



## THE INVESTIGATION OF GOAL COMMITMENT AND PERSONALITY TRAITS OF THE STUDENTS IN THE FIELD OF SPORT SCIENCES

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### Abstract:

Of the sport sciences students, 400 students were voluntarily recruited to respond to goal commitment scale and personality trait inventory. Totally 387 data including 262 males and 125 females were taken in analyses process. The relationship between personality traits and goal commitment was examined for the study. Data were analyzed in SPSS (version 16.0). The differences between the two variables were analyzed with an independent t-test. The differences between departments were analyzed with one-way ANOVA. The significance level was accepted as 0.05. The age mean was found to be  $20.93 \pm 2.58$ . Of the participants, 34.6% were reported to be living in the county while 32.4% reported being living in the metropole. There were significant differences between genders in terms of goal commitment and personality traits ( $t=3.112$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). A positive correlation was found between goal commitment and extraversion ( $r=0.156$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) while negative correlation was found with openness to experiences ( $r=-0.114$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Consequently, goal commitment and personality traits differed according to gender.

**Keywords:** goal commitment, personality traits, sport, student

### 1. Introduction

Personality is a spiritual unity that brings together features that are unique to human. This includes the bodily structure, physical appearance, intelligence, abilities, excitement, reactions, feelings, interests, and general culture of the individual (Adasali, 1979: 19). The personality under the constant influence of internal and external stimulants encompasses all human genetic and acquired abilities, instincts, habits, emotions and all behavioral characteristics. From this point of view, it can be said that personality reflects not only the individual characteristics but also the shared

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environment and the human community, hence the common characteristics of all people (cited in Yelboğa, 2006). Personality is composed of 5 subscales, even if different researchers differently define them. These dimensions are extraversion, compatibleness, emotional imbalance, responsibility, and openness (Yazgan and Yerlikaya, 2008). One of the most important reasons for the separation of psychology from philosophy into a separate discipline is the transformation of different approaches and different fields of study into a science. Personality psychology is one of the different working areas of psychology (Cüceloğlu, 1991: 430).

Personality is one of the critical areas of psychology to address the person with emotional, cognitive, social, and physical features. Personality is defined as convergent, shaped by the interaction with the environment of uncompromising properties. Personality traits constitute the basis of predictions for the individual's future behavior that distinguishes the individual from other individuals (McCrae, 2003; Goldberg, 1992). People are biopsychosocial entities. All people have cognitive, emotional, physical, and social aspects. These essential elements have been brought to an essential and sufficient level with the planning and implementation of the desired activity (Erdogan and Kocaeksi, 2015). At the beginning of the most critical activities to reach such enough level is a sport. Today, although it is known that participation in sports activities positively contributes to the personality traits of the students, the concern that it will negatively affect academic achievement is one of the obstacles to participation in this kind of sportive activities (Saygılı, Atay, Eraslan and Hekim, 2015). From this point of view, it can be said that, as a student of sports science faculty, there should be psychological, mental, physical, and tactical characteristics of teachers, sports managers, trainers, and recreationists. Personality characteristics are an essential factor that directly affects sporting performance, but the performance is the result of the physical and physiological capacity of the athlete who determines the sportive performance (Blanco, Hill, and Piedmont, 1999).

Sports have a vital role in the socialization of the individual because it is a social activity that enables the individual to participate in the dynamic social environment. Considering that sport is a collective activity in modern societies, individuals who are interested in sports through social activities enter into a social relationship with different groups of people. Sports allow people to communicate with the people from different beliefs, thoughts, and environment by getting rid of their narrow world. With this aspect, it can be said that sports provide support for the establishment, consolidation, and social cohesion of new friendships. Sports are an important issue not only among individuals but also among the audiences (Küçük ve Koç, 2004). Participation in sports activities, which is a social activity, affects the social and psychological development of individuals. Studies have proven that the personality traits of individuals who participate in and do not participate in sports activities are different (Weinberg and Gould, 2007). While sport allows the individuals to reach their target of their impulse resulting from biological instincts, it enables them to meet their basic needs (Tazegül, 2014). With the help of sporting activities, individuals make positive progress in achieving social and social goals.

The goal is defined as what an individual is trying to achieve. Goal setting has primarily led to more significant interest in the use of objectives in the industrial and organizational sector, but more recently in the context of sport (Kieran, Kingston, Kylie, and Wilson, 2009). According to Latham (2003), goals have impact on the feeling of accomplishment when a progress is made toward goal attainment. Locke (1980) stated that if there were no commitment, goal would not improve performance. As Latham (2003) states *“To gain goal commitment, one must understand the outcomes that people expect from attaining the goal. If the outcomes are positive, goal commitment is likely.”* Goals are divided into aims that focus on the performance or process. The performance goals focus on reaching a standard above the earlier performance of the person, while the result goals only focus on the competition (Burton, Naylor and Holliday, 2001). The main reason behind the fact that people stay away from the desired targets in some periods is to focus on the target and to decrease the belief in the aim. In this context, the most crucial factor that makes a goal successful is the existence and sustainability of commitment to the goal (Locke and Latham, 1984). This study aims to examine the goal commitment and personality traits of the students who continue their education and training in the faculty of sports sciences in terms of various variables.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1 Participants**

Of the sport sciences students, 400 students were voluntarily recruited to respond to goal commitment scale and personality trait inventory. Totally 387 data including 262 males and 125 females were taken in analyses process. A total of 387 students (262 males, 67.7% females, 125 females, and 32.3%) were included in the study. The mean age of the participants was  $20.93 \pm 2.58$ . 12.1% of the participants stated that they lived in the village, 6.7% in the province, 34.6% in the county, 14.2% in the city and 32.3% in the metropolitan area. 20.7% of the participants were educated in physical education and sports (n=80), 27.6% in coaching (n=107), 27.1% in sports management (n=105) and 24.5% in recreation departments. 33.9% of the participants were. First, 30% were second, 15.8% were third, 20.4% were fourth-grade students.

### **2.2 Data Collection Tools**

#### **A. 10-item personality scale**

The scale was used to assess the personality traits of the participants. Gosling, Rentfrow, and Swann (2003) developed and Atak (2013) adapted the scale into Turkish. The scale has five subscales including Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and Openness to Experience. Each dimension consists of expressions that define personality in itself and reflect the position of the person. In this scale, which is a 7-point Likert type, there are two items in each sub-dimension. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients of the scale are .83 for “openness to experience,” .81 for “Agreeableness,” .83 for 'emotional stability,' .84 for “Conscientiousness” and .86 for “extraversion.”

## B. Goal Commitment Scale

Goal commitment was measured by using Goal Commitment Scale, developed by Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, and Wright (2001), adapted to Turkish by Şenel and Yıldız (2016). The initial scale was developed by Hollenbeck, Williams, and Klein (1989) with 9 items. DeShon and Landis (1997) criticized the scale as being multidimensional in complex tasks. Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, and Wright (2001) revised the scale with 5 items. The scale is Likert type, and each item is rated between 1 and 5. Şenel and Yıldız (2016) found Cronbach's alpha as 0.74. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0.73. The higher the point in scale indicates higher commitment to a goal.

Depending on the alpha coefficient, the reliability of the scale is interpreted as follows:

- $\leq \text{alfa} \leq 0.40$ , the scale is not reliable;
- $0.40 \leq \text{alfa} \leq 0.60$ , the scale has low reliability;
- $0.60 \leq \text{alfa} \leq 0.80$ , the scale is reliable;
- $0.80 \leq \text{alfa} \leq 1.00$ , the scale has a prominent level of reliability.

According to this, the scale is reliable.

## 3. Results

**Table 1:** Demographic characteristics of participants

	f	%	Mean	S.D.
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	262	67.7%		
Female	125	32.3%		
<b>Age</b>			20.93	2.58
<b>Environment</b>				
Village	47	12.1%		
Province	26	6.7%		
County	134	34.6%		
City	55	14.2%		
Metropolitan	125	32.3%		
<b>Department</b>				
Physical education	80	20.7%		
Coaching	107	27.6%		
Management	105	27.1%		
Recreation	95	24.5%		
<b>Academic Year</b>				
1	131	33.9%		
2	116	30.0%		
3	61	15.8%		
4	79	20.4%		

A total of 387 students (262 male, 67.7% female, 125 female, and 32.3%) were included in the study. The mean age of the participants was  $20.93 \pm 2.58$ . 12.1% of the participants stated that they lived in the village, 6.7% in the province, 34.6% in the county, 14.2% in

the city and 32.3% in the metropolitan area. 20.7% of the participants were educated in physical education and sports (n = 80), 27.6% in coaching (n = 107), 27.1% in sports management (n = 105) and 24.5% in recreation departments. 33.9% of the participants were. First, 30% were second, 15.8% were third, 20.4% were fourth-grade students.

**Table 2:** Gender differences of participants in terms of goal commitment and personality traits

	Gender	N	Mean	S. Deviation	t	p
Extraversion	Male	262	6.05	1.36	.367	.714
	Female	125	6.00	1.27		
Emotional stability	Male	262	6.37	1.54	-.952	.342
	Female	125	6.52	1.48		
Openness to experience	Male	262	5.64	1.61	3.112	.002
	Female	125	5.12	1.41		
Conscientiousness	Male	262	6.17	1.27	-.404	.686
	Female	125	6.23	1.30		
Agreeableness	Male	262	6.50	1.43	.299	.765
	Female	125	6.45	1.54		
Goal commitment	Male	262	20.79	3.81	-1.484	.139
	Female	125	21.38	3.21		

Table 2 shows the gender differences in terms of goal commitment and personality traits of the participants. According to this, there was no gender difference in the values of extraversion, emotional balance, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and goal commitment ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, there was a statistically significant difference in the values of openness to experiences ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $t = 3.112$ ). It was seen that male participants had higher values in terms of openness to experiences.

**Table 3:** Differences according to the environment in terms of personality traits and goal commitment

		N	Mean	S. Deviation	F	p
Extraversion	Village	47	6.42	1.47	1.429	.224
	Province	26	5.88	.99		
	County	134	6.05	1.26		
	City	55	5.83	1.44		
	Metropolitan	125	5.99	1.36		
Emotional stability	Village	47	6.25	1.39	.682	.605
	Province	26	6.46	1.33		
	County	134	6.32	1.55		
	City	55	6.40	1.69		
	Metropolitan	125	6.59	1.49		
Openness to experiences	Village	47	5.57	1.54	.831	.506
	Province	26	5.84	1.75		
	County	134	5.34	1.53		
	City	55	5.34	1.48		
	Metropolitan	125	5.56	1.61		
Conscientiousness	Village	47	6.29	1.33	.414	.798
	Province	26	6.34	1.32		
	County	134	6.22	1.41		

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	City	55	6.03	1.05		
	Metropolitan	125	6.16	1.20		
Agreeableness	Village	47	6.44	1.93		
	Province	26	6.73	1.37		
	County	134	6.41	1.30	.547	.702
	City	55	6.34	1.61		
	Metropolitan	125	6.59	1.39		
Goal commitment	Village	47	20.42	4.73		
	Province	26	19.34	4.04		
	County	134	21.44	3.22	2.169	.072
	City	55	20.92	3.56		
	Metropolitan	125	21.08	3.47		

In Table 3, participants' personality traits and goal commitment values were given according to their environment. The results of the analysis showed that the level of personality traits and goal commitment of the participants did not differ according to the environment ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 4:** Differences of participants' personality traits and goal commitment values according to the department they study

		N	Mean	S. Deviation	F	p
Extraversion	Physical education	80	5.96	1.24		
	Coaching	107	6.14	1.56	1.161	.324
	Management	105	5.86	1.12		
	Recreation	95	6.15	1.34		
Emotional stability	Physical education	80	6.33	1.62		
	Coaching	107	6.56	1.41	.475	.700
	Management	105	6.41	1.52		
	Recreation	95	6.33	1.56		
Openness to experiences	Physical education	80	5.61	1.57		
	Coaching	107	5.43	1.60	.268	.848
	Management	105	5.41	1.56		
	Recreation	95	5.46	1.54		
Conscientiousness	Physical education	80	6.07	1.49		
	Coaching	107	6.15	1.33	.521	.668
	Management	105	6.30	1.10		
	Recreation	95	6.21	1.21		
Agreeableness	Physical education	80	6.62	1.58		
	Coaching	107	6.22	1.40	1.916	.126
	Management	105	6.66	1.28		
	Recreation	95	6.47	1.59		
Goal commitment	Physical education	80	20.75	3.64		
	Coaching	107	20.53	4.04	1.378	.249
	Management	105	21.17	3.39		
	Recreation	95	21.49	3.38		

In the table, the differences in the personality traits and goal commitment values of the participants are given. The results of the analysis showed that the level of personality

traits and goal commitment of the participants did not differ according to the departments they studied ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 5:** Differences between academic years in terms of personality traits and goal commitment

		N	Mean	S. Deviation	F	p
Extraversion	1.00	131	6.09	1.29	1.424	.235
	2.00	116	5.83	1.41		
	3.00	61	6.06	1.19		
	4.00	79	6.21	1.38		
Emotional stability	1.00	131	6.59	1.52	1.299	.275
	2.00	116	6.28	1.63		
	3.00	61	6.52	1.21		
	4.00	79	6.25	1.55		
Openness to experiences	1.00	131	5.51	1.62	1.583	.193
	2.00	116	5.22	1.64		
	3.00	61	5.60	1.34		
	4.00	79	5.67	1.49		
Conscientiousness	1.00	131	6.33	1.12	1.983	.116
	2.00	116	6.04	1.31		
	3.00	61	5.98	1.29		
	4.00	79	6.34	1.43		
Agreeableness	1.00	131	6.35	1.34	1.722	.162
	2.00	116	6.46	1.50		
	3.00	61	6.40	1.44		
	4.00	79	6.81	1.60		
Goal commitment	1.00	131	21.36	3.56	1.350	.258
	2.00	116	20.63	3.62		
	3.00	61	20.49	4.13		
	4.00	79	21.25	3.34		

In the table, the differences in personality traits and goal commitment values of the participants are given. The results of the analysis showed that the personality traits and goal commitment levels of the participants did not differ according to the academic year ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 6:** The relationship between age, class, personality traits and goal commitment

	Mean	S. Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	20.93	2.58	1							
2. Academic year	2.22	1.12	.542**	1						
3. Extraversion	6.03	1.33	-.020	.039	1					
4. Emotional stability	6.42	1.52	-.075	-.065	.177**	1				
5. Openness to experience	5.47	1.56	.059	.049	.184**	.192**	1			
6. Conscientiousness	6.19	1.28	-.057	-.014	.210**	.307**	.201**	1		
7. Agreeableness	6.48	1.46	.051	.100*	.067	-.071	.000	.075	1	
8. Goal commitment	20.98	3.64	-.086	-.024	.156**	.017	-.114*	.094	.089	1

The relationships between age, academic year, personality traits, and goal commitment are given in Table 6. According to this, there was a positive correlation between goal commitment and extraversion ( $r = .156$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and a negative correlation was found between experience and openness ( $r = -.114$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ).

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

People are different from each other in terms of geography and cultural variables and psychological and sociological terms (Locke & Latham, 1984). In this context, the mental and sociological situations that people have are directly related to the performance increase (Kazım, 2018). According to the results obtained from psychological and clinical researches in the field of goal setting, it has been shown that goal setting has a positive effect on performance and personality (Goldberg, 1992). When the literature on personality is examined, it is seen that personality is critical both in the field of education and in the targeted areas of work. While people adapt to their environment through their inherent abilities and the stages of education, they also shape their personality (Kalaycı, 2008). University education is an essential period in which individuals' personalities shape and mature. In this period, students' ability to establish good relationships with their environment will positively affect the formation of their personalities. Individuals with strong and personal harmony in social relations will be able to solve the problems they face in life more easily (Cüceloğlu, 1991). It has universal importance in terms of preparing the ground for the free-thinking and future research that will give students a scientific perspective. It is known that university education has positive effects on personality development as well as developing ways of people gaining awareness of responsibility.

In this context, this study that is conducted for the purpose to examine the goal commitment and personality traits of the students who continue their education and training in the faculty of sports sciences in terms of various variables revealed the results of the relationships between gender, academic year, goal commitment, and personality traits. The gender differences in terms of goal commitment and personality traits of the participants were displayed. According to this, there was no gender difference in the values of extraversion, emotional balance, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and goal commitment ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, there was a statistically significant difference in the values of openness to experiences ( $p < 0.05$ ,  $t = 3.112$ ). It was seen that male participants had higher values in terms of openness to experiences (Table 2). As a result of the literature review, it has been observed that there is not a sufficient number of studies directly demonstrating the relationship between the goal commitment and personality traits of the students. This study supplies an essential contribution to the literature.

There were no relationships between age, gender, and doing sport, which is similar to our results. In a similar study, Akpınar and Akpınar (2018) found that the students of the School of Physical Education and Sports were mentally strong and durable and had a moderate personality. Mental endurance and personality levels do



not interact between sport, age, and gender, and there is a moderately significant relationship between mental and personality sub-dimensions.

Participants' personality traits and goal commitment values were given according to their environment were given. The results of the analysis showed that the level of personality traits and goal commitment of the participants did not differ according to the environment ( $p > 0.05$ ). Başbay, Kağnıcı, and Başbay (2018) found that there was a significant positive relationship between openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and multicultural competence, while there was a significant negative relationship with emotional stability, but no significant relationship was found with extraversion. In other words, it was found that teachers who are open to different experiences, open-minded, sensitive, regular, attentive, helpful, compassionate, reliable, tolerant and acting in line with the plan have a high level of perception of multicultural competence.

The differences in the personality traits and goal commitment values of the participants are given. The results of the analysis showed that the level of personality traits and goal commitment of the participants did not differ according to the departments they studied ( $p > 0.05$ ). According to the results of his research on university students, Aktaş (1997) found that the general, personal, and social adaptations of the fourth-grade students were higher than the first-grade students. The university education process is an essential process in which students' personalities and personality adaptations mature.

The differences in personality traits and goal commitment values of the participants are given in Table 6. The results of the analysis showed that the personality traits and goal commitment levels of the participants did not differ according to the academic year ( $p > 0.05$ ).

As a result, it was seen that there was a significant difference in terms of goal commitment and personality traits of the university students taking part in the study. However, there was no significant difference in terms of personal characteristics and commitment of the students in terms of class, department, and environment. Research can be developed by including students in different geographical regions and universities in different faculties.

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