

*Full Length Research Paper*

# The relationship between sportsmanship level of secondary school students and their success regarding the religious culture and knowledge of ethics course

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This study aims to exhibit how the sportsmanship level of secondary school students relates to their success regarding the religious culture and knowledge of ethics course (RCKEC). The research was made on 609 students attending public schools in Erzincan city center during 2016 to 2017 academic year. "Physical Education Course Sportsmanship Behavior Scale" (PECSBS), a form for collecting personal details and RCKEC success averages obtained using the e-school system were utilized in the study. Scores of students that they received from the sportsmanship scale were examined by their school types, grades, genders and favorite sports. Besides, a Pearson correlation analysis was made between sportsmanship scores of the students and their RCKEC success averages. Data showed a significant level of differentiation in physical education course sportsmanship behaviors in terms of school type (in favor of regular secondary schools), gender (in favor of females), grade (against grade 8 students) and favorite sport (in favor of sports without physical contact). Furthermore, a positively significant relation was observed between physical education course sportsmanship behaviors (factor of avoidance negative behavior and total sportsmanship averages) and RCKEC success averages. Inclusion of activities supporting sportsmanship practices into religious culture and knowledge of ethics courses with an interdisciplinary education approach which appeared to be beneficial. On the other hand, low sportsmanship scores were obtained for religious vocational secondary schools compared to regular ones. The argument that the fact that religious vocational secondary schools have only one hour of physical education course per week, restricts sports culture learning outweighed.

**Key words:** Physical education course, sportsmanship behavior, religious culture, knowledge of ethics course.

## INTRODUCTION

Physical educators always remark the positive effect of sports on character and moral development (Bredemeier, 1995; Clifford and Feezell, 2010; Laker, 2001). However,

virtue in sports that is intended by sports in terms of ethics has been substituted by violence, irregularity and unfairness today. Currently, where adverse attitudes and

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behaviors are constantly increasing, importance of sportsmanship has increased even more. Whereas sportsmanship is defined in a number of ways, it basically describes ethical behaviors displayed in sports environment. Given that fair play is the same thing as sportsmanship, the definition made by Yıldırım, (2005) can be used for both formal and informal sports environments; therefore, it can be taken as a reference. According to the definition, fair play manifests itself in the efforts of players during competitions as regards obeying rules patiently, consistently and consciously even under harder conditions, refusing unfair advantages for the sake of equality of opportunity, refusing to benefit from unfair advantages of opponents, considering opponents as individuals and partners with equal rights who make the game meaningful and appreciating them instead of considering them as enemies (Yıldırım, 2005). Gill (2000) defines a sportsmanship person as a player who can lose the game and accept defeat without complaining; someone who acts in a true, generous and kind way against his/her opponent, and who do not display illegal behaviors to win.

Unvirtuous behaviors which have become popular in sports environments have also affected schools. Particularly, after the 1970s, the socializing effect of physical education courses has been seen to be coming short in motivating behaviors that are in compliance with fair play (Yıldırım, 2005). Education in primary and secondary schools is responsible for establishing the sportsmanship behaviors (Papp and Prisztóka, 1995). Green (1997) argues that the contribution of sports to social development will be reduced if efforts towards increasing the sportsmanship quality are neglected. Many researchers are of the opinion that sportsmanship and moral development are only possible through systematic programs (Green and Gabbard, 1999; Yıldırım, 2005). Sportsmanship education is included in the physical education course syllabus. However, its reflection on students' behaviors is not at a desired level. In this sense, it is crucial to handle sportsmanship along with its all aspects and determine all elements that contribute to sportsmanship positively. Particularly, various programs have been enforced in US towards enhancing sportsmanship orientation. Examples include the Sports Education Model (Siedentop et al., 2004), "Play Hard, Play Fair, Play Fun" (PHPPFF) program (Ellis et al., 2004), and STAR sportsmanship Education Module (Ford, 2009). Efficacy of these and other similar programs has also been tested by experimental studies. In general, positive contributions of these programs to sportsmanship behaviors have been observed (Arthur-Banning et al., 2007; Blair, 2014; Cecchini et al., 2007; Glapa et al., 2016; Hassandra et al., 2007; Hestie and Sharpe, 1999; Lodl, 2005; Wells et al., 2005, 2008; Bronikowski et al., 2014).

Using the interdisciplinary education method, other

courses can be utilized as well in establishing a sports environment encompassing love, respect and observance of rules which is the primary aim of sportsmanship. There is no study on the relationship between the courses in schools and the sportsmanship. A review of the content of religious culture and knowledge of ethics course showed that such course supports the sportsmanship idea. Indeed, ethical issues constitute an important part of the religious culture and knowledge of ethics course syllabus. In this context, education on the importance of national and moral values for personal development and social peace, usage of rights and freedoms, living in peace, being an honest and reliable person, and always forgiving have been intended in such field. Besides, through such learning field, a student realizes that to love and to be loved in general is a religious, moral and social value; and that ill feelings and hate eliminate love, peace, brotherhood and friendship, and he/she tries his best to live amicably (MEB, 2010). According to Berger (1993), religion, which is one of the most important components of social reality, has a central role in determination of behaviors of the social structure. Concordantly, Keskin (2004) opines that providing a symbolic union within a society is one of the most important social functions of religion. Religious principles play an important role in the formation of characters in students, such as sharing, tolerance, and outright assistance to those in difficulty. Moral advices for both the individual and the society are reiterated by means of Quranic stories as well as lives of prophet Muhammed and other remarkable historical persons contained in the syllabus of the religious culture and knowledge of ethics.

In this sense, the significant role of the religious culture and knowledge of ethics course in displaying sportsmanship behaviors provided the inspiration for this research. Although only knowledge dimension of the religious attitude was discussed in the study, hereby, it is expected that such dimension should predict also its effective and behavioral dimension. The main purpose of the research was to exhibit how sportsmanship level of secondary school students relates to their success regarding the religious culture and knowledge of ethics course. In addition to that, sportsmanship scale scores of students were examined in terms of their school types, genders, grades and favorite type of sports in physical education courses.

## METHODOLOGY

### Method

The relational survey method was used as the quantitative research method. Survey models are appropriate for studies which aim to describe past or present situations in the way they occurred. The relational survey method was also suitable for the current research, since it is used for studies aiming to specify the presence or degree

of covariance among two or more variables, which is among the general survey methods (Cohen et al., 2000; Karasar, 2003).

### Participants

The study group consisted of totally randomly selected 609 students (310 females and 299 males) from regular and religious vocational secondary schools, during the 2016 to 2017 academic year in Erzincan city center. Weekly, there are two hours of physical education and sports course in regular secondary schools and one hour in religious vocational secondary schools, which are included in the study. There are weekly two hours of Religious Culture and Knowledge of Ethics Course in both types of schools. Religious vocational secondary schools in Turkey are preferred by students especially those who desire to receive religious education, and the number of courses related to religion is more compared to regular schools. Socio-economical characters of the included students were close. Grades 6, 7, and 8 students were included in the study. The age range of the students in this period was 12 to 14. The study was conducted after obtaining the required permits from the Ministry of Education and written consents from parents.

### Instruments

A "Personal Details Form" designed by the researcher, a "Physical Education Course Sportsmanship Behavior Scale (PECSBS)" developed by Koç (2013) and "Religious Culture and Knowledge of Ethics Course" were used to obtain success averages in the study (100-point grading scale), using the e-school system. The 'Personal Details Form' was prepared with the purpose of collecting details regarding the group of study and included questions about the students' school type, gender, grade and favorite type of sports in physical education courses. Type of sports were grouped in two categories namely team sports which include physical contact with opponents (football, basketball, handball, etc.) and sports without physical contact (volleyball, badminton, table tennis, etc). The "Physical Education Course Sportsmanship Behavior Scale (PECSBC)" developed by Koç (2013), consists of 22 items and is a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "never" (1) to "always" (5) answers. The scale consists of 2 factors, "Realization of Positive Behavior" (RPB) and "Avoidance Negative Behaviors" (ANB). "I help my opponent in getting up if he/she falls down" is an example of the "Realization of Positive Behavior" factor and "I make fun of the members of the rival team whenever I win them during the physical education course" is an example of the "Avoidance Negative Behavior" factor. The ANB factor items are calculated in a reverse scored. Increased averages mean an increased sportsmanship level. Goodness of fit indices of confirmatory factor analysis of PECSBC ( $n = 609$ ) ( $\chi^2/df = 2.39$ , RMSEA = 0.048, NNFI = 0.96 and CFI = 0.96) were calculated to be at a good and acceptable level. The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach Alpha) was calculated as 0.79 for ANB factor, 0.83 for RPB factor, and 0.86 for the entire scale. Total score obtained from the entire scale was defined as "Total Sportsmanship Behavior (TSB)".

### Data analysis

The obtained data were checked to see if they were suitable for parametric analyses or non-parametric ones (kurtosis, skewness values, scattering and histogram chart), and the equality of the group variances (Levene F test) were checked as well. The t-test and Pearson Correlation test which are among parametric analyses were applied for data with normal distribution, and Mann Whitney U

and Kruskal Wallis tests were applied for those without normal distribution. SPSS 22 and LISREL 8.7 software were used to evaluate the data.

## RESULTS

This part includes results and interpretations regarding main and sub-purposes of the research. First of all, sportsmanship scores of the students were examined by independent variables and then, the relationship between sportsmanship averages and religious culture and knowledge of ethics course successes of the students was tested.

Significant differences were determined among students' sportsmanship behaviors (except RPB factor) by school types ( $p < 0.01$ ). Sportsmanship behaviors of students in regular secondary schools came out to be significantly better compared to students in religious vocational secondary schools (Table 1).

In the analyses made separately for regular and religious vocational schools groups, a significant difference was observed in ANB factor and total sportsmanship averages of students by their gender ( $p < 0.01$ ). No effect of the students' gender on their sportsmanship behaviors was observed in terms of the RPB factor ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 2).

Significant differences were observed among sportsmanship behaviors of students by their grades ( $p < 0.01$ ). A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to discover the source of the mentioned significant difference and it showed that sportsmanship behaviors of grade 6 and grade 7 students were significantly better than those of grade 8 students (Table 3).

Significant differences were determined for ANB and TSB scores of students by their type of favorite sports ( $p < 0.01$ ). Sportsmanship behaviors of students which are interested in sports without physical contact mostly came out to be better than that of students who are interested in team sports which include physical contact with opponents. No effect of the students' type of favorite sports on their sportsmanship behaviors was observed in RPB factor ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 4).

A positive significant relationship was observed between religious culture and knowledge of ethics course averages of students and their avoidance from negative behavior scores ( $r = 0.13$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and total sportsmanship behavior scores ( $r = 0.11$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). No significant difference between religious culture and knowledge of ethics course averages of students and their realization of positive behavior scores was found ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Table 5).

## DISCUSSION

In this part sportsmanship scores of students are discussed in terms of independent variables and religious

**Table 1.** Comparison of sportsmanship scores of students by their types of school (Mann-Whitney U).

Factor	Types of school	N	Min	Max	Median	Mean rank	U	p
Realization of Positive Behavior	Regular	310	1.55	5.00	4.36	318.68	42105.500	0.051
	Religious vocational	299	1.64	5.00	4.18	290.82		
Avoidance from Negative Behavior	Regular	310	2.64	5.00	4.45	324.74	40227.000	0.005**
	Religious vocational	299	1.45	5.00	4.36	284.54		
Total Sportsmanship Behavior	Regular	310	2.27	5.00	4.36	325.96	39848.000	0.003**
	Religious vocational	299	2.14	5.00	4.22	283.27		

\*\*p&lt;0.01.

**Table 2.** Comparison of sportspersonship scores of students by gender (Mann-Whitney U).

Type of school	Factor	Gender	N	Min	Max	Median	Mean rank	U	p
Regular	Realization of Positive Behavior	Female	144	2.18	5.00	4.41	161.25	11124.000	0.292
		Male	166	1.55	5.00	4.27	150.51		
	Avoidance from Negative Behavior	Female	144	2.64	5.00	4.64	186.26		
		Male	166	2.82	5.00	4.36	128.82		
	Total Sportsmanship Behavior	Female	144	2.45	5.00	4.45	174.47		
		Male	166	2.27	5.00	4.24	139.05		
Religious Vocational	Realization of Positive Behavior	Female	167	1.64	5.00	4.18	149.96	11015.500	0.993
		Male	132	2.27	5.00	4.18	150.05		
Religious Vocational	Avoidance from Negative Behavior	Female	167	2.00	5.00	4.55	172.60	7248.500	0.000**
		Male	132	1.45	5.00	4.18	121.41		
Religious Vocational	Total Sportsmanship Behavior	Female	167	2.14	5.00	4.36	162.55	8926.500	0.005**
		Male	132	2.68	5.00	4.09	134.13		

\*\*p&lt;0.01.

**Table 3.** Comparison of sportsmanship scores of students by grade (Kruskal Wallis).

Factor	Grade	N	Min	Max	Median	Mean rank	Chi-Square	p	Mann-Whitney U
Realization of Positive Behavior	6	200	1.64	5.00	4.36	328.05	29.533	.000	*(6>8), *(7>8)
	7	195	1.82	5.00	4.45	338.70			
	8	214	1.55	5.00	3.91	252.75			
Avoidance from Negative Behavior	6	200	1.45	5.00	4.45	322.83	20.339	.000	*(6>8), *(7>8)
	7	195	1.64	5.00	4.55	334.08			
	8	214	2.00	5.00	4.27	261.84			
Total Sportsmanship Behavior	6	200	2.14	5.00	4.36	328.49	35.599	.000	*(6>8), *(7>8)
	7	195	2.55	5.00	4.45	343.65			
	8	214	2.23	5.00	4.09	247.83			

\*\*p&lt;0.05.

**Table 4.** Comparison of sportsmanship scores of students by their type of favorite sports in physical education course (t-test).

Factor	Groups <sup>a</sup>	N	Mean	Sd	t	p
Realization of Positive Behavior	1	306	4.12	0.66	-0.878	0.380
	2	303	4.17	0.71		
Avoidance from Negative Behavior	1	306	4.18	0.62	-5.423	0.000**
	2	303	4.44	0.55		
Total Sportsmanship Behavior	1	306	4.15	0.53	-3.499	0.001**
	2	303	4.30	0.55		

\*\*p<0.01 (<sup>a</sup>: 1= team sports which include physical contact with opponents, 2= sports without physical contact).

**Table 5.** The relationship between sportsmanship scores of students with their religious culture and knowledge of ethics course success averages (Pearson).

Factor	1	2	3	4	
N=609	1. Realization of Positive Behavior	-	0.44**	0.87**	0.06
	2. Avoidance from Negative Behavior	-	-	0.82**	0.13**
	3. Total Sportsmanship Behavior	-	-	-	0.11**
	4. Religious Culture and Knowledge of Ethics	-	-	-	-
	X	4.14	4.31	4.22	89.64
Sd	.69	0.60	0.55	8.52	

\*\*p<0.01.

knowledge course success averages.

Significant differences were determined among students' sportsmanship behaviors (except RPB factor) in terms of school type. Sportsmanship behaviors of students (in both gender) in regular secondary schools were better compared to students in religious vocational secondary schools (Table 1). There was no literature review study on sportsmanship of students by school types. Weekly hour of physical education courses being one is supposed to have an effect on low sportsmanship levels in religious vocational secondary schools. A study on difference of sportsmanship levels of students from different cultures which was conducted in 3 cities from different countries has failed to show a significant difference between students taking 2 hours of physical education courses per week and those taking 4 hours per week (Broikowski et al., 2014); however, teaching only one weekly hour of physical education course in religious vocational secondary schools is considered to have caused a problem in terms of providing a sufficient level of sports culture. Although a relevant study could not be found on this subject, it is thought that better sportsmanship levels in regular secondary schools can be explained after instructing sports culture at a relatively better level in these schools.

In the analyses made separately for regular and

religious vocational schools groups it was found that ANB factor of sportsmanship behaviors and total sportsmanship averages of students displayed a significant difference in terms of their gender. In terms of the RPB factor, students' gender failed to display any effect on their sportsmanship behaviors (Table 2). Likewise, a significant difference in realization of positive behavior could not be found in high school students according to Koç (2017b) and for secondary students according to Sezer et al. (2015). However, they found that the scores of female students came out to be significantly higher to avoid negative behavior and in total sportsmanship averages. It can be concluded that the factor of avoiding negative behavior predicts the gender difference in sportsmanship better. Some other studies by Esentürk et al. (2015) and Türkmen and Varol (2015) have reported that the level of sportsmanship behaviors of female students is significantly higher compared to males. Topan's (2011) study has shown that female students display sportsmanship behaviors in a more sensible way in winning and losing situations compared to male students. Female students appear to act in a more suitable way in terms of ethical attitudes and behaviors which are supposed to arise from the fact that their upbringing manner always urged them to conform to rules. This keeps them a step away from negative

behaviors.

Students' sportsmanship behaviors by their grades displayed significant differences. A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to discover the source of the mentioned significant difference and it showed that sportsmanship behaviors of grades 6 and 7 students were significantly better than those of grade 8 students (Table 3). A literature review has revealed that as age and grade increase, sportsmanship behaviors weaken (Koç, 2017b). In their study, Koç and Tamer (2016) have identified that as age and grade increase sportsmanship displaying level of female students reduces. Tsai and Fung (2005) have stated that older high school basketball and volleyball players attach less importance to sportsmanship compared to younger ones. On the other hand, Shields et al. (2007) have failed to find a significant difference between sportsmanship behaviors of grades 5 to 8 students. However, the sportsmanship level reduces as grade increases. As age advances, fighting spirit and competitive attitude of children increase; whereas still entertaining part of games is important for younger age groups. On the other hand, some studies have emphasized that experiences gained from negative social environment reduce the sportsmanship level (Nucci and Young-Shim, 2005). Furthermore, some other studies have discovered that grade of students do not have any effect on sportsmanship behaviors (Hacıcaferoğlu et al., 2015; Kayışoğlu et al., 2015; Koç, 2017a).

ANB and TSB scores of students displayed significant differences in terms of their favorite sports. Sportsmanship behaviors of students who were interested in team sports without physical contact came out to be better than that of students who were interested in team sports which include physical contact with opponents. Regarding the realization of positive behavior factor, there was no observed effect of the students' favorite sports on their sportsmanship behaviors (Table 4). A literature review has supported the findings of the research that sportsmanship has been differentiated for students and athletes according to their type of sports. Some studies have shown that sportsmanship levels of people engaged in individual sports are poorer (Lee et al., 2007), sportsmanship behaviors of high school students interested in team sports without physical contact are better compared to those engaged in other sports branches (Koç and Güllü, 2017); and sportsmanship scores of high school students interested in volleyball (sports without physical contact) are significantly better than those interested in football (sports with physical contact) (Esentürk et al., 2015). Likewise, Koruç and Bayar (1990) and Güner (2006) have shown that individual sports players are more aggressive than those engaged in team sports, and Lee et al. (2007) have discovered that those engaged in individual sports have a more negative ethical decision taking attitude compared to those engaged in team sports. Nixon (1997) has found

that university students engaged in sports with physical contact display a higher level of aggression and toughness outside school. Bloom and Smith (1996) have argued that a high level of physical contact in sports affects players' ethical judgement adversely. In contrast, Akandere et al. (2009) have failed to discover a significant difference among ethical judgment levels of secondary school students in terms of the sports branch they are engaged in. Behaviors such as verbal teasing and committing foul are more common in tackling sports and team sports with physical contact due to their nature. It is understood that as level of contact increases in a game so does the potential of players or students to display antisocial behaviors.

A significantly positive relationship was discovered between physical education course sportsmanship levels (ANB and TSB) of secondary school students and their success levels in the religious culture and knowledge of ethics course (Table 5). A literature review did not reveal any similar study. Only Kaya (2006) has stated a positive effect of RCKEC success on ethical behaviors. Teaching contents of religious culture and knowledge of ethics course to students makes them more sensible in terms of displaying a number of ethical behaviors (MEB, 2010). Students are expected to learn forgiveness, respect, tolerance, fairness and honesty, and it is expected that this would contribute to the sportsmanship behaviors desired within scope of the physical education course when they reflect these characters on their behaviors. Sportsmanship personality formation during physical education courses aims at formation of similar characters by individuals. The parallelism of ethical perspectives of these two courses has reflected on the result obtained from the study. In fact, Ekşi (2003) argues that morals and values in education is possible in primary schools through courses like Turkish, social sciences, physical education, music, painting, vocational training, and even through science and mathematics. All values such as sportsmanship should be handled with an interdisciplinary perspective.

The study had some limitations. Firstly, the scope of the group of study was limited. Secondly, only a scale was used as a means of measurement sportsmanship and results were limited to the answers provided. Thirdly, other data collection tools such as the observation method, etc., could not be used to make in depth investigation. And finally, since a limited number of studies were available on the subject of the research both in domestic and international literature, it was not possible to make comparisons at a sufficient level.

In general and as a summary, the study showed that sportsmanship levels of regular secondary schools students are higher compared to religious vocational secondary schools students, sportsmanship levels of females are higher compared to males, sportsmanship level decreases as the grade of students advances, and

sportsmanship levels of students who are mostly interested in sports without physical contact are higher compared to those interested in team sports which include physical contact with opponents. Besides, a significantly positive relationship was observed between sportsmanship levels of secondary school students and their religious culture and knowledge of ethics course successes.

The study revealed that physical education and physical education courses play an important role in teaching sports culture to students yet under the expected level. A sufficient level of sports culture is not delivered in religious vocational schools, and it is recommended to increase the number of weekly hours of physical education courses, which is currently one, in these schools. Inclusion of activities supporting sportsmanship practices in religious culture and knowledge of ethics courses with an interdisciplinary education approach appeared to be beneficial.

Researchers are recommended to investigate the relation of sportsmanship with other relevant courses, in addition to its relationship with religious culture and knowledge of ethics courses. The relationship between sportsmanship and religious knowledge in various cultures is worth researching as well.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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