INVESTIGATION OF THE CHILDREN'S MOTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN SPORTS AND THE DIFFICULTIES THEY EXPERIENCE

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Original scientific paper

Abstract
The present study aims to investigate the motives of children for participating in sports and the difficulties they experience. The study was conducted on a sample of 500 people, 235 of whom were female and 265 were male. When the female students and male students were compared in terms of their motives for participation in sports, it was found out that the teamwork motives of the male students were higher than those of the female students and the motive for participation in sports of the ones who were engaged in sports was higher in all sub-dimensions except for the sub-dimension of fun. It was found out that the students who were engaged in sports experienced less difficulty compared to the children who were not engaged in sports in various sub-dimensions and in the total difficulties scores ($p<0.05$).Consequently, it can be said that the teamwork of the male students were stronger than that of the female students, the students who were not engaged in sports experienced more difficulties in many areas, and the difficulties experienced in the sub-dimensions differed between the branches.

Key words*:* Motivation, Sports, Difficulties, Child

Introduction

Physical Activity (PA) has an important role which affects the health and development of children and supports them in physical, psychological and social terms (Bassett-Gunter et al., 2017). Although the benefits of sports are frequently emphasized (Fraser-Thomas, Côté & Deakin, 2008), it has been reported that the majority of children and adolescents do not participate in regular sports programs (Weinberg *et al*., 2000) and that situation continues in their adulthood as well (Sirard, Pfeiffer, & Pate, 2006). Motivation has been suggested to be the key for individuals to participate in sports (Ulrich-French & Smith, 2009). Although it is possible to define the common motives while defining the motivational factors causing the individuals to be engaged in sports (Guedes, 2015), many reasons, especially the cultural differences, can be effective in the participation of individuals in sports (Weinberg et al., 2000; Sirard et al., 2006; Jöesaar and Hein, 2011).

Participation in sports can vary between different living environments, such as countries, regions, rural areas and urban eras (Afsanepurak et al., 2012). Lack of motivation is one of the primary problems encountered in entering into sports activities, and the main reason underlying it is usually a wrongly selected sports activity. A wrongly selected sports activity can prevent the enjoyment the individual would take from sports. An individual's taking or not taking part in a sports activity depends not only on motivational structures, but also on various different conditions (Sindik et al., 2013). Some of these reasons can be attention deficit, hyperactivity, behavioral disorders and emotional problems, which can be frequently seen in the childhood and adolescence periods (Muris, Meesters & Berg 2003; Bilyk & Goodman, 2004). These problems cause considerable difficulties in the daily life of children and adolescents, and taking the protective measures is of great importance in this regard (Becker et al., 2004). PA can be one of these measures. As a matter of fact, Noonan and Fairclough (2018) determined a decrease in the emotional and peer-related problems experienced by the males taking part in PA. Another study suggested that PA decreased the psychological problems (anxiety and depression) experienced by children and adolescents (Larun et al ., 2006).

The aim of this study was to investigate the correlation between the sports motivation and the difficulties experienced, as well as the effect of the factor of gender, being or not being engaged in sports, and the branches of sports engaged in on motivation and on the difficulties experienced.

Methods

Participants
The participants in the study were randomly selected 500 students of the 11-14 age group attending the second stage of 20 different primary education schools. Of these students, 235 (47.00 %) were female and 265 (53.00 %) were male. The permissions required for the study were obtained from the Directorate of National Education. The Personal Information Form including the demographical characteristics was used in order to determine the socio-demographical characteristics

of the students in the present study. In procedure and measures collection tools employed were the Participation Motive Questionnaire (PMQ) and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ-Tur). The present study was approved by the Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publications Ethics Council of Usak University.

Procedure and measures

Participation Motivation Questionnaire (PMQ)

Developed by Gill, Gross & Huddleston (1983), the Participation Motivation Questionnaire is intended for explaining the reasons of individuals for participating in sports, and it is composed of 30 items and 8 sub-dimensions (Skills Development, Teamwork, Fun, Friendship, Achievement/status, Energy Spending, Fitness/Being Active, and Situational factors). In order to find out which reason was more effective on the participation of individuals in sports and exercise activities, a 3-point scale composed of the options of "Very Important (1)", "Slightly Important (2)" and "Not Important At All (3)" was used. Since the items in the inventory were assessed within the interval of "Very Important (1)" and "Not Important at all (3)", the low points scored in the scale showed a higher motive for participation in sports, while high points showed a lower motive for participation in sports. Reliability and validity studies were carried out for the original scale, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the sub-dimensions were determined to range between 0.78 (Achievement/status) and 0.30 (Friendship). By means of the test-retest method, the reliability of the PMQ was found to be 0.68 (Gould, Feltz & Weiss 1985). The validity and reliability study for the Turkish version of the inventory was carried out by Oyar et al., (2001), and the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were found for 8 sub-dimensions. While the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficients for the sub-dimensions were found to be between .61 (Skills Development) and .78 (Achievement/status), the internal consistency for the entire scale was found to be .86.

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

The scale used for the scanning of psychological problems in children and adolescents is the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) developed by Goodman (1997). The SDQ is composed of a total of 25 items and six sub-dimensions. The questions are grouped under 5 titles: (1) behavioral problems; (2) attention deficiency and hyperactivity; (3) emotional problems; (4) peer-related problems; and (5) Prosocial. While each title can be evaluated on its own, the total of the first four titles gives the total difficulty score. The high scores in social behavior part reflect the individual's strengths in the social domain, while the high scores in the other four parts suggest that the problem areas are severe. The questionnaire was adapted to Turkish (SDQ-Tur) by Güvenir et al., (2008). The internal reliability coefficients of the questionnaire were found to be .69 for the emotional problems factor, .68 for the behavioral problems factor, .85 for the attention deficiency and hyperactivity factor, .46 for the peer-related problems factor, and .73 for the Prosocial factor, while it was determined to be .83 for the entire questionnaire.

Statistical analysis

SPSS 25.0 statistical software package was employed in the analysis of the data. Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was examined in order to measure the reliability of the scales. After it was examined by means on "One-Way Anova" whether there was a difference between the sports branches, the Scheffe Test, which is a Post-Hoc test, was employed in order to see the differences between the groups. The correlations between the *PMQ and SDQ-TUR* were assessed by means of the Pearson Correlation method. In order to determine whether the groups differed depending on the gender and being or not being actively engaged in sports, Independent Sample t-test was employed. The statistical significance level was accepted to be $p<0.05$.

Results

Table 1. Correlation between the Sub-Dimensions of PMQ and SDQ-TUR

	SDQ-TUR				
PMQ	Emotions	Conduct	Hyperactivity	Peers	Prosocial
Achievement/status	.030	.030	-.005	.025	-.142
Teamwork	.096	.148	.032	.121	-.303
Energy release	.077	.020	-.082	.079	-.182
Fun	-.016	.044	-.094	.032	-.077
Friendship	-.056	.036	-.066	.069	-.228
Situational factors	.024	.020	-.008	.018	-.107
Fitness	.094	.120	-.058	.100	-.172
Skill development	.098	.119	.030	.106	-.258

There are positive and negative correlations between the motive for participation in sports and the sub-dimensions of the difficulties experienced, and these correlations are statistically insignificant ($p<0.05$; Table 1).

Table 2. Comparison of the female and male students' motives for participation in sports

	Gender	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p
Achievement/status	Male	265	1.38	1.74	-.070	498	.944
	Female	235	1.40	1.71			
Teamwork	Male	265	1.02	1.61	-2.210	470	.028*
	Female	235	1.36	1.82			
Energy release	Male	265	1.58	1.64	.573	498	.567
	Female	235	1.50	1.59			
Fun	Male	265	1.15	1.26	-.285	498	.775
	Female	235	1.18	1.23			
Friendship	Male	265	1.18	1.26	-.368	498	.713
	Female	235	1.23	1.43			
Situational factors	Male	265	.91	1.19	-.936	498	.350
	Female	235	1.02	1.37			
Fitness	Male	265	.46	.84	.425	498	.671
	Female	235	.43	.75			
Skill development	Male	265	.91	1.36	.271	498	.786
	Female	235	.87	1.37			

When the female students' motive for participation in sports was compared to that of the male students, the teamwork points of the male students were found to be statistically significantly different that those of the female students ($t_{0.05:500}$=-2.210). The fact that the teamwork points of the male students were low indicates that their motivation is higher than that of the female students ($p<0.05$; Table 2).

Table 3. Comparison of the sports participation motives of the participants engaged in sports and those of the ones who are not engaged in sports

	Are you engaged in sports?	N	M	Sd	t	df	p
Achievement/status	No	250	1.64	1.99	3.321	444	.001
	Yes	250	1.14	1.38			
Teamwork	No	250	1.75	2.00	7.859	397	.000
	Yes	250	.60	1.15			
Energy release	No	250	1.81	1.72	3.775	498	.000
	Yes	250	1.27	1.46			
Fun	No	250	1.20	1.34	.607	488	.544
	Yes	250	1.13	1.16			
Friendship	No	250	1.46	1.46	4.296	476	.000
	Yes	250	.95	1.17			
Situational factors	No	250	1.21	1.46	4.402	445	.000
	Yes	250	.71	1.02			
Fitness	No	250	.62	.93	5.080	428	.000
	Yes	250	.27	.60			
Skill development	No	250	1.30	1.59	6.930	406	.000
	Yes	250	.48	.95			

When the sports participation motivations of the participants who were engaged in sports and those who were not are compared, statistically significant differences were found in all sub-dimensions except for the sub-dimension of Fun ($p<0.05$). Accordingly, the fact that the Achievement/status, Teamwork, Energy release, Friendship and Situational factors points of the students engaged in sports are lower indicates that their motivation for participation in sports is higher in these domains compared to the students who are not engaged in sports (Table 3).

Table 4. Comparison of the difficulties experienced by the participants who are engaged in sports

	Are you engaged in sports?	N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p
Emotions	No	250	3.81	2.50	5.325	498	.000
	Yes	250	2.64	2.39			
Conduct	No	250	3.40	2.32	5.161	480	.000
	Yes	250	2.42	1.91			
Hyperactivity	No	250	4.33	1.87	2.166	485	.031
	Yes	250	4.00	1.59			
Peers	No	250	3.84	2.08	3.678	498	.000
	Yes	250	3.17	1.98			
Prosocial	No	250	6.91	2.42	-5.789	478	.000
	Yes	250	8.05	1.98			
Total Difficulty	No	250	15.38	6.33	5.837	498	.000
	Yes	250	12.23	5.71			

When the difficulties experienced by the children engaged in sports and the ones who were not engaged in sports were examined, statistically significant differences were found in all sub-dimensions and in the total strength points. The fact that the children who were not engaged in sports scored high points indicates that there was a problem in the domain in question. In the sub-dimension of Prosocial, high scores were determined for the children engaged in sports ($p<0.05$). This indicates that the children not engaged in sports experienced more difficulties in this domain (Table 4).

Table 5. Investigation of the sports participation motives of the students engaged in sports by the branches

	Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Achievement/status	Intergroup	3	26.48	8.83	4.838	.003
	Intragroup	246	448.89	1.82		
Teamwork	Intergroup	3	19.96	6.65	5.318	.001
	Intragroup	246	307.83	1.25		
Energy release	Intergroup	3	19.17	6.39	3.056	.029
	Intragroup	246	514.34	2.09		
Fun	Intergroup	3	27.49	9.16	7.339	.000
	Intragroup	246	307.15	1.25		
Friendship	Intergroup	3	16.15	5.38	4.060	.008
	Intragroup	246	326.18	1.33		
Situational factors	Intergroup	3	9.44	3.15	3.098	.027
	Intragroup	246	249.83	1.02		
Fitness	Intergroup	3	1.38	.46	1.266	.287
	Intragroup	246	89.66	.36		
Skill development	Intergroup	3	1.44	.48	.531	.662
	Intragroup	246	222.99	.91		

When the motives for participation in sports were examined, statistically significant differences were found depending on the variable of sports branches ($p<0.05$). By means of the analysis conducted, differences were found in the sub-dimensions of Achievement/status, teamwork, Energy release, fun , friendship and Situational factors ($F=3.246$; Table 5).

Table 6. Investigation of the sports participation motives of the students engaged in sports by the branches

Sub-Dimension	Branch		Mean Difference	p
Achievement/status	Tennis	Basketball	.755*	.019
		Handball	.850*	.009
Energy release	Tennis	Basketball	.740*	.039
Fun	Tennis	Basketball	.702*	.006
		Volleyball	.800*	.002
		Handball	.817*	.001
Teamwork	Tennis	Basketball	.700*	.006
		Handball	.600*	.037
Friendship	Tennis	Basketball	.203*	.009
Situational factors	Volleyball	Basketball	.445*	.047

When the differences between the groups were examined depending on the variable of branch, it was found out that the Tennis players experienced more difficulty in the Achievement/status sub-dimension than the Basketball and Handball players, the Tennis players experienced more difficulty in the Energy release sub-dimension than the Basketball players, the Tennis players experienced more difficulty in the Fun sub-dimension than the Basketball, Volleyball and Handball players, the Tennis players experienced more difficulty in the Teamwork sub-dimension than the Basketball and Handball players, the Tennis players experienced more difficulty in the Friendship sub-dimension than the Basketball players, and the Volleyball players experienced more difficulty in the Situational factors sub-dimension than the Basketball players ($p<0.05$; Table 6).

Table 7. Investigation of the difficulties experienced by the students engaged in sports by the branches

	Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Emotions	Intergroup	3	54.16	18.05	3.244	.023
	Intragroup	246	1369.15	5.57		
Conduct	Intergroup	3	22.56	7.52	2.087	.103
	Intragroup	246	886.34	3.60		
Hyperactivity	Intergroup	3	25.24	8.41	3.417	.018
	Intragroup	246	605.75	2.46		
Peers	Intergroup	3	17.31	5.77	1.485	.219
	Intragroup	246	955.63	3.88		
Prosocial	Intergroup	3	36.90	12.30	3.235	.023
	Intragroup	246	935.42	3.80		
Total Difficulty	Intergroup	3	301.88	100.63	3.165	.025
	Intragroup	246	7822.13	31.80		

When the difficulties experienced by the students engaged in sports were examined depending on the variable of branch, statistically significant differences were found ($p<0.05$). As a result of the analysis carried out, statistically significant differences were determined in the dimensions of Emotions, Hyperactivity, Prosocial, and Total Difficulty (Table 7).

Table 8. The results of Post-Hoc Scheffe Test concerning the difficulties experienced

Sub-Dimension	Branch		Mean Difference	p
Emotions	Tennis	Basketball	-1.243 *	.032
Hyperactivity	Basketball	Handball	.86 *	.022
Prosocial	Basketball	Volleyball	-1.057 *	.025
Total difficulties	Basketball	Tennis	2.92 *	.035

By means of the analysis conducted in order to find out the differences between the points scored in sub-groups depending on the variable of branch, it was determined that the Tennis players experienced more difficulty in the Emotions sub-dimension than the Basketball players, the Basketball players experienced more difficulty in the Hyperactivity sub-dimension than the Handball players, the Basketball players experienced more difficulty in the Prosocial sub-dimension than the Volleyball players, and the Basketball players experienced more difficulty in the Total difficulties sub-dimension than the Tennis players ($p<0.05$;Table 8).

Discussion

In the present study, when the female and male participants were compared, it was found out that the motivation of the male students was higher than that of the female students in the sub-dimension of Teamwork, and there was no difference between the genders other than that (Table 3). When the literature concerning this subject was reviewed, it was seen that very different conclusions had been obtained in previous studies. While some studies suggested differences in various sub-dimensions between female and male students (Barber, Sukhi, & White, 1999; Gould, Feltz, & Weiss, 1985), Ryckman & Hamel (1993) suggested there was no difference between the genders, and McNeill, Fry and Hairil (2011) stated that the male students had scored higher points than the female students only in the sub-dimensions of "Skills Development", "Achievement/status" and "Energy Spending". This shows that males and females have different motives for participating in sports activities (Shao-hua et al., 2006; Sirard, Pfeiffer & Pate, 2006). Indeed, many different reasons, especially the cultural differences, can be effective in the investigation of the motivational factors directing the children to be engaged in sports (Weinberg et al., 2000; Sirard et al., 2006; Jöesaar & Hein, 2011). Participation in sports can vary between different living environments, i.e. different countries, different regions, and rural versus urban areas (Afsanepurak et al., 2012), which can result in emergence of differences between the genders or not. The fact that the gender differences were found to be effective in various sub-dimensions in the investigation of the motivational differences among the students in three countries (Kondric et al., 2013) can be deemed important in terms of supporting our thoughts.

When the sports motivations were compared based on being or not being engaged in sports, the participants engaged in sports were found to have higher sports participation motives in all sub-dimensions except for the sub-dimension of Fun (Table 4). When it was investigated whether the sports motivation differed depending on the sports branches, statistically significant differences were found between different branches in the sub-dimension of achievement/status, teamwork, energy release, Fun , friendship and Situational factors (Table 6,7). It is now known that the life quality decreases among the people who are not engaged in sports, and that many psychological changes take place as a result of the participation in exercise programs (Haapanen et al., 1996). The motivational and behavioral changes theories are among the primary techniques used to support sports activities (Wang & Biddle, 2001). The positive correlation between motivation and success provides important findings in terms of supporting the participation of people in sports activities (Vlachopoulos et al., 2000). However, in order for an individual to participate in an activity, he/she needs to have a high level of motivation, which needs to be voluntary. Motivation is an important factor for success in many individual and team sports branches (Matsumoto & Takenaka, 2004). In his study where he investigated the sports participation motivation of 2,598 Italian athletes (from the branches of basketball, tennis, volleyball, etc.), whose ages ranged between 9 and 18, Mussino cited the energy release, Fun , social behavior, friendship, Situational factors and success among the reasons for motivation. Investigating the motivational factors of athletes (12.14±1.44 years of age), Interdonato, Miarka, Oliveira, & Gorgatti (2008) stated that the health-related factors constituted the most important motivational factors. In his study conducted on swimmers, Morouço (2007) cited the Skills among the most important motivational factors. These results show that children have many diverse motivations to participate in sports, which can be the primary reason why motivational factors have been found to be different for different branches of sports in the present study. As the children's reasons for participation in sports can differ, the situations they encounter in the sports fields, the difficulties they experience with their coaches and the facilities or during the contests, as well as the difficulties related to the workouts, can result in differences in their motivation.

In the investigation of the difficulties encountered by the children who are engaged in sports and the ones who are not, it has been found out that the

children who are not engaged in sports experience more difficulty in all sub-dimensions and they score higher total difficulties points (Table 5). In addition, when this subject has been investigated depending on the sports branches, statistically significant differences were found between the branches in terms of the emotions, hyperactivity, Prosocial and the total difficulty as well (Table 8,9). While Sagatun et al., (2007) suggested that there was a decrease in the emotional and peer-related problems in individuals who were physically active, it has also been stated that the children with high social behavior scores did not experience difficulties in interpersonal relations and had features that would facilitate their participation in sports activities (Brodersen et al., 2005). In addition, a compilation study suggested that the PA helped decreasing negative psychological states in children and adolescents (Larun et al., 2006). These studies can be considered to be of importance in terms of supporting the present study. Sports contribute to the elimination of the social and emotional problems encountered in the childhood period by developing the communicational skills, interpersonal relations and other factors such as the self-esteem (Vella, Oades, & Crowe, 2011). Thus, directing children into sports may protect them against social and emotional difficulties (Vella et al., 2015). McCarthy, Jones & ClarkCarter (2007) suggested that the enjoyment level of the children participating in team sports was higher compared to the children engaged in individual sports. Team sports provide an opportunity for cooperation and socialization (Garyfallos, & Asterios, 2011), which, in turn, can change the problems encountered. The results of the present study indicate that the internal factors such as friendship, energy and socialization are dominant with regard to participation in sports. The fact that the sub-factors have differed depending on the branches of sports in the present study shows similarity with the results of other studies. The differences may have resulted from the different sports the individuals in the sample were engaged in, from the differences in the methodology, from the different age groups used, and from the cultural differences (Kirkby et al., 1999).

Conclusion

Consequently, it has been determined that the children engaged in sports have higher level of motivation and experience less psychological problems. There are differences between the branches of sports as well. It is necessary to ensure the quality of and to implement duly the sports programs, which will promote the psychological health. Such sports programs should be public and age-appropriate, the support of the parents should be ensured, and the children should be provided with the opportunities to develop their skills. The sports clubs, coaches, managers and health professionals should be aware of and systematically follow up the difficulties the children experience. Future studies need to give priority to determine the variables such as why the children who experience psychological difficulties and have low levels of motivation are not engaged in sports, how long they have been engaged in sports, their achievements in sports, the reason why they have quitted sports, and the other variables that may serve as agents.

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ISPITIVANJE MOTIVA KOD DJECE ZA SUDJELOVANJEM U SPORTSKIM AKTIVNOSTIMA I POTEŠKOĆA KOJE SU DOŽIVJELI

Sažetak

Ova studija ima za cilj istražiti motive djece za sudjelovanje u sportu i poteškoće koje doživljavaju. Istraživanje je provedeno na uzorku od 500 ispitanika, od toga 235 žena i 265 muškaraca. Kad su učenice i učenici uspoređeni u smislu njihovih motiva za sudjelovanje u sportu, ustanovljeno je da su učenici motivirani za timski rad, te da imaju više motiva za sudjelovanje u sportu od onih koji nisu bili angažirani u sportu u svim pod-dimenzijama, osim pod-dimenzije zabave. Slijedom toga, može se reći da je timski rad muških učenika bio jači od učenica. Također učenici koji nisu sudjelovali u sportu iskusili su više poteškoća u mnogim područjima, a poteškoće koje su doživjeli u poddimenzijama različite su.

Ključne riječi: Motivacija, sport, poteškoće, učenici.

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Accepted: 01.12.2018,
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