



An Analysis of The Effect of Personality Traits on Sport Choice Among Athletes

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to investigate the influence of personality traits on the selection of sports disciplines prior to the performance stage. The research aims to determine the extent to which personality characteristics serve as decisive factors in branch selection during the early stages of athletic involvement. Data were collected via an 18-item questionnaire from 349 students (214 males, 135 females) at Kütahya Dumlupınar University, Faculty of Sports Sciences. Following a data screening process, 9 inconsistent responses were excluded to ensure the validity of the results, and the analysis was conducted with 340 participants. Statistical analyses were performed using SPSS 26. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicated that the data did not follow a normal distribution ($p < 0.05$); therefore, non-parametric tests were employed. The Mann-Whitney U test was used for binary variables, and the Kruskal-Wallis H test was utilized for variables with more than two categories, with the significance level set at $p < 0.05$. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference in the "Agreeableness" trait across different sports disciplines ($p = 0.041 < 0.05$). Additionally, a significant difference in "Extraversion" was observed between athletes who selected their disciplines independently and those guided by external influences ($p = 0.01 < 0.05$). Furthermore, a significant variance in "Emotional Stability" was identified between national and non-national athletes ($p = 0.04 < 0.05$). In conclusion, the results suggest that personality traits play an influential role in both the selection of sports branches and the process of achieving athletic success.

Keywords: Personality Traits, Sport Discipline Selection, Athletes, Sport Preference

Sporcularda Kişilik Özelliklerinin Branş Seçimine Etkisinin İncelenmesi

Özet

Bu çalışmanın amacı henüz performans aşamasına gelmeden spor branşının seçiminde kişilik özelliklerinin etkisi olup olmadığının araştırılmasıdır. Böylece erken süreçte kişilik özelliklerinin branş seçiminde ne düzeyde rol oynadığı ve karar verici olduğu ortaya konmak istenmiştir. Araştırma Kütahya Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Spor Bilimleri Fakültesi'nden 214 erkek 135 kadın olmak üzere toplam 349 öğrencinin katılımıyla toplamda 18 adet sorudan oluşan anket ile veriler toplanmıştır. 9 hatalı veri sonuçları etkilememesi adına çalışmadan çıkarılmış ve çalışmaya 340 adet veri üzerinden devam edilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde SPSS 26 paket programı kullanılmıştır. Verilerin normal dağılıma sahip olup olmadığı Kolmogorov Smirnov testine göre belirlenmiş ve p değerinin 0.05'ten küçük olduğu görülmüştür. Dolayısıyla verilerin analizde parametrik olmayan testler uygulanmıştır. İkili değişkenler arasındaki farkı belirlemek için Mann Whitney U testi, ikiden fazla değişkenlerde ise Kruskal Wallis H testi uygulanmıştır. Anlamlılık düzeyi $p < 0,05$ olarak kabul edilmiştir. Test sonuçları arasında branşlara göre kişilik özellikleri incelendiğinde Uyumluluk özelliği gruplar arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı fark bulunmuştur. ($p=0,041 < 0,05$). Spor branşı tercihini kendi yapanlar ve başkaları tarafından yönlendirilenler arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı fark dışı dönüklük özelliğinde bulunmuştur ($p=0,01 < 0,05$). Yapılan çalışmada milli sporcular ve milli olmayan sporcular arasında kişilik özellikleri incelendiğinde duygusal denge özelliğinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılık bulunmuştur ($p=0,04 < 0,05$). Elde edilen sonuçlar ışığında sporcuların kişilik özelliklerinin branş seçiminde ve başarıya ulaşma aşamalarında etkili olabileceği düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kişilik Özellikleri, Spor Dalı Seçimi, Sporcular, Spor Tercihi

INTRODUCTION

Sports are not only an area where individuals demonstrate their physical strength, but also a comprehensive phenomenon that shapes their social, psychological, and mental aspects. While people's personality traits are decisive in their preferences in different areas of life, the same effect is seen in their choice of sports discipline. In this context, choosing the right discipline can be considered one of the most critical factors in leading an athlete to success (Karakuzulu, 2018).

However, the fundamental problem here is that athletes' branch preferences are mostly based on physical fitness and athletic performance potential. Personality, on the other hand, is a structure that begins to develop in childhood and changes throughout life, playing an important role in the individual's participation in sports and adaptation to the sports environment. Indeed, personality is not only a psychological concept but is also closely related to physical and bodily factors (Eraslan, 2015).

At this point, studies addressing the relationship between personality and sports in literature are noteworthy. Studies conducted since the early 1950s have begun to examine the differences in personality traits and attitudes between individuals who participate in sports and those who do not, using alternative tests. *The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)* is at the forefront of these tests (Bayar, 2003). Subsequent research has examined the personality traits of individual and team athletes (Çetinöz, 2005), the personality structures of coaches and their job satisfaction (Duman, 2023), the relationship between personality and stress in traditional horseback archers (Okuyucu Yöreñç, 2024), personality traits of employees in sports businesses (Al-Zaidi, 2023), personality factors in sports brand preferences (Sisli, 2023), personality traits of physical education teachers (Şimşek, 2023; Karakaş, 2023; Güley Arslan, 2023), personality and sports injury anxiety (Şeflek, 2023), and the personality structures of adolescent athletes (Güllü, 2023).

However, a gap in literature is the limited number of studies that directly address the role of personality traits in the branch selection process before athletes enter the performance phase. While most studies examine the relationship between performance, stress, or injury, they do not provide comprehensive data to the extent to which personality structures influence branch selection.

Addressing this gap could provide significant contributions for sports scientists, coaches, and prospective athletes. Specifically, personality analyses conducted at an early stage could help predict in which sports athletes are likely to be more successful, thereby supporting both individual adaptation and long-term performance development. Furthermore, from an institutional perspective, accurate guidance could increase efficiency in the athlete development process.

In conclusion, the aim of this study is to determine the personality traits of athletes before choosing a sport and, in line with this, to contribute to increasing both individual adaptation and athletic achievement levels by directing them to suitable sports.

Research Model and Design

In this research, a quantitative research method was used to determine whether personality traits

affect branch selection in athletes. Quantitative research allows the data obtained to be expressed numerically and analyzed using statistical methods (Ekiz, 2013).

A descriptive survey model was chosen as the research design. Survey models aim to describe the current situation as it is and reveal the differences or relationships between variables. Since this study comparatively examined whether the personality traits of athletes differ according to their branch selection, nationality, gender, and training age, the design was based on a comparative survey model.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of students at the Faculty of Sports Sciences at Kütahya Dumlupınar University. The sample of the study consists of a total of 349 students, including 214 male and 135 female students enrolled at the faculty during the 2023-2024 academic year. 9 questionnaires that were incomplete or incorrectly filled out were excluded from the study, and the analyses were conducted on 340 valid data. Participants were included in the study on a voluntary basis.

Research Publication Ethics

Before starting the research process, the necessary application was made to the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Kütahya Dumlupınar University's Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, and the "Ethics Committee Approval Certificate" numbered 113482 was obtained on 01.06.2022. The agreements for the research were based on voluntary participation and consisted of a two-part questionnaire completed online via Google Forms. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of eight questions from the "Personality Inventory," which included demographic information such as gender, age, and sports history. The second part used the "Ten-Item Personality Scale." Of the 349 components within the scope of the research, 349 were examined, and 9 missing or incorrect data points were excluded from the study, resulting in a total of 340 valid data points included in the analysis list. This survey determined the personality traits of the athletes, and comparisons were made between the findings obtained.

Data Collection Tools

1. Personal Information Form

Personal Information Form This form was prepared by the researcher to obtain information about the demographic characteristics of teachers in the working group. It asks about your gender, age, sport, level in your sport, your national athlete status, your years of training, whether you chose your sport voluntarily or were directed by someone else, and if you had the choice, would you choose the same sport or, if not, which sport would you choose.

2. Ten-Item Personality

The study used a personal information questionnaire that examined athletes' personal information and sporting life, along with the Ten-Item Personality Scale developed by Gosling, Rentfrow, and Swann (2003) and adapted into Turkish by Atak (2013). The 10-item scale consists of five factors: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. This seven-point Likert-type scale includes two items in each sub-

dimension. Items 1 and 6 correspond to extraversion, items 9 and 4 to neuroticism, items 5 and 10 to openness to experience, items 3 and 8 to conscientiousness, and items 2 and 7 to agreeableness.

The "extraversion" dimension in the scale refers to being outgoing, sociable, and talkative, the "agreeableness" dimension refers to being easygoing, the "Conscientiousness" dimension represents disciplined and task-oriented behavior, the "neuroticism" dimension represents low levels of worry and anxiety, and "openness to experience" represents characteristics such as enjoying change and being open to new experiences. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the scale is 0.83 for the Openness to Experience subscale, 0.81 for the agreeableness subscale, 0.83 for the neuroticism subscale, 0.84 for the conscientiousness subscale and finally 0.86 for the extraversion subscale, indicating that the scale's internal consistency is at an acceptable level. Although the Ten-Item Personality Scale provides practical assessment, it is acknowledged that its short structure may be a limitation in capturing personality dimensions in depth.

FINDINGS

Table 1. A comparison of sport discipline selections based on personality traits

| Personality | Discipline | N | Mean Rank | Chi-Square Value | df | p |
|------------------------|---------------|----------|-----------|------------------|----|------|
| Openness To Experience | Football | 126 | 173.47 | 6.3 | 10 | 0.50 |
| | Basketball | 26 | 142.52 | | | |
| | Volleyball | 36 | 179.69 | | | |
| | Handball | 20 | 166.20 | | | |
| | Karate | 26 | 167.12 | | | |
| | Athletics | 9 | 168.33 | | | |
| | Boxing | 22 | 171.77 | | | |
| | Rugby | 11 | 169.73 | | | |
| | Weightlifting | 15 | 148.97 | | | |
| | Other | 49 | 172.13 | | | |
| Conscientiousness | Football | 126 | 156.65 | 15.3 | 10 | 0.12 |
| | Basketball | 26 | 169.12 | | | |
| | Volleyball | 36 | 170.56 | | | |
| | Handball | 20 | 229.85 | | | |
| | Karate | 26 | 171.77 | | | |
| | Athletics | 9 | 154.56 | | | |
| | Boxing | 22 | 212.43 | | | |
| | Rugby | 11 | 174.68 | | | |
| | Weightlifting | 15 | 169.03 | | | |
| | Other | 49 | 169.53 | | | |
| Extraversion | Football | 126 | 179.75 | 12.27 | 10 | 0.26 |
| | Volleyball | 36 | 165.79 | | | |
| | Handball | 20 | 177.58 | | | |
| | Karate | 26 | 184.65 | | | |
| | Athletics | 9 | 188.83 | | | |
| | Boxing | 22 | 162.23 | | | |
| | Rugby | 11 | 162.18 | | | |
| | Weightlifting | 15 | 194.47 | | | |
| | Other | 49 | 137.28 | | | |
| | Agreeableness | Football | 126 | | | |
| Basketball | | 26 | 118.50 | | | |
| Volleyball | | 36 | 198.49 | | | |
| Handball | | 20 | 177.15 | | | |

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|--------------------|---------------|-----|--------|-------|----|------|
| | Karate | 26 | 165.23 | | | |
| | Athletics | 9 | 141.39 | | | |
| | Boxing | 22 | 205.00 | | | |
| | Rugby | 11 | 144.05 | | | |
| | Weightlifting | 15 | 190.23 | | | |
| | Other | 49 | 154.18 | | | |
| Neuroticism | Football | 126 | 172.03 | 11.18 | 10 | 0.34 |
| | Basketball | 26 | 129.48 | | | |
| | Volleyball | 36 | 171.21 | | | |
| | Handball | 20 | 190.70 | | | |
| | Karate | 26 | 151.02 | | | |
| | Athletics | 9 | 176.94 | | | |
| | Boxing | 22 | 206.55 | | | |
| | Rugby | 11 | 196.23 | | | |
| | Weightlifting | 15 | 158.47 | | | |
| | Other | 49 | 169.65 | | | |

*p<0,05

The data in Table1 were analyzed using the Kruskal-Wallis test to examine the differences between the five personality traits and sports disciplines. As a result of the test, a statistically significant difference was observed only in the **agreeableness** dimension among the personality traits. No significant difference was found in the other personality dimensions. The analysis results were as follows: Openness to experience ($p=0.50 > 0.05$), Conscientiousness ($p=0.12 > 0.05$), Extraversion ($p=0.26 > 0.05$), Agreeableness ($p=0.041 < 0.05$), and Neuroticism ($p=0.34 > 0.05$).

Table 2. Comparison of personality traits based on sport discipline preference

| Personality | Selection of Sport Discipline | N | Mean Rank | Std. Deviation | p |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|-----------|----------------|-----|
| Openness To Experience | KT | 269 | 168.48 | .83 | .44 |
| | BTY | 71 | 178.15 | | |
| Conscientiousness | KT | 269 | 168.37 | .91 | .42 |
| | BTY | 71 | 178.58 | | |
| Extraversion | KT | 269 | 177.38 | .84 | .01 |
| | BTY | 71 | 144.44 | | |
| Agreeableness | KT | 269 | 170.57 | .99 | .97 |
| | BTY | 71 | 170.22 | | |
| Neuroticism | KT | 269 | 169.56 | .92 | .72 |
| | BTY | 71 | 174.06 | | |

BTY: Those Directed by Others **KT:** Those Who Chose on Their Own

Table 2 was examined, and the Mann-Whitney test, which allows for the comparison of two independent samples, was applied to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between athletes who chose their sport based on their own preferences and those who chose it based on others' recommendations. According to the analysis results, a significant difference was found only in the **extraversion** dimension. No significant difference was found in the other personality dimensions. The findings are reported as follows: Openness to experience ($p=0.44 > 0.05$), Conscientiousness ($p=0.42 > 0.05$), Extraversion ($p=0.01 < 0.05$), Agreeableness ($p=0.97 > 0.05$), and Neuroticism ($p=0.72 > 0.05$).

Table 3. Comparison of personality traits according to branch level

| Personality | Sport Participation Level | N | Mean Rank | Std. Deviation | p |
|--------------------|---------------------------|-----|-----------|----------------|-----|
| Openness To | Amateur | 267 | 168.86 | .83 | .54 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|-----|--------|-----|-----|
| Experience | Professional | 73 | 176.49 | | |
| Conscientiousness | Amateur | 267 | 168.37 | .91 | .43 |
| | Professional | 73 | 178.30 | | |
| Extraversion | Amateur | 267 | 173.38 | .84 | .29 |
| | Professional | 73 | 159.97 | | |
| Agreeableness | Amateur | 267 | 171.41 | .99 | .74 |
| | Professional | 73 | 167.16 | | |
| Neuroticism | Amateur | 267 | 166.51 | .92 | .13 |
| | Professional | 73 | 185.10 | | |

Upon examining Table 3, the Mann-Whitney test was applied to compare the distributions of two independent samples in order to determine whether professional and amateur athletes showed a significant difference in terms of personality traits. Upon examining the test findings, no statistically significant difference was found in any personality dimension. The analysis results were obtained as follows: Openness to experience ($p=0.54 > 0.05$), Conscientiousness ($p=0.43 > 0.05$), Extraversion ($p=0.29 > 0.05$), Agreeableness ($p=0.74 > 0.05$), and Neuroticism ($p=0.13 > 0.05$).

Table 4. Comparison of personality traits according to nationality levels

| Personality | National Status | N | Mean Rank | Std. Deviation | p |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----|-----------|----------------|------|
| Openness To Experience | Yes | 26 | 170.75 | .83 | .98 |
| | No | 314 | 170.48 | | |
| Conscientiousness | Yes | 26 | 191.69 | .91 | .24 |
| | No | 314 | 168.75 | | |
| Extraversion | Yes | 26 | 150.71 | .84 | .27 |
| | No | 314 | 172.14 | | |
| Agreeableness | Yes | 26 | 187.81 | .99 | .34 |
| | No | 314 | 169.07 | | |
| Neuroticism | Yes | 26 | 207.23 | .92 | .04* |
| | No | 314 | 167.46 | | |

* $p < 0,05$

When examining Table 4, the Mann-Whitney test was applied to compare the distributions of two independent samples in order to determine whether national athletes and non-national athletes differ in terms of personality traits. Analysis findings reveal that a statistically significant difference exists only in the neuroticism dimension. No significant differences were found in other personality traits. The results obtained are as follows: Openness to experience ($p=0.98 > 0.05$), Conscientiousness ($p=0.24 > 0.05$), Extraversion ($p=0.27 > 0.05$), Agreeableness ($p=0.34 > 0.05$), Neuroticism ($p=0.04 < 0.05$).

Table 5. Comparison of personality traits according to training age

| Personality | Training Age | N | Mean Rank | Chi-Square Value | df | p |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-----|--------------|------------------|----|-----|
| Openness To Experience | 1-3 years | 102 | Value | 4.19 | 3 | .24 |
| | 4-6 years | 80 | 184.43 | | | |
| | 7-10 years | 80 | 154.04 | | | |
| | 10 + | 78 | 169.89 | | | |
| Conscientiousness | 1-3 years | 102 | 169.44 | .03 | 3 | .99 |
| | 4-6 years | 80 | 171.21 | | | |
| | 7-10 years | 80 | 169.90 | | | |
| | 10 + | 78 | 171.77 | | | |
| Extraversion | 1-3 years | 102 | 168.87 | 1.22 | 3 | .74 |
| | 4-6 years | 80 | 167.23 | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------|-----|--------|------|---|-----|
| | 7-10 years | 80 | 165.79 | | | |
| | 10 + | 78 | 180.83 | | | |
| Agreeableness | 1-3 years | 102 | 172.31 | 2.64 | 3 | .45 |
| | 4-6 years | 80 | 163.58 | | | |
| | 7-10 years | 80 | 161.79 | | | |
| | 10 + | 78 | 184.16 | | | |
| Neuroticism | 1-3 years | 102 | 172.33 | .14 | 3 | .98 |
| | 4-6 years | 80 | 167.14 | | | |
| | 7-10 years | 80 | 170.54 | | | |
| | 10 + | 78 | 171.50 | | | |

Upon examining Table 5, the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied to determine the differences between athletes' training age and personality traits. The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences in any of the personality traits. The findings are reported as follows: Openness to experience ($p=0.24 > 0.05$), Conscientiousness ($p=0.99 > 0.05$), Extraversion ($p=0.74 > 0.05$), Agreeableness ($p=0.42 > 0.05$), and Neuroticism ($p=0.98 > 0.05$).

Table 6. Comparison of personality traits according to gender

| Personality | Sex | N | Mean Rank | Std. Deviation | p |
|-------------------------------|-------|-----|-----------|----------------|-----|
| Openness To Experience | Woman | 127 | 175.95 | .83 | .40 |
| | Man | 203 | 167.09 | | |
| Conscientiousness | Woman | 127 | 172.79 | .91 | .72 |
| | Man | 203 | 169.06 | | |
| Extraversion | Woman | 127 | 164.44 | .84 | .35 |
| | Man | 203 | 174.30 | | |
| Agreeableness | Woman | 124 | 164.80 | .92 | .39 |
| | Man | 203 | 174.07 | | |
| Neuroticism | Woman | 127 | 174.28 | .48 | .56 |
| | Man | 203 | 168.13 | | |

Upon examining Table 6, the Mann-Whitney test was applied to determine whether there was a significant difference between the athletes' gender and personality traits. The analysis results show that there is no statistically significant difference in any personality dimension. The findings are as follows: Openness to experience ($p=0.40 > 0.05$), Conscientiousness ($p=0.72 > 0.05$), Extraversion ($p=0.35 > 0.05$), Agreeableness ($p=0.39 > 0.05$), and Neuroticism ($p=0.56 > 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

The research findings reveal that athletes' personality traits can vary depending on different variables. In particular, personality differences are found to be decisive in terms of branch preferences, and significant differences are observed in the trait of agreeableness (Table 1, $p=0.041$). This finding shows that athletes are strong in social relationships and team cohesion. Indeed, in a study conducted by Karavelioğlu and colleagues on futsal players, it was found that athletes selected for the national team had higher levels of conscientiousness, emphasizing that personality traits could be an important criterion in the selection of national athletes (Hadi & Karavelioğlu, 2023). In a similar vein, Soltysik et al. (2019) conducted a study on mountaineers, demonstrating that extraversion and emotional stability play a pivotal role in personality regulation. Furthermore, in an exemplary study involving 119 athletes aged between 19 and 34, Piepiora (2024) investigated the differences in personality traits among amateur, competitive, and professional athletes. Utilizing the NEO-FFI Personality Inventory

to assess personality profiles, the researcher found that football players exhibited higher levels of neuroticism and extraversion compared to athletes in other sports. Additionally, while neuroticism levels were higher in competitive athletes than in elite athletes, the correlations between personality traits and professionalism were not found to be statistically significant. These findings suggest that different sports exert a distinct influence on the personality development of athletes.

In the branch selection process, it was determined that athletes who made their own choices had a more extroverted personality structure (Table 2, $p=0.041$). This suggests that family influence and guidance may play an important role in personality development. Zorba's (2024) findings also show that family guidance has a decisive impact on the personality of athletes. Similarly, a study conducted on female soccer players reported that personality traits lead to significant differences in individuals' recreational preferences and that the conscientiousness dimension is particularly related to cultural activities (Bozyel & Karavelioğlu, 2021). In light of the obtained results, it can be argued that athletes who assume the responsibility for their own branch preferences and selections tend to be more extraverted individuals. Regarding the potential influence and expectations of family members on this inclination and encouragement, Zorba (2024) investigated the reasons and expectations behind parents directing their children toward sports. The analysis conducted to determine intergroup differences revealed that in the 'reasons for sports orientation' variable, parents who enrolled their children for a healthy lifestyle scored significantly higher than those aiming for social networking, prevention of bad habits, or professional athleticism. Conversely, in the 'expectations' sub-dimension, participants aiming for their children to become professional athletes had higher scores than those focused on social environment, healthy living, or habit prevention. These findings underscore the divergent motivational frameworks between parental reasons for participation and their long-term expectations

In comparison of amateur and professional athletes, professionals were found to be stronger in terms of emotional balance (Table 3) This is consistent with the findings of P. Piepiora and Naczynska (2023), who emphasized the neuroticism of elite athletes. Similarly, a study conducted on futsal players in Türkiye found that national-level athletes differed significantly from league players in terms of conscientiousness, demonstrating that the personality traits of professional athletes are integrated with performance (Hadi & Karavelioğlu, 2023). In a related study, Piepiora and Piepiora (2021) investigated the personality determinants of success in male sports within the framework of the Five-Factor Model of personality. The study population consisted of 1,260 male athletes aged 20–29, of whom 118 were professionals. The findings revealed a significant difference in the neuroticism levels of the participants. Specifically, it was demonstrated that professional athletes exhibited lower levels of neuroticism and, consequently, higher emotional stability compared to their counterparts.

The finding of significant differences in neuroticism characteristics when comparing national and non-national athletes (Table 4, $p=0.04$) shows that national athletes have an advantage in coping with stress. In a study by Karavelioğlu and colleagues (2023) examining personality factors in 30-meter sprint performance, it was also found that athletes with high levels of agreeableness were more responsive to suggestions, while those with high levels of conscientiousness were less responsive to suggestions (Karavelioğlu, Başkaya, & Aydın, 2023).

These findings reveal that personality traits in athletes are decisive not only in performance but also in processes such as coping with stress and openness to guidance. In a study yielding similar results, Piepiora (2021) examined the differences in personality traits between individual champion athletes and other champion athletes. The findings indicated that individual champions exhibited lower levels of neuroticism, coupled with higher levels of extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness compared to their peers. These results are consistent with the significant difference in emotional stability observed between national and non-national athletes in Table 3.4, suggesting that the two studies support one another.

Evaluations based on training age revealed that openness to experience was higher in the early years and decreased in later years (Table 5). This finding partially differs from the work of Piepiora and colleagues (2022). The difference is thought to stem from the sample including both amateur and professional athletes. Furthermore, a study conducted on sports science faculty students determined that narcissistic personality traits differ according to age and are associated with self-esteem (Karavelioğlu, Karavelioğlu, & Ersoy, 2024). This result shows that as experience increases in athletes, differences in personality traits may vary depending on age and developmental stages.

Although there was no significant difference in terms of the gender variable, mathematical data show that female athletes are superior to males in terms of Conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience (Table 6). This finding is consistent with similar results in the literature (Karavelioğlu et al., 2024; Marczak & Ginszt, 2017; Tatar, 2009). Furthermore, a study conducted on physical education teachers found that the Conscientiousness dimension is a dominant personality trait, which is closely related to professional behavior (Acar & Karavelioğlu, 2022). Therefore, female athletes exhibiting higher Conscientiousness is a trend also observed in the literature in examples of teaching and leadership.

In conclusion, the findings and literature comparisons reveal that personality traits directly affect athletes' individual performance, team cohesion, and professional development. Dimensions such as neuroticism, extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, in particular, stand out as critical factors shaping the path to success in athletes. Therefore, considering personality traits in studies conducted in the fields of sports science and sports psychology can be regarded as an important factor contributing to both the individual and social development of athletes. In this context, the findings reveal that personality traits are a critical variable that should be considered not only in individual development but also in athlete guidance and talent selection processes.

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