

THE EFFECT OF THE COACH-ATHLETE RELATIONSHIP ON THE ATHLETES' LEVEL OF ANGER

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A Çalışma Deseni (Study Design)

B Verilerin Toplanması (Data Collection)

C Veri Analizi (Statistical Analysis)

D Makalenin Hazırlanması (Manuscript Preparation)

E Maddi İmkanların Sağlanması (Funds Collection)



Abstract: This study aimed at searching the effect of the coach-athlete relationship on the athletes' level of aggression. As the sample of the study, 420 athletes voluntarily participated in the survey. Two hundred forty-three of the participants were taekwondo athletes (107 female & 136 male), 177 were protected football player. In the study to obtain data in addition to demographic information form, the "Coach-Athlete Relationship Inventory Athlete Form" and "Multi-Dimensional Aggression Scale" were used. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS 20 package program. The multi-regression analysis used to determine the correlation between the coach-athlete relationship and the aggression level of the participants. According to analyze results, there was a negative and moderate correlation between the level of the coach-athlete relationship and the aggression, however; there was a positive and moderate correlation between the calmness level of the athletes. Therefore, we can say that if the coach-athlete relationship increases, the aggression level decreases. Moreover, the coach-athlete relationship is determined to be a meaningful indicator of athletes' aggression levels.

Key Words: Coach, Athlete, Relationship, Anger

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1. INTRODUCTION

Athletes who deal with tense and competitive branches of sports may face various forcing factors from time to time. As the word competitive implies, the athlete has to strive with one or more elements. One of these mentioned factors is emotion, anger. The athletes have to cope with the situations that psychologically affect them if they want to display their utmost performance. In other words, we can say that one of the essential factors for an athlete to achieve the top performance is to take anger under control.

One of the causes of sportive failure is the athletes' psychological condition. Because this situation is not evaluated enough, it has recently become the agenda of researchers (Erdoğan, Zekioğlu, Dorak, 2014) and recent studies are continually being done to develop the performance and increase the success of the athletes. One of these psychological factors, and maybe the most important one, is the level of anger. This emotion can cause the athlete to win or lose the game or even be disqualified. Many types of research in the common area, aggressive behaviors are performed in an experimental environment. If we evaluate this situation in terms of preliminary point of view, the setting for doing sports is a natural environment for these kinds of researches. Obstruction and anger, which are considered to be the reasons for aggression, can always be encountered during competition. Sportive settings are convenient places where aggressive behaviors can be modeled and imitated. Because of that, most of the adverse events happen in these play-fields. (Kiper, 1984).

Anger is an emotion which can be triggered by many reasons, whereas, it is usually felt by the individual when the individual feels a threat, injustice, or obstruction. If we talk about anger in sports, we can say it particularly emerges from the obstruction of the athlete who is extremely focused on his/her target. Besides, if the athlete thinks he/she will not achieve his/her goal, it probably ends with anger or aggression (Konter, 2003). Anger immediately causes the body to increase heart rate, breath in and out fast, contract muscles, and think negatively. As a result of this, a sense of reasoning and decision-making may be lost for the short term. Anger affects the athlete adversely, and it may cause the athlete's performance to decrease (Erdem, 2005).

When anger is over the average level, it may turn into aggressive behaviors. Researchers define this situation as the most destructive kind of emotional experience. Besides, Uncontrolled anger can have extremely adverse outcomes (Romas and Sharma, 2000, cited in Soykan, 2003). Aggressive behaviors of an athlete lead him/her to failure being distracted from the real target or get him to be disqualified. For that matter, researchers define aggression as the athletes' verbal, physical, and human behaviors that are unruly to the pertaining sports branch (İkizler and Karagözoğlu 1997, p.81).

Coach is one of the essential aids for the athlete not only during workout sessions but also during the competition. Coach has to prepare the athlete mentally

and physically for each new challenge. Therefore, coaches who are considered to be the nucleon of sports also have many roles such as teacher, leader, friend, and mentor. Coaches, who are responsible for the athletes' education, training, and activation, are the critical people for the improvement of sports (Sevim, Tuncel, Erol and Sunay, 2001, p.16). In general sense, a coach is a person who helps the athlete to improve his/her capacity physically-physiologically, mentally, emotionally (psychologically) and socially with purposeful behaviors. So to provide this, the coach fulfills the exact requirements of training and receives special education (Konter, 1996, p.102).

A coach is a person who transforms the information of sports doctors, scientists, and psychologists with his/her own experiences to guide the athletes to reach high levels of physical and emotional (psychological) performance. While achieving this, the coach is in direct relation with the athlete during a long workout period (Sevim, 2002, p.329).

Coaches, who share and interact with athletes regularly, should be a role-model in terms of knowledge and personality. Likewise, during the interaction period, athletes observe coaches' behaviors, and especially young athletes may mimic the coaches' behaviors as role-models (Sevim, 2002, p.330). In this respect, the personality of the coach plays a vital role in the success of the athlete. As a mentor and guide, a coach has to have a sense of humor, exemplifying behaviors, be highly educated on the field, patient, mature, honest, innovative and open to change in order to be respected by the athlete and to build positive and high level relationship (Sevim, 2002, p.330).

It is a bare fact that interpersonal relationship is complicated just as the coach-athlete relationship is. Coaching is an art and science formed by the relationship and interaction among the sport, athlete, and coach. In order to reach the intended success, the coach prepares the athlete both psychologically and physically. Doing this, the coach considers not only the physical capacity but also the psychological capacity of the athlete. In order to take the harmful and undesired emotions under control, the coach provides conformity among the athletes', sports' and his/her own needs (Konter, 1996, p.101).

The coach-athlete relationship is defined as a social relationship which is shaped by the personal emotions, thoughts, and behaviors of coach and athlete (Jowett, 2017). The relationship that contributes to the athlete's success requires factors like mutual trust, respect, belief, cooperation, support communication, and understanding (Jowett and Poczwardowski, 2007).

In the field of sports, especially in the coaching field, the relationship between coach and athlete relationship plays a central role in psycho-social and physical development (Jowett and Cockerill, 2002). The coach-athlete relationship is not only one of the principal agents for the athletes' motivation but also the athletes' performance (Mageau and Vallerand, 2003). Moreover, coaches have an essential role in easing and in providing help and happiness for the emotional crisis during hard

times such as being disqualified or the times of injury and mutilation the athlete goes through (Jowett, 2005).

In researches, the coach-athlete relationship is evaluated within the notion of leadership. However, evaluating this relationship only in terms of leadership is not enough to explain the notion, so other measurement tools are needed to define the term better. Various researches have been implemented to understand the relationship between the coach and the athlete. For example, in his study, Wylleman (2000) mentioned behavioral elements of the coach-athlete relationship, and he added that these behaviors are structured as "acceptance-denial, dominant-submission, and social-emotional." In his model which he developed, Lavoie (2004) emphasized the importance of the notions like trust, authority, coordination and the method to overcome difference and conflict (cited in Altıntaş, Kazak Çetinkalp, and Aşçı, 2012). Later, in order to evaluate the coach-athlete relationship, 3 Cs concept has been developed by Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004). According to them to evaluate and explain the coach-athlete relationship, closeness, commitment, complementarity structures shall be used.

Besides, they developed 23 item inventory formed with "closeness (emotional), commitment (cognitive) and complementarity (behavioral)" sub-dimensions (Jowett and Ntoumanis, 2004). This inventory which has later been evaluated and analyzed, and thus re-developed as 11 items "Coach-athlete relationship questionnaire" (Coach-athlete relationship questionnaire, Cart-Q) with same sub-dimensions. As a result, this questionnaire is believed to be more appropriate (Jowett, 2007; Jowett and Ntoumanis, 2004; Altıntaş et al., 2012). *Closeness* defines the emotional aspect of the coach-athlete relationship. It conveys the level and depth of emotional binding to each other. Closeness refers to the affective meanings, such as trust, liking, respect, that the athlete and coach ascribe to their relationship and is the indicator of positive interrelationships and emotions. *Commitment* refers to the cognitive aspect of the coach-athlete relationship. It reflects the athlete's and the coach's intention to maintain a healthy relationship. *However, complementarity* represents the level of interaction and cooperation. Moreover, it includes the athlete's and coach's similar behaviors of affiliation, such as an athlete's friendly and responsive attitude (Jowett, 2005).

The basis of the coach-athlete relationship is effective communication. Communication is a period to form a sharing and agreement environment to convey and receive emotions, thoughts, and information mutually. Coaching requires being an excellent communicator in each act. Successful coaches are usually efficient communicators (Martens, 1998, p.77). Effective coach-athlete communication process and open communication channels enable the development of unity by reciprocally sharing each other's experience, beliefs, values, thoughts, and worries. (Jowett, Cockerill, 2003). Communication establishes a ground for the development of feelings of closeness and enables the athlete to understand the coach. Moreover, the healthy coach-athlete relationship allows the athlete to develop physical self, contentment of

training performance, and increase success targets. It also increases the internal motivation and maintains the sustainability of sports passion. Clear cut communication lets the athlete to understand his/her role better, improves his/her skills, and reinforces the feeling of trust between coach-athlete. (Sagar and Jowett 2012).

Through open communication channels, unhindered, and efficient communication, the coach can convey all of his/her knowledge and experience. With his clear and understandable instructions, the coach increases learning skills and gains his/her trust. The coach states his/her expectations from the athlete. Building trust with the athlete, the coach enables the athlete to share his/her problems, expectations, and anxiety directly, and thus the athletes' motivation increases.

Thanks to efficient communication environment and positive coach-athlete relationship, the satisfaction and motivation of the athlete increases and provides the opportunity to the athlete to develop skills (Altıntaş et al., 2012).

From this point of view, the coach-athlete relationship is thought to affect the anger of an athlete. It can take the anger under control. The main question of the present study was to find out whether the coach-athlete relationship is productive in taking the anger of the athlete under control.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

This section involves the model of the study, universe and the sample, tools for data collection, and the method for data analysis.

Model of the Study: In the present study, we used the relational screening model. Relational screening model is often used for determining the existence and the level of two or more variables (Karasar, 2014, p.81).

Research Group: As the sample of the study, 420 athletes voluntarily participated in the survey. Two hundred forty-three of the participants were taekwondo athletes (107 female & 136 male), 177 were protected football players from the 2017-18 Protected Football Super League.

Data Gathering Instruments: As the data gathering tool, we used a three-part questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire included the athletes' demographical information. In the second part, the coach-athlete relationship inventory athlete form, which determines the quality of the coach-athlete relationship with three sub-dimensions. In the third part, aggression and calmness sub-dimensions of multi-dimensional anger scale were used to determine the anger levels of the participants.

Coach-athlete Relationship Inventory: The Coach-Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q) developed by Jowett and Ntoumanis (2004), was adapted into Turkish by Altıntaş et al. (2012). The inventory has two separate forms that measure reciprocal relationships of coach-athlete and athlete-coach. In this study, we used the form in which athletes grade their relationship with their coaches. The scale

has 11 items that measure closeness (4 items), commitment (3 items), and complementarity (4 items). Closeness refers to the emotional dimension, commitment refers to the cognitive dimension, and complementarity refers to the behavioral dimension. The answers to the scale evaluated with seven types of Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Jowett and Ntoumanis, (2004) calculated the Cronbach's Alpha values for closeness as 0.89, for commitment as 0.82 and 0.89 for complementarity as 0.89. Altıntaş et al. (2012) calculated Cronbach's Alpha values as 0.89 for closeness sub-dimension, 0.88 for commitment sub-dimension, 0.74 for complementarity sub-dimension, and 0.93 for the full scale.

Multi-Dimensional Aggression Scale (MDAS): Multi-dimensional aggression scale was developed by Balkaya and Şahin (2003). The scale aims to measure aggression with various dimensions and determine the emotions, thoughts, and behaviors of people about aggression. The sub-dimensions of the scale follow as: "The Symptoms Related to Aggression" with 14 items, "The causes of aggression" with 42 items, "Opinions about aggression" with 30 items, "Interpersonal Aggression Reactions" with 47 items, and "The Behaviors Related to Aggression" with 26 items. The scale is anchored with five Likert type scale from 1 (never) to five 5 (always). Cronbach's Alpha calculated for the sub-scales varies from $\alpha=0.83$ and $\alpha=0.93$. These results were regarded as enough for the reliability of the scale (Balkaya and Şahin 2003).

Data Analysis: In data analyzes first, we checked the missing values, skewness, and kurtosis values. Then we used the Mann Whitney U test in order to identify significant differences and Multi Regression Analyses in order to identify correlations.

3. FINDINGS

Table 1. The distribution of the gender of the athletes

Variable	f	%
Female	107	25,5
Male	313	74,5
Total	420	100

In Table 1, according to the gender ranges of the athletes within the research, it is clear that 313 athletes are (% 74,5) male, 107 athletes (% 25,5) are female. All the female athletes are in the branch of taekwondo.

Table 2. The distribution of the athletes' sport branch

Type of Sport	f	%
Taekwondo (individual sport)	243	57,9
Protected football (team sport)	177	42,1
Total	420	100

According to analyze results %57,9 of the were taekwondo athletes, %42,1 were protected football players.

Table 3. The Level of coach-athlete relationship according to gender. Mann Whitney U Test

		N	(Range) Average.	U	P
Closeness Sub Dimension	Male	313	216,38	18585,	,070
	Female	107	193,31		
Commitment Sub dimension	Male	313	213,86	17796,	,322
	Female	107	200,68		
Complementarity Sub dimension	Male	313	217,37	18895,	,043
	Female	107	190,41		

According to analyze results, there was no statistically meaningful difference in the Closeness and Commitment sub-dimensions. However, in the Complementarity sub-dimension, there was a statistical differentiation related to gender, and this difference was in favor of male athletes ($U = 18895,0$; $p < 0.05$).

Table 4. The Level of coach-athlete relationship according to the type of sport. Mann Whitney U Test

		N	(Range) Average	U	P
Closeness Sub Dimension	Taekwondo (Individual sports)	243	212,22	21088,500	,717
	Protected football (Team Sport)	177	208,14		
Commitment Sub dimension	Taekwondo (Individual sports)	243	215,15	20376,500	,347
	Protected football (Team Sport)	177	204,12		
Complementarity Sub dimension	Taekwondo (Individual sports)	243	201,14	23781,000	,059
	Protected football (Team Sport)	177	223,36		

According to analyze results, there was no statistically meaningful difference in the Closeness, Commitment, and complementarity sub-dimensions.

In order to determine the effects of the coach-athlete relationship on the aggression levels of athletes, multi regression analysis applied using the coach-athlete relationship inventory and aggression sub-dimension of multi-dimensional aggression scale. The results were shown in Table 5.

Table 5. The effects of the coach-athlete relationship on the aggression levels of athletes. The Multi Regression Analysis Results

	Non Standardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients
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		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
Taekwondo	<i>Stable</i>	42,671	3,317		12,863	,000
	Closeness	,241	,255	-,130	,945	,345
	Commitment	-,684	,232	-,388	-,388	,003
	Complementarity	-,445	,211	-,228	-,228	,036
Protected football	<i>Stable</i>	52,944	5,355		9,886	,000
	Closeness	-,611	,304	-,280	-2,013	,046
	Commitment	,318	,307	-,160	1,036	,302
	Complementarity	-,691	,312	-,286	-2,218	,028

Taekwondo: R=,474 R²=,224 Protected Football: R=,400 R²=,160

According to the analysis results for the taekwondo athletes; commitment and complementarity sub-dimension scores of coach-athlete relationship inventory significantly explained the aggression sub-dimension scores of multi-dimensional aggression scale. However, according to analysis results for the protected football athletes, it was seen that the closeness and complementarity sub-dimension scores of coach-athlete relationship indicated aggression sub-dimension score of MDAS. The effect of commitment sub-dimension score on explaining the aggression score variant was not regarded as statistically meaningful.

In order to determine the effects of the coach-athlete relationship on the aggression levels of athletes, multi regression analysis applied using coach-athlete relationship inventory and MDAS calmness sub-dimension. The results were shown in Table 6.

Table 6. The effects of the coach-athlete relationship on the calmness levels of athletes- The Multi Regression Analysis Results

		Non Standardized		Standardized		
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
Taekwondo	<i>Stable</i>	25,015	2,283		10,955	,000
	Closeness	-,350	,176	-,263	-1,992	,048
	Commitment	,844	,159	,668	5,292	,000
	Complementarity	,150	,145	,107	1,030	,304
Protected football	<i>Stable</i>	8,331	2,733		3,048	,003
	Closeness	,262	,155	,183	1,693	,092
	Commitment	,317	,157	,242	2,023	,045
	Complementarity	,511	,159	,322	3,212	,002

Taekwondo: R=,532 R²=,284 Protected Football: R=,702 R²=,493

According to the analysis results for the taekwondo athletes; closeness and commitment sub-dimension scores of coach-athlete relationship inventory significantly explained the calmness sub-dimension scores of multi-dimensional aggression scale. However, according to analysis results for the protected football athletes, it was seen that the commitment and complementarity sub-dimension scores

of coach-athlete relationship indicated aggression sub-dimension score of MDAS. The effect of closeness sub-dimension score on explaining the aggression score variant was not regarded as statistically meaningful.

4. DISCUSSION

As a result of the analysis of coach-athlete relationship inventory used to determine the level of coach-athlete relationship evaluated in terms of gender, from the three sub-dimensions of the inventory, two of them, in Closeness and Commitment sub-dimensions, related to coach-athlete relationship levels, a meaningful difference between male and female athletes was not detected. In the complementarity sub-dimension, there was a statically meaningful difference in favor of male athletes.

When other studies in the literature related to the topic were examined, the fact that there is no meaningful difference between male and female athletes related to the coach-athlete relationship levels has drawn attention (Lavoi, 2007; Yücel, 2010; Flores 2013, p.55; Sinnott, 2015, p.32). In this study, the meaningful difference in the complementarity sub-dimension, which was in favor of male can be explained as follows:

In the coach-athlete relationship, the complementarity sub-dimension represents the interaction and cooperation levels between the coach and the athlete. There is naturally cooperation in team sports. Thus, in the complementarity sub-dimension, it is considered that the difference formed in favor of male was because there was no female protected football player.

In the analysis that the relationship between the level of the coach-athlete relationship and that of athlete's aggression was searched, the aggression and calmness dimensions of multi-dimensional aggression scale have been used to indicate the aggression levels of athletes. In both branches, between the scores gathered from the aggression dimension of the scale and the ones gathered from every three dimensions (closeness, commitment, and complementarity) of the coach-athlete relationship inventory, a negatively meaningful relationship at a moderate level was detected. According to this result, while the athletes' level scores of coach-athlete relationship increase, the aggression level of scores decrease. In the calmness dimension of the scale, between the scores gained again for each branch and the scores gained from all the three sub-dimensions of coach-athlete relationship inventory, a positively meaningful relationship at a moderate level observed. In terms of this result, as the athletes' level scores of coach-athlete relationship rise, their calmness level scores increase, as well.

5. RESULT

In this research whose primary concern was the effect of the coach-athlete relationship on controlling and fixing at the intended levels of the aggression emotion which is considered to be active on the performance and the success of the athletes;

By comparison with the scores of coach-athlete relationship levels of athletes in terms of gender, in the complementarity sub-dimension of the coach-athlete relationship inventory, it was confirmed that the coach-athlete relationship level scores of male athletes were higher than those of female. In Closeness and Commitment sub-dimensions, there was no statistically meaningful difference.

Between the aggression sub-dimension scores of multi-dimensional aggression scale used to determine the aggression levels of athletes and the scores of coach-athlete relationship levels, there is a statically meaningful and negatively moderate relationship. Between the scores of calmness dimension of the multi-dimensional aggression scale and the scores of coach-athlete relationship levels, there was a statically meaningful and positively moderate relationship. Thus, as the athletes' scores of coach-athlete relationship levels increase, the scores of aggression levels decrease, but the score of the calmness level increases.

Following these results, we can say that coach-athlete relationships do not vary according to gender and type of sports. On the other hand, it can also be said that positive and productive coach-athlete relationships have a positive effect on their aggression levels.

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