

Investigation of the Leadership Skills of Secondary School Students with and
Without Sports in Their Free Time

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Investigation of the Leadership Skills of Secondary School Students With and Without Sports in Their Free Time*

Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the leadership skills of middle school students in Karaköprü district of Şanlıurfa province based on whether they engage in sports during their leisure time.

In line with the purpose of the study, 2 middle schools and 2 sports clubs in Karaköprü district of Şanlıurfa province were determined as the research sample. The researcher visited the selected schools and clubs to explain the purpose of the study to 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade students. The "Leadership Skills Assessment Scale" and the "Personal Information Form" created by the researchers were used as data collection tools. The data obtained were analyzed using the SPSS 22 software package. When the findings obtained in the research were analyzed, it was found that the leadership scores of those who engage in sports were significantly higher than those who do not, in favor of the former ($p < 0.05$).

The results of the study showed that the leadership qualities of middle school students improved based on their participation in sports during their leisure time. Other analyses revealed that variables such as gender, age, grade level, family income status, and being licensed did not show a statistically significant difference in terms of leadership skills ($p > 0.05$). In conclusion, it was observed that engaging in sports has a positive effect on the development of leadership qualities.

Keywords: Leadership, Leadership Skills, Leisure Time, Secondary School Student, Sports

Boş Zamanlarında Spor Yapan ve Yapmayan Ortaokul Öğrencilerinin Liderlik Becerilerinin İncelenmesi*

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Şanlıurfa ili Karaköprü ilçesindeki ortaokul öğrencilerinin liderlik becerilerini boş zamanlarında spor yapıp yapmama durumlarına göre incelemektir.

Çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda Şanlıurfa ili Karaköprü ilçesinde bulunan 2 ortaokul ve 2 spor kulübü araştırma örneklemini olarak belirlenmiştir. Araştırmacı, seçilen okulları ve kulüpleri ziyaret ederek 6, 7 ve 8. sınıf öğrencilerine çalışmanın amacını açıklamıştır. Veri toplama aracı olarak araştırmacılar tarafından oluşturulan "Liderlik Becerileri Değerlendirme Ölçeği" ve "Kişisel Bilgi Formu" kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen veriler SPSS 22 paket programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmada elde edilen bulgular incelendiğinde, spor yapanların liderlik puanlarının spor yapmayanlara göre, spor yapmayanlar lehine anlamlı düzeyde yüksek olduğu bulunmuştur ($p < 0,05$).

Çalışmanın sonuçları, ortaokul öğrencilerinin liderlik özelliklerinin boş zamanlarında spora katılımlarına bağlı olarak geliştiğini göstermiştir. Diğer analizler, cinsiyet, yaş, sınıf düzeyi, ailenin gelir durumu ve lisanslı olma gibi değişkenlerin liderlik becerileri açısından istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık göstermediğini ortaya koymuştur ($p > 0.05$). Sonuç olarak, spor yapmanın liderlik özelliklerinin gelişimi üzerinde olumlu bir etkisi olduğu görülmüştür.

Anahtar kelimeler: Boş Zaman, Liderlik, Liderlik Becerileri, Ortaokul Öğrencisi

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1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership skills are critical competencies that play an important role in both the social life and future professional careers of individuals. The middle school period is a key stage in the character development and social skills of individuals. Participation in sports activities during this period supports both physical and mental development of

individuals, while at the same time providing an environment in which leadership skills can be developed. It is thought that individuals who participate in sports have the potential to develop leadership qualities such as teamwork, taking responsibility, problem solving and decision making.¹

Leisure time is defined as the period of time left after individuals meet their basic needs such as sleeping, eating and drinking, and working.² Leisure time activities include activities in which individuals spend their free time as they wish and voluntarily participate.³ The evaluation of leisure time is an important issue. It is important that free time should not be considered as just spending time and that this period of time should be spent with activities that benefit the individual.^{4,5}

Concepts such as sports, athletes, health, nutrition, leadership in sports, coaching have emerged as the characteristics of how to do sports. In order to be successful in sports, it is important that many scientific studies and various scientific disciplines are carried out together. One of the main concepts used in sports is leadership.⁶

Leadership is the art of influencing people in a positive and desired direction. It is known that individuals with this power of influence have high social skills. Sports have the characteristic of bringing people together in terms of the way it is practiced and watched. It is an expected behavior that people who are together can influence each other positively. The relationship between social skills and leadership is also felt in the field of sports.⁷

In this study, it is aimed to compare the leadership skills of middle school students who do and do not do sports in their free time. In addition, it is aimed to determine whether they differ in terms of variables such as age, gender, grade level, income status of their families, whether they do sports regularly or not, whether they are licensed or not, and whether there are people who do sports in their families or not. Thus, by better understanding the effect of sports on leadership skills, it is aimed to obtain scientific data on how it contributes to the social development of students. The results of this study may reveal findings that support the positive effect of sports on students' leadership skills.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Methodology of the Study

In this research, the quantitative method was used, and the relational survey model was chosen as the research design. Karasar (2019) defined the relational survey model as a research design aimed at determining the existence and degree of co-variation between two or more variables.⁸

2.2. Working Group

The research population and sample consist of 2 secondary schools and 2 sports clubs in Karaköprü District of Şanlıurfa Province. A total of 343 middle school students, 204 boys and 139 girls, participated in the study. The convenience sampling method was used.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

The leadership scale developed by Lois Roets (1992) and adapted for Turkish with reliability and validity studies conducted by Çayırdağ & Acar (2007). along with a personal information form, was administered. Information about the measurement tools is given below.⁹

In the prepared personal information form, questions were included to obtain information about the current socio-economic status of the students, such as age, gender, grade, family income status, whether they do sports, whether they are licensed athletes, and whether there are individuals in their family who are interested in sports.

The "Roets Rating Scale for Leadership" (RRSLRoets Rating Scale for Leadership), developed by Lois Roets (1992), is a 5-point Likert-type unidimensional scale prepared by self-assessment measurement method in order to measure the leadership levels of individuals. The scale, which consists of 26 items in total, is scored with 1 - "always" with 3 points, 2 - "often" with 2 points, 3 - "sometimes" with 1 point, 4 - "sometimes" and 5 - "never" with 0 points. The adaptation of Roets' "Leadership Skills Assessment Scale" into Turkish was carried out by Çayırdağ & Acar (2007).⁹ The reliability of the scale was found to be quite high at .91. The test-retest correlation coefficient for the total scores of the scale was found to be .80. The minimum score that can be obtained from the scale is 0, and the maximum score is 78. The test-retest correlation coefficient of .80 between the total scores of the scale was also found to be high. When we analyzed the reliability of the scale for our research, the cronbach alpha value was found to be 88.

2.4. Data Analysis

The "Roets Leadership Assessment Scale" and the "Personal Information Form", which were administered by the researcher to volunteer middle school students and collected after they were filled in, were checked and those who filled in the measurement tools incompletely or incorrectly were excluded from the study. Afterwards, 343 valid and acceptable scales were included in the research. The collected data were analyzed through SPSS 22 package program and the results were interpreted. The data were checked whether they conformed to the normal distribution or not, and since the data showed normal distribution in the normality test, t test for independent groups was used for pairwise cluster comparisons, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for more than two cluster comparisons, and Tukey HSD test was used to determine which groups the differences between the averages were between and to analyze them correctly.

3. Findings

Table 1. Scale Score Distribution

Scale	N	Min	Max	\bar{X}	SS	Skewness	Kurtosis
Leadership	343	5	78	48,34	12,34	-0,27	0,35

Within the scope of the research, the arithmetic mean of the scores obtained from the Leadership scale answered by the students is 48.34. When the Skewness (-0.27) and

Kurtosis (0.35) coefficients are analyzed, it is seen that the data collected from the participants have a normal distribution (Table 1).

3.1 Findings Related to the Percentage Distribution of Socio-Demographic Variables of the Students Participating in the Study

When the age variables and percentages of the students participating in the study were analyzed, 108 (31.5%) were 11 years old, 106 (30.9%) were 12 years old, 67 (19.5%) were 13 years old, 31 (9%) were 14 years old, and 31 (9%) were 15 years old. Regarding the gender variable, 139 (40.5%) were female and 204 (59.5%) were male. Regarding the economic status of the family, 83 (24.2%) responded that it was below 5000tl, 93 (27.1%) 5000-7500tl, 69 (20.1%) 7500-9500tl, 56 (16.3%) 9500-12000tl, 42 (12.2%) above 12,000TL. Regarding the grade variable, 153 (44.6%) were sixth graders, 84 (24.5%) were seventh graders, and 106 (30.9%) were eighth graders.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Values of Socio-Demographic Variables of the Students Participating in the Study

Variables	N	%
Age	11 years old	31.5
	12 years old	30.9
	13 years old	19.5
	14 years old	9.0
	15 years old	9.0
Gender	Girl	40,5
	Male	59,5
Grade	6th grade	44.6
	7th grade	24.5
	8th grade	30.9
Family Economic Status	Under 5000 TL	24.2
	5000-7500 TL	27.1
	7500-9500 TL	20.1
	9500-12000 TL	16.3
	Over 12000TL	12.2

3.2. Percentage Findings Showing the Sports Participation Status of the Students Participating in the Study

Regarding the variable of doing sports, 245 (71.4%) answered yes and 98 (28.6%) answered no. When the license status variable of the students participating in the study was examined, 141 (26.0%) answered yes and 202 (58.9%) answered no. According to the variable of being interested in sports in the family, 140 (40.8%) answered yes, while 203 (59.2%) answered no.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage Values Regarding the Participating Students' Sports Participation Status

Variables		N	%
Doing Sports	Yes	245	71.4
	No	98	28.6
License Status	License available	141	26.0
	No license	202	58.9
Sports in the Family	Yes	140	40.8
	No	203	59.2

3.3. Findings Related to the Comparison of Leadership Characteristics of Students According to Gender, Playing Sports, Playing Licensed Sports, and Playing Sports in Their Families

Table 4. t-Test Analysis of Students' Leadership Levels by Gender

Scale	Gender	N	$\bar{X} \pm Sd$	F	t	P
Leadership Scale	Girl	139	49.25±11.96	341	1.124	0.262
	Male	204	47.72±12.59			

When the mean scores of the leadership scale according to gender variable are analyzed in Table 4, it is seen that girls have 47.72±12.59 points and boys have 49.25±11.96 points. When the mean scores of the leadership scale were analyzed according to the gender variable, it was found that there was no significant difference ($p=0.156$; $p>0.05$).

Table 5. t-Test Analysis of Students' Leadership Levels According to Their Sports Participation

Scale	Does he play sports?	N	$\bar{X} \pm Sd$	F	t	p
Leadership Scale	Yes	245	50.08±11.68	341	4.221	0.00*
	No	98	44.00±12.94			

In Table 5, when the mean and standard deviation of the leadership scale scores according to the variable of doing sports are analyzed; it is observed that the scores of those who do sports are 50.08±11.68 and 44.0±12.94 higher than those who do not do sports. The difference between those who do sports and those who do not do sports was found to be significant ($p=0.00$; $p<0.05$).

Table 6. t-Test Analysis of Students' Leadership Levels According to Family Sports Participation

Scale	Does the family play sports?	N	$\bar{X} \pm Sd$	F	t	p
Leadership Scale	Yes	140	49.81±11.98	341	1.838	0.067
	No	203	47.33±12.52			

When the mean and standard deviation of the leadership scale scores according to the status of doing sports in the family were analyzed in Table 6, it was seen that the scores of those who did sports in the family were 49.81±11.98, while the scores of the families who did not do sports were 47.33±12.52. When the mean scores of the leadership scale were analyzed according to the status of doing sports in the family, it was determined that there was no significant difference ($p=0.067$; $p>0.05$).

Table 7. t-Test Analysis of Students' Leadership Characteristic According to Their Undergraduate Status

Scale	Is it licensed?	N	$\bar{X} \pm Sd$	F	t	p
Leadership Scale	Yes	141	49.06±11.85	341	.902	0.368
	No	202	47.84±12.68			

In Table 7, when the mean score and the standard of the leadership scale according to the status of doing licensed sports were examined, it was seen that the mean score of the licensed athletes was 49.06±11.85, while the mean score of the unlicensed athletes was 47.84±12.68. When the mean score of the leadership scale according to the status of doing licensed sports is examined, it is seen that there is no statistically significant difference between those who do licensed sports and those who do unlicensed sports. ($p=368$; $p>0.05$).

Table 8. Variance Analysis Results of Leadership Level According to Student'S Grade Level (One Way ANOVA)

Scale	Grade	N	$\bar{X} \pm Sd$	F	p
Leadership Scale	6th grade	153	49.12±11.77	0.61	0.54
	7th grade	84	47.35±12.22		
	8th grade	106	48.00±13.26		

Table 8 shows that the mean scores of the leadership scale according to the grade variable were 49.12±11.77 for 6th grade students, 47.35±12.22 for 7th grade students, and 48.00±13.26 for 8th grade students. There was no statistically significant difference in the mean score of the leadership scale according to the grade variable ($p=0.54$; $p>0.05$).

Table 9. Variance Analysis Results of Leadership Level According to Family Income Status of Students (One Way ANOVA)

Scale	Family Income Status	N	$\bar{X} \pm Sd$	F	p
Leadership Scale	Under 5000 TL	83	46.69±12.37	0.718	0.580
	5000-7.500TL	93	48.24±12.05		
	7500-9.500TL	69	48.46±14.31		
	9500-12.000TL	56	50.14±9.97		
	Over 12.000TL	42	49.21±12.45		

In Table 9, when the mean scores according to the family income variable are examined, it is seen that the mean score of those with an income of less than 5000 TL is 46.69±12.37, the mean score of those with an income of 5000-7500 TL is 48.24±12.05, the mean score of those with an income of 7500-9500 TL is 48.46±14.31, the mean score of those with an income of 9500-12,000 TL is 50.88±9.97, and the mean score of those with an income of 12,000 TL and above is 49.21±12.45. There was no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the leadership scale according to the family income variable ($p=.580$; $p<0.05$).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aims to examine the leadership skills of students who do and do not play sports in leisure time at the secondary school level. In line with this purpose, in this part

of the study, the findings obtained as a result of the analysis are summarized and discussed.

4.1. Discussion of Findings Related to Gender, Sports Participation Status, Licensed Sports Participation Status, and Sports Participation Status in the Family of the Students

In order to find answers to the research problems, the leadership scale was applied to the students in the sample group and the data obtained from this scale were analyzed by independent groups t test based on gender. In line with the findings, no significant difference was found between the leadership scores of male and female students. In the literature, several potential reasons explain why there is no significant difference in leadership skills based on gender. First, the importance of gender in leadership development is diminishing, as modern education and social environments have partially eliminated stereotypes associated with gender roles, allowing individuals to develop their potential equally.¹⁰ When the literature is examined, it is seen that there are quite a number of studies that support these findings and do not find a difference in terms of gender in girls and boys.^{11,12,13} Contrary to these findings, it was also seen that there were studies that found girls' leadership characteristics higher in terms of gender.¹⁴ In conclusion, the absence of gender differences in leadership skills can be viewed as a positive indicator of progress in promoting gender equality in education and society. Nevertheless, these findings may vary depending on the characteristics of the sample, the tools used for measurement, and the specific aspects of leadership skills being assessed.

When the data obtained from the leadership scale of the students in the sample group within the scope of the research purpose were compared according to the students' sports participation status; in line with the findings, it was found that the leadership scores of the students who did sports were significantly higher than the scores of the students who did not do sports. When the studies were analyzed, it was seen that there were studies supporting these findings.⁷ Sports allow students to practice leadership skills such as empathy, vision-building, and motivating team members, further strengthening their leadership capacities.¹⁵ Sports activities provide opportunities for students to develop teamwork and collaboration skills, which are fundamental for effective communication and strategic thinking in leadership. This study examined the development of leadership skills through sports in high school students. The research indicated that sports enhance students' leadership abilities, mental approaches, individual responsibility, and self-confidence.¹⁶ It was found that students participating in competitive sports programs developed life skills such as teamwork and leadership. Sports activities provided opportunities for learning leadership skills¹⁷

Another result of the study is that when the data obtained from the leadership scale of the students in the sample group were analyzed depending on the status of doing licensed sports, no significant difference was found between licensed and non-licensed students. Both licensed and non-licensed student athletes may benefit from similar social and psychological advantages through sports activities. Being licensed alone might not be a determining factor for leadership skills. When the relevant literature was

examined, it was seen that there are studies that support our study in which the leadership level was examined within the framework of licensed sports participation.^{18,19} Research shows that while all students who participate in sports improve their communication and social skills, there is no significant difference between licensed and non-licensed athletes in this regard.²⁰ However, contrary to this study, according to the results of the study, doing sports with or without a license has a significant effect on leadership²¹

4.2. Discussion of Findings Related to Students' Socio-Demographic and Grade Level Variables

Another result of this study is that the leadership level of the students does not show a significant difference according to the grade level. When the leadership levels of 6th, 7th and 8th grade students, which constitute the research sample, were compared with the ANOVA test, it was determined that there was no significant difference in favor of any grade level. Leadership skills may develop gradually over time and might not vary significantly within the narrow age range of students in adjacent grade levels. For instance, research highlights that leadership skills are influenced by accumulated experiences rather than specific grade-level milestones.²² When we look at the literature, findings supporting our findings were obtained. Contrary to this information, there are also studies indicating that the grade level of the students has a significant effect on their leadership levels.²³ There are also studies reporting that the leadership level of primary school students is at a higher level compared to high school students.²⁴

In this study, which examines the factors affecting the leadership levels of secondary school students, the leadership scale applied to the students was analyzed using the ANOVA test based on the variable of family income. According to the findings of this analysis, family income does not significantly affect the leadership level of middle school students. However, it was determined that students with a family income of 9500-12,000 TL had higher leadership scores compared to those with a family income of less than 5000 TL, 5000-7500 TL, and 7500-9500 TL. These results are significant in highlighting the importance of family income in the leadership levels of secondary school students. When the literature on this subject is examined, it is seen that previous research supports these findings, suggesting that higher family income allows students to live more freely and develop greater self-confidence.²⁵ Students from wealthier families have greater access to educational programs and activities that help develop leadership skills. This can explain the higher leadership scores among these students.^{26,27}

In this study, no significant difference was found when leadership levels were examined in terms of gender, age, grade, income status of students' families, and undergraduate variables, while there was a significant difference in the variable of doing sports.

Considering these results, the following recommendations were made.

1. By addressing the concept of leadership, which has not been studied in middle school students, information can be obtained about the leadership skills of middle school students.

2. Since leadership is a trait that can be learned and developed, it can contribute to the development of an individual's leadership qualities by being included in the curriculum.
3. The effects of sports branches and extracurricular activities on leadership can be investigated and recommendations can be made.
4. It can be thought that directing students to sports at an early age will positively affect both personality and leadership development.
5. It can contribute to further studies on how team sports or individual sports will contribute to the leadership development of students.

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