



International

Journal of Human Sciences

ISSN:2458-9489

Volume 16 Issue 4 Year: 2019

Investigation of middle school parents' attitude towards extracurricular sports activities according to some demographic characteristics¹

Gökhan Dokuzoğlu²
Süleyman Murat Yıldız³

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate middle school parents' attitude towards extracurricular sports activities according to some demographic characteristics. The data for the study was obtained from parents of a public school in Aydın Province, in Turkey. To measure parents' attitude, "The Parents' Attitude Scales Towards Extracurricular Sports Activities" was used. This scale includes three sub-dimensions: personality development, academic perception, and social support. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and non-parametric tests were used to analyze the data. The findings indicated that parents' attitude towards extracurricular sports activities were seen to be at a very good level in all dimensions. In demographic variables, only income groups and educational degree groups had significant differences at the $p < 0.01$ level for all of the sub-dimensions. Results indicated that parents' approach to extracurricular sports activities plays an important role on students' participation in these activities.

Keywords: Parents' attitude, extracurricular activities, middle school, student.

1. Introduction

Due to their popularity, sports activities attract a lot of interest in societies (Menevse, 2019). Sports can be categorized into two types: elite sports, and mass sports. Elite sports require skill and performance, while mass sports can be done by just about everyone (Yildiz, 2009). Countries give great importance to sports activities to create a healthier and more productive society, both physically and psychologically (Inan & Ozel, 2019). Therefore, they direct individuals to elite sports or mass sports (Collins, 2008:59). Sports competitions (leagues, tournaments) are organized among clubs through various sports federations for elite sports. For mass sports, state-run sports facilities are often offered to the public (Yildiz, 2010).

On the other hand, schools offer some sports activities to students in an educational setting (Yildiz, 2007). In this context, in-class (physical education lesson) and extracurricular sports

¹ This paper was summarized from the first author's master thesis and presented at the Proceeding of the II. World Congress of Sport Sciences Researches, 21-24 March 2019, Manisa, Turkey.

² M.Sc., dkzgkhn_1988@hotmail.com

³ Assoc. Prof. Dr., Mugla Sitki Kocman University, Faculty of Sport Sciences, Mugla, Turkey, smyildiz@gmail.com (corresponding author)



activities are provided for students in formal education (Smith et al., 2007). The aim of the physical education lesson is to train a healthy and productive individual in terms of physical, psychological, and social aspects (Capel, 2000:131). The purpose of extracurricular activities is to prepare the individual for life according to his/her interest and ability.

In contemporary education systems, extracurricular activities are as important as in-class activities (Köse, 2013). Extracurricular sports activities are carried out under the supervision of the school administration with the completely voluntary participation of students, completing the missing aspects of formal education and meeting the different demands and needs of the students. In short, extracurricular activities are an indispensable part of education, and they are planned and regular activities that enable students to develop their physical and mental skills inside or outside of the school setting for the purposes of education (Binbaşıoğlu, 2000:9).

Physical and sports activities take an important place in extracurricular activity programs in schools (Mercanoğlu, Çevik, & Şimşek, 2015). The main aim of the extracurricular physical and sport activity programs is to develop creativity of students (Cotter, Pretz, & Kaufman, 2016). In addition, reducing health risks, making students socialize, and preventing bad habits of students are within the objectives of the program (Carlini-Cotrim & Carvalho, 1993; Hoffmann, 2006). There are a number of activity choices in extracurricular physical and sport activity programs. Some of them are based on advanced motor skills, such as basketball, soccer, and tennis, which are traditional competitive sports, while some of them do not need motor skills as much, such as aerobics, jogging, and dance, which are generally noncompetitive activities (Holly et al., 2002). In short, extracurricular activity programs help students prepare for life.

Lam and Wong (1997), and Şimşek (2005) argue that understanding attitudes and perceptions of parents towards extracurricular activity programs is important. Van Eck et al. (2017) highlight that with regard to the educational development of students, students' parents contribute as much as the school. Therefore, we believe that it is important to learn the attitudes of parents towards extracurricular activity programs and to encourage the support of those with weak attitudes. Hence, in this study, we focus on the attitudes of parents towards extracurricular programs and aim to explore the attitudinal differences according to some demographic characteristics.

2. Method

2.1. Measurement Instruments

As a data collection tool, the Parents' Attitude Scales Towards Extracurricular Sports Activities developed by Yılmaz and Güven (2015) was used. The participants responded to each item using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). The scale includes three sub-dimensions: personality development, academic perception, and social support.

2.2. Sample Size and Procedure

In this study, the parents of a state middle school selected from Aydın Province in Turkey were identified as samples. The scale forms were randomly distributed on the basis of voluntariness and given to the parents of 125 students in each class (total=500). Of the 345 scale forms returned, 20 forms were lacking information; therefore, 325 forms were found suitable for the analysis.

2.3. Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and non-parametric tests were used to analyze the data. The reliability of the scale was determined by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. In addition, the assessment of parents' attitudes towards students' participation in extracurricular sports activities is based on the following point ranges:

1.00 – 1.79 evaluated as "poor"

1.80 – 2.59 evaluated as "fair"

2.60 – 3.39 evaluated as "good"

3.40 – 4.19 evaluated as “very good”

4.20 – 5.00 evaluated as “excellent”

3. Analysis and Results

3.1. Sample Characteristics

The majority of the participants were female (64.9%). The variables with the highest rate in their category were homemakers (33.8%); 36–40 age range (33.5%); 541 USD and above income (37.5%), and lyc ee degree (31.1%). According to the classes (for each class), student distributions were above 20% and seemed to be close to each other (Table 1).

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Variables		F	%
Gender	Female	211	64.9
	Male	114	35.1
Age	25–30	8	2.5
	31–35	63	19.4
	36–40	109	33.5
	41–45	80	24.6
	More than 46	65	20.0
Profession	Worker	48	14.8
	Farmer	4	1.2
	Civil servant	75	23.1
	Homemaker	110	33.8
	Other	88	27.1
Income (Monthly)	Less than 270 USD	98	30.2
	271–360 USD	34	10.5
	361–450 USD	40	12.3
	451–540 USD	31	9.5
	More than 541 USD	122	37.5
Educational degree	Primary	76	23.4
	Middle	55	16.9
	Lyc�ee	101	31.1
	Associate	43	13.2
	Undergraduate	46	14.2
	Graduate	4	1.2
Students' class	Fifth	70	21.5
	Sixth	82	25.2
	Seventh	92	28.3
	Eighth	81	24.9

3.2. Test for Reliability

Cronbach's alpha value was found to be 0.931 in the reliability analysis conducted to determine the internal consistency of the scale used in this study. This value indicates that the scale is highly reliable. In addition, there is no negative correlation between the total correlations of any item in the scale.

3.3. Correlation Analysis

The results of the correlation analysis show that personal development sub-dimension is significantly and positively associated with income ($r=0.139$; $p<0.05$) and educational degree ($r=0.165$; $p<0.01$). The academic perception sub-dimension is significantly and positively associated with income ($r=0.203$; $p<0.01$) and educational degree ($r=0.213$; $p<0.01$). The social support sub-dimension ($r=0.230$; $p<0.01$) is significantly and positively associated with educational degree ($r=0.201$; $p<0.01$). In general, parents' attitudes are significantly and positively associated with income ($r=0.223$; $p<0.01$) and educational degree ($r=0.224$; $p<0.01$) (Table 2).

Table 2. Results of correlation analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender of parent	1						
2. Gender of children	.139*	1					
3. Income	.088	-.066	1				
4. Educational degree	.071	-.017	.504**	1			
5. Personality development	-.041	.083	.139*	.165**	1		
6. Academic perception	-.053	.001	.203**	.213**	.533**	1	
7. Social support	-.003	.100	.230**	.201**	.792**	.579**	1
8. Parents' attitude	-.036	.071	.223**	.224**	.880**	.814**	.915**

*p<0.05; **p<0.01

3.4. Test for Normality

Initially, the normality test was applied to the data set to determine which of the parametric tests was appropriate. According to the Shapiro-Wilk test, the level of significance was found to be less than 0.05 (Table 3), and therefore, non-parametric tests were used for further analysis.

Table 3. Results of normality test

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	p	Statistic	df	p
Data	.099	325	.000	.920	325	.000

3.5. Parents' Attitude Levels for Middle School Students' Participation in Extracurricular Sports Activities

Parents' attitude levels towards extracurricular sports activities are seen to be at a very good level in all dimensions. Social support sub-dimension has the highest value ($X=4.02$) within these dimensions (Table 4).

Table 4. Parents' attitude levels for middle school students' participation in extracurricular sports activities

Variables	X	Sd
Personality development	3.86	.71
Academic perception	3.84	.81
Social support	4.02	.88
Parents' attitude	3.91	.69

3.6. Parents' Attitudes Compared to Some Demographic Characteristics Parents' Attitudes According to Gender of the Parents

Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference when parents' attitudes are evaluated according to the gender of parents. According to this result, it can be said that the attitudes of all parents are the same.

Table 5. Mann-Whitney U Test results for all sub-dimensions in terms of gender of the parents

	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	z	p
Personality development	Female	211	165.56	34933.00	11487.000	-.669	.503
	Male	114	158.26	18042.00			
Academic perception	Female	211	166.27	35082.50	11337.500	-.861	.389
	Male	114	156.95	17892.50			
Social support	Female	211	163.38	34473.00	11947.000	-.100	.920
	Male	114	162.30	18502.00			
Parents' attitude	Female	211	165.25	34868.50	11551.500	-.588	.556
	Male	114	158.83	18106.50			

3.7. Parents' Attitudes Compared to Gender of the Children

Table 6 shows that only social support dimension has a significant difference at the $p < 0.05$ level in terms of gender of the children. According to these results, it can be said that parents provide more social support to boys than girls.

Table 6. Mann-Whitney U Test results for all sub-dimensions in terms of gender of the children

	Gender of children	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	z	p
Personality development	Female	179	154.58	27669.00	11559.000	-1.395	.163
	Male	142	169.10	24012.00			
Academic perception	Female	179	158.91	28444.00	12334.000	-.459	.646
	Male	142	163.64	23237.00			
Social support	Female	179	149.51	26762.00	10652.000	-2.523	.012
	Male	142	175.49	24919.00			
Parents' attitude	Female	179	154.34	27626.00	11516.000	-1.445	.149
	Male	142	169.40	24055.00			

3.8. Parents' Attitudes Compared to Income

Income groups have significant differences at the $p < 0.01$ level for all of the sub-dimensions (Table 7). According to these results, it can be said that the attitudes of parents who have high income are higher than other income groups.

Table 7. Kruskal Wallis H Test results for all sub-dimensions in terms of the income

	Income (USD)	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	p
Personality development	Less than 270	98	141.53	14.541	4	.006
	271–360	34	164.29			
	361–450	40	151.46			
	451–540	31	149.13			
	More than 541	122	187.20			
Academic perception	Less than 270	98	141.03	17.352	4	.002
	271–360	34	150.29			
	361–450	40	155.98			
	451–540	31	148.98			
	More than 541	122	190.06			
Social support	Less than 270	98	141.21	23.538	4	.000
	271–360	34	134.50			
	361–450	40	146.88			
	451–540	31	161.56			
	More than 541	122	194.10			
Parents' attitude	Less than 270	98	135.81	25.305	4	.000
	271–360	34	148.04			
	361–450	40	148.66			
	451–540	31	154.11			
	More than 541	122	195.97			

3.9. Parents' Attitudes Compared to Educational Degree

The educational degree groups have significant differences at the $p < 0.01$ level for all of the sub-dimensions (Table 8). According to these results, it can be said that the attitudes of parents who have a postgraduate education degree are higher than others.

Table 8. Kruskal Wallis H Test results for all sub-dimensions in terms of educational degree

	Educational Degree	N	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	p
Personality development	Primary	76	135.57	19.600	5	.001
	Middle	55	137.95			
	Lycée	101	173.87			
	Associate	43	182.47			
	Undergraduate	46	190.35			
	Graduate	4	230.38			
Academic perception	Primary	76	139.63	21.467	5	.001
	Middle	55	132.85			
	Lycée	101	173.86			
	Associate	43	173.62			
	Undergraduate	46	197.21			
	Graduate	4	240.00			
Social support	Primary	76	138.05	20.440	5	.001
	Middle	55	143.13			
	Lycée	101	165.13			
	Associate	43	176.40			
	Undergraduate	46	205.05			
	Graduate	4	228.88			
Parents' attitude	Primary	76	134.66	27.579	5	.000
	Middle	55	131.05			
	Lycée	101	171.51			
	Associate	43	182.66			
	Undergraduate	46	204.12			
	Graduate	4	241.38			

4. Conclusion

This study was aimed mainly at the attitudes of parents towards extracurricular programs and exploring their attitudinal differences according to some demographic characteristics. Findings indicated that parents' attitude levels towards extracurricular sports activities are seen to be at a very good level in all dimensions. In the literature, there is consensus in the positive view of parents to extracurricular programs (Behtoui, 2019). For instance, Lam and Wong (1997) found in their research conducted in Hong Kong that parents view extracurricular activities favorably. Similarly, Reverler et al. (2013) found that Spanish parents' attitudes on physical and sports activities are positive. In addition, they highlighted that due to the high level of sedentarism in school-age children, physical and sports activities were needed for a healthy lifestyle. In research by Kremer-Sadlik et al. (2010) that focused on children's engagement in extracurricular activities from the perspective of middle-class parents who live in Rome and Los Angeles, both sets of parents perceived activities as important for children's success. In addition, Roman parents consider activities as part of "children's world," downplaying intense involvement and performance. Conversely, parents who live in Los Angeles view activities as preparing children for adult life, emphasizing competition and accomplishment.

Attitudinal differences of parents in terms of some demographic characteristics were found in this study. Specifically, four findings were obtained.

First, there is no significant difference when parents' attitudes are evaluated according to the gender of the parents. For this result, it can be said that the attitudes of both male and female parents are the same.

Second, in all dimensions, only the social support dimension had a significant difference in terms of the gender of the children. This result showed that parents provide more social support to boys than girls. Similarly, Reverler et al. (2013) reported that Spanish girls' rate of physical and sports activity is one of the lowest of all European countries. It is clear that all parents must be motivated toward participation of girls in extracurricular programs. Sarı (2012) found that

participation of children in extracurricular sports activities revealed significant results in favor of more boys, and stated that the kind of these activities are mostly directed at boys. Therefore, he suggested various activities to attract girls.

Third, income groups have significant differences for all of the sub-dimensions. According to this result, it can be said that the attitudes of parents who have high income are higher than other income groups. This result showed that families with lower income should be supported by school management.

Fourth, educational degree groups have significant differences for all of the sub-dimensions. According to this result, it can be said that the attitudes of parents who have a postgraduate education degree are higher than others. Similar findings were also found by Yılmaz (2016). We believe that parents who have a low educational degree must be encouraged by school management to increase participation of their daughter(s) in extracurricular programs.

Results obtained by this study indicated that parents' approach to extracurricular sports activities plays an important role on students' participation in these activities. Therefore, it is clear that some prevention should be taken in order to eliminate some negative situations. For example, the thought that extracurricular sports activities can bring new costs may cause parents to have a negative outlook against these activities. Hence, the costs of activities should be reduced as much as possible. Parents with low income and low education levels should be supported and motivated. In order for the girls to participate more, the kinds of activities that would attract them should be increased.

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