

Examination of the Relationship Between Teacher Candidates' Emotional Intelligence and Communication Skills

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Abstract

In this study, the relationship between teacher candidates' emotional intelligence levels and communication skills was examined. It was examined whether there was a significant difference between teacher candidates' emotional intelligence and communication skills, depending on gender and the departments they studied at. The research was designed in relational screening model. The universe of the research consists of teacher candidates, who are students at Necmettin Erbakan University Ahmet Keleşoğlu, Faculty of Education. In this universe, 326 teacher candidates were selected as the research sample. "Emotional Intelligence Scale" and "Communication Skills Inventory" were used to collect data. In the analysis of the data, one-way variance analysis and independent samples t-test, one of the parametric tests, were used. It is observed that there are low levels of positive relationship between teacher candidates' communication skills and their emotional intelligence levels. No significant difference was found between teacher candidates' emotional intelligence levels and communication skills regarding gender and department variables.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, communication skills, teacher candidates

1. Introduction

We can define communication as an indispensable process in an individual's life. Because communication is a need for the individual, it is impossible for us to spend one or more days without any communication.

Every individual comes to the world alone, and even twins, triplets, quadruplets, one by one, are born before the other. After living, every individual leaves the world alone again. However, in the process from birth to death, each individual establishes many relationships that require communication in order to stay alive and useful. Communication is a social process that results from the social and physiological needs of individuals. This social process has three important characteristics: it is a process that takes place as a result of human behaviors; it is not a static but a dynamic phenomenon; it depends on specific molds. The importance of communication stems from the fact that it is an important issue for all people in social life. For example, we cannot think of a teacher who cannot communicate because teaching requires a very high level of communication skills. Teacher competence includes three groups of fundamental professional competencies: educational competencies, course content competencies and communication competence. In the last twenty years teacher communication competence has been one of the most important content of teacher training programmes. In other words, communication is of great importance in the teaching and learning process. Individuals can learn the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need for social life only through communication (Çağlar & Kılıç, 2011; Bhala, 2011; Zlatić, Bjekić, & Marinković ve Bojović, 2014).

Learning means the formation of permanent traced behavior change in the individual as a result of communication procedures. Therefore, it can be said that learning is a product of good communication. Since new learning will be by acquiring new knowledge and skills, learning will not occur unless communication occurs (Ergin, 2014).

Interpersonal communication is a psycho-social process in which at least two people share their knowledge, emotions, thoughts and lives in certain ways. It is important that a good communication is established among the people who form the society. The most important task in this regard falls to the teachers after families (Kaya,

2016; Gedik, 2016). In the communication process, individuals send many messages to the people they communicate with in verbal and non-verbal ways. During this message exchange, emotions and moods containing emotions are also reflected along with many messages.

The most important indicators of non-verbal communication are bearing, the tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and mimics. The key information it presents the opposite party is that it reflects the feelings of the individual, i.e. whether s/he is happy, sad, angry, anxious or confused. Basic skills like the understanding, expression and management of feelings, which have an important place in relations necessitate a strong emotional awareness. It was emotional intelligence theory which drew attention to the importance of feelings and their determining role in interpersonal relations the most. This theory attaches importance to individuals' awareness of their own feelings, making sense of these feelings, being able to control them and the ability to evaluate hints regarding others' feelings correctly and to react to them appropriately. The improvement of these characteristics, which emotional intelligence theory notices is also necessary for interpersonal relations to be healthier (Kaya, 2016). It is known that Thorndike laid the foundations of the concept of emotional intelligence theory with his social intelligence theory. Initially, measurement tools were developed to measure intelligence, David Wechsler IQ tests were developed in 1940's and he stated that the nonintellectual parts of general intelligence could also be measured. In 1970s, experimental studies were made on social intelligence and the term "social intelligence", gradually came into use; emotional intelligence was conceptualized by Gardner. In 1985s, Bar-On mentioned some properties of emotional intelligence. In 1990's the first articles on the subject started to be written. This was initiated by psychologist John Mayer from New Hampshire University and psychologist Peter Salovey from Yale University and they formed a skill model for emotional intelligence (Özdemir, 2015; Yeşilyaprak, 2001).

The researches conducted lately have revealed that the factor considered to be efficient in both private and business lives of people is emotional intelligence rather than IQ (Gül, İnce, & Korkmaz, 2014). According to Goleman (1995), our feelings mostly predominate our thoughts when shaping our decisions and acts. It was gone to extremes in the value and importance we attach to intelligence, i.e., what IQ measures. Besides, as long as emotions dominate us, intelligence will get nowhere.

Emotional intelligence comprises verbal and nonverbal expressions and evaluations. This concept also involves utilizing emotions in solving problems (Mayer & Salovey, 1993). Emotional intelligence focuses upon basic human skills inside our being, on the ability to control our feelings and inner potential to create a positive interaction (Petrovici & Dobrescu, 2014). Emotional intelligence is specializing in human relations. It means that the individual understands both him/herself and the feelings of the opposite party and determines his/her route accordingly. Emotional intelligence necessitates not only to understand one's own feelings but also to be able to develop empathy. We all have feelings but having these feelings is not enough; we also need to make sense of and analyze them. It is crucial to use them correctly in order to be able to reach the goals we aim at regarding many issues in our lives.

Rapidly developing technology leads to the states of loneliness and not being understood with people. Whereas people communicate with each other in line with technological developments, they relate each other through writing e-mails and using social media in a virtual vicious cycle. Since this is the way of communication in business life in general, the number of people who use their emotional intelligence and have high social skills decrease. One-to-one communication with people and listening to them attentively lead to a sense of being cared about in the person we interact with. Therefore, understanding others and verbal communication form the basis of emotional intelligence (Aydın, 2017). We can better prepare our students by teaching them not only the cognitive knowledge they will need, but also social and emotional skills (Sigmar, Hynes, & Cooper, 2010). Within this context, the aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between teacher candidates' emotional intelligence levels and communication skills. When the researches conducted on this subject were investigated, researches regarding the determination of teacher or teacher candidates' emotional intelligence or communication skills were found to have been performed (Bozkurt Bulut, 2004; Ocak & Erşen, 2015; Çetinkaya, 2011; Baykara Pehlivan, 2005; Acar, 2009; Tepeköylü, Soytürk, & Çamlıyer, 2009; Selanik Ay, 2015; Dilekmen, Başcı, & Bektaş, 2008; Milli & Yağcı, 2017; Maden, 2010; Önen, 2012; Toytok, 2013; Altınkaynak & Çakır, 2015; Ünlü, Ezberci Çevik & Kurnaz, 2016). However, it was determined that there was no study performed on the relationship between the two. Within this context, the subject of the study was chosen as the correlation between the emotional intelligence and communication skills of teacher candidates.

1.1 Problem Status

The problem situation of the research is the investigation of the relationship between the teacher candidates'

emotional intelligence levels and communication skills.

1.2 Sub-Problems

- 1) Is there a significant difference between the emotional intelligence levels and communication skills of teacher candidates?
- 2) Is there a significant difference between teacher candidates' emotional intelligence levels and communication skills based on gender factor?
- 3) Is there a significant difference between the teacher candidates' emotional intelligence levels and their communication skills based on the factor of the department they are educated in?

2. Method

2.1 Research Model

The research was designed in relational screening model. Relational screening models are research models aiming to determine the existence or degree of covariance between two or more variables (Karasar, 2016).

2.2 Population and Sample

The universe of the research consists of teacher candidates, who are students at Necmettin Erbakan University Ahmet Keleşoğlu, Faculty of Education. 326 teacher candidates in this population were chosen as research sample. The sample consists of the teacher candidates, who were students in the last year of the following departments; 62 classroom teachers, 61 social studies teachers, 128 preschool teachers and 75 science teachers.

2.3 Data Collection Tools

2.3.1 Emotional Intelligence Scale

In this research, "Emotional Intelligence Scale" was used. It was developed by Huyuneung Lee and Yungjung Kwak in South Korea in 2011, adapted to Turkish (Kayihan & Arslan, 2016) and its reliability and validity were tested. The emotional intelligence scale, which has a three-dimensional structure, consists of 20 items. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale is 83.

2.3.2 Communication Skills Inventory

In this research, Communication Skills Inventory developed by Ersanlı and Balcı (1998) was used. It is a Likert-type scale consisting of 45 questions with three sub-dimensions being Mental, Emotional and Behavioral. Each sub-dimension has 15 items.

Cognitive Dimension Items: 1-3-6-12-15-17-18-20-23-24-26-28-33-37-45

Emotional Dimension Items: 5-9-11-27-29-31-34-35-36-38-39-40-42-43-44

Behavioral Dimension Items: 2-4-7-7-8-10-13-14-16-16-19-21-22-25-30-32-41

Test-retest reliability study was performed and reliability coefficient was found to be $R = 68$. The reliability coefficient of Cronbach Alpha, which was used to determine the consistency of the method was determined as 72. The relationships between each sub-dimension and total communication skills were 83.73 and 82, respectively. The validity coefficient of the scale was determined to be 70.

2.3.3 Data Analysis

Before starting the analysis of the data, the data set was evaluated in terms of missing values. There were no missing values in the data set. After this stage, while examining the differences between the means in the study, it was examined whether the assumptions about the application of parametric or non-parametric techniques were met. In the grouped (male and female) data, normality was examined and skewness and kurtosis values and histogram graphs were studied for each group. The extreme value hypothesis was examined using box plot. Levene test was performed regarding the assumption of the homogeneity of variances. Groups free from parametric tests t test and one-way variance analysis were utilized in data analysis aimed at meeting the assumptions.

Multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the relationship between communication skills and emotional intelligence levels of university students. Before passing on to regression analysis, normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity of residuals were evaluated in terms of multivariate extreme values, independence of residuals, multicollinearity and singularity. Assumption of the normality, linearity and homoscedasticity of residuals was controlled by scatter plot of residuals. As a result of this examination, it was determined that this

assumption was met. Durbin-Watson statistics was reviewed for the independence of residuals. The Durbin-Watson statistic was observed to be 2.14. Within this context, it can be stated that the residuals are not related to each other. Multivariate extreme values were examined by mahalonobis distance test. As a result of this examination, it was found that seven observations exceeded the critical value($\chi^2_3=16.27$). Accordingly, these seven observations were excluded from the data set and analyzes were pursued. For multivariate and singularity hypothesis, the relationships between predictors, tolerance and VIF values were checked. That tolerance values are higher than 10, VIF values are less than 10 and the relationship between predictors is not high (.80 and above) are considered necessary to avoid the problem of multiple connections and singularity. In this study, the smallest tolerance value was calculated as 60 and the largest VIF value was calculated as 1.67. The correlation values between the predictors were also found to be moderate. After meeting these assumptions, regression analysis was performed. The error margin in the research was accepted as 05.

3. Results

Research Problem 1: Is there a significant difference between the emotional intelligence levels and communication skills of teacher candidates?

Table 1. Mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficients of variables

Variable	\bar{x} (ss)	IB	DA	DK	DD
Communication Skills	23.79 (3.28)	-			
Emotional comprehension	22.13 (3.60)	.18**	-		
Emotional facilitation	29.94 (5.44)	.13*	.38**	-	
Emotional regulation	155.27 (11.56)	.14*	.39**	.61**	-

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01.

When the relationships between variables in Table 1 are examined, low level positive relationships are observed between communication skills and emotional understanding, emotional facilitation and emotional regulation.

Table 2. Regression analysis results

Predictor Variables	Model I			
	B	SE B	β	t
Constant	136.84	5.28		25.94 *
Emotional comprehension	.49	.22	.14	2.28*
Emotional facilitation	.12	.23	.04	.52
Emotional regulation	.14	.15	.07	.91
R ²	.04			
adjusted R ²	.03			

Note. *p < .05.

The results of the regression analysis are given in Table 2. At the end of the analysis, the model was (F(3, 315) = 4.25, p < .05) found to be significant. Among the emotional intelligence sub dimensions, only emotional understanding is a meaningful predictor of university students' communication skills (B = .49, t = 2.28, p < .05). According to this result, one unit increase in emotional understanding levels of university students predicts 49 units of increase in their communication skills. The model explained 3% of the variance of communication skills.

Research problem 2: Is there a significant difference between teacher candidates' emotional intelligence levels and communication skills based on gender factor?

Table 3. Examination of emotional understanding in terms of gender (t test)

Gender	n	\bar{x}	SS	t	p
Female	245	23.89	3.21	1.00	.32
Male	74	23.46	3.50		

When Table 3 is examined, no significant difference is observed in university students' emotional understanding levels regarding gender variable ($t(317) = .62, p > .05$). In other words, emotional understanding levels of male and female students are similar.

Table 4. Examination of emotional facilitation in terms of gender

Gender	n	\bar{x}	SS	t	p
Female	245	22.21	3.61	.78	.43
Male	74	21.84	3.58		

When Table 4 is examined, no significant difference is observed in university students' emotional facilitation levels regarding gender variable ($t(317) = .78, p > .05$). In other words, emotional facilitation levels of male and female students are similar.

Table 5. Examination of emotional regulation in terms of gender

Gender	n	\bar{x}	SS	t	p
Female	245	30.01	5.26	.47	.64
Male	74	29.68	6.05		

When Table 5 was examined, no significant difference was found in emotional regulation level regarding gender variable ($t(317) = .47, p > .05$). In other words, emotional regulation skills of male and female students are similar.

Table 6. Examination of communication skills in terms of gender

Gender	n	\bar{x}	SS	t	p
Female	245	155.18	11.42	-.27	.79
Male	74	155.59	12.06		

When Table 6 is examined, no significant difference was found in the communication skills of university students regarding gender ($t(317) = -.27, p > .05$). According to this result, it can be stated that communication skills of male and female students are similar.

Research problem 3: Is there a significant difference between the teacher candidates' emotional intelligence levels and their communication skills based on the factor of the department they are educated in?

Table 7. Examination of emotional understanding in terms of department variable (one-way analysis of variance)

Dimension	Age	n	\bar{x}	Source of the Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Average of Squares	F
Emotional comprehension	1. Class T.	62	24.13	Between Groups	11.51	3	3.84	.36
	2. Social Studies	58	23.70					
	3. Preschool T.	124	23.62	In-Group	3400.84	315	10.80	
	4. Science	75	23.87	Total	3412.35	318		

In Table 7, it is seen that there is no significant difference between university students' emotional understanding levels regarding department variable ($F(3, 315) = .36, p > .05$). According to this finding, emotional comprehension levels of the students who are pursuing their education in classroom teaching, social studies teaching, preschool teaching and science teaching are similar.

Table 8. Examination of emotional facilitation regarding department variable

Dimension	Age	n	\bar{x}	Source of the Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Average of Squares	F
Emotional facilitation	1. Class T.	62	22.13	Between Groups	89.00	3	29.67	2.31
	2. Social Studies	58	21.03					
	3. Preschool T.	124	22.45	In-Group	4039.98	315	12.83	
	4. Science	75	22.44	Total	4128.98	318		

In Table 8, no significant difference was found between students' emotional facilitation levels regarding department variable ($F(3, 315) = 2.31, p > .05$). In other words, the emotional facilitation levels of students who pursue their education in classroom teaching, social studies teaching, preschool teaching and science teaching are similar.

Table 9. Examination of emotional regulation regarding department variable

Dimension	Age	n	\bar{x}	Source of the Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Average of Squares	F
Emotional regulation	1. Class T.	62	30.48	Between Groups	212.47	3	70.83	2.42
	2. Social Studies	58	28.47					
	3. Preschool T.	124	30.60	In-Group	9214.27	315	29.25	
	4. Science	75	29.52	Total	9426.75	318		

In Table 9, it was seen that there was no significant difference between university students' emotional regulation levels regarding department variable ($F(3, 315) = 2.42, p > .05$). In other words, the emotional understanding levels of students pursuing their education in classroom teaching, social studies teaching, preschool teaching and science teaching are similar.

Table 10. Examination of communication skills regarding department variable

Dimension	Age	n	\bar{x}	Source of the Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Average of Squares	F
Communication Skills	1. Class T.	62	155.94	Between Groups	426.39	3	142.31	1.07
	2. Social Studies	58	153.17					
	3. Preschool T.	124	156.26	In-Group	42052.88	315	133.50	
	4. Science	75	154.72	Total	42479.27	318		

In Table 10 it is seen that there is no significant difference between university students' communication skills regarding department variable ($F(3, 315) = 1.07, p > .05$). In other words, communication skills of students who pursue their education in classroom teaching, social studies teaching, preschool teaching and science teaching are similar.

4. Discussion

In this study, the relationship between teacher candidates' emotional intelligence levels and communication skills was examined. It was examined whether there was a significant difference between teacher candidates' emotional intelligence and communication skills, depending on gender and the departments they studied at. It is observed that there are low levels of positive relationship between teacher candidates' communication skills and their emotional intelligence levels. In their research, Çetinkaya and Alparslan (2011) examined the effect of Applied Technology and Management College students' emotional intelligence on their communication skills. Likewise, they concluded that there was a positively significant relation between the sub-dimensions of emotional intelligence and sub-dimensions of communication skill. In the study conducted by Özer, Gün and Düzen (2018) it was determined that emotional intelligence has an influence on communication skills regarding nursing students. In their research, Marzuki, Mustaffa and Saad (2015) concluded that there is a positive relation between emotional intelligence and communication skills. The study also determined that students with high emotional intelligence would be better in communication skills.

According to Jadhav and Gupta (2014), emotional intelligence helps one to communicate better. In their research, Sinha and Sinha (2007) maintained that emotional intelligence is the key to efficient communication. They also emphasized that the two are interwoven in an unorganized fashion. Emotional intelligence is a must for any kind of efficient communication to take place.

The key factors which form a bond between emotional intelligence and communication skills as empathy, adaptability, positive thinking, good interpersonal skills, group behavior, problem solving, decision making abilities etc., are surveyed and the analysis shows that many communication skills effectiveness factors depend on emotional intelligence (Lakshmi, 2016).

In this research, it was determined that university students' emotional understanding, facilitation and regulation levels did not differ significantly regarding gender variable. It was seen that there was no significant difference between university students' communication skills regarding gender. It was determined that university students' emotional understanding, facilitation and regulation levels did not differ significantly regarding the department variable. It was also seen that there was no significant difference between university students' communication skills depending on the department variable. Yousefi (2006) examined the relation between emotional intelligence and communication skills on a group of Iranian students. Likewise, it was found that emotional intelligence was positively related to communication skills and that gender differences were not significant regarding emotional intelligence and communication skills.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Low level of positively oriented relations is observed between the teacher candidates' communication skills and their emotional intelligence levels. No significant difference was found between teacher candidates' emotional intelligence levels and communication skills regarding gender and department variables. However, the strong relation between emotional intelligence and communication was emphasized in the articles on this topic. From this point forth, it is thought that there should be courses and applications aimed at improving teacher candidates' emotional intelligence and communication skills. Qualitative researches may also be performed in order to obtain detailed information regarding their communication skills and emotional intelligence.

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