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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MERCY AND HUBRIS SYNDROME IN ATHLETES

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to examine the mercy and hubris syndrome levels of athletes studying at the faculty of sports sciences in terms of some demographic information and to investigate the relationship between mercy and hubris syndrome. In the study, a descriptive scanning model was used. The universe of the research consists of the students of Ondokuz Mayıs University (OMU) Yaşar Doğu Faculty of Sports Sciences, and the sample consists of 299 students selected by random sampling method among the students studying at OMU Yaşar Doğu Faculty of Sports Sciences in the 2022-2023 academic year. The Personal Information Form developed by the researchers, the Mercy Scale developed by Üzen Cura and Cura (2022), and the Hubris Syndrome Scale developed by Tutar and Nacar, (2022) were used as data collection tools. In the study, whether the total scores of the scale differ according to gender, sport type and being a national athlete was determined by Student's t-test, and whether they differ according to age, income level and sport age was determined by One-Way Analysis of Variance and Tukey multiple comparison test. In the research, while a significant difference was determined according to gender, sport type, being a national athlete, income level, no significant difference was found according to age and sports age. As a result, mercy can be affected by people's personal experiences, level of success, type of sport and many other factors. Beyond that, personality traits such as compassion and emotional responses can vary widely among individuals. It can be said that whether a person is arrogant or compassionate may depend on many factors such as life experiences, values and personality traits.

Keywords: Mercy, hubris, athlete.

INTRODUCTION

Mercy, though a concept originating from Arabic and adopted into our language, is interpreted as 'forgiving,' 'pardoning,' and 'showing compassion.' Mercy is considered an important value judgment and a virtue in the form of emotion and behavior. This value emerges when individuals demonstrate sensitivity to coming together, the ability to empathize, and their ability to feel and respect the pains, happiness, or dignity of others. Mercy is considered to be a reflection of an individual's inner value and ethical principles, while also contributing to the functioning of society with more solidarity and benevolence. Mercy is acknowledged as an integral part of being human because humans are social beings who connect with each other (Özcan, 2020).

The indicators and manifestations of mercy can take the form of helping others, establishing empathy, supporting justice, and respecting human rights. Such behaviors facilitate mutual support among individuals, the creation of a fair and humane society, and the fostering of positive human development. The concept of mercy can be seen as an essential value judgment that individuals must possess. The concept of mercy has retained its importance value in all religious beliefs for centuries and has been regarded as an important virtue that individuals should possess (Ülkü, 2012).

Mercy includes the desire to help someone, sympathizing with someone in pain, coping with difficult emotions, empathy, and the ability to relate and accept. Mercy is a feeling that a person has towards another person as soon as they realize that the other person is in a difficult situation. This feeling is also known as psychosocial assistance provided to those in need. The concept of mercy arises when one empathizes with the situation of the other person and feels the urge to help them (Özcan, 2020). Empathy is often seen in conjunction with the feeling of mercy. People with empathy and a sense of mercy tend to be more connected to their family and social life. Thus, when they empathize with other people's difficult situations, they feel and initiate a search for help. In this context, mercy manifests itself as excessive politeness and altruism, with unlimited forgiveness potential in all areas of life (Hacikeleşoğlu and Kartopu, 2017).

Pride encompasses concepts such as hubris, self-conceit, superiority over others, boasting, selfhood, and ego. The word "pride" generally carries two meanings. First, it is used in the sense of "greatness, largeness, nobility," and second, it is known as the meaning of "major sin" (kebair), "excessiveness," and "considering oneself great" (Ateş, 2021). Pride is defined as "behavior resulting from a person excessively considering themselves superior to others in situations and circumstances" (Ateş, 2021). The hubris (Pride) syndrome is characterized by a person's overconfidence, thinking they are superior to others, exaggerating their actions, and attributing blame to external factors when they fail. They argue that their knowledge is more accurate (Uz, 2021). People affected by the Hubris syndrome deify themselves, considering themselves superior and unattainable. They exhibit narcissistic and antisocial characteristics. (Uysal and Çelik, 2018). The Hubris syndrome can lead individuals to have destructive thoughts toward each other for success. This syndrome may manifest itself when individuals with strong qualifications reach powerful positions. People in workplaces, the military, or politics have stated that those affected by this syndrome are closed to criticism and believe they are superior, showing signs of

"power intoxication" (Russell, 2011). To talk about pride, a person should not have any mental health problems before being affected by the hubris syndrome (Claxton, 2015).

The phenomenon of sports appears as an activity that captivates masses and encompasses political and ideological meanings (Kirişci and Dinçer Albayrak, 2018). Indeed, individuals can experience different emotional states momentarily during this process. The relationship between sports and pride and mercy can be complex and dependent on many factors. Personal values, education, experiences, age, and the type of sport can all be significant factors in this process. Therefore, the aim of this research is to examine the mercy and hubris syndrome levels of athletes studying at the faculty of sports sciences in terms of some demographic information and to investigate the relationship between mercy and hubris syndrome.

METHOD

Research Model

A descriptive survey model, which carries a descriptive nature as its aim is to determine the current situation, was used in the research. Survey models are research approaches that aim to describe a situation as it exists in the past or present (Karasar, 1999).

Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of the students of the Faculty of Sports Sciences at Ondokuz Mayıs University (OMU). The sample consists of 299 students selected using the random sampling method among the students of the Faculty of Sports Sciences at OMU for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Data Collection Tools

As the data collection tool, a "Personal Information Form" developed by the researchers, the "Mercy Scale" developed by Üzen Cura and Cura (2022), and the "Sporting Hubris (Hubris) Syndrome" developed by Tutar and Nacar (2022) were used. The personal information form includes questions about the gender, sports age, national representation, income level, age, and type of sport of the students participating in the research.

The mercy scale, developed by Üzen Cura and Cura (2022), consists of 16 items. The scale has 4 sub-dimensions: conscious awareness, compassion, indifference, and awareness of sharing. The Mercy Scale consists of statements such as 1) Never, 2) Rarely, 3) Sometimes, 4) Often, 5) Always. Cronbach Alpha (α) internal consistency coefficients were calculated as .61 for the entire scale, and .65 for the sub-dimensions of awareness, .65 for compassion, .66 for indifference, and .71 for awareness of sharing.

The Sporting Hubris (Hubris) Syndrome scale developed by Tutar and Nacar (2022) is a 12-item scale aimed at examining individuals' levels of hubris. The scale consists of 3 separate sub-dimensions: self-conceit, superiority over others, and self-confidence.

Statistical Analysis

Reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) were calculated to check the internal consistency of the responses of the individuals participating in the research to the mercy and sporting hubris syndrome scale items (Table 1).

Table 1. Internal consistency coefficients of participants' responses to scale items

Scale	Internal Consistency Coefficient	Evaluation
Mercy Scale	0.794	Moderately Reliable
Conscious Awareness	0.419	Low Reliability
Compassion	0.726	Moderately Reliable
Indifference	0.722	Moderately Reliable
Awareness of Sharing	0.648	Moderately Reliable
Sporting Hubris Scale	0.720	Moderately Reliable
Self-Conceit	0.595	Low Reliability
Superiority Over Others	0.426	Low Reliability
Self-Confidence	0.586	Low Reliability

In the statistical evaluation of the data, the normality assumption was first examined using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests ($P > 0.05$). In the study, whether there were differences in scale total scores based on gender, type of sport, and being a national athlete was determined using the Student t-test, while differences based on age, income level, and sports age were determined using one-way analysis of variance and the Tukey post hoc test. SPSS 22.0 V. statistical package program was used for all statistical calculations. The research findings are presented as n(%), mean, and standard deviation values, and the results were considered significant at $P < 0.05$ level.

FINDINGS

The distribution of university students who are enrolled in the Faculty of Sports Sciences at Ondokuz Mayıs University and who voluntarily participated in the research, based on their demographic characteristics, is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of participants' demographic characteristics

Gender	n	%	Type of Sport	n	%
Female	116	38.8	Individual	159	53.2
Male	183	61.2	Team	140	46.8
Total	299	100.0	Total	299	100.0

Age	n	%	Income level	n	%
18-21	158	52.8	Low	62	20.7
22-24	119	39.8	Medium	208	69.6
25 and above	22	7.4	High	29	9.7
Total	299	100.0	Total	299	100.0

National Athlete Status	n	%	Years of Sports Experience	n	%
Yes	31	10.4	Not an athlete	31	10.4
No	268	89.6	1-2	14	4.7
Total	299	100.0	3-4	38	12.7
			5-6	55	18.4
			7 and above	161	53.8
			Total	299	100.0

The individuals who voluntarily participated in the research consisted of the following demographics: 61.2% were male, 53.2% were engaged in individual sports, 52.8% were in the age range of 18-21, 69.9% had a moderate income level, 10.4% were national athletes, and 53.8% were individuals with 7 or more years of sports experience (Table 2).

Table 3. Mercy and sporting hubris levels of university students by gender

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Gender	n	Mean	SD	P-value
Mercy Scale	Female	116	66.51	9.23	<0.001
	Male	183	61.60	9.29	
Conscious Awareness	Female	116	17.60	2.40	0.001
	Male	183	16.56	2.72	
Compassion	Female	116	17.31	2.66	0.002
	Male	183	16.22	3.11	
Indifference	Female	116	14.75	4.24	<0.001
	Male	183	13.15	3.32	
Awareness of Sharing	Female	116	16.84	2.85	0.001
	Male	183	15.66	3.00	
Sporting Hubris Scale	Female	116	37.26	8.26	0.389
	Male	183	38.05	7.35	
Self-Conceit	Female	116	9.91	3.66	0.063
	Male	183	10.69	3.44	
Superiority Over Others	Female	116	16.85	3.92	0.804
	Male	183	16.96	3.52	
Self-Confidence	Female	116	10.49	3.03	0.729
	Male	183	10.39	2.44	

In the research, significant differences were found between male and female participants in terms of total scores on the mercy scale and the sub-dimensions of conscious awareness, compassion, indifference, and awareness of sharing ($P < 0.05$; Table 3). Female students had higher total scores compared to male students. However, no significant differences were found in the Sporting Hubris Scale and its sub-dimensions between male and female participants.

Table 4. Mercy and sporting hubris levels of university students by type of sport

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Type of Sport	n	Mean	SD	P-value
Mercy Scale	Individual	159	62.36	9.76	0.027
	Team	140	64.80	9.18	
Conscious Awareness	Individual	159	16.72	2.79	0.082
	Team	140	17.25	2.45	
Compassion	Individual	159	16.23	3.03	0.009
	Team	140	17.12	2.87	
Indifference	Individual	159	13.35	3.69	0.040
	Team	140	14.25	3.84	
Awareness of Sharing	Individual	159	16.06	3.06	0.739
	Team	140	16.18	2.92	
Sporting Hubris Scale	Individual	159	38.32	7.92	0.167
	Team	140	37.09	7.45	
Self-Conceit	Individual	159	10.71	3.57	0.097
	Team	140	10.03	3.49	
Superiority Over Others	Individual	159	17.03	3.83	0.598
	Team	140	16.80	3.50	
Self-Confidence	Individual	159	10.58	2.62	0.292
	Team	140	10.26	2.75	

In the research, significant differences were found among participants in terms of the total score on the mercy scale, as well as the sub-dimensions of compassion and indifference, based on the type of sport ($P < 0.05$; Table 4). Participants involved in team sports had higher total scores compared to those involved in individual sports.

Table 5. Mercy and sporting hubris levels of university students by national athlete status

Scales and Sub-dimensions	National Athlete Status	n	Mean	SD	P-value
Mercy Scale	Yes	31	62.55	7.97	0.558
	No	268	63.61	9.73	
Conscious Awareness	Yes	31	16.68	2.14	0.521
	No	268	17.00	2.70	
Compassion	Yes	31	16.61	2.80	0.949
	No	268	16.65	3.01	
Indifference	Yes	31	12.74	3.07	0.109
	No	268	13.89	3.84	
Awareness of Sharing	Yes	31	16.52	2.73	0.436
	No	268	16.07	3.02	
Sporting Hubris Scale	Yes	31	40.48	6.32	0.036
	No	268	37.43	7.81	
Self-Conceit	Yes	31	11.71	3.27	0.028
	No	268	10.24	3.55	
Superiority Over Others	Yes	31	17.90	2.36	0.115
	No	268	16.81	3.78	
Self-Confidence	Yes	31	10.87	2.63	0.336
	No	268	10.38	2.69	

In the research, significant differences were found in the sporting hubris scale's total score and the sub-dimension of self-conceit based on the national athlete status of the participants ($P < 0.05$; Table 5). Participants who were national athletes had higher total scores compared to those who were not national athletes.

Table 6. Mercy and sporting hubris levels of university students by income level

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Income Level	n	Mean	SD	P-value
Mercy Scale	Low	62	60.40b	9.28	0.012
	Medium	208	64.50a	9.51	
	High	29	63.00ab	9.31	
Conscious Awareness	Low	62	16.45	2.76	0.206
	Medium	208	17.13	2.64	
	High	29	16.90	2.32	
Compassion	Low	62	16.00	3.35	0.160
	Medium	208	16.81	2.89	
	High	29	16.83	2.71	
Indifference	Low	62	12.66b	3.54	0.015
	Medium	208	14.18a	3.77	
	High	29	13.24ab	3.92	
Awareness of Sharing	Low	62	15.29b	3.35	0.042
	Medium	208	16.38a	2.85	
	High	29	16.03ab	2.95	
Sporting Hubris Scale	Low	62	37.98	6.86	0.579
	Medium	208	37.49	7.75	
	High	29	39.03	9.16	
Self-Conceit	Low	62	10.23	3.46	0.916
	Medium	208	10.43	3.43	
	High	29	10.48	4.51	
Superiority Over Others	Low	62	17.34	2.96	0.106
	Medium	208	16.64	3.75	
	High	29	18.00	4.25	
Self-Confidence	Low	62	10.42	2.54	0.968
	Medium	208	10.42	2.72	
	High	29	10.55	2.77	

In the research, significant differences were found in the mercy scale's total score and the sub-dimensions of indifference and awareness of sharing based on the income level of the participants ($P < 0.05$; Table 6). Participants with high income had higher total scores compared to those with low income.

Table 7. Mercy and sporting hubris levels of university students by age groups

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Age Group	n	Mean	SD	P-value
Mercy Scale	18-21	158	64.44	10.05	0.194
	22-24	119	62.39	8.30	
	25 and above	22	62.77	11.84	
Conscious Awareness	18-21	158	17.11	2.65	0.619
	22-24	119	16.80	2.58	
	25 and above	22	16.86	3.04	

Compassion	18-21	158	16.64	3.09	0.724
	22-24	119	16.74	2.78	
	25 and above	22	16.18	3.40	
Indifference	18-21	158	14.23	3.91	0.055
	22-24	119	13.13	3.60	
	25 and above	22	13.91	3.48	
Awareness of Sharing	18-21	158	16.46	2.99	0.107
	22-24	119	15.71	2.84	
	25 and above	22	15.82	3.59	
Sporting Hubris Scale	18-21	158	37.03	7.36	0.207
	22-24	119	38.69	8.16	
	25 and above	22	37.77	7.53	
Self-Conceit	18-21	158	10.03	3.56	0.168
	22-24	119	10.80	3.55	
	25 and above	22	10.82	3.28	
Superiority Over Others	18-21	158	16.66	3.62	0.246
	22-24	119	17.35	3.77	
	25 and above	22	16.45	3.38	
Self-Confidence	18-21	158	10.34	2.67	0.829
	22-24	119	10.54	2.75	
	25 and above	22	10.50	2.46	

In the research, no significant differences were found in the total scores and sub-dimensions of the mercy scale and sporting hubris scale among participants in different age groups ($P > 0.05$; Table 7).

Table 8. Mercy and sporting hubris levels of university students by sports age

Scales and Sub-dimensions	Sports Age	n	Mean	SD	P-value
Mercy Scale	Non-Athlete	31	63.39	10.69	0.296
	1-2	14	59.21	11.95	
	3-4	38	61.79	9.95	
	5-6	55	63.87	8.47	
	7 and above	161	64.17	9.33	
Conscious Awareness	Non-Athlete	31	16.81	3.05	0.551
	1-2	14	16.21	3.12	
	3-4	38	16.53	2.90	
	5-6	55	17.04	2.57	
	7 and above	161	17.14	2.48	
Compassion	Non-Athlete	31	15.90	3.66	0.061
	1-2	14	14.93	4.30	
	3-4	38	16.42	3.05	
	5-6	55	17.16	2.56	
	7 and above	161	16.81	2.77	
Indifference	Non-Athlete	31	14.48	4.01	0.272
	1-2	14	12.50	3.67	
	3-4	38	12.97	3.87	
	5-6	55	13.56	4.08	
	7 and above	161	14.01	3.60	
Awareness of Sharing	Non-Athlete	31	16.19	3.08	0.525
	1-2	14	15.57	3.20	
	3-4	38	15.87	2.94	
	5-6	55	16.11	3.02	
	7 and above	161	16.21	2.99	

Sporting Hubris Scale	Non-Athlete	31	35.71	7.83	0.318
	1-2	14	38.50	6.15	
	3-4	38	38.37	7.08	
	5-6	55	39.18	8.82	
	7 and above	161	37.43	7.53	
Self-Conceit	Non-Athlete	31	8.74	3.15	0.057
	1-2	14	10.43	3.63	
	3-4	38	10.21	3.39	
	5-6	55	11.09	3.95	
	7 and above	161	10.51	3.43	
Superiority Over Others	Non-Athlete	299	10.39	3.54	0.598
	1-2	31	16.77	4.14	
	3-4	14	17.43	3.48	
	5-6	38	17.05	3.23	
	7 and above	55	17.55	4.07	
Self-Confidence	Non-Athlete	161	16.66	3.56	0.483
	1-2	31	10.19	2.83	
	3-4	14	10.64	1.95	
	5-6	38	11.11	2.86	
	7 and above	55	10.55	2.79	

In the research, no significant differences were found in the total scores and sub-dimensions of the mercy scale and sporting hubris scale among participants of different sports ages ($P > 0.05$; Table 8).

Table 9. Correlation table for participants' mercy scale and sporting hubris scale

		Sporting Hubris Total Score	Self-Liking	Superiority	Self-Confidence
Mercy Scale	r	-0.080	-0.253	0.060	0.021
	p	0.167	<0.001	0.300	0.713
Conscious Awareness	r	0.025	-0.163	0.146	0.089
	p	0.662	0.005	0.012	0.124
Compassion	r	-0.013	-0.149	0.072	0.062
	p	0.826	0.010	0.212	0.289
Indifference	r	-0.226	-0.301	0.108	-0.105
	p	<0.001	<0.001	0.061	0.071
Awareness of Sharing	r	0.020	-0.135	0.128	0.060
	p	0.733	0.019	0.027	0.300

In the research, it was determined that there is a significant negative relationship of 25.3% between the mercy score of the individuals participating in the research and the self-liking sub-dimension total scores ($P < 0.001$).

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

This study was conducted in the academic year 2022-2023 with university students at Ondokuz Mayıs University's Yaşar Doğu Faculty of Sports Sciences to measure the levels of compassion and sports hubris syndrome among university students in sports, based on certain socio-demographic characteristics. In the research, significant differences were found in terms of gender, sports type, being a national athlete, and income level, while no significant differences were found in terms of age and sports age.

In the study, it was observed that female participants had higher total scores in the compassion scale and in the sub-dimensions of conscious awareness, benevolence, indifference, and awareness of sharing compared to male

students. When reviewing the literature, studies indicating that women have higher levels of compassion compared to men were encountered (Kapıcıoğlu, 2019; Aydemir, 2018; Erdoğan, 2017; Polat and Erdem, 2017). This result suggests that women tend to be more compassionate than men, possibly due to emotional reasons rooted in their nature.

According to the research, students interested in team sports had higher total scores in the compassion scale, as well as in the benevolence and indifference sub-dimensions compared to students interested in individual sports. Erdener (2010) found in interviews that compassion is more prevalent in team sports due to the sense of camaraderie and the need for teamwork. In individual sports, athletes tend to be more self-confident and consider themselves superior to others (Sasev, 2010).

In the research, it was found that students who were national athletes had higher total scores in the sports hubris scale compared to students who were not national athletes. When reviewing the literature, no information specific to this research was found. The higher scores of national athletes in the sports hubris scale could be attributed to their high self-esteem and abilities at the national level. National athletes can compete at the highest levels of sport, which can boost their self-confidence and lead to the expression of this confidence. Consequently, their belief in their own abilities may elevate their level of hubris. In this process, individuals may be recommended to attend educational seminars with the aim of preventing negative behaviors, fostering empathy, and acting within the framework of respect (Sabah et al., 2022).

Because as individuals develop their sense of empathy, they will exhibit more social and sharing behaviors (Derelioğlu and Çankaya, 2021).

The research revealed that participants with higher income levels displayed more compassion compared to those with lower income levels. When examining the literature, it is seen that lower income levels are associated with decreased compassion due to feelings of anger (Özmen and Demir, 2016). Income levels seem to influence both hubris and compassion. Individuals with lower income levels may experience more anger and stress related to economic life, which may lead to reduced compassion. In this process, it has been determined that the role ambiguities undertaken by athletes also affect their levels of burnout and lead to negative situations (Çankaya et al., 2021).

According to the research, no significant differences were found in terms of age and sports age in the total scores of the compassion scale and sports hubris scale as well as their sub-dimensions. When reviewing the literature, similar results were obtained in studies (Esentaş et al., 2017; Demir et al., 2017; Temel and Nas, 2018). Therefore, it can be said that the ages of athletes and their years of engagement in sports do not lead to a change in their character traits of hubris and compassion (İmamlı and Ünver, 2018).

Research findings show that there is a significant relationship between compassion and hubris syndrome among athletes. The results showed that as the level of compassion of the athletes increased, the level of hubris

syndrome decreased. This shows that athletes' compassion also leads to a decrease in their tendency to be arrogant. On the other hand, if what a person envisions does not align with their achievements, this can lead to the emergence of negative emotions (negative attitudes, behaviors, etc.) (Derelioğlu and Çankaya, 2021).

In conclusion, compassion can be influenced by personal experiences, levels of achievement, sports types, and various other factors. Furthermore, personality traits and emotional responses like compassion can vary significantly among individuals. Whether a person is arrogant or compassionate can depend on many factors, including life experiences, values, and personality traits.

SUGGESTIONS

- The findings indicate that female athletes, those engaged in team sports, and athletes with higher incomes tend to have higher levels of compassion. Therefore, it is important for athletes to receive training to enhance their emotional intelligence and increase their emotional awareness. This can lead to more positive interactions both in personal relationships and within a team.
- To better understand the relationship between compassion and hubris and to support athletes' emotional well-being, psychological counseling and guidance services can be provided. This can assist athletes in finding emotional balance.
- Using successful athletes who exhibit compassionate and courteous behavior as role models can encourage other athletes to adopt these values. The media and the public can focus on highlighting these role models to promote positive behaviors.

ETHICAL TEXT

"This article adheres to the journal's writing guidelines, publication principles, research and publication ethics, and journal ethical rules. Any potential violations related to the article are the responsibility of the author(s)." In the research, ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Ondokuz Mayıs University, Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, with Decision No. 2022/926 dated 25/11/2022, to be able to apply the scales and collect data.

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