

Examination of basketball players' team cohesion levels according to some variables

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Accepted 12 May, 2023

ABSTRACT

This study was applied to measure the team cohesion of basketball players playing in the Türkiye Basketball Leagues in terms of some variables. In the research, two different forms have been used. First of these forms, the personal data form is prepared by a researcher to collect data about the active basketball period of the participants, their league category, camping with the team at the start of the season, and the duration of their presence in the team. The second is the Morali data form developed by Neil W. Widmeyer, Lawrence R. Brawley and Albert Carron (1985) The Measurement of Cohesion in Sports Team Inventory adapted to Türkiye by 1994. The research group consists of a total of 266 basketball players actively playing in the Türkiye Basketball Leagues. The scale and personal data form were applied to the basketball players who participated in the study with the online method using the purposeful sampling method. The data obtained as a result of the research were analyzed in the SPSS.22 program. Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis of the data, a t-test for independent groups was used in pairwise group comparisons, and a one-way analysis of variance ANOVA test was used to compare multiple groups. In addition, posthoc tests were used to know the way of the difference among groups. The significance level was taken as 0.05 in the interpretation of the results. The cohesion levels of the basketball players participating in the study were mostly at a better level.

Keywords: Basketball, team cohesion, basketball players.

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INTRODUCTION

Team cohesion is a notion that is the same as group cohesion, group cooperation and group unity in the literature. All those notions are expressed as cohesion, the commitment that holds the team or group working for a particular purpose together. Festinger et al. (1950) express this as the totality of the forces that have a role to take the members of the group. Carron (1982), on the other hand, expresses group cohesion as a dynamic process that is reflected in trends for holding the group together as a whole in the pursuit of goals and objectives (Dorak and Vurgun, 2006).

One of the most basic features of the team is to create unity among its members. Cohesion means that members reach unity of manners by establishing a close bond among themselves and supporting each other and thus becoming self-sufficient players. It is quite difficult to qualify a team with a low level of unity, so this term also

creates the consideration of being a group (Hoog and Vaughan, 2007).

Team cohesion depends on the members' degree of commitment to the team and their willingness to stay in the team. Members of teams in close unity are eager to participate in the team's activities, attend meetings, and the success of the team makes them happy. Members of teams with weaker cohesion are not interested in the team's circumstances. A high level of togetherness is accepted as a positive feature of teams (Eren, 2001). Any trouble with achieving success cannot be seen in teams that have a higher level of unity. The aim of success represents the idea of individual success by providing a cognitive structure that regulates the definitions of success and failure, motivation processes, emotional reactions and motivating behaviors of individuals in the team (Kaplan and Akyüz, 2020).

Team unity has certain elements. The features and general condition of the team are the most regarded elements affecting the unity of the team. The initial of those is interrelation within the team. The greater the interrelation among the team players and the more the players are cohesive, the team unity will be stronger. The next element is to share the aims. Collaboration increases when team players go toward the goal. Unity of purpose takes the team together, motivates them and creates an energy among members for achievement. The third one is individual dependence on the team. That means that members adopt the same manners and values and are keen on being together (Eren, 2001).

Festinger et al. (1950) defined a team as a group of people who are interconnected and interact with each other. Teamwork is defined as more than synergy, cooperation, unity and harmony among athletes. The actual root of commitment is putting one's interests aside and putting the team's goals above their own, and working willingly and voluntarily to make them happen. Accordingly, they believed that a field of forces based on the attraction and common goal among the members had an effect on the group members, and that team unity led to the continuation of the members and adherence to the team norms (Hoog and Vaughan, 2007).

Hogg and Turner (1987) considered the team as a whole consisting of cooperative individuals and stated it in a framework that had the general characteristics of the model. They have argued that the fact that individuals who come together mutually meet each other's needs and can achieve goals that they cannot achieve alone, only when they are together, strengthens the bond among them. It is argued that this view of team cohesion represents interpersonal dependence of the social group or a much broader social cohesion (Bayar, 1997; Hoog and Vaughan, 2007).

Teams that accept being in the team as a duty, enjoy the team as they are in, and have higher attractiveness among their members have a higher level of cohesion (Mullen and Copper, 1994). A more level of cohesion in a team means more closeness and interaction among team members. Cohesion can be generally defined as the degree to which members find each other and the group attractive (Kocaekşi and Koruç, 2012).

In this context, unity in team sports takes great importance. As in all other team sports, it is predicted that success will come more easily with the existence of unity in basketball. The purpose of this study is to contribute to the literature by aiming to determine the level of team unity of basketball players.

METHOD

Research model

Scanning model was used in the study. The scanning

model is defined as a research model that purposes to indicate the degree and/or degree of co-variance between two or among more variables (Karasar, 2009).

Research group

The research group consists of 266 basketball players actively playing in Türkiye Basketball Leagues in the 2022-2023 Basketball Season.

Data collection tools

In this study, Personal Data Form and Team Cohesion Scale, which were prepared by the researcher in cohesion with its design, were used in cohesion with its purpose. Data on the measurement tools used in the research is given below.

Personal data form

The personal data form was prepared by the researcher to achieve the purpose of the research, to gather demographic data about the athletes; The purpose of this study is to obtain data about the variables of active basketball playing year, league category they play, camping with the team they are in at the starting of the season, and the year they spent in their present team.

Team cohesion scale

The adaptation of The Measurement of Cohesion in Sport Team inventory brought on by Neil W. Widmeyer et al. (1985) to the Türkiye population was applied by Moralı (1994). The inventory used to measure Team Cohesion includes measuring it and also group members' thoughts about their teams. The inventory consists of 18 questions and 4 sub-dimensions. Items 5,9,10,12,15 and 16 of the scale are scored straightly and other items are scored in reverse. A separate cohesion score was obtained for each sub-dimension by summing the marked scale values, and a general cohesiveness score was obtained by summing the scores obtained from the sub-dimensions. A higher score shows a higher perception of cohesiveness. The internal consistency value of the scale was found to be 0.78 in the original study. In this study, the internal consistency value was found to be 0.82.

Data collection

The scale and personal data form were applied to the basketball players who participated in the study with the online method using the purposeful sampling method.

Analysis of data

The data gained as a consequence of the research were examined in the SPSS.22 program. Descriptive statistics were taken to use in the analysis of the data, a t-test for independent groups was used in pairwise group comparisons, and a one-way analysis of variance ANOVA test was used to compare multiple groups. In addition, post-hoc tests were put to use to see the direction of the

difference between groups. The significance level was taken as 0.05 in the interpretation of the results.

RESULTS

The demographic information of the basketball players taking part in the study and the statistical results of the scale applied are given in Tables 1 to 5.

Table 1. Findings regarding the demographic variables of the research group.

Variables	Groups	n	%
Period of playing basketball actively	1-7 years	78	29.3
	8-14 years	111	41.7
	15 years and +	77	28.9
	Total	266	100
Category of league	Basketball Super League	39	14.7
	Türkiye Basketball League	71	26.7
	Türkiye Basketball 2nd League	156	58.6
	Total	266	100
Camping with the team at the start of the season	Yes	150	56.4
	No	116	43.6
	Total	266	100
Playing period at the team	1 year	129	48.5
	2-4 years	99	37.2
	5 years and +	38	14.3
	Total	266	100

As shown in Table 1, 29.3% of the basketball players participating in the research played basketball actively for 1 to 7 years, 41.7% for 8 to 14 years, and 28.9% for 15 years or more. 14.7% of these basketball players play in the Türkiye Basketball Super League, 26.7% in the Türkiye Basketball League, and 58.6% in the Türkiye Basketball Second League. While 56.4% of the basketball players in our research attended the camp at the start of the season with their team, 43.6% did not attend the camp at the start of the season. 48.5% of these basketball players work for 1 year, 37.2% for 2 to 4 years, and 14.3% for 5 years or more in their present teams.

As shown in Table 2, there is a statistically significant difference in the whole scale in the analyzes aimed at measuring the level of team cohesion according to the variable of active basketball playing time of basketball players ($p < 0.05$). As with the whole scale, we could see a significant difference in the "individual task attractiveness" and "individual social attractiveness" sub-dimensions ($p < 0.05$), while any statistically significant difference has not been seen in the other sub-dimensions

($p > 0.05$). As a consequence of the research made to explain between which groups the mentioned difference is, there is a significant difference in favor of "1-7 years" between "1-7 years" and "8-14 years" and "15 years and above" groups in the "individual task attractiveness" sub-dimension. In the "individual social attractiveness" sub-dimension, we could see that there is a significant difference between the "1-7 years" and "8-14 years" groups in favor of "1-7 years". When the whole scale is examined, it is seen that a significant difference has been determined between the "1-7 years" and "15 years and above" groups in favor of "1-7 years".

As shown in Table 3, it has been determined that there is a statistically significant difference in the whole scale in the analyses to measure the level of team cohesion according to the league category variable in which the basketball players play ($p < 0.05$). As in the whole scale, a significant difference was found in the sub-dimensions of "individual task attractiveness", "individual social attractiveness" and "group task unity" ($p < 0.05$), while any statistically significant difference was not determined in the "group social cohesion" sub-dimension ($p > 0.05$).

Table 2. One-way Anova test results regarding the team cohesion scale and its sub-dimensions according to the variable of active basketball playing period of the research group.

Scale and its sub-dimensions	Period of playing basketball actively	n	\bar{X}	ss	F	p	Scheffe
Individual task attractiveness	1-7 years (1)	78	27.85	6.74	6.01	0.00*	1-2 1-3
	8-14 years (2)	111	24.21	8.56			
	15 years and + (3)	77	24.08	8.03			
Individual social attractiveness	1-7 years (1)	78	33.29	6.52	7.77	0.00*	1-3
	8-14 years (2)	111	30.88	8.85			
	15 years and + (3)	77	28.16	8.47			
Group task unity	1-7 years (1)	78	32.23	7.23	2.01	0.14	
	8-14 years (2)	111	32.45	8.43			
	15 years and + (3)	77	30.13	8.93			
Group social unity	1-7 years (1)	78	22.03	5.01	0.97	0.38	
	8-14 years (2)	111	22.14	5.43			
	15 years and + (3)	77	21.04	6.50			
Team collaboration scale	1-7 years (1)	78	115.40	18.94	5.22	0.01*	1-3
	8-14 years (2)	111	109.68	24.64			
	15 years and + (3)	77	103.40	24.66			

* p < 0.05 significance level.

Table 3. One-way ANOVA test results regarding the team cohesion scale and its sub-dimensions by league category variable of the research group.

Scale and its sub-dimensions	Category of league	n	\bar{X}	Ss	F	p	Scheffe
Individual task attractiveness	Basketball Super League (1)	78	28.62	7.21	4.12	0.02*	1-3
	Türkiye Basketball League (2)	111	24.73	7.70			
	Türkiye Basketball 2nd League (3)	77	24.62	8.25			
Individual social attractiveness	Basketball Super League (1)	78	34.46	7.63	6.07	0.00*	1-2 1-3
	Türkiye Basketball League (2)	111	28.79	9.01			
	Türkiye Basketball 2nd League (3)	77	30.80	7.89			
Group task unity	Basketball Super League (1)	78	35.67	7.55	5.40	0.01*	1-2 1-3
	Türkiye Basketball League (2)	111	30.87	7.51			
	Türkiye Basketball 2nd League (3)	77	31.11	8.56			
Group social unity	Basketball Super League (1)	78	23	5.62	2.01	0.14	
	Türkiye Basketball League (2)	111	20.82	4.92			
	Türkiye Basketball 2nd League (3)	77	21.93	5.91			
Team cohesion scale	Basketball Super League (1)	78	121.74	22.59	6.93	0,00*	1-2 1-3
	Türkiye Basketball League (2)	111	105.21	20.30			
	Türkiye Basketball 2nd League (3)	77	108.46	24.18			

* p < 0.05 significance level.

Table 4. T-test results of the research group on the team cohesion scale and its sub-dimensions according to the variable of camping with the team at the start of the season.

Scale and its sub-dimensions	Camping with the team at the start of the season	n	\bar{X}	ss	t	df	p
Individual task attractiveness	Yes	150	24.89	8.20	-0.81	264	0.33
	No	116	25.69	7.88			
Individual social attractiveness	Yes	150	30.04	8.84	-1.70	264	0.26
	No	116	31.78	7.53			
Group task unity	Yes	150	31.45	8.13	-0.60	264	0.70
	No	116	32.06	8.50			
Group social unity	Yes	150	21.95	5.71	0.52	264	0.99
	No	116	21.59	5.57			
Team cohesion scale	Yes	150	108.32	23.73	-0.96	264	0.92
	No	116	111.12	23.18			

As a result of the analyses made to determine between which groups this difference is, it was determined that the "individual task attractiveness" sub-dimension was in favor of Basketball Super League players between Basketball Super League players and Türkiye Basketball 2nd League players. It has been determined that the sub-dimensions of "individual social attractiveness" and "group task unity" are in favor of Basketball Super League players between Basketball Super League players and Türkiye Basketball League and Türkiye Basketball 2nd League players. When the whole scale is examined, it has been determined that the sub-dimensions of "individual social attractiveness" and "group task integrity" are in favor of Basketball Super League players among Basketball Super League players and Türkiye Basketball League and Türkiye Basketball 2nd League Players.

No statistically significant differences were found in the whole scale and its sub-dimensions in the analyzes aimed at measuring the level of team cohesion according to the variable of camping at the beginning of the season with the teams of basketball players ($p > 0.05$) (Table 4).

There was no statistically significant differences in the whole scale and its sub-dimensions in the analyzes to measure the level of team cohesion according to the variable of the time that the basketballers are in their present teams ($p > 0.05$) (Table 5).

DISCUSSION

In team sports, the individual abilities of the team members usually come to the fore for success. However, it is not possible for a team to achieve success by only training individually. And also; Team dynamics and team

unity are important for team success. In addition, it is more reasonable that teams consisting of members who like each other and like to play together will be more successful than teams that lack this quality. It is known that the level of unity of the teams in basketball, which is a team sport, will be beneficial in achieving success. For that, this research was purposed to measure the team cohesion levels of basketball players playing in Türkiye basketball leagues.

A significant difference was found in the levels of team cohesion according to the variable of active basketball playing period of basketball players ($p < 0.05$). As a result of the analyzes made, when the whole scale has been researched, it was found a significant difference between the "1-7 years" and "15 years and above" groups in favor of "1-7 years". In addition, a significant difference was seen in the "individual task attractiveness" and "individual social attractiveness" sub-dimensions of the scale ($p < 0.05$), while any statistically significant difference was not seen in the other sub-dimensions ($p > 0.05$). We can say that this difference is based on when basketball players gain experience, they focus more on their individual performance and think less about the team. When we look at the literature, it has been seen that there are studies supporting our study. Dorak and Vurgun (2006), in their study analyzing the relationship between empathy and team cohesion in terms of team sports, reveals that the level of team cohesion decreases as experience increases. Tatar (2009) also found a significant difference, supporting our study, among the scores of the answers given by the athletes to the perceptions of "individual attractiveness-task", which is the sub-dimension of team unity, according to the variable of football playing year in his research named "Examination of team cohesion in football and the impact of the captain

on team unity" has found. Contrary to our study, Polat (2019) could not find a significant difference between the years of doing sports and the level of team cohesion in his study on curling athletes. He found a difference only in the "individual social attractiveness" sub-dimension of the team cohesion scale.

It was seen a statistically significant difference in the whole scale in the analyses to measure the level of team cohesion according to the league category variable in which the basketball players play ($p < 0.05$). No statistically significant difference was determined only in the "group social unity" sub-dimension of the scale. According to the result of this difference, it can be said that the level of team cohesion increases as the league category played by basketball players increases. Looking at the literature, Tatar (2009) found a significant difference in the "individual social attractiveness" sub-dimension of the level of team cohesion according to the league category in which they played in his study named "Examination of team cohesion in football and the impact of the captain on team unity". Tatar (2009) concluded that an increase in the league category reduces the level of team cohesion. This result contradicts the result found in our study. Tatar (2009) did not find a significant difference in the other sub-dimensions and the whole scale, except for the "individual social attractiveness" sub-dimension of the scale. This supports the result found in the "group social unity" sub-dimension of the scale in our study. However, the other sub-dimensions and the whole scale do not support our study.

Any statistically significant difference was not determined in the whole scale and its sub-dimensions in the analyzes aimed at measuring the level of team cohesion according to the variable of camping at the start of the season with the teams of basketball players ($p > 0.05$). It can be said that the basketball players' camping or not at the start of the season with the teams they are in has no effect on the levels of team cohesion. When the literature is examined, Widmeyer and Martens (1978) and Ruder and Gill (1982) revealed in their studies that, contrary to our study, camping at the start of the season increases the level of cohesion during and at the end of the season.

Any statistically significant difference was not determined in the whole scale and its sub-dimensions in the analyzes to measure the level of team cohesion according to the variable of the time that the basketballers are in their present teams ($p > 0.05$). It can be said that the years spent with the teams of basketball players playing in the Türkiye leagues have no effect on team unity. When the literature is examined, Tatar (2009) in his research named "Examination of Team Cohesion in Football and the Impact of the Captain on Team Unity" could not detect a significant difference between the average scores of the answers given by the athletes to the questions regarding the sub-dimensions of team unity, according to the "years they played in their team" variable. This result supports our study. Contrary to our

study, Polat (2019) found a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of "individual social attractiveness" and "group social unity" between the years they played in their teams and their level of team cohesion in his study on curling athletes. He found that as the number of years they played in their team increased, their level of team cohesion decreased. Donnelly et al. (1978) in their study on major baseball league teams found that as the years in the teams increased, the levels of team cohesion also increased.

Conclusion

Consequently, the levels of team cohesion of basketball players playing in Türkiye leagues differ in terms of active playing years, league category, camp at the start of the season and the time they are in their present teams. According to the variables in our study, the level of team cohesion of the basketball players was at a better level in line with the answers they gave to the scale.

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Citation: Duran, M. (2023). Examination of basketball players' team cohesion levels according to some variables. *Net Journal of Social Sciences*, 11(2): 73-79.
