

Examination of group cohesiveness levels and goal orientations of basketball players

Can Çavin Ötkan^{1a}, Gönül Tekkurşun Demir², and Alperen Halıcı³

¹Faculty of Sport Science, Gazi University/YüzüncüYıl University, 06000 Ankara, Turkey

²Faculty of Sport Science, Gazi University, 06000 Ankara, Turkey

Abstract. This research intends to examine goal orientation and group cohesiveness levels of basketball players. 243 mature players who play in the leagues of Turkish Basketball Federation in 2016-2017 season participated the study. “Task and Ego Orientation in Sports” and “Group Cohesiveness” questionnaires are used in study. While frequency, arithmetic mean and standard deviation is used for the analysis of data, T-Test, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Post-Hoc test statistics (Tukey HSD) are used for independent samples. Depending on the variables of gender and educational background of players, a significant difference is identified in sub-dimension of Task Attraction of Group and a low-level negatively significant difference is identified between Ego Orientation in terms of age and sportive age. Significant differences are identified between the Perception of Team Success and sub-dimensions of Social Integration of Group and Social Attraction of Group. No statistically significant difference can be found for the variable of time spent in team in terms of group cohesiveness and goal orientation.

Keywords: Group cohesiveness, goal orientations, motivation, basketball.

1 Introduction

There are some major facts to achieve the intended objectives in all team sports. Mental potentials of athletes as well as their physical and technical capacities are critical criteria. Particularly in terms of team sports, the levels of individuals to feel that they belong to the group and orientating themselves, as well as their attitudes

^aCorresponding author: cancavitotkan@gazi.edu.tr

towards the tasks undertaken in line with intended objectives are requisites of group [12, 17]. In this context, group cohesiveness and task and ego orientation levels of individuals in the group play an important role in the future of organization.

Cohesiveness which represents the sum of factors and strengths providing group members to stay in group is also generally defined as the level of their attraction to each other and to group [5].

When cohesiveness is examined specific to team sports we see that it has two basic dimensions; task cohesiveness and social cohesiveness. Team cohesiveness describes the process where group members attach themselves to each other in order to achieve intended objectives and/or due to emotional interaction between them and sustain this state [4].

It is stated that the pleasure felt due to the long-time togetherness of team members, homogeneity of group, size of group, cooperation in group and successful performance is an important factor to constitute and develop cohesiveness in a sportive group [14].

In relation to goal oriented motivation in sports the concepts of group cohesiveness of team members, goal orientation with regard to task in behavioral sense and goal orientation in sense of ego intersect at many points [7].

It is observed that athletes who are used to goal orientation in sense of task attach more importance to team rapport and cooperation, development of skills, getting specialized in task and learning while athletes who are used to goal orientation in sense of ego take overcoming their competitors, being superior and focusing on result to forefront [18]. Task oriented athletes believe in the necessity of skill development and intense practice to make it possible. They are more inclined to use internal motivation to fight with resistance and obstacles they face on the road to success. Ego oriented athletes, on the other hand, are more inclined to follow the exact opposite road and exhibit unsporting behaviors to succeed when they face with a similar resistance [20].

When these facts are taken into consideration, it is thought that assessment of cohesiveness levels of groups and how relational are the ego-task orientations of individuals would be beneficial. This research intends to examine the said variables specific to basketball to the accompaniment of different demographic information.

2 Method

2.1 Research model

Out of general screening models, the relational screening model is used in this research to descriptively reveal the relation of group cohesiveness of basketball players with their task and ego orientations. Relational screening model is a research model which describes the extents of differences between two or more variables [13].

2.2 Universe and sampling

Universe of research is composed of mature players who play in the leagues of Turkish Basketball Federation in 2016-2017 season. Sample group is composed of 243 individuals, 152 of whom are males and 91 are females.

2.3 Data collection tools

“Group Environment Questionnaire”, a nine points Likert Questionnaire developed by Carron, Widmayer and Brawley [5] and adapted to Turkish by Öcel [17] is used to measure the group cohesiveness levels of basketball players. In Turkish version of the Questionnaire which is composed of 18 points and 4 sub-dimensions, Cronbach’s Alpha Internal Consistency Coefficients are found as .59, .67, .50, .65 and .64 for “Dimension of Task Integration in Group”, “Dimension of Social Integration in Group”, “Dimension of Social Attraction in Group”, “Dimension of Task Attraction in Group” and all of them together respectively. “Task and Ego Orientation in Sports Questionnaire”, a five points Likert Questionnaire developed by Duda and Nichols and adapted for Turkish athletes by Toros [19] is used to determine task and ego orientations of athletes. There are 2 sub-dimensions of the 13-point Questionnaire to measure task oriented objectives and ego oriented objectives. Cronbach’s Alpha Internal Consistency Coefficients in Turkish version of Questionnaire are found as .87, .85 and .86 for “task oriented objectives”, “ego oriented objectives” and general reliability coefficient respectively.

2.4 Analysis of data

Data obtained from participants are statistically analyzed by using SPSS 23 package program. Before determining the statistical methods to be used, skewness and kurtosis values (normal distribution of data) are tested and Levene’s test (equality of variances) is conducted. In this context, it is seen in research that Skewness and Kurtosis values of each independent variable range from +1 to -1. If skewness coefficient is between the range of + 1 and -1, it is interpreted as there is no significant deviation from normal distribution of points (9). After testing the homogeneity of variances of normally distributed variables, these variables are tested via parametric test methods. Frequency, arithmetic mean and standard deviation are used to analyze data and T-Test, One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Post-Hoc test statistics (Tukey HSD) are used for independent samples.

3 Findings

This section includes findings obtained in line with various statistical processes applied to data given by participants and interpretations.

Table 1. Independent group t test results to determine whether or not there is differentiation according to gender variable

		Cinsiyet	N	\bar{x}	Ss	df	t	p
		Male	Female					
Goal Orientation	Task Orientation	Male	152	30,6053	3,96868	241	1,375	,171
		Female	91	29,8242	4,77399			
	Ego Orientation	Male	152	20,5855	5,77439	241	,741	,459
		Female	91	20,0440	5,04185			
Group Cohesiveness	Social Integration of Group	Male	152	24,7171	8,57180	241	1,472	,142
	Female	91	23,0879	7,96471				
	Task Attraction of Group	Male	152	21,0789	7,08092	241	2,272	,024*
		Female	91	19,0879	5,74195			
	Social Attraction of Group	Male	152	23,2303	6,74264	241	,427	,670
		Female	91	22,8462	6,85229			
	Task Integration of Group	Male	152	12,3750	4,11235	241	-,554	,580
		Female	91	12,6703	3,85589			

*p<.05

Whether there is a significant difference in level of group cohesiveness and goal orientation of participants in independent groups or not in terms of gender variable is examined via *t*-test in Table 1. Accordingly, a significant difference is identified in dimension of *Task Attraction of Group* in terms of gender variable.

Table 2. Age variable correlation results according to group cohesiveness and goal orientation

	N	\bar{x}	ss	r	p
Age Variable	243	2,2181	1,07841	-,034	,593
Task Orientation		30,3128	4,29502		
Age Variable	243	2,2181	1,07841	-,210**	,001*
Ego Orientation		20,3827	5,50710		
Age Variable	243	2,2181	1,07841	-,035	,591
Social Integration of Group		24,1070	8,37036		
Age Variable	243	2,2181	1,07841	,032	,616
Task Attraction of Group		20,3333	6,66928		
Age Variable	243	2,2181	1,07841	-,120	,061
Social Attraction of Group		23,0864	6,77233		
Age Variable	243	2,2181	1,07841	-,013	,839
Task Integration of Group		12,4856	4,01274		

*p<.05; **p<.01

Table 2 shows the results of Pearson Moment Correlation Analysis performed to determine if there is a relation between participants' level of group cohesiveness and goal orientation and age variable or not. In this context, it is seen that there is a negative low-level significant difference between *Ego Orientation* of athletes and age variable.

Table 3. Sportive age variable correlation results according to group cohesiveness and goal orientation

Değişken	N	\bar{x}	ss	r	P
Sportive Age Variable	243	2,6255	,87415	-,036	,579
Task Orientation		30,3128	4,29502		
Sportive Age Variable	243	2,6255	,87415	-,214**	,001*
Ego Orientation		20,3827	5,50710		
Sportive Age Variable	243	2,6255	,87415	-,043	,591
Social Integration of Group		24,1070	8,37036		
Sportive Age Variable	243	2,6255	,87415	,034	,595
Task Attraction of Group		20,3333	6,66928		
Sportive Age Variable	243	2,6255	,87415	-,026	,688
Social Attraction of Group		23,0864	6,77233		
Sportive Age Variable	243	2,6255	,87415	-,005	,939
Task Integration of Group		12,4856	4,01274		

*p<.05; **p<.01

Table 3 shows the results of Pearson Moment Correlation Analysis performed to determine if there is a relation between participants' level of group cohesiveness and goal orientation and sportive age variable or not. In this context, it is seen that there is a negative low-level significant difference between *Ego Orientation* of athletes and sportive age variable as in the case of age variable.

Table 4. Anova results according to educational status

		N	\bar{x}	Variance Source	Sum of Squares	Avg. of Squares	F	p	Sig. Dif.
Task Orientation	High School	12	28,6667	Inter Groups	34,497	17,249	,935	,394	-
	Undergraduate	210	30,4095		4429,733	18,457			
	Postgraduate	21	30,2857	InGroup					
Ego Orientation	High School	12	18,9167	Inter Groups	28,257	14,129	,464	,629	-
	Undergraduate	210	20,4810		7311,150	30,463			
	Postgraduate	21	20,2381	InGroup					
Social Integration of Group	High School	12	22,1667	Inter Groups	96,6901	48,345	,688	,503	-
	Undergraduate	210	24,0619		6858,529	70,244			
	Postgraduate	21	25,6667	InGroup					
Task Attraction of Group	High School ^a	12	18,8333	Inter Groups	419,095	209,548	4,861	,009*	c>b>a
	Undergraduate ^b	210	20,0000		10344,905	43,104			
	Postgraduate ^c	21	24,5238	InGroup					
Social Attraction of Group	High School	12	23,6667	Inter Groups	5,466	2,733	,059	,943	-
	Undergraduate	210	23,0333		11093,719	46,224			
	Postgraduate	21	23,2857	InGroup					
Task Integration of Group	High School	12	14,7500	Inter Groups	73,211	36,606	1,387	,252	-
	Undergraduate	210	12,4286		3823,488	15,931			
	Postgraduate	21	11,7619	InGroup					

*p< .05

As seen from Table 4, one-way variance analysis applied to points in “Group Cohesiveness Questionnaire” and “Task and Ego Orientation in Sports Questionnaire” in terms of educational backgrounds of participants revealed a significant difference in sub-dimension of *Task Attraction of Group* ($F=4,861$; $p=.009$) under “Group Cohesiveness Questionnaire”. In order to determine the source of the significant difference appears between groups as a result of this analysis, Post-Hoc test statistics are applied (Tukey HSD). Groups which the score (point) difference is in favor of are stated in table. Accordingly, it is identified that participants with postgraduate education received higher points than the ones with undergraduate and high school education in sub-dimension of *Task Attraction of Group* and showed a significant difference.

Table 5. Anova results according to number of seasons in the team

		N	\bar{x}	Variance Source	Sum of Squares	Avg. of Squares	F	P	Sig Dif
Task Orientation	1 and Under	131	29,7786	Inter Groups	82,759 4381,472	41,379 18,256	2,267	,106	-
	2	61	31,0492						
	3 and Over	51	30,8039	InGroup					
Ego Orientation	1 and Under	131	19,7252	Inter Groups	123,877 7215,531	61,938 30,065	2,060	,130	-
	2	61	21,0656						
	3 and Over	51	21,2549	InGroup					
Social Integration of Group	1 and Under	131	23,3817	Inter Groups	234,991 16720,228	117,49 5 69,668	1,687	,187	-
	2	61	25,7541						
	3 and Over	51	24,0000	InGroup					
Task Attraction of Group	1 and Under	131	20,1145	Inter Groups	130,359 10633,641	65,179 44,307	1,471	,232	-
	2	61	19,6557						
	3 and Over	51	21,7059	InGroup					
Social Attraction of Group	1 and Under	131	22,5649	Inter Groups	158,597 10940,588	79,299 45,586	1,740	,178	-
	2	61	24,4754						
	3 and Over	51	22,7647	In Group					
Task Integration of Group	1 and Under	131	12,3282	Inter Groups	49,027 3847,672	24,514 16,032	1,529	,219	-
	2	61	13,2295						
	3 and Over	51	12,0000	In Group					

* $p < .05$

As seen from Table 5, no significant difference is identified in one-way variance analysis applied to “Group Cohesiveness Questionnaire” and “Goal and Ego

Orientation in Sports Questionnaire” points received by participants in terms of the number of seasons that participants have been part of their teams.

Table 6. Anova results according to team’s perception of success

	N	\bar{x}	Variance Source	Sum of Squares	Avg. of Squares	F	p	Sig. Dif.
Task Orientation	I don't find any success	38	30,5263	Inter Groups	50,421 4413,810	16,807 18,468	,910	,437
	I find it a bit successful	68	30,6765					
	I find it successful	103	29,7961	Inter Groups				
	I find it very successful	34	30,9118					
Ego Orientation	I don't find any success	38	20,3684	Inter Groups	125,713 7213,694	41,904 30,183	1,388	,247
	I find it a bit successful	68	20,7353					
	I find it successful	103	19,6893	In Group				
	I find it very successful	34	21,7941					
Social Integration of Group	I don't find any success ^a	38	31,0526	Inter Groups	2216,636 14738,582	738,879 61,668	11,982	,000
	I find it a bit successful ^b	68	22,6029					
	I find it successful ^c	103	23,2330	In Group				
	I find it very successful ^d	34	22,0000					
Task Attraction of Group	I don't find any success	38	22,2368	Inter Groups	180,086 10583,914	60,029 44,284	1,356	,257
	I find it a bit successful	68	19,5735					
	I find it successful	103	20,1748	In Group				
	I find it very successful	34	20,2059					
Social Attraction of Group	I don't find any success ^a	38	22,4211	Inter Groups	395,064 10704,121	131,688 44,787	2,940	,034
	I find it a bit successful ^b	68	21,3088					
	I find it successful ^c	103	24,0194	In Group				
	I find it very successful ^d	34	24,5588					
Task Integration of Group	I don't find any success	38	11,8158	Inter Groups	26,962 3869,737	8,987 16,191	,555	,645
	I find it a bit successful	68	12,7206					
	I find it successful	103	12,6699	In Group				
	I find it very successful	34	12,2059					

*p< .05

Table 6 shows the results of one-way variance analysis applied to “Group Cohesiveness Questionnaire” and Task and Ego Orientation in Sports Questionnaire” points received by participants in terms of team’s perception of success. Significant differences are identified in sub-dimension of *Social Integration of Group* ($F=2.940$; $p=.034$) and sub-dimension of *Social Attraction of Group* ($F=11.982$; $p=.000$) under “Group Cohesiveness Questionnaire”. Groups which the score (point) difference is in favor of are stated in table.

4 Discussion and conclusion

It was intended to determine group cohesiveness goal orientation levels of mature basketball players who play in the leagues of Turkish Basketball Federation in 2016-2017 season in the light of different demographic information in this research. At the end of the analyses conducted accordingly, data obtained from “Group Cohesiveness Questionnaire” and “Task and Ego Orientation in Sports Questionnaire” are examined in terms of gender variable. Eys, Evans, Ohlert, Wolf, Martin & Van Bussel [8] aimed to examine cohesiveness of male and female athletes and obtained data from coaches with different demographic characteristics by using semi-structured interview method. The said study suggests that cohesiveness level in teams composed of female athletes is lower because female athletes perceive everything more personally in comparison with male athletes. In this research, on the other hand, a significant difference in favor of male athletes is identified only in sub-dimension of *Task Attraction of Group* under “Group Cohesiveness Questionnaire”. Haddera [10]; Gammage, Carron and Estabrooks [9]; Carron, Eys, Bray [4] could not find any difference which would be regarded significant between gender variable and group cohesiveness and Zakaria, Yasim and Taff [23] concluded in their study that group cohesiveness of male individuals is statistically more significant than female individuals. No significant difference is identified between gender variable and sub-dimensions of “Task and Ego Orientation in Sports Questionnaire”. Altıntaş [1] identified a significant difference in favor of female athletes with regard to *Task Orientation and Ego Orientation* in his study on athletes from different branches. However White and Duda [22]; Duda [6]; Li, Harmer and Acock [16] concluded in their studies that there is a significant difference between gender and *Ego Orientation* in favor of males. On the other hand, Hanrahan and Cerin [11] and Duda [6] revealed in their studies that there is a significant difference with regard to *Task Orientation* sub-dimension in favor of females.

As a result of Pearson Moment Correlation analysis conducted to see whether there is a significant difference between group cohesiveness levels of participants and their goal orientation and age variable or not, it is observed that there is a low-level and negative significant relation between Ego Orientation of athletes and age variable. Same findings are reached with regard to sportive age variable and a low-level and negative significant relation is identified between sportive age and Ego Orientation. Even if this is a finding in parallel with the perception that athletes grow mature in sportive sense in line with aging and gaining experience and elude their egos and thus behave in a more task-oriented way, Lameiras, Almeida and Garcia-Mas [15] reached a contrariwise conclusion in their study conducted on male athletes and identified a low-level and negative relation between age variable and *Task Orientation*.

Üngür [21] examined goal orientations of participants in terms of age and

sportive experience variables while Altıntaş [1] examined the same thing only in terms of sportive experience variable but could not find a significant relation. Haddera [10] examined the relation between age and sportive experience of participants with their group cohesiveness and identified a low-level and negative significant difference between the said variables and *Task Attraction of Group*.

Data obtained from participants are examined in terms of educational background variable and a significant difference is identified in sub-dimension of *Task Attraction of Group*. In this context, the points received from sub-dimension of *Task Attraction of Group* got higher in parallel with the increase in level of education. No statistically significant data could be obtained between educational background variable and none of the sub-dimensions of “Task and Ego Orientation in Sports Questionnaire” and in parallel with this finding, Üngür [21] also couldn’t identify a significant relation between level of education and *Goal Orientation* in his study including amateur and professional football players.

When the variable of number of seasons in the same team is analyzed, no statistically significant data could be obtained both in sub-dimensions of “Group Cohesiveness Questionnaire” and “Task and Ego Orientation in Sports Questionnaire”. A factor hindering the emergence of a significant difference between the group cohesiveness levels of participants might be the stability of individuals in their group rather than the number of seasons they had in the team.

When the findings regarding perception of team success are examined, significant differences are identified in sub-dimensions of *Social Integration of Group* and *Social Attraction of Group*. In this context, the participants who find their team very successful got highest points in *Social Attraction of Group* sub-dimension. In parallel with this finding, Carron, Colman, Wheeler and Stevens [3] revealed that performance of team and *Social Attraction of Group* are directly associated with each other in their meta-analysis regarding the relation between cohesiveness and performance of team. Öcel [17] identified a significant relation between perception of success and social attraction of group in his study. Participants who don’t deem their team successful got highest points in *Social Integration of Group* sub-dimension. This could be assessed as the result of the desire of team members who fail on the field to be freed from the feeling of unsuccessfulness by socially integrating with each other. No finding is obtained regarding the impact of goal orientation on perception of success.

Fundamental characteristics of team members are directly related with performance and success in team sports. Goal orientations and cohesiveness levels of the group composed of athletes are two of these characteristics. In this study, it was intended to examine the said factors in light of different demographic information and identify their extent of impact on the success of teams. Physical capacities of athletes as well as their mental qualities are regarded as important parameters today. Therefore, this research intends to contribute to awareness of sport psychology by executives and trainers who form, design and program the teams and also contribute the future studies on this topic and literature via its findings.

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