

The Relationship Between Sportsmanship and Happiness: A Research on Martial Arts Athletes*

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Abstract

This study was carried out to determine and reveal the contribution of martial arts to mental health such as sportsmanship and happiness as well as physical health. The present study, conducted with the participation of Taekwondo and kickboxing branch sportsmen, aims to examine the relationship between sportsmanship and happiness. The population of the study consists of licensed taekwondo and kickboxing branch sportsmen, while the sample group consists of 198 taekwondo and 166 kickbox players, selected by sampling method, who have accepted to voluntarily participate in the study (Age, $M=15,00 \pm Sd= 2.98$). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed for the research scales. In addition to descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analyses were also included within the scope of the relational model. As a result, we can say that there are positive relationships between sportsmanship orientation and happiness, their commitment to sportsmanship values increases, their happiness shall also increase.

Keywords: *Happiness, martial arts, sportsmanship*

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1. Introduction

Sports, as a part of the universal culture, have always been a tool gathering all individuals together regardless of their language, race and religion, and enabling individuals to maintain their physical and mental health, moral and personal development, to mature, have self-confidence and to socialize. The sports activities provide a positive contribution in order for individuals to develop in a healthy way and to increase their social, emotional and moral development (Sağın & Akbuğa, 2019).

The concept of sportsmanship, frequently mentioned from the ancient Olympics to today's modern Olympics, is increasing its popularity day by day (Çağlayan, Çoskun & Yılmaz, 2021). The concept of sportsmanship behavior (Elendu & Dennis, 2017), which refers to the respect for teammates, competitors, sports officials and other sports participants before, during and after sports competitions within the frame of fair play principles, is a set of behaviors that should be exhibited in all sports environments. Sportsmanship also provides the athletes with ideal opportunities to improve his/her behavior including character development, team unity, fair play, discipline, respect and setting goals (Yıldız, 2019). According to Vallerand et al. (1997) the multidimensional construct of sportsmanship consists of five dimensions: 1) Respect for the officials and rules; 2) Respect for social convention; 3) Respect for one's full commitment; 4) Respect for opponents; 5) True respect and concern for the opponent. According to Robinson (2009) sportsmanship; maintains a commitment to fairness, integrity and respect for rules while striving to achieve success.

As stated in the word "Do", Taekwondo has a meaning much further than the violent tendency attributed to the martial arts and ultimately aims to complete the human character. As a martial art, the most important element of Taekwondo is not only the ability to protect oneself at the highest level, but also to develop a sense of self-confidence. The feeling of self-confidence makes people tolerant in their actions towards those who are weaker (Şahin, 2002). One of the sports that has been increasing its popularity especially recently is kickboxing. The name of this sport, which is a synthesis of boxing, karate and taekwondo sports, consists of the terms kicking and boxing (punch) (Karadağ, 2018). Although sports branches of far eastern origin have different styles within themselves, they usually require individual skills and also contain the philosophical structures that come from the origins of the nations living in that geography (Uyar & Susuz, 2020). In taekwondo and kickboxing sports, originated in different geographies and countries, the main goal appears to be the protection of the individual himself/herself, but in essence it affects many areas, from the self-discovery of the athlete to his/her communication with his/her environment. Aimed at protecting oneself as well as providing universal values such as justice, benevolence, respect, tolerance, the martial arts contribute to athletes' physical development as well as their spirits and minds. A large number of people consider martial arts to be an effective way of treating psychological problems (Sezen-Balçıklı & Koçak, 2021).

Martial Arts and combat sports are the subject of a dispute. On the one hand, they have been considered an ideal means to acquire emotional self-control. On the other hand, they have been considered aggressive practices which may promote violent behaviors (Lafuante, Gonzalez & Gutierrez-Garcia, 2021). Aggression and violence in the context of young athletes is a deplorable social phenomenon. However, sportsmanship is an alternative way of reducing this type of behavior (Saenz et. al., 2013) and athletes with a strong sportsmanship orientation are often inclined to act in dignity (Vallerand & Losier, 1994). Environments that improve people's sportsmanship behaviors also help minimize the impact of negative events (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2017). In addition, promoting sportsmanship is a common goal of physical education and many youth and sports organizations (Bolter, Kipp & Johnson, 2017). Happiness is one of the most basic psychological needs of people (Özgür, 2021). According to Aristotle, the search for happiness is universal and is as old as human existence (Bailey & Fernando, 2012). Happiness is a feeling that every person is trying to experience. People do their actions in their lives to be happy, because happiness is not a right given to selected people, but a feeling that every person can experience by working and learning (Kerimov, 2020).

There are many studies in the related literature that show that participation in sports has positive effects on happiness (Lekue, 2022; Frey & Gullo, 2021; Kim, Ryu, Lee, Kim & Heo, 2021; Tejero-González, 2020; Zhang & Chen, 2019; Balish, Conacher, Dithurbide, 2016; Nabizadeh, 2015; Huang & Humphreys, 2012; Downward & Rasciute, 2011). However, a limited number of studies have been reached in which the relationship between sportsmanship and happiness has been investigated. The following statements were included in an accessible study: Sportsmanship is behavior or attitudes that can be learned or improved. The main aim of individuals participating in sports competitions is, of course, to be victorious. However, considering the joy experienced by the victorious athletes, it is believed that what motivates people is not only the desire to win, but also the feeling of being victorious, which leads to happiness. Consequently, if we can teach the ethics of sportsmanship to the new generation, we may not only teach such values but also happiness (Ozsari & Altın, 2021), for the pursuit of happiness is a desire that everyone has in life (Guazzelli & Zilli, 2016).

Individually, sports have many positive effects on the physical and psychological health of individuals. In this context, the training of sports styles called martial arts has positive effects in reducing the stress level of the participants, attention, focus, discipline, physical development and many other aspects. However, the performance of many sports that involve body contact, and especially combat sports, has a high risk of injury (Ölmez & Kılıç, 2021). According to Imansari, Soegiyanto and Kusuma (2020), there is a significant relationship between personality and sportsmanship orientation. In a study in which the sample group of judo trainers was formed, a negative and low-level significant relationship was found between psychoticism and the sum of sportsmanship orientation and all its sub-dimensions (Sulun, Susuz, Varol, & Çolakoğlu, 2021). In the related research of Emek and Yigiter (2022), the branches of the athletes with the highest level of sportsmanship are volleyball and athletics, while the branch of the participants with the lowest level of sportsmanship is combat sports. National athletes who do martial arts (taekwondo, judo, karate) gain values such as discipline, self-confidence, health, ambition, self-sacrifice, responsibility, congratulating the opponent, leader, respect, love of the flag, tolerance, empathy, and sportsmanship; It has been determined that they believe that every way can be tried within the framework of the rules when it comes to winning and achieving success (Yıldız & Uslu, 2021). Considering the results of the relevant research and nowadays some people are cautious about martial arts, it is thought that these research results will have important implications for these people. Based on this idea, martial arts athletes were selected for this research sample.

Psychomotor development, which is known to start with reflex movements at birth, can turn into more professional skills at later ages, especially through sports training, and can provide positive contributions to the individual. For this reason, working in age groups where sports education can be applied more intensively will provide more meaningful results. According to Gallahue's Hourglass Model (1982) a theoretical model for 7-10, 11-13, 14 and over age groups was presented within the framework of "the period of movements in sports". Within the framework of this model, it is aimed that the participants are athletes aged 15-16 on average.

The study aims to evaluate the relationship between sportsmanship and happiness, which are considered to be two indispensable elements of sports life, within the framework of martial arts and to evaluate the hypotheses created within the scope of the research model. In the available literature, no study has been found that investigates the relationship between sportsmanship and happiness in the sample of martial arts athletes. Therefore the results of the study will be of great importance for all athletes, coaches and families involved in martial arts.

2. Methodology

The method of the study is explained in the following headings.

2.1. Model

The relational screening model has been used within the study which is among the general screening models. Conceptual model of the research and hypotheses: The conceptual model of the research and related hypotheses are presented below.

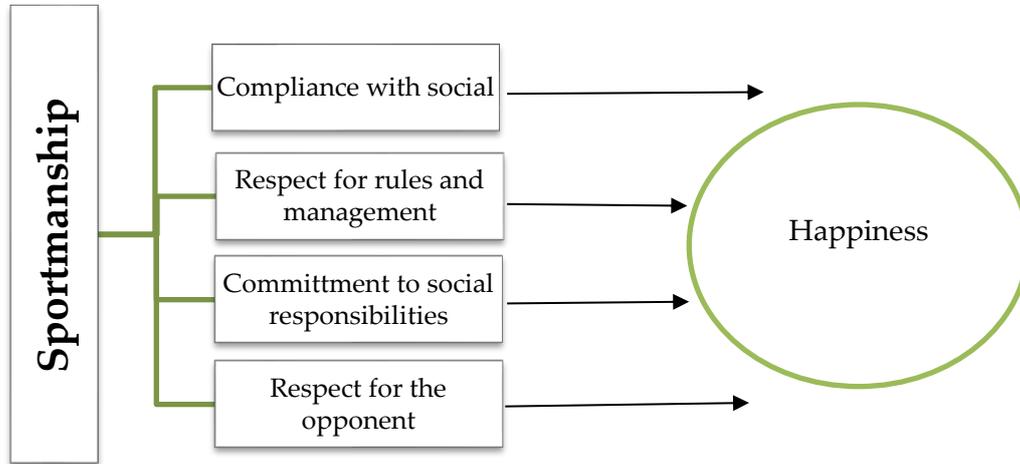


Figure 1. Conceptual model of research

H₁: Compliance with social norms positively affects happiness.

H₂: Respect for rules and management positively affects happiness.

H₃: Commitment to responsibilities in sports positively affects happiness.

H₄: Respect to the opponent positively affects happiness.

2.2. Participants

An ethics committee approval, numbered 1801 and dated 14/2/2021, was received from the relevant unit of Osmaniye Korkut Ata University for the study. The population of the study consisted of licensed amateurs athletes in taekwondo and kickboxing branches. The sample group, on the other hand, consisted of 364 athletes in total, including 198 taekwondo players and 166 kickboxers, who were selected by convenience sampling method and voluntarily accepted to participate in the research (Age, $M=15,00 \pm Sd= 2,98$). These two branches were preferred due to the limited studies in the literature. Efforts were made to ensure that the participants and age groups of the two groups were close to each other. In addition, homogeneity analysis was performed for the groups.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

For data collection, the demographic form was used in the first part, which included personal information of the participants, and the "multidimensional sportsmanship orientation scale" developed by Vallerand et al. (1997) and adapted into Turkish by Sezen-Balçıkanlı (2010) was used in the second part for determining sportsmanship orientation. In the third part, the 7-item "Oxford happiness scale short form" developed by Hills and Argyle (2002) and adapted to Turkish by Doğan and Çötök (2011) was used to evaluate the level of happiness.

2.4. Analysis of Data

Primarily missing values and then extreme values were examined in the study. The data were collected from a total of 370 athletes. After removing the problematic forms, the analysis were performed with the final 364 forms in the data set. In addition to descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and regression tests were conducted within the context of the relational model.

4. Findings

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Validity - Reliability Analyzes

	CMIN/DF (x ² /df)	GFI	AGFI	CFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA	Cronbach's Alfa (α)
Happiness scale	1.609	.990	.969	.988	.989	.975	.041	.885
Sportsmanship orientation scale	1.792	.926	.903	.953	.953	.944	.047	.701

As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis of the "happiness scale" used in the study, the model fit criteria were reviewed and it was decided to exclude proposition 7 from the model because the factor load of the scale was not within the appropriate value ranges. According to the results of the analysis, the following to values were reached: CMIN/DF(x²/df): 1.609, GFI: .990, AGFI: .969, CFI: .988, IFI: .989, TLI: .975, RMSEA: .041. The results of the confirmatory factor analysis of the "Sportsmanship scale" were found as CMIN/DF(x²/df): 1.792, GFI: .926, AGFI: .903, CFI: .953, IFI: .953, TLI: .944, RMSEA: .047. The fact that the X²/DF value is below 3, the RMSEA value is below 0.08, and the GFI, AGFI, CFI, IFI, TLI values are within the value ranges specified in the literature indicate that the values reached are within the limits of perfect fit and that both scales are confirmed with the collected data (Hair et al., 2014; Çapık, 2014; Plichta & Kelvin, 2013; Erkorkmaz et al., 2013; Kline, 2011; Segars & Grover, 1993).

Table 2. The Demographic Characteristics Of The Athletes Participating In The Research

	N	%	
Branch	Taekwondo	198	54.4
	Kickbox	166	45.6
Gender	Female	158	43.4
	Male	206	56.6
Age	10-13	108	29.7
	14-15	92	25.3
	16-17	101	27.7
	18 and above	63	17.3
Sports History	1-3 years	228	62.6
	4 and above	136	37.4
Total	364	100%	

Considering the demographic characteristics of the participants, it is observed that 54.4% (198 athletes) of 364 athletes formed the taekwondo group while 45.6% of them (166 athletes) formed the kickboxer group. 43.4% (158 athletes) of the athletes were women while 56.6% (206 athletes) are men. In addition, 29.7% of the participants (108 athletes) were between the ages of 10-13, while 27.7% (101 athletes) of them were between 16-17, 25.3% (92 athletes) of them were between 14-15 and 17.3% (63 athletes) were 18 and older. Considering their history of sports, it was observed that 62.6% (228 athletes) of them had a sports history of 1-3 years while 37.4% (136 athletes) had a sports history of 4 years or more.

Table 3. Findings Related to Correlation Analysis

N =364	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Sportsmanship	1.Compliance with social norms	4.37	.795	-			
	2.Respect for rules and management	4.46	.607	.494**	-		
	3.Committment to social responsibilities	4.61	.540	.306**	.436**	-	
	4. Respect for the opponent	3.83	.999	.580**	.442**	.248**	-
5. Happiness	3.96	.741	.379**	.363**	.316**	.328**	-

**p<0,01

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis, which was conducted to determine the direction and level of change of sportsmanship and happiness variables together, are shown in Table 3. As a result of the evaluation to determine the correlation between the four dimensions of sportsmanship and happiness; it was determined that there is a positive and moderately significant relationship between "compliance with social norms" and "respect for rules and management" at the rate of "r=.494; p<0.01". between

"compliance with social norms" and "commitment to social responsibilities" at the rate of " $r=.306$; $p<0.01$ ", between "compliance with social norms" and "respect for the opponent" at the rate of " $r=.580$; $p<0.01$ ". between "respect for rules and management" and "commitment to social responsibilities" at the rate of " $r=.436$; $p<0.01$ "; between "respect for rules and management" and "respect for the opponent" at the rate of " $r=.442$; $p<0.01$ " and between "commitment to social responsibilities" and "respect for the opponent" at the rate of " $r=.248$; $p<0.01$ ". Besides, a significant, positive and moderate correlation was found between the sub-dimensions of sportsmanship orientation scale, compliance with social norms and happiness at the rate of " $r=.379$; $p<0.01$ "; between respect for rules and management and happiness at the rate of " $r=.363$; $p<0.01$ "; between commitment to social responsibilities and happiness at the rate of " $r=.316$; $p<0.01$ " and between respect for the opponent and happiness at the rate of " $r=.328$; $p<0.01$ ". In accordance with these findings, it can be noted that there are positive relationships between sportsmanship orientation and the happiness of athletes.

Table 4. Multiple Regression Analysis Of Sportsmanship And Happiness

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	p	VIF
(Constant)	1,011	,333		3,033	,003	
Compliance with social norms	,179	,057	,192	3,148	,002	1,699
Respect for rules and management	,179	,071	,147	2,513	,012	1,564
Commitment to social responsibilities	,228	,072	,166	3,179	,002	1,252
Respect for the opponent	,082	,044	,110	1,878	,061	1,583
R=,464	R ² =,215	Adj. R ² =,206				
F(4-359)= 24,580	p=,000	D-W=1,856				

Dependent Variable: Happiness

Multiple regression analysis results were statistically significant ($F(df=4.359) =24.580$, $p< 0.001$). The R^2 value of the model was found to be ,215 and the adjusted R^2 value to be ,206. This finding shows that the independent variable of sportsmanship orientation explains about 21 % of the changes in the happiness dimension, which is the dependent variable. Considering the power of the independent variables in this relationship to affect the dependent variable, starting from the beta values we observe that the first significant positive effect was on the "compliance with social norms" ($\beta=.192$; $p<.01$) sub-dimension of sportsmanship orientation while the second positive effect was on the "commitment to social responsibilities" ($\beta=.166$; $p<.01$). The third positive effect was on the sub-dimension "respect for rules and management" ($\beta=.147$; $p<.01$). It was revealed that the sub-dimension "respect for the opponent" ($\beta=.110$; $p>.05$) did not have any impact because it was statistically insignificant.

In addition, it has been revealed that "compliance with social norms", "commitment to social responsibilities" and "respect for rules and management" had a significant positive contribution to happiness since. As a result, it can be said that the happiness levels of the athletes will increase with the increase in sportsmanship orientation (compliance with social norms, commitment to social responsibilities and respect for rules and management). H1, H2 and H3 were supported within the scope of this study.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The participants of this study, which investigated the relationship between the concepts of sportsmanship and happiness, are licensed taekwondo and kickboxing athletes. According to the results of the correlation analysis of the study; a significant and moderate correlation was found between happiness and sub-dimensions of sportsmanship orientation scale (Table 3). According to the results of the regression analysis of the research we can say that there are positive relationships between sportsmanship orientation and happiness, that sportsmanship orientation contributes positively to "compliance with social norms", "respect for rules and management" and "commitment to social responsibilities" in a significant way (Table 4) and finally, as the commitment of martial art players to sportsmanship values increases, their

happiness shall also increase. It can also be stated that these results are very important for individuals participating in martial arts.

In their research with the participation of hockey players; Özsarı and Altın (2021) found that there were significant relationships between happiness and sub-dimensions of sportsmanship: "respect for rules and management", "compliance with social norms", "commitment to social responsibilities" and "respect for opponents" while commitment to social responsibilities and respect for the competitor significantly contributed positively to happiness and as the contribution of the athletes to the values of sportsmanship increases, their happiness would also increase. Yıldız (2019) found in his research that sportsmanship orientation reduces the tendency to move away from morality in sports. Ulukan (2021) stated that the sportsmanship perception of the students who are interested in combat sports is above the moderate level and that the sportsmanship orientation of the individuals interested in sports develops not only in the field of sports but also in other areas of life. In his research conducted with the participation of secondary school students, Babur (2020) determined that video-assisted sportsmanship education has positive effects on the sportsmanship orientation of students who attend physical education classes. There was a moderate positive relationship between the communication skills scale and all sub-dimensions of the sportsmanship scale (Çağlayan, Çoskun & Yılmaz, 2021). Nunez et al. (2009) intrinsic motivation was directly and positively associated with self-concept of interpersonal relations, which in turn, was positively and significantly related to sportsmanship, they found. The contingencies placed on good sportsmanship also appeared to have positive effects on other aspects of game performance (Hupp & Reitman, 1999). Burgueno and Medina-Casaubon (2020) examined the effect of sports education on sportsmanship orientations in high school students and reported that athletes made significant improvements in their sportsmanship orientation with sports education. Mendez-Gimenez, Fernandez-Rio and Mendez-Alonso (2015) reported that sports education in a school in the north of Spain was effective in showing a significant increase in the sportsmanship behaviors of secondary school students. Similar results were obtained by Lee, Kim Fernandez-Rio, J., and Mendez-Alonso, Lee (2016), and Günbay (2019).

Furthermore, the sample of this research is taekwondo and kickboxing athletes. There are many researches that show that sports have a positive effect on happiness. For example, Özsarı and Çetin (2022) found in their related research that there is a positive relationship between attitude towards sports and happiness, and that living with sports has a significant positive contribution in explaining the effect of attitude towards sports on happiness. Rodriguez-Bravo, De-Juanas and Garcia-Castilla (2020) emphasize that sports activities have positive effects on the psychological state of Spanish and Colombian youth. Sport can make people happier and that it has also made them happier throughout their lives (Gonzalez, Fernandez, Ordonez, Morales, 2017). It was determined by Zhang and Chen (2019) that there are relationships between happiness and sports. Gonzales et al. (2017) concluded that sporting activities promote higher levels of happiness, as well as improving socialization and thus helping people. People with a high happiness score were found to have a healthier lifestyle, meaning they had more physical activity (Lesani et al., 2016). Khazae-pool et al. (2015) concluded in their research that regular exercise contributes positively to the happiness of older adults. In particular, martial art athletes are taught to respect their opponent and their environment from the first day they start training. Considering the results of this and other related studies, it can be said that athletes not only learn the values of sportsmanship, but also ways to be happy. Moreover, creating a resource rich work environment that enhances individuals' sportsmanship behaviour can help to minimize the unfavourable impact of daily negative events (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2017). The main thing is that the individual has added the philosophy of sportsmanship to his life and has given direction to his life in this line (Gümüş et al., 2020).

As a finding of this study, it is thought that with the increasing participation in martial arts, it is thought to mediate the young people to lead a healthy life by contributing to their self-realization and correcting their positive self-concepts physically. In addition, the current study carried out for licensed athletes is also important in terms of helping to develop regular training programs for young people. Young athletes will contribute to their physical health by regularly participating in physical activities through combat

sports, as well as to their psychological well-being, such as sportsmanship and happiness, which calms the soul. With this study, it has been revealed that combat sports are sports that contribute to happiness, like other sports, without restrictions and misperceptions. Choi et al. (2021) reveal that martial athletes dominate their sportsmanship behaviors. The study can be applied to the middle age group in the future and compare the results.

As a result, we can say that there are positive relationships between sportsmanship orientation and happiness within the sample of martial art athletes and “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 shall also increase. The theoretical conclusion of this research can be summarized as that the concepts of sportsmanship can be used as an educational element in martial arts, and the practical conclusion can be summarized as that sportsmanship can be improved by participating in taekwondo and kickboxing sports, thus increasing the level of happiness with the value given to the concepts of sportsmanship, thus raising happy individuals.

Two martial arts (taekwondo-kickboxing) athletes constitute the limitations of this research, in which the relationship between sportsmanship and happiness is investigated. In the future, researches can be conducted comparing the participation of different martial arts athletes or martial arts athletes and active sportsmen in other sports branches.

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Conflict of Interest: There is no conflict of interest or gain in the article.

Contribution Rate of Researchers: The study was prepared with the contribution of a four author.

Contribution rates: 1. Author = 60%, 2. Author = 20%, 3. Author= 10%, 4. Author=10%.

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