

Communication Skills Levels of Nursing Students

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Abstract

Introduction and Objective: Communication is the way through which people express themselves, feelings and thoughts and understand others. Communication skills can be defined as an open and clear speech conducting a single emotional input or output, or a combination of active listening, empathy and conversation techniques. Nursing which is one of the professions based on interpersonal relationship completely depends on communication skills. In this study, we aimed to determine communication skills of nursing students in the Selcuk University, Health Sciences Faculty, and to investigate whether these skills differ according to socio-demographic and educational features.

Methods: The study population consisted of 690 students having education in the Selcuk University, Department of Nursing and conducted between 01/03/2018 and 30/04/2018. Data were collected using Personal Description Form and Communication Skills Inventory. Data were analysed using t-test and One-Way ANOVA tests.

Results: Of the students; 83.8% were girls, 87.8% had nuclear family, 49.9% had 3 or more siblings, 16.2% had an monthly income higher than expenditure, 24.8% were in Grade 4, 85.5% had received communication training, and 36.3% were academically successful. Being girl, having nuclear family, low number of siblings, a monthly income higher than expenditure, and academic success increased communication skills ($p < 0.05$), while parenteral education level, place of living during college years, school grade, receiving communication training, and high school variables did not affect the scale scores ($p > 0.05$).

Conclusion and Recommendation: Boys, those with extended family, having 3 or more siblings, a monthly income lower / equal compared to expenditure, and academically unsuccessful students were in the risk group. We recommend that counselling and new trainings should be provided for students in the risk group in order to develop their communication skills, and theoretical courses should be supported with practice / laboratory works.

Keywords: Nursing Students; Communication Skills; Communication; Communication Skills Inventory.

INTRODUCTION

Although communication skills do not have a common definition, they can be defined as a combination of a single emotional input or a clear speech or active listening, empathy and interview techniques [1]. Communication skills include verbal and non-verbal messages and sensitivity to listening and responsiveness [2,3]. Nursing, which is one of the occupational occupations of human human beings, is totally dependent on communication skills [4]. Özcan

(2015) emphasizes that one of the most important treatment tools in the hands of the nurse is the interpersonal relationship with the patient, which is one of the important factors determining the course of the disease. The importance of the communication and communication skills that determine the quality of the nurse-patient relationship is defined by the concepts "the heart of patient care nit as belir the key determinant in the healing of the patient. [1] Made works; effective interpersonal relations and communication skills of nurses indicate that positive

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effects on patients (increased satisfaction from service, adaptation to disease and treatment, increased motivation to improve) [5,6,3]. Communication techniques can sometimes be used so that the relationship with the patient is not satisfactory and the client cannot express himself / herself and his needs. In this case, the individual and his needs are not recognized and therefore our help is limited. Therefore, the interactions that cause the individual to be silent and prevent him from expressing himself are unhelpful and have no therapeutic value. Patients describe the nurse-patient relationship as good when they feel treated as a respectable person. This enables the individual to perceive himself as a) worthy person) and to feel (in safety) that he is in good hands. The professional attitude, practices and communication skills of the nurse will make them feel [4,5,1].

Due to the need for communication skills training [7], most of the students who choose the nursing profession in which interpersonal relationships are of utmost importance, should be organized in such a way that the students develop their communication skills while continuing their education in clinical practice areas before they start their professional life. The main purpose of nursing education is to learn the professional nursing and nursing practices of students. In this process, students should learn the basic skills that will provide qualified nursing care such as establishing effective interpersonal relationships, helping and consulting skills as well as learning knowledge and technical skills specific to nursing [8]. In professions that produce services such as nursing and help the client; communication skills are one of the factors that determine the quality of service and these are the skills that can be learned. Learning and implementing these knowledge and skills is a necessity and responsibility [6,9,1].

Objective

In this study, it is aimed to determine the communication skill levels of 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th class nursing students of Selçuk University Faculty of Health Sciences and to investigate whether communication skills differ according to socio-demographic and educational characteristics of students.

Research Questions

- What are the mental, emotional, behavioral and general communication skill levels of student nurses?

- Do the mental, emotional, behavioral and general communication skills of the student nurses differ according to the socio-demographic characteristics of the students?
- Do the mental, emotional, behavioral and general communication skills of the student nurses differ according to the educational characteristics of the students?

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Type of Research

The purpose of this study is to determine the communication skill levels of nursing students and to determine whether communication skills differ according to socio-demographic and educational characteristics of students.

Place of Research

The research was carried out in Selçuk University Faculty of Health Sciences, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th nursing students.

Research Universe and Working Group

The universe of the study consists of 806 students, 631 girls and 175 boys attending the university during the spring semester of 2017-2018 academic year in Nursing Department of Selçuk University Faculty of Health Sciences. The sample was not included in the study and the whole of the universe was included in the study. With the participation of 106 students who did not agree to participate because of voluntary participation, 10 questionnaires with more than one deficiency were excluded from the study, and the study group consisted of 690 students, 578 of whom were girls and 112 boys.

Data Collection Tools of the Research

In order to evaluate the socio-demographic and educational characteristics of nursing students, oluşturun Personal Information Form "was used by the researcher and" Communication Skills Inventory Ver was used to evaluate the communication skills of nursing students.

Communication Skills Inventory

This is a 5-point Likert-type scale developed by Ersanlı and Balcı in order to measure the communication skill levels of university students. Rating of the scale is always done as = 5, Generally = 4, Sometimes = 3,

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Rarely = 2, Never = 1. The scale consists of 45 items and 3 sub-dimensions (mental, emotional and behavioral). In reliability and validity studies conducted by Eranlı and Balcı (1998), reliability coefficient was found to be .68, and reliability coefficient was found as .64. The Cronbach alpha coefficient, which was calculated to determine the internal consistency of the scale, was found as .72. The sub-dimensions of the scale were found to be .83, emotional skills .73, and behavioral skills were .82. These findings indicate that the reliability of the scale is at an acceptable level. In the validity study of the inventory; The validity coefficient was found .70. This value is considered to be sufficient for the scale to be considered valid. The calculation of the scale scores is based on the calculation of the total scores of the items entering the sub-dimensions [10].

Data Collection Method

The data were collected by the researcher between 1 March and 30 April 2018 based on self-report collectively in the classroom.

Variables

The Dependent Variable

- The level of mental communication skills
- Emotional communication skills
- Level of behavioral communication skills
- The level of general communication skills.

Independent Variables

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

- Gender,
- Family type,
- Number of siblings,
- Education status of parents
- Living place,
- Place during the university,
- Family income level

Educational Features

- Class level,
- Taking courses related to communication,
- Academic achievement perception,
- High School

Statistics

IBM SPSS Statistics v20 program was used to analyze the data. In statistical analyzes, descriptive statistics were used to determine the appropriateness of normal distribution, from Kolmogorov-Smirnov analysis, gender, family type, number of siblings, parent education status, place of residence, place during the university, taking courses related to communication and independent groups for high school independent variables. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) methods were used for t-test, family monthly income level and academic achievement perception. Post Hoc Tukey HSD was used to find the differences between groups according to one-way analysis of variance. $p < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

Ethical Dimension

Before starting the study, written permission from the Dean of Selcuk University Faculty of Health Sciences and Ethics committee approval was obtained from the Presidency of Faculty of Health Sciences Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee. Before the questionnaire forms were completed, the purpose of the study was explained to the students and voluntary participation was provided. Prior to the survey, instructors and appointments from the related courses were taken. Eranlı and Balcı, who developed the scale for the Communication Skills Inventory, were granted permission.

Limitations of the Research

This study was carried out in Selcuk University Faculty of Health Sciences Nursing Department with the students attending the university during the spring term of 2017-2018 academic year. Data were obtained solely based on the self-report of the students, and no communication was observed with the patients and other people. The results of this study can only be generalized to the students studying in Selcuk University Faculty of Health Sciences Nursing Department.

RESULTS

Of the 690 students who participated in the study, 83,8% were girls, 87,8% were nuclear family members, 49,9% were 3 or more siblings, 16,1% were mothers high school and over, 59,9% is a graduate of primary and lower education. 53.9% of the students stay at the dormitory during the university education. 84.9% of the students lived in the province, county and metropolitan area for the longest period and 68.9%

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of the students stated that they were equivalent to the monthly income of the family (Table 1). The mean number of siblings participating in the study was 2.86 ± 1.83 .

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of nursing students (N = 690).

Specifications	N	%
Gender		
Female	578	83,8
Male	112	16,2
Family Type *		
Core family	605	87,8
Extended family	84	12,2
Number of siblings		
0-2	346	50,1
3 and above	344	49,9
Mother Education Status		
Elementary and below	579	83,9
High School and higher	111	16,1
Father Education Status		
Elementary and below	413	59,9
High School and higher	277	40,1
Place During University Education		
in dorms	372	53,9
At home (single-house in the family-house next to al-a-relatives, other) **	318	46,1
Longest Settlement		
City (City-State-Metropolitan) ***	583	84,9
Village (Village-Town)	104	15,1
Family Income Level ****		
Less than revenue	103	14,9
Equivalent to income expense	475	68,9
More than revenue	111	16,2
TOTAL	690	100

When we look at the sub-dimension scores and total score of the Communication Skills Inventory; the highest score was obtained from the sub-dimension (55,61 \pm 6,55), while the lowest score was obtained from the sub-dimension of emotional skills (51,09 \pm 5,84). The overall communication skill score obtained by summing the subscale scores of the scale is 160.88 \pm 15.77 (Table 2).

Table 2. Nursing students in the Communication Skills Inventory sub-dimension and general communication skills average scores.

		X \pm Sd	Min	Max
The sub-dimensions	Mental Skills	54,17 \pm 5,89	34,00	72,00
	Emotional Skills	51,09 \pm 5,84	32,00	75,00
	Behavioral Skills	55,61 \pm 6,55	27,00	75,00
	General Communication Skills	160,88 \pm 15,77	100,00	221,00

In Table 3, the average of the Communication Skills Inventory of nursing students was examined according to socio-demographic characteristics (gender, family type, number of siblings, parental education status, place during university education, place of residence in the longest period, income level of the family).

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Table 3. Comparison of socio-demographic characteristics of the nursing students and comparison of sub-dimension and general communication skills scores of Communication Skills Inventory.

	Specifications	Mental Skills X±Sd	Emotional Skills X±Sd	Behavioral Skills X±Sd	General Communication Skills X±Sd
Gender	Female	54,29±5,60	51,49±5,64	56,02±6,26	161,80±15,01
	Male	53,55±7,20	49,03±6,43	53,54±7,57	156,13±18,61
	Testing and p value	t =1,029, p=0,305	t= 4,115, p< 0,001*	t= 3,250, p= 0,001	t= 3,039, p= 0,003
Family Type	Core family	54,30±5,87	51,29±5,84	55,86±6,36	161,46±15,50
	Extended family	53,40±5,77	49,75±5,65	54,05±7,40	157,21±16,68
	Testing and p value	t=1,322, p=0,187	t=2,274, p=0,023	t=2,129, p=0,036	t=2,333, p= 0,020
Number of siblings	0-2	54,20±5,92	51,63±5,89	56,14±6,46	161,98±15,76
	3 and above	54,13±5,87	50,54±5,75	55,09±6,61	159,78±15,73
	Testing and p value	t=0,153, p=0,879	t=2,443, p=0,015	t=2,107, p=0,035	t=1,835, p=0,067
Mother Education Status	Elementary and below	54,06±5,82	50,99±5,84	55,43±6,39	160,49±15,47
	High School and higher	54,74±6,22	51,62±5,83	56,56±7,29	162,93±17,17
	Testing and p value	t=-1,120 -1,120, p= 0,263	t=-1,040 -1,040, p=0,299	t=-1,524 -1,524, p=0,130	t=-1,497-1,497, p=0,135
Father Education Status	Elementary and below	54,23±5,69	50,91±5,65	55,46±6,46	160,61±15,41
	High School and higher	54,07±6,19	51,35±6,11	55,85±6,68	161,28±16,32
	Testing and p value	t=0,345, p=0,731	t=-0,960 -0,960, p=0,337	t=-0,777 -0,777, p=0,437	t=-0,550-0,550, p=0,583
Place During University Education	in dorms	54,00±5,57	51,06±5,79	55,65±6,56	160,72±15,46
	At home **	54,37±6,25	51,12±5,91	55,57±6,54	161,07±16,16
Longest Settlement	City (City-State- Metropolitan) ***	54,10±5,88	51,19±5,87	55,64±6,52	160,94±15,70
	Village (Village- Town)	54,56±6,05	50,59±5,71	55,50±6,84	160,67±16,44
	Testing and p value	t=-0,736 -0,736 p=0,462	t=0,965, p=0,335	t=0,193, p=0,847	t=0,163, p=0,847
Family Income Level	Less than revenue	54,61±5,94	50,16±6,29	55,10±6,68	159,88±16,38
	Equivalent to income expense	53,90±5,71	50,89±5,70	55,46±6,41	160,27±15,25
	More than revenue	54,88±6,57	52,72±5,74	56,72±6,97	164,33±17,08
	Testing and p value	F=1,565, p=0,210	F=5,957, p=0,003	F=2,043, p=0,130	F=3,236, p=0,040

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When the sociodemographic characteristics of the students and the sub-dimension scores of the communication skills inventory and the overall communication skills score were compared; It was found that female students' emotional, behavioral skills and general communication skill scores were significantly higher than the male students, while the students who have nuclear family structure had significantly higher emotional, behavioral skills and general communication skill scores than the students who had a large family structure ($p < 0.05$). The mean scores of emotional and behavioral skills of the students with two or less siblings were found to be

significantly higher than the students with three or more siblings ($p < 0.05$).

When the sub-dimension scores of communication skills inventory and general communication skills score are compared to the students' monthly income level; emotional skills and general communication skill scores were found to differ between groups ($p < 0.05$); In the Post Hoc Tukey HSD test conducted to find the difference, the emotional skills and general communication skill scores of the students whose monthly income was higher were found to be significantly higher than the other groups.

Table 4. Comparison of the educational characteristics of the nursing students and the sub-dimension of the Communication Skills Inventory and the comparison of general communication skills scores.

	Specifications	Mental Skills X±Sd	Emotional Skills X±Sd	Behavioral Skills X±Sd	General Communication Skills X±Sd
Class level	1st Class	53,59±5,99	50,99±5,72	55,59±6,69	160,15±15,90
	2nd Class	54,63±5,83	50,89±6,14	55,08±7,09	160,60±16,57
	3rd Class	54,18±5,73	50,88±5,52	56,15±6,11	161,22±15,04
	4th Class	54,14±6,06	51,62±5,99	55,60±6,32	161,37±15,74
	Testing and p value	F=0,811, p=0,488	F=0,693, p=0,590	F=0,837, p=0,474	F=0,202, p=0,895
Getting a Course on Communication	Yes	54,13±5,93	51,08±5,83	55,64±6,55	160,86±15,72
	No	54,42±5,67	51,12±5,92	55,46±6,56	161,01±16,18
	Testing and p value	t=-0,464 -0,464, p=0,643	t=-0,067 -0,067, p=0,947	t=0,255, p=0,799	t=-0,093 -0,093, p=0,926
Perceptions of Academic Achievement	Successful	55,06±5,83	51,97±6,17	56,56±6,53	163,59±16,39
	Middle	53,79±5,56	50,81±5,55	55,39±6,28	159,99±14,82
	Unsuccessful	52,00±8,99	47,75±5,41	51,03±8,01	150,78±17,90
	Testing and p value	F=5,935, p=0,003	F=8,710, p<0,001* *p=0,000	F=10,972, p<0,001* *p=0,000	F=11,206, p<0,001* *p=0,000
Graduated High School	Health vocational high School	55,00±6,07	51,21±5,84	57,50±6,22	163,71±15,99
	Other High Schools	54,15±5,89	51,08±5,85	55,57±6,56	160,81±15,78
	Testing and p value	t=0,529, p=0,597	t=0,081, p=0,935	t=1,089, p=0,277	t=0,680, p=0,497

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When parents' educational status, place of residence during the university education, and communication skills inventory according to the place of residence for the longest period, sub-dimension scores and general communication skills score are compared; students' mental, emotional, behavioral skills and general communication skill scores were found to be similar ($p > 0.05$) (Table 4).

According to the students' academic achievement perception, communication skills inventory sub-dimension scores and general communication skills score are compared; It was found that the sub-dimensions and general communication skill scores of the students who perceived their academic achievement as successful were significantly higher than the other groups ($p < 0.05$).

Comparing the students' grade level, communication and the communication skills inventory according to the high school they graduated, and the overall communication skills score; students' mental, emotional, behavioral skills and general communication skills score were found to be similar ($p > 0.05$) (Table 4).

DISCUSSION

The communication skills of nursing students were determined according to the socio-demographic and educational characteristics of the students. In our study, it was found that female students' behavioral, emotional and general communication skills were higher than that of male students and that their mental skills were similar. Erigüç and Eriş (2013) 's behavioral and general communication skills; Erigüç et al (2013) in the study of emotional, behavioral and general communication skills; Gaskar and Özyazıcıoğlu (2014) in their study of Anatolian Health Vocational High School students in mental, emotional and general communication skills; In the study of Elkin et al. (2016), it was found that female students had higher communication skills than male students in the dimensions of behavioral skills [11,12,13,14]. In the study conducted by Çetinkaya (2011), the results of Turkish teacher candidates were supported by our findings [15]. Erözkan (2007) and Kahyaoğlu Süt et al. (2015) concluded that gender did not affect communication skills in contrast to our findings. Female students have higher communication skills than male students, our girls have different roles and responsibilities for girls and boys, girls take an

active role in family relations from a young age, they can express their feelings more easily and they can create more intimate relationships than boys [16,9]. It is thought that communication skills may have increased. In addition, the positive results in favor of female students in our study, because the profession of nursing in our society is attributed to more women to help people, others who understand the ability to listen, listen and empathy can be caused by the fact that girls have chosen this profession.

In our study, it was found that emotional, behavioral and general communication skills of the students who have a nuclear family structure were higher than the students having a large family structure, and that their mental skills were similar. Similar to our finding, Elkin et al. (2016) found that the behavioral skills of those with a nuclear family were higher than others, but no difference was found in emotional and general communication skills [14]. In the same study, it was found that mental skills were higher than other groups in contrast to our findings. In contrast to our study, Bingöl and Demir (2011) reported that there was no statistically significant relationship between the family structure and the students' mean scores in the study using the Communication Skills Assessment Scale (IBAS) [6].

In our study, the emotional and behavioral skills of students with two or fewer siblings and no siblings were higher than those with three or more siblings; mental and general communication skills were found to be similar. In other words, as the number of siblings increased, communication skills did not increase in parallel. In contrast to our study, Gaskar and Özyazıcıoğlu (2014) reported that the ability of mental communication due to the increase in the number of siblings increased [13]. In our study, Elkin et al. (2016) found that the number of siblings did not affect the communication skills of the students [14]. The fact that both having a nuclear family structure and having fewer siblings increased the mean score of communication skills, suggests that more qualified and adequate communication can be established with a small number of people than with poor quality communication.

In our study, the emotional and general communication skills of the students with higher monthly income were higher than the other groups; mental and behavioral skills were found to be similar. Aydın Avci et al. (2012) and Elkin et al. (2016) found that income level did

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not affect students' communication skills [17,14]. Similarly, it was concluded that Kissal et al. (2016) did not affect the communication skills scores of the family in the study conducted by the nursing and physical education and sports high school students [18]. It is thought that students who have more than their monthly income are more likely to have higher scores than their income level because of their quality of life, self-confidence and socialization, and thus ease of interaction and ability to maintain communication.

In our study, it was concluded that the level of education of the parents, the place where they lived during the university education and the place with the longest period did not affect the communication skills levels of the students. In some studies [15,17,9,14], we support our finding in the case of parenting education.

CONCLUSION

In our study, it was found out that nursing students were the determinants of communication skill levels of socio-demographic characteristics, gender, family type and monthly income of the family; The level of education of the parents, the place during the university education and the place of residence for the longest period showed that it did not affect the communication skill levels of the students. Female students' communication skills were higher than male students. It has been found that having a family structure and having a smaller number of siblings increases the communication skills of the students. It was observed that the students who had more than the monthly income of the family had higher communication skills. In our study, there were no differences in the communication skill levels of the students according to the place of education of parents, the place where they lived during the university education and the place where they lived for the longest time. In our study, it was determined that the communication skill levels of nursing students were influenced only by the academic achievement perception. It has been shown that the students are not determining the level of communication, the level of communication, and the level of communication skills of high school graduates. As the academic achievement of students increased, communication skill levels increased in parallel. In conclusion, we can say that gender, family type, number of siblings, monthly income of the family and perception of academic achievement have a significant effect on communication skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the results of this study, we can make the following suggestions:

- Due to the low communication skills of the male students, when they are employed, their patients and team members; In their daily lives, it is thought that they may have problems in communicating with other people. For this reason, new studies should be planned by the researchers in order to teach new education and lessons to improve the communication skills of males and why male students have lower communication skills.
- Monitoring of family relations, conflict situations and communication of individuals living in a large family and having more than two siblings in terms of family relations and, if necessary, family members should be encouraged to strengthen their inter-family relations by providing communication skills training.

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Citation: Gülten Uzun, Neslihan Lök. *Communication Skills Levels of Nursing Students. Archives of Community and Family Medicine*. 2019; 2(1): 34-42.

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