

Exploring the emotional intelligence of leaders in governance of non-profit sports organizations: A voluntary vs. non-voluntary comparison

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Abstract

Research and practice have overlooked the emotional intelligence (EI) of senior leaders in non-profit organizations. Our research aims to explore and compare the EI capacity of two groups of such leaders; voluntary (i.e., presidents of sport federations) and remunerated (i.e., provincial directors of sports), in the sport governance system of Turkey. The results of a small-scale census revealed that voluntary leaders were older, had more years of sporting experience, and achieved higher EI scores ($p < .05$) than their paid counterparts. A regression analysis to examine whether age and sporting experience predicted the EI scores returned positive results for age only ($p < .01$). *A priori* and *post hoc* power analyses assured that results had sufficient power for practically meaningful implications (.95 and .85, respectively). We discuss the implications of our findings within the metamorphosis of sports governing bodies from a non-profit organization to a more business-like entity.

Keywords: sport management, leadership, sport governance, non-profit sport organizations, emotional intelligence

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INTRODUCTION

10 People and managing relationships with people are at the core of leadership. Within the non-
11 profit sports organization (NSO) context, where a leader's span of control includes voluntarily
12 hired individuals, leadership is about altruist people who have community-centered motivations
13 (such as using skills to help others) and are enticed into the solidaristic nature of uncoerced
14 works (Khoo and Engelhorn, 2011; Kolar *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, presiding over volunteering
15 workforce is more challenging for leaders who preponderantly are also volunteers, compared to
16 that over salaried workforce for paid leaders (Sport New Zealand, 2015a, p. 6). The human

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17 resources line of NSO research has reported this challenge in terms of shrinking supply of
18 volunteering labor (Wicker and Breuer, 2011; Breuer *et al.*, 2012; Shilbury, 2015, p. 109); and
19 escalating turnover rates for long-term official (Chelladurai, 2006) and leadership volunteers
20 (Wicker and Breuer, 2013). The same line of studies has also shown that commitment
21 terminations at NSOs are mostly due to volunteer dissatisfaction and lack of both encouragement
22 and recognition of voluntary labor (Bussell and Forbes, 2002; Breuer *et al.*, 2012). Among senior
23 leaders in NSOs, weak orientation towards collective solidarity and poor recognition are
24 reportedly the major causes of quitting voluntary leadership positions (Schlesinger *et al.*, 2013). In
25 summary, the human resources stream of NSO research indicates that the management of human
26 capital is weak in NSOs.

27 Retaining human capital in NSO settings depends highly on the nourishment of the
28 volunteer's emotional and social ties to the NSO and its members (Engelberg *et al.*, 2012;
29 Schlesinger *et al.*, 2013). Leadership research in both for-profit non-sport (Goleman, 1995; 1998;
30 George, 2000; Wong and Law, 2002) and non-profit sports settings (Schneider, 2012; Magnusen
31 and Perrewé, 2016;) suggests that maintaining a work environment that stimulates emotional and
32 social ties is more likely when emotionally intelligent leaders are in charge. Accordingly, in
33 countries where the sporting system is largely or entirely governed by NSOs, such as New
34 Zealand and Australia, emotional intelligence (EI) is a sought-after quality for senior leadership
35 positions (Sport New Zealand, 2015b, p. 19). However, our knowledge of EI in NSO leadership
36 is mostly based on inferences from research with camp leaders (Magyar *et al.*, 2007), team
37 captains (Stough *et al.*, 2009; Voight, 2014) and coaches (Thelwell *et al.*, 2008; Chan and Mallett,
38 2011; Hwang *et al.*, 2013). It seems therefore that the EI stream of leadership research in business
39 and sports domains had different focus during their emergence. The former mostly adopted a
40 top-down look by examining the EI of leaders at senior levels (e.g., Daniel Goleman's studies
41 with executives in the 1990s) whereas the latter has favoured a bottom-up look by focusing on
42 the EI of leaders at low-to-middle levels (e.g., coaches). A look at the qualities of volunteering
43 leaders taking up roles at board membership, executive or president levels through an EI lens has
44 mostly been overlooked in the NSO context.

45 It is, therefore, timely to attempt to fill this void as NSOs have been undergoing an
46 organizational metamorphosis to become more professionally governed bodies by benchmarking
47 against their commercial counterparts (Vos *et al.*, 2012; Maier *et al.*, 2016). However, the
48 motivation for this organizational change is predominantly the need to resolve the NSO's
49 endemic working capital problem (Singer and Yankey, 1991; Lasby and Sperling, 2007; Wicker,
50 Breuer and Hennings, 2012; Cordery *et al.*, 2013; Lu, 2016). A basic understanding of EI as a
51 desirable quality for leadership at the higher levels of NSO governance could grab attention to
52 other metamorphous dimensions, for instance, retaining human capital or leadership training.
53 Such basic understanding could also provide directions for future research in the emerging field
54 of EI in NSO context.

55 From an EI perspective, we therefore set ourselves a challenge to respond to the calls for
56 examining leadership qualities necessary for a volunteer to lead other volunteers (Brewis *et al.*,
57 2010) within sports governance systems (Chelladurai, 2006; Hoye, 2006; 2007; Shilbury and
58 Ferkins, 2011; Schlesinger *et al.*, 2013). We conducted a small-scale census to explore the EI of
59 two groups of sports leaders in a Mediterranean country, Turkey. Those leaders were the
60 voluntary presidents of sports federations and remunerated provincial directors of youth services
61 and sports. Both groups of leaders perform under and in coordination with the Ministry. We
62 made between-groups comparisons of EI scores and examined whether key demographic
63 variables that are time-dependent covariates (age and sporting experience in years) predict the EI
64 of leaders.

65 The following sections present the theoretical background to our study, starting with a
66 brief overview of the emergence of the EI concept. In three sub-sections, we then provide short

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67 reviews of EI research in sports, the constructs developed to measure EI and those widely used
68 in sports sciences, respectively. Later, the sports governance system in the study location is
69 outlined. Methodological details, findings, and a discussion of the results follow. A section on
70 implications for practice and research concludes the paper.

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72

73 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

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75 The idea of multi-dimensional intelligence dates back to 1909 when the social intelligence
76 concept was introduced as a set of abilities complementing cognitive skills (Landy, 2006). The
77 attempt to conceptualize alternative components of intelligence did not come until 1986 when
78 Gardner developed the multiple intelligence theory (MIT) (Gardner, 2011). The MIT suggests six
79 dimensions for abilities; those are, linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-
80 kinesthetic, and personal intelligence. The concept of EI emerged from the ‘personal intelligence’
81 aspect in Gardner’s MIT, which captures both intrapersonal (i.e., the capacity to understand self-
82 desires and feelings) and interpersonal intelligence (i.e., one’s ability to understand others’
83 motivations and emotions).

84

85 EI in Sports Settings

86 Sport influences the emotions and moods of individuals and crowds due to its festive and
87 competitive nature. Although closely related, the terms emotion and mood are semantically
88 different (Ekkekakis, 2013). Emotions are episodic internal events that coordinate a complex set
89 of psychological subsystems interrelated with one’s changing relationships with people, things, or
90 events (Mayer *et al.*, 1999, p. 267), such as envy, love, and hate. Moods, compared to emotions,
91 last longer and are not explicit; but diffuse and global, such as vigor and fatigue (Ekkekakis, 2013,
92 p. 43). These terms have been studied in the sport psychology (e.g., Johnson, 1949; Simmons,
93 1959) and sociology domains (e.g., Firth, 1930; Beaglehole, 1937) long before EI was coined.

94 Following the conceptualization of EI, its first applications in the 1990s were, however,
95 not in the emotion-laden sports or NSO domains, but mostly in for-profit organizations where
96 emotions were historically forborne from valuing. This line of management research initially
97 measured the EI of individuals taking up leadership positions at executive levels. Conversely, EI
98 research in sports that emerged as an area of inquiry in the 2000s has mainly studied people in
99 non-executive roles. The first direct attribute to EI in sports domain appears in McCann’s paper,
100 which—although briefly—expresses the importance of EI for elite athletes (McCann, 1999). From
101 then on, studies in sport psychology have shown that EI affects athletes’ mood state (Laborde
102 *et al.*, 2011; Lane and Wilson, 2011), mental strength (Lane, Thelwell *et al.*, 2009), and sporting
103 performance (Zizzi and Deaner, 2003; Lane *et al.*, 2009; Lane *et al.*, 2010). Sports scientists have
104 examined the influence of perceiving, understanding and utilizing emotions (e.g., managing
105 stress) on sporting success (Botterill and Brown, 2002; Lozovina *et al.*, 2012) in various sports.
106 Among examples are basketball (Stough *et al.*, 2009), mountaineering (Castanier *et al.*, 2011), and
107 ocean sailing (Puig and Villanova, 2011). Other studies have looked at how the EI ability
108 influences team capacity (Crombie *et al.*, 2009) and coaching effectiveness (Thelwell *et al.*, 2008;
109 Chan and Mallett, 2011). Additionally, a line of sport physiology research has shown that EI can
110 improve the physical performance of not just sedentary individuals (Costarelli and Stamou, 2009)
111 but also athletes of indoor and outdoor sports (Bal *et al.*, 2011).

112 The indication of this body of literature is that the emotion aspect of sports highlights
113 some necessary athletic qualities that the umbrella term EI contains. However, emotions, as
114 studied by sports scientists, are not entirely the same as those EI captures. It seems that studies in
115 sport psychology and physiology have mostly considered EI as an intrapersonal intelligence (as in
116 Gardner’s MIT), and overlooked that it is also an interpersonal ability to understand and manage
others’ emotions. This implies that the focus of EI research in business and sports domains has

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117 been different. While EI in business contexts considered the concept as an interpersonal ability
 118 and examined it initially on executives, EI in sports considered the concept more of an
 119 intrapersonal ability and favored a bottom-up look by examining the concept mostly among line
 120 and middle-level sportsmen (such as athletes and coaches).

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122 **The Conceptions and Measurement of EI**

123 Three main streams of EI research have offered the ability, mixed, and trait models of the
 124 concept, each proposing measures to quantify EI. Introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990), the
 125 ability model is based on information processing. They first developed the Multifactor Emotional
 126 Intelligence Scale (MEIS), a 402-item device composed of four branches that assesses one's
 127 ability in perceiving, utilizing, understanding, and managing emotions (Mayer *et al.*, 1999, pp. 273-
 128 278). Because the MEIS was based on IQ tests, responses to its items were either correct or
 129 incorrect. To determine a correct answer, scores in each branch were attuned to social norms
 130 through a triangulation that involves a between-groups comparison of consensus scores, expert
 131 identification, and target's assessment (p. 280). The MEIS was later improved as Mayer-Salovey-
 132 Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), a 141-item construct including the same four
 133 branches. Different than its predecessor, the MSCEIT yields seven scores; four of which are
 134 individual branch scores, one experiential EI score, one strategic EI score (the combined scores
 135 of the first and last two branches, respectively), and a total EI score (Brackett and Salovey, 2006).

136 Goleman, who suggests that people are born with a general EI but not emotional
 137 competency, introduced the mixed model of EI. According to this model, one must work to
 138 master their emotional capabilities. Goleman's framework offers a five-component EI model,
 139 including the self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill dimensions
 140 (Goleman, 1998). Mixed model constructs are self-report designs measuring competencies rather
 141 than intelligence. The first such device was the Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI)
 142 developed by Boyatzis *et al.* (1999), which was later improved to form ECI-2.0. The ECI-2.0 is a
 143 quadripartite model (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship
 144 management) that measures 18 competencies in total (Wolff, 2005, p. 2).

145 Petrides and Furnham (2000) suggested the trait EI model (also known as emotional self-
 146 efficacy) that refers to one's self-perception of their emotional abilities. They argued that ability
 147 EI devices measure actual emotion-related cognitive abilities by a performance test, whereas self-
 148 report EI constructs measure self-perceived emotion-related abilities and traits (Petrides and
 149 Furnham, 2006, p. 554). Their argument reflects the authors' view of EI that it relates more to
 150 behavioural consistency in different situations (e.g., manifests in particular traits or behaviours
 151 such as empathy and assertiveness) than to information-processing abilities (such as perceiving
 152 and utilising emotions) (Petrides and Furnham, 2000, p. 314). In sum, the conceptual difference
 153 between the trait and ability models is in the measurement of EI. The 33-item Self-report EI
 154 Scale (SREIS) developed by Schutte *et al.* (1998) is an example of the self-report measures that
 155 map onto ability tests.

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157 **Constructs Used to Measure EI in Sports Sciences**

158 In sport psychology, the use of performance tests (such as the MSCEIT) has been limited due to
 159 their less practicality (Meyer and Fletcher, 2007). EI studies in the sports domain have mainly
 160 favored self-report ability tests based on traits. Other than the ECI, researchers have used Bar-
 161 On's Emotional Quotient Inventory (Bar-On EQ-i) (e.g., Costarelli and Stamou, 2009; Lu *et al.*,
 162 2010) and the Trait EI Questionnaire (e.g., Laborde *et al.*, 2011; Laborde, Dosseville *et al.*, 2014;
 163 Laborde, Lautenbach *et al.*, 2014). Another line of EI research in sports has employed compact
 164 self-report scales that map onto ability tests. This stream of studies validated the use of SREIS in
 165 sports (Lane, Meyer *et al.*, 2009), and has widely employed this scale in the areas of sport
 166 psychology (e.g., Lane *et al.*, 2010; Solanki and Lane, 2010; Lane and Wilson, 2011; Hwang *et al.*,

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167 2013). A review of the EI studies in sports that use the SREIS has reported that the compact
168 construct is reliable (Meyer and Zizzi, 2007).

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170 **The Governance of Sports in Study Location: An Overview**

171 A Ministry, dedicated to sports, administers sporting events in Turkey. Through its
172 heteronomous and supervised autonomous units, the Ministry governs youth services, amateur
173 and professional sporting events at regional, national and international levels, and legal sports
174 betting and pari-mutuels (Ministry, 2014).

175 The ministerial unit that implements the governance of youth services and sports in cities
176 is the provincial directorate. Organizing sporting camps and sports competitions in school
177 leagues, for example, are among the responsibilities of the local directorate. Provincial directors
178 report to the General Director, who performs under the Minister. According to the relevant Act,
179 the General Director makes assignments to the provincial director position, which is a tenured
180 and remunerated government post.

181 The supervised autonomous units that implement the governance of sports at amateur
182 and professional levels are sports federations. Similar to their French counterparts, sports
183 federations in the study destination function under the close supervision of the Ministry. They
184 gained a partial autonomy from the government in 2004 when the parliament passed an
185 amendment to the Act. The change introduced an election-based independent management
186 system, replacing the assignment-based fulfillment of the president position by the General
187 Director. However, it kept the General Director as the superintendent of federations' budget
188 (Erturan-Ogut and Sahin, 2014). This legal status of federations compares to the Spanish system
189 where Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport authorizes and approves by the statutes
190 and budgets of sports federations (Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sport, 2014). The
191 president position at sports federations is a voluntarily assumed duty in the country where the
192 study was carried out.

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194 **METHODOLOGY**

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196 We collected data from the presidents of sports federations and the provincial directors of sports.
197 The census of presidents (62) and provincial directors (81), as of mid-2016, constituted a
198 relatively small population (N = 143). Accordingly, a census survey was aimed. The possibility of
199 a low response rate necessitated power analysis to determine size requirements for the design.
200 Through a pilot study, we sought the optimization of the minimum effect that would practically
201 be meaningful for the possible implications of the study.

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203 **Instrument and Procedures**

204 We used the SREIS on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree) to measure EI scores. Gender, age,
205 and sporting experience were the three demographic variables on the instrument. A dichotomous
206 question asked respondents whether they would like to receive an executive summary of the
207 results.

208 Three bilingual experts translated the SREIS from English to the target language through
209 a process of forward-back translations. Experts were native speakers of the target language, had
210 excellent knowledge of English, and achieved quality-assured international publications in their
211 fields. A language expert performed provisional forward-translation, and another language expert
212 did back-translation. The third, who was a researcher in psychology, independently checked
213 translator interpretations for conceptual fit. The negotiated final translation underwent a local
214 testing at the institution of the second author, with a conveniently selected small group
215 comprising three academic and three administrative staff members, and three postgraduate
216 students. Feedback from the test subjects assured appropriate wording in target language.

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217 Following a pilot study, we sent the leaders email invitations to the online survey. By
218 appointment, we visited a handful of federation presidents and provincial directors, who were
219 geographically accessible for data collection. Overall, data collection lasted for nearly seven
220 months, as we had to make multiple reminders for participation in the online survey to maintain
221 a sufficient response rate.

222 **Pilot Study**

224 We first employed the SREIS on a conveniently selected group ($n = 26$) to determine the
225 observation amount needed and power for the study. The pilot group consisted of two provincial
226 directors and 24 members of a sports federation. The federation members included 10 board
227 members, six referees, five coaches, two club managers, and a president. All subjects were male.
228 They ranged in age from 31 to 63 ($M = 47.9$, $SD = 8.2$), in sporting experience from four to 30
229 years ($M = 13.8$, $SD = 8.3$), and scored on average $M = 3.9$ ($SD = .6$) on the SREIS, ranging
230 from 2.9 to 4.5. The EI scores were significantly correlated with age, $r(24) = .581$, $p < .01$; but
231 not with sporting experience, $r(24) = .218$, $p = .29$.

232 Based on these statistics, the non-central probability for $\alpha = .05$ found critical $R^2 = .187$,
233 and that 32 observations would produce the power of .95 (see Appendix A1) to detect a possible
234 linear multiple regression with two predictors (i.e., age and experience; we excluded gender due to
235 the likelihood of male dominance). We sought this size estimation per group for a between-
236 groups design that would attempt a comparison of the EI scores.

237 One-week test-retest reliability assessment of the SREIS with the pilot group returned
238 intra-class correlation coefficient .74 with 95% confidence intervals (.41, .88), $p < .01$. Items were
239 shuffled in the retest round to avoid inflated reliability estimates due to subject's familiarity with
240 the instrument. The average variation in the SREIS scores between two trials was $.11 \pm .27$. Trials
241 showed no difference ($F(1, 22) = 3.90$, $p > .06$) and the SREIS construct was found reliable.
242 Three of the 26 test subjects did not participate in the retest.

243 **Participants and Data Analysis**

245 The minimum size estimation per group was met as of the 143 invited sports leaders, 87 (38
246 federation presidents, 49 provincial directors) took part in the study (response rate = 61%). The
247 indication of the pilot study that leaders in president and director roles were male-dominant held
248 true. Only two participating leaders (2%) were women, both were sports federation presidents.
249 On average, leaders were $M = 48.4$ years old ($SD = 7.6$, min. 35, max. 65), and ranged in sporting
250 experience from two to 51 years ($M = 13.2$, $SD = 10.5$). They scored $M = 3.9$ ($SD = .3$) on the
251 SREIS, ranging from 3.1 to 4.5.

252 We used the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (*KS*) test and the Q-Q plot to check normality
253 assumptions for the index SREIS scores. A series of *t*-tests examined the EI score difference
254 between the voluntary presidents and the remunerated directors. A regression analysis tested
255 whether age and sporting experience predicted EI.

256 **RESULTS**

258 The EI scores were normally distributed ($KS(87) = .064$, $p = .196$, see Appendix B). Federation
259 presidents and provincial directors differed significantly in their age and sporting experience. On
260 average, the former group of leaders was 4.4 years older and had nearly 12 more years of sporting
261 experience than those comprising the latter group (see table 1). These differences represented a
262 medium-size effect ($r = .30$ and $.32$, respectively). Similarly, the EI of federation presidents
263 ranked significantly higher than that of the provincial directors; however, the effect size of this
264 difference was small ($r = .16$).

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Table 1 Age, Sporting Experience and EI Comparisons among Sport Leaders

	Federation presidents ^a	Provincial directors ^b	<i>t</i> (<i>df</i>)
	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	
Age	50.9 (7.9)	46.5 (6.9)	2.78 (85) [*]
Sporting experience	19.7 (11.8)	8.1 (5.4)	5.62 (49.18) ^{**}
EI	4.02 (.3)	3.87 (.3)	2.26 (85) [*]

N = 87 (38 federation presidents, 49 provincial directors of youth services and sports)

^a voluntary leaders. ^b remunerated leaders. ^{*} $p < .01$. ^{**} $p < .05$.

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Relations of Leader Position, Age, and Sporting Experience to EI

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A leader's position (voluntary president vs. remunerated director) was significantly negatively related to their EI, age, and years of sporting experience with Pearson correlation coefficients $r_s = -.24, -.29$ and $-.55$, respectively ($p_s < .02$, one-tailed) (see table 2). Age was significantly correlated with the EI score ($r = .36, p < .01$), however sporting experience was not ($r = .18, p > .06$). Partial correlation between age and EI was also significant ($r = .31, p < .01$), and it did not diminish considerably when the effect of position was controlled. We further computed the point-biserial (pb) correlation coefficients to compare independent r_s between the age and EI of federation presidents ($r_{pb} = .509, p < .01$, one-tailed, $n = 38$) and provincial directors ($r_{pb} = .160, p < .13$, one-tailed, $n = 49$). Following the standardization process [$z_r = 1/2 \log_e ((1 + r) / (1 - r))$] and $SE z_r = 1 / \sqrt{n - 3}$, the z_r -score of the difference between these correlations ($z_{r1} - z_{r2}$) returned $z_r = 1.78$, which corresponded to $p = .037$. This suggested that the correlation between age and EI was significantly different in the binary categories of position.

Table 2 Correlation Matrix

	EI	Age	Sporting experience	Position
EI	—	.361 [*] [.314 [*]]	.182 [.063]	-.238 ^{**}
Age		—	.353 [*]	-.289 [*]
Sporting experience			—	-.552 [*]
Position				—

Notes:

Figures in brackets are partial correlation coefficients, controlling for position; remaining figures are zero-order correlation coefficients. Position was coded as 1 = sports federation president (voluntary leader) and 0 = provincial director of youth services and sports (remunerated leader). ^{*} $p < .01$. ^{**} $p < .02$.

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Accordingly, we ran a regression analysis to examine whether age and sporting experience predicted EI. We split the file so that position categories could organise the regression output. Age, but not sporting experience, significantly predicted the EI of federation presidents ($\beta = .509, t(36) = 3.54, p < .01$), accounting for slightly over a quarter of the variance in EI scores ($R^2 = .259$) (see table 3). For the provincial directors, neither age nor sporting experience predicted EI. Overall, age significantly predicted a leader's EI ($\beta = .361, t(85) = 3.57, p < .01$).

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Post Hoc Power

We performed power analysis for the regression with two predictors to check whether the effect size in the observed group (overall) was the true population effect. Given the attained size of study group ($n = 87$), effect size ($R^2 = .130$), and α ($1 - \alpha = .436$), the *post hoc* power returned .85, representing a large effect size (Alberson, 2010). Computation details are provided in Appendix A2.

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Table 3 Multiple Regression Results

	Sports federation presidents ^a			Provincial directors ^b			Overall ^c		
	β	<i>SE</i> β	<i>Std.</i> β	β	<i>SE</i> β	<i>Std.</i> β	β	<i>SE</i> β	<i>Std.</i> β
<i>Step 1</i>									
Constant	3.050	.277		3.526	.314		3.320	.206	
Age	.019	.005	.509*	.007	.007	.160	.015	.004	.361*
<i>Step 2</i>									
Constant	3.048	.281		3.504	.316		3.230	.210	
Age	.019	.006	.499*	.009	.007	.197	.014	.005	.339*
Sporting experience	.001	.004	.041	-.007	.009	-.124	.002	.003	.063

Notes:

Std. β : Standardized beta, *SE β* : Standard error for beta

^a $R^2 = .259$ for Step 1. $\Delta R^2 = .002$ for Step 2 ($p = .786$). $n = 38$ voluntary leaders. ^b $R^2 = .026$ for Step 1. $\Delta R^2 = .014$ for Step 2 ($p = .418$). $n = 49$ remunerated leaders.

^c $R^2 = .130$ for Step 1. $\Delta R^2 = .003$ for Step 2 ($p = .564$). $n = 87$. * $p < .001$

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DISCUSSION

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Our research provides a basic look at the EI capacity of senior leaders in a non-profit sports governance system. We explored and compared the EI of two groups of sports leaders in a Mediterranean country: federation presidents and provincial directors. The members of their branch-specific sports federation elect the former group of leaders who perform voluntarily. The leaders of the latter group are remunerated, and the General Directorate assigns them to their tenured government positions. We entered the participants' age and sporting experience into a regression to test whether these variables predict their EI.

We found that voluntary sports leaders, who scored significantly higher on the SREIS, were older and had more sporting experience than the remunerated leaders. Upon a closer look at this result for a position-based difference, it appeared that EI, age, and sporting experience were positive correlates. This finding was in line with the suggestions of EI research with non-leaders in sports (Kafetsios, 2004; Ruffman *et al.*, 2008; Fernández-Berrocal *et al.*, 2012), as well as that with leaders in for-profit non-sport contexts (Goleman, 1998; Arunima and Ajeya, 2014).

The observed correlation led us to perform a regression analysis to check for the predictability of leaders' EI by their age and sporting experience. The findings of Fernández-Berrocal *et al.* (2012), which suggested EI could change according to one's age, formed our expectation that age could forecast EI scores. The study by Khoo and Engelhorn (2011), which indicated a motivational difference in volunteer commitment by one's expertise in the voluntary sector, was the basis to our anticipation for the sporting experience to predict EI. The test results proved our first expectation correct; that age predicts EI scores, but our similar expectation for sporting experience incorrect. Considering that experience is a time-dependent covariate as age, this result was surprising.

Reading of our findings requires caution, as they must be interpreted within the particular dynamics of the governance system at the study location. While international criticism has expressed the ever-growing centralization and authoritarianism in the country (Kristianasen, 2015), national critiques have reported the influence of political power on ministerial units governing sports (Erturan and Imamoglu, 2011; Sahin and Imamoglu, 2011), through gaps in the relevant Act (Erturan-Ogut and Sahin, 2014). Therefore, our inferences for the senior sports

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330 leaders require further investigations of similar governance systems in other geographies before
331 they can be generalized.

332

333 **Limitations and Implications**

334 Research from around the world has implied that women underrepresentation in management
335 positions is typical of not just for-profit (Sandler, 2014) but also NSO settings (Cunningham,
336 2008; Riot *et al.*, 2008; Wicker, Breuer and von Hanau, 2012; Schlesinger *et al.*, 2013). We
337 observed a similar pattern at our study locale. Women occupying senior positions were few in the
338 sports governance system we surveyed. Consequently, we could not observe differences or
339 relationships involving gender. Future qualitative designs, such as semi-structured interviews with
340 a focus on EI, could provide an insight into the EI traits of female leadership within the context
341 of NSO governance. Alternatively, investigating the topic among sports leaders in female-
342 dominant (such as gymnastics), male-dominant (e.g., wrestling) and unisex sports (such as
343 basketball) for between-groups comparisons could expand our understanding of the relationship
344 between EI and gender among leaders of, for instance, sports clubs. Senior leaders in sports
345 clubs comprise a larger population in most countries in Europe and Americas, which can enable
346 surveys with samples that are larger than the size of the present study's population.

347 The altruist, motivation-related and solidaristic nature of voluntary labour suggests that
348 NSO leadership demands people-oriented individuals (Harrison and Murray, 2012), who typically
349 prioritise the emotional, social, and cognitive appraisals of the extent to which volunteers'
350 experience meet their primarily visceral expectations (Chelladurai, 2006). Such traits of people-
351 oriented leaders are conceptualised in the trait theory of EI (Harrison and Murray, 2012, p. 429).
352 Given their need to retain voluntary labour NSOs can consider to reap the benefits of leadership
353 training programmes that include sessions on EI. It seems the generally accepted characterisation of
354 a voluntary leader that they have substantial experience (Riot *et al.*, 2008; Schlesinger *et al.*, 2013), as
355 echoed by our results, has a role in the historical underestimation of leadership training in NSOs
356 (Brewis *et al.*, 2010). However, our findings indicate a restricted understanding of EI within NSO
357 setting, which does not suffice to state a bold implication of such training. This is because we
358 neither investigated what sorts of training programmes were in practice at the NSOs nor examined
359 the impact of the EI traits of sports leaders on their effectiveness. Yet, it is likely that some EI
360 training will strengthen the person-orientedness of an NSO leader (Wagstaff *et al.*, 2013), which is
361 necessary to maintain an internal environment that galvanises the emotional and social ties of the
362 voluntary workforce. When trialled in NSOs, the effectiveness of such training programmes can be
363 monitored by 360-degree appraisal designs.

364

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