

# Investigation of Sports Management Students' Perceptions and Attitudes towards the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

The research aims to examine the perceptions and attitudes of students studying in the department of sports management towards the Covid-19 epidemic. Covid-19 has had a huge impact on the world and has affected many segments of society. The research was conducted using a descriptive survey model, one of the quantitative research methods. The data obtained in the study went through statistical processes. In the research, the scores and differences between the students were examined by considering the variables of gender, class, and age. The statistical processing process of the data obtained from the research was carried out in the SPSS 22.0 program.

**Keywords:** Sports Management, Covid-19, Perception, Attitude.

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## INTRODUCTION

Coronaviruses (CoV) are among the common cold-flu factors that we can see widely in society. It is known that various coronavirus varieties that have been genetically modified in ancient times also cause some infections. Until now, seven types of coronavirus have been identified in humans: 229E (HCoV-229E), OC43 (HCoV-OC43), SARSCoV, NL63, HKU1, MERS-CoV, and COVID-19 (Turkish Ministry of Health, 2020). Among them, it is estimated that it was influenced in the Far East between 2002-2003 in the recent past and passed from wild cats to humans. "Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome" (SARS) is in this family of viruses. This virus affected about 8000 people, causing the death of approximately 10% of the affected people, that is, nearly 800. Similarly, "Middle East Respiratory Syndrome" (MERS), which caused the death of 30% of the people affected in Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries in 2012 and is estimated to spread from camels, is also included in this virus family (Karcioğlu, 2020: 66). According to the definition of the Ministry of Health; (COVID-19), that is, the new Coronavirus Disease is a virus first identified on January 13, 2020, as a result of research conducted in a group of patients who developed respiratory symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) in Wuhan Province in late December (TC Ministry of Health, 2020). COVID-19 was declared as a "pandemic" by the World Health Organization on 11 March 2020. The perception, which is known as transferring the objective world to subjective consciousness through the senses, is derived from the root of taking it as in Western languages (Özer, 2012). Perception organizes and interprets the sensory data carried by our sensory organs. It is defined as the process of interpreting the stimuli around individuals (Arkonaç, 1998, as cited in Minister & Kefe, 2012). The individual's past experiences are influenced by mental organization, motivation level, prior knowledge, and different internal factors (Senemoğlu, 2005). Attitude is the negative or positive evaluations of people about a subject, object, individual, or action and the way they act in a certain direction as a result of these evaluations (Koç, 2007). According to Krech et al. (1980), attitude is a continuous and systematic combination of motivation, perception, cognition, learning, and excitement

functions of the individual. It is the sum of the behaviors that emerge as a result of personal perception and learning. According to Hilgard et al. (1971), while attitude reacts against an event, fact, rule, value, and conditions, it also enables to reveal the direction and extent of behavior against these principles. According to Şişko and Demirhan (2002), if individuals have a positive attitude towards an event, phenomenon, concept, and object, they love, adopt, embrace and get closer to it; however, if he has produced negative behavior, he does not like it, does not adopt it, does not own it and moves away. Over time, there may be changes in the acquired positive or negative attitudes towards the same object and event or new attitudes may emerge.

## MATERIAL and METHOD

**Research Method:** A descriptive survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, was used in the study. Descriptive scanning is statistical operations that allow the collection, description, and presentation of numerical values of a variable (Büyükoztürk et al. 2014).

**Study Population and Sample:** The universe of the research consists of 200 students studying at İnönü University, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Department of Sports Management. The sample of the study, on the other hand, consists of 155 students who are determined by random method among the students in the universe.

**Data Collection Tools:** In the study, the scale for the evaluation of perceptions and attitudes towards the Covid-19 pandemics, whose validity and reliability studies were conducted by Tartan et al. (2020), was used. The scale consists of 4 subscales: general perception, perception of control, avoidance behaviors, and perception of causes, and sub-dimensions of these scales.

**Data Analysis:** The data of the research were analyzed using IBM SPSS 22.0 program. Firstly, a normality test was applied to the answers given by the students participating in the study to the questions on the scale and it was determined that the data did not show a normal distribution. As a result, Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis tests were applied.

**Table 1.** Demographic Features of the Students Participating in the Study

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	108	69,7
Female	47	30,3
<b>Age</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
18-21	64	41,3
22-25	45	29,0
26-29	46	29,7
<b>Doing Active Sports</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	60	38,7
No	95	61,3
<b>Grade</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> grade	29	18,7
2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	44	28,4
3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	46	29,7
4 <sup>th</sup> grade	36	23,2

The students participating in the study consisted of N = 108 male students and N = 47 female students, a total of 155 people. The age distribution of the students participating in the study is N = 64 between 18-21 years old, N = 45 between 22-25, and N = 46 between 26-29 years old. The students participating in the study, N = 60 do sports actively, N = 95 students do not do sports actively. First grade students participating in the study are N = 29, second grade students N = 44, 3rd grade students N = 46 and 4th grade students N = 36.

**Table 2.** Mann Whitney U Test Results Regarding Gender Variable

	<b>Contagiousness Sub-dimension</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Female	47	85,93	4038,50	2165,000	-1,471	,141
<b>General Perception Sub-Dimension</b>	Male	108	74,55	8051,50			
	<b>Dangerousness Sub-dimension</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Female	47	60,36	2837,00	1709,000	-3,247	,001*
	Male	108	85,68	9253,00			
<b>Causes Perception Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>Conspiracy Sub-dimension</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Female	47	78,50	3689,50	2514,500	-,092	,927
	Male	108	77,78	8400,50			
	<b>Environment Sub-dimension</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Female	47	78,00	3666,00	2538,000	,000	1,000
	Male	108	78,00	8424,00			
	<b>Faith Sub-dimension</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Female	47	76,23	3583,00	2455,000	-,325	,745
<b>Control Behaviors Sub-Dimension</b>	Male	108	78,77	8507,00			
	<b>Self-control</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Female	47	79,94	3757,00	2447,000	-,356	,722
	Male	108	77,16	8333,00			
	<b>Macro control</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Female	47	75,95	3569,50	2441,500	-,378	,705
	Male	108	78,89	8502,50			
	<b>Inevitableness</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Avoiding Behaviors Sub-Dimension</b>	Female	47	76,33	3587,50	2449,500	-,309	,758
	Male	108	78,73	8502,50			
	<b>Avoiding personal contact</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Female	47	78,07	3669,50	2534,500	-,014	,989
	Male	108	77,97	8420,50			
	<b>Avoiding common fields</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Female	47	72,50	3407,50	2279,500	-1,010	,313
	Male	108	80,39	8682,50			
<b>Cognitive Avoiding</b>	<b>Cognitive Avoiding</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Female	47	78,94	3710,00	2494,00	-,177	,860
	Male	108	77,59	8380,00			

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test for the subscales and sub-dimensions of the scale for the evaluation of perceptions and attitudes towards the Covid-19 pandemic are given in Table 2. No significant differences were found between female (S.O = 85.93) and male (S.O = 74.55) students in the contagiousness subscale of the general perception subscale ( $p > 0.05$ ). In the dangerousness sub-dimension, significant differences were found between female (S.O = 60.36) and male (S.O = 85.68) students ( $p < 0.05$ ). No significant differences were

found between female (S.O = 78.50) and male (S.O = 77.78) students depending on the gender variable in the conspiracy sub-dimension of the perception of reasons ( $p > 0.05$ ). No significant differences were stated between female (S.O = 78.00) and male (S.O = 78.00) students depending on the gender variable in the environmental sub-dimension of the perception of reasons ( $p > 0.05$ ). No significant differences were expressed between female (S.O = 76.23) and male (S.O = 78.77) students depending on the gender variable in the belief sub-dimension of the

perception of reasons ( $p > 0.05$ ). No significant differences were found between female (S.O = 79.94) and male (S.O = 77.16) students in the personal control subscale of the control subscale ( $p > 0.05$ ). No significant differences were found between female (S.O = 75.95) and male (S.O = 77.89) students in the macro control subscale of the control subscale ( $p > 0.05$ ). No significant differences were discovered between female (S.O = 76.33) and male (S.O = 78.73) students in the macro inevitability subscale of the control subscale ( $p > 0.05$ ). No significant differences were seen between female (S.O = 78.07) and male (S.O = 77.97) students in the personal contact avoidance subscale of the avoidance behavior subscale ( $p > 0.05$ ). No significant differences were noticed between female (S.O = 72.50) and male (S.O = 80.39) students in the avoidance of common areas subscale of the avoidance behavior subscale ( $p > 0.05$ ). No significant differences were detected between female (S.O = 78.94) and male (S.O = 77.59) students in the cognitive avoidance subscale of the avoidance behavior subscale ( $p > 0.05$ ).

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test made for the subscales and sub-dimensions of the scale for the evaluation of perceptions and attitudes towards the Covid-19 pandemics are given in table 3. In the dangerousness and contagiousness sub-dimensions of the general perception subscale ( $p > 0.05$ ), there were no significant differences between the students who actively do sports and those who do not. In the conspiracy, environment, and belief ( $p > 0.05$ ) sub-dimensions of the reason perception

subscale; no significant differences were detected between students who do active sports and those who do not. In the personal control, macro-control, and inevitability ( $p > 0.05$ ) sub-dimensions of the control subscale; no significant differences were discovered between students who do active sports and those who do not. In the avoidance of personal contact, avoidance of common areas, and cognitive avoidance ( $p > 0.05$ ) sub-dimensions of the avoidance behaviors subscale; no significant differences were noticed between students who do active sports and those who do not.

The results of the Kruskal Wallis test conducted for the subscales and sub-dimensions of the scale for the evaluation of perceptions and attitudes towards the Covid-19 pandemics are given in Table 4. In Dangerousness ( $p > 0.05$ ) and contagiousness sub-dimensions of the general perception subscale ( $p > 0.05$ ); no significant differences were detected between students. In the conspiracy, environment, and faith ( $p > 0.05$ ) sub-dimensions of the reason perception subscale; no significant differences were stated between students. In the personal control, macro-control, and inevitability ( $p > 0.05$ ) sub-dimensions of the control subscale; no significant differences were found between students. In the avoidance of personal contact, avoidance of common areas, and cognitive avoidance ( $p > 0.05$ ) sub-dimensions of the avoidance behaviors subscale; no significant differences were seen between students.

**Table 3.** Mann-Whitney U Test Results Based on the Variable of Active Sports Status

<b>General Perception Sub-Scale</b>	<b>Dangerousness</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Yes	60	82,98	4979,00	2551,000	-1,105	,269
	No	95	74,85	7111,00			
	<b>Contagiousness Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Reasons Perception Sub-Scale</b>	Yes	60	82,46	4947,50	2582,500	-,997	,319
	No	95	75,18	7142,50			
	<b>Conspiracy Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Yes	60	82,60	4956,00	2584,000	-1,018	,309
	No	95	75,09	7134,00			
	<b>Environment Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Yes	60	79,56	4773,50	2756,500	-,345	,730
	No	95	77,02	7316,50			
	<b>Faith Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Yes	60	74,37	4462,00	2632,000	-,806	,420
	No	95	80,29	7628,00			
	<b>Personal Control</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Control Behaviors Sub-Scale</b>	Yes	60	84,64	5078,50	2451,500	-1,470	,142
	No	95	73,81	7011,50			
	<b>Macro Control</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Yes	60	74,27	4456,00	2626,000	-,828	,408
	No	95	80,36	7634,00			
	<b>Inevitableness</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Yes	60	81,87	4912,00	2618,000	-,861	,389
	No	95	75,56	7178,00			
<b>Avoiding Behaviors Sub-Scale</b>	<b>Avoiding Personal Contact</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Yes	60	76,76	4605,50	2775,500	-,280	,780
	No	95	78,78	7484,50			
	<b>Avoiding common fields</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Yes	60	79,26	4755,50	2774,500	-,278	,781
	No	95	77,21	7334,50			
	<b>Cognitive Avoiding</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>S.T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>P</b>
	Yes	60	77,13	4627,50	2797,500	-,199	,842
	No	95	78,55	7462,50			

**Table 4.** Kruskal-Wallis test results based on the class variable of the students participating in the study

<b>General Perception Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>Dangerousness</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	29	86,21	4,003	,261
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	44	67,21		
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	46	81,80		
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	36	79,25		
	<b>Contagiousness</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	29	82,03	1,959	,581
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	44	75,90		
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	46	82,21		
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	36	4,72		
<b>Reasons Perception Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>Conspiracy Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	29	74,12	2,644	,450
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	44	78,65		
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	46	72,29		
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	36	87,63		
	<b>Environment Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	29	76,41	,282	,963
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	44	80,95		
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	46	76,53		
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	36	77,54		
	<b>Faith Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	29	84,31	2,633	,452
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	44	72,63		
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	46	83,80		
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	36	72,07		
<b>Control Behaviors Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>Personal Control</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	29	90,45	3,471	,325
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	44	70,97		
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	46	75,88		
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	36	79,28		
	<b>Macro Control</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	29	68,36	3,170	,366
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	44	74,15		
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	46	85,67		
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	36	80,67		
	<b>Inevitableness</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	29	88,62	1,522	,677
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	44	77,91		
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	46	73,97		
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	36	76,32		
<b>Avoiding Behaviors Sub-Dimension</b>	<b>Avoiding Personal Contact</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	29	68,90	1,817	,611
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	44	79,48		
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	46	82,66		
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	36	77,57		
	<b>Avoiding Common Fields</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	29	75,24	,390	,942
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	44	76,27		
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	46	81,02		
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	36	78,47		
	<b>Cognitive Avoiding</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>S.O</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	29	75,84	,380	,944
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	44	80,88		
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	46	75,93		
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	36	78,86		

## DISCUSSION AND RESULT

Kesgin (2021) stated in his study that there are no big differences in perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors regarding the COVID-19 pandemic according to the age group, but the negative psychological effects of the epidemic are felt more in young people. Knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors towards COVID-19 have been found at a positive level. Ceyhan and Uzuntarla (2020)

stated in their study that there are significant differences in the knowledge level of academicians according to the number of members in the family, their attitudes according to gender and marital status, and their behaviors according to gender, age, and status. They stated that there is a significant positive correlation between knowledge, attitude, and behavior towards COVID-19. In the same study, 83.6% of the participants stated that they had a medium level of knowledge, 82.1% of them had a high level of attitude and

88.1% of them had a high level of behavior. They stated that the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of the academicians towards COVID-19 are at a good level.

As a result, the scale of perception and attitudes towards the COVID-19 pandemic, which consists of four subscales, was used in the study. As a result of the analysis made depending on the gender variable of the students, there was no significant difference between male and female students according to their scores in the contagiousness sub-dimension, which is one of the sub-dimensions of the general perception subscale, significant differences were found between the scores of male and female students in the dangerousness sub-dimension. Depending on the gender variable, reasons perception, perception of control, and avoidance behaviors were found in all sub-dimensions of the subscales; significant differences were not observed between the scores of the students. Depending on the doing active sports status variable, no significant differences were found in all sub-dimensions between the scores of the students who do active sports and those who do not, in the four sub-scales. Depending on the class variable of the students, in the sub-dimensions of the general perception, perception of reasons, perception of control, and avoidance behaviors; significant differences were not stated between the scores of the students.

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