

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

COMPARING PROSOCIAL TENDENCIES OF ATHLETES AND NONATHLETES

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine the university students' prosocial tendencies in terms of athletes and non-athletes. The hypothesis in the study was sport has a positive effect on showing more prosocial behavior so athletes display more prosocial behavior than non-athletes. Participants were (n=236) voluntary undergraduate students from Ankara University, Turkey. To obtain related data, the Prosocial Tendencies Measure (PTM) was administered. The results showed that there were not significant effects of participants on showing more prosocial behaviors in terms of, athletes and non-athletes. Therefore the research hypothesis was rejected. Results of MANOVA analysis related to gender of athletes and non-athletes indicated that female's emotional prosocial behavior mean was higher than that of men ( F (1-234)=11,96, P<,05). Results related to branch variable of athletes indicated that mean of anonymous prosocial behavior of team sport athletes was higher than that of individual sport athletes ( F (1-86)=13,05, P<,05).

**Key Words:** Prosocial behavior, athletes, non-athletes, gender.

**Introduction**

In many studies conducted by sport philosophers related to relationship between the moral education and competition concepts, it has been concluded that completed sport education and involment in the sport competitions accompanied with the understanding of fair play effect the moral (moral values such as honesty, justice, equality and respect) education of the individual (Robert et all., 1999; Carry, 1998; Singleton, 2003; Spencer, 1993; Bergman, 2000). In other words, it has been suggested that there is a sensitive relationship between physical education and moral education. In fact, Sabock (1985) emphasize that sport provide a very important opportunity to students for development of ethical behavior, honesty, fairness, and so on. Moreover, Bergman (2000) stated that there is a logical relationship between physical education and moral education and this relationship is based on the students' understanding of the concept of success and acceptance of the importance of competitions. Bergman has also stated that competition gives opportunity to students to compare their own skills and talents with other individuals' skills and talents and which motivates students to gain practical knowledge at certain standards. To sum up the relationships between the moral education and sport concepts showed a sensitive relationship between them which means sport has positive effects on ethical decision making and moral character education" (Sabock, 1985; Carry, 1998; Robert and et. all. ,1999; Bergman, 2000; Singleton, 2003).

Prosocial behavior consists of the basic part of socialization process because it is valued by the societies. Prosocial behavior is defined generally saying as volunteer behaviors aimed to do good for societies (Staub, 1978; 1979; Eisenberg, 1986). Carlo and Randall (2001) described six positive social behaviors by examining the theories and researches in the field, altruistic, compliant, emotional, public, dire and anonymous. Altruistic prosocial behaviors is the volunteer help, in addition to the norms and principles consistent with internalizing and displayed by the norms taken from the sympathy felt for the needs and well being of others. Compliant prosocial behaviors are the help behavior done as a result of the verbal or nonverbal request. Emotional prosocial behavior is described as the help behavior performed in the situations which have emotional stimulants. Public prosocial behavior on the other hand, is the help behavior displayed in order to gain respect, value and to be approved. Dire prosocial behavior is the help of under emergency and crisis. And anonymous prosocial behavior is the donation by unknown individual.

In socialization of the individuals, sport are an important factor as the variables such as family, environment, school and so on. For this reason, examination of prosocial behavior has a great importance for both societies and individuals. Cultural values and socialization practices have an important place for the social development of the children and youngsters (Whiting and Edwards, 1988). In these socialization practices sport has been a concept with multi factor social structure while it has been an indispensable part of human life. Societies have valued sport which provide the cognitive, emotional and social developments of the individuals in every phase (McIntosh, 1981). A lot of researchers assume that the socialization experiences of the youngsters effect the way they display moral motivation and prosocial behavior and how often they are displayed (Fabes, Carlo, Kupanoff and Laible, 1999). In the light of above information, the hypothesis in the study was that sport has an positive effect on showing more prosocial behavior so athletes display more prosocial behaviors than non-athletes and the purpose of the study was to examine the university students' prosocial tendencies in terms of gender, athletes and non-athletes..

## Method

### Participants

Participants were 236 voluntary undergraduate students from Ankara University, Turkey (121 males, 115 females, age mean = 22,96 years; SD=3,46). Of those 236 students, 148 were nonathletes ( 54 males, 94 females, age mean = 20,98 years; SD=2,22) while 88 were athletes ( 40 team sport athletes, 48 individual sport athletes; 67 males, 21 females, age mean = 24,50 years; SD=4,43). The athletes training age mean was 12,29 and SD= 6,83. The athletes group was purposefully chosen to conduct the study. In all class the purpose of the study was explained and asked the students if they were willing to participate in. All of the students' responses were anonymous. The questionnaire was administrated to the participants before lesson and it took 15 minutes.

### Instrument

“Prosocial Tendencies Measure” was developed by Carlo and Randall (2002) to measure prosocial behaviors. It was developed as a 23 item scale for the university students. Each item was evaluated out of 5 degrees scale (1- not describes me, 5- describes me very well). In scoring, 5 points was assigned to very well describe at positive items, and 1 point was assigned to very well describe at negative items. Higher values on the PTM correspond to more prosocial behaviors. The scale is made up of 6 subscales, Cronbach Alfa obtained from the studies done with the youngsters at the beginning and middle of adolescences in raw were for the public subscale .76-.86 (*in this study .67*), for the emotional subscale.86-.82 (*in this study .71*), for the altruistic subscale .59-.80 (*in this study .65*), for the compliant subscale.80-.75 (*in this study .69*), for the anonymous subscale.76-.84 (*in this study .66*) and for the dire prosocial behavior subscale .71-.75 (*in this study .70*). In addition to this, 2 weeks test-retest validity coefficient of the subscale change between .54 and .82 (Carlo and et.all, 2003)

### Statistical Analysis

The construct validity of PTM was examined with EFA. This analysis is aimed to find factor or factors based on the relationships among variables. (Kline, 1994; Stevens, 1996; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). For reliability of the scale, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was computed. In addition to this, MANOVA was used to determine the effects of independent variables on showing prosocial behaviors.

### Finding

Table 1 displayed information on participants' prosocial behavior in terms of athletes and nonathletes. In both groups anonymous prosocial behavior was followed by emotional, altruistic, dire, public and compliant prosocial behavior. Results of MANOVA analysis showed that there were not significant differences in regard to athletes and nonathletes on showing prosocial behavior ( Wilks Lambda (^)= 0,968, F( 1-234)= 1,245, P>,01).

Table 1 . Results of MANOVA Analysis Related to Athletes and Non-athletes

Prosocial Behaviors	Athletes/Non A.	n	x	sd	df	f	p
Public	Athletes	88	8,6818	2,62414	1-234	1,032	0,311
	Non-athletes	148	8,3311	2,52979			
	Total	236	8,4619	2,56545			
Emotional	Athletes	88	14,6136	2,99207	1-234	3,320	0,070
	Non-athletes	148	15,3108	2,75002			
	Total	236	15,0508	2,85641			
Dire	Athletes	88	10,8409	2,51838	1-234	0,204	0,652
	Non-athletes	148	10,9797	2,13322			

	Total	236	10,9280	2,28014			
Compliant	Athletes	88	7,8864	1,89635	1-234	0,579	0,447
	Non-athletes	148	8,0676	1,68895			
	Total	236	8,0000	1,76732			
Anonymous	Athletes	88	19,3409	4,34142	1-234	0,32	0,857
	Non-athletes	148	19,2432	3,83614			
	Total	236	19,2797	4,02309			
Altruistic	Athletes	88	11,9659	3,78275	1-234	1,838	0,177
	Non-athletes	148	11,3041	3,53151			
	Total	236	11,5508	3,63341			

Not only males but also females displayed in a raw anonymous, emotional, altruistic, dire, public and compliant prosocial behavior. Results of MANOVA analysis indicated that there were significant differences in regard to gender on showing emotional prosocial behavior. Wilks Lambda ( $\lambda$ )= 0,888, F( 6-229)= 4,821, P<,01). In fact, females were more likely to report emotional prosocial behavior than males ( F (1-234)=11,96, P<,05). (Table 2).

Table 2. Results of MANOVA Analysis Related to Gender of Athletes and Non-Athletes

Prosocial Behaviors	Gender	n	x	sd	df	f	p
Public	Male	121	8,6529	2,47558	1-234	1,37	0,241
	Female	115	8,2609	2,65266			
	Total	236	8,4619	2,56545			
Emotional	Male	121	14,4380	2,90084	1-234	11,96	0,001
	Female	115	15,6957	2,67271			
	Total	236	15,0508	2,85641			
Dire	Male	121	11,0744	2,37404	1-234	1,024	0,313
	Female	115	10,7739	2,17667			
	Total	236	10,9280	2,28014			
Compliant	Male	121	8,1240	1,80541	1-234	1,22	0,270
	Female	115	7,8696	1,72455			
	Total	236	8,0000	1,76732			
Anonymous	Male	121	19,3140	4,14936	1-234	,018	0,893
	Female	115	19,2435	3,90364			
	Total	236	19,2797	4,02309			
Altruistic	Male	121	11,9256	3,72193	1-234	2066	0,104
	Female	115	11,1565	3,51086			
	Total	236	11,5508	3,63341			

As can be seen Table 3. tendency of showing the prosocial behavior of both team sport athletes and individual sport athletes were in a raw anonymous, emotional, altruistic, dire, public and compliant prosocial behavior. According to MANOVA analysis it was seen that there were significant differences in regard to team sport athletes and individual sport athletes on showing anonymous of prosocial behavior (Wilks Lambda ( $\lambda$ )= 0,822, F( 6-81)= 2,917, P<,01). Team sport athletes' tendency of showing anonymous prosocial behavior were higher than individual sport athletes (F(1-86)=13,05, P<,05).

Table 3. Results of MANOVA Analysis Related to Branch of Athletes

Prosocial Behaviors	Branch	n	x	sd	df	f	p
Public	Team	40	8,3000	2,42000	1-86	1,56	,215
	Individual	48	9,0000	2,76759			
	Total	88	8,6818	2,62414			
Emotional	Team	40	14,3500	2,83341	1-86	0,518	,474
	Individual	48	14,8125	3,13292			

	Total	88	14,6023	2,99248			
Dire	Team	40	10,6250	2,44622	1-86	,786	,378
	Individual	48	11,1042	2,58671			
	Total	88	10,8864	2,52086			
Compliant	Team	40	7,8000	1,68249	1-86	0,290	,592
	Individual	48	8,0208	2,08836			
	Total	88	7,9205	1,90716			
Anonymous	Team	40	17,6750	4,82721	1-86	13,057	,001
	Individual	48	20,8333	3,34113			
	Total	88	19,3977	4,35637			
Altruistic	Team	40	12,3250	2,96464	1-86	1,082	,301
	Individual	48	11,5000	4,22253			
	Total	88	11,8750	3,70713			

### Discussion and conclusions

Results indicated that participants displayed anonymous prosocial behavior most followed by emotional, altruistic, dire, public and compliant.

Although, the moral education and sport concepts showed a sensitive relationship which means sport has positive effects on ethical decision making and moral character education (Sabock, 1985; Carry, 1998; Robert and et. all. ,1999; Bergman, 2000; Singleton, 2003, results of this study showed that there were not significant differences in regard to athletes and nonathletes on showing prosocial behavior. Therefore research hypothesis was rejected. On the other hand, there were significant differences in regard to team sport athletes and individual sport athletes on showing anonymous prosocial behavior. Team sport athletes' tendencies of showing anonymous prosocial behavior were higher than individual sport athletes.

In literature, females show more emotional prosocial behavior than males (Carlo and et.all, 1996; Eisenberg and et.all, 1991; Lennon and Eisenberg, 1987; Whiting and Edwards, 1974) and the results of this study, matched with the literature in that there were significant differences in regard to gender on showing emotional prosocial behavior. In fact, females were more likely to report emotional prosocial behavior than males.

At the end of the study, although the research hypothesis was rejected, it should not be forgotten that physical education and athletic programs could be harmonious in promoting the development of sportsmanlike behaviors, ethical decision-making skills, and a total curriculum for moral character development" (Robert et all., 1999; Carry, 1998; Singleton, 2003; Spencer, 1993; Bergman, 2000; Stoll, 1995).

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