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Investigation of the Relationship Between the Tactical Skills Used by Football Players and Their Maximum Performance Levels*

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Abstract

This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between the tactical skills used by amateur and professional league football players and their excellent performance levels. A total of 906 licensed football players, including 671 male and 235 female athletes, who play at amateur and professional levels in football leagues, participated in the research. Three different forms were used as data collection tools: Personal Information Form, Tactical Skills in Sports and Excellent Performance in Sports Scale. According to the findings of the study, 25.9% of the football players participating in the study were female and 74.1% were male. While the mean age of female football players was 20.06±3.18 years, the average age of male football players was determined as 23.34±5.62 years. In the study, a significant difference was found between the sub-dimensions of tactical skills in sports and the total scores of male and female football players. Similarly, it has been observed that male athletes have higher scores than female athletes in excellent performance scores. According to the years of playing licensed football, there were significant differences in all sub-dimensions of the tactical skills of the football players, between the athletes who played football between 1-5 years and all other groups who played football for more years (p<0.05). Based on the findings obtained in the research, it has been observed that there is a difference in terms of the tactical skills used by football players according to the year of playing football, and while tactical skills and excellent performance scores in sports differ according to gender, they do not differ in terms of status (amateur-professional). As a result, it seems that increasing the number of years of licensed football playing in amateur and professional league football players is very important in terms of tactical skills. From this point of view, it can be said that increasing the experience period of both male and female football players by trying to reduce the age of starting sports to earlier ages will make a significant contribution to tactical skills, which are very important for performance in football.

Keywords: Football, Tactics, Skill, Excellent Performance.

Özet

Futbolcuların Kullandıkları Taktiksel Beceriler ile Mükemmel Performans Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişkilerin Araştırılması

Bu çalışma, amatör ve profesyonel lig futbolcularının kullandıkları taktiksel beceriler ile mükemmel performans düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkilerin araştırılması amacıyla yapılmıştır. Araştırmaya, Türkiye Futbol liglerinde amatör ve profesyonel düzeyde aktif olarak oynayan 671 erkek ve 235 kadın sporcu olmak üzere 906 lisanslı futbolcu katılmıştır. Veri toplama araçları olarak, kişisel bilgi formu, Sporda Taktiksel Beceriler Envanteri ve Sporda Mükemmel Performans Ölçeği olmak üzere üç farklı form kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada elde edilen bulgulara göre, çalışmaya katılan sporcuların %25.9'u kadın, %74.1'i ise erkektir. Kadın futbolcuların yaş ortalamaları 20.06±3.18 yıl iken, erkek futbolcuların yaş ortalamaları 23.34±5.62 yıl olarak belirlenmiştir. Araştırmada kadın ve erkek futbolcuların, sporda taktiksel beceri alt boyutları ile toplam puanları arasında anlamlı farklılık bulunmuştur. Benzer şekilde mükemmel performans puanlarında da erkek sporcuların kadın sporculara göre yüksek puana sahip oldukları görülmüştür. Lisanslı futbol oynama yıllarına göre futbolcuların sporda taktiksel beceriler alt boyutlarının tümünde, 1-5 yıl arasında futbol oynayan sporcular ile daha fazla yıl futbol oynayan diğer tüm gruplar arasında anlamlı düzeyde farklar bulunmuştur (p<0.05). Araştırmada elde edilen bulgulardan yola çıkarak, futbolcuların kullandıkları taktiksel beceriler açısından, futbol oynama yılına göre farklılaşma olduğu, sporda taktiksel beceriler ve mükemmel performans puanlarının cinsiyete göre farklılaşırken, statü (amatör-profesyonel) açısından farklılaşmadığı görülmüştür. Sonuç olarak, amatör ve profesyonel lig futbolcularında lisanslı olarak futbol oynama yılının artmasının taktiksel beceriler açısından oldukça önemli olduğu görülmektedir. Bu noktadan hareketle, hem kadın hem de erkek futbolcularda, spora başlama yaşının daha erken yaşlara indirgenmesine çalışılarak deneyim sürelerinin artırılmasının, futbolda performans için oldukça önemli bir yeri olan taktiksel becerilere önemli katkılar sağlayacağı söylenebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Futbol, Taktik, Beceri, Mükemmel Performans.

INTRODUCTION

Football, due to its unpredictable, random and complex nature (7), requires a permanent tactical-strategic attitude from its players to solve problem situations that arise within the person-task-environment relationship. In this context, the cognitive processes underlying decision-making allow the player to propose solutions to problem situations that arise from the game (14;16). As a result of the game achieved after every match in football, the psychological and physiological needs of football players increase. This situation causes the football player to push his physical and psychological upper limits every day. Based on this, today's football is always open to improvement physically and mentally in order to achieve what seems impossible, and when they succeed in achieving what they want, "what can be done differently?" and "how can the competition be won? It is a branch that makes you think about questions (22).

Since teamwork is required in football, effective application of technical and tactical skills during the match, as well as working as a team, also affects success. From this perspective, for a successful competition to be achieved, a football player with a high performance level must have strong tactical skills and technique, be effective in instant thinking and decision-making skills, be prone to team work, and be physically competent (1).

Tactics are all the organized work implemented to achieve the goals of the game. In this respect, the role and meaning of tactical training in sports sciences is very important. Tactical training has a high place in both individual sports branches and team sports (2). Tactical Skills are a very important element to achieve success in today's modern football (20).

Tactical skills in football refer to the athlete's ability to take the right action at the right time during the match and the ability to quickly adapt to new game transitions and ball circulation. Properly applied and directed tactical skills are a strategy and tactics used to challenge the opponent. Strategy is a plan, such as instructions and specific positioning, used to face different game situations, while tactics are a timely adaptation to new game configurations and circulation of the ball (9).

In order to achieve ideal performance in football, there are high performance items that indicate the development of the individual's emotional and mental factors as well as the excellent performance level that the individual will exhibit. Some of these items can be listed as providing motivation and setting the goal, having a positive, realistic attitude, being self-confident, determined, being concentrated and focused on work, being able to show willpower in difficult conditions, and having a sense of responsibility (12). From this point of view, this study was conducted to examine the tactical skills used by football players and their excellent performance levels.

METHOD

Research Model

This study was designed in a descriptive survey model as it aims to investigate the tactical skills and excellent performance levels of male and female football players playing in Turkish Football Leagues and to reveal the relationship between them as it exists. Descriptive survey models in research aim to describe an existing situation as it exists. In the survey model, an attempt is made to describe the research subject as it is (11).

Participants

The population of the research consists of licensed Professional and Amateur football players in the Turkish Football Leagues in the 2021-2022 football season, and the sample consists of 906 football players, including 671 male and 235 female athletes between the ages of 18-38, playing football in the same season. After receiving ethics committee approval, the football players participating in the research were given their consent on a voluntary basis.

Data Collection Tools

In this research, three different forms were used as data collection tools: personal information form, Tactical Skills Inventory in Sports (TACSIS) and Excellent Performance in Sports Scale (PPS-S).

Tactical Skills Inventory in Sports (TACSIS) was developed by Elferink-Gemser et al. (3). The Turkish adaptation of this scale was made by Yarayan et al (23). TACSIS consists of 4 sub-dimensions and 22 items: Positioning and Decision Making (PDM), Having Knowledge of Ball Movements (HKBM), Knowing Your Opponents (KYO) and Acting in Changing Situations (ACS). Confirmatory factor analysis index values of the scale, x2/sd(x2=603.89, sd=164)=2.97, RMSEA=0.094, RMR=0.64, SRMR=0.73, CFI=0.94, NFI =0.91, NNFI=0.93, IFI=0.94, while internal consistency coefficients vary between 0.70 and 0.93 (23).

Performance Perfectionism Scale for Sport (PPS-S): The scale developed by Hill, Appleton and Mallinson (10) was adapted to Turkish by Esentaş et al. (2020). The Spearman-Brown value of the scale was calculated as 0.83 and the Guttman value was 0.80. It was found that the model reached excellent and sufficient fit indices (χ 2/sd=2.21, RMSEA=0.07, GFI=0.97, AGFI=0.92, NFI=0.96, CFI=0.97, AGFI=0.92) (4).

Data Collection and Statistical Analysis

Research data were collected from the football players participating in the study on a voluntary basis through online forms. The evaluation of the data obtained in the research was made in the licensed SPSS 22.0 program. Independent Sample t-test was used to determine the difference between two groups, and one-way ANOVA Test was used to determine whether there was a difference between multiple groups. Tukey HSD was used to determine the group that created the difference, and Pearson correlation tests were applied to determine the relationships between variables. When evaluating the results, the significance level was accepted as p<0.05.

Ethical approval and institutional permission

Ethical approval of the research was provided by the approval of Mugla Sitki Kocman University Health Sciences Ethics Committee dated 03.12.2021 and numbered 23. The data collection process of the study started after receiving ethics committee approval and lasted approximately 3 months.

FINDINGS

The findings obtained in this research are shown in the tables below.

Table 1: Age, gender, status a	nd licensed football playing t	times distribution of the	e Participants
Variables		N	%
Gender	Female	235	25.9
Gender	Male	671	74.1
Status	Professional	150	16.6
	Amateur	756	83.4
	1-5 years	148	16.3
	6-10 years	318	35.1
Linnal Artina Van Bana	11-15 years	252	27.8
Licensed Active Year Range	16-20 years	115	12.7
	21 years and above	73	8.1
	Total	906	100
		Х	Sd
Age (years)	Female	20.06	3.18
	Male	23.34	5.62

It was determined that 25.9% of the football players participating in the research were female and 74.1% male. In the research, the average age of female football players is 20.06±3.18 years, while the average age of male football players is 23.34±5.62 years. Of the athletes participating in the research, 16.6% are professionals and 83.4% amateurs. It was observed that 8.1% of the football players have been playing football with a license for at least 21 years or more, and 35.1% have been playing football for a license period of 6-10 years.

Table 2: Comparis	son of Tactical Skills ar	nd Excellent P	erformance in Spo	rts by Gender	
Variables	Gender	N	Mean±SD	t	P
DDM	Female	235	36.19±7.91	(22 0	0.000*
PDM	Male	671	39.50±6.65	-6.239	0.000*
НКВМ	Female	235	16.52±3.85	-7.708	0.000*
HKDW	Male	671	18.47±3.12	-7.708	0.000*
I/V/O	Female	235	20.11±4.75	((07	0.000*
KYO	Male	671	22.19±3.91	-6.607	
ACC	Female	235	16.25±3.95	F F/1	0.000*
ACS	Male	671	17.79±3.53	-5.561	0.000*
TACCIC	Female	235	89.09±18.83	7 100	0.000*
TACSIS	Male	671	97.97±15.31	-7.182	0.000*
PPS-S	Female	235	16.41±6.47	2 241	0.025*
	Male	671	17.61±7.29	-2.241	0.025*

^{*}p<0.05

A significant difference was found between the tactical skills sub-dimensions and total scores of the male and female football players participating in the research. Similarly, it was observed that men had higher scores than women in terms of perfect performance (p<0.05).

Table 3: Comp	arison of Tactical Skill	ls and Excel	lent Performance	in Sports by Stat	tus
Variables	Status	N	Mean±SD	t	P
PDM	Professional	150	38.39±7.50	400	0.630
PDM	Amateur	756	38.69±7.07	482	0.630
НКВМ	Professional	150	17.46±3.65	-1.963	0.064
нквм	Amateur	756	18.06±3.38	-1.963	0.064
KYO	Professional	150	21.33±4.38	-1.028	0.204
KIU	Amateur	756	21.72±4.22	-1.028	0.304
ACC	Professional	150	17.06±3.89	1 107	0.232
ACS	Amateur	756	17.46±3.66	-1.197	0.232
TACCIC	Professional	150	94.25±17.66	1 104	0.257
TACSIS	Amateur	756	95.95±16.56	-1.134	0.257
PPS-S	Professional	150	16.99±6.53	E07	0.557
	Amateur	756	17.37±7.22	587	0.557

^{*}p<0.05

There was no significant difference between the sub-dimensions and total scores of tactical skills in sports of professional and amateur football players participating in the study. Although the excellent performance scores were higher in amateur football players than in professionals, there was no significant difference (p>0.05).

Table 4: Comparison of Football Players According to Years of Licensed Football Playing **Variables** Sum of Squares Mean Square Between Groups 4609.923 1152.481 24.961 0.000* **PDM** Within Groups 41599.923 46.171 46209.847 Total 1042.079 260.520 Between Groups **HKBM** Within Groups 9649.056 10.709 24.327 0.000* Total 10691.135 Between Groups 1378.801 344.700 **KYO** Within Groups 14950.811 16.594 20.773 0.000* Total 16329.613 Between Groups 583.710 145.927 ACS 0.000* Within Groups 11835.244 13.136 11.109 Total 12418.954 Between Groups 25737.113 6434.278 **TACSIS** Within Groups 228057.549 25.420 0.000*253.116 253794.662 Total Between Groups 239.163 59.791 PPS-S 50.456 1.185 0.316 Within Groups 45460.758 Total 45699.921

When the football players participating in the research are evaluated according to their years of licensed football playing; A significant difference was found between the sub-dimensions and total scores of tactical skills in sports. (p<0.05). When looking at the perfect performance scores, there was no difference according to the years of licensed football playing (p>0.05).

^{*}p<0.05

Table 5: Evaluation of Football Players Participating in the Research According to Their Licensed Football Playing Years

	(I) Football Age	(J) Football Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	P
		6-10	-3.526	0.00
	1-5	11-15	-5.291	0.00
	1-5	16-20	-6.374	0.00
		21 and above	-7.924	0.00
		1-5	3.526	0.00
	(10	11-15	-1.765	0.02
	6-10	16-20	-2.848	0.00
		21 and above	4.398	0.00
		1-5	5.291	0.00
PDM	44.45	6-10	1.765	0.02
	11-15	16-20	-1.083	0.62
		21 and above	-2.633	0.03
		1-5	6.374	0.00
	46.00	6-10	2.848	0.00
	16-20	11-15	1.083	0.62
		21 and above	-1.550	0.55
		1-5	7.924	0.00
	24 1 1	6-10	4.398	0.00
	21 years and above	11-15	2.633	0.03
		16-20	1.550	0.55
		6-10	-1.970	0.00
		11-15	-3.098	0.00
	1-5	16-20	-3.366	0.00
		21 and above	-4.223	0.00
_		1-5	1.970	0.00
		11-15	-1.128	0.009
	6-10	16-20	-1.396	0.01
		21 and above	-2.253	0.00
_		1-5	3.098	0.00
		6-10	1.128	0.009
KYO	11-15	16-20	-0.267	0.97
		21 and above	-1.125	0.23
_		1-5	3.366	0.00
		6-10	1.396	0.01
	16-20	11-15	0.267	0.01
		21 and above	-0.857	0.62
_		1-5	4.223	0.00
		6-10	2.253	0.00
	21 years and above		1.125	
		11-15 16-20	0.857	0.23 0.62
		6-10		0.00
			-1.937	
	1-5	11-15	-2.694	0.00
		16-20	-2.874	0.00
_		21 and above	-3.847	0.00
		1-5	1.937	0.00
	6-10	11-15	757	0.048
		16-20	-0.937	0.06
_		21 and above	-1.910	0.00
		1-5	2.694	0.00
HKBM	11-15	6-10	.757	0.48
		16-20	-0.179	0.98
		21 and above	-1.152	0.06
		1-5	2.874	0.00
	16-20	6-10	0.937	0.06
	10-20	11-15	0.179	0.98
_		21 and above	-0.973	0.27
		1-5	3.847	0.00
	21 years and above	6-10	1.910	0.00
	21 years and above	11-15	1.152	0.62
		16-20	0.973	0.27

Table 5 (Continued): Evaluation of Football Players Participating in the Research According to Their Licensed Football Playing Years

	(I) Football Age	, ,		P
	(-,		(I-J)	
		6-10	-1.493	0.00*
	1-5	11-15	-2.205	0.00*
	10	16-20	-2.429	0.00*
		21 and above	-2.243	0.00*
		1-5	1.493	0.00*
	6-10	11-15	-0.71	0.137
	0-10	16-20	-0.94	0.124
		21 and above	-0.75	0.502
		1-5	2.205	0.00*
ACS	11 15	6-10 0.71		0.137
	11-15	16-20	-0.22	0.982
		21 and above	-0.04	1.000
		1-5	2.429	0.00*
	16.20	6-10	0.94	0.124
	16-20	11-15	0.22	0.982
		21 and above	0.19	0.997
		1-5	2.243	0.00*
	21 years and above	6-10	0.75	0.502
		11-15	0.04	1.000
		16-20	-0.19	0.997
		6-10	-8.927	0.00*
		11-15	-13.290	0.00*
	1-5	16-20	-15.044	0.00*
		21 and above	-18.239	0.00*
_		1-5	8.927	0.00*
		11-15	-4.363	0.01*
	6-10	16-20	-6.117	0.004*
			21 and above -9.311	
		1-5	13.290	0.00*
	11-15	6-10	4.363	0.01*
TACSIS		16-20	-1.754	0.864
		21 and above	-4.948	0.133
		1-5	15.044	0.00*
		6-10	6.117	0.004*
	16-20	11-15	1.754	0.864
		21 and above	-3.194	0.665
		1-5	18.239	0.00*
				0.00*
	21 years and above	6-10	9.311	
		11-15	4.948	0.133
		16-20	3.194	0.665

When the football players participating in the research are evaluated according to their years of licensed football playing; It was observed that there was a significant difference (p<0.05). In all sub-dimensions of tactical skills in sports and the total TACSIS score compared to the scores of athletes who played football for 1-5 years and all other groups who played football for more years.

Relationships between tactical skills and excellent performance levels in female football players Table 6. Variables **PDM HKBM KYO ACS TACSIS** Р .849* **HKBM** .000 r 235 Р .818* .795* KYO .000 .000 r N 235 235 Р .748* .704* .755* **ACS** r .000 .000 .000 235 N 235 235 Р .910* .957* .917* .859* **TACSIS** r .000 .000 .000 .000 N 235 235 235 235 Р .057 .003 .049 .072 .027 PPS-S .272 .385 .685 .968 .453 r N 235 235 235 235 235

*p<0.05

When the relationships between tactical skills and excellent performance levels in female football players are examined; it is seen that all sub-dimensions of tactical skills used by football players are in significant relationship with each other (p<0.05). There was no relationship between tactical skills and excellent performance levels (p>0.05).

Table 7. Relationships between tactical skills and excellent performance levels in male football players						ale football players
Variables		PDM	HKBM	KYO	ACS	TACSIS
	P	.793*	-			
HKBM	r	.000				
	N	671				
	P	.773*	$.724^{*}$			
KYO	r	.000	.000			
	N	671	671			
	P	.628*	.580*	.696*		
ACS	r	.000	.000	.000		
	N	671	671	671		
	P	.939*	.868*	.900*	.800*	
TACSIS	r	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	671	671	671	671	
	P	.018	014	.032	054	.001
PPS-S	r	.643	.721	.413	.160	.989
	N	671	671	671	671	671

*p<0.05

When the relationships between tactical skills and excellent performance levels in male football players are examined; It is seen that all sub-dimensions of tactical skills used by football players are in significant relationship with each other (p<0.05). There was no relationship between tactical skills and excellent performance levels (p>0.05).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was carried out to determine the tactical skills used by amateur and professional league football players and their excellent performance levels and to examine the relationships between these variables. There are significant differences between athletes playing football in different years in terms of the duration of active licensed football players.

In the research, it is seen that there is a significant difference between male and female football players in terms of tactical skills sub-dimensions and total scores in sports, and that men have higher scores than women in terms of perfect performance scores. In terms of years of licensed football playing; It was found that there was a significant difference in all sub-dimensions of tactical skills in sports and the total PPS-S score between the scores of athletes who played football for 1-5 years and all other groups who played football for more years. All sub-dimensions of tactical skills used by male and female football players have a significant relationship with each other; It was concluded that there was no relationship between tactical skills and excellent performance levels.

Müniroğlu et al. (15) examined professional football players' views on "Tactics in Football"; while 58% of football players say they completely agree with the statement "Tactics are very important in winning a match", 42% tend to agree. According to this result; Football players stated that they attach importance to tactics and that they think that tactical understanding is an important factor in achieving success. As a result, it has been revealed that the football players care about tactics and think that tactics have a very effective importance in winning the match.

González-Víllora et al. (8) in their study on "Review of tactical evaluation tools for young players in football and evaluation of tactics in team sports"; by compiling the studies conducted in the last 20 years, they stated that teaching-learning processes that are more tactically focused in younger age groups are much more beneficial for the tactical development of children.

In the study conducted by Low et al. (13) on tactical skills in football players; they emphasize that playing with a high-pressure game strategy against deep defense in football players of different ages and at different levels can lead to lower distance traveled on the physically and physiologically effective playing field, lower player speed and lower heart rates, as well as the tactical skills of the football players.

In the study by Figueira et al. (5), in which they aimed to determine the effects of playing football with different age groups on physical and tactical performance, they stated that young football players playing in different age groups developed positively both physically and technically when they trained and competed with different age groups. Forsman et al. (6) in their study on the effect of perception competence on the development of tactical skills, technical skills, motivation, speed and agility in young football players, they stated that there is a positive relationship between the levels and changes in perceived competence and motivation, and the perceived competence and speed and agility levels.

Rechenchosky et al. (19) in their study examining the tactical efficiency of football players playing in different positions, found that young attacking players were less able to apply the principle of "depth mobility" compared to "going inside", "offensive coverage", "width and length" and "attacking unity". They stated that they were efficient, and regarding the defensive aspects, they stated that they achieved "concentration" more efficiently than other principles. In the study by Popovych et al. (17) where they examined the basic characteristics of football players' tactical thinking types, they found that the tactical thinking levels of offensive players were higher than other players. It has been observed that defensive players have less predictability and analytical thinking than offensive players and goalkeepers. In the study conducted by Praça et al. (18), they stated that football players with higher tactical skills revealed significantly higher density and total connection values, and there were also differences in the frequency of defensive tactical principles. Silva et al. (21) stated in their study that national level players are more sensitive to field changes, however, they exhibit more variability in small and medium fields than regional level players.

In our research, when looked at in terms of years of licensed football playing; It was found that there was a significant difference in all sub-dimensions of tactical skills in sports and TACSIS score between the scores of athletes who played football for 1-5 years and all other groups who played football for more years.

As a result, it seems that increasing the number of years of licensed football playing in amateur and professional league football players is very important in terms of tactical skills. From this point of view, it can be said that increasing the experience period of both male and female football players by trying to reduce the age of starting sports to earlier ages will make a significant contribution to tactical skills, which are very important for performance in football.

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