EXAMINATION OF THE POSITIONAL COMPETITION OF FOOTBALL PLAYERS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the positional competition levels of football players playing licensed football in local leagues in Isparta province. 178 football players selected by easily accessible sampling method from 840 active football players licensed in Isparta province participated voluntarily. The survey model was used to collect the research data and the survey technique was applied. The questionnaire applied in the research consists of two parts. In the first part, personal information, in the second part, Harenberg et al. (2019) with the original name "Positional Competition in Sports Questionnaire" and translated into Turkish by Akgül et al. (2021), there is a scale consisting of 25 likert type questions. In all statistical calculations, the results were considered significant at the p<0.05 level. One-way analysis of variance was conducted to examine whether the positional competitiveness levels of the players participating in the research differed according to demographic variables. For those with more than two categories of demographic variables, post-hoc tests (LSD) were performed to determine which category the difference originated from. When the obtained data is evaluated; While there is no significant difference between the average positional competitiveness scale scores according to the age variable, from the sub-headings; A statistically significant difference was found between the mean scores of improvement effort, supporting teammates, communication and self-awareness. According to the training age variable, among the positional competition scale scores and sub-headings; It has been determined that there is a statistically significant difference between the average scores of improvement effort, supporting teammates, communication, getting to know the coach and coaching preference. According to the position variable played by the football players, between the average positional competitiveness scale scores and sub-headings; It has been determined that there is a statistically significant difference between the average scores of improvement effort, teammate support, supporting teammates, communication, self-awareness, getting to know the coach and choosing the coach. As a result; In particular, there are significant differences between the football player's training age and the position played and the level of competition of the football player.

Keywords: Competition, football, positional

INTRODUCTION

Each person tends to surpass all competitors in the society in which they live (Adler, 2012) and strives to prove oneself to other people to become a successful individual in society (Akkaya, 2008). For a long time, social science research has focused on competition within social processes because it is present in our daily lives, in every moment and everywhere (Johnson & Johnson, 2003). People face competition in their daily lives, in schools and even in their free time. In addition, one area where competition is often experienced is sport (Stanne, Johnson and Johnson, 1999). Coakley and Donnelly (2004) emphasised that competition is an inseparable part of the sport.

People compete for different reasons, both internal and external, environmental and emotional. Likewise, in sports, competition manifests itself in various ways. For example, it can be noted that people attend a weekly football pitch match just because they enjoy the competition. Professional runners, by contrast, may compete solely for the win and the financial reward that accompanies it. The reason for commitment is the perfection in performance compared to others. Typically, perfection in sports is usually measured over the evaluation of the persons capabilities compared to others (Stanne et al., 1999).

Chelladurai (2012) explained competition in sports in two approaches as the seeking of pleasure and the seeking of excellence. The seeking of pleasure describes the events in which participants participate for the sake of participation. In such equalitarian sports, everyone, regardless of their ability level, gets a chance to participate. For instance, in a recreational football, athletes can participate to enjoy the sport. In this regard, in order to give every person an opportunity to enjoy participation, the distribution of playing time among athletes with different skill levels can be kept in some way equal.

Contrarily, the seeking of perfection is characterized by comparison. Human beings seek to win. Chelladurai (2012) called the seeking of excellence "serious work", which is privileged by nature. That is to say, the pursuit of excellence can only be pursued by a select group of athletes who possess the necessary talent and perform at a high level.

One of the most obvious areas where the intra-team competition process takes place is the football field. Competition takes place both between teams and within a team. Typically, teams that are pushing for higher positions in their league and are aiming for a championship will transfer more players to their current playing positions in their squads. In this case, athletes are required to compete for playing time against teammates who play in the same position as themselves (Rees & Segal, 1984; Van Yperen, 1992). Therefore, assuming that there are approximately 25 to 30 players in a football team, the fact that there is more than one football player for each position accelerates this competitive process. For this reason, the aim of this study is to examine the positional competition levels of football players.

METHOD

Model of the Studuy

In the research, relational screening methods were used to state the change and/or degree of change between or together with descriptive and two or more variables to reveal the current situation (Karasar, 2007b).

Formation of Volunteer Groups

178 footballers selected using the easily accessible sampling method (Çıngı, 1994) from 840 active footballers playing licensed football in local leagues (1st and 2nd amateur league) in Isparta province voluntarily participated in the research.

Data Collection Tools

As a data gathering tool in the research; personal information form and positional competition scale were used in team sports.

Demographic Characteristics

In order to find out the age of the football players who participated in the study and how many years they have been participating in football training, they were asked about their training age and the position they played.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

	Veriables	**N**	**%**
Age	16-20 years	42	23,6
	21-25 years	61	34,3
	26-30 years	40	22,5
	31 years and older	35	19,7
Training Age	5-8 years	30	16,9
	9-12 years	44	24,7
	12 years and older	104	58,4
Position	Goalkeeper	15	8,4
	Defance	50	28,1
	Midfield	90	50,6
	Striker	23	12,9

When Table 1 was analyzed, it was found that 23.6% of the footballers participating in the study, according to age groups, 23.6% were 16-20 years old, 34.3% were 21-25 years old, 22.5% were 26-30 years old and 17.7% were 31 years and older, 16.9% were 5-8 years according to training age, 24.7% were 9-12 years, 58.4% were 12 years and older, 8.4% were goalkeepers, 28.1% were defenders, 50.6% were midfielders and 12.9% were strikers according to the position they played.

Positional Competition in Sports Questionnaire

"Positional Competition in Sports Questionnaire" deals with the comparison of athletes competing in the same position within the team with other athletes. The scale is a 7-point likert-type scale consisting of 25 questions and 7 sub-factors (1= I do not agree at all 7=I completely agree). The sub-factors belonging to the current scale

are development effort, teammates support, supporting a teammate, communication, self-awareness, coach recognition, and coach preference. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale ranged from ,81 to ,87, and the combined reliability value (CR) ranged from ,75 to ,90. The current scale is a new scale developed by Harenberg et al. (2019) to evaluate positional competitiveness, which has been studied for validity and reliability and adapted to Turkish by Akgül et al. (2021). The Cronbach Alpha coefficient obtained from the reliability analysis of the scale, which was adapted into Turkish, ranged from, 921 and the combined reliability (CR) ranged between ,87 and ,71 (Akgül, 2021).

Data Analysis

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to examine the normality states of the obtained data. According to the statistical procedures, the distributions of distortion and flatness are given in Table 2.

Table 2. The Results of the Scales of the Participants' Skewness-Kurtosis and the Level of Significance of the Kolmogrov Smirnov Test

Scales	N	X.	Ss.	Skewness	Kurtosis	Kolmogorov-smirnow
Development effort	178	6,36	,046	-,517	-,692	,000
Teammate support	178	5,29	,075	-1,311	1,758	,000
Support a teammate	178	6,11	,067	-1,202	,740	,000
Communication	178	6,24	,057	-,669	-,882	,000
Self-awareness	178	6,01	,074	-1,149	1,218	,000
Coach recognition	178	6,14	,066	-1,333	1,517	,000
Coach preference	178	5,11	,117	-1,066	,683	,000
Positional Competition Scale in Sports	178	5,91	,036	-,471	-,679	,000

**p<0.005

When the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test were examined, it was found that the total scores of the participants' positional competition scale sub-headings deviated from the normality at significant levels (p<0.05) (Table. 2). In the literature, George and Mallery (2016:112) explain that skewness and kurtosis values are ideally acceptable for values between ±1, while Demir et al. (2016) explained that these values are in the range of ±2 as an appropriate situation in terms of normality.

In accordance with this information, parametric statistical analysis tests were used. The arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the scores scored by the footballers on the scale are presented as X±Sd. One-way analysis of variance (anova) was performed to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the measurements. LSD test was applied to determine the source of the differences determined as a result of statistical analyzes. The results were evaluated according to the importance level of 0.05. SPSS For Windows 13.00 package program was used for the analysis of the data.

FINDINGS

Table 3. Comparison of Positional Competition Levels of Footballers According to Age Variable

	Age	N	X	Sd	F	p	LSD
Positional Competition Scale in Sports	[a]16-20	42	6,02	,267	2,63	,051	-
	[b]21-25	61	5,94	,591			
	[c]26-30	40	5,91	,488			
	[d]31 and 31+	35	5,72	,443			
Development effort	[a]16-20	42	6,75	,302	19,32	,000*	a>b a>d
	[b]21-25	61	6,36	,596			
	[c]26-30	40	6,43	,576			
	[d]31 and 31+	35	5,82	,601			
Teammate support	[a]16-20	42	5,30	,405	,325	,807	-
	[b]21-25	61	5,37	1,13			
	[c]26-30	40	5,18	1,28			
	[d]31 and 31+	35	5,23	,948			
Support a teammate	[a]16-20	42	6,61	,410	8,32	,000*	a>b a>c
	[b]21-25	61	5,76	1,24			
	[c]26-30	40	6,06	,629			
	[d]31 and 31+	35	6,15	,597			
Communication	[a]16-20	42	6,53	,384	4,49	,005*	a>c b>d
	[b]21-25	61	6,22	,840			
	[c]26-30	40	6,25	,780			
	[d]31 and 31+	35	5,91	,824			
Self-awareness	[a]16-20	42	5,98	,620	23,92	,000*	a>d
	[b]21-25	61	6,30	,679			
	[c]26-30	40	6,50	,648			
	[d]31 and 31+	35	5,00	,438			
Coach recognition	[a]16-20	42	5,88	1,44	3,78	,012	-
	[b]21-25	61	6,33	,629			
	[c]26-30	40	5,91	,648			
	[d]31 and 31+	35	6,36	,438			
Coach preference	[a]16-20	42	4,73	1,15	2,14	,096	-
	[b]21-25	61	5,27	2,12			
	[c]26-30	40	4,91	1,37			
	[d]31 and 31+	35	5,53	,788			

While there is no significant difference between the average positional competition scale scores of the footballers according to the age variable in Table 3, from the subheadings; A statistically significant difference was found between the average scores of development effort, supporting teammates, communication and self-awareness.

Table 4. Comparison of Positional Competition Levels of Footballers According to Training Age Variable

	Training Age	N	X	Sd	F	p	LSD
Positional Competition Scale in Sports	[a]5-8	30	6,26	0,399	16,7	,000*	a>b a>c c>b
	[b]9-12	44	5,65	,578			
	[c]12 and 12+	104	5,92	,394			
Development effort	[a]5-8	30	6,75	,359	7,57	,001*	a>b a>c
	[b]9-12	44	6,29	,605			
	[c]12 and 12+	104	6,28	,640			
Teammate support	[a]5-8	30	5,33	,479	2,63	,075	
	[b]9-12	44	4,99	1,49			
	[c]12 and 12+	104	5,40	,834			
Communication	[a]5-8	30	6,50	,415	22,9	,000*	a>b c>b
	[b]9-12	44	5,40	1,39			
	[c]12 and 12+	104	6,29	,504			

		N	X	Sd			
Self-awareness	[a]5-8	30	6,75	,207			a>b
	[b]9-12	44	6,06	,909	8,98	,000[*]	a>c
	[c]12 and 12+	104	6,17	,739			
Communication	[a]5-8	30	6,11	,696			
	[b]9-12	44	6,19	,737	1,48	,230	
	[c]12 and 12+	104	5,91	1,13			
Coach recognition	[a]5-8	30	6,77	,319			a>b
	[b]9-12	44	6,18	,687	11,6	,000[*]	a>c
	[c]12 and 12+	104	5,93	,991			
Coach preference	[a]5-8	30	5,55	1,11			a>b
	[b]9-12	44	4,38	2,06	7,13	,001[*]	c>b
	[c]12 and 12+	104	5,30	1,33			

**p<0.005

In Table 4, according to the training age variable of the footballers, the average positional competition scale scores and subheadings; It was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the average scores of development effort, supporting teammates, communication, coach recognition and coach preference.

Table 5. Comparison of Positional Competition Levels of Footballers According to the Position They Play

	Position	N	X	Sd	F	p	LSD
Positional Competition Scale in Sports	[a]Goalkeeper	15	6,31	,237			a>b
	[b]Defence	50	5,71	,447	20,56	,000*	a>c
	[c]Midfield	90	5,83	,462			d>b
	[d]Striker	23	6,42	,230			d>c
Development effort	[a]Goalkeeper	15	6,46	,516			
	[b]Defence	50	6,13	,822	11,47	,000*	d>b
	[c]Midfield	90	6,32	,452			d>c
	[d]Striker	23	6,95	,208			
Teammate support	[a]Goalkeeper	15	6,26	,457			a>b
	[b]Defence	50	5,25	,875	20,57	,000*	a>c
	[c]Midfield	90	4,91	,996			d>b
	[d]Striker	23	6,21	,421			d>c
Support a teammate	[a]Goalkeeper	15	6,36	,441			
	[b]Defence	50	5,78	,899	7,93	,000*	d>b
	[c]Midfield	90	6,07	,969			d>c
	[d]Striker	23	6,80	,291			
Communication	[a]Goalkeeper	15	6,60	,387			
	[b]Defence	50	6,03	,733	11,97	,000*	d>b
	[c]Midfield	90	6,11	,794			d>c
	[d]Striker	23	6,96	,156			
Self-awareness	[a]Goalkeeper	15	6,64	,344			a>b
	[b]Defence	50	5,20	1,19	31,74	,000*	c>b
	[c]Midfield	90	6,11	,633			d>b
	[d]Striker	23	6,97	,139			d>c
Coach recognition	[a]Goalkeeper	15	6,64	,344			a>c
	[b]Defence	50	6,06	,769	9,06	,000*	d>b
	[c]Midfield	90	5,92	1,00			d>c
	[d]Striker	23	6,82	,197			
Coach preference	[a]Goalkeeper	15	5,04	2,53			
	[b]Defence	50	5,40	,901	7,29	,000*	b>d
	[c]Midfield	90	5,31	1,19			c>d
	[d]Striker	23	3,78	2,43			

*p<0.005

In Table 5, according to the position variable played by the footballers, between the average positional competition scale scores and subtitles; It was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the average scores of development effort, teammate support, supporting teammates, communication, self-awareness, coach recognition and coach preference.

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

In addition to wanting to belong to a team and be a part of the team he is in, by imitating or modeling the good and successful athletes around him, the athlete wants to be self-actualized and different from other athletes. The desire of the athlete to be different and special from other athletes, and sometimes to be ahead of other athletes, brings him to the point of comparing himself with other athletes, which brings out the competition (Harenberg et al. (2019). In our research, it is aimed to examine the positional competition levels of the footballers and compare them according to different variables.

In our research, while there is no significant difference between the average positional competition scale scores according to the age variable of the football players, from the subtitles; A statistically significant difference was found between the average scores of development effort, supporting teammates, communication and self-awareness. It was found that the younger age (16-20 years) group participating in our research had more development efforts than the athletes over the ages of 21-25 and 31, that the younger age group (16-20 years) supported their teammates compared to the ages of 21-25 and 26-30, and that communication decreased as the age grew, and finally the younger age group had more self-awareness than the older age. It is thought that the reason for this is the perception that young age footballers work to improve their abilities while competing for playing positions.

Our research also shows that according to the training age variable of the football players, the average positional competition scale scores and sub-headings; It was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the average scores of development effort, supporting teammates, communication, coach recognition and coach preference. It has been found that as the training year increases, the level of positional competition decreases, the effort to improve decreases, the support of teammates decreases. The reason for this is the perception that athletes who are new to football encourage themselves to compete with their teammates while at the same time improving their skills and performing better.

In our research, according to the position variable played by the footballers, the average positional competition scale scores and subheadings; It was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the average scores of development effort, teammate support, supporting teammates, communication, self-awareness, coach recognition and coach preference. It has been found that goalkeepers are more competitive than defenders and midfielders, and strikers are again more competitive than defenders and midfielders. The reason for this is thought to be that the competition rate is higher due to the fact that the number of goalkeepers and strikers in a football team is less than the number of football players playing in other positions.

In addition, it is thought that the lack of studies on the measurement of intra-team competition in sports in the national literature will contribute to the national literature in various researches on intra-team competition in football.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With this research, the positional competition levels of footballers were revealed. This research is limited to athletes from Isparta province. For future researches it is recommended to include football players from different cultural backgrounds and a wider sample; it is also recommended to apply it with different team sports and to reveal the relationships between them.

ETHICAL TEXT

In this study, journal writing rules, publication principles, research and publication ethics rules, journal ethics rules were followed. The responsibility for the violations that may arise related to the study belongs to the authors. This study was found ethically appropriate by the ethics committee with the decision of Osmaniye Korkut Ata University Social Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee registration number E.90100.

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