Examining The Effective Decision-Making Situations Of Amateur Football Players By Various Variables

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Abstract

In this study, it was aimed to examine the effective decision-making situations of amateur football players affiliated with the Bayburt Amateur League by some variables. A total of 102 football players playing in the amateur league participated in the study. The data of the research were obtained using a personal information form and a sports effective decision-making scale consisting of 15 items. Descriptive statistics and normality test were utilized. To examine the differences between the educational level variable and the sub-dimensions, t-test was used; and for the examination of the sub-dimensions according to age, sports age, played club, and played position classification, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test was used. SPSS 26 statistical package program was used for the analysis of the study. It was found that there was a significant difference between the ages of the players and the scores they received from the external decision-making sub-dimension (p<.05). It was found that there was a significant difference between the scores of the players obtained from the scale sub-dimensions and the clubs they played for (p<.05). The age levels of amateur football players and the clubs they play for are important factors that can affect the decision-making process in the performance of athletes. In this regard, it has been observed that the younger the age in the external decision-making process, the higher the rates of influence. As age increases, the external decision-making process decreases. It has also emerged from our study that it is important for players to be effective in decision-making in the club where they play.

Keywords: Amateur league, Football players, Decision making

Introduction

Football is the most popular sport globally among various sports branches. It is played by millions of individuals and watched by hundreds of millions (Wesson, 2002). In football, a team sport where the outcome is evaluated by goals scored or conceded into the nets in a large playing field with many players involved, recent trends have shifted towards more systematic and planned training sessions, replacing conventional methods (İnal, 2004; Carling, 2016). Factors such as exercise style during training and matches, physical fitness level, general mood, and the ability to make correct and effective decisions stand out as some of the factors affecting football players' performances (Reilly et al., 2008; Williams & Krane, 2015).

Decision-making is a natural process encountered at every stage of human life. Although the decision-making process may seem easy at first, it emerges as a complex process (Pekdoğan, 2015). Defined as choosing the most appropriate option among presented alternatives (Tatlılıoğlu & Deniz, 2011), decision-making and decision-making style are crucial both in individuals' daily lives and in sports environments. Appropriate and timely decisions made in sports environments can positively impact the game, whereas incorrect decisions or decisions made at the wrong time can not only negatively affect the athlete during the game but also influence the game's outcome (Leveaux, 2010). Athletes in many sports have to make decisions among various possibilities. While a footballer decides when and where to strike the ball, a gymnast decides to attempt a new movement sequence, or a wrestler applies a specific grappling technique, they may get stuck in the execution phase of the decision made internally. In such a situation, although the athlete may choose one of the possibilities, the steps to execute the movement may either be delayed or not taken at all (Baumann, 1986). In every moment of human life, decisions are made about how life will be. This can sometimes be instantaneous decisions and sometimes decisions for the future. Since everything realized as a result of decision-making is crucial in our lives, it is necessary to think carefully before making decisions (Deveci, 2011). Decision-making is the act of selecting from available actions those that are appropriate for achieving the individual's goals (Kahneman, 2011; Hastie & Dawes, 2010). Decision-making encompasses cognitive and behavioral states that allow choosing among various options in different situations. In daily life, individuals may encounter decision-making behaviors numerous times. This can sometimes be a quite complex structure to understand structurally. Decision-making can be expressed as a tendency that reduces the problems encountered when there are many choices according to need. When it comes to decision-making, what gains more importance is the tendency to anticipate consequences and choose the one with the most power to prepare for and reach the goal (Kuzgun, 1992). In line with the definitions made, we can define decision-making as the action of determining the right among the alternatives created by calculating the effects of all factors objectively, using scientific methods, to solve problems or achieve goals (İlmez, 2010).

Athletes need to be physically and psychologically strong during training and competition periods. It has been determined in this study that football players are affected by various factors. Moreover, besides the psychological conditions of football players, effective decision-making situations are also important. Since effective decision-making situations of athletes affect the performance they will display during training and competitions, they hold an important place in athletes' lives. Studies focusing particularly on correct and effective decision-making techniques during training and competition periods can positively influence athletes' correct and effective decision-making situations. In this context, the aim of this study

is to examine the effective decision making of amateur soccer players in terms of some variables.

Material and Method

Ethics Committee Permission

Voluntary consent forms were obtained from the football players participating in the research. Necessary permissions were obtained from the scale owners for the scales used in our research. In the implementation of the current research, the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" was followed. The research was implemented after the ethics committee decision of Bayburt University dated 20.03.2024 and numbered E-15604681-100-194854 was obtained.

Research Model

Descriptive survey model was used in this study. Karasar (2007) defines the descriptive survey model as a research model that aims to describe a past or present situation as it exists. In this model, events, objects, institutions, groups or existing conditions in various fields are described in detail. The current situation is presented as it is without the intervention of the researcher.

Universe and Sample / Study Group

A total of 102 amateur football players selected from the teams playing licensed football in the Bayburt Amateur League in the 2023-2024 season took part in this study.

Data Collection Tools

Personal Information Form: Developed by the researcher to determine the data and personal information (age, education level, years of sports experience, duration of playing football professionally, and the club played for) to be used in the study.

Effective Decision Making in Sports Scale: It consists of 15 items and 2 sub-dimensions. The internal decision making sub-dimension consists of items 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 and the external decision making sub-dimension consists of items 8,9,10,11,11,12,13,14,15. In the scale, external decision-making items are reverse coded items. The scale is evaluated on a 5-point Likert scale (5: Strongly Agree, 4: Agree, 3: Neutral, 2: Disagree, 1: Strongly Disagree). The score that can be obtained from the scale varies between 8 and 40 in the external decision making sub-dimension and between 7 and 35 in the internal decision making sub-dimension. The reliability coefficients of the scale were determined as external decision making 0,87 and internal decision making 0,85 (Çetin & Kara, 2024).

Data Analysis

Before proceeding to statistical analyses, assumptions such as normality, homogeneity, stationarity, linearity, etc., were checked, and statistical information regarding which assumptions were met was provided. Based on this information, the rationale for choosing which analysis techniques were preferred and which ones were not preferred was justified (Tozoğlu and Dursun, 2020). In the study, data processing procedures were conducted for the analysis of the data obtained from the scale. For this purpose, the personal information form filled out by the football players, the "Effective Decision Making in Sports Scale," were thoroughly reviewed. Subsequently, the data suitable for the research were evaluated for analysis. SPSS 26.0 analysis software was used. Descriptive analysis techniques were primarily used for data analysis. In normally distributed data, parametric tests were used, and

the "Independent Samples T-Test" was conducted to determine the differences between two different independent variables and the subscales of the scale, while the "One-Way Analysis of Variance" test and "LSD" from multiple comparison tests were conducted to determine the differences between more than two different variables and the subscales of the scale, and the results were evaluated at the significance level of $p < 0.05$.

Findings

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants

		n	%
Age	18-22 age	37	36.3
	23-27 age	46	45.1
	28 + age	19	18.6
Education Level	High School	64	62.7
	University	38	37.3
Sports Age	1-2 years	9	8.8
	3-4 years	19	18.6
	5-6 years	24	23.5
	7-10 years	50	49.1
Club	Danişment	21	20.6
	Soğukgöze	25	24.5
	Çatıksu	26	25.5
	Konursu	30	29.4
Position You Play	Goalkeeper	14	13.7
	Back	20	19.7
	Stopper	18	17.6
	Midfielder	23	22.5
	Wing	16	15.7
	Forward	11	10.8

The research was conducted on a total of 102 football players, with 37 aged 18-22, 46 aged 23-27, and 19 aged 28 and above. Regarding the question about the educational level of participating football players, it was observed that 64 answered high school and 38 answered university. In response to the question about the years of experience in sports, it was observed that 9 answered 1-2 years, 19 answered 3-4 years, 24 answered 5-6 years, and 50 football players answered 7-10 years. Regarding the question about the club they play for, it was observed that 21 answered Danişment Sport, 25 answered Soğukgöze Sport, 26 answered Çatıksu Sport, and 30 answered Konursu Sport. Additionally, in response to the question about the position they play, it was observed that 14 football players answered Goalkeeper, 20 answered Defender, 18 answered Center-back, 23 answered Midfielder, 16 answered Wing, and 11 answered Forward.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics distribution

	Effective Decision Making Scale in Sports (General)	Internal Decision Making	External Decision Making
N	102	102	102
Mean	3.322	4.268	2.493
Std. Deviation	0.482	0.759	0.860
Skewness	**0.351**	-2.169	0.589

Std. Error of Skewness	0.239	0.239	0.239
Kurtosis	**1.312**	2.393	0.308
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.474	0.474	0.474

When the descriptive data of the Sports Decision-Making Scale were examined, it was found that the skewness and kurtosis values were between +1.5 and -1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Based on this point, parametric tests were applied in our research.

Table 3. Effective decision making scale in sports (SEKVÖ) reliability distribution results

Scale and Sub-Dimensions	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
General	15	0.704
Internal Decision Making	7	0.872
External Decision Making	8	0.882

According to the reliability distribution results of the scale used in our research, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient value was found to be .704. This value being within the range of $0.60 < R2 < 0.80$ indicates that the scale used is quite reliable (Özdamar, 2002; George & Mallery, 2010).

Table 4. Variance analysis test results of football players' scale sub-dimensions according to age variable

Scale and Sub-Dimensions	Age	n	x	ss	f	p	LSD
General	18-22 Age[a]	37	3.320	0.593	0.681	0.509	-
	23-27 Age[b]	46	3.368	0.444			
	28+ Age[c]	19	3.214	0.300			
Internal Decision Making	18-22 Age[a]	37	4.104	0.742	1.457	0.238	-
	23-27 Age[b]	46	4.338	0.795			
	28+ Age[c]	19	4.421	0.675			
External Decision Making	18-22 Age[a]	37	4.104	0.742	2.005	**0.048***	**a<c**
	23-27 Age[b]	46	4.338	0.795			
	28+ Age[c]	19	4.421	0.675			

*p<0.05

There was found to be a significant difference at the p <0.05 level between the ages of the football players and the scores they obtained from the external decision-making sub-dimension. Significant differences were found between the age groups of 18-22 years and 28 years and above in the external decision-making sub-dimension. However, no significant difference was found among age groups in the internal decision-making sub-dimension.

Table 5. Variance analysis test of football players' scale sub-dimensions according to sports age variable

Scale and Sub-Dimensions	Sports Age	n	x	ss	f	p	LSD
General	1-2 Year[a]	9	3.370	0.290	0.078	0.972	-
	3-4 Year[b]	19	3.347	0.219			

5-6 Year[c]	24	3.291	0.408	
7-10 Year[d]	50	3.318	0.607	

Scale and Sub-Dimensions		n	x	ss	f	p	-
Internal Decision Making	1-2 Year[a]	9	4.428	0.410			
	3-4 Year[b]	19	4.443	0.398	0.647	0.587	-
	5-6 Year[c]	24	4.226	0.774			
	7-10 Year[d]	50	4.194	0.893			
External Decision Making	1-2 Year[a]	9	2.444	0.628			
	3-4 Year[b]	19	2.388	0.530	0.183	0.908	-
	5-6 Year[c]	24	2.474	0.755			
	7-10 Year[d]	50	2.552	1.040			

*p<0.05

There was no significant difference at the p <0.05 level observed between the football players' years of sports age and the averages of the scores they obtained from the sub-dimensions of the scale.

Table 6. T-Test results of football players' scale sub-dimensions according to education level variable

Scale and Sub-Dimensions	Education Level	n	x	ss	sd	t	p
General	High School	64	3.295	0.491	100.000	-0.715	0.476
	University	38	3.366	0.470			
Internal Decision Making	High School	64	4.227	0.716	100.000	-0.710	0.479
	University	38	4.338	0.832			
External Decision Making	High School	64	2.480	0.894	100.000	-0.203	0.839
	University	38	2.516	0.811			

 *p<0.05

There was no significant difference at the p <0.05 level found between the educational levels of the football players and the averages of the scores they obtained from the sub-dimensions of the scale.

Table 7. Analysis of variance test results of football players' scale sub-dimensions according to the club played variable

Scale and Sub-Dimensions	Club	n	x	ss	f	p	LSD
General	Danişment[a]	21	3.371	0.211			
	Soğukgöze[b]	25	3.232	0.383	2.552	**0.046***	**b<c**
	Çatıksu[c]	26	3.515	0.640			**c>d**
	Konursu[d]	30	3.195	0.497			
Internal Decision Making	Danişment[a]	21	4.625	0.368			
	Soğukgöze[b]	25	4.280	0.817	2.254	**0.028***	**a>c**
	Çatıksu[c]	26	4.137	0.938			**c>d**
	Konursu[d]	30	4.123	0.688			
External Decision Making	Danişment[a]	21	2.273	0.374	3.971	**0.010***	**a<c**

Soğukgöze[b]	25	2.315	0.884		**b<c**
Çatıksu[c]	26	2.971	0.966		**d<c**
Konursu[d]	30	2.383	0.865		

*p<0.05

There was found to be a significant difference at the p <0.05 level between the football players' club played and the averages of the scores they obtained from the scale sub-dimensions. In the Internal Decision Making sub-dimension, significant differences were found between Danişment Sport and Çatıksu Sport, as well as between Danişment Sport and Konursu Sport. In the External Decision Making sub-dimension, significant differences were found between Danişment Sport and Çatıksu Sport, Soğukgöze Sport and Çatıksu Sport, as well as between Konursu Sport and Çatıksu Sport.

Table 8. Analysis of variance test results of football players' scale sub-dimensions according to the played position variable

Scale and Sub-Dimensions	Position You Play	n	x	ss	f	p	LSD
General	Goalkeeper[a]	14	3.247	0.436	0.293	0.916	-
	Back[b]	20	3.423	0.546			
	Stopper[c]	18	3.314	0.485			
	Midfielder[d]	23	3.269	0.565			
	Wing[e]	16	3.329	0.386			
	Forward[f]	11	3.345	0.418			
Internal Decision Making	Goalkeeper[a]	14	3.959	0.971	0.747	0.590	-
	Back[b]	20	4.335	0.420			
	Stopper[c]	18	4.341	0.752			
	Midfielder[d]	23	4.229	0.891			
	Wing[e]	16	4.267	0.866			
	Forward[f]	11	4.506	0.453			
External Decision Making	Goalkeeper[a]	14	2.625	0.859	0.283	0.921	-
	Back[b]	20	2.625	0.900			
	Stopper[c]	18	2.416	0.839			
	Midfielder[d]	23	2.429	0.863			
	Wing[e]	16	2.507	0.842			
	Forward[f]	11	2.329	0.984			

*p<0.05

There was no significant difference at the p <0.05 level found between the football players' played positions and the averages of the scores they obtained from the scale sub-dimensions.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, the aim was to examine the effective decision-making situations of amateur licensed football players affiliated with the Bayburt Amateur League, in relation to certain variables. A total of 102 male football players participated in the research, with 37 in the age group of 18-22, 46 in the age group of 23-27, and 19 aged 28 and above. Significant differences were found at the $p < 0.05$ level between the ages of the players and the scores they obtained from the external decision-making subscale of the scale. Parallel to our study, Akbulut (2012) found in his study on amateur and professional male football players that decision-making, problem-solving, and communication skills did not vary according to age groups. On the other hand, Bağlıkol (2010) examined decision-making strategies in 8th grade students and found significant differences in decision-making strategies depending on age.

Regarding education level, 64 players reported high school education and 38 reported university education. There was no significant difference at the $p < 0.05$ level between the education levels of the players and the scores they obtained from the scale subscales.

Regarding the position played, 14 players reported being goalkeepers, 20 defenders, 18 stoppers, 23 midfielders, 16 wingers, and 11 forwards. There was no significant difference at the $p < 0.05$ level between the positions played by the players and the scores they obtained from the scale subscales. Similar to our study, Akbulut (2012) found in his study on amateur and professional male football players that decision-making, problem-solving, and communication skills did not vary according to the positions played.

Looking at studies related to effective decision-making in the literature, Türksoy et al. (2019) conducted a study on amateur league football players and found that players tried to make careful decisions based on self-confidence rather than making evasive, panicky, or procrastinating decisions. They also found that players with a performance climate were more likely to deviate from ethical standards. Aktaş et al. (2018) found no significant difference in perception and decision-making, judgment, and reaction values, but numerically, the increase favored regular athletes. Kesici (2002) examined the comparative effects of psychological conditions such as adaptation, attribute, accusation, perseverance, and autonomy on decision-making strategies in university students and found that decision-making strategies were influenced by psychological conditions.

In conclusion, age and the clubs players belong to are important factors that can affect the performance of amateur football players in the effective decision-making process. It was observed that the younger the age, the greater the impact on external decision-making processes. As age increases, the external decision-making process decreases. The club where players play also emerged as an important factor in effective decision-making in our study. In this context, it is thought that informing athletes about effective decision-making in sports will contribute not only to their lives but also to their sports success. Further research in different sports branches and on professional athletes can determine how effective decision-making affects athletes.

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