



Geliş Tarihi (Received): 11.01.2023

Kabul Tarihi (Accepted): 18.05.2023

Online Yayın Tarihi (Published): 30.06.2023

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP ORIENTATIONS AND SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE LEVELS OF SPORTS MANAGER CANDIDATES: THE CASE OF SAKARYA

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Abstract: The present research is conducted to determine the effect of social intelligence levels of sports manager candidates on their leadership orientations. In this context, the model of the research is determined as the causal screening model. The sample group of the research consists of 261 students studying at Sakarya University of Applied Sciences Faculty of Sport Sciences. The research data are collected by the Personal Information Form developed by the researcher, the Leadership Orientation Scale developed by Bolman and Deal (1991) and adapted into Turkish by Dereli (2003), and Tromso Social Intelligence Scale developed by Silvera, Martinussen and Dahl (2001), and adapted into Turkish Doğan and Çetin (2009). In the analysis of the collected data; Regression analysis is conducted to determine the effect of social intelligence on leadership orientations. As a result of the research, it has been determined that the social intelligence levels of the sports manager candidates are a positive and statistically significant predictor of their leadership orientation.

Keywords: Sports management, leadership orientation, social intelligence, interaction

SPOR YÖNETİCİSİ ADAYLARININ SOSYAL ZEKA DÜZEYLERİ İLE LİDERLİK YÖNELİMLERİ ARASINDAKİ ETKILEŞİM: SAKARYA ÖRNEĞİ

Öz: Bu araştırma, spor yöneticisi adaylarının sosyal zeka düzeylerinin liderlik yönelimleri üzerindeki etkisini tespit etmek için yapılmıştır. Bu kapsamda araştırmanın modeli nedensel tarama modeli olarak belirlenmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklem grubu, Sakarya Uygulamalı Bilimler Üniversitesi Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi’nde öğrenim gören 261 öğrenciden oluşmaktadır. Araştırma verileri, araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Bolman ve Deal (1991)’in geliştirdiği ve Dereli (2003)’nin Türkçe uyarlamasını yaptığı Liderlik Yönelimleri Ölçeği ve Silvera, Martinussen ve Dahl (2001)’in geliştirdiği ve Doğan ve Çetin (2009)’ın Türkçe uyarlamasını yaptığı Tromso Sosyal Zeka Ölçeği ile toplanmıştır. Toplanan verilerin analizinde; liderlik yönelimleri üzerinde sosyal zekanın etkisini belirlemek üzere Regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda spor yöneticisi adaylarının sosyal zeka düzeylerinin liderlik yönelimlerine pozitif yönlü ve istatistikî açıdan anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Spor yöneticiliği, liderlik yönelimi, sosyal zeka, etkileşim

INTRODUCTION

In order to cope with challenges posed by the increasingly complex social and economic process in the twenty-first century, many organizations have focused on human capital as an integral part of their mission, vision and values. The idea behind human capital is based on the idea that the power of economic and social growth is people rather than money (Yigitcanlar, Baum, and Horton, 2007). Many theories about management have revealed that a common synergy occurs when the human element is acquired and activated, and this synergy is reflected in organizational efficiency and performance (Arslan, 2012). Sports is one of the industries where the human factor is important (Doğan, 2005). In this direction, the enormous growth of sports

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organizations and sports events in the world and in our country, especially in the last 50 years, has increased the importance of sports management. In this process, it has become an important situation to train individuals who have acquired the management and business skills appropriate for this sector (Basim and Argan, 2009).

While management, leadership, diplomacy, experience, flexibility, self-criticism, merit, respect, trust, motivation and teamwork are the professional qualifications of sports managers (Yetim, 2002), especially according to Ekelund and Adl, (2012), leadership is seen as an important element in the effective management of organizations. Sports managers with high leadership orientation are more successful in influencing people and thus athletes (Doğan, 2005). However, leadership alone is not a sufficient element in the process of influencing people and providing communication. Goleman (2006) pointed out that social intelligence is vital for success in many areas, especially in leadership. Thorndike states that social intelligence as the ability to understand and manage people (Goleman, 2014), and Albrecht, (2006) defined it as the ability to successfully communicate with people, the combination of skills necessary to understand them, and the ability to get along and cooperate with others.

Recently, many scientists have claimed that social intelligence is the most important type of intelligence for managers (Beikzadeh and Soltandadashi, 2011). Goleman and Boyatzis (2008) states that effective leaders with social intelligence should have characteristics such as empathy, adapting to others, having positive feelings for others, and inspiring. When the literature is examined, in some studies, emotional intelligence in leadership is seen as a subset of social intelligence, Crowne, (2009), or social intelligence and emotional intelligence are blended (Harriott, 2014; Hawley, 1996; Mayer, 1990; Riggio and Reichard 2008; Salovey et al.; 2012).

In the literature, the research on leadership focuses on emotional intelligence rather than social intelligence (Altıntaş, 2009; Hotamışlı and Efe, 2015; Kerr et al., 2006; Şenocak, 2015; Reshetnikov et al., 2020; Savel and Munro, 2016), considering that it is of great importance (Albrecht, 2006; Goleman, 2008), it is thought that it is necessary to focus on social intelligence-oriented studies in leadership. In this direction, it is thought that the social intelligence levels of the sports manager candidates predict their leadership orientations.

The theoretical background of the research is social intelligence theory (Bar-On, 2007; Goleman, 2006; Goleman and Boyatzis, 2008), and it can be said to be compatible with trait, behavioral, and contingency approaches within leadership theories (Hersey and Blanchard, 1970; Mann, 1959; McClelland, 1975; Riggio, 2007 and Stogdill, 1948;). These leadership approaches focus on both individual personality traits and individual behaviors in social intelligence and leadership (Turan, 2022; Riggio, 2007).

In this direction, "Examination the relationship between the Social Intelligence Levels and Leadership Orientations of Sports Manager Candidates" constitutes the purpose of our research. It is seen that research on social intelligence and leadership is generally aimed at organizational managers or employees (Özdemir, 2020; Promsri, 2017; Türker and Tanrıögen, 2021; Yıldız et al., 2022). Recently, people prefer to be led instead of being managed. Social ties and spiritual feelings are important to be able to lead people. There are some criteria to be a successful leader; such as the technical and social characteristics of the leader. Social intelligence is also an important criterion for leadership. In this context, examining the relationship between social intelligence and leadership orientations is important in terms of literature. In the present study, an answer to the following problem is sought:

Does the social intelligence levels of sports manager candidates predict their leadership orientation?

METHOD

Model of the Research

The correlational survey model which is one of the quantitative research methods, is used in the current study. The correlational survey model is a survey approach that aims to determine the existence of change between two or more variables (Karasar, 2011).

The Universe and Sample

The universe of this research consists of sports manager candidates in Sakarya province. The sample group of the research consists of 261 students studying at Sakarya University of Applied Sciences Faculty of Sport Sciences. Demographic characteristics of the sample group are shared in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic information of sports manager candidates

Variable	Group	f	%
Gender	Female	65	25
	Male	196	75
Active Sports Status	Yes	153	59
	No	108	41
Status of Volunteering in Any Sports Organization	Yes	147	56
	No	114	44
Total		261	100.0

According to Table 1, the sports manager candidates participating in the research; 75% men, 25% women, 59% do active sports, 41% do not actively do sports, 56% have volunteered in any sports organization, 44% are in sports organizations who do not serve voluntarily.

Data Collection Tools

The data of this research are collected with Personal Information Form, Leadership Orientations Scale and Tromso Social Intelligence Scale.

Personal Information Form: It is developed by the researcher in order to obtain information about the personal qualities of the sports manager candidates participating in the research. It consists of questions about gender, active sports status and volunteering in any sports organization.

Leadership Orientations Scale: In order to measure the leadership orientations of the sports manager candidates, the Leadership Orientation Scale, developed by Bolman and Deal (1991) and translated into Turkish by Dereli (2003), is used to determine its validity and reliability. This scale consists of 32 five-point Likert-type items and 4 sub-dimensions (Human Resources Framework, Structural Framework, Political Framework and Symbolic Framework). Cronbach's Alpha reliability information regarding the total score and sub-dimensions of the scale is given in Table 2.

Tromso Social Intelligence Scale: The Tromso Social Intelligence Scale, which is developed by Silvera, Martinussen, and Dahl (2001) and which Doğan and Çetin (2009) translated into Turkish, is used to measure the social intelligence levels of sports manager candidates. This scale consists of 21 items of five-point Likert type and 3 sub-dimensions (Social Information

Process, Social Skills and Social Awareness). Cronbach's Alpha reliability information regarding the total score and sub-dimensions of the scale is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Cronbach's alpha results of leadership orientations and social intelligence scale

Leadership Orientation Scale	Substances	n	Cronbach's α
Structural leadership	8 md	261	0.805
Human Resources	8 md	261	0.828
Political leadership	8 md	261	0.831
Symbolic leadership	8 md	261	0.806
Leadership Total	32 md	261	0.943
Social Intelligence Scale	Substances	N	Cronbach's α
Social information process	8 md	261	0.730
Social skill	6 md	261	0.737
Social awareness	7 md	261	768
Social Intelligence Total	21 md	261	0.830

According to Table 2, the leadership orientations of the sports manager candidates and the Social Intelligence scale sub-dimension and total score Cronbach's Alpha reliability results are highly reliable.

Analysis of Data

In order to determine the effect of the social intelligence levels of the sports manager candidates on their leadership orientation, the conditions for the data to show at least the interval scale and normal distribution, the existence of a linear relationship between the variables and the normality of the differences between the estimation variable and the observed variable are tested. According to this, firstly, the condition of meeting the normal distribution assumption is checked. The most common method used when performing normality checks is to reference the skewness and kurtosis values of the data (Yalçıntaş, 2019). These values are between -1.00 and +1.00 according to Büyüköztürk (2010); According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), -1.50 and +1.50; According to George and Mallery (2010), if it is between -2.00 and +2.00, it means that it is normally distributed.

Table 3. Leadership orientations and tromso social intelligence scale skewness and kurtosis values

Leadership Orientation Scale	Substances	n	The lowest	The highest	Mean	Sd	Skewness	Kurtosis
Structural Leadership	8 md	261	2.45	5	4	0.55	-0.141	-0.631
Human Resources	8 md	261	2.75	5	4.09	0.53	-0.202	-0.450
Political Leadership	8 md	261	2	5	3.77	0.60	0.126	-0.391
Symbolic Leadership	8 md	261	2.25	5	3.89	0.58	-0.004	-0.537
Leadership Total	32 md	261	2.61	5	3.94	0.51	0.043	-0.681
Social Intelligence Scale	Substances	n	The lowest	The highest	Mean	Sd	Skewness	Kurtosis
Social Information Process	8 md	261	2.63	5	3.84	0.51	0.069	-0.458
Social Skill	6 md	261	1.17	5	3.77	0.72	-0.464	0.142
Social Awareness	7 md	261	1.57	5	3.59	0.73	-0.463	-0.369
Social Intelligence Total	21 md	261	2.63	5	3.74	0.49	0.054	-0.599

According to Table 3, when the normality distributions of the scales are examined, it is seen that the skewness and kurtosis values are between (+1 and -1). The fact that the skewness and kurtosis values are between (+1 and -1) shows that the data provides normality distribution (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2018).

In addition, the linear relationship between the leadership orientations of sports manager candidates and their social intelligence levels is examined by pearson correlation analysis.

Table 4. Social intelligence scale and leadership orientation scale pearson correlation results

	Social Intelligence	Leadership Orientations
Social Intelligence	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000**
	N	261

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In Table 4, we can say that there is a linear relationship between the two variables, since $p<0.01$ according to the Pearson Correlation results of the Social Intelligence Scale and the Leadership Orientation Scale of the sports manager candidates. For the validity of the regression model, the normality of the differences; histogram distribution is evaluated according to Normal P-P Plot and scatter plot. The analyzes show that the data meet the normality conditions required by the regression model.

FINDINGS

Findings Regarding Leadership Orientations of Sports Manager Candidates

Within the scope of the research hypotheses, the leadership orientations of the sports manager candidates are examined according to the demographic variables. In these examinations, data on gender, active sports status, licensed sports status, type of school entry, voluntary participation in the organization are obtained from independent groups t-test; data on the type of high school graduated from are compared with one-way analysis of variance (Anova).

Table 5. Regression results of leadership orientations and social intelligence levels of sport manager candidates

	Non-Standard Coefficients		Beta*	t	p	Model			
	B	Std. Error				R	R ²	F	P
Constant	1.819	0.208		8.755	0.000				
Social Intelligence	0.567	0.055	0.539	10.290	0.000	0.539	0.290	105.888	0.000*
Dependent Variable: Leadership Orientations									df=1,259
Independent Variable: Social Intelligence									

When the regression analysis findings in Table 5 are examined; it is seen that the social intelligence levels of the sports manager candidates are a positive and statistically significant predictor of their leadership orientation ($R= 0.539$, $R^2 = 0.290$, $F(1,259)=105.888$ $p<0.01$). According to this, social intelligence levels of the independent variable sports manager candidates explain their dependent variable leadership orientations by 29% ($R^2=0.290$).

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

In this study, in which the interaction between the social intelligence levels of the sports manager candidates and their leadership orientations is examined, it is determined that the social intelligence levels of the sports manager candidates are a positive and statistically significant predictor of their leadership orientation within the scope of the research question. In this direction, it can be said that social intelligence is an important component in the emergence of an effective leader behavior. In other words, it can be said that leaders who can communicate well, understand verbal and nonverbal expressions correctly, and give correct responses and feedback have high social intelligence levels (Wessel et al., 2008 and Gilbert, 1994). Edward Thorndike, who coined the term social intelligence for the first time in 1920, pointed out in his study that social intelligence is vital for success in many areas, especially in leadership (Goleman, 2006). Similarly, when ordinary people are asked by Goleman (2006) to list what makes a person intelligent, competence in social skills emerged as a natural category (Goleman, 2006). Therefore, the main competence that causes success for managers in this field is leadership intelligence, which includes social intelligence, because research has shown that managers who can communicate effectively and efficiently with their own efforts will be successful in the future (Nazem and Tousy, 2000). Many studies in the leadership literature emphasize the relationship between social intelligence and effective leadership. Moghaddam, Kermani, Ghorbani, Sadeghi, and Sardarabadi (2013) reveal that social intelligence competencies are important predictors of effective leadership performance. In the literature, Carson (2011) found that there is a positive relationship between social skills and effective leadership in his study with administrators (Boyatzis, Stubbs, and Taylor, 2002). The fact that it is related to qualifications is in line with the results of our research. Dulewicz and Higgs (2003); Cavins (2006) reveal in their research that there are connections between leadership practice and social intelligence, and in this direction, Folkman and Edinger (2011); Good and Massa (2012) found that leaders with high social intelligence are more effective than leaders with low social intelligence, which is an important indicator that social intelligence level is a predictor of effective leadership. As it can be understood from the explanations above, in parallel with the results of our research, the results of the studies on social intelligence and leadership in the literature show that social intelligence is a prerequisite for effective leadership in general.

This research, which examines the relationship between the social intelligence levels and leadership orientations of sports manager candidates, is limited to the students studying sports management at Sakarya University. Future research can be done more comprehensively with more participants in different universities and different departments. In addition to social intelligence, the relationship of different intelligence types such as emotional intelligence and logical intelligence with leadership can be investigated. In order to contribute to the literature and fill the gap in the field, comparative research can be done by including the managers who are not employed in the employment and the managers who are in the employment. Examining future research with a qualitative approach that includes participant interviews may provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between social intelligence and leadership. In line with the results obtained, social intelligence and leadership themed training programs and in-service training seminars can be organized for institutions and organizations that train executive candidates and operate in the field of management, to raise awareness for more qualified governance.

Ethics Committee Permission Information

Ethics review board: Sakarya University of Applied Sciences

Ethics

Committee Date of ethics assessment document:

08.11.2022

Ethics assessment document number: E.65447

Statement of Researchers' Contribution Rates

Research Design-

Conflicts of interest

The authors of the article do not have any personal or financial conflicts of interest within the scope of the study.

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