






## Examining the Personality Traits and Empathetic Tendency Levels of Students of the Coaching Education Department

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### Abstract

The objective of this study is to determine the personality traits and empathetic tendency levels of students of the coaching education department. In addition to that, the empathetic tendency levels of students of the coaching education department were compared according to some characteristics. The research was conducted as a survey model. 347 students participated in the research group, who were studying at Erciyes University Department of Coaching Education, Faculty of Sport Sciences in the 2018-2019 academic year. In the study, Personal Information Form, Ten-Item Personality Inventory and Empathetic Tendency Scale were used as the data collection tools. SPSS program was used for the analysis of the data. According to the results of the study, the "compatible" personality trait of students of the coaching education department came to the fore and their empathetic tendency levels were determined at "medium level". Moreover, it was determined that there was statistically no significant difference in the empathetic tendency levels of students of the coaching education department concerning age, gender, academic grade, doing active sports, GPA, and sports branch.

**Keywords:** Coaching education, Personality, Empathic tendency, Student, Individuality, Sociability.

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## 1. Introduction

Empathy is putting oneself into someone's shoes and thus, understanding his/her feelings and opinions (Dökmen, 2009). Empathy is to see with someone else's eyes, to hear with someone else's ears, and to feel with someone else's heart (Adler, 1993). The empathy potential of an individual is explained through empathetic tendency concept. It is necessary to have the empathetic sensitivity for an individual to develop empathy (Akkoyun, 1987).

Personality is the reflection of the structure, which emerges as a result of the combination of certain innate biological and psychological features and interest, skill and talents of a person, upon behaviors and attitudes of an individual (İlal, 2001). Feelings, opinion, and patterns of behavior of individuals are determinants of their personality (Yavuzer, 2010).

An individual is called as coach who completes successfully his/her education programs in the relevant sport branch, gains necessary documents from the general directorates proving his/her level, and trains athletes or sports teams for competitions (GSGM, 2018). Coaching is accepted as a profession in our day; in this regard, "Coaching Education" departments are established in the universities, and courses and seminars are organized by relevant institutions, organizations and federations about coaching.

Coaches are sports trainers, who become a model for the athletes through their professional knowledge and personality traits, and it is expected that their behaviors should be displayed in accordance with the universally admitted and embraced values (Dolaşır, 2006). It is stated that coaches have a quite efficient role in the management of the game and the athletes (Ikizler, 2000).

It is considered critical that the coach candidates, who will work in different sports branches as a coach, have a good personality to be a model for the athletes and should display empathy towards their athletes. In this study, it was aimed to examine the personality traits and empathetic tendency levels of Coaching Education Department students, in other words, the coach candidates.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research Model

This is a survey model research aiming at examining the personality traits and empathetic tendency levels of students of the coaching education department. Survey model research studies are defined as the kind of studies, in which information is gathered from a large mass through multiple choice answers determined by the researcher (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006).

### 2.2. Research Group

The research group was consisted of 347 students, who studied at the Department of Coaching Education in Faculty of Sport Sciences, Erciyes University during the 2018-2019 academic year, and they were selected through random sampling. 171 of the participant students were female (49.3%), whereas 176 of them were male (50.7%).

### 2.3. Data Collection Tools

As the data collection tools, a Personal Information Form that was developed by the researchers was used for collecting demographic characteristics of the students, a Ten-Item Personality Inventory was used for determining the personality traits of the students, and the Empathetic Tendency Scale was used for determining the empathetic tendency levels of the students.

Ten-Item Personality Inventory was developed by Gosling *et al.* (2003) this scale is comprised of 10 articles and five factors as "being open to experience", "responsibility", "being extravert", "compatibility", and "emotional balance". A seven point likert type, this scale has two articles for each sub-dimension. Each article includes two descriptors separated with a comma. The "being extravert" dimension in the scale involves some features such as being sociable, talkative, and social, the "compatibility" dimension involves being amiable, the "responsibility" dimension means being disciplined and task-oriented, the "emotional balance" dimension involves features such as having less anxiety and worry and being secure, while the "being open to experience" dimension involves features such as to have a liking for change and new experiences. The internal reliability coefficients of the sub-dimensions of the scale vary between 0.40 and 0.73 (Factor 1: 0.68, Factor 2: 0.40, Factor 3: 0.50, Factor 4: 0.73, Factor 5: 0.45).

Empathetic Tendency Scale was developed by Dökmen (1988) in order to measure the skills of individuals to develop empathy in the daily life. It is a five point likert type scale and it is comprised of 20 articles. The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> articles of the scale are scored reversely. The lowest score in the Empathetic Tendency Scale is 20 points and the highest score is 100 points. If the score obtained from this one-dimensional scale is high it is concluded that the empathetic tendency is high as well, and if the score is low the tendency is low. The test-retest reliability coefficient of the scale is .82.

### 2.4. Statistical Analyses

Statistical analyses were conducted via SPSS program. In order to determine the personality traits and empathetic tendency levels of students of the coaching education department, arithmetic averages ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviation (Sd) were used among the descriptive statistics.

In the analyses, it was investigated through Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test whether the data followed a normal distribution. As a result, it was found that empathetic tendency levels did not follow normal distribution ( $p=.000$ ). Because of that, Mann-Whitney U Test was employed for paired comparisons and Kruskal Wallis Test for multiple comparisons. The accepted level of significance for all analyses was  $p<0.05$ .

### 3. Results

**Table-1.** Distribution of demographic characteristics of the students in the research group.

Gender	n	%	Academic Grade	n	%
Male	176	50.7	1st Grade	96	27.6
Female	171	49.3	2nd Grade	105	30.3
Age	n	%	3rd Grade	85	24.5
18-20 Years old	123	35.4	4th Grade	61	17.6
21-23 Years old	172	49.6	Sport Branch	n	%
24 Years old or over	52	15	Team Sports	162	46.7
GPA	n	%	Individual Sports	185	53.3
Between 1.50-1.99	31	8.9	Doing Active Sport	n	%
Between 2.00-2.49	99	28.5	Yes	252	72.6
Between 2.50-2.99	142	40.9	No	95	27.4
Between 3.00-3.49	75	21.7	<b>Total n: 347</b>		

Source: Personal Information Forms with SPSS Analyze

According to the data obtained from the personal information forms, and as is seen on the Table 1, among the students in the research group, 176 (50.7%) are male, 171 (49.3%) are female; 123 (35.4%) are 18-20 years old, 172 (49.6%) are 21-23 years old, and 52 (15%) are 24 years old or over. Of the students, 252 (72.6%) are actively doing sports, 95 (27.4%) don't do it actively; 31 (8.9%) have GPAs between 1.50-1.99, 99 (28.5%) have GPAs between 2.00-2.49, and the GPAs of 142 (40.9%) are in between 2.50-2.99, while 75 (21.7%) of them have GPAs between 3.00-3.49. Among the students, 96 (27.6%) are 1<sup>st</sup> grades, 105 (30.3%) 2<sup>nd</sup> grades, 85 (24.5%) 3<sup>rd</sup> grades, and 61 (17.6%) 4<sup>th</sup> grades; 162 of them (46.7%) are doing team sports, while 185 (53.3%) deals with individual sports.

**Table-2.** The averages that the students in the research group obtained from the ten-item personality inventory sub-dimensions and empathetic tendency scale in general.

Personality and Empathetic Tendency	n	$\bar{X}$	Sd
Being Extravert	347	3.98	1.532
Compatibility	347	4.71	1.252
Responsibility	347	4.62	1.506
Emotional Balance	347	4.20	1.084
Being Open to Experience	347	4.47	1.301
Empathetic Tendency	347	65.4	.382

Source: Ten-Item Personality Inventory and Empathetic Tendency Scale with SPSS Analyze.

The results revealed from the data obtained from the Ten-Item Personality Inventory sub-dimensions and Empathetic Tendency Scale are shown in Table 2. As is seen in the Table 2, the students in the research group obtained the following averages from the Ten-Item Personality Inventory sub-dimensions: Being Extravert  $\bar{X}$  =3.98, Compatibility  $\bar{X}$  =4.71, Responsibility  $\bar{X}$  =4.62, Emotional Balance  $\bar{X}$  =4.20 and Being Open to Experience  $\bar{X}$  =4.47. According to these results, it can be mentioned that the "compatible" personality trait of students came to the fore among other traits with an average of  $\bar{X}$  =4.71. Moreover, it is observed that the students gained the average  $\bar{X}$  =65.4 from the Empathetic Tendency Scale in general. According to this result, the empathetic tendency levels of the students in the research group can be interpreted as "medium level".

**Table-3.** Comparison of the empathetic tendency levels of the students in the research group concerning gender, sport branch, and doing active sport.

Characteristic	n	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p	
Gender	Male	176	167.59	29496.50	13920.500	.227
	Female	171	180.59	30881.50		
Sport Branch	Team Sport	162	172.48	27942.50	14739.500	.792
	Individual Sport	185	175.33	32435.50		
Doing Active Sport	Yes	252	175.59	44248.50	11569.500	.630
	No	95	169.78	16129.50		

Source: Empathetic Tendency Scale and Personal Information Forms with SPSS Analyze.

**Table-4.** Comparisons of the empathetic tendency levels of the research group students with regards to age, academic grade, and GPA.

Characteristic	n	Mean Rank	df	$\chi^2$	p	
Age	18-20 Years old	123	164.44	2	2.559	.278
	21-23 Years old	172	182.59			
	24 Years old or over	52	168.19			
Academic Grade	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	96	162.68	3	7.611	.055
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	105	194.93			
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	85	173.29			
	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	61	156.77			
GPA	Between 1.50-1.99	31	165.87	3	2.299	.513
	Between 2.00-2.49	99	164.66			
	Between 2.50-2.99	142	175.60			
	Between 3.00-3.49	75	186.67			

Source: Empathetic Tendency Scale and Personal Information Forms with SPSS Analyze.

The results of Mann-Whitney U Test, which was conducted for the paired comparisons of the abnormally distributed empathetic tendency levels of the research group students, are shown in Table 3. As is seen in Table 3, empathetic tendency levels of the research group students were compared with regards to gender, sport branch, and doing active sports; however, it was determined that there was statistically no significant difference.

The results of the Kruskal Wallis H Test, which was conducted for multiple comparisons of the abnormally distributed empathetic tendency levels of the students in the research group, are shown in Table 4. As is seen in Table 4, the empathetic tendency levels of the students in the research group were compared concerning age, academic grade, and GPA, and it was determined that there was statistically no significant difference.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

In this research study, the personality traits and empathetic tendency levels of students of the coaching education department were determined. Additionally, the empathetic tendency levels of students of the coaching education department were examined concerning some characteristics. According to the results of the study, the "compatible" personality trait of students of the coaching education department came to the fore and their empathetic tendency levels were determined at "medium level". Moreover, it was determined that there was statistically no significant difference in the empathetic tendency levels of students of the coaching education department concerning age, gender, academic grade, doing active sports, GPA, and sports branch.

In studies conducted by Kivanç Sudak (2011); Tarhan (2012) and Ozer (2013) it was determined that the highest level personality trait in the participants was "compatible" personality trait. These mentioned studies are in parallel with this study. Akbulut and Sağlam (2010); Rehber and Atıcı (2009) determined that there was statistically significant difference in the empathetic tendency levels of the participants concerning gender. The results of abovementioned studies contradict to this study. Bulut and Düşmez (2014); Mutlu *et al.* (2015); Yaşar and Erol (2016) determined that there was statistically no significant difference in the empathetic tendency levels of the participants concerning gender. The results of these studies are in parallel with this research study. In different studies conducted by Günaydın (1999); Pinar (2004); Celik (2008); Mutlu *et al.* (2015); Yaşar and Erol (2016); Elik (2017) it was determined that there was statistically no significant difference in the empathetic tendency levels of the participants concerning age. The results of these studies are in parallel with this study. In other studies conducted by Genç and Kalafat (2008); Yılmaz and Akyel (2008); Tekin and Güllü (2010); Yaşar and Erol (2016) it was determined that there was statistically no significant difference in the empathetic tendency levels of the participants concerning academic grade. The results of these studies are in parallel with this study.

According to the findings of this study, it can be evaluated as a positive result that the "compatible" personality traits of students of the coaching education department came to the fore among others. Considering the future professions of students of the coaching education department, it can be thought that this result is more important than it seems. Increasing the participation of students of the coaching education department in social activities that enhance their positive personality traits might be useful for them. For further studies, examining the personality traits of students of the coaching education department on different research groups and with more participants can contribute to the literature.

According to the findings of this research study, it can be evaluated as a negative result that the empathetic tendency levels of students of the coaching education department were at "medium level". A development in the empathetic tendency levels of students of the coaching education department can be achieved through trainings provided by field experts. For further studies, examining the empathetic tendency levels of students of the coaching education department through qualitative research methods can make important contributions to the literature.

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