

THE ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANGER EXPRESSION AND EMPATHIC DISPOSITIONS OF TURKISH YOUNG NATIONAL WRESTLING TEAM PLAYERS³

ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to evaluate the anger level and emphatic concern of young wrestlers and determine the relationship between anger expression and empathic dispositions of Turkish young national wrestling team players. The study was conducted in 46 wrestlers from Turkish young national wrestling team whose ages differed from 17 to 20 (19.0 ± 0.82).

The Interpersonal Reactivity Index: IRI which was developed by Davis (1980) and translated into Turkish by Engeler (2005) and the Anger Expression Inventory which was developed by Spielberger (1988) and translated into Turkish by Özer (1994) have been used for collecting data.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were employed to test whether or not scores obtained from the inventory followed a normal distribution before the statistical analyses of the data were initiated and it was found out that observation values did not follow a normal distribution. Since there is not a normal distribution of the data non-parametric correlation test Spearman Correlation was performed.

Statistical analyses of the data obtained were performed using Portable IBM SPSS Statistics v19 program. Minimum and maximum values of the mean scores obtained from the Interpersonal Reactivity Index and Anger Expression Inventory subscales were presented in tables.

The analysis showed that there is a significant relationship ($p < 0.05$) between anger expression and empathic dispositions of Turkish young national wrestling team players. This situation was observed frequently athletes who are dealing with combat sports. This result is consistent with the literature.

Key words: Anger Expression, Empathic Dispositions, Wrestlers

TÜRKİYE GENÇ GÜREŞ MİLLİ TAKIMI SPORCULARININ ÖFKE DÜZEYLERİ İLE EMPATİK EĞİLİMLERİ ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİNİN BELİRLENMESİ

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı; genç güreşçilerin öfke düzeyleri ve empatik eğilimlerinin tespit edilmesi ve Türkiye genç güreş milli takımı sporcularının öfke düzeyleri ile empatik eğilimleri arasındaki ilişkinin belirlenmesidir. Bu çalışma yaş ortalamaları 17 ile 20 ($19,0 \pm 0,82$) arasında değişen 46 adet genç güreş milli takım sporcusu üzerine yapılmıştır.

Çalışmada veri toplama aracı olarak; Davis (1980) tarafından geliştirilen ve Türkçe uyarlaması Engeler (2005) tarafından yapılan Kişiler Arası Tepkisellik İndeksi ve Spielberger (1988) tarafından geliştirilip Özer (1994) tarafından Türkçe uyarlaması yapılan Sürekli Öfke ve Öfke Tarzı Ölçeği kullanılmıştır.

İstatistiksel analizlere geçmeden önce ölçeklerden elde edilen puanların normal dağılım gösterip göstermediği test etmek amacıyla yapılan Kolmogorov-Smirnov ve Shapiro-Wilk testleri sonucunda gözlem değerlerinin normal dağılım göstermediği anlaşılmıştır. Dağılımın normal olmamasından dolayı nonparametrik korelasyon testlerinden Spearman Korelasyon testi uygulanmıştır.

Elde edilen verilerin istatistiksel çözümleri Portable IBM SPSS Statistics v19 programından yararlanılarak yapılmıştır. Kişiler Arası Tepkisellik İndeksi ve Sürekli Öfke ve Öfke Tarzı ölçeklerinden elde edilen puan ortalamalarının minimum ve maksimum değerleri tabloda gösterilmiştir.

Sonuç olarak; analiz sonuçları Türkiye genç güreş milli takımı sporcularının öfke düzeyleri ile empatik eğilimleri arasında anlamlı bir ilişkinin ($p < 0.05$) olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu durum mücadele sporları ile uğraşan sporcularda sıklıkla gözlemlenmektedir. Bu sonuç literatür ile tutarlıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Öfke İfade, Empatik Eğilim, Güreşçiler

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INTRODUCTION

Anger is defined as a person's response to a threat or the perception of a threat against an individual or group (Lazarus, 1991). The types of threats that tend to trigger an anger response are broad in scope and include both physical threats and psychological threats, or threats to a person's pride or dignity. Anger can also evolve from empathic concern or perceptions of injustice and is related to cognitive factors such as hostility (Spielberger et al., 1985) and cynicism (Martin, Watson, & Wan, 2000). Anger can be adaptive by energizing an individual and heightening cognitive awareness to take action against a threat or perceived threat (Goleman, 1995)

Anger is an emotion that is often difficult to control because of the intense physiological reactions involved in the fight or flight response that triggers anger. The fight response is a response triggered naturally by the body to protect itself against the instigating situation (Lazarus, 1991). Intense, uncontrolled feelings of anger are often associated with externalizing behavior problems, particularly aggression.

Aggression is generally defined as a behavioral act that results in harming or hurting others. However, there are numerous types of aggression, depending on the intentions of the aggressor and the situation that stimulated the aggressive response. Because aggressive behavior, and thus the treatment of aggression, varies greatly according to the intentions and conditions surrounding the aggression, aggression is typically categorized according to type. Aggression is commonly viewed as being either proactive or reactive; overt or covert; or physical, verbal, or relational (Werner & Crick, 2004). Because proactive and reactive types of aggression have been the focus of recent research and offer both an explanation and description of

aggression, they receive primary emphasis here.

Children engaging in proactive aggression typically use aggression to meet a goal. For example, if the child wants to have an object that belongs to another child, the proactively aggressive child will simply use aggression to take the object from the other child. Proactively aggressive children also use aggression to obtain social goals (Dodge, 1991). When the aggressive behavior yields the desired reward, the child is more likely to engage in proactive aggression the next time he or she intends to meet a goal. Conversely, reactively aggressive children do not seek to meet goals through their aggressive behavior. Instead, those children react negatively to perceived or actual threats and are easily irritated and provoked

Theoretical developments in the field of empathy research have yielded two broad positions regarding the nature of empathy, namely affective and cognitive theories (see Davis, 1994, for an extensive review). Theories that emphasize the affective nature of empathy have maintained that empathy is revealed in an individual's vicarious emotional response, which arises as a direct result of witnessing another's emotion (Stotland, 1969). The relationship of this vicarious emotional response to the observed emotion has been a topic of debate. Some researchers suppose that in order to be an empathic response, the observer's emotional response must be the same as that of the observed other (Eisenberg & Miller, 1987). Other researchers argue that any emotional response to another's distress qualifies as an empathic response, even if that emotional experience differs from the emotion exhibited by the target (Stotland, 1969). Rather than emphasizing affect, another school of thought has viewed empathy as a cognitive activity. Those who hold this point of view have emphasized an individual's capacity to

accurately perceive and understand another's plight (Dymond, 1949).

Some researchers (eg. Davis, 1994; Pithers, 1994), have called for empathy to be seen as a multidimensional construct, consisting of both affective and cognitive components. In addition, Pithers has called for a behavioral component to be included in the construct.

Davis (1994) has proposed a model of multidimensional empathy, designed to include both affective and cognitive components of empathy, as well as addressing the relationship between these components and behavior. Additionally, Davis (1994) has developed a self-report measure of empathy, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) to reflect both cognitive and affective components of empathy.

Violent offenders are often described as having a lack of empathy. Empathy and aggression have been seen as incompatible (Baron, 1983), and an

empathic response by an aggressor to an individual in distress appears to reduce displays of aggression towards that person (Miller & Eisenberg, 1988). Feshbach (1964) attempted to explain the mechanisms underlying this connection between empathy and aggressive behavior. According to Feshbach, seeing the consequences of aggression elicits distress in an empathic observer, even if that observer is the aggressor. In these circumstances, the distress experienced becomes an unpleasant consequence of the aggressive behavior. Empathy, therefore, was hypothesized by Feshbach to act as an inhibitor of aggression and violence. The aim of this study was to evaluate the anger level and emphatic concern of young wrestlers and determine the relationship between anger expression and empathic dispositions of Turkish young national wrestling team players.

METHOD

Research Model

The study was conducted in a descriptive model. Quantative research approach was employed. The study was made in national team summer camp of Turkish young wrestler in 2012.

Population and Sample

The population of the study was composed of the students who studied at the schools of physical education and sports at state universities in Turkey. The sample of the study was consisted of 46 wrestlers from Turkish young national wrestling team. The wrestlers ranged in age from 17 to 20 years with a mean age of (19.0 ± 0.82) years. All participants are licensed athletes and also all of them are student.

Data Collection Tool

The data collection tool was composed of two parts: The first part "**Identity Information Form**" included the questions about the wrestlers' personal information. The second part included "**The**

Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI)" used to measure empathic dispositions of the wrestlers.

The Scales Used

Personal Information Form

The form, which was designed by the researcher, included personal information such about gender, class, the place where the wrestlers are living, parental status, income level of the family, the place where the family lived currently.

The Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI)

The scale consists of 28 items constituting four subscales of seven items each (Davis, 1980). Each of the 28 items was rated using a five point Liker scale, ranging from 0 (does not describe me well), to 4 (describes me very well). The IRI has become the measure of choice for investigation into the empathic ability of offenders for instance, it is recommended for use by Polaschek & Reynolds (2001). Four subscales are contained within the IRI: Perspective Taking (Cognitive), Fantasy (Cognitive), Empathic Concern (Affective),

and Personal Distress (Affective). Subscales Cronbach's alphas: Perspective Taking = 0.77, Empathic Concern = 0.72, Personal Distress = 0.77 (Davis 1980). In our study the subscales cronbach's alphas: Perspective Taking = 0.69, Empathic Concern = 0.67, Personal Distress = 0.70. The Perspective Taking (PT) subscale is purported to measure an individual's dispositional tendency to adopt another's perspective, although it does not provide an indication of the accuracy of that perspective taking activity (Davis, 1994). The Fantasy Subscale (FS) is intended to provide an indication of an individual's propensity to become imaginatively involved with fictional characters and situations. The Empathic Concern (EC) subscale measures an individual's self-reported tendency to experience feelings of concern for others, and the Personal Distress (PD) subscale was designed to measure the extent to which an individual feels distress as a result of witnessing another's emotional distress. Unlike the other subscales of the IRI, Personal Distress has been shown to correlate positively with measures of antisocial behavior and aggression (Davis 1980).

The State-Trait Anger Scale

The original design was developed by Spielberger (1988). Turkish adaptation was carried out by Özer (1994). It is a 34-item scale which measures the anger levels and anger expression styles in adolescents and adults. The scale consists of 4-point scales (1: never, 4: completely) to answer the items. No total score is obtained from the scale and scoring is carried out for subscales. Higher scores in the subscale of the trait anger (10 items) mean a higher level of anger. Higher scores in the

subscale of anger control (8 items) demonstrate the ability to control anger. External anger (8 items) suggests that anger is easily expressed and internal anger (8 items) shows suppressed anger. In the study of reliability; criterion related validity and factor analysis were carried out for the adaptation study. Item-total correlation scores were found to be between .14 and .56 and Cronbach alpha internal consistency was between .73 and .84 (Savaşır & Şahin, 1997). In our study internal consistency using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was of 0.84.

Data Collection

The questionnaire forms were distributed by the researcher to the wrestlers and they filled in the forms. 8 forms were not evaluated because they were incorrectly filled in or there were missing answers.

Data Analysis

Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were employed to test whether or not scores obtained from the inventory followed a normal distribution before the statistical analyses of the data were initiated and it was found out that observation values did not follow a normal distribution. Since there is not a normal distribution of the data non-parametric correlation test Spearman Correlation was performed. Statistical analyses of the data obtained were performed using Portable IBM SPSS Statistics v19 program. The findings were assessed with 95 % confidence interval and 5 % significance level. Minimum and maximum values of the mean scores obtained from the Interpersonal Reactivity Index and Anger Expression Inventory subscales were presented in tables.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Correlations between anger expression and empathic dispositions of Turkish young national wrestling team players

	FS	EC	PT	PD	TA	AI	AO	AC
Fantasy Scale	1,000							
	.							
	46							
Empathic Concern	,098	1,000						
	,568	.						
	46	46						
Perspective-Taking	-,143	,087	1,000					
	,405	,613	.					
	46	46	46					
Personal Distress	,564(**)	,141	-,344(*)	1,000				
	,000	,413	,040	.				
	46	46	46	46				
Trait-Anger	,306	,154	-,380(*)	,295	1,000			
	,069	,370	,022	,081	.			
	46	46	46	46	46			
Anger-In	,281	,302	-,217	,363(*)	,190	1,000		
	,097	,074	,204	,030	,268	.		
	46	46	46	46	46	46		
Anger-Out	,394(*)	,167	-,502(**)	,486(**)	,635(**)	,355(*)	1,000	
	,017	,330	,002	,003	,000	,034	.	
	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	
Anger-Control	-,440(**)	,018	,338(*)	-,465(**)	-,583(**)	-,178	-,471(**)	1,000
	,007	,915	,043	,004	,000	,299	,004	.
	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), FS: Fantasy Scale, EC: Empathic Concern, PT: Perspective-Taking, PD: Personal Distress, TA: Trait-Anger, AI: Anger-In, AO: Anger-Out, AC: Anger-Control

Table 2. Mean Interpersonal Reactivity Index and Anger Expression Inventory Subscale Scores for Turkish Young National Wrestling Team Players

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Fantasy Scale	46	13,00	30,00	20,0278	4,41741
Empathic Concern	46	18,00	32,00	23,3333	3,22490
Perspective-Taking	46	13,00	29,00	22,6389	3,46536
Personal Distress	46	8,00	35,00	19,5556	5,22327
Trait-Anger	46	11,00	35,00	22,8333	6,50933
Anger-In	46	9,00	23,00	15,1667	3,09377
Anger-Out	46	9,00	25,00	14,6389	3,28766
Anger-Control	46	10,00	30,00	21,3056	4,88625
Valid N (listwise)	46				

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The interpersonal reactivity index and anger expression inventory subscale scores for Turkish young national wrestling team players are given in table 2. As a result of the statistical processing, the mean interpersonal reactivity index and anger expression inventory subscale scores of

the athletes are arranged as follows; Interpersonal Reactivity Index Subscale Scores; Fantasy Scale; 20,03±4,42, Empathic Concern: 23,33±3,23, Perspective-Taking: 22,64±3,47, Personal Distress: 19,56±5,22. Anger Expression Inventory Subscale scores are arranged as follows; Trait-Anger: 22,83±6,50, Anger-In: 15,17±3,09, Anger-Out: 14,64±3,29, Anger-

Control; 21,31±4,89.

The result of this study, there are significant correlations between sub-dimensions of anger expression and empathic dispositions of Turkish young national wrestling team players (Table 1). There is a low and negative correlation ($r:-0,380$) between trait anger and perspective taking. The correlation between Anger-In and Personal Distress is positive and low ($r:+0,362$). There is a low and negative correlation ($r:-0,394$) between Anger out and Fantasy Scale. The correlation between Anger-out and perspective taking is negative and low ($r:-0,502$). The meaningful correlation between personal distress and anger out is positive and low ($r:+0,486$). There is a low and negative correlation ($r:-0,440$) between Anger Control and Fantasy Scale. The correlation between Anger Control and Perspective taking is positive and low ($r:+0,338$). There is a low and negative correlation ($r:-0,465$) between anger control and personal distress.

It was told in the literature review that effects of different combat sports were different. In a study of Foster (1997), no improvement was observed among the aikido students while significant decreases in the personal tension scores were seen in the karate students. In other words; it was understood that some of those who were interested in combat sports adapted themselves more easily to the changes. It was pointed out in some of the studies that the type of combat sport did not have any effect upon any of the psycho-social aspects of the athletes who did that sport.

In a cross-sectional study undertaken by Kroll and Carlson (1967), no significant correlation existed between length of continuing karate activities and personal characteristics. (Tekin et al., 2011)

When our study findings were compared to

the findings in literature; it was seen that the result was not different. In a study of Certel and Bahadır (2012); they explored that anger levels of football players did not differ in branches. Certel and Bahadır (2012) interpreted that athletes controlled their anger so that the team could not be damaged.

When we compared our findings to those of Certel and Bahadır; it was noted that wrestlers' anger scores (Trait-Anger: 22.83±6.50, Anger-In: 15.17±3.09, Anger-Out: 14.64±3.29, Anger-Control; 21.31±4.89) were higher than those of football players (Trait-Anger: 21.64±4.48, Anger-In: 15.44±3.67, Anger-Out: 15.80±3.72, Anger-Control; 23.05±4.39), basketball players (Trait-Anger: 21.08±4.07, Anger-In: 15.55±3.70, Anger-Out: 15.81±3.65, Anger-Control; 23.30±4.48) and handball players (Trait-Anger: 21.23±4.90, Anger-In: 15.85±3.92, Anger-Out: 15.16±3.47, Anger-Control; 23.00±4.47) in terms of all of the subscales. As for another combat sport, namely kick-box, it was seen that kick-boxers had rather high anger levels; which was an expected outcome (Tekin et al., 2011).

As a result; literature information and the studies conducted supported our study and it was discovered that anger levels of individuals who did combat sports had higher level of anger (Tekin et al., 2011, Certel and Bahadır 2012, Foster, 1997). It was seen in the comparisons of team sports that those doing combat sports had higher level of anger than those doing team sports. When the situation was investigated in terms of empathic tendency; it was detected that there was a significant correlation between anger levels and empathic tendency of wrestlers.

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