

## Determination of leadership styles of boxing trainers

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### Abstract

This study aimed to determine the leadership styles of boxing trainers. For this purpose, a total of 100 male trainers who worked actively in Turkey volunteered to participate in the study. The data of the study were collected by using the leadership questionnaire which was adapted by Tiriyaki (2001) from the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS) developed by Chelladurai and Saleh (1980). The descriptive statistical analysis of the obtained data was carried out using the Kruskal Wallis and Mann-Whitney-U tests. Whether the trainers were assigned to the national team, whether they differ in terms of age, how they were assigned, their training experience and level and their leadership styles were determined. After the tests were carried out, it was observed that there was a statistically significant difference between the variables of the trainers' age, training experience and level ( $P<0.05$ ). Apart from the variables of age, training experience and level and the leadership style of democratic behavior, it was ascertained that there was no significant relationship between the leadership styles of the boxing trainers ( $P>0.05$ ). According to the results of the study, the leadership styles of trainers do not differ according to whether they are/have been assigned as national team trainers. In addition, apart from democratic behavior, a significant difference was not detected in the other leadership styles in terms of demographic characteristics.

**Keywords:** Boxing, leadership, trainer.

### INTRODUCTION

Although different meaning have been ascribed to the concept of leadership in all the fields that deal with management functions, this concept has always existed and maintained its importance since the most ancient ages of history. This concept that comes from the French word "leader" has the meaning of "Önder, Şef" in the Turkish Language Institution (TDK) (16). Leadership exists in all societies without discrimination of geography, religion or culture. Leadership is existent whenever and wherever people live within groups, communities or organizations and engage in activities. Therefore, it can be said that leadership is a humane, social and universal phenomenon. Nevertheless, despite the fact that it is a well-discussed, written and investigated-field, it has still not yet come to an agreement (7).

Leadership is a path walked with patience, a deepened activity of life, a paid off process rather than being a personal characteristics (12). Leadership is the ability and power of directing the behavior of the organization members towards the realization of its predetermined

goals (3). A leader is not just an ordinary person. A leader must have the qualifications that puts an individual in the position of being a leader. Leaders should be able to move their followers in the direction they aim to go not just with their qualifications but also with their actions. It can be said that one has to first have a group/team accept his/her superior characteristics, then have these characteristics give confidence to them and get them to accept the impact in order to be considered as a leader (6).

Along with high performance, continuity in sport clubs also depends on the success. Along with performance, the builders of success are the leaders who make prudential plans for the team, have idiosyncratic methods in reaching goals and who are constantly with their athletes, getting to know them and satisfying their needs. A trainer comes forward as a leader who affects the group processes. Traditionally, a trainer is accepted as one who is inborn with charisma and leadership skills (1).

In this study that aimed to determine the leadership styles of boxing trainers; the leadership styles were analyzed with the variables of age,

whether they were assigned to the national team, the level of training, years of experience and whether they were trainers of a national team.

## MATERIALS & METHODS

Trainers who work within the organization of the Turkish Boxing Federation were recruited for the study. A total of 100 trainers who participated in The Turkish Amateur Boxing (U15) Championship from May 27th to June 3rd in 2016 held in the province of Mersin, Turkey were randomly selected for this study.

The data collection consisted of two parts; a personal information form and a Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS). The personal information form consisted of the participants' demographic characteristics. The form of leadership characteristics within the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS), which was adapted to Turkish by Tiryaki & Toros (14) and developed by Chelladurai & Saleh (1980), was used in the study. The scale has been made up of 40 items for determining leadership styles that are divided into 5 subscales that determine the leadership styles entitled. Training and instruction behavior, Democratic behavior, Autocratic behavior, Social support behavior and Positive feedback behavior. Each response category was measured in a five-value Likert scale (5: Always, 4: Often, 3: Occasionally, 2: Seldom, and 1: Never). The scale's Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients were given as follows; .79 for Training and instruction behavior, .79 for Democratic behavior, .56 for Autocratic behavior, .71 for Social support behavior and .65 for Positive feedback behavior.

### Analysis of the Data

For descriptive statistics, the percentage distribution and frequency were used to organize and summarize the data. With the purpose of determining the statistical analysis, testing for normality was carried out using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z Test ( $z=.109$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Because of the fact that the condition of normality distribution was not provided, in the analysis of the data, the Kruskal Wallis Test was performed for the multiple comparisons and the Mann-Whitney U Test for the paired comparisons. Statistical analyses were done

through SPSS software, version 15.0 for Windows at the significance level of 0.05.

## RESULTS

The obtained results of the study have been given in the tables.

Table 1. Results of the leadership styles the trainers.

Sub-Dimensions of Leadership Styles	N	Mean	SD	Max	Min
Training and Instruction	100	4.32	0.25	4.73	3.67
Democratic Behavior	100	4.38	0.40	5.00	2.75
Autocratic Behavior	100	4.40	0.36	5.00	3.67
Social Support	100	4.09	0.45	4.75	3.00
Positive Feedback	100	3.72	0.33	4.50	2.83

Table 2. Age distribution of the trainers.

Age	N	%
21-30	4	4.0
31-40	26	26.0
41-50	53	53.0
51-60	17	17.0
61 and above	0	0.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 3. Gender distribution of the trainers.

Gender	N	%
Female	0	0.0
Male	100	100.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 4. The results of whether the trainers are assigned to a national team.

State of Being Assigned to a National Team	N	%
Yes	71	71.0
No	29	29.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 5. The distribution of the trainers according to their training level.

Training Level	N	%
1	0	0.0
2	16	16.0
3	30	30.0
4	28	28.0
5	26	26.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 6. The distribution of the trainers' years of experience.

Training Experience (Years)	N	%
1-3	0	0.0
4-7	22	22.0
8-11	12	12.0
12-15	20	20.0
15 and above	46	46.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 7. The distribution of whether the trainers are assigned to training a national team.

State of Being a Trainer of a National Team	N	%
Yes	76	76.0
No	24	24.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 8. The comparison of the trainers' leadership styles when they were athletes.

Sub-Dimensions of Leadership Styles	State of Being Assigned to a National Team	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Training and Instruction	Yes	71	50.83	3609.00	1006.00	.857
	No	29	49.69	1441.00		
Democratic Behavior	Yes	71	53.20	3777.00	838.00	.142
	No	29	43.90	1273.00		
Autocratic Behavior	Yes	71	48.33	3431.50	875.50	.224
	No	29	55.81	1618.50		
Social Support	Yes	71	51.35	3646.00	969.00	.644
	No	29	48.41	1404.00		
Positive Feedback	Yes	71	49.41	3508.00	952.00	.550
	No	29	53.17	1542.00		

Table 9. The comparison of the leadership styles the trainers prefer according to their training level.

Sub-Dimensions of Leadership Styles	Training Level	N	Mean Rank	X <sup>2</sup>	p
Training and Instruction	1	0	-	.832	.842
	2	16	49.38		
	3	30	51.97		
	4	28	53.21		
	5	26	46.58		
Democratic Behavior	1	0	-	7.514	.000
	2	16	62.44		
	3	30	52.83		
	4	28	61.75		
	5	26	28.35		
Autocratic Behavior	1	0	-	.440	.932
	2	16	54.63		
	3	30	50.30		
	4	28	49.57		
	5	26	49.19		
Social Support	1	0	-	2.208	.530
	2	16	45.19		
	3	30	46.23		
	4	28	54.61		
	5	26	54.27		
Positive Feedback	1	0	-	4.587	.205
	2	16	64.13		
	3	30	50.00		
	4	28	46.36		
	5	26	47.15		

According to Table 8, there was no significant difference in the comparisons made between the sub-dimensions of the trainers' leadership styles and whether they were assigned to a national team in their lives of sportsmanship ( $p>0.05$ ).

In result of the comparisons made between the sub-dimensions of the traing levels and leadership styles (Table 9), there was a statistically significant difference in democratic behavior ( $X^2=7.514$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). In result of the paired comparisons made by the Mann-Whitney U Test, carried out with the purpose of determining the group that the significant difference stemed from; it has been determined that there is a significant difference in favor of Level 2 trainers between Levels 2 and 5 ( $U=63.00$ ;  $p<0.05$ ); there is a significant difference in favor of Level 3

trainers between Levels 3 and 5 ( $U=184.00$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and there is a significant difference in favor of Level 4 trainers between Levels 4 and 5 ( $U=139.00$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) ( $p>0.05$ ). The differences between the other groups were not found to be statistically significant ( $p>0.05$ ).

According to Table 10, there was a significant difference found in democratic behavior ( $X^2=13.898$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) in the statistical analysis between the sub-dimensions of training experience and leadership styles. In result of the paired comparisons made with the Mann-Whitney U Test, carried out with the purpose of determining the group in which the significant difference in democratic behavior is; there was a significant difference in favor of the trainers with 4-7 years of experience between 4-7 years and 15 years of experience ( $U=326.00$ ;  $p<0.05$ );

there was a significant difference in favor of the trainers with 8-11 years of experience between 8-11 years and 12-15 years of experience ( $U=58.00$ ;  $p<0.05$ ); there was a significant difference in favor of the trainers with 8-11 years of experience between 8-11 years and 15 years of experience ( $U=109.00$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The differences among the other groups were found to be statistically not significant ( $p>0.05$ ).

There was no significant difference found in the comparison made between the sub-dimensions of whether the trainers are assigned in training a national team and the leadership styles ( $p>0.05$ ; Table 11).

According to Table 12, in result of the statistical analysis of the comparison made between the sub-

dimensions of age and the leaderships of the trainers who participated in the study, it was observed that there was a significant difference in democratic behavior ( $X^2=11.396$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). In result of the paired comparison made with the Mann-Whitney U Test, carried out with the purpose of determining the group in which the significant difference in democratic behavior is; there was a significant difference in favor of the 31-40 year old trainers between the trainers of 31-40 and 41-50 years of age ( $U=432.00$ ;  $p<0.05$ ); there was a significant difference in favor of the 31-40 year old trainers between the trainers of 31-40 and 51-60 years of age ( $U=118.00$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The differences among the other groups were found to be statistically not significant ( $p>0.05$ ).

Table 10. The comparison of the leadership styles the trainers prefer in accordance with their training experiences.

Sub-Dimensions of Leadership Styles	Training Experience (Years)	N	Mean Rank	X <sup>2</sup>	p
Training and Instruction	1-3	0	-		
	4-7	22	54.91		
	8-11	12	64.92	5.367	.147
	12-15	20	50.30		
	15 and above	46	44.72		
Democratic Behavior	1-3	0	-		
	4-7	22	58.59		
	8-11	12	73.25	13.898	.003
	12-15	20	48.75		
	15 and above	46	41.46		
Autocratic Behavior	1-3	0	-		
	4-7	22	52.86		
	8-11	12	67.17	6.105	.107
	12-15	20	43.30		
	15 and above	46	48.15		
Social Support	1-3	0	-		
	4-7	22	58.41		
	8-11	12	46.25	5.142	.162
	12-15	20	57.90		
	15 and above	46	44.61		
Positive Feedback	1-3	0	-		
	4-7	22	47.27		
	8-11	12	59.17	4.505	.212
	12-15	20	40.60		
	15 and above	46	54.09		

Table 11. The comparison of leadership styles the trainers prefer according to whether they are assigned to training a national team.

Sub-Dimensions	Being National Team	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Training and Instruction	Yes	76	49.88	3791.00	865.00	.703
	No	24	52.46	1259.00		
Democratic Behavior	Yes	76	51.84	3940.00	810.00	.406
	No	24	46.25	1110.00		
Autocratic Behavior	Yes	76	48.97	3722.00	796.00	.330
	No	24	55.33	1328.00		
Social Support	Yes	76	50.42	3832.00	906.00	.961
	No	24	50.75	1218.00		
Positive Feedback	Yes	76	48.93	3719.00	793.00	.330
	No	24	55.46	1331.00		

Table 12. The comparison of the leadership styles the trainers prefer according to their age.

Sub-Dimensions	Age	N	Mean Rank	X <sup>2</sup>	p
Training and Instruction	21-30	4	75.50	6.193	.103
	31-40	26	54.81		
	41-50	53	50.11		
	51-60	17	39.24		
	61 and above	0	-		
Democratic Behavior	21-30	4	71.00	11.396	.010
	31-40	26	64.04		
	41-50	53	45.42		
	51-60	17	40.82		
	61 and above	0	-		
Autocratic Behavior	21-30	4	68.50	2.304	.512
	31-40	26	50.12		
	41-50	53	51.03		
	51-60	17	45.21		
	61 and above	0	-		
Social Support	21-30	4	84.75	7.020	.071
	31-40	26	54.08		
	41-50	53	47.77		
	51-60	17	45.47		
	61 and above	0	-		
Positive Feedback	21-30	4	58.50	4.163	.244
	31-40	26	42.65		
	41-50	53	55.23		
	51-60	17	45.88		
	61 and above	0	-		

## DISCUSSION

It has been understood from the data that most of the trainers who participated in the study have the leadership style of autocratic behavior. Autocratic behavior was followed by, in order, democratic behavior, training and instruction, social support and then positive feedback (Table 1). In a study on Taekwondo trainers, it was determined that, in order, the trainers were inclined to the leadership styles of democratic behavior, training and instruction, autocratic behavior, social support and positive feedback (17). The leadership styles of trainers may differ according to external factors and the qualities of the athletes they are working with. Therefore, it is not suitable to judge the trainers' leadership styles as good or bad. The essential thing for the trainers is to be aware of their leadership styles and be able to make changes in their leadership styles in accordance with the qualities of the athletes (13).

The age ranges of the trainers who participated in the study have been given (Table 2). Köksal (11) has determined that the trainers of individual sports are 36% at the range of 31-40 years of age and 25% at the range of 41-50 years of age. Çelik (5), in a study on soccer trainers, has reported that 24% are at the range of 41-45 years of age and 75% are at the range of 36 years and above. In this sense, it can be concluded that trainers are young and middle-aged individuals.

There was no significant difference among the sub-dimensions of democratic behavior in the leadership styles of the trainers in accordance with age. According to the obtained data, it can be said that the more the age decreases, the more the trainers are inclined to the leadership style of democratic behavior (Table 12). Yurt (17) has reported that, with Taekwondo trainers, apart from autocratic behavior, there was no significant difference between the leadership styles according to age. The significant difference found in autocratic behavior was reported to be in favor of trainers between the ages of 41-50. The findings of the study are supportive of each other although there seems to be a contradiction. Hasançebioglu (8) has come to conclusion that the leadership styles of teachers do not differ with age. Karayol (10) has observed that there is no significant difference between the age groups and leadership style scores.

It has been observed that all of the trainers who participated in the study are male individuals and

there are no female individuals among them (Table 3). In a study on individual sports trainers, it has been observed that 22% were female, 78% were male and that leadership styles do not differ according to gender (11). Hasançebioglu (8) has also reported similar results. In the study Birell and Cole (2) carried out in America, they have determined that the rate of female trainers, who train male athletes for individual and team sports, is 1%. Based on results of studies, it can be accepted that male individuals are dominant in the profession of sports training.

It has been observed that 71% of the trainers who participated in the study have experienced a national sportsmanship (assignment) (Table 4). A significant difference was not found in the sub-dimensions of the leadership styles of the trainers who have or have not experienced national sportsmanship in their career (Table 8). Yurt (17) has obtained similar results for Taekwondo trainers. A trainer's part in an athlete's success and performance is related to his/her previous experiences in terms of sports, special learned skills, culture, physical conditions and working environment, dealing with the athletes, motivation and compliance (4). In this sense, it can be said that the trainers' previous life in terms of sports has a direct effect on athletes' performances.

The training levels of the trainers who participated in the study have been given in Table 5. In a study, it has been observed that 53.1% of tennis trainers were in level 1, 30.5% in level 2, 14.1% in level 3, 1.7% in level 4 and 0.6% in level 5 (15). Similarities or differences in training levels is a natural result. Apart from democratic behavior, a significant difference has not been observed among the leadership styles of the boxing trainers, who participated in the study, regarding training levels (Table 9). In accordance with the obtained results of the study, the more the training level decreases, the more the trainers are inclined to the leadership style of democratic behavior. A study on tennis trainers has reported that there was no significant difference between self-sufficiency situations as well as leadership styles and training levels (15).

The fact that approximately half of the trainers have 15 years and above of experience in training really draws attention (Table 6). In a study on individual and team sports trainers, it has been determined that most trainers have between 6 to 10 years of experience in training (9). According to the

study results, it can be said that trainers have medium and high levels of experience.

No significant difference was observed in the leadership styles the boxing trainers preferred according to the groups of their training experiences (Table 10). According to these data, it can be said that the more the training experience decreases the more trainers are inclined to the leadership style of democratic behavior. A significant difference has been detected between the tennis trainers' leadership styles of social support and positive feedback and their active training period. The scores of the leadership styles of trainers whose active training periods are 4-6 years, were found to be significantly high (15). It has been reported that there was no significant difference between the scores of the leadership styles of trainers of male team sports in accordance with their experiences of being team captains (10).

76% of the trainers who participated in the study have worked as a national team trainer (Table 7). No significant difference was obtained in the comparisons made between the sub-dimensions of whether they have been assigned as a national team trainer and their leadership styles (Table 11). To our knowledge, there was no report on national team training and leadership styles in the obtained literature.

In the study, it has been observed that trainers between the ages of 31-40, who are level 2 trainers and who have between 4-7 years of experience display more democratic behavior when compared to the other trainers. According to the results of the study, the leadership styles of trainers do not differ according to whether they are/have been assigned as national team trainers. In addition, apart from democratic behavior, a significant difference was not detected in the other leadership styles in terms of demographic characteristics. The fact that the trainers who participated in the study were all male individuals prevented the leadership styles to be tested in accordance with the variable of gender.

To perform more comprehensive studies with larger sample sizes on boxing trainers is important in terms of generating data and evaluation. A difference in three demographic characteristics has been detected in democratic behavior which are; the level of training, experience of training and age. While no differences were observed in the other leadership styles, the difference observed in democratic behavior is considered as a matter that

needs to be further investigation and is thought that it could contribute to the field. The fact that most of the participant trainers have the leadership style of autocratic behavior is a subject to be embarked on in terms of the sport of boxing. Additionally, another subject of interest would be the fact that there is male dominance among boxing trainers.

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