

The Determining Role of Socio-Cultural Factors in the Branch Choice of Male Volleyball Players

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the influence of family, environment, and society on the orientation of athletes toward the sport of volleyball in the Turkish Men's First League during the 2023–2024 season. The research population consisted of 24 teams and 384 athletes, while the study sample included 263 volleyball players. Data were collected using a four-item personal information form and the Scale of Reasons and Expectations for Starting Sports. The data were analyzed using SPSS software. Since the data showed normal distribution, parametric tests were applied. An independent samples t-test was used for binary variables and ANOVA for variables with more than two groups, with the significance level set at $p < 0.05$. The findings indicated that participants who started sports between the ages of 5 and 8 scored significantly higher than those who began between the ages of 13 and 16 ($p < 0.05$). It was also observed that participants with fathers involved in sports were more likely to engage in sports themselves. Differences in participation and expectations were found between individuals living in rural and urban areas ($p < 0.05$). Educational level had a significant effect on encouragement and engagement in sports but not on expectations ($p > 0.05$). Overall, the study highlights that factors such as age of sport initiation, presence of active family members, place of residence, and education level play a significant role in shaping individuals' participation, orientation, and expectations regarding sports. Promoting early sport involvement, strengthening family support, improving access to sports in rural areas, and encouraging participation according to educational level are essential strategies for the wider promotion of sports.

Keywords: Volleyball, Branch, Athlete, Orientation to Sports.

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Erkek Voleybol Sporcularının Branş Seçiminde Sosyo-Kültürel Etkenlerin Belirleyici Rolü

Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı, 2023-2024 sezonunda Türkiye Erkekler Voleybol 1. Ligi'nde mücadele eden sporcuların voleybol branşına yönelmesinde aile, çevre ve toplumun etkisini incelemektir. Araştırmanın evrenini 24 takım ve 384 sporcu, örneklemini ise 263 sporcu oluşturmuştur. Veriler, dört sorudan oluşan kişisel bilgi formu ile "Spora Başlama Nedenleri ve Beklentileri Ölçeği" aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. SPSS programı kullanılarak yapılan analizlerde, verilerin normal dağılım gösterdiği belirlenmiş ve bu doğrultuda parametrik testler uygulanmıştır. İkili karşılaştırmalar için bağımsız örneklem t-testi, çoklu gruplar için tek yönlü varyans analizi (ANOVA) kullanılmış; anlamlılık düzeyi $p < 0,05$ olarak kabul edilmiştir. Araştırma bulgularına göre, 5-8 yaş grubunda spora başlayan katılımcıların, 13-16 yaş grubuna göre anlamlı düzeyde daha yüksek puan aldığı görülmüştür ($p < 0,05$). Ayrıca, babası sporla ilgilenen bireylerin spora yönelimlerinin daha yüksek olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Kırsal ve kentsel yerleşim birimleri arasında spora katılım ve beklentiler açısından anlamlı farklar saptanmış ($p < 0,05$); eğitim düzeyinin ise spora teşvik ve katılım üzerinde etkili olduğu, ancak beklentiler boyutunda anlamlı bir fark oluşturmadığı belirlenmiştir ($p > 0,05$). Elde edilen bulgular, bireylerin spora yönelimi ve katılımında erken yaşta başlama, ailede spor yapan bireylerin varlığı, yaşanan yerleşim yeri ve eğitim düzeyinin önemli belirleyiciler olduğunu göstermektedir. Sporun yaygınlaştırılması açısından, erken yaşta spora başlama alışkanlığının desteklenmesi, aile desteğinin artırılması, kırsal bölgelerde spor imkânlarının geliştirilmesi ve eğitim düzeyine göre katılımın teşvik edilmesi önem taşımaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Voleybol, Branş, Sporcu, Spora Yönelme.

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Introduction

Sport has become an integral part of life, not only because it contributes to physical health but also because it addresses mental, emotional, and socio-economic needs. In addition to strengthening the body, it contributes to the development of knowledge, skills, and leadership abilities. Furthermore, it supports an individual's psychological balance, thereby contributing to the formation of a well-rounded personality. For this reason, encouraging individuals to participate in sports, identifying potential athletes at an early age, developing their talents, and supporting their training processes have become essential (Gündoğdu et al., 2012). In this regard, the existence of a strong sport culture in society is a key factor that facilitates sport orientation, since cultural norms, family values, and institutional structures shape individuals' access to and motivation for sports participation (AL Mudd et al., 2024; Peng et al., 2025). Sport also facilitates individuals' escape from the monotony of daily life and helps them cope with stress, offering positive contributions to both physiological and psychological well-being. Team sports, in particular, demonstrate these benefits in a more tangible way (Yetim & Cengiz, 2005).

The choice of a sports branch is a significant decision that affects an individual's lifestyle, identity, and social environment. It is observed that socio-cultural factors, as well as personal preferences, play a decisive role in this decision. In a study conducted by Bayraktar and Sunay with elite-level male and female volleyball players in Türkiye, it was found that the reasons for athletes' orientation toward volleyball and their expectations differed. Male athletes were found to perceive volleyball primarily as a source of income and chose this sport with the aim of earning a living and potentially becoming a coach in the future. These findings clearly demonstrate the importance of socio-cultural factors in the selection of a sports branch (Bayraktar & Sunay, 2006).

Numerous studies support the idea that family, social environment, and societal structure play a significant role in individuals' orientation toward sports. For example, Demiralp & Bingöl (2024) found that among professional volleyball players in Türkiye, influence from parents, siblings, and coaches was strongly associated with early engagement in the sport; Wang et al. (2024) showed in Chinese adolescents that family and community environments, along with awareness of sports policies, significantly predict both physical activity participation and fitness levels; Li et al. (2025) reported that school and natural/social environments strongly correlate with adolescents' motivation to engage in regular sport; and Sansi & Çetin (2025) demonstrated that in the case of physically disabled athletes, supportive family and social context serve as key enablers of sports participation. In Şimşek and Gökdemir's study, it was found that physical education teachers and local coaches played a determining role in the sports preferences of secondary school students. Especially in childhood, experiences gained through sports can significantly influence individuals' attitudes toward

physical activity later in life (Şimşek & Gökdemir, 2006). In this regard, the opportunities provided by families and schools to children at an early age may foster a lasting interest in sports.

Wheeler (2012) emphasized that family culture is the most important supportive factor in an individual's tendency to engage in sports, while Hayoz (2019) highlighted that a sport-oriented lifestyle within the family has the most significant impact on adolescents' and young adults' participation in sports. Similarly, environmental and societal factors are also recognized in the literature as playing a crucial role in directing individuals toward sports (Binbin, 2004; Keresztes et al., 2008; Wilson, 2002). All these findings indicate that the development of athletic identity is shaped not only by individual motivations but also by socio-cultural influences.

In this context, examining the extent to which socio-cultural factors such as family, environment, and society influence the orientation of athletes in the Turkish Men's Volleyball First League toward the sport of volleyball is considered important both for contributing to the literature and for guiding athlete development. The aim of this study is to reveal the determining influence of socio-cultural factors in the branch selection process of male volleyball players.

Materials and Methods

In this section, information is provided regarding the research design, population and sample, data collection instruments, and data analysis procedures. During the course of the study, all processes were conducted in accordance with the "Directive on Research and Publication Ethics of the Higher Education Institutions."

Research Design

This research was designed as a descriptive study, employing the general survey model. General survey models are designed to estimate the overall characteristics of a large population and involve survey arrangements conducted on either the entire population or a representative sample (Karasar, 2012).

Population and Sample

The study population consisted of 24 teams and 384 athletes competing in the Turkish Men's Volleyball First League during the 2023–2024 season. The sample of the study included 263 athletes from the same league and season. A G*Power analysis was conducted to determine the adequacy of the sample size, which indicated that a minimum of 196 participants would be sufficient for the study. In the present research, data were collected from 263 athletes, representing a substantial portion of the entire population.

Data Collection Tools

In this study, participants were administered a 4-item personal information form—including questions on age of starting volleyball, presence of family members involved in sports, place of residence, and educational background—along with the “Scale of Reasons and Expectations for Starting Sports.” The rationale for collecting these demographic data stemmed from the researcher's review of the literature prior to the thesis study, during which these questions were deemed necessary. The personal information form and the aforementioned scale were distributed and completed via Google Forms.

Scale of Reasons and Expectations for Starting Sports

The scale used to determine the reasons for individuals' orientation toward volleyball was previously employed in the studies titled “Reasons and Expectations for Starting Tennis Among Performance Tennis Athletes in Türkiye” (Yıldırım, 2007) and “Factors Influencing the Initiation of Sport and Expectations Among Elite Male and Female Volleyball Players in Türkiye” (Bayraktar & Sunay, 2006). The “Reasons for Starting Sports Scale” was also utilized in Doğan's study investigating performance swimmers (Doğan, 2023). The scale consists of three sections and includes 27 items based on a 5-point Likert type (Sunay & Saraçoğlu, 2003). The first subscale addresses individuals' views on the factors that encourage them to start playing volleyball. The scale contains eight items to capture these views. The second section covers their views on pursuing professional volleyball. Nine items are used to capture these views. The third section, which reflects individuals' perspectives on their expectations from volleyball, included 10 items to gather participants' opinions. Reliability analysis results from previous studies using this scale showed Cronbach's alpha values of .89 in Yıldırım's (2007) study and .80 in the research conducted by Bayraktar and Sunay (2006). In the present study, the reliability coefficient was found to be .72.

Data Analysis

The data obtained from the “Scale of Reasons and Expectations for Starting Sports” were transferred to the SPSS 26.00 software, and percentage and frequency values were calculated for the variables identified in the study. A normality test was conducted to determine whether to use parametric or non-parametric tests, and the results were examined accordingly. Since the skewness and kurtosis values were within the acceptable range of -1.5 to +1.5, the use of parametric tests was deemed appropriate (Tabachnick, 2013). Accordingly, an independent samples t-test was applied for comparisons between two groups, and one-way ANOVA was used for comparisons involving more than two groups. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$ to determine differences between groups.

Table 1

Analysis of Skewness and Kurtosis Values of the Scale Scores

		Statistic	Std. Error
Factors Encouraging Participation in Sports	Skewness	-,852	,150
	Kurtosis	,500	,299
Engagement in Sports	Skewness	-,846	,150
	Kurtosis	1,316	,299
Expectations from Sports	Skewness	-1,069	,150
	Kurtosis	1,410	,299

When the skewness and kurtosis values of the scale scores are examined, it is seen that they meet the normality assumptions (Tabascnick, 2013). In this case, the use of parametric tests in statistical analysis was deemed appropriate.

Research Ethics

In order to conduct the study, ethical approval was obtained from the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Hakkari University with decision number 2024/91, confirming that the study met ethical standards.

Results

In this section, the statistical data obtained from the study are presented in tables, and each variable is interpreted within its own context.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

Variable		N	%
Age of Starting Sports	5-8 years	64	24,3
	9-12 years	129	49,0
	13-16 years	39	14,8
	17-20 years	31	11,8
Family Members Involved in Sports	Father	59	22,4
	Mother	28	10,6
	Sibling	64	24,3
	Close Friend	62	23,6
	None	50	19,0
Place of Residence	Village	11	4,2
	District Center	47	17,9
	City	130	49,4
	Metropolitan City	75	28,5
Participant's Education Level	High School	53	20,2
	Bachelor's Degree	160	60,8
	Postgraduate Degree	50	19,0
	Total	263	100,0

An analysis of the participants' demographic characteristics revealed the following distribution based on age at which they started sports: 64 individuals (24.3%) began between the ages of 5–8, 129 individuals (49.0%) between 9–12, 39 individuals (14.8%) between 13–16, and 31 individuals (11.8%) between 17–20. Regarding the presence of family members involved in sports: 59 participants (22.4%) reported having a father engaged in sports, 28 (10.6%) reported a mother, 64 (24.3%) reported a sibling, 62 (23.6%) had a close friend involved in sports, and 50 participants (19.0%) reported having no one in their close circle involved in sports. Based on place of residence, 11 participants (4.2%) lived in a village, 47 (17.9%) in a district center, 130 (49.4%) in a provincial city center, and 75 (28.5%) in a metropolitan city. In terms of educational background, 53 participants (20.2%) were high school graduates, 160 (60.8%) held an undergraduate degree, and 50 (19.0%) had completed postgraduate education.

Table 3

Distributions of Participants' Age at Sport Initiation in Relation to Their Reasons for Starting Volleyball

		N	X	Ss	f	p	Tukey
Factors Encouraging Participation	5-8 years ^a	64	3,62	,83	4,169	0,007*	a>c
	9-12 years ^b	129	3,50	,68			
	13-16 years ^c	39	3,12	1,02			
	17-20 years ^d	31	3,18	1,03			
	Total	263	3,44	,84			
Engagement in Sports	5-8 years ^a	64	3,87	,72	1,657	,177	
	9-12 years ^b	129	3,86	,57			
	13-16 years ^c	39	3,82	,63			
	17-20 years ^d	31	3,57	,97			
	Total	263	3,82	,68			
Expectations from Sports	5-8 years ^a	64	4,00	,59	1,391	,246	
	9-12 years ^b	129	3,96	,63			
	13-16 years ^c	39	3,76	,72			
	17-20 years ^d	31	3,79	1,06			
	Total	263	3,92	,70			

*p<0.05

An analysis of the participants' age variable revealed a statistically significant difference between the age groups and the sub-dimension of factors encouraging participation in sports ($p < 0.05$). However, no significant differences were found in the sub-dimensions of engagement in sports and expectations from sports ($p > 0.05$). When examining the mean scores of the engagement in sports and expectations from sports sub-dimensions, the highest scores were observed in the 5–8 age group. To determine between which groups the significant difference in the “factors encouraging participation” sub-dimension occurred, a Tukey post-hoc test was conducted. The results showed that there was a significant difference between participants who started volleyball at the ages of 5–8 and those who started between the ages of 13–16.

Table 4

Distributions of Participants' Family Members' Involvement in Sports in Relation to Their Reasons for Starting Volleyball

		N	X	Ss	f	p	Tukey
Factors Encouraging Participation	Father ^a	59	3,92	,58	15,718	,000*	a > c,d,e e < a,b,c,d
	Mother ^b	28	3,73	,48			
	Sibling ^c	64	3,45	,85			
	Close Friend ^d	62	3,32	,60			
	None ^e	50	2,82	1,04			
	Total	263	3,44	,84			
Engagement in Sports	Father ^a	59	4,13	,52	5,660	,000*	a>e
	Mother ^b	28	3,85	,52			d< a
	Sibling ^c	64	3,82	,64			
	Close Friend ^d	62	3,73	,53			
	None ^e	50	3,55	,95			
	Total	263	3,82	,68			
Expectations from Sports	Father ^a	59	4,11	,54	2,408	,050*	a>e
	Mother ^b	28	4,00	,42			
	Sibling ^c	64	3,95	,60			
	Close Friend ^d	62	3,83	,74			
	None ^e	50	3,74	,96			
	Total	263	3,92	,70			

*p<0.05

When examining the distribution of participants based on whether their family members are involved in sports, significant differences were found across all sub-dimensions: factors encouraging participation in sports, engagement in sports, and expectations from sports ($p < 0.05$). To identify which groups contributed to these differences, a Tukey post-hoc test was conducted. The results indicated that, in the “factors encouraging participation” sub-dimension, there were significant differences between individuals whose fathers were involved in sports and those whose siblings, close friends, or no family members were involved in sports.

In the “engagement in sports” sub-dimension, significant differences were found between participants whose fathers were involved in sports and those with no family members involved in sports, as well as between participants with close friends involved in sports and those whose fathers were involved. In the “expectations from sports” sub-dimension, a significant difference was observed between participants whose fathers were involved in sports and those who reported having no acquaintances engaged in sports.

Table 5

Distributions of Participants' Place of Residence in Relation to Their Reasons for Starting Volleyball

	N	X	Ss	f	p	Tukey
Village ^a	11	2,81	1,01	2,488	,061	

Factors Encouraging Participation	District Center ^b	47	3,36	,91			
	City ^c	130	3,46	,76			
	Metropolitan City ^d	75	3,52	,86			
	Total	263	3,44	,840			
Engagement in Sports	Village ^a	11	2,95	1,36	6,856	,000*	a< b,c,d
	District Center ^b	47	3,91	,70			
	City ^c	130	3,83	,56			
	Metropolitan City ^d	75	3,88	,63			
	Total	263	3,82	,68			
Expectations from Sports	Village ^a	11	3,15	1,2	4,915	,002*	a< b,c,d
	District Center ^b	47	3,89	,85			
	City ^c	130	3,97	,60			
	Metropolitan City ^d	75	3,98	,60			
	Total	263	3,92	,70			

*p<0.05

When examining the distribution of participants based on their place of residence, no significant difference was found in the “factors encouraging participation” sub-dimension ($p > 0.05$). However, the highest mean score in this sub-dimension was observed among participants living in metropolitan areas. On the other hand, significant differences were found in the sub-dimensions of “engagement in sports” and “expectations from sports” ($p < 0.05$).

To identify which groups contributed to these significant differences, a Tukey post-hoc test was conducted. The analysis revealed that, in the “engagement in sports” sub-dimension, significant differences existed between participants living in villages and those living in districts, cities, and metropolitan areas. Similarly, in the “expectations from sports” sub-dimension, participants living in villages significantly differed from those living in districts, cities, and metropolitan areas.

Table 6

Distributions of Participants' Educational Status in Relation to Their Reasons for Starting Volleyball

		N	X	Ss	f	p	Tukey
Factors Encouraging Participation	High School ^a	53	3,14	,93	4,652	,010*	a< b,c
	Bachelor's Degree ^b	160	3,48	,80			
	Postgraduate Degree ^c	50	3,60	,79			
	Total	263	3,44	,84			
Engagement in Sports	High School ^a	53	3,58	,80	4,082	,018*	a< b
	Bachelor's Degree ^b	160	3,89	,58			
	Postgraduate Degree ^c	50	3,86	,78			
	Total	263	3,82	,68			
Expectations from Sports	High School ^a	53	3,76	,89	1,689	,187	
	Bachelor's Degree ^b	160	3,97	,63			
	Postgraduate Degree ^c	50	3,95	,69			
	Total	263	3,92	,70			

*p<0.05

When examining the distribution of participants based on their educational background, no significant difference was found in the “expectations from sports” sub-dimension ($p > 0.05$). However, significant differences were observed in the “factors encouraging participation” and “engagement in sports” sub-dimensions ($p < 0.05$). To determine between which groups these differences occurred, a Tukey post-hoc test was conducted. The results showed that, in the “factors encouraging participation” sub-dimension, significant differences were found between participants with a high school education and those with undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. In the “engagement in sports” sub-dimension, a significant difference was identified between participants with a high school education and those with an undergraduate degree.

Table 7

Distributions of the Mean Scores Obtained from the Scale

	Factors Encouraging Participation	Engagement in Sports	Expectations from Sports
\bar{X}	3,4401	3,8251	3,4268
Minimum	1,00	1,00	1,00
Maximum	5,00	5,00	5,00

An analysis of the mean scores obtained by male volleyball players competing in the First League during the 2023–2024 season revealed the following results: The mean score for the “expectations from sports” sub-dimension was $\bar{x} = 3.9268$; for the “engagement in sports” sub-dimension, $\bar{x} = 3.8251$; and for the “factors encouraging participation” sub-dimension, $\bar{x} = 3.4401$.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this section of the study, the findings regarding whether the sub-dimension scores of the "Scale of Reasons and Expectations for Starting Sports" differed according to various variables among teams competing in the Turkish Men's Volleyball First League during the 2023–2024 season are discussed. When the analysis results concerning the participants' age of starting volleyball were examined, a significant difference was observed in the sub-dimension of “factors encouraging participation.” This significant difference was found between participants who started volleyball at the ages of 5–8 and those who started between the ages of 13–16. The highest mean score in this sub-dimension was obtained by athletes who began playing volleyball between the ages of 5–8. In a related study conducted with professional athletes in the Women's Volleyball First League, which focused on the influence of family, environment, and society on their orientation to volleyball, no significant difference was found in the "factors encouraging participation" sub-dimension with respect to age of starting sports; however, significant differences were identified in the “engagement in sports” and “expectations from sports” sub-dimensions (Tunçel, 2021). On the other hand, in a study by Ekinçi and Çolak (2022) investigating reasons for starting sports among participants aged

13–18, no significant differences were found in the “engagement in sports” and “expectations from sports” sub-dimensions. However, the analysis of mean scores revealed that participants with less than four years of sports experience had higher mean scores in these two sub-dimensions. In another study conducted by Demiralp and Bingöl (2024), which examined the influence of family and environment on the orientation of Efeler League athletes to volleyball, a statistical analysis of sports age and scale scores revealed a significant difference in the “factors encouraging participation” sub-dimension. The highest mean score was again observed among those who started sports between the ages of 5–8. In this context, the present study supports previous findings in the literature. Furthermore, the observed results may be explained by the widely accepted view that starting sports at an early age contributes to greater success in athletic development.

An analysis of the presence of family members involved in sports among volleyball athletes participating in the study revealed significant differences in the sub-dimensions of factors encouraging participation, engagement in sports, and expectations from sports. In a study conducted by Akandere et al. (2009), which examined the influence of social environment and economic status on the orientation of male marathon runners to sports, participants were asked several questions regarding their initial involvement in sports. In response to the question “My family encouraged me to participate in sports,” 17.5% of the participants answered “rarely.” Additionally, statistical analyses conducted regarding the influence of peers and schools on sports participation revealed no significant differences. In a study by Çimen and Yaman (2020), which investigated the reasons for sports participation among students in schools of physical education and sports, the relationship between role models in sports and the sub-dimensions of the scale was analyzed.

Overall, the findings suggest that having a father who is actively involved in sports plays a significant role in encouraging individuals to participate in sports (Salman & Sunay, 2012; Whitehead et al., 2006; Kraaykamp, 2023; Kay et al., 2012). It can also be inferred that the father figure has a greater influence on the behavior of other family members compared to other household figures. Among all sub-dimensions, the father appears to be the most influential factor contributing to the significant differences observed. In addition, having a close friend who engages in sports may also be considered an impactful figure in shaping an individual’s orientation toward sports.

When examining the findings related to participants’ place of residence, no significant difference was found between this variable and the “factors encouraging participation” sub-dimension. However, the distribution of mean scores in this sub-dimension showed that participants living in metropolitan areas had the highest scores. On the other hand, significant differences were observed in the “engagement in sports” and “expectations from sports” sub-dimensions. In a study

by Kazak (2010), which examined the role of social factors in primary school students' participation in sports, 24 participants lived in villages, 24 in district centers, and 22 in city centers. In response to the question "Would you have become a better athlete if you had lived in a metropolitan city?", 55 students answered "yes," representing a significant portion of the sample. When asked "Why do you think you would have been a better athlete in a metropolitan area?", 45 students stated that they believed opportunities were more abundant in large cities. This finding aligns with the present study. A review of the literature reveals similar studies indicating that living in urban areas has a substantial impact on sports participation and, consequently, increases the likelihood of individuals engaging in sports in the future (Elime et al., 2015; Deelen et al., 2017).

When examining the findings related to participants' educational status, significant differences were observed between education level and the sub-dimensions of "factors encouraging participation" and "engagement in sports." However, no significant difference was found in the "expectations from sports" sub-dimension. In a study by Öztürk (2019) examining the reasons and expectations for starting sports among triathlon national team athletes, no significant relationship was found between education level and reasons for starting or pursuing triathlon professionally. However, a significant difference was observed in the "expectations from triathlon" sub-dimension. Further analysis revealed that the item "Maintaining relationships as a popular person who engages in sports" showed a significant difference between participants with secondary education and other levels. Similarly, in a study by Kahraman (2019) investigating the reasons and expectations of Turkish national boxing team members for starting boxing, no significant difference was found between education level and reasons for starting or pursuing the sport professionally, whereas a significant difference was found in expectations from sports. Specifically, the item "Pursuing higher education related to sports in the future" showed a significant difference between participants at the primary and high school levels, with those in the primary education group scoring higher on average. Additionally, significant differences were identified between educational levels and variables such as the influence of coaches, liking the sport, starting due to stress management, perceived benefits of the sport, and aspirations of becoming a national athlete. These findings are consistent with previous research in the literature, which supports the results of the current study.

In conclusion, based on the findings of this study and current scientific evidence, it is evident that age of initiation into sports, the presence of physically active family members, place of residence, and educational level play significant roles in individuals' orientation toward sports. Starting sports at an early age increases both interest and participation, with participants in the 5–8 age group scoring highest in the "factors encouraging participation" sub-dimension, supporting this notion. The presence of family members involved in sports, particularly fathers, has been identified as a strong

influencing factor, as participants whose fathers were active in sports were more likely to engage in sports themselves. Moreover, differences in “engagement in sports” and “expectations from sports” were observed between individuals living in rural areas and those residing in urban centers. Educational level also showed a significant effect on “factors encouraging participation” and “engagement in sports,” with notable differences between high school graduates and those with undergraduate or postgraduate education. However, educational status did not appear to be a determining factor in expectations from sports. These findings highlight the importance of early sports participation and family support in the development and sustainability of a strong sports culture.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that encouraging children to participate in sports at an early age (particularly between 5 and 8 years) enhances both commitment to and success in sports. Therefore, talent identification and orientation programs should be expanded and implemented to reach a wider population. Family involvement and support are also of critical importance; in particular, the role model effect of fathers should be considered, and parents should be provided with awareness-raising initiatives. In addition, reducing disparities in sports opportunities between rural and urban areas, strengthening the role of educational institutions in promoting sports, and enhancing the pedagogical competencies of coaches are essential steps to increase participation. Finally, promoting sport as a cultural value through local governments and non-governmental organizations can contribute to the development and sustainability of a strong sports culture.

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Ethical Approval Information

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Both authors contributed equally to all stages of the research.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to this research.

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