

Relationship between Target Orientations and Perceived Motivational Climate Levels of Students Engaged in Individual and Team Sports Activities

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to analyze the relationship between perceived motivational climate and target orientations of team and individual athletes who participate in sports at the Physical Education and Sports Departments of faculties. A total of 200 athletes (students at the Physical Education and Sports Departments of Gazi University, Selçuk University Akdeniz University, Karamanoğlu Mehmetbey University and Atatürk University in the 2012-2013 academic year), 92 of whom play individual sports and 108 of whom play team sports participated in this study ($M=21.475$, $Ss= 2.23$). To reach the aim of the study, "Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire" (TEOSQ) developed by Duda (1989) and "The Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire" (PMCSQ) developed by Walling Duda and Chi (1993) were applied to the athletes. To analyze and interpret the data by using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation statistic technique significance taken $P<0,05$. To rate the data and find the estimated values SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences) package program is used. As a result of this study it is found that ego and target orientations of team athletes have more perceptions than individual athletes. On the other hand there was an advantage noted among team athletes who perceived motivational climate in terms of mastery climate. There is a resemblance in relation between team athletes target orientation and motivational climate where as there is a resemblance between individual athletes assignment orientation and mastery climate.

KEYWORDS

Target orientation, ego orientation, motivational climate

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Introduction

There are several factors involved in the success and failure of athletes. These factors are directly proportional with the athlete's personal perception and his

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environment. It is thought that target orientation and motivational climate can be included in these factors.

Research on target orientation reveal that there are two independent success ideas. These ideas are task-oriented and ego-oriented targets (Duda and Nicholls, 1992). These two target orientations which will be mentioned as task and ego, are related to individuals' skill levels (Toros 2002). It is stated that an individual with task-oriented targets focuses on individual skill development, learning new skills, show mastery in tasks and are hard-working (Toros, 2011). Task-oriented athletes believe in skill development and hard working in training. They deliberately avoid normative comparisons with their peers at the same age. At the same time, they base their perceptions of success on their personal development. When they face difficulties or failures, they tend to show and continue inner motivational behaviors (Toros et al., 2010). In ego-oriented targets, it is stated that an individual shows efforts to prove himself. The source of personal success for an individual in ego-oriented targets is defined as winning over the competitor in a contest with less effort (Toros, 2002). As winning is embraced as performing the best, the real target in ego-oriented targets is perceived to be superior to competitors (Bray, Balaguer and Duda, 2004). Perceived skills are more important than hard work and efforts for ego-oriented athletes. These athletes tend not to show inner motivational behaviors when they face difficulties and failures. Ego-oriented athletes tend to use unsportsmanlike behavioral advantages (Toros et al., 2010).

Motivational climate is defined as the situational environment that directs the target of the action in success (Ames, 1992). It is accepted that motivational climate affects an individual's interpretation of success and failure measures in success environments, and success behaviors by individual's affective and cognitive responses (Jaakkola and Digelidis, 2007). Motivational climate is adressed in two dimensions; mastery-oriented climate and performance-oriented climate. Mastery climate has the characteristics of increasing social responsibility, developing life-long skills, having a higher will to practice and keeping resistance. Performance oriented climate is the motivational climate that makes the feeling of satisfaction easier after demonstrating superiority over competitors (Sage and Kavussanu, 2007).

Common argument of the results of literature search is that there is an interaction between target-oriented and motivational climate, and the target-orientation of athletes affects their motivational climate perceptions. The results of a study conducted in students of Physical Education and Sports by Roberts and Ommundsen (1996) showed that athletes with primarily task-orientation perceive motivational climate as mastery target-oriented and athletes with primarily ego-orientation perceive motivational climate as performance task-oriented. Also, in a study done in male, elite- and non-elite basketball players showed meaningful relationships between ego-orientation and performance climate (Toros, 2002).

The aim of this study is to reveal the relationship between target-orientation and motivational climate perceptions of athletes engaged in team and individual sports activities.

Method

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between target orientation and perceived motivational climates of athletes engaged in team

sports and individual sports activities in Schools of Physical Education and Sports.

Research Sampling

200 athletes who were students in Schools of Physical Education and Sports of Gazi University, Selcuk University, Akdeniz University, Karamanoglu Mehmetbey University and Ataturk University during 2012-2013 academic year participated in the study. 108 of these athletes were engaged in team sports and 92 athletes were engaged in individual sports activities (The average of age is 21.475 ± 2.23 years). Relational survey method is used in this research. According to this survey method, aiming to determine the existence of change and/or its level in between two or more variables.

Data Collection

Information related to the purpose of the study is given systematically by doing a literature review, and a theoretical framework is set. Then, 'Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire' (TEOSQ) developed by Duda (1989; 1992) and 'The Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire' (PMCSQ) developed by Walling, Duda and Chi (1993) were applied to athletes. Tools for data collection are presented below.

Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire: This questionnaire has 13 items where 7 of these items are related to task and 6 are related to ego-orientation. The adaptation of this questionnaire for Turkish athletes was done by Toros (2002).

The Perceived Motivational Climate in Sport Questionnaire: This questionnaire has 21 items where 9 of these items are performance related and 12 of them are mastery related. The adaptation of this questionnaire for Turkish athletes was done by Toros (2002).

Data Analysis

Mann-Whitney U and Pearson Correlation methods were used in data analysis and interpretation. The result was significant, $P < 0,05$. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in evaluating data and calculating values.

Findings

Table 1. The results of Mann-Whitney U Test of the Sample that Show Target Tendencies

		n	Mean Rank	Rank Total	U	Z	P
Task-orientation	Team Sports	108	114,97	12416,50	3405,500	-3,836	0,000
	Individual Sports Activities	92	83,52	7683,50			
Ego-Orientation	Team Sports	108	110,65	11950,00	3872,000	-2,692	0,007
	Individual Sports Activities	92	88,59	8150,00			

When Table 1 is examined, it is found that there is a significant difference in task-orientations of athletes who are engaged in team sports and individual sports activities. [U value=3405,500 P=0,000<0.05]. The mean rank of athletes in team sports is \bar{X} =114,97 while the mean rank is \bar{X} =83,52 for athletes engaged in individual sports activities.

Significant difference in ego-orientations of athletes that are engaged in team sports and individual sports activities was found [U value=3872,000 P=0,007<0.05]. Average values show that the mean rank is \bar{X} =110,65 for athletes engaged in team sports while the mean rank is \bar{X} =88,59 for athletes that are engaged in individual sports activities.

Table 2. Mann-Whitney U Test Results that Show the Perceived Motivational Climates of the Research Sample

		n	Mean Rank	Total Rank	U	Z	P
Mastery Climate	Team Sports	108	109,37	11812,00	4010,000	-2,365	0,018
	Individual Sports Activities	92	90,09	8288,00			
Performance Climate	Team Sports	108	106,49	11501,00	4321,000	-1,596	0,110
	Individual Sports Activities	92	93,47	8599,00			

Table 2 shows a significant difference in mastery climate between athletes engaged in team sports and athletes engaged in individual sports activities [U value=4010,000 P=0,018<0.05]. Average scores show that athletes engaged in team sports have a mean rank of (\bar{X} =109,37) while athletes engaged in individual sports activities have a mean rank of (\bar{X} =90,09).

No significant difference was found in performance climate between athletes engaged in team sports and athletes engaged in individual sports activities [U value=4321,000 P=0,110>0.05].

Table 3. Correlational Analysis Between Target Orientations and Perceived Motivational Climates of Athletes Engaged in Team Sports

		Mastery Climate	Performance Climate
Task-Orientation	r	-,025	-1,110
	P	-,796	0,048
	N	108	108,000
Ego-Orientation	r	-,031	-,077
	P	-,749	,429
	N	108	108

Table 3 shows a significant relationship between task-orientation of athletes engaged in team sports and performance climate (r=1,110, P< 0.05).

Table 4. Correlational Analysis between Target-Orientation and Perceived Motivational Climates of Athletes Engaged in Individual Sports Activities

		Mastery Climate	Performance Climate
Task-Orientation	r	-,157	-0,310
	P	,136	,770
	N	92	92
Ego-Orientation	r	-,101	1,113
	P	,338	0,045
	N	92	92

Table 4 shows that there is a significant relationship between ego-orientation and performance climate of athletes engaged in individual sports activities ($r=1,113$, $P<0.05$).

Discussion and Conclusion

Significant difference was found between athletes engaged in team sports and those engaged in individual sports activities in task-orientation. The average values show that the mean rank of athletes involved in team sports is ($\bar{X}=114,97$) while it is ($\bar{X}=83,52$) for athletes involved in individual sports activities.

A significant difference was found between athletes engaged in team sports and that are engaged in individual sports activities in ego-orientations. According to the average values, the mean rank for athletes that are engaged in team sports is ($\bar{X}=110,65$) while the value for athletes that are engaged in individual sports activities is ($\bar{X}=88,59$).

According to this result, the task and ego-orientation of athletes that are engaged in team sports are higher than athletes who are engaged in individual sports activities. The reason for this can be the fact that athletes engaged in team sports having certain tasks and playing in a certain position within the team in terms of technical and tactical tasks requires team players to have higher perceptions in terms of target-orientation. It can be said that, in terms of ego-orientation, in-group motivation, trust for team players and the feeling of success together leads to a higher ego-orientation in athletes that are engaged in team sports compared to athletes engaged in individual sports activities. Generally, it is seen that both athletes engaged in team sports and engaged in individual sports activities have higher ego-orientations.

Results of similar studies such as Yilmaz et al., (2009), Nutoumanis (2001), White et al., (2004), Toros and Guven (2011), Toros (2002), Ariburun and Asci (2005), Kazak et al. (2002) support our results. These results suggest that task-oriented athletes are happy with what they do and they reach success easier while ego-oriented athletes aim to reach success in as short a time as possible and when they can not reach their target, they psychologically and physically breakdown. According to Stephens and Bredilmer (1995), athletes with high task-orientation see themselves as skilled and they are happy with being involved in sports activities. An athlete with a high task-orientation considers contests as a chance to improve his skills.

A significant difference is found between mastery climate and athletes engaged in team sports. Average values show that the mean rank of athletes engaged in team sports is ($\bar{X}=109,37$) while the mean rank for athletes engaged in individual sports activities is ($\bar{X}=90,09$). There is no significant difference found between performance climate and athletes engaged in team sports compared to athletes engaged in sports activities individually.

This result shows that there is a significant difference in mastery climate in team athletes compared to athletes engaged in individual sports activities while there is no significant difference in performance climate.

Considering this result, it can be said that compared to athletes engaged in individual sports activities, team athletes playing in more games, being aware of their tasks and responsibilities in the team and finding their place in the team, and with the thought of not training enough or irregularly would have a negative effect both on their own and their team's performance, coach and appropriate sports environments might be more appropriate in terms of team sports which causes team athletes to have a higher mastery climate dimension.

Similarly, a study conducted in soccer players by Van-Yperen and Duda (1999) showed that the athletes' mastery climate perceptions were higher. Another study performed by Ungor (2009) in amateur and professional athletes, amateur soccer players showed higher mastery climate perceptions than performance climate perceptions. Roberts and Ommundsen (1996) found that volleyball players perceive motivational climate of the sports environment as mastery climate based.

Ariburun and Asci (2005) conducted a study on team sports and did not find a significant relationship between mastery climate and performance climate. Gencer and Ilhan (2009) performed a study in badminton players and did not find a significant relationship between mastery climate and performance climate. The results of a study by Pensgaard and Robert (2002) which examined the climate averages of amateur and professional soccer players separately, both groups' performance climate averages were higher than mastery climate averages. Halvari et al. (2011) conducted a study in athletes and students and found that encouragement of their coaches and teachers had a positive effect on their mastery climates.

The reason for differences in similar studies can be due to whether the sports activities are individual or team based, conducting the studies in different sports, and engaging in sports activities professionally or as an amateur.

A significant relationship between task orientation of team athletes and performance climate is found. This result shows that athletes in teams with higher task-orientation perceptions result in an increased performance climate perception. Roberts and Ommundsen (1996) conducted a study in students of sports and found that task-oriented athletes perceive motivational climate as mastery target-oriented and similarly, ego-oriented athletes perceive their motivational climates as performance task-oriented. Gencer and Ilhan (2009) found an insignificant relationship at a low level between task-orientation and performance climate. Cunningham and Xiang (2008) found that mastery climate perception regulates the relationship between task-orientation and life satisfaction. Stornes and Ommundsen (2004) performed a study in handball players and found that performance climate perceptions show parallelism with ego-orientation and task-orientation perceptions show parallelism with mastery

climate. A study done by Ungor (2009) in football players, strong correlations were found between task-orientation and mastery climate, and ego-orientation and performance climate.

Literature search shows that athletes with higher task-orientation have higher perceptions of mastery climate. As a result, athletes with task-oriented targets can be successful in an environment with mastery climate and these two traits compensate each other.

A significant relationship was found between ego-orientation and performance climate of athletes engaged in individual sports activities ($r=1,113$, $P< 0.05$). According to this result, in the relationship between target orientation and perceived motivation climates of athletes engaged in individual sports activities, a significant relationship was found between ego-orientation and performance relationship.

Similar studies were examined and Gencer and Ilhan (2009) conducted a study with badminton players where they found that high performance leads to ego-orientation. Roberts and Ommundsen (1996) conducted a study in students of school of sports where they found a significant relationship between ego-orientation and performance climate. Ungur (2009) determined that increase in ego-orientation scores leads to an increase in perception of target orientation in a study performed in soccer players.

From the common points of studies, we can say that athletes judge their competencies or skills to present their personal skills to others and to be successful in tasks that are given to them while performing individually. Their efforts on reaching their goals increase their performance levels while allowing them to feel successful and enjoy it. This leads to an increase in ego-orientation. Therefore, efforts of athletes for high performance and being successful increases their ego-orientations and lead to feeling of satisfaction.

This study shows that task orientations of athletes engaged in team sports are higher than their ego-orientations compared to athletes engaged in individual sports activities. According to their motivational climate levels, although the level of mastery climate of athletes engaged in team sports is high, no difference was found in terms of performance climates. While similarity is found between task orientation and performance climate in between target orientation and motivational climates of athletes engaged in team sports while there is similarity between task orientation and mastery climate in athletes engaged in individual sports activities.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors

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