

# An Investigation of the Relationship Between Leadership Styles of Physical Education and Sports Academy Students and Different Variables (The Case of Ordu University)

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## Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between gender, major and class level of students and their views on leadership styles. The study was carried out on students of Physical Education and Sports Academy (PESA) of Ordu University, between 2015 and 2016. PESA graduates work for schools, sports clubs and in different areas of sports as teachers, coaches, managers and sports writers. They exhibit various features of leadership in order to enable students, athletes or other individuals engaging in sports to achieve set goals and teach them to develop necessary behavioral patterns to sustain their success. The aim of this study is to reveal the relationship between gender, major and class level of PESA students and their views on leadership styles. The study was carried out with a total of 251 participants; 116 (46.2%) women and 125 (53.8%) men. The Leadership Style test scale developed by Frew et al. (1977) and adapted to Turkish by Konter (1996) was used to assess this relationship. Data were analyzed using the SPSS, version 20. Frequency distributions were used to determine the demographic characteristics of the students. A chi-square analysis was performed to determine the relationship between the independent variables and leadership styles. The results indicate that there is no statistically significant relationship between students' gender and class levels and their views on leadership styles. The results show that there is a statistically significant relationship between students' majors and their views on leadership styles. Management students show features of moderately democratic leadership and features of very democratic leadership while teaching students do not. Another noteworthy finding is that students mainly display mixed features of leadership. It is suggested that courses on leadership be included in the curriculum of physical education and sports departments. Seminars, panels, congresses, etc. should be held to inform students on leadership and, moreover, they should be encouraged to participate in scientific studies. This study was orally presented at the 9th International Education Research Congress held at Ordu University between 11 and 14 May, 2017.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Physical Education, Teacher, Sports Manager, Leadership Style

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Human being are inherently social creatures. They seek the companionship of others and have a need for intimacy and social interactions from the moment they are born. They maintain their lives and fulfil their basic needs, such as food and shelter, either together or in group (Arkonaç, 1999). The concept of leadership has been addressed by many studies presenting various definitions and interpretations of the concepts of "leader" and "leadership" (Chelladurai & Riemer, 1998, İmamoğlu & Yerlisu, 2003, Loughhead & Hardy, 2003; Özdemir, 2003).

Barrow (1977) defines leadership as a behavioral process in which an individual influences other individuals around him/her to achieve set goals. Similarly, Northouse (2001) defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal." Hollander (1985) states that functional groups also have a universal dimension for leadership as they play an important role in increasing or decreasing, organizing, directing and motivating group performance (6). Hitt et al. (1979) defines leadership as an activity that influences the behavior of an individual or a group to achieve a set of shared goals.

In the light of the definitions above, leadership can be summarized as a process of influencing that becomes meaningful in the presence of a group and a set of shared goals. Leaders, on the other hand, are creative people who can influence the behavior of others or a group at their sole discretion and give guiding directions and enlightening instructions as they perform the process of influencing the activities in the task of goal setting and

goal achievement and they are visionaries who feel the needs and desires of others in a timely manner when working in collaboration (Bakan, 2008). Sports is an important phenomenon that exists in all stages of life and affects all aspects of life. Individuals who engage in sports gain a footing within the social structure. The power of sports is determined by the fact that it is a means of socialization as well as a medium providing individuals with the capacity to learn to assume the role of acting together. Given their unifying, integrative and socializing power, sports activities enable individuals to league together and cooperate to achieve common goals.

Sports activities teach individuals group discipline, competitive information and determination to win. Through sports activities, individuals learn how to share success and accept failure, and comprehend the importance of tolerance and cooperation. Providing various means of socialization, team sports activities enable individuals to acquire the consciousness of collective responsibility and to act for the welfare of the group of which they are a member. The dimension of social status is, therefore, high in individuals who engage in sports.

Leaders have the power to influence others and have the ability to direct them to achieve specific and shared goals. Power means creating or influencing a character. We can state that a coach who can create any emotion in his/her players is a leader with this power of influence. A leader should be able to help the individuals of a group to be happy in that group, direct them towards specific activities and provide them with a satisfactory environment in which they enjoy being a member of that group. To this respect, leadership constitutes one of the most fundamental aspects of sports activities and plays a critical role in their execution. Consequently, a teacher with advanced leadership skills influences students' success, a coach with advanced leadership skills warrants the on-field accomplishments of players and an individual with advanced leadership skills directly contributes to the achievement of organizational objectives of a group. The aim of this study is to reveal the leadership styles of students of the Academy of Physical Education and Sports (PESA) who continue their higher education.

## **2. GENERAL INFORMATION**

This section provides general concepts of leadership, leadership styles, and information on physical education and sports departments.

### **2.1. What is Leadership?**

It will be useful to address the definition of "leader" before defining "leadership." Genç (2009, p. 161) defines leaders as "individuals who gather around themselves other individuals wishing to achieve a specific purpose and motivate them towards common goals and enable them to exhibit goal-oriented behavior" while Koçel (2011, p. 569) defines leaders as "individuals followed by a group of people wishing to achieve their personal and group goals and behaving in accordance with the request, commands and instructions of the individuals they follow." Leaders are individuals who are conscious of the importance of the element of individuality and well aware of the severity of contempt, derision, insult and offence. Leaders activate, yet, never destroy individuals' selfhood and act with utmost respect and empathy knowing very well that people have great talent and value in their own way (Çoban & Coşkuner, 2006, p. 7).

The concept of leadership refers to directing individuals towards specific goals without coercion (Koray, 1997, p. 169). Leadership can be defined as the art of guiding. Leadership is about the skills of preparing and motivating individuals or groups in an organized manner to achieve specific goals (Kaya, 1991, p. 138).

Leadership is an influencing process through which common goals are set and other individuals are motivated and directed to achieve these common goals because there is no leader if there are no followers (Clayton, 2000, p. 151). Leadership is defined as the use of force to influence the thoughts, ideas and actions of followers by Zaleznik (1977, p. 267). According to Lewis McKenzie, leadership refers to "a process of making a decision to change, setting a vision and spreading the change." These definitions indicate that leaders are individuals who are, in a given situation, capable of making positive changes and showing courage to initiate actions to realize these changes for the well-being of their followers or of the organization they are in. Therefore, the vision and mission of leaders direct their own leadership (Türksoy, 2010, p. 8). Consequently, leaders can be defined as individuals who have the talent to direct, organize and guide people around them to achieve set goals regardless of circumstances.

### **2.2 Types of Leadership**

#### **2.2.1. Autocratic Leadership**

Power, superiority, seizure and dominance are the symbols of this type of leaders, who aim to be successful by making use of external forces (Moore, 2001). No other member of the group but the leader has a say in the goal, plan, and course of action, which reduces creativity. Only those ideas shaped and limited by the views, recommendations and perceived reality of the leader are put into practice (Eren, 2006). The basic behavioral pattern of autocratic leaders can be described as; setting the whole purpose and policies of the group on their own, determining by what means and how those ideas will be put into practice, distancing themselves from group activities and making subjective evaluations of their subordinates (Türksoy, 2010, p. 27). Autocratic

leadership is a type of leadership dominated by a single person who solely assumes the decision-making and goal-setting authority and decides the course of action which will be pursued by the group to achieve set goals.

### **2.2.2 Democratic Leadership**

In democratic leadership, leaders involve their followers and people around them in decision-making processes, which makes all members of the group more motivated to adopt those courses of action and to achieve set goals. Therefore, the most important characteristic of this type of leadership is that participants act jointly for the success or in the face of failure of decisions made within a democratic organization. The source of a democratic leader's power is the high level of commitment of participants to him and to the organization. This level of commitment is directly proportional to reduced conflicts and tension within the group and to high levels of joint act and sense of belonging (Koç & Topaloğlu, 2010, p 184). Democratic leadership is the ability to act jointly with group members, and motivating them and giving them an equal opportunity to have a say to achieve set goals.

### **2.2.3. Strategic Leadership**

Strategic leadership is to anticipate and design change, when it is inevitable, and carry it out in a flexible manner, and encourage and empower others during transition. Having a multifunctional structure, strategic leadership is to create potential to move beyond functional horizons in order to realize organizational change together with others and bring the whole organization into this change process. It is suggested that the essence of strategic leadership lies in three questions: "What is happening? What is not happening? What can I do to influence the action?" How many leaders today can take a step back and strategically consider what they would like to realize? This is, however, what a leader is supposed to do (Türksoy, 2010, p. 40). A strategic leader should be able to design, prepare and implement his/her plans and strategies confidently to achieve set goals by foreseeing and overcoming obstacles one by one and by taking the group a step further even in seemingly impossible conditions.

### **2.2.4. Visionary Leadership**

Vision refers to having a great imagination and ability to make predictions and constructions, and thinking ahead and forward. Vision is not a slogan. It should be open, clear and riveting (Türksoy, 2010, p. 35). Vision in general is defined as predicting and foreseeing a situation that is likely to happen in the future. Vision, rather, refers to taking a look at what is unknown based on what is known. In other words, vision is defined as taking actions based on future plans as if they have to be executed today (Aksu, 2009, pp. 24-39). Vision can also be defined as conceiving of and expressing a situation today that could happen or arise in the future.

### **2.2.5. Transformational Leadership**

Moving simply beyond the methods of change and having interesting dreams, transformational leaders allow employees to bring their performances to a higher level. Bass (1985) states that four dimensions underlie transformational leadership: Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. According to Northouse (2001), transformational leadership is the ability to direct, develop, manage, meet and motivate the needs of subordinates in the face of their demands for change (Top, et al., 2010; cited in Erdem, et al. 2012). Leithwood (1992) defines transformational leadership as the restoration of mission and visions of individuals, the renewal of their responsibilities and the restructuring of the system in order to achieve set goals. This is a relationship based on mutual encouragement by which those who support leaders assume the position of leadership, and leaders, in return, become spiritual intermediaries (Leithwood, 1992; cited in Erarslan, 2004). Transformational leadership is the ability to direct others towards intended goals, together with knowledge, experience and foresight.

### **2.2.6. Charismatic Leadership**

Emerging mostly in crisis situations, charismatic leadership is a type of leadership that appears in individuals with strong, extraordinary and resilient personality traits. Such leaders have high self-confidence and are able to persuade, motivate, encourage and fascinate their followers (Çelik & Sünbül, 2008). Due to their charm, charismatic leaders are capable of leading the masses without any question or doubt. The several unique aspects that distinguish charismatic leaders are that they are depicted as exemplary figures, capable of motivating others easily, have the ability to generate a great deal of enthusiasm and excitement, and possess an exciting vision (Tengilimoğlu, 2005). Some charismatic leaders in history are Atatürk, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. (Shepherd & Coşkun, 2006, p. 12). Charismatic leaders are individuals who can, thanks to their personal attributes, lead people around them to achieve set goals without any question or doubt.

### **2.2.7. Cultural leadership**

It is hard to define cultural leadership in one sentence. However, it is defined as the activation of the organizational culture which is composed of influences of actors within the organization, influences of cultural values and of people's thoughts and ideas. In cultural leadership, the leader is responsible for preparing an environment for more dialogue in order to make sure that operations are carried out smoothly (Tierney, 1992). Cultural leadership constitutes the process of influencing employees with beliefs, ideologies, norms and values created and shared by people in the organization (Biovvning, 1999). In short, culture is the main parameter for a mutual interaction

### 2.2.8. Coaching Leadership

In this type of leadership, leaders demonstrate attitudes and behaviors in accordance with the learning organization model. The behaviors of individuals who will lead learning organizations have to be very different from traditional leadership behaviors (Çelik, 2012). According to Senge (1996), leaders of learning organizations or groups have to perform the tasks of three important positions; a designer, an intendant and a teacher. These leaders are responsible for expressing individual complexities, sustaining the improvement of the ability of individuals to achieve a consensus and establishing a learning organization for this continuous improvement. Unlike other types of leadership, being responsible for learning is the main parameter of coaching leadership.

### 2.2.9. Intellectual Leadership

With the beginning of information society, leaders will not be able to influence only with their authorities or charisma but also with their intellectual qualities. Especially highly educated "intellectual leaders" who possess knowledge, skill and general culture are in demand. Intellectual leaders not only possess knowledge and experience but also necessary information about management. They have a high level of technical ability, adaptation and unity skills, insightful linguistic skill, resources, superior managerial skills and cultural awareness, consciousness, emotional balance, openness to negotiations, future-oriented visionary perspective, creativity, and have flexibility and simplicity to ensure unity, love and peace anywhere in the world (Akgemci, 2011; Uslu, 2011). Given changing conditions, advancements in technology and prominence of knowledge, intellectual leadership is a model of leadership which encourages transformation, focuses on culture and human relations, stimulates questioning, strengthens decision-making processes in strategic situations and constantly pushes for success.

## 3. MATERIAL AND METHOD

### 3.1. Population and Sampling:

The population of this study consists of students studying at Physical Education and Sports Departments. The sample consists of students studying at Sports Management and Teaching Department of the Physical Education and Sport Academy of Ordu University.

### 3.2. Data Collection:

The Leadership Style test scale developed by Frew et al. (1977) and adapted to Turkish by Konter (1996) was used to assess the relationship between leadership styles of students and different variables.

#### 3.2.1. Leadership Style Test

Developed by Frew et al. (1977) and adapted to Turkish by Konter (1996), the Leadership Style Test was prepared to be administered to individuals who have various styles of leadership.

Students were asked to respond to statements using the Leadership Style Test scale ranging from **1. Strongly agree, 2. Agree, 3. No opinion, 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree.**

The test consisted of 20 items. The items 2, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18 and 19 were evaluated as positive statements while items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 14, 15, 16 and 20 as negative statements. The mean scores were obtained by dividing the total scores by the number of items; **1 - 1.9 very autocratic, 2.0 - 2.4 moderately autocratic, 2.5 - 3.4 mixed, 3.5 - 4.0 moderately democratic and 4.1 - 5 very democratic leadership style.**

### 3.3. Analysis of Data

Data were statistically analyzed using the SPSS, version 20. Frequency and percentage distributions were used to determine the demographic characteristics of the students. A chi-square analysis was performed to determine the relationship between the independent variables and leadership styles.  $P < 0.05$  was accepted as statistically significant.

## 4. FINDINGS

Tables 1, 2 and 3 show the frequency distributions of the demographic characteristics of the students. Tables 4, 5 and 6 present the results of the chi-square test carried out to determine the relationship between the gender, majors and class levels of the students and the leadership styles.

**Table 1: Gender Distribution of Participants**

Gender	Number (N)	Percent (%)
Woman	116	46.2
Man	135	53.8
Total	251	100.0

The study was carried out with a total of 251 participants; 116 (46.2%) women and 125 (53.8%) men.

**Table 2: Majors of Participants**

Major	Number (N)	Percent (%)
Teaching	81	32.3
Management	170	67.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>100.0</b>

81 (32.3%) of the participants are teaching students and 170 (67.7%) are management students.

**Table 3: Class Levels of Participants**

Year	Number (N)	Percent (%)
1 <sup>st</sup> year	116	46.2
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	83	33.1
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	52	20.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The class levels of participants were: 116 (46.2%) Freshmen, 83 (33.1%) Sophomores and 52 (20.7%) Juniors.

**Table 4: Relationship between Gender and Leadership Styles**

Gender	Distribution	Moderately Autocratic Leader	Mixed Leader	Moderately Democratic Leader	Very Democratic Leader	Total	p
Woman	N	9	105	0	2	116	.112
	%	7.8%	90.5%	.0%	1.7%	100.0%	
	<b>Total %</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>41.8%</b>	<b>.0%</b>	<b>.8%</b>	<b>46.2%</b>	
Man	N	11	120	4	0	135	
	%	8.1%	88.9%	3.0%	.0%	100.0%	
	<b>Total %</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>47.8%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>.0%</b>	<b>53.8%</b>	
Total	N	20	225	4	2	251	
	%	8.0%	89.6%	1.6%	.8%	100.0%	
	<b>Total %</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>89.6%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>.8%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

The results of the chi-square analysis reveal no statistically significant relationship between the gender of participants and their views on the leadership styles ( $p > 0.05$ ). The results also indicate that both male and female students mainly display features of mixed leadership.

**Table 5: Relationship between Majors and Leadership Styles**

Major	Distribution	Moderately Autocratic Leader	Mixed Leader	Moderately Democratic Leader	Very Democratic Leader	Total	p
Teaching	N	12	69	0	0	81	.017
	%	14.8%	85.2%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	
	<b>Total %</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>27.5%</b>	<b>.0%</b>	<b>.0%</b>	<b>32.3%</b>	
Management	N	8	156	4	2	170	
	%	4.7%	91.8%	2.4%	1.2%	100.0%	
	<b>Total %</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>62.2%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>.8%</b>	<b>67.7%</b>	
Total	N	20	225	4	2	251	
	%	8.0%	89.6%	1.6%	.8%	100.0%	
	<b>Total %</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	<b>89.6%</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>.8%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

The results of the chi-square analysis show that there is a statistically significant relationship between the majors of the participants and their views on the leadership styles ( $p < 0.05$ ). Management students show features of moderately democratic leadership and features of very democratic leadership while teaching students do not. The results also indicate that both management and teaching students mainly exhibit features of mixed leadership.

**Table 6: Relationship between Class Levels and Leadership Styles**

Class Level	Distribution	Moderately Autocratic Leader	Mixed Leader	Moderately Democratic Leader	Very Democratic Leader	Total	P
Freshman	N	5	107	2	2	116	.057
	%	4.3%	92.2%	1.7%	1.7%	100.0%	
	Total %	2.0%	42.6%	.8%	.8%	46.2%	
Sophomore	N	12	71	0	0	83	
	%	14.5%	85.5%	.0%	.0%	100.0%	
	Total %	4.8%	28.3%	.0%	.0%	33.1%	
Junior	N	3	47	2	0	52	
	%	5.8%	90.4%	3.8%	.0%	100.0%	
	Total %	1.2%	18.7%	.8%	.0%	20.7%	
Total	N	20	225	4	2	251	
	%	8.0%	89.6%	1.6%	.8%	100.0%	
	Total %	8.0%	89.6%	1.6%	.8%	100.0%	

The results of the chi-square analysis do not show any statistically significant relationship between the class levels of the participants and their views on the leadership styles ( $p > 0.05$ ). Freshmen, sophomores and juniors mainly display features of mixed leadership. The results also indicate that some first-year students exhibit features of very democratic leadership, however, second-year and third-year students do not exhibit features of very democratic leadership.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study was carried out on a total of 251 participants, 116 women and 135 men, who study at Ordu University. 81 of the participants are physical education and sports teaching students and the remaining are sports management students in PESA. The class levels of the participants are; 116 first-year, 80 second-year and 50 third year. The results indicate that both male and female students mainly have features of mixed leadership.

The results also show that management and teaching students mainly have features of mixed leadership. Some first-year students have features of very democratic leadership, however, second-year and third-year students do not exhibit features of very democratic leadership. A conclusion that could be drawn from these results is that management and teaching students should be given not only vocational education but also education on leadership in order to make significant contributions to the development of their professional skills which they can make use of in their careers as teachers, managers and coaches. This will also have a positive impact on their learning and work environments.

The study on the evaluation of principals' educational leadership based on class teachers' perceptions carried out by Aktepe and Buluç (2014) shows that principals' educational leadership behaviors have some deficiencies in terms of determining the mission and objectives of the school, managing teaching programs and providing a positive learning atmosphere in the school. Features of mixed leadership that emerged in our study can be effective in solving these problems.

The results reveal that teaching students do not exhibit features of moderately democratic leadership and features of very democratic leadership. Similarly, Tozoğlu (2003) reports that coaches who engage in individual and team sports activities do not show features of democratic leadership.

The results of the chi-square analysis do not show any statistically significant relationship between the class levels of the participants and their views on the leadership styles ( $p > 0.05$ ). Similarly, Atar and Özbek (2009) report no statistically significant relationship between students' gender, majors and class levels and their views on constructive and empathizing behavior.

The results indicate that there is a statistically significant relationship between the majors of the participants and their views on the leadership styles. Providing PESA students with education on leadership will make important contributions to the development of new skill sets and improvement of their capacities and knowledge which are crucial for their professional development. Today, a learner-centered approach is being implemented in our schools, which is based on the premise that students have different styles of learning. Therefore, features of mixed leadership can play an effective role in the implementation of different methods and techniques of teaching which could improve the quality of education and facilitate students' learning.

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