

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Impact of Islam on the Organizational Commitment of Athletes

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ABSTRACT

Aim: Based on the scriptures of the religion of Islam, which obliges its followers to work, loyalty and honesty, as seen in the verses and hadiths, this study aims to examine the impact of the religion of Islam on the organizational commitment of athletes, who are one of the most important stakeholders of sports.

Method: In the research, "Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS) and "Islamic Religion's Impact on Sports Activities Scale (IRISAS) were used to determine the organizational commitment of the athletes and the impact of Islam in sports activities. Research data were obtained from 365 athletes according to the convenience sampling technique. The survey model was used in the study, which was conducted as a field study. For this purpose, distributions of demographic characteristics are shown with ratio, frequency and percentage. In addition, the correlation status between "Age", "OCS", and "IRISAS" were tested with the Correlation test. Regression analysis was also applied to determine the impact of Islamic religion on the organizational commitment of the athletes.

Results: According to the findings, it has been determined that there is a positive and significant relationship between "age" and "organizational commitment" and "Islamic religious impact in sports activities".

Conclusion: As a result of the regression analysis, it was determined that the impact of Islam in sports activities significantly predicted the organizational commitment of the athletes.

Keywords: The Impact of Islam, Organizational Commitment, Athletes.

INTRODUCTION

Sports, which is an important part of social life, has entered into social life in different ways, has created a situation for individuals directly or indirectly, and has managed to keep the interest of the society alive¹. Today, sports; It has become a universal phenomenon without making any biological, cultural and social distinctions such as religion, language, gender, race, occupation, age. At the same time, one of the most basic social institutions, which has an important place in social life in terms of affecting the behavior of individuals and regulating the social structure, is "religion", which is as old as humanity². Religion can be defined as a way of belief that encompasses and regulates people's belief in the supreme power, which they accept as the creator, and how they should behave according to this belief, and the whole worship they will do to the creator. In other words, religion is the whole of teachings that surrounds life, has certain orders, prohibitions and rules, presents religious perspectives in this framework, the boundaries are sometimes flexible and sometimes rigidly drawn, predicts certain behavior patterns in different life areas, and offers a static and dynamic life cycle³⁻⁴. According to the Islamic understanding, religion is a set of rules that guide individuals to live in accordance with the purpose of their creation and to realize this purpose in a certain discipline⁵.

Sports and religion have been closely related throughout human history and have undertaken a task that reflects the common culture and values of humanity. In the historical process, many sports branches have become a part of religious holidays, and sports events have aroused passionate devotion, similar to religious holidays. The use of sports as a metaphor for religious effort in general, and the fact that religion and sports emphasize non-material success and experience, overcoming personal desires to cooperation and sacrifice for the good of the group, are evidence that religion and sports are closely related.⁶ The ability of the athletes to act in accordance with their beliefs in sports activities will contribute to their performance and increase their participation in sports activities.⁷ It is thought that this situation is a factor that increases the commitment of the athletes to the clubs where they play sports.

In today's first quarter of the 21st century, the changing economic, technological and political process has also changed the organizational behavior process in the management science. It can be said that the most important problem faced by organizations and industries in this process of change is the problem of human resources, and this problem has been the focus

of organizational behavior science for the last 30 years.⁸ Some key factors come to the fore in order to achieve the business goals of the organizations, to gain competitive advantage and at the same time to increase the service performance and productivity of the employees. At the forefront of these factors is workplace spirituality.⁹ Spirituality, which has a significant impact on personal attitudes; Organizational commitment is seen as an important factor in overcoming the problems faced by many organizations such as poor job performance and job dissatisfaction. Another factor is the concept of organizational commitment, which characterizes the relationship of employees with the organization and has impacts on the decision to continue membership in the organization, as well as containing a psychological dimension.¹⁰ Vecchio stated that religious beliefs and values are predictors of organizational commitment, and Meyer and Allen similarly found that religiousness affects employees' perceptions of organizational goals and their desire to maintain organizational membership. Hashim argued that the Islamic approach to human resource management is highly related to organizational commitment. Mohsen assumes that the concept of taqwa (Islamic spirituality) is an absolute precursor to organizational commitment, and that Muslim employees with taqwa will have a high level of commitment to their organizations, regardless of their social, economic or cultural background. In general, when we look at the literature, it is seen that religious belief has important impacts on people's behavior, and religion and spirituality affect moral reasoning, attitudes and behaviors.¹¹⁻¹² In the research we have done in this direction, it is thought that spirituality, that is, Islamic sensitivity, is an important element in the commitment of club athletes to the club they play sports. In other words, it is predicted that the organizational commitment of club athletes who apply the rules and principles of the Islamic religion and who have Islamic sensitivity will be at a high level. Because Rego and Pina e Cunha stated that when an employee feels included in a rich spiritual organizational climate, they are more effectively committed to their organization, experience a sense of loyalty, and act in a more committed and collaborative way. Thus, by developing a psychological commitment to the organization, the employee becomes more determined and productive for the organization. Research has revealed that organizations that respect employee spirituality positively affect organizational commitment and productivity among employees.¹³⁻¹⁴⁻¹⁵ When we look at the literature, it is seen that there are limited number of studies on the impact of the religion of Islam on organizational commitment. It is

seen that these limited studies focus on organizational outputs such as commitment, satisfaction, loyalty and work ethics.^{16-17-18,2}

In this context, the research aims to examine the impact of the religion of Islam on the organizational commitment of athletes, who are one of the most important stakeholders of sports.

Contributing to the organizational commitment literature from an Islamic perspective and revealing the impact of club athletes' beliefs on their commitment to their clubs constitute the original value of our research.

In this direction, answers to the following problem situations were sought in the study.

- 1- Is there a significant correlation between the age levels of club athletes and their organizational commitment levels?
- 2- Is there a significant correlation between the age levels of club athletes and the level of Islamic religious impact?
- 3- Does the impact of Islamic religion on club athletes significantly predict the organizational commitment of the athletes?

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Research Model: The data collection and analysis of this study was done by quantitative methods. Questionnaire method was applied to obtain primary data for the empirical study. The survey model was used in the study, which was conducted as a field study.

Population and Sample of the Research: Research data, according to the convenience sampling technique, were obtained from 365 sportsmen aged between 16 and 55 years old and licensed as club athletes in Sakarya in the 2021-2022 season.

Data Collection Tools: The data collection tool of the research consists of three parts. In the first part, there are personal information designed by the researcher to determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. In the second and third sections, there are measurement tools to determine the organizational commitment of athletes and the level of influence of Islam in sports activities.

The "Organizational Commitment Scale" developed by Meyer, Allen, and Smith and adapted into Turkish by Dağlı et al. was used to determine the organizational commitment levels of athletes. The scale, which consists of 6 items and 3 dimensions (emotional, continuation and normative), which explains 52% of the total variance, has a total of 18 items. The scale was scored as "Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5" over 5 categories. If the scores obtained from the scale are in the range of 1 and 2, it means low, at the level of 3 it is medium, and between 4 and 5 indicates a high level of organizational commitment. The Cronbach Alpha reliability value of the scale used in this study was determined as "emotional commitment" 0.80" Continuanance commitment "0.73" Normative commitment "0.78" and the scale total "0.83". These values show that the scale is highly reliable.

In order to determine the level of influence of the religion of Islam in sports activities, Taş et al., as a valid and reliable measurement tool, "Islamic Religion's Impact on Sports Activites Scale (IRISAS)" was used. IRISAS, which explains 64.37% of the total variance, consists of 6 dimensions (Motivation, Morality, Self-

control, Dress, Opposite Sex and Participation) and a total of 38 items. It was scored as "Strongly Disagree=1, Strongly Agree=5" over 5 categories. If the scores obtained from the total and sub-dimensions of the scale are less than 3, 1 or 2, the level of influence of Islam in that dimension is low, if it is close to 3, it is medium, and if it is between 4 or 5, the level of influence of Islam in that dimension is high. The Cronbach Alpha reliability value of the scale used in this study was determined as Motivation "0.93", Morality "0.93", Self-control "0.92", Dress "0.92", Opposite sex "0.89", Participation "0.57" and the scale total "0.85". These values show that the scale is highly reliable.

A Scale of Reasons that Motivate for Physical Activity: This scale, which consists of 30 questions, determines the reasons for participation in physical activity. These reasons are evaluated in 5 dimensions. These; interest/enjoyment (because it's fun), talent (because I like activities that challenge me physically), looks (because I want to maintain my weight so I look better), physical fitness (because I want to be physically fit), and social (because I want to be with my friends) dimensions. Scoring of the 7-point Likert-type scale is determined by ranking from 1 (not at all correct) to

7 (definitely correct). There are 7 questions (questions numbered 2,7,11,18,22,26,29) expressing the dimension of interest from the sub-components in the scale. There are 7 questions expressing the skill dimension (questions numbered 3,4,8,9,12,14,25). There are also 6 questions expressing appearance dimension (questions numbered 5,10,17,20,24,27), 5 questions expressing physical fitness dimension (questions numbered 1,13,16,19,23), 5

Population and Sample of the Research: Some of the data were obtained through Google form and some of them were obtained through face-to-face survey application. The data obtained from the athletes who participated in accordance with the voluntariness principle were analyzed through the SPSS 24 statistical program. The minimum acceptable sample size for different universes, which was conducted at a 95% confidence level, was targeted as 384 for 10 000 000 (N). For this purpose, data were collected from 374 athletes, and it was decided to exclude 9 data as they did not meet these criteria, by examining the obtained data such as suitability for sampling, incomplete information and creating extreme values. Normality values and analysis results of the remaining 365 data are presented in the findings section by tabulating. In the study, the demographic distributions of the athletes were shown with frequency and percentage. The correlation between dependent and independent variables was tested with Correlation analysis, and interaction conditions were tested with Regression analysis. In the analyzes, normality (skewness and kurtosis) values were evaluated according to (+1 to -1) criteria, and homogeneity of variances was evaluated according to the 'Levene test' results. The linear correlation between the predictor and predicted variables was determined by the 'scatter diagram'. Statistical significance value was interpreted on the basis of (p<0.05) criterion.

RESULT

Table 1: Skewness and Kurtosis Values of "OCS" and "IRISAS"

| Scales | Substances | N | The lowest | The highest | Mean | Skewness | Kurtosis |
|------------------------|------------|-----|------------|-------------|------|----------|----------|
| Emotional commitment | 6 md | 365 | 1 | 5 | 3.83 | -0.407 | -0.332 |
| Continuance commitment | 6 md | 365 | 1 | 5 | 3.45 | -0.021 | -0.150 |
| Normative commitment | 6 md | 365 | 1 | 5 | 3.64 | -0.160 | -0.220 |
| OCS Total | 18 md | 365 | 1 | 5 | 3.64 | -0.160 | -0.292 |
| Scales | Substances | N | The lowest | The highest | Mean | Skewness | Kurtosis |
| Motivation | 11 md | 365 | 1 | 5 | 3.97 | -0.777 | 0.944 |
| Morality | 10 md | 365 | 1 | 5 | 4.11 | -1.059 | 1.119 |
| Self-control | 6 md | 365 | 1 | 5 | 4.11 | -0.950 | 0.973 |
| Dress | 5 md | 365 | 1 | 5 | 3.43 | -0.325 | -0.742 |
| Opposite Sex | 4 md | 365 | 1 | 5 | 3.12 | -0.084 | -0.806 |
| Participation | 2 md | 365 | 1 | 5 | 3.67 | -0.447 | -0.479 |
| IRISAS Total | 38 md | 365 | 1 | 5 | 3.86 | -0.468 | -0.300 |

According to Table 1, when the normality distributions of the scales are examined, it is seen that the skewness and kurtosis values are between (+1 and -1). The fact that the skewness and kurtosis values are between (+1 and -1) shows that the data provides normality distribution.¹⁹ It was found appropriate to perform analyzes because of the normal distribution.

Research Findings: Findings regarding the descriptive statistics of the data obtained in this part of the study are presented with graphics and tables.

In Figure 1 and Figure 2 below, the distributions of the demographic characteristics of the participating athletes are shown as frequency and percentage with the column chart

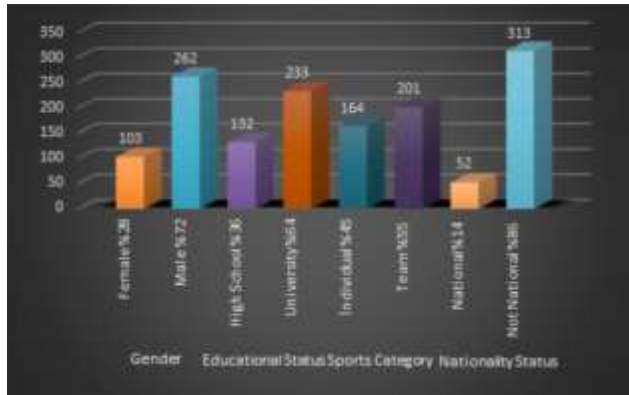


Figure 1: Demographic feature

When Figure 1 is examined, 28% of the athletes in the research group are female and 72% are male, 36% have high school education and 64% have university education, 45% are in individual sports, 55% are in team sports. It was determined that they competed in team sports, 14% of them were not national athletes and 86% of them were not national athletes.

When Figure 2 is examined, it is seen that the average age of the athletes in the research group is 22 years, the average of the first quarter (percentiles 25) is 17 years, the middle half (percentiles 50) is 20 years old, and the average of the last quarter (percentiles 75) is 22 years old. In addition, it is seen that the

average age of licensed athletes is 6 years old, the average of the first quarter (percentiles 25) is 3 years, the middle half (percentiles 50) is 5 years old, and the average of the last quarter (percentiles 75) is 9 years old.

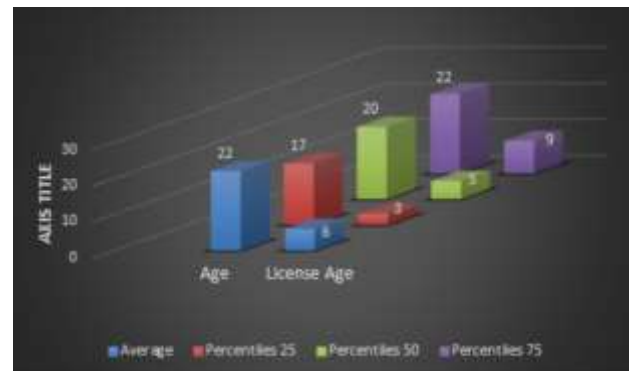


Figure 2: Age and Income

Table 2: Correlation test results between variables

| | Age | OCS | IRISAS |
|--------|-----|--------|---------|
| Age | 1 | 0.127* | 0.293** |
| OCS | | 1 | 0.391** |
| IRISAS | | | 1 |

When the correlation analysis performed to determine the direction and strength of the relationship in Table 2 is evaluated, there is a correlation between age and organizational commitment ($r= 0,127, p<0.05$), low and positive, age and the influence of Islam in sports activities ($r= 0,293, p. <0.01$), a moderate and positive significant relationship was found. A strong and positive relationship was found between organizational commitment and the influence of Islam in sportive activities ($r= 0,391, p<0.01$). According to the findings, the impact of Islamic religion on organizational commitment and sports activities increases as age increases. In addition, as the influence of Islam in the sports activities of athletes increases, their organizational commitment levels also increase.

Table 3: The Result of Regression of Islamic Religious Influence and Organizational Commitment in Sports Activities

| | Non-standard coefficients | | Standard coefficients | t | p | Model | | | |
|---|---------------------------|------------|-----------------------|--------|-------|-------|----------------|----------|-------|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta* | | | R | R ² | F | P |
| Constant | 2.218 | 0.178 | | 12.443 | 0.000 | 0.391 | 0.153 | 65.667 | 0.000 |
| MBO | 0.369 | 0.046 | 0.391 | 8.104 | 0.000 | | | | |
| Dependent variable: Organizational Commitment | | | | | | | | | |
| Independent variable: the Impact of Islamic Religion on Sports Activities | | | | | | | | Df=1,363 | |

When the regression analysis findings in Table 3 are examined; The impact of the religion of Islam in sports activities is a positive and statistically significant predictor of the organizational commitment levels of the athletes. ($R= ,391, R^2 = ,153, F_{(1,363)}= 65,667 p<0,01$). According to this, the impact of Islam religion in sportive activities as independent variable and the dependent variable explains organizational commitment by 15% ($R^2=0,153$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research reveals that as the age level of the athletes increases, their organizational commitment levels increase. Yalçın and İplik (2005) determined in a study that the age factor is an important indicator of an employee's organizational commitment, and stated that in this direction, as the working time of the employee increases with age, the gains from the organization will increase. Since these gains will affect organizational commitment, they increase organizational commitment as age increases.²⁰ Some studies examining the relationship between age and organizational commitment are based on the "Career Development

Theory" of Super (1957). This theory argues that younger employees and less experienced employees will be less committed to their employers than older employees.²¹ The fact that Salami, (2008); Angle and Perry (1981); Dodd-McCue and Wright, (1996); Allen and Meyer (1990); Amangala, (2013); Salami, (2008); Suliman and Lies (2000) found a positive and significant relationship between age and organizational commitment in their research is similar to the results of our research. According to Al-Kahtani, (2012), age is positively associated with organizational commitment, and older employees are more committed to their organizations than younger employees. According to Brimeyer et al., (2010), having freedom in their organization is seen as an empowering element for older and experienced employees, while freedom is seen as risky and threatening for inexperienced employees who prefer more guidance. Üzüm (2010) explained the increase in the level of commitment to their clubs as the age level of the athletes increases, with the normative and rational commitment approach of Allen and Meyer (1990). Normative commitment is that the athletes act by thinking that they have

responsibilities and obligations towards their club, and as a result, they feel obliged to stay in the club. Rational commitment, on the other hand, is commitment that makes you feel that it is necessary to stay in the club, considering that the feeling of interest is at the forefront and the cost of leaving the club is high.^{22,28,29,30} Luthans et al., (1987)k found that the club loyalty of the athletes increased depending on the age level, and the increase in the working time of the athlete in the club depending on the age, promotion, wage, compensation etc. found that the incidence was increasing. From this point of view, the feeling of having to stay in the club and the development of loyalty towards the club can be explained by the increase in the age level of the athletes in this study.

According to another result of this research, as the age level of the athletes increases, the impact of the religion of Islam in sports activities also increases. When the studies examining the subject of age and religion (Argyle and BeitHallahmi, 1992) are examined, it is seen that three models have been developed in order to analyze the changes in religious beliefs and behaviors with increasing age.²³ These are the "Traditional Model", which focuses on the increase in religious orientation and religiosity depending on the increase in age; the second is the "Consistency Model", which argues that there is no change in religious tendencies with the increase in age; the third is the "Apathy Model", which argues that there is a continuous decrease in religious activities depending on the increase in age (Argyle and BeitHallahmi, 1992).²³ Considering these models, the results of this research confirm the traditional model, which is the first model. When the literature on the relationship between age and religion is examined, some studies show that in parallel with this research, religious orientation and religiosity increase depending on the increase in age. In this direction, according to Elias (1982), religious beliefs are more effective for individuals in later ages. Similarly, Payne (1990) found that religious belief and faith become more important as an individual's age increases. In another study, Zorn and Johnson (1997) "Is there a significant increase in the value of religious beliefs with increasing age?" searched for an answer to the question and as a result, 24.6% of the participants stated that there was no significant change, and 69.3% stated that religious beliefs gained more value with increasing age. Taplamacioğlu (1962) divided the participants into groups according to their religious attitudes in a study related to age and religion. According to this, he found that while the rate of those who pray, fast and try to fulfill their religious obligations as much as possible, was 31.8% in the 16-30 age group, it increased to 48.5% in the 30-50 age group, and 68.5% in the 50 and over age group. In his study, Uysal (1995) revealed that between the age groups of 20-41+, the participants exhibited a positive attitude towards religion as the age progressed. On the other hand, as can be understood from the explanations above, it is seen that foreign literature and the literature in our country are similar in researches related to age and religion.

On the other hand, Taş, (2020) and Alfarhat (2021) found a negative and low-level relationship between the age of the athletes and the influence of Islam in their study, which does not match the results of our study. This difference can be attributed to the fact that individuals feel close to death in the face of painful events and situations (death of parents, natural disasters, etc.) that they encounter in their lives, at any age, in other words, the positive-negative experiences of the individual. However, it can be explained by the fact that approaching religion and seeking meaning can have more influence than chronological age.^{24,31,32,33,34} In addition, the fact that the researches are carried out using different methods and the study groups and cultures in the research may cause different results.

In the study, a significant and high-level positive relationship was found between organizational commitment and the influence of Islam in sports activities. Accordingly, as the level of influence of the athletes on the Islamic religion in sports activities increases, the club loyalty of the athletes also increases. According to the results of the regression analysis, it was determined that the level

of being affected by the religion of Islam in the sports activities of the athletes explained the organizational commitment by 15%. In the Islamic sense, organizational commitment is a form of self-awareness of a Muslim working in the organization. In this respect, he not only does business according to the job description, but also works to alleviate the burden of the organization and to protect the organization from possible losses by carrying out useful activities.²⁵ Tepper, who is among the earliest researchers to examine the relationship between workplace spirituality and organizational commitment, evaluated workplace spirituality as an antecedent for employees' organizational commitment.²⁵ It can be said that employees with strong spirituality generally exhibit behaviors in accordance with organizational commitment towards the workplace where they work or serve. In this direction, Emmons (1999) stated that workplace spirituality is effective on personal attitudes and has an important role in overcoming the problems encountered in organizations such as low organizational commitment and low job performance. Similarly, Milliman et al., (2003); Nasrudin et al., (2013) and Kazemipour et al., (2012) found a significant relationship between spirituality and organizational commitment. In their study, Rego and Pina e Cunha (2008) examined the relationship between spirituality and organizational commitment and revealed that when employees feel a stronger spiritual presence in the organization, they exhibit and develop strong effective and normative commitment. These last two studies, whose names we have mentioned, also coincide with the results of this study. On the other hand, Yousef (2001); Othman et al., (2004) and Jaros, (2007) revealed in their research that Islamic work ethic is associated with high organizational commitment. Islam encourages its believers to be perfect in every deed, deed and deed they do. As the Prophet Muhammad mentioned, "Ihsan is worshiping as if you see Allah, because even if you do not see Him, He sees you".²⁷ In this respect, believing that one is always being watched by Allah inspires employees to do their jobs perfectly. In addition, by motivating them to go beyond their job descriptions, it can naturally lead to high organizational commitment. In this case, it can be said that creating an environment where the athletes can fulfill their religious obligations is an important factor that increases the loyalty of the athletes to the club. As a result, we can say that the religion of Islam has an important impact on the commitment of the athletes to the clubs in which they play sports.

This study, which examines the impact of Islamic religion on organizational commitment in athletes, is in parallel with the limited literature in general. It is seen that researches focus on spirituality, work ethics, and organizational commitment. It is thought that future studies with different research methods and different sample groups will contribute to the elimination of the deficiency in this area. In addition, the inclusion of other organizational behavior concepts such as the relationship between the religion of Islam and organizational citizenship and organizational justice is considered important in terms of contributing to the field

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