



## THE DETERMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ATHLETES' PERSONALITY TRAITS AND THEIR POSITIVE THINKING LEVEL

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### Abstract:

The aim of this study is to introduce the determination of the relationship between the athletes' personality traits and their positive thinking level. The study involved in total 175 athletes, who have participated to the study voluntarily. The Eysenck Personality Survey (Shortened Version) (EKA- GGK) was used. Reliability and validity studies have been made by Karancı and his colleagues and Positive Thinking Scale, of which validity, reliability has been done by Akin, and his friends in 2015 have been used as data collection tool in this study. SPSS 20 Packet Programme has been used for analyzing the collected data. "Kolmogorov-Smirnov" single sample test has been applied to learn whether the data have a normal distribution or not. "Anova-Homogeneity of Variance" Test has been applied to detect the data homogeneity and it has been found out that data have normal and homogeneous distribution. Descriptive Statistic and Pearson Correlation Analysis have been applied for analyzing the data. At the end of the descriptive statistics found that the athletes' positive thinking score ((16,5569±5,18757), the extroverted personality score (3,2733 ± 1,41454), the neurotic personality score (3,1637 ± 1,75133) and the psychotic personality score, 4588 ± 1.34607). At the end of the correlation analysis, it has been detected that there is a positive way correlation between extroverted and positive thinking.

**Keywords:** positive thinking, personality, athletes

### 1. Introduction

There are more than one definition and theory of personality in the literature. In the most general sense, personality includes everything from A to Z that interests the

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person. The beginning of the personality is a long and uninterrupted process that starts from the time when a person enters into the mother's womb and continues until the end of his life (Tazegül, 2012., Güney, 2000., Hancerlioğlu, 1993, Geçtan, 2004). Cüceloğlu defines personality as a consistent and structured relationship form which is established by inner and outer environment that separates oneself from other people (Cüceloğlu, 2002).

Sport is an instrument in the socialization of individuals as well as allowing the individual to express their emotions and realize themselves through the exercises and games that a sport branch includes. Through the sport, individuals learn to release many negative instincts, mainly aggression, and keep them under control (Öztürk, 2007).

Sport is a form of behavior that meets basic needs while at the same time ensuring that the impulses arising from the individual's biological instinct are reached the target. The aim may be individual, social or economic. Sport is not only a physical activity; it is also an instrument in the socialization and integration into society of the individual. In that case, the interaction in the sports environment provides suitable opportunities for abreaction and emotional control. The individual participating in sportive activities has the opportunity to express her through exercises. It learns to control emotions such as aggression, anger, shyness, jealousy, which are described as negative behaviors, and negative emotions. Therefore, it has a positive effect on the adaptation process. At the same time, sport has a positive effect on neurovegetative nervous system, so it ensures this system to work in a balanced manner. It helps to overcome the excitement, aggression and irritability. The successes and goals achieved in the sport increase the self-confidence (Feist, 1990; Kuru, 2003).

Hills ve Argyle (1998) serbest zaman aktivitelerinin yarattığı pozitif duygu durumlarını ve bunların kişilikle etkisini inceledikleri çalışmalarında, her türlü serbest zaman etkinliğinin pozitif duygu durumlarının kaynağı olduğunu bulmuşlardır. Ayrıca bu aktivitelerin her birinin dışadönük (extravert) kişilik özelliği ile ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Spor ile extravert kişilik özelliği arasındaki ilişki özellikle takım sporlarında ortaya çıkmıştır (Pehlivan ve Ada, 2011).

A specific way of thinking can be defined as the way in which individuals choose and process information when interpreting the events they face in their lives. This style varies according to individual differences. While some individuals interpret an event in a positive way, another one may interpret the same event negatively (Erez et al., 1995). The way of thinking is a kind of preference for the use of the talents that individuals possess. They choose a form of expressing or controlling themselves in any situation in which they meet (Çubukcu, 2004). Individuals, who have a positive thinking and are able to positively evaluate the events that they are experiencing on their surroundings,

have more positive experiences than others and they are more successful in their lives and feel more energetic and happy in their activities (Öğretir, 2004).

According to Freitag (2003), an individual's thinking is one of the essential elements of her existence and has important functions like her organs. The general function of the ideas is to facilitate the adaptation of the individual to the society and environment where he lives in, thereby increasing the possibility of subsistence. Individuals need to think positively depending on two important factors. Positive thinking is an important source of motivation and an important means of raising the quality of existence for the individual to continue his daily life. Positive thinking can be considered as the way of looking on the bright side of events. Positive thinking, a concept that includes general features, can be defined as a comprehensive attitude that reflects in the individual's speech, behavior, feelings, and thoughts (McGrath, 2004).

Positive thinking, which is a cognitive process, helps individuals to use their skills effectively, to create positive images, to develop optimistic ideas, to find solutions to problems, to make positive decisions and to find more happiness in their lives. Positive thinking can be defined as using skills but it does not ignore the need to make realistic assessments. On the contrary, positive thinking is a positive focus and interpretation after acknowledging the positive and negative aspects of events and situations that individuals face (Bekhet and Zauszniewski, 2013; Tod et al., 2011).

The aim of the study is to reveal the relationship between athletes' personal properties score and positive thinking score.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 The Sample**

The sample for this study was made up of 175 athletes who study at Istanbul Gelişim University School of Physical Education and Sports, and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study.

### **2.2 Data Collection Tools**

#### **2.2.1 The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised Short Form (EPQ & EPQR-S)**

The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ, by Eysenck & Eysenck 1975) and 48-items short form of the same questionnaire, the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised Short Form (EPQR-S; Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985) was revised and EPQ & EPQR-S was formed (Yıldız et al., 2009).

#### **2.2.2 Positive Thinking Skills Scale**

Positive Thinking Skills Scale was developed by Bekhet and Zauszniewski in 2013. The Cronbach alpha value for internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be .90 (Akin et al., 2015).

### 2.3 The Analysis of Data

For analyses of the data, Portable IBM SPSS Statistics v20 software package was used. "The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test" was applied in order to decide whether data has normal distribution and "ANOVA-Homogeneity of variance" was applied to test the homogeneity of variances and it is observed that data is homogeneous and has a normal distribution. After this initial analysis, it was decided to use the parametric test method in statistical analysis of the data. For the analysis of data, the descriptive statistics and Pearson Correlation analysis were used to analyze the collected data.

### 3. Findings

**Table 1:** The Findings of Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Extroversion</b>	3,2733	1,41454
<b>Neurotic</b>	3,1637	1,75133
<b>Psychoticism</b>	2,4588	1,34607
<b>Positive Thinking</b>	16,5569	5,18757

According to the results of descriptive statistical analysis, athletes' positive thinking score was found to be (16,5569±5,18757), extroversion personality score was found to be (3,2733±1,41454), neurotic personality score was found to be (3,1637±1,75133) and psychoticism personality score was found to be (2,4588±1,34607).

**Table 2:** Correlation Analysis

		Positive Thinking
<b>Extroversion</b>	Pearson Correlation	,166*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,032
<b>Neurotic</b>	Pearson Correlation	-,202**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,009
<b>Psychoticism</b>	Pearson Correlation	-,104
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,182

As a result of the correlation analysis carried out, it was determined that there is a positive relationship between Extroversion personality characteristics and Positive Thinking score, there is a negative relationship between neurotic personality characteristics and body Positive Thinking of athletes in the sample group.

### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results of descriptive statistical analysis, it was determined that the extrinsic personality score of the athletes in the sample group was higher than their

neurotic personality scores and psychotic personality scores. Based on these data, it can be said that the athletes in the sample group are generally cheerful and social people. Because, extroverted people are generally cheerful and social people, sport is being thought as one of the biggest factor for development of outgoing personality characteristic of athletes. Since, at the end of the literature scan, in great numbers of the study related with personality and sport, it has been found out that sport has an important role in socializing and gaining self-confidence of person. Tazegül (2014) carried out sports training on university students four days per week for 3 months. At the end of the study, it was found that there was a positive development in the personality of the students and an increase in their self-confidence and sense of responsibility. Kane (1964) discuss that athletes are safer and more emotionally stable compared to individuals not engaging in sporting events (transferred by Kuru, 2003).

As a result of the correlation analysis carried out, it was determined that there is a positive relationship between the extrovert personality score and the positive thinking score of the athletes in the sample group, and a negative relationship between the neurotic personality score and the positive thinking score. The extrovert personality score of athletes will increase as well as positive thinking score of those will increase. The neurotic personality score of athlete will increase as well as positive thinking score of those will decrease. When this result is evaluated according to the concepts of extrovert personality, neurotic personality and positive thinking, it is thought that statistical results emerging from correlation analysis are normal. Because extroverted people are generally cheerful and tended to look for the positive in their lives. Individuals who have high level of positive thinking can look at the facts more clearly. Therefore, it is a natural result that there is a relationship between extrovert personality and positive thinking.

The negative relationship between neurotic personality and positive thinking confirms the concepts of neurotic personality and positive thinking. Neurotic personalities are generally concerned and obsessed. Because of this, these people do not have much positive thoughts towards their lives. Therefore, individuals who have neurotic personality traits do not have a high level of positive thinking.

As a result of the literature review, it was seen that there was no study that directly reveals the relationship between positive thinking and personality traits of athletes. Trish and et al. (2002) conducted a study evaluating athletes' psychological skills training program with their intelligence. In the study, a total of 14 athletes who are consisted of seven girls and seven boys, aged between 15.8 and 27.1, and aged between 7 and 13.7 with an age of 1-6 years; two female coaches, two psychologists, and one sports psychologist also guided them. Each athlete was interviewed for three hours for three months. Topics in the negotiations were about breathing techniques, stress management and positive thinking. At the end of the program, athletes participating in

the program have increased their success both in the basketball champions and skill training program. Scott (1997) studied the attitudes and principles of female athletes, called sub-elites, in his work. As a result, it was determined that female athletes have a greater desire to win rather than their talents. When the athletes' thoughts were examined, it was observed that they had the opinion like *"you cannot do it if you do not plan to do something very well. If you really want to achieve it then you can achieve it"*. Therefore, women athletes have achieved success due to positive thinking.

Morgan found a level of neuroticism below normal standards among 12 US, 4 Canadian and 7 South African college student wrestlers attending Amateur Wrestling World Championship in 1966 (transferred by Tosunoğlu, 2008). Tazegül (2012) found that wrestlers' extroversion personality score was found to be (=3.454), neurotic personality score was found to be (=3.035) and psychotic personality score was found to be (=1.930). Güven (1988) examined the psychic properties, personality characteristics, mental health characteristics, intelligence forms and levels of athletes engaged in freestyle wrestling. The athletes engaged in freestyle wrestling had higher scores in psychopathic, paranoid and hysteroid dimension than non-athletes. The wrestlers have more extroversion personality. A significant difference was found between wrestlers' concrete and creative intelligence and their dimension of extroversion. Tazegül (2015) found that wrestlers' extroversion personality score was found to be (=3.523), neurotic personality score was found to be (=3.125) and psychotic personality score was found to be (=1.877). Tazegül (2016) set the score of body appreciation score of elite tennis players was found to be (40.9808). Tazegül (2016a) determined that the body perception level of bodybuilding athletes competing in 90 kg and below categories have at a better level than the other athletes. Yıldız et al. (2009) revealed that there was no significant relationship between the sub-dimensions of extraversion–introversion and neuroticism in their studies on the personality traits of footballers in different leagues.

As a result, it was determined that there is a negative relationship between the extrovert personality traits and the positive thinking score of the athletes in the sample group; and between the neurotic personality score and the positive thinking score. When this statistic is evaluated according to the concepts of extrovert personality, neurotic personality and positive thinking, it is thought that the result is normal. When the extroverted personality score of the athletes in the sample group will be increased, and positive thinking score will increase, while the neurotic personality score will decrease. As a result of the literature review, it was observed that there was no study that directly reveals the relationship between the personality traits and the levels of positive thinking of the athletes. Therefore, it is thought that this study will be a great contribution to the literature and set a more comprehensive example for the studies which will be done thereafter.

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