



## Investigation of sport participation motivation and psychological resilience in football players

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**Araştırma Makalesi/Research Article**

**DOI:** 10.5281/zenodo.10876509

Gönderi Tarihi/ *Received:*

Kabul Tarih/ *Accepted:*

Online Yayın Tarihi/ *Published:*

09.10.2023

15.03.2024

27.03.2024

### Abstract

This study aims to examine the motives for participation in sports and the psychological resilience of soccer players. A total of 351 volunteer football players who had been actively playing football for at least 5 years participated in the study. Psychological resilience scale for adults and sport participation motivation scale were used as data collection tools in the study. According to the study results, those aged 18-21 use different sports participation motives. There are differences between age groups in psychological resilience sub-dimensions. A high relationship was found between the sub-dimensions of sport participation and psychological resilience sub-dimensions. This correlation may be due to the team unity of football players. When the differences between the positions are analysed, there are differences in the sub-dimensions of sports participation and psychological resilience. These differences can be related to the position and abilities of the players due to the game structure.

**Keywords:** Football players, psychological resilience, sport participation

### *Futbolcularda spora katılım motivasyonu ve psikolojik dayanıklılığın incelenmesi*

#### Öz

*Bu çalışmanın amacı futbolcuların spora katılım güdülerini ve psikolojik dayanıklılıklarını incelemektir. Çalışmaya en az 5 yıldır aktif olarak futbol oynayan toplam 351 gönüllü futbolcu katılmıştır. Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak Yetişkinler İçin Psikolojik Dayanıklılık Ölçeği ve Spora Katılım Motivasyonu Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre, 18-21 yaş aralığındakiler farklı spora katılım güdülerini kullanmaktadır. Psikolojik dayanıklılık alt boyutlarında yaş grupları arasında farklılıklar vardır. Spora katılım alt boyutları ile psikolojik dayanıklılık alt boyutları arasında yüksek bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Bu ilişki futbolcuların takım bütünlüğünden kaynaklanıyor olabilir. Mevkiler arasındaki farklılıklar incelendiğinde, spora katılım ve psikolojik dayanıklılık alt boyutlarında farklılıklar vardır. Bu farklılıklar oyun yapısından dolayı oyuncuların mevkileri ve yetenekleri ile ilişkilendirilebilir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Futbolcular, psikolojik dayanıklılık, spora katılım

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## INTRODUCTION

Regular physical activity has several positive effects. Sports participation has a significant positive impact on health, as extensively demonstrated by numerous studies. Consistently engaging in physical activity can serve as a preventive measure against various chronic diseases, including but not limited to heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and osteoporosis (Bassuk & Manson, 2005; Sigal et al., 2006). Engagement in structured sports activities is linked to a reduced likelihood of experiencing anxiety, depression, and feelings of hopelessness, surpassing the benefits derived solely from physical exercise (Pedersen et al., 2017). About the correlation between sports involvement and mental well-being, contemporary studies indicate that adolescents participating in sports exhibit lower rates of self-disclosed diagnoses of anxiety and depression compared to those observed in the broader population (Jewett et al., 2014). Participation in sports is influenced by factors that extend beyond the benefits derived from sports itself.

Among these factors is the resilience and performance of active athletes under challenging training and competition conditions. Athletes are characterized by their ability to utilize and optimize various psychological qualities to meet the pressure they face in their situation (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). Recent research has emphasized that athletes encounter various factors in response to pressure, and these factors are often psychological in nature, investigating how athletes cope with this psychological state (McKay et al., 2008). The impact of psychological factors related to resilience, which is effective in athletes reaching high performance levels, is generally defined by the concept of psychological resilience (MacNamara et al., 2010).

Sport psychological resilience plays an active role in safeguarding athletes from the negative impacts of the mental processes and behaviors necessary to achieve peak performance (Gustasson et al., 2010). When considered alongside physical resilience, psychological resilience is not only seen as aiding athletes in adapting to training and competition periods but also as a motivational parameter for high performance (Hays et al., 2009). Considering that athletes' success is believed to be directly proportional to high performance, it is evident that these concepts are closely intertwined (Galli & Reel, 2012).

Developing resilience is necessary in an athlete's acquisition of high-performance levels (Collins & MacNamara, 2012). Resilience was conceptualized as the capacity to uphold optimal levels of both psychological and physical well-being and the ability to restore equilibrium in

the face of adversities (Sisto et al., 2019). Research has shown that individuals with psychological solid resilience are more resistant to life's challenges. Karacaoğlu and Köktaş (2016) found a positive and significant impact on employees' psychological well-being due to their psychological resilience. Friborg et al. (2003) identified five dimensions of psychological resilience: personal power, structural style, social competence, family harmony, and social resources. The personal power sub-dimension was divided into 'self-perception' and 'future perception', resulting in the final form of the six-dimensional scale in 2005. Self-perception pertains to an individual's self-awareness and thoughts regarding their identity.

The mechanisms of psychological resilience enable individuals to confront events by preserving and augmenting their resources, ultimately leading to personal empowerment and a positive restructuring of their life narrative (Sisto et al., 2019).

People can be influenced by many factors when participating in sports. These factors vary according to many variables. Changes as a function of sports participation and participation in sports are essential issues. Football has a large fan base and is one of the world's most popular sports. Examining the factors that lead individuals to start playing football is essential in this regard. Additionally, the psychological characteristics of athletes playing football can vary, and investigating these features, often expressed as psychological resilience, has become the focus of this study. This study aimed to investigate the motives for taking up sports and the psychological resilience of football players.

## **METHOD**

### **Research group**

A total of 351 volunteer football players who played football for at least 5 years participated in the study.

### **Data collection tools**

The psychological Resilience Scale for Adults, developed by Friborg et al. (2005), and conducted Turkish validity and reliability by Basım and Çetin (2011), was used as the data collection tool. In the scale, 'structural style' (3,9,15,21) and 'future perception' (2,8,14,20) have 4 items each; 'family harmony' (5,11,17,23,26,32), 'self-perception' (1,7,13,19,28,31,) and 'social competence' (4,10,16,22, 25,29) are measured with 6 items each and 'social resources' (6,12,18,24,27,30,33) is measured with 7 items.

Participation Motivation Questionnaire (PMQ) was developed by Gill, Gross, and Huddleston (1983). It consists of a list 30 possible reasons for participating in sports and

includes 8 subscales named Skill Development, Team Affiliation, Fun, Achievement/Status, Friendship, Energy Release, Fitness, and Miscellaneous. Participants were asked to indicate whether each reason was very important (coded as 1), somewhat important (coded as 2), or not at all important (coded as 3) to them for participating in sport. The evidence of reliability and validity of PMQ for Turkish sample were determined in a study of Oyar et al. (2001)

### Data analysis

ANOVA was used to compare more than two groups, and the Tukey multiple comparison test was used to determine in whose favour the difference was in cases with a difference.

### FINDINGS

The results from the study are presented in tables. The comparison of footballers according to their ages is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Comparison of participation motivation in sport according to age of football players**

	Age	n	Mean	sd	F	p
Achievement/status	18-21 years	117	1.18 <sup>a</sup>	0.22	4.804	0.009
	22-25 years	182	1.19 <sup>a</sup>	0.35		
	26 years and over	52	1.05 <sup>b</sup>	0.09		
Team affiliation	18-21 years	117	3.03	0.47	1.544	0.215
	22-25 years	182	3.05	0.63		
	26 years and over	52	3.19	0.48		
Energy release/fitness	18-21 years	117	2.51 <sup>a</sup>	0.68	6.574	0.002
	22-25 years	182	2.60 <sup>a</sup>	0.47		
	26 years and over	52	2.30 <sup>b</sup>	0.30		
Fun	18-21 years	117	3.47 <sup>a</sup>	0.72	17.714	<0.001
	22-25 years	182	3.96 <sup>a</sup>	0.70		
	26 years and over	52	3.81 <sup>b</sup>	0.65		
Friendship	18-21 years	117	3.44 <sup>a</sup>	0.35	11.201	<0.001
	22-25 years	182	3.19 <sup>b</sup>	0.67		
	26 years and over	52	3.00 <sup>b</sup>	0.82		
Competition	18-21 years	117	3.44	0.35	0.602	0.548
	22-25 years	182	3.38	0.60		
	26 years and over	52	3.42	0.28		
Movement	18-21 years	117	3.33 <sup>a</sup>	0.63	7.862	<0.001
	22-25 years	182	3.11 <sup>b</sup>	0.60		
	26 years and over	52	3.00 <sup>b</sup>	0.36		
Skill development	18-21 years	117	3.06 <sup>b</sup>	0.41	3.707	0.026
	22-25 years	182	3.02 <sup>b</sup>	0.40		
	26 years and over	52	3.19 <sup>a</sup>	0.37		

In achievement/status, energy, release/fitness, fun sub-dimensions, 18-21 years olds had higher scores than 22-25 and 26 years olds and above ( $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 2. Comparison of psychological resilience according to age of football players**

	Age	n	Mean	sd	F	p
Structured Style	18-21 years	117	3.17 <sup>a</sup>	0.36	8.870	<0.001
	22-25 years	182	3.00 <sup>b</sup>	0.46		
	26 years and over	52	3.21 <sup>a</sup>	0.25		
Perception of Future	18-21 years	117	3.19 <sup>b</sup>	0.44	32.821	<0.001
	22-25 years	182	3.34 <sup>a</sup>	0.36		
	26 years and over	52	2.88 <sup>c</sup>	0.13		
Family Cohesion	18-21 years	117	3.17 <sup>a</sup>	0.36	8.870	<0.001
	22-25 years	182	3.00 <sup>b</sup>	0.46		
	26 years and over	52	3.21 <sup>a</sup>	0.25		
Perception of Self	18-21 years	117	2.85 <sup>c</sup>	0.46	34.665	<0.001
	22-25 years	182	3.25 <sup>a</sup>	0.42		
	26 years and over	52	3.00 <sup>b</sup>	0.21		
Social Competence	18-21 years	117	3.20	0.44	0.620	0.539
	22-25 years	182	3.25	0.38		
	26 years and over	52	3.21	0.14		
Social Resource	18-21 years	117	2.65 <sup>b</sup>	0.48	18.179	<0.001
	22-25 years	182	2.87 <sup>a</sup>	0.38		
	26 years and over	52	2.54 <sup>b</sup>	0.31		

In Perception of Future and social resource sub-dimensions, 22-25-year-olds had higher scores than 18-21 and 26+ year-olds ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 3. Comparison of participation motivation in sport according to position of football players**

	Positions of Football Players	n	Mean	sd	F	p
Achievement/status	Defence	117	1.16 <sup>b</sup>	0.16	8.005	<0.001
	Midfield	117	1.09 <sup>b</sup>	0.19		
	Forward	78	1.20 <sup>b</sup>	0.45		
	Goalkeeper	39	1.33 <sup>a</sup>	0.34		
Team affiliation	Defence	117	3.03 <sup>a</sup>	0.36	14.156	<0.001
	Midfield	117	3.19 <sup>a</sup>	0.56		
	Forward	78	3.17 <sup>a</sup>	0.50		
	Goalkeeper	39	2.58 <sup>b</sup>	0.84		
Energy release/fitness	Defence	117	2.44	0.61	20.445	<0.001
	Midfield	117	2.56 <sup>b</sup>	0.51		
	Forward	78	2.33 <sup>c</sup>	0.32		
	Goalkeeper	39	3.07 <sup>a</sup>	0.34		
Fun	Defence	117	4.08 <sup>a</sup>	0.64	27.094	<0.001
	Midfield	117	3.56 <sup>b</sup>	0.73		
	Forward	78	3.42 <sup>b</sup>	0.40		
	Goalkeeper	39	4.25 <sup>a</sup>	0.90		
Friendship	Defence	117	3.41 <sup>a</sup>	0.38	26.293	<0.001
	Midfield	117	2.89 <sup>b</sup>	0.59		
	Forward	78	3.33 <sup>b</sup>	0.84		
	Goalkeeper	39	3.67 <sup>a</sup>	0.00		
Competition	Defence	117	3.44 <sup>b</sup>	0.35	6.112	<0.001
	Midfield	117	3.41 <sup>a</sup>	0.67		
	Forward	78	3.50 <sup>a</sup>	0.17		
	Goalkeeper	39	3.11 <sup>a</sup>	0.57		
Movement	Defence	117	3.33 <sup>a</sup>	0.53	8.146	<0.001
	Midfield	117	3.00 <sup>a</sup>	0.67		
	Forward	78	3.08 <sup>b</sup>	0.61		
	Goalkeeper	39	3.33 <sup>b</sup>	0.24		
Skill development	Defence	117	3.08 <sup>b</sup>	0.29	38.389	<0.001
	Midfield	117	3.28 <sup>a</sup>	0.47		
	Forward	78	2.75 <sup>d</sup>	0.29		
	Goalkeeper	39	2.92 <sup>c</sup>	0.12		

In achievement/status sub-dimensions goalkeepers have a higher score ( $p < 0.001$ ). Team affiliation sub-dimensions defence, midfield, forward have a higher score than goalkeepers ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 4. Comparison of psychological resilience according to positions of football players**

	Positions of Football Players	n	Mean	sd	F	p
Structured Style	Defence	117	3.37 <sup>a</sup>	0.29	56.864	<0.001
	Midfield	117	2.91 <sup>b</sup>	0.33		
	Forward	78	2.83 <sup>b</sup>	0.43		
	Goalkeeper	39	3.28 <sup>a</sup>	0.29		
Perception of Future	Defence	117	3.22 <sup>b</sup>	0.48	8.005	<0.001
	Midfield	117	3.17 <sup>b</sup>	0.39		
	Forward	78	3.17 <sup>b</sup>	0.28		
	Goalkeeper	39	3.50 <sup>a</sup>	0.21		
Family Cohesion	Defence	117	3.37 <sup>a</sup>	0.29	56.864	<0.001
	Midfield	117	2.91 <sup>b</sup>	0.33		
	Forward	78	2.83 <sup>b</sup>	0.43		
	Goalkeeper	39	3.28 <sup>a</sup>	0.29		
Perception of Self	Defence	117	3.13 <sup>a</sup>	0.38	6.054	0,001
	Midfield	117	3.17 <sup>a</sup>	0.51		
	Forward	78	2.92 <sup>b</sup>	0.50		
	Goalkeeper	39	3.00 <sup>ab</sup>	0.14		
Social Competence	Defence	117	3.15 <sup>b</sup>	0.43	13.393	<0.001
	Midfield	117	3.35 <sup>a</sup>	0.37		
	Forward	78	3.08 <sup>b</sup>	0.27		
	Goalkeeper	39	3.39 <sup>a</sup>	0.21		
Social Resource	Defence	117	2.65 <sup>b</sup>	0.44	6.307	<0.001
	Midfield	117	2.76 <sup>ab</sup>	0.35		
	Forward	78	2.90 <sup>a</sup>	0.54		
	Goalkeeper	39	2.67 <sup>b</sup>	0.18		

In structured style and family cohesion sub-dimensions, defence with goalkeeper than forward with midfield ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 5. The correlation between motives for participation in sport and psychological resilience of football players**

		Structured Style	Perception of Future	Family Cohesion	Perception of Self	Social Competence	Social Resource
Achievement/ status	r	0.173 <sup>**</sup>	0.442 <sup>**</sup>	0.173 <sup>**</sup>	0.119 <sup>*</sup>	-0.274 <sup>**</sup>	0.466 <sup>**</sup>
	p	0.001	<0.001	0.001	0.026	<0.001	<0.001
Team affiliation	r	0.023	0.247 <sup>**</sup>	0.023	0.287 <sup>**</sup>	-0.063	0.474 <sup>**</sup>
	p	0.673	<0.001	0.673	<0.001	0.240	<0.001
Energy release/fitness	r	-0.005	0.475 <sup>**</sup>	-0.005	0.189 <sup>**</sup>	0.413 <sup>**</sup>	0.551 <sup>**</sup>
	p	0.932	<0.001	0.932	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Fun	r	0.536 <sup>**</sup>	0.257 <sup>**</sup>	0.536 <sup>**</sup>	0.507 <sup>**</sup>	0.240 <sup>**</sup>	-0.062
	p	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.245
Friendship	r	0.364 <sup>**</sup>	0.250 <sup>**</sup>	0.364 <sup>**</sup>	-0.005	-0.204 <sup>**</sup>	0.228 <sup>**</sup>
	p	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.931	<0.001	<0.001
Competition	r	0.406 <sup>**</sup>	0.137 <sup>*</sup>	0.406 <sup>**</sup>	0.338 <sup>**</sup>	0.208 <sup>**</sup>	0.233 <sup>**</sup>
	p	<0.001	0.010	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001
Movement	r	0.131 <sup>*</sup>	-0.157 <sup>**</sup>	0.131 <sup>*</sup>	-0.074	0.120 <sup>*</sup>	-0.199 <sup>**</sup>
	p	0.014	0.003	0.014	0.169	0.025	0.000
Skill development	r	0.431 <sup>**</sup>	0.199 <sup>**</sup>	0.431 <sup>**</sup>	0.330 <sup>**</sup>	0.193 <sup>**</sup>	0.301 <sup>**</sup>
	p	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001

A negative correlation exists between the achievement/status sub-dimension and the psychological resilience sub-dimension with Social Competence. At the same time, there is a positive correlation with the other sub-dimensions ( $p < 0.001$ ). There is a high correlation between the competition and skill development sub-dimensions and psychological resilience ( $p < 0.001$ ).

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between football players' participation motives and their psychological resilience. According to the results, those aged between 18-21 years have higher scores than those aged 22-25 and those aged 26 years and above. This difference was observed in achievement/status, energy release/fitness, fun, and friendship sub-dimensions. It can be stated that age can be an important factor for sports participation. Salguero et al., (2004) stated that 14-year-old swimmers had high scores in the skill development sub-dimension. Football players' participation in sports related to age may differ. A similar situation can be expressed for psychological resilience. The maturation of individuals can express this interaction. It is likely an interaction with the gains of football and sports over time. This phenomenon can be understood as a dynamic process wherein players' psychological attributes and coping mechanisms undergo changes over time. Factors such as accumulated experience, maturity, and exposure to various challenges contribute to the development of their psychological resilience. Intense match and training periods can cause psychological changes in young footballers (Andersen et al., 2023). This finding is consistent with the results obtained in this study.

There is evidence that participation in sport has social outcomes. Mickelsson (2019), including self-control and pro-social behaviour, Brinkley et al. (2017) interpersonal communication, Thorpe (2014) fostering a sense of belonging. Moreover, there is empirical support indicating that engagement in collective endeavors, such as team sports or informal group activities, is associated with an increased sense of social connectedness over an extended period (Dore et al., 2018).

Eather et al. (2023), stated that sports participation is related to adults' psychological well-being and social situations. Similarly, Thoits (2014) states that sports participation interacts with social resources to provide psychological benefits to individuals. Cross-sectional and experimental studies have shown that team sports have more positive effects on mental (Hornstrup et al., 2018), physical self-perception (Mickelsson, 2019), and overall psychological

health and well-being (Doré et al., 2016; Dore et al., 2018; Eime et al., 2014) in adults than individual sports. The relationship between the sub-dimensions of sports participation and psychological resilience found in the study may be related to the football game structure. This situation shows the significance of social dynamics and support structures within the football context, emphasizing the potential psychological benefits for football players as they perceive themselves to be valuable contributors to their team. An individual's self-esteem can be influenced by the social connections and support received within the context of sports. Enhanced perceptions of one's abilities or value within a team in the sporting realm are likely to contribute positively to overall self-esteem and a sense of personal worth (Chinkov & Holt, 2016).

Kilpatrick et al. (2005), stated that sports participation is related to exercise behaviour, not health. Participation in sports is more closely related to intrinsic motives, while exercise is related to extrinsic motives. Sport participation, in general, can be explained from a demographic-economic perspective (Breuer & Wicker, 2008). Football is the most commonly practised team sport. This suggests that sports that can be performed independently of fixed times and places are favoured. Football is very popular among young people. Along with the popularity of football, its professional achievements are also significant. This effect continues over time. The young male adolescent football player was also reported in previous research (Seabra et al., 2007). Many factors affect people's participation in sports. Factors such as living environment, field, facility facilities, and friend participation may affect the sports branch. Within the branch, the player's ability determines his/her position. The position played is related to the talent, and there may be different effects according to the position. With the study, it was determined that differences between positions affect different situations for both sports participation and psychological resilience.

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Fikir ve Kavramsal Örgü <i>Idea or Notion</i>	Araştırma hipotezini veya fikrini oluşturmak <i>Form the research hypothesis or idea</i>	Hamza KUCUK
Tasarım <i>Design</i>	Yöntem ve araştırma desenini tasarlamak <i>To design the method and research design.</i>	Hamza KUCUK
Literatür Tarama <i>Literature Review</i>	Çalışma için gerekli literatürü taramak <i>Review the literature required for the study</i>	Hamza KUCUK
Veri Toplama ve İşleme <i>Data Collecting and Processing</i>	Verileri toplamak, düzenlemek ve raporlaştırmak <i>Collecting, organizing and reporting data</i>	Hamza KUCUK
Tartışma ve Yorum <i>Discussion and Commentary</i>	Elde edilen bulguların değerlendirilmesi <i>Evaluation of the obtained finding</i>	Hamza KUCUK
<b>Destek ve Teşekkür Beyanı/ Statement of Support and Acknowledgment</b>		
Bu çalışmanın yazım sürecinde katkı ve/veya destek alınmamıştır. <i>No contribution and/or support was received during the writing process of this study.</i>		
<b>Çatışma Beyanı/ Statement of Conflict</b>		
Araştırmacıların araştırma ile ilgili diğer kişi ve kurumlarla herhangi bir kişisel ve finansal çıkar çatışması yoktur. <i>Researchers do not have any personal or financial conflicts of interest with other people and institutions related to the research.</i>		
<b>Etik Kurul Beyanı/ Statement of Ethics Committee</b>		
Bu araştırma, Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşerî Araştırmalar Etik Kurulunun 28.04.2023 tarih, 2023-363 sayılı kararı ile yürütülmüştür. <i>This research was conducted with the decision of Ondokuz Mayıs University Ethics Committee for Social and Human Sciences 04.28.2023 date, numbered 2023-363</i>		



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