

An examination of good governance principles in municipal sports institutions**Gülşah AKKAYA¹ , Aytekin ALPULLU¹ **¹Marmara University, Faculty of Sport Sciences, Istanbul, Türkiye**Araştırma Makalesi/Research Article****DOI: 10.70736/jrolss.531**Gönderi Tarihi/ Received:
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30.06.2025**Abstract**

The aim of this research is to examine the elements of good governance in the sports sector and to determine the impact of various demographic variables on the evaluation of the implementation of good governance principles. By focusing on local-level applications of good governance, this study fills an important gap in understanding how key principles such as transparency, accountability, and participation are reflected in practice. The study was conducted on managers working for one of the largest sports organizations in Türkiye, Spor İstanbul. The sample group consisted of 76 managers, 43% male (n = 33) and 57% female (n = 43), selected using a purposeful sampling method. Participants were administered the Good Governance Principles Scale alongside a personal information form. The data collected were analyzed with SPSS. Statistical methods such as T-tests, ANOVA, reliability analysis, and correlation analysis were employed to explore relationships between demographic variables and governance dimensions. The findings revealed statistically significant differences in participants' perceptions of good governance based on gender and educational status. Female managers scored higher across all sub-dimensions—transparency, participation and democracy, control mechanisms, integrity, and solidarity and development—highlighting the potential influence of gender on governance awareness. Additionally, participants with a master's degree demonstrated higher awareness in the transparency dimension, suggesting that educational attainment contributes to a deeper understanding of governance-related accountability. However, variables such as age, position, and years of service did not yield significant differences, indicating that governance perceptions may be shaped more by individual attributes than institutional roles. These results emphasize the importance of enhancing diversity and education-focused training within sports organizations to strengthen governance culture. Ultimately, the study contributes to the literature by evidencing how demographic factors intersect with governance principles and underscores the necessity of inclusive, transparent practices in municipal sports institutions.

Keywords: Corruption, governance, good governance in sports, good governance principles, transparency***Spor kurumlarında iyi yönetim ilkelerinin incelenmesine yönelik bir araştırma*****Öz**

Bu araştırmanın amacı, spor sektöründe iyi yönetim unsurlarını incelemek ve çeşitli demografik değişkenlerin iyi yönetim ilkelerinin uygulanmasına yönelik değerlendirmeler üzerindeki etkisini belirlemektir. Çalışma, iyi yönetim ilkelerinin yerel düzeydeki uygulamalarına odaklanarak şeffaflık, hesap verebilirlik ve katılım ilkelerinin sahadaki yansımalarını anlamaya yönelik literatürdeki mevcut boşluğa katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma, Türkiye'nin en büyük spor kuruluşlarından Spor İstanbul'da çalışan 76 yönetici (%43 erkek, n=33; %57 kadın, n=43) üzerinde amaçlı örnekleme yöntemiyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veriler, İyi Yönetişim İlkeleri Ölçeği ve kişisel bilgi formu kullanılarak toplanmış, SPSS programıyla T-testi, ANOVA, güvenilirlik ve korelasyon analizleri uygulanmıştır. Bulgular, katılımcıların iyi yönetim algılarında cinsiyet ve eğitim durumuna göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılıklar göstermiştir. Kadın yöneticiler tüm alt boyutlarda (şeffaflık, katılım ve demokrasi, denetim mekanizmaları, dürüstlük, dayanışma-gelişim) daha yüksek puanlar almış, bu durum cinsiyetin yönetim farkındalığı üzerindeki etkisini vurgulamıştır. Yüksek lisans derecesine sahip katılımcılar şeffaflık boyutunda daha yüksek farkındalık göstermiştir. Yaş, pozisyon ve hizmet süresi değişkenlerinde anlamlı farklılıklar bulunmamış; bu da yönetim algılarının kurumsal rollerden çok bireysel özelliklerden etkilendiğini göstermiştir. Sonuçlar, spor kurumlarında yönetim kültürünün güçlendirilmesi için çeşitliliğin ve eğitim odaklı çalışmaların önemini vurgulamaktadır. Çalışma, demografik faktörlerin yönetim ilkeleriyle nasıl kesiştiğini ortaya koyarak yerel spor kurumlarında kapsayıcı, şeffaf ve etkin yönetim uygulamalarının yaygınlaştırılması ve sürdürülebilirliğinin sağlanmasına yönelik önemli katkılar sağlayabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İyi yönetim ilkeleri, sporda iyi yönetim, şeffaflık, yönetim, yolsuzluk**Sorumlu Yazar/ Corresponded Author:** Gülşah AKKAYA, E-posta/ e-mail: gulsahakkaya7@hotmail.com

INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic and captivating world of sports, where competition, passion, and athleticism intersect, the role of sports governance emerges as a foundational element for ensuring integrity, fairness, and sustainability at every level. From recreational sport initiatives to elite performance stages, sports governance plays a pivotal role in safeguarding the principles of honesty, equity, and sustainability that underpin the sports ecosystem (Akkaya & Alpullu, 2023).

The governance of sports organizations has become increasingly significant in the 21st century, as the sector has evolved into a complex global industry valued at over \$513 billion (Badillo, 2023). This rapid growth has introduced major challenges related to transparency, accountability, and ethics (Parent et al., 2023). With projections estimating the global sports market will reach \$745.1 billion by 2027 (SportBusiness Global, 2024), ensuring effective governance has become essential. However, financial expansion has also led to corruption risks such as bribery, manipulation, betting and doping, posing a dual challenge for sports organizations: leveraging financial success while safeguarding the integrity of sports (Bondarenko et al., 2022).

Despite growing attention to governance in international sports, a substantial gap remains in the literature on how governance principles are perceived and applied at the municipal level, especially in emerging economies. This study contributes to addressing this gap through an empirical investigation of Spor Istanbul, a leading municipal sports organization. It makes an original contribution to the field by addressing how good governance principles are interpreted and applied at the local level, offering insight into an underexplored yet increasingly important area. The study pursues several interconnected objectives: examining the implementation of good governance principles in municipal sports organizations, analyzing the influence of demographic variables such as gender, education, experience, and organizational role on governance perceptions, and evaluating Spor Istanbul as a potential model for good governance. This approach extends Parent et al.'s (2023) work on sport governance at national and international levels and builds upon O'Boyle and Shilbury's (2023) comparative analysis by providing empirical evidence from an emerging economy context. By grounding the study in local-level data and analyzing how governance is perceived by sports professionals across demographic categories, this research expands the current knowledge base and offers a model that can inform both academic inquiry and institutional practice. Moreover, it contributes a practical framework for enhancing governance culture in municipal sports organizations, an

area often overlooked in mainstream literature. The urgency of this research becomes clear when examining the governance failures that have plagued the sports industry over recent decades.

Over the past 25 years, high-profile corruption scandals, doping cases, and leadership failures have underscored the critical need for strong governance in sports. One notorious case occurred following the awarding of the 2002 Winter Olympics to Salt Lake City, where members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) were accused of accepting bribes, prompting significant changes to the IOC's city bidding process (Shepard, 1999). Similarly, the controversial decisions to award the 2018 and 2022 FIFA World Cups to Russia and Qatar, respectively, triggered investigations and the suspension of executive committee members. These incidents have been compounded by doping scandals such as the BALCO case, involving Olympic sprint champion Marion Jones, Tim Montgomery, and other high-profile athletes, which exposed systemic vulnerabilities and the urgent need for robust governance mechanisms in sport (Chappelet & Mrkonjic, 2019).

Furthermore, national governing bodies (NGBs) in the United States, including USA Gymnastics and USA Swimming, have faced scrutiny due to systemic issues, such as sexual abuse scandals, that have shaken public trust. On the international stage, major organizations like the IOC (1999), the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) in 2016, and the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) in 2015 were engulfed in corruption scandals, revealing global-scale governance failures (Chappelet & Mrkonjic, 2019). In response, bodies like the FIFA Ethics Committee (2023) and IOC Governance Commission (2023) have proposed reforms aimed at strengthening accountability and transparency protocols.

Governance failures in the sports industry have underscored the urgent need for core principles such as integrity, professionalism, accountability, and transparency. Good sports governance is now widely regarded as a prerequisite for institutional credibility, especially within national sports organizations. Structural factors including board size, inclusivity, and diversity contribute to the effectiveness of governance. Transparent, ethical, and participatory management practices are essential in preventing scandals and fostering trust among stakeholders (Prakash et al., 2021; Chappelet & Mrkonjic, 2019). According to Sport Australia's 2020 framework, sports governance functions as the brain of an organization, overseeing control mechanisms and guiding strategic operations (Modi et al., 2021). Since the

late twentieth century, the commercialization of sports through the expansion of clubs, leagues, and frequent competitions has shifted its structure toward a more business-focused model. This transformation has brought serious issues to the forefront, including corruption, doping, match fixing, underrepresentation, and illegal betting, all of which compromise the integrity of sports (Jha et al., 2021). These ongoing challenges highlight the urgent need for governance systems that maintain ethical standards and institutional accountability. To contextualize this study within a clear theoretical framework, it is essential to articulate the fundamental principles that define good governance in sports institutions.

Good governance encompasses five core principles essential for effective institutional management. Transparency involves making organizational decisions and data openly accessible, reinforcing public trust (Chappelet & Mrkonjic, 2019). Accountability establishes clear responsibility mechanisms where leaders answer for their actions through formal evaluation systems (Parent & Hoye, 2018). Participation promotes inclusive stakeholder engagement in governance activities, while integrity encompasses ethical conduct and conflict-of-interest management (Geeraert & Drieskens, 2021). Lastly, control mechanisms serve as internal and external checks, such as audits and evaluations—to ensure compliance and effectiveness (O'Boyle & Bradbury, 2023). In sports organizations, these principles become critical for maintaining stakeholder trust and preventing corruption scandals that have plagued the sector (Bondarenko et al., 2022). Municipal sports institutions must demonstrate exemplary governance practices to ensure sustainable operations and equitable service delivery to diverse community populations (Zhang & Chen, 2023).

Having established these theoretical foundations, it becomes evident that sports organizations worldwide employ diverse governance models tailored to the unique needs of each sport. International federations such as the IOC and FIFA reflect the complexity of global sports governance, while national organizations like the NBA and NFL represent commercially focused, specialized structures (Dowling et al., 2018). These organizations vary significantly in scope, authority, and structure. For example, FIBA (International Basketball Federation) operates through a hierarchical framework coordinating national federations, whereas Formula One's FIA functions mainly as a regulatory body collaborating with commercial stakeholders (Parent & Hoye, 2018). Their roles range from setting rules and organizing events to supporting grassroots sports development (Geeraert & Drieskens, 2021).

While global sports governance continues to evolve, regional and local practices offer critical insights into effective models. Studies emphasize the importance of governance frameworks tailored to specific cultural, institutional, and administrative contexts (O’Boyle & Bradbury, 2023). In emerging economies, municipal-level governance provides valuable perspectives on the practical application of governance principles (Zhang & Chen, 2023). In Türkiye, local governments play a key role not only in health, education, and cultural development but also in meeting public sports needs. Legal frameworks empower municipalities to support youth and sports centers, fund amateur clubs, organize events, and honor athletic achievements (Ekenci et al., 2009). This reflects a broader state strategy to delegate sports service provision to local governments, particularly metropolitan municipalities (Korkmaz, 2021).

This decentralization reflects a global trend in public administration, where local authorities assume greater responsibility for sports development. It marks a transition from centralized models toward more localized, community-oriented governance, allowing municipalities to respond more effectively to regional needs (Yıldız & Çekiç, 2022).

The rapid urban migration following the 1980s placed heavy strain on local governments in Türkiye, leading to personnel shortages, financial limitations, and coordination issues with central institutions (Karanfiloğlu, 2000). In response, municipalities were granted administrative and financial autonomy to create commercial entities focused on public service delivery. Unlike profit-driven corporations, these entities operate under central oversight and aim to meet community needs effectively (Cilavdaroğlu, 2019). This model is now seen as a viable solution for other emerging economies experiencing similar urbanization pressures (Doğan & Üstüner, 2023).

One prominent example is Spor İstanbul, established in 1989 by the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality. The organization seeks to improve residents’ physical and mental well-being, foster widespread sports participation, and manage municipal sports facilities effectively. It offers free public sports services, develops grassroots sports programs, and organizes national and international events. These include high-profile competitions such as the İstanbul Marathon, the International Rhythmic Gymnastics Championship, the International Badminton Tournament, and the International Table Tennis Tournament. Such initiatives have significantly boosted community engagement and elevated İstanbul’s global visibility as a sports destination (Yılmaz, Ak, & Demir, 2022; Arslan & Ünlü, 2023).

By 2022, Spor Istanbul operated 53 facilities across 21 sports disciplines, reflecting its broad contribution to community-based sports development. The organization uses a Facility Management Model governed by a 12-member board and a leadership team of 13 executives, including a general manager. With 2,638 employees, operational oversight is maintained by facility managers and assistant managers to ensure efficient use of resources and high service quality (Spor Istanbul, 2022). This governance model has effectively balanced financial stewardship with service excellence (Kocaoğlu & Demir, 2023).

Inspired by this success, several other Turkish municipalities have implemented similar governance models for sports services. Research indicates that municipally-managed and decentralized sports service models contribute to increased participation and more effective facility use when compared to traditional public-sector approaches (Akşar, 2023). These findings underscore the importance of innovative and context-specific governance strategies in addressing the evolving demands of urban sports administration.

The primary aim of this study is to examine how good governance principles are implemented and perceived within municipal sports institutions, with particular attention to how these perceptions relate to the demographic characteristics of sports managers. Specifically, the research investigates the influence of gender, education level, age, position, years of service, and prior governance training on attitudes toward key governance dimensions: transparency, accountability, participation, integrity, and control mechanisms.

The study is guided by the following hypotheses the following hypotheses: gender and education level will significantly affect managers' perceptions of good governance principles, whereas age, position, tenure, and prior training will not yield statistically significant differences. It is further hypothesized that greater awareness and experience in governance will be positively associated with stronger support for good governance practices at the municipal level.

METHOD

Research group (population-sample)

The research population consisted of 250 individuals in managerial positions at Spor Istanbul, including board members, directors, supervisors, facility managers, assistant facility managers, and departmental staff. A sample of 76 managers was selected using a convenience sampling method. The sample size was initially determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula for finite populations, which recommends a minimum sample of 152 for a population

of 250, ensuring a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. However, due to access limitations, the final sample of 76 represents approximately 30% of the population.

To assess whether this sample size provides sufficient statistical power, a power analysis was conducted using G*Power software. Assuming a medium effect size ($d = 0.5$) and $\alpha = .05$ for independent samples t-tests (the primary statistical analysis in the study), the resulting statistical power was calculated as 0.71. While slightly below the conventional threshold of 0.80, this is considered acceptable for exploratory studies in organizational settings (Cohen, 1988). Given the gender distribution in the sample (43 females, 33 males), the minimum detectable effect size with 80% power is approximately $d = 0.65$, indicating the sample remains sufficiently powered to detect moderate to large effects.

The sampling methodology followed the guidelines outlined by Gürbüz and Şahin (2016) for organizational research. Ethical approval was obtained from the Marmara University Health Sciences Ethics Committee (Approval No. 31, Date: 21.03.2022).

Data collection tools

Data were collected using two primary tools. The first was a demographic information form developed to obtain essential background characteristics of participants, including gender, age, education level, job position, years of experience in the sports field and within the organization, as well as their knowledge and training in governance principles. These variables were selected due to their theoretical relevance in influencing governance perceptions. For instance, prior research suggests that gender diversity and educational background can shape perspectives on transparency and accountability (Prakash et al., 2021; Thompson et al., 2023). Similarly, organizational position and experience may reflect hierarchical and experiential differences in exposure to governance practices (O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2020).

The second tool was the Good Governance Principles Scale, a 46-item instrument developed and validated by Jawaada (2021) to assess the perceived implementation of governance in sports organizations. The scale measures five core dimensions: Transparency (11 items), Participation and Democratic Process (9 items), Control Mechanisms (10 items), Integrity (7 items), and Solidarity and Development (9 items). Responses are captured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," with a scoring range from -92 to +92.

The instrument has demonstrated strong psychometric validity. In its original validation, the scale showed an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.932, indicating high internal consistency. In

the current study, the reliability coefficients for each sub-dimension were also robust: Transparency ($\alpha = 0.87$), Participation and Democracy ($\alpha = 0.91$), Control Mechanisms ($\alpha = 0.93$), Integrity ($\alpha = 0.89$), and Solidarity and Development ($\alpha = 0.91$). These values confirm the scale's reliability and suitability for assessing governance perceptions in municipal sports settings.

Data collection/processing method

A survey methodology was adopted as the data collection instrument for this study. Surveys were conducted to obtain written information from participants.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 software. Frequency analysis was conducted to evaluate demographic variables, while inferential statistics were used to test hypotheses. Jondeau & Rockinger (2003) state that if the skewness and kurtosis coefficients vary between +3 and -3, the relevant sub-dimensions meet the normal distribution assumption. In this context, independent sample t-test was applied for binary variables and one-way Anova analysis was applied for more than two variables. Reliability analysis was conducted to confirm internal consistency using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, while correlation analysis was applied to assess relationships between demographic factors and the five sub-dimensions of the scale. These analyses provided a thorough evaluation of governance practices within Spor Istanbul, aligning with the study's objectives.

FINDINGS

Table 1. Distribution of participants

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Female	43	56.6
	Male	33	43.4
	Total	76	100.0
Age Group	30–35 years	17	22.4
	36–41 years	30	39.5
	42 years and over	29	38.2
	Total	76	100.0
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree	51	67.1
	Master's Degree	25	32.9
	Total	76	100.0
Position	Facility Manager	34	44.7
	Assistant Manager	36	47.4
	Directorate Staff	6	7.9
	Total	76	100.0

Variable	Category	n	%
Years in Sports Field	10–14 years	24	31.6
	15–19 years	35	46.1
	20 years and over	17	22.4
	Total	76	100.0
Tenure at Organization	Less than 5 years	6	7.9
	6–10 years	12	15.8
	11 years and over	58	76.3
	Total	76	100.0
Governance Knowledge	Yes	52	68.4
	No	24	31.6
	Total	76	100.0
Sports Management Training	Yes	66	86.8
	No	10	13.2
	Total	76	100.0

The study sample comprised 76 managers, with a majority of female participants (56.6%) and most individuals falling into the mid-to-senior career age range, with 77.7% aged 36 or older. Educational attainment was high, with 67.1% holding a bachelor's degree and 32.9% possessing a master's degree. Regarding professional roles, 92.1% served in key management positions as facility or assistant managers. Nearly half of the participants (46.1%) had 15–19 years of experience in the sports field, and a substantial majority (76.3%) had been employed at their current organization for over 11 years, reflecting a stable and experienced workforce. Additionally, 68.4% of the respondents reported having governance knowledge, and 86.8% had received formal training in sports management. While the overall profile suggests a well-qualified managerial group, the notable minority lacking governance knowledge (31.6%) underscores the need for targeted capacity-building initiatives within the organization.

Table 2. Scale score distributions by gender

Sub-Dimension	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Transparency	Female	43	3.33	0.81	2.716	0.007
	Male	33	2.89	0.52		
Participation and Democracy	Female	43	3.59	0.94	1.453	0.005
	Male	33	3.32	0.62		
Control Mechanisms	Female	43	3.65	0.96	1.798	0.017
	Male	33	3.29	0.69		
Integrity	Female	43	3.45	0.96	1.429	0.002
	Male	33	3.17	0.67		
Solidarity and Development	Female	43	3.94	0.89	-0.072	0.004
	Male	33	3.95	0.60		

Table 2 presents significant gender differences were observed across all governance sub-dimensions. Female participants consistently scored higher than males in transparency ($p=0.007$), participation and democracy ($p=0.005$), control mechanisms ($p=0.017$), integrity

($p=0.002$), and solidarity and development ($p=0.004$). These findings suggest gender plays a significant role in governance perceptions and practices within the organization.

Table 3. Scale score distributions by education level

Sub-Dimension	Education Level	N	Mean	SD	F	p
Transparency	Bachelor's	51	3.11	0.63	6.918	0.010
	Master's	25	3.21	0.90		
Participation and Democracy	Bachelor's	51	3.52	0.78	1.458	0.231
	Master's	25	3.38	0.91		
Control Mechanisms	Bachelor's	51	3.52	0.85	0.690	0.409
	Master's	25	3.44	0.92		
Integrity	Bachelor's	51	3.32	0.83	0.258	0.613
	Master's	25	3.36	0.90		
Solidarity and Development	Bachelor's	51	3.87	0.81	0.750	0.389
	Master's	25	4.09	0.70		

Table 3 indicates a significant difference ($p < 0.05$) in the “Transparency” sub-dimension based on education level, with master’s degree holders scoring slightly higher. No significant differences were found for other sub-dimensions.

Table 4. Scale score distributions by age

Sub-Dimension	Age Group	N	Mean	SD	F	p
Transparency	30–35 years	17	3.20	0.58	0.696	0.502
	36–41 years	30	3.23	0.73		
	42+ years	29	3.01	0.80		
Participation and Democracy	30–35 years	17	3.47	0.70	0.614	0.544
	36–41 years	30	3.60	0.84		
	42+ years	29	3.36	0.88		
Control Mechanisms	30–35 years	17	3.34	0.89	1.019	0.366
	36–41 years	30	3.67	0.81		
	42+ years	29	3.40	0.91		
Integrity	30–35 years	17	3.02	0.74	2.922	0.060
	36–41 years	30	3.60	0.85		
	42+ years	29	3.24	0.85		
Solidarity and Development	30–35 years	17	3.98	0.65	1.084	0.344
	36–41 years	30	4.08	0.71		
	42+ years	29	3.78	0.89		

Table 4 demonstrates that no significant differences ($p > 0.05$) were found in any sub-dimension of the Good Governance Scale based on age groups.

Table 5. Scale score distributions by position

Sub-Dimension	Position	N	Mean	SD	F	p
Transparency	Facility Manager	34	3.13	0.89	0.093	0.912
	Assistant Manager	36	3.16	0.56		
	Directorate Staff	6	3.03	0.70		
Participation and Democracy	Facility Manager	34	3.52	0.90	0.937	0.397
	Assistant Manager	36	3.50	0.79		
	Directorate Staff	6	3.03	0.41		
Control Mechanisms	Facility Manager	34	3.50	0.96	0.162	0.851
	Assistant Manager	36	3.51	0.82		
	Directorate Staff	6	3.30	0.70		
Integrity	Facility Manager	34	3.40	0.90	0.349	0.706
	Assistant Manager	36	3.31	0.82		
	Directorate Staff	6	3.09	0.83		
Solidarity and Development	Facility Manager	34	3.91	0.90	0.057	0.944
	Assistant Manager	36	3.96	0.66		
	Directorate Staff	6	4.01	0.78		

Table 5 shows that no statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$) were found in governance perceptions across organizational positions. Although the organizational structure is hierarchical, with facility managers at the top, followed by assistant managers and then directorate staff, these positional differences did not influence governance perceptions in a statistically meaningful way. The study sample consisted of 76 participants, representing approximately 30 percent of the total workforce of 250 employees. The majority of participants held managerial roles. One-way ANOVA analysis confirmed that hierarchical position did not significantly impact how governance principles were perceived or evaluated. This suggests that factors such as gender and educational background may play a more prominent role than job title in shaping governance attitudes within the organization..

Table 6. Scale score distributions by tenure in the sports field

Sub-Dimension	Tenure (Years)	N	Mean	SD	F	p
Transparency	10–14 years	24	3.35	0.67	1.501	0.230
	15–19 years	35	3.02	0.55		
	20+ years	17	3.10	1.04		
Participation and Democracy	10–14 years	24	3.47	0.75	0.155	0.857
	15–19 years	35	3.43	0.75		
	20+ years	17	3.57	1.08		
Control Mechanisms	10–14 years	24	3.58	0.80	1.111	0.335
	15–19 years	35	3.34	0.78		
	20+ years	17	3.68	1.10		
Integrity	10–14 years	24	3.28	0.78	1.594	0.210
	15–19 years	35	3.21	0.84		
	20+ years	17	3.65	0.94		
Solidarity and Development	10–14 years	24	3.96	0.81	0.385	0.682
	15–19 years	35	3.87	0.75		
	20+ years	17	4.07	0.77		

Analysis from Table 6 reveals no significant differences ($p > 0.05$) in any sub-dimension of the Good Governance Scale based on participants' tenure in the sports field.

Table 7. Scale score distributions by organizational tenure

Sub-Dimension	Organizational Tenure	N	Mean	SD	F	p
Transparency	<5 years	6	3.30	1.16	1.093	0.341
	6–10 years	12	3.39	0.67		
	11+ years	58	3.07	0.68		
Participation and Democracy	<5 years	6	3.76	1.18	0.502	0.608
	6–10 years	12	3.39	0.70		
	11+ years	58	3.46	0.81		
Control Mechanisms	<5 years	6	4.15	1.12	1.939	0.151
	6–10 years	12	3.51	0.87		
	11+ years	58	3.42	0.82		
Integrity	<5 years	6	4.04	0.97	2.372	0.100
	6–10 years	12	3.21	0.68		
	11+ years	58	3.28	0.85		
Solidarity and Development	<5 years	6	4.22	0.89	0.396	0.675
	6–10 years	12	3.93	0.67		
	11+ years	58	3.92	0.79		

Table 7 indicates that organizational tenure does not significantly influence the sub-dimensions of the Good Governance Scale ($p > 0.05$).

Table 8. Scale score distributions by governance knowledge

Sub-Dimension	Governance Knowledge	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Transparency	Yes	52	3.19	0.75	0.803	0.439
	No	24	3.04	0.67		
Participation and Democracy	Yes	52	3.51	0.82	0.481	0.644
	No	24	3.41	0.83		
Control Mechanisms	Yes	52	3.53	0.88	0.566	0.600
	No	24	3.41	0.84		
Integrity	Yes	52	3.41	0.85	1.221	0.732
	No	24	3.16	0.85		
Solidarity and Development	Yes	52	4.02	0.78	1.198	0.712
	No	24	3.79	0.76		

Table 8 shows no significant differences in Good Governance Scale sub-dimensions based on participants' governance knowledge ($p > 0.05$).

Table 9. Scale score distributions by training in governance

Sub-Dimension	Training in Governance	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Transparency	Yes	66	3.11	0.72	-0.761	0.918
	No	10	3.30	0.78		
Participation and Democracy	Yes	66	3.43	0.82	-1.180	0.864
	No	10	3.76	0.80		
Control Mechanisms	Yes	66	3.41	0.86	-2.086	0.726
	No	10	4.02	0.79		

Sub-Dimension	Training in Governance	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Integrity	Yes	66	3.30	0.85	-0.874	0.987
	No	10	3.55	0.86		
Solidarity and Development	Yes	66	3.90	0.79	-1.293	0.102
	No	10	4.24	0.61		

Table 9 reveals no significant differences in Good Governance Scale sub-dimensions based on whether participants had received training in governance ($p > 0.05$).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined the implementation of good governance principles within a major municipal sports organization and explored how demographic factors influence governance perceptions. Our analysis revealed several important insights that advance understanding of governance in local sports institutions.

The most notable finding was the significant gender-based difference in governance perceptions across almost all dimensions. Female managers demonstrated higher scores in transparency ($M=3.33$, $SD=0.81$ vs $M=2.89$, $SD=0.52$, $t=2.716$, $p=0.007$), participation and democracy ($M=3.59$, $SD=0.94$ vs $M=3.32$, $SD=0.62$, $t=1.453$, $p=0.005$), control mechanisms ($M=3.65$, $SD=0.96$ vs $M=3.29$, $SD=0.69$, $t=1.798$, $p=0.017$), and integrity ($M=3.45$, $SD=0.96$ vs $M=3.17$, $SD=0.67$, $t=1.429$, $p=0.002$). In solidarity and development, scores were nearly identical between genders (Female $M=3.94$, $SD=0.89$ vs Male $M=3.95$, $SD=0.60$, $t=-0.072$, $p=0.943$). This aligns with research by Thompson et al. (2023) and Adriaanse and Schofield (2014), who have documented positive correlations between gender diversity and effective governance. This finding is further reinforced by Geeraert and Van der Sjepe (2022), who found that increased female representation on sports governance boards correlates with higher accountability scores across European sports federations. Ömür (2010) similarly argues that organizations embracing transparent governance gain sustainable competitive advantages—an approach our female managers appeared to value more highly.

Education level emerged as another significant factor, particularly regarding transparency perceptions. Managers with master's degrees had significantly higher transparency scores ($M=3.21$, $SD=0.90$) than those with bachelor's degrees ($M=3.11$, $SD=0.63$; $F(1,74)=6.918$, $p=0.010$). This supports Parent et al.'s (2023) stakeholder governance framework, which emphasizes how advanced education enhances critical evaluation of accountability mechanisms. These results are consistent with İşcan and Kaygın (2009), Gençkaya et al. (2021), and Hoye and Cuskelly (2021), who found that higher education correlates with improved

governance performance, particularly transparency. Cunningham (2008) also emphasizes the combined role of education and institutional support in sustaining inclusive governance cultures.

Interestingly, our analysis revealed no significant differences based on age, position or tenure. Age groups showed no differences in transparency ($F=0.696$, $p=0.502$), participation and democracy ($F=0.614$, $p=0.544$), control mechanisms ($F=1.019$, $p=0.366$), integrity ($F=2.922$, $p=0.060$), or solidarity and development ($F=1.084$, $p=0.344$). Despite the hierarchy from facility managers to directorate staff, positional authority did not significantly influence governance perceptions across any dimension (all $p>0.05$). This finding contrasts with Erturan and Yakupoğlu's (2023) research on Turkish sports federations, which found positional differences in governance perceptions, suggesting that municipal sports contexts may operate under different dynamics than national federations. Neither years in sports field nor organizational tenure showed significant differences in governance understanding (all $p>0.05$). This challenges conventional assumptions about seniority-based governance competence and aligns with Öksüz's (2014) observation that effective governance requires organizational transformation rather than merely accumulated experience. Chappelet (2018) similarly argues that structural position is less important than governance awareness and intentional implementation.

Perhaps most unexpected was the lack of significant difference between those with governance knowledge and those without (transparency: $t=0.803$, $p=0.439$; participation: $t=0.481$, $p=0.644$; control mechanisms: $t=0.566$, $p=0.600$; integrity: $t=1.221$, $p=0.732$; solidarity: $t=1.198$, $p=0.712$). Similarly, no differences were found between those with governance training and those without training across all dimensions (all $p>0.05$). This finding highlights potential gaps in current training approaches and supports Erat's (2021) assertion that governance implementation often remains superficial without properly designed educational interventions. It also aligns with O'Boyle and Shilbury's (2020) critical analysis of governance education in sports organizations, which found that many training programs emphasize theoretical knowledge over practical application. This suggests a need to reconsider how governance training is conceptualized and delivered in municipal sports contexts.

Based on these findings, we conclude that demographic factors—particularly gender and education—significantly influence perceptions of good governance in municipal sports organizations. Female managers demonstrate greater sensitivity to governance principles,

suggesting that gender diversity enhances organizational governance culture. Higher educational attainment shows limited correlation with governance awareness, primarily affecting only transparency perceptions, indicating that advanced education fosters deeper understanding of specific accountability principles rather than comprehensive governance competence.

These findings have important practical implications for sports governance. Organizations should prioritize gender diversity in leadership positions not merely for equity purposes but as a strategic approach to enhancing governance quality, given the consistent gender differences observed across four governance dimensions (transparency, participation, control mechanisms, and integrity). The modest educational effects (significant only in transparency, $p=0.010$) suggest that while advanced degrees may contribute to specific governance awareness, they do not guarantee comprehensive governance competence. The lack of impact from current governance training programs (all $p>0.05$) indicates a critical need for redesigning educational interventions to focus on practical application rather than theoretical knowledge. As Şahin and Kocaoğlu (2022) demonstrated in their comparative study of Turkish municipal sports organizations, institutions that implemented gender-balanced hiring policies showed measurable improvements in governance performance metrics. Similarly, Hoye and Cuskelly (2021) found that sports organizations with diverse leadership teams demonstrated superior accountability practices and stakeholder engagement. Parent et al. (2023) further emphasize that effective governance implementation requires experiential learning approaches and mentorship programs rather than traditional classroom-based training methods.

While this study provides valuable insights, limitations include its focus on a single municipal organization ($n=76$) and its cross-sectional design. The sample comprised 56.6% female participants and 32.9% with master's degrees, which may limit generalizability. Future research should examine multiple institutions across different regions of Turkey and employ longitudinal approaches to better understand how governance perceptions evolve over time. Comparative studies between municipal sports organizations and other public institutions would provide deeper insights into sector-specific governance dynamics. Additionally, mixed-methods approaches incorporating qualitative interviews could help explain the mechanisms behind the gender differences observed in our quantitative analysis.

In conclusion, our findings demonstrate that effective governance in sports organizations requires attention to demographic diversity rather than simply focusing on experience, position

or formal training. By prioritizing gender balance in leadership roles and investing in governance-focused educational initiatives, municipal sports organizations can strengthen their governance practices and ultimately improve organizational performance and stakeholder trust. These findings contribute to the growing body of research on sports governance in Turkey and offer practical guidance for municipal sports leaders seeking to enhance their governance practices.

Recommendations

Based on our findings, we propose several practical recommendations for enhancing governance practices in municipal sports organizations. First, institutions should implement strategic gender diversity policies, particularly leadership roles, to leverage the stronger governance orientation demonstrated by female managers. This could include establishing formal policies for gender-balanced hiring and promotion, especially for governance-related roles. Second, organizations should invest in advanced governance education programs specifically designed for the municipal sports context, focusing on practical application rather than theoretical knowledge. These programs should address the apparent gap between governance training and implementation identified in our study. Third, comprehensive and regular evaluation systems should be developed to assess performance across governance dimensions, including measurable indicators that allow benchmarking across comparable institutions. Fourth, digital transparency mechanisms should be established, including regularly updated organizational websites with accessible activity reports and leadership information. Fifth, organizations should introduce digital feedback mechanisms to strengthen internal control processes and promote participatory decision-making at all staff levels. Finally, municipal sports organizations should form networks for sharing governance best practices, allowing for collaborative learning and the establishment of sector-specific standards that reflect the unique challenges and opportunities in Turkish municipal sports governance. Implementing these recommendations would help organizations strengthen their governance practices and ultimately improve their operational effectiveness, stakeholder relationships, and social impact.

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Fikir ve Kavramsal Örgü Idea or Notion	Araştırma hipotezini veya fikrini oluşturmak Form the research hypothesis or idea	Gülsah AKKAYA Aytekin ALPULLU
Tasarım Design	Yöntem ve araştırma desenini tasarlamak To design the method and research design.	Gülşah AKKAYA
Literatür Tarama Literature Review	Çalışma için gerekli literatürü taramak Review the literature required for the study	Gülsah AKKAYA
Veri Toplama ve İşleme Data Collecting and Processing	Verileri toplamak, düzenlemek ve raporlaştırmak Collecting, organizing and reporting data	Gülşah AKKAYA
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