

The Relationship Between the Emotional Literacy Skills and Communication Skills of Pre-Service Turkish Teachers

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Abstract

The aim of the current study is to determine the relationship between the emotional literacy skills and communication skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers. The population of the study employing the relational survey model based on descriptive model, is comprised of 249 pre-service teachers attending the Department of Turkish Teaching in Mugla Sıtkı Kocman University while the sample is comprised of 196 pre-service teachers who could be reached from the population without any sampling. As the data collection tools, a personal information form, the “Emotional Literacy Skills Scale (ELSS)” and the “Communication Skills Evaluation Scale” were used. In order to determine the emotional literacy and communication skills of the pre-service teachers, t-test was used in binary comparisons, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for comparisons having more than two dimensions. Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the relationship between the levels of emotional literacy skills and communication skills of the pre-service teachers. In the analysis of the collected data, descriptive statistics such as arithmetic means and standard deviations were used. As a result of the study, it was concluded that the levels of the emotional literacy skills and communication skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers are high. The pre-service teachers’ emotional literacy skills and communication skills were found to be varying significantly depending on gender in favour of the female pre-service teachers, yet, they were found to be not varying significantly depending on grade level. It was also found that with the increasing level of emotional literacy skills, the pre-service teachers’ level of communication skills also increased and that there is a positive, medium and significant correlation between their emotional literacy skills and communication skills.

Keywords: Emotional Literacy, Communication Skill, Pre-service Turkish Teachers

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INTRODUCTION

The characteristics and skills a teacher possesses have a significant impact on students' academic achievement as well as their behaviours and personality development. In this regard, communication skills are of great importance. The communication process of the child, which begins in the family, continues and develops more actively in formal education. According to Çetinkaya (2011), "when the education and training environment is considered, it is seen that one of the basic elements of the communication process is the teacher. Teachers have an impact on the development of human communication. The person who initiates the communication in the learning process, in other words, the source, is mostly the teacher." The teaching-learning process is an act of communication and the teacher is one of the two basic factors of communication in the educational process. On the other hand, teachers design, organize and implement content related to the development of communication skills and evaluate its effects on students (Muste, 2016). Therefore, one of the important factors determining the quality of the communication process and the development of students' communication skills is the communication skills of teachers. Training social and self-confident individuals who are in harmony with the society they live in, who can establish meaningful relationships with their environment, is only possible with teachers who have effective communication skills. When the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that teachers and pre-service teachers' communication skills are significantly correlated with their problem-solving skills (Nacar & Tümkaya, 2011; Piji-Küçük, 2012, Saracaloğlu et al., 2009; Yılmaz, 2011), questioning skills (Bakır, 2019), empathy skills (Baydar-Posluoğlu, 2014; Gönönü-Kurt, 2019; Özgökman, 2019; Sarıkaya & Şakiroğlu, 2019) and emotional intelligence (Gürşimşek et al., 2008; Şenol et al., 2019).

A teacher who can communicate effectively can use his/her language skills well so that he/she can transmit his/her knowledge to students in an easy, understandable and permanent way. Accordingly, the communication skills of the teacher affect both his/her own professional success and the academic achievement of his/her students. Studies show that the communication skill of the teacher in the classroom has a direct effect on students' academic achievement (Asrar et al., 2018; Duta et al., 2016; Khan et al., 2017; Pektaş, 1989). In addition to increasing academic achievement, the communication skills of the teacher have an important role in classroom management, problem-solving, preventing communication problems, increasing student motivation and creating a positive classroom atmosphere. Bee (2012) argues that effective communication skills are very important for a teacher in terms of transferring information, classroom management and providing in-class communication with students (as cited in Khan et al., 2017). In the study conducted by Aküzüm & Gültekin (2017), it was found that there was a positive and significant relationship between the communication skills of primary school teachers and their classroom management skills, and it was concluded that the increase or decrease in the communication skills of teachers could affect their classroom management skills in the same direction. In the studies conducted by Ceylan (2007) and Şeker (2000), it was observed that primary school teachers with high communication skills were more effective in creating a positive classroom atmosphere. According to Jones and Jones (2001), "in a classroom where there is no effective communication, all attempts to create a positive learning environment will be ineffective and the intended effects of these attempts will be short-lived. Effective communication helps to establish more natural and sincere relationships with students. At the same time, it ensures that learning-teaching activities are meaningful, enjoyable and satisfying." (as cited in Lokman, 2014).

Communication is a multi-faceted process that includes many different skills such as body language, sensitivity to verbal and non-verbal messages, empathy, and emotional literacy, as well as language skills such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It also forms the basis of the social skills required to establish healthy relationships in the society. According to Yüksel (2001), among the social skills that effective teachers should have, there are skills such as clarity in communication, being able to thoroughly explain their feelings and thoughts, communicating well with students and other staff, and being affectively and socially sensitive. The basic skills required for establishing clear and effective student-teacher communication are explained as follows (Emer et al., 2003, as cited in Çubukçu & Girmen, 2008; Kısaç, 2017).

- Non-authoritative structure: It includes presenting the problem clearly, using a clear body language, and explaining the appropriate behaviour regarding the solution of the problem.
- Empathic responsibility: It includes showing students that they can look at events from their own perspectives.
- Problem-solving: The problem-solving process involves conflict resolution. The conflicts that develop between the teacher and the student arise from the differences in roles, needs, interests, and individual goals.
- The ability to be open and transparent: Teachers clearly reveal their feelings about events occurring in the classroom.
- Speaking and transmission skills: They refer to providing feedback on students' academic performance and using communication skills well.
- Receiving and listening skills: In communication, the teacher knows how to listen and what to pay attention to while listening.

Effective communication requires the use of these different skills as a whole and in the best way possible. In recent years, with individual differences and emotional intelligence coming to the fore in education, “emotional literacy”, one of the skills required for effective communication, has gained importance. The concept of emotional literacy, which is based on defining, understanding, interpreting and expressing emotions correctly, was first used by Steiner (1979). According to Steiner (2003/2014), emotional literacy means knowing one's feelings in a way that improves one's own personal power, quality of life, as well as the quality of life of the people around him/her. Emotional literacy is not only the unfolding of emotions, but also learning to understand, control and manage emotions. While Joseph et al. (2005) explain emotional literacy as “the ability of the individual to correctly and accurately describe, understand and respond to the emotions of himself/herself and others he/she communicates with” (as cited in Kuru-Şevik, 2020), Sharp and Herrick (2000) define it as “the ability to recognize, understand and express emotions appropriately” (as cited in Mader, 2005). When different definitions made are examined, it is seen that emotional literacy generally includes the skills of the individual necessary to understand, describe, interpret and express his/her own emotions and those of others around him/her and to develop appropriate responses and behaviours to all these emotions. According to Zeidner et al. (2009), emotional literacy includes four skills that can be defined as “perceiving a person's emotions from his/her gestures, body language, voice pitch and speech rhythm”, “understanding the premises and consequences of emotions”, “facilitating thought by awakening certain emotions”, “regulating negative emotions such as anger and sadness” (as cited in Lee, 2016). Suhaily & Tiah (2005) state that emotional literacy is the sum of skills such as “empathy, emotional awareness, self-motivation, social and self-regulation skills” (as cited in Malkoç & Aydın-Sünbül, 2020). According to Faupel (2003), who developed an emotional literacy model, emotional literacy includes “self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social competence and social skills” (as cited in Coşkun & Öksüz, 2019).

According to Steiner (2003), who developed the “Heart-Centred Emotional Literacy” theory and emotional literacy education, emotional literacy includes the following five basic skills” (as cited in Mader, 2005):

1. Recognizing our own emotions: The individual can define his/her emotions and the reasons that trigger these emotions. Also, he/she can describe the strength of the emotions felt.
2. Having a sense of empathy: The individual can recognize the emotions of others, understand how strong their emotions are and what the causes of these emotions are.

3. Learning to manage our emotions: The individual keeps his/her emotions under control. He/she knows when and how to explain his/her emotions, and how his/her emotions will affect others. He/she can express positive and negative emotions in a harmless and effective way.
4. Repairing emotional damage: The individual knows how to apologize and fix his/her mistake. He/she can take responsibility for his/her actions, demand forgiveness, and compensate for his/her mistakes.
5. Practicing emotional literacy as a whole: The individual has developed an emotional interaction through which he/she can adapt to the emotions of the people around him/her, feel their emotional state and communicate with them in a beneficial way.

In many countries around the world, emotional literacy education is included in the curriculum and studies are carried out to develop emotional literacy in the school environment. Emotional literacy education is not included in elementary, secondary and higher education curricula in Turkey. When the literature is reviewed, it is seen that there are a limited number of empirical studies on emotional literacy. In the study conducted by Coşkun & Öksüz (2019), an emotional literacy program was developed and it was observed that this program was effective in increasing the emotional intelligence performance of 10-year-old primary school students. In another study conducted by Öksüz (2006), it was concluded that emotional literacy activities applied to primary school 4th grade students for two months made positive social and emotional changes on students. In the study conducted by Tuyan (2003), an in-service training program was prepared and implemented to improve the emotional literacy skills of English teachers.

The goal of emotional literacy education is to help people work collaboratively, without directing or forcing them, to connect them to each other using empathic feelings and to enrich the quality of living together (Steiner, 2003/2014). The goal of emotional literacy education in the school environment is to help all students learn and mature by giving them the opportunity to think about the emotions they experience in the classroom. In this environment, answers can be sought for questions such as “How do emotions affect students’ listening, thinking and problem-solving capacity?”, “What can be done to improve this capacity at emotional level?”, “What can be done to help them deal with the emotions that hinder their learning?” and in this connection, conducting practices to explore the emotional dynamics in the class and school can be useful for both teachers and students (Park et al., 2003).

Emotional literacy education includes every member of the school and education, including students, teachers, other staff and parents. Undoubtedly, the teachers who communicate most with students have an important role in the development of emotional literacy. According to Goleman (1995), “the emotionally literate teacher is the one who knows the relationship between thoughts and reactions, enables students to control and manage their emotions, finds ways to cope with fear, anxiety, anger and sadness, is good at communicating, has the ability to build trust, trusts others while trying to understand their feelings and anxieties, and as a result, has highly developed emotional awareness.” (as cited in Tuyan, 2013).

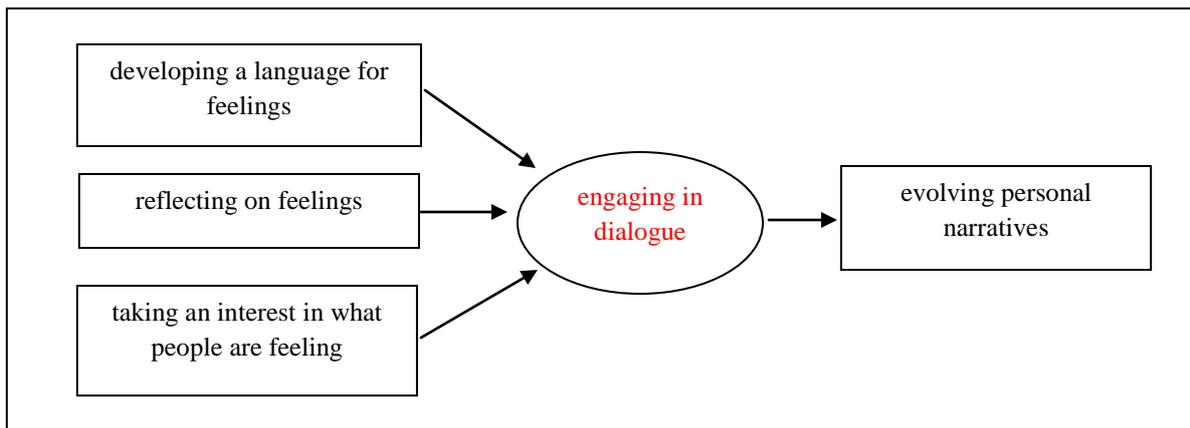


Figure 1. The things that should be done for an emotionally literate school environment (Park et al., 2003)

Figure 1 shows the expected behaviours from students and teachers to create an emotionally literate school environment. Park et al. (2003) explain these behaviours as follows:

- Developing a language for feelings: Developing a language to put their feelings into words
- Reflecting on feelings: Creating a space to discover your own emotions and how these emotions are shaped according to the situation.
- Taking an interest in what people are feeling: Asking other people what they feel so they can compare different experiences with their own.
- Engaging in dialogue: Reciprocal talk about one's own thoughts and feelings.
- Evolving personal narratives: Creating a personal narrative out of everything they have learned about themselves that allows them to experience their lives meaningfully.

Communication skills have an important role in the accomplishment of all these behaviours listed above. It is necessary to have effective communication skills in order to listen and understand others, gain sensitivity to understand their feelings and thoughts by empathizing, as well as to express one's own feelings, thoughts and attitudes in an understandable and acceptable way. Turkish is the course where communication skills are used the most as it is the course in which listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are taught and developed. Correspondingly, Turkish teachers are expected to have these skills in order to improve students' communication skills and emotional literacy. In this respect, it is important to train teachers who are social, self-confident, able to establish meaningful relationships with their environment and actualize themselves, recognize and manage their emotions, develop awareness of their own emotions and the emotions of others, self-motivate, and effectively cope with communication problems.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are various studies examining the emotional literacy skills and communication skills of people in different professions and pre-service teachers in different branches. However, there is no study directly focused on both pre-service Turkish teachers and evaluation of the relationship between these two sets of skills. Therefore, it is thought that the data obtained by evaluating the emotional literacy skills and communication skills of pre-service teachers will contribute to the literature. In order to develop emotional literacy and communication skills in the school environment and to organize the curriculum in this direction, it is necessary to know the extent to which these skills are possessed by teachers. Another factor that makes the study important is that the communication skills of pre-service Turkish teachers may have an effect on the

process of increasing their emotional literacy. In this regard, the aim of the current study is to determine the relationship between the emotional literacy skills and communication skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers. To this end, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What is the pre-service Turkish teachers' level of emotional literacy skills and communication skills?
2. Do the pre-service Turkish teachers' emotional intelligence skills and communication skills vary significantly depending on gender and grade level?
3. Is there a significant correlation between the pre-service Turkish teachers' emotional literacy skills and communication skills?

METHOD

In this section of the study, information about the research model, population and sample, data collection tools and statistical techniques used to analyse the data is presented.

Research Model

In the current study investigating the relationship between the pre-service Turkish teachers' emotional literacy skills and communication skills, the relational survey model based on descriptive model, was used. The relational survey model is a survey method used to determine the existence of covariance between two or more variables. In the relational survey model, it is attempted to determine whether the variables covary and if yes, then the extent of this covariance (Karasar, 2011).

Population-Sample

The population of the study is comprised of 249 pre-service Turkish teachers attending the Education Faculty of Mugla Sitki Kocman University in the fall term of the 2018-2019 academic year. As it was seen to be possible to reach the whole population, it was not attempted to construct a sample; yet, a total of 210 pre-service teachers could be administered the scale. After the exclusion of the scales which were found to be uncompleted or erroneously completed, the analyses were conducted on the data collected from a total of 196 pre-service Turkish teachers. The complete response rate of the scales applied by the students was 93.3%. Descriptive features of the pre-service Turkish teachers participating in the current study are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive features of the participating pre-service Turkish teachers

Variables	Groups	n	%
Gender	Female	108	55.1
	Male	88	44.9
	Total	196	100
Grade Level	1	54	27.6
	2	51	26
	3	51	26
	4	40	20.4
	Total	196	100

As can be seen in Table 1, of the participating 196 pre-service Turkish teachers, 108 (55.1%) are females and 88 (44.9%) are males. On the other hand, 54 of them are first grade students (27.6%), 51 are second grade students (26%), 51 are third grade students (26%) and 40 are fourth grade students (20.4%).

Data Collection Tools

In the current study, the “Emotional Literacy Skills Scale (ELSS)” and “Communication Skills Evaluation Scale (CSES)” were used to determine the relationship between the emotional literacy skills and communication skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers.

The “Emotional Literacy Skills Scale (ELSS)” developed by Alemdar (2014) consists of 21 items (18 positive and 3 negative). The scale comprised of four sub-dimensions called “motivation”, “empathy”, “emotional awareness” and “social skills” can also be used as a single dimension scale and a total score can be taken from the whole scale. The scale items are designed as four-point Likert scale items that can be responded with one of the following response options; “1-It doesn’t suit me at all”, “2-It does not suit me”, “3-It suits me” and “4-It thoroughly suits me”. A total score in the range of 21-42 points from the Emotional Literacy Skills Scale indicates a “low level”, a total score in the range of 43-64 points indicates a “medium level” and a score in the range of 65-84 points indicates a “high level” (Alemdar, 2014). The Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was calculated to be .70 for the first factor, .71 for the second factor, .55 for the third factor and .40 for the fourth factor and the Cronbach Alpha value calculated for the whole scale is .78. In the current study, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was calculated to be .89 for the whole scale. Considering the aims of the current study, while evaluating the relationship between the pre-service Turkish teachers’ emotional literacy skills and communication skills, no evaluation was made on the basis of the sub-dimensions. In the analysis of the pre-service teachers’ emotional literacy skills, the total score taken from the whole scale was used.

The “Communication Skills Evaluation Scale (CSES)” was developed by Korkut (1996). The scale designed in the five-point Likert scale type consists of 25 items gathered under a single factor. The scale items can be responded with one of the following response options; “5-Always”, “4-Frequently”, “3-Sometimes”, “2-Rarely”, “1-Never”. Korkut (2005) later structured the scale scored between 0 and 4 in his first study in such a way as to be scored between 1 and 5. The highest score to be taken from the scale is 125 while the smallest score to be taken is 0. Higher scores taken from the scale having no reversely coded items indicate that the respondent perceive himself/herself successful in communication skills (Korkut, 1996). The test-retest reliability of the scale was calculated to be .76. In the current study, the reliability of the scale was recalculated and the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .80.

Data Collection

The data of this research were collected face to face by the researcher from a total of 196 students studying at Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Faculty of Education, Department of Turkish Education in the fall semester of the 2018-2019 academic year. In this research, the answers of the students to the scale were made on a voluntary basis. The scale used in the research was distributed to the students and they were asked to fill in the scale completely, and the completed scales were analysed by the researchers using the SPSS-15 statistical program for analysis.

Data Analysis

In the calculation of the sample size of the current study conducted to investigate the relationship between the emotional literacy skills and communication skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers, power was determined to be at least 80% for each variable and first-type error was determined to be 5%. In order to determine whether the pre-service teachers’ emotional literacy skills and communication skills scores were distributed normally, Kolmogorov-Smirnov ($n > 50$) and Skewness-Kurtosis tests were run (Table 2).

Table 2. Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Skewness-Kurtosis Tests Results of the Emotional Literacy Skills Scale and Communication Skills Evaluation Scale

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Skewness-Statistic	Kurtosis Statistic
	Statistic	df	p		
Emotional Literacy Skills Scale	,078	196	,006	-,217	-,333
Communication Skills Evaluation Scale	,065	196	,041	-,393	-,286

As can be seen in Table 2, the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov ($n > 50$) test revealed that the communication skills scores were not distributed normally ($p < 0.05$). It was determined that the Skewness and Kurtosis values of the data obtained from the scales that did not show normal distribution according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov value ranged from -1.5 ile +1.5, and these data showed a normal distribution according to the classification of Tabachnick & Fidell (2013). However, as the Skewness and Kurtosis values were found to indicate a normal distribution ($\pm 1,5$), parametric tests were used in comparisons.

T-test was used in binary comparisons and one-way variance of analysis (ANOVA) was used in comparisons having more than two dimensions to determine the pre-service teachers' emotional literacy and communication skills. Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the relationship between the pre-service teachers' emotional literacy skills and communication skills. In the analysis of the data, descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, percentages and frequencies were used.

FINDINGS

In line with the aims of the current study, the pre-service Turkish teachers' emotional literacy skills and communication skills, whether these skills vary significantly depending on gender and grade level and the relationship between the pre-service teachers' emotional literacy skills and communication skills were investigated on the basis of the total scores taken from the scales.

In the determination of the pre-service Turkish teachers' emotional intelligence skills and communication skills, the Emotional Literacy Skills Scale and the Communication Skills Evaluation Scale were used. In Table 3, arithmetic means and standard deviations related to the pre-service Turkish teachers' emotional intelligence skills and communication skills are presented.

Table 3. Pre-service Turkish Teachers' Emotional Literacy Skills and Communication Skills

Scales	n	\bar{X}	sd
Emotional Literacy Skills Scale	196	65.99	7.71
Communication Skills Evaluation Scale	196	102.82	11.82

As can be seen in Table 3, the mean score taken from the Emotional Literacy Skills Scale by the pre-service Turkish teachers is 65.99. As this score is in the range of 65-84, it indicates a high level of possession of these skills; thus, it can be argued that the participating pre-service teachers have high levels of emotional literacy skills. The mean score taken from the Communication Skills Evaluation Scale was found to be 102.82. Thus, it can be argued that the pre-service Turkish teachers have high levels of communication skills.

Table 4. Comparison of the pre-service Turkish teachers' emotional literacy skills and communication skills according to gender

	Gender	n	\bar{X}	sd	p	Cohen's d
Emotional Literacy Skills Scale	Female	108	67.35	7.566	.006	.39
	Male	88	64.32	7.608		
Communication Skills Evaluation Scale	Female	108	104.76	10.985	.011	.36
	Male	88	100.44	12.414		

As can be seen in Table 4, the mean score taken from the Emotional Literacy Skills Scale by the female students (n=108) is 67.35 and that of the male students (n=88) is 64.32. On the other hand, the mean score that of the male students was found to be 100.44. Thus, the levels of both the emotional literacy skills and communication skills of the female students are higher than those of the male students. As a result of the independent samples t-test conducted to determine whether these differences are statistically significant, it was concluded that both the emotional literacy skills and communication skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers vary significantly depending on gender ($p=.006<.05$ and $p=.011<.05$). In order to determine the size of these differences, the effect size values were calculated with the “Cohen d” formula. According to the classification of Cohen (1988), $d\leq 0.2$ values reveal low effect size, $0.2<d<0.8$ values moderate, and $d\geq 0.8$ values reveal high effect size (as cited in Aydın, 2006). It is seen that the gender variable has a “moderate effect size” on both emotional literacy skills ($d=.39$) and communication skills ($d=.36$).

Table 5. Comparison of the pre-service Turkish teachers’ emotional literacy skills and communication skills according to grade level

	Grade Level	n	\bar{X}	sd	p
Emotional Literacy Skills Scale	1	54	66.57	7.239	.900
	2	51	66.12	7.740	
	3	51	65.59	8.053	
	4	40	65.55	8.095	
Communication Skills Evaluation Scale	1	54	103.56	9.836	.670
	2	51	103.86	11.659	
	3	51	101.22	13.202	
	4	40	102.82	12.776	

As can be seen in Table 5, the mean scores taken from both the Emotional Literacy Skills Scale and the Communication Skills Evaluation Scale by the first, second, third and fourth grade students are close to each other. As a result of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) conducted to determine whether the differences are statistically significant, it was concluded that the pre-service Turkish teachers’ emotional literacy skills and communication skills do not vary significantly depending on grade level ($p=.900>.05$ and $p=.670>.05$).

Table 6. The relationship between the emotional literacy skills and communication skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers

Scales		Emotional Literacy Skills Scale (n=196)	Communication Skills Evaluation Scale (n=196)
Emotional Literacy Skills Scale	Pearson Correlation	1	.643*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001**
Communication Skills Evaluation Scale	Pearson Correlation	.643*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001**	

*Low level correlation: 0.00-0.30; Medium level correlation: 0.31-0.69; High level correlation: 0.70-1.00 (Büyüköztürk et al., 2012).

**Significance: $p<.05$

As can be seen in Table 6, there is a positive, medium and significant correlation between the mean scores taken from the Emotional Literacy Skills Scale and the Communication Skills Evaluation Scale by the pre-service Turkish teachers ($r=.643$, $p<.05$). Thus, it can be argued that with improving emotional literacy skills of pre-service Turkish teachers, their communication skills also improve.

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Emotional literacy is based on the theory of “emotional intelligence”, which refers to the ability to process emotional information, and is still considered a new and evolving field today. Emotional literacy skills started to be gained in the family environment such as expressing emotions and understanding the emotions of others may vary depending on social and cultural characteristics.

The school environment, which requires students to use their communication skills actively, contributes significantly to the development of emotional literacy skills. The results of the current study conducted to determine the relationship between the emotional literacy skills and communication skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers were discussed within the context of the pre-service Turkish teachers' levels of emotional literacy skills and communication skills, whether these skills vary significantly depending on gender and grade level and the relationship between their emotional literacy skills and communication skills.

As a result of the current study, it was determined that the pre-service Turkish teachers have high levels of emotional literacy skills. This result concurs with the findings of other studies conducted on pre-service teachers' emotional literacy skills. While Özden et al. (2018) revealed that the pre-service teachers' emotional literacy skills are at high and medium levels, Akçin (2019) found that the pre-service pre-school teachers' levels of emotional literacy skills are above the average.

In the current study, the emotional literacy skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers were found to be varying significantly depending on gender in favour of the female students. Parallel to this finding, Eminoğlu-Küçüktepe et al. (2017) found a gender-based significant difference between the pre-service teachers' emotional literacy skills in favour of the female students. Alemdar (2014) also investigated the emotional literacy skills among high school students and found that the mean score of the female students is higher than that of the male students. In the study by Balta-Özkan (2019), it was also concluded that the emotional literacy skills of elementary and secondary school students vary significantly depending on gender in favour of the female students. On the other hand, Akçin (2019) and Özden et al. (2018) found that gender is not a factor significantly affecting pre-service teachers' emotional literacy skills. Similarly, Yazgılı (2019) reported that secondary school students' emotional literacy skills do not vary significantly by gender, which is explained by the author through the fact that secondary school students are still too young to allow differentiation in their emotional literacy skills.

Another finding of the current study is that the pre-service Turkish teachers' emotional literacy skills do not vary significantly depending on grade level. In similar studies conducted by Akçin (2019), Alemdar (2014) and Cesur et al. (2018), it was also found that emotional literacy skills do not vary significantly depending on grade level. These findings reported in the literature support the finding of the current study. On the other hand, Balta-Özkan (2019) and Yazgılı (2019) reported that emotional literacy skills of the elementary and secondary school students vary significantly depending on grade level. While the emotional literacy skills were found to be not varying significantly depending on grade level in the studies conducted on pre-service teachers, they were found to be varying significantly in the studies conducted on elementary and secondary school students. When the age and developmental characteristics are considered, elementary and secondary school students' emotional development is expected to vary more remarkably across the grade levels. On the other hand, the fact that the emotional literacy skills of pre-service teachers do not vary significantly depending on grade level can be seen as a result of not providing a planned and special education for the development of emotional literacy skills in education faculties. It can be expected that the emotional literacy skills of pre-service teachers will gradually improve with the preparation and implementation of training programs for the development of their emotional literacy skills.

Another finding of the current study is that the communication skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers are generally high. This finding concurs with the findings of other studies conducted to investigate the communication skills of pre-service teachers (Bakır, 2019; Maden, 2010; Sarıkaya & Şakiroğlu, 2019). The findings of the studies conducted by Gülbahar & Sıvacı (2018), Günönü-Kurt (2019), Kaya et al. (2019), Ocak & Erşen (2015), Piji-Küçük (2012), Uygun & Arıkan (2019), Yıldız & Kurtuldu (2016) on the communication skills of pre-service teachers from different branches show that the communication skills of the pre-service teachers are generally above the average and support the finding of the current study. In the study by Durukan & Maden (2010), it was observed that the communication skills of Turkish teachers are low.

The pre-service Turkish teachers' communication skills were found to be varying significantly depending on gender in favour of the female students. This might indicate that female pre-service teachers are more open to communication than male pre-service teachers. Parallel to this finding, Bakır (2019), Baki (2018), Çetinkaya (2011), Maden (2010), Sarıkaya & Şakiroğlu (2019) also found that pre-service Turkish teachers' communication skills vary significantly depending on gender. In the study of Kana (2015), although there was a significant difference in terms of gender, it was observed that the emotional communication skills of the male pre-service teachers were higher than those of the female pre-service teachers. Contrary to these results, Aptekin (2019) found that the communication skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers did not vary significantly depending on the gender variable. When studies conducted on teachers or pre-service teachers in other branches are examined, it is seen that different results are obtained in terms of gender variable. In their studies, Çuhadar et al. (2014), Kaya et al. (2019), Küpeli (2019), Milli & Yağcı (2016), Ocak & Erşen (2015), Uygun & Arıkan (2019), Yıldız & Kurtulmuş (2016), Yılmaz & Altunbaş (2012) revealed that the communication skills of teachers or pre-service teachers varied significantly by gender in favour of the female participants. Acar (2009), on the other hand, in his study, which examined the communication skills of pre-service primary school teachers, pre-service preschool teachers, pre-service social studies teachers, pre-service art teachers and pre-service Turkish teachers, found that the communication skills of the pre-service teachers did not vary significantly by gender. Similarly, in the studies conducted by Baydar-Posluoğlu (2011), Çiftçi & Taşkaya (2010), Gülbahar & Sıvacı (2018), Gülbahçe (2010), Günönü-Kurt (2019), Şenol et al. (2019), Tunçeli (2013), no gender-based significant difference was found in the communication skills of the teachers or pre-service teachers. Based on these and similar studies in the literature, it can be said that the communication skills of pre-service teachers cannot be generalized according to gender. In terms of professional competencies, teaching is a profession that requires both male and female teachers to have a high level of communication skills. Therefore, it is not desirable that pre-service teachers' communication skills vary significantly depending on gender.

Given that both content courses and elective courses can contribute to the development of communication skills, it is expected that the communication skills of pre-service Turkish teachers will gradually improve through the grade levels as a result of the education they have received for four years. Contrary to this expectation, it was determined in the current study that the communication skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers did not vary significantly depending on grade level. In the studies conducted by Aptekin (2019), Milli & Yağcı (2016), Sarıkaya & Şakiroğlu (2019), the communication skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers were also found to be not varying significantly depending on grade level. Contrary to these results, Bakır (2019), in his study examining the relationship between the communication skills and questioning skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers, concluded that the communication skills of the pre-service teachers varied significantly in favour of the fourth graders. In another study, Kana (2015) observed that the communication skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers varied significantly depending on grade level, but surprisingly, as the grade level increased, their communication skills decreased. When the studies examining the communication skills of pre-service teachers in other branches are examined, it is seen that there are different results obtained in relation to grade level. In the studies conducted by Ocak & Erşen (2015), Tepeli & Arı (2011) and Uygun & Arıkan (2019), it was determined that the communication skills of the pre-service teachers varied significantly depending on grade level, while Tunçeli (2013), Yıldız & Kurtulmuş (2016) reported opposite results in their studies.

As a result of the current study, it was determined that while the emotional literacy skills of the pre-service Turkish teachers improved, their communication skills improved as well and that there is a positive, medium and significant correlation between their emotional literacy skills and communication skills. This result can be interpreted as positive for pre-service Turkish teachers and may also indicate that individuals with improved emotional literacy skills also have improved communication skills. When the literature is examined, it is seen that various studies have been carried out separately addressing the emotional literacy skills and communication skills of different professional groups and pre-service teachers in different branches. However, there is no study directly focused on both pre-service Turkish teachers and evaluation of the relationship between these two sets of skills. In the study conducted by Cesur et al. (2018), similar to the results of the current study, it

was found that there is a positive and significant relationship between the emotional literacy skills and communication skills of nursing students.

In order to train students who can understand and manage their own and others' emotions, empathize, and have high level of emotional literacy and effective communication skills, teachers must first themselves have these skills. In the curriculum of education faculties, there are compulsory or elective courses to improve the communication skills of pre-service teachers, but there are no courses to improve their emotional literacy skills. The existence of a significant relationship between emotional literacy skills and communication skills of pre-service Turkish teachers indicates that these two skills can affect each other positively. Therefore, courses that will contribute to the development of emotional literacy skills should be included in the curriculum, as well as courses aimed at improving the communication skills of pre-service teachers. Thus, emotional literacy and communication skills can be developed simultaneously. In addition to the theoretical courses, story-based activities and creative drama applications that can increase the interaction and sharing of students and that can allow them to reflect their real-life situations and thus enable them to use their emotional literacy and communication skills more actively can be used.

According to the results of the current study, both the emotional literacy and communication skills of the female pre-service teachers are higher than those of the male pre-service teachers. Correspondingly, both in-class and extracurricular activities and projects can be developed to improve the emotional literacy and communication skills of male pre-service teachers. In order to develop pre-service teachers' emotional literacy and communication skills gradually through the grade levels, courses to improve these skills should be included at every grade level, and a planned education should be implemented taking into account the cognitive and affective characteristics of students. In the study conducted by Tuyan (2003), the Emotional Literacy Development Program was prepared and applied to English teachers, and it was observed that this in-service training increased the level of emotional literacy of the English teachers. Similarly, in-service training programs can be prepared for Turkish teachers to improve both their emotional literacy and communication skills.

This research was limited to examining the relationship between emotional literacy skills and communication skills of pre-service Turkish teachers according to gender and class variables. In future studies, the emotional literacy skills and communication skills of pre-service teachers in other branches can be examined in terms of different variables. Furthermore, a quantitative study can be designed by conducting in-depth interviews with pre-service teachers.

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