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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS' LEVELS OF ALEXITYMIA AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Özlem KÖROĞLU
Asst. Prof. Dr., Toros Üniversitesi, ozlem.koroglu@toros.edu.tr
ORCID: 0000-0001-6710-3790

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between public administration students' level of alexitymia and communication skills.The data of the study were collected with the 'Toronto Alexithymia Scale' and 'communication skills scale'. The normality controls for continuous measurements in data analysis were tested by Shapiro Wilk test. As a result of the research, it was determined that communication skills of Public Administration students were "good level" and "intermediate" levels of alexithymia. When the relationships between alexithymia levels and communication skills are examined; It was determined that there was only an increase in extrovert thought as the communication principles and basic skills scores increased, only an increase in extrovert thought as the self-expression increased. As acitve listening and non-verbal communication increased, there was an increase in extrovert thought and total alexithymia levels. As the willingness to communicate increased, it was concluded that there was only an increase in extrovert thought, while the increase in total communication skills, and the increase in extrovert thought.

Keywords: Communication skills, alexithymia, student.

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an important factor in every situation where there is a human element as a social entity. (Aziz, 2012;1). All kinds of thoughts, problems and feelings can eliminate by sharing them with other people through communication (Aşçı, Hazar and Yılmaz, 2015: 161). Aristotle communication has been defined as "the skill and art of a preacher to be able to influence his/her audience in any way he wants with his speech" (Tevrüz, 1997: 25; Ocak and Erşen, 2015: 2). Communication is the transmission of emotion, thought, dream, event, fact or information to others in any way (Baltaş and Baltaş, 2001: 42). Communication is a process of interaction for sharing information, thought, attitude, emotion and skill to create a change in behavior (Gülbahçe, 2010: 14; Bingöl and Demir, 2011: 152-153). According to Gölönü and Karcı (2010: 125), communication is the process of interaction between individuals, groups or communities through the exchange of information, thought and belief in a variety of ways.

People communicate to the people in front of them and tell them what they want, what they think, and what they feel. Also, they also reach the wishes, thoughts and feelings of the people they are facing, and the communication they communicate with them (Aksoy and Çoban, 2017). In a quality communication process, it is important to fully express emotions and to understand the feelings of the other person (Bağcı, 2018). Although communication is in every stage of life, there can sometimes be disruptions in communication for various reasons and misunderstandings or disagreements during the communication process. One of the important reasons for this is that during the communication process, the person can not accurately understand and explain his/her feelings. The situations that affect communication in the absence of understanding of human feelings have led to research on the strength of emotions in the communication process, especially in the last 30-40 years, this subject has often become a field of study of psychology and Communication Sciences (Sevindi and Kumcağız, 2018).

One of the most important elements in establishing healthy and balanced relationships is our feelings which are the mirrors of our inner world (India, 2012). They state that being physically and psychologically good is closely related to their ability to recognize and express emotions (Eid and Boucher 2012). The ability of the individual to recognize emotions is the basis of the internal communication that he or she will provide and the interaction that will be established with the external world as a result of this success (Gürkan and Ekitli, 2015). But for a variety of reasons, many people have problems recognizing and expressing their feelings. This distress in the emotional sense is defined as alexithymia (Koçak, 2002).

Expressing the individual's feelings and realizing the feelings are one of the basic indicators of mental health. Many people have difficulty recognizing and expressing their feelings for various reasons. The alexithymia (emotional deafness), which we can describe as emotional distress, is considered as a field of study by different disciplines. The alexithymia word "a: non-existence, Lexis: word, thymos: word" meaning is a concept that consists of the combination of words in Greek as a word meaning, and is translated into Turkish as "word for feelings, word for lack of words" (Dereboy, 1990). The concept of alexithymia was used for the first time in a

conference organized by Sifneos in 1972 to describe the problems experienced in the ability to recognize and express emotions. These problems are; summarized as being unable to identify the feelings, not being able to express in words, not being able to differentiate the feelings from each other and living without emotional awareness. Şahin (1991) develops the explanation of the concept and emphasizes that alexithymia is not only "mute" to the feelings used in the absence of statement/words for emotions, but also "deaf" to the feelings of alexithymic individuals. Dökmen (2000) argues the concept of "thought slavery" in return for its alexithymia. alexithymia was originally used as a term for psychosomatic diseases in the field of mental health. However, in recent studies, it has been determined that alexithymia is a common condition among healthy individuals as well as patients. The prevalence of alexithymia in healthy population was over 10% in the studies. In a quality communication process, it is important to fully express emotions and to understand the feelings of the other person (Bağci, 2008).

It is not expected that alexithymic individuals who cannot express their feelings fully and cannot be very sensitive to their feelings. In other words, alexithymic individuals not only have difficulty in recognizing their own feelings, but also have difficulties in recognizing others feelings. This situation causes the empathy ability of alexithymic individuals to be limited (Aksoy and Çoban,2017). In a study conducted by Guttman and Laporte, it was stated that there was a negative relationship between the level of alexithymia and empathy of individuals and that they had problems in understanding the feelings of others in alexithymic. In the literature, it is also stated that alexithymic individuals have problems in interpersonal relations and communication due to their limited empathy levels. Because in a quality communication process, it is important to fully express emotions and to understand the feelings of the other person (Aksoy and Çoban, 2017).

Alexithymic individuals, as well as their own feelings, also have trouble in understanding the feelings of others. This situation causes the empathy ability of people with alexithymic to be limited (Aaron, Benson and Park, 2015; Teten, Miller, Bailey, Dunn and Kent, 2008). Expression of emotions leads the other side to better understand the situation, put itself in the position of the opposite, and want to change its behavior for him/her (Beck, 2001). In the literature, it is reported that alexithymia may occur as a coping style against stressful situations that cause emotional distress (Karlıdağ, 2001). In previous studies, it is stated that the alexithymic personality structure is an important risk factor for interpersonal problems (Oktay and Batıgün, 2014).

Alexithymic individuals are cold against people, avoidant, socially incompatible, irrelevant-indifferent, and shy personality (Ünal, 2004). Individuals with alexithymic characteristics experience emotional infertility because they define their emotions and are difficult to distinguish and express (Atasayar, 2011). Alexithymia is thought to function as a defense mechanism in order to avoid severe affect (Motan and Gençöz, 2007).

In the previous studies, it is stated that the alexithymic personality structure is an important risk factor for interpersonal problems (Oktay and Batıgün, 2014). When compared with people with low emotional awareness, it is observed that people with higher awareness experience more positive emotions, have higher

self-esteem, have more extrovert, have less social anxiety, and have more life satisfaction (Swinkels and Giuliano, 1995).

The concept of management is to be able to do business through others in the most general sense. The success of managers who manage others behaviour and do business through them depends on their communication skills.

The quality of communication between the public administration-subordinate and the citizen depends on the empathy of the public administration. When the literature is examined, there are many studies that investigate empathy and communication skills. However, there are very few studies investigating situations such as alexithymia, which are thought to adversely affect the development of public officials communication and empathy skills. In other words, for efficient and active Public Administration, Public managers must have emotional awareness. It is in the direction that public administrators with emotional awareness will communicate effectively between citizens and subordinates and improve the quality of Management in this respect.

First of all, employees should be aware of their emotions. This starts with the perception of the manager's own emotional state. It is possible for future public executive candidates to provide active, efficient, continuous and high quality public service to society, to communicate effectively with individuals, to develop and to transfer emotions. Therefore, effective communication between public administrators and citizens is among the main functions. Providing effective communication management while performing public services (recognition, expression, empathy of the feelings of the citizens it offers) will increase the satisfaction of the citizens who receive public service, the quality of the public service and the professional satisfaction of the public service. However, limitations in the ability of public administrators to define, express and communicate emotions will reduce the quality of public services.

It is very important to determine the level of Public Administration students alexithymia levels while their education is still in progress and to make appropriate initiatives to increase emotional awareness. When the literature is examined, there are a small number of scientific studies aimed at determining the level of alexithymia of Public Administration students abroad, and such research has not been reached in our country. Therefore, it is thought that this study will contribute to the filling of an important gap in the literature.

METHOD

Research Model

This research was carried out in the relational survey model to determine the relationship between the alexithymia levels of communication skills of public administration department students. In the study, dependent variables are communication skills levels, independent variable alexithymia levels, intermediate variables are gender, class, family type, parent education status, residential location and interpersonal communication level variables.

Universe and Sampling

The universe of study, In 2018-2019 fall academic year, 250 students(N=250) were educated in the Department of Public Administration of the Economics Faculty and Administrative Sciences. In the research, the whole universe was targeted to be taken and the sample selection was not taken. However, the research was completed with 151 students (participation rate: 60.4%) due to reasons such as not being in school at the time of the research.

Data Collection Process

The data were collected in a classroom environment and outside the classroom hours. In order for the study to be conducted, written approval was obtained from the University Ethics Committee and the Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences in order to collect the data. Students were informed about the purpose of the research and made necessary explanations about the research. All public administration students who had not applied to the sample selection method and agreed to participate in the study were included in the study between May 2009 and December 2009.

Data Collection Tools

Student Description Form

The data were collected between October 2018 and November 2018. As a data collection tool consisting of 11 questions on students age, gender, parent's education, economic level, family type, living place, the level of interpersonal communication prepared by the researchers in order to determine properties such as a “questionnaire form” was used.

Communication Skills Scale

As a data collection tool in the research; Developed by Korkut and Bugay (2014), the “Communication Skills Scale (CSS)” has been used. For the internal consistency reliability of the scale, Crunbach Alpha coefficient was calculated and the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as 88. The scale consists of a total of 25 items and 4 sub-dimensions and is rated as 5 likert (5=Always, 4=Often, 3=Sometimes, 2=Rarely, 1=Never). Public administration students are analyzed in terms of the sub-dimensions of communication skills: Communication principles and basic skills, self-expression, active listening and non-verbal communication are willing to communicate.

Toronto Alexithymia Scale

The “Toronto Alexithymia Scale” (TAS) was developed by Taylor and et al. (1985), and was adapted to Turkish by Güleç et al. (2009) and validated with validity reliability and was made up of 20 questions. Internal reliability coefficient on the scale was calculated as 0.78. Public Administration students were analysed in terms of sub-dimensions (3) of TAS: The difficulty of recognizing emotions, the difficulty of expressing emotions, and the

extrovert thought. The highest score from the scale is 100 and the lowest score is 20. The total score of ≤ 51 and below will be included in the alexithymia group, the average score of 52-60 will be included in the alexithymia group, and the average score of 61 and above will be included in the totally alexithymia group (Taşkın and et al. 2007).

Examination of the Reliability of the Data Collection Tools and Normality Distribution

Data Analysis

SPSS 21.0 software program was used in data analysis. P<0.05 was considered significant in statistical analysis. Normality controls for continuous measurements were tested by Shapiro Wilk test. Differences between socio-demographic characteristics in terms of communication skills scale scores were tested with Student's t test and One Way ANOVA tests. Homogeneity of variance was tested by Levene test. The Bonferroni test was used for binary comparisons. The mean and standard deviation values were used as descriptive statistics. Pearson correlation coefficient was used for the relationship between continuous measurements. For the internal consistency reliability of the scale, Crunbach Alpha coefficient was calculated and the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as 88.

Research Hypotheses

The aim of this descriptive research study was to determine the correlations between the communication skills and alexithymia levels of university students and the gender, age, school year, family residence, family structure, family socio-economic status, maternal and paternal education level and communication level variables, and to detect any significant differences.

We evaluated the following hypotheses in this study:

H1: a. Students, communication principles and basic communication skills are differentiated by gender.
H1: b. There are differences in students' self-expression by gender.
H1: c. Students, active listening and non-verbal communication skills are differentiated by gender.
H1: d. There are differences in students willingness to communicate by gender.
H1: e. Students, general (total) communication skills are differentiated by gender.
H2: a. Students, communication principles and basic skills are different according to the situation of success.
H2: b. There are differences in students self-expression according to the success situation.
H2: c. Students have differences in active listening and non-verbal communication according to the success situation.
H2: d. In the willingness of the students to communicate there is a difference according to the success situation.
H2: e. Students, general (total) communication skills vary according to the success situation.
H3: a. Students, communication principles and basic skills are different according to the mother's education status.

H3: b. Students, self-expression skills vary according to the mother's education status.

H3: c. Students, active listening and non-verbal communication skills are differentiated according to the mother's education status.

H3: d. Students willingness to communicate skills vary according to the mother's education status.

H3: e. Students, general (total) communication skills vary according to the mother's education status.

H4: a. Students' communication principles and basic skills are differentiated according to the father's education status.

H4: b. Students self-expression skills vary according to the state of education of the father.

H4: c. Students, active listening and non-verbal communication skills are differentiated according to the father's education status.

H4: d. Students willingness to communicate skills vary according to the father's education status.

H4: e. Students general (total) communication skills vary according to the state of education of the father.

H5: a. Students communication principles and basic skills are different from with whom lives.

H5: b. There is a difference in students ability to express themselves according to with whom lives.

H5: c. Students active listening and non-verbal communication skills are different from with whom lives.

H5: d. When students are willing to communicate, there is a difference between with whom lives.

H5: e. Students general (total) communication skills vary according to with whom lives.

H6: a. Students difficulty to recognize emotions there are differences according to the mother's education status.

H6: b. Students have difficulty expressing emotions according to the mother's education status.

H6: c. There are differences in the students extrovert thoughts according to the mother's education status.

H6: d. There are differences in general (total) alexithymia levels of students according to the mother's education status.

H7: a. The difficulty of recognizing the emotions of students is different according to the type of family.

H7: b. Students extrovert thoughts are different according to the type of family.

H7: c. Students have difficulty expressing emotions according to family type.

H7: d. Students general (total)alexithymia levels differ according to family type.

H8: a. There is a significant relationship between the students communication principles and their basic skills and their ability to express themselves.

H8: b. Students have a significant relationship between communication principles and basic skills, active listening and non-verbal communication, and their skills.

H8: c. There is a significant correlation between the students ability to express themselves and the active listening and non-verbal communication skills.

H8: d. There is a significant relationship between the students willingness to communicate with self-expression.

H9: a. There is a significant relationship between the difficulty of expressing emotions, difficulty with emotion recognition to students.

H9: b. There is a significant relationship between students difficulty in recognizing emotions and extrovert thoughts.

H9: c. There is a significant relationship between students difficulty in expressing emotions and extrovert thoughts.

H9: d. There is a significant correlation between the difficulty of recognizing students feelings and the general (total) levels of alexithymia.

H10: There is a significant correlation between communication skills and alexithymia levels of students.

RESULTS

The percentage distribution of various features in the study subjects was female gender in 60.9%, nuclear family in 84%, moderate income in 80.1% and "good" interpersonal communication skills in 59.6%. The place of residence was urban in 54.7% and a student residence in 41.7%. The education level was secondary school or less in 70.2% of the mothers and 58.5% of the fathers.

Table 1: Demographic Data Distribution

		Number	Percent
Gender	Female	92	60,9
	Male	59	39,1
Classes	1.Class	29	19,2
	2.Class	43	28,5
	3.Class	35	23,2
	4.Class	44	29,1
Mother's Education	Primary school	74	51,4
	Secondary School	27	18,8
	High school	31	21,5
	University	12	8,3
Father's Education	Primary school	55	37,4
	Secondary School	31	21,1
	High school	35	23,8
	University	26	17,7
With whom lives	Family	50	33,1
	Friend	26	17,2
	Dormitory	63	41,7
	Alone	12	7,9
Income status	Good	12	7,9
	Medium	121	80,1
	Bad	18	11,9
Place of residence	Village/Town	23	15,3
	District	45	30,0

	Province	82	54,7
Family Type	Elementary family	126	84,0
	Extended family	24	16,0
Communication Level	Good	90	59,6
	Medium	61	40,4

We evaluated whether a difference was present in the communication skills scale scores according to sociodemographic features and found no statistically significant difference between the family type, school year, income level and place of residence among the sociodemographic features of our students as related to the scale scores. However, some difference was present for the other parameters. Table 2 presents the relevant descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and the p values.

Table 2: Distribution of Communication Skills Scale Scores According Demographic Data

		Communication Principles and Basic Skills	Self-Expression	Active listening and non-verbal communication	Willingness to communicate	Total Communication Skills
Gender	Female (n=92)	41,2 ± 4,4	16,3 ± 2,6	24,8 ± 3,0	19,0 ± 3,3	101,3 ± 9,7
	Male (n=59)	39,1± 4,6	16,1 ± 2,4	23,3 ± 3,4	18,4 ± 2,9	96,9 ± 10,2
	P	**0,005**	0,671	**0,008**	0,234	**0,009**
Success status	Successful (n=83)	40,81 ± 4,01	16,02 ± 2,30	24,52 ± 2,81	19,02 ± 2,86	100,37 ± 0,97
	Unsuccessful (n=24)	40,29 ± 4,83	17,17 ± 2,65	24,58 ± 3,59	19,08 ± 3,49	101,13 ± 9,87
	P	0,598	**0,041**	0,925	0,932	0,721
Family type	Elementary family (n=126)	40,54 ± 4,37	16,44 ± 2,38	24,10 ± 3,23	18,72 ± 3,03	99,81 ± 9,71
	Extended family (n=24)	39,46 ± 5,64	15,42 ± 2,98	24,54 ± 3,26	18,75 ± 3,70	98,17 ± 11,99
	P	0,292	0,065	0,543	0,968	0,466
Classes	1.Class (n=29)	39,83 ± 4,58	16,28 ± 2,36	23,07 ± 3,45	18,55 ± 3,21	97,72 ± 10,29
	2.Class (n=43)	39,95 ± 4,58	15,79 ± 2,87	24,05 ± 3,16	18,09 ± 3,21	97,88 ± 9,91
	3.Class (n=35)	40,74 ± 4,78	16,06 ± 2,66	24,60 ± 3,18	18,69 ± 3,08	100,09 ± 10,46
	4.Class (n=44)	40,86 ± 4,48	16,82 ± 2,11	24,80 ± 3,11	19,52 ± 2,95	102,00 ± 9,47
	P	0,685	0,280	0,129	0,194	0,183

Mother's educational status	Primary school graduate (n=74)	40,55 ± 4,54	16,22 ± 2,56	24,14 ± 2,98	18,77 ± 2,87	99,68± 9,93
	Secondary school graduate (n=27)	41,11 ± 4,15	17,41 ± 1,97	23,67 ± 3,73	19,15 ± 3,70	101,33 ± 9,30
	High school graduate (n=31)	38,68 ± 5,47	15,13 ± 2,77†	23,97 ± 3,62	18,26 ± 3,29	96,03 ± 11,95
	University graduate (n=12)	40,92 ± 2,39	16,42 ± 1,62	25,42 ± 2,64	18,75 ± 3,11	101,50 ± 6,29
	P	0,161	**0,007**	0,477	0,756	0,174
Father's educational status	Primary school graduate (n=55)	41,20 ± 4,05	16,42 ± 2,40	24,55 ± 3,16	18,93 ± 2,62	101,09 ± 9,62
	Secondary school graduate (n=31)	39,58 ± 5,14	15,81 ± 2,34	23,06 ± 2,54	18,81 ± 3,42	97,26 ± 9,89
	High school graduate (n=35)	41,28 ± 3,90	16,74 ± 2,79	24,51 ± 3,76	18,63 ± 3,57	101,14 ± 9,69
	University graduate (n=26)	38,04 ± 4,86*,‡	15,92 ± 2,58	24,27 ± 3,48	18,42 ± 3,36	96,65 ± 11,62
	P	**0,011**	0,400	0,198	0,917	0,121
With whom lives	Family (n=50)	41,12 ± 4,31	16,88 ± 1,97	24,56 ± 3,41	19,18 ± 3,07	101,74 ± 9,33
	Friend (n=26)	39,15 ± 5,89	15,77 ± 3,29	23,31 ± 3,58	17,69 ± 3,61	95,92 ± 12,51
	Dormitory (n=63)	40,57 ± 4,01	16,22 ± 2,53	24,48 ± 2,86	19,21 ± 2,91	100,48 ± 8,77
	Alone (n=12)	38,92 ± 4,96	14,75 ± 2,09*	23,25 ± 3,49	16,67 ± 2,15*,‡	93,58 ± 10,19*
	P	0,212	**0,039**	0,254	**0,013**	**0,013**
Income status	Good (n=12)	39,58 ± 4,36	16,33 ± 2,53	25,17 ± 3,97	18,33 ± 3,06	99,42 ± 9,14
	Medium (n=121)	40,21 ± 4,63	16,12 ± 2,55	24,07 ± 3,18	18,69 ± 3,13	99,08 ± 10,24
	Bad (n=18)	42,06 ± 4,15	17,06 ± 2,34	24,44 ± 3,20	19,33 ± 3,24	102,89 ± 9,20

	P	0,230	0,338	0,511	0,645	0,327
Place of residence	Village/town (n=23)	40,65 ±4,40	16,17 ± 2,37	24,61 ± 2,64	19,00 ± 2,70	100,43 ± 8,87
	District (n=45)	40,84 ± 4,35	16,27 ± 2,81	23,93 ± 3,24	18,69 ± 2,75	99,73 ± 9,43
	Province (n=82)	40,02 ± 4,79	16,23 ± 2,45	24,23 ± 3,42	18,65 ± 3,44	99,13 ± 10,79
	P	0,600	0,990	0,716	0,891	0,849
Communication level	Good (n=90)	41,18 ± 3,96	16,99 ± 2,18	24,87 ± 3,03	19,71 ± 2,83	102,74 ± 8,29
	Medium (n=61)	39,20 ± 5,17	15,15 ± 2,62	23,23 ± 3,31	17,30 ± 3,00	94,87 ± 10,63
	P	**0,009**	**<0,001**	**0,002**	**<0,001**	**<0,001**

***:** It represents the differences with the first category; †: differences with the second category; ‡: differences with the third category.

Table 2 reveals a difference between the communication principles and basic skills scale score, effective listening and non-verbal communication score and total communication skills score by student gender (p value: 0.0005; 0.0008 and 0.009, respectively). The scores of the female students for these scales was slightly higher than those of male students. This means acceptance of the H1 hypothesis: "There is gender-based differentiation of the students for communication principles and basic skills, self-expression, effective listening and non-verbal communication, willingness to communicate and general (total) communication skills."

Evaluation of the level of success (Table 2) revealed a significant difference only in the self-expression scores (p=0.041) with higher self-expression scores in unsuccessful students than successful ones. This resulted in rejection of the H2 hypothesis: "There is success level-based differentiation of the students for communication principles and basic skills, self expression, effective listening and non-verbal communication, willingness to communicate and general (total) communication skills."

Considering the mother's education level (Table 2) only revealed a significant difference for the self-expression status (p=0.007). Students whose mother was a high school graduate showed lower self-expression scores than those whose mother was a secondary school graduate (p=0.003). This resulted in rejection of the H3 hypothesis: "There is maternal education level-based differentiation of the students for communication principles and basic skills, self expression, effective listening and non-verbal communication, willingness to communicate and general (total) communication skills."

There was a statistically significant difference between the communication principles and basic skills scores according to the father's educational status (p=0.011) (Table 22). Evaluation of these differenced showed that students whose father was a primary school graduate showed a statistically significant difference in communication principles and basic skills scores compared to those whose father was a university graduate

(p=0.019) and there was a similar statistically significant difference between those whose father was a high school graduate and those whose father was a university graduate (p=0.033). The scores of the children with a university graduate father were lower than those whose father was a primary school or high school graduate. We therefore rejected the H4: "There is paternal education level-based differentiation between the paternal education levels of the students for communication principles and basic skills, self expression, effective listening and non-verbal communication, willingness to communicate and general (total) communication skills" hypothesis.

Comparison of the scale scores of the students according to who they lived with (Table 2) showed statistically significant differences in the self-expression scores, willingness to communicate scores and total communication skills scores (p value: 0.039; 0.013 and 0.013, respectively). A statistically significant difference was found between the self-expression scores of those living with their family and those living alone (p=0.042). Similarly, there was a difference between the willingness to communicate scores of those living alone and those living with their family (p=0.045) and those living in a student home (p=0.044). Analysis of the total communication skills scores only showed a difference between those living with their family and those living alone (p=0.049). H5: "There differentiation according to who the students live with for communication principles and basic skills, self expression, effective listening and non-verbal communication, willingness to communicate and general (total) communication skills."

Evaluation of all scale scores by communication level showed that the scores were statistically significantly higher in those with good communication skills compared to those with moderate communication skills. Table 2 presents all relevant p values.

We also analyzed whether a relationship was present between communication skills scale scores and the subject age and mean demographic values but did not find a statistically significant relationship with any scale score. Table 3 presents the correlation coefficients (r) and p values.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis of Communication Skills Scale Scores With Age and Related General Averages

		Communication Principles and Basic Skills	Self-Expression	Active listening and non-verbal communication	Willingness to communicate	Total Communication Skills
Age	r	0,042	0,082	0,010	0,029	0,052
	P	0,617	0,321	0,909	0,729	0,529
General average	r	0,163	-0,006	0,049	0,090	0,120
	P	0,094	0,107	0,615	0,355	0,217

The mean Total Alexithymia Scale (TAS) score of the public management students was 57.58±9.30, indicating that these students were "moderately alexithymic" (Table 4).

Table 4: Distribution of Alexithymia Scale Scores According to Demographic Data

		Difficulty Recognizing Emotions	Difficulty In Expressing Emotions	Extrovert Thought	Total Alexithymia
Gender	Female (N=92)	16,89 ±5,99	14,08 ± 3,07	26,35 ± 3,77	57,32 ± 9,85
	Male (N=59)	17,36 ± 5,53	14,12 ± 3,07	26,37 ± 4,03	57,85 ± 8,75
	P	0,632	0,934	0,969	0,736
General Success Status	Successful (N=83)	16,55 ± 5,74	14,25 ± 3,16	26,65 ± 3,88	57,46 ± 9,46
	Unsuccessful (N=24)	17,21 ± 5,96	14,13 ± 2,95	26,38 ± 3,36	57,71 ± 9,63
	P	0,627	0,860	0,753	0,910
Family Type	Elementary Family (N=126)	16,55 ± 5,55	14,02 ± 3,07	26,37 ± 3,79	56,94 ± 8,90
	Extended family (N=24)	19,79 ± 6,50	14,58 ± 3,03	26,21 ± 4,38	60,58 ± 11,64
	P	**0,012**	0,413	0,849	0,084
Communication Level	Good (N=90)	16,39 ± 5,59	14,03 ± 3,20	26,60 ± 3,92	57,02 ± 9,24
	Medium (N=61)	18,08 ± 6,00	14,18 ± 2,86	26,00 ± 3,78	58,26 ± 9,69
	P	0,078	0,773	0,351	0,429
Class	1.Class (N=29)	17,83 ± 4,88	13,55 ± 2,72	25,45 ± 3,41	56,83 ± 7,19
	2.Class (N=43)	16,60 ± 6,77	13,67 ± 3,23	26,53 ± 3,97	56,81 ± 10,75
	3.Class (N=35)	16,23 ± 5,61	13,94 ± 3,51	26,37 ± 4,35	56,54 ± 10,08
	4.Class (N=44)	17,70 ± 5,53	14,98 ± 2,58	26,77 ± 3,65	59,45 ± 8,75
	P	0,569	0,140	0,535	0,455
Mother's Education	Primary school (N=74)	17,47 ± 5,82	14,30 ± 2,85	26,39 ± 3,70	58,16 ± 9,20
	Secondary school (N=27)	15,04 ± 5,19	13,26 ± 3,48	25,81 ± 3,88	54,11 ± 9,83
	High school (N=31)	19,19 ± 5,62[†]	14,77 ± 2,96	26,23 ± 3,89	60,19 ± 9,52
	University (N=12)	14,50 ± 4,58	13,83 ± 3,10	27,17 ± 5,25	55,50 ± 7,01
	P	**0,014**	0,269	0,789	0,071

Father's Education	Primary school (N=55)	17,29 ± 5,34	13,80 ± 2,97	26,42 ± 3,74	57,51 ± 9,11
	Secondary school (N=31)	18,10 ± 5,97	14,74 ± 3,36	25,87 ± 4,03	58,71 ± 10,70
	High school (N=35)	16,31 ± 6,13	13,57 ± 2,93	26,14 ± 3,50	56,03 ± 9,99
	University (N=26)	17,04 ± 6,20	14,62 ± 3,14	27,23 ± 4,55	58,88 ± 7,64
	P	0,665	0,307	0,595	0,600
With whom lives	Family (N=50)	16,74 ± 5,54	14,40 ± 3,19	26,90 ± 4,22	58,04± 9,15
	Friend (N=26)	16,46 ± 5,38	13,00 ± 2,87	25,04 ± 3,55	54,50 ± 8,49
	Dormitory (N=63)	17,62 ± 6,23	14,14 ± 2,91	26,87 ± 3,55	58,63 ± 9,96
	Alone (N=12)	16,92 ± 5,23	14,92 ± 3,48	24,25 ± 3,52	56,08 ± 8,93
	P	0,799	0,195	0,065	0,263
Income Status	Good (N=12)	15,92 ± 5,35	12,50 ± 2,07	27,08 ± 4,40	55,50 ± 8,72
	Medium (N=121)	17,58 ± 5,90	14,32 ± 3,11	26,07 ± 3,77	57,98 ± 9,63
	Bad (N=18)	14,44 ± 4,72	13,61 ± 3,03	27,78 ± 3,98	55,83 ± 8,36
	P	0,077	0,112	0,173	0,496
Place of Residence	Village/Town (N=23)	16,87 ± 5,90	14,13 ± 3,06	27,09 ± 4,18	58,09 ± 9,97
	District (N=45)	17,40 ± 5,40	14,20 ± 2,85	26,24 ± 3,71	57,84 ± 8,24
	Province (N=82)	16,89 ± 6,05	13,99 ± 3,20	26,20 ± 3,90	57,07 ± 9,93
	P	0,885	0,929	0,610	0,856

Comparison of the alexithymia scale scores by sociodemographic features revealed a statistically significant association only between the family type and maternal education level and the Difficulty in Recognizing Emotions score (p value: 0.012 and 0.014, respectively). Table 4 presents the relevant descriptive statistics (mean and standard value) and p values.

The public management students were also evaluated regarding the TAS subscales and differences were found regarding the descriptive statistics (mean and standard value) and p values (Table 4). Comparison of the sociodemographic features by alexityhmia scale scores showed statistically significant differences between the

Difficulty in Recognizing Emotions Scale scores for type of family and maternal educational status (p value: 0.012 and 0.014 respectively). As regards the type of family, children from a large family had more difficulty recognizing emotions than those from a nuclear family (p:0.012). There was also a statistically significant difference between the difficulty in recognizing emotions scores as related to the maternal education (p=0.014). Analysis of these differences revealed that the scores were lower in the students whose mother was a secondary school graduate than in those with a mother who was a high school graduate (p=0.027). This resulted in confirmation of the H6: "There is maternal education level-based differentiation between the difficulty in recognizing emotions, difficulty in expression emotions, extrovert thought and general (total) alexithymia levels of the students" and H7: "There is type of family-based differentiation for difficulty in recognizing emotions, difficulty in expressinh emotions, extrovert thought and general (total) alexithymia levels of the students" hypotheses.

No statistically significant relationship was found between the alexithymia scale scores and the gender, communication level, paternal educational status, place of residence, and income level (p>0.05). There was also no statistically significant relationship between the alexithymia scale scores and the age and general mean demographic values.

We evaluated the correlation of each communication skills scale score and alexithymia scale score with each other and also within the groups. Table 5 presents the relevant correlation coefficients and p values.

Table 5: Correlation Coefficients and P Values for Scale Scores

		se	alnc	Wtc	Total communication	dore_alek	doee_alek	et_alek	Total_alek
cpbs	r	0,345	0,504	,364	0,817	-0,147	-0,001	0,290	0,028
	p	**<0,001**	**<0,001**	**<0,001**	**<0,001**	0,072	0,994	**<0,001**	0,731
se	r		0,394	0,410	0,663	-0,147	-0,012	0,287	0,023
	p		**<0,001**	**<0,001**	**<0,001**	0,071	0,880	**<0,001**	0,778
alnc	r			0,358	0,762	0,012	0,135	0,436	0,230
	p			**<0,001**	**<0,001**	0,884	0,099	**<0,001**	**0,005**
wtc	r				0,695	-0,124	0,049	0,238	0,037
	p				**<0,001**	0,129	0,548	**0,003**	0,651
Total communication	r					-0,139	0,055	0,418	0,104
	p					0,090	0,500	**<0,001**	0,203
dore_alek	r						0,514	0,134	0,838
	p						**<0,001**	0,101	**<0,001**
doee_alek	r							0,271	0,753
	p							**0,001**	**<0,001**
et_alek	r								0,581
	p								**<0,001**

Cpbs: communication principlens and basic skills, se: self-expression, alnc: active listening and non-verbal communication, wtc: willing to communicate, dore: difficulty of recognizing emotions, doee: difficulty of expressing emotions, et: extrovert thought.

Evaluation of the relationship between communication skills scores (Table 5) revealed that the self-expression score, effective listening and non-verbal communication score, willingness to communicate score and total communication skills score increased as the communication principles and basic skills score increased ($r=0.345$, $p<0.001$; $r=0.504$, $p<0.001$; $r=0.364$, $p<0.001$ and $r=0.817$, $p<0.001$, respectively). The effective listening and non-verbal communication score, willingness to communicate score and total communication skills score increased as the self-expression score increased ($r=0.394$, $p<0.001$; $r=0.410$, $p<0.001$ and $r=0.663$, $p<0.001$, respectively). It was also found that the willingness to communicate score and total communication skills score increased as the listening and non-verbal communication score increased ($r=0.358$, $p<0.001$ and $r=0.762$, $p<0.001$, respectively). The total communication skill score increased as the willingness to communicate score increased ($r=0.695$, $p<0.001$). We therefore accepted the H8: “There is a significant relationship between the communication principles and basic skills, self-expression, effective listening and non-verbal communication, willingness to communicate and the general (total) communication skills of the students” hypothesis.

It is possible to say that the difficulty in expressing emotions score and total alexithymia score increased as the difficulty in recognizing emotions increased when the relationship between the alexithymia scale scores is evaluated (Table 5) ($r=0.514$, $p<0.001$ and $r=0.838$, $p<0.001$), respectively. The extrovert thought score and total alexithymia scores also increased as the difficulty in expressing emotions score increased ($r=0.271$, $p=0.001$ and $r=0.753$, $p<0.001$, respectively) The total alexithymia score increased as the extrovert thought score increased ($r=0.581$, $p<0.001$). These findings support the H9: “There is a significant relationship between the difficulty in identifying emotions, extrovert thought and general (total) alexithymia levels of the students” hypothesis.

Evaluation of the relationship between alexithymia levels and the communication skills scores (Table 5) showed only an increase in the extrovert thought score as the communication principles and basic skills scores increased ($r=0.298$, $p<0,001$). Similarly, only the extrovert thought score increased as the self-expression score increased ($r=0.287$, $p<0,001$). An increase in the extrovert thought score and total alexithymia level score was found as the effective listening and non-verbal communication score increased ($=0.436$, $p<0.001$; $r=0.230$, $p=0.005$, respectively). An increase in the willingness to communicate score was associated with an increase only in the extrovert thought score ($r=0.238$, $p=0.003$). The extrovert thought score increase was the only one associated with a total communication score increase ($r=0.418$, $p<0,001$). These findings support the H10: “There is a significant relationship between the communication skills and alexithymia levels of the students” hypothesis.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The relationship between communication skills of public administration students and alexithymia levels was examined in terms of various variables and the results were discussed. According to the results, the communication skills of public administration students were found to be good, whereas the level of alexithymia was found to be moderate.

According to the findings of the study, gender variable has made a significant difference in terms of communication skills (Table 2). It was determined that gender of the students, communication principles and basic skills, scale scores, active listening and non-verbal communication scores and total communication skills scores were significant differences. This finding is also supported by Korkut (1997) and Görür (2001), Karatekin and et al (2012), Gölönü and Karcı (2010), Çetinkaya (2011), Özerbaş and et al (2007), Tepeköylü and et al (2009), Saygıdeğer (2004), Alkaya (2004), Kılcıgil and et al (2009) studies in terms of communication skills in general. However, this finding is not supported by the studies of Tunçeli (2013) and Kayabaşı and Akcengiz (2014) Dilekmen, Başçı and Bektaş (2008), Toy (2007), Gülbahçe (2010), Yılmaz and Çimen (2008), Günay (2003), Çiftçi and Taşkaya (2010), Bingöl and Demir (2011), İlaslan (2001), Çevik (2011), Pehlivan (2005). Different findings regarding this variable were obtained in the literature. Significant differences were found in favor of girls in the majority of studies conducted to investigate whether there is a gender difference in communication skills (Korkut, 2005; Cunningham 1977). While some of the studies were not able to relate to gender, in some studies, gender-linked studies have led to different results for male and female (Sağay, 2013). Therefore, it is difficult to generalize the gender variable.

According to the results of the study, there was no significant difference in the alexithymia score in terms of gender variables (Table 4). In previous studies, alexithymia has been reported to be more common in males. (Bağcı, 2008; Hamarta, Yalçın) in some studies, it is stated that there is no difference between genders as in this research (Aksoy, Çoban,2017).

In terms of age variables, similar results were obtained in terms of communication skills and alexithymia levels. In this study, age variables did not make a significant difference in communication skills perceptions (Table 2). This finding is supported by Tepeköylü and et al (2009), Yılmaz and Çimen (2008) and alkaya (2004) studies. According to the results of the study, there was no significant difference between the alexithymia levels and the age variables (Table 3). In the literature, when age differences are examined, it is stated that there are difficulties in expressing emotions as age increases and empathy tendencies decrease (Çetin, 2010; Durakoğlu and Gökçearslan, 2010; Sevindi and Kumcağız, 2018)

In the study, similar results were obtained in terms of communication skills and alexithymia levels in terms of class-level variables. The results of the study show that the level of communication skills of the students did not affect their perceptions of different levels of Communication Skills (Table 2). This finding was supported by Tunçeli (2013), Yılmaz and Çimen (2008), Bingöl and Demir (2011), Tepeköylü and et al (2009), Gölönü and Karcı (2010), Gülbahçe (2010), Saygıdeğer (2004), Pehlivan (2005) were found to be a significant difference between

classroom level and communication skills. The results of the study showed no significant difference in the level of alexithymia of the students grade level (Table 3). While this finding was supported by Sevin and Kumcağız (2018) Studies, in Çoban and Aksoy (2016) studies, alexithymia levels of third-year students from other grades were found to be high.

The study found significant differences in communication skills and alexithymia levels in terms of mother's education level variables. The findings of the study are based on the mother's education status and communication skills; the difference was found to be significant only in terms of self-expression (Table 2). the self-expression score of students who graduated from high school was found to be lower than those who graduated from secondary school. The findings of the study are similar to those of Saygıdeğer (2004), Ilaslan (2001), Karatekin and et al (2012). However, there was no parallelism between the mother's education level and the communication level in other studies in the literature (Çetinkaya, 2011; Bingöl and Demir, 2011; Tepeköylü and et al 2009).

In this study, there was a statistically significant difference between the parents level of alexithymia level and the students level of alexithymia level (Table 4). When the differences were examined, the scores of the mothers who graduated from secondary school were lower than those who graduated from high school. High school graduates with high education level of mother's difficulty in recognizing feelings was found to be higher. Our findings do not coincide with studies that indicate that individuals whose parents are illiterate or only literate have higher alexithymic characteristics than others (Koçak, 2002). There are also studies that indicate that alexithymic characteristics are found in individuals with low educational levels of their mother (Yemez, 1991; Sallıoğlu, 2002).

The findings of the study differ significantly in the level of the father's education status and Communication Skills (Table 2). There was a statistically significant difference between the father's education status and the communication principles and basic skill scores. When the differences were examined, the difference between the communication principles and the basic skills scores of the students who graduated from primary school and the scores of the students who graduated from university was found to be statistically significant, and the difference between the communication principles and the basic skills scores of the students who graduated from high school and the scores. The scores of children whose father graduated from University were lower than those of primary and high school. Our findings indicate parallelism between Yılmaz and çimen (2008) and Karatekin and et al (2012), Ilaslan (2001), Tepeköylü and et al (2009), Bingöl and Demir (2011) are not supported by the research.

As a result of the results of the study, there was no difference between the father's education status and his alexithymia scores (Table 4). Our findings have paralleled the studies of İlaslan (2001), Saygıdeğer (2004), Bing and Demir (2011) in the literature.

In this study, there was no significant difference in alexithymia scores and communication skill scale scores in terms of income level variability (Table 2, 4). According to the findings of the study, there is no significant

difference between income variables and communication skills levels (Table 2). The findings were supported by the studies of Iaslan (2001), Tepeköylü and et al (2009), gölönü and Karci (2010), Bingöl and Demir (2011). This finding shows that the allexitic levels of university students do not change according to the economic situation. While some of the previous studies supported the findings in this study (Bağcı, 2008), Türk (1992) found that the prevalence of alexithymia among individuals with low income levels was higher. In this study, the absence of alexithymia different according to the level of income may be due to the fact that the students in the study were defined in the same income group.

According to the findings of the study, when the communication skills scale scores were compared according to who our students live with, the differences in terms of self-expression scores, willingness to communicate and total communication skills scores were found to be statistically significant (Table 2). When the self-expression scores were analyzed, the differences between the scores of those living with their families and those living alone were found to be significant. In terms of willingness to communicate, there were differences between the scores of those living alone and the scores of those living with their families and the scores of those living in the dormitories. When the total communication skills scores are looked at, it was determined that only the scores of the people who live with the family were different. In the literature, there was no study for these findings.

According to the results of the study, there was no difference in alexitymia scores between the students with whom they lived (Table 4). A study of findings was not found in the literature.

When we look at the settlements in which students live their lives, no significant difference was found between the communication skill scale scores and alexithymia levels of the students living in the village, town, district, city and big cities (Table 2, 4). In the literature, there are studies where there is a significant difference in favor of university students living in cities and metropolises. (Bingöl and Demir, 2011; Kıssal, Kaya, Koç; 2016)

In the study, there was no significant difference between the family type variables and the communication skills scale scores (Table 2). In the study, when the family type of family type was compared with the alexithymia level of the students, it was observed that the difficulty of recognizing the emotions of the students living in the extended family was higher than the students living in the elemantary family (Table 4).

When the results of the study were analyzed in terms of success status and communication skill scale scores, it was found that only the difference in self-expression scores was significant (Table 2). It was observed that the grades of unsuccessful students expressed themselves were higher than those of successful students. There was no significant difference between the success of our students and their alexithymia scores (Table 4).

The relationship between alexithymia levels and communication skills scores was examined (Table 5); As communication principles and basic skills scores increase, there is only an increase in extrovert thought scores. As the score of expressing oneself increases, there is only an increase in the extrovert thought score. As active listening and non-verbal communication scores increase, there is an increase in extrovert thought scores and

total alexithymia level scores. As the willingness to communicate increases, there is only an increase in extrovert thought. As the total communication skills score increases, there is only an increase in extrovert thought scores. In the literature, it was noted that there was a negative relationship between the level of alexithymia and the communication skills of the students, and Kumcak (2018), Tutuk, Al and Doğan (2002), Karcı (2011) and Gürsoy (2015).

Suggestions for Further Research

In this study, it was determined that the communication level of the public administration department students was “good”, moderate alekitymic and the interpersonal relations and communication of the alexithymia level of the students were negatively affected.

It is recommended that the student counsellors be aware of the problem that needs to be noticed and corrected in public administration students, which is expressed as not recognizing the person's feelings and anxieties, to direct the students to guidance and psychological counseling units.

In public administration education, students are encouraged to teach and apply methods to define, express and eliminate the limitations of communication skills with the citizens they offer public service as an administrator.

In addition, Public Administration Department students will be able to develop effective communication skills such as seminars, conferences, etc. participation in these activities should be ensured by organizing.

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