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RURAL MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS SPORTS

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted in order to determine Turkish rural middle school students' attitudes towards sports. A total of 464 middle school students were included in the study sample. Data was obtained using a scale previously developed by Kocak (2014), consisting of 22 items and three sub-scales; psychosocial development, physical development, and mental development. Statistical analyses were performed on the data obtained in the study using the SPSS 23.0 package program. The Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used to determine the statistical test methods and it was concluded that the study is of normal distribution.

Therefore the t-test was used to compare two independent groups and ANOVA and Bonferroni multiple comparison tests were used to compare more than two independent groups. Most of the participants of the study were male students in 6th grade and the majority of these students do not regularly practice a sport. A significant difference was found between the variables of gender and engagement in sports and the sub-scale of the attitude scale, while no significant difference was found between the grade variable, the attitude scale, and all of its sub-scales.

Key Words: student, sports, attitude.

INTRODUCTION

Sports are an important factor in ensuring that individuals lead a healthy lifestyle. Sports education in schools has an undoubtedly important place in terms of introducing future generations to sporting activities and instilling them with a sporting spirit.

Sports are all forms of play, recreation, and competitive games that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being, and social interaction (United Nations, 2003). According to Cookley, the term “sports” encapsulates all organized competitive activities which involve people demonstrating their physical strength or complex skill sets, driven by a variety of internal and external motivating factors (2001). People aim to be physically, mentally and spiritually healthy and happy. one of the most effective ways of achieving this goal is physical education, sports and physical activity (Alincak, 2016a).

Sports and physical activities draw great interest from the masses and are accepted as symbols of health (Solmaz and Aydın, 2012). Today, lack of knowledge about physical activity causes the importance of physical activity and the link between physical activity and health (Alincak, 2017). Physical activities and participation in sports develop people’s physical strength, as well as teamwork, self-discipline, leadership, and socialization skills (Aicinena, 1991).

Educational institutions’ attitudes are very important in teaching terminal behaviors to individuals (Celep, 2000). Attitudes shape human behavior in a variety of ways, determining the ways in which they participate in daily activities, as well as forming behaviors of acceptance and abandonment (Rikard and Banville, 2006).

Attitude is comprised of three components; thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Morris, 2002). Many studies have reported that positive attitudes developed towards physical education (PE) class contribute to students’ engagement in physical activities outside school (Solmon and Lee, 1996; Walhead and Buckworth, 2004), while negative attitudes developed towards PE class prompt students to avoid physical activities outside school (Carlson, 1995; Ennis, 1996; Portman, 1995). Individuals who participate in physical education and sports activities want to

reach a certain level or increase their performance. It is seen that individuals exhibit different behaviors towards achieving their goals in this process (Alıncak, 2016b).

This study was conducted in order to determine Turkish rural middle school students' attitudes towards sports.

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to determine student attitudes towards sports in middle schools across Turkey.

Data Collection Tool

Data was gathered from a total of 464 middle school students in rural locations of Turkey. Data was obtained using a scale previously developed by Kocak (Kocak, 2014), consisting of 22 items and three sub-scales; psychosocial development, physical development, and mental development. For the purposes of the study, students studying in rural areas were asked to respond to a survey. The survey consisted of two sections. The first section concerned the students' personal characteristics and the second section employed the attitude scale in order to determine their attitude towards sports.

Data Analysis

The Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used to check the normal distribution of the continuous variables. The t-test was used to compare the two independent groups of variables with the normal distribution, and ANOVA and Tukey multiple comparison tests were conducted to compare more than two independent groups of variables with the normal distribution, with frequency and percentage values given as descriptive statistics. $P < 0.05$ was accepted as significant in the statistical analyses performed in the study.

RESULTS

Data from this study.

Table 1: Personal characteristics of the study participants

Variables		Number (n=464)	Percentage
Gender	Female	136	29.3
	Male	328	70.7
Practices a sport	Yes	112	24.1
	No	352	75.9
Grade	5th grade	91	19.6
	6th grade	150	32.3
	7th grade	145	31.3
	8th grade	78	16.8

When Table 1 is examined, it can be seen that 70.7% of the participants were male students, 75.9% do not do any sort of sport, and the highest engagement is among 6th grade students with 32.2%.

Table 2: Attitude scale comparison by gender

Variable	Gender	Number	Average	Std. deviation	t	p
Psychosocial development	Female	136	4.2181	0.65860	2.65	0.01*
	Male	328	4.0478	0.62020		
Physical development	Female	136	4.4265	0.53394	3.70	0.00*
	Male	328	4.1951	0.64322		
Mental development	Female	136	4.1912	0.78895	3.28	0.01*
	Male	328	3.8933	0.92867		
Total	Female	136	4.2701	0.61418	3.40	0.00*
	Male	328	4.0599	0.60314		

When Table 2 is examined, it can be seen that there are significant differences in terms of attitude scale based on the gender variable, as well as in terms of all its sub-scales. From this

result, it can be concluded that female students achieved higher scores compared to male students in the attitude scale and its sub-scales.

Table 3: Attitude scale comparison based on engagement in sports

Variable	Engagement in sport	Number	Average	Std. deviation	t	p
Psychosocial development	Yes	104	4.2981	0.72077	3.69	0.00*
	No	360	4.0398	0.59766		
Physical development	Yes	104	4.4231	0.76214	3.01	0.00*
	No	360	4.2167	0.56759		
Mental development	Yes	104	4.2788	0.91727	3.90	0.00*
	No	360	3.8944	0.87680		
Total	Yes	104	4.3287	0.72266	3.97	0.00*
	No	360	4.0616	0.56496		

When Table 3 is examined, it can be seen that there are significant differences in terms of attitude scale based on the “engagement in sports” variable, as well as in terms of all its sub-scales. From this result, it can be concluded that female students achieved higher scores compared to male students in the attitude scale and its sub-scales.

Table 4: Attitude scale comparison based on school grade

Variable	Grade	Number	Average	Std. deviation	F	p	Significant difference
Psychosocial development	5th grade	91	4.1676	0.63967	1.555	0.2	
	6th grade	150	4.0206	0.58449			
	7th grade	145	4.1529	0.65521			
	8th grade	78	4.0620	0.68091			
Physical development	5th grade	91	4.3022	0.65353	1.436	0.23	
	6th grade	150	4.1833	0.59727			
	7th grade	145	4.3253	0.61027			

	8th grade 78	4.2543	0.64506		
Mental development	5th grade 91	4.0714	0.91461		
	6th grade 150	3.8550	0.86954	2.084	0.10
	7th grade 145	4.0862	0.88897		
	8th grade 78	3.9199	0.93844		
Total	5th grade 91	4.1868	0.63822		
	6th grade 150	4.0348	0.56066	1.994	0.11
	7th grade 145	4.1878	0.62733		
	8th grade 78	4.0886	0.64190		

When Table 4 is examined, it can be seen that there are no significant differences in terms of attitude scale based on the grade variable or in terms of all its sub-scales. From this result it can be concluded that no significant difference was observed between the grade variable attitude scale and its sub-scales.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There is a significant difference in terms of attitude scale based on the gender variable, as well as in terms of all its sub-scales. From this result, it can be concluded that female students achieved higher scores compared to male students in the attitude scale and its sub-scales.

The results of some studies in the literature are similar to the results of the current study. When Deniz and Tuna analyzed the attitude levels of Turkish children in the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades towards Turkish class they found that the female students' engagement in Turkish class was higher than that of the male students (Deniz and Tuna 2006). In a study by Ekici et al., Atalay et al. which focused on middle school students' attitudes towards PE class, it was found that the male students were more engaged in this class compared to the female students. Other studies have also concluded that male students are more engaged in PE class than female students (Hatten, 2004; Hünük and Demirhan, 2004; Balyan, Moralı and Onursal, 2005; Koca and Asci, 2005; Güllü, 2007).

Significant differences are observed in terms of attitude scale based on the “engagement in sports” variable, as well as in terms of all its sub-scales. From this result, it can be concluded that female students achieved higher scores compared to male students in the attitude scale and its sub-scales.

Some other studies also report similar findings to ours. Trudeau and Shephard reported that young individuals’ attitudes towards physical education and sports activities are generally positive (2005). Attitude scores towards PE class among students who have access to sports halls in their schools are higher than those who do not (Chellodurai and Chank, 2000). European countries have had difficulties getting women to participate in sports, with women’s participation rates being lower than men’s in almost every country (Hardman, 2007).

The above mentioned Deniz and Tuna study focused on the attitude levels of Turkish children in the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades towards Turkish class, which then found that the female students’ engagement in Turkish class was higher than that of the male students (Deniz and Tuna, 2006). There is no significant difference in terms of attitude scale based on the class variable, as well as in terms of all sub dimensions. From this result it can be concluded that no significant difference was observed between the grade variable attitude scale and its sub-scales.

Meanwhile, studies in the literature that show differing results from those in our study include Yağcı’s study which found that students’ attitudes towards PE classes changed according to the other subjects they studied, and accordingly, 11th and 12th grade students’ scores for attitude towards PE class were low (Yagci, 2009). In some studies, it was observed that as the students progressed through the grades at school, there were fluctuations or decreases in their attitude scores towards PE class (Hologlu, 2006; Erkmen, Tekin and Tasgin, 2006).

Conclusion:

There was a significant difference in terms of attitude scale based on the gender variable, as well as in terms of all its sub-scales.

Significant differences were observed in terms of attitude scale based on the “engagement in sports” variable, as well as in terms of all its sub-scales.

There was no significant difference in terms of attitude scale based on the grade variable or in terms of all its sub-scales.

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