



# Sportsmanship Behaviors in Early Adolescence and Gender and Family Attitudes

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## Abstract

**Introduction and Aim:** Sportsmanship is a concept defined as the awareness of having the values required by sports and the golden key of sportive activities. In addition to changes in early adolescence, family attitude and gender are thought to be among the concepts affecting sportsmanship. This study aimed to examine sportsmanship behaviors and family attitude and gender characteristics. **Materials and Methods:** The study group consisted of a total of 300 students with a mean age of  $12.48 \pm 0.79$ , randomly selected from second-level primary schools in Isparta province. In the research conducted with a survey design, the "Physical Education Course Sportsmanship Behavior Scale (PECSBS)" developed by Koç (15) and the personal information form were used as data collection tools. In the data analysis, frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation were used as descriptive statistical methods for personal information. Since the data were normally distributed, the t-test was used for paired groups, and the ANOVA test was used for multiple comparisons. **Findings:** According to the findings, the students' sportsmanship behaviors were at a high level. According to gender, a statistically significant difference was found in favor of female students in the sub-dimensions of displaying appropriate behavior and avoiding inappropriate behavior and in the overall scale. According to the family attitudes of the students, there was no statistically significant difference in the sub-dimension of displaying appropriate behavior. However, in the sub-dimension of avoiding inappropriate behavior and in the overall scale, the scores of the students with democratic family attitudes were found to be higher than the scores of the children of families with liberal attitudes. **Conclusion:** When the sportsmanship behavior scores of second-level primary school students were examined, it was seen that female students scored higher than male students. It is thought that changing family attitudes will improve the sportsmanship behaviors of society.

**Keywords:** Early Adolescence, Sportsmanship Behavior, Family Attitude, Gender,

**Erken Ergenlik Dönemi Sportmenlik Davranışları ile Cinsiyet ve Aile tutumu**

## Özet

**Giriş ve Amaç:** Sportmenlik, Sporun gerektirdiği değerlere sahip olma bilinci ve sportif etkinliklerin altın anahtarı olarak tanımlanan bir kavramdır. Sportmenliği etkileyen kavramlar arasında erken ergenlik dönemi değişimlerinin yanı sıra, aile tutumu ve cinsiyet' inde olduğu düşünülmektedir. Araştırmada sportmenlik davranışları ile aile tutumu ve cinsiyet özelliklerinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. **Materyal ve Metot:** Araştırma grubunu Isparta ili ikinci kademe ilköğretim okullarından rastgele seçilen yaş ortalamaları  $12,48 \pm 0,79$  olan toplam 300 öğrenci oluşturmuştur. Tarama modeli ile yapılan araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak Koç (15), tarafından geliştirilen "Beden Eğitimi Dersi Sportmenlik Davranışı Ölçeği (BEDSDÖ)" ile kişisel bilgi formu kullanılmıştır.

Verilerin analizinde kişisel bilgiler için betimsel istatistik yöntemi olarak frekans, yüzde, aritmetik ortalama ve standart sapma kullanılmıştır. Veriler normal dağılım gösterdiği için ikili gruplarda t-testi ve çoklu karşılaştırmalarda Anova testi kullanılmıştır. Bulgular: Elde edilen bulgulara göre; öğrencilerin spormenlik davranışlarının yüksek düzeyde olduğu belirlenmiştir. Cinsiyete göre uygun davranış sergileme ve uygunsuz davranıştan kaçınma alt boyutlarında ve ölçek toplamında kadın öğrenciler lehine istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark bulunmuştur. Öğrencilerin aile tutumlarına göre uygun davranış sergileme boyutunda istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark bulunmazken, uygunsuz davranıştan kaçınma boyutunda ve ölçek toplamında demokratik aile tutumu gösteren öğrencilerin puanları, serbest tutum gösteren ailelerin çocuklarının puanlarına göre daha yüksek bulunmuştur. Sonuç: İkinci kademe ilköğretim öğrencilerinde spormenlik davranış puanları incelendiğinde, kadın öğrencilerin erkek öğrencilere göre puanlarının yüksek olduğu görülmüştür. Aile tutumlarının değiştirilmesinin, toplumun spormenlik davranışlarını geliştirileceği düşünülmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Erken Ergenlik, Spormenlik Davranışı. Aile tutumu, Cinsiyet,

## INTRODUCTION

Sport is a phenomenon reflecting the values and norms of our society. Hence the values that our young people learn during sports activities are an important issue. It is essential that all participants support the idea that winning fairly is the most honorable form of victory. Therefore, the ideals of sportsmanship should be valued above many other aspects of sport. Definitions of sportsmanship include elements, e.g., playing fair, complying with the game's rules, respecting the decisions of referees and officials, and treating opponents with respect. Nowadays, sportsmanship is defined as the "golden rule" of sport. We can display good sportsmanship behavior when we treat the people we play with and against as we want to be treated, and when we respect ourselves, our teammates and opponents, the coaches and referees on both sides, and other officials. However, sportsmanship is not just for people on the field. All participants, fans, and parents must also be aware of how they conduct themselves during the competition. Although physical education and game teaching programs stress the significance of sportsmanship in children, this combination of attitudes and styles may not yield the expected results without parents' support and help. Therefore, sportsmanship behavior should have an aspect that requires the family support together with the child. Sportsmanship represents a style and attitude and will have an influence that everyone in our surroundings will regard as positive. Considering the developmental stages of Fleishman (6), early adolescence in terms of personal and social development is defined as 8-9 years of age. This period, during which honesty, team spirit, and group awareness come to the forefront in personality development, should be evaluated in terms of sportsmanship training (6).

Adolescence is the period when children are physically and emotionally transformed into young men and women. This period is defined as 10 years of age for girls and 11 years of age for boys. However, it is perfectly normal for adolescence to begin between the ages of 8 and 13 for girls and between the ages of 9 and 14 for boys. During this period, primary school students change emotionally and behaviorally due to very rapid early growth spurts. While moodiness and nervous changes are observed in females, who are mostly affected by early adolescence, more irritable behaviors are observed in males. It is essential to encourage sportsmanship behavior and teach the principles of sportsmanship in students who are trying to cope with the difficulties of this period in order to facilitate the flow of their lives.

Sportsmanship behavior must be displayed in the entire course of life, from childhood games to international matches. Nevertheless, numerous studies carried out in physical education courses have stressed that students are not encouraged toward sportsmanship, students do not have knowledge and experience on the concept of sportsmanship, and students brag even when they win by violating the principles of sportsmanship (10,1). Sports, which is regarded as a different area of the social community in which we live together, leads to an increase in the tendency to use violence and display unsportsmanlike behavior because of increasing competitive tendencies. Unfortunately, educators and parents sometimes put excessive pressure on athletes and insist on winning at all costs. Hence whereas it is great to be a champion, the importance of having enjoyed the process of reaching the top should be stressed. The International Sportsmanship Association, which was established in 1926 with the objective of spreading the principles of sportsmanship to

all aspects of life, from children's games to international competitions, has set certain rules. These include obeying the rules, staying loyal to your teammates, keeping yourself fit, controlling your anger, keeping your game away from violence, not bragging when you win, not collapsing in case of defeat, and having a strong spirit and an open mind for a healthy body (14).

Therefore, it is essential to provide training that encourages sportsmanship in sports activities, particularly for children in early adolescence. The situation is a little more complicated for female students, who enter early adolescence a year or two earlier. During this period, female students may be exposed to peer bullying or hide themselves physically and emotionally due to changes in their bodies. Considering the above-mentioned reasons, new education models and popular views should be determined. The aforesaid approach must be formed by taking into account the ethical foundations and developmental stages of sports.

## METHOD

### Research Design

A survey design was employed in the research. The survey design is a research design aiming to describe a past or present situation as it is and attempting to define the individual, event, or object that is the subject to research as it is, within its own conditions (13,2). The current work attempted to determine the relationship between second-level primary school students' sportsmanship behavior levels in the physical education course and gender and family attitude values.

### Population and Sample

The study population consisted of volunteer students receiving second-level primary education. Three hundred students selected from the above-mentioned population using a random sampling method constituted the sample. The data were collected face-to-face using a survey, and the questions encountered during the application were responded to.

### Data Collection Tool

In the present research, the "Physical Education Course Sportsmanship Behavior Scale (PECSBS)" developed by Koç (15) was utilized as a data collection tool. Furthermore, a personal information form was applied to the students for the purpose of revealing their gender and family attitudes.

### Physical Education Course Sportsmanship Behavior Scale (PECSBS):

The Physical Education Course Sportsmanship Behavior Scale, developed by Koç (15) as a result of examining the scales and surveys in the literature and physical education curricula and obtaining the opinions of relevant students, teachers, and experts, and prepared for secondary school students, represents a 5-point Likert scale. The original scale comprises a total of 22 items, 11 of which are the "Displaying Appropriate Behavior" (DAB) factor (items 1, 2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 19, and 21) and 11 reverse-scored items are the "Avoiding Inappropriate Behavior" (AIB) factor (items 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, and 22). The lowest score that can be received from the scale is 22, and the highest score is 110. The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) of the overall scale was computed as 85. Increased scores on the scale mean better sportsmanship behavior levels of students (15).

### Data Analysis

In the data analysis, frequency, percentage, arithmetic mean, and standard deviation were employed as descriptive statistical methods for personal information. Since the data were normally distributed, the t-test was used for paired groups, and the ANOVA test was used for multiple comparisons.

### Ethical approval and institutional permission

Akdeniz University Rectorate Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee. With the decision dated 14.12.2023, numbered 23 and 556, it has been unanimously decided that its implementation is ethically appropriate.

## FINDINGS

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics for students' personal information

Variable		N	%
Gender	Female	147	49.0
	Male	153	51.0
Grade Level	6th grade	37	12.3
	7th grade	205	68.3
	8th grade	58	19.4
Family attitude	Authoritarian	28	9.3
	Democratic	228	76.0
	Liberal	44	14.7
License	License available	60	16.7
	License not available	240	83.3

As seen in Table 1, 49% (n=147) of the students were female, and 51% (n=153) were male. Of these students, 12.3% (n=37) were 6th-grade secondary school students, 68.3% (n=205) were 7th-grade secondary school students, and 19.4% (n=58) were 8th-grade secondary school students. Of the students taking part in the research, 16.7% were students who had a license and did sports (60), and 83.3% were students who did not have a license and did not do sports (n=240).

**Table 2. Min-Max Values and Mean Values of Secondary School Students' PECSBS Scores**

Scale	N	Min	Max	X	SD
Displaying appropriate behavior		2.50	5.00	4.12	.66
Avoiding inappropriate behavior	300	1.00	5.00	4.30	.77
PECSBS		2.36	5.00	4.21	.59

As seen in Table 2, the candidates' mean scores for displaying appropriate behavior in the alternative sub-dimension of the scale were the highest ( $\bar{x}$  item=4.12), followed by avoiding inappropriate behavior ( $\bar{x}$  item=4.30) and the overall scale ( $\bar{x}$  item=4.21). It can be stated that the candidates' sportsmanship behavior was good and at a high score level. In the research, the t-test was performed with the objective of determining the change in sportsmanship behavior levels by gender, and the results are displayed in Table 3.

**Table 3. Comparison of Students' Scale Scores by Gender (t-test results)**

Scale	Gender	N	X	SD	t	p
Displaying appropriate behavior	Female	147	4.20	.62		
	Male	153	4.04	.69	2.015*	.045
Avoiding inappropriate behavior	Female	147	4.58	.51		
	Male	153	4.02	.83	6.893*	.000
PECSBS	Female	147	4.39	.47		
	Male	153	4.03	.64	5.571*	.000

As seen in Table 3, there was a statistically significant difference in the sub-dimension of displaying appropriate behavior according to the participants' gender ( $t=2.015$ ,  $p=.045$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), and there was a statistically significant difference in the sub-dimension of avoiding inappropriate behavior ( $t=6.893$ ,  $p=.000$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) and in the total Physical Education Course Sportsmanship Behavior Scale ( $t=5.571$ ,  $p=.000$ ;  $p<0.05$ ). The

sportsmanship behavior mean scores of female students were higher compared to male students. The ANOVA results concerning secondary school students' Physical Education Course Sportsmanship Behavior Scale scores according to family attitudes are presented in Table 4.

Scale	Attitude	N	X	SD	F	P	Difference
Displaying appropriate behavior	1-Authoritarian	28	3.99	.70	1.344	.262	
	2-Democratic	228	4.15	.62			
	3-Liberal	44	4.01	.84			
Avoiding inappropriate behavior	1-Authoritarian	28	4.22	.70	6.276*	.002	2-3
	2-Democratic	228	4.37	.71			
	3-Liberal	44	3.94	1.00			
<b>Overall Scale</b>	1-Authoritarian	28	4.11	.57	4.938*	.008	2-3
	2-Democratic	228	4.26	.55			
	3-Liberal	44	3.98	.76			

As seen in Table 4, there was no significant difference in second-level primary school students' display of appropriate sportsmanship behavior in the physical education course according to their family attitudes ( $F=1.344$ ,  $P=.262$ ,  $P>.05$ ). However, there was a significant difference in terms of avoiding inappropriate behavior ( $F=6.276$ ,  $P=.002$ ,  $P<.05$ ) in the democratic family attitude in comparison with the liberal family attitude. A statistically significant difference was identified in the overall scale when the democratic family attitude was compared to the liberal family attitude ( $F=4.938$ ,  $P=.008$ ,  $P<.05$ ).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In line with the results from the study carried out to examine the sportsmanship behavior of second-level primary school students in the physical education course in terms of gender and family attitude variables, it can be stated that the total scores on the Physical Education Course Sportsmanship Behavior Scale were good or high. Unlike our research findings, in their study with secondary school students aged 10-15, Karafil et al., reported that students' sportsmanship scores were moderate (11). Upon examining the students' sportsmanship behavior according to the gender variable, a statistically significant difference was revealed in displaying appropriate behavior, avoiding inappropriate behavior, and the overall scale. The findings from the present research are in line with the literature findings (7).

Esentürk et al., and Tsai and Fung, indicated that female students' total scores on the Physical Education Course Sportsmanship Behavior Scale were higher in comparison with male students (5,19). Unlike the research findings, some studies report that male students' sportsmanship behavior scores are higher compared to female students (8,11,3).

Unlike our research findings, some studies indicate no statistically significant difference upon examining students' sportsmanship behavior according to the gender variable (16,18).

The concept of sportsmanship has numerous meanings. Sportsmanship behavior helps make all competitive games enjoyable and fun. It helps to be a good sportsperson, develops good habits and positive life skills both inside and outside of sports games, and is a crucial life skill for people of all ages. Sportsmanship is more than being courteous to others. There are several key qualities contributing to athlete behavior. These include the following: being supportive. If you are losing, it is best not to take your frustrations out on your teammates. Being a team player is crucial in team sports, where support can mean everything. In a game, players do their best, and every person wants to win. People are more productive and effective with positive reinforcement, and several words of encouragement or a round of applause can sometimes be all a person needs to get their thinking back on the game. Having a positive attitude. Having a negative attitude towards the game can pull down the entire team, making the competition less enjoyable for every person. Childish or inappropriate behavior can disrupt the game's spirit and make players appear immature. Positivity represents an essential

trait, particularly in team sports. Being respectful. Respecting others is very important, whether you win or lose. Avoid being passive-aggressive or insulting your opponents in the game. Even if you suspect someone of cheating (which may not be the case), speaking harshly to your opponents or teammates can damage your reputation and the respect of others for you. Complaining about calls or arguing with referees also indicates unsportsmanlike behavior. However, a number of people regard trash-talking as part of the game and have more tolerance for it than others, but a general rule is that trash-talking can be fun as long as it does not cross personal boundaries. Revive the game's spirit. Being willing to learn. If you lose, try to learn from your mistakes instead of taking it out on your opponent. For instance, if you push too hard and make a mistake during a tennis match, practice returning the balls that give you the most trouble. Practicing self-control. Games can become emotional, but players must always make a conscious effort to control their emotions and concentrate on the game. Damaging sports equipment or playfields is a certain way to be a bad athlete and can also embarrass your teammates (9,17).

Keeping the physical activity levels of students in early adolescence high through school sports and ensuring their participation in activities will help them undergo a more trouble-free and acceptable period (4). During this period, when energy capacities and the need for movement are considered to be at the highest level, behavioral changes to be developed with the contributions from educators will pave the way for students to display more acceptable behaviors physically and emotionally. Educators and parents can provide simple and accurate explanations to their children in early adolescence about the period they are in, and children who comprehend that the changes they experience are normal can continue their lives by being more accepting of this period. The good sportsmanship behavior they can develop during this period is crucial since this behavior makes competitive play more enjoyable for every person. Whereas sometimes winning feels like the most important thing, good sportsmanship teaches competitors how to be kind and respectful to others. Poor sportsmanship promotes a negative environment and can take fun out of the game. Especially due to the rapid physical and emotional changes of students in early adolescence, poor sportsmanship behavior will lead to a conflict environment. Students who have acquired sportsmanship behaviors will be able to overcome these characteristics by being less affected by the changes caused by early adolescence. Gender differences also become more pronounced during adolescence, which can significantly impact sports participation. Educators should plan the educational process by assessing the overall development and readiness of adolescents for sports participation.

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