

Exploring the Gender Differences in Sport Homophobia among Turkish Sport Sciences Students

Türk Spor Bilimleri Öğrencilerinin Sporda Homofobiye İlişkin Görüşlerinin Cinsiyet Farklılıkları açısından İncelenmesi

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed to explore views towards homosexual athletes among 298 male and 173 female sport sciences in Turkey. Students' views were assessed in relation to their gender using a Homophobia in Sports Scale. The results showed that male and female students' views towards gay male athletes were significantly different, but that attitudes towards lesbian athletes were not. Also, no difference was found between male and female students' overall views on the level of acceptance of homosexual athletes in various sports. Male and female students' level of acceptance toward homosexual athletes was lowest for wrestling, boxing, weight lifting, and football; students' level of acceptance was highest in figure skating, gymnastics, and golf. Similarly, no difference was found between male and female students' use of positive and negative labels to describe a popular homosexual athlete.

Keywords: homosexuality, gay athlete, lesbian athlete, homophobia

ÖZ: Bu çalışma 298 erkek 173 kadın Türk Spor Bilimleri öğrencilerinin eşcinsel sporculara ilişkin görüşlerinin incelenmesini amaçlamıştır. Öğrencilerin Sporda Homofobi Ölçeği kullanılarak alınan görüşleri cinsiyet değişkenine göre incelenmiştir. Bulgular erkek ve kadın öğrencilerin görüşlerinin eşcinsel erkek sporcuya karşı farklılık gösterdiğini; eşcinsel kadın sporcuya karşı ise farklılık göstermediğini göstermiştir. Ayrıca, erkek ve kadın öğrencilerin farklı spor branşlarında eşcinsel sporcuların kabulüne yönelik görüşlerinde de bir fark bulunmamıştır. Erkek ve kadın öğrencilerin eşcinsel sporculara yönelik kabul düzeyinin düşük olduğu branşların güreş, boks, halter ve futbol; kabul düzeyinin yüksek olduğu branşların ise buz pateni, jimnastik ve golf olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Benzer şekilde, erkek ve kadın öğrencilerin popüler eşcinsel sporcuyu tanımlamak için kullandıkları sıfatlar arasında da fark ortaya çıkmamıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: eşcinsellik, gay sporcu, lezbiyen sporcu, homofobi

1. INTRODUCTION

Sexual orientation is an enduring emotional, romantic, sexual, or affectionate attraction toward others, and it exists along a continuum that ranges from exclusive heterosexuality-- sexual orientation to people of opposite sex-- to exclusive homosexuality--sexual orientation to people of same sex (American Psychological Association [APA] 2009). In addition to heterosexuality, male homosexuality (gay) and female homosexuality (lesbian), bisexuality is the sexual orientation to people of both the same and opposite sexes (APA 2009).

Homosexuality was considered a psychological disorder for many years; however, in 1973, as a result of scientific evidence and expert opinions, the APA removed homosexuality from its official list of mental disorders. Since that time, the APA and various organizations have actively attempted to persuade society that homosexuality is normal. Despite these efforts, homosexuality has remained conceptualized as a mental disorder and deviant behavior by many people in society; homosexuals still experience prejudice, discrimination and violence against them (APA 2009). This irrational fear, hatred, or prejudice against homosexuals is called "homophobia" (Alexander 1997; Hyde, DeLamater, and Byers 2006). Additionally, homosexuality has been perceived as a threat to religious beliefs (e.g., against God's will), to the natural order (e.g., homosexuals cannot reproduce), to masculinity, and to standard family values (Plummer 1992). For many years, homosexual intercourse was considered a sexual crime (Menken 2006). In a

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world survey of laws that prohibit same sex activity between consenting adults performed by the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA), at least 86 member states of the United Nations still criminalize consensual same sex acts among adults, and seven have legal provisions with the death penalty as punishment (Ottosson 2009).

Due to traditional ideas on sexuality, and conservative social and family structures, studies in Turkey also show negative attitudes toward homosexuals and homosexuality (Oksal 2008). Many Turkish people perceive homosexuality as an unacceptable and abnormal sexual behavior with regard to the cultural norm (Sakallı and Uğurlu 2001). University-based studies have demonstrated that students have negative attitudes regarding homosexuality (Sakallı 2002; Sakallı and Uğurlu 2001). Additionally, Turkish university students perceived that the causes of homosexuality were “disorder, problems, modeling or sensation seeking, and preference” (Çırakoğlu 2006).

Homophobic attitudes and behaviors are commonplace and are seen in social life, school life, family life, and the workplace (APA 2009). Similarly, people in the world of sports both heterosexual and homosexual, face discrimination and prejudice (Harris 2005). Homophobic attitudes and behaviors in sports are based on the traditional description of gender and sexuality as contrast concepts: “masculinity X femininity”, and “heterosexuality X homosexuality” (Davison and Frank 2006; Kane 2007). Messner (2007) also proposed that heterosexuality in sports was maintained with the equation of “athleticism = masculinity = heterosexuality”.

Thus, heterosexuality was reinforced and “others” including homosexuals, females, and physically disabled people, were excluded from sports (Davison and Frank 2006). Traditionally, the stereotypical female is supposed to deal with domestic duties and childcare. High levels of female physical ability and performance mismatched the stereotypical feminine heterosexual identity and such individuals were labeled as “lesbians” (Clarke 2003; Peper 1994). Similarly, males who did not fit the traditional stereotypical masculine heterosexual identity experienced homophobic attitudes and behaviors (Clarke 2003). These “feminine” and “masculine” stereotypes were accepted as “normal”, “necessary”, and “unquestioned” characteristics for males and females (Clarke 2002).

In such a strict masculine and heterosexist sporting environment, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual and also heterosexual male and female athletes continuously attempted to prove that they were “normal” individuals (Harris 2007). Females, for example, chose not to participate in athletics in order not to be labeled a “lesbian”; additionally, they tried to prove they were not lesbians by wearing make-up and feminine clothes (CAAWS 2006; Demers 2006). In some instances, even coaches forced athletes to wear feminine clothing to demonstrate to society that the team met societal (i.e., heterosexual) norms. Many homosexual athletes preferred to stay silent throughout their career to avoid the social problems related to their sexual orientation. The existence of homosexuality in the world of sport was ignored and denied. Similarly, in men’s sports, homosexuality is not welcomed. Teammates and coaches rejected male athletes who did not match the characteristics of masculinity and heterosexuality (Anderson 2002; CAWWS 2006). For many years, homophobia in sports has had apparent negative effects on all people, regardless of sexual orientation (Messner 2007).

Turkish sports culture, especially its soccer culture, is extremely homophobic. A famous ballet dancer started a well-known argument: He claimed that there were more gay soccer players than gay ballet dancers (Walther 2006). He also claimed that he had friends who were gay soccer players. Many people from the soccer world objected to his claims and invited him to declare the names of the gay soccer players. They also blamed him for bringing all soccer players under suspicion. One of the most famous soccer players (a record scorer) in Turkish soccer history participated in this argument by rejecting the existence of homosexuals in soccer: “In all these years, I have never met a single gay player. And if I met one, I would instantly recognize him”

(Walther 2006). This argument was brought to a conclusion by the ballet dancer who said, “The gay soccer players that I know are in another country”. More recently, a report came out about a gay soccer referee who documented his homosexuality with a medical report and was excluded from compulsory military service (Birch 2009). He complained that according to regulations, a person who is exempted from military service for health reasons is unqualified to be a referee. Although being gay has no effect on being a soccer referee, this regulation negatively affected his career and forced him to leave his job. These examples highlight the widespread homophobic discrimination in the Turkish soccer world.

There are several scientific studies on homosexuality and homophobia; however, studies specifically on homophobia in sports are limited in Turkey. Saraç and Ebem (2007) have explored Turkish university student attitudes toward homosexual athletes. Results demonstrated that neither male nor female university students would change their opinion if a male and female athlete revealed that he or she was homosexual. However, 30% of students stated that they would have negative opinions toward homosexual athletes. Students also stated that other sports fans would have unfavorable opinions about homosexual athletes. Additionally, students' acceptance level toward homosexual athletes was lowest for soccer, wrestling, boxing, and weight lifting athletes.

As previously mentioned, studies report that homophobia is present in the world, including Turkey. Additionally, homophobia is present in sports due to sports' association with traditional heterosexual masculinity. Sport is accepted as the arena where boys learn to be real men. It is expected that people who have an athletic background will have different attitudes toward homosexual athletes compared with people without an athletic background. In addition, it is crucial and necessary for future physical education teachers, sport trainers and sport managers to provide safe, inclusive and equal sport environment for diverse populations including individuals with different sexual orientations. Examination of the existing prejudice toward homosexual individuals among sports sciences students is essential to provide such environment. The findings from the current study will provide significant insights into the attitudes of sports sciences students toward lesbian and gay athletes. Furthermore, limited research has been conducted examining the homophobia especially in Turkey. Therefore, this study explored and compared male and female Turkish sport sciences students' opinions of homosexual athletes.

Previous studies have demonstrated that homophobia still exists in different areas including physical education and sports and it affects both homosexual and heterosexual physical education teachers and students, athletes, coaches, teammates, sport managers etc. negatively (Demers 2006; Morrow and Gill 2003). There is a need to prevent such threatening sporting environment for sexually diverse populations and to create a welcoming and supportive environment for them and also for everybody. One of the strategies to prevent and to respond homophobic behaviors in physical education and sport setting is increasing the knowledge about homosexuality and improving positive attitudes towards homosexual individuals. In order to make a sport as a fair place for everyone, physical education teachers, coaches, and sport managers should remove all the barriers in physical education and sport settings. There is a role in educating these physical education and sport professionals in various seminars and courses to make their physical education classes, training sessions and sport institutions accessible to everyone.

Exploratory assessment of homophobic attitudes of future physical education teachers and sport professionals is important to understand, since these homophobic attitudes were reflected in an individual's work experiences in schools, clubs, etc. The information gathered for the current study will help to make any possible changes and adjustments necessary in sport sciences curriculum. There is a lack of investigation examining homophobic attitudes of future sport sciences professionals. For this reason, this study will fill the gap in the literature. Therefore, this

study explored and compared male and female sport sciences majors' opinions of homosexual athletes.

2. METHOD

2.1. Participants

Four hundred seventy-one undergraduate students from the Physical Education and Sport College of Çukurova University participated in the study. The sample consisted of 298 male ($M_{age} = 22.97$, $SD_{age} = 2.07$) and 173 female ($M_{age} = 22.06$, $SD_{age} = 1.88$) students aged 18 to 29 ($M_{age} = 22.64$, $SD_{age} = 2.05$). Study participants represented three college departments: Teacher Education ($N_{male} = 99$, $N_{female} = 71$), Sport Management ($N_{male} = 68$, $N_{female} = 45$), and Coaching Education ($N_{male} = 131$, $N_{female} = 57$). Table 1 displays the additional demographics.

Table 1: Demographic Information on Participants

Grade			Gender		Total (N)
			Male (N)	Female (N)	
Grade 1	Departments	Teacher Education	23	15	38
		Coaching Education	34	22	56
		Sport Management	22	9	31
	Total	79	46	125	
Grade 2	Departments	Teacher Education	24	23	47
		Coaching Education	34	14	48
		Sport Management	21	16	37
	Total	79	53	132	
Grade 3	Departments	Teacher Education	32	22	54
		Coaching Education	23	14	37
		Sport Management	11	14	25
	Total	66	50	116	
Grade 4	Departments	Teacher Education	20	11	31
		Coaching Education	40	7	47
		Sport Management	14	6	20
	Total	74	24	98	

2.2. Materials and Procedure

Using a survey research design, we targeted students at the Physical Education and Sports College of Çukurova University as participants during the spring semester of the 2008-2009 academic years. The entire population of the college consisted of 428 male and 241 female students; however, we were only able to obtain data from 298 male and 173 female students. We administered the Homophobia in Sports Scale to students in 12 classes during a normal class period. Participation was on a volunteer basis. The Mann-Whitney U test, chi-square analysis and frequency ranking were used to analyze the data.

The Turkish version of the Homophobia in Sport Scale evaluated students' views on homosexual athletes and homosexuality in sports. The scale was originally developed and used by the Witeck-Combs Communications/Harris Interactive (Witeck-Combs) research companies as a nationwide online survey in 2002 (Witeck-Combs 2002). The scale consisted of three parts. The first part explores participants' views after it is revealed that their favorite male and female athlete is homosexual. The first part of the scale also included one additional question assessing participants' perception of other sports fans' views toward athletes' sexual orientation. The second part assessed students' views on the level of acceptance toward athletes in various sports

who reveal their sexual orientation. These items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale (ranging from “not accepting at all” to “completely accepting”). The third part asked participants to identify positive and negative labels used to describe a popular male and female athlete if he or she revealed that he or she was homosexual. The Turkish version of the original scale was revised and validated with a sample of 61 male ($M_{age} = 22.52$, $SD = 1.38$) and 57 female ($M_{age} = 22.36$, $SD = 1.35$) university students (Saraç 2006). The alpha coefficient value for the Turkish version of the scale was 0.74. The scale was also used to measure Turkish university students’ (316 male, 251 female) views on homosexual athletes (Saraç and Ebeş 2007). In the current study, the test-retest reliability of the survey instrument was examined with 72 students by performing the survey at two-week time intervals. Reliability was analyzed using Spearman’s rho non-parametric correlation coefficient through paired correlations of individual items. Spearman’s rho demonstrated that the reliability scores of Part 1 were between 0.90 and 0.97; Part 2 was between 0.64 and 0.89; and Part 3 was between 0.64 and 0.92. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient in the present study is 0.75. Research Ethics Committee report was not obtained because of subject and study characteristics. First of all, subjects were aged 18 year or older and participated in the study voluntarily. In addition, privacy and confidentiality of the subjects were guaranteed by collecting data anonymously. Also, the study was **recognized as harmless**.

3. FINDINGS

The Mann-Whitney U test compared male and female students’ responses on the first part of the scale. The results of the analysis showed that male and female students’ views toward a favorite male athlete were significantly different from each other ($z = -3.21$, $p < .05$, $M_{male} = 249.95$, $M_{females} = 211.97$).

The frequency of responses revealed that, although most of the participants ($N = 253$) thought that they would not change their opinion if a male athlete announced his was gay, 183 of them stated that they would have a much less or somewhat less favorable opinion of him (Table 2).

Table 2: Frequency of Responses to the Item Related With Students’ Views toward a Favorite Male Athlete If He Revealed That He Was Gay

Responses	Gender		Total (N)
	Male (N)	Female (N)	
I would have a somewhat more favorable opinion of him	7	9	16
I would have a much more favorable opinion of him	7	12	19
It would not change my opinion of him	154	99	253
I would have a much less favorable opinion of him	80	31	111
I would have a somewhat less favorable opinion of him	50	22	72
Total	298	173	471

*Mann-Whitney U test is significant, $p < .05$

Male and female students’ views toward a favorite female athlete who revealed that she is a lesbian were not different from each other ($z = -.01$, $p > .05$, $M_{male} = 236.02$, $M_{female} = 235.97$; see Table 3).

Similar to the responses for the gay athlete, 260 of the total 471 participants stated that they would not change their opinion of a lesbian athlete, though 175 of them stated that they would have a much less or somewhat less favorable opinion of her (Table 3).

Table 3: Frequency of Responses to the Item Related With Students' Views toward a Favorite Female Athlete If He Revealed That He Was Lesbian

Responses	Gender		Total (N)
	Male (N)	Female (N)	
I would have a somewhat more favorable opinion of her	10	5	15
I would have a much more favorable opinion of her	8	13	21
It would not change my opinion of her	172	88	260
I would have a much less favorable opinion of her	68	41	109
I would have a somewhat less favorable opinion of her	40	26	66
Total	298	173	471

*Mann-Whitney U test is not significant, $p > .05$

Results of the analysis also demonstrated a significant difference between male and female students' perceptions of other sports fans' views toward an athlete's sexual orientation ($z = -2.52$, $p < .05$). Male students had higher average rank ($M = 246.83$) than female students ($M = 217.35$; see Table 4). The overall frequency of responses demonstrated that according to male and female students, other sports fans would have negative opinions toward homosexual athletes.

Table 4: Frequency of Responses to the Item Related with Students' Perceptions of Other Sports Fans toward an Athlete's Sexual Orientation

Responses	Gender		Total (N)
	Male (N)	Female (N)	
More favorable opinion	2	4	6
Much more favorable opinion	7	5	12
No difference in opinion	69	45	114
Much less favorable opinion	160	103	263
Less favorable opinion	60	16	76
Total	298	173	471

*Mann-Whitney U test is significant, $p < .05$

Applying the Mann-Whitney U test to the second part of the scale demonstrated no significant differences between male and female students' views on the level of acceptance

towards athletes who reveal their homosexuality in various sports. Types of sports included in the scale were soccer ($z = -.65$), ice hockey ($z = -.84$), auto racing ($z = -.65$), rugby ($z = -1.18$), basketball ($z = -.88$), baseball ($z = -1.77$), golf ($z = -.96$), track and field ($z = -.38$), swimming ($z = -.82$), diving ($z = -.22$), gymnastics ($z = -.91$), tennis ($z = -.17$), figure skating ($z = -.03$), wrestling ($z = -.36$), boxing ($z = -.22$), and weight lifting ($z = -.30$; see Table 5).

Additionally, frequencies demonstrated that students' level of acceptance toward homosexual athletes were the lowest for wrestling ($N = 357$), boxing ($N = 353$), weight lifting ($N = 345$) and soccer ($N = 323$); and the highest for figure skating ($N = 104$) and gymnastics ($N = 90$).

Table 5: Frequency of Responses to Items Related With Students' Views on Level of Acceptance towards Athletes in Various Sports Who Reveal Their Sexual Orientation

	Not Accepting At All		Somewhat Accepting		Accepting		Completely Accepting	
	Male (N)	Female (N)	Male (N)	Female (N)	Male (N)	Female (N)	Male (N)	Female (N)
Football	201	122	57	29	28	16	12	6
Ice Hockey	109	50	95	69	79	49	15	5
Auto Racing	94	62	101	52	83	49	20	10
Rugby	111	57	94	48	71	62	22	6
Basketball	139	69	85	62	59	35	15	7
Baseball	110	48	96	60	65	53	27	12
Golf	65	34	90	60	91	66	52	13
Track and Field	97	53	99	70	81	38	21	12
Swimming	77	46	91	57	100	60	30	10
Diving	72	42	96	51	89	67	41	13
Gymnastics	64	35	74	51	96	61	64	26
Tennis	76	36	93	64	92	63	37	10
Figure Skating	61	30	72	47	96	61	69	35
Wrestling	228	129	35	25	23	13	12	6
Boxing	223	130	35	25	28	11	12	7
Weight Lifting	217	128	40	23	28	15	13	7

*Mann-Whitney U test is not significant, $p > .05$

A chi-square analysis was conducted on the third part of the scale to compare male and female students' responses on the positive and negative labels that would describe a popular male or female athlete if he or she revealed that they were homosexual. Results of the analysis demonstrated that male and female students did not differ in their preference of negative and positive labels to describe homosexual male and female athlete.

The most frequently selected positive labels by male and female students for a gay athlete included honest (N = 303), courageous (N = 286), and being himself (N = 225). Additionally, 240 students stated that they did not care and did not need to know about the sexual orientation of a male athlete. Frequently selected negative labels by male and female students for gay athletes included misguided/confused (N = 181), publicity seeking (N = 160), sick/mentally unstable (N = 132), perverted (N = 128), and sad (N = 114; Table 6).

Similar results were derived for lesbian athletes. The most frequently selected positive labels by male and female students for lesbian athletes included honest (N = 244), courageous (N = 233), and being herself (N = 191). One hundred ninety-one students stated that they did not care and did not need to know about the sexual orientation of a female athlete. The most frequently selected negative labels by male and female students for a lesbian athlete included: misguided/confused (N = 164), publicity seeking (N = 128), sad (N = 117), and sick/mentally unstable (N = 115; Table 6).

Table 6: Frequency of Responses to Items Related With Students' Preferred Labels to Describe A Popular Male and Female Athlete If He/She Revealed That He/She Was Gay/Lesbian

	Labels for Gay Athletes			Labels for Lesbian Athletes		
	Male (N)	Female (N)	Total (N)	Male (N)	Female (N)	Total (N)
Positive labels						
Honest	194	109	303	140	104	244
Courageous	178	108	286	128	105	233
Heroic	102	63	165	77	51	128
Fair-minded	89	56	145	71	59	130
Being Himself	138	87	225	107	84	191
None/don't care/don't need to know	158	82	240	120	76	196
Negative labels	Male (N)	Female (N)	Total (N)	Male (N)	Female (N)	Total (N)
Publicity-seeking	103	57	160	86	42	128
Militant	60	40	100	59	26	85
Perverted	79	49	128	56	35	91
Sad	68	46	114	64	53	117
Self-centered	47	24	71	38	20	58
Disrespectful	47	28	75	33	11	44
Sinful/amoral/other negative religious comment	57	32	89	45	33	78
Misguided/confused	110	71	181	98	66	164
Stupid	59	30	89	51	15	66
Sick/mentally unstable	89	43	132	79	36	115

*chi-square test is not significant, p>.05

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study investigated attitudes toward homosexual athletes in male and female sport sciences students. In the first analysis, we discovered a significant difference between male and female students' attitudes toward gay male athletes: Compared to male students, fewer females had a less favorable opinion of gay athletes. These findings support the results of previous studies, which reveal that males are more prejudiced towards homosexuals than females (Arnold, Voracek, Musalek, and Springer-Kremser 2004; Gelbal and Duyan 2006; Sakallı 2002; Sakallı and Uğurlu 2001). The responses also demonstrated that more than half of the sample would not be influenced by the sexual orientation of a gay athlete and would not change their opinion of him; however, most of the other students stated that they would have a negative opinion of the athlete. These findings support previous nationwide online surveys, including studies conducted on 2,191 American adults (Witeck-Combs 2002) and a study conducted on 567 Turkish university students (Saraç and Ebem 2007).

Furthermore, no differences were found between male and female students' attitudes for the female athlete who revealed that she was a lesbian. More than half of the students stated that they would not change their opinion of her; however, students who stated that they would have negative opinion of her were a large minority. These results also supported the study conducted in the US in a nationwide online survey (Witeck-Combs 2002) and the study on Turkish university students (Saraç and Ebem 2007).

In general, both male and female students stated that other sports fans would have a negative opinion of a homosexual athlete. Similar results were gathered in a nationwide online survey in the US; however, researchers believed that the American findings were indicative of participants hiding their actual opinions about homosexual athletes to display themselves as more positive and tolerant toward homosexual athletes than the general public (Witeck-Combs 2002). Likewise, the results derived from the current study are likely due to students' awareness of societal homophobic prejudice. Similar results were found in Turkey (Saraç and Ebem 2007).

Male and female students agreed that the sports least likely to accept homosexual athletes were wrestling, boxing, weight lifting and soccer, whereas figure skating and gymnastics were the most likely to accept homosexuals. These findings support athletic gender roles; some sports are viewed as masculine, such as soccer, wrestling and boxing, and some are feminine, such as gymnastics and figure skating (Mennesson and Clement 2003; Walther 2006). According to this definition, male homosexual athletes would be more accepted in female-dominated sports; furthermore, the current study found that homosexuality in sports is interpreted in different ways for different sports (Walther 2006). A previous study on a Turkish sample demonstrated that wrestling, soccer, boxing and weightlifting were too conservative to accept homosexual athletes (Saraç and Ebem 2007).

The present study showed that the majority of male and female students positively labeled gay and lesbian athletes as "honest", "courageous", and "being himself" or "being herself". Additionally, most students stated that they did not care about and did not need to know about the sexual orientation of the athletes. Nevertheless, many male and female students negatively labeled gay and lesbian athletes as "misguided/confused", "publicity seeking", "sick/mentally unstable", and "sad". Negative labels given by both male and female students were likely to reflect the fact that these students harbored negative attitudes toward homosexual athletes. These data support previous investigations that revealed participants' perceptions of the causes of homosexuality include "disorder, problems, modeling or sensation-seeking, preference" (Çırakoğlu 2006). Although homosexuality was removed from APA's official list of mental disorders 37 years ago, many laypeople still accept homosexuality as a disorder and homosexuals as "sick". Another study on Turkish university students demonstrated similar results with the use of positive and negative labels. Furthermore, compared to female university students, male

students were found to use the words “perverted” and “stupid” to describe homosexual athletes (Saraç and Ebem 2007). Similarly, American adults used the words “publicity seeking”, “sad” and “perverted” to describe homosexual athlete (Witeck-Combs 2002).

There are some limitations to this research study. The subjects of the study are limited to the undergraduate students from a single university and department (Physical Education and Sports College) and are not representative of the population of Turkey. Data from different higher education institutions and student characteristics may have yielded to different results. Different research methods (qualitative or mixed methods) may be used to examine and understand homophobic attitudes in the world of physical education and sport.

We hypothesized that students of sports sciences area would have positive attitudes towards homosexual athletes because most of the physical education students in the study were athletes of various sports, including basketball, soccer, volleyball, or swimming. Furthermore, it was expected that student athletes would be more sensitive and more capable in discriminating the positive and negative effects of sexual orientation on sports compared to non-athletes. Overall, the results suggested that although most of the students’ statements demonstrated no negative views toward homosexual athletes, negative feelings and attitudes may underlie their affirmation that there is little acceptance of homosexual athletes in different sports and in their selection of negative labels to describe gay and lesbian athletes.

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Uzun Özet

Eşcinsel bireylere karşı tutum uzun yıllar ulusal ve uluslararası araştırmalara konu olmuştur. Yapılan araştırmaların büyük bir çoğunluğu heteroseksüel bireylerin eşcinsellere karşı olumsuz tutuma sahip olduklarını ortaya koymuştur. Ancak cinsiyet eşcinsellere karşı tutumu etkileyen bir faktör olarak ortaya çıkmış ve erkeklerin kadınlara oranla daha fazla olumsuz tutuma sahip oldukları da belirlenmiştir. Buna ek olarak, erkeklerin kadınlara oranla özellikle erkek eşcinsellere (gey) karşı daha fazla olumsuz tutuma sahip oldukları ortaya konmuştur. Bununla birlikte, cinsiyet yanında, eşcinsellere karşı olumsuz tutumu etkileyen yaş, eğitim, meslek gibi farklı etkenler olduğu da vurgulanmıştır.

Spor alanında ise özellikle erkek eşcinsellerin, sporun doğasında bulunan ve genellikle erkeklerle atfedilen güç göstergelerine sahip olmadıkları gibi bir kalıpyargıya istinaden kabul görmedikleri yapılan araştırmalarla ortaya konmuştur. Bunun tersine, kadın eşcinsel sporcuların da erkeklerle has özellikleri

geliştirdikleri ve taşıdıkları, kadınlara has özellikleri de kaybettikleri gibi bir kalıpyargıdan yola çıkarak erkek eşcinsellere oranla daha az da olsa yine kabul görmedikleri belirlenmiştir.

Eşcinsellere karşı tutumun belirlenmesine yönelik çalışmalar farklı örneklemeler üzerinde yapılmıştır. Ancak spor alanında yapılan çalışmalar oldukça kısıtlı, ülkemizde ise yok denecek kadar azdır. Bu çalışmanın amacı da özellikle Türkiye’de spor ile ilgilenen bireylerin eşcinsel sporculara karşı görüşlerinin belirlenmesidir. Bu amaçla Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Yüksekokulu’nun üç farklı bölümünde (Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Öğretmenliği, Spor Yöneticiliği, Antrenörlük) öğrenim gören genç kadın ve erkek öğrencilerin, eşcinsel sporculara karşı görüşleri incelenmiştir.

Çalışmaya yaşları 18 ve 29 arasında değişen 173 genç kadın-298 erkek öğrenci katılmıştır. Bu öğrencilerin 170’i beden eğitimi öğretmenliği, 113’ü spor yöneticiliği, 188’i de çeşitli spor branşlarına yönelik antrenörlük bölümlerinde, 2008-2009 eğitim öğretim yılı bahar yarısında öğrenim görmektedir. Çalışmada veri toplamak amacı ile Sporda Homofobi Skalası’nın Türkçe versiyonu kullanılmıştır.

Araştırma bulguları, erkek ve kadın öğrencilerin eşcinsel olduğunu açıklayan popüler bir erkek sporcuya karşı görüşlerinin, bu açıklamadan sonra değişip değişmeyeceğine yönelik görüşleri arasında fark olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Öğrencilerin yarısından fazlası bu açıklama karşısında sporcuya karşı görüşlerinin değişmeyeceğini belirtmelerine karşın, yine büyük bir bölümü bu sporcu hakkında olumsuz görüşe sahip olacaklarını belirtmişlerdir. Eşcinsel olduğunu açıklayan popüler bir kadın sporcuya karşı erkek ve kadın öğrencilerin görüşlerinde bir fark bulunmamıştır. Yine öğrencilerin yarısından fazlası görüşlerinin değişmeyeceğini belirtirken, öğrencilerin üçte birinden daha fazla bir bölümü de görüşlerinin olumsuz yönde değişeceğini belirtmişlerdir. Erkek ve kadın öğrencilere, eşcinsel olduğunu açıklayan popüler bir sporcuya karşı diğer spor taraftarlarının görüşlerinde bir değişiklik olup olmayacağına ilişkin fikirleri sorulmuş ve iki cinsiyet arasında fark bulunmuştur. Erkek ve kadın öğrencilerin büyük bir bölümü, diğer spor taraftarlarının bu sporcuya karşı görüşlerinin olumsuz yönde değişeceğini savunmuşlardır.

Farklı branşlardan (futbol, buz hokeyi, otomobil yarışı, rugby, basketbol, beyzbol, golf, atletizm, yüzme, dalma, cimnastik, tenis, buz pateni, güreş, boks ve halter) sporcuların eşcinsel kimliğinin kabul edilebilirliği konusunda, erkek ve kadın öğrencilerin görüşleri arasında bir fark bulunmamıştır. Öğrenciler, eşcinsel sporcuların kabul görmeyeceği branşları sırası ile güreş, boks, halter ve futbol olarak; kabul görebileceği branşları ise buz pateni ve cimnastik olarak belirtmişlerdir.

Erkek ve kadın üniversite öğrencilerinin, eşcinsel kimliğini açıklayan bir sporcu için kullanabilecekleri olumlu ve olumsuz sıfatlar açısından fark göstermedikleri bulunmuştur. Erkek ve kadın öğrencilerin eşcinsel kimliğini açıklayan bir sporcu için kullanmayı tercih ettikleri olumlu sıfatların dürüst, cesaretli ve kendisi olan; olumsuz sıfatların ise yanlış yönlendirilmiş, reklam yapan, hasta/dengesiz, sapık ve mutsuz olduğu belirlenmiştir. Eşcinsel kimliğini açıklayan kadın sporcular için de dürüst, cesaretli, ve kendisi olan sıfatlarının; yanlış yönlendirilmiş, reklam yapan, mutsuz ve hasta/dengesiz şeklindeki olumsuz sıfatların tercih edildiği ortaya konmuştur.

Çalışma bulguları erkek beden eğitimi ve spor bölümü öğrencilerinin, kadın öğrencilere oranla, eşcinsel kimliğini açıklayan popüler erkek sporculara karşı düşüncelerinin olumsuz yönde değişeceğini ortaya koymuştur. Bu bulgular, ulusal ve uluslararası çalışmaların, erkek heteroseksüel bireylerin eşcinsel bireylere karşı olumsuz tutuma sahip olduklarına yönelik sonuçları ile örtüşmektedir. Yine ilgili literatüre paralel olarak katılımcıların kadın eşcinsel sporcuya karşı görüşlerinde bir fark bulunmamıştır. Erkek ve kadın öğrenciler, kendi görüşlerinde bir fark olmayacağını belirtmelerine karşın, diğer spor taraftarlarının görüşlerinin olumsuz yönde değişeceğini vurgulamışlardır. Bu da toplumda var olan eşcinsellere karşı olumsuz tutumdan haberdar olduklarının bir göstergesi olarak kabul edilebilir. Yine literatüre benzer olarak, erkek cinsiyet özelliklerinin daha fazla vurgulanabildiği ve sergilenebildiği güreş, boks, halter gibi bazı spor branşlarında eşcinsel sporcuların kabul edilmesinin oldukça zor olduğu ortaya konmuştur. Buna karşın cimnastik ve buz pateni sporlarında eşcinsel sporcuların daha kabul edilebilir olduğu vurgulanmıştır. Eşcinsel kimliğini açıklayan popüler bir sporcu için kullanılmak üzere seçilen dürüst, cesaretli gibi sıfatların, toplumda eşcinsel kimliğinin çoğunlukla gizlendiği ve açıklanmasının da beraberinde getireceği olumsuz tutum ve davranışlar göz önünde bulundurulduğunda cesaret gerektirdiği gerçeğinden yola çıkılarak tercih edildiği düşünülmektedir.

Geleceğin beden eğitimi ve spor öğretmen adaylarının eşcinsel sporcuları, 1973 yılında Amerika Psikoloji Derneği’nin eşcinselliği hastalıklar listesinden çıkarmasına, o zamandan günümüze kadar eşcinselliğin bir hastalık olmadığını pek çok bilimsel platformda vurgulayarak toplumda var olan

kalıpyargıları ortadan kaldırma girişimlerine rağmen, hasta ya da sapık gibi sıfatlarla eşleştirmeleri, onların eşcinsellik konusundaki bilgi eksikliklerini ve yanlış bilgilere sahip olduklarını ortaya koymuştur.

Eğitim-öğretim kapsamında, öğrencilerin kendilerini güvende hissetmelerini sağlayacak bir ortam yaratmakla yükümlü öğretmenlerin bu tür kalıpyargılarının olması, ileride karşılaşacakları olası eşcinsel sporcu ya da öğrencilere karşı olumsuz tutum ve davranış sergilemelerine yol açabilecektir. Bu yüzden araştırma bulgularından yola çıkılarak yükseköğretim programlarına eşcinsellik ile ilgili doğru bilgilerin sağlanacağı dersler konulması, ya da çeşitli seminerler düzenlenmesi önerilmektedir.

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