

# Examination of passivity, assertivity and aggression levels of teacher candidates in terms of sports activity and different variables

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to examine the passivity, assertiveness and aggressiveness levels of teacher candidates in terms of sports activities and different variables. The study was designed in the relational screening model. The study group consists of a total of 566 participants, 305 female and 261 male, studying at Atatürk University in Erzurum, Turkey. The "Personal Information Form" and the "Passiveness, Assertiveness and Aggressiveness Scale" developed by Duyan and Gelbal (2016) were used as data collection tools in the study. The data were analyzed with the SPSS 22.00 package program. The parametric t-test and one-way Anova test analyzes were applied to the data determined to have a normal distribution. The results were evaluated according to the significance level of  $p < .050$ . Cronbach's Alpha analysis was applied to examine the internal consistency values of the data (passivity, 715, assertiveness, 669 and aggression, 727) and it was found to be moderately reliable. As a result of the analysis, it was determined that there was a difference between the genders and between those who did and did not do sports activities in terms of the passivity, assertiveness and aggressiveness levels of teacher candidates. It was found that the aggressiveness level of male participants was higher than that of female participants. It was found that the passivity level of participants who did sports activities was lower than that of those who did not. It was determined that there was no difference between the participants according to the type and purpose of the sports activities they did. It is recommended that students be provided with the opportunity to do sports and similar activities in teacher training programs, thus contributing positively to the passivity, assertiveness and aggressiveness levels of students.

**Keywords:** Sports activity, teacher candidates, passivity, assertiveness, aggressiveness.

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout an individual's life cycle, various emotions may become predominant during certain periods. One of the significant emotions that emerges predominantly during adolescence is anger. How adolescents express, reflect, or manifest this emotion is as critical as the emotion itself. If they are unable to manage their anger or express it appropriately, they may face significant physical and

psychosocial challenges in subsequent stages of their life cycle (Duran and Eldeleklioğlu, 2005; Starmer and Peters, 2004). The inability to control anger leads to negative behaviors and aggression. Although anger is generally considered a negative emotion, it has protective, warning, and motivational positive effects on the individual (Bedel and Arı, 2011).

Anger is an emotional action inherent in human nature, developing in the early years of life and frequently encountered in daily life. It arises in response to unmet desires or unfulfilled expectations and is a natural and universal emotion. Anger, which does not inherently involve negative behavior, enriches life and is essential for its continuity (Balkaya, 2006; Balkaya and Şahin, 2003; Batıgün, 2004; Erkek et al., 2006; Eşiyok, Yasak and Korkusuz, 2007; Özmen, 2006; Soykan, 2003).

It is possible to identify three primary behavioral tendencies in expressing individuals' thoughts and emotions. These behaviors can be placed along a spectrum: passiveness on one end, assertiveness in the middle, and aggressiveness on the other end: Passive (-), Assertive (+), Aggressive (-) (Acar et al., 2008; Duyan and Gelbal, 2016). Passive individuals struggle to express their thoughts and emotions, set boundaries with others, say "no," and make decisions. Consequently, they often experience elevated levels of anger or feelings of inadequacy (Duyan and Gelbal, 2016). Assertive individuals, in contrast, enjoy influencing and guiding their peers and are often characterized by strong leadership skills (Zel, 2001). Assertive individuals express their thoughts and emotions both verbally and non-verbally while respecting others' rights and encouraging them (Koçak, Türkkân and Tuna, 2014). Aggression is typically defined by psychologists as activities directed toward a fully functioning being with the intent to cause harm or negative outcomes (Deaux, Dane and Wrightsman, 1993; Çakmak et al., 2018).

It is well established that participating in sports significantly improves individuals' quality of life and interpersonal relationships. According to Erkal (1992), sports, conducted within defined rules, with or without tools, individually or collectively, during leisure time or professionally, serve as a socializing activity. Sports promote reconciliation with society, psychomotor and psychosocial development, and reflect cultural values through competition, solidarity, and cooperation (Tozoğlu et al., 2015). Additionally, participating in sports positively contributes to components such as hope, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy (Tozoğlu et al., 2024). As a social activity, sports encourage people to come together and foster broad participation. Furthermore, it is known that physical activity positively impacts mental health (Han, 2024). This study examines the differentiation of pre-service teachers' levels of passiveness, assertiveness, and aggressiveness in terms of variables such as sports participation and gender. It has been suggested that sports improve mood through various physiological and biological mechanisms, including changes in monoamine activity in the central nervous system (Canan and Atatoğlu, 2010).

Studies conducted by researchers have emphasized that life skills have positive contributions to an individual's life (Burton et al., 2001; Claessens et al., 2007; Judge et al., 2005; Humphrey et al., 2011). Studies conducted in the

field of sports psychology have stated that sports contribute positively to individuals' personal and life skills (Gould and Carson, 2010; Jones and Lavallee, 2009).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Research aim**

This study aims to determine the levels of passiveness, assertiveness, and aggressiveness among pre-service teachers and to identify the differences between participants based on their gender and engagement in sports activities.

### **Research model**

The research was designed as a survey and descriptive model. Survey models aim to explain events from past to present as they exist. Selecting the phenomenon to be explained in an appropriate manner is essential (Karasar, 2005). Descriptive survey studies begin with a theoretical review method and proceed to a definition phase, where the reviewed literature is analyzed based on specific research criteria such as publication date, research model, approach, and visual research data (King and He, 2005).

### **Population and sample**

The study's population comprises students enrolled at Atatürk University, Kazım Karabekir Faculty of Education in Erzurum, Turkey, during the 2018–2019 academic year. During the research process, 720 students were reached. Incomplete or incorrectly filled questionnaires were not evaluated. Incomplete or incorrectly filled questionnaires were not evaluated. The sample consists of 566 voluntary participants, including 305 females and 261 males. The sampling method used was convenience sampling due to constraints such as time, workforce, and financial challenges. This method involves selecting accessible and applicable units for administering the surveys (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016; Dursun and Tozoğlu, 2024).

### **Data collection techniques and tools**

The data collection tool consists of two sections. The first section employs a "Personal Information Form," while the second section utilizes the "Passiveness, Assertiveness, and Aggressiveness Scale." Data were collected through face-to-face surveys with the participants.

### **Personal information form**

This form includes questions designed to identify

participants' gender and sports activity participation status.

### **Passiveness, assertiveness, and aggressiveness scale**

This scale is a 5-point Likert-type instrument comprising three subdimensions, each containing 10 items, for a total of 30 items. Participants are asked to select one of the following options for each statement: "Exactly like me = 1," "Often like me = 2," "Sometimes like me = 3," and "Not like me at all = 4." Scores for each subdimension range from 10 to 40. Low scores on the scale indicate high levels of passiveness, assertiveness, or aggressiveness, while high scores suggest low levels of these traits. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated and found to be .715 for passivity, .669 for assertiveness and .727 for aggression (Duyan and Gelbal, 2016).

### **Data analysis**

Researchers should provide statistical information

demonstrating that assumptions such as homogeneity and normality for the planned analyses are met. Subsequently, they must confirm the analysis techniques they choose (Tozoğlu and Dursun, 2020). The results of the normality distribution analysis of the data are presented in Table 1.

The data were analyzed using the SPSS 22.00 software package. Descriptive analysis techniques such as frequency, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and percentage distribution were employed. For data showing a normal distribution, parametric tests were used. To identify differences between two independent variables and the subdimensions, the Independent-Sample T-Test was applied. For differences among subdimensions with more than two independent variables, a One-Way ANOVA test was conducted. For data not showing a normal distribution, nonparametric tests were utilized. To determine differences between two independent variables and the subdimensions, the Mann-Whitney U Test was applied. To identify differences among subdimensions with more than two independent variables, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used. Results were evaluated at a significance level of  $P < .050$ .

**Table 1.** Normality distribution test results.

	<b>Assertiveness</b>	<b>Aggressiveness</b>	<b>Passiveness</b>
N	566	566	566
Mean	29.6237	26.1237	25.6979
Median	31.0000	27.0000	26.0000
Std. Deviation	4.41976	5.88975	5.86897
<b>Skewness</b>	<b>-1.263</b>	<b>-.301</b>	<b>-.155</b>
Std. Error of Skewness	.103	.103	.103
<b>Kurtosis</b>	<b>2.547</b>	<b>.065</b>	<b>-.143</b>
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.205	.205	.205
Minimum	9.00	10.00	10.00
Maximum	36.00	40.00	40.00

When examining the results of the normality distribution test, it was found that for assertiveness, Skewness is -1.263 and Kurtosis is 2.547, for aggressiveness, Skewness is -0.301 and Kurtosis is 0.065, and for passiveness, Skewness is -0.155 and Kurtosis is -0.143. The Skewness and Kurtosis values for the assertiveness subdimension are not within the range of -2.0 to +2.0, and based on the statistical analysis results, it was observed that the data do not show a normal distribution, thus non-parametric tests should be applied. On the other hand, the Skewness and Kurtosis values for aggressiveness and passiveness fall within the -2.0 to +2.0 range, and the statistical analysis results indicate that these data show a normal distribution, suggesting that parametric tests

should be applied. Since the values fall within the limits specified by Tabachnik and Fidell (2015) and George and Mallery (2003) (-1 to +1; -1.5 to +1.5; -2.0 to +2.0), it is concluded that the dataset shows a normal distribution.

### **FINDINGS**

The study was conducted with a total of 566 participants, consisting of 305 females and 261 males. When examining the distribution of participants' engagement in sports activities, it was found that 272 participants engaged in sports, while 294 participants did not.

**Table 2.** Distribution of participants' personal information.

Variable		n	%
Gender	Female	305	53.9
	Male	261	46.1
	Total	566	100.0
Engagement in Sports	Yes	272	48.1
	No	294	51.9
Type of Sports Activity	Individual sports	126	46.3
	Team sports	96	35.3
	Both types of sports	50	18.4
Purposes for Engaging in Sports	Health	115	42.3
	Social activity	138	50.7
	Economic gain	19	7.0

Regarding the types of sports activities participants were involved in, it was observed that 126 participants engaged in individual sports, 96 participants in team sports, and 50 participants engaged in both types of sports. Among the

participants, 138 individuals reported engaging in sports for health purposes, 115 for social activities, and 19 for economic gain.

**Table 3.** T-test and Mann-Whitney U test results for the assertiveness subdimension by gender.

Subdimensions	Gender	n	$\bar{x}$	Sd	t	p	
*Aggressiveness	Female <sup>1</sup>	305	24.98	5.82	<b>-5.087</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>2&gt;1</b>
	Male <sup>2</sup>	261	27.46	5.70			
*Passiveness	Female <sup>1</sup>	305	25.54	5.68	-.702	.483	
	Male <sup>2</sup>	261	25.89	6.09			
**Assertiveness			Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	p	
	Female <sup>1</sup>	305	289.52	88303.00	.950	.342	
Male <sup>2</sup>	261	276.47	72158.00				

\* Independent samples T-test, \*\* Mann-Whitney U Test.

In the t-test analysis conducted to determine the differences between genders in the aggression and passivity subscales, it was found that there was a significant difference in the aggression subscale at the  $p < 0.050$  level ( $p = 0.000 < 0.050$ ). The aggression levels of male participants were found to be higher than those of female participants. However, in the Mann-Whitney U test analysis conducted to determine the differences in the assertiveness subscale between genders, no significant difference was found between the genders. (Table 4)

In the t-test analysis conducted to determine the differences between participants who engage in sports activities and those who do not in the aggression and passivity subscales, it was found that there was a significant difference in the passivity subscale at the  $p < 0.050$  level ( $p = 0.019 < 0.050$ ). It was concluded that participants who do not engage in sports activities have higher passivity levels than those who do. However, in the Mann-Whitney U test analysis conducted to determine the differences in the assertiveness subscale based on participation in sports activities, no significant difference was found between participants. (Table 5)

**Table 4.** T-test results for aggression and passivity subscales based on participation in sports activities.

Subdimensions	Sports activity	n	$\bar{x}$	Sd	t	p	
*Aggressiveness	Yes <sup>1</sup>	272	26.47	5.78	<b>.232</b>	.630	
	No <sup>2</sup>	294	25.80	5.98			
*Passiveness	Yes <sup>1</sup>	272	25.10	6.27	6.088	<b>.019</b>	<b>2&gt;1</b>
	No <sup>2</sup>	294	26.25	5.43			
**Assertiveness	Yes <sup>1</sup>	272	<b>Mean Rank</b> 296.92		<b>Sum of Ranks</b> 80761.00	<b>Z</b> -1.884	<b>p</b> .060
	No <sup>2</sup>	294	271.09		797700.00		

*\*Independent samples T-test, \*\* Mann-Whitney U Test.*

**Table 5.** One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Kruskal-Wallis test results for aggression and passivity subscales based on type of sports activity.

Subdimensions	Sports activity type	n	$\bar{x}$	Sd	F	P
*Aggressiveness	Individual sports	126	26.73	5.80	.505	.604
	Team sports	96	26.50	5.80		
	Both	50	25.76	5.75		
	Total	272	26.47	5.78		
*Passiveness	Individual sports	126	24.98	6.48	.041	.960
	Team sports	96	25.18	6.19		
	Both	50	25.24	5.98		
	Total	272	25.10	6.27		
**Assertiveness	Individual sports	126	<b>Mean rank</b> 145.87		<b>df</b> 2	<b>p</b> .109
	Team sports	96	123.55			
	Both	50	137.76			
	Total	272				

*\* One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA); \*\* Kruskal-Wallis Test.*

In the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) conducted to determine differences between participants based on the type of sports activity in the aggression and passivity subscales, no significant differences were found in either subscale ( $p > 0.050$ ). The results indicate that the type of sports activity does not affect the aggression or passivity levels of participants. In the Kruskal-Wallis test conducted to determine the differences in the assertiveness subscale based on the type of sports activity, no significant difference was found between participants either ( $p = 0.109$ ).

In the One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) conducted to determine differences based on the purpose of sports activity in the aggression and passivity subscales, no significant differences were found in either subscale ( $p > 0.050$ ). The results indicate that the purpose of the sports activity does not affect the aggression or passivity levels of the participants. In the Kruskal-Wallis test conducted to determine the differences in the assertiveness subscale based on the purpose of sports activity, no significant differences were found between participants either ( $p = 0.570$ ). (Table 6)

**Table 6.** One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) results for aggression and passivity subscales based on the purpose of sports activity.

Subdimensions	Purpose	n	$\bar{x}$	Sd	F	P
Aggressiveness	Health	115	26.50	6.61	.272	.762
	Social activity	138	26.33	5.08		
	Economic gain	19	27.37	5.40		
	Total	272	26.47	5.78		
Passiveness	Health	115	24.64	7.10	.627	.535
	Social activity	138	25.52	5.52		
	Economic gain	19	24.90	6.12		
	Total	272	25.10	6.27		
**Assertiveness	Health	115	142.06		2	.570
	Social activity	138	133.24			
	Economic gain	19	126.53			
	Total	272				

\* One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA); \*\* Kruskal-Wallis Test.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the subscales of passivity, assertiveness, and aggression, it was found that there is a significant difference in the aggression subscale between genders, with males exhibiting higher aggression levels than females. However, no significant differences were observed in the passivity and assertiveness subscales. In a study by Üzüm et al. (2016) investigating the relationship between anger levels and anger styles in individuals who do and do not engage in sports, no significant gender difference was found in anger levels. However, they identified that the arithmetic mean of anger control was higher in males than females. Albayrak and Kutlu (2010), in their study on the anger expression styles of adolescents aged 16 to 18 and their relationship with various factors, concluded that female students had lower anger control scores than male students. The results of these studies support our findings. Anderson and Huesmann (2003) argue that the higher aggression levels in males compared to females can be attributed to biological factors, such as higher testosterone levels in men. In a study by Dervent, Arslanoğlu, and Şenel (2010), no significant differences were found between genders in the passivity and aggression subscales. In contrast, Tutkun et al. (2010) found that female athletes had higher aggression scores than male athletes, which does not align with the findings of our study.

In the subscale of passivity, a significant difference was found, with individuals who did not engage in sports having higher levels of passivity than those who did. In a study by Sezan (2016), which examined the anger expression styles of university students, it was found that students

who engaged in sports had higher anger levels compared to those who did not. In their study, Temel et al. (2015) observed that sports teachers exhibited higher levels of expressed anger and were able to express their anger more easily than teachers who did not participate in sports. Karagün and Çağlayan (2014), in their evaluation of athletes' anger levels in relation to violence exposure, found that as the expression of anger increased, anger control also improved. Certel and Bahadır (2012) noted that athletes were more successful in controlling their anger.

No significant differences were found in the subscales of passivity, assertiveness, and aggression based on the type of sport participants engage in or their motives. Uluşık and Pepe (2015), and Demir et al. (2017), in their studies, found that individuals who participate in individual sports tend to have higher levels of outward anger and are more likely to display aggressive behaviors compared to those involved in team sports. Tutkun et al. (2010) found that athletes with better anger control are more likely to engage in team sports. Şahan (2008) examined the impact of sports activities on the socialization phase of university students and found that the goal of healthy living was prioritized over other motivations by 28%. People assess their lives by comparing them to a standard concept of life they create in their minds. Life satisfaction is the result of comparing what individuals expect from life with what they have (Han et al., 2024). In our study, the goal of engaging in sports for health reasons was found to be the most prominent motivation.

Erden (2007) stated that the main purpose of sports is to provide physical development, as well as spiritual and mental development, to keep the individual fit, and to

ensure that life is enjoyed (Özdevecioğlu and Yalçın, 2010). Belli (2019) stated that sports, which improves the health of individuals both physically and mentally, is a biological, pedagogical and social phenomenon that regulates their social behavior and raises their mental and motoric characteristics to a certain level (Turan et al., 2022). Definitions that present the contribution of sports to the psychological and social development of individuals emphasize the importance of sports activity.

It is important to provide opportunities for the expression of anger from the early years of life to help university students develop anger control, and to emphasize training on the most appropriate ways to express it. The understanding that anger is a natural and universal emotion that should be expressed in appropriate ways should be learned and taught from childhood. It is recommended that studies examining university students' anger control levels in relation to sports and other variables be conducted over a longer period and with a larger sample size in order to obtain more comprehensive results.

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