

School Managers' Interpersonal Communication Skills in Turkey

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Abstract

The purpose of the study, which was conducted as a survey using a descriptive method, was to explore school managers' interpersonal communication skills in Turkey. The data were collected from teachers and managers working in Kindergartens, Primary Schools, Anatolian High Schools, and Vocational and Technical High Schools in the province of Antalya, Turkey via the "Interpersonal Communication Skills Questionnaire" consisting of 22 items designed with five-point Likert scales, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The population of the research consisted of 11690 teachers and managers working in these schools. A total of 1441 questionnaires were responded. After the invalid questionnaires were eliminated, 1284 questionnaires were included in the analysis. In order to determine the views of both managers' and teachers' means, frequencies, standard deviations, two kinds of parametric tests, independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA, were utilized. Consequently, school managers' communication skills in empathic sensitivity, reflective listening and feedback and creating positive communication climate seem to have a satisfactory level in the current state. This is hopeful in that this is likely to mean that they engage in new communicational techniques and technologies for their personal and professional development.

Keywords: Communication, interpersonal communication skills, school management, school managers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication, starting from last quarter of the twentieth century has become gradually complex confronting the technological developments which provided a huge step, opening a gate to a new age, for individuals and organizations of both developed and underdeveloped countries, so to say, a step which created the excitement and confusion the same as Neil Armstrong's the first step on the surface of the moon. The dynamic nature of human relations is likely to absorb and digest the new theories, concepts, techniques and technologies provided with the new perspectives of the new age of communication in the process and finally transform the quality of relationships, which in turn requires questioning the communication in interpersonal and organizational level. The purpose of this study was to explore school managers' interpersonal communication skills in the current state in Turkey.

Most definitions of communication used in organizational behaviour literature stress the use of symbols to transfer the meaning of information (Luthans, 2011, p.249). Communication is the exchange of the ideas, opinions and information through written or spoken words, symbols or actions (Baird, Post and Mahon, 1990.) Communication is the social process in which two or more parties exchange information and share meaning (Griffin and Moorhead, 2013, p.295).

Communication is essentially a perceptual process. The sender must encode intended meaning to create messages. The receiver then decodes the messages to obtain perceived meaning. Effective communication depends on the sender and the receiver sharing an understanding of the rules used to encode meaning into messages (Stroh et al. 2002, p.175). Effective communication is important because it affects practically every aspect of organizational behaviour (George and Jones, 2012, p.403). Experts tell us that effective communication is the result of a common understanding between the communicator and the receiver. Communication is successful only if the communicator transmits that understanding to the receiver (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly and Konopaske, 2011, p.432). In this sense, Stroh, et al. (2002, p.181) proposed that to improve communication one must increase the probability that the receiver will accurately perceive a sender's communication attempt. For effective communication, the sender must know what and how to say it. Interpersonal communication problems can occur when the message a person sends is not the one intended. Aamodt (2010, p.415) asserted three solutions on the part of the sender to this problem: thinking about what you want to communicate, practicing what you want to communicate and learning better communication skills. On the other hand, Stroh et al. (2002, p.181) considered three keys to improve the receiver's perceptual accuracy: sender empathy, active listening and media selection. To Champoux (2011, p.338) communication effectiveness can be improved through training, asking for a receiver's feedback and understanding cultural differences in communication. To alleviate the numerous barriers to communication in organizations, managers should follow up on their messages, regulate information flow, use feedback, develop empathy, use message repetition, encourage mutual trust, simplify their language,

effectively time the delivery of their messages, and become effective listeners (Gibson et al, 2011, p.458).

Communication is one of the most important interpersonal processes in organizations. Effective communication allows employees, groups, and organizations to achieve their goals and perform at a high level (George and Jones, 2012, p.428). Interpersonal communication is fundamental to obtaining employment, succeeding on the job, and being an effective colleague, subordinate, or manager (Harris and Nelson, 2008). Interpersonal communication involves the exchange of a message across a communication channel from one person to another (Aamodt, 2010, p.414). In interpersonal communication, the major emphasis is on transferring information from one person to another. Communication is looked on as a basic method of effecting behavioural change and it incorporates the psychological processes (perception, learning, and motivation) on the one hand and language on the other (Luthans, 2011, p.253). Communication among individuals and groups is vital in all organizations. Communication is probably the most visible of all group activities and it is critical to effective group functioning (Stroh et al., 2002, p.174). Without communication, an organization would be merely a collection of individual workers doing separate tasks. Organizational action would lack coordination and would be oriented toward individual rather than organizational goals (Griffin and Moorhead, 2013, p.295). Communication fosters motivation by clarifying for employees what is to be done, how well they are doing, what can be done to improve performance if it's subpar (Robbins, 2002, p.114). Communication creates the foundation for successful actions; it opens pathways to a more collaborative workplace. Collaboration requires effective communication. It is the way we share information, ideas, goals, directions, expectations, feelings, and emotions in the context of coordinated action. Successful organizations value and promote effective communication both at the interpersonal level and across organizational boundaries (Schermerhorn, Hunt, Osborn and Uhl-Bien, 2010, p.256).

Organizational communication has several functions and dysfunctions. Keyton (2005) asserted that some organizational communication functions for socializing new members or negotiating one's position in the organization. Some organizational communication is a mediator for management in order to structure or control the organization. Some organizational communication is devoted to negotiating and coordinating work activities. Finally, some organizational communication functions for positioning the organization within the marketplace and society. Robbins (2002, p.114) claimed that communication serves four major functions within a group or organization: control, motivation, emotional expression, and information. Champoux (2011, p.338) stated that the functions include letting people share information and helping managers integrate or coordinate different parts of the organization. Champoux (2011, p. 338) listed the dysfunctions as selective perception, semantic problems and information overload. (Schermerhorn et al. 2010, p.256) used glue to explain the tie between communication and organization. They stated that communication is the glue that holds organizations together. Similarly, Griffin and Moorhead (2013, p.295) to explain the function of communication in an organization used the human nervous system as a metaphor well. They stated that the primary purpose is to achieve coordinated action. Just as the human nervous

system responds to stimuli and coordinates responses by sending messages to the various parts of the body, communication coordinates the actions of the parts of an organization.

Communication is one of the management functions and it is one of the most crucial aspects of effective leadership, planning control, coordinating, training, conflict management, decision making and all other management functions (Wexley and Yukl, 1984, p.74; Miller, 2000, p.25; Shochley-Zalabak, 2006, p.244). Organizations are always looking for employees with excellent communication skills and listening is probably the most important communication skill that a supervisor should master (Aamodt, 2010, p.425, 428). When organizations experience problems such as unmotivated employees or excessively high turnover, poor communication is often partially to blame (George and Jones, 2012, p.403). Research indicates that it is essential that managers not only communicate well but that their success is, in large measure, determined by their communication skills (Stroh et al. 2002, p.175). Interpersonal communication is the primary means of managerial communication; on a typical day, over three-fourths of a manager's communications occur in face-to-face interactions. The day-to-day activities of managers are closely tied to effective interpersonal communications. Managers provide information (which must be understood), they give commands and instructions (which must be obeyed and learned) and they make efforts to influence and persuade (which must be accepted and acted on) (Gibson et al. 2011, p.446). Effective managers and leaders are skilled at human relations, develop others, make decisions, provide role models, use humor, understand language, use positive nonverbal behaviour, develop networks and encourage upward and downward communication, listen effectively, develop strong symbolic messages, and apply power effectively. This is a prodigious set of expectations for any manager (Harris and Nelson, 2008). Characteristics and qualities of the principals identified showed a common and consistent set of personal traits, behaviours, values and beliefs, such as honesty and openness, highly developed communication skills, flexibility, commitment, passion, empathy with others, a sense of 'innate goodness', support of equity and social justice, a belief that all children are important and can succeed, being other-centred, high expectations and a belief that schools can make a difference (Gurr, Drysdale and 2006, p.371).

Luthans (2011, p.247) asserted that "Real Managers" in their day-to-day behaviors, devoted about a third of their activities to exchanging and processing routine information. Research has repeatedly shown that groups and organizations spend enormous amounts of time communicating. The centrality of communication to the overall job of the administrator is evident when we consider how much time administrators spend communicating in organizations (Lunenburg and Ornstein, 2012, p.158; Schermerhorn, 1996, p.209; Wexley and Yukl, 1984, p.74). Research findings proved that managers spend most of their time for organizational communication. In some occupations, more than half of all time on the job is spent communicating (Lunenburg and Ornstein, 1991; Stroh et al. 2002, p.175, Schermerhorn, 1996; Wexley and Yukl, 1984). Baird et al. (1990, p.352) stated that top level managers spent 87 % of their work day for communication (62 percent for listening and speaking, 8 percent for telephone, 13 percent for writing and 12 percent for reading). Lunenburg and Ornstein (1991, p.185) reported that the results of two separate studies of executives also indicated that administrators spend 80 percent of their time in interpersonal communication.' Similar findings,

ranging from 70 to 80 percent, have been reported for elementary and high school principals. School administrators, therefore, need a clear understanding of the process of communication (Lunenburg and Ornstein, 2012, p.158).

Literature review showed that studies in interpersonal communication skills concentrated mainly on the dimensions of empathy, comprehension, active listening, feedback, effectiveness (openness, clarity, transparency, brevity, kindness, concreteness, consideration), persuasion, trusting and being an effective sender (effective body language, effectiveness in verbal and non-verbal communication) (Cohen, Fink, Gadon, Willits and Josefowitz, 2001, p.240; Daft, 2002, p.589; Devito, 2001; Dubrin, 1997; Gordon, 1998, p.191; Hartley and Bruckmann, 2002, p.247-248; Ivancevich and Matteson, 1996, p.503; Lunenburg and Ornstein, 1991, p.189-209; Murphy, Hildeprant and Thomas, 1997, p.31; Robbins, 2000, p.129, 150-151; Schermerhorn, 2001; Sims, 2002; Steers, 1981, p.214; Tim, Peterson and Stevens, 1990, p.246).

Consequently, in recent years, managerial supervision has become more challenging given that organizations have become flatter and as a result, managers have more subordinates to oversee (Gibson et al. 2011, p.446). A holistic overview leads us to think that communication is in the core of all kinds of organizational behaviour (Aydın, 2000, p.123; Eren, 2003, p.449; Gürgen, 1997, p. 25; George and Jones, 1996, p. 399; Schermerhorn, 1996, p.209). It is important to note that communication skills are not inherent to an individual but can be learned and taught (William, 2004, pp.73–74). Accordingly, the pertinent question is not whether managers engage in communication because communication is inherent to the functioning of an organization. Rather, the real issue is whether managers communicate well or poorly. In other words, communication itself is unavoidable in an organization's functioning, but ineffective communication is avoidable. Every manager must be a communicator. In fact, everything a manager does communicates something in some way to somebody or some group. The only question is, "With what effect?" (Gibson et al. 2011, p.432).

The purpose of this study was to explore school managers' interpersonal communication skills in Turkey. For this purpose the research question was "What are the views of school managers and teachers about school managers' interpersonal communication skills?"

For this purpose the following questions were addressed:

1. What are the views of school managers and teachers about their interpersonal communication skills in relation to their position?
2. How do school managers' views differ about their interpersonal communication skills by means of gender, education background, seniority and school type variable?
3. How do teachers' views differ about school managers' interpersonal communication skills by means of gender, education background, seniority and school type variable?

2. METHOD

This research was conducted as a survey using a descriptive method in order to ascertain the views of school managers and teachers about school managers' interpersonal communication skills in Turkey.

2.1. Population and Sample

In this research, the data were collected from Kindergartens, Primary Schools (consist 1-8 grades), Anatolian High Schools, and Vocational and Technical High Schools in the province of Antalya, Turkey. The population of the research consisted of 11690 teachers and managers working in these schools. The sample size to represent the universe of 11690 teachers and managers with 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level is at least 372 persons (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970, p.608; Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2010, p.94). However, out of 1600 questionnaires sent to managers and teachers, a total of 1441 questionnaires were responded. After the invalid questionnaires were eliminated, 1284 questionnaires were included in the analysis.

Table 1. Respondents' profiles

		Kindergarten		Primary school		Anatolian high school		Vocational and Technical High Schools		Total (N=1284)	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Position	Teacher	55	57,3	353	53,7	174	62,4	166	65,9	748	58,3
	Manager	41	42,7	304	46,3	105	37,6	86	34,1	536	41,7
Gender	Female	88	91,7	320	48,7	113	40,5	95	37,7	616	47,9
	Male	8	8,3	337	51,3	166	59,5	157	62,3	668	52,1
Education Background	Pre-licence	9	9,4	119	18,1	2	0,7	3	1,2	133	10,4
	Undergraduate	82	85,4	506	77	246	88,2	223	88,5	1057	82,3
	Graduate	5	5,2	32	4,9	31	11,1	26	10,3	94	7,3
Seniority in position	1-5 years	41	42,7	58	8,8	32	11,5	45	17,9	176	13,7
	6-10 years	26	27,1	126	19,2	31	11,1	36	14,3	219	17,1
	11-15 years	19	19,8	155	23,6	68	24,4	84	33,3	326	25,4
	16-20 years	5	5,2	122	18,6	74	26,5	44	17,5	245	19,1
	21years and more	5	5,2	196	29,8	74	26,5	43	17,1	318	24,8

As indicated on table 1, out of 1284 participants, 748 (58,1 %) were teachers and 536 (41,7 %) were school managers. The proportion of female to male employees was similar across the schools with more male representation (62%) at vocational high schools and small representation (8,3 %) at pre-education schools. A total of 668 (52,1 %) were male while 616 (47,9 %) were female participants. The participants' educational backgrounds varied considerably. About 7,3 % of the participants had graduate (master's and doctoral) degrees, 82,3 % had under graduate (bachelor's) degrees, and 10,4 % had pre-licence degrees (two years of higher education). 25,4 % of the participants had 11-14 years seniority, 24,8 % had 21 years and above seniority, 17,1 % had 6-10 years seniority, and 13,7 % had 1-5 years seniority.

2.2. Instrument

In this research the data was collected by "Interpersonal Communication Skills Questionnaire" which consisted of 33 items. The questionnaire was, first, developed by Şahin (2007) to

measure primary school managers’ communication skills: Emphatic listening (Cronbach’s Alpha=,95), effectiveness (Cronbach’s Alpha=,92), feedback (Cronbach’s Alpha=,93) and trusting (Cronbach’s Alpha=,79). The questionnaire was adopted to gather data from teachers and managers. The questionnaire was designed as a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (coded as 1) to strongly agree (coded as 5). The items of the questionnaire with factor loadings were given in table 1 below.

Table 2. Interpersonal communication skills of school managers scale items and factor loadings

Items	Factors		
	ES*	RLF*	CPCC*
Our school managers, pay attention to the suitability of the quality, location and timing of the feedback.	,726	,387	,290
try to exemplify the feedback until they make sure that it is understood.	,720	,332	,346
are creative when transmitting a message using current materials.	,710	,303	,328
avoid using routine phrases that are likely to cause negative ideas and feelings.	,708	,345	,320
try to understand the reasons underlying teachers’ attitudes and behaviours.	,705	,449	,286
careful at creating opportunities for teachers to express themselves.	,691	,457	,302
try to anticipate teachers’ reactions during communication process.	,683	,275	,367
try to configure the communication process stressing on teachers’ strong characteristics and skills.	,638	,479	,352
reflect willingness to communicate teachers to acknowledge them better.	,617	,522	,267
reflect willingness to clarify the problems occurred in relation to teachers’ messages.	,548	,404	,442
try to understand teachers’ thoughts and feelings.	,351	,735	,326
exhibit willingness to share their feelings.	,405	,712	,245
make eye contact when listening to teachers.	,197	,702	,456
try to use both verbal and non-verbal feedback.	,435	,662	,319
avoid spontaneous Reaction instead consider the problem in details first.	,464	,656	,203
pay attention to include the details of the issue when giving feedback to the teachers.	,445	,649	,350
pay attention to respond and give feedback to the issues mentioned by teachers.	,455	,640	,376
exhibit willingness to listen to the teachers no matter how important the issue is.	,180	,397	,767
reflect frank feelings in the communication process.	,325	,324	,754
keep their promise.	,475	,221	,707
pay attention to the consistency of their verbal and non-verbal	,454	,331	,681

communication with teachers.

express their ideas about personal and professional issues honestly on the time. ,485 ,267 ,641

Variance explained (%)= 29,637 24,329 20,117

Cronbach's Alpha= ,96 ,94 ,92

Total Variance Explained (%)=74,083

Cronbach's Alpha=,97

*EL: Empathic sensitivity, RL: Reflective listening, CPCC: Creating positive communication climate.

Table 2 shows the results of the principal components factor analysis conducted with 229 questionnaires in order to provide validity. According to the results Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was found to be ,974. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was found to be significant (=,00) (Akgül and Çevik, 2003, p. 428; Büyüköztürk, 2003, p.120; Hair, Anderson, Tahtam and Black, 1998, p. 99). As a result of the analysis, the questionnaire consisted of 22 items dispersed in three factors: empathic sensitivity (10 items; Cronbach's Alpha=,96) reflective listening and feedback (7 items; Cronbach's Alpha=,94), and creating positive communication climate (5 items; Cronbach's Alpha=,92). The alpha coefficient of reliability of the whole scale was found to be ,97. All of the factor loadings of the items were greater than ,55 and explained 74,08 percent of the total variance.

2.3. Data Analysis

The data were analysed using quantitative analysis techniques. In the analysis SPSS package statistical program was used. In order to determine the views of both managers and teachers means, frequencies and standard deviations were calculated. Additionally, in order to find out whether managers and teachers' views differ in relation to their education background, school types, gender and seniority t-test and a One-Way ANOVA were utilized (Akgül and Çevik, 2003; Büyüköztürk, 2003; Büyüköztürk et al. 2010; Hair, Anderson, Tahtam and Black, 1998).

3. FINDINGS

In this section the findings about the views of school managers and teachers about school managers' interpersonal communication skills in Turkey were presented. First school managers and teachers 'views were presented by comparison. Secondly, school managers' views were presented in relation to demographic variables. Thirdly, the views of teachers about school managers' interpersonal communication skills in regard to their demographic variables were presented.

3.1. The views of school managers and teachers about school managers’ interpersonal communication skills

Table 3. Views of school managers and teachers about school managers’ interpersonal communication skills according to their position

Factors	position	N	\bar{x}	sd	df	t	p
Empathic sensitivity	A- Teacher	748	3,8705	,69428	1282	3,68	,00
	B- Manager	536	4,0119	,65402			
Reflective listening and feedback	A- Teacher	748	3,9051	,71813	1282	3,68	,00
	B- Manager	536	4,0509	,67094			
Creating positive communication climate	A- Teacher	748	4,1730	,62382	1282	4,90	,00
	B- Manager	536	4,3437	,60307			

According to the data given in table 3 school managers and teachers reported the highest level about the skills of creating positive communication climate (\bar{x} =4,3437; 4,1730), Reflective listening and feedback were reported as high in the second order by both of the groups (\bar{x} =4,0509; 3,9051) and finally empathic sensitivity were reported to be the last highly exerted skill by managers again by both of the groups (\bar{x} =4,0119; 3,8705). According to the means they thought that they were relatively more capable about creating positive communication climate compared the other two. Similarly they thought that they were capable about reflective listening and feedback more compared to empathic sensitivity.

According to the data given in table 3, there are significant differences in relation to their positions about capability in empathic sensitivity [$t_{(1282)}= 3,68$; $p<,01$], capability of reflective listening and feedback [$t_{(1282)}= 3,68$; $p<,01$] and capability of creating positive communication climate [$t_{(1282)}= 4,90$; $p<,01$].

The data show that administrators find themselves sufficient about capability of creating positive communication climate (\bar{x} =4, 34) at highest level compared to other two factors. In this factor teachers also reported that they had the same perception. The mean found in relation to teachers’ views about managers’ interpersonal communication skills in creating positive communication climate was (\bar{x} =4,17). Reflective listening and feedback skill (\bar{x} =4,05) was reported as the second highly sufficient capability which was also reported by teachers similarly (\bar{x} =3,90). In the third factor, school managers found themselves again highly sufficient but with a slight reduction in the mean scores (\bar{x} =4,01). Empathic sensitivity (\bar{x} =3,87) had the lowest mean score according to teachers’ views.

3.2. The views of school managers about their interpersonal communication skills in regard to gender, education background, seniority and school type variables

Table 4. Views of school managers about their interpersonal communication skills according to gender variable.

Factors	Gender	N	\bar{x}	sd	t	df	p
Empathic sensitivity	A- Female	198	3,9136	,67227	-2,679	534	,008
	B-Male	338	4,0695	,63707			
Reflective listening and feedback	A- Female	198	3,9380	,70785	-3,005	534	,003
	B-Male	338	4,1171	,64020			
Creating positive communication climate	A- Female	198	4,2545	,61607	-2,633	534	,009
	B-Male	338	4,3959	,59001			

In regard to table 4, the data show that a significant difference was found about empathic sensitivity factor [$t_{(534)} = -2,679$; $p < ,01$], reflective listening and feedback factor [$t_{(534)} = -3,005$; $p < ,01$] and creating positive communication climate factor [$t_{(534)} = -2,633$; $p < ,01$]. According to the data, male participants found managers highly sufficient in capability of empathic sensitivity ($\bar{x} = 4,0695$) where female participants reported high level of capability too, but with less mean scores compared to male participants' views ($\bar{x} = 3,9136$). About capability of reflective listening and feedback skills of school managers, again male participants reported higher scores ($\bar{x} = 4,1171$) compared to female participants ($\bar{x} = 3,9380$). The highest sufficiency for school managers was reported about the factor of capability of creating positive communication climate. The mean scores for male participants ($\bar{x} = 4,3959$) were slightly higher than female participants ($\bar{x} = 4,2545$). No significant difference was found in the views of school managers about their communication skills according to education background variable but the difference found in seniority variable was presented in table 5.

Table 5. Views of school managers about their interpersonal communication skills according to seniority variable

Factors	Education Background	N	\bar{x}	sd	F	p	Significant difference (Between)
Reflective listening and feedback	A. 1 to 5 years	98	4,2507	,52261	3,190	,013	A-E
	B. 6 to 10 years	69	4,0932	,62885			
	C. 11 to 15 years	120	4,0262	,64926			
	D. 16 to 20 years	102	3,9650	,76217			
	E. 21 years +	147	3,9776	,70695			
Creating positive communication climate	A. 1 to 5 years	98	4,5469	,45548	5,434	,000	A-D A-E
	B. 6 to 10 years	69	4,4522	,56636			
	C. 11 to 15 years	120	4,3333	,54777			
	D. 16 to 20 years	102	4,2510	,71681			
	E. 21 years +	147	4,2299	,62695			

According to table 5, views show significant difference in reflective listening and feedback [$F_{(4-531)} = 3,190$; $p < ,05$] and creating positive communication climate role culture [$F_{(4-531)} = 5,434$;

$p < .01$. On the other hand no significant difference was found about empathic sensitivity in the views of school managers. According to the results of Scheffe test, participants who had between 1 and 5 years seniority ($\bar{x} = 4,2507$) had more positive views than participants who had 21+ years of seniority ($\bar{x} = 3,9776$) by means of reflective listening and feedback. According to the results of Scheffe test, participants who had between 1 and 5 years seniority ($\bar{x} = 4,5469$) had more positive views than participants who had between 16 and 20 years of seniority ($\bar{x} = 4,2510$) and 21+ years of seniority ($\bar{x} = 4,2299$) by means of creating positive communication climate.

Table 6. Views of school managers about their interpersonal communication skills according to school type variable

Factors	School type	N	\bar{x}	S	F	p	Significant difference (Between)
Empathic sensitivity	A- Kindergarten	41	4,2463	,49654	3,215	,023	A-D
	B-Primary school	304	3,9888	,64762			
	C- Anatolian high school	105	4,0819	,60523			
	D- Vocational and Technical High Schools	86	3,8965	,76488			

According to table 6, views show significant difference in empathic sensitivity [$F_{(3-532)} = 3,215$; $p < .05$]. On the other hand no significant difference was found about reflective listening and feedback and creating positive communication climate in the views of school managers. According to the results of Scheffe test kindergarten managers ($\bar{x} = 4,2463$) reported more positive views about their communication skills than vocational and technical high Schools' managers ($\bar{x} = 3,8965$).

3.3. The views of teachers about school managers' interpersonal communication skills in regard to gender, education background, seniority and school type variables.

Table 7. Views of teachers about their interpersonal communication skills according to gender variable.

Factors	Gender	N	\bar{x}	sd	t	df	p
Empathic sensitivity	A- Female	418	3,8108	,71275	-2,657	746	,008
	B-Male	330	3,9461	,66355			
Reflective listening and feedback	A- Female	418	3,8455	,71969	-2,562	746	,011
	B-Male	330	3,9805	,71010			

In regard to table 7, the data show that a significant difference was found about empathic sensitivity factor [$t_{(746)} = -2,657$; $p < .01$] and reflective listening and feedback factor [$t_{(746)} = -2,562$; $p < .01$]. On the other hand, no significant difference was found about creating positive communication climate in the views of teachers. According to the data, male teachers found managers highly sufficient in capability of empathic sensitivity ($\bar{x} = 3,9461$) where female participants reported high level of capability too, but with less mean scores compared to male participants' views ($\bar{x} = 3,8108$). About capability of reflective listening and feedback skills of

school managers, again male participants reported higher scores ($\bar{x}=3,9805$) compared to female participants ($\bar{x}=3,8455$).

Table 8. Views of teachers about their interpersonal communication skills according to education background variable

Factors	Education Background	N	\bar{x}	sd	F	p	Significant difference (Between)
Empathic sensitivity	A-Pre-licence	60	3,9883	,67950	5,135	,006	C-A C-B
	B-Undergraduate	633	3,8826	,68850			
	C-Graduate	55	3,6018	,72457			
Reflective listening and feedback	A-Pre-licence	60	4,1071	,66103	6,171	,002	C-A C-B
	B-Undergraduate	633	3,9088	,71402			
	C-Graduate	55	3,6416	,75736			

According to table 8, the results of One-Way ANOVA analysis show that there is significant difference in the views about capability of empathic sensitivity [$F_{(2-745)}= 5,135$; $p<,05$] in terms of education backgrounds of managers. According to the results of Scheffe test, participants who had graduate degree thought that ($\bar{x}=3,6018$) managers had lower level capability in empathic sensitivity compared with the participants who had pre-licence ($\bar{x}=3,9883$) and undergraduate ($\bar{x}=3,8826$) degrees. There was also a significant difference in capability of reflective listening and feedback [$F_{(2-745)}= 6,171$; $p<,05$]. The results of Scheffe test show that, participants who had graduate degree thought that ($\bar{x}=3,6416$) managers had lower level capability of reflective listening and feedback skill compared with the participants who had pre-licence ($\bar{x}=4,1071$) and Undergraduate degree ($\bar{x}=3,9088$). Last of all no significant difference was found between the views of the participants about the capability of creating positive communication climate in relation to education backgrounds. The analysis shows that no significant difference was found between the views of the teachers about communication skills of the managers by means of seniority variable.

Table 9. Views of teachers about their communication skills according to school type variable

Factors	School type	N	\bar{x}	S	F	p	Significant difference (Between)
Empathic sensitivity	A- Kindergarten	55	4,2255	,68047	13,959	,000	A-C A-D
	B-Primary school	353	3,9652	,64939			
	C- Anatolian high school	174	3,6661	,71447			
	D- Vocational and Technical High Schools	166	3,7657	,69253			
Reflective listening and feedback	A- Kindergarten	55	4,3403	,61445	20,500	,000	A-B A-C A-D
	B- Primary school	353	4,0275	,66042			
	C- Anatolian high school	174	3,6724	,73889			
	D- Vocational and Technical High Schools	166	3,7444	,72806			
Creating positive communication climate	A- Kindergarten	55	4,4327	,55480	9,874	,000	A-C A-D
	B- Primary school	353	4,2419	,57510			
	C- Anatolian high school	174	3,9977	,68002			
	D- Vocational and Technical High Schools	166	4,1241	,63496			

According to table 9, views show significant difference in empathic sensitivity [$F_{(3-744)}= 13,959$; $p<,05$], Reflective listening and feedback [$F_{(3-744)}= 20,500$; $p<,05$] and creating positive communication climate [$F_{(3-744)}= 9,874$; $p<,05$]. According to the results of Scheffe test kindergarten teachers ($\bar{x}=4,2255$) reported more positive views about managers' communication skills by means of empathic sensitivity than teachers in Anatolian high schools ($\bar{x}=3,6661$) and vocational and technical high schools ($\bar{x}=3,7657$). According to the results of Scheffe test kindergarten teachers ($\bar{x}=4,3403$) reported more positive views about managers' communication skills by means of reflective listening and feedback than teachers in primary schools ($\bar{x}=4,0275$), Anatolian high schools ($\bar{x}=3,6724$) and vocational and technical high schools ($\bar{x}=3,7444$). The results of Scheffe test show also that kindergarten teachers ($\bar{x}=4,4327$) reported more positive views about managers' communication skills by means of creating positive communication climate than teachers in Anatolian high school ($\bar{x}=3,9977$) and vocational and technical high schools' managers ($\bar{x}=4,1241$)

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore school managers' interpersonal communication skills in the current state in Turkey. For this purpose the views of school managers and teachers about their interpersonal communication skills in relation to their position; the differences in school managers' views about their interpersonal communication skills by means of gender, education background, seniority and school type variable and finally the differences in teachers' views about school managers' interpersonal communication skills by means of gender, education background, seniority and school type variable were sought.

As a result school managers and teachers reported that skills of creating positive communication climate, reflective listening and feedback and empathic sensitivity were highly exerted by the managers. Ağaoğlu, Altınkurt, Yılmaz and Karaöse, (2012 p.165) also reported high communication skills for managers. in the studies of Sabancı, Şahin and Kasalak (2013, p.59; 2014, p.181) teachers' viewed their principals' as honest, fair, open mindedness, democratic, valuable, equal, considerate and objective treatment to the staff; gentle, friendly, polite, emotional; demonstrating positive human relations, supportive, reflecting personal communication style and successful in setting two way communication processes. This finding is significant in that there is strong evidence in the literature that as Coyle (1993, pp.4-5) asserted, members who reflect communication skills in organizations well were more productive than members who do not and the better the communication skills of a person is the more likely to promote to higher positions in the organization. The findings draw us to think that imposing effective communication skills is likely to be one and perhaps the most important reasons of participant managers' promoting to this position. Additionally, communication is a signifier of a manager's performance (Penley, Alexander, Jernigan and Henwood, 1991, p.69). In regard to managers' views, the findings show that managers were effective in communication their subordinates with slight differences in their views based on the demographic variables. According to the results male managers found managers more sufficient in capability of empathic sensitivity, capability of reflective listening and feedback and creating positive communication climate compared to female participants. Research findings show that school climate is positively associated with positive communication effectiveness. For example, Halaway (2005, p.334) asserted that where effective communication between school principals and teachers exists better school climate was expected. Managers who had 1-5 years seniority had more positive views than participants who had 21+ years of seniority in reflective listening and feedback and then participants who had 16-20 years of seniority and 21+ years of seniority in creating positive communication climate. There is a need to seek for the reasons lying behind the views based on seniority but among many likely reasons what Robson and Tourish (2005, p.213) asserted worth considering. They stated first that senior managers who over-work are even less likely to have the time for reflection. Second, the absence of adequate upward communication may blind managers to the full nature of their problems, which in turn guides the search for solutions. Last of all kindergarten managers reported more positive views about their communication skills than managers in vocational and technical high schools. According to the data, male teachers found managers more sufficient in capability of empathic sensitivity and of reflective listening and feedback skills compared to female participants' views.

But Şimşek and Altinkurt (2009, p.13), unlikely, found that female participants had higher scores for managers' communication skills. This difference is likely to come out because of the sample. In their study homogeneity assumption was violated and non-parametric tests were conducted (27 female and 75 male).

In regard to teachers' views the findings show that teachers also perceived positive communication skills in their managers with slight differences in their views based on the demographic variables. Çınar (2010, p.267) also found that teachers thought that their principals were effective in using communication skills. On the other hand, Şekerci and Aypay (2009, p. 149) reported that teachers evaluated their principals more adequate in quality consideration, technical skills, verbal communication and taking responsibility but less adequate in listening, human relations, conflict management, and motivation skills. Teachers who had graduate degree thought that managers had lower level capability in empathic sensitivity and reflective listening and feedback skills compared with the participants who had pre-licence and undergraduate degrees accordingly. Kindergarten teachers reported more positive views about managers' communication skills by means of empathic sensitivity than teachers in Anatolian high school and vocational and technical high schools. Kindergarten teachers reported more positive views about managers' communication skills by means of reflective listening and feedback than teachers in primary schools, Anatolian high schools and vocational and technical high schools. Kindergarten teachers reported more positive views about managers' communication skills by means of creating positive communication climate than teachers in Anatolian high schools and vocational and technical high schools.

Consequently, school managers' communication skills in empathic sensitivity, reflective listening and feedback and creating positive communication climate seem to have a satisfactory level in the current state. This is hopeful in that this is likely to mean that they engage in new communicational techniques and technologies for their personal and professional development. This study focused on the current state of managers' communication skills based on the perceptions of managers and teachers. On the other hand we still need to seek for the awareness about the new communication technologies and to what extent these technologies were used by both parties. Some recommendations based on the related literature also prove a standpoint for consideration. For example Aamodt (2010, p. 416) stated that interpersonal communication can be improved. It is essential to take courses in public speaking, writing and interpersonal communication. Hunt, Tourish and Hargie (2000, p.120) recommended greater communication skills training for managers and finally Demirtaş and Özer (2014 p.14) asserted that in in-service training programmes communication should not be avoided.

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