

PREFERENCES AND AWARENESS TOWARDS SPORTS BRANCHES OF TURKISH HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The study examines high school students' preferences and awareness towards sports. A total of 3080 high school students (1446 males, 1630 females) from 25 different schools in Central Anatolia (Kırşehir 9, Kırıkkale 9, Konya 7) participated in the study. The survey determined that if the participants had the chance, they would most like to do swimming. In order of preference, the female participants indicated these sports after swimming: ice skating, basketball, volleyball, mountaineering, archery, kickboxing, bowling, dancing sports, tennis, taekwondo and table tennis. In order of preference, the male participants indicated these sports after swimming: football, bodybuilding, motorcycle racing, archery, billiards, boxing, mountaineering, kickboxing, parachute and wrestling. Wushu, curling, bridge, bocce, squash, biathlon, triathlon, and Thai boxing were the sports about which the participants were least knowledgeable.

Keywords: Sports preferences, students

TÜRK LİSE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN SPOR BRANŞLARINA YÖNELİK TERCİHLERİ VE FARKINDALIKLARI

ÖZ

Bu araştırmanın amacı, lise öğrencilerinin spor branşlarına yönelik tercihlerini ve farkındalıklarını ortaya koymaktır. Araştırmaya İç Anadolu bölgesinde 3 ilde toplam 25 okulda (Kırşehir 9, Kırıkkale 9, Konya 7) eğitim gören 3080 lise öğrencisi (1634 bayan, 1446 erkek) katılmıştır. Değişik spor branşlarının isimlerini içeren anket formu ile elde edilen verilere göre, araştırmaya katılan kız ve erkek öğrencilerin imkânları olsaydı ilk sırada, en fazla Yüzme sporunu yapmak istedikleri görülmüştür. Kız öğrencilerde Yüzme sporundan sonra sırayla: Buz Pateni, Basketbol, Voleybol, Dağcılık, Okçuluk, Kick Boks, Bowling, Dans Sporları, Tenis, Tekvando ve Masa Tenisi branşları takip etmektedir. Erkek öğrencilerde yine Yüzme sporundan sonra sırayla: Futbol, Vücut Geliştirme, Basketbol, Motosiklet, Okçuluk, Bilardo, Boks, Dağcılık, Kick Boks, Paraşüt, Güreş sporları gelmektedir. Araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin en az bilgi sahibi olduğu sporlar arasında; Wushu, Curling, Briç, Bocce, Squash, Biatlon, Triathlon, Muaythai yer almaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Spor Tercihleri, Öğrenci

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INTRODUCTION

There are many factors that influence students' sports preferences such as parental education levels, family income, parental sports history, gender, age, students' sports history, general state of health, students' level of skill and extracurricular physical activity levels. Other factors that contribute to students' preferences are the availability of equipment, facilities, physical education teachers' specialization and students' previous interests^{15,8,10,26}. Financial concerns and accessibility are key elements in sports activities²⁵.

Social and environmental factors can affect students' preferences by limiting their exposure to other activities and guiding them towards main activities³². Students may opt for the activities with which they are most familiar. This effect may be strengthened by positive role models, ethnic or cultural values associated with special physical activities and media⁵.

Gender affects students' activity preferences. Bradley, et al., (2000) reported that female students prefer non-competitive individual activities, and that primary school males prefer traditional team sports. Hill and Cleven (2005) found that ninth grade female students prefer non-contact individual activities (swimming, volleyball, modern dance, aerobics, gymnastics and rope jumping), while male students prefer activities with contact (weightlifting, street hockey and soccer).

The studies in the literature reveal that students from middle and high income

families actively participate in sports and participate more continuously than the students from low-income families^{21,27}. Families' high incomes especially effect female students' participation in sports^{3,9,18}. High levels of parental education also lead to children's active participation in sports.

The negative effects of watching TV and computer and video games have been emphasized as factors that prevent children's physical activity^{30,29,14,11}. In a study of third and fourth graders' leisure time activities, Harrell et al. (1997) found that participants spent a considerable amount of their leisure time playing video games (33%) and watching TV (28%). Pate et al. (2007) found that age affects individuals' activity preferences. In the same vein, the level of physical activity falls as age rises, and this effect is reported to be stronger for females than for males^{7,19}.

This study examines which sports youth like to do. It also examines their awareness about sports. The interpretation of its results of the study can guide future research and sports policies.

METHODOLOGY

Participants:

The study was conducted with 3080 high school students (1634 females, 1446 males) from 25 schools (Kırşehir 9, Kırıkkale 9, Konya 7) in three different cities in Central Anatolia in the 2015-2016 academic year. The research was conducted in schools preferred by families in similar socio-economic levels. The location of cities can be seen on this map.



1-Kırıkkale, 2-Kırşehir, 3-Konya

Kırşehir has a continental climate that is cold and snowy in winters and hot and dry in summers. The city is located 985 meters above sea level. Its population was estimated to be 114,244 in 2015 according to 2013 Address Based Population Registration System results. During the 2014-2015 academic year, there were 44 schools and 13,804 students in secondary education (generally high school) in the city. There are a total of 2,561 active sportsmen (962 females, 1,599 males) in Kırşehir. Kırşehir City has 3 grass and 7 synthetic football fields, 5 indoor sports facilities, 1 olympic pools belonging to universities, 2 non-olympic pools belonging to private hotels and 1 semi-olympic pools (not active yet) belonging to the Provincial Directorate of Youth and Sports.

Konya is located at an average altitude of 1016 meters above sea level. Plains and plateaus are the land forms that cover most of Konya. Its 2015 population was 1,250,482 according to 2015 Address Based Population Registration System results. Konya city has 1 olympic indoor pools, 6 semi-olympic pools, 2 private non-olympic pools and 2 semi-olympic pools belonging to the municipality. Among its important sports facilities, there are two stadiums with capacities of 42,000 and 22,300, an indoor sports facility and

congress center with a capacity of 10,000 people, two sport facilities with capacities of 1,400 and 600 people, a municipal sports facility and congress center and a total of 158 sports facilities. There are also 3 youth centers for cultural activities, 1 international youth academies and 1 youth camps active in the city. In the city of Konya, there are more than 15 thousand active licensed sportsmen and 250 active and registered sports clubs.

There are a total 25,922 licensed sportsmen (8,063 females, 17,859 males) in Kırıkkale. Among these sportsmen, 806 females and 958 males are active. There are 1 grass and 4 synthetic soccer fields, 1 sports facilities, 1 sport complexes containing 5 training fields, 1 olympic pools and 1 non-olympic pools in the city of Kırıkkale.

Data Collection Instruments:

A form containing 78 sports branches in Turkey and in the World was prepared by scanning the internet pages of sport federations and Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Turkey and taking expert opinions to use in the research. The prepared form consists of two parts including questioning the participant's personal information and of the sports branches take place. Asked to the participants: "If you had a

lot of time to do sports and if you had a lot of financial proficiency (your money) which five sport branches would you want to do the most from the following sports branches? Participations' preferences about sport branches are tried to identify with the instruction, "Number the sport branches from 1 to 5" You most want to do is as number one

RESULTS

This section presents the participants' demographic information, their sports preferences by gender, whether they have internet access at home and the sports about which they are knowledgeable.

The Students' Demographic Information

A total of 3,080 (1,634 females, 1,446 males) participated in this study. Their ages range from 16 to 25. The grades display an even distribution. Of their fathers, 42.2% are self-employed. A total of 9.56% of their fathers are teachers, military, lawyers, police,

and the least number five. Also "Which of the five branches do you have the least knowledge about above sports branches? It is aimed to determine the awareness of the students towards sports branches in this section.

academics, chemists, doctors or engineers. Of their mothers, 81.5% are housewives. While 30.6% of the students' fathers were high school graduates, and 25.3% were university graduates, 40.4% of their mothers had completed primary school, and 25.6% had completed middle school. Of the students, 76.9% have computers at home, and 66.7% have internet access. Only 152 students (4.94%) said that they cannot do sports. There are 714 people (23.2%) with a sports club license, while there are 1,502 people (48.8%) with school team licenses. Of the participants, 43.6% do sports two or three times a week. The participants' demographic information is presented in detail in Table 1.

Table 1. The frequency and percentage values for participants' demographic information

Variables	Grups	n	%
Location	Kırşehir	1242	40.3
	Kırıkkale	1068	34.7
	Konya	770	25
Gender	Female	1634	53.1
	Male	1446	46.9
Date of birth	1997	62	2.01
	1998	349	11.3
	1999	893	29.0
	2000	928	30.1
	2001	751	24.4
	Unspecified	97	3.14
Class	9	947	30.7
	10	984	31.9
	11	744	24.2
	12	306	9.93
	Unspecified	99	3.21

Table 1. continue

	Self-employment	1299	42.2
	Officer	498	16.2
	Worker	538	17.4
	Retired	376	12.2
	Teacher	82	2.67
	Soldier	36	1.17
Father job	Lawyer	20	0.64
	Unemployed	11	0.36
	Police	95	3.08
	Academician	13	0.42
	Pharmacist	23	0.75
	Doctor	12	0.39
	Engineer	15	0.49
	Unspecified	62	2.01
Father's educational status	Primary school	673	21.9
	Middle school	649	21.1
	High school	942	30.6
	University	779	25.3
	Unspecified	37	1.20
Mother job	House wife	2511	81.5
	Officer	145	4.71
	Self-employment	118	3.83
	Worker	56	1.82
	Teacher	64	2.08
	Doctor	8	0.26
	Retried	13	0.42
	Nurse	66	2.14
	Unspecified	99	3.21
Mother' educational status	Primary school	1244	40.4
	Middle school	788	25.6
	High school	623	20.2
	University	333	10.8
	Unspecified	92	2.99
Having a computer at home	Yes	2370	76.9
	No	700	22.7
	Unspecified	10	0.32
With internet access at home	Yes	2053	66.7
	No	1027	33,3
Condition to prevent sports	Yes	152	4.94
	No	2917	94.7
	Unspecified	11	0.36
Sport club license	Yes	714	23,2
	No	2366	76.8
School team license	Yes	1502	48,8
	No	1578	51,2
Duration of sport	Everyday	351	11.4
	2-3 days a week	1342	43.6
	2-3 days per month	392	12.7
	Very rare	687	22.3
	No	283	9.19
	Unspecified	25	0.81

Sports Club and School Sports License Distribution

Table 2. The frequency and percentage distribution of students with a sports club license

Branch	n	Branch	n
Football	155	Futsal	5
Basketball	109	Muay Thai	4
Hall Volleyball	84	Archery	4
Athletics	45	Baseball	3
Swimming	41	Road Cycling	2
Tekwondo	31	Body Building	2
Ping Pong	30	Wushu	2
Kick Box	29	Mountain Bike	2
Handball	29	Fencing	2
Chess	29	Billiards	1
Boxing	24	Free Wrestling	1
Folk dances	23	Greg. Wrestling	1
Badminton	21	Grass Hockey	1
Tennis	17	Barbell	1
Bocce	7	Sled	1
Orienteering	7	Darts	1

Table 2 indicates that the students with a sports club license participated in: soccer (155), basketball (109), indoor volleyball (84), track and field (45), swimming (41), taekwondo (31), handball (29) and chess (29)

Table 3. The frequency and percentage distribution of students with a school sports license

Rank	Branch	n	Rank	Branch	n
1	Football	408	12	Swimming	23
2	Volleyball	349	13	Grass Hockey	20
3	Basketball	252	14	Karate	12
4	Handball	82	15	Tae-kwon-do	6
5	Ping Pong	70	16	Cross	5
6	Futsal	60	17	Body Building	5
7	Athletics	58	18	Archery	4
8	Badminton	44	19	Wrestling	3
9	Chess	39	20	Boxing	2
10	Tennis	30	21	Barbell	2
11	Folk Dances	26	22	Kick Box	1
			23	Bocce	1
Total=1502					

According to Table 3, soccer (408), volleyball (349), basketball (252), handball (82), table tennis (70), futsal (60), track and field (58), badminton (44), chess (39) and tennis (30)

sports were among the sports for which the students have the most licenses.

Sport Preferences by Gender

Table 4. The frequency and percentage distribution of the sports that females and males like to do

What females like to do				What males like to do			
Rank	Branch	n	%	Rank	Branch	n	%
1	Swimming	715	43.8	1	Swimming	405	28.0
3	Ice Skate	275	16.8	2	Football	350	24.2
2	Basketball	271	16.6	3	Body Building	243	16.8
4	Hall Volleyball	242	14.8	4	Basketball	212	14.7
5	Mountaineering	195	11.9	5	Motorcycle	178	12.3
6	Archery	189	11.6	6	Archery	161	11.1
7	Kick Box	165	10.1	7	Billiards	149	10.3
8	Bowling	141	8.6	8	Boxing	147	10.2
9	Dance Sports	140	8.6	9	Mountaineering	141	9.8
10	Tennis	139	8.5	10	Kick Box	81	5.6
11	Tae-kwon-do	130	8.0	11	Parachute	65	4.5
12	Ping Pong	83	5.1	12	Wrestling	56	3.9

The distribution of the participants' sport preferences by gender is shown in Table 4. Swimming was the sport that 43.8% of the female students like to do most. In order of preference, these sports were listed after swimming: basketball, ice skating, indoor volleyball, mountaineering, archery, kick boxing, bowling, dancing, tennis, taekwondo and table tennis.

Table 4 shows that swimming was preferred by 28% of the male students. The male students listed these sports in order of preference after swimming: football, bodybuilding, basketball, motorcycle racing, archery, billiards, boxing, mountaineering, kick boxing, parachute jumping and Greco-Roman wrestling.

The Sports about Which the Students were Least Knowledgeable by Gender

Table 5. The frequency and percentage distribution of the sports about which male and female students were least knowledgeable

Females were least knowledgeable				Males were least knowledgeable			
Rank	Branch	n	%	Rank	Branch	n	%
1	Wushu	564	34.5	1	Offshore	331	22.9
2	Biathlon	556	34.0	2	Bridge	314	21.7
3	BMX	429	26.3	3	Bocce	302	20.9
4	Skeleton	381	23.3	4	Wushu	302	20.9
5	Offshore	379	23.2	5	Biathlon	296	20.5
6	Curling	374	22.9	6	Triathlon	258	17.8
7	Bocce	358	21.9	7	Squash	233	16.1
8	Muaythai	350	21.4	8	Rugby	216	14.9
9	Triathlon	335	20.5	9	Muaythai	191	13.2
10	Bridge	282	17.3	10	Korfbol	185	12.8
11	Squash	277	17.0	11	BMX	164	11.3
12	Korfbol	194	11.9	12	Softbol	159	11.0

According to Table 5, wushu, biathlon, BMX, skeleton, offshore, curling, bocce, Thai boxing, triathlon, bridge, squash and korfbol were among the sports about which the female students are least knowledgeable. The findings for the male students were similar.

Internet Access at Home and the Sports That Students Like to Do Most

The participants with internet access at home (n=2,054) preferred these sports most: swimming, basketball, soccer, archery, paragliding, kick boxing, bodybuilding, parachuting, mountaineering, motorcycle racing, ice skating and tennis. The results were very similar for the students without internet access at home (n=1,028). Their order of preferences was: swimming, soccer, basketball, boxing, mountaineering, indoor

volleyball, tennis, bodybuilding, kick boxing, paragliding, table tennis and ice skating.

Internet Access at Home and the Sports about Which the Students were Least Knowledgeable

The sports about which participants with internet access at home (n=2,054) were least knowledgeable were: biathlon, offshore, skeleton, bocce, bridge, triathlon, Thai boxing, BMX, curling, squash, korfbol and rugby. The participants without internet access at home (n=1,028) were least knowledgeable about: wushu, biathlon, bocce, BMX, curling, skeleton, rugby, triathlon, offshore, bridge, korfbol and softball.

CONCLUSION

The results clearly show that swimming is the sport that students want to do most. Nonetheless, the number of students who do swimming with club or school licenses is very low. Despite the fact that there were 64 students with licenses (23 school licenses, 41 club licenses), 1,120 students (715 females, 405 males) preferred swimming. This is more evident in the case of female students. Almost half of the female students stated that they would swim if they had a chance. The cities where the study was conducted (Kırşehir-Kırıkkale-Konya) are located in Central Anatolia. The number of pools in these cities is very limited. For example, there were 1 olympic pools in Kırıkkale. The limited number of pools in these cities (1-2) and pool fees make accessibility difficult in terms of time and money. This reduces participation in swimming, but the study implies that it increases desire and interest. The social effect of religious and cultural values can account for the difference between males and females in swimming. The fact that even if female students had a chance to go to pools, their families would not allow them because of religious values may be reflected in the study. In Germany and Switzerland, there have been court decisions against families who do not permit their children to participate in swimming classes. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled against a Turkish family in Switzerland. The Strasbourg court ruled that all children in primary school must participate in mixed swimming classes regardless their religious beliefs. Considering the participants' age (teenagers), there are hundred thousands of families in Turkey who share the same stance with the Turkish family in Switzerland. On the other

hand, the cities in which the study was carried out are places where highly conservative people reside. If this study were conducted in seaside cities on the west or south coast of the country, the results would be different. The fact that families do not allow their children to swim because of the danger of drowning can also explain the low rate of participation despite the high interest in swimming. One of the reasons for students to prefer swimming regardless their gender is that students can easily swim in the sea when they go on holiday. The fact that female students like to do swimming more than males may be due to its non-competitive nature.

Ice skating was in second place after swimming on the list of the sports the female participants would like to do most. Ice skating was not even in the top ten on the male participants' list. There are no ice skating facilities in the cities where the study was carried out. The male participants did not indicate much interest in ice skating even though they were told to state their preferences bearing in mind that they could do any sport they wanted. Nevertheless, the female students indicated that they would like ice skating most after swimming. This may be due to the feminine nature of ice skating. In a study designed to determine the activity preferences of middle school students, Greenwood et al. (2001) determined that the majority of the students are interested in sports such as basketball, cycling, skating, soccer, swimming and volleyball, while they are less interested in sports such as folk dance, ballroom dancing, shuffleboard, badminton and street hockey. From the perspective of gender, the results of the same study revealed that males are mostly interested in sports such as basketball (68%), swimming (57%), cycling (51%), skating (48%),

bowling (43%), archery (42%), rugby, soccer and wrestling, while females are mostly interested in sports such as swimming (77%), basketball (65%), skating (64%), volleyball (63%), cycling, gymnastics, soccer and tennis. The results of this study are similar to those in the literature even though they were conducted in different regions and cultures. A study of youths' (mean age: 16.66 ± 1.12) sports preferences in the Czech Republic determined that swimming, cycling and skiing were the most popular individual sports, while volleyball, handball and street hockey were the most popular team sports²⁰. Anca and Sabina (2015) reported that male university students prefer basketball, volleyball, soccer, handball, table tennis, fitness, swimming, aerobics, gymnastics and badminton among physical education activities, whereas female students prefer fitness, aerobics, gymnastics, basketball, volleyball, soccer, handball, badminton, swimming and table tennis. Hill and Cleven (2005) highlighted that ninth grade female students mostly prefer individual, non-contact activities (swimming, volleyball, modern dance, aerobic, gymnastics and rope jumping), while male students prefer more muscular activities and contact sports (weightlifting, street hockey and soccer). In a study of the preferences of ninth graders for 37 physical education activities in the US, Hill and Cleven (2005) found these sports were most popular: basketball (70.7%), soccer (60.2%), bowling (56.5%), softball/baseball (55.3%), swimming (53.8%) and volleyball (52.1%). The five activities that males preferred most were: basketball, soccer, bowling, softball/baseball and bodybuilding. The females' top five preferences were: basketball, volleyball, swimming, modern dance and softball/baseball. A study conducted by

Tammelin et al. (2003) on Finland found that males between 14-31 years of age had participated in ice hockey (36.8%), soccer (21.2%), ski touring (24.9%), swimming (14.1%), track and field (11.2%) and skiing (11.8%), whereas females had participated in ski touring (24.9%), running (11.2%) and skating (11.8%). Hill and Hannon (2008) in their study of the preferences of middle school students about the activities in physical education, they found these rates: basketball (67.4%), soccer (63.7%), bowling (63.1%), swimming (59.1%), archery (57.1%), table tennis (54.1%), skating (54.1%) and volleyball (51.9%). In a study in South Africa, Burnett (2010) found that the most popular sports among university students were: rugby, hockey, cricket, soccer, netball, track and field, basketball and tennis. Rugby, cricket and soccer are traditionally male sports, but hockey, basketball, volleyball and track and field can be considered gender neutral. The male and female participation rates were similar in these sports, while only females participated in netball.

After swimming and ice skating, the female participants' preferences clearly differ from the male participants' in sports that do not require contact such as volleyball (fourth), bowling, dance sports, tennis and table tennis. The male participants, on the other hand, differ in soccer (most popular after swimming), bodybuilding (third), motorcycle racing and billiards. This result overlaps with previous studies. However, one result that differs from the literature was also obtained by this study. Of the 72 sports listed on the survey, the seventh most popular sport among the female participants was kickboxing, whereas taekwondo was eleventh. Self-defense and self-confidence among men may be the two reasons for this high rate of preference among the female participants. It can be inferred that by

learning self-defense through kickboxing and taekwondo, females can feel more secure on the streets where crime is increasing.

According to research conducted by Forbes in 2008, kickboxing was then the most popular sport after soccer in our country. The high rate of preference among females may be due to the increased number of professional hygienic fitness and kickboxing facilities in Turkey. Hitting or training with the sandbag may be the cause of the preference for many females. The stress of daily life may also affect females' preference for kickboxing.

On the list of sports that they would like to do most, female participants ranked basketball third, while males ranked it fourth. Archery was listed in sixth place for both genders. Live basketball broadcasting in recent years in Turkey may have affected the participants' preference for basketball. Altunbaş (2008) asked fans the most suitable platform to gather information related to sports and to watch activities and games. The study underlined the power of television since television was the response of 77.9% of the participants, followed by the internet with a frequency of 7.6%. The achievements of the national team and the clubs such as Anadolu Efes have also increased the participation. The facts that Turkish players have played in the NBA in the US for the last decade, that they have participated on the All-Star team and that live broadcasts of these games are on TV may also have influenced these results. On the list of sports that they like to do most, male participants ranked motorcycle racing in fifth place. Kenan Sofuoğlu, who has been frequently mentioned with successive championships in very important international contests, may have affected this preference of male

participants. Kenan Sofuoğlu's videos and races have been quite popular in TV sports and news programs in recent years.

In Turkey, there are not enough archery facilities. In addition, archery equipment is quite expensive. The licensed sportsmen in archery is very low. Similarly, in this study, there are only four students with an archery license among 714 students with club licenses and 1,502 students with school sports licenses. Even if this contradicts with above numbers, archery is perceived as sport of the ancestors in Turkey. It is also known as a sport sanctioned by the Prophet Mohammed. It is believed that more than 40 sayings of the Prophet mention archery. Therefore, there is sympathy for archery. Interest in archery increases every day. The most important factor in this increasing interest is the national and international achievements. One of the cities where this study was conducted was Konya. Sportsmen from Konya have represented our country in many international arenas, particularly in Korea, and have attained high levels of success. These achievements over the last four to five years caught young people' attention. The Hasan-Ömer Koç brothers, who decided to participate in competitions after their curiosity of archery, won many victories in a short period of time and were heard about by young people throughout this country. Recently, Chinese sportsmen in China, one of the most important countries for archery, took lessons from sportsmen from Konya, and this was reported in the national press and the Konya local press. Traditional archery in Turkey has been supported by the government, which defines itself as a conservative and devout. This support enables archery to attract attention in every corner of the country. All of these points are reflected in the participants' responses.

Weightlifting and wrestling were not listed in the top ten sports by the participants, although Turkey has achieved great success in these sports. Male participants ranked them in twelfth place. Having a strict training schedule and not being popular on TV can be seen as reasons for these low preference rates.

Considering the sports that students are

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