolutely dependent on communication. In other words, teachers' competency and qualifications in communication are prerequisites for successful teaching. Efficient teacher communication in education processes also

has a vital role in students' learning. A teacher establishes an interactive and communication system in order to create a behavioral change by arranging the social and physical environment in the classroom. In such a case, communication is an anonymous element of, and essential factor in the education of teachers.

In the literature, there are some studies about the communication proficiency of pre-service teachers (Yesil 2010; Saka and Surmeli 2010; Cevik 2011; Ciftci and Taskaya 2011; Yilmaz and Altunbas 2012; Tozoglu and Bayraktar 2014; Yalman and Hamidi 2014) but these studies examine communication proficiency through only one dimension. However, this paper examines all the dimensions (intellectual, emotional and behavioral) of communication proficiency for pre-service teachers. It is expected that this study contributes to the work area, especially, to the teacher training programs with holistic perspectives. In addition, this study and its findings will shed light on the training of teachers. Furthermore, the results of this study will give in-depth knowledge to the instructors and teachers who are in the teaching profession.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the level of communication skills possessed by prospective teachers. Accordingly, the study aims to provide answers to these questions: 1) What are the general communication skills levels of prospective teachers? 2) What are the communication skills levels of prospective teachers in intellectual, emotional, and behavioral terms? 3) Do levels of communication skills of prospective teachers differ with respect to variables such as gender, university, department, type of education, living place of the family, perceived parents' attitude, perceived socio-economic level and perceived friendship relationships?

METHODOLOGY

Research Method and Participants

The relational screening method was used as the research method. 1706 prospective teachers were the sample group for this study, which consists of 1026 female and 680 male students studying in the faculty of education in Turkey,

with the following universities: *Abant İzzet Baysal* (N=227), *Ataturk* (N=193), *Dumlupınar* (N=54), *Erciyes* (N=232), *Gazi* (N=260), *Nigde* (N=248), *On Sekiz Mart* (N=268) and *Sakarya* (N=224) universities. A total of 1706 prospective teachers, studying in their fourth-year education programs, were selected as the sample group. 66.6 percent of participants are studying in daytime education programs, while the remaining 33.4 percent are studying in evening education programs. Participants' breakdown on the basis of departments of study are as follows: Classroom Teaching, 19.7 percent; Turkish Teaching, 12.1 percent; Social Studies Teaching, 15.1 percent; Preschool Teaching, 6.1 percent; Science Teaching, 14.6 percent; Elementary Education Math Teaching, 5.3 percent; Computers Teaching, 7.9 percent; Paint Workshop Teaching, 5.6 percent; Music Teaching, 5.4 percent; Special Education Teaching, 5.6 percent; and Religion Teaching, 2.5 percent. The living place of parents is as follows: Village, 11.6 percent; County, 6.3 percent; District, 27.3 percent; Province, 30.2 percent; and Metropolitan City, 24.6 percent. Participants' perceived socio-economic levels are as follows: Low, 11.8 percent; Middle, 84.6 percent; and High, 3.6 percent. Participants' perceived parents' behavior as follows: Democratic-Liberal, 68.2 percent; Conservative-Controlling, 28.4 percent; Indifferent, 1.9 percent; and Inconsistent-Unstable, 1.5 percent. Participants' perceived friendship relationships are as follows: Positive-Calm, 91.3 percent; Linguistic-Controversial, 7.9 percent; and Physical Fights, 0.8 percent.

Research Instrument

Communication Skills Inventory (CSE), developed by Ersanli and Balci (1998) was used as a data collection tool. The scale is a 5-option Likert Type scale. The highest score that can be achieved in all scales is 225 and the lowest score is 45. The scale consists of 45 questions. There

are three subordinate sections in the scale that measure cognitive, emotional, and behavioral communication skills, and each section include 15 items. The highest score that can be achieved in each subordinate section is 75, while the lowest score is 15.

The scale reliability r is equal to .68 in reliability test which was concluded with the test retest reliability method. The Alpha coefficient pertaining to the internal consistency of the scale is .72. In accordance with factor analysis results, scale items were grouped into three dimensions. These dimensions include intellectual, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, based on their contents. Correlation coefficients for each of the three dimensions are .83, .73 and .82, respectively. The scale validity coefficient was calculated to be .70 (Ersanli and Balci 1998).

RESULTS

This section includes the results of the analysis of both research problem and data obtained with respect to the subordinate problems in each section.

As indicated in Table 1, the average score for general communication skills was calculated to be 149.63. In the subordinate section, the prospective teachers' average scores are 52.12 for cognitive communication skills, 44.52 for emotional communication skills and 52.98 for behavioral communication skills.

As indicated in Table 2, when we compare subordinate dimensions of communication skills scale and grand total averages in terms of gender variable with t-test, there is no significant difference between boys and girls in terms of communication skills in accordance with [$t_{(1704)} = .49, p > .05$] significance level.

As indicated in Table 3, the prospective teachers' communication skills level based on the university studied showed that there is only a significant difference in emotional subordinate di-

Table 1: Prospective teachers' cognitive, emotional, behavioral and general communication skills levels

	<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	\bar{X}	<i>Std. deviation</i>
Cognitive	1706	31.00	69.00	52.12	4.23
Emotional	1706	31.00	65.00	44.52	4.50
Behavioral	1706	37.00	71.00	52.98	4.28
Total	1706	102.00	201.00	149.63	9.30

Table 2: Prospective teachers' cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and general communication skills levels depending on gender variable

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. deviation	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Cognitive	Female	1026	53.09	4.16	1704	1.29	.19
	Male	680	52.82	4.45			
Emotional	Female	1026	44.37	4.41		1.69	.09
	Male	680	44.75	4.62			
Behavioral	Female	1026	52.25	4.22		1.58	.11
	Male	680	51.92	4.23			
Total	Female	1026	149.72	9.14		.49	.61
	Male	680	149.49	9.54			

mension [$F_{(7-1698)}=,70, p<.05$]. There are no significant differences in cognitive and behavioral subordinate dimensions and grand total score. Scheffe test results revealed that the prospective teachers studying at *Erciyes* University have better emotional communication skills than those studying at other universities.

According to the department variable, in Table 4, there are significant differences in emotional subordinate [$F_{(10-1695)}=2.40, p<.05$] dimension and behavioral [$F_{(10-1695)}=1.95, p<.05$] subordinate dimension. Based on Scheffe test results, this difference in the emotional subordinate section is to the advantage of prospective students

Table 3: Prospective teachers' cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and general communication skills levels depending on studied university variable

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	Std. deviation	f	Sig. (2-tailed)
Cognitive	Between groups	90.28	7	12.89		.70	.67
	Within groups	31159.37	1698	18.35			
	Total	31249.66	1705				
Emotional	Between groups	756.72	7	108.10		5.42	.000*
	Within groups	33848.64	1698	19.93			
	Total	34605.36	1705				
Behavioral	Between groups	156.18	7	22.31		1.24	.27
	Within groups	30366.22	1698	17.88			
	Total	30522.40	1705				
Total	Between groups	1059.54	7	151.36		1.75	.09
	Within groups	146681.13	1698	86.38			
	Total	147740.67	1705				

*p<0.05 significance level

Table 4: Prospective teachers' cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and general communication skills levels depending on department studied variable

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	Std. deviation	f	Sig. (2-tailed)
CCognitive	Between groups	117.31	10	11.73		.63	.78
	Within groups	31132.35	1695	18.36			
	Total	31249.66	1705				
Emotional	Between groups	484.50	10	48.45		2.40	.008*
	Within groups	34120.86	1695	20.13			
	Total	34605.36	1705				
Behavioral	Between groups	347.37	10	34.73		1.95	.035*
	Within groups	30175.03	1695	17.80			
	Total	30522.40	1705				
Total	Between groups	393.64	10	39.36		.45	.92
	Within groups	147347.03	1695	86.93			
	Total	147740.67	1705				

*p<0.05 significance level

studying in the Elementary Math Teaching department. On the other hand, the difference in behavioral subordinate dimension is to the benefit of those prospective students who study at the Department of Special Education.

In review of prospective teachers communication skills level based on their perceived family attitudes, Table 5 shows that there are significant differences in cognitive [$F_{(3-1702)}=2.62, p<.05$] and emotional [$F_{(3-1702)}=11.62, p<.001$] dimensions. According to Scheffe test results, this difference is to the advantage of those prospective teachers who perceived their parents' attitude as indifferent in the cognitive dimension, and to the advantage of those who perceived their parents' attitude as unstable in the emotional subordinate dimension. There are no significant differences in the behavioral subordinate dimension and grand total averages.

The results of prospective teachers' communication skills level as related to other variables which include type of education studied, living province of parents, socio-economic levels and perceived friendship relationships are as follows:

Prospective teachers' communication skills based on the type of education studied differ in cognitive [$t_{(1704)}=2.30, p<.05$] and emotional [$t_{(1704)}=2.22, p<.05$] dimensions. This difference is to the advantage of Daytime Education in cognitive dimension and to the advantage of Evening Education in the emotional dimension. There are no significant differences in behavioral dimension [$t_{(1704)}=1.79, p>.05$] and general communication levels.

There is no difference in prospective teachers' general communication levels [$F_{(4-1701)}=.52,$

$p>.05$] and subordinate dimensions depending on the living place of the parents of prospective teachers' families. In other words, the living province of parents is not a factor to prospective teachers' communication skills level.

There is no significant difference in prospective teachers general communication skills level [$F_{(2-1703)}=.79, p>.05$] and in subordinate dimensions based on their socio-economic levels. In other words, prospective teachers' socio-economic level is not a factor to their communication skills levels.

In review of prospective teachers' communication skills level based on perceived friendship relationships, there are significant differences in cognitive [$F_{(2-1703)}=6.06, p<.01$] and emotional [$F_{(2-1703)}=4.69, p<.01$] dimensions. Scheffe test results show that, this difference is to the advantage of those prospective teachers who have positive-calm relationships in the cognitive dimension, and to the advantage of those with physical fighting in the emotional dimension. There are no significant differences in the behavioral subordinate dimension or in grand total averages.

DISCUSSION

Prospective teachers' general communication skills were found to be of middle level. Prospective teachers' communication skills at subordinate dimensions were found to be of middle level, as well. However, in comparison to the communication skills level in subordinate dimensions, we see the following in descending order: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional. Gursimsek et al. (2008) and Pijikucuk (2012) pointed out in their

Table 5: Prospective teachers' cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and general communication skills levels depending on perceived parents' attitude variable

	<i>Sum of squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean square</i>	<i>Std. deviation</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>
<i>Cognitive</i>	Between groups	143.65	3	47.88	2.62	.049*
	Within groups	31106.00	1702	18.27		
	Total	31249.66	1705			
<i>Emotional</i>	Between groups	694.72	3	231.57	11.62	.000**
	Within groups	33910.63	1702	19.92		
	Total	34605.36	1705			
<i>Behavioral</i>	Between groups	33.58	3	11.19	.62	.59
	Within groups	30488.82	1702	17.91		
	Total	30522.40	1705			
<i>Total</i>	Between groups	537.95	3	179.31	2.07	.10
	Within groups	147202.72	1702	86.48		
	Total	147740.67	1705			

* $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$ significance level

studies that there is a positive relationship between prospective teachers' characteristics, such as emotional intelligence, creativity, problem solving skills and job satisfaction, and their communication skills. Kilic and Saruhan's (2006) research findings showed that many teaching behavior of senior year prospective teachers was not sufficiently well-developed, which seems to support the findings given above. It can be said that throughout their education, prospective teachers are not able to gain a sufficient level of communication skills, which is one of the many competencies that must be possessed by teachers. One cause of this is that there aren't sufficient courses targeting the elimination of this incompetency in the curriculum. Another reason is that extra curriculum activities may be insufficient.

New discoveries have shown that gender is not a factor to prospective teachers' communication skills level. These findings align well with the findings of Dilekmen et al. (2008) and Gulbahce (2010) in their research on communication skills levels of education students. Prospective teachers' general communication skills do not differ with respect to the university studied. However, prospective teachers studying at *Erciyes* University showed advantages in the emotional subordinate dimension. It can be said that this is as a result of the fact that the training of teachers in Turkey is dependent on framework programs supplied by The Council of Higher Education. Yilmaz (1998) pointed out in his study that there is no relationship between the school from which they graduated and their communication skills. On the other hand, studies of Denizel-Guven and Cevher (2005) indicate that the university from which they were graduated is a factor to teachers' class management skills level.

In review of prospective teachers' communication skills levels in terms of the department variable, there are differences in Math Teaching and Special Education Teaching. While prospective teachers studying Math Teaching have better emotional communication skills, prospective teachers studying Special Education Teaching have better behavioral communication skills in comparison to those studying in other departments. A study which was done by Dilekmen et al. (2008) showed that the department variable is a factor in prospective teachers' communication skills. However, study by Ozerbas et al. (2007) found that department is not an effective factor

in prospective teachers' communication skills level. In review of the type of education studied, the difference in terms of general communication skills is not significant. Kayabasi and Akcengiz's (2014) findings are consistent with this result. Living place of parents and socio-economic level are not factors of prospective teachers' communication skills level. This may be the result of prospective teachers' feeling of confidence that they belong to, and are ready for, the vocation. This finding is supported by Sirin and Izgar's (2013) research results.

Furthermore, prospective teachers who perceived their parents' attitude as an uninterested one have higher cognitive communication skills, while prospective teachers who perceived their parents' attitude as an unstable one have higher emotional communication skills. According to the research by Erkan and Avci (2014), temperament and character traits both play an important role in the communication skills of pre-service teachers. This may result from the fact that prospective teachers who perceived their parents' attitude as an uninterested one had to use cognitive processes at a higher level. The reason prospective teachers who perceived their parents' attitude as an unstable one, having higher emotional communication skills may be as a result of their effort to maintain a balance. Prospective teachers who perceived their friendship relationships to be positive-calm have higher intellectual communication skills, while prospective teachers who perceived their friendship relationships to be with physical fights have higher emotional communication skills. Eriguc et al. (2013) found that communication skills of students who have positive and calm relations with their friends were higher than the others. On the other hand, Karahan (2005) showed that emotional characteristics caused insufficiencies in communication and conflict process, and also weakened communication skills.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, general communication skills competencies of the prospective teachers attending the last grade of the faculty of educations are moderate in all the dimensions -mental, emotional and behavioral-. When compared within themselves, communication skills levels in each sub-dimension are ranked from high to low as behavioral, mental and emotional. Similarly, com-

munication skills competencies of the prospective teachers are also moderate in mental, emotional and behavioral dimensions. On the other hand, gender, socio-economic level and settlement are not determinative factors in prospective teachers' communication skills levels. In addition, communication competency levels of prospective teachers in the emotional dimension differ according to universities. In other words, universities, where prospective teachers study, appear to be a factor in communication skill competencies. Similar to these results, communication competency levels of prospective teachers differ also according to the department. The teaching area which the prospective teachers attend is a determinative factor in communication competencies. Likewise, teachers' communication competencies differ according to type of education, perceived attitudes of parents and perceived friendship relations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made in relation to the findings of this study: The number of courses directed towards communication skills and competencies, and social skills must be increased in teacher training programs; and extra curriculum activities directed towards development of communication skills must be prepared in an oriented, systematic, and regular manner, but prospective teachers must be included in this process, as well.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It was suggested that further researches should be carried out in order to determine extra curriculum activities and organization culture, targeting development of communication skills for each educational program and even for each department at the faculty of education.

LIMITATIONS

This research was carried out in eight faculties of education in Turkey. However, there are more than 79 schools of education in Turkey. Thus, this type of research should be conducted in the other universities' educational faculties to see the whole picture on teacher's training.

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