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Young athletes of leadership and effective communication perceptions the case of Turkish Football Federation 3rd league

Jóvenes atletas de liderazgo y percepciones de comunicación efectiva: el caso de la 3ra liga de la Federación Turca de Fútbol

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Abstract

Leadership behaviors of team captains in sports and the evaluation of effective communication levels in terms of demographic variables is the aim for study. The sample of the study consists of 106 football players who play football actively in the 3rd League of the Turkish Football Federation (TFF). Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Mann Whitney U test, Kruskal Wallis H test and Spearman correlation analyzes has been used for evaluating. The results show that there was a positive linear relationship between the perceived leadership behaviors of the athletes and their perceptions of effective communication. The significant difference between the education level variable, and the democratic behavior and autocratic behavior, which are the sub-dimensions of the perceptions of leadership in sports. The significant difference between the variable of position and the sub-dimensions of leadership in sports, social support and rewarding behavior. There is also a significant difference between the year playing football and democratic behavior, social support and rewarding behavior. No significant difference was found between perceptions of effective communication and demographic variables. Five predictor variables from the sub-dimensions of leadership in sports significantly explain approximately 30% of the total variance in effective communication scores. As a result, it can be concluded that the socially supported, rewarding, educational and instructive behaviors of team captains increase their effective communication skills with their athletes.

Keywords

Leadership; leadership in sports; effective communication; team captain.

Resumen

Los comportamientos de liderazgo de los capitanes de equipo en los deportes y la evaluación de los niveles de comunicación efectiva en términos de variables demográficas es el objetivo de estudio. La muestra del estudio está formada por 106 futbolistas que juegan al fútbol de forma activa en la 3ª Liga de la Federación Turca de Fútbol (TFF). Para la evaluación se ha utilizado la prueba de Kolmogorov-Smirnov, la prueba U de Mann Whitney, la prueba H de Kruskal Wallis y los análisis de correlación de Spearman. Los resultados muestran que hubo una relación lineal positiva entre los comportamientos de liderazgo percibidos de los atletas y sus percepciones de comunicación efectiva. La diferencia significativa entre la variable nivel educativo, y el comportamiento democrático y el comportamiento autocrático, que son las subdimensiones de las percepciones de liderazgo en el deporte. La diferencia significativa entre la variable de posición y las subdimensiones de liderazgo en deportes, apoyo social y comportamiento gratificante. También hay una diferencia significativa entre el año jugando al fútbol y el comportamiento democrático, el apoyo social y el comportamiento gratificante. No se encontraron diferencias significativas entre las percepciones de comunicación efectiva y las variables demográficas. Cinco variables predictoras de las subdimensiones de liderazgo en los deportes explican significativamente

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aproximadamente el 30 % de la variación total en las puntuaciones de comunicación efectiva. Como resultado, se puede concluir que los comportamientos socialmente apoyados, gratificantes, educativos e instructivos de los capitanes de equipo aumentan sus habilidades de comunicación efectiva con sus atletas.

Palabras clave

Liderazgo; liderazgo en el deporte; comunicación efectiva; capitán de equipo.

Introduction

Performance and success are accepted as important concepts related to each other at all levels of football. It can be argued that team captaincy is added to these concepts. As an important element of professional football, captaincy is in a dominant position in the team due to its direct relationship with team success, performance and effective communication. In this context, it is said that team captains have effective communication skills and have an important role in team success.

A lot of research has been done on the concepts of leadership and leader, and these terms have been defined in many different ways. Although the concepts of leader and leadership are as old as human history, they have begun to be studied scientifically in the last century (Kaplan et al., 2016). Leadership is referred to as a fundamental feature of sports performance, especially in team sports. In the last 25 years, important researches have been carried out investigating the role of coach and manager in this issue. However, this represents only one aspect of leadership in sports. Athlete leadership is an equally important concept, although less studied.

It has been consistently emphasized that athlete leadership is an important factor within sports teams, influencing a range of outcomes, including effective leadership, team performance and team functioning (Cotterill, 2013). Of particular interest in recent years has been the leadership provision that exists among team members and the extent to which the leadership provided meets the team's leadership needs. This type of leadership has been described as 'athlete leadership' and is operationally defined as "an athlete who assumes a formal or informal role within a team and influences a group of team members to achieve a

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common goal" (Loughead et al., 2006). Therefore, providing this leadership within a team has emerged as an important focus for managers, coaches, sports psychologists and scientists (Cotterill, Loughead and Fransen, 2022).

The role of athlete leaders, both formal (e.g.captain) and informal (e.g. leaders' motivations and cultural architects), has a significant impact on various team-related variables such as satisfaction, cohesion, and team dynamics (Loughead, 2017). When we consider team captains as official leaders, team captains are equipped to provide leadership in sports and are more likely to transfer their leadership skills to other areas of life (Newman, Lower ve Brgoch, 2019).

The coaching context is more than just a space where children can acquire “sports skills” in an individual-majority environment. It also often doubles as an interactive workplace, meaning it is a complex, multifaceted and comprehensive social system on its own, limited by competing egos, hierarchies, constraints, and opportunities (O’Boyle et al., 2020). These systems and features also include team captains who are the leader of the athlete. Dinç (2010) states that athlete leadership is an important factor in terms of team harmony, communication and high performance within the team. López-Gajardo et al. (2021) observed a positive relationship between perceived athlete leadership quality and perceived performance. They stated that this relationship stems from the leaders' ability to positively influence the group, encourage them, remind them of their required duties and their place on the field, or indicate when the team should attack or defend.

It has been reported that a set of behaviors is important for athlete leaders to influence their teammates and meet the leadership needs of a team. These include having effective communication skills, guiding group tasks, and achieving individual and team goals (Riggio et al., 2003; Wright and Cote, 2003). Gould and Voelker (2010) developed a workshop-based development program focusing on the role of the team captain, effective communication, team motivation, team building and cohesion, overcoming difficult team situations, and suggestions from coaches.

Athlete leadership, called the team captain, has responsibilities such as communicating

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When we consider communication as a process, it involves the transfer of a message from a source to a receiver. Dökmen (2010) defines communication as “the process of transmitting and making sense of information between the sender and the receiver”. Tayfun (2014), on the other hand, defines communication as “a cultural process in which feelings and thoughts are exchanged between people”. If we do not recognize effective communication from the definition of communication, conveying the message to the receiver is the correct perception of the message by the receiver. In this context, establishing an effective communication link between the team captain and team members and using effective communication skills are important factors that increase team performance as well as individual performance. In particular, we can say that the communication between the team leader and its members is different. Because the starting point of communication strategies is leader and team relations. For effective communication, it is extremely important that the relations between team members move in the right direction. On the contrary, it is not possible to talk about effective communication if the members are not sincere, neat and honest in their relations.

In their study, Fransen, Haslam, Mallet, Steffens, Peters, and Boen (2017) found that from leadership roles, the team with the highest quality athlete leadership excels in all indicators of team effectiveness. They found that high-quality athlete leadership was positively associated with team effectiveness. In their study, Metin, Eratlı Şirin, Şirin, and Şahin (2019) concluded that the communication skills of coaches with their athletes increase depending on their age and undergraduate level. Cunningham and Eys (2007) examined the

Original article. Young athletes of leadership and effective communication perceptions the case of Turkish Football Federation 3rd league. Vol. 8, n.º 3; p. 348-369, sep 2022. <https://doi.org/10.17979/sportis.2022.8.3.8975> relationship between team communication and role confusion in team sports. It was found that as the communication rate increased, the role confusion within the team decreased. Sullivan and Gee's (2007) research on athletic satisfaction and communication found that as communication within the team increases, athletic satisfaction increases. Döşyılmaz and Şirin (2021) stated in their study that the role model effect of athlete leaders also contributed greatly to the career development of athletes. These studies support the idea that there is a positive relationship between leadership in sports and effective communication.

Effective captains have to be consistent. As a consistent captain, he must always compete in a ready, well-motivated and 100 percent effort. By realizing some of these features, we cannot direct the team positively, and this plays a negative role in the success of the team. As a result of failure, he cannot win the respect of his teammates and the technical man. Stable captains need to have effective communication skills. The important thing in communication is to differentiate from others and to come forward with your own leadership style and develop this style.

The leadership field of athletes has been shaped by the theories and measurement tools obtained from the organizational and coaches' literature. This study is considered important because the leadership style displayed by the team captains playing in the sports teams in Turkey affects the harmony of the team and the communication within the team positively and negatively, and of course, can contribute to the development of sports, together with the success and failure of the teams. This study was applied on 106 football players who play football actively in TFF 3rd League. The purpose of this study is to examine the team captains' leadership behaviors in sports and the evaluation of their effective communication levels by their teammates in terms of demographic variables. In this context, the subject of the study is to show that team captains have an important role in team success with their leadership behaviors and effective communication skills. Although there are studies that deal with the similar questioning in various sports organization structures, the number of studies examining the leadership styles and effective communication perceptions of team captains is very few. For this reason, it has shown that this issue is a problem that needs to be investigated and made it necessary to conduct research on it.

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Sample of the Research

This study was conducted to examine the effect of the leadership style of the team captains on the effective communication within the team. The study sample was carried out with a total of 106 football players playing active football in the TFF 3rd League in 2021.

Data Collection Tool

In this study, (i) leadership scale for sports and (ii) effective communication scale were used in order to evaluate the leadership behaviors and effective communication levels of the team captains of the athletes in terms of demographic variables. Some brief information about the data collection tools used in the study is given below.

The leadership scale for sport (LSS): One of the scales used in the research, Leadership scale for sport (LSS) was developed by Chelladurai and Saleh (1980). The original scale consists of 40 items and 5 factors. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Unutmaz and Gencer (2012) and used in their own studies. Unutmaz and Gençer (2012) stated that the internal consistency coefficients for the sub-dimensions of the scale vary between 0.58 and 0.91 and the total internal consistency coefficient of the scale is 0.94. Research data were scored with a 5-point Likert-type rating. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the Sport Leadership Scale - Athlete's Perception of his Coach Version is a valid and reliable measurement tool that can be used on professional athletes. In the analysis performed to test the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach's Alpha value was determined as 0.912.

Effective Communication Scale: Effective Communication Scale The "Effective Communication Scale in Team Sports", which is used to measure intra-team communication in team sports, was determined based on Sullivan and Feltz's (2003) scale. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Alkan (2009) and used in his own studies. Effective communication scale is a 7-point Likert type scale with Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient determined as 0.851 by Alkan (2009). The original scale consists of 4 factors and 15 items. As a result of factor analysis, it was seen that the scale consisted of 2 factors and 15 items. In the analysis performed to test the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach's Alpha value was determined as 0.851.

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Data Analysis

In the analysis of the data obtained as a result of the scales applied in the research, $p \leq 0,05$ was taken as the significance level and SPSS 26.0 was used as the package program. With the program used, the data were tested with different analysis techniques suitable for the problems. Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was used to determine whether the research data showed a normal distribution. The analyzed which has been used Kruskal Wallis H test for multiple groups, Man Whitney U test for paired groups, and Spearman correlation analysis to determine the relationship between two variables.

Results

In this section, the findings, results and comments obtained from the analyzes are presented.

Table 1. Normality Test Results

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov		
	Statistic	df	p
Leadership in Sports	.097	106	.015
Effective communication	.103	106	.007

df= degree of freedom, p= significance level

In Table 1, Kolmogorov-Smirnov data were analyzed since the size of the sample group was more than 50. In Table 1, it was determined that the data were not normally distributed ($p < 0.05$, $p = 0.15$, $p = 0.07$). For this reason, non-parametric tests were applied.

Table 2. The results of the Man Whitney U Test Regarding the Perception of Leadership in Sports According to the Education Level Variable of the Football Players.

Leadership in Sports	Education level	N	Mean	df	χ^2	p
Training and instruction	Highschool	79	51,12	1	1,865	0,172
	University	27	60,46			
Democratic behavior	Highschool	79	47,57	1	11,617	0,001
	University	27	70,85			
Autocratic behavior	Highschool	79	57,82	1	6,164	0,013
	University	27	40,87			
Social support	Highschool	79	51,99	1	0,756	0,385
	University	27	57,93			
Rewarding behavior	Highschool	79	52,61	1	0,262	0,609
	University	27	56,09			

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N= Number of samples, df= degree of freedom, χ^2 = Chi squared, p= significance level

According to Table 2, there is a significant difference between the education level variable of the football players and the sub-dimensions of the perception of leadership in sports, democratic behavior and autocratic behavior ($p < 0.05$, $L = 598,000,725,500$; $z = -3,408,-2,483$). As a result of the analysis, it seems that the difference is between high school graduates and university graduates. It was determined that in the democratic behavior dimension, it was in favor of university graduates, and in the autocratic behavior sub-dimension, it was in favor of high school graduates.

Table 3. Man Whitney U Test results regarding the effective communication perceptions of the football players according to the education level variable.

Effective communication	Education level	N	Mean	df	χ^2	p
Acceptance and Positive Conflict	Highschool	79	50,72	1	2,542	0,111
	University	27	61,63			
Discrimination and Negative Conflict	Highschool	79	54,31	1	0,217	0,642
	University	27	51,13			
Effective Communication Total Score	Highschool	79	52,84	1	0,143	0,706
	University	27	55,43			

N= Number of samples, df= degree of freedom, χ^2 = Chi squared, p= significance level

According to Table 3, no significant difference was found between the education level variable of football players and their perception of effective communication. ($p > 0.05$). Considering the averages, the averages of the university graduate athletes were found to be higher than the high school graduate athletes.

Table 4. Kruskal Wallis test results regarding the perception of leadership in sports according to the variable of the position played by the football players.

Leadership in Sports	Position Played	N	Mean	df	χ^2	p
Training and instruction	Goalkeeper	10	73,30	3	5,525	0,137
	Defense	33	47,30			
	Midfielder	42	53,93			
	Striker	21	52,95			
Democratic behavior	Goalkeeper	10	68,35	3	7,409	0,06
	Defense	33	42,94			
	Midfielder	42	58,54			

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	Striker	21	52,95			
Autocratic behavior	Goalkeeper	10	50,00	3	1,291	0,731
	Defense	33	52,58			
	Midfielder	42	57,35			
	Striker	21	48,93			
Social support	Goalkeeper	10	73,45	3	9,737	0,021
	Defense	33	41,80			
	Midfielder	42	55,61			
	Striker	21	58,17			
Rewarding behavior	Goalkeeper	10	76,85	3	10,085	0,018
	Defense	33	42,89			
	Midfielder	42	55,12			
	Striker	21	55,81			
Total	Goalkeeper	10	75,75	3	10,751	0,013
	Defense	33	42,02			
	Midfielder	42	57,89			
	Striker	21	52,17			

N= Number of samples, df= degree of freedom, χ^2 = Chi squared, p= significance level

In Table 4, a significant difference was found between the position variable played by the football players and the social support and rewarding behavior, which are the sub-dimensions of leadership in sports and leadership in sports they perceive. ($p < 0.05$). As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the difference was between the football players playing in the goalkeeper position and the footballers playing in the striker position in favor of the footballers playing in the goalkeeper position ($U = 58,500, 74,000, 68,500; z = -1,967, -1,319, -1,563$).

Table 5. Kruskal Wallis H test results regarding the effective communication perceptions of the players according to the variable of the position they play.

Effective communication	Position Played	N	Mean	df	χ^2	p
Acceptance and Positive Conflict	Goalkeeper	10	65,30	3	2,289	0,515
	Defense	33	54,47			
	Midfielder	42	49,39			
	Striker	21	54,57			
Discrimination and Negative Conflict	Goalkeeper	10	68,20	3	7,626	0,054
	Defense	33	45,59			
	Midfielder	42	59,96			
	Striker	21	46			
Total	Goalkeeper	10	73,50	3	5,418	0,144
	Defense	33	48,30			

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Midfielder	42	54,32
Striker	21	50,50

N= Number of samples, df= degree of freedom, χ^2 = Chi squared, p= significance level

According to Table 5, no significant difference was found between the position variable played by the football players and the effective communication they perceived. ($p > 0.05$). Considering the row averages, the averages of the athletes playing in the goalkeeper position were found to be higher than the athletes playing in the defender, midfield and forward positions.

Table 6. Kruskal Wallis H test results regarding the perception of leadership in sports according to the variable of the year the football players played.

Leadership in Sports	Football year they played	N	Mean	df	χ^2	p
Training and instruction	1-3 Years	23	50,41	4	8,612	0,072
	4-7 Years	24	44,65			
	8-11 Years	32	60,58			
	12-15 Years	13	42,54			
	15 year or more	14	67,75			
Democratic behavior	1-3 Years	23	51,26	4	18,465	0,001
	4-7 Years	24	43,38			
	8-11 Years	32	63,41			
	12-15 Years	13	31,15			
	15 year or more	14	72,64			
Autocratic behavior	1-3 Years	23	57,52	4	7,721	0,102
	4-7 Years	24	51,08			
	8-11 Years	32	51,94			
	12-15 Years	13	70,35			
	15 year or more	14	38,96			
Social support	1-3 Years	23	52,07	4	11,703	0,02
	4-7 Years	24	45,15			
	8-11 Years	32	60,95			
	12-15 Years	13	36,04			
	15 year or more	14	69,36			
Rewarding behavior	1-3 Years	23	55,87	4	12,817	0,012
	4-7 Years	24	46,29			
	8-11 Years	32	62,16			
	12-15 Years	13	30,65			
	15 year or more	14	63,39			
Total	1-3 Years	23	51,02			

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4-7 Years	24	42,73	4	15,034	0,005
8-11 Years	32	64,20			
12-15 Years	13	35,12			
15 year or more	14	68,64			

N= Number of samples, df= degree of freedom, χ^2 = Chi squared, p= significance level

In Table 6, a significant difference was found between the variable of the year the football players played football and the perceived Leadership in Sports and its sub-dimensions, democratic behavior, social support, and rewarding behavior. ($p < 0.05$). As a result of the analyzes, it was determined that the difference was in favor of the players with 15 years or more experience between the players with 15 years or more experience and the players with 1-3 years of experience ($U = 112,000, 99,000, 111,000, 140,000$; $z = -1,535, -1,950, -1,573, -0,665$).

Table 7. Kruskal Wallis H test results regarding the perception of effective communication according to the variable of the year the football players played.

Effective communication	Football year they played	N	Mean	df	χ^2	p
Acceptance and Positive Conflict	1-3 Years	23	54,72	4	3,796	0,434
	4-7 Years	24	45,60			
	8-11 Years	32	59,97			
	12-15 Years	13	46,81			
	15 year or more	14	56,46			
Discrimination and Negative Conflict	1-3 Years	23	60,89	4	5,394	0,249
	4-7 Years	24	51,17			
	8-11 Years	32	56,78			
	12-15 Years	13	53,27			
	15 year or more	14	38,07			
Total	1-3 Years	23	58,80	4	2,184	0,702
	4-7 Years	24	49,77			
	8-11 Years	32	56,84			
	12-15 Years	13	48,35			
	15 year or more	14	48,32			

N= Number of samples, df= degree of freedom, χ^2 = Chi squared, p= significance level

No significant difference was found between the variable of the year the football players played football and their perceptions of effective communication. ($p > 0.05$). Considering the averages, the averages of the athletes who played football for 1-3 years were found to be higher than those who played football for 4-7 years, 8-11 years, 12-15 years and

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15 years or more (See Table-7).

Table 8. Results of Spearman Correlation Analysis Between Leadership in Sport, Effective Communication and Its Sub-Dimensions.

	Leadership in Sports	Effective communication	Training and instruction	Democratic behavior	Autocratic behavior	Social support	Rewarding behavior	Acceptance and Positive Conflict	Discrimination and Negative Conflict
Leadership in Sports	1	,381**	,894**	,886**	-,180	,903**	,882**	,431**	,149
Effective communication		1	,415**	,300**	-,087	,414**	,304**	,783**	,751**
Training and instruction			1	,777**	-,360**	,867**	,819**	,518**	,113
Democratic behavior				1	-,442**	,820**	,774**	,438**	,065
Autocratic behavior					1	-,377**	-,279**	-,301**	,124
Social support						1	,789**	,478**	,156
Rewarding behavior							1	,322**	,126
Acceptance and Positive Conflict								1	,266**
Discrimination and Negative Conflict									1

r= correlation coefficient, p= significance level

Spearman correlation analysis was conducted to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the participants' Sport Leadership and Effective Communication and its sub-dimensions. As a result of the analysis, it is seen that there is a

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positive and moderately significant relationship between the scores of leadership in sports and effective communication perceptions (Spearman $R=0.381$; $p = 0,000 < 0,01$). When the leadership styles of the team captains are examined according to the sub-dimensions, there is a medium, linear and positive relationship for the education and training sub-dimension, and a medium, linear and positive relationship for the democratic behavior sub-dimension. There is no relationship for the autocratic behavior sub-dimension, a medium, linear and positive relationship was found for the social support sub-dimension, and a medium, linear and positive relationship was found for the rewarding behavior sub-dimension (Spearman $R=0.415$; $p = 0,000 < 0,01$ - Spearman $R=0.300$; $p = 0,002 < 0,01$ - Spearman $R=-0.087$; $p = 0,374 > 0,01$ - Spearman $R=0.414$; $p = 0,000 < 0,01$ - Spearman $R=0.304$; $p = 0,000 < 0,01$). When the effective communication of the team captains is examined according to the sub-dimensions; The results were medium, linear and positive for the sub-dimension of acceptance and positive conflict, and no correlation was observed for the sub-dimension of discrimination and negative conflict (Spearman $R=0.431$; $p = 0,000 < 0,01$ - Spearman $R=0.149$; $p = 0,128 > 0,01$).

Finally, in the study, it was aimed to investigate whether the leadership perceptions of football players in sports predict their perceptions of effective communication. For this purpose, since there is a correlational relationship between perceptions of leadership in sports and perceptions of effective communication, regression analysis was performed and the findings are given in Table 9.

Table 9. Regression Analysis Results Between Leadership and Effective Communication in Sports

The dependent variable	Independent variable	R ²	t	β	F	p
Effective communication	Leadership in Sports	0,229	5,551	0,478	30,817	0,000

R²= Coefficient of Determination, t= Significance test value of regression coefficients, β= Beta Coefficient, F= test value, p= significance level

When Table 9 is examined regarding whether the perceptions of leadership in sports are a predictor of perceptions of effective communication, it is understood that it is a predictor of $p = 0.000 < 0.001$ significance level ($R^2 = 0.229$). Accordingly, it can be said that ~23% of the variance explained for effective communication stems from the perceptions of leadership in sports.

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Table 10. Regression Analysis Results Between Leadership Sub-Dimensions and Effective Communication in Sport

Predicted Variable: Effective Communication					
Independent variable	B	Standard error B	β	t	p
Leadership in Sports	32,583	9,644		3,379	0,000
Training and instruction	0,737	0,262	0,499	2,815	0,006
Democratic behavior	0,075	0,299	0,042	0,250	0,803
Autocratic behavior	0,214	0,259	0,083	0,825	0,412
Social support	0,831	0,416	0,340	2,000	0,048
Rewarding behavior	-1,198	0,584	-0,348	-2,050	0,043
R= 0,551		R ² = 0,303		Adjusted R ² = 0,268	
F= 8,698			P= 0,000		

B= constant coefficient, β = Beta Coefficient, t= Significance test value of regression coefficients, p= significance level, R= simple correlation coefficient, R²= Coefficient of Determination, F= , F= test value

Leadership dimensions in sports; The dimensions of education and training, social support and rewarding behavior are shown in the table10, which is in a significant relationship with the effective communication scores of the football players. However, no significant relationship was found between the democratic behavior and autocratic behavior dimensions and the effective communication scores of the football players. The five aforementioned predictor variables significantly explain approximately 30% of the total variance in effective Communication scores (R=0.551, R²=0.303 p<0.001).

Discussion, conclusion and recommendations

The captain of a team is the visible face of that team. For this reason, the two most important criteria are leadership and communication. Communication within the team makes the athletes happy, increases their performance, and shows them that they are valuable, it instills the feeling of being valued, sets out the template of duties and responsibilities, and also eliminates possible negativities that may occur. As a result, success also is provided. Athletes need a leader they respect and follow, who will ideally perform it in effective and desired communication within the team. This leader can be the team manager and coach, as well as the team captains, who are another leader in the team.

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In this study, in which the leadership and effective communication behaviors of team captains in sports are examined from different perspectives and the athletes are included; positive linear relationship was observed between perceptions of leadership in sports and perceptions of effective communication. Aznan et al. (2018) revealed in their study that the relationship dimension between communication management and coach-athlete is at a significant level. This research supports the idea that there is a positive relationship between leadership in sports and effective communication.

While there is a medium relationship between the effective communication skills of the team captains and their educational and instructive, democratic, social support and rewarding behaviors, there is devoid of relationship between their autocratic behaviors and their effective communication skills. Once again, while there is a medium relationship between team captains' leadership behaviors in sports, acceptance and positive conflict behavior, there is devoid of relationship with discrimination and negative conflict behavior. Luis Rogério de Albuquerque et al. (2021), found that there is a positive relationship between the social, cognitive, goal setting and initiative taking of the athletes and the democratic behavior, social support, education and training and positive feedback dimensions from the leadership perceptions of the coaches. Özbey and Yılmaz (2021), in their study, found a relationship with the educational, supportive, democratic and explanatory-rewarding behavior in the sub-dimensions of leadership in the relationship between the perceived leadership styles of the athletes and their communication levels, and concluded that there was no relationship at the level of autocratic behavior.

In the study seems that, there is a significant difference between the education level variables of football players and the sub-dimensions of the perception of leadership in sports, democratic behavior and autocratic behavior. It was determined that this difference was in favor of university graduates in the dimension of democratic behavior and in favor of high school graduates in the sub-dimension of autocratic behavior. In this context, it can be said that as the education level increases, the players perceive the team captains' behaviors focused on group equality and free flow of ideas. It coincides with the findings of Bayrak and Nacar (2015) in their study and states that the higher the education level, the higher the communication skills of the coaches. However, no significant difference was found between

Original article. Young athletes of leadership and effective communication perceptions the case of Turkish Football Federation 3rd league. Vol. 8, n.º 3; p. 348-369, sep 2022. <https://doi.org/10.17979/sportis.2022.8.3.8975> the education level variable and effective communication perceptions. Mutlu, Akoğlu, Şentürk, Ağılönü, and Özbey (2019) concluded in their study that there is a significant difference in relation to communication skills, according to the same variable. And they stated that this difference was between the participants at the high school and undergraduate level, and it was in favor of the participants with a high school graduation. This result contains contradictory findings to our study. However, in the research of Tepeköylü Öztürk and Soytürk (2019), the communication skills of the coaches perceived by the athletes were evaluated and it was concluded that there was no significant difference. In this context, the result obtained is similar to the result of our study.

A significant difference was encountered between the variable of the position played by the footballers and the perceived leadership in the sport and its sub-dimensions, social support and rewarding behavior ($p < 0.05$). As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the difference was between the football players playing in the goalkeeper position and the footballers playing in the striker position in favor of the footballers playing in the goalkeeper position. Accordingly, it can be said that the players playing in the goalkeeper position adopt the leadership behavior of the team captains more than the players playing in the forward position. However, there is no significant difference between perceptions of effective communication. In his study, Türksoy (2013) found a significant difference between the leadership behavior he wanted to see in his coach, according to the position criteria played by the athletes playing in the 1st League and 2nd League categories. It was determined that this difference was between the goalkeeper and the defending and attacking players, the result is similar to the results in our study.

There is a significant difference between the years in which the players played football and the perceived leadership in sport and its sub-dimensions, democratic behavior, social support and rewarding behavior. It was determined that the difference was between the players with 15 years and more experience and the players with 1-3 years of experience, in favor of the players with 15 years and more experience. We can say that the players who have seen on the football fields for a long-time gain experience and look at the events on and off the field from different perspectives, withal they perceive team captains behaviors more the democratic, social support and rewarding. In the research of Ödemiş and Karagün (2016), the

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communication skills of the coaches perceived by the athletes were evaluated and it was concluded that there was a significant difference according to the variable of experience years. In this context, the result obtained here is similar to the result of our study. There is no significant difference between the variable of years in which the football players played football and their perceptions of effective communication. However, Ateş, Yıldız, and Yıldız (2018) located that there is a significant difference between the communication levels of the coaches and the variables of the participants' years of doing sports.

When the team captains' effective communication skills and the sub-dimensions of leadership in sports are examined; while there is a medium relationship between their educational and teaching behaviors, democratic behaviors, social support and rewarding behaviors, there is no relationship with their autocratic behaviors. When the sub-dimensions of effective communication with the leadership behaviors of team captains in sports are examined; while there is a medium relationship between acceptance and positive conflict behavior, there is no relationship between discrimination and negative conflict behavior. In this sense; team captains' educational, democratic, social support and rewarding behaviors have shown that they increase their effective communication levels. As a result of the done regression analysis it was determined that, the perceptions of leadership in sports are the predictors of perceptions of effective communication and 30% of the variance explained for; effective communication stems from the sub-dimensions of education and training, democratic behavior, autocratic behavior, social support and rewarding behavior in sports.

Based on the contribution of the study to the field, it is thought that stating that the team captain intended for young athletes with strong leadership has an impact on team communication and team performance will change the perspectives of the teams to the team captains and increase the importance of the team captains. This study, like other field research, has some limitations. It is thought that this study, which is especially about football players in teams, will contribute to the literature by examining the factors of leadership and effective communication in sports that affect the productivity of athletes. In the light of the information at the end of our study, some suggestions can be made. For students in physical education and sports colleges and sports faculties, courses on communication, leadership and leadership for young athletes can be included in their curriculum as compulsory courses.

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Conducting the trainings in the courses and seminars opened by the TFF for the coaches in a way to include the team captains and increasing the number of them will contribute to the development of their communication skills, motivating and performance-enhancing aspects. Adapting the study to Turkey and conducting a more comprehensive analysis are recommended to researchers. In this context, it is thought that with the data to be taken from different regions of Turkey, the analysis of leadership in sports and effective communication perceptions will be revealed more clearly and benefit will be provided in this way.

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