

## The Comparison of Emphatic Tendencies of the Management Department Students

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The aim of the current research is to make a comparison between the university students majoring at the department of sport management at Kafkas University and Atatürk University in terms of empathy level. For data collection, "Emphatic Tendency Scale", which was developed by Dökmen (1994) and which included 20 items, was administered to a total of 463 participants consisting of 174 female and 289 male students. For data analysis, SPSS 16 programme was used for statistical procedures such as frequency analysis for demographic information, independent sample t-test for the comparison of empathy level of gender and university and one-way Anova and Tukey for the comparison of empathy level in terms of age and grade. The results of the study revealed that there were statistically significant differences in gender and empathy level ( $p=,028$ ), age and empathy level ( $p=,026$ ), grade and empathy level ( $p=,039$ ).

**Key Words:** Empathy, Management, Sports, Physical Education

For management students who are expected to be future managers and entrepreneurs, being successful is connected with their empathetic tendency levels. Empathetic tendency is the leading skill of modern leadership and communication that every successful manager should keep. Enhancing empathetic tendency and level of aforesaid students will increase success of their future attempts and activity of their management. In this point, parts of family are very important with the society in which individual is present while raising future managers. Also this situation gives academics

who train them a mentorship duty increasing student's empathetic tendency level.

Indeed, in recent years, empathy concept that we encounter it in every area of life can be described as "one individual rightly understanding another person's feelings and thoughts by putting himself in his place" (Dökmen, 2004, p.157). It is thought that origin of empathy term whose importance is increasing in both psychiatry and psychology came from "empathéia" term in ancient Greek (Dökmen, 2008). In contemporary sense, empathy concept approached first time by Theodor Lips in 1897 has been being

examined by a lot of discipline with its different extents for duration which is more than a century (Filiz, 2009, p.8). When aforementioned centenary period is examined, characterizations had been being made for cognitive aspect of empathy until the years of 1950, in 1960s, cognitive and affective extents dominated. After 1970s, a person understanding feelings of others and transmitting his own feelings to them meaning was accepted (Ural, 2010, p. 53).

Goldstein and Michaels (1985) examined empathy concept which means to have awareness in an objective way about the other's thoughts and feelings and the possible meanings of them and to live these feelings in a vicarious way (Budak, 2000, s.528) examined as four component like cognitive, emotional, communicational and sensory (Akcali, 1991, p.19)

The process that formed to understand the other people's thoughts, aims and necessities may be called cognitive component (Ceyhan, 1994, p.33). According to Wied, Branje and Meeus (2005) the emotional format of empathy may be defined as to be able to feel the other person's experienced emotions and to be able to show the most suitable attitude to the other's emotional situation. Actually the most important distinction can be represented as "to understand what your partner is feeling" with cognitive aspect and "to be able to feel the other's feelings" with emotional aspect (Gladstein, 1983). Today, according to most researcher these two components are interacted with each other. With more clear expression, empathy is formed with both cognitive and emotional components (Chlopan et.al., 1985).

Researchers specified the communicational component as, to be able to transmit the reactions of cognitive and emotional components' process to the partners. So, transmitting right is added next to understanding (Öner, 2001, p.13). As a last component, sensory component is represented as the individual's first experience about the partner's feelings. Essentially this is an individual's implication containment process by looking to the partner's face, speech, voice and facial expressions. After these are occurred the person who empathize activates the emotional and cognitive components and this concludes with communicational empathy (Öner, 2001, p.32).

After giving the general information about the empathy conception, it would be well-judged to say that the managers are compelled to communicate effective with subordinates at our today's modern companies. By this reason empathy as a talent is a need to provide this communication (Acuner, 2002, p.1). Subordinates' trust to managers is a matter for achieving the company's aims. Gaining confidence on behalf of managers and orientation of subordinates to the companies' aims are geared to managers' emphatic abilities. Managers must empathize themselves like subordinates, must understand them, and must be able to convey the requirements. At the researches, empathy talents' close relationship is detected with conceptions like leadership, emotional intelligence, communicational talent and more. Actually the conceptions that are mentioned are some of the properties that must be presented on a good manager. So the manager candidates' empathic proclivity level must be increased to the highest grades.

Not also there are researches that represent the emphatic talents are received with birth, but also it has been observed that the empathy is a teachable process at some researches (Ural, 2010, p.53). The empathy training to the managers will cause to receive more social behaviours by enriching affection, cognitive and emotional sympathy (Halicioğlu, 2004, p.17).

This researches' main purpose is to compare the management students at different universities by identifying their empathic proclivity. In the light of the foregoing reasons management students' empathic proclivity levels' researches according to some variables represents the main topic of this research. Also a comparison is intended to make between management students' by taking into considerations of their gender, age, class, the choice willing and satisfaction situations about their courses.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this research is to compare the empathy level of the students who study Sports Management at Ataturk University and Kafkas University.

The population of the study consists of students studying Sports Management at the School of Physical Education and Sports at

Atatürk University and Kafkas University while 463 students, 174 female and 289 male, make up the sample of this study.

Emphatic Tendency Scale, which had 20 questions and was developed by Dokmen (1994), was used to obtain data in the research. In the scale, the minimum possible grade that can be gained from the scale is 20, and the maximum one is 100. After students were informed about the study and detailed information was given regarding the survey in the classroom, the survey was distributed and applied one by one to those who voluntarily wanted to participate in the study. Subsequently, it was collected back.

The analysis of the obtained data was done with the help of the computer statistical package software, and the level of comprehension was taken as ( $p=0.05$ ).

Frequency analysis was used to determine the demographic characteristics while independent t-test was employed to find out the differences in the empathy levels of the students according to gender and university. Moreover, one-way analysis of variance (Anova) was used to determine the differences in the empathy levels of the students according to age and year at university. Finally, Tukey's test was employed to find the groups from which the differences are sourced.

### Findings

Table.1 Information about the Participants acc. to Demographic Properties

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	289	62.4
Female	174	37.6
<b>Age</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Btw. Ages 18-20	212	45.8
Btw. Ages 21-23	173	37,4
Btw. Ages 24-26	59	12,7
Age 27 and older	19	4,1
<b>University</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Atatürk University	253	54,6
Kafkas University	210	45,4
<b>Grade</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
1.Grade	139	30.1
2.Grade	140	30.2
3.Grade	102	22.0
4.Grade	82	17.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>463</b>	<b>100</b>

It can be seen that % 62.4 of the participants are male; %37.6 are female while %45.8 are between **18-20** ages, %37.4 are between **21-23 ages**, %12.7 are between **24-26 ages**, and %4.1 are **27 years and older**. As for the distribution of their university, %54.6 study

at **Atatürk University**, %45.4 study at **Kafkas University**. When it comes to class distribution, %30.1 of them are in their 1<sup>st</sup> year and %30.2 of them are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year while %22 of them are in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year and %17.7 of them are in their 4<sup>th</sup> year.

Table 2- Comparison of the Participants Empathy Levels acc. to Gender

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std.Dev.</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Female	174	72.08	9,81	2,202	,028*
Male	289	70.09	8,70		

When the data is analyzed, meaningful difference is seen about the empathy level according to the participants' gender. ( $p=,028$ )

According to this, it is seen that female students' empathy levels are ( $\bar{X}=72.08\pm,9.81$ ), more than male students ( $\bar{X}=70.09\pm,8.70$ )

Table 3- Comparison of the Participants` Empathy Levels acc. to University

	University	N	Mean	Std.Dev.	t	p
*(p<0,05)	Kafkas	210	71,22	9,66	-,274	,784
	Atatürk	253	71,47	9,19		

When the data is analyzed, no meaningful difference is obtained about the empathy level according to the participants' university. (p=,784)

Table 4- Comparison of the Participants` Empathy Levels acc. to Ages

	Age	N	Mean	Std.Dev.	f	p
*(p<0,05)	18-20 Ages	212	68,73	11,731	3,119	,026*
	21-23 Ages	173	71,43	9,419		
	24-26 Ages	59	70,94	8,173		
	27 and older	19	73,89	9,140		

As it is seen on Table 4, we can see some meaningful difference about the empathy level according to the participants ages (p=,026).

The multiple comparison results are given at Table-5 to show which groups are the source of difference.

Table 5- Results of the Multiple Comparison of Participants` Empathy Levels Difference acc. to Ages.

Post Hoc (Tukey Test)			
Comparison		Difference Btw. Average	Meaning
18-20 Ages	21-23 Ages	-2,70239	,056
	24-26 Ages	-2,21802	,470
	27 and older	-5,16360	,036*
21-23 Ages	18-20 Ages	2,70239	,056
	24-26 Ages	,48437	,990
	27 and older	-2,46121	,762
24-26 Ages	18-20 Ages	2,21802	,470
	21-23 Ages	-,48437	,990
	27 and older	-2,94558	,706
27 and older	18-20 Ages	5,16360	,036*
	21-23 Ages	2,46121	,762
	24-26 Ages	2,94558	,706

\*(p<0,05)

According to the multiple comparison results, there are meaningful differences between 18-20 ages and 27 and older.(p=,036) Thus, it can be put forward that the students

that are **27 and older** ( $\bar{X}=73,89\pm,9.140$ ) have higher empathy level than **18-20 Ages** ( $\bar{X}=68,73\pm,11.731$ ).

Table 6- Comparison of the Participants` Empathy Levels acc. to Grade

	Grade	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	f	p
*(p<0,05)	1. Grade	139	67,66	12,023	2,639	,039*
	2. Grade	140	70,12	10,664		
	3. Grade	102	69,73	10,308		
	4. Grade	82	71,86	11,422		

When the data is analyzed, we can see meaningful differences about the empathy

level according to the participants grade (p=,039). The multiple comparison results are

given at Table-7 to demonstrate which groups are the sources of difference.

Table-7- Results of the Multiple Comparison of Participants` Empathy Levels Difference acc. to Grade

Post Hoc (Tukey Test)			
Comparison		Difference Btw. Average	Meaning
1.Grade	2.Grade	-2,466	,252
	3.Grade	-2,073	,483
	4.Grade	-4,203	,035*
2.Grade	1.Grade	2,466	,252
	3.Grade	,393	,993
	4.Grade	-1,737	,677
3.Grade	1.Grade	2,073	,483
	2.Grade	-,393	,993
	4.Grade	-2,130	,571
4.Grade	1.Grade	4,203	,035*
	2.Grade	1,737	,677
	3 Grade	2,130	,571

\*(p<0,05)

According to the multiple comparison results, there are meaningful differences between 4<sup>th</sup> grade and 1<sup>st</sup> grade students (p=,035), so it is seen that the students of **4<sup>th</sup> Grade** have a higher empathy level ( $\bar{X}=71,86\pm,11.422$ ) than **1<sup>st</sup> Grade** students ( $\bar{X}=67,66\pm,12.023$ ).

### Discussion and Conclusion

The examined data showed no significant differences in empathy regarding the gender of the participants. (p=028) According to this finding, female students ( $\bar{X}=72.08+9.81$ ) seem to have higher empathy levels than male students.

Akar (2014) found significant differences in favor of the woman regarding in his study on the analysis of empathic tendencies and narcissistic personality traits of the students. Ekinci (2009) found significant differences in favor of female prospective teachers in his study on the analysis of empathic and critical thinking tendencies. Kapıkıran (2009) investigated the empathic tendencies of candidate teachers and found significant differences in favor of men.

Satılmış (2012) found significant differences in favor of women in his study on the psychological symptoms based on some variables and empathic tendencies of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students.

Atli and Kutlu (2012) found significant differences in favor of women in his study on the empathy level of staff in the kindergartens and orphanages.

Some of the studies in literature that are on empathy levels according to gender and found significant differences in favor of women are Feshbach & Roe,1968, Cohen and Strayer,1996, D'Amrosio, 2009, Fittnes and Curtis, 2005, Myyry and Helkema,2001, Whalen, 2010.

These findings also support the findings we obtained. This result may stem from the fact that female students can express their feelings more comfortably because of the style of upbringing because girls play games like playing house more from a young age on, and they have more moderate and more affectionate approach towards human relations considering the fact that they choose the mother as a role model.

Also, according to Freud, the fact that a male who gets over the oedipal period by having fewer difficulties has more identification problems in this period may cause such difference with respect to empathy between the genders (Aydin, 1996).

There are also publications regarding gender and empathy in literature that contradict our findings such as Alisinaoğlu and Köksal,2000, Alver,2003, Durmuşoğlu, 2001, Ercoskun,2005,Gönüllü,2007, Önemlitürk,1997, Vatanserver,2002, Kışlak and

Çabukça, 2000, Köksal, 2000, Yaydırğan, 2008).

Significant differences were found about the empathy levels in connection with the age of the participants. Students who are 27 and older ( $\bar{X}=73.89+9.140$ ) had a higher level of empathy compared to students aged 18-20 ( $\bar{X}=68.73+11.731$ ). This may result from the fact that with the experience they gain thanks to their age regarding the changing environment and difficulties of life, students can better understand the younger and less experienced ones.

Nelson (1985) found a significant difference between the variable of age and empathy, and concluded that the level of empathy will increase as the individual ages (Köksal, 2000).

Atli and Kutlu (2012) found out that the highest level of empathy belonged to those groups who are the oldest in the studies in which the empathy level of the staff working in kindergartens and orphanages. These findings support then ones we had.

Vural (2008) found out that the age variable does not cause any difference on the levels of empathic ability of the managers. Köksal (2000) concluded in the study he conducted on university students that empathy does not differ according to age. This finding contrasts with the findings we got. Significant differences were spotted regarding the empathy level according to the classes of the participants.

According to that finding, 4<sup>th</sup> grade students ( $\bar{X}=71.86+11.422$ ) have a higher empathy level than 1<sup>st</sup> grade students ( $\bar{X}=67.66+12.023$ ). These findings are consistent with the findings we had in the empathy level according to age.

Considering the fact that as the individual ages, the class level also increases, we can conclude that students from upper levels have a more improved empathy level that those from lower grades.

Bryant (1982) concluded that 7<sup>th</sup> grade students have a higher empathy level than 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. (Akar, 2014) investigated empathic tendencies of students based on age and concluded that 4<sup>th</sup> grade students had a higher level of empathy than 1<sup>st</sup> year students.

Ekinci (2009) pointed out that the empathic tendencies of 4<sup>th</sup> grade students were significantly higher than 1<sup>st</sup> grade ones. These findings also support the findings we reached.

Rehber (2007) did not find any significant differences between their Empathic Tendency Scale scores in terms of their grade level in his research on elementary school students. Yasar (2008) and Hasankahyaoglu (2008) found no significant relationship between the level of empathy and grade level in the study carried out on college students. These findings are inconsistent with the findings we obtained.

Considering these findings, young people who will have an important place in the future society and will be the parents of next generation should be taught that the empathy is an essential element of being human and that it is an indispensable concept of personal and social development. The young who are aware of this will pass on the tradition on next generations thereby contributing to the development of a sensitive generation.

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