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ANALYSIS OF MULTIDIMENSIONAL LEADERSHIP ORIENTATIONS IN UNIVERSITY STUDENT TENNIS PLAYERS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the multidimensional leadership orientations of university student tennis athletes. The "Multidimensional Leadership Orientation Scale" was used as data collection tool. In the analysis of the data, independent samples t-test was conducted to determine whether the total scores obtained from the scale differed in terms of gender and the status of being a licensed athlete. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the Least Significant Difference (LSD) test were used to assess whether there were significant differences based on age, athletic experience, and weekly training hours. According to the findings, no statistically significant differences were found in the total scores or sub-dimension scores of multidimensional leadership orientation with respect to gender, age group, being a licensed athlete, or weekly training frequency. There were also no statistically significant differences in the overall leadership orientation scores and sub-dimension scores based on years of athletic experience, except for the charismatic leadership and structural leadership sub-dimensions. Participants with one year or less of athletic experience had significantly lower scores in these two sub-dimensions compared to those with 4–5 years or 6 years and more of experience. The findings of the study indicate that tennis players generally show a high level of multidimensional leadership orientation. No significant differences were observed in leadership orientations based on gender, the status of being a licensed athlete, age group, or weekly training frequency. However, significant differences were found in the charismatic and structural leadership sub-dimensions based on the athletes' years of experience. In this context, it is recommended for future studies to include broader age ranges and additional demographic variables and to be conducted with a larger and more diverse sample of tennis players.

Keywords: Multidimensional Leadership, Orientation, Tennis

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INTRODUCTION

Tennis is a sport that can be played between two people or as a team of two with a racket and a ball by dividing a court, which varies in terms of the structure of the ground (hard ground, grass ground, clay ground), into two with the help of a net in the middle. The primary objective of the game is to score points by successfully hitting the ball into the opponent's court in a manner that prevents a valid return. The game is structured through a scoring system composed of points, games, and sets. Besides its competitive nature, tennis plays a significant role in the development of both physical and mental capacities. It engages multiple muscle groups simultaneously, thereby enhancing overall muscular strength, endurance, and physical fitness. Tennis is a sport that serves both recreational and competitive purposes, offering numerous benefits such as personal development, physical fitness, psychological well-being, socialization, and overall health enhancement. In recent years, it has gained increasing popularity in Turkey. Starting tennis at an early age contributes significantly to the development of fundamental motor skills. Through mini tennis activities, which do not require a full-sized tennis court, young children are introduced to the sport in an engaging and accessible manner (İlhan, 2021). As an individual sport, tennis requires intensive training, motivation and patience. It is of great importance for athletes to participate in many tournaments and compete against various opponents in order to gain different experiences. Training programmes should be constantly updated and improved, because it takes a long time to acquire skills in tennis. Tennis is a sport that requires late specialisation; therefore, it is important for instructors to teach many basic skill sets. Basic training such as endurance and speed are needed to reach high level skills. The success of athletes in tennis is strongly associated not only with these core competencies but also with consistent effort, resilience, and long-term commitment to the sport (Kaman et al., 2017). Modern tennis has evolved from a fundamentally technical discipline into a sport characterized by highly specialized skills and dynamic performance demands. Throughout this evolution, particular emphasis has been placed on technical proficiencies such as racket and ball control. Advanced hitting techniques, including serving, have enhanced the intensity and pace of gameplay, with increased ball and serve velocities significantly contributing to the sport's fast and explosive nature. As a result, tennis has become markedly more dynamic and physically demanding. In this context, players' physical capacities have gained heightened importance, with attributes such as endurance, speed, and agility now recognized as critical determinants of athletic success. As a result, modern tennis has become a sport based not only on technical skills, but also on high physical demands (Ulbricht et al.,2016).

An athlete is an individual who engages in regular physical activity with the goals of enhancing physical health, participating in competitive sport, promoting personal development and mental well-being, experiencing enjoyment, fostering social interaction, building self-confidence, and attaining a higher quality of life. Performance athletes, who integrate sport as a core component of their lifestyle, begin to construct their social identity through their athletic involvement. The identity perception of athletes is related to the sport they do. In addition to the development of their identities, their athletic characteristics also develop in parallel. Since the basis of sport is competition, the motivation to succeed is continually reinforced throughout an athlete's career (Yanar et al., 2017).

Athletic performance and leadership are two interrelated concepts that mutually enhance and support one another across various contexts. The communication that occurs between athletes and those in leadership roles is essential to the overall success of a team. Effective and continuous communication not only reveals and amplifies the potential of individual athletes but also fosters coordination and harmony within the group. Leadership, in this context, may be defined as the capacity to guide, influence, and motivate individuals or groups toward the achievement of common goals. It involves the ability to articulate a vision, provide direction, and inspire others to reach their full potential efficiently and collaboratively. There are various styles of leadership such as authoritarian, democratic and transformational. Each style has its own characteristics, disadvantages and advantages. For example, an authoritarian leader makes decisions alone and gives little importance to the opinions of team members. While this approach can be effective in situations requiring swift decisions or strict discipline, it may hinder creativity and reduce team engagement. Democratic leader cares about the ideas of other members in the group and includes them in the decision-making process. This participatory approach fosters a sense of ownership, enhances motivation, and promotes stronger group cohesion, although it may be less efficient in urgent or high-pressure contexts. Transformational leader maximises the potential of group members by increasing communication and motivation within the team. This style is particularly effective in promoting long-term growth, innovation, and a strong sense of team identity.

Leadership is an important concept both in business life and in one's daily life. A leader, who has an important feature such as motivating others, is a person who can create a sphere of influence that can direct people (Güllü, 2018). Leadership can be likened to a cohesive force—functioning as the glue that unites individuals around a common goal, the compass that provides direction, and the lantern that illuminates the path forward. Leadership is one of the most essential elements that encourages group members to act collectively, often requiring individuals to set aside personal feelings, desires, thoughts, and priorities in pursuit of a shared goal (Demirel & Kişman, 2014). As inherently social beings, humans have functioned as members of groups from birth. While some individual needs can be met independently, many others necessitate integration into a collective. Humans constantly need a leader who will meet the changing demands of the group they are a part of and who will manage that group (Güler et al., 2020).

The present study aims to examine the multidimensional leadership orientations of university student tennis players in relation to some parameters.

METHOD

Research Model

The present study was designed based on quantitative research model and a correlational research design was used.

Population and Sample

Population of the study consisted of tennis players who were students attending Ondokuz Mayıs University Faculty of Sports Sciences and the sample consisted of 187 athletes selected by random sampling method among these athletes. Of the participants, 80 were female and 107 were male.

Data collection

The research data were collected from the participants between 16.12.2024 and 16.01.2025 on the basis of voluntary participation either via Google forms or face to face. A personal information form prepared by the researchers and Multidimensional Leadership Orientations Scale were used as data collection tools.

Data Collection Tools

Personal information form

This form includes questions such as age, gender, frequency of doing sports per week, status of being a licensed athlete and sports experience. Before the survey questions were applied to the students of the Faculty of Sport Sciences, who constituted the research group, the purpose of the research was explained and necessary information was provided.

Multidimensional Leadership Orientations Scale

The Multidimensional Leadership Orientations Scale used in the study consists of 19 questions and 4 sub-dimensions. "Political Leadership" sub-dimension consists of 5 items (3,6,9,10,11), "Human Resource Leadership" subdimension consists of 5 items (2,8,12,14,17), "Charismatic Leadership" subdimension consists of 5 items (13,15,16,18,19) and "Structural Leadership" subdimension consists of 4 items (1,4,5,7). The items in the Multidimensional Leadership Orientations Scale are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' to 'Strongly Agree'. There are no reversely scored items in the scale. The scale is evaluated within the scope of sub-dimensions. The high scores obtained from the sub-dimensions of the scale indicate that the individual has a high tendency towards that leadership orientation. These sub-dimensions are political leadership, human resource leadership, charismatic leadership and structural leadership.

Data Analysis

In the statistical evaluation of the data, normality assumption was first examined by Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests ($p>0.05$). In the study, whether the scale total scores differed in terms of gender and being a licensed athlete was determined by Student's t test, and whether they differed in terms of age, sports experience and weekly sports hours was determined by One-Way Analysis of Variance and Tukey multiple comparison test. SPSS 27.0 V. statistical package programme was used for all statistical calculations. Total internal consistency coefficient of Multidimensional Leadership Orientations was found as 0.957.

Ethics Statement: 25.10.2024 dated and 2024-995 numbered approval was obtained from Ondokuz Mayıs University Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee in order to conduct the study.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Multidimensional Leadership Orientation Levels of Participants by Gender

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Gender	n	Mean	SD	T test	P-value
Multidimensional Leadership Orientations Total	Female	80	76.34	12.88	0.61	0.543
	Male	107	75.02	15.82		
Political Leadership	Female	80	19.46	3.82	1.34	0.179
	Male	107	18.63	4.45		
Human Resource Leadership	Female	80	21.16	3.29	0.98	0.326
	Male	107	20.60	4.27		
Charismatic Leadership	Female	80	19.50	4.08	-0.21	0.832
	Male	107	19.64	4.48		
Structural Leadership	Female	80	16.26	2.98	0.19	0.843
	Male	107	16.16	3.90		

No statistically significant difference was found between the total score and sub-dimension total scores of the participants in terms of gender ($p>0.05$).

Table 2. Multidimensional Leadership Orientation Levels of Participants in Terms of Being a Licenced Athlete

Scales and Sub-dimensions	The status of being a licenced athlete	n	Mean	SD	T test	P-value
Multidimensional Leadership Orientations Total	Yes	120	75.63	15.26	0.06	0.958
	No	67	75.49	13.47		
Political Leadership	Yes	120	18.88	4.31	-0.47	0.636
	No	67	19.18	4.03		
Human Resource Leadership	Yes	120	20.83	4.09	-0.07	0.945
	No	67	20.87	3.50		
Charismatic Leadership	Yes	120	19.70	4.47	0.52	0.604
	No	67	19.36	4.02		
Structural Leadership	Yes	120	16.23	3.65	0.16	0.876
	No	67	16.15	3.32		

In the present study, no statistically significant difference was found between the total score and sub-dimension total scores of the participants' multidimensional leadership orientations with respect to the status of being a licensed athlete ($p>0.05$).

Table 3. Multidimensional Leadership Orientation Levels of Participants in Terms of Age

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Age	n	Mean	SD	F	P-value
Multidimensional Leadership Orientations Total	18-20	29	77.21	9.56	0.24	0.784
	21-23	138	75.40	15.01		
	≥24	20	74.50	18.01		
Political Leadership	18-20	29	18.90	2.83	0.009	0.991
	21-23	138	18.99	4.35		
	≥24	20	19.05	4.96		
Human Resource Leadership	18-20	29	21.55	2.03	0.90	0.406
	21-23	138	20.80	3.97		
	2≥24	20	20.05	5.15		
Charismatic Leadership	18-20	29	20.00	3.48	0.20	0.817
	21-23	138	19.54	4.43		
	≥24	20	19.25	4.62		
Structural Leadership	18-20	29	16.76	2.95	0.43	0.654
	21-23	138	16.09	3.52		
	≥24	20	16.15	4.39		

In the present study, no statistically significant difference was found between the total score and sub-dimension total scores of the participants' multidimensional leadership orientations in terms of age ($p>0.05$).

Table 4. Multidimensional Leadership Orientation Levels of Participants in Terms of Sports Experience

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Sports Experience	n	Mean	SD	F/LSD	P-value
Multidimensional Leadership Orientations Total	≤1 year (1)	19	70.05	10.04	1.98	0.118
	2-3 years (2)	29	72.07	18.57		
	4-5 years (3)	43	76.86	14.70		
	≥6 years (4)	96	77.17	13.73		
Political Leadership	≤1 year (1)	19	17.53	3.08	1.09	0.355
	2-3 years (2)	29	18.69	5.02		
	4-5 years (3)	43	18.95	4.46		
	≥6 years (4)	96	19.38	3.99		
Human Resource Leadership	≤1 year (1)	19	20.53	3.04	1.54	0.204
	2-3 years (2)	29	19.52	4.82		
	4-5 years (3)	43	20.95	3.73		
	≥6 years (4)	96	21.25	3.74		
Charismatic Leadership	≤1 year (1)	19	17.32	3.16	2.98 1<3.4	0.033*
	2-3 years (2)	29	18.69	5.19		
	4-5 years (3)	43	20.40	4.38		
	≥6 years (4)	96	19.93	4.03		
Structural Leadership	≤1 year (1)	19	14.53	2.99	2.72 1<3.4	0.046*
	2-3 years (2)	29	15.31	4.36		
	4-5 years (3)	43	16.56	3.40		
	≥6 years (4)	96	16.64	3.35		

In the present study, no statistically significant difference was found between the total score and sub-dimension total scores (except charismatic and structural leadership sub-dimension) of the participants' multidimensional leadership orientations in terms of sports experience of athletes ($p>0.05$).

Table 5. Multidimensional Leadership Orientation Levels of Participants in Terms of Frequency of Weekly Sports Participation

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Frequency of Weekly Sports Participation	n	Mean	SD	F	p
Multidimensional Leadership Orientations Total	1-2 hours	41	75.37	12.56	0.06	0.980
	3-4 hours	58	75.02	15.30		
	5-6 hours	71	76.08	12.47		
	≥7 hours	17	75.94	23.90		
Political Leadership	1-2 hours	41	18.76	4.36	0.26	0.853
	3-4 hours	58	18.79	4.03		
	5-6 hours	71	19.10	3.72		
	≥7 hours	17	19.71	6.20		
Human Resource Leadership	1-2 hours	41	21.17	3.11	0.69	0.559
	3-4 hours	58	20.50	4.29		
	5-6 hours	71	21.14	3.10		
	≥7 hours	17	19.94	6.43		
Charismatic Leadership	1-2 hours	41	19.44	3.81	0.07	0.977
	3-4 hours	58	19.47	4.47		
	5-6 hours	71	19.68	4.02		
	≥7 hours	17	19.88	6.09		
Structural Leadership	1-2 hours	41	16.00	3.10	0.09	0.923
	3-4 hours	58	16.26	3.67		
	5-6 hours	71	16.21	3.15		
	≥7 hours	17	16.41	5.56		

In the present study, no statistically significant difference was found between the total score and sub-dimension total scores of multidimensional leadership orientations in terms of the athletes' weekly frequency of doing sports ($p>0.05$).

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

The present study examined the multidimensional leadership orientations of university student tennis players in relation to some parameters. For this purpose, Multidimensional Leadership Orientation Scale was used in the study to collect data. This scale has four sub-dimensions as political leadership, human resource leadership, charismatic leadership and structural leadership. A maximum of 25 points can be taken from each of the political, human resource and charismatic leadership sub-dimensions of the scale. A maximum of 20 points can be taken from the structural leadership dimension of the scale and 95 points can be taken from the total scale. In the present study, mean political leadership scores were 19.46 for women and 18.63 for men, mean Human Resource Leadership scores were 21.26 for women and 20.60 for men, mean Charismatic Leadership scores were 19.50 for women and 19.64 for men and mean structural leadership scores were 16.26 for women and 16.16 for men. In the present study, total score of the scale was 76.34 (80.36% of the maximum score that can be obtained from the scale) for females and 75.02 (78.92% of the maximum score that can be obtained from the scale) for males. According to these scores, it can be said that tennis players have a high level of leadership orientation.

In a study in which Başoğlu (2012) examined the leadership behaviours of female and male coaches, it was found that the mean scores of female and male participants were equal in the social and organisational support (human oriented) analysis. Similarly, Solmaz and Aydın (2015) found that the leadership behaviours of pre-service teachers showed similar characteristics in terms of gender. Çelik (2015) argued that all components that make up the perception of charisma in the leadership process have a positive effect on the integrity of the group directly or indirectly. In Özdenk's (2015) study, it was found that female participants had higher scores than male participants in the leadership orientation scale sub-dimensions of structural leadership and human resource leadership scores, and this difference was statistically significant. In their study, Çetin and İmamoğlu (2018) found no significant difference in human resource leadership, structural leadership and transformational leadership scores in terms of gender, while a statistically significant difference was found in the charismatic leadership dimension. Atan et al. (2018) stated that the mean scores of males were higher than females in the sub-dimensions of transformational and charismatic leadership. However, in the study of Yazıcı and İmamoğlu (2024), it was found that leadership orientations of sport sciences faculty students varied in terms of gender.

In the present study, when the total multidimensional leadership scores and sub-dimension scores of tennis players were analysed in terms of gender variable, no statistically significant difference was found ($p>0.05$). Although this result is consistent with some studies (Başoğlu, 2012; Solmaz & Aydın, 2015; Çetin & İmamoğlu, 2018), it contradicts with some other studies (Özdenk, 2015; Atan et al., 2018; Yazıcı & İmamoğlu, 2024). This suggests that leadership orientations depend not only on the gender factor, but individual, social and contextual factors can also play an important role.

Çar (2013) found that the department, sports branch, and active sports time of the students were important when examining the leadership characteristics of university students studying sports. In their study, Çetinkaya and İmamoğlu (2018) found that students receiving university sports education showed similar leadership orientations. Atan et al. (2018) found that students in the faculty of sport sciences had significantly higher scores than students in other faculties in the sub-dimensions of structural, transformational and charismatic leadership, while they did not find a significant difference in terms of faculty in the sub-dimension of humanistic leadership. In the present study, no statistically significant difference was found between the total score and sub-dimension total scores of the participants' multidimensional leadership orientations in terms of being a licensed athlete ($p>0.05$).

Yazıcı and İmamoğlu (2024) found a statistically significant difference in all sub-dimensions of leadership orientations with respect to the sport experience variable in their study. In the present study, no statistically significant difference was found between the total score and sub-dimension total scores of the participants' multidimensional leadership orientations in terms of the ages of athletes ($p>0.05$). In the present study, no statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$) was found between the total score and sub-dimension total scores of the participants' multidimensional leadership orientations (except charismatic and structural leadership sub-dimension) with respect to the sports experience of athletes. It was found that student athletes with 1 year or less sports background had lower charismatic and structural leadership scores than those with 4-5 years and 6 years or more experience.

Şener et al. (2019) did not find a significant difference in leadership subscale scores in terms of weekly sports frequency in their study. Yamaner et al. (2017) did not find a significant difference in leadership characteristics scores in their study. In the present study, no statistically significant difference was found between the total score and sub-dimension total scores of multidimensional leadership orientations with respect to the weekly sports frequency of the athletes ($p>0.05$). The sports education received by the students and the sportive activities they do in the courses may be effective in the similar results found.

In conclusion, the multidimensional leadership orientations of university student tennis players were found to be at a high level in the present study. Multidimensional leadership orientations of tennis players were found to be similar with respect to gender, licence status, age and weekly sports practice. It was also found that there were differences in charismatic and structural leadership sub-dimensions with respect to sport experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the present study, since university tennis players already show high levels of multidimensional leadership orientations, universities and sports organizations should design programs to further strengthen these qualities. Workshops focusing on decision-making, team communication, and problem-solving could be beneficial. Differences in charismatic and structural leadership sub-dimensions depending on sport experience highlight the need for targeted mentorship. More experienced athletes could mentor less experienced players to foster leadership growth through peer learning. Coaches should incorporate leadership-building exercises into training sessions, emphasizing both charismatic and structural aspects of leadership. Further studies could explore other potential factors influencing leadership orientations, such as cultural background, academic discipline, or personality traits, to deepen understanding.

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CONTRIBUTION RATE	CONTRIBUTORS
Idea or Notion	Egemen ERMİŞ, Aydan ERMİŞ
Literature Review	Egemen ERMİŞ, Aydan ERMİŞ
Methods	Egemen ERMİŞ, Osman İMAMOĞLU
Data Collecting	Aydan ERMİŞ
Data Analysis	Osman İMAMOĞLU
Findings	Aydan ERMİŞ, Osman İMAMOĞLU
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