



MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS THAT PLAY A ROLE IN THE ENGAGEMENT OF ATHLETES IN THE FIELD OF ATHLETICS

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Abstract:

This aim of study is to identify the motivational factors that play a role in the athletic engagement of athletes who are based in the region of Southeastern Anatolia. The population consisted of individuals engaged in athletics in Turkey's Southeastern Anatolia Region. The study's sample consisted of 234 participants who were chosen randomly. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check compliance with the normal distribution. The T-Test was conducted to compare the two independent groups of variables with the normal distribution, and the ANOVA and Tukey multiple comparison tests were conducted for the comparison of more than two independent groups of variables with the normal distribution. The frequency, percentage, average, and standard deviation values are provided as descriptive statistics. SPSS 22.0 software package was used for statistical analyses. As a result of the study, it was determined that the most influential factors encouraging individuals to pursue a career in the field of athletics were trainers, physical education teachers, friends and sports programs on TV. Their expectations from athletics were that it would allow them to be healthy, become a national athlete, and make money out of sports through their physical appearance. Their reasons for choosing the field of athletics were to gain success, become successful and healthy, make use of spare time, and a belief in the positive impact of athletics. It was also determined that there was a significant difference between the genders and the total scale and all sub-dimensions of those who participated in the study, a significant difference between their ages and their total

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scales and sub-dimension of expectations, while there was no significant difference between their ages and their total scales and other sub-dimensions.

Keywords: athletics, sports, motivational factors, expectation

1. Introduction

Regional levels of development and geographical conditions affect human lives on different levels in Turkey, as they do in other countries. These differences have a significant impact on our country as well as the relevant region, in terms of sports.

As stated by Sami (2015) in the literature, the region of Southeastern Anatolia has an immense potential for development in terms of natural resources and population when compared to other regions, however despite this potential, the region's level of development is too far behind the country's level of development in terms of its socio-cultural, urban and economic potentials. The utilization of this potential belonging to the region as a strategic opportunity is a societal necessity. It is considered that a change in the positive direction has occurred in the way people view sports due to modern day communication technologies. In particular, some of the benefits of sports, such as good health, socialization opportunities, instilling self-confidence in people and helping them to maintain a good physical appearance, are confirmed by social media, as well as scientific resources.

Technological developments and changes take place at a very fast pace in the 21st century. A very strong level of competition is experienced, especially in the area of information technology, and new technologies are constantly being launched. In accordance, interest in, expectations, and goals from sports have gained a new dimension. Sports are constantly on the agenda in the environment of communication, meaning that their impact on people is more profound. It has been stated by Aydoğan, Ozyurek, and Akduman (2015), that sports affect people through elements such as their place in the communication environment, the economic opportunities which they provide, their effect on a person's health and social circle, and their improvement of a person's physical appearance, social status, health, physical and mental skills, perceptions, and decision-making processes. In another study, Karakucuk and Yenel (1997) state that people engage in mass communication devices in order to get information and especially to make use of their spare time, and that this transfer of knowledge has an impact on people's interests.

Today, it has become very easy to access information about the Olympics and other sports events. It is a well-known fact that when a country's level of participation and their number of athletes increases it is a result of having a developed industry and technology. Success in sporting events has become an important element of competition in the way countries present themselves and has key economic value in areas such as their tourism and sports industries. Athletics events are some of the oldest of these sporting events and an area where significant success has been experienced.

In their study, Karac (2017) described athletics as one of the oldest branches of sport, dating back to 776 BC. They have been performed since the Ancient Olympic Games and continue to be performed today in the branches of running, walking, throwing and jumping track and field events. Furthermore, Karac also states that due to the fact that athletics includes many of the forms of movements employed in other sports branches, it is accepted as the main branch in sports science. Athletics consists of many disciplines, some of which are affected by the lack of appropriate geographical conditions, as well as the availability of a sufficient level of facilities and resources. Despite these limited resources, individuals in the Southeastern Anatolia Region are attempting to engage in some disciplines of the branch of athletics as far as the region's conditions allow. In particular, long-distance running is preferred because, of all the disciplines, the nature of this one allows it to be performed in any condition and under any circumstances.

Bayram and Sıktar (2011) state that athletics is most important element of the Olympic Games, in addition to it being considered the foundation of other branches of sports. When the literature is reviewed, a study by Goktas, Kalemoglu, Ozmaden, and Pekel (2006) revealed that there is a high interest in athletics, however that it is not developed in Turkey's provincial cities as almost all athletes are unable to make money from this branch of sport. In addition to the harsh conditions of this sport, regional problems and economic circumstances also affect the athlete.

It was stated by Simsek and Gokdemir (2006) that those who lead students to pursue athletics were physical education (PE) teachers. They also stated that broadcasts, publications and TV channels had no impact on the reason why individuals engaged in athletics, but rather the reasons were; the pleasure obtained from succeeding, the love of the branch of athletics, a desire to be recognized and respected by peers. Meanwhile, individuals' expectations were to be selected for the national team, to become a PE teacher, and to study at a university level in the future.

There are many factors that influence an athlete in choosing and engaging in a specific branch of sport. Guven and Oncü (2006) stated that children's participation in physical education and sports is to a great extent related to the parents' point of view on this issue; some parents are aware of the positive impact of physical education and sports on the process of socialization and hence support the their children's participation in these activities, while many families indicate that they are not keen on their children participating in such activities.

Socialization within society has a high influence on an individual choosing a sport. Yetim (2000) describes socialization as the process whereby beliefs, values, behaviors and lifestyle norms, that are shaped according to society itself, are adopted. It was indicated that thanks to socialization, it is possible for an individual to be able to adapt to social life and the society in which s/he lives through cultural integration and that sports are a medium for socialization. From this perspective, it can be stated that while socialization enables engagement in sports, sports is a factor that enables socialization. From a different point of view, it can be stated that factors which enable

socialization are elements of social circles and engagement in sports is realized through these elements.

Kılıçgil (1998) stated that another element which influences an individual's engagement in sports is the form and structure of the relationships within their social circle outside the family, and that the existence of groups of friends and the obtainment of a certain status among these friends are influential elements in engagement in sports. Aydoğan, Ozyürek, and Akduman (2015), indicated that a love of sports and the level of participation in sports in a society vary from person to person, that it does not depend on skills and interest, and that also sports skills do not occur on their own and have a changing and reshaping effect, in particular on the relationships within society.

Alibaz, Gunduz, and Sentuna, (2006) mentioned that trainers have a significant impact in leading athletes to sports, however the most important criterion in sports is the well-being and safety of the athlete which is important for the sustainability of success.

In his study regarding "the reasons why handball players in the age group of 11-14 take part in sports and their level of life satisfaction", Gorgut (2012) states that the reasons why the children took part in sports are; competing, being healthy, friendship, being part of a team, improving skills and having fun.

Gaining knowledge of the factors that lead athletes in the region of Southeastern Anatolia to athletics through this study, and improving the success of athletes in the field of athletics in the light of this knowledge, will have a significant impact on the success of individuals as well as international success.

2. Method

This aim of study was to identify the motivational factors that play a role in the athletic engagement of athletes who are based in the region of Southeastern Anatolia.

The study was conducted with the voluntary participation of a total of 234 athletes who are members of the Turkish Athletics Federation's Minors and All Stars Clubs Regional Cross League. As the study required large expenditures and a long period of time, it was limited to athletes participating in the competitions of the Minors and All Stars Clubs Regional Cross League. The screening model method was used and Sunay and Saracaloglu's scale (1996) was employed. The validity and reliability of the used scale was tested in advance. The Cronbach's Alpha value for the survey's internal consistency and reliability coefficient was found to be 0.84. A 5-point Likert scale consisting of 3 sub-dimensions and 27 items was used in the implementation of the survey. SPSS 22.0 software package was used for statistical analyses. Complementary statistical methods (frequency, percentage, average and standard deviation) were employed. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check compliance with the normal distribution. The T-Test was conducted to compare the two independent groups of variables with the normal distribution, and the ANOVA and Tukey multiple

comparison tests were conducted for the comparison of more than two independent groups of variables with the normal distribution.

3. Results

Table 1: Athletes' Personal Traits

Variable	Groups	N	%
Gender	Male	138	59
	Female	96	41
Age	08-10	34	14.5
	11-13	88	37.6
	14-16	79	33.8
	17 and above	33	14.1

138 male and 96 female athletes, most of whom consist of athletes between the ages of 11-13 (88 people) and 14-16 (79 people) participated in the study.

Table 2: Elements That Encouraged Them to Engage in Their Chosen Sports Branch

Survey Items	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Have your parents or siblings had an influence on your participation in the sport?	142	60.7	92	39.3
Has your trainer had an influence on your participation in the sport?	175	74.8	59	25.2
Have your group of friends or peers had an influence on your participation in the sport?	167	71.4	67	28.6
Has your PE teacher had an influence on your participation in the sport?	172	73.5	62	26.5
Have environmental conditions had an influence on your participation in the sport?	143	61.1	91	38.9
Has the existence of a gym and sports facility had an influence on your participation in the sport?	116	50.4	118	49.6
Have sports programs on TV had an influence on your participation in the sport?	166	70.9	68	29.1
Has the media had an influence on your participation in the sport?	130	55.6	104	44.4

It was observed that trainers (74.8%), PE teachers (73.5%) and groups of friends and peers (71.4%) are the elements that encourage athletes the most to engage in their branch of sport.

Table 3: Athletes' Expectations from Their Chosen Sports Branch

Survey Items	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
I want to be healthy and protect my health.	217	92.7	17	7.3
I want to be a national athlete by being selected for the national team.	217	92.7	17	7.3
I want to have a good physical appearance.	206	88	28	12
I want to be a trainer.	192	82.1	42	17.9
I want to go to university to study sports in the future.	190	81.2	44	18.8
I want to maintain my relationships with my circle as a popular person who engages in sports.	195	83.3	39	16.7
I want to be a good athlete and make a living as one	202	86.3	32	13.7
I want to have financial opportunities.	187	79.9	47	20.1
I want to be a PE teacher.	167	71.4	67	28.6
I want to be a referee.	133	56.8	101	43.2

It was observed that the primary expectations from athletics are; being healthy and being selected for the national team (92.7%), having a good physical appearance (88%) and being a good athlete and making a living through sports (86.39%).

Table 4: Athletes' Reasons for Choosing Athletics

Survey Items	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
I like athletics.	210	89.7	24	10.3
I enjoy succeeding.	222	94.9	12	5.1
I want to be healthy by engaging in athletics.	219	93.6	15	6.4
I want to make good use of my spare time by engaging in sports.	216	92.3	18	7.7
I want to keep informed of the positive contributions that sports have.	212	90.6	22	9.4
I want to enjoy a team spirit with my friends.	207	88.5	27	11.5
I want to be recognized, liked and respected among my friends as an athlete.	203	86.8	31	13.2
I want to easily join a friendship group.	200	85.5	34	14.5
I want to increase my income.	189	80.8	45	19.2

It was concluded that the athletes chose athletics primarily because they take pleasure in succeeding (94.9%), they want to be healthy by engaging in athletics (93.6%), they want to make good use of their spare time by engaging in sports (92.3%), and they want to benefit from the positive contributions that sports have (90.6%).

Table 5: Comparison of Total Scale and Sub-Dimensions According to Gender Variable

Dimension	Gender	n	*Avg.	Sd	t	p
Encouraging Elements	Male	138	4.03	0.54	-2.221	0.027*
	Female	96	4.17	0.37		
Expectations	Male	138	3.99	0.50	2.213	0.028*
	Female	96	4.13	0.44		
Reason for Choosing	Male	138	4.05	0.72	-3.353	0.001*
	Female	96	4.32	0.51		

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Total scale	Male	138	4.03	0.47	-3.421	0.001*
	Female	96	4.21	0.34		

P<0.05

When Table 5 is examined, it is concluded that there is a significant difference between the total scale and its sub-dimensions according to the gender variable of the athletes.

Through the analysis performed according to the gender variable, it is observed in the total scale and its sub-dimensions that the motivational factors for the engagement of female athletes in athletics are higher than those of male athletes.

In general, it can be stated that females search for a social environment that is different than the one in which they currently find themselves, and perhaps see athletics as a new way of life or an instrument that can open up new horizons for them.

Table 6: Comparison of Total Scale and Sub-Dimensions According to Age Variable

Dimensions	Age Groups	n	Avg.	Ss	F	p	Significant Difference
Encouraging Elements	08-10 (x)	34	4.09	0.46	0.479	0.697	
	11-13 (y)	88	4.13	0.44			
	14-16 (z)	79	4.07	0.54			
	17 and above (t)	33	4.02	0.47			
Expectations	08-10 (x)	34	3.83	0.41	14.054	0.000*	y>x
	11-13 (y)	88	4.27	0.41			y>z
	14-16 (z)	79	4.00	0.52			y>t
	17 and above (t)	33	3.80	0.31			
Reasons for Choosing	08-10 (x)	34	4.23	0.47	2.348	0.073	
	11-13 (y)	88	4.28	0.73			
	14-16 (z)	79	4.08	0.61			
	17 and above (t)	33	3.97	0.64			
Total Scale	08-10 (x)	34	4.05	0.38	4.995	0.002*	
	11-13 (y)	88	4.23	0.38			y>z
	14-16 (z)	79	4.05	0.48			y>t
	17 and above (t)	33	3.93	0.36			

P<0.05

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that there is a significant statistical difference between the points of the total scale and the expectations sub-dimension of the athletes according to the age variable.

According to this outcome, it has been concluded that those in the age group of 11-13 scored higher points than those in the age group of 8-10, while in the total scale, those in the age group of 11-13 scored higher points than those in the age groups of 14-16 and 17 and above.

4. Discussion

As a result of the findings of the study, it has been concluded that trainers, PE teachers and groups of friends and peers are encouraging elements; being healthy and being selected for the national team, having a good physical appearance and being a good

athlete and making a living through sports are important expectations; and taking pleasure in succeeding, the desire to be healthy by engaging in the branch of athletics, making good use of one's spare time by engaging in sports and benefiting from the positive contributions sports have are the reasons for choosing athletics as a sport. In similar research on the subject, participants in similar researches on the subject, the participants were able to spend their energy on the positive side and decrease their stress (Hacıcaferoglu, Hacıcaferoglu, Selcuk and Karatas, 2013), in enhancing their communication skills in the community (Hacıcaferoğlu, 2014; Hacıcaferoglu, Korkmaz, Atalay, Yucel and Koksall, 2015)

In a similar study by Simsek and Gokdemir (2006), it was stated that the PE teacher and the trainer of the relevant branch of sport in one's immediate circle are effective as encouraging elements, however that media and TV channels and the sports facilities and materials at school are not so significant as encouraging elements.

In a similar study conducted by Aydogan, Ozyurek, and Akduman (2015), factors leading students to sports are stated as follows: family (13%), neighborhood group of friends (9.8%), PE teachers (7.1%), facilities and clubs in the local area and facilities and materials at school (6.4%), admiration of celebrities (5.9%), and the desire to be famous and to be recognized (5.8%). (Aydogan, Ozyürek, and Akduman, 2015); in a similar study, it was determined that the participants participated in recreational sports activities (Hacıcaferoglu, Gundogdu and Hacıcaferoglu, 2012).

There is a statistically significant difference in the total scale and sub-dimensions according to the variables of gender and age. It has been found that women are affected more by the motivational factors that play a role in engagement in the branch of athletics compared to men, while athletes in the age group of 11-13 are affected more compared to those in the age groups of 14-16 and 17 and above.

The findings obtained as a result of the study show similarities to those obtained in Simsek and Gokdemir's study (2006) who also stated that women are affected more than men. In the same study, it was mentioned that the effect of parents and siblings in leading the individual to sports is important to 15 and 16-year-olds, the effect of the local environment in leading the individual to sports is important to 15-year-olds, and the effect of the PE teacher in leading the individual to sports is important to 15-year-olds. There are studies that include different results than those of our study which can be explained by the difference of the age groups in both studies, In a similar survey, it was determined that those who participated in sporting events were generally more likely to be women (Hacıcaferoglu, Bozkus and Kızılkaya, 2014; Hacıcaferoglu, Korkmaz, Atalay, Yucel, Koksall (2015).

According to the study results, it can be concluded that children in the age group of 11-13 have a higher level of expectation and impressionability compared to older children. According to Karac (2017), athletes in the age group of 8-11 are affected more by external factors compared to other age groups, while other age groups are affected by internal factors. On www.bilimvesaglik.com (2017), it has been mentioned that the adolescent development of boys kick-starts between ages 11-13, while the adolescent

development of girls is at its highest level. This is a period of puberty for girls, and early physical development in both boys and girls increases self-confidence, they begin to think in a more critical sense in terms of mental development, and they care more about their independence.

When athletics is viewed from the perspective of the gender variable, it can be said that females are in search of a social environment that is different from their current one and perhaps they see athletics as a new way of life or an instrument that can open up new horizons for them.

Leading the individuals in the region to athletics should enable the individual to gain respect; it is also important in terms of being an example for society. In a study conducted by Ozturk and Sahin (2007), it was found that the social competence expectations of adolescents who maintain a regular workout program increase, their self-esteem improves in a positive direction and they become more successful in taking responsibility and fulfilling the tasks which they are assigned. When the social competence expectation scores of students were compared on the basis of genders, no statistically significant difference was detected between women and men. In the same study, when the scores of male and female students who engage in individual sports, students who engage in team sports and students who do not engage in any sports were compared, it was found that the score of female students who engage in team sports was higher than that of male students.

Ozdemir, Guzel, Kadak and Nasıroğlu, (2012) stated that the adolescent needs to gain respect and have a status in society and adopts emotions, thoughts, attitudes, behaviors and actions that reflect that period of their life. It is also stated that the fundamental characteristics of this age are; emotional exuberance and outbursts, relationships that are easily established and broken, impressionability, and efforts made to stand out, draw attention to oneself and play a role in society.

Athletics is a difficult branch of sports as it is, but the conditions of the region also affect the performance of this sport. In a study conducted by Bayram and Siktar (2011) in the region of Eastern Anatolia, it is mentioned that there are administrative, financial, nutritional-health related and educational problems in athletics. It can be said that these results bear similarities to the factors regarding financial gains and education, which are among the elements that encourage individuals in the region of Southeastern Anatolia to engage in athletics.

According to the results of a study by TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute) (2016) on income and living conditions, 21.9% of individuals were living below the poverty line in 2015. In the same study, it was found that the number of family members living in the same household is higher in this region compared to other regions. In the ranking for provinces with the highest number of family members per household, Şırnak comes first with 29.9 family members, Hakkari second with 26.4 family members, Batman third with 25.9 family members, Ağrı fourth with 25.7 family members and Siirt fifth with 24.8 family members. It has been stated that the fertility rate in this region is higher than the fertility rate throughout Turkey and that Şanlıurfa has the highest fertility rate,

followed by Siirt and Şırnak with 4.33, 3.46 and 3.45 children per family respectively, as of 2016.

Turkey is a country where geographical and socio-economic living conditions differ by region. The fact that each region has living conditions that are specific to that region affects low-income families in particular, and hence adolescents. The region of Southeastern Anatolia is the region where this effect is observed the most. Terrorism, unemployment, and underdevelopment due to lack of education and difficult economic conditions, the rapid increase in the number of the family members, and young marriages in this region affect the children most.

5. Conclusion

As a result of the study findings, it is envisaged that once there is a correct assessment of the age when children, girls in particular, in the 11-13 age bracket, begin taking part in athletics and how they are affected by various factors, athletics will provide significant social and sports related contributions for the region of Southeastern Anatolia, which will in turn provide relief for the region's problems such as immigration, terrorism, unemployment, and poverty, and sports will thus help increase the level of education and attract the young population to sports.

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