

The Role of Personality in Athletes' Professionalism

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the complex interplay among personality types and professionalism in the realm of sports. The objective is to explore the relationship between personality traits, sex, age, experience in national teams, the sport they engage in, their accomplishments, duration of their sports careers, and levels of professionalism in athletes. The study involves 761 active sports participants, aged 18 to 38, selected through the snowball sampling technique. Data collection relies on the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) to evaluate personality types and the Professionalism Scale for Athletes (PSA) to measure professionalism levels. Results reveal no significant sex-based differences in personality types or professionalism levels, although females exhibit advantages in specific personality sub-dimensions. Athletes with national team experience and those engaged in individual sports demonstrate heightened professionalism, emphasizing unique opportunities and personal responsibility. Those with international and regional achievements, older athletes, and those with prolonged sports engagement display elevated professionalism levels. The correlation between personality dimensions (openness to experience, agreeableness, and extraversion) and professionalism underscores the multifaceted nature of professional behavior. In conclusion, the study provides comprehensive insights into the relationships shaping athletes' professionalism, emphasizing the need for continued exploration to uncover additional contributing factors.

Keywords: Professionalism, Personality type, Athletes.

INTRODUCTION

Professionalism is a concept extensively examined across various disciplines in the literature (Hilferty, 2008). In the business world, professionalism is often synonymously used with “success” or expressing expected behaviors of individuals in specific professions (Tichenor and & Tichenor, 2005). Professionalism is a multidimensional structure encompassing attitudes and behaviors related to one’s profession, equating it to the achievement of high standards (Boyt et al., 2001). Englund (1996) emphasizes the qualities, skills, and competencies necessary for the successful execution of a profession.

The expression of professionalism is exemplified by executing a task with precision, care, and minimal errors (Adiguzel et al., 2011). In the era of globalization and increasing competition, professionalism becomes an essential and inescapable need, integral not only to meeting the demands of the time but also to improving the quality of life for individuals (Arsita et al., 2019). At its simplest, professionalism involves commitment to work, possessing strong competence, and broad insight, while also being described as a state of being professional (Altiok & Ustun, 2014). Considering various definitions, professionalism emerges as a lifelong developmental process informed by the effective, ethical, and safe application of human skills (Ludwig, 2020).

In general terms, an individual can be considered professional if they meet three criteria: possessing expertise to perform tasks in their field, establishing standards in their professional domains, and adhering to established professional ethical rules (Lestari & Achadi, 2016). Professionalism is often attributed to a professional’s spirit, attitude, character, passion, and values (Khareng et al., 2020), and it is interpreted as having high skills in fulfilling professional duties (Mujahidah et al., 2020). According to Merriam-Webster (2018), professionalism involves behaviors, goals, or qualities attempting to describe a professional person or profession.

Reviewing the literature reveals diverse perspectives on professionalism, particularly in foundational disciplines like education and health (Hilferty, 2008; Jones & Green, 2006). The scope of professionalism extends across various domains, impacting employees, managers, academics, and teachers irrespective of their positions in any workplace. The application of professionalism is also evident in the realm of sports, where athlete professionalism encompasses continuous development, openness to criticism, collaboration, effective communication, responsibility, coping with challenges, and serving as role models (Wicker & Frick, 2016). With the rapid evolution of information and technologies in sports, understanding and measuring professionalism in athletes is crucial for managing relationships with clubs, teammates, and coaches. Within the dynamic landscape of sports, where the embodiment of professionalism is integral, a deeper examination of individual personality types is warranted. The interplay between professionalism and personality becomes a focal point, as the distinct traits and characteristics that define an athlete’s approach to their craft can markedly influence not only their on-field performance but also extend to shape broader facets of their personal and interpersonal dynamics.

From an individual standpoint, personality encompasses mental, emotional, and physical variations, while socially, it denotes distinct characteristics and roles that set an individual apart

within society. The term “personality” in Western languages corresponds to the Latin “persona,” originating from masks used in Roman Theatre to support actors in portraying predefined roles. Over time, this symbolic meaning shifted, losing its equivalence to the real person (Allport, 1937). The concept of personality, with its diverse definitions across various fields, extends beyond the confines of our contemporary understanding due to decades of exploration. Allport’s (1937) extensive study revealed over fifty distinct definitions of personality, encompassing realms such as psychology, law, and technology.

Given the complexity of human personality and its varied definitions, researchers approach the concept from different perspectives. Some emphasize social success, associating personality with individuals who express themselves confidently, engage actively in social activities, excel in skill-based sports, or play musical instruments (Luthans, 2010). Others focus on specific dominant traits when defining personality (Buchanan & Huczynski, 1997). In the vast landscape of personality research, the presence of comprehensive models plays a pivotal role. The Five Factor Personality Model (Hendricks et al., 1999), emerging from extensive experimental research, stands as a notable example, providing a thorough classification of personality traits. Researchers like Costa and McCrae (2012), Goldberg (1993), and Zhang (2002) have underscored the significance of this model, which encompasses five fundamental dimensions: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness. The first dimension of this model, Extraversion, includes traits like warmth, assertiveness, and high energy levels, enabling extraverts to excel in social interactions and cope more effectively with stressful situations (Wayne et al., 2004). The second dimension, Agreeableness, characterized by traits such as trust and compassion, reduces interpersonal conflicts and allows individuals to receive more support from their surroundings (Zellers & Perrewé, 2001). Conscientiousness, the third dimension, is defined by competence and reliability, facilitating effective planning and organization for positive outcomes. Neuroticism, reflecting emotional instability, may impact task performance and time management due to negative emotions. Finally, Openness, the fifth dimension, includes open-mindedness and creativity; individuals with these traits adapt well to changes and creatively resolve conflicts (Wayne et al., 2004). The Five-Factor Personality Model provides a valuable framework for understanding and explaining individuals’ unique characteristics.

Shaped by diverse factors like genetics, family dynamics, cultural influences, and societal structures, an individual’s personality is a complex interplay (Parikh & Gupta, 2010; Robbins & Judge, 2012). Moving into the realm of professionalism, the concept resists a universal definition, acknowledged for its significance yet remaining somewhat elusive (Mackey & Evans, 2011). According to Ludwig (2020), professionalism is better grasped through practical observation. Just as personality is dynamically characterized, professionalism serves as both a way of conceptualizing oneself and a behavioral pattern, influencing an individual’s conduct in various contexts (Björkström et al., 2008).

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between personality traits according to Five-Factor Personality Model, sex, age, experience in national teams, the sport they engage in, their accomplishments, duration of their sports careers, and levels of professionalism in athletes. This understanding is important for the optimal approach to development of professionalism in

athletes, which can benefit not only the athletes themselves through continuous development but also sports organizations and coaches through factors such as improved communication and greater athlete responsibility.

METHOD

Participants

In the study, we reached out to a total of 761 athletes, aged between 18 and 38 years (Mean age = 22.16, SD = 5.32). However, two participants who provided incomplete information were subsequently excluded from the analysis. The participants were recruited using the snowball sampling technique. Snowball sampling involves identifying initial participants and then relying on them to refer or recruit additional participants, creating a network-like structure for sampling. This method is particularly useful when the target population is challenging to access directly (Noy, 2008). This study's limitations are confined to factors such as sex, age, education level, type of sport, national team experience, and success level.

Research Procedure

This research conducted in Ankara, Turkey, in 2023. The Professionalism Scale for Athletes and Ten-Item Personality Inventory, utilized in the research procedure, were administered to participants through Google Forms. Subsequently, the links to these surveys were sent to the targeted sports participants via email. The email communication included a brief introduction to the purpose of the study, instructions on how to complete the surveys, and assurances regarding the confidentiality of the responses. Participants were encouraged to respond truthfully and thoughtfully to the items presented in the surveys.

Data Collection Tools

Personal Information Form

In Personal Information Form (PIF), we asked participants' sex, age, education level, type of sports, national team experience, and success level. The education level consists of *High School*, *Associate degree*, *Undergraduate*, *Graduate*. For the type of sports, they had to select either *individual sports* or *team sports*. For the national team experience, we asked athletes whether they participated in the national team at least once in the sports branch in which they continued their careers. *No success group*: Athletes with no notable regional, national, or international achievements. *Local levels*: Athletes excelling within their local community or region, with victories in local tournaments or leagues. *National level*: Athletes achieving success on a national scale, representing their country in competitions and receiving recognition at the national level. *International level*: Athletes excelling globally, representing their country in prestigious international events, earning medals, and contributing significantly to their sport on an international scale.

Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI)

Ten-Item Personality Inventory was developed by Gosling et al. (2003) to evaluate personality types. Its adaptation to Turkish was made by Atak (2013). The original form consists of 5 sub-

dimensions and 10 items, namely Openness to Experiences (2 items), Agreeableness (2 items), Emotional Stability (2 items), Conscientiousness (2 items), and Extraversion (2 items). The inventory, which has a 7-point Likert type structure, is scored “Disagree strongly” (1), “Disagree moderately” (2), “Disagree a little” (3), “Neither agree nor disagree” (4), “Agree a little” (5), “Agree moderately” (6), and “Agree Strongly” (7) in the format. In scoring the scale, total scores are not calculated; instead, scores are computed for each sub-scale individually. Considering the scores obtained by individuals on each sub-scale, this scoring method aims to identify the dominant personality trait in individuals and assign them to one of the personality characteristics. When scoring this scale, which is designed to determine the individual’s primary personality trait based on the scores received from each sub-scale, it is assumed that the personality trait corresponding to the highest score in a specific sub-dimension is the individual’s fundamental personality trait. This approach provides a nuanced understanding of an individual’s personality by recognizing the prominence of specific traits within the framework of sub-scales rather than generating an overall total score.

Conceptual Explanations of Sub-Dimensions of TIPI

Openness to Experiences (OE): This dimension reflects traits like adventurousness, openness to change, curiosity, independence, freethinking, analytical thinking, and non-traditionalism. Those high in openness tend to have an active imagination, aesthetic sensitivity, emotional receptivity, diverse interests, intellectual curiosity, and independent judgment, while those at the lower end exhibit more straightforward attitudes, and adherence to traditional norms (McCrae & Costa, 1987; McCrae & Costa, 2003).

Agreeableness (AG): This dimension includes traits such as honesty, altruism, trust, compliance, humility, and compassion. Agreeable individuals are characterized by kindness, selflessness, trustworthiness, obedience, humility, and compassion, while those on the antagonism end display traits like pessimism, rudeness, insecurity, reluctance to collaborate, lack of compassion, anger, and opportunism (Costa & McCrae, 2008).

Emotional Stability (ES): This dimension involves traits like calmness, relaxation, composure, security, and maintaining healthy self-awareness (McCrae & Costa, 2003).

Conscientiousness (CO): Encompassing traits like achievement striving, competence, task-focused behavior, organization, self-discipline, and prudence, conscientious individuals excel in self-management and goal-oriented behavior, while those at the opposite end struggle with organization, setting standards, and lack self-discipline and energy (McCrae & Costa, 1987).

Extraversion (EX): Traits such as liveliness, outgoingness, talkativeness, social engagement, and enthusiasm characterize this dimension. Extraverts typically exhibit high energy, a positive outlook, and responsiveness to rewards, distinguishing them from introverts (McCrae & Costa, 2003; Somer, 1998).

Professionalism Scale for Athletes (PSA)

The professionalism scale used to assess participants in the study was developed by Gungor et al. (2022). The scale comprises a total of 11 items and consists of a single subscale. Additionally, there is no need for reverse coding any item on the scale. The scale is of the 5-point Likert type,

with response options ranging from “Strongly Disagree” (1), “Disagree” (2), “Neutral” (3), “Agree” (4), to “Strongly Agree” (5). The potential scores on the scale can range from a minimum of 11 to a maximum of 55. Furthermore, it can be stated that as the scores obtained from the scale increase, the level of professionalism among athletes is presumed to increase. This scale is designed to assess professional behaviors in athletes. Developed to understand and measure professionalism in athletes, this scale also measures various attributes such as athletes’ knowledge, skills, and talents related to their sport, as well as their openness to continuous development, communication skills, sense of responsibility, ability to cope with challenges, and capacity to serve as role models in society. By evaluating the synthesis of these attributes and professional behaviors, it serves as a tool to determine the level of professionalism in athletes.

Analysis of the Data

Microsoft Excel and SPSS 22.0 computer program were used for the statistical analysis of the data obtained from the inventories. Normality assumptions were checked with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and it was determined that the data did not meet the normality assumptions. However, there is an increasing number of opinions in the related literature that normality tests are not sufficient in Likert-type scales (Hair et al., 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). For this reason, the prominent skewness and kurtosis values for the normality assumptions were examined. In this context, the skewness and kurtosis values (-2.0, +2.0) suggested by George and Mallery (2010) and McKillup, (2012) were taken into account and the distribution was found to be normal. In this direction, the T-Test was used to determine the differences between individuals’ personality types and professionalism levels according to the sex variable, national team experience, and categories of sports. Also, One-way ANOVA test was utilized for comparison of education and success levels of the participants, and Games-Howell is employed to understand the difference between groups of the variables. In addition, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationships between the variables, and Multiple Linear Regression analysis was used to determine the power of the independent variable (Personality) in predicting the dependent variable (Professionalism). The significance value was set as $p < .05$ for each test performed.

The Cronbach’s alpha values for the research scales were found to be .64 for the TIPI and .87 for the PSA.

RESULTS

Table 1: Information on Descriptive Characteristics of the Participants

Variables	Groups	n	%
Sex	Male	468	61.7
	Female	291	38.3
	Total	759	100.0
Education level	High School	295	38.9
	Associate degree	120	15.8
	Undergraduate	307	40.4
	Graduate	37	4.9
	Total	759	100.0
Category of sports	Individual sports	256	33.7
	Team sports	503	66.3
	Total	759	100.0
National team experience	Yes	152	20
	No	607	80
	Total	759	100.0
Success level	No success	328	43.2
	Local levels	110	14.5
	National levels	193	25.4
	Worldwide levels	128	16.9
	Total	759	100
n: Sample size			

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for the participants involved in the study.

Table 2: Average and Standard Deviation Values of the Inventories

Scales	Sub-Dimensions	n	Σ	Sd
TIPI	OE	759	6.86	2.45
	AG	759	8.50	2.29
	ES	759	7.90	2.52
	CO	759	8.41	1.85
	EX	759	8.18	2.06
PSA	PSA Total	759	48.39	6.22

Table 2 provides details on the mean scores and standard deviations for the scales used.

Table 3: T-Test Results of TIPI sub-dimensions and PSA by Sex Variable

Sub-Dimensions	Sex	n	Σ	Sd	t	df	p
OE	Male	468	6.90	2.55	.563	666.038	.573
	Female	291	6.80	2.28			
AG	Male	468	8.62	2.36	1.944	656.912	.052
	Female	291	8.30	2.16			
ES	Male	468	7.76	2.58	-1.962	757	.050
	Female	291	8.13	2.41			
CO	Male	468	8.35	1.87	-1.292	757	.197
	Female	291	8.52	1.81			
EX	Male	468	8.17	2.14	-.151	757	.880
	Female	291	8.20	1.92			
PSA	Male	468	48.06	6.47	-1.933	667.531	.054
	Female	291	48.93	5.77			

OE: Openness to Experiences, AG: Agreeableness, ES: Emotional Stability, CO: Conscientiousness, EX: Extraversion, PSA: Professionalism Scale for Athletes, Σ : Sum, Sd: Standard deviation, t: t-value, df: degrees of freedom, p: Reliability co-efficient

Table 3 presents the results of an investigation into the participants' personality types by sex. The analysis reveals no statistically significant differences between the groups based on the sub-dimensions of the TIPI and the PSA ($p > .05$).

Table 4: One-Way ANOVA Results of TIPI by Education Levels

Sub-dimensions	Groups	n	Vs	Ss	df	Ms	F	p	Games Howell
OE	A: High school	295	Inter-group	103.005	3	34.335	5.816	.001*	C>A
	B: Associate degree	120		4457.082	755	5.903			
	C: Undergraduate	307	Intra-group						
	D: Graduate	37							
AG	A: High school	295	Inter-group	61.699	3	20.566	3.945	.008*	C>A
	B: Associate degree	120		3936.043	755	5.213			
	C: Undergraduate	307	Intra-group						
	D: Graduate	37							
ES	A: High school	295	Inter-group	65.609	3	21.870	3.467	.016*	C>A
	B: Associate degree	120		4762.749	755	6.308			
	C: Undergraduate	307	Intra-group						
	D: Graduate	37							
CO	A: High school	295	Inter-group	12.862	3	4.287	1.249	.291	
	B: Associate degree	120		2591.905	755	3.433			
	C: Undergraduate	307	Intra-group						
	D: Graduate	37							
EX	A: High school	295	Inter-group	18.700	3	6.233	1.464	.223	
	B: Associate degree	120		3215.358	755	4.259			
	C: Undergraduate	307	Intra-group						
	D: Graduate	37							

OE: Openness to Experiences, AG: Agreeableness, ES: Emotional Stability, CO: Conscientiousness, EX: Extraversion, n: Sample size, Vs: Variance source, Ss: Sum of squares, df: degrees of freedom, Ms: Mean square, F: F-statistic, p: Reliability co-efficient, *p<.05

In table 4, the personality types (Openness to experience, Agreeableness, and Emotional stability) of the participants are examined in terms of education level variable. It is found that there is statistically significant difference between undergraduate and high school groups on OE, AG, and ES (p<.05). It means that who holds undergraduate degree has higher scores than participants who have high school degree.

Table 5: T-Test Results of TIPI sub-dimensions and PSA by National Team Experience

Sub-dimensions	National Team Experience	n	Σ	Sd	t	df	p
OE	Yes	152	6.54	2.59	-1.821	757	.069
	No	607	6.95	2.41			
AG	Yes	152	8.61	2.20	.691	757	.490
	No	607	8.47	2.31			
ES	Yes	152	8.17	2.37	1.446	757	.148
	No	607	7.84	2.55			
CO	Yes	152	8.32	1.54	-.819	281.010	.413
	No	607	8.44	1.92			
EX	Yes	152	8.35	2.13	1.114	757	.266
	No	607	8.14	2.04			
PSA total	Yes	152	49.76	5.53	3.319	259.751	.001*
	No	607	48.05	6.34			

OE: Openness to Experiences, AG: Agreeableness, ES: Emotional Stability, CO: Conscientiousness, EX: Extraversion, PSA: Professionalism Scale for Athletes, Σ : Sum, Sd: Standard deviation, t: t-value, df: degrees of freedom, p: Reliability co-efficient, *p<.05

In table 5, personality types and professionalism levels of participants are evaluated. It is found that there is solely statistically significant difference on professionalism levels of athletes who participated in the study (p<.05).

Table 6: T-Test Results of TIPI and PSA According to the Variable of Sport Type

Sub-Dimensions	Groups	n	Σ	Sd	t	df	p
OE	Individual sports	256	6.88	2.49	.106	757	.916
	Team sports	503	6.86	2.43			
AG	Individual sports	256	8.44	2.30	-.463	757	.644
	Team sports	503	8.53	2.29			
ES	Individual sports	256	7.73	2.47	-1.310	757	.191
	Team sports	503	7.99	2.54			
CO	Individual sports	256	8.60	1.89	2.023	757	.043*
	Team sports	503	8.32	1.82			
EX	Individual sports	256	8.14	2.08	-.454	757	.650
	Team sports	503	8.21	2.05			
PSA total	Individual sports	256	48.33	6.37	-.191	757	.848
	Team sports	503	48.42	6.14			

TIPI: Ten-Item Personality Inventory, OE: Openness to Experiences, AG: Agreeableness, ES: Emotional Stability, CO: Conscientiousness, EX: Extraversion, PSA: Professionalism Scale for Athletes, Σ : Sum, Sd: Standard deviation, t: t-value, df: degrees of freedom, p: Reliability co-efficient, $p < .05$

In table 6, personality types and professionalism levels of participants are tested. It is seen that there is statistically significant difference between individual sport players and team sports players on conscientiousness sub-dimension of TIPI ($p < .05$).

Table 7: Results of One-Way ANOVA for PSA based on Players' Achievement Levels

Scales	Groups	n	Vs	Ss	df	Ms	F	p	Games Howell
PSA	A: Worldwide levels	128	Intergroup	499.275	3	166.425	4.354	.005*	A>D C>D
	B: National levels	193							
	C: Local levels	110							
	D: No success	328							

PSA: Professionalism Scale for Athletes, n: Variance Source, Vs: Variance source, Ss: Sum of squares, df: Degrees of freedom, Ms: Mean Square, F: F-statistic, p: Reliability co-efficient, $p > .05$

In table 7, professionalism levels of athletes are tested according to athletes' success levels in their professional sport. It is found that those who achieved worldwide and local levels of trophies show higher scores on PSA than athletes who have no success ($p < .05$).

Table 8: Correlation Analysis Results of TIPI and PSA by Years of Engaging Sports

Variable		OE	AG	ES	CO	EX	PSA
Sport year	r	-.079	.051	.002	-.050	.032	.146
	p	.029*	.160	.951	.172	.376	.000**
	n	759	759	759	759	759	759
Age	r	-.060	.059	.039	-.090	.023	.096
	p	.101	.104	.286	.013*	.534	.008*
	n	759	759	759	759	759	759

OE: Openness to Experiences, AG: Agreeableness, ES: Emotional Stability, CO: Conscientiousness, EX: Extraversion, PSA: Professionalism Scale for Athletes, r: Correlation co-efficient, p: Reliability co-efficient, n: Sample size, *p<.05, **p<.001

In table 8, an examination of the scores obtained from the PSA and TIPI scales by participants, based on sports years, was conducted through correlation analysis. Accordingly, a statistically significant correlation was found between the sports years and the Openness to Experiences subscale, as well as the PSA. Also, it was found that the conscientiousness sub-dimension and PSA are correlated with age, and it is statistically significant (p<.05).

Table 9: The Results of the Correlation Analysis on TIPI Sub-dimensions and PSA

Sub-Dimensions of TIPI		OE	AG	ES	CO	EX
PSA total	r	-.097	.085	-.014	.055	.147
	p	.007*	.019*	.695	.132	.000**
	n	759	759	759	759	759

OE: Openness to Experiences, AG: Agreeableness, ES: Emotional Stability, CO: Conscientiousness, EX: Extraversion, PSA: Professionalism Scale for Athletes, r: Correlation co-efficient, p: Reliability co-efficient, n: Sample size, *p<.05, **p<.001

In table 9, the correlational relationship between the sub-dimensions of TIPI and PSA was examined. It was found that there is a significant correlational relationship between Openness to Experiences, Agreeableness, Extraversion, and PSA (p<.05).

Findings Related to Regression Analysis

Table 10: The results of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis on Predicting Professionalism Based on Personality Types

Predictive Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p	Tolerance	VIF	Model (p)
(Stable)	44.244	1.446		30.603	.000**			
OE	-.347	.094	-.137	-3.679	.000**	.912	1.096	
AG	.244	.098	.090	2.474	.014*	.956	1.046	
CO	-.150	.093	-.061	-1.603	.109	.878	1.139	.000**
ES	.186	.128	.056	1.457	.145	.870	1.150	
EX	.498	.113	.165	4.397	.000**	.892	1.121	

R=.222, Adjusted R²=.043, F=7.801, OE: Openness to Experiences, AG: Agreeableness, ES: Emotional Stability, CO: Conscientiousness, EX: Extraversion, B: Unstandardized Beta, t: t test statistic, VIF: Variance inflation factor, *p<.05, **p<.001,

In table 10, a regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between participants' personality types and the level of professionalism. The model was found to be statistically significant (p<.001). Additionally, it was observed that the Openness to Experiences, Agreeableness, and Extraversion sub-dimensions collectively predicted professionalism by 4%, and this relationship was statistically significant (p<.05).

DISCUSSION

According to the data obtained from the research findings, there was no significant difference in personality types among the participants based on sex (p>.05). This suggests that within the context of the current study and consistent with findings from other research, sex does not seem to have a significant impact on overall personality types and professionalism levels. The absence of a substantial sex-based difference in personality traits among participants in this study aligns with similar results reported in the literature (Kaplan et al., 2015; Karabag, 2019; Kose, 2020; Unal, 2020). In addition, Schoonover (2016) conducted a study comparing the personality traits of athletes and non-athletes. The study, which included 120 participants, found no significant differences in personality types based on gender among the athletes. On the other hand, significant differences favoring women were identified in specific personality sub-dimensions across various studies: Emotional Stability in Tatlilioglu's (2014) study, Conscientiousness in Pulkkinen's (1996) research, and Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness in Taskinoz's (2022) work. Moreover, Filho et al. (2005) investigated the personality traits of athletes and non-athletes, specifically exploring gender differences. Contrary to the current findings, their study revealed significant differences in personality types based on gender among both athletes and non-athletes. These findings contribute to the broader understanding of the relationship between sex and personality traits, suggesting that the impact of sex on personality may vary across different studies. The stability of personality types

regardless of sex suggests that, at a broader level, individual differences in personality may not be inherently linked to one's sex identity (Eagly & Wood, 1999; Wood & Eagly, 2002). These consistent findings contribute to our understanding of the universality and robustness of personality traits across diverse demographic factors, emphasizing the importance of exploring the complexities of individual differences beyond sex distinctions.

In the current study, professionalism did not exhibit a statistically significant difference based on sex ($p > .05$). It underscores the notion that dedication and work ethic in pursuing professional objectives are not influenced by sex, emphasizing a shared commitment and capability across diverse individuals. Traditionally, sports have been regarded as a domain where sex distinctions should not dictate one's capacity for professionalism (Walton, 2013). Surprisingly, the existing literature lacks comprehensive studies examining the nuanced interaction between sex and professionalism in sports. This void calls for a concerted effort to explore how societal expectations, cultural influences, and institutional structures may shape the relationship of sex and professionalism in the sports arena. Moreover, it is imperative to emphasize that professionalism is an essential requirement in sports for both sexes, regardless of the type of sports being done. No matter the athletic discipline, the pursuit of professionalism is a shared necessity. Athletes, irrespective of sex, are expected to embody a high level of commitment, dedication, and adherence (Kirby & Demers, 2013) to ethical standards to be considered professionals in their respective fields.

In the current study, while there was no observed differentiation in personality types among athletes with national team experience ($p > .05$), a statistically significant advantage in professionalism levels was identified in favor of athletes who have national team experience ($p < .05$). These findings emphasize the potential impact of national team exposure on the development of professional attributes among athletes. Several factors may contribute to the higher professionalism levels observed among athletes with national team experience because national team environments often provide athletes with unique opportunities for exposure to elite competition, advanced training methodologies, and increased visibility on the international stage (Baur & Lehmann, 2008). Additionally, the rigorous selection process and competitive nature of representing a national team may foster a heightened sense of commitment, discipline, and accountability (Barth et al., 2018; Güllich, 2013). These factors collectively contribute to the cultivation of a more professional mindset among athletes with national team experience. It is also necessary to consider that athletes with a higher degree of professionalism may more frequently achieve the highest level in sports. For a complete understanding of the impact of national team experience on the degree of professionalism, longitudinal studies will be needed.

In this study, a statistically significant difference was found only in the Conscientiousness sub-dimension, favoring individuals engaged in individual sports based on the variable of the type of sport practiced ($p < .05$). It is possible to find studies that support these results (Eysenck et al., 1982; Nia & Besharat, 2010). This suggests that, concerning personality traits, individuals participating in individual sports exhibit a distinct advantage in conscientiousness compared to those participating in team sports. Athletes participating in individual sports typically bear the sole responsibility for their performance outcomes. Unlike team sports where success relies on collective effort (Folkman, 1984), individual sports demand a high degree of personal accountability (Hanrahan & Cerin, 2009;

Nia & Besharat, 2010; Nicholls, 1989). The absence of teammates to share the burden of success or failure places a premium on self-discipline and commitment. Athletes in individual sports often develop a heightened awareness of the direct correlation between their efforts and achievements, leading to an intrinsic motivation to uphold a strong sense of responsibility.

Concerning the variable of athletes' achievements, a statistically significant difference in professionalism levels has been observed between athletes who have secured international and regional rankings and those who have not achieved notable success ($p < .05$). The findings reveal that athletes with international and regional trophies demonstrate a distinct level of professionalism compared to their counterparts without significant achievements. Athletes achieving international and regional sporting success often display heightened professionalism compared to those without notable achievements. This is attributed to their unwavering commitment (De Bosscher et al., 2006), effective pressure management skills (Perry, 2020), goal-setting proficiency (Nicholls, 1989), access to broader professional networks (Côté & Gilbert, 2009), and their roles as influential leaders and role models (Lockwood et al., 2002; Wicker & Frick, 2016) within their sports communities. These factors collectively contribute to a more professional approach to their athletic endeavors and overall careers. These results suggest that a higher degree of professionalism could be an important part of athletic success.

This study explored the correlational relationship between age, sporting years, TIPI, and PSA. The findings revealed statistically significant correlations between sporting years and Professionalism in Sport (PSA) ($p < .05$). Additionally, statistically significant relationship was found between age and PSA. This finding aligns with the notion that prolonged engagement in sports contributes to the development of a more professional mindset. Athletes who have been involved in sports for an extended period may exhibit higher levels of commitment, discipline, and adherence to the principles of professionalism (Nixon, 1993), which contributes to their overall approach to sports. Moreover, a meaningful statistical relationship was found between age and PSA ($p < .05$) that indicates that age is associated with the levels of professionalism in sports. Age is often associated with increased emotional intelligence (Farrelly & Austin, 2007) and maturity (Williams & McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 1999). Additionally, it may influence athletes to approach their sport careers with a greater degree of professionalism and understanding of the broader context. Older athletes may have demonstrated a sustained commitment to their sports over time, showcasing a professional dedication that evolves with age and experience.

The statistical analysis revealed significant correlations between professionalism and personality subdimensions indicating a negative correlation with OE ($p < .05$), and positive correlations with AG ($p < .05$) and EX ($p < .001$). The negative correlation between professionalism and OE suggests that athletes who exhibit higher levels of professionalism may adopt a more focused, structured, and disciplined approach to their sport. Individuals scoring lower on OE may prioritize routine, established methods, and adherence to standards, aligning with the conventional expectations (Feist, 1998) of professionalism in sports. The positive correlations with Agreeableness and Extraversion imply that athletes demonstrating greater agreeableness and extraversion traits tend to exhibit higher levels of professionalism. Agreeable individuals may excel in team dynamics, communication, and cooperation (Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2001; Donnellan et al., 2004)

essential components of professional conduct in team sports. Extraverted athletes may display assertiveness, a proactive approach (Feist, 1998), social skills (Costa & McCrae, 1992), and contributing positively to their professional demeanor. It appears that among the dimensions of the Five-Factor Model, extraversion and conscientiousness have the strongest relationship to sports performance (Allen & Laborde, 2014).

The results of the regression analysis indicate that the sub-dimensions of OE, AG, and EX collectively explain 4% of the variance in professionalism. This suggests that, while these personality dimensions contribute to understanding aspects of professionalism, there are likely other factors not accounted for in the current model. Due to the lack of scientific data on this issue, further research is needed for a complete understanding of the factors associated with professionalism in sports.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our study provides valuable insights into the relationship between professionalism, personality traits, and athletic success in sports. One key finding is that there were no significant differences in personality traits or professionalism levels based on sex. Moreover, although the results showed that there is a significant relationship between OE, AG, EX, and professionalism among athletes, the regression analysis reveals that these factors explain only 4% of the variance in professionalism, indicating that additional factors, yet to be explored through further research, contribute to professionalism in sports. Further, the findings indicate a significant association between a higher degree of professionalism and athletic success, as evidenced by achievements such as national team experience and international or regional rankings. Although causality cannot be determined based on our data, the results indicate a relationship between age, years of sports experience, and professionalism, suggesting that beyond success, the level of professionalism may also play a role in athletes' long-term participation in sports. This underscores the importance of further research to explore the factors influencing the development of professionalism in sports comprehensively.

These findings have practical implications for athlete training and development. Coaches and sports psychologists can utilize this knowledge to foster professionalism in athletes by emphasizing traits like discipline, accountability, and teamwork, regardless of the athletes' sex, type of sport or even personality traits according to the Five-Factor Model.

Future research should explore how these findings translate across different sports, regions, and levels of competition. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how professionalism evolves throughout an athlete's career, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between various personality models and professional success in sports.

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