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Self-leadership Skills for University Students

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Abstract

The Revised Self-Leadership Questionnaire (RSLQ) was used for obtaining data in the study. The scale consists of 29 questions, 8 sub-dimensions and 3 strategies. Behaviour-oriented strategy, natural reward strategies, constructive thinking model strategies were the object of this study. The study was examined on 7 questions based on "imagining successful performance by setting yourself a goal" and 4 questions "evaluating your thoughts and opinions" in the sub-dimension of "constructive thinking model strategies" of self-leadership. "Constructive thinking model strategies" and "evaluating thoughts and ideas" sub-dimensions of self-leadership were discussed, considering that the self-leadership of the individual, which is among the self-leadership skills, has an important share while preparing the individual for business life, to manage individual and organizational success. A total of 95 students participated in the research. While comparing the self-leadership sub-dimensions of the participants according to their gender; Significant differences were found in sub-dimensions of imagining successful performance by setting goals for himself. But, on the factors of self-leadership, it was thought that self-leadership levels would be increased by motivational efforts in line with goals and objectives, according to gender, age and recreational activity.

Introduction:

Unlike traditional leadership approaches, the model in which each individual has a leadership model (Kinter, 2016) with the implicit leadership theory today is called self-leadership (Kutaniş, 2018). The sources of influence of leadership are defined as leadership influencing processes that occur at two extreme points in the process of external influence and internal influence, and that emerge with a combination of different levels. In sports organizations, it is a normal situation for athletes to show different behaviors to achieve a goal with both self-leadership and the leadership of others. Bozyigit & Çetin (2019) revealed that there are self-leadership strategies related to athlete performance in sports sciences. In this context, Çekiç (2019) states that the athlete evaluates his performance on the field according to his mindset.

Most of the studies on self-leadership in our country were conducted in the fields of social sciences, teachers, bankers, and health. In the field of sports sciences, it was stated that there are studies conducted with students engaged in sports, academic staff in sports sciences,

football coaches, and volleyball referees (Bozyigit & Çetin, 2019). It has been understood that there were very few studies on the effect of constructive thoughts on athletes' self-leadership approach, self-leadership, goal setting, and performance improvement strategies.

In sports organizations, athletes and other officials acting under the leadership responsibility of both themselves and others. In the study conducted by White & Rezanian (2019), it is stated that the Canadian Coaching Association determines the leadership of coaches with a set of ethical rules and corresponding behavioral standards, despite the obligations arising from the relationships of coaches with athletes in terms of their roles.

Setting Goals: self-leadership is an inherent strategic resource and plays an active role in achieving the goals determined by the individual and the organization. It has been stated that behavior-oriented strategies include increasing self-awareness, self-observation, goal setting, rewarding, punishment (Furtner & Rauthmann, 2010).

It has been stated that one of the most popular areas of goal setting is management according to goals, it facilitates

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the direct orientation of the group to its goals and causes the strengthening of the collective actions of individuals and group results as a whole (Helvacı, 2002).

Evaluation of thoughts: behavioral strategies consist of determining target behaviors, self-observation, observing others, and realizing the target behavior. Besides, it is an individual's improvement in his performance as a result of self-evaluation, self-rewarding, and self-discipline (Georgianna, 2007). Self-leadership strategies are defined as the "self-influence process" of self-leadership in which different mental processes such as cognition, learning, emotion, motivation, and will, that is, the motivating and voluntary goal-oriented "priority" of one's own thoughts and behaviors. In contrast to widely researched structures such as self-regulation, self-control, and self-efficacy, it has been stated that self-leadership also integrates the concept of intrinsic motivation (Furtner & Rauthmann, 2010).

Constructive thinking: strategies on how individuals choose the subjects they choose to reason on constitute constructive thinking model strategies. Constructive thinking model strategies are classified as identifying and changing dysfunctional thoughts and assumptions, mental imagery, and positive self-talk (Kutanis, 2018). Although it is an approach that is expected to create many strategic thoughts in the environment that the individual is in and to realize the behavior option determined for the goal, constructive thinking is also seen as individual ability. Houghton *et al.*, (2004) stated that constructive thought pattern strategies involve the creation and preservation of functional patterns in usual thinking, while special thinking-oriented strategies include evaluating and challenging successful and unsuccessful thoughts, mentality, and positive attitude in the interpretation of irrational beliefs.

Imagining a successful performance, also called mental image, means performing successfully before the task is completed. Individuals with mental images are more likely to perform better than possible outcomes (Bozyigit & Çetin, 2019). Furtner *et al.*, (2013) stated that the leader should develop self-improvement strategies, and even this should be the first strategy of self-directed leaders in order to direct others effectively.

In this direction, the sub-dimensions of "constructive thinking model strategies" and "evaluating thoughts and ideas" of self-leadership were examined for the students studying in the field of Sports Sciences to manage their individual and organizational success while preparing for business life.

Materials and Methods:

Purpose of the research and hypotheses: this study aimed to determine the levels of students studying in the field of sports sciences in setting goals for themselves and evaluating their thoughts and ideas.

The hypotheses of the research were as follows:

- H1. There is a significant difference according to gender when students imagining of successful performance by setting goals for themselves.
- H2. Students' evaluation of their thoughts and opinions differs significantly according to gender.
- H3. The way students imagine successful performance by setting goals for themselves differs significantly by age.
- H4. The students' evaluation of the thoughts and ideas of those found shows a significant difference according to age.

Data collection tool: to determine the level of self-leadership behavior of individuals in the study, Self-Leadership Scale, developed by Houghton & Neck (2002), adapted to Turkish by Tabak *et al.*, (2013), was used. Our research consists of 7 expressions "imagining successful performance by determining a goal for yourself" and "evaluating your thoughts and opinions" 4 statements in the sub-dimension of self-leadership.

Universe and sample: the universe of the research consists of the 95 students studying in the field of sports sciences at Marmara University and Cerrahpaşa Universities in Istanbul.

Analysis of data: for the analysis of the data obtained in the study, frequency, t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) in the independent groups as well as the homogeneous distribution of normality, Tukey test to find out which group the difference originated from, reliability and variances for the scale sub-dimensions were run in the SPSS program.

Table 1. Two Sub-Dimensions of Self-Leadership Scale

Self-Leadership Scale	Item #	Item No
Constructive Thinking Model Strategies		
Imagine successful performance by setting yourself goals	7	1,8,16,17,23,24,28
Evaluating thoughts and ideas	4	4,11,20,25

A5-point Likert type scale was used. They were asked to express themselves as "Never", "Rarely", "Occasionally", "Usually" and "Always".

Reliability analysis: in the study, when the validity and reliability analysis were performed for this scale for two sub-dimensions, the reliability coefficient was found to be 0.76. The fact that this value is $\alpha > 0.7$ indicates that the questionnaire has a high reliability.

Normality test: in order to determine the appropriate measurement technique, kurtosis-skewness situation was examined for the normality distribution of the scale.

Table 2. Kurtosis-Skewness Results of Two Sub-Dimensions

Self-Leadership Sub-Dimensions	Kurtosis	Skewness
Imagine successful performance by setting yourself goals	-.523	-.786
Evaluating thoughts and ideas	-.692	.782

According to these results, it was determined that the distribution of the scale showed a normal distribution. It was decided to use parametric tests in testing the

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hypotheses.

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was used to decide whether the scale would be suitable for the parametric test.

Table 3. Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) Test of Self Leadership Scale

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	S.S.	K-S Test	p
a*	95	4.2346	.578	1.184	.121
b*	95	4.1842	.568	1.181	.123

a*-Imagine successful performance by setting yourself goals

b*-Evaluating thoughts and ideas

In line with the findings, the responses given by the respondents of the scale come from a normally distributed population.

Demographic features: within the scope of the research, 95 people studying in the field of sports sciences at Marmara University and Cerrahpasa Universities in Istanbul were reached.

Table 4. Demographic Characteristics of the Students Participating in the Study

Demographic features	Groups	N	%
Gender	Men	82	88.3
	Women	13	13.7
Age	20-23 age	41	43.2
	24-25 age	21	26.3
	26-27 age	15	15.8
	28 and over	14	14.7
Sports branch	Individual	22	23.2
	Team	73	76.8

Results:

Table 5. Self-Leadership Dimensions Values of the Expressions in the Scale (Mean±SD)

Expressions	$\bar{x} \pm S.D.$
a* ● I use my imagination to show my success in important works.	4.05±.843
● Before starting a job. I imagine myself as if I have successfully completed that job.	4.16±.748
● Before I do a job. before I do it. I imagine that I have successfully done it.	4.15±.825
● I work to achieve certain goals that I have set for myself	4.36±.713
● Especially. I visualize that I can overcome the difficulties I faced.	4.11±.792
● I think about the goals I want to achieve in the future	4.52±.697
● I set specific goals for my personal success	4.31±.864
b* ● When faced with a difficult situation. I evaluate the situation by using my own logic.	4.20±.723
● I try to weigh the accuracy of my thoughts about the situations I have problems with.	4.11±.818
● When I have a disagreement with someone, I can express my own thoughts and opinions clearly. if necessary. I can evaluate those thoughts and ideas for their accuracy.	4.12±.697
● I think and evaluate my ideas and beliefs	4.32±.762

a*-Imagine successful performance by setting yourself goals

b*-Evaluating thoughts and ideas

Table-6: T-test results of gender and Self-Leadership Sub-Dimensions (SD)

SD	Gender	n	$\bar{x}$	S.s.	df	t	p
a	Men	82	4.18	.584	93	-1.995	.049*
	Women	13	4.52	.456			
b	Men	22	4.14	.565	93	-1.509	.135
	Women	73	4.40	.564			P<0.5

“Imagining Successful Performance by Setting Self Goals” sub-dimension, was a low level ($p > 0.049$) significant difference in the opinions of women ($\bar{x}$: 4.52) regarding that they dreamed of successful performance by setting themselves goals compared to men ($\bar{x}$: 4.18). No significant difference ($p < 0.135$) between genders in the sub-dimension of Assessing Thoughts and Ideas. According to these results, it was determined that while H₁ was accepted among the hypotheses tested according to gender, H₂ was not.

In the “Imagining Successful Performance by Setting Self Goals” sub-dimension, significant difference in the opinions of women ($\bar{x}$: 4.52) regarding that they dreamed of successful performance by setting themselves goals compared to men ($\bar{x}$: 4.18) was evidenced.

No significant difference between genders in the sub-dimension of Assessing Thoughts and Ideas. It was determined that while H₁ was accepted among the hypotheses tested according to gender, H₂ was not.

Table 7. ANOVA Test Results of Ages of Participants and Self-Leadership Dimensions

Age	n	$\bar{x}$	S.s.
Setting Your Own Goal and Imagining Successful Performance (F=3.482; p=.019)			
20-23	41	4.42	.474
24-25	25	4.01	.704
26-27	15	4.04	.557
≥27	14	4.28	.475
Düşünce ve Fikirlerini Değerlendirme (F=5.475; P=.002)			
20-23	41	4.37	.454
24-25	25	3.93	.682
26-27	15	3.91	.449
≥27	14	4.35	.516

A high level of significant difference in the KHBBPHE sub-dimension ($p > 0.019$) and the DFD sub-dimension ($p > 0.002$) was found. Post Hoc (Tukey Test) was conducted to determine which age groups differed significantly. In the sub-dimension of “Imagining Successful Performance by Setting Yourself a Goal” It was found that there was a significant difference between the 20-23 age and 24-25 age groups. Considering the average of the age groups, it was understood that the 20-23 age group ($\bar{x}$: 4.42) had more individuals with the attitude of setting themselves goals and imagining successful performance than the 24-25 age group ($\bar{x}$: 4.01). In the sub-dimension of “Evaluating Thought and Ideas”

It was found that there was a significant difference between the 20-23 age group, 24-25 age group and 26-27 age group. Looking at the average of the age groups, it was understood that the 20-23 age group ($\bar{x}$: 4.37) evaluated more thoughts and opinions than the 24-25 age ($\bar{x}$: 3.93) and 26-27 age group ($\bar{x}$: 3.91).

According to these results, it was determined that H₃ and H₄ hypotheses tested according to age were accepted.

Discussion and Conclusion:

Among the expressions of the sub-dimension of "self-determination and imagining successful performance", one of the students' self-leadership skills, "I think about the goals I want to achieve in the future" was their average preferences. Athlete students reached the highest average with "I think and evaluate about my ideas and beliefs" among the expressions of the "evaluating their thoughts and ideas" sub-dimension. According to these preferences, it was understood that students had goals and the ability to lead themselves for their goals. Leadership and self-leadership are a process needed for the athlete to work with himself, his teammates, and other leaders in a targeted manner and for the athlete's goal-oriented performance in individual and team sports that require responsibility. It was stated that it is beneficial to act following the predetermined rules during the implementation by making goal setting instructions for physical activity performance, and coaches and leaders must have expertise in terms of goal setting principles, as well as a sense of trust in their athletes to set their own goals (Toros *et al.*, 2010).

When self-leadership skills were examined in terms of age groups, in the sub-dimension of imagining successful performance by setting goals for yourself; It was understood that athletes between the ages of 20-23 had goals compared to those between the ages of 24-25 and they dream of these goals more in terms of their performance. This situation can be explained by the fact that the younger ones had much more active sportsmanship, and the older ones had a little more concerns about the future, and they see sportive performance as their second priority.

In the sub-dimension of evaluating thoughts and ideas; It was revealed that students in the 20-23 age group between the ages of 20-23, 24-25, and 26-27 attach more importance to their own thoughts and ideas towards the target determined than other age groups. Lerner & Locke (1995), reported that goal-setting provided an increase in success between 20% and 40% compared to individuals who did not set goals, and goal setting activated purposeful behaviors more (Toros *et al.*, 2010). It was observed that there was no significant difference between the individual and team recreational activity preferences of the athletes in terms of gender in terms of self-leadership skills in setting goals for themselves, imagining successful performance, and evaluating their thoughts and ideas. It can be said that the recreational activity preferences of the students at the

gender level were similar to each other Toros *et al.*, (2010). According to the meta-analysis conducted in the goal-setting study, it was stated that the productivity in goal setting increases by 17% and goal setting increases the perceived ability and allows the development and adjustment of task strategies in the individual.

According to Çepikkurt & Yazgan (2012), another structure that affects the cognitive and emotional responses of the athletes to the competition is that the success goals adopted by the athletes and the theory of success goals in sports has two goal orientations: "performance" and "mastery" (or task/ego). specified. In a similar study, Toy (2015) stated that one of the factors in successful goal orientation is the achievement behavior, and in the studies conducted, task orientation was positively associated with the effort spent behavior in completing the determined training of athletes.

As a result, it is thought that self-leadership levels can be increased according to gender, age, and recreational activity in line with the goals and objectives with the determination of self-leadership factors and motivational efforts for this. It should be taken into consideration that researching at different levels on self-leadership skills will improve the performance of students in a target-oriented manner, and there will be a need for mentors and performance consultants working with scientific methods specialized in this field.

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