



## STUDENTS' COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN THE SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS\*

Hamza Ali GÖKALP\*

Ahmet Haktan SİVRİKAYA\*\*

### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the communication skills of students in the School of Physical Education and Sports. This study is cross-sectional type. Population of the study composed of 500 students and entire population composed of 406 students. The independent variables were age, gender, department, grade, doing sports, maternal and paternal educational levels, whether the mother is the biological mother or not, and mother is alive or not, dependent variable was communication skill levels. In the study, socio-demographic characteristics and communication skills evaluation scale was used. Numbers, percentage, ANOVA, t-Test were used to evaluate the data. The participants, 57.6% were male, 57.1% were between 21-23 years old, 24.9% were seniors, 31.3% were in the teacher training department, 11.8% were doing sports. The students' mean scale score was 100.01±14.24. Statistically significant differences in communication skill levels were found between students in the sports management department who are licensed and doing sports regularly, and whose mothers are biological mothers and alive. The students' communication skill levels were high. The females' mean communication skills score was higher than male students. The communication skills of students whose mothers were alive and their biological mothers and who were doing sports were higher.

**Keywords:** Communication, Communication Skills, University Students, Physical Education, Sports.

### 1. Introduction

Sports is a rich and unique context in which to study the basic and applied nature of a variety of social dynamics. Issues such as leadership, collective efficacy, team cohesion and group goal setting undoubtedly have great theoretical and practical value for sports teams. These issues all rely on one social process that may be the most important component of intra-team interactions. This process is communication, and for some reason, it has been continually unrecognized and neglected in sports psychology research (Sullivan & Feltz, 2003). Teachers, coaches, managers, students, and athletes who take part in sports that require personal communication need to know and implement communication skills to establish, strengthen, and maintain good communication with each other. Individuals learn effective communication skills and use them in their lives by seeing, hearing and experiencing situations in team and individual sports (Güler, 1990). Effective communication occurs when team members listen to one another and attempt to build on each other's contributions. In team situations when a disagreement is likely to occur, the ability to recognize and resolve conflict is important for success. The creation of feelings of trust, respect, and understanding are key elements in team development (Sullivan 1993). A prerequisite for achieving team coordination is effective communication between team members, including coaches, about game plans and the roles and responsibilities of team members (Eccles & Tran, 2012). Some female participants believed communicating was more difficult because their coach was a male. One female athlete said: "Last year, we had two female coaches, and talking was easier. This year, we had a male coach, and there were really big changes. Personally, I think there is a difference between males and females in sports. With [name of coach], we could only talk about soccer. On the other hand, with the girls, we could let loose on certain things" (Camire, Trudel & Forneris, 2009). Communication is correlated to the effectiveness and efficiency of any sports team function due to its informative, motivational and evaluative role. Coaching, teaching, evaluating and decision making are very important activities, especially when attempting to help players to enjoy mastering new skills, compete with others and feel good. In small group communication, every person can participate actively with other members, so that whatever their makeup, small groups process characteristics that are not present in a dyad (Athanasios, 2005). Communication is the verbal or nonverbal transfer of information, ideas and feelings from one individual to another or from one group to another (Küçükahmet, 2009). In order to be able to communicate there is a need to meet at a mid-point, which, to a great extent, is realized in the first moments of the communication.

\* This article is derived from the thesis titled D Communication Skills of Physical Education and Sports College Students Opened Different Variables den in the Department of Physical Education and Sports in Balıkesir University Health Sciences Institute in 2017.

\* Student, Institute of Health Sciences, Celal Bayar University, aligokalp89@gmail.com

\*\* Asst. Prof., Department of Teaching Physical Education, School of Physical Education and Sports, sivrikaya@balikesir.edu.tr



Various elements affect communication, including the signs that the communicator uses, word selection and the surrounding environment. These elements are realized at the beginning of the communication process and start the interaction (Baltaş et al., 2007). When there is a lack of good communication, people may feel isolated, like outsiders, or they may consider themselves unsuccessful in professional terms. If interpersonal skills are not learned, productivity and satisfaction, which are important for relationships, may be lost (Johnson, 1993). The concept of communication needs to be investigated from the perspective of values in sports performance. The use of effective communication skills is an important factor that increases both athletes' performance and team performance (Abakay & Kuru, 2013). In all occupations, a certain level of communication skills is important. In certain occupational groups, it is more important because their work is mainly based on relations between people (Dilekman et al., 2008). Communication is quite important in occupations with human relations at the forefront but has less importance in technical occupations that do not require skill in human relations. In this respect, it is quite natural that people in different occupations have different communication skills (Akyurt et al., 2009). The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that affect the communication skills of the students in the School of Physical Education and Sports at Balıkesir University.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This cross-sectional study was conducted by means of face-to-face interviews with students in the School of Physical Education and Sports at Balıkesir University from January to June 2016.

### Study Group

The population of this study was the students in the School of Physical Education and Sports at Balıkesir University (n=500) in the 2015-2016 academic year. Balıkesir University is in northwestern Turkey. The research targeted the entire population without selecting a sample. Students who did not agree to participate in the study or skipped some survey items were excluded from the study (94 students, 18.8%), and the study was completed with 406 (81.2%) students.

### Dependent and Independent Variables

The independent variables of this study were age, gender, department, level of income, doing sports, maternal and paternal levels of education, whether the mother is the biological mother or not, and whether the mother is alive or not. Its dependent variable was communication skills.

### Procedures

The research data was collected using a socio-demographic characteristics form and the Evaluation of the Communication Skills Scale. The socio-demographic characteristics form asked the questions about age, gender, department, year of study, level of income, doing sports, maternal and paternal education levels, whether the mother is the biological mother or not, and whether father is the biological father or not.

The Evaluation of the Communication Skills Scale (ECSS): This scale's validity and reliability study were done by Korkut (1996). It is a 5-point Likert-type scale with 25 items. The responses are: (5) always, (4) frequently, (3) sometimes, (2) rarely, and (1) never. No reverse coded items are included in the scale. The highest possible score is 125, and the lowest is 25. High scores indicate better communication skills. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.80. In this study, it was 0.86.

### Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS 20.0. The descriptive findings were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The relationship between the dependent variable and socio-demographic variables were analyzed using the t-test, and the relationships between more than two groups were analyzed using ANOVA. The threshold for statistical significance was  $p < 0.05$ .

### Ethical Approval

In order to conduct the study, written and verbal consent was obtained from the administration of the School of Physical Education and Sports.



### 3. Results

**Table 1:** The Descriptive Characteristics of the Participants (n=406)

Variables		n	%
Gender	Female	172	42.4
	Male	234	57.6
Age	18-20	83	20.4
	21-23	232	57.1
	24-26	77	19.0
	27 +	14	3.5
Class	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	110	27.1
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	97	23.9
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	98	24.1
	4 <sup>th</sup> Year	101	24.9
Department	Coaching	138	34.0
	Management	141	34.7
	Teaching	127	31.3
Doing Sports	No	79	19.5
	Yes	48	11.8
	Licensed	162	39.9
	No Licensed	117	28.8
Mother education	Not literate	42	10,3
	Literate	15	3,7
	Primary school	151	37,2
	Middle School	76	18,7
	High school	97	23,9
	University	25	6,2
Father education	Not literate	5	1.2
	Literate	16	3.9
	Primary school	114	28.1
	Middle School	81	20.0
	High school	130	32.0
	University	60	14.8
Whether the Mother is Biological Mother or Not	Biological	402	99.0
	MotherStep	4	1.00
	Mother		
Whether the Mother is Alive or Not	Alive	397	97.8
	Deceased	5	1.2
	Separated	2	0.5
	Divorced	2	0.5

Table 1 shows that, of the participants, 42.4% were females, 57.6% were males, and 20.4% were between the ages of 18 and 20. Of them, 57.1% were between the ages of 21-23, 19% were between the ages of 24 and 26, and 3.5% were 27 and above. Of the participants, 27.1% were freshmen, 23.9% were sophomores, 24.1% were juniors, and 24.9% were seniors. Of them, 34% were in the department of coaching education, 34.7% were in the department of sports management, and 31.3% were in the department of teaching. Of the participants, 19.5% were not doing sports, 11.8% were doing sports, 39.9% were licensed athletes, and 28.8% did not have licenses. Of the participants' mothers, 10.3% were not literate, 3.7% were literate, 37.2% had completed primary school, and 32% were high school graduates. Of them, 99% were biological mothers, 1% were step-mothers, 97.8% were alive, and 1.2% were deceased. Of the participants' fathers, 1.2% were not literate, 39% were literate, 32% were high school graduates.

**Table 2:** The Mean Scores of Evaluation of the Communication Skills Scale According to the Variables (n=406)

Variables	N	X	SS	Test Value	P
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	172	101.30	13.84	t=0.80	0.37
Male	234	99.05	14.48		
<b>Age</b>					
18-20	83	101.84	13.31	F=0.89	0.44
21-23	232	99.98	14.33		



24-26	77	98.14	14.52		
27+	14	99.92	16.69		
<b>Department</b>					
Coaching	138	97.88	15.04		
Management	141	<b>103.78</b>	<b>13.04</b>	F=7.82	<b>.000</b>
Teaching	127	98.14	13.87		
<b>Year of Study</b>					
1 <sup>st</sup> Year	110	102.16	12.65		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	97	100.78	13.34	F=2.17	0.090
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	98	97.29	16.30		
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	101	99.56	14.32		
<b>Doing Sports</b>					
No	79	95.70	14.62		
Yes (School Team)	48	100.31	12.00		
Yes (Licensed)	162	<b>101.29</b>	<b>14.46</b>	F=3.09	<b>0.027</b>
Yes (On certain days)	117	101.02	14.13		
<b>Whether the Mother is Biological Mother or Not</b>					
Biological Mother	402	<b>100.16</b>	<b>14.07</b>	t=4.52	<b>0.034</b>
Step Mother	4	85.00	24.85		
<b>Whether the Mother is Alive or Not</b>					
Alive	397	<b>100.25</b>	<b>13.99</b>		
Deceased	5	90.80	26.15	F=2.91	<b>0.034</b>
Separated	2	74.50	10.60		
Divorced	2	100	.70		

Table 2 shows that female students' mean communication skills score was (101.30±13.84), and the male students' mean communication skills score was (99.05±14.48). All the students' mean scale score was (100.01±14.24). Table 2 shows that there was no statistically significant difference in communication skill levels by gender or age (t:0.80 and P: 0.37), (F: 0.89 and P: 0.44). A statistically significant difference was found by department (p<0.05). The post hoc test found that this difference stemmed from the students in the department of management (F:7.82 and P: 0.00).

There was no statistically significant difference in the students' communication skill levels by year of study (F: 2.17 and P: 0.09). A statistically significant difference was found by involvement in sports (p<0.05). The post hoc test found that this difference was stemmed from the licensed students (F: 3.09 and P: 0.027). The biological mother variable made a statistically significant difference in the students' communication skills. The post hoc test found that this difference was stemmed from the students raised by their biological mothers (F: 4.52 and P: 0.034). A statistically significant difference was found in communication skills levels according to the living mothers variable (p<0.05). The post hoc test showed that this difference stemmed from the mothers' who were alive (F: 2.91 and P: 0.034).

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusions



This study found that the students' mean communication skills score was high (100.01±14.24). Tepeköyü et al. (2009) found that students in a school of physical education and sports had high ECSS scores (Bingöl&Demir 2011). A study with students in a faculty of education found high communication skill scores (Korkut 1997). In a study conducted with the students at Amasya School of Health, the ECSS mean scores of the students were quite high at 102.69 (Bingöl&Demir, 2011). Studies by Tutuk et al. (2002) with nursing students and Pehlivan (2005) with classroom teaching department students found high mean ECSS scores as well (Bingöl&Demir 2011).

This study found that the female students had a higher mean ECSS score than the male students. In a study conducted with students in a faculty of education, the mean score of the female students was higher than that of the male students (Korkut, 1997). A study with pre-service teachers by Pehlivan (2005) found that the female students had a higher mean communication skills score than the male students. In a study conducted with the faculty of education students, there was no significant difference between gender and communication skills (Dilekman et al., 2008). Bingöl and Demir (2011) found that the mean ECSS score of female students was higher than the males' mean scores, but this finding was not statistically significant.

This study found no statistically significant difference in ECSS scores by age. Bozkurt et al. (2003) investigated the problem-solving and communication skills of primary school teachers and found no statistically significant difference by age. However, Görür (2001) found a statistically significant difference in his study of teenagers and adults.

This study found a statistically significant difference in ECSS scores by department. The post hoc test found that this difference stemmed from the sports management department. The importance of communication in management can be expressed: "If you cannot communicate, you cannot be a manager" (Fidan&Küçükali, 2014). The students in the department of management have a higher level of communication because of both their athletic identity and their management science classes. In addition, they can also become teachers after taking pedagogical classes as well. This difference with other departments may be because they graduate as both teachers and managers. Bingöl and Demir (2011) found that midwifery department students had the highest mean ECSS score at 104.33, and this result was statistically significant ( $p < 0.005$ ). Tepeköylü et al. (2009) in their study, they found no statistically significant difference in the communication skill levels of students in a school of physical education and sports by department (Bingöl&Demir, 2011).

This study found no statistically significant difference in ECSS scores by year of study. Korkut (1997) also found no significant difference by year of study in a faculty of education. In a study with the pre-service classroom teachers, Pehlivan (2005) found that communication skills gradually increased from the first year of study to the fourth and a statistically significant difference in favor of the fourth year students.

This study found a statistically significant difference in ECSS scores by involvement in sports. The post hoc test determined that it was due to the licensed students. Another study found that individuals who do sports are more sociable, courageous, respectful, friendly and more experienced with social relationships than others (Çamlıyer, 1984). Another study of physical education teachers found that they were more comfortable in social environments, self-confident, empathetic, affected by incidents, sympathetic and open to communication (Avşar, 2004). Yet another study found that individuals who are interested in sports are more willing to communicate and have better communication skills than people who are not; and that skills and experiences from sports influence our lives (Özerkan, 2005).

This study found a statistically significant difference in ECSS scores by the biological mother variable due to the participants whose mothers were their biological mothers. Family is the first and most important place to socialize in human life. The cultural behaviors of children are formed according to parental guidance and expectations. Many studies have found that, along with physical education, sports teachers, friends and social environment, families also directly influence children's interest in sports. In this respect, having a biological mother who is alive is quite important in a child's life in terms of communication (Yetim, 2010). Research has shown that supportive parents and coaches positively influence youth development. A recent study conducted with junior tennis coaches suggests that parents who provide logistical, financial, social and emotional support can positively influence their children's development (Gould et al., 2006). Côté (1999) has shown that successful elite athletes generally have parents who support their sports endeavors during adolescence.

In this study, the communication skill scores of the students were high. The communication skills mean score of the female students was higher than the male students' mean score. The students in the department of sports management had higher communication skill mean scores than the students in other



departments. The students who are licensed and do sports regularly had higher communication skill mean scores. Having a living biological mother made a statistically significant difference in the students' levels of communication skills. This study found no statistically significant differences in ECSS scores by gender, age or year of study.

Another study examined the effects of sports and academic success on the communication skills of students in a school of physical education and sports. It found that putting communication skills in curricula by means of homework, courses, group work and project work in each stage of education may be helpful.

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