

Longitudinal review of communication skills and empathic tendency levels among the students of the department of sports management

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to review communication skills and empathic tendency levels of the students who studied at the department of sports management in a longitudinal manner. The study was designed in a longitudinal survey model of quantitative study methods. The study group consisted of 122 students (52 female students, 70 male students) who attended the first grade of Sarıkamış Department of Sports Management, School of Physical Education and Sports, Kars Kafkas University in Turkey during the 2016-2017 academic year. To detect the differences, data collection tools were employed four times for the same students during the first grade of 2016-2017 academic year, the second grade of 2017-2018 academic year, the third grade of 2018-2019 academic year and the fourth grade of 2019-2020 academic year. As data collection tools, "The Communication Skills Scale" (CSS) developed by Korkut (1996) and Empathic Tendency Scale (ETS) developed by Dökmen (1988) were used. The data were analyzed by using the Bonferroni post-hoc comparison test, independent t-test, analysis of one-way variance (ANOVA) and Pearson correlation coefficients. The result found that both students' communication skills and empathic tendency levels were high, their 3rd grade communication skill scores were higher in terms of grade/time variable, their empathic skill scores were higher in the 3rd and 4th grades, their scores of communication skills and empathic tendency did not differ in terms of age and gender variables and a positive correlation existed between communication skills and empathic tendency at all levels.

Keywords: Sports management, communication skill, empathic tendency, longitudinal.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication, described as the process of exchange of feelings in order to understand one another, has been the most important instrument in forming the accumulation of knowledge that people as social beings transmit from the past to the present. Communication skills, which people have and can improve with education, have been gaining importance more and more in today's world in relation to fast growing technology and social change.

The definition of communication varied among scholars, but the widely agreed point is the common meaning of the feelings, thoughts, attitudes, knowledge and behaviours (Ersanlı and Balcı, 1998). Various meanings may be ascribed to communication; such as the transfer of knowledge, feelings, skills through

symbols or search for a meaning or exchange of the facts (Cüceloğlu, 2013; Oskay, 1994). Dökmen (2005) defines communication as a process in which the participants produce knowledge/symbols, transfer them to each other and try to understand and interpret these messages. Communication constitutes one of the most crucial elements through which humans adapt themselves to the environment (Yüksel, 1997). Overcoming barriers during the process will narrow communication gaps in human relations and help maintain healthy relationships. Besides; solving problems that may arise among humans is too related to defining this problem better (Riesch et al., 2003).

Humans are social beings and continue their lives in

the social organizations that they build. Relations and interactions in these organizations are only possible through communication. Communication is one of the most crucial elements necessary for humans to adapt themselves to the environment (Cüceloğlu, 2013).

To be successful in putting work plans in practice and in coordinating the activities depends on the effective use of communication processes by managers. Using communication skills effectively increases workers' motivation and thus facilitates the achievement of the goals (Koçel, 2010) and helps employees carry out organizational goals voluntarily and maximizes productivity (Efil, 2010). Likewise, using communication effectively may minimize and even eliminate conflicts. Even though it is argued that communication skills arrive innately and instinctively; the studies report that communication skills can be learnt and taught (Owen and Bugay, 2014). When individuals have communication skills, they realize inter-personal communications by using these skills in their daily lives. Thus, the communication skills of senders and receivers of these messages in the communication process affect the quality of communication (Ceyhan, 2006).

It is necessary for sports managers, to have skills that facilitate human relations. In sports settings that enable people to perform by seeing, hearing and experiencing the events and that do not ignore individual differences; it may be possible to learn skills that will make communication more effective and send it to social life. Therefore, teachers of physical education, trainers and sports managers must be well educated and trained about communication skills so that they can teach them to others with whom they interact (Tepeköylü et al., 2009); which is possible only when people know some of the communication skills. Accepted as one of these most precious skills and considered as one of the healthy communication tools; empathy helps others and makes one feel in a safe setting. The ability to empathize may play a key role in people's relations and is one of the skills that manage crises in interpersonal communication and conflicting situations in the best way.

An effective communication process is associated not only with the quality of messages conveyed to each side but also with their disposition to listen and to understand each other willingly (Baltacı, 2016). Therefore, the method to create effective communication is to understand attitudes and behaviours mutually in line with expectations and to have empathy (Mutlu et al., 2015). At the root of empathy lies the understanding of "people can feel others' happiness and distress in their minds just as they do theirs" (Ayten, 2010). Here, empathy means agreeing to others' emotions and feeling how others' experiences are (Cournoyer, 2011). In other words, it includes perceiving, understanding, experiencing another's emotional changes and thoughts and responding to them (Barker, 2003). The role of empathy in building interpersonal communication and interaction is

indisputable. However, empathy is often a communication way that we do not understand fully due to our different perceptions. Every human being and even every living creature has a distinctive point of view for situations. We cannot get it just by seeing it from outside.

Empathy is originally derived from the Greek word of *empathia* meaning physical love, passion (Sofronieva, 2012). It is defined as the ability to put yourself in another person's place. Empathy, an approach focusing on understanding the other's feelings, is regarded as "the process in which one puts themselves in another person's place, sees situations from their point of views, understands and feels their emotions and thoughts correctly and conveys them to them" (Dökmen, 2005). The skill of empathy helps individuals "to assess others' emotional reactions correctly and to choose correct social-appropriate behaviours" (Fitness and Curtis, 2005). Empathic tendency constitutes the emotional dimension of empathy and underlines people's potential to empathize. As for the emphatic skill, it is the status that points out individuals' ability to have empathy (Barrett-Lennard, 1993).

Despite disagreements as to the use of empathy (Batson, 2009), there is an agreement that it consists of three main components: cognitive empathy is the ability to know how the other person feels (Guttman and Laporte, 2000), emotional empathy is the ability to share emotional states with others or the ability to experience similar emotions as others and compassionate empathy is to respond with sympathy or personal sorrow (Decety and Jackson, 2004). Empathy can strengthen the quality of communication for human beings who are obliged to communicate. If communication is strengthened with empathic reactions, messages are easily conveyed and interpreted (Dökmen, 1988). It is suggested that those with higher empathic skills demonstrate healthy psychological development and a higher level of self-esteem (Kalliopuska, 1992). People use these characteristics in many areas of life and thanks to their ability to develop empathy, they gain advantages in many areas such as marriage, business, social life (Goleman, 1998). Besides; skills of empathy may be effective upon establishing positive social behaviours (Ginsburg et al., 2003), reducing aggression levels (Findlay et al., 2006) and forming healthier friendship relations (Roberts and Strayer, 2004).

The fact that presence of empathy affects people's behaviours positively and lack of it negatively (Kışlak and Çabukça, 2006) is the characteristic of empathy that facilitates interpersonal communication in daily life and makes people closer to each other (Başer, 2016). Managers, assuming important tasks in organizations, are doubtlessly supposed to have many qualifications and skills. Communication and empathy are among those important ones. With this aspect; empathy increases not only the quality of interpersonal communication but also cooperation. Relations formed with empathy in the

process of communication require managers' empathic approaches to be handled as an important managerial skill (Turhan, 2018). Particularly, those working in managerial positions should realize communication effectively but the basis of effective communication lies in the ability to empathize (Hançer and Tanrısevdi, 2003).

Sport is also a social setting where more than one person works for the same goal in a coordinated manner. Therefore, one of the effective keys for success is communication in the field of sports as in all of the other fields. On the basis of effective communication lies empathic skills. It is argued that it is indispensable for managers, working in the field of sports, to have effective communication and empathic skills as well as many other properties so that they can be successful in their profession. The aim of the study was to study communication skills and empathic tendency levels in the department of sports management in a longitudinal manner.

METHOD

The study was designed in a longitudinal survey model of quantitative study methods. Survey models explore participants' views or such characteristics as interests, skills, attitudes about a phenomenon (Turkay, 2020). In longitudinal research, the data are collected from the same sample group by using the same or similar measuring tools more than once and thus time-dependent changes and differences are explored in the same phenomenon (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006).

Study group

The study group consisted of 122 students (52 female students, 70 male students) who attended the first grade of Sarıkamış Department of Sports Management, School of Physical Education and Sports, Kars Kafkas University in Turkey during the 2016-2017 academic year.

To detect the differences and changes in communication skills and empathic tendency; data collection tools were -four times in spring semesters- employed across the same students during the first grade of 2016-2017 academic year (1st measurement), the second grade of 2017-2018 academic year (2nd measurement), the third grade of 2018-2019 academic year (3rd measurement) and the fourth grade of 2019-2020 academic year (4th measurement).

Data collection tools

As for data collection tools; "The Communication Skills Scale (CSS)" -to identify students' communication skill levels- and "Empathic Tendency Scale (ETS)" -to identify

their empathic tendency- were used.

The Communication Skills Scale

"The Communication Skills Scale (CSS)", developed by Korkut (1996) in order to understand how individuals, assess their communication skills, is a five-point Likert scale (0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = always). The scale is consisted of 25 items and has no reverse coded items. The highest score is 100 while the lowest score is 0. Higher scores indicate that individuals regard their communication skills positively. The reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be 0.80 (Korkut, 1996).

Empathic tendency scale

"Empathic Tendency Scale (ETS)", developed by Dökmen (1988), measures individuals' potential to empathize in daily life. It is a five-point Likert scale of 20 items and is rated as totally disagree (1), disagree (2), undecided (3), agree (4), totally agree (5). Eight items of ETS are reversely coded in order to prevent individuals from responding "yes" mechanically. After the participants read the items, the numbers marked by them indicate the scores of the items. Higher scores indicate higher empathic tendency while lower scores indicate lower empathic tendency (Dökmen, 1988). The highest score is 100 while the lowest score is 20. Reliability and validity tests of the Empathic Tendency Scale were performed by Dökmen (1988). The reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .91.

Data analysis

The data were processed using SPSS (IBM SPSS for Windows, data.24) statistical package program. To find the sample size of the study, a power of at least 80% was calculated and Type I error was determined as 5% for each variable. Whether or not continuous measurements of the study followed a normal distribution was determined using Kolmogorov-Smirnov ($n > 50$) and Skewness-Kurtosis tests and since data followed a normal distribution parametric tests were performed. Continuous variables in the study were presented with descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviation, minimum and maximum means. Comparisons were made using the total score of "Communication Skills and Empathic tendency" dimensions. For the repeated measurements, ANOVA was employed in order to compare grades according to different measuring times of "Communication Skills and Empathic tendency" dimensions. Following the repeated ANOVA, Bonferroni

post-hoc comparison test was employed to find the differences in grades. In the comparisons of scale scores in terms of grade, gender and age groups, "Independent T-test" and "Analysis of One-Way Variance (ANOVA)" were performed. In grades, inter-scale correlations were identified using "Pearson correlation coefficients". The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$.

FINDINGS

According to the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ($n > 50$) presented in Table 1, scales generally did not follow a normal distribution ($p < 0.05$), but since Skewness and Kurtosis values of these measurements followed a normal distribution (± 1.5) parametric tests were employed in comparisons.

According to Bonferroni post-hoc multiple comparison

test in Table 2, results of communication skill levels were presented in terms of grades. In the measurement of communication skills; there was statistically a significant difference in terms of grade/time ($p < 0.05$). The 3rd grade communication skill score (82.63) was found to be higher than the scores of other grades significantly and the difference was statistically significant. The scores of communication skills of the 1st grade (78.51), 2nd grade (76.39) and 4th grade (78.15) were similar.

In Table 3, results of empathic tendency levels were presented in terms of grades according to Bonferroni post-hoc multiple comparison test. In the measurement of empathic tendency levels; there was statistically a significant difference in terms of grade/time ($p < 0.05$). The 3rd grade (70.84) and the 4th grade (69.73) empathic tendency scores were high and similar to each other but 2nd grade empathic tendency score (67.75) was found to be the lowest one. Again, 1st grade empathic tendency score was similar to the other three scores (68.60).

Table 1. Normality test.

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		Shapiro-Wilk		Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	n	p.	Statistic	n	p.	Statistic	Statistic
1 st grade communication skills	.070	198	.019	.977	198	.003	-.466	-.219
2 nd grade communication skills	.112	198	.000	.965	198	.000	-.679	.235
3 rd grade communication skills	.112	198	.000	.950	198	.000	-.939	1.395
4 th grade communication skills	.099	198	.000	.953	198	.000	-.862	.858
1 st grade empathic tendency	.056	198	.200	.993	198	.423	.059	-.461
2 nd grade empathic tendency	.042	198	.200	.992	198	.372	-.177	.432
3 rd grade empathic tendency	.042	198	.200	.990	198	.162	-.195	-.125
4 th grade empathic tendency	.067	198	.029	.994	198	.546	-.031	.222

Table 2. Comparison of communication skill levels in terms of grades.

	Mean	Sd.	Min.	Max.	*p.
1 st grade communication skills	78.51 ^b	11.96	43.00	100.00	.001
2 nd grade communication skills	76.39 ^b	11.56	40.00	100.00	
3 rd grade communication skills	82.63 ^a	8.61	50.00	100.00	
4 th grade communication skills	78.15 ^b	8.70	49.00	94.00	

Table 3. Comparison of empathic tendency levels in terms of grades.

	Mean	Sd.	Min.	Max.	*p.
1 st grade empathic tendency	68.60 ^{ab}	8.55	47.00	91.00	.001
2 nd grade empathic tendency	67.75 ^b	8.48	39.00	89.00	
3 rd grade empathic tendency	70.84 ^a	7.05	47.00	87.00	
4 th grade empathic tendency	69.73 ^a	6.93	47.00	89.00	

According to the results of the one-way ANOVA test presented in Table 4, significance levels were studied

and communication skill levels were compared in terms of age groups in grades. No statistically significant

Table 3. Comparison of empathic tendency levels in terms of grades.

	Mean	Sd.	Min.	Max.	*p.
1 st grade empathic tendency	68.60 ^{ab}	8.55	47.00	91.00	.001
2 nd grade empathic tendency	67.75 ^b	8.48	39.00	89.00	
3 rd grade empathic tendency	70.84 ^a	7.05	47.00	87.00	
4 th grade empathic tendency	69.73 ^a	6.93	47.00	89.00	

difference was found in communication skills scale scores across all grades in terms of age groups ($p > 0.05$). In other words, communication skill scores were not affected by age variables among all grades.

According to the results of the one-way ANOVA test demonstrated in Table 5, significance levels were studied and results of empathic tendency levels of all grades were given in terms of age groups. No statistically significant difference was found in empathic tendency scale scores across the grades in terms of age groups ($p > 0.05$). In other words, empathic tendency scores were not affected by age variables among all grades.

In Table 6, significance levels were studied according to T-test results and comparison results of communication skills of grades were presented in terms

of genders. No statistically significant difference was identified in the scores of the communication skills scale of the 1st grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade and 4th grade in terms of gender variable ($p > 0.05$). To put it differently, the communication skill scores of the grades did not differ in terms of gender variables.

In Table 7, significance levels were studied according to T-test results and comparison results of empathic tendency level of grades were presented in terms of genders. Accordingly, no statistically significant difference existed in the scores of empathic tendency scale of the 1st grade, 2nd grade, 3rd grade and 4th grade in terms of gender variables ($p > 0.05$). In other words, empathic tendency scores of the grades were not affected by gender variables.

Table 5. Comparison of empathic tendency levels of grades in terms of age groups.

	18-20 Age		21-23 Age		24+ Age		*p.
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	
1 st grade empathic tendency	68.90	9.12	67.99	7.77	69.33	9.22	.620
2 nd grade empathic tendency	67.14	8.51	68.17	8.75	67.79	8.02	.738
3 rd grade empathic tendency	70.90	6.99	71.01	7.40	70.43	6.55	.891
4 th grade empathic tendency	70.36	8.08	69.83	6.66	68.90	6.16	.556

Table 6. Comparison of communication skill levels of grades in terms of gender.

	Female		Male		*p.
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	
1 st grade communication skills	79.44	10.98	77.73	12.72	.291
2 nd grade communication skills	75.06	12.31	77.52	10.83	.116
3 rd grade communication skills	82.36	9.36	82.87	7.95	.665
4 th grade communication skills	78.60	9.22	77.74	8.24	.489

Table 7. Comparison of empathic tendency levels of grades in terms of gender.

	Female		Male		*p.
	Mean	Sd.	Mean	Sd.	
1 st grade empathic tendency	68.39	8.98	68.78	8.20	.737
2 nd grade empathic tendency	68.06	8.40	67.49	8.57	.621
3 rd grade empathic tendency	71.02	6.19	70.68	7.74	.725
4 th grade empathic tendency	70.43	.73	69.11	7.08	.183

Results of correlation analysis were given in Table 8. Accordingly, in all of the four measurements performed in terms of grade/time variable, a statistically significant correlation was found between the scores of

communication skills scale and empathic tendency scale ($p < 0.05$). This was a positive correlation in the 1st Grade (44.9%), the 2nd Grade (45.4%), the 3rd Grade (26.0%) as well as in the 4th Grade (50.3%).

Table 8. Results of correlation analysis between communication skill scores and empathic tendency scores.

Grades	r
1 st grade empathic tendency / 1 st grade communication skills	.449**
2 nd grade empathic tendency / 2 nd grade communication skills	.454**
3 rd grade empathic tendency / 3 rd grade communication skills	.260**
4 th grade empathic tendency / 4 th grade communication skills	.503**

** $p < 0.01$; r: Pearson correlation coefficients.

DISCUSSION

According to the analysis results of the data, when Table 2 was investigated, in the measurements done in terms of grade/time variable, the 3rd grade communication skill scores were higher than other measurements. The scores of the 1st and 2nd grades were close to each other and the lowest score belonged to the 4th grade. A similar result was identified in the study of Yılmaz et al. (2009) and the 4th grade students' communication skill levels were found to be lower than other grades. Again, Tutuk et al. (2002), Gülbahçe (2010) and Turhan (2018) reported that students' communication skill levels differed in terms of grade variables. Yet, the studies of Korkut (1997), Yılmaz and Çimen (2008), Tepeköylü et al. (2009), Yanık (2015) and Çetinkaya (2011) identified no statistically significant difference among the communication skill levels in terms of grades.

Considering the comparison results of empathic tendency level given in Table 3 across the grades, a statistically significant difference was observed in the measurement of empathic tendency scores in terms of grade/time. It was seen that similar values were obtained in the measurements but the empathic tendency scores of the 3rd and 4th grades were a bit higher than those of the 1st and 2nd grades. The scores of the 1st, 2nd and 4th grades were lower than that of the 3rd grade and the lowest score was seen in the 4th grade while the highest score was seen in the 3rd grade. In the studies of Tazegül et al. (2009), Tutuk et al. (2002), Alver (2005) and Ekinçi and Aybek (2010), carried out with different sample groups, it was detected that empathic tendency differed in grade levels; which concurred with the findings of the current study. However, the studies of Yılmaz and Akyel (2008) and Beyaz and Yalız (2016), done with candidate teachers of physical education, found no significant difference in empathic tendency scores across the grades.

In the measurements shown in Table 4, the significance of communication skill levels was analyzed in

age groups and comparison results of the ANOVA test were presented. Accordingly, no statistically significant difference was found in communication skills scale scores of the 1st grade, the 2nd grade, the 3rd grade and the 4th grade in terms of age groups ($p > 0.05$). In other words, communication skill scores were not affected by the age variable. In the study of Karademir and Türkçapar (2016), carried out with athletes performing different sports, communication skills were found not to be different in age variable. Avcı (2018) identified that university students attending different academic grades did not show a difference in communication skills. In the findings of the study of Tepeköylü et al. (2011), focusing on communication skills of the students studying sports education, the age variable was found not to differ in terms of communication skills. Ulukan et al. (2017) reported that as age groups of the university students who performed sports and those who did not perform sports increased, so did their communication scores but no statistically significant difference existed in the scores of communication skills. Again, the findings of Şahan and Gönen, (2018), Korkut (1997), Çavuşoğlu and Günay (2014), Mutlu et al. (2015) and Bozkurt et al. (2003) concurred with the results of the current study. However; the study of Altınışık (2019), done with the candidate sports managers, indicated a positive correlation between communication skills and age variable and argued that as the age of the candidate sports managers went up further, so did their communication skills.

As a result of comparing the empathic tendency scale scores across the age groups, no statistically significant difference was identified across the measurements. To put it differently, empathic tendency scores of the 1st grade, the 2nd grade, the 3rd grade and the 4th grade were not affected by age variable. In the study of Şener and Koraltan (2019), investigating communication skills among the students of the department of sports management, communication skills were found not to be affected by the age variable. In the study of Korkmaz et al. (2003), done with the students of physical education

and sports, similar results were obtained. Likewise, in the study of Aydın (1996), done with different professional groups, age was found not to have much effect on empathic growth. Yılmaz and Akyel (2008) investigating candidate teachers of physical education and Mutlu et al. (2015) investigating tennis player university students, concluded that empathy level did not differ statistically according to age variables. As for the study of Karabulut and Pulur (2016), a positive correlation was seen between the age variable and empathic tendency level.

In the comparison results of communication skill levels in terms of gender, no statistically significant difference existed ($p > 0.05$). In other words, communication skill scores were not affected by gender variables across the grade levels. The study of Öksüz (2018) examining sports managers and the studies of Hacıoğlu (2017) examining university students and the study of Şenbakar (2015) examining elite boxers, reported no difference across communication skill levels in terms of gender variable and concluded that female and male participants were not different in communication skills.

However, in the literature, studies are pointing out a significant correlation between female and male participants in terms of gender variables. The study of Owen and Bugay (2014), done to develop a scale for assessing communication skills, the studies of Tepeköylü et al. (2009), Özşaker (2013), Kılıçgil et al. (2009) and Yanık (2015), done with students studying at the department of sports, the study of Karademir and Türkçarpar (2016), done with the athletes of the individual and team sports, emphasized that female students' scores of communication skills were bigger than those of male students. In the study of Akyol (2019), where the communication skills of the students of different faculties were compared, male participants' communication skill scores were found to be higher than female participants.

In the comparison results of empathic tendency levels in terms of gender; no statistically significant difference existed ($p > 0.05$). In other words; empathic tendency scores were not affected by gender variables. Ayaş et al. (2016) studied empathy levels among the university students who received sports education and their empathy levels were identified not to be affected by age variable. In the study of Gençoğlu and Namlı (2020), done with the students attending the faculty of sports sciences, results similar to ours were found. Again, the studies of Demirci and İkiz (2017), Gülbahçe (2010) and Mutlu et al. (2015) reported no significant difference in communication skill scores according to gender variable.

Even if McClelland (1951), Dökmen (1987), Tanrıdağ (1992) and Korkmaz (2003) suggested that people's empathic skills are not related to their genders at all; there are studies results of which indicate that female participants' empathic skills scores were higher than those of male participants. The studies carried out by Öztürk et al. (2004), Roe (1977), Batson et al. (1997), Nadler and Nadler (2000), Litvack et al. (1997), Karniol et

al. (1998), Myyry and Helkama (2001), Schierman and Gundy (2000), and Toussaint and John (2005), draw attention to the higher empathic tendency scores among female participants than male participants. Similarly, Ornum et al. (1981) argued that female students had higher scores than male students and Kalliopska (1984) determined that mothers were more empathic than fathers. However, there are also opposing views and study results. Eisenberg-Berg and Lennon (1980) explored that male children received higher scores in non-verbal empathy as compared to female children. However; the study of Kolayış and Yiğiter (2010) found no difference between male participants and female participants in terms of empathy scores. In general, it is known that women's empathic skills were better than men's; the reason of which -according to Dökmen (2005)- can be explained with the term "female sensitivity".

Looking at the correlation analysis results between the scores of communication skill scale and empathic tendency scale, a statistically positive and significant correlation was found between empathic tendency and communication skill levels in the measurements performed across all grades. Empathy is regarded as one of the basic conditions that should exist in interpersonal relations. That is why it is a skill that is necessary for communication and that should be emphasized more (Voltan-Acar, 2009). To Kılıç (2005), a communication of high quality is possible only by understanding humans, meeting expectations and developing empathy. In the study of Borke (1971), it is emphasized that "as one's empathy level goes up, so do their human interactions and communication". Mutlu et al. (2015) reported a statistically significant and positive correlation between empathic tendency and communication skills and suggested that this correlation may be originating from the fact that people's psycho-social development influences each other.

CONCLUSION

In the current study where communication skills and empathic tendency levels of the students who studied at the department of sports management were investigated longitudinally, a total of four measurements were once performed across the same students at the end of the spring semesters. With these measurements, it was concluded that students generally demonstrated higher scores both in communication skills and empathic tendency. In the analysis performed in terms of grade/time variable, the 3rd grade communication skill scores were found to be higher. As for empathic skill scores, these were higher in the 3rd and the 4th grades. In the analysis performed according to both age and gender variables, scores of communication skills and empathic tendency did not differ. Following the investigation of the correlation between communication skills and empathic

tendency, the measurements done across all grades were found to show a positive correlation.

Having effective communication skills provides important conveniences in people's relations. To have these skills seems more important for –particularly- those who are engaged in professions that require working with people. Another property critical to the communication process is the ability to develop empathy. It may be argued that it is essential for sports managers to have effective communication skills -like other employees who work in the field of sports, where human relations are dominant- so that they can be successful in their jobs.

It is recommended that effective communication skills and empathy training should be included more in the education processes of sports management students and it should clearly be emphasized that these properties are cared and encouraged.

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