



# Communication Skills and Time Management as the Predictors of Student Motivation

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines free time management and communication skills as the predictors of university students' motivation. The study sample includes 610 undergraduate students in a variety of programs. Of the 610 students, 441 are female, 169 are male, and the mean age is 20.1 years. Their GPA averages range from 1.83 to 3.96 on a 4.0 scale. Data collection tools included three instruments. The relationship between university students' communication skills, free time management, and motivation levels are determined using correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis. The findings show that there are positive and meaningful relationships between students' motivation and the subscales of communication skills and free time management. These subscales include goal setting and technique, free time attitude, scheduling, evaluating, respect, ability of expression, desire, democratic attitude, value, and obstacles. In addition, a regression analysis shows that students' motivation is predicted by their free time management and communication skills.

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## 1. Introduction

Organizations are evaluated based on the quality of their products, customer satisfaction, and professional attitude. In that sense, all the organizations have certain missions to accomplish. As one these organizations, schools take serious measures to comply with their mission and vision statements. They recognize and understand the importance of creating a positive school climate that motivates all school members to achieve targeted goals. Based on the objectives of the educational institutions, students need to be encouraged and motivated in order to establish set goals for accomplishment. To increase student motivation, school administrators and teachers must be willing to spend a great amount of time and energy to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of educational delivery system.

There are several approaches that may increase student motivation. These approaches include but are not limited to making the learning activities interesting, promoting a growth mindset, developing meaningful relationships, creating a learning community, establishing high expectations, and being able to inspire students. Putting these factors aside, helping students with their communication skills and teaching them on how to beneficially manage their free time may have a positive impact on their motivation as well.

There are several learning theories focusing on explaining the motivation of students. However, it seems difficult to locate a specific theoretical framework in order to explain the concept of motivation (Yenilmez & Çemrek, 2008). Basically, most of the theories stress the patterns of motivation through the acts of rewards and punishments of the students within the school settings. Wentzel and Wigfield (2007) suggested that improving student motivation would also affect their social competencies and academic performance. In line with this

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argument, this study employs social cognitive theory (SCT) and self-determination theory (SDT) to explain the effects of different variables on student motivation. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) was used to explain how motivational factors have any associations with students' social competencies. The theory explains that learning takes place in social contexts in which the reciprocal interaction of the human, environment, and behavior is inevitable (Bandura, 1989). With that in mind, learning how to improve the communication skills and manage free time may increase the motivation level of the students. In addition, a theory of motivation, namely self-determination theory (SDT) was also employed to explain the effects of communication skills and free time management on student motivation. This theory is a contemporary one as researchers use to determine how factors in social contexts support or undermine a person's motivation (Kahn et al., 2002).

### 1.1. Motivation

The concept of motivation includes an inner state of human being that channels and directs behaviors towards targeted goals (Musaazi, 2006). Gardner (1985) explained that motivation involves effort, aims, attaining goals, and behaviors towards tasks. Motivation has goal seeking acts and a desire for achievement (Ames & Ames, 1989; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). It is the most influential of all factors that enables students to make choices which will eventually affect their performances at the end (Francis et al., 2004; Keller, 1983). The existence of motivation comes with instigated and sustained goal-oriented tasks (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Motivation is considered as an internal force arouses and maintains behaviors over the time (Thokildsen, Nicholls, Bates, Brankis, & DeBott, 2002; Woolfolk, 2004; Yorks, 1976).

Many factors affect student motivation in schools. Some of these factors include poverty, social disadvantages, family situations, poor conditions in schools, and lack of some personal skills (Robinson, 2017). Educational researchers and practitioners state that the most critical factor for student achievement is motivation (Maulana, Opdenakker, den Brok, & Bosker, 2011; Orhan Özen, 2017). From this perspective, schools and educational leaders need to pay more attention to the factors of motivation to establish a concrete base for student learning and achievement (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Slavin, 2013; Wang & Eccles, 2013; Yazıcı, 2012).

Robinson (2017) suggested that improving student motivation was possible through improving the quality of education system. The evidence of quality education is viable when students learn how to establish a control system over their life. If they know how to have strong peer interactions and wisely use their free time (Opdenakker, Maulana, & den Brok, 2012), their level of motivation may increase. Having said that, educational leaders have to know what types factors have either positive or negative effects on students' motivation (Deniz, Avşaroğlu, & Fidan, 2006; Ünal & Gürsel, 2015).

There are certain things, behaviors, or approaches that diminish student motivation (Kearney, Plax, Hays, & Ivey, 1991). Lack of communication, disrespectful criticism, lack of sensitivity, bias, verbal abuse, lack of feedback and time management, and negative attitudes towards students decrease student motivation in the classroom (Gorham & Christophel, 1992). Gorham and Millette (1997) emphasized that teachers' poor communication skills with their students result in low student motivation. (Yan, 2009). Lamb (2017) pointed out that ignoring students' identity, not looking friendly, providing monotonous learning activities, and not setting appropriate learning goals and clear instructions (Ünal, 2012), reduce motivation among students. Lack of communication between teachers and students may turn learning activities into the monotonous ones, thus reducing their level of motivation (Ünal & Gürsel, 2015).

On the other hand, some behaviors occurring in the learning settings may have a positive impact on student motivation. An effective communication between teachers and students will help students perform well with higher levels of motivation (Passini, Molinari, & Speltini, 2015). Student motivation is related to teachers, who are able to create a positive atmosphere and become a role model (Erben Keçici, Beyhan, & Sönmez Ektem, 2013). In a study, Dörnyei (2001) found that the enthusiasm of the teachers, their commitment and expectations to the learning of the students, and their relationships have an association with their students' motivation. Even ways of teaching may affect student motivation. Lamb and Wedel (2014) explained that innovation in teaching methodology increased the motivation of Indonesian students than Chinese ones. In addition, Zhang (2007) found that the deterioration of students' motivation in the USA, Japan, and Germany was more associated with teacher behavior than the one in China. As a result, exploring the motivation to learn, skills and knowledge required to be successful in school life, helping them maintain their motivation (Gorham & Millette, 1997; Rehman & Haider, 2013; Slavin, 2013).

## **1.2. Communication Skills**

There are different definitions of the concept of communication in the literature. Oskay (1993) told that the word communication refers to being socialized and togetherness. Budak (2005) stressed that it meant knowledge, symbols, signs, and behaviors. Köknel (2005) said that communication is the process of information coming through a channel. It is related to its functions which are very effective in the socialization process (Gürgen, 1997). It is necessary for establishing relationships and obtaining new knowledge.

Effective communication is a crucial element that helps students to engage in many activities (Ntoumanis, Queded, Reeve, & Cheon, 2018). Stakeholders in education must be aware of the fact that communication failures in the schools may create deficiencies in student motivation and learning (Dökmen, 2002). This situation occurs due to lack of a common language between students and teachers, or students' peers. As a matter of fact, students need to establish good communication skills to avoid such problems. Communication skill is of great importance in establishing a correct and effective communication, eliminating or reducing communication conflicts (Akvardar et al, 2005). It is related to students' speaking, writing, reading, listening, and thinking skills (Oya, Manalo, & Greenwood, 2004).

In his study, Ceyhan (2006) found that communication skills include answering questions by reflecting the speaker's emotions and thoughts, asking open questions that are not directing, responding correctly to messages, being willing to listen, making eye contact, concentrating on understanding, and giving correct feedback. Some of these may be considered as verbal or non-verbal skills (Cunningham, 1977; Maletasta & Izard, 1987; Minskoff, 1980). When students know how to use both skills, they would be able to ask effective questions, make summaries, and make sense of what is taught in the classroom, thus increasing their performance towards learning (Korkut, 1996).

In a study, Korkut (2005) found that students who have effective communication skills feel more enthusiastic towards communicating with their peers in social settings. Yüksel-Şahin (1997), in an experimental study, looked at the change in the communication skills of university students and found that those with such skills are more inclined to participating in personal interactions and activities. Researchers (Işık, 1993; Özgüt, 1991) suggest that communication skills may be taught to students by school administrators or teachers as they can increase student engagement and motivation (Demirci, 2002). Parents and educational leaders need to know that teaching communication skills to students at younger ages would be more beneficial than teaching such skills to those with older ages (Berglund, Eriksson, & Westerlund, 2005). Similarly, Malatesta and Izard (1987) found that people at younger ages are more motivated and successful in analyzing the codes of communication than the older ones.

## **1.3. Time Management**

The concept of time has been defined in many ways (Üstün, Kalkavan, & Demirel, 2016). Time cannot be perceived by human senses and it includes philosophical, psychological, and sociological dimensions (Bayramlı, 2017). Time can be expressed as an abstract concept (Kingır, 2007) as it is an uninterrupted process in which events come from past to present and follow each other to the future (Smith, 2000). Time also means the perceptions of human being based on the events that occur consecutively (Gürbüz & Aydın, 2012). Time is a true treasure that is presented to people and necessary to know its value well. That is why a successful management of time becomes an imperative for everyone. Making good use of time puts our lives in balance or helps us identify the source of the imbalance. Being aware of using time is the key to continually improving the way we work and produce (Ağduman, 2014).

Although using time efficiently is a skill that everyone needs, many people will not have this skill and will have to settle for less than what they can do throughout their lives (Jones, 2000). This situation brings in the question of whether people are able to manage their free time or not. Tezcan (1994) describes free time as people getting rid of all necessities or burdens and voluntarily dealing with an activity. It takes place when individual is absolutely independent and free. Godbey (1999) defined the concept of free time as the time period that one can use freely without being exposed to the physical and cultural influence of external factors. According to Samdahl (2016), free time is a special definition of a situation as it is not earned, but it can be processed and lived. In addition, Zelinski (2004) defined free time as the time required to achieve the necessary things in our life. These definitions demonstrate and claim the importance of free time management.

Studies on free time management have been conducted by researchers since 1960s to emphasize importance of this situation. However, most people seem not to be aware of the importance of how they should use their free time (Hickerson & Beggs, 2007). Shaikh and Deschamps (2006) found that most of the students did not use their free time efficiently to keep up with their daily chores. Mannel and Kleiber (1997) pointed out that free time management is a behavioral strategy required to overcome the factors that limit the leisure time due to the insufficiency of existing time. Therefore, Goll, Charlesworth, Scior, and Stott (2015) stated that using free time effectively may be considered as a sign for wisdom.

In a study conducted on undergraduate students, Wang (2019) found that students who know how to manage and wisely use their free time are not easily bored. Studies show that students are bored due to lack of not knowing how to use their free time may be involved in unwanted situations. Some of these include extreme and addictive behaviors and substance use (Biolcati, Mancini, & Trombini, 2018; Weybright, Caldwell, Ram, Smith, & Wegner, 2015). Another study found that students with lack of free time management skills are prone to wasting their valuable time on useless tasks (Hickerson & Beggs, 2007). Therefore, the stakeholder needs to create opportunities for students to learn how to efficiently use their free time. Caldwell, Baldwin, Walls, and Smith (2004) found that after participating in a training that taught time management, students were able to participate into more arousing activities. Theoretically, such assumptions are in line with the framework that different variables may affect motivation (Bandura, 1989).

Based on the literature review above, there are some indications showing the relationship of students' motivation with their time management and communication skills. The literature suggests that students, who poorly manage their time are prone to comply with the assignments and responsibilities on time and that is why they may feel less enthusiastic to engage and communicate with their friends (Biolcati et al., 2018; Caldwell et al., 2004; Hickerson & Beggs, 2007; Weybright et al., 2015). Research also indicates that the existence of useful time management skills would increase students' motivation, performance, and academic outcomes (Elias, Ping, & Abdullah, 2011; Karaman & Watson, 2017; Watson & Watson, 2016). However, there is lack of research showing students' communication skills and free time management as the predictors of their motivation particularly in the context of Turkey. Knowing about such factors may help educators, students, and other stakeholders in education to be aware of the things that affect the level of motivation. Thus, the study has attempted to reveal the predictor roles of communication skills and free time management in such context and aimed to make a contribution to the current literature. In that sense this research poses two hypotheses: (i) Free time management and communication skills are positively associated with motivation. (ii) Free time management and communication skills are the predictors of motivation.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Design**

This study was designed as a correlational research. Its first goal includes examining the relationship among students' time management, communication skills, and motivation. Secondly, the study is aimed to determine the predictor roles of time management and communication skills on undergraduate students' motivation.

### **2.2. Research Sample**

The study included 610 undergraduate students; 441 were female and 169 were male (Table 1). The participants were determined using a convenient sampling method. It took place at a university located at Western Black Sea Region in Turkey. The teacher candidates were enrolled in six different education programs; Turkish education (n = 137), school counseling (n = 180), science education (n = 44), elementary education (n = 109), special education (n = 60), and pre-school (n = 80). There were 218 freshmen, 122 sophomore, 176 junior, and 94 senior students in the study. The student GPAs ranged from 1.83 to 3.96 on a 4.0 scale.

**Table 1.** Frequency and Percent Distributions of Various Features of the Participants

Features	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	
Gender	Male	Female						
	n	169	441				610	
	%	27.7	72.3				100	
Grades	Freshman	Sophomore		Junior	Senior			
	n	218	122	176	94		610	
	%	35.7	20.0	28.9	15.4		100	
Program	Turkish Education	School Counseling	Science Education	Elementary Education	Special Education	Pre-School		
	n	137	180	44	109	60	80	610
	%	22.5	29.5	7.2	17.9	9.8	13.1	100

## 2.4. Data Collection Tools

For data collection, three instruments were used in the study. The instruments included The Free Time Management Scale (FTMS), the Communication Skills Scale (CSS), and the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS). Each scale was used to find any associations available between free time management, communication skills, and motivation.

The Free Time Management Scale (FTMS) was first developed by Wei-Ching Wang, Chin-Hsung Kao, Tzung-Cheng Huan, Chung-Chi Wu (2011). It was then adapted to Turkish language by Akgül and Karaküçük (2015). The scale is consisted of 15 items and four subscales. The dimensions of the instrument were called free time attitude (six items), scheduling (six items), goal setting and technique (six items), and evaluating (three items). The FTMS is a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = absolutely disagree to 5 = absolutely agree). Akgül and Karaküçük (2015) measured the reliability coefficients of the instrument. They found Cronbach alpha coefficient as .81 for goal setting and technique, .79 for free time attitude, .73 for scheduling, and .71 for evaluating. Researchers also found the reliability coefficients for overall instrument as .83. As for this study, alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient was found to be .80 for the overall scale. It was also measured for the subscales and was found to be .79 for goal setting and technique, .77 for free time attitude, .81 for scheduling, and .79 for evaluating. In addition, the researcher used Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to confirm the structure of the scale. The findings from CFA confirmed that the model for the structure was acceptable ( $\chi^2= 244.759$ ,  $df= 89$ ,  $\chi^2 /sd= 2.750$ ,  $GFI= .91$ ,  $AGFI= .90$ ,  $RMSEA= .061$ ,  $CFI=.90$ ,  $SRMR= .032$ ,  $TLI= .92$ ).

Secondly, the Communication Skills Scale (CSS) was used for data collection. This 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = absolutely disagree to 5 = absolutely agree) was developed by Karagöz and Kösterelioğlu (2008). The construct included 25 items with six subscales. The subscales were called respect (five items), ability of expression (five items), desire (four items), democratic attitude (three items), value (four items), and obstacles (four items). Researchers found the instrument's Cronbach alpha coefficient as .88. In this study, the instrument's Cronbach alpha coefficient was measured as .86. As for its subscales, the internal consistency coefficients respectively were  $\alpha=.88$ ,  $\alpha=.93$ ,  $\alpha=.86$ ,  $\alpha=.90$ ,  $\alpha=.89$ , and  $\alpha=.88$  for respect, ability of expression, desire, democratic attitude, value, and obstacles. Also, CFA was carried out for this research group as well and it was seen that structure of the scale was confirmed for this research ( $\chi^2= 528.613$ ,  $sd= 248$ ,  $\chi^2 /sd= 2.131$ ,  $GFI= .93$ ,  $AGFI= .92$ ,  $RMSEA= .044$ ,  $CFI=.94$ ,  $SRMR= .039$ ,  $TLI= .90$ ).

The final instrument used in this study was called the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS). The scale was developed by Gömleksiz and Serhatlioğlu (2014). The scale included 28 items and seven subscales. However, in the study, the researcher only took the overall scale into account to determine the relationships between free time management, communication skills, and motivation. After the instrument was constructed, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the overall scale was calculated to be .87. On the other hand, for the current study, the alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient for overall instrument was measured as .89. The researcher of this study also confirmed the model of the construct through CFA. The results suggested that that the model for this construct was acceptable ( $\chi^2= 1427.286$ ,  $df= 371$ ,  $\chi^2 /sd= 3.847$ ,  $GFI= .90$ ,  $AGFI= .91$ ,  $RMSEA= .077$ ,  $CFI=.91$ ,  $SRMR= .044$ ,  $TLI= .91$ ).

## 2.5. Data Analysis

After the necessary permissions were obtained from the department of ethics, the data collection tools were used to gather data from the participants. Before research took in place, pre-study folders were formed to collect information about the participants' identification numbers, ages, grade levels, and GPA scores. Students were informed about the purpose of the study in which they voluntarily participated. To ensure confidentiality, all the folders were kept in locked cabinets.

In addition, the tests of normality and homogeneity were conducted before addressing the assumptions of multiple regression. For the normality, Kolmogorov- Smirnov test was employed and the test results ( $p > .05$ ) showed that the assumptions of normality were met. For homogeneity, Levene's test was conducted, and the findings ensured the homogeneity of variances. As the study participants were consisted of from six different programs and four levels, an ANCOVA test was employed to ensure that all groups were equivalent. After conducting ANCOVA, the results indicated that the groups were equivalent as the findings from these tests suggested that all assumptions were met ( $p > .05$ ). In addition, the Mahalanobis distance was used to examine the outliers. Tabachnick and Fidell (2001) define an outlier as an observed case that demonstrates abnormal distance from the majority of values in a sample from a population. The same researchers suggested that a case is an outlier which involves a value of  $D^2$ , which is .001 or less. According to such approach, three of the cases were labeled as outliers and then deleted. Moreover, in determining multicollinearity, Variance inflation factors (VIF) were used (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). The VIF indicated values less than 10 suggesting that there was no severe multicollinearity in the study. After all of the assumptions were met, a multiple regression analysis, which included a forward selection was conducted. In the study, the independent variables were the subscales of free time management and communication skills, and the dependent variable was motivation.

For data analysis, SPSS 20.0 was used. In order to test both Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were employed. For testing Hypothesis 1, Pearson's correlation analyses were used to determine the relationships between free time management, communication skills, and motivation levels of the participants. In regard to testing Hypothesis 2, a multiple regression analysis was used to find out about the predictive role of free time management and communication skills on motivation.

## 3. Findings

In this study, the variables such as internal consistency coefficients, means, and inter correlations are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics, Alphas, and Inter-Correlations of the Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Goal setting and technique	1										
2. Free time attitude	,25 <sup>a</sup>	1									
3. Scheduling	,29 <sup>a</sup>	,16 <sup>a</sup>	1								
4. Evaluating	,72 <sup>a</sup>	,18 <sup>a</sup>	,17 <sup>a</sup>	1							
5. Respect	,23 <sup>a</sup>	,11 <sup>a</sup>	,12 <sup>a</sup>	,18 <sup>a</sup>	1						
6. Ability of expression	,23 <sup>a</sup>	,17 <sup>a</sup>	,11 <sup>a</sup>	,15 <sup>a</sup>	,76 <sup>a</sup>	1					
7. Desire	,20 <sup>a</sup>	,11 <sup>a</sup>	,13 <sup>a</sup>	,11 <sup>a</sup>	,74 <sup>a</sup>	,77 <sup>a</sup>	1				
8. Democratic attitude	,20 <sup>a</sup>	,10 <sup>a</sup>	,12 <sup>a</sup>	,13 <sup>a</sup>	,69 <sup>a</sup>	,68 <sup>a</sup>	,67 <sup>a</sup>	1			
9. Value	,19 <sup>a</sup>	,09 <sup>b</sup>	,07	,17 <sup>a</sup>	,75 <sup>a</sup>	,74 <sup>a</sup>	,71 <sup>a</sup>	,72 <sup>a</sup>	1		
10. Obstacles	-,03	,07	,09 <sup>b</sup>	-,08 <sup>b</sup>	,30 <sup>a</sup>	,33 <sup>a</sup>	,34 <sup>a</sup>	,23 <sup>a</sup>	,30 <sup>a</sup>	1	
11. Motivation	,33 <sup>a</sup>	,15 <sup>a</sup>	,12 <sup>a</sup>	,26 <sup>a</sup>	,41 <sup>a</sup>	,40 <sup>a</sup>	,36 <sup>a</sup>	,34 <sup>a</sup>	,37 <sup>a</sup>	,20 <sup>a</sup>	1
Mean	3,33	3,91	3,76	2,99	3,49	3,64	3,76	3,61	3,55	4,24	3,65
Cronbach's a	,73	,82	,71	,81	,70	,65	,68	,75	,74	,72	,54

Note. a:  $p < .01$ ; b:  $p < .05$ .

Based on the findings on Table 2, respect ( $r = .41$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and ability of expression ( $r = .40$ ,  $p < .01$ ) had a positive and meaningful relationship with motivation at medium level. Goal setting and technique ( $r = .33$ ,  $p < .01$ ), evaluating ( $r = .26$ ,  $p < .01$ ), desire ( $r = .36$ ,  $p < .01$ ), democratic attitude ( $r = .34$ ,  $p < .01$ ), value ( $r = .37$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and obstacles ( $r = .20$ ,  $p < .01$ ) had a positive and weak relationship with motivation. The findings also indicated that Free time attitude ( $r = .15$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and Scheduling ( $r = .12$ ,  $p < .01$ ) had a positive and quite weak relationship with motivation.

In order to determine the predictors of motivation, a regression analysis was performed. The results of the analysis showed that the significant predictors of motivation included the subscales such as goal setting and technique ( $p < .05$ ), respect ( $p < .05$ ), ability of expression ( $p < .05$ ), and obstacles ( $p < .05$ ). On the other hand, as seen in Table 3, free time attitude ( $p > .05$ ), scheduling ( $p > .05$ ), evaluating ( $p > .05$ ), desire ( $p > .05$ ), democratic attitude ( $p > .05$ ), and value ( $p > .05$ ) did not significantly predict motivation. As soon as the analysis of this test was done, a multiple regression analysis was performed using the forward model as a type of stepwise regression. This model was used in order to start adding from the most significant predictor to the least significant predictor in the regression model.

**Table 3.** Summary of Linear Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Motivation

Variables	B	Standard error of B	Beta	t	p
(Constant)	1,57	,18		8,77	,00
Goal setting and technique	,15	,04	,21	3,89	,00
Free time attitude	,02	,02	,03	1,02	,30
Scheduling	-,01	,02	-,01	-,09	,92
Evaluating	,03	,03	,05	1,08	,28
Respect	,12	,05	,16	2,53	,01
Ability of expression	,09	,05	,11	1,70	,04
Desire	,01	,05	,01	,11	,91
Democratic attitude	,01	,04	,01	,26	,78
Value	,05	,04	,07	1,15	,24
Obstacles	,07	,02	,09	2,56	,01

Note.  $p < .05$ .

The results in Table 3 were analyzed in order to determine subscales that explain motivation. For that purpose, respect was entered in the equation first, accounting for 16.9% of the variance in predicting motivation ( $R^2 = .170$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .169$ ,  $F_{1,608} = 124.728$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Second, Goal setting and technique was entered accounting for an additional 6.1% variance ( $R^2 = .062$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .061$ ,  $F_{2,607} = 91.845$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Third, ability of expression was entered accounting for an additional 1.2% variance ( $R^2 = .014$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .012$ ,  $F_{3,606} = 65.781$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Lastly, obstacles were entered, accounting for an additional .7% variance ( $R^2 = .017$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .007$ ,  $F_{4,605} = 51.534$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

**Table 4.** Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Motivation

Model	Variables	B	Standard error of B	Beta	t*
Model 1	(Constant)	2,53	,10		24,63
	Respect	,32	,02	,41	11,16
Model 2	(Constant)	2,05	,12		17,10
	Respect	,27	,02	,35	9,66
	Goal setting and technique	,19	,02	,25	7,00
Model 3	(Constant)	1,89	,12		14,82
	Respect	,17	,04	,21	3,97
	Goal setting and technique	,18	,02	,24	6,74
	Ability of expression	,15	,04	,18	3,27
Model 4	(Constant)	1,66	,15		10,74
	Respect	,15	,04	,20	3,70
	Goal setting and technique	,19	,02	,25	7,06
	Ability of expression	,13	,04	,15	2,80
	Obstacles	,07	,02	,09	2,62

\*  $p < .01$ .

The initial regression model included factors including goal setting and technique, free time attitude, scheduling, evaluating, respect, ability of expression, desire, democratic attitude, value, and obstacles. However, the final regression design included only respect, goal setting and technique, ability of expression, and obstacles (Table 4). The final model did not include free time attitude, scheduling, evaluating, desire, democratic attitude, and value as they were not statistically significant factors. The significant factors including respect, goal setting and technique, ability of expression, and obstacles were able to predict the variances of motivation by 24.9%. In the final model it was also evident that the value of the standardized beta

coefficient was found to be significant for respect ( $\beta = .20, p < .01$ ), goal setting and technique ( $\beta = .25, p < .01$ ), ability of expression ( $\beta = .15, p < .01$ ), and obstacles ( $\beta = .09, p < .01$ ).

#### 4. Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

In this research, firstly, the relationship between university students' communication skills, free time management, and motivation levels were examined. The findings suggested that there were positive and meaningful relationships between communication skills, free time management, and motivation of the students. In the study, the subscales of free time management included goal setting and technique, free time attitude, scheduling, and evaluating. On the other hand, the subscales of communication skills were respect, ability of expression, desire, democratic attitude, value, and obstacles.

The study results showed that the relationships between motivation and other variables such as respect and ability of expression were at medium level. Akvardar et al. (2005) found similar results in their study. They found that people with effective communication skills were good at eliminating communication conflicts. Individuals, who know how to respectfully speak and listen the others are motivated to develop their interpersonal relationships in the society (Oya et al., 2004). It may be inferred that when people they are listened and paid serious attention with respect, they would feel more enthusiastic and motivated to take initiatives in certain tasks. The findings of the study also demonstrated that the relationships between motivation and desire, democratic attitude, value, and obstacles were at weak level. Even though the relationships between these variables were significant, they seemed to be at quite weak levels. Ceyhan (2006) contends that people, who are not spending enough efforts to understand and make eye contact while communicating with others may fail to provide correct feedbacks on issues they discuss. This situation may leave a disappointing remark on creating motivation among them (Cunningham, 1977; Maletasta & Izard, 1987; Minskoff, 1980). This may even result in decreasing student performance and achievement in the class (Korkut, 1996).

The study findings indicated that the motivation level of the students had significantly weak relationships with goal setting and technique, free time attitude, scheduling, and evaluating as well. This relationship is found to be positive. In line with this, Ağduman (2014) found that people, who are aware of the importance of their free time are inclined and motivated to keep their life in balance. Conversely, those who lack to understand the value of their free time are doomed to avoid dealing with their necessities or burdens Tezcan (1994). Supporting this idea, students may feel reluctant to participate in learning activities in the classroom when they mainly waste their valuable times on unnecessary things rather than doing their homework, participating in team work tasks, and engaging in meaningful community events (Biolcati et al., 2018; Weybright et al., 2015). Educators need to realize that students get more motivated when they actually know how to make use of most of their free time (Deniz et al., 2006; Godbey, 1999; Jones, 2000; Ünal & Gürsel, 2015). That is why they would feel obliged to achieve the necessary things in their life (Zelinski, 2004).

In the second part of this research, the predictive role of free time management and communication skills on motivation was investigated. The findings showed that both free time management and communication skills of the students were able to predict their level of motivation. Having said that as a subscale of free time management; goal setting and technique and as the subscales of communication skills; respect, ability of expression, and obstacles were the predictors of motivation. This situation is in line with both social cognitive theory (SCT) and self-determination theory (SDT). The theories explain that environmental factors have effects on motivation (Bandura, 1989; Kahn et al., 2002; Wentzel & Wigfield, 2007; Yenilmez & Çemrek, 2008). Confirming that the factors of free time management and communication skills in the study explained students' motivation.

Variables such as respect, ability of expression, and obstacles were the dimensions of communication skills that were able to explain the variances of student motivation by %18.8. This finding is parallel to the findings of Opdenakker et al. (2012) that there is an association between setting strong communication skills and wisely using free time, thus increasing the level of motivation. Such results confirm that students who know how to make their free time beneficial and wisely communicate would feel powerful and motivated to take care of things on time and take certain responsibilities. However, when individuals fail to properly manage their time and communicate with other without respectful criticism, hardly would they find a ground for motivation



(Gorham & Christophel, 1992; Kearney et al., 1991). Similarly, Gorham and Millette (1997) found that poor communication skills between teachers and students would end up with decreased student motivation.

On the other hand, goal setting and technique as a dimension of free time management explained the variances of student motivation by %6.1. This finding suggests that being motivated is related to planning things ahead. Parallel to this finding, Lamb (2017) found that not setting appropriate goals in life may reduce individuals' level of motivation. Such result shows that people need to understand the value of free time to accomplish things (Hickerson & Beggs, 2007). Researchers (Goll et al., 2015) indicated that effective use of free time meant as signs for wisdom. Students without skills and knowledge of how to logically use their free time would have difficult times to deal with daily tasks (Mannel & Kleiber, 1997; Wang, 2019). This similar to the findings of Shaikh and Deschamps (2006) as they contend that students lacking skills of managing their free time may fall behind in their daily chores.

In conclusion, the study findings showed that there was a relationship between students' communication skills, free time management, and motivation levels. In addition, they suggested that some of the factors associated with communication skills and free time management of students were the predictors of motivation. Focusing on the success of their schools, the administrators need to teach students how to manage their free time. School leaders should also create opportunities and environments for students to improve their communication skills. Considering that free time management and communication skills increase the motivation of students, it will be beneficial to students that school administrators, teachers, and parents should have enough knowledge about such factors. For that matter it is recommended that the Ministry of National Education must ensure that this deficiency is eliminated with in-service training courses for all school leaders.

This study includes some limitations and suggestions. First, as the number of the participants was low for this study, the number of teacher candidates may be increased to increase the generalizability of this research. Second limitation includes the fact that the participants were only from a public university. The ones from the private universities should be included in the study as well in order to make comparative analysis between the public and private sector. As for suggestions; in addition to examining the relationship of student motivation with free time management and communication skills, concepts such as school climate and culture, organizational leadership, students' self-efficacy, teacher autonomy, and burnout can be studied as well. In addition, as this research was carried out using quantitative methods, both qualitative or mixed methods may be used to conduct research not just at higher education level, but also at pre-school, elementary school, and high school level.

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