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A Cross-Sectional Analysis of Personal-Professional Competence, Job Satisfaction, and Career Engagement in Football Coaches

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The aim of this study is to examine the relationships among coaches' perceptions of personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement within a holistic framework, thereby contributing to the sports science literature.

Method: The study, designed according to a descriptive research model, included a sample of 305 football coaches working in different regions of Turkey. Convenience sampling was used to reach the football coaches. The Personal-Professional Competence Perception Scale, Job Satisfaction Scale, and the Career Engagement Scale were used in the research. The normality of the data distribution was checked using skewness and kurtosis values, and a normal distribution was confirmed. Independent samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA tests were used to determine differences between groups. For groups where significant differences were found in the ANOVA results, the Tukey post-hoc test was applied to determine which groups showed the difference.

Results: Within this sample, participants' education level was associated with significant differences in the 'Ability to Work Independently and Take Responsibility' and 'Communication-Social Competency' sub-dimensions of the Professional Competence Scale, as well as in job satisfaction; while length of experience showed significant differences in the "Communication-Social Competency" sub-dimension of the PPCPS, job satisfaction, and career engagement. Within this group of Turkish football coaches, increases in professional experience and age were associated with improvements in certain professional competencies and job satisfaction. Furthermore, within this group of Turkish football coaches, career engagement was higher among those coaching at the amateur league level compared to those in the professional leagues.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the study shows that education level, professional experience, and age have a significant impact on the coaches in this sample of personal and professional competence and job satisfaction. Based on these results, it is recommended that sports organizations consider implementing training programs that support the professional development of the coaches in this sample and create supportive work environments, especially for those coaching at professional league levels, to increase their career engagement.

Keywords: Football coaches, personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, career engagement.

ÖZET

Futbol Antrenörlerinde Kişisel-Mesleki Yetkinlik, İş Tatmini ve Kariyer Adanmışlığına İlişkin Kesitsel Bir Analiz

Amaç: Bu çalışma, antrenörlerin kişisel ve mesleki yeterlilik algıları, iş memnuniyeti ve kariyer adanmışlığı arasındaki ilişkileri bütüncül bir çerçevede inceleyerek spor bilimleri literatürüne katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Yöntem: Tanımlayıcı araştırma modeline göre tasarlanan çalışma, Türkiye'nin farklı bölgelerinde çalışan 305 futbol antrenöründen oluşan bir örneklemle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Futbol antrenörlerine ulaşmak için uygun örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada Kişisel Mesleki Yetkinlikler Algı Ölçeği, İş Tatmini Ölçeği ve Kariyer Adanmışlık Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Veri dağılımının normalliği, çarpıklık ve basıklık değerleri kullanılarak kontrol edilmiş ve normal dağılım gösterdiği tespit edilmiştir. Gruplar arasındaki farklılıkları belirlemek için bağımsız örneklem t-testi ve tek yönlü ANOVA testleri kullanılmıştır. ANOVA sonuçlarında anlamlı farklılık bulunan gruplar için, hangi grupların farklılık gösterdiğini belirlemek amacıyla Tukey post-hoc testi uygulanmıştır.

Bulgular: Katılımcıların eğitim düzeyi, KMYAÖ'nün "Bağımsız Çalışabilme ve Sorumluluk Alabilme Yetkinliği" ile "İletişim ve Sosyal Yetkinliği" alt boyutları ve iş tatmini üzerinde; deneyim süresi ise KMYAÖ'nün "İletişim-Sosyal Yetkinliği" alt boyutu, iş tatmini ve kariyer adanmışlığı üzerinde anlamlı farklılıklar bulunmuştur. Türkiye'deki futbol antrenörleri örnekleminde, mesleki deneyim ve yaş arttıkça bazı mesleki yeterlilikler ve iş tatmini düzeylerinde artış gözlemlenmiştir. Ayrıca, kariyer adanmışlık açısından amatör liglerde görev yapan antrenörlerin, profesyonel liglerde görev yapanlara kıyasla daha yüksek puanlar aldığı tespit edilmiştir.

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Sonuç: Sonuç olarak, eğitim düzeyi, mesleki deneyim ve yaş bu örneklemdeki antrenörlerin kişisel-mesleki yetkinlik algıları ve iş tatmini üzerinde anlamlı bir etkiye sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu bulgular doğrultusunda, spor organizasyonlarının antrenörlerin mesleki gelişimini destekleyen eğitim programları uygulamayı ve özellikle profesyonel lig seviyelerinde antrenörler için destekleyici çalışma ortamları oluşturarak kariyer adanmışlık seviyelerinin artırmaları önerilmektedir.
Anahtar Kelimeler: Futbol antrenörleri, kişisel-mesleki yetkinlik, iş tatmini, kariyer adanmışlığı.

INTRODUCTION

Football coaching is a demanding profession characterized by high levels of interaction, competition, and performance pressure. In this context, coaches' perceptions of personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement may play an important role in their professional performance and career development. The concept known as self-efficacy or competence was first used and introduced into the literature by Bandura. It is defined as the capacity to organize and carry out activities needed for the successful performance of individual abilities (Yıldırım et al., 2019). An individual's perception of competence affects motivation and performance. Individuals with a high self-efficacy perception recover more quickly after setbacks, while individuals with a low self-efficacy perception perceive challenging tasks as threats (Doğan et al., 2023). Professional competence is not only about possessing knowledge, but also about having a high level of desire and energy to perform the job (Çakan, 2022). Personal professional competence enhances an individual's motivational aspect by revealing their cognitive ability and the effort required for successful performance, thus demonstrating its impact on success. In the context of coaching, the perception of personal professional competence strengthens processes such as effective decision-making in stressful situations, effective communication with athletes, and rapid recovery from negative outcomes. Personal and professional competencies interact with multiple factors (Ekşi et al., 2020). The first of these factors is job satisfaction, which is included in our research title. An individual's perceptions of their professional competence affect their experience in the work environment and the level of satisfaction they derive from their job. Job satisfaction defines the degree to which an individual working in an organization is satisfied with their position. It is an aspect of the employee's overall well-being. Job satisfaction is a dynamic path for organizational productivity and is an important issue for researchers and organizations. Issues such as performance, motivation, and engagement are closely related to job satisfaction (Uzkurt et al., 2022). Motivated and satisfied employees have higher morale (Korkmazer and Ekingen, 2017). According to Subagja and Safrianto (2020), employees who are satisfied with their jobs will have high job engagement, as well as satisfaction and loyalty towards the company, and thus will continue to improve their performance (Hartika et al., 2023). While there is some debate about the

dimensionality of job satisfaction, there is a general consensus that job satisfaction can reflect a general (one-dimensional) feeling of satisfaction. In various professions, job satisfaction has been found to have an impact on various outcomes (Madigan and Kim, 2021). The attractiveness of one's job is a strong motivator for happiness at work. Mesurado et al. (2021) argued that an employee's level of happiness at work is proportional to the effort they expend on their work. The positive emotional state obtained from successfully completing assigned tasks contribute to job satisfaction (Gazi et al., 2024). Job satisfaction is not only related to task performance but also plays an important role in shaping individuals' levels of career engagement. The coaching profession involves long working hours and frequent travel. In particular, pressure from management and fans is a significant factor may influence job satisfaction in terms of professional sustainability. Consequently, career engagement is another concept that emerges as a natural result of positive work-related experiences. Career engagement is the degree to which an individual can express behaviors such as proactive networking, planning, and skill development in their career (Hirschi and Freund, 2014; Boğazlıyan et al., 2023). Although the concept of career commitment is widely used in the literature, the present study specifically focuses on career engagement as measured by the Career Engagement Scale developed by Hirschi et al. (2014). Career engagement refers to proactive career-related behaviors such as career planning, networking, skill development, and self-management. In contrast, career commitment is more closely associated with emotional attachment to one's profession. Therefore, the findings of this study should be interpreted within the framework of behavioral career engagement rather than attitudinal commitment. Proactive individuals tend to find solutions that adapt to changing circumstances. They are willing to try new approaches and are inclined to acquire knowledge and skills to increase future employment opportunities (Atay and Büyükgöze-Kavas, 2025). For career engagement to be observed in an individual, various factors such as mandatory working hours, workplace dissatisfaction, and work energy are necessary (Karaşin and Öztırak, 2023). Career engagement includes behaviors such as career planning, exploration, and voluntary skill development, which support individuals in achieving their long-term career goals (Siyahtaş et al., 2023). Career engagement also affects work attitudes. When evaluated for coaches, it directly corresponds to processes such as license updates, participation in training, adaptation to sports technologies, and the development of leadership skills. Studies in the literature on this subject indicate that positive emotions and support, competence in career decision-making, and emotional support positively influence career engagement (Tunç and Tunç, 2022). In general, career-bound employees possess persistence,

a crucial element that allows them to remain in a particular field long enough to acquire specialized skills and experience (Schultheiss et al., 2023). Although research on coaching has increased in recent years, studies examining career-related processes among coaches remain limited, particularly in terms of integrating personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement within a single framework (Guo et al., 2024). This gap is especially evident in the context of football coaching. Due to the nature of the coaching profession, an individual's perception of professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement are interconnected processes. This study aims to examine the relationships between personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement among football coaches, and to explore differences across key demographic variables. Significant differences between demographic variables (age, education, professional experience, work method, length of service at the current club) and scale scores were examined, and the relationships between age and the scales were evaluated separately. The hypotheses developed in line with the theoretical framework of the study are as follows:

H1: There are significant differences between education level and personal-professional competencies perception, job satisfaction, and career engagement scales.

H2: There are significant differences between professional experience and personal-professional competencies perception, job satisfaction, and career engagement scales.

H3: There are significant differences between working method and personal-professional competencies perception, job satisfaction, and career engagement scales.

H4: There are significant differences between length of service at the current club and personal-professional competencies perception, job satisfaction, and career engagement scales.

H5: There is a positive relationship between perceived personal-professional competencies and job satisfaction.

H6: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and career engagement.

H7: There is a positive relationship between perceived personal-professional competencies and career engagement.

H8: There is a significant relationship between age and perceived personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement levels.

By examining these variables together, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of coaches' career development processes and offer implications for coach education and career planning.

METHODS

Research Design

This research was planned using a descriptive research model to examine the relationships between football coaches' perceptions of personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement. This study adopts a cross-sectional and descriptive research design. Therefore, the analyses are limited to identifying relationships and group differences rather than establishing causal relationships. Descriptive research models are studies conducted with large groups, where the opinions and attitudes of individuals in the group regarding an event are recorded and described (Karakaya, 2012). Since the aim of this research is to examine the relationships between football coaches' perceptions of personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement within the current context, this model was deemed appropriate for the research objective. Furthermore, the analysis of the relationships between variables through quantitative data supports the reason for choosing the descriptive model.

Participants

In this study, the research group consisted of 305 football coaches working in football clubs in different regions of Turkey, selected using convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method. Convenience sampling is a sampling method that allows easy and quick access to the research group (Yağar and Dökme, 2018). In this study, the sample was determined using convenience sampling due to time and resource limitations. While this method allows researchers to collect data from accessible participants, it limits the sample's capacity to represent the general population, which constitutes the study's most significant limitation. Therefore, the generalizability of the findings should be carefully evaluated, and it is recommended that larger, randomly selected samples be used in future research. This method is a frequently preferred sampling approach that provides practical advantages in reaching professional groups working in the field of sports. Coaches were contacted online, and all coaches who voluntarily participated in the study were included in the sample. The average age of the participants was 40.6 ±10.59. The participant group had a heterogeneous structure in terms of education, professional experience, league level, and length of service.

Data Collection Methods and Tools

In order to determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants in the study, a personal information form was created that included questions about age, education, professional experience, league level, and length of service. In addition, the Personal Professional Competencies Perception Scale, the Job Satisfaction Scale, and the Career Engagement Scale were used. These scales were chosen because they have been widely used in previous research, Turkish validity and reliability studies have been completed, and they are suitable for our study's objective of examining football coaches' perceptions of personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement.

Personal-Professional Competencies Perception Scale (PPCPS)

The "Personal-Professional Competencies Perception Scale," developed by Kazu and Demiralp (2017), was used to measure participants' perceptions of their personal professional competencies. The scale consists of 4 sub-dimensions, 18 items, and a 5-point Likert-type scale. The sub-dimensions are, respectively: Ability to Work Independently and Take Responsibility (AWITR), Field-Specific Competence (FSC), Learning Competency (LC) and Communication-Social Competency (CSC). The sub-dimensions are, respectively, "independent work-responsibility taking competence, field-specific competence, learning competence, and communication-social competence." The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be .96 (Kazu and Demiralp, 2017).

Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS)

To determine the job satisfaction levels of the participants, the "Job Satisfaction Scale," developed by Brayfield and Rothe (1951), with a short 5-item form created by Judge et al. (1998) and adapted into Turkish by Keser and Bilir (2019), was used. The scale consists of a single sub-dimension, 5 items, and a 5-point Likert-type scale, rated from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strongly agree. The internal consistency coefficient of the original scale was found to be .83 (Keser and Bilir, 2019).

Career Engagement Scale (CES)

The scale to measure participants' career engagement levels was developed by Hirschi et al. (2014) and adapted into Turkish by Korkmaz et al. (2020). The scale consists of a single factor with 9 items on a 5-point Likert scale (1-Almost never, 2-Occasionally, 3-Moderately, 4-Quite often, 5-Very often). The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be .88 (Korkmaz et al., 2020).

Data Analysis

The data obtained in the study were first transferred to a Microsoft Excel file and then analyzed using SPSS 31.0. Normality and homogeneity of variance assumptions were checked before group comparison analyses. Normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis values, and homogeneity of variance was evaluated using the Levene test. The results showed that the necessary assumptions for parametric tests were met. Since it took a value in the range of ±3, it was determined that the assumption of normal distribution was satisfied (Kline, 2011). The relationship between variables was tested with Pearson correlation analysis. For differences between groups, independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA tests were used. In ANOVA results where a significant difference was detected, Tukey post-hoc test was applied to determine which groups the difference was between.

Research Ethical Approval

This research was conducted in accordance with the principles of the Helsinki Declaration and with the permission of the Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa Rectorate Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Date: 05.08.2025, Decision No: 2025/494).

RESULTS

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for participants' age, education, professional experience, working method and length of service at the current club

Variable		n	%
Age		305	X= 40.61±10.59
Education	Primary School	15	4.9
	High School	152	49.8
	Undergraduate	118	38.7
	Postgraduate	20	6.6
Professional experience	0-5 years	111	36.4
	6-11 years	92	30.2
	12 years and over	102	33.4
Working method	Amateur	138	45.2
	Professional	167	54.8
Length of service at the current club	1 year or less	137	44.9
	2-3 years	95	31.1
	4 years and over	73	23.9
Total		**305**	**100.0**

X: Average

Table 1 presents the results regarding the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. According to the analysis results, 49.8% of the participants have a "high school" education, 36.4% have "0-5 years" of professional experience, 54.8% work in the "professional" sector, and 44.9% have been practicing working at their current club for "1 years and under".

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the sub-dimensions of personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement

Scale	NI	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min.	Max.	α
Personal-Professional Competencies Perception Scale (PPCPS)								
AWITR	4	4.52	.46	-1.06	2.18	2.00	5.00	.68
FSC	5	4.53	.46	-.785	-.137	3.00	5.00	.82
LC	5	4.52	.49	-.898	.259	2.80	5.00	.85
CSC	4	3.72	.75	-.286	-.504	1.50	5.00	.73
Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS)	5	3.63	.44	.346	.144	2.60	5.00	.70
Career Engagement Scale (CES)	9	38.78	4.94	-.710	.047	23.00	45.00	.89

NI: Number of items, M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation, Min: Minimum, Max: Maximum, α: alpha

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistical results for the sub-dimensions of the scale used in the study. Internal consistency coefficients for the current study ranged from 0.68 to 0.89, indicating acceptable to high reliability. Coefficients may vary depending on the length of each sub-dimension. In the relevant literature (Ural and Kılıç, 2005), this range is defined as a 'highly reliable' level. Furthermore, considering the sensitivity of this coefficient to the number of items and the limited number of items in the sub-dimension, the obtained value is evaluated as sufficient for analyses in terms of internal consistency and in accordance with academic standards. The “field specific competence” dimension of the Personal-Professional Competence Scale has the highest mean (M= 4.53), while the “communication social competency” sub-dimension has the lowest mean (M= 3.72). The mean for the job satisfaction scale is (=3.63) and the mean for the career engagement scale is (M= 4.94). These results indicate that football coaches have positive levels of professional competence and job satisfaction, and high levels of career engagement. To determine whether the data showed a normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis values were examined; values between -3 and +3 indicate a normal distribution (Kline, 2011). The internal consistency coefficients for the sub-dimensions of the scale ranged between .68 and .89.

Table 3 presents a one-way ANOVA examining differences in the sub-dimensions of the scale according to participants’ education levels. Significant differences were found in the ability to work independently ($F(2, 977) = 3.32$, $p < .05$), communication-social competence ($F(2, 397) = 6.40$, $p < .05$), and job satisfaction ($F(2, 931) = 7.93$, $p < .05$). According to the Tukey test results, the difference in the sub-dimension of independent work and responsibility-taking competence is between the groups with primary education and graduate-doctoral education levels; in the sub-dimension of communication-social competence, it is

between the primary and high school education levels and the university education level groups; and in the job satisfaction dimension, it is between the primary and high school education levels and the graduate-doctoral education level groups and the high school and university education levels groups.

Table 3. One-way ANOVA results for the sub-dimensions of personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement according to participants' education levels

Scale	Education	n	M	SD	F	p	Tukey
AWITR	Primary School	15	4.70	.40	2.977	**.032***	**1-4**
	High School	152	4.55	.44			
	Undergraduate	118	4.51	.42			
	Postgraduate	20	4.27	.66			
FSC	Primary School	15	4.69	.52	.964	.410	
	High School	152	4.55	.44			
	Undergraduate	118	4.50	.48			
	Postgraduate	20	4.46	.43			
LC	Primary School	15	4.70	.48	.743	.527	
	High School	152	4.51	.49			
	Undergraduate	118	4.52	.48			
	Postgraduate	20	4.48	.49			
CSC	Primary School	15	3.15	.85	6.397	**.001***	**1-3** **2-3**
	High School	152	3.62	.72			
	Undergraduate	118	3.91	.76			
	Postgraduate	20	3.77	.57			
JSS	Primary School	15	3.84	.54	7.931	**.001***	**1-4** **2-3** **2-4**
	High School	152	3.71	.39			
	Undergraduate	118	3.54	.45			
	Postgraduate	20	3.34	.41			
CES	Primary School	15	38.66	4.83	.095	.963	
	High School	152	38.76	5.06			
	Undergraduate	118	38.72	4.99			
	Postgraduate	20	39.35	3.91			

*p < .05, ***n: Sample size, M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation, p: significance value,***

Table 4 presents a one-way ANOVA examining differences in the sub-dimensions of the scale according to participants' length of professional experience. Significant differences were found in communication-social competence ($F(3, 201) = 4.20$, $p < .05$), job satisfaction ($F(3, 559) = 7.56$, $p < .05$), and career engagement ($F(3, 065) = 10.07$, $p < .05$). According to the Tukey test results, differences in communication-social effectiveness sub-dimensions are observed between groups with 6-11 years and 12 years and over experience; in job satisfaction, between groups with 0-5 years and 6-11 years of experience and those with 12 years and over experience; and in career engagement, between groups with 0-5 years and 6-11 years of experience and those with 12 years and over experience.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA results for the sub-dimensions of personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement according to participants' of professional experience

Scale	Professional experience	n	M	SD	F	p	Tukey
AWITR	0-5 years	111	4.44	.47	2.780	.064	
	6-11 years	92	4.54	.50			
	12 years and over	102	4.59	.39			
FSC	0-5 years	111	4.48	.49	1.269	.283	
	6-11 years	92	4.56	.45			
	12 years and over	102	4.57	.44			
LC	0-5 years	111	4.50	.50	.346	.708	
	6-11 years	92	4.56	.48			
	12 years and over	102	4.51	.48			
CSC	0-5 years	111	3.73	.74	3.201	**.042***	**2-3**
	6-11 years	92	3.85	.69			
	12 years and over	102	3.58	.81			
JSS	0-5 years	111	3.55	.43	7.559	**.001***	**1,2-3**
	6-11 years	92	3.57	.43			
	12 years and over	102	3.76	.42			
CES	0-5 years	111	39.30	4.55	10.065	**.001***	**1,2-3**
	6-11 years	92	40.03	3.95			
	12 years and over	102	37.09	4.94			

*p < .05, ***n: Sample size, M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation, p: significance value,***

Table 5. Independent samples t-test results for the sub-dimensions of personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement according to participants' working method

Scale	Working method	n	M	SD	T	p
AWITR	Amateur	138	4.50	.45	-.715	.475
	Professional	167	4.54	.46		
FSC	Amateur	138	4.51	.49	-.770	.442
	Professional	167	4.55	.43		
LC	Amateur	138	4.52	.49	-.198	.843
	Professional	167	4.53	.49		
CSC	Amateur	138	3.75	.76	.737	.462
	Professional	167	3.69	.75		
JSS	Amateur	138	3.57	.40	-1.943	.053
	Professional	167	3.67	.46		
CES	Amateur	138	39.53	4.50	2.427	**.016***
	Professional	167	38.16	5.20		

*p < .05, ***n: Sample size, M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation, p: significance value***

Table 5 presents the results of independent samples t-tests examining differences in the sub-dimensions of the scale according to work setting. Career engagement differed significantly by work setting ($t(427) = 2.43$, $p = .016$). However, no significant difference was found between working method and the perceived level of personal professional competencies and job satisfaction levels.

Table 6. One-way ANOVA results for the sub-dimensions of personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement according to participants' length of service at the current club

Scale	Length of service at the current club	n	M	SD	F	p
AWITR	1 year or less	137	4.56	.47	2.044	.131
	2-3 years	95	4.44	.46		
	4 years and over	73	4.55	.42		
FSC	1 year or less	137	4.58	.43	1.867	.156
	2-3 years	95	4.47	.47		
	4 years and over	73	4.52	.49		
LC	1 year or less	137	4.56	.48	.866	.421
	2-3 years	95	4.52	.49		
	4 years and over	73	4.46	.50		
CSC	1 year or less	137	3.72	.69	.182	.833
	2-3 years	95	3.69	.81		
	4 years and over	73	3.76	.80		
JSC	1 year or less	137	3.69	.46	2.786	.063
	2-3 years	95	3.60	.41		
	4 years and over	73	3.55	.41		
CES	1 year or less	137	38.91	5.09	.092	.912
	2-3 years	95	38.73	4.55		
	4 years and over	73	38.61	5.18		

n: Sample size, M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation, p: significance value,

Table 6 presents the results of a one-way ANOVA examining differences in the sub-dimensions of the scale according to participants' length of service at their current club. No significant differences were found ($p > .05$).

Table 7. Correlation coefficients (r) between participants' age and the sub-dimensions of personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement

		Age	AWITR	FSC	LC	CSC	JSS	CES
Age	**r**	1						
AWITR	**r**	**.165****	1					
FSC	**r**	**.135***	**.575*****	1				
LC	**r**	.047	**.531*****	.801***	1			
CSC	**r**	-.105	.164**	.300***	.343***	1		
JSS	**r**	.207***	.246***	.266***	.285***	.170**	1	
CES	**r**	-.251***	.235***	.394***	.468***	.396***	.275***	1

AWITR: Ability to work independently and take responsibility, FSC: Field specific competence, LC: Learning competency, CSC: Communication social competency, JSC: Job satisfaction scale, CES: Career engagement scale

Table 7 shows the results of the Pearson correlation analysis between the age variable and the sub-dimensions of the scale. According to the analysis results, positive and significant relationships were found between age and ability to work independently and take responsibility ($r = .165$), field specific competence ($r = .135$), and job satisfaction ($r = .207$). These findings indicate that as age increases, individuals' levels of independent work and

responsibility taking, their perceptions of competence in their fields, and their job satisfaction increase. In contrast, negative relationships were found between age and communication social competency (r = -.105) and career engagement (r = -.251). This suggests that there may be a partial decrease in communication social competency and career engagement levels with increasing age. On the other hand, no significant relationship was found between age and learning competency (r = .047). Overall, the correlations observed in this study were generally weak, indicating meaningful but not strong associations between variables.

DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between football coaches' perceptions of personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement from various demographic perspectives. The findings indicate that, within this group of Turkish football coaches, individual competence perceptions, attitudes towards work, and career-related behaviors may interact as dynamic processes. In the discussion section, the research findings are interpreted in light of the literature, and the results are presented with explanations for theoretical frameworks and coaching practices. The findings should be interpreted in terms of proactive career-related behaviors rather than emotional attachment to the profession.

Personal-professional competencies are also defined in terms of observable behaviors that include distinctive knowledge, attitudes, and skills in creating excellent performance (Ekşi et al., 2020). The quality of an individual's competencies is important for social functioning, efficient resource utilization, and better service delivery (Akıncı et al., 2023). If the work performed meets the desires of the employees, their satisfaction levels may be higher (Ay et al., 2014). The concept of career engagement is still relatively new in the literature. However, in the field of sports, career engagement affects an individual's professional continuity and performance. The findings generally reveal that, in the present study sample, socio-demographic variables such as education level, professional experience, age, and league level appear to be associated with the coaches' perceptions of their profession and career management. These results become even more meaningful when evaluated within the framework of theoretical models examining the relationship between personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement. In this context, the results of our study are considered to be of significant importance to the literature.

The study found significant differences between the sub-dimensions of personal-professional competence levels, specifically the ability to work independently, take

responsibility, and communication-social competence, based on the participants' education levels. In the literature, Yıldırım et al. (2019) suggested that managers improve employee performance when assigning candidates based on their personal characteristics and education levels. While this study found significant differences between job satisfaction levels and education levels, Çap et al. (2017) found no significant relationship between education level and job satisfaction. Similar results were found in the study by Güneş and Ataç (2022). The results of this study show both similarities and differences with previous research, potentially due to variations in participants' education levels, professional experience, or coaching environments. Based on this finding, it can be suggested that education levels may be related to individuals' perceptions of personal-professional competence, and that individuals with higher education levels may report higher job satisfaction. Increased professional competencies strengthen the sense of achievement in an individual. The individual's willingness to persevere and maintain control in the face of obstacles and failures is a determining factor in achieving their goals (Çiftçi, 2015). The increase in communication and social skills as education level rises can be evaluated within this framework. Higher education also provides individuals with the capacity to manage professional relationships. Therefore, this finding may be considered consistent with previous research. Furthermore, the literature contains research indicating that achievement motivation influences personal-professional competence through lifelong learning and is a partial mediator of lifelong learning (Ekşi et al., 2020).

Table 4, which examines participants according to their years of personal-professional experience, reveals a significant difference between communication-social competence, a sub-dimension of personal-professional competence, and job satisfaction and career engagement. This finding suggests that experience can be effective not only in technical skills but also in the development of professional identity and a sense of belonging. Similar studies in the literature on this subject have been examined. While some studies show parallels with the findings of this research, others have yielded different results, which may be explained by contextual factors such as differences in competitive pressures, sample characteristics, or methodological approaches (Sepin et al., 2022; Özan et al., 2023). Another study in the literature emphasizes that, depending on the age and experience of athletes, psychological counseling improves self-confidence, communication, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills; and that this is linked to performance, job satisfaction, and professional engagement (Wee et al., 2020). The study conducted by Kalkavan and Katrinli (2014) also found that job

satisfaction has a positive effect on career engagement and organizational engagement. However, no effect was found between job satisfaction and job performance. This may be due to variations in the sample group, research method, or cultural context. The length of experience is a determining factor in the individual's adaptation to their profession. Observed differences suggest that greater professional experience may be associated with more effective workplace communication and improved social relationships. These factors may, in turn, be related to higher job satisfaction and career engagement. Time spent in the profession allows individuals to better manage their relationships with athletes and management, strengthens their problem-solving skills, and reinforces their professional identity. Naturally, job satisfaction increases, and career engagement strengthens.

According to Table 5, a significant difference was found between career engagement and league level. Coaches in amateur leagues had higher average scores than those in professional leagues. Since career engagement reflects proactive career behaviors such as professional planning, skill development, exploration, networking, and initiative, the lower scores observed among professional league coaches may suggest that performance pressure, occupational instability, and extensive managerial responsibilities constrain these long-term developmental behaviors. Conversely, amateur coaches may have more opportunities to engage in proactive career behaviors, possibly due to lower performance pressure and closer relationships with athletes. These observations align with the literature indicating that excessive workload and stress may reduce proactive career behaviors and professional development activities among professionals (Archer & Yates, 2017; Mergan et al., 2025). This study examined the levels of personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement of participants based on their length of service as coaches at their current clubs. The analysis revealed no significant differences between the scale sub-dimensions and length of service. The findings suggest that length of service at the current club may not be significantly associated with the measured variables. A review of similar research results in the literature revealed studies showing both similarities and differences to this study's findings (Gögercin, 2017; Ayık, 2022; Madigan and Kim, 2021). Studies show that coaches who approach their profession with genuine passion tend to perceive more positive experiences in the workplace and derive greater satisfaction from these activities (Peixoto et al., 2023).

Table 7, which examines the relationships between the age variable and the sub-dimensions of the scale, shows positive correlations between age and the ability to work independently and take responsibility, field specific competency, and job satisfaction. These

findings may indicate that older or more experienced individuals tend to fulfill professional responsibilities more effectively, their knowledge and skills in their field may improve, and job satisfaction may increase. Conversely, the research results revealed negative correlations between age and communication social competency and career engagement. This finding suggests that engagement levels and communication-social competency perceptions may decrease partially with age. This negative association may indicate a reduction in proactive career-management behaviors over time. This could be due to career plateauing, fatigue, or decreased motivation for active career exploration. Based on this finding, it can be assumed that as coaches get older, they gain experience, develop professional skills, and adapt to the work environment more quickly. In addition, professional stability and the fulfillment of desires with age lead to an increase in job satisfaction. These similarities and differences may be attributed to differences in league levels, age distributions, or cultural and organizational contexts of the coaches studied. (Gül and Köse, 2021; Acar and Karaaslan, 2022; Dursun and Tozoğlu, 2024). It's not certain that satisfied employees are automatically more productive, but dissatisfied employees generally leave the organization more often, are absent more frequently, and produce lower quality work than satisfied employees (Singh and Surujlal, 2006). According to the results of the one-way analysis of variance, it was determined that job satisfaction levels did not show a logical difference related to age (Dalkilic and Atasoy, 2016). The increase in personal-professional competencies and job satisfaction with age is related to developmental career theories. Individuals with career maturity gain greater professional stability, a stronger professional identity, and self-confidence. Any initiative aimed at increasing job satisfaction will not only improve employee well-being but also enhance the organization's productivity and the sustainability of its success (Sönmez and Üngüren, 2026). On the other hand, it is argued that employees with high job satisfaction will be more productive and stay with the organization longer, while employees with low job satisfaction will be less productive and more prone to leaving (Çetinkaya and Karagözoğlu, 2025). Therefore, the increase in job satisfaction with age may be considered consistent with previous research.

The findings of the present study suggest that the coaches in this sample demonstrated differences in perceptions of personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement according to various demographic variables. The findings indicate that several demographic variables are associated with coaches' professional perceptions. However, it was observed that within this group of Turkish football coaches, those coaching at the professional

league level demonstrated relatively lower levels of career engagement, possibly due to factors such as intense competition, performance pressure, and stress. Furthermore, the present study suggests that, within this sample, increases in age and professional experience are associated with higher levels of professional maturity, contributing to greater job satisfaction. The research findings also offer some important practical implications. In this context, it is crucial for sports federations and clubs to develop programs that support the professional development of coaches. For example, since less experienced coaches showed lower communication-social competence, in-service training programs focusing on communication, leadership, team management, and psychosocial skills can specifically target these gaps and strengthen personal-professional competencies. Given that career engagement was lower among professional league coaches, structured mentoring programs can facilitate knowledge transfer while also supporting proactive career development and engagement in less experienced coaches. Additionally, continuous education programs, seminars, and professional development workshops can reinforce both personal-professional competencies and career engagement, particularly addressing areas highlighted by differences in experience, league level, and education among the participants.

The study findings show that hypotheses H1, H2, H5, H6, and H7 are fully supported, indicating significant relationships between perceived personal-professional competence, job satisfaction, and career engagement. Hypothesis H3 is partially supported, as no significant differences were observed in any of the sub-dimensions in terms of study method and length of service in the current club. However, hypothesis H4 is not supported.

This study has some limitations. Since all variables were measured using self-report questionnaires collected at a single time point, common method bias may have influenced the results. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the data, causal inferences cannot be made. The findings should be interpreted as associations rather than cause-and-effect relationships. Since the sample consisted solely of football coaches, the findings cannot be generalized to other sports. Furthermore, data was collected via survey, and participants' responses may have been influenced by social expectations. The distribution of the variables included in the study was also unequal. Therefore, the findings should be carefully evaluated within the context of these limitations.

Suggestions

Future research examining the professional career paths of coaches in different sports branches could make significant contributions to the literature. Furthermore, using

qualitative research methods would allow for a more in-depth analysis of coaches' professional experiences and the challenges they face. Future research may also benefit from using more advanced analytical approaches such as regression analysis, path analysis, or structural equation modeling to examine predictive relationships among variables. Studies focusing particularly on coaches working at the national team level or in youth development programs would further expand the body of knowledge in this field.

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