

The Relationship Between Sportsmanship and Happiness

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ABSTRACT

Aim: This study aims to investigate the relationship between the concepts of sportsmanship and happiness with the participation of the team players who took part in the 1st and 2nd league competitions of Hockey 5S U16 Championships organized by the Turkish Hockey Federation.

Methods: Relational screening model, one of the general screening models, was used in this study. The study population consisted of teams who participated in the U16 Hockey 5S 1st and 2nd league competitions organized by the Turkish Hockey Federation, though the sample group was selected by convenience sampling method. The study group involved a total of 181 licensed hockey players, 83 of whom were women and 98 men, who volunteered to participate in the research. The descriptive statistics in the study, the Independent-Samples T test was used for paired comparisons. Pearson's correlation and regression tests were applied in line with the relational model.

Results: As a result of the study, it can be assumed that there are differences in terms of sportsmanship orientation and extent of happiness of hockey athletes according to demographic characteristics, and that there are positive and statistically significant relationships between 'happiness' and the sub-dimensions of the concept of sportsmanship such as 'compliance with social norms', 'respect for rules and management', 'adherence to social responsibilities', and 'respect for one's opponents'.

Conclusion: In explaining the effect of the sportsmanship orientations on happiness, it must be noted that 'adherence to social responsibilities' and 'respect for one's opponents' have a significantly positive contribution to happiness, and that higher levels of happiness of athletes can be attributed to their increased contribution to sportsmanship values (adherence to social responsibilities and respect for one's opponents).

Keywords: Athletes, Sportsmanship, Happiness

INTRODUCTION

The concept of sports plays an important role in the lives of millions of people around the world¹. Sport, as we know, is one institution in society that affects behaviour. Sport trains young people to become independent, self controlled, resolute, responsible, and communal in their outlook². Sport builds character and the world of sports is an arena for moral progress³. Beyond considering sport as a venue for character development, it is also valuable to acknowledge the potential for character to improve athletic performance⁴. Having a great effect in all areas of life, the domains of sports are mostly influenced by immoral and unethical behavior in a socio cultural context⁵. The line between sportsmanship and the motive of winning at all costs has recently become very blurry. Athletes are taught to win at all costs, pushing sportsmanship aside⁶. There are sportsmanlike conducts as forms of alternatives to these types of behaviors⁷. In the universe of sports, it is believed that such behavior can be avoided with the spirit of sportsmanship.

Sportsmanship is a vitally important concept⁸. It is mainly based on following a range of moral principles in the sports environment, and all athletes are supposed to respect their teammates, competitors and coaches line with sportsmanship⁹. The spirit of sportsmanship can also be regarded as one of the important building blocks of a society¹⁰.

Sportsmanship mainly refers to virtues such as fairness, self-control, courage, and persistence, and has been associated with interpersonal concepts of treating others and being treated fairly, as well as maintaining self-control while dealing with others, and respect for both authorities and opponents¹¹. It can also be assumed that

sportsmanship is conventionally suitable behavior expected from someone engaged in sports. Sportsmanship has four components: fairness, equality, good performance and the desire to win. These four elements are equally important and cannot be used interchangeably¹². However, the poor tendency of young athletes towards sportsmanship is a serious and growing problem¹³. Well-organized sport character education can provide powerful contexts for teaching and learning good moral habits¹⁴. What is important is to achieve a holistic balance within the framework of individual development and happiness in life¹⁵.

Human beings have tried to understand, define and capture happiness since their existence^{16,17}. The reason for this is that the most basic need of human beings is happiness, and as long as individuals are happy, they feel more successful and secure¹⁸. It is important for a person to develop his/her personal capacity while preserving his/her own personal integrity to be able to reach happiness¹⁹. It can be assumed that very happy people have a system of emotions and thoughts that can react appropriately²⁰.

The better the concept of sportsmanship is understood, the more effective the practices that improve sportsmanship will become. In this respect, sportsmanship should be handled in all its aspects in addition to increasing the number of theoretical studies²¹. A number of studies were found to have been conducted in the literature on subject matters such as task-oriented motivational climate and sportsmanship²², sportsmanship and loyalty²³, sportsmanship and personality²⁴, sportsmanship and respect²¹⁻²⁵, motivational and sports personship²⁶, sportsmanship and responsibility²⁷, leadership

characteristics and sportsmanship²⁸, mental health and happiness²⁹, values and happiness³⁰, modesty and happiness³¹, quality of life and happiness³², socialization and happiness³³, recreational activities and happiness³⁴, as well as aggression and happiness³⁵. However, no study was found to have examined the concepts of sportsmanship and happiness together, which is the reason why the current study is believed to contribute to the relevant literature.

Lee et al.³⁶ developed a curriculum to teach and learn sportsmanship in South Korea and conducted a study to determine the effects of the program on athletes. The authors not only found significant differences in the sportsmanship test scores of the students at the end of the training, but also found that the students experienced how valuable maximum effort is, as well as coming to conclusions about the importance of respect for one's opponents, respect for their teammates, the capability to accept the result as it is, respect the rules, and character training. On the other hand, Burgueno and Medina-Casaubon³⁷ aimed to examine the influence of sport education on sportsmanship orientations in high school students. The results of this research reflect the significant improvement of four of the five sportsmanship orientations (respect for rules, respect for social conventions and referees, full commitment, and respect for opponents).

Given the results of the relevant research, it can be assumed that sportsmanship is behavior or attitudes that can be learned or improved. The main aim of individuals participating in sports competitions is, of course, to be victorious. However, considering the joy experienced by the victorious athletes, it is believed that what motivates people is not only the desire to win, but also the feeling of being victorious, which leads to happiness. Consequently, if we can teach the ethics of sportsmanship to the new generation, we may not only teach such values but also happiness.

This study, therefore, aimed to evaluate the following hypotheses by considering the relationship between sportsmanship and happiness, which are considered to be the two indispensable elements of sports life.

- H1: There is a positive relationship between compliance with social norms and happiness.
- H2: There is a positive relationship between respect for rules and management, and happiness.
- H3: There is a positive relationship between adherence to responsibilities in sports and happiness.
- H4: There is a positive relationship between respect for one's opponents and happiness.

MATERIAL & METHODS

Research Model: Relational screening model, one of the general screening models, was used in this study³⁸.

Study Group: The study population consisted of teams who participated in the U16 Hockey 5S 1st and 2nd league competitions organized by the Turkish Hockey Federation, though the sample group was selected by convenience sampling method. The study group involved a total of 181 hockey players, 83 of whom were women and 98 men, who volunteered to participate in the research.

Data Collection Tool: The demographic form was used in the collection of data in the first part with the aim of

collecting personal information, while the 'Multidimensional Sports personship Orientations Scale' developed by Vallerand et al. and adapted into Turkish by Sezen-Balcıkanlı³⁹ was used in the second part. The scale consists of 4 sub-dimensions and 20 items, including 'compliance with social norms (5 statements)', 'respect for rules and management (5 statements)', 'adherence to responsibilities in sports (5 statements)', and 'respect for one's opponents (5 statements)'. The third part was based on the 7-item scale of 'Oxford Happiness Questionnaire short-form', which was developed by Hills and Argyle in order to evaluate the extent of happiness, and adapted into Turkish by Dogan and Cotok⁴⁰. Cronbach's Alpha (α) values of the scales were calculated for this study, given as follows: Happiness Scale: ,71; Compliance with Social Norms: ,87; Respect for Rules and Management: ,76; Adherence to Responsibilities in Sports: ,79; Respect for One's Opponents: ,82; and Sportsmanship Orientation Scale: ,87.

Data analysis: Reliability analysis was performed using Cronbach's Alpha (α) method in order to evaluate the internal consistency of the scales used in the study. First, the missing values and then the outliers were examined. Data were collected from a total of 201 student athletes. Upon removing the forms with problematic content, statistics were generated with the final 181 forms in the data set. In addition to the descriptive statistics in the study, the Independent-Samples T test was used for paired comparisons. Pearson's correlation and regression tests were applied in line with the relational model.

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RESULTS

Results related to the demographic features: The demographic characteristics of the participants show that 54,1% (98 athletes) of the 181 hockey players constituted the male group, while 45,9 % (83 athletes) of them the female group. Of all the athletes, 45,9 % (83 athletes) competed in the 1st league and 54,1% (98 athletes) in the 2nd. Looking at the distribution by age groups, one can see that 48,1 % (87 athletes) of hockey players were between the ages of 12-14, while 51,9% (94 athletes) were in the 15-16 age group. It appeared that 66,3 % (120 athletes) of the athletes had 1-3 years, whereas 33,7% (61 athletes) of them had 4 or more years of experience of being a sportsperson. The average age of student athletes was $14,48 \pm 1,28$.

The independent samples t test: The results of the t test conducted to determine 'whether or not the sportsmanship orientations and happiness levels of the student athletes differ' by gender revealed that the sportsmanship (except for the respect for one's opponents) orientation of the hockey athletes did not show statistical significance. The mean values of the dimension, namely 'respect for one's opponents' ($0,00 < 0,05$), with statistical significance, show that the values of male athletes ($\bar{x} = 3,93$) were significantly higher than those of female athletes ($\bar{x} = 3,36$). On the other hand, the mean values of the dimension of 'happiness', which showed statistical significance ($0,00 < 0,05$) by gender, signified that the values of male athletes ($\bar{x} = 4,10$) were significantly higher than those of female athletes ($\bar{x} = 3,65$). Under the 'league category', however,

the sportsmanship orientation of hockey players (except for the dimension of compliance with social norms) did not present any statistical significance. The mean values of the dimension, namely, 'compliance with social norms' ($0,00 < 0,05$), which shows a statistical significance, indicated that the value of the 2nd league athletes ($\bar{x} = 4,56$) is higher than those in the 1st league ($\bar{x} = 4,05$). The mean values of the dimension of 'happiness', with statistical significance ($0,04 < 0,05$) in the league category, revealed that the value of the 1st league athletes ($\bar{x} = 4,01$) was significantly higher than that of the 2nd league athletes ($\bar{x} = 3,79$). No significant changes appeared in the happiness dimension and sportsmanship orientation of hockey players in relation to the variable of the experience of being engaged in sports. Yet, the happiness level ($\bar{x} = 4,04$) of hockey players with the experience of 4 years or more was found to be higher than those with 1-3 years ($\bar{x} = 3,82$) of sports experience. Considering the age range of hockey players, there were no significant differences in their sportsmanship orientation and levels of happiness.

Correlation Analysis: The direction and levels of the variables of sportsmanship and happiness were analyzed through the Pearson correlation test, the results of which are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Results of the Correlation Analysis

Variables (n=181)	1	2	3	4	5
1.Compliance with social norms	-				
2.Respect for rules and management	,417**	-			
3.Adherence to social responsibilities	,136	,479**	-		
4.Respect for one's opponents	,506**	,379**	,127	-	
5.Happiness	,235**	,389**	,320**	,542**	-

**p<0,01 statistical significance

In a general evaluation of the four dimensions of sportsmanship in relation to happiness, a positive but weak correlation was found between 'compliance with social norms' and 'happiness' ($r=.235$, $p<0.01$), while a positive, but moderate correlation was found between 'respect for rules and management' and 'happiness' ($r=.389$, $p<0.01$), as well as a positive and moderate correlation between 'adherence to social responsibilities' and 'happiness' ($r=.320$, $p<0.01$), and likewise, a positive, but moderate correlation observed between 'respect for one's opponents' and 'happiness' ($r=.542$, $p<0.01$). Based on such findings, it can be assumed that there are positive relationships between athletes' sportsmanship orientation and their happiness.

Regression Analysis

Table 2. Regression analysis of the relationship between sportsmanship and happiness

Independent Variables	Dependent Var.	Beta	P	F	R	R ²
Compliance with social norms	Happiness	-,115	,112	26,409	.612	.375
Respect for rules and management		,144	,060			
Adherence to social responsib.		,201**	,004			
Respect for one's opponents		,520**	,000			

The regression model helped reveal the explanatory power, effect and direction of the correlation of sportsmanship, which is the independent variable, on happiness- the dependent variable. The results demonstrated the validity and significance of the model with the f value of 26,409 showing that the effect of sportsmanship on happiness was valid at the significance level of 0,00. The corrected R² value of the model was determined as 0,375, suggesting that the independent variable of sportsmanship accounted for 37,5% of the changes in the dependent variable of happiness. Considering the role of the independent variables to affect the dependent variable based on the beta values, the first significant positive effect was seen in the dimension, namely 'adherence to social responsibilities' ($\beta = ,201$; $p < ,01$), which is the sub-dimension of sportsmanship orientation, while the second positive effect was seen in the dimension of respect for one's opponents' ($\beta = ,520$; $p < ,01$). Consequently, H₃ and H₄ were confirmed in line with the findings. Sub-dimensions of 'compliance with social norms ($\beta = -,115$)' and 'respect for rules and management ($\beta = ,144$)' did not present any effect due to their statistical insignificance. In explaining the effect of sportsmanship orientation on happiness, it can be assumed that 'adherence to social responsibilities' and 'respect for one's opponents' have a significant positive contribution, that a one-unit rise in the level of 'adherence to social responsibilities' of athletes increased their happiness by 0,201, and that a one-unit rise in the level of 'respect for one's opponents' increased their happiness by 0,520. As a result, it can be inferred that 'happiness' levels of athletes will likely to grow higher with the increase in sportsmanship orientation (adherence to social responsibilities and respect for one's opponents).

DISCUSSION

Aiming to investigate the relationship between sportsmanship and happiness, this study included 181 hockey athletes with an age range of $14,48 \pm 1,28$, and who participated the 1st and 2nd leagues of U16 Hockey 5S organized by the Turkish Hockey Federation. The results of the t test conducted to determine whether or not the sportsmanship orientation and happiness levels of hockey players differ according to gender indicated that the sportsmanship orientation (except for the respect for one's opponents) of hockey athletes did not differ significantly. Given the mean values of the dimension of 'respect for one's opponents' with statistical significance, it was found that the values of male athletes were significantly higher than those of female athletes. Considering that respect for one's opponents has an important role in the domain of sportsmanship, this finding can be regarded as pleasing and worthwhile. Also, male players were found to have significantly much higher sportsmanship values than those of female players^{11,41}. In a study by Gullu⁴², statistical significance was observed in the sub-dimensions of compliance with social norms by male and female participants, and of the respect for one's opponents, which was in favor of female participants. Similarly, in another study by Yanik⁵, with a focus on the same dimensions, statistical significance was observed in favor of female participants. On the other hand, statistical significance was

found in the sub-dimension of 'respect for one's opponents' in favor of men in relation to the sportsmanship orientation levels of national wrestlers⁴³. Tsai and Fung⁴⁴ provide that male players attach less importance to sportsmanship than female players. Kavussanu and Roberts⁴⁵ comment in view of the results of their study conducted on the college basketball players on the fact that in attaining their success targets, male sports people exhibit behaviors that do not comply with morality and sportsmanship at lower levels than female sports people. Gencer et al.⁴⁶, however, found that the sportsmanship behaviors of athletes participating in basketball competitions did not show a statistical significance by gender. The same directional finding was also present in Shugge's²³ study. Shugge²³ asserted that gender factor is not effective in sportsmanship orientations. As can be seen in the related studies in the literature, varying results exist regarding the issue and it is believed that the differences arise from the sample groups. According to Gumus¹, the opponent's perspective is an important factor which is likely to affect the course of the game. Considering the opponent as part of the game, and being aware that no game is possible without an opponent is a prerequisite for displaying sportsmanship behavior.

The mean values of the dimension of 'happiness', which showed statistical significance in the study as to the gender variable revealed that the values of male athletes were significantly higher than those of female athletes. There are a number of studies in the literature whose results overlap with ours. In the study conducted with the participation of students from sports sciences faculties and students from different faculties, statistical significance was found in students' happiness levels in favor of men³³. The mean levels of happiness of male students in physical education and sports lessons were found significantly higher than those of female students⁴⁷. Similarly, there are other studies in which statistical significance was observed in happiness levels between male and female participants in favor of men⁴⁸. With the citation of Aksoy et al.³¹: Based on the results of the research, it is possible to conclude that happiness has various positive effects on individuals. For this reason, it is believed that it is important to know the factors that affect individuals' happiness. According to Kuter & Kuter¹⁵, it should be ensured that children and young people have fun and be happy while participating in sports.

The results of the t test conducted to determine whether or not the sportsmanship orientations and happiness levels of hockey players differ according to the 'league category' suggested that the sportsmanship (except for the dimension of compliance with social norms) of hockey athletes did not show any statistical significance. The mean values of the dimension of 'compliance with social norms', which differ statistically significantly indicated that the values of the 2nd league athletes were higher than those of the 1st league athletes. In the dimension of 'happiness', which is the other variable of the study, it was found that the value obtained for the 1st league athletes was significantly higher than that of the 2nd league athletes. A study conducted by Diener & Seligman²⁰ revealed that people with high social relationships, that is, who are able to comply with social norms, also appear to have higher levels of happiness. Although female basketball players

presented no statistical significance in the sportsmanship orientation according to the league category, the mean values of the athletes competing in the regional league in all sub-dimensions of sportsmanship were higher than the first league athletes⁴⁹. The athletes participating in international sports organizations generally appeared to adhere to responsibilities and social norms in sports, and respect rules and management⁵⁰.

There are no statistically significant changes in the dimension of happiness and sportsmanship orientation of hockey players in the variable of experience of being engaged in sports. Still, the happiness level of hockey players with the experience of being engaged in sports for 4 years or more appeared higher than those with 1-3 years of experience. With this finding, students who have more experience of being engaged in sports can be considered happier. As an example, handball players with 10 or more years of experience in playing the game have higher happiness values compared to those with less experience⁵¹. Yucekaya⁴⁷ stated that according to the variable of being engaged in sports as a licensed athlete, the mean levels of happiness of students who do sports are higher in physical education and sports lesson than those who are not involved in any sports, along with statistical significance in favor of students who do sports. It can be assumed that individuals with longer duration of experience in sports as active athletes are happier.

Another output of this study referred to the findings related to the correlation analysis: a positive but weak correlation was found between 'happiness' and 'compliance with social norms', while a positive, but moderate correlation was found between 'respect for rules and management' and 'happiness', as well as a positive and moderate correlation between 'adherence to social responsibilities' and 'happiness', and likewise, a positive, but moderate correlation between 'respect for one's opponents' and 'happiness'.

Based on the relevant results, it can be concluded that there are positive relationships between athletes' sportsmanship orientation and their happiness. The results of the regression analysis indicated that 'adherence to social responsibilities' and 'respect for one's opponents' have a significant positive contribution to explaining the effect of sportsmanship orientation on happiness, and that athletes' level of 'happiness' will increase as the sportsmanship orientation (adherence to social responsibilities and respect for one's opponents) develops. Upon examining the results of the relevant studies in the literature, no study has been found to have examined the relationship between the concepts of sportsmanship and happiness. These findings are, therefore, thought to have a unique value in terms of their contribution to scientific knowledge. Based on such findings, sportsmanship can be regarded as a concept that incorporates universal values. Consequently, it can be expected that as the contribution to sportsmanship values increases, so will the extent of happiness.

CONCLUSION

As a consequence, it is possible to conclude that there are differences in the sportsmanship orientation and happiness levels of hockey athletes according to their demographic

characteristics, and that there are positive and significant correlations between 'happiness' and the sub-dimensions of sportsmanship such as 'compliance with social norms', 'respect for rules and management', 'adherence to social responsibilities', and 'respect for one's opponents'.

In explaining the effect of sportsmanship orientation on happiness, it must be noted that 'adherence to social responsibilities' and 'respect for one's opponents' have a significantly positive contribution, and that the level of 'happiness' will rise with the increase in sportsmanship orientation (adherence to social responsibilities and respect for one's opponents).

Dreaming of a happy world surrounded by the feeling of sportsmanship requires the awareness of the fact that it is essential for families, in particular, as well as sports managers, trainers and educators to instill sportsmanship as a value in the individuals they train. It can also be assumed that research studies to be conducted with the participation of different populations and sample groups will be an important guide for athletes, families, educators, trainers, and sports managers on the whole.

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