



## THE DETERMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LEVELS OF SPORTSPERSONSHIP AND NARCISSISM OF ATHLETES

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### Abstract:

This study aims to reveal the relationship between the levels of sportspersonship and narcissism of athletes. The sample of the study was selected by 33 football players, 36 volleyball players, 40 handball players and 30 basketball players who already ranked among the top three athletes in Turkish Championships. Narcissistic Personality Inventory and Multidimensional Sportspersonship Orientation Scale were used as a collection tool in the study. Portable IBM SPSS Statistics v20 software package was also used to analyze the data. The descriptive analysis was used in the analysis of the data, a correlation analysis was used to determine the severity and direction of the relationship between variables and regression analysis was used to reveal cause-effect relationship between the variables. As a result of the correlation analysis carried out, it was determined that there is a statistically significant negative relationship between an athlete's narcissism score, and respect for opponents and respect for social convention.

**Keywords:** narcissism, sportspersonship, basketball, football, volleyball

### 1. Introduction

When the concepts of narcissism and sportspersonship are evaluated, it is seen that these two concepts are totally incompatible with each other. Athletes who develop their narcissistic personalities are success-oriented and able to do anything at any moment for success, but athletes who develop their sportspersonship levels prefer to defeat their opponent in a fair game without exhibiting behavior contrary to the spirit of sports. Despite the fact that the concepts of narcissism and sportspersonship are evaluated under separate titles in the literature, no research was found that directly reveals the relationship between narcissism and sportspersonship.

Narcissistic individuals excessively admire themselves physically and spiritually, get above themselves and constantly expect for appreciation, attention and

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approval; so they believe that they immediately draw a special interest and deserve a superior position in everywhere they go. It is an inevitable fact that disappointments and hurts in such intense narcissistic expectations are not a coincidence. The self-esteem of the narcissistic individuals mostly relies on interest, appreciation and approval from outside sources. These people cannot handle criticism, but constantly seek to be praised. For this reason, their appearance and behavior are always shaped to achieve them. They make friendships in order to glorify themselves and get themselves superior, so they exploit others to achieve their goals in this direction. Because narcissistic individuals do not show empathy towards emotions, thoughts and needs of others, narcissistic athletes are also known as selfish and ego-centric (Öztürk, 2002: 436).

Narcissistic individuals are selfish because they think that they are unique and special. Because narcissistic individuals have sense of selfishness, they believe that they deserve more than they always get. They are success-oriented. They seek opportunities to increase their self-esteem when they feel a little fear of failure. Narcissistic individuals always strive to look good, and to feel themselves special, successful, important and positive. Sometimes, these self-regulatory efforts can have spiritual considerations, such as fantasizes of power or blaming the situation rather than personal failures and sometimes, they have idea of using the others for their own interests in their relationships (Campbell and Foster, 2007: 7).

When narcissistic athletes fail, they argue referee decisions, incorrectness of the rules, supporters, and incorrect tactics by coaches as reasons for their failures. Therefore, they will not believe that they fail due to their own fault (Tazegül, 2011: 170; Tazegül, 2013).

The concept of sportspersonship is related with normative standards on the relationship between social and moral values. Sportspersonship reveals virtuous behavioral tendencies that promote how to behave in accordance with the spirit of sports (Stornes and Bru, 2002).

The concept of sportsperson refers the concept of competition and honesty as a responsible and thoughtful athlete, and it can be also expressed by concepts of supreme volunteerism, respect, kindness, outgoingness, compassion and generosity (Stornes, Ommundsen, 2004).

The concept of sportspersonship, in its general sense, is concerned with how athletes are guided to play the game. There are three theoretical approaches to how to understand sportspersonship. The first is socio-cognitive theory. In this theory, modelling and reinforcement determine the appropriate and non-competitive behavior of athletes in competitive situations. The second approach reveals the concepts and especially, moral logic in the structural development models. This approach demonstrates the influence of aggression on one person's capacity of reconciliation through moral dialogue, suggesting similar tendencies associated with sportspersonship. The last approach is socio-psychological approach. This approach has sports-based aspects of socio-psychological model. In the socio-psychological approach, there are three key elements and they are sportspersonship orientation, the development of the sportspersonship orientation and behaviors towards

sportspersonship (Valleran and Losier, 1994). Vallerand and Losier explain the socio-psychological model as the relationship between sportspersonship and personal decision. (Chantal and Bernache Assolant, 2003)

This study aims to reveal the relationship between tendency of sportspersonship and level of narcissism of athletes in team sports.

## **2. Method of Study**

In this study, quantitative method of research was used. The quantitative method of research is defined as a method of research that can be observed, measured, and numerically expressed by objectifying phenomena and events. The main aim in quantitative studies is to examine the social behaviors of people through observation, experiment, and test, and to quantify them numerically.

### **2.1 Sample**

A total of 139 athletes, 33 football players, 36 volleyball players, 40 handball players and 30 basketball players, who already ranked among the top three athletes in Turkish Championships, represent sample for the study.

## **3. Data Collection Tools**

### **3.1 Narcissistic Personality Inventory**

Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI-16) was formed by Daniel R. Ames, Paul Rose and Cameron P. Anderson in 2005 (Atay, 2009).

### **3.2 Multidimensional Sportspersonship Orientation Scale**

The value of Cronbach Alpha was respectively 0,86 for Factor 1 (respect for social convention), 0,83 for Factor 2 (respect for rules and officials), 0,91 for Factor 3 (respect for one's full commitment) and 0,82 for Factor 4 (respect for opponents). The values were considered to be highly reliable (Sezen-Balçıkanlı, 2010)..

### **3.3 Analysis of Data**

Portable IBM SPSS Statistics v20 software package was also used to analyze the data. The descriptive analysis was used in the analysis of the data, a correlation analysis was used to determine the severity and direction of the relationship between variables, regression analysis was used to reveal cause-effect relationship between the variables, one-way analysis of variance was used to reveal the difference between more than two variables, and independent sample t-test was applied to reveal between two variables.

## 4. Findings

**Table 1:** The Findings of Descriptive Statistics

	$\bar{x}$	$\pm$
Narcissism	8,6374	1,74175
Respect for social convention	20,3711	3,57747
Respect for rules and officials	20,7629	3,30332
Adherence to responsibilities in sports	21,8438	3,08247
Respect for opponents	19,8021	3,61465

According to the results of descriptive statistical analysis, narcissism score of athletes in sample group was found to be (8,6374±1,74175), the score of respect for social convention of athletes was found to be (20,3711±3,57747), the score of respect for rules and officials of athletes was found to be (20,7629±3,30332), the score of adherence to responsibilities in sports of athletes was found to be (21,8438±3,08247), and the score of respect for opponents of athletes was found to be (21,8438±3,08247).

**Table 2:** Correlation analysis

		Narcissism
Respect for social convention	Pearson Correlation	-0,041
	P	0,572
Respect for rules and officials	Pearson Correlation	0,125
	P	0,244
Adherence to responsibilities in sports	Pearson Correlation	0,144
	P	0,18
Respect for opponents	Pearson Correlation	-,238*
	P	0,026

As a result of the correlation analysis carried out, it was determined that there is a statistically significant negative relationship between athletes' narcissism score, and respect for opponents and respect for social convention.

**Table 3:** Regression analysis

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
,339a	0,115	0,072	1,67498		
ANOVA					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	29,899	4	7,475	2,664	,038b
Residual	230,055	82	2,806		
Total	259,954	86			
Coefficientsa					
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	6,911	1,419		4,87	0
Respect for social convention	-0,129	0,061	-0,266	-2,122	0,047
Respect for rules and officials	-0,058	0,085	-0,109	-0,676	0,501
Adherence to responsibilities in sports	0,101	0,073	0,184	1,375	0,173
Respect for opponents	0,169	0,071	0,356	2,385	0,019

As a result of the regression analysis carried out, it was determined that there is a statistically significant cause-effect relationship between athletes' narcissism score, and respect for opponents and respect for social convention.

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results of descriptive statistical analysis, narcissism score of athletes in sample group was found to be  $(8,6374 \pm 1,74175)$ , the score of respect for social convention of athletes was found to be  $(20,3711 \pm 3,57747)$ , the score of respect for rules and officials of athletes was found to be  $(20,7629 \pm 3,30332)$ , the score of adherence to responsibilities in sports of athletes was found to be  $(21,8438 \pm 3,08247)$ , and the score of respect for opponents of athletes was found to be  $(21,8438 \pm 3,08247)$ . Miller et al. (2004) determine that the score of respect for social convention of young athletes was found to be 3.50. Stornes and Ommundsen (2004) found the score of respect for social convention of young handball players as 4.13. According to the correlation analysis carried out, a statistically significant correlation was found between narcissism score of athletes, and respect for opponents and respect for social convention of athletes. This statistical result was thought to be normal when it is evaluated according to the characteristics of narcissistic personality characteristic and sportspersonship behavior. Because individuals with narcissistic personality traits are generally self-centered and tend to keep their interests at forefront in their relations with other people. The dimension of respect for opponents of sportspersonship was expressed by behaviors such as refusing an unfair advantage when opponent is injured in any competition, preventing the opponent from being punished unfairly, and lending his equipment to the opponent. A narcissistic athlete who only wants to win and be successful in his mind, will desire to take advantage of his injured opponent and all other adversities. Therefore, as narcissism score of athletes will increase, the score of the respect for opponents of athletes will also decrease. Lemyre et al. (2002) found that high ego-oriented athletes exhibited low level of sportspersonship behaviors. They also determined that high ego-oriented athletes had little respect for the rules and officials of the match and they displayed deceptive behaviors in order to reach their goals. Tazegül (2013a) argued that when athletes who have high narcissistic score fail, they prove that it is actually the result of misfortune and they mention referee decisions, incorrectness of the rules, supporters and incorrect tactics by coaches as reasons for their failures, so they cannot believe that they fail due to its own fault.

The dimension of respect for opponents of sportspersonship is related to sportspersonship behaviors that an athlete exhibits after the competition. When the score of respect for social convention of an athlete will increase, the athlete is in a position to congratulate his opponent and coach of the opponent and to praise the performance of his opponent after the competition. On the other hand, success is everything for the athlete who has advanced narcissistic personality. When a narcissistic athlete is unsuccessful, he feels himself humiliated and argues other factors in his failure. When narcissist athletes fail, they try to prove that his failure is a result of

misfortune (Wallace and Baumeister, 2002: 832). Therefore, it is thought to be normal that an athlete with high score of narcissism has low score of respect for social convention. The studies on narcissistic personality revealed that individuals with narcissistic personality traits who have a high level of self-confidence (Campbell, Goodie and Foster, 2004) are ostentatious individuals who love to show off (Morf and Rhodewalt, 2001). Duda and his colleagues (1991) found that high ego-oriented female and male basketball players exhibited unsporting and aggressive behaviors. Kavussanu and Roberts (2001) reported that high ego-oriented high school basketball players exhibited unsporting behaviors when they had a fear of failure in a competition.

As a result, it was determined that there is a statistically significant relationship between athletes' narcissism score, and respect for opponents and respect for social convention. This result is thought to be normal when this statistical result is evaluated according to the scales.

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