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MÜCADELE SPORLARINDA ANTRENÖR- SPORCU İLİŞKİLERİ VE LİDERLİĞİN YAŞ, CİNSİYET VE KATILIM SÜRESİ DEĞİŞKENLERİ AÇISINDAN İNCELENMESİ ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, mücadele sporlarına katılan bireylerin antrenörleriyle ilişkilerini ve sporcuların antrenörlerinden algıladıkları liderlik tarzını cinsiyet, yaş ve mücadele sporuna katılım süresi değişkenlerine göre incelemektir. Araştırma grubu, 132 erkek, 72 kadın toplam 204 mücadele sporuna katılan bireyden oluşmaktadır. Basit rastele örnekleme yöntemiyle veri toplanmıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak, Chelladurai ve Saleh (1980)⁸ tarafından geliştirilen Spor için Liderlik Ölçeği'nin Sporcunun Lider Davranışını Algılaması Formu ve Jowett ve Ntoumanis (2004)²³ tarafından geliştirilen Antrenör - Sporcu ilişkileri *Envanteri* kullanılmıştır. Veri analizinde tanımlayıcı istatistikler ve tek yönlü varyans analizi (ANOVA) kullanılmıştır. ANOVA bulgularına göre erkek sporcular, 18 yaşından büyük sporcular ve daha deneyimli sporcuların antrenörlerinden daha fazla otoriter davranış algıladığı saptanmıştır. Ayrıca daha az deneyimli sporcular daha fazla pozitif geri bildirim algılamaktadırlar. Antrenör-sporcu ilişkileri envanterinde, sadece yaşa göre anlamlı fark bulunmuştur. Daha genç sporcular antrenörlerinden daha fazla yakınlık algılamaktadırlar. Sonuç olarak, yaş, cinsiyet ve katılım süresi değişkenleri antrenörün liderliğini algılamada belirleyicidir. Bu bulgu antrenörlerin veya spor psikologlarının gruplarını daha etkin olarak tanımlarında ve yönlendirmelerinde fayda sağlayabilir.

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EXAMINATION OF COACH-ATHLETE RELATIONSHIPS AND LEADERSHIP IN TERMS OF AGE, GENDER, AND PARTICIPATION DURATION VARIABLES IN MARTIAL ARTS

ABSTRACT

Aim of this study was to examine martial arts athletes' relationships with their coaches and the perceived leadership styles of their coaches in terms of gender, age and duration of their participation in martial arts. The sample consisted of 132 male, 72 female and 204 in total martial arts participants. Data were collected by simple random sampling method. Perception of Leadership Behavior part of Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) developed by Chelladurai and Saleh (1980)⁸, and Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q) developed by Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004)²³ were employed as data collection tools. ANOVA findings depicted that male, older than 18 years old and experienced athletes perceived more autocratic behavior of their coaches than female, 17 and younger, and less experienced athletes. In addition, less experienced athletes perceived more positive feedback than experienced athletes. In Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire, only significant difference was detected in age. Younger athletes felt their coaches closer to them than older counterparts. In conclusion; age, gender, and participation duration are determinants of differences in perceiving coaches' leadership. This information can benefit sports psychologists or coaches on identifying and instructing their groups effectively.

Keywords: Martial arts, coach-athlete relationships, sports leadership, coaching

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership has been one of the most studied variables in sports sciences. Leadership can be defined as “the behavior that affects groups or individuals to accomplish a goal”⁽⁹⁾. Leading as the coach is an important behavioral process that has an impact on several concepts such as; performance achievement and satisfaction^(6, 19), motivation⁽¹⁰⁾, group cohesion⁽¹⁸⁾ and collective competency⁽²⁴⁾. Moreover, coach-athlete relationship is a holistic concept emphasizing an individual’s positive growth and progress⁽¹⁷⁾.

Coach-athlete relationships serve as a platform for achieving performance goals, generating success and satisfaction, and coach-athlete interactions. In other words; coach-athlete relationship is a tool for meeting and explaining the requirements of athletes⁽¹⁹⁾. Common trust, respect, commitment and collaboration are included as the criteria defining the quality of coach-athlete relationships in the context of sport⁽¹⁸⁾. These relationships are defined in terms of reciprocal emotions, opinions and behaviors^(16, 22).

Effectiveness of the coaches depends on their relationships with their athletes⁽¹⁹⁾. Some basic features such as empathy, honesty, support, enjoyment, acceptance, responsiveness, friendship, collaboration, care and respect are included as the assets of these effective relationships. On the contrary; lack of emotions, distance, hostility, cheating will damage the relationships⁽¹⁷⁾. Previous studies demonstrated that although coach-athlete relationships are tools of an athlete’s development, they can be distracting or become the sources of stress for athletes as well⁽²⁰⁾.

Coach-athlete relationships are defined as a coach’s and an athlete’s reciprocal closeness, commitment, and their complementarity by Jowett and her colleagues^(16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 27). According to this definition; closeness refers to meaning

attributed to emotions (such as trust, enjoyment, respect etc.) by a coach and an athlete. While, commitment refers to a coach and an athlete’s maintaining their relationship. Lastly, complementarity corresponds to the harmony of a coach and an athlete’s behaviors. These factors define the quality and content of coach-athlete relationships⁽²¹⁾.

It is not possible for athletes to produce high level of performance without the support of their coaches or for coaches to succeed without the athletes’ talent, commitment and enthusiasm⁽²⁴⁾. For a successful and effective leadership of a coach, the quality of the relations has profound importance⁽¹⁸⁾. Coaches’ leadership styles and their understandings of coach-athlete relationships may help practitioners, trainers and researchers enhance athletes’ psychological wellbeing and performance.

When studies about coach-athlete relationships regarding branches are examined; swimming⁽²⁸⁾, football⁽²⁴⁾, tennis⁽¹⁵⁾, and track and field⁽¹⁾ emerged as the most popular ones. Various studies were conducted on tennis⁽³⁰⁾, handball⁽³²⁾ and volleyball⁽²⁵⁾ for leadership styles regarding branches; however, the number of studies⁽³¹⁾ investigating the relationships between these variables on martial arts is rare. Sport branches may have their own specific characteristics. The reason why this study focuses especially on martial arts is that martial arts has some characteristics that differentiated from other branches. The fact that there is a certain hierarchy (grading system from white belt to black belt) and the emphasis laid on an athlete’s psychological maturation and leaders’ role in this psychological maturation are these distinct features. In such unique branches as martial arts, studies concerning leadership behavior in sports and coach-athlete relationships may contribute to the field. In this regard, the aim of this study was to examine martial arts athletes’ relationships with their coaches and the

perceived leadership styles of their coaches in terms of gender, age and

METHOD

Participants

In determination process of the sample, researchers used simple random sampling which is a probability sampling method. The sample consisted of 132 male ($M_{age}=19.54 \pm 5.4$ years), 72 female ($M_{age}=17.69 \pm 5.1$ years) and 204 in total ($M_{age}=18.9 \pm 5.3$ years) martial arts participants. Percentages of the participants in terms of branches are as follows; 69.3 % kick boxing, 15.3 % muay-thai, 10.4 % boxing, 3 % taekwondo and 2 % judo. Experience of the participants was $M=2.4 \pm 3.5$ years.

Data Collection Tools

Leadership Scale for Sports

In order to understand the athletes' perception of their coaches' leadership styles, researchers used Leadership Scale for Sports (athlete's perception of leadership behavior form) which was developed by Chelladurai and Saleh (1980)⁸. Toros and Tiryaki (2006)³⁴ who adapted this questionnaire into Turkish culture reported that the scale has five sub-dimensions. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency values for this study were calculated as training and instruction 0.78, democratic behavior 0.81, autocratic behavior 0.63, social support 0.67, positive feedback 0.73 and 0.85 for the whole scale.

The Coach–Athlete Relationship Questionnaire

This questionnaire was developed by Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004)²³ and

FINDINGS

For determining participants' degrees of leadership perceptions and relationship with their coaches, means and standard

duration of their participation in martial arts.

measures the content and quality of coach-athlete relationships. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Altıntaş et al. (2012)². In this study, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency values were found as closeness 0.91, commitment 0.78, complementarity 0.73, and 0.91 for the whole scale.

Data Collection

Permission from authors who adapted the scales were granted. Scales were applied to the athletes who volunteered as participants of this study and took part in the martial arts trainings regularly.

Data Analysis

In order to determine coach-athlete relationships and athletes' perception of leadership behavior, descriptive statistics were utilized. In the leadership scale's differentiation calculations, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used.

Acceptable skewness and kurtosis range in normal distributions are considered as -2 to +2⁽¹⁴⁾. Evaluating normality assumption; as can be seen in Table 1, all of the sub-dimensions excluding closeness are in acceptable threshold. Even though normality transformation and elimination of outliers were applied to closeness factor, internal consistency values were above -2 +2 range. Since similar findings were found in parametric and non-parametric tests, authors decided to use ANOVA for this questionnaire as well. Likewise, in Jowett and Ntoumanis' (2004)²³ study the scale didn't ensure the normal distribution and was regulated by normality transformation. All of the analyses were conducted by SPSS 23 package program.

deviations of each factors in the scales were given in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Leadership Scale for Sports and the Coach–Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (n=204).

Leadership Scale for Sports	Means	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Training and instruction	4.23	.51	.568	.036
Democratic behavior	3.97	.68	.561	.230
Autocratic behavior	2.78	.86	.017	.492
Social support	3.92	.57	.705	.260
Positive feedback	3.93	.78	.910	.980
Coach–Athlete Relationship Questionnaire				
Closeness	6.53	.79	2.363	5.581
Commitment	6.08	.97	1.267	1.381
Complementarity	6.09	.82	1.096	.942

According to Table 1; martial arts athletes perceived training and instruction in high level whilst, autocratic behavior of their coaches had the least impact on their perception. Having looked at coach-athlete relationships; closeness appeared to have the highest mean score.

Table 2. ANOVA Findings (Independent Variable: Gender)

n=204	SS	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Leadership Scale for Sports						
Training and instruction	Between group	.997	1	.997	3.860	.051
	Within groups	52.159	202	.258		
	Total	53.155	203			
Democratic behavior	Between group	.795	1	.795	1.750	.187
	Within groups	91.754	202	.454		
	Total	92.549	203			
Autocratic behavior	Between group	7.218	1	7.218	10.286	.002**
	Within groups	141.742	202	.702		
	Total	148.960	203			
Social support	Between group	.413	1	.413	1.286	.258
	Within groups	64.866	202	.321		
	Total	65.279	203			
Positive feedback	Between group	.005	1	.005	.009	.926
	Within groups	123.317	202	.610		
	Total	123.322	203			
Coach–Athlete Relationship Questionnaire						
Closeness	Between group	.035	1	.035	.056	.814
	Within groups	128.502	202	.636		
	Total	128.537	203			
Commitment	Between group	1.148	1	1.148	1.204	.274
	Within groups	192.597	202	.953		
	Total	193.745	203			
Complementarity	Between group	.440	1	.440	.643	.424
	Within groups	138.335	202	.685		
	Total	138.775	203			

Among coach-athlete relationships, no significant difference was found in closeness ($F_{(1, 202)}=0.56$, $p=0.814$), commitment ($F_{(1, 202)}=1.204$, $p=0.274$) and complementarity ($F_{(1, 202)}=0.643$, $p=0.424$) variables in terms of gender. Among sub-dimensions of leadership scale for sports; no significant difference were found in training and instruction ($F_{(1,$

202)=3.860, $p=.051$), democratic behavior ($F_{(1, 202)}=1.750$, $p=0.187$), social support ($F_{(1, 202)}=1.286$, $p=0.258$), and positive feedback ($F_{(1, 202)}=0.009$, $p=0.926$) in terms of gender. However, significant difference was found in autocratic behavior ($F_{(1, 202)}=10.286$, $p=0.002$, $\eta^2=0.05$). Male martial arts athletes ($M=2.92 \pm 0.86$) perceived more autocratic behavior of their coaches than female ($M=2.52 \pm 0.80$) athletes.

Table 3. ANOVA Findings (Independent Variable: Age)

n=204		SS	df	MS	F	p	η^2
Leadership Scale for Sports							
Training and instruction	Between groups	.001	1	.001	.004	.947	
	Within groups	53.154	202	.263			
	Total	53.155	203				
Democratic behavior	Between groups	.232	1	.232	.508	.477	
	Within groups	92.316	202	.457			
	Total	92.549	203				
Autocratic behavior	Between groups	5.102	1	5.102	7.164	.008*	.034
	Within groups	143.858	202	.712			
	Total	148.960	203				
Social support	Between groups	.214	1	.214	.666	.416	
	Within groups	65.064	202	.322			
	Total	65.279	203				
Positive feedback	Between groups	.023	1	.023	.038	.845	
	Within groups	123.299	202	.610			
	Total	123.322	203				
Coach–Athlete Relationship Questionnaire							
Closeness	Between groups	2.820	1	2.820	4.532	.034*	.02
	Within groups	125.716	202	.622			
	Total	128.537	203				
Commitment	Between groups	.096	1	.096	.100	.752	-
	Within groups	193.649	202	.959			
	Total	193.745	203				
Complementarity	Between groups	.001	1	.001	.002	.966	
	Within groups	138.774	202	.687			
	Total	138.775	203				

According to age variable, no significant difference existed in commitment ($F_{(1, 202)}=0.100$, $p=0.752$) and complementarity ($F_{(1, 202)}=0.002$, $p=0.966$). Whereas, significant difference was encountered in closeness ($F_{(1, 202)}=4.532$, $p=0.034$, $\eta^2=0.02$). Younger ($M=6.64 \pm 0.67$) group

(17 and below) considered their coaches as closer when comparing with the older ($M=6.40 \pm 0.90$) group (18 and above). Among factors of leadership scale for sports; no significant difference were found in training and instruction ($F_{(1, 202)}=0.004$, $p=0.947$), democratic behavior

($F_{(1, 202)}=0.508$, $p=0.477$), social support ($F_{(1, 202)}=0.666$, $p=0.416$), and positive feedback ($F_{(1, 202)}=0.038$, $p=0.845$). Again significant difference emerged in autocratic behavior ($F_{(1, 202)}=7.164$,

$p=0.008$, $\eta^2=0.034$). Athletes older than 18 years old ($M=2.95 \pm 0.86$) perceived their coaches' autocratic behavior significantly more than the ones 17 and less ($M=2.63 \pm 0.83$).

Table 4. ANOVA Findings (Independent Variable: Participation Duration in Months)

n=204		SS	df	MS	F	P	η^2
Leadership Scale for Sports							
Training and instruction	Between groups	.078	1	.078	.274	.602	
	Within groups	33.254	116	.287			
	Total	33.333	117				
Democratic behavior	Between groups	1.448	1	1.448	2.882	.092	
	Within groups	58.308	116	.503			
	Total	59.756	117				
Autocratic behavior	Between groups	10.148	1	10.148	13.707	.000*	.10
	Within groups	85.881	116	.740			
	Total	96.029	117				
Social support	Between groups	.045	1	.045	.126	.723	
	Within groups	40.975	116	.353			
	Total	41.019	117				
Positive feedback	Between groups	3.691	1	3.691	7.170	.008*	.05
	Within groups	59.713	116	.515			
	Total	63.404	117				
Coach–Athlete Relationship Questionnaire							
Closeness	Between groups	1.352	1	1.352	1.833	.178	
	Within groups	85.552	116	.738			
	Total	86.904	117				
Commitment	Between groups	.272	1	.272	.227	.635	
	Within groups	139.250	116	1.200			
	Total	139.523	117				
Complementarity	Between groups	.005	1	.005	.007	.936	
	Within groups	84.903	116	.732			
	Total	84.907	117				

According to participation duration; as sub-dimensions of coach-athlete relationships, closeness ($F_{(1, 116)}=1.833$, $p=0.178$), commitment ($F_{(1, 116)}=0.227$, $p=0.635$), and complementarity ($F_{(1, 116)}=0.007$, $p=0.936$) had no significant

difference. Among leadership scale for sports sub-dimensions, training and instruction ($F_{(1, 116)}=0.274$, $p=0.602$), democratic behavior ($F_{(1, 116)}=2.882$, $p=0.092$), and social support ($F_{(1, 116)}=0.126$, $p=0.723$) had no significant

difference in terms of participation duration as well. Nevertheless, significant differences were observed in autocratic behavior ($F_{(1, 116)}=13.707$, $p=0.000$, $\eta^2=0.10$) and positive feedback ($F_{(1, 116)}=7.170$, $p=0.008$, $\eta^2=0.05$). Athletes who participated martial arts more than 3 years ($M = 3.06 \pm 0.86$) reported that they

perceive their coaches more authoritarian than the ones who participated between 4 months and a year ($M = 2.47 \pm 0.86$). Moreover, athletes with less participation (4-12 months) duration ($M = 4.19 \pm 0.61$) perceived more positive feedback of their coaches than experienced (3 years and more) athletes ($M = 3.83 \pm 0.81$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Aim of this study was examining the martial arts athletes' relations with their coaches and perceptions of their coaches' leadership styles in terms of gender, age and participation duration in months. The discussion issues emerged with respect to the findings are below.

It was found that; training and instruction had the highest mean score whereas, autocratic behavior had the lowest among sub-dimensions of leadership scale for sports which is a tool for determining martial arts coaches' leadership style. This finding has similarities with the work of Cengiz et. al. (2012)⁵ in which they studied on taekwondo athletes. Findings of the studies focusing on different sport branches reflected that: Toros and Duvan's (2011)³³ study with fencing athletes indicated that training and instruction had the highest mean score, whereas democratic behavior had the lowest. This finding proved that; martial arts participants perceived high level of training and instruction just as taekwondo and fencing athletes. Reason of this might be the desire of learning of martial arts athletes and encouragement of athletes' skills by their superior coaches whatever the athlete's level is (e.g. black belt). In other words, training and instruction is a constant action. This instructional and progressional environment might shape participants' expectations.

Martial arts' training and instruction dimensions, athletes' having encouraged their skills by their superior coaches regardless of their level (black belt etc.), and hierarchical structure of this process

may cause acceptance of this hierarchic structure. In other words, education is constant in martial arts. This cultural environment that intended education, hierarchy, and development might shape participants' expectations⁽³¹⁾.

Differences between martial arts and other sports branches exist as well. For example; in another study of Toros (2011)³³, he used the scale for basketball players and found that autocratic behavior with highest mean and positive feedback with the lowest. Çakıoğlu (2003)⁴ demonstrated that Turkish soccer players perceived authoritarian behavior more likely while, perceived training and instruction in lower levels. Chelladurai (2007)⁷ specified that such factors as nature of the sport, success or failure of the team, competition level, being in the competition or training period may affect coaches' behavior, athletes' perceptions and reactions. Differences among findings above may originate from sport branches' idiosyncratic nature or level of competition.

Findings of the Leadership for Sports Scale yielded significant differences in autocratic behavior factor in terms of gender variable. Male athletes perceive their coaches as more authoritarian. Moreover, both male and female athletes perceive training and instruction behavior as the most rated factor. Similar with this work; in a study on baseball and softball players, Gardner et. al. (1996)¹³ found that both male and female athletes perceived training and instruction as the highest coaching behavior. In addition, males perceived more autocratic behavior whereas, females perceived more democratic behavior, positive feedback,

and training and instruction behaviors of their coaches. Pyun et. al. (2010)²⁹ asserted that female athletes competing in team sports perceive more positive feedback, social support, and training and instruction than their male counterparts. In another study that was carried out with martial arts athletes, Cengiz et. al. (2012)⁵ found significant difference in training and instruction for taekwondo athletes in terms of gender. In detail, female athletes rated training and instruction more than males. These findings proved that female athletes perceived more positive behaviors of their coaches. Then the question here may be why women perceive differently? The reason why women perceived differently is; studies on social psychology research stated that females can be more easily influenced and convinced than males. In addition, females are better at accommodating their selves in circumstances such as group pressure (12, 11, 3). Somehow, it is emphasized that this difference may be originated from the gender roles. Coaches' influence on female athletes may cause gender differences in the findings of this study. Practitioners should be aware of this gender difference. Another indicator of the different perception might be gender of the coach. Gender of the coach in these studies including ours is unknown. Future studies may take into account this variable as well.

As a highlighted finding of the age variable, athletes older than 18 years perceived more authority. In addition, significant differences were found on athletes' perceptions on their coaches' autocratic behavior and positive feedback according to their participation duration. Experienced athletes perceived more authority and less positive feedback. As an encounterer to findings of this study, Cengiz et. al. (2012)⁵ found significant difference on social support behavior between young (15-17) and older (older than 18 years old) athletes. Cengiz and his colleagues conducted their study on elite taekwondo athletes who applied for the

national team tryouts. Differences on findings of age and gender of these studies might derive from this reason. In Gardner et. al.'s (1996)¹³ findings, older (older than 18 years old) athletes perceived more training and instruction, social support behavior, and autocratic behavior than their younger counterparts. Studies depicted that teenagers, especially in their early puberty years can be more easily convinced or have influenced socially (26). Since martial arts has a hierarchical nature, coaches being role models, and importance on respect and discipline; a similar social influence may have existed on young participants in this study. As a consequence, athletes in this age group may adopt authority more easily than older athletes.

Chelladurai (2007)⁷, and Jowett & Poczwadowski (2007)²¹ explained that athletes' gender, age and, experience can be determinants of their evaluations of their coaches' behaviors. From this point forth, athletes' gender, age, and participation duration may differ on perceiving coaches' leadership behaviors. Such variables used for perception of coaches' leadership styles may be remarkable confounding variables. These findings might help coaches for regulating their behaviors.

Coach-athlete relationships findings yielded mean scores for closeness (6.53±.79), commitment (6.08±.97), and complementarity (6.09±.82). These can indicate high level of coach-athlete relationships. In Coach–Athlete Relationship Questionnaire, no significant difference was found on perception of relationships with coaches in terms of gender and participation duration variables. However, significant differences were detected in age. Younger and less experienced athletes felt closer themselves to their coaches. This finding can be supported by younger athletes' perceiving less authority. The reason might be the effects that were discussed above and coaches' influence on young

athletes. According to Jowett and Poczwardowski (2007)²¹; age, gender, and participation duration affect interpersonal communication. They can be especially effective on closeness and commitment. Even though this difference was found on closeness, no difference was found in other variables. Especially, it was expected to observe difference in commitment variable. There is a need to conduct more studies for examining differences on commitment in terms of age variable deeply.

One of the limitations of this study was the small sample (n=204). Future studies may work with bigger samples and more martial arts branches. For example, dominance of the sample in this study belongs to kick-box (69.3 %) athletes, whereas taekwondo and judo athletes (3-2 %) were minority in the sample. Athletes of branches such as karate or kung-fu couldn't take place in the sample. In addition, branches of martial arts have their distinctive features. For instance; kick boxing and boxing take place in rings while, karate or taekwondo require tatami. Other distinction examples can be counted as differences on grading systems or boxing and kick boxing's

including professionalism. Can such confounding variables have an impact? That is why upcoming studies may focus on a unique branch or more branches together. Another limitation of this work was it was done with only martial arts athletes. Such unique branches as mountaineering can be examined as well. Because mountaineering is distinct with its features as; it doesn't have competition, have less spectator or media attention, or athletes struggle with their selves. This study didn't evaluate the interactions between coaches' leadership behaviors and coach-athlete relationships. Despite martial arts' autocratic nature, coaches not perceived as autocratic and athletes felt closeness to their coaches are suspected findings for the possible interactions.

Consequently; gender, age, and participation duration are important variables for understanding coach's leadership behaviors and coach-athlete relationships. This information can benefit sports psychologists or coaches on identifying and instructing their groups effectively. This study may contribute to the literature, because it provided a deep understanding about martial arts structure.

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