



## Sportsmanship in sport with athlete perspective

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### Abstract

The study aims to determine the athletes' views on sportsmanship. In the study, qualitative research method and phenomenology design was preferred. The sampling group of the study consists of 15 athletes determined by the easily accessible case sampling method. Individual interviews were conducted with the athletes within the scope of semi-structured interview technique lasting an average of 25 minutes. Descriptive and content analysis methods were applied to the transcribed participant statements. As a result, sportsmen define sportsmanship as acting in accordance with the rules and fighting within the scope of fair play. Having or not having sportsmanship behaviour has positive or negative effects on all segments in the field and the competition environment, the circle of friends, especially the family and the coach, are the relevant stakeholders affecting sportsmanship. Finally, unsportsmanlike behaviours are seen due to reasons such as coach behaviours, provocation of the rival team, injury, etc.

**Keywords:** Athlete, perspective, sport, sportsmanship.

### *Sporcu bakış açısıyla sporda sportmenlik*

#### Öz

*Çalışma, sporcuların sportmenliğe ilişkin görüşlerini belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemi ve olgu bilim deseni tercih edilmiştir. Çalışmanın örneklem grubunu kolay ulaşılabilir durum örnekleme yöntemi ile belirlenen 15 sporcu oluşturmaktadır. Sporcularla yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniği kapsamında ortalama 25 dakika süren bireysel görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Deşifre edilen katılımcı ifadelerine betimsel ve içerik analizi yöntemleri uygulanmıştır. Sonuç olarak sporcular sportmenliği kurallara uygun davranmak ve fair play kapsamında mücadele etmek olarak tanımlamaktadır. Sportmenlik davranışına sahip olmak ya da olmamak sahadaki tüm kesimleri olumlu ya da olumsuz etkilemekte ve müsabaka ortamı, aile başta olmak üzere arkadaş çevresi ve antrenör sportmenliği etkileyen ilgili paydaşlar olmaktadır. Son olarak sportmenlik dışı davranışlar antrenör davranışları, rakip takımın kışkırtması, sakatlık vb. nedenlerle görülmektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sporcu, bakış açısı, spor, sportmenlik.

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## INTRODUCTION

Sport brings different people together as participants and spectators in an organized environment where social values such as showing respect and dignity to others, recognizing and abiding by established rules, and showing deference to authority figures are portrayed. From this point of view, communication is vital for the realization of this endeavor and the concept of sportsmanship is tied intimately to communication. Physical educators who encourage children to share and take turns during play and that coaches who remind players to treat visiting team members with courtesy and respect foster and facilitate sportsmanship. This fostering of sportsmanship is inherently communicative, enacted through the communicative acts of encouraging and reminding (Kassing & Barber, 2007). Promoting sportsmanship is a common goal of physical education and sport classes and of many youth sport organizations. Teachers and coaches in particular play a key role in realizing this goal (Bolter et al., 2018).

Sportsmanship is referred to as respect for the game, a commitment or dedication to a sport that goes beyond specific victories and failures. It is defined as personal integrity-being honest, open and true to oneself. Sportsmanship is also necessary for the games to continue as ongoing competitions; without widespread sportsmanship, rule-governed competitions become all about fighting, as opposed to love and struggle (Lad-Sessions, 2004). Sportsmanship is the virtue of coordinating play and competition in the light of moral goals. It is the behavioral tendencies or moral attitudes and behaviors that determine how all individuals participating in sporting activities behave in accordance with the spirit of sport. It is also the ability to show respect for opponents and a fair and honest attitude without giving up the desire to win (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995; Stornes & Bru, 2002; Huang et al., 2014). It is the behavior befitting a person participating in a sporting activity. It is a moral category. It demands certain forms of behavior from people involved in sport, such as fairness, equality, good play and the desire to win, and these forms of behavior are equally important and directed towards other people involved in sport (Abad, 2010). Because in sport, some behaviors are not violations of the rules of the game but violations of the spirit of the game. Therefore, sportsmanship is not to follow the rules of the game but to adapt to the spirit of the game. In this context, sportsmanship, which is the emotional tone of the relationship with the game and the stakeholders of the game, is thought to be important not only for sports but also for the protection of social order as reflected in sports environments (Yarayan et al., 2020; Aktaş & Sezen Balçıkanlı, 2023).

Sportsmanship is influenced by many factors including individual attitudes, coach behaviors, parental behaviors, norms built into the team, supporters and referee performances

(Yıldız et al., 2015; Sulistiyono et al., 2020). The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) defines sportsmanship as a set of behaviours that should be exhibited by athletes, coaches, officials, administrators and fans, including parents, in sport competitions. These behaviors are based on core values such as respect, fairness, courtesy, honesty and responsibility (Goldstein & Iso-Ahola, 2006). In this context, it is seen that athletes who exhibit a high level of sportsmanship balance their feelings of intense effort and play and develop ethical standards that prevent strategic gain in the context of competition (Ryska, 2003). However, the fact that athletes and clubs now have the desire to win more has to some extent damaged the spirit of sport. In sports played with the desire to win at all costs, an athlete may exhibit unethical behavior to achieve his/her sporting goal. It brings to mind the idea that these individuals do not have an adequate sports ethics and sports culture (Yanık, 2019). Specially, the behavior of individuals with higher ego goal orientation is associated with approving or encouraging unsportsmanlike actions. These individuals may be more likely to adopt dishonest means (cheating, unfair play) to achieve their goals (e.g., winning) as long as the outcome serves their needs (Stuntz & Weiss, 2003). Studies on basketball and rugby athletes have shown that college basketball players exhibit unsportsmanlike attitudes and perceive intentional acts of injury to opposing players as acceptable, and that the level of moral judgement is low among adult rugby players. Thus, poor sportsmanship, poor moral judgement, discrimination, racism, aggression, win-at-all-costs attitudes and other fair play distortions have also been associated with sport participation (Crossan et al., 2023). In the light of this information, sportsmanship is a complex process and those who want to combat unsportsmanlike behavior need to think about what sportsmanship means before trying to teach it (Rudd & Stoll, 1998). This is because, despite athletes and coaches constantly questioning authority and complaining about unsportsmanlike behaviors, the nature and rate of unsportsmanlike behaviors in sport raise doubts about the potential of these behaviors to improve athletes' sportsmanship. Therefore, this study was prepared to determine the views of athletes who are expected to exhibit sportsmanship behavior in sports environments, the meanings they attribute to the concept, the reasons that lead to unsportsmanlike behaviors and the stakeholders who are effective in sportsmanship.

## **METHOD**

The research was prepared within the scope of qualitative research. Qualitative research is an approach that aims to reveal social phenomena in a realistic and holistic manner in the environment in which they are located and includes different designs such as cultural analysis,

theory building, case study, action research and phenomenology (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In this study, phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research designs, was used. The design is used to determine the personal experiences of individuals in the face of a concept or phenomenon and to show the identifiable universal essence of these experiences (Creswell, 2018).

### Research group

In sample selection, easily accessible case sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used. This approach, which provides speed and practicality to the researcher, allows the creation of a sampling group from a close and easy-to-reach situation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). In this context, 15 athletes were included in the research group.

**Table 1. Distribution of personal information of the researchers**

| Participant | Age | Gender | Province  | Education Level  | Branch       | Sport Age (years) |
|-------------|-----|--------|-----------|------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| P1          | 24  | Male   | Kocaeli   | University       | Football     | 3                 |
| P2          | 20  | Male   | Denizli   | University       | Football     | 8                 |
| P3          | 24  | Female | Trabzon   | High school      | Volleyball   | 6                 |
| P4          | 23  | Female | Samsun    | High school      | Badminton    | 5                 |
| P5          | 23  | Female | Tekirdağ  | University       | Handball     | 5                 |
| P6          | 22  | Male   | İstanbul  | Secondary school | Football     | 10                |
| P7          | 23  | Male   | Adana     | University       | Table Tennis | 7                 |
| P8          | 20  | Female | Eskişehir | Associate degree | Swimming     | 8                 |
| P9          | 22  | Female | Van       | University       | Volleyball   | 4                 |
| P10         | 22  | Male   | Antalya   | University       | Wrestling    | 12                |
| P11         | 23  | Male   | Kastamonu | University       | Handball     | 8                 |
| P12         | 21  | Female | Elazığ    | University       | Handball     | 7                 |
| P13         | 20  | Female | İzmir     | University       | Basketball   | 5                 |
| P14         | 22  | Male   | Kütahya   | University       | Football     | 6                 |
| P15         | 25  | Male   | İstanbul  | University       | Handball     | 3                 |

### Data collection/processing method

In the study, semi-structured interview technique consisting of questions prepared about the concept of sportsmanship was used. After the literature review, a question pool was created and the questions to be used during the interview were finalised in line with the expert opinions. It was decided to include 4 questions in the semi-structured interview form. The athletes were informed that their answers to the questions would be recorded and then kept by the researcher, and that the records would be transcribed and analysed. After the appropriate environment was provided, face-to-face interviews were conducted. The interviews lasted an average of 25 minutes. In the interview,

- ✓ What do you think about sportsmanship and what should be the criteria of sportsmanship?
- ✓ How does the concept of sportsmanship affect the game played by athletes?
- ✓ What are the reasons that push athletes to unsportsmanlike behaviour?

- ✓ Who has an influence on sportsmanship behaviour? What kind of effects do they have?” questions were included in the interview.

The interviews recorded by the researcher were transcribed in computer environment. The athletes were coded as P1....P15.

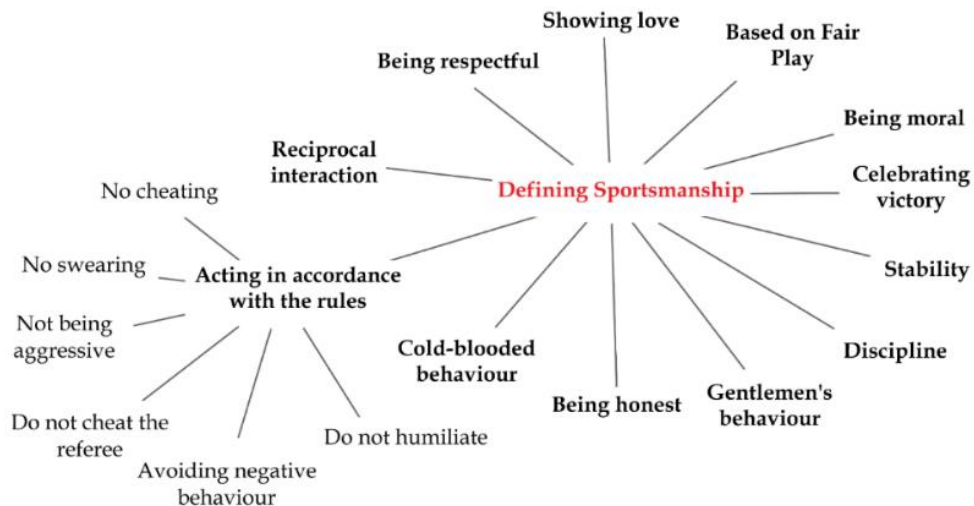
### **Data analysis**

Descriptive and content analysis methods were applied to the texts obtained. Athletes' opinions were subjected to content analysis through categorisation and descriptive analysis through direct quotations to ensure reliability.

Reliability: Validity and reliability in qualitative research studies depend on the interpretation of the data obtained by the researcher and the degree to which these interpretations match the facts expressed by the participants (Şencan, 2005). Three different concepts, namely stability, repeatability and accuracy, are mentioned to ensure reliability in content analysis (Güler, Halıcıoğlu & Taşgın, 2015). Stability is the similarity or sameness of a measurement or coding situation, repeatability is the thematization of the data in a similar way by the researcher, and accuracy is the degree of process conformity, that is, the classification of texts by adhering to standards and norms (Krippendorff, 2004; Şencan, 2005). In the study, reliability was ensured by transcribing the texts without making any changes, consistency was ensured by the similarity in the coding made by the researchers in different time periods, and accuracy was ensured by adhering to scientific norms and standards. Finally, a rich and in-depth description was realized in the presentation of the findings by including the individual statements of the classroom teachers in the study.

### **FINDINGS**

The question “*What do you think about sportsmanship and what should be the criteria of sportsmanship?*” was asked to the athletes participating in the study.



**Figure 1. Participants' views on defining sportsmanship.**

According to the figure 1, stating that sportsmanship should be mutual, athletes define the concept as acting in accordance with the rules and cold-bloodedly, competing within the scope of respect, love and fair play, being moral and honest, displaying a gentlemanly attitude and celebrating the opponent in case of victory, and being consistent and disciplined in actions.

*P1:.....Sportsmanship is the gentlemanly behaviour of both sides towards each other within the framework of respect and love.....*

*P2:.....Sportsmanship is to follow the rules on and off the field, to be cool-headed, to keep calm. On the field, it can be to avoid negative actions, etc. to exhibit behaviours.....*

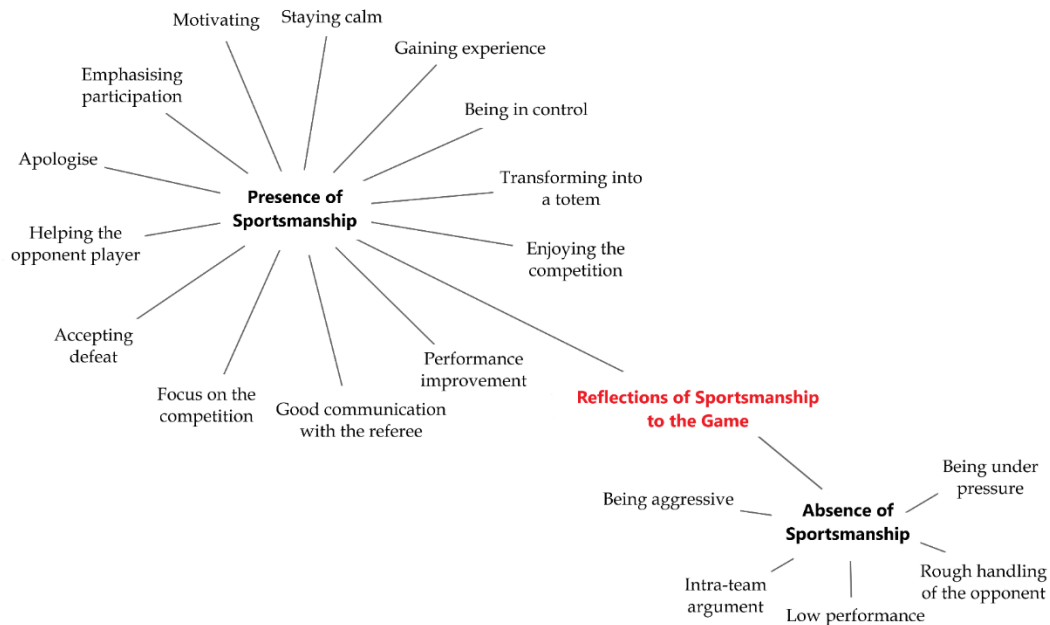
*P7:.....Displaying a certain disciplined and stable behaviour in a sports competition, beyond following the rules of the game.....*

*P8:.....The ability to follow the rules during the game, but also to see the opponent not as an enemy but as a part of the game.....*

*P13:....Sportsmanship is not to lose respect for the opponent and the game, even though one wants to win.....*

*P14:....It is the respectful and loving approach of an athlete to his/her opponents on and off the field, in and out of the competition....*

The question “How does the concept of sportsmanship affect the game played by athletes?” was asked to the athletes participating in the study.



**Figure 2. Participants' views on the reflections of sportsmanship on the game.**

When figure 2 is analysed, having or not having sportsmanship behaviour has positive or negative effects on all segments in the field. According to the athletes, it is possible to talk about positive effects such as staying calm, focusing on the competition, prioritising participation, communicating well with the rival team athletes, and negative effects such as being aggressive, showing low performance in the team, being harsh towards the opponent and therefore feeling under pressure.

*P2: It can also turn into a totem. Being a sportsman can fire people up a bit, because players who know the concept of sportsmanship can create positive effects, they concentrate more on their game, they respect the decisions of the referees, they give themselves completely to the game, so they can show sportsmanship and influence their teammates..... This can not only affect the course of the game, but it can also put a strain on the whole spark between the two teams, tensions will be high, nerves will be raised, there might even be a fight between the two sides, because of this, the opponent will play stronger, they will play better and this can break the whole mentality of the other team, they will not be able to keep their composure, They lose their sportsmanship and so there's a build-up of tension, it starts with one player and it can spread to other players, it's not a game at all...*

*P4: They follow the rules of the game during the competition, they do not see the opponent as an enemy, they appreciate and congratulate even if the other side wins, and most importantly, they do not forget how to play the game, not whether they win or lose.... If the competition*

continues with a draw, the players of both teams may be more ambitious, but if there are a few points difference, the players of the team that scored that difference may play a little more relaxed and calmer, while the players of the defeated team may be a little more aggressive.

P12: It would be an honest game, it would be a game with a sense of fair play...in every game there is winning and losing. The important thing is to play honestly and to be an ethical player....If we lose according to the course of the game, nerves can get tense, sadness, gloom can descend for the losing team. The other team can be provoked by the joy of the other team, so professionalism comes into play here, people should not be inclined to this, after all, there is winning and losing.

P14: It allows him/her to spend the competition in a more controlled, calmer and more experienced way during the competition...This can be interpreted as good and bad things because a losing athlete can focus on harming his/her opponent, attacking him/her more violently, destroying his/her psychology because he/she focuses on winning by forgetting a sportsmanship behaviour he/she has done before and a bad result can be encountered. There may be a better outcome depending on the behaviour of the athletes....

P15: Sportsmanship allows players to perform more comfortably, and the more negative the sportsmanship is, the more arguments within the team increase and increase the tension of the game, which decreases the efficiency of the branch we do....In defeat situations, players can cause confusion of emotions and aggression as a result of aggression and harsh intervention on the opponent, which can lead to bad reasons.

The question “What are the reasons that push athletes to unsportsmanlike behaviour?” was asked to the athletes participating in the study.



**Figure 3. Participants' views on the reasons for unsportsmanlike behavior.**



According to the findings obtained in figure 3, unsportsmanlike behaviours are seen due to reasons such as coach's behaviours, provocation of the rival team, revenge motive, friendship, living conditions, failure to achieve goals, injury, biased decisions of the referee, fan pressure and inability to remain calm in the event of defeat that occurs at the end of being constantly victorious.

*P1: Ambition to win, inability to accept defeat, injustice, out-of-game fan pressure, in-game misfortunes, injuries, inability to realize the thought in his/her head, etc. are among the behaviours that lead to unsportsmanlike behaviour.*

*P3: Nerves can be tense during the competition, so the players of the defeated team can be more aggressive, or they can try to take revenge for a foul committed against them, that is, they can turn to unsportsmanlike behaviour.*

*P5: During the competition, the referee may make a wrong decision, losing a point advantage in a game or provocative play by opposing players may lead to negative behaviour.*

*P10: Since the tempo is very high due to the sport we do, the pulse flow is very high, which minimizes the ability to think, apart from that, there may also be the ambition to win, no one wants to lose, which can cause unsportsmanlike behaviour.*

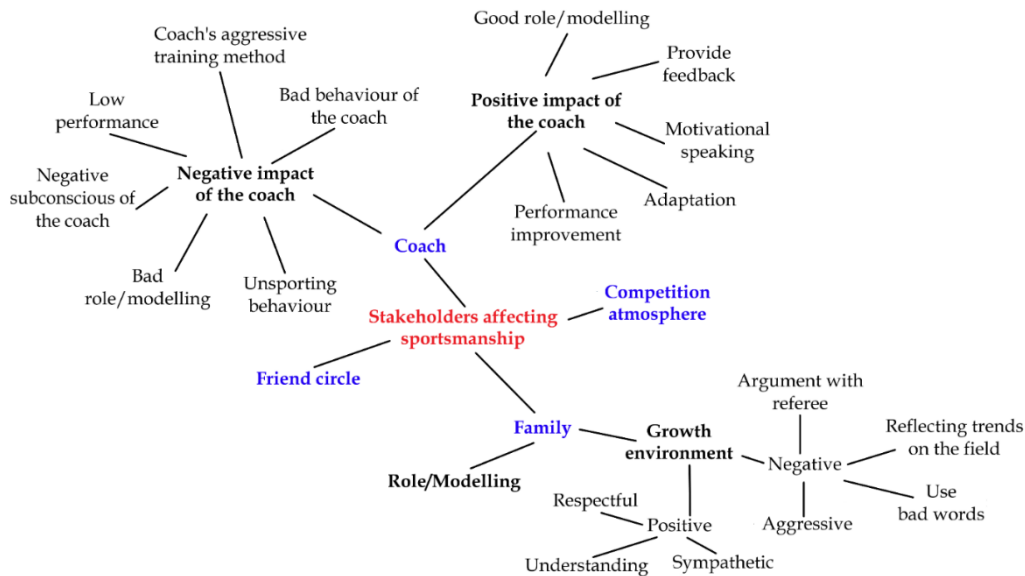
*P11: Ambition, determination, desire, grudge or not accepting defeat can push athletes to unsportsmanlike behaviour...*

*P12: There may be provocative behaviour of the opposing team's player or wrong calls by the referee.*

*P14: Coaches, friends, lifestyle, place of residence, city, and many different external factors can be the main factor.*

*P15: Aggressive behavior during the game, rhetoric from the opposing team's stands, referee mistakes and defeat.*

The question “Who has an influence on sportsmanship behavior? What kind of effects do they have?” was asked to the athletes participating in the study.



**Figure 4. Participants' views on stakeholders affecting sportsmanship.**

In figure 4, it is obtained that, the competition environment and the environment of friends, especially the family and the coach, are the relevant stakeholders for athletes, affecting sportsmanship. The positive and negative approaches of the coach towards the competition environment and athlete performance, the upbringing style of the family and the role modelling of the parents directly affect sportsmanship.

*P1: The coach plays a key role on the player. By motivating the athlete with a good word or behaviour.... The athlete who develops in an environment of respect and love will likewise respect and love his/her surroundings and environment...The family has a great influence on behaviour. The children of the family first take the mother and father as role models.... The behaviours of the athlete can change in situations such as the opposing team player being aggressive or undercutting, insulting or using words of praise by the spectators, etc.*

*P2: A coach is not only responsible for the game played on the field, for winning the team, of course, he/she is responsible for the whole team, for all the players...The environment in which a person grows up is one of the biggest factors in the person he/she will become one day...The influence of the family can be quite big and it can be small. If a child grows up in a healthy and very positive home, he/she can develop respect, tolerance, friendliness, if he/she grows up in an unhealthy and negative home, he/she can turn into a person who lacks respect... Spectators can have negative effects such as, during the competition everyone can be nervous*

*and tense, for example if there are slang words or wrong cheering, the defeated team can get angry or the motivation of the winning team can decrease.*

*P8: Athletes can see their coaches as idols, so the coach's actions, the way he/she speaks, his/her attitudes can affect the athlete positively, but at the same time, if the coach has a foul mouth, if he/she can swear without realizing himself/herself in a moment of anger, he/she can also affect his/her athlete in this way.....The athlete can be shaped according to the environment he/she grows up in.... Family is the biggest factor, because if there is fighting, noise, slang words etc. in the family, it affects the player badly...Spectators can have such effects, swearing at the players of the opposing team, trying to sabotage the game from outside.....*

*P11: The coach should be constructive in such situations, he/she should show behaviours in this direction in order for a competition to be more enjoyable and competitive, in a gentlemanly manner, and raise moral athletes for sports... If an athlete is raised in a good neighbourhood and environment, it is important in terms of friendship, in terms of protecting and protecting each other. ...Everything starts in the family, well-educated athletes are exemplary athletes, they know both their elders and their juniors...For a professional athlete, it doesn't matter much, he does his job and leaves, but for a professional athlete, as we said, he comes, does his job and leaves after his job is done.*

*P13: First of all, the coach should set an example for his/her player and support his/her player...An athlete wants to be like the person he/she idolizes.... The child behaves according to the environment in which he/she grew up....Whether it is the fans, they will go on the team, this completely mentally collapses the team. Slang words may increase on the pitch, the referee's decisions are not respected and disrespect towards the referee causes miscommunication within the team....*

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Athletes, who state that sportsmanship should be mutual, define the concept as acting in accordance with the rules and cold-bloodedly, fighting within the scope of respect, love and fair play, being moral and honest, displaying a gentlemanly attitude and celebrating the opponent in case of victory, and being consistent and disciplined in actions.

Sport is a tool for teaching and learning sportsmanship and core values such as discipline, respect, responsibility, fairness, reliability, teamwork, good citizenship, positive competition and the spirit of excellence (Goldstein & Iso-Ahola, 2006). It is not only about displaying certain types of acceptable behaviour, but also about having the right attitude towards sport (Abad, 2010). Sportsmanship for an athlete is analyzed in five dimensions: (a) respect for rules

and officials, (b) respect for competitors, (c) respect for social customs, (d) respect for one's total commitment to the sport, and (e) a negative attitude of being a bad loser and competing only for prizes and trophies (Vallerand et al., 1997). That means, in order to balance the tension that exists between competition and cooperation in sports competitions, concepts such as preparing well for participation, maintaining composure, playing fairly, respecting officials, coaches, competitors, teammates, thinking, having fun, choosing role models carefully, and learning about life through sports activity come to the fore (Kassing & Barber, 2007).

Sportsmanship as applied to the actual game is a spirit, an attitude. Otherwise, it is a style or mode of interpreting a purely legal rule. It is to preserve and develop the appropriate festive mood in an activity whose primary purpose is entertainment, pleasure, joy. Players are taking a very polite attitude towards their personal rights under the law. They prefer to be magnanimous and altruistic if in this way they contribute to the enjoyment of the game (Keating, 1973). Although sportsmanship is associated with certain types of praiseworthy behavior in the context of sport, it can sometimes be extended to apply to other areas of life and living, especially those related to competing fairly and honestly as well as to good humor. In this context, sportsmanship is a form of social unity, a means of promoting pleasure and fun, and a form of altruism (Arnold, 1983).

Sportsmanship is fair play and a founding rule of competitive games. For unless a competitor plays fairly, he or she is not really playing the game (Lad-Sessions, 2004). Fair play as respect for the game is philosophy in action. This is an attempt to philosophically ground the handling of current sporting concerns and issues (Butcher & Schneider, 1998). The concept of Fair Play is integral to sport as we know and experience it and is often seen as a necessary ethos for competitive sport to survive and thrive. It embodies issues such as justice and fairness in sport, the moral and immoral interpretation of athletic performance, what makes a competition good and the core values of competitive sport (Loland, 2002). It is seen that the definitions of sportsmanship obtained in our research are similar to the related literature. From this point of view, it can be stated that there are general and similar definitions within the scope of sportsmanship.

According to the athletes, having or not having sportsmanship behavior has positive or negative effects on all segments in the field. According to the athletes, it is possible to talk about positive effects such as staying calm, focusing on the competition, prioritizing participation, communicating well with the rival team athletes, and negative effects such as being aggressive,

showing low performance in the team, being harsh towards the opponent and therefore feeling under pressure.

While playing to win and playing for fun may seem diametrically opposed, the goal is to create an environment where hard work is as valuable as winning, which is the product of a specific achievement. These goals need not be mutually exclusive (Kassing & Barber, 2007). However, athletes with a desire to win conceal unethical behavior and exhibit unsportsmanlike behavior to deceive all stakeholders, especially referees (Yanık, 2019). When an athlete has a score-oriented attitude and is only interested in the athlete's physical performance, this may lead the athlete to think that this is all that is expected of him/her and that he/she does not need to develop his/her character. However, what is expected from athletes is to be a role model for the society (Arslan & Sezen-Balçıklı, 2019). Because when the virtue of sportsmanship is ignored and forgotten in the pursuit of victory, which is a good way for physical development and the love of sport, the result can be disadvantageous or even disastrous (Giray, 2021). Again, some athletes engage in sportsmanship practices related to their attitudes, values and behaviors. As a result, the pressure of external factors, such as making the team successful and gaining external rewards and popularity, leads to a lack of emphasis on sportsmanship and unethical behaviors. This situation stems from the perception of winning at all costs (Mohd-Zain et al., 2021). A negative coach-athlete relationship also causes athletes to experience negative cognitive and emotional states. Therefore, athletes experience dysfunctional behavior patterns and exhibit unsportsmanlike behaviors both on and off the field (Shipherd et al., 2019). In addition, when the causes of unsportsmanlike behaviors are examined, the first rank is given to spectators, then to athletes and then to coaches. Referees, then athletes, then coaches and spectators are the most frequently exposed to unsportsmanlike behaviors. In terms of types of behaviors, psychological pressure, protest, complaint against the opponent, complaint against the referee, objection, not helping the referee, lack of concentration, provocation, disrespect, insult, not appreciating, unsportsmanlike behavior, threat, damage to equipment, physical attack and attempt were determined as common unsportsmanlike behaviors (Gürpınar & Güven, 2011).

Unsportsmanlike conduct is a serious and growing problem in young people who play sports. Unpleasant experiences following incidents of poor sportsmanship can lead children to limit their physical activity, increasing their risk of developing health problems and limiting their quality of life such as obesity. In turn, creating sport experiences that promote sportsmanship can increase the fun in the activity and encourage children to embrace physical

activity as part of their lifestyle (Wells et al., 2005). It was concluded that there are positive relationships between sportsmanship orientations and happiness of athletes who are interested in combat sports, “compliance with social norms”, “respect for rules and management” and “commitment to social responsibilities” contribute positively to happiness and as their commitment to sportsmanship values increases, their happiness will increase (Özsarı et al., 2023). Although inappropriate behaviors such as doping, profit-struggle, cheating, match-fixing, etc. are seen intensely in sports environments, sportsmanship constitutes the most important parameters of controlling these inappropriate behaviors (Aktaş & Sezen-Balçıkınlı, 2023). In this context, it is assumed that sportsmanship behaviors provide happiness in the sports environment, while unsportsmanlike behaviors create discomfort because they stem from the motive to win at all costs.

According to the athletes, unsportsmanlike behaviors are seen due to reasons such as coach behaviors, provocation of the rival team, revenge instinct, friendship, living conditions, inability to achieve goals, injury, biased decisions of the referee, fan pressure and inability to remain calm in case of defeat that occurs at the end of winning series.

Athletes who participate in sports for intrinsic reasons such as learning new skills, experiencing cooperation, and increasing self-esteem exhibit more sportsmanship behaviors, while athletes who adopt extrinsic participation goals such as increasing social status, receiving scholarships, or achieving a professional career exhibit lower sportsmanship behavior (Ryska, 2003). For this reason, there are pressures exerted on those who play by those who do not: coaches, fans, sponsors, dependents, gamblers-all have a stake in the outcome of sports that does not necessarily pay much attention to sportsmanship (Lad-Sessions, 2004). Especially coaches’ communication is related to athletes’ self-reported tendencies to exhibit sportsmanship behaviors. It is clear that communication plays a critical role in shaping the understanding of sportsmanship behavior. Coaches engage in unsportsmanlike tactics when they encourage athletes to play injured, verbally abuse and humiliate players, and defend or protect cheating team members (Kassing & Barber, 2007). Again coaching change affects team processes, namely cohesion, communication and peer leadership. Coaches with different backgrounds, personalities and specializations support or hinder team dynamics (Stornes & Bru, 2002). In athlete training, coaches’ focusing only on performance development will leave the social and psychological development of the athlete incomplete. Therefore, the fact that athletes are at a good physical level does not mean that they will also be empathetic or sportsmanlike. At this point, the issue of coaches who have an important influence on the athlete

and how they guide their athletes comes to the agenda (Arslan & Sezen-Balçıkanlı, 2019). The sportsmanlike behaviors that coaches can exhibit towards the team can lead the athletes towards sportsmanlike behaviors. Also, as a moral educator, the coach needs to provide a space for the players to make good decisions as well as for the coach to make good decisions for himself/herself (Aktaş & Sezen-Balçıkanlı, 2023). In this respect, it is thought that the situations affecting sportsmanship may be effective in the continuation or termination of sports life.

According to the athletes, primarily the family and coach, the competition environment and the circle of friends are the relevant stakeholders affecting sportsmanship.

The importance of pleasure in all competitive sports and the level of acceptance of gamesmanship and cheating, mostly in male athletes, is often reinforced by various psychosocial factors surrounding athletes, including parents, coaches and peers (Mohd-Zain, Ahmad et al., 2021). In a study to develop and evaluate a program to promote sportsmanship in youth sport, it was found that children specialize in sport earlier, play all year round, and experience significant pressure from parents and coaches to perform at elite levels. Almost half of the athletes (45.3%) reported being yelled at or insulted; 21% reported being pressured to play while injured; 17.5% reported being subjected to physical violence; and 8% reported being pressured to intentionally harm another player (Wells et al., 2005). So, the positive and negative approaches of the coach towards the competition environment and athlete performance, the upbringing style of the family and the role modelling of the parents directly affect sportsmanship (Shipherd et al., 2019). For sportsmanship to be exhibited by students, it must first be exhibited by teachers, coaches, referees and other stakeholders. One of the ways they can learn this virtue is by being a model. When sportsmanship behaviors are exhibited, it becomes a culture in which individuals learn it through socialization (Giray, 2021). Satisfaction, goal orientation and sportsmanship are important in activating the motivational mechanisms of athletes. The fact that goal orientation influences sportsmanship imposes a great responsibility on coaches and educators who have a great contribution in the training of athletes. In addition, moral development is the result of a process of internalization of behaviors that are modeled and reinforced by significant adults such as parents, coaches, teachers or colleagues (Cosma et al., 2021). Coaches, officials, parents and training program designers play a critical role in shaping a child's early sport experience and self-confidence. They should focus on helping the child develop an enjoyment of sport and fitness, physical fitness, basic motor skills, a positive self-image, a balanced view of sport in relation to the child's school and community life, a commitment to the values of teamwork, fair play and sportsmanship. In addition, efforts should

be made to make sport as safe as possible (Committee on Sports Medicine & Committee on School Health, 1989). Because coaches, parents and teammates are influential in the formation of normative pro-social behaviors among young athletes (Ryska, 2003). Additionally, the coach's being an example with his/her own behaviors and providing positive behaviors to the athletes with appropriate guidance contribute to the formation of desired sports environments. Because the fact that the coach has a lot of control over the emotions of the athletes makes him/her an important factor in sportsmanship (Aktaş & Sezen-Balçıkkanlı, 2023). Therefore, coaches are key to making the youth sport experience positive and educational. In addition, parents and the social structure surrounding the individual are crucial in creating and supporting the environment that can foster positive sport experiences (Goldstein & Iso-Ahola, 2006). A skill-oriented motivational climate promotes the development of self-determined motivation and efficacy beliefs. Conversely, coaches who promote an ego-oriented climate are more likely to create negative and dysfunctional emotional experiences among their athletes. In addition to the content (e.g., pleasant or unpleasant) and functionality (e.g., functional or dysfunctional) of emotional experiences, coaches' behaviors also influence the intensity of emotional responses experienced by athletes (Shipherd et al., 2019). It is important that coaches teach and model good sportsmanship behaviors. Coaches can encourage sportsmanship by prioritizing sportsmanship over winning, teaching good sportsmanship, modelling good sportsmanship and punishing bad sportsmanship (Stewart, 2014; Giray, 2021). The circle of friends is also an important aspect of sportsmanship as it encourages positive interactions and relationships between individuals engaged in sports (Hardin & Whiteside, 2012; Kim & Lee, 2020). Because moral concepts and values associated with situations and behaviors are learned through interpersonal relationships. Thus, interaction with coaches, family, peer group and other social actors is related to the way a person learns what sportsmanship is. The way young people perceive their parents' attitudes also has a significant influence on sportsmanship. Moreover, how athletes perceive the attitudes of their peers is associated with certain types of sportsmanship. Social goals such as friendship and peer acceptance influence the intention to engage in unsportsmanlike behavior (Núñez et al., 2009). Therefore, although some of them come to the fore, it is possible to mention that many factors affect sportsmanship and should be evaluated as a whole.

In conclusion, it is seen that sportsmanship is evaluated within the scope of universal values such as obeying the rules, valuing the rival team, that is, acting in accordance with fair play. It is stated that having a sense of sportsmanship has effects on the team and the opposing



team and is an indispensable element in the formation of desired competition environments. The special situation of the athlete, the type of coach and training methods, the attitudes and behaviors of the opposing team players, fans, referees are effective in the emergence of unsportsmanlike behavior. It is thought that the primary stakeholders in preventing unsportsmanlike behaviors in the competition environment are family, coaches, friends and fans, and the behaviors and practices exhibited by stakeholders are important in promoting sportsmanship.

### **Recommendations**

- ✓ Athletes can be encouraged to behave in a sportsmanlike manner.
- ✓ Arrangements can be made to encourage participation in competitions rather than winning.
- ✓ Financial concerns of athletes can be addressed and post-career financial and moral support can be provided.
- ✓ Psychological and physiological conditions of athletes can be monitored and necessary support programs can be provided.
- ✓ Cooperation can be made with relevant stakeholders on the control and supervision of athletes' circle of friends.
- ✓ Approaches of fans towards athletes can be controlled.
- ✓ Referees can be more transparent in their decisions and approaches to athletes.
- ✓ Coaches can organize their training methods in a way to emphasize sportsmanship.
- ✓ Basic fair play values can be conveyed within the scope of physical education courses in schools.
- ✓ Visual and verbal practices that promote and encourage sportsmanship can be included in sports environments.
- ✓ Families can be made aware of participating in sports and encouraging athletes.

## **GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET**

### **GİRİŞ**

Sportmenlik, oyuna saygı, belirli zafer ve başarısızlıkların ötesine geçen bir spora bağlılık veya adanmışlık olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Dürüst, açık ve kendine karşı doğru olmak gibi kişisel bütünlük olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Oyunların devam eden yarışmalar olarak sürmesi için de gereklidir. Yaygın sportmenlik olmadan, kurallarla yönetilen yarışmalar sevgi ve mücadelenin aksine kavgadan ibaret hale gelmektedir (Lad-Sessions, 2004). Sportmenlik, ahlaki hedefler ışığında oyun ve rekabeti koordine etme erdemidir. Sportif faaliyetlere katılan tüm bireylerin sporun ruhuna uygun olarak nasıl davranacaklarını belirleyen davranışsal eğilimler ya da ahlaki tutum ve davranışlardır. Aynı zamanda kazanma

arzusundan vazgeçmeden rakiplere saygı gösterme, adil ve dürüst bir tutum sergileme becerisidir (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995; Stornes & Bru, 2002; Huang ve ark., 2014). Ancak, sporcuların ve kulüplerin artık daha fazla kazanma arzusuna sahip olmaları, sporun ruhuna bir ölçüde zarar vermiştir. Her ne pahasına olursa olsun kazanma arzusuyla yapılan sporlarda, bir sporcu sportif hedefine ulaşmak için etik dışı davranışlar sergileyebilmektedir. Bu durum, bu bireylerin yeterli spor etiğine ve spor kültürüne sahip olmadığı düşüncesini akla getirmektedir (Yanık, 2019). Dolayısıyla, sportmenlik karmaşık bir süreçtir ve sportmenlik dışı davranışlarla mücadele etmek isteyenlerin, bunu öğretmeye çalışmadan önce sportmenliğin ne anlama geldiğini düşünmeleri gerekir (Rudd & Stoll, 1998). Bu nedenle bu çalışma, spor ortamlarında sportmenlik davranışı sergilemesi beklenen sporcuların sportmenlik kavramına ilişkin görüşlerini, kavrama yükledikleri anlamları, sportmenlik dışı davranışlara yol açan nedenleri ve sportmenlikte etkili olan paydaşları belirlemek amacıyla hazırlanmıştır.

## **YÖNTEM**

Araştırma nitel araştırma kapsamında hazırlanmıştır. Çalışmada nitel araştırma desenlerinden ise fenomenolojik desen kullanılmıştır. Araştırmaya amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden biri olan kolay ulaşılabilir durum örnekleme yöntemi ile seçilmiş 15 sporcu dahil edilmiştir. Araştırma verilerinin elde edilmesi için sporcularla, alan uzmanları denetiminde geliştirilen 4 sorudan oluşan yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmeler ortalama 25 dakika sürmüştür. Araştırmacı tarafından kaydedilen görüşmeler bilgisayar ortamında yazıya dökülmüştür. Sporcular K1...K15 şeklinde kodlanmıştır. Elde edilen metinlere betimsel ve içerik analizi yöntemleri uygulanmıştır. Sporcuların görüşleri, güvenilirliği sağlamak için kategorizasyon yoluyla içerik analizine ve doğrudan alıntılar yoluyla betimsel analize tabi tutulmuştur.

## **BULGULAR**

Araştırmaya katılan sporcular sportmenliğin karşılıklı olması gerektiğini belirterek sportmenlik kavramını kurallara uygun ve soğukkanlı davranmak, saygı, sevgi ve fair play çerçevesinde yarışmak, ahlaklı ve dürüst olmak, centilmence bir tutum sergilemek ve galibiyet durumunda rakibi kutlamak, hareketlerde tutarlı ve disiplinli olmak olarak tanımlamaktadırlar. Ayrıca sportmenlik davranışına sahip olmanın ya da olmamanın sahadaki tüm kesimler üzerinde olumlu ya da olumsuz etkileri olduğu ifade edilmektedir. Sporculara göre sakin kalma, müsabakaya odaklanma, katılımı ön planda tutma, rakip takım sporcularıyla iyi iletişim kurma gibi olumlu etkilerden ve agresif olma, takım içinde düşük performans gösterme, rakibe karşı sert davranma ve dolayısıyla baskı altında hissetme gibi olumsuz etkilerden bahsetmek mümkündür. Antrenörün davranışları, rakip takımın kışkırtması, intikam güdüsü, arkadaşlık, yaşam koşulları, hedeflere ulaşamama, sakatlık, hakemin yanlı kararları, taraftar baskısı ve sürekli galip gelmenin sonunda ortaya çıkan yenilgi durumunda sakin kalamama gibi nedenlerden dolayı sportmenlik dışı davranışlar görülmektedir. Başta aile ve antrenör olmak üzere müsabaka ortamı ve arkadaş çevresi sporcular için sportmenliği etkileyen ilgili paydaşlardır. Antrenörün müsabaka ortamına

ve sporcu performansına yönelik olumlu ve olumsuz yaklaşımları, ailenin yetiştirme tarzı ve ebeveynlerin rol modelliği sportmenliği doğrudan etkilemektedir.

### **TARTIŞMA VE SONUÇ**

Sportmenliğin karşılıklı olması gerektiğini belirten sporcular, kavramı kurallara uygun ve soğukkanlı davranmak, saygı, sevgi ve fair play çerçevesinde mücadele etmek, ahlaklı ve dürüst olmak, centilmence bir tutum sergilemek ve galibiyet durumunda rakibi kutlamak, eylemlerde tutarlı ve disiplinli olmak olarak tanımlamaktadır. Araştırmamızda elde edilen sportmenlik tanımlarıyla ilgili literatürde (Keating, 1973; Arnold, 1983; Vallerand ve ark., 1997; Butcher & Schneider, 1998; Loland, 2002; Lad Sessions, 2004; Goldstein & Iso-Ahola, 2006; Kassing & Barber, 2007; Abad, 2010) de genel ve benzer tanımların olduğu ifade edilebilir.

Sporculara göre sportmenlik davranışına sahip olmak ya da olmamak sahadaki tüm kesimler üzerinde olumlu ya da olumsuz etkilere sahiptir. Sporculara göre sakın kalma, müsabakaya odaklanma, katılımı ön planda tutma, rakip takım sporcularıyla iyi iletişim kurma gibi olumlu etkilerin yanı sıra agresif olma, takım içinde düşük performans gösterme, rakibe karşı sert olma ve dolayısıyla baskı altında hissetme gibi olumsuz etkilerden de söz etmek mümkün. Literatürde yapılan çalışmalarda da benzer sonuçlara ulaşılmaktadır (Wells ve ark., 2005; Kassing & Barber, 2007; Gürpınar & Güven, 2011; Arslan & Sezen Balçıkanlı, 2019; Shipherd ve ark., 2019; Yanık, 2019; Giray, 2021; Mohd-Zain ve ark., 2021; Aktaş & Sezen-Balçıkanlı, 2023; Özşarı ve ark., 2023). Bu bağlamda sportmenlik davranışlarının spor ortamında mutluluk sağladığı, sportmenlik dışı davranışların ise her ne pahasına olursa olsun kazanma güdüsünden kaynaklandığı için rahatsızlık yarattığı varsayılmaktadır.

Sporculara göre sportmenlik dışı davranışlar; antrenör davranışları, rakip takımın kışkırtması, intikam içgüdüğü, arkadaşlık, yaşam koşulları, hedeflere ulaşamama, sakatlık, hakemin yanlış kararları, taraftar baskısı ve galibiyet serileri sonunda ortaya çıkan yenilgi durumunda sakın kalamama gibi nedenlerden dolayı görülmektedir. Literatürde yapılan çalışmalarda da bu yönde sonuçlar görülmektedir (Stornes & Bru, 2002; Ryska, 2003; Lad-Sessions, 2004; Kassing & Barber, 2007; Arslan & Sezen-Balçıkanlı, 2019; Aktaş & Sezen-Balçıkanlı, 2023). Bu açıdan sportmenliği etkileyen durumların spor hayatının devamında ya da sonlanmasında etkili olabileceği düşünülmektedir.

Sporculara göre, başta aile ve antrenör olmak üzere, yarışma ortamı ve arkadaş çevresi sportmenliği etkileyen ilgili paydaşlardır. Alanyazında da benzer sonuçlara rastlanılmaktadır (Committee on Sports Medicine & Committee on School Health, 1989; Ryska, 2003; Wells ve ark., 2005; Goldstein & Iso-Ahola, 2006; Núñez, Martín-Albove ark., 2009; Hardin & Whiteside, 2012; Stewart, 2014; Shipherd ve ark., 2019; Kim & Lee, 2020; Cosma ve ark., 2021; Giray, 2021; Mohd Zain ve ark., 2021; Aktaş and Sezen-Balçıkanlı, 2023). Dolayısıyla bunlardan bazıları ön plana çıksa da birçok faktörün sportmenliği etkilediğinden ve bir bütün olarak değerlendirilmesi gerektiğinden bahsetmek mümkündür.

Sonuç olarak sportmenliğin kurallara uymak, rakip takıma değer vermek yani fair play'e uygun davranmak gibi evrensel değerler kapsamında değerlendirildiği görülmektedir. Sportmenlik duygusuna sahip olmanın takım ve rakip takım üzerinde etkileri olduğu ve istenilen rekabet ortamlarının oluşmasında vazgeçilmez bir unsur olduğu belirtilmektedir. Sportmenlik dışı davranışların ortaya çıkmasında sporcunun özel durumu, antrenör tipi ve antrenman yöntemleri, rakip takım oyuncularının, taraftarların, hakemlerin tutum ve davranışları etkili olmaktadır. Müsabaka ortamında sportmenlik dışı davranışların önlenmesinde öncelikli paydaşların aile, antrenör, arkadaşlar ve taraftarlar olduğu, paydaşların sergilediği davranış ve uygulamaların sportmenliğin teşvik edilmesinde önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir.

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|---|---|------------------------------------|
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| Literatür Tarama<br><i>Literature Review</i>  | Çalışma için gerekli literatürü taramak<br><i>Review the literature required for the study</i>      | İlyas GÖRGÜT                       |
| Veri Toplama ve İşleme<br><i>Data Collecting and Processing</i>   | Verileri toplamak, düzenlemek ve raporlaştırmak<br><i>Collecting, organizing and reporting data</i> | Erkut TUTKUN                       |
| Tartışma ve Yorum<br><i>Discussion and Commentary</i>   | Elde edilen bulguların değerlendirilmesi<br><i>Evaluation of the obtained finding</i>               | İlyas GÖRGÜT                       |
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