E-ISSN: 3062-0961
International Journal Of Physical Activity, Nutrition and Health
URL: https://ijpanh.com/index.php/pub

Research Atricle

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18072076

Received: 22.10.2025 Accepted: 28.12.2025 Online Published: 28. 12.2025

Examining the Mental Well-being Levels of Coaches in Different Disciplines

Rıfat YAĞMUR[1] Gamze TOKMAN ÖRMECİ[2] Yusuf Can ÖZDEMİR[3] Şükran DENER[4]

Abstract

The aim of this research is to examine the relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics and mental well-being levels of sports coaches in different disciplines. The study was designed based on a descriptive survey model, one of the quantitative research methods. The population of the study consists of sports coaches working throughout Turkey, and the sample group consists of a total of 169 coaches (66 women and 103 men) who participated in the study, determined by convenience sampling. A demographic characteristics form and the Turkish adaptation of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale were used as data collection tools. Data were collected online, and t-tests, ANOVA, and correlation analyses were applied in the analyses. According to the research findings, although the mental well-being levels of men were higher than those of women, no significant difference was found. An increase in mental well-being levels was observed with increasing age, but this difference was not statistically significant. Married individuals had higher mental well-being levels than single individuals. It was determined that mental well-being levels increased with increasing years of experience. According to employment type, permanent employees had higher mental well-being levels than contract employees. In conclusion, it was observed that employment type, marital status, and years of experience had positive effects on mental well-being, while other variables did not make a significant difference. Based on the results of this research, it is thought that future studies comparing mental well-being levels according to different sports branches and conducting in-depth investigations using qualitative research methods could provide more comprehensive and specific data.

Keywords: Coaches, Mental Well-Being, Psychological Health, Psychological Resilience

INTRODUCTION

The coaching profession is a multifaceted discipline that goes beyond the goal of improving physical performance and enhancing athletes' technical skills; it also supports the mental and emotional development of individuals (Mutlu et al., 2019). In today's sports world, it is not enough to view coaches solely as those who manage physical training; they also play a significant role as guides supporting the psychological well-being of athletes. This situation highlights the importance of coaches' own mental well-being. A coach's mental and emotional health directly affects both their individual work performance and the quality of their relationships with athletes (Thelwell, Weston, and Greenlees, 2010). The concept of psychological well-being is related to individuals finding meaning in life, having

[1] Corresponding Author: Afyon Kocatepe University, Afyonkarahisar-Türkiye. ryagmur@aku.edu.tr
[2] Afyon Kocatepe University, Afyonkarahisar-Türkiye. gamzetokmanormeci@gmail.com
[3] Afyon Kocatepe University, Afyonkarahisar-Türkiye. ozdemircanyusuf@hotmail.com
[4] Afyon Kocatepe University, Afyonkarahisar-Türkiye. sukrandener@outlook.com

positive emotions, and establishing balance in their social relationships (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). Bradburn (1969) defined this concept as an individual's capacity to maintain balance between positive and negative emotions. In the positive psychology literature, self-actualization, life satisfaction, and stress management are among the fundamental components of psychological well-being (Seligman, 2011).

Considering that coaches face occupational stressors such as long working hours, constant performance pressure, and high expectations for athletes, it is seen that their levels of psychological well-being significantly affect their professional success and job satisfaction (Fletcher and Scott, 2010). The coaching profession can present different physical, social, and mental needs depending on the sport. For example, coaches working in individual sports may be exposed to more mental pressure while focusing on the individual achievements of their athletes; while coaches working in team sports may experience more difficulty in managing team dynamics (Nicholls, Polman, and Levy, 2012). In this context, examining the mental well-being of coaches in different branches can provide a better understanding of occupational differences and sources of stress.

Ryff and Singer (2008) examined psychological well-being in six key dimensions: self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, life purpose, and positive relationship building. Each of these dimensions is critically important for the mental health of coaches. For example, a coach's level of self-acceptance affects their attitude towards professional errors, while the autonomy dimension is related to independent decision-making skills (Ryff, 1989). Similarly, the capacity to build positive social relationships is crucial in developing strong bonds with both athletes and other coaches. In the world of sports, the impact of coaches' mental health on athletes' performance is frequently emphasized in the literature. Thelwell et al. (2010) stated that coaches' stress management skills and emotional intelligence have an impact on athletes' motivation levels and team dynamics. This situation necessitates that coaches pay attention to their own mental health, rather than focusing solely on physical performance. Different sports branches can create different levels of mental burden and emotional pressure on coaches. For example, elite-level football coaches more frequently encounter external stressors such as media pressure and fan expectations, while coaches in individual sports may face the risk of being held directly responsible for athletes' individual development and failures (Olusoga, Butt, Maynard, and Hays, 2012). Balancing relationships between players and maintaining team dynamics in team sports requires coaches to exert more effort in the social dimension; however, coaches in individual sports have the opportunity to establish one-on-one relationships with athletes and develop more personal bonds.

On the other hand, demographic factors such as gender, age, and experience can also affect the psychological well-being of coaches. Burke et al. (2001) stated that female coaches exhibit higher levels of empathy than their male counterparts, and this can have both advantages and disadvantages. Furthermore, it has been noted that young coaches have a higher risk of professional burnout at the beginning of their careers, while experienced coaches are more effective at coping with stress Goodger et al. (2007).

This study aims to examine the mental well-being of coaches working in different branches of sport. The research aims to reveal inter-branch differences by addressing the relationships between coaches' professional requirements and stress sources and their psychological well-being. Based on the findings in the literature, it is predicted that supporting the psychological well-being of coaches can contribute to both their individual professional performance and the success and motivation of athletes. In this context, it is thought that the results obtained will play an important role in the creation of policies that support the professional development and mental health of coaches.

METHOD

Research Model: This research was conducted based on a quantitative research approach and a correlational survey model was used. A correlational survey model is a survey approach that aims to determine the relationship and level of covariation between two or more variables. In this model, the

relationships between variables are examined, and the direction and level of variation between them are revealed (Karasar, 2011).

Ethics Approval: This study complies with the Helsinki Declaration. Ethical approval was obtained from the Afyon Kocatepe University Health Sciences Ethics Committee with decision number 14/02/2024-07.

Population and Sample / Study Group: The population of the research consisted of sports coaches working throughout Turkey. The sample group was determined using the convenience sampling method. This method allows the inclusion of accessible individuals from the population in the sample. The sample size was calculated with G*Power 3.1. In the a priori power analysis performed with the assumptions of moderate effect size ($r = 0.30$), significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), and 80% power ($1-\beta = 0.80$) for two-tailed correlation analysis, the minimum sample size was determined as $n = 84$. The study included 169 participants, with 60.9% male and 39.1% female participants, and ages ranging from under 25 to 46 years and older. The vast majority of participants were associate degree graduates (81%) and employed under contract (63.3%).

Data Collection Tools: The Demographic Information Form (gender, age, marital status, number of children, number of occupations, education level, coaching style, and employment type) and the Turkish adaptation of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (Tennant et al., 2007) were used as data collection tools in the study. The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) consists of 14 items and has a 5-point Likert-type rating scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). Scores on the scale range from 14 to 70, with higher scores indicating a higher level of mental well-being. The reliability coefficient of the Turkish form of the scale was reported as Cronbach's Alpha = .89.

Collection of Data: Data were collected in April and May via Google Forms, an online platform. This method allowed participants to complete the questionnaires remotely and securely. Data collection took place after obtaining ethical committee approval, ensuring the ethical standards were met throughout the research process.

Procedure: Participants were informed by the researchers about the purpose and procedure of the study. Voluntary informed consent was obtained from all participants. Once the consent was obtained, the participants filled out the Demographic Information Form and the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale through the provided online link.

Analysis of Data: Before starting the analysis of the data obtained in the research, the normality assumption and reliability levels of the scale used were examined. Skewness and kurtosis values were calculated to evaluate the suitability of the data for normal distribution. As a result of the normality and reliability analyses of the Mental Well-being Scale, the skewness value was found to be -0.688 and the kurtosis value was 1.353, indicating that the data is suitable for normal distribution. Furthermore, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated to determine the reliability of the scale and was found to be 0.892 (89.2%), indicating a high level of reliability. Based on these results, it was assumed that the data set had a normal distribution and that the scale was reliable. Therefore, parametric statistical tests were used in subsequent analyses. Independent samples t-tests, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Pearson correlation analyses were performed, with the significance level set at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Table 1. Demographic variables of participants

Variables		n	%
Gender	Female	66	39.1
	Male	103	60.9
Age	Under 25 years old	25	14.8

	26-45 years old	132	78.1
	Over 46 years old	12	7.1
Marital Status	Single	75	44.4
	Married	94	55.6
Number of Children	None	85	50.3
	1-2 Children	61	36.1
	3-4 Children	23	13.6
Professional Year	Less than 5 years	85	50.3
	6-10 years	45	26.6
	11-15 years	14	8.3
	16 years and over	25	14.8
Education Level	High School	21	12.9
	Associate Degree	132	81.0
	Bachelor's Degree	2	1.2
	Master's Degree	5	3.1
	Doctorate	3	1.8
Coaching Style	Amateur	102	60.4
	Professional	67	39.6
Working Method	Contractual	107	63.3
	Permanent	62	36.7

Table 1 shows the variables with the highest percentages regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. The majority of participants are male (60.9%), aged between 26 and 45 (78.1%), and married (55.6%). Most are childless (50.3%), have less than five years of professional experience (50.3%), and hold an associate degree (81.0%). Furthermore, the majority of coaches work in amateur (60.4%) and contract (63.3%) status.

Table 2. Mental Well-being Levels of Participants According to Gender Variable

Variables			n	%	Total score	Sd.	Ss	t	p
Mental Well-being	Gender	Kadın	66	39.1	47.5606	9.0997	1.1201	-1.696	0.094
		Erkek	103	60.9	49.6699	7.0910	0.6987		

P<0,05

Table 2 presents the findings regarding participants' mental well-being levels according to gender. The independent samples t-test revealed no statistically significant difference in mental well-being levels based on gender (t=1.696, p=0.094, p>.05).

Table 3. Mental Well-being Levels of Participants According to Age Variable

Variables			n	%	Total score	Sd.	Ss	t	p
Mental Well-being	Age	25 ≤	25	14.8	48.2400	6.4697	1.2939	1.265	0.285
		26-45	132	78.1	48.6439	8.3995	0.7311		
		46 ≥	12	7.1	52.3333	5.0692	1.4634		

P<0,05

Table 3 presents the findings regarding participants' mental well-being levels according to age. According to the results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), there was no statistically significant difference in mental well-being levels based on age (F=1.265, p=0.285, p ≥ .05).

Table 4. Mental Well-being Levels of Participants According to Marital Status Variable

Variables			n	%	Total score	Sd.	Ss	t	p
Mental Well-being	Marital Status	Bekar	75	44.4	47.3067	7.3705	0.8511	-2.269	0.025
		Evli	94	55.6	50.0745	8.2635	0.8523		

P<0,05

Table 4 presents the findings regarding participants' mental well-being levels according to their marital status. According to the independent samples t-test results, married participants had significantly higher levels of mental well-being than single participants (t=-2.269, p=0.025, p ≤ .05).

Table 5. Mental Well-being Levels of Participants According to Years of Professional Experience

Variables			n	%	Total score	Sd.	Ss	t	p
Mental Well-being	Mesleki Yıl	Less than 5 years	85	50.3	48.8941	6.78588	0.736	3.724	0.013
		6-10 years	45	26.6	46.9778	9.65893	03		
		11-15 years	14	8.3	46.8571	9.32208	1.439		
		16 years and over	25	14.8	53.1600	6.15549	87		

P<0,05

Table 5 presents the findings regarding participants' mental well-being levels according to their professional experience. The mean mental well-being score was 48.89 (SD=6.79) for participants with less than five years of experience, 46.98 (SD=9.66) for those with 6–10 years of experience, 46.86 (SD=9.32) for those with 11–15 years of experience, and 53.16 (SD=6.16) for those with 16 years or more of experience. According to the results of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), a statistically significant difference was found between the mental well-being levels according to the duration of professional experience (F=3.724, p=0.013, p ≤ .05).

Table 6. Mental Well-being Levels of Participants According to Their Study Habits

Variables			n	%	Total score	Sd.	Ss	t	p
Mental Well-being	Working Method	Contractual	107	63.3	47.9159	8.04366	0.77761	-2.010	0.04
		Permanent	62	36.7	50.4516	7.66015	0.97284		

P<0,05

Table 6 presents the findings regarding participants' mental well-being levels according to their employment type. The mental well-being score for contract employees was 47.92 (SD=8.04), while for permanent employees it was 50.45 (SD=7.66). According to the independent samples t-test results, a

statistically significant difference was found between the mental well-being levels based on employment type (t=-2.010, p=0.04, $p \leq .05$). Permanent employees showed higher levels of mental well-being compared to contract employees.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The findings of this study revealed the relationships between the socio-demographic characteristics of coaches and their mental well-being. In analyses based on the gender variable, although male participants had higher mental well-being than female participants, this difference was not statistically significant. This result suggests that the effect of gender on mental well-being may be limited. This is consistent with the research of Blanchflower and Bryson (2024), which showed that the difference in well-being between genders remains modest in many contexts. In analyses based on the marital status variable, it was determined that married participants had significantly higher mental well-being than single participants. This finding parallels the literature showing that the social support and emotional security provided by marriage positively affect mental well-being. This is consistent with the recent findings of Hsu and Barrett (2020) and research showing that married individuals tend to report higher subjective well-being and lower psychological distress compared to single individuals. Apostolou et al. (2024) also found that individuals who are married or unmarried experience better mental health outcomes, including higher quality of life and lower stress levels, compared to single individuals. In analyses based on the marital status variable, it was determined that married participants had significantly higher levels of mental health than single participants. This finding parallels the literature showing that the social support and emotional security provided by marriage positively impact mental health. This is also consistent with the recent findings of Hsu and Barrett (2020), which showed that marital relationships support both positive and negative dimensions of psychological well-being. In terms of years of professional experience, coaches with 16 years or more of experience were found to have significantly higher levels of mental health. This finding is consistent with the literature suggesting that professional experience can enhance individuals' life satisfaction and psychological well-being. This is also supported by Ewert et al. (2024), who found that experienced personnel generally report higher levels of psychological well-being compared to those with less experience. Furthermore, recent research has shown that among longer-term employees, greater professional experience is associated with higher psychological well-being through improved coping mechanisms and resilience. This is consistent with Badía et al. (2024), who found that in high-stress occupations such as emergency medical workers, experience and occupational coping strategies can act as psychological mediators between job stress and mental well-being.

Finally, in analyses related to employment type, it was found that full-time employees had higher levels of mental well-being than contract employees, and this difference was significant. This finding is consistent with the literature showing that job security and economic stability positively contribute to individuals' psychological well-being. This is also consistent with the recent findings of Hsu and Barrett (2020), which showed that marital relationships support both positive and negative dimensions of psychological well-being. It is also supported by Wang et al. (2024), who found that job flexibility and job security are strongly linked to improved mental health outcomes, suggesting that secure and stable employment conditions are crucial for better psychological well-being. Overall, the study findings indicate that marital status, professional seniority, and type of employment significantly affect the mental well-being levels of coaches. In general, the study findings show that marital status, professional experience, and type of employment significantly influence the mental health levels of coaches.

The lower mental health levels observed in female coaches compared to their male counterparts highlight the need to develop psychosocial support and awareness programs, particularly for women. It is recommended to expand training focusing on stress management, self-awareness, and life satisfaction for younger age groups. Given the positive impact of marriage and social support systems on psychological resilience, initiatives promoting family communication and social connection should be supported. Higher mental health levels among permanently employed coaches underscore the

importance of policies that ensure job security and stable employment. Mentoring and guidance systems should be established to help less experienced coaches strengthen their stress coping abilities. Since higher levels of education appear to positively impact mental health, coaches should be encouraged to participate in professional development programs and pursue postgraduate education. No significant difference was found between amateur and professional coaches.

Authors' Statement of Contribution to the Article: Article design: YR; Data Collection and Processing: OTG; Statistical analysis/Comment: OCY; Literature review: DS Article writing: YR, OTG, OCY, DS; Consulting: YR

Conflict of Interest: The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

Financial support. No financial support was received for the completion of this study**.**

Ethics Committee Approval. This study complies with the Helsinki Declaration. Ethical approval was obtained from the Afyon Kocatepe University Health Sciences Ethics Committee with decision number 14.02.2024 and numbered 2024-07.

Peer Review: After the blind review process, it was found suitable for publication and accepted.

REFERENCES

Apostolou, M., Tekeş, B., Kagialis, A., & Lajunen, T. J. (2024). Aspects of Quality of Life: Single vs. Mated People. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(10), 954. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14100954

Badía, M. D. C., Alarcón, R., Trillo, J., & Miranda-Páez, J. (2024). Psychological mediators between risk perception and psychological wellbeing in emergency healthcare workers. *Frontiers in Psychology, 15*, Article 1435189.

Blanchflower, D., and Bryson, A. (2024). The gender well-being gap. *Social Indicators Research, 173*(3), 1–45.

Bradburn, N. M. (1969). *The structure of psychological well-being*. Aldine Publishing.

Burke, S. (2001). Women coaches: Careers and experiences. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal, 10*(2), 57–88. https://doi.org/10.1123/wspaj.10.2.57

Ewert, A., Davidson, C., Direnzo, A., & Frankel, J. (2024). Experienced and inexperienced staff: Exploring the differences. *Journal of Experiential Education, 47*(4), 723–742.

Fletcher, D., and Scott, M. (2010). Psychological stress in sports coaches: A review of concepts, research, and practice. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 28(2), 127–137. https://doi.org/10.1080/02640410903406208

Goodger, K., Gorely, T., Lavallee, D., & Harwood, C. (2007). Burnout in sport: A systematic review. *The sport psychologist*, 21(2), 127-151.

Hsu, T. L., and Barrett, A. E. (2020). The association between marital status and psychological well-being: Variation across negative and positive dimensions. *Journal of Family Issues, 41*(11), 2179–2202.

Karasar, N. (2011). *Bilimsel araştırma yöntemi: Kavramlar, ilkeler, teknikler* (22. baskı). Nobel Yayın Dağıtım.

Keldal, G. (2015). Warwick-Edinburgh Mental İyi Oluş Ölçeği'nin Türkçe formu: Geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışması. *The Journal of Happiness & Well-Being, 3*(1), 103–115.

Mutlu, T. O., Akoğlu, H. E., Şentürk, H. E., Ağılönü, A., & Özbey, Ö. (2019). Antrenör adaylarının iletişim ve liderlik becerilerinin incelenmesi. *SPORMETRE Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi, 17*(1), 167–177. https://doi.org/10.33689/spormetre.467828

Nicholls, A. R., Polman, R. C. J., & Levy, A. R. (2012). A path analysis of stress appraisals, emotions, coping, and performance satisfaction among athletes. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 13*(3), 263–270. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2011.12.003

Olusoga, P., Butt, J., Maynard, I., & Hays, K. (2012). Stress and coping: A study of world-class coaches. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 24*(3), 338–355. https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200.2011.639933

Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 57*(6), 1069–1081. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.57.6.1069

Ryff, C. D., and Keyes, C. L. M. (1995). The structure of psychological well-being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69*(4), 719–727. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.69.4.719

Ryff, C. D., and Singer, B. (2008). Know thyself and become what you are: A eudaimonic approach to psychological well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 9(1), 13–39. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-006-9019-0

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Atria Books.

Tennant, R., Hiller, L., Fishwick, R., Platt, S., Joseph, S., Weich, S., Parkinson, J., Secker, J., & Stewart-Brown, S. (2007). The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS): Development and UK validation. *Health and Quality of Life Outcomes*, 5(1), 63. https://doi.org/10.1186/1477-7525-5-63

Thelwell, R. C., Weston, N. J. V., & Greenlees, I. A. (2010). Coping with stressors in elite sport: A coach perspective. *European Journal of Sport Science, 10*(4), 243–253. https://doi.org/10.1080/17461390903353390

Wang, M. L., Narcisse, M. R., Togher, K., & McElfish, P. A. (2024). Job flexibility, job security, and mental health among US working adults. *JAMA Network Open, 7*(3), e243439.