

## The Role of Personality Traits and Gender in Sports Coaching Preferences

## Kişilik Özellikleri ve Cinsiyetin Spor Koçluğu Tercihlerindeki Rolü

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the relationship between the personality traits and genders of students from the Faculty of Sports Sciences at Inönü University and their preferences for sports coaching. Based on a relational survey model, the study involved 243 participants, consisting of 141 males and 102 females aged between 18 and 24 (Mage = 20.5, SD = 1.7). The personality traits of the participants were assessed using the Five Factor Personality Inventory, while their coaching preferences were evaluated using the Leadership Scale for Sport. The data were analyzed using independent samples t-tests and multiple regression analysis methods. According to the analysis results, gender has shown a significant effect on personality traits. Men scored higher in extraversion and self-discipline, whereas women were found to excel in agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Additionally, the examination of coaching preferences revealed that men significantly favored the autocratic coaching style, while women preferred the educational and instructional coaching style. According to analyses of personality traits, the characteristic of openness to experience has a positive effect on the coaching types of education and training, while agreeableness has a positive impact solely on the education and training coaching type. Extraversion has shown a significant and positive effect on the autocratic coaching type. However, no personality traits have had a significant effect on the democratic and rewarding behavioral coaching types. In conclusion, the findings indicate that gender has a significant effect both on personality traits and coaching preferences, while personality traits themselves also play a determinative role in coaching preferences.

**Keywords:** Personality traits, Sports coaching, Gender

## ÖZ

Bu çalışma, İnönü Üniversitesi Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi öğrencilerinin kişilik özellikleri ve cinsiyetleri ile spor koçluğu tercihleri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. İlişkisel tarama modeline dayanan çalışmaya, yaşları 18 ile 24 (Orta yaş = 20,5, SS = 1,7) arasında değişen toplam 243 katılımcı (141 erkek ve 102 kadın) dahil edilmiştir. Katılımcıların kişilik özellikleri Beş Faktör Kişilik Envanteri ile değerlendirilirken, koçluk tercihleri Spor için Liderlik Ölçeği kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Veriler, bağımsız örneklem t-testi ve çoklu regresyon analizi yöntemleriyle incelenmiştir. Analiz sonuçlarına göre, cinsiyetin kişilik özellikleri üzerinde anlamlı bir etkisi olduğu görülmüştür. Erkekler dışa dönüklük ve öz disiplin puanlarında daha yüksek değerlere sahipken, kadınların uyumluluk, duygusal dengesizlik (nevrotizm) ve deneyime açıklık özelliklerinde daha başarılı oldukları belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca, koçluk tercihleri incelendiğinde erkeklerin otoriter (otokratik) koçluk stilini anlamlı ölçüde daha fazla tercih ettikleri, kadınların ise eğitim ve öğretim odaklı koçluk stilini tercih ettikleri görülmüştür. Kişilik özellikleri analizlerine göre, deneyime açıklık özelliğinin eğitim ve öğretim koçluk türü üzerinde olumlu bir etkisi olduğu, uyumluluk özelliğinin ise yalnızca eğitim ve öğretim koçluk türüne pozitif bir etkisi olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Dışa dönüklüğün otoriter koçluk türü üzerinde anlamlı ve olumlu bir etkisi olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bununla birlikte, demokratik ve ödüllendirici davranışsal koçluk türleri üzerinde herhangi bir kişilik özelliğinin anlamlı bir etkisi olmadığı görülmüştür. Sonuç olarak, elde edilen bulgular, cinsiyetin hem kişilik özellikleri hem de koçluk tercihleri üzerinde anlamlı bir etkisi olduğunu, ayrıca kişilik özelliklerinin de koçluk tercihleri üzerinde belirleyici rol oynadığını göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kişilik özellikleri, Spor koçluğu, Cinsiyet

## INTRODUCTION

Personality traits refer to consistent patterns in how individuals think, feel, and behave (Lucas and Donnellan, 2011). The study of personality has been integral to sports and exercise psychology since Coleman Griffith emphasized its importance in understanding athlete performance. Over time, researchers have continued to investigate which personality traits are associated with athletic success (Allen et al., 2013). Understanding athletes' personality characteristics is not only academically significant but also offers practical advantages; sports psychologists and coaches can use personality assessments to personalize interventions and optimize counseling processes, ultimately supporting athletes more effectively (Spielmann et al., 2024).

Personality traits predict a range of performance indicators in competitive contexts such as work and academia (Poropat, 2009). Research conducted in athletic environments has provided evidence that these trait dimensions forecast short-term athletic behaviors (Allen et al., 2011; Kaiseler et al., 2019). However, distinguishing and defining the optimal personality type is extremely challenging, as it is largely influenced by the sports discipline practiced and the athletes' personal conditions (Piepiora, 2021). Studies have indicated that certain personality traits are associated with greater success in competitive sports. Piepiora and Witkowski (2020) found that a fundamental mental factor distinguishing champions from other competitors is low neuroticism, while linking this importance to extraversion in their review (Allen et al., 2020). Elite athletes typically exhibit higher conscientiousness and lower neuroticism compared to lower-tier rivals (Allen et al., 2011). Paralympic athletes demonstrate greater resilience and lower anxiety than their unselected peers (Martin et al., 2011). Longitudinal studies also associate conscientiousness and low neuroticism with higher performance and progression in professional sports (Piedmont et al., 1999). Additionally, significant differences indicate that elite athletes are more extraverted and emotionally stable compared to recreational-level athletes (Kirkcaldy, 1982).

One of the various social factors that can affect athletes' motivation in a sports context is the influence of the coach—perhaps one of the most significant factors (Amorose and Anderson-Butcher, 2007; Vallerand and Losier, 1999). A coach plays a crucial role in shaping the psychological experiences that athletes derive from their sports participation (Mageau and Vallerand, 2003). A successful sports team needs coaches who can appropriately guide athletes to maintain healthy team relationships and achieve high levels of performance (Mallett, 2005). Coaches' behaviors directly impact athletes' psychological aspects and their social-moral attitudes (Kim et al., 2018). Numerous studies have found that coaches' leadership behaviors can play a significant role in athletes' psychological development and satisfaction (Weiss and Friedrichs, 1986), training efficiency, and game outcomes (Becker and Wrisberg, 2008), as well as team cohesion (Jowett and Ntoumanis, 2004; Vincer and Loughhead, 2010).

Personality and psychological characteristics significantly affect not only the athletic performance of athletes but also their relationships with their coaches and their coaching preferences (Collinwood, 2020; Horn et al., 2011; Terry and Howe, 1985). Research conducted in recent years shows that athletes' personalities and psychological profiles play a decisive role in their preferred coaching styles and leadership approaches. For example, Horn et al. (2011) revealed that the psychological characteristics of athletes, such as their motivational orientation and anxiety levels, have an impact on democratic or autocratic leadership styles and the types of feedback expected from coaches. Terry and Howe (1985) showed that athletes' different personality traits affect the leadership and communication styles they expect from their coaches. Similarly, Collinwood (2020) also states that personality types have an impact on the quality of athlete-coach relationships and perceptions of the coaching process. These findings show that personality and psychological

characteristics should be taken into account not only in the individual competition environment but also in coaching and leadership processes.

A framework considered as a criterion for leadership in sports coaching is the Sports Leadership Scale (SLS), developed by Chelladurai and Saleh (1980). This scale conceptualizes leadership through five distinct dimensions of leader behavior in sports environments: training and instruction, democratic behavior, autocratic behavior, social support, and positive feedback (Loughead and Hardy, 2005).

Based on a multidimensional model, researchers have identified various sociocultural factors that influence athletes' preferred leadership behaviors. These include gender (Chia et al., 2015), age or maturity (Martin et al., 1999), type of sport (Terry, 1984), and level of competition (Beam et al., 2004). For instance, athletes in individual sports prefer coaches who exhibit democratic behavior and provide positive feedback, whereas those in team sports tend to favor coaches who display autocratic behavior (Witte, 2011). Furthermore, Riemer and Toon (2001) discovered that athletes with male coaches preferred social support behaviors compared to those with female coaches, suggesting that the gender of the coach may significantly influence leadership preferences (Riemer and Toon, 2001).

A comprehensive study addressing the impact of personality traits on athletes' coaching preferences has not been found in the existing literature. Although current research (Horn et al., 2011; Kuntz and Moorfield, 2024) has primarily focused on sociocultural factors, it is believed that an individual's personality traits could play a significant role in determining preferred coaching behaviors. In this context, the lack of research examining how different personality types among athletes influence their leadership understanding and coaching preferences is noteworthy. To fill this gap, this study aims to investigate how individual personality factors shape athletes' preferences for coaching behaviors in sports.

## METHOD

**Participants:** This research was conducted to determine the relationship between the personality traits and genders of students studying at the Faculty of Sport Sciences at Inonu University's and their preferences for sports coaching. All of the students who participated in the study were admitted to the sports sciences program based on their athletic résumés, and therefore each has an active athletic background. The study was carried out using the relational screening model, a method of quantitative research. The sample size consisted of 243 participants, including 141 males and 102 females, all aged between 18 and 24 years ( $M_{age} = 20.5$ ,  $SD = 1.7$ ).

In this study, a power analysis was conducted using the G\*Power 3.1.9.7 program to determine the adequate sample size. The ANOVA: Fixed effects, special, main effects, and interactions test was utilized, with parameters set for effect size of 0.25, error probability of 0.05, and test power of 0.80. The degrees of freedom were calculated to be 9, with a total of 10 groups based on gender (2 groups) and personality traits (5 dimensions). The analysis indicated that the study required 239 participants, and it was noted that the current sample size met this requirement.

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the Declaration of Helsinki and was approved by the Inonu University Health Sciences Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee (Approval No: 2024/6139).

**Personal Information Form:** This form was used to collect basic demographic information from the participants. It included four questions: age, gender, department, and year of study.

**Five Factor Personality Scale:** Developed by Rammstedt and John (2007) and adapted into Turkish by Horzum, Ayas, and Padır (2017), the scale is structured as a 5-point Likert type instrument, featuring options such as "Never," "Rarely," "Sometimes," "Often," and "Always." It consists of a total of 10 items and encompasses five sub-dimensions: extraversion, agreeableness, self-control, neuroticism, and openness to experience. The fact that the sub-dimensions of the scale have Cronbach's alpha (.81-.90) and composite reliability (.73-.85) values above .70 indicates that the scale is highly reliable and consistent (Horzum et al., 2017; Rammstedt and John, 2007).

**Leadership Scale for Sports:** The "Leadership Scale for Sport - Athlete's Perception of Coach Behavior Version," developed by Chelladurai and Saleh (1980) and adapted into Turkish by Unutmaz and Gencer (2014), consists of 40 items and 5 subdimensions: training and instruction, democratic behavior, autocratic behavior, social support, and positive feedback. The fact that Cronbach's alpha values obtained from internal consistency calculations to test the reliability of the scale are above .70 indicates that the scale is reliable. This scale has been utilized to measure athletes' perceptions of their coaches' leadership behaviors (Chelladurai and Saleh, 1980; Unutmaz and Gencer, 2014).

**Procedures:** In this study, data were collected online via Google Forms. The data collection instruments included a personal information form—used to obtain demographic information such as age, gender, department, and year of study—the Five-Factor Personality Scale, and the Leadership Scale for Sports. The Five-Factor Personality Scale measures individuals' levels of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience, while the Leadership Scale for Sports evaluates athletes' perceptions of their coaches' leadership behaviors. All responses were checked for validity, and those that were incomplete or incorrectly filled out were excluded from the analysis. Valid data were prepared for statistical analysis.

**Data Analysis:** In the analysis of the data, the Shapiro-Wilk normality test was applied to determine whether the assumptions of parametric tests were met. The results of the analysis indicated that the data were normally distributed. Subsequently, an independent samples t-test was conducted to assess gender differences. Pearson correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationships among the main variables. In addition, a multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the relationships between coaching types and personality traits. Descriptive statistics (such as means and standard deviations) for the variables used in the analyses were provided, and the results were evaluated based on statistical significance levels ( $p < 0.05$ ). All analyses were conducted using relevant statistical software programs.

## RESULTS

**Table 1**

*Distribution of Personality Traits by Gender*

Personality Trait	Gender	n	Mean	p
Extraversion	Male	141	7.16	< 0.001
	Female	102	6.66	
Agreeableness	Male	141	7.74	< 0.001
	Female	102	8.35	
Conscientiousness	Male	141	7.16	< 0.001
	Female	102	6.67	
Neuroticism	Male	141	6.62	< 0.001
	Female	102	7.09	
Openness to Experience	Male	141	7.34	0.021
	Female	102	7.60	

Independent samples t-test results indicated statistically significant differences in personality traits between genders in Table 1 ( $p < 0.05$ ). It was determined that males had significantly higher average scores than females in

extraversion (Mean Difference = 0.499,  $p = 0.001$ ) and conscientiousness (Mean Difference = 0.496,  $p = 0.001$ ). Conversely, females scored significantly higher than males in agreeableness (Mean Difference = 0.615,  $p=0.001$ ), neuroticism (Mean Difference = 0.464,  $p=0.001$ ), and openness to experience (Mean Difference= 0.258,  $p=0.021$ ). All these findings indicate that gender creates a statistically significant difference in personality traits.

**Table 2***Distribution of Coaching Preferences by Gender*

Coaching type	Gender	n	Mean	p
Educational and Instructional	Male	141	52.93	<b>0.045</b>
	Female	102	55.45	
Democratic Behavior	Male	141	35.74	0.345
	Female	102	34.88	
Autocratic Behavior	Male	141	15.74	< <b>0.001</b>
	Female	102	13.28	
Social Support	Male	141	28.92	0.691
	Female	102	29.19	
Rewarding Behavior	Male	141	19.99	0.687
	Female	102	19.78	

According to the independent samples t-test analysis results in Table 2, males significantly prefer the "autocratic behavior coaching type" more than females (Mean Difference = 2.460,  $p= 0.001$ ). Conversely, females tend to prefer the Educational and Instructional coaching type more than males (Mean Difference = 2.522,  $p= 0.045$ ). No significant difference was found between genders for the democratic behavior, social support, and rewarding behavior coaching types ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 3***Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between Coaching Types and Five-Factor Personality Traits*

Correlations									
	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
a	1	.398**	.335**	-.058	.441**	.063	.162*	.208**	.132*
b	.398**	1	.031	.158*	.567**	.253**	.136*	-.026	.184**
c	.335**	.031	1	-.033	.272**	.030	.130*	.173**	.113
d	-.058	.158*	-.033	1	.222**	.091	.057	.003	.038
e	.441**	.567**	.272**	.222**	1	.270**	.205**	.056	.254**
f	.063	.253**	.030	.091	.270**	1	.922**	.620**	.953**
g	.162*	.136*	.130*	.057	.205**	.922**	1	.826**	.969**
h	.208**	-.026	.173**	.003	.056	.620**	.826**	1	.744**
i	.132*	.184**	.113	.038	.254**	.953**	.956**	.744**	1
i	.132*	.138*	.110	.064	.197**	.919**	.969**	.773**	.953**

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

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

a. Extraversion, b. Agreeableness, c. Conscientiousness, d. Neuroticism, e. Openness to Experience, f. Training and Instruction, g. Democratic Behavior, h. Autocratic Behavior, i. Social Support, i. Positive Feedback

The Pearson correlation coefficients presented in Table 3 reveal notable associations between coaching types and the Five-Factor Personality Traits. The findings indicate significant positive correlations between Extraversion and both Openness to Experience ( $r = .441$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and Agreeableness ( $r = .398$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Similarly, Agreeableness is strongly and positively correlated with Openness to Experience ( $r = .567$ ,  $p < .01$ ), as well as with Training and Instruction ( $r = .253$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Among the coaching behaviors, Training and Instruction, Democratic Behavior, Social Support, and Positive Feedback exhibit particularly high and significant intercorrelations (for example, Training and Instruction and Democratic Behavior,  $r = .922$ ,  $p < .01$ ; Training and Instruction and Social Support,  $r = .953$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting that these behaviors often co-occur in the coaching context. In contrast, correlations involving Neuroticism are generally low

and not significant. Overall, these results demonstrate that there are meaningful relationships between personality traits and coaching styles, implying that specific personality dimensions may serve as predictors of distinct coaching behaviors.

**Table 4**

*The Role of Personality Traits on Coaching Types in Educational and Instructional*

Personality Trait	Type of Educational and Instructional Coaching <sup>a</sup>						Collinearity Statistics
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
Extraversion	-1.053	.802	-.098	-1.313	.190	.688	1.453
Agreeableness	1.584	.742	.168	2.135	.034	.618	1.617
Conscientiousness	-.005	.853	.000	-.006	.995	.826	1.210
Neuroticism	.131	.771	.011	.169	.866	.913	1.095
Openness to Experience	2.418	.926	.215	2.612	.010	.562	1.778

a. Dependent Variable

According to regression analysis, the personality traits of Openness to Experience (B=2.418, p=0.010) and Agreeableness (B=1.584, p=0.034) have a significant and positive role on the type of Educational and Instructional Coaching. The effects of other personality traits, including Extraversion, Self-Regulation, and Neuroticism, were found to be statistically insignificant (p>0.05).

Additionally, an examination of the multicollinearity statistics shows that all tolerance values are above 0.1 and all VIF values are below 10. These results indicate that there is no multicollinearity problem among the variables in the regression model.

**Table 5**

*The Role of Personality Traits on The Democratic Behavior Coaching Style*

Personality Trait	Democratic Behavior Coaching Type <sup>a</sup>						Collinearity Statistics
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
Extraversion	.549	.589	.071	.933	.352	.688	1.453
Agreeableness	.166	.545	.024	.304	.761	.618	1.617
Conscientiousness	.630	.626	.070	1.006	.315	.826	1.210
Neuroticism	.259	.566	.030	.457	.648	.913	1.095
Openness to Experience	1.081	.680	.134	1.590	.113	.562	1.778

a. Dependent Variable

According to the results of this regression analysis, no personality trait has a significant role on Democratic Behavior Coaching Type (p>0.05). Although Openness to Experience (B=1.081, p=0.113) showed a higher effect compared to other personality traits, it was not statistically significant.

Furthermore, an examination of the collinearity statistics shows that all tolerance values are above 0.1 and all VIF values are below 10. These results indicate that there is no multicollinearity problem among the independent variables in the regression model.

**Table 6***The Role of Personality Traits on the Autocratic Coaching Style*

Autocratic Behavior Coaching Type <sup>a</sup>							
Personality Trait	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Extraversion	1.195	.394	.229	3.032	.003	.688	1.453
Agreeableness	-.541	.365	-.118	-1.482	.140	.618	1.617
Conscientiousness	.640	.419	.105	1.527	.128	.826	1.210
Neuroticism	.239	.379	.041	.631	.529	.913	1.095
Openness to Experience	-.084	.455	-.015	-.184	.854	.562	1.778

a. Dependent Variable

According to the results of the regression analysis, only the personality trait of Extraversion ( $B=1.195$ ,  $p=0.003$ ) has a significant and positive role on the Autocratic Behavior Coaching Type. Other personality traits, such as Agreeableness ( $p=0.140$ ), Self-Control ( $p=0.128$ ), Neuroticism ( $p=0.529$ ), and Openness to Experience ( $p=0.854$ ), do not exhibit a statistically significant effect on the dependent variable.

Furthermore, an examination of the multicollinearity statistics shows that all tolerance values are above 0.1 and all VIF values are below 10. These results indicate that there is no multicollinearity problem among the independent variables in the regression model.

**Table 7***The Role of Personality Traits on Social Support Coaching Types*

Social Support Coaching Type <sup>a</sup>							
Personality Trait	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Extraversion	-.038	.428	-.007	-.090	.928	.688	1.453
Agreeableness	.355	.396	.071	.897	.371	.618	1.617
Conscientiousness	.371	.455	.056	.816	.415	.826	1.210
Neuroticism	-.107	.411	-.017	-.260	.795	.913	1.095
Openness to Experience	1.212	.494	.205	2.453	.015	.562	1.778

a. Dependent Variable

According to the table, only the personality trait of Openness to Experience ( $B=1.212$ ,  $p=0.015$ ) has a significant role on the type of Social Support Coaching. Other personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Self-Control, Neuroticism) do not exhibit statistically significant role ( $p>0.05$ ).

Furthermore, an examination of the multicollinearity statistics shows that all tolerance values are above 0.1 and all VIF values are below 10. These results indicate that there is no multicollinearity problem among the independent variables in the regression model.

**Table 8**

*The Role of Personality Traits on Reward-Based Coaching Behavior*

Rewarding Behavior Coaching Type <sup>a</sup>							
Personality Trait	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
Extraversion	.168	.326	.040	.517	.606	.688	1.453
Agreeableness	.151	.301	.040	.499	.618	.618	1.617
Conscientiousness	.300	.346	.060	.865	.388	.826	1.210
Neuroticism	.155	.313	.033	.494	.621	.913	1.095
Openness to Experience	.592	.376	.133	1.573	.117	.562	1.778

a. Dependent Variable

According to Table 8, none of the personality traits have a statistically significant role on the rewarding behavior coaching type, as all p-values are greater than 0.05. In addition, the collinearity statistics (Tolerance and VIF values) indicate that there is no multicollinearity problem among the independent variables, since Tolerance values are above 0.1 and VIF values are below 10.

## DISCUSSION

It has been found that gender has a significant role on personality traits (see Table 1). Men tend to have higher average scores than women in traits such as extraversion and self-control. This suggests that men may generally be more social, extroverted, and more adept at self-regulation. Conversely, women scored higher than men in traits such as agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. These findings indicate that women are likely to be more accommodating, more prone to emotional responses, and more open to new experiences.

Research frequently indicates that men are more extroverted and self-confident, while women are generally more agreeable and emotional (Costa et al., 2001; Feingold, 1994). Karwowski et al. (2013) demonstrated that the personality traits of Neuroticism and Agreeableness are at higher levels in women than in men (Karwowski et al., 2013). It has also been found that women score higher than men on Neuroticism at the level of the Big Five personality traits, as well as on most sub-dimensions related to Neuroticism in the NEO-PI-R, which is a common measurement tool for the Big Five (Costa et al., 2001). These differences may be associated with the development of varying personality traits in individuals according to societal roles and expectations.

Gender appears to create significant differences in preferences for certain coaching types (Table 2). It has been found that men significantly prefer the Autocratic Behavior Coaching Type compared to women. For instance, Hastie (1995) found that female athletes preferred coaches who exhibited less autocratic behavior and more positive feedback compared to their male counterparts (Hastie, 1995). These findings suggest that men are more inclined to exhibit an authoritative and control-oriented attitude in their leadership approaches. Authoritarian leadership may reflect male behaviors associated with traditional gender roles. In contrast, it has been observed that women significantly prefer the Education and Training Coaching Type over men. This preference indicates that women may have adopted leadership styles that prioritize guidance, knowledge sharing, and personal development. This situation is consistent with literature suggesting that women lean towards a more supportive and encouraging leadership style. Cruz and Kim (2017) demonstrated that girls prefer coaches who provide education, training, and positive feedback more than boys do (Cruz and Kim, 2017).



The correlation analysis presented in Table 3 offers important insights regarding the relationships between the Five-Factor Personality Traits and various coaching behaviors. The significant positive correlations between traits such as Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Openness to Experience indicate that these personality dimensions frequently coexist, which is in line with existing literature suggesting that socially open and agreeable individuals are also often more extraverted (Costa et al., 2001; Feingold, 1994). Furthermore, the moderately strong correlations between Agreeableness and the Training and Instruction coaching style suggest that individuals who display higher levels of Agreeableness may prefer or benefit from more instructional and supportive coaching approaches. Among the coaching behaviors themselves, Training and Instruction, Democratic Behavior, Social Support, and Positive Feedback are highly interrelated, reflecting the tendency of coaches to exhibit these positive and athlete-centered leadership styles together rather than in isolation. Conversely, the generally low and non-significant correlations associated with Neuroticism suggest that this trait may have limited relevance in shaping coaching style preferences. Collectively, these findings underscore the existence of broad and meaningful associations between athletes' personality traits and their expectations or perceptions of coaching styles.

The results of the analysis regarding the role of personality traits on different coaching styles have revealed that certain personality traits significantly influence specific coaching types. The personality trait of openness to experience has been shown to have a significant and positive effect on both the Education and Training Coaching Type ( $B=2.418$ ,  $p=0.010$ ) and the Social Support Coaching Type ( $B=1.212$ ,  $p=0.015$ ). This finding suggests that individuals who are open to experience are more inclined towards leadership styles that focus on exploring new ideas and supporting individuals. Moreover, the study by Ni and Feng (2023) demonstrated that an increase in openness to experience enhances athletes' levels of sociability—particularly through knowledge sharing—which in turn significantly contributes to their well-being and social adaptation (Ni and Feng, 2023). Similarly, Agreeableness has contributed significantly and positively to the Education and Training Coaching Type ( $B=1.584$ ,  $p=0.034$ ), indicating that harmonious individuals may adopt a teaching and guidance-oriented leadership approach.

Conversely, extraversion has a significant and positive effect solely on the Autocratic Behavior Coaching Type ( $B=1.195$ ,  $p=0.003$ ). This result suggests that extraverted individuals may be more inclined toward authoritarian leadership styles. However, Garland and Barry (1990), in contrast to this finding, reported that high-performing athletes exhibited higher levels of extraversion and perceived their coaches as less autocratic (Garland and Barry, 1990). On the other hand, Bulut et al. (2024), in their study conducted on students of the Faculty of Sport Sciences, found that extraversion was a significant and positive predictor specifically for the determined (decisive) leadership dimension of leadership behaviors (Bulut et al., 2024). It is thought that the divergence of views in the literature largely stems from differences in the sample groups used in the various studies. Both the present study and that of Bulut et al. (2024) were conducted with students from Faculties of Sport Sciences, whereas Garland and Barry (1990) focused on high-performing athletes. High-performing athletes are individuals who have achieved sporting success, possess considerable experience, and demonstrate a competitive nature; consequently, their perceptions of coaches and expectations from leadership may differ significantly. This may be considered a potential explanation for the inconsistencies observed in the findings across the literature. In other coaching types, no significant effect of extraversion was found. Furthermore, other personality traits such as Self-control, Neuroticism, and Agreeableness did not demonstrate a statistically significant role on coaching types (similar to Autocratic Behavior) ( $p>0.05$ ). Additionally, no personality trait was identified as having a significant effect on Democratic Behavior or Rewarding Behavior Coaching Types ( $p>0.05$ ).

These findings suggest that personality traits may influence preferences for leadership styles; however, no specific set of traits is effective in isolation for each coaching type. It can also be considered that certain coaching styles may be shaped by other individual or environmental factors. Future studies could clarify the role of personality traits in coaching preferences within a broader context and examine in depth the relationship between character and leadership style.

**Limitations:** This study offers important insights into the relationship between personality traits, gender, and coaching preferences; however, it also has certain limitations. Detailed information regarding participants' specific sports branches or duration of athletic experience was not collected. This limitation arises from the study's primary focus on the general relationship between personality traits and coaching preferences. Additionally, all participants were students in the Faculty of Sports Sciences, where admission requires a sports background. It was therefore assumed that participants possessed a certain level of athletic experience. Nevertheless, collecting more detailed data on participants' sports branches and years of experience in future research would enable a more precise description of the sample and allow for a more nuanced interpretation of findings.

Furthermore, the sample consisted exclusively of 18-24-year-old students from the Faculty of Sports Sciences at Inonu University, which restricts the generalizability of the results to other age groups, individuals outside academic settings, or those from different cultural contexts. The use of online self-report surveys introduces potential biases, such as social desirability, which may affect response accuracy. Additionally, relying solely on the Five Factor Personality Scale may have limited the assessment of other potentially important personality dimensions relevant to coaching preferences. The cross-sectional design precludes establishing causal relationships; thus, longitudinal studies would provide more comprehensive insights into how these relationships evolve over time.

It is recommended that future studies include information about participants' sports branches and experience, and employ longitudinal designs to further enhance the depth and generalizability of results.

## CONCLUSION

According to the results of this research, it has been observed that gender has a significant role on both personality traits and coaching preferences. While males scored higher on the dimensions of extraversion and self-control, females achieved higher scores compared to males in traits such as agreeableness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. This finding indicates that personality traits may vary between male and female individuals due to societal roles and expectations.

When examining differences in coaching preferences based on gender, it has been determined that males significantly prefer the autocratic coaching style, whereas females are more inclined towards education and training-oriented coaching. No significant difference was found between genders regarding democratic behavior, social support, and rewarding behavior coaching types.

Regarding the impacts of personality traits on coaching styles, it has been established that the trait of openness to experience has a significant and positive effect on both education and training-focused as well as social support-oriented coaching types. The trait of agreeableness, on the other hand, has shown a positive effect solely on the education and training coaching style. The personality trait of extraversion has a significant and positive impact on the autocratic coaching type, while no significant effect was detected on other coaching styles.

The traits of self-regulation and neuroticism have not shown any statistically significant impact on any type of coaching. These findings suggest that personality traits can influence individual tendencies toward leadership and coaching preferences, yet the process is complex and multi-dimensional. While it has been observed that gender differences play a significant role in preferences for types of coaching, it has also been concluded that the relationship between personality and leadership styles warrants more in-depth examination. Future research is recommended to include a broader range of individual factors (such as motivation, previous coaching experiences, or athletic level) and environmental variables (such as team culture or coach characteristics) to further elucidate the influences on coaching style preferences.

**Authors Contribution:**

1. **Oğuzhan BOZKURT:** Concept/Idea, Design, Data Collection and Processing, Analysis and Interpretation, Article Writing, Critical Review
2. **Özgür EKEN:** Concept/Idea, Design, Supervision, Analysis and Interpretation, Article Writing, Critical Review

**Information about Ethical Board Permission**

**Committee Name:** Inonu University, Health Sciences Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee  
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