

## Effective Communication in Team Sports from a Sociological Perspective

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### Abstract

This research was carried out in order to examine the effect of effective communication on athletes in team sports from a sociological perspective. The universe of the research consisted of Istanbul, and the sample consisted of 491 athletes, 106 women and 385 men, in different sports clubs in Istanbul. Personal information form and "Effective Communication Scale in Team Sports" developed by Sullivan and Feltz, translated into Turkish by "Hambleton and Jones" (1994) and adapted for Turkish athletes by "Alkan" (2009) were used as data collection tools in the research. SPSS 25.0 package program was used to analyze the data. It was examined whether the data showed normal distribution and Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was applied. T-Test was applied for pairwise comparisons, Anova test for three or more comparisons and correlation test for relationship, and the findings were evaluated according to  $p < 0.05$  significance value. As a result, while there was no difference between the communication levels of the athletes in team sports and the variables of age and education, there were significant differences between the variables of gender and branch ( $p < 0.05$ ). It has been determined that there is a positive relationship between the effective communication levels of the athletes in team sports and "acceptance and positive conflict" and "discrimination and negative conflict".

**Keywords:** Sports Sociology, Team Sports, Communication

### Introduction

The fact that sport is a cultural and social phenomenon creates a close relationship between sport and sociology. In this context, sports sociology evaluates sports as a cultural and social phenomenon and uses sociological theories to understand the role, function and meaning of sports in social life.

The fact that sports take an important place in social life and has a great impact on society allows this phenomenon to be understood especially in terms of functional theory and conflict theory. In the light of this information, social system, social cohesion and harmony, social gender, communication etc. concepts come to the fore. This common relationship has formed a phenomenon called communication depending on the need (Çetinkaya, 2011). Although the most commonly used communication tool among people is speech, laughter, gestures, facial expressions, bodily expressions, and silence are other tools that serve to convey the concepts (Lazar 2001). Oskay (2011) states that communication is a human-specific phenomenon that changes according to the way the person maintains his existence.

In addition, Ansel and Orlick, in their study on coach and athlete communication, emphasized the importance of coaches showing positive behavioral characteristics such as being honest, positive, constructive and sympathetic, and giving importance to the team's opinion in decisions to be made (Erkan, 2002). Güngör (2011), on the other hand, emphasizes that communication is a basic premise to be a social whole and moreover to create the organizational structure of the society.

Communication, organizing the process of people collectively constructing social reality, conveying knowledge, ideas, emotions, skills, symbols; the process of sharing that information to build knowledge about respondents and to reach mutual understanding with each other; and likewise, it is understood that all information and ideas are of the same value or should be explained, sharing and ensuring mutual influence (Dökmen, 2005). From this point of view, it can be expected that the participants (athletes, trainers, parents, managers, etc.) in sports teams have an effective communication process.

It can be said that communication in sports teams is also important in achieving success and delivering the desired performance. In the sports environment, both the athlete and the trainer can be mutually dependent on each other. From the athlete's perspective, this mutual commitment defines the need to leverage the trainer's competence, knowledge and experience; and coach, he needs to transfer his own competence and skill to performance and success through his athlete. Therefore, athletes and coaches develop a professional relationship or partnership between themselves and dual performance, they need time for a common need to achieve success and the obligation to cooperate (Antonini Philippe & Seiler, 2006). From this point of view, communication provides a suitable environment for establishing positive relationships and experiencing a positive coach-athlete relationship. (Altıntaş et al., 2012).

In this respect, sociology offers a theoretical perspective in terms of understanding the phenomenon of sports. "Communication", which is one of the social interaction processes of people who come together in sports environments based on competition and struggle, is extremely important. In team sports, achieving success, achieving the desired goals and ensuring that the performance is stable are among the most important goals. This is achieved through effective communication. In this context, the aim of this study is to examine the phenomenon of effective communication in team sports from a sociological perspective according to some variables.

## Material and Method

The research was carried out using the general scanning model. Scanning model is “the scanning arrangements made on the whole universe or a group, sample or sample to be taken from it in order to make a general judgment about the universe in a universe consisting of many elements” (Karasar, 2017).

### Research Group

While the study population of the research consists of athletes playing in different amateur sports clubs in Istanbul in 2021-2022, the sample consists of 491 volunteer athletes in total, 106 women and 385 men, in different sports clubs in Istanbul.

### Data Collection Tools

**Personal Information Form:** In the personal information form, there are questions that will enable access to information about the participants' age, gender, education and sports branch, and their status.

**Effective Communication Scale in Team Sports:** The scale used in the research was developed by Sullivan and Feltz and translated into Turkish by “Hambleton and Jones” (1994). An adaptation for Turkish athletes was made by “Alkan” (2009). The scale has 15 items, 9 items are "acceptance and positive conflict", 6 items are "discrimination and negative conflict", the sub-dimensions of the scale are Cronbach's Alpha values; .86, Discrimination; It was found to be .84.

### Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed in the SPSS 25.00 package program. It was examined whether the data showed normal distribution and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was applied. As analysis methods; Independent Sample T-Test was used for independent groups, Anova test for multiple comparisons, and correlation test for relationship.

## Findings

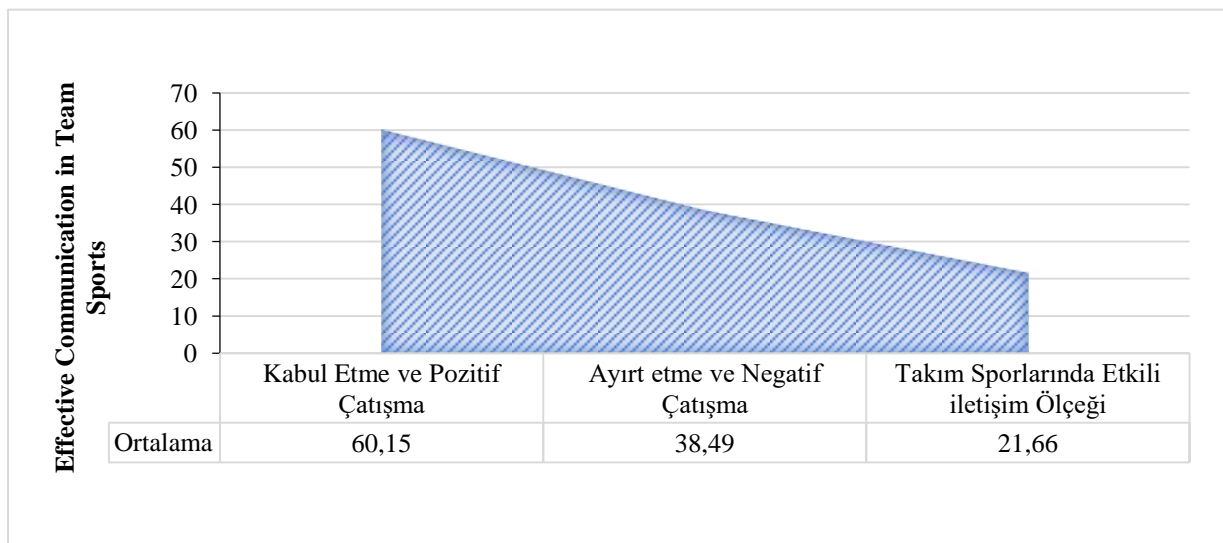
**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics Regarding Effective Communication Branch Variable in Team Sports

Dimension	Branch Status	N	X	Ss
<b>Acceptance and Positive Conflict</b>	Football <sup>a</sup>	193	39,20	4,026
	Volleyball <sup>b</sup>	107	37,69	4,333
	Basketball <sup>c</sup>	95	37,85	4,570
	Handball <sup>d</sup>	54	38,03	4,551
	Field Hockey <sup>e</sup>	25	40,00	2,309
	American Football <sup>f</sup>	17	38,23	3,767
<b>Discrimination and Negative Conflict</b>	Football <sup>a</sup>	193	22,51	5,339
	Volleyball <sup>b</sup>	107	20,86	5,552
	Basketball <sup>c</sup>	95	21,35	5,475
	Handball <sup>d</sup>	54	22,44	5,954
	Field Hockey <sup>e</sup>	25	19,12	3,789
	American Football <sup>f</sup>	17	20,11	4,371
<b>Effective Communication in Team Sports</b>	Football <sup>a</sup>	193	61,71	8,552
	Volleyball <sup>b</sup>	107	58,56	9,139
	Basketball <sup>c</sup>	95	59,21	9,380

Handball <sup>d</sup>	54	60,48	10,15
Field Hockey <sup>e</sup>	25	59,12	5,659
American Football <sup>f</sup>	17	58,35	6,909

When Table 1 is examined, when the averages for the branches of the athletes are examined, the scores of the athletes engaged in field hockey (40.00) in the sub-dimension of "acceptance and positive conflict", the scores of the football players (22,51) in the dimension of "discrimination and negative conflict" and in team sports. In communication, it was determined that football players (21,66) had higher scores.

**Table 2.** Average Values of Effective Communication and Its Sub-Dimensions in Team Sports



When Table 2 is examined, it was seen that the athletes' scores for acceptance and positive conflict sub-dimension (60.15), discrimination and negative conflict (38.49) and effective communication in team sports (21.66) were higher.

**Table 3.** T-Test Analysis Results on Effective Communication Status in Team Sports by Gender Variable

	Gender	N	X	Ss	T	P
<b>Acceptance and Positive Conflict</b>	Female	106	40,29	3,248	5,067	<b>,000*</b>
	Male	385	37,99	4,344		
<b>Discrimination and Negative Conflict</b>	Female	106	21,88	4,838	,467	,641
	Male	385	21,60	5,607		
<b>Effective Communication in Team Sports</b>	Female	106	62,17	7,109	2,646	<b>,008*</b>
	Male	385	59,60	9,301		

Table 3, according to a significant difference was found between the genders in the sub-dimensions of effective communication and acceptance and positive conflict in team sports ( $p < 0.05$ ). There was no difference in discrimination and negative conflict dimensions. Considering the mean scores, both women ( $62.17 \pm 7.109$ ) and men ( $59.60 \pm 9.301$ ) have very similar levels of self-efficacy in effective communication.

**Table 4.** Anova Analysis Results on Effective Communication Status in Team Sports by Age Variable

Dimension	Age Group	N	X	Ss	F	P
Acceptance and Positive Conflict	15-19 <sup>a</sup>	103	38,69	2,008	,203	,894
	20-24 <sup>b</sup>	144	38,28	5,721		
	25-29 <sup>c</sup>	147	38,54	3,673		
	30 and Over <sup>d</sup>	97	38,49	4,233		
Discrimination and Negative Conflict	15-19 <sup>a</sup>	103	21,97	4,495	,198	,898
	20-24 <sup>b</sup>	144	21,43	6,362		
	25-29 <sup>c</sup>	147	21,66	5,118		
	30 and Over <sup>d</sup>	97	21,70	5,447		
Effective Communication in Team Sports	15-19 <sup>a</sup>	103	60,66	5,834	,232	,874
	20-24 <sup>b</sup>	144	59,71	11,38		
	25-29 <sup>c</sup>	147	60,21	8,012		
	30 and Over <sup>d</sup>	97	60,19	8,919		

In Table 4, when the age status of the athletes was examined in terms of variables, it was found that there was no statistically significant difference in effective communication and its sub-dimensions.

**Table 5.** Anova Analysis Results on Effective Communication Status in Team Sports by Education Variable

Dimension	Educational Status	N	X	Ss	F	P
Acceptance and Positive Conflict	Secondary Education <sup>a</sup>	98	38,60	1,988	,145	,865
	Lycee <sup>b</sup>	245	38,38	5,167		
	University <sup>c</sup>	148	38,58	3,585		
Discrimination and Negative Conflict	Secondary Education <sup>a</sup>	98	21,58	4,278	,088	,916
	Lycee <sup>b</sup>	245	21,60	6,041		
	University <sup>c</sup>	148	21,82	5,119		
Effective Communication in Team Sports	Secondary Education <sup>a</sup>	98	60,18	5,496	,100	,905
	Lycee <sup>b</sup>	245	59,99	10,49		
	University <sup>c</sup>	148	60,41	7,929		

In Table 5, when the educational status of the athletes was examined in terms of variables, it was determined that there was no significant difference in their effective communication status and in the two sub-dimensions.

**Table 6.** Anova Analysis Results on Effective Communication Status in Team Sports by Branch Variable

Dimension	Branch Status	N	X	Ss	F	P	Significant Difference
Acceptance and Positive Conflict	Football <sup>a</sup>	193	39,20	4,026	3,117	,009*	a-b
	Volleyball <sup>b</sup>	107	37,69	4,333			
	Basketball <sup>c</sup>	95	37,85	4,570			
	Handball <sup>d</sup>	54	38,03	4,551			
	Field Hockey <sup>e</sup>	25	40,00	2,309			
	American Football <sup>f</sup>	17	38,23	3,767			
Discrimination and	Football <sup>a</sup>	193	22,51	5,339	3,104	,009*	a-e
	Volleyball <sup>b</sup>	107	20,86	5,552			

<b>Negative Conflict</b>	Basketball <sup>c</sup>	95	21,35	5,475			
	Handball <sup>d</sup>	54	22,44	5,954			
	Field Hockey <sup>e</sup>	25	19,12	3,789			
	American Football <sup>f</sup>	17	20,11	4,371			
<b>Effective Communication in Team Sports</b>	Football <sup>a</sup>	193	61,71	8,552			
	Volleyball <sup>b</sup>	107	58,56	9,139			
	Basketball <sup>c</sup>	95	59,21	9,380	2,323	,042*	a-b
	Handball <sup>d</sup>	54	60,48	10,15			
	Field Hockey <sup>e</sup>	25	59,12	5,659			
	American Football <sup>f</sup>	17	58,35	6,909			

When Table 6' was examined according to the branch status variable of the athletes, a statistically significant difference was found in the effective communication, "acceptance and positive conflict" sub-dimension and "discrimination and negative conflict dimension" in team sports ( $p < 0.05$ ). It has been observed that this difference is between football and volleyball players in the "acceptance and positive conflict dimension", football and field hockey in the "discrimination and negative conflict dimension" in team sports, and between football and volleyball branches in effective communication.

**Table 7.** Team Correlation Analysis Results Regarding Effective Communication and Its Sub-Dimensions in Sports

		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acceptance and Positive Conflict</b>	P	1	,696	,899
	r		<b>,000</b>	<b>,000</b>
<b>Discrimination and Negative Conflict</b>	p		1	,940
	r			<b>,000</b>
<b>Effective Communication in Team Sports</b>	p		,	1
	r			

Table 7 shows the correlation analysis results of the athletes participating in the research regarding effective communication in team sports and its sub-dimensions. According to the findings; A positive relationship was observed between the athletes' "acceptance positive conflict" dimension and "discrimination and negative conflict" dimension and effective communication in team sports.

## Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, the effective communication levels of the participating athletes in team sports in terms of sociological perspective were examined according to different variables. As a result of the findings obtained, there were significant differences between the genders and branches of the individuals engaged in team sports. No significance was found in the education and age variables. A positive and significant relationship was observed in the "acceptance and positive conflict" sub-dimension, "discrimination and negative conflict" dimensions, which are included in effective communication in team sports. When the literature on the subject is examined, effective communication studies are found.

In our study, while significant differences were found between gender variable and effective communication, acceptance and positive conflict in team sports, no difference was observed between discrimination and negative conflict. In a study conducted by Kılıçgil et al. (2009), it was investigated whether there was a difference between the communication skills of the



Physical Education and Sports Department students. It was found that female students had significantly higher communication skills than male students. In the study of the effect of communication skills on team and individual athletes conducted by Ulukan, H. (2012), it was determined that there was no significant difference between the gender variable and communication skills. These studies support our study. When the age status of the athletes was examined in terms of variables, it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference in the sub-dimensions of effective communication, "acceptance and positive conflict" and "discrimination and negative conflict". In the study conducted by Görür (2001) that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of communication skills in favor of the older age group adolescents, it differs from the finding of our study. However, there are studies in the literature that include results that negatively affect communication skills as age increases (Hacıoğlu 2017; Bayrak & Nacar, 2015; Dalkılıç 2011).

When the educational status of the athletes was examined in terms of variables, it was determined that there was no significant difference in their effective communication status and in the two sub-dimensions. When the literature is examined, studies on educational status and effective communication are seen (Korkut, 2005). In the study conducted by Abakay and Kuru (2011), it was determined that as the educational status of professional and amateur male football players increased, the level of communication with the coach also increased. On the other hand, in the study conducted by Ulukan, H. (2012), it was found that the communication skills of athletes who have parents with high education levels are high. When the athletes' branch status was examined according to the variable, a statistically significant difference was found in the effective communication in team sports, "acceptance and positive conflict" sub-dimension and "discrimination and negative conflict" dimension. Unlike this study, in the study conducted by Ulukan, H. (2012), it was determined that there was no significant difference between the branch variable and the communication skills of the athletes. According to the results of the correlation analysis regarding the effective communication and sub-dimensions of the athletes participating in the research in team sports; It has been determined that there is a positive relationship between the "acceptance positive conflict" dimension of the athletes and the "discrimination and negative conflict" dimension and effective communication in team sports. In the studies of Cuningham and Eys (2007), the relationship between intra-team communication and role confusion in team sports was examined. It was found that as the level of communication increased, the role confusion within the team decreased. It has been seen that the high level of communication is an important tool in minimizing the problems among the athletes. In addition, increasing team unity and facilitating learning are important in sports (Baser, 1985).

As a result, it has been seen that communication from a sociological perspective is important for the success of the team and for the conflicts of intra-team communication. In the light of this information and as a result of social resources, researches can be made for different studies. It can be used in individual and team sports without determining whether communication is affected positively or negatively. In the light of the obtained results, various programs can be applied to improve communication within the team.

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