ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Role of Sports Dedication in Determining the Level of Mental Training in National Athletes

ATALAY GACAR[1], EYYUP NACAR[2], FATİH ÇELİK[3], ÖMER FARUK TUTAR[4]
[1]Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences,Firat University,Turkey. Email: agacar@firat.edu.tr Tel: +905056834045
[2]Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Sciences,Firat University,Turkey. Email: enacar@firat.edu.tr Tel: +905324348022
[3]Institute of Health Sciences,Firat University,Turkey. Email: celikfatih2344@hotmail.comTel: +905074914832
[4]Institute of Health Sciences,Firat University,Turkey. ·Email: tutar10476549@hotmail.comTel: +905535818330

ABSTRACT
The aim of this study is to examine the effects of national athletes' dedication to sports on mental training levels according to gender, age, sports branch, and the year of being a national athlete, as well as to reveal the effect of dedication to sports on mental training. 101 female and 137 male national athletes between the ages of 10 and 30 who actively do sports in 2020 for various branches and achieved degrees in national and international competitions participated voluntarily. The 'Personal Information Form' prepared by the researchers as a data collection tool and the Sports Dedication Scale developed by Guillen and Martinez-Alvarado to measure the participants' dedication to sports were adapted for athletes and adapted in Turkish by Sirgancı et al. "Mental Training Inventory in Sports" developed by Behnke et al and adapted into Turkish by Yarayan and İlhan was used to measure the mental training usage levels of the athletes. In order to determine the significance of the differences between the two groups, t-test analysis, and ANOVA were applied to determine the significance between more than two groups in the study. According to the research findings obtained, there is a significant difference in the levels of dedication to sports according to the variables of gender and the year of being a national athlete; there was no difference according to age and sports branch variables. A statistically significant difference was found in the mental training levels of the athletes in terms of gender, age, sports branch and year of being a national athlete. Pearson Correlation analysis was used to determine the direction and severity of the relationship between variables. According to the results of the analysis, it was seen that mental training skills increased as the level of dedication to sports increased.
Keywords: Dedication to Sports, Mental Training, Sports, Psychology

INTRODUCTION
The logic of managing psychological processes in athletes has emerged in recent years as the strongest determinant of sporting success. This situation has emphasized that athletes should practice mental and psychological methods as well as physical, technical, and tactical training(Weinberg and Gould, 2015). It is of great importance that providing mental and psychological superiority can change the outcome of the competition, especially in an environment where athletes at the professional level who compete in international competitions or perform the sport as a profession, win and lose the race with very small differences measured in milliseconds(Altıntas and Akalan, 2008). The measure of success in sports is to perform well. A good performance can only be made possible by a combination of physical fitness, technique, tactics and, more importantly, psychological factors (Roberts, Spink, & Pemberton, 1999). For a good sportive performance, both physiological and psychological skills of the athlete should be developed and raised to a certain level in accordance with the purpose (Konter, 2003). Today, the concept of performance in sports is defined as physiological, biomechanical and psychological results shown by the athlete during training or competition. In this context, 'dedication to sports' is one of the most necessary prerequisites for improving athlete performance. Dedication to sport can be expressed as building a bridge between the athlete and the activities related to the sport and the sports environment in which he or she is located, based on some mental and emotional situations related to the general condition of an athlete (Martinez-Alvarado, Guillen and Feltz, 2016). It is thought that the concept of dedication has an important place in people's feelings, behaviors and attitudes towards their work. Considering that athletes at the elite level consider their branches as their professions, athletes can express the concept of 'dedication in sports' in a different dimension by showing continuity in the sport they do, gaining experience and feeling that they belong in this field and fighting, exerting effort and enjoying them (Lonsdale, Hodge, and Jackson, 2007).

The needs of mankind are physiological and psychological. In order to address psychological needs, it is necessary to first address the 'physiological needs' at the bottom, which Maslow (1943) stated in the pyramid of needs, and then the needs of 'dignity' and 'self-realization' towards the upper parts (Maslow, 1943). Considering this pyramid; Some of the underlying reasons for athlete loyalty are understandable. Meeting the basic psychological needs during exercise and the desire of the athlete to build his own personality and the need to 'realize himself' will cause him to connect more to the sport and the branch he is interested in. It can be considered that the athlete's identification of his or her branch is related to the level of dedication to the sport (Cüceloglu, 1992).

Sports psychology has been involved long in a developmental process in training and other sporting practices, incorporating and practicing mental processes in its research to improve athlete continuity and athlete performance (Jarvis, 2005). It is known that there are mental and emotional elements as well as physical characteristics that are thought to affect performance in sports. These are the ones that are going to emotional intelligence, goal orientation, self-speaking, self-sufficiency,

intrinsic motivation, concentration, stimulation control, internal speech, ability to cope with difficulties, mental resilience, imagery and mental training. How other psychological elements affect mental processes was one of the topics of interest to researchers, especially as it became clear that mental practices were indispensable in the sports environment (Vealey, 1986). Mental training can be defined as reviving all kinds of situations that can be encountered in a sports environment in the mind of the athlete and imagining that moment as if he were living with all his sensory and physical processes. In other words, mental training is the intense re-enactment of activity in the mind without the need for practice (Hecker and Kaczor, 1988). Stated in other words, mental training involves not only revitalizing the mind but also experiencing the revived state in the mind with all sensory organs, seeing, smelling, hearing touching tasting, and kinesthetic (Konter, 2004). Athletes must successfully manage mental processes in order to perform optimally and to control their stress and anxiety in World Championships, Olympics, and various national and regional competitions. Talented athletes may also experience problems from time to time and maybe incapable of showing their true potential in these situations of intense pressure and stress exposure. One of the main factors in athletes' success under intense pressure is that they control mental processes in the best way (Danube, 2018). The fact that related concepts are new and interesting topics in the Turkish sports psychology literature has been at the forefront of this study.

In this research, the competing athletes who have reached the degree of national athletes have been wondered about their constant stay in the sports environment, that is, their dedication to sports and their orientation towards mental practices; It is aimed that national athletes will be able to perform at a high level in sports, manage their mental processes, and their level of dedication to sports plays a role in determining the level of mental training.

MATERİALS AND METHOD

A relational scanning model from descriptive research methods was used in the research. The relational scanning method is a type of research aimed at determining whether there is a relationship between two and more variables and the extent of this relationship (Karasar, 2017).

The personal information form was created by the researchers in order to determine the personal characteristics of the participants, including demographic information such as gender, age, national sports year, sports branch (team, individual).

National athletes who achieved a degree in one of the team and individual branches in national and international competitions actively engaged in sports in 2020 participated in the research voluntarily. A total of 238 national athletes, 101 females, 137 males, between the ages of 10 and 30, actively engaged in various team and individual sports branches, participated in the study.

For the purposes of the research, the personal information form with demographic information developed by the researchers, the 'Mental Training Inventory in Sports' developed to measure mental training skills, and the 'Dedication to Sports Scale' which measures dedication to sports were used. The 'Sports Dedication Scale' was developed by Guillen and Martinez Alvarado (2014) to determine the level of dedication of athletes to sports (Guillen, et al., (2014), adapted to Turkish by Sirgancı, Ilgar, and Cihan (2019). The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the Likert-type scale was measured as 0.91. The scale consists of 15 items and three sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions are “Being Fit” (5 items 1,2,6,7,8), “Dedication” (5 items 3,4,5,9,12) and “Internalization” (5 items 10, 11, 13, 14.15). The 5-point Likert type inventory is scored as (1) "Completely Disagree" and (5) "Completely Agree". The lowest score that can be obtained from the inventory is 20, and the highest score is 100. The athlete who scores 100 has the highest level of dedication to sports; the athlete who scores 20 is measured as the lowest level of dedication to sports (Sirgancı et al., 2019). Mental Training Inventory in Sports developed by Behnke et al (2017) in order to measure the capacity of athletes to use their mental skills during sports, before or after sports, and consists of 5 sub-dimensions and 20 items. Details of the items have defined according to the sub-dimensions; "Mental Basic Skills 4 items '3,7,10,14', "Mental Performance Skills 6 items'1,5,8,12,16,19', "Interpersonal Skills" 4 items '4,11,15,18', "Self-Speaking" 3 items '2,6,13', "Mental Resuscitation" 3 items '9,17,20'. The inventory with a 5-type Likert type is rated '1' as "I Completely Disagree" and '5' as "I Completely Agree". The lowest score from inventory is 20 and the highest score is 100. The athlete who scores 100 has the highest ability to use 'mental training'; The 20-point athlete's ability to use 'mental training' is measured as the lowest(Behnke et al., 2017). It was translated into Turkish by Yarayan and İlhan (2018). Sub-dimensions and item numbers are the same as in the original form (Yarayan and İlhan, 2018).

The scales were applied online via Google forms as included in the personal information form after detailed and necessary explanations were made about the research to the national athletes who participated in the study.

Analysıs of Data: SPSS 22.00 statistical package program was used to evaluate the data obtained from the participants. T-test was used in independent groups and one-way variance analysis 'ANOVA' was used in multiple groups in the analysis of the data. Pearson Correlation Test analysis was used to determine the role of dedication to sports in influencing the level of mental training and to examine their relationship. The significance level was taken as ‘p<0,05’ in this study.

Findings:

Table 1. Distribution Values of Sports Dedication Levels Related to the Gender Variable of the Athletes Participating in the Study

	Gender	N	X	Ss	t	p
Being fit	Female	101	21,22	3,47	-1,42	0,15
	Male	137	21,81	2,89		
Dedication	Female	101	21,23	3,84	-1,94	0,05*
	Male	137	22,15	3,37		
Internalization	Female	101	20,84	3,48	0,52	0,60
	Male	137	20,60	3,43		

Independent sample t-test, p<0.05.

It was determined that there was no statistically significant difference in the score averages of the participants' being fit and internalization sub-dimensions compared to the scale sub-dimension score averages t-test results in Table 1(p>0.05).

In the sub-dimension of dedication; It was observed that male athletes had higher levels of dedication than female athletes (p <0.05).

Table 2. Distribution Values of Sports Dedication Levels Related to the Age Variable of the Athletes Participating in the Stud

	Age	N	X	Ss	F	p
Being fit	10-13	25	21,96	2,99	0,98	0,39
	14-18	141	21,70	3,27		
	18-22	53	21,00	2,70		
	22-30	19	21,15	3,64		
	Total	238	21,56	3,16		
Dedication	10-13	25	22,00	4,22	0,29	0,82
	14-18	141	21,88	3,64		
	18-22	53	21,37	3,39		
	22-30	19	21,63	3,14		
	Total	238	21,76	3,60		
Internalization	10-13	25	20,68	3,42	0,58	0,62
	14-18	141	20,86	3,27		
	18-22	53	20,16	3,62		
	22-30	19	21,05	4,30		
	Total	238	20,70	3,45		

One way anova, p<0.05

Sports dedication levels by age variable in Table 2; there was no statistically significant difference in the score averages of being fit, dedication and, internalization sub-dimensions compared to the scale sub-dimension score averages in terms of ANOVA test results(p>0.05).

Table 3. Distribution values of sports dedication levels related to the sports branch variable of the athletes participating in the study

	Sports Branch	N	X	Ss	t	p
Being Fit	Team Sport	137	21,37	3,25	-1,06	0,28
	Individual Sport	101	21,82	3,02		
Dedication	Team Sport	137	21,43	3,92	-1,63	0,10
	Individual Sport	101	22,20	3,07		
Internalization	Team Sport	137	20,64	3,29	-0,33	0,74
	Individual Sport	101	20,79	3,66		

Independent samplet-test, p<0.05

In Table 3, participants' sports dedication levels according to the sports branch type variable Scale sub-dimension averages compared to t-test results, there was no statistically significant difference in the score averages of Being Fit, Dedication, and Internalization sub-dimensions (p>0.05).

In Table 4, participants' commitment to sports according to the variable of the year of being a national athlete Scale sub-dimension score averages compared to ANOVA test results, there was no statistically significant difference in the score averages of the Being fit and Dedication sub-dimensions (p>0.05).

In the internalization sub-dimension; It is observed that the level of internalization commitment of those who do national athletes for 1-3 years is higher than those of national athletes between 4-7 years (p <0.05).

Table 4. Distribution Values of Sports Dedication Level Regarding the Variable of the Year of Being a National Athlete for the Athletes Who Participated in the Study

	The Year of Being A National Athlete	N	X	Ss	F	p
Being Fit	1-3 Years	74	22,06	2,90	1,37	0,25
	4-7 Years	122	21,31	3,36		
	8 Years and above	42	21,42	2,92		
	Total	238	21,56	3,16		
Dedication	1-3 Years	74	22,40	3,53	1,83	0,16
	4-7 Years	122	21,55	3,70		
	8 Years and above	42	21,23	3,34		
	Total	238	21,76	3,60		
Internalization	1-3 Years*	74	21,62	3,06	4,89	0,00*
	4-7 Years *	122	20,07	3,72		
	8 Years and above	42	20,92	2,89		
	Total	238	20,70	3,45		

One way anova, p<0.05

Table 5. Mental Training Skills Distribution Values Related to Gender Variability for Athletes Participating in the Study

	Gender	N	X	Ss	t	p
Mental Basic Skills	Female	101	15,80	3,33	-2,42	,016*
	Male	137	16,75	2,70		
Mental Performance Skills	Female	101	21,52	4,56	-2,15	,033*
	Male	137	22,71	3,95		
Interpersonal Skills	Female	101	16,73	3,34	-1,99	,048*
	Male	137	17,48	2,46		
Self-Speaking	Female	101	11,12	3,20	1,24	0,21
	Male	137	10,60	3,20		
Mental stimulation	Female	101	11,60	2,63	-1,67	0,09
	Male	137	12,13	2,27		

Independent sample t-test, p<0.05

In Table 5, participants' mental training skills by gender variable Scale sub-dimension score averages compared to t-test results, there was no statistically significant difference in the score averages of self-speaking skills and mental studies skills (p>0.05). Significant differences were observed in the sub-dimensions of Mental Basic Skills, Mental Performance Skills, and Interpersonal Skills (p<0.05).

Mental Basic Skills sub-dimension; it was observed that male athletes had higher mental basic skill levels than female athletes (p<0.05).

It was observed that male athletes had higher mental basic skill levels than female athletes in the Mental Performance Skills sub-dimension (p<0.05).

It was observed that male athletes had higher mental basic skill levels than female athletes in the sub-dimension of Interpersonal Skills (p<0.05).

Table 6. Mental Training Skills Distribution Values Related to Age Variable of the Athletes Participating in the Study

	Age	N	X	Ss	F	p
Mental Basic Skills	10-13	25	16,40	3,13	0,42	0,73
	14-18	141	16,46	3,08		
	18-22	53	15,94	2,59		
	22-30	19	16,57	3,53		
	Total	238	16,34	3,01		
Mental Performance Skills	10-13	25	22,24	4,36	2,94	0,03*
	14-18*	141	21,84	4,21		
	18-22	53	22,20	4,17		
	22-30*	19	24,89	3,98		
	Total	238	22,21	4,25		
Interpersonal Skills	10-13	25	17,44	2,81	1,64	0,18
	14-18	141	17,35	2,95		
	18-22	53	16,39	2,54		
	22-30	19	17,52	3,22		
	Total	238	17,16	2,88		
Self-Speaking	10-13	25	9,68	2,93	1,72	0,16
	14-18	141	10,88	3,39		
	18-22	53	10,84	2,85		
	22-30	19	11,84	2,83		
	Total	238	10,82	3,21		
Mental resuscitation	10-13	25	11,52	2,34	0,26	0,84
	14-18	141	11,92	2,51		
	18-22	53	12,01	2,28		
	22-30	19	12,05	2,63		
	Total	238	11,91	2,44		

One way anova (Tukey), p<0.05

In Table 6, the participants 'mental training skills' Scale sub-dimension score averages and ANOVA test compared to their results, there was no statistically significant difference in the score averages of Mental Basic Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Self-Speaking Skills and Mental Resuscitation sub-dimensions (p>0.05). Significant differences were observed in the sub-dimension of Mental Performance Skills (p<0.05).

Considering the Mental Performance Skill sub-dimension; It is observed that the mental performance of athletes between the ages of 22-30 is higher than those between the ages of 14-18.

Tablo 7. Mental Training Skills Distribution Values Related to the Sports Branch Variable of the Athletes Participating in the Study

	Sports Branch	N	X	Ss	t	p
Mental Basic Skills	Team Sport	137	16,03	2,98	-1,87	0,06
	Individual Sport	101	16,77	3,01		
Mental Performance Skills	Team Sport	137	21,72	4,16	-2,04	0,04 *
	Individual Sport	101	22,86	4,30		
Interpersonal Skills	Team Sport	137	17,02	3,02	-0,88	0,37
	Individual Sport	101	17,35	2,68		
Self-Speaking	Team Sport	137	10,49	3,16	-1,86	0,06
	Individual Sport	101	11,27	3,22		
Mental resuscitation	Team Sport	137	11,65	2,43	-1,88	0,06
	Individual Sport	101	12,25	2,42		

One way anova (Tukey), p<0.05

In Table 7, there was no statistically significant difference in the score averages of the participants' mental training skills scale sub-dimension compared to the sports branch type variable in terms of t-test results, mental basic skills, interpersonal skills, self-speaking ability, and mental resuscitation sub-dimensions (p>0.05). A significant difference was observed in the sub-dimension of Mental Performance Skills (p<0.05).

Considering the Mental Performance Skills sub-dimension; It is observed that the mental performance of athletes who do individual sports is higher than the athletes who do team sports.

Tablo 8. Mental Training Skills Distribution Values Related to the Variable of the Year of Being a National Athlete of the Athletes Participating in the Study

	The Year of Being a National Athlete	N	X	Ss	F	p
Mental Basic Skills	1-3 Years	74	16,48	2,87	0,89	0,41
	4-7 Years	122	16,45	2,94		
	8 Years and above	42	15,78	3,43		
	Total	238	16,34	3,01		
Mental Performance Skills	1-3 Years	74	22,67	4,18	0,71	0,49
	4-7 Years	122	21,92	4,19		
	8 Years and above	42	22,21	4,56		
	Total	238	22,21	4,25		
Interpersonal Skills	1-3 Years*	74	17,77	2,30	5,39	0,00*
	4-7 Years*	122	17,20	2,81		
	8 Years and above **	42	15,97	3,62		
	Total	238	17,16	2,88		
Self-Speaking	1-3 Years	74	10,86	3,37	1,82	0,16
	4-7 Years	122	11,09	3,15		
	8 Years and above	42	10,00	2,99		
Total		238	10,82	3,21		
Mental resuscitation	1-3 Years	74	12,29	2,17	1,56	0,21
	4-7 Years	122	11,81	2,58		
	8 Years and above	42	11,52	2,42		
	Total	238	11,91	2,443		

One way anova (Tukey), p<0.05

In Table 8, participants' mental training skills according to the variable of the year of being a national athlete Scale sub-dimension score averages were not statistically significantly differentiated in the score averages of Mental Basic Skills, Mental Performance Skills, Self-Speaking Skills, and Mental Resuscitation sub-dimensions compared to ANOVA test results (p>0.05). Significant differences were observed in the Interpersonal Skills sub-dimension (p <0.05).

When looking at the Interpersonal Skills sub-dimension; It is observed that the interpersonal skill levels of the athletes with a being national athletic year of 8 years and above are lower than those who do being national athletes for 1-3 years and, 4-7 years.

In Table 9, it was observed that our correlation coefficient between the sub-dimensions of the Level of Commitment to Sports and the sub-dimensions of Mental Training Skills made sense when looking at the correlation relationship values between the sports loyalty levels of the

athletes participating in the study and the Mental Training Skills ($p<0.05$). According to the results of the Pearson Correlation analysis, which was carried out to determine whether there is a relationship between dedication to sports and mental training level, a positively significant difference was found between the 'Being Fit', 'Dedication', 'Internalization', sub-dimensions and 'Mental Training Skills', 'Mental Basic Skills', 'Mental Performance Skills', 'Interpersonal Skills', 'Self-Speaking Skills' and 'Mental Resuscitation' sub-dimensions. In correlation analysis, if the coefficient is less than 0.30, it is accepted that the relationship is weak, between 0.30 and 0.70 is medium, and if it is greater than 0.70, it is considered to be high (Köklü, Büyüköztürk, and Çokluk, 2007).

Tablo 9. Correlational Relationship Distribution Values Between Athletes' Dedication to the Sport and Mental Training Skills Who Participated in the Study

		Being Fit	Dedication	Internalization	Mental Basic Skills	Mental Performance Skills	Interpersonal Skills	Self-speaking	Mental Resuscitation
Being Fit	X	1	,76**	,69**	,59**	,53**	,53**	,35**	,44**
	p		,00	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00
	N	238	238	238	238	238	238	238	238
Dedication	X	,76**	1	,74**	,54**	,43**	,50**	,32**	,50**
	p	,00		,00	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00
	N	238	238	238	238	238	238	238	238
Internalization	X	,69**	,74**	1	,45**	,41**	,36**	,24**	,41**
	p	,00	,00		,00	,00	,00	,00	,00
	N	238	238	238	238	238	238	238	238
Mental Basic Skills	X	,59**	,54**	,45**	1	,66**	,66**	,49**	,62**
	p	,00	,00	,00		,00	,00	,00	,00
	N	238	238	238	238	238	238	238	238
Mental Performance Skills	X	,53**	,43**	,41**	,66**	1	,58**	,43**	,56**
	p	,00	,00	,00	,00		,00	,00	,00
	N	238	238	238	238	238	238	238	238
Interpersonal Skills	X	,53**	,50**	,36**	,66**	,58**	1	,44**	,52**
	p	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00		,00	,00
	N	238	238	238	238	238	238	238	238
Self-Speaking	X	,35**	,32**	,24**	,49**	,43**	,44**	1	,45**
	p	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00		,00
	N	238	238	238	238	238	238	238	238
Mental Resuscitation	X	,44**	,50**	,41**	,62**	,56**	,52**	,45**	1
	p	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00	,00	
	N	238	238	238	238	238	238	238	238

Correlational Test

DİSCUSSİON AND CONCLUSİON

It was tried to determine whether the athletes who reached the national athlete degree and continued to play sports at an active level differed according to their Sports Commitment Levels, Mental Training Levels, gender, age, sports branch, being national athletes year variables of the athletes in our research. As a result of the analyses of 238 athletes who participated in the study; the 'Dedication' sub-dimension according to gender variable in Sports Commitment Levels; According to the variable of the year of being a national athlete, a significant difference was found in the sub-dimension of 'Internalization'. There was no difference according to age and sports branch variables.

The 'Dedication' sub-dimension of the gender variable of athletes at The Level of Dedication to Sport; male athletes were observed to have higher levels of dedication than female athletes ($p<0.05$). According to the literature review, some studies have been found that show parallels with our study. Yerlikaya (2019) found that male athletes have a higher dedication than female athletes in his research on athlete engagement of cyclists. Zivkovic et al. (2013) found a result in favor of boys in terms of gender factor in their study of 1279 children. Studies with different results have also been found. Peke (2020) stated that there was no significant difference by gender in the results of the research in which orienteering athletes tried to determine their dedication to sports and their mental endurance. Kelecek and Göktürk (2017) found that female footballers have high sports dedication in their studies on athlete loyalty in young footballers.

A significant difference was found in the sub-dimension of 'Internalization' according to the variable of the year of being a national athlete in our research. There has been no researched study in the literature according to the variable of athlete loyalty in the year of being a national athlete. However, some research findings have been found regarding the year of sports variable.

Peke (2020) has found that the year of sports of orienteering athletes has a meaningful effect on the level of continuity of sports. Yamaner et al. (2019) did not find a significant difference between the sports dedication of athletes according to their years of doing sports and the effect of sports on life skills in their study, in which they investigated the sports dedication levels of the students of the Faculty of Sports Sciences. Yerlikaya (2019) did not find any meaningful relationship between the year of sports and dedication to sports in his research on cyclist commitment.

In our study, no difference was observed in the level of dedication to sports according to age and sports branch variables. Uzgur (2020) stated that the data it obtained did not indicate a statistically significant difference between age groups; Peke (2020) stated that orienteering athletes' addiction to sports has no significant difference when compared to age.

In the sports branch variable, the dedication of athletes interested in the team and individual sports do not differ in any way. Showing similarities with our study, Yamaner et al. (2019) stated that according to the results of their research, there was no significant difference between the sports branch and their commitment to sports.

A statistically significant difference was found in the 'Mental Training Levels' of the athletes in terms of gender, age, sports branch and year of national athletes. It was observed that 'Mental Training Levels' in athletes, 'Mental Basic Skills', 'Mental Performance Skills' and 'Interpersonal Skills' were more advantageous than female athletes in their lower dimensions ($p<0.05$). When we look at the studies with similar results; Nicholls, et al. (2009) also obtained a result in favor of men. Habacha, et al. (2014) stated in their research results that gender may be a determining factor in mental practices. Cankurtaran (2020) found that male archers scored higher than female archers in their study of archers' mental training skills; Erdogan and Gülşen (2020) did not see a significant difference in gender variability in their research to determine the mental training levels of athletes studying in the faculty of sports sciences.

A significant difference was found in the sub-dimension of 'Mental Performance Skills' according to the

age variable. No differentiation was found in the other sub-dimensions. Considering the "Mental Performance Skill" sub-dimension; It is observed that the mental performance skills of athletes between the ages of 22-30 are higher than those between the ages of 14-18. This is the case for older athletes; it can be interpreted as using their mental performance better than athletes at a young age. In the field summer scan, studies that support our research findings were found. Connaughton et al. (2008), in their study, stated that age and mental training skills in sports progress in a coordinated manner, therefore, with increasing age; They found that mental training skills also increased. Yıldız (2017) examined the relationship between mental processes and self-sufficiency and stated that the mental performance ability of athletes will increase as the age increases. Cankurtaran (2020) found a positive relationship between the age of archers and their mental training performances.

While there was a difference in the 'Mental Performance Skills' sub-dimension of the athletes in the comparison of the sports branch variable in terms of dealing with the team and individual branches, there was no difference in other sub-dimensions. Considering the "Mental Performance Skill" sub-dimension; It can be said that athletes who do individual sports have more advanced mental performance than athletes who do team sports. This can be explained by individual athletes taking full responsibility during the competition and controlling the entire competition themselves. Studies have been found that have obtained results in parallel with our research findings. Celik and Güngör (2020) found that athletes interested in individual sports had higher 'Mental Performance Skills' than athletes interested in team sports. The underlying reason for this is that individual athletes have improved self-decision-making skills and are freer in practice than athletes who play team sports. Erdogan and Gülşen (2020) concluded that there was no statistically significant difference according to the branch variable.

A significant difference was found in the sub-dimension of 'Interpersonal Skills' in the variable of the year of being a national athlete. Looking at the "Interpersonal Skills" sub-dimension; It is observed that athletes with a national athletic year of 8 years or more have lower scores than athletes with a national sports year of 1-3 years and 4-7 years. To define this concept; "Interpersonal Skills: Mental skills that allow for high-level psychological functioning and the desire to communicate with other individuals, influenced by the concept of self and feelings of self-well-being, which are the most important markers of personal development (Identity Acquisition, Interpersonal Competence)" (Vealey, 2007). According to this definition, athletes with higher years of being national athletes in the sub-dimension of interpersonal skills; it can be said that they use their interpersonal communication skills less or do not prefer this method when they are training mentally compared to athletes with low years of being national athletes. Dogan (2009) found in his study that there was no relationship between the year of sports and the score of vision; In their research, Erdogan and Gülşen (2020) found a significant difference in interpersonal skills and mental resuscitation sub-dimensions according to the being national athlete variable. In addition, according to the sports year variable, they found a parallel difference with the age of sports in terms of the sub-dimension of 'Interpersonal Skills'. Orhan (2020) could not find a statistically significant difference between active sports time and the mental training averages of swimmers. Aktepe (2006) stated that the proportion of athletes who consider mental training methods important and think they improve their performance is over 90% in his study, which examines the level of application of mental training methods of individual national athletes, while the level of applying mental training models of these athletes remains below 50%.

According to the distribution values of the correlation relationship between sports addiction levels and mental training skills of the athletes participating in the study, it is seen that national athletes have a positive relationship with the sub-dimensions of 'Being Fit, Dedication, Internalization', 'Mental Training Skills' sub-dimensions (Mental Basic Skills, Mental Performance Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Self-Speaking, Mental Resuscitation). Athletes' mental training skills increase and decrease depending on their level of dedication to the sport. We can say that as the commitment of national athletes to sports increases, their mental training levels also increase. We can mention that mental processes progress in coordination with athlete addiction. Some studies with exercise addiction are similar to our research findings. Hausenblans et al. (2002) found that exercise behavior, appearance image and energy image positively affected the symptoms of exercise dependence for athletes in their study. Tek Kurşun et al. (2018) found that as the symptoms of exercise dependence of the participants increased, their mental endurance levels also increased.

As a result of this study, it can be mentioned that there is a significant difference in "Sports Addiction Levels" according to the variables of gender and the year of being a national athlete; There was no difference in terms of age and sports branch variables. A statistically significant difference was found in the "Mental Training Levels" of the athletes according to the variables of gender, age, sports branch and the year of being a national athlete.

The 'Level of Addiction to Sports' in national athletes positively affects the athletes' self-identification with the sport they do, their focus on their goals, and their 'Mental Training Skills' in order to reach a good level both physically and mentally in their sport.

REFERENCES

1. Altıntas, A., and Akalan, C. (2008). Mental training and high performance. Journal of Sports Meter Body Training and Sports Sciences, 6(1): 39–43
2. Aktepe K. (2006). Importance of Mental Training in Sports and Determination of Mental Training Knowledge and Application Levels of Individual National Athletes. Master's Thesis, Department of Physical Education and Sports. Nigde 2006.
3. Behnke, M., Tomczak, M., Kaczmarak, L., Komar, M., and Gracz, Z. (2017). The sport mental training questionnaire: development and validation. Current Psychology, 37, 1-13
4. Erdoğan, B.S., Batur, D., and Gülşen, A. (2020). Determination of Mental Training Levels of Athletes studying at the Faculty of Sports Sciences, Mediterranean Journal of Sports Sciences, Volume 3, Issue 1

5. Cu□celog□lu, D. (1992). Human and Behavior. Istanbul: Remzi Bookstore.
6. Cankurtaran Z. (2020). Impact of Archers' Mental Training Skills in Competitive Environment on Ranking Shooting Scores, International Journal of Current Educational Research (UGEAD), June, 2020; 6(1): 13-29
7. Connaughton, D., Wadey, R., Hanton, S., and Jones, G. (2008). The development and maintenance of mental toughness: Perceptions of elite performers. Journal of sports sciences, 26(1), 83-95 doi:10.1080/02640410701310958•.
8. Çelik, O. B. and Güngör, N. B. (2020). The Effects of the Mental Training Skills on the Prediction of the Sports Sciences Faculty Students' Anxiety Levels, International Journal of Eurasian Education and Culture, Issue: 9, pp. (888-929).
9. Doğan, E. (2009). Comparison of The Forms of Vision of Male and Female Athletes. Gaziantep University Journal of Sports Sciences, 4(3), 373-381.
10. Guillén, F, Martínez, A., and Julio R., (2014). The Sport Engagement Scale: An Adaptation Of The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Uwes) For The Sports Environment. Universitas Psychologica, 13(3), 975-984.
11. Hecker, J. E., and Kaczor, L. M. (1988) "Application of imagery theory to sport psychology", Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 1988; 10, pp. 363-373,
12. Habacha, H., Molınaro, C., and Dosseviıle F., (2014). Effects of Gender, Imagery Ability, and Sports Practice on the Performance of a Mental Rotation Task, Université de Caen Basse-Normandie The American Journal of Psychology • August 2014 DOI: 10.5406/amerjpsyc.127.3.0313 • Source: PubMed
13. Hausenblas H. A. and Downs, D. S. (2002). Relationship among sex, imagery, and exercise dependence symptoms. Psychology of Addictive Behaviours
14. Jarvis, M. (2005). Sport Psychology, Arousal, Anxiety And Stress (A. 49-51). In: New York: Routledge.
15. Konter, E., (2003) Misconceptions and Facts in Sports Psychology Applications, Dokuz Eylül Publications, s.7, 31,31,37, Ankara.
16. Koner, E., (2004). Mental Training in Applied Sports Sciences, Vision Training for Peak Performance, page 7. Nobel Publication Distribution Ankara 2004.
17. Karasar, N., (2017). Scientific Research Methods: Concepts, Techniques and Principles (27. Edition), Ankara: Nobel Press.
18. Köklü, N., Büyüköztürk, Ş., and Çokluk, Ö. (2007). Statistics for Social Sciences (Second Edition), Ankara: Pegem Publishing.
19. Kelecek, S., and Koruç, Z. (2018). The Role of Footballers' Motivational Orientation and Sports Dependency Levels in Determining Athlete Burnout. Bas□kent University Faculty of Health Sciences Journal-BÜSBİD, 3(2).
20. Lonsdale, C., Hodge, K., and Jackson, S.A. (2007). Athlete engagement: II. Development and initial validation of the athlete engagement questionnaire. Int J Sport Psychol, 38, 471-492.
21. Martínez-Alvarado, J. R., Guillén García, F., and Feltz, D. (2016). Athletes' motivational needs regarding burnout and engagement. Revista de psicologia del deporte, 25(1), 006571
22. Maslow, A. H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. Psychological Review, 50, 370-396.
23. Nicholls A, Remco C.J., and Polman Andrew Levy, R. (2009). Mental toughness in sport: Achievement level, gender, age, xperience, and sport type differences, Personality and Individual Differences, Volume 47, Issue 1, Pages 73-75
24. Orhan E. (2020). Examining swimmers' mental training and personality traits in terms of different variables (Adiyaman Provincial Example) Master's Thesis, Elazig 2020.
25. Peke, K. (2020). Master's Thesis on Sports Commitment and Mental Endurance of Orienteering Participants. Istanbul Gelisim University Graduate School of Education, Istanbul.
26. Roberts, G., Spink, K., and Pemberton, C. L. (1999). Learning Experiences in Sport Psyhology. 2nd Edition. (U.K). Human Kinetics.
27. Sırgancı,G., Ilgar, E.A., and Cihan, B.B.(2019) Journal of Youth Research, Validity and Reliability Study of the Sports Dedication Scale, April 2019, 7(17), 5-19.
28. Tuna, N. (2018). Impact of Mental Training Program with Biological Feedback on Athletes' Performance, Master's Thesis, Institute of Health Sciences, 2018.
29. Tekkurşun-Demir, G., and Türkeli, A. (2018). Study of Exercise Addiction and Mental Endurance Levels of Faculty of Sports Sciences Students. Journal of Sports Science Research, 4(1), 10-24.
30. Uzgur, K. (2020), Determination of The Level of Dedication of Recreation Runners to Sports in Running Groups Master's Thesis Department of Physical Education and Sports, Gazi University Institute of Health Sciences.
31. Vealey, R. S. (1986). Conceptualization of sport confidence and competitive orientation: Preliminary investigation and instrument development. Journal of Sport Psychology 1986; 8 (3): 221-246.
32. Vealey, R. S. (2007). Mental skills training in sport. In Editors (eds.), Handbook of Sport Psychology (Third Edition).
33. Weinberg RS., and Gould D. (2015). Introduction to Psychological Skills Training. Ed., Gould D, Weinberg RS, Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology (ss. 247-271). Human Kinetics, Champaign
34. Yarayan, Y. E., and İlhan, E. L. (2018)Adaptation Study of Mental Training Inventory in Sports. Gazi Journal of Physical Education and Sports Sciences, 23(4), 205-218
35. Yerlikaya, G. (2019). Study of Cyclists' Athlete Dedication, Master's Thesis, Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University Institute of Social Sciences, Bolu, 27-60
36. Yamaner, F. (2019). 11. International Sports Community Symposium 28-30 October 2019 / Determination of the Relationship Between The Level of Dedication to Sports and Their Effects on Life Skills of Antalya Faculty of Sports Sciences Students.
37. Yıldız, A. B., and Yılmaz, B. (2017). Examination of the relationship between mental endurance and self-sufficiency levels in athletes. 15th International Sports Sciences Congress 15-18 November, Antalya.
38. Zivkovic, M, Markovic, M., and Stamenkovic, M. (2013). Angažovanost dece u sportu nateritoriji Beograda. Glasnik Antropološkog društva Srbije/Journal of the Antropological Society of Serbia, 1(48), 129-136.