

Full Length Research Paper

The role of sports in kindergarten teachers' recreational habits

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Received 26 October, 2015; Accepted 18 January, 2016

The aim of this study is to investigate the role of the sports in the recreational habits of kindergarten teachers. The survey population comprises kindergarten teachers who are employed in the province of Gaziantep. The sample constitutes a total of 378 kindergarten teachers determined by circumstantial method. The survey developed by Tunçel was used in the research as a data collection tool. The acquired data were evaluated using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) for Windows 16.0 statistical package software. The percentage of the obtained answers and frequency distributions were calculated. In order to reveal a statistically significant difference for some of the questions, cross-tabulation and chi-squared test were applied at the significance level. The data obtained indicated that the kindergarten teachers participating in the research are at school not more than 21 to 30 h, attend a class for 20 to 30 h, have two free days and wish to have more free time. The research results also reveal that the main recreational activity of the kindergarten teachers is doing sport, and they mostly do sport activities at school. They go for a walk as a sport activity, and the main reasons for them to take part in these recreational activities are physical fitness and being healthy. After participating in recreational activities they feel relaxed and satisfied, and this contributes to their professional success positively. As for their expectations from the government, they mostly want more facilities to be provided for recreation.

Key words: Kindergarten, teacher, spare time, sporting habit.

INTRODUCTION

Pre-school education has become an issue growing in importance in Turkey as well as in the world in recent years (Kalkan, 2008). This is because people become aware of the significant role of providing quality education ensuring versatile development of children, and raising a healthy generation of kids. From this point of view, it is an important factor in children's education that teachers in pre-school education should have an environment where

they can spend their spare time more effectively in order to be more efficient.

Recreation promotes physical health development, brings mental health, improves socialization, helps personal skills and abilities to be improved, enhances creativity, increases success at work and labour productivity, promotes economic mobility and makes people happy (Bucher, 1972; Corbin, 1970; Jenny, 1956;

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Koknel, 1993; Nixon and Jewett, 1996; Tezcan, 1982).

Free time is a duration in which a person spends the time left from his/her work and other social tasks with his/her free will either by resting freely, or by having fun, or by achieving cultural, social and vocational cohesion with other people whom he/she interacts and collaborates with for the sake of his/her social and personal success (Binarbasi, 2006). Free time is the time in which a person is supposed to be independent and free (Simmons, 1975). It is a time that will be spared for one's personal preferences after expending energy which is necessary to make a living (Erkal, 1981).

Spare time refers to rights and opportunities such as hobbies and activities one can participate in to improve his/her personality within the cultural and public services. Spare time may also be defined as a source of creative and spiritual values (Arslan, 1996). Spare time is to let oneself go, have fun and improve oneself (Dumazedier, 1968). Spare time is accepted as being able to set boundaries at work to maintain work-life balance. It is also seen as the capacity for reaching the powers which rejuvenate and refresh one (Guler, 1986). Spare time, left from the life's necessities and formal duties, is a time when one does not work and spend his/her time as he/she wishes (Keles, 1996).

Free time activity which a person is willing to participate in is called recreation. In short, recreation is anything some one does in order to meet his need of resting, entertainment and development in his free time with voluntary participation to get away from everyday life's stress. Recreational sports take precedence over the other recreational activities which are favoured by many people, because sports, with a wide range of activities, are important in terms of the quality of life (Ozturk, 2013). Sportive recreation activities contribute to people's mental and physical developments, reduce stress and anxiety, help them to be happy, calm and creative. According to this result, it is necessary for teachers to spend their spare time more effectively in order that they could be more efficient, and one of the most effective activities to ensure this is sport. As a means of recreation, sport has undertaken very important functions in order to compensate for the problems resulted from people's changing their personal and work life with the advent of industrialization as well as the problems caused by the physical and mental insufficiency (Keten, 1964).

Sport, as a spare time activity, has the characteristic of a recreative activity when it is done unprofessionally. In other words, as long as sport is at the service of people, it is accepted as recreational activity, but in the case of people's being at the service of sport, then sport stands for an occupation rather than a recreational activity (Koknel, 1979). While sport takes an important place in meeting people's recreative requirements, recreation plays a fundamental role in sport's becoming widespread and achieving sportive successes. Sport should fulfill this role by providing such services as sport for everyone

and sport for a healthy life (Keten, 1974).

In today's world, in parallel with the developments in Sportive Recreational Activities, people from all strata do these activities so as to enjoy themselves, seek adventure and excitement and feel healthy, both physically and mentally. (Karakucuk, 1995).

Addressing the needs of a child, getting him adopt the basic habits and preparing him for life ideally could only be ensured by a qualified pre-school education. Provided that a child is given a qualified pre-school education, it will ensure the success of the child in his entire life by motivating him to learn. Pre-school education is a critical period in that taking education in this period considerably contributes to the development of children.

Considering all these assessments, it is fair to assume that the kindergarten teachers will give a better education to their students should they have an opportunity to spend their free time efficiently. Therefore, in the event that they participate in recreational activities, it will not only contribute to their physical and mental development positively but also make them feel happy and comfortable by reducing the stress and worries in their life. This research has been conducted to reveal the contribution of the recreational activities of pre-school teachers to the quality of education given in pre-school.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research model

It is a research conducted in descriptive survey model. In the present study, in order to determine the recreational habits of teachers working at the kindergartens in Gaziantep and the role of sport in these habits, theoretical information related to the issue was included by reviewing the related literature and a survey was conducted.

Population and sample

The survey population comprised kindergarten teachers working in the province of Gaziantep and the sample constituted a total of 378 kindergarten teachers (362 female, 16 male) determined by circumstantial method. The survey population comprises kindergarten teachers who are employed in the province of Gaziantep. While selecting the sample, random sampling method was used. The random sampling is a method in which all members of a group (population or universe) have an equal and independent chance of being selected (Arli and Nazik, 2004). The sample constitutes a total of 378 people (362 female, 16 male) determined by the random sampling method.

Data collection tool

Benefited from the study which was named as The Role of Sport in Recreations Habits of the Teachers Who Works At Secondary Schools and which was used as data collection tool by Tunçel (1999) before. The survey consists of 17 closed ended questions. 450 survey were distributed to the teachers within the scope of the study and 378 of returning survey were evaluated. Rate of return was 84%. Acquired 72 survey were excluded because of missing

Table 1. Additional information related to the kindergarten teacher.

Variable		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	362	95.8
	Male	16	4.2
Age	At the age of 25 and below	104	27.5
	Between the age of 26-30	150	39.7
	Between the age of 31-35	106	28.0
	Between the age of 36-40	18	4.8
	1-3 years	169	44.7
	4-6 years	135	35.7
Seniority	7-9 years	62	16.4
	10 years and above	12	3.2
Marital status	Married	247	65.3
	Single	131	34.7
	None	187	49.5
Number of children	1-2 children	161	42.6
	3-4 children	30	7.9
	High	8	2.1
Income status	Middle	299	79.1
	Low	71	18.8

n=378.

coding and giving same points to all questions.

Analysis of data

The data were analysed by statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) for Windows 16.0 software. Frequency and percentage of the data were calculated, tabulated and interpreted by applying χ^2 (chi-square) test for significance level in comparisons. During the test of significance, significance level was $p < 0.05$.

FINDINGS

As can be seen in Table 1, women consisted the 95.8% (362 persons) and men consisted the 4.2% (16 persons) of the kindergarten teachers who participated in the study. In terms of age distribution, their ages varied between 26 to 35 mostly (67.7%), they had professional experience mostly 1 to 3 years (44.7%), most of them were married (65.3%), considering the number of children 50.5% of them had at least 1 child (and they mostly had medium income (79.1%).

Looking at Table 2, considering the distribution of the activities, it seemed that they preferred the propositions such as "I mostly do sport (26.2%)", and at the lowest level, "I play an instrument and take part in the activities

like chorus (2.1%)". Looking at Table 3, it can be seen that the reason why the teachers participate in spare time activities was mostly for physical fitness and being healthy (43.9 %), at the lowest level (1.1 %) for spending time.

Looking at Table 4, considering the feelings of the kindergarten teachers participating in recreational activities, it was seen that they preferred highly the propositions such as "I mostly feel relaxed and satisfied and I find it enjoying and exciting (56.1 %)", and they prefer the propositions such as "I feel tired and bored" and "it provides new experiences" at the lowest level (2.2 %).

In Table 5, significance level between the branch of sports teachers did in their free time and marital status was found statistically at the level of $p < 0.05$. Regarding the data in Table 5, it is seen that kindergarten teachers who are married highly prefer walking as sports at the rate of 97.4% (167 persons), while those who are single prefer aerobic-step/Pilates at the rate of 52.9% (27 persons). In Table 6, significance level between the place where kindergarten teachers did sport in their free time and marital status was found statistically at the level of $p < 0.05$. Regarding the data in Table 6, it could be seen that Kindergarten teachers who were married highly prefer the school to do sports at the rate of 76.3% (139 persons), while those who were single preferred private sport facilities at the rate of 51.1% (46 persons).

Table 2. The activities in which the kindergarten teachers participate in their free time.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I play an instrument, I participate in activities like chorus	8	2.1
I actively do sport	99	26.2
I go to visit my friends	62	16.4
I am interested in art and craft	32	8.5
I read books and newspapers	55	14.6
I go to scientific and cultural activities	39	10.3
I watch sport events	10	2.6
I go to the cinema and theatre	41	10.8
I watch TV	32	8.5

Table 3. The reasons kindergarten teachers to participate in recreational activities.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I think it will help me to obtain a position	10	2.6
Physical fitness and being healthy	166	43.9
Because I find it educational and useful	20	5.3
Wish for being with my friends and sharing	26	6.9
To get rid of monotonous and make life enjoyable	146	38.6
Because I can do it well and it is suitable for my capabilities	6	1.6
To spend time	4	1.1

Table 4. Feelings of kindergarten teachers after participating in recreational activities.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I feel relaxed and satisfied	212	56.1
I find it enjoying and exciting	126	33.3
It boosts my self confidence	24	6.3
It provides new experiences	4	1.1
I feel tired and bored	4	1.1
It increases my vocational success and productivity	8	2.2

Table 5. Relationship between the branches of sports teachers do in their free time and marital status.

Variable		Married	Single	df	X ²	p
Walking	N	167	52	-	-	-
	%	76.3	23.7	-	-	-
Swimming	N	21	14	-	-	-
	%	60	40	-	-	-
Volleyball	N	20	21	4	29.27	0.00 [*]
	%	48.8	52.2	-	-	-
Aerobic-step/Pilates	N	24	27	-	-	-
	%	47.1	52.9	-	-	-
Other Sports	N	15	17	-	-	-
	%	47.9	51.1	-	-	-

Table 6. Relationship between the place where kindergarten teachers do sport in their free time and marital status.

Variable		Married	Single	df	X ²	p
At school	n	139	43	-	-	-
	%	76.4	23.6	-	-	-
At private sport facilities	n	44	46	-	-	-
	%	48.9	51.1	-	-	-
At home	n	20	11	4	23.18	0.00
	%	64.5	35.5	-		
In nature	n	16	15	-	-	-
	%	51.6	48.4	-	-	-
In municipal facilities	n	28	16	-	-	-
	%	63.6	36.4	-	-	-

Table 7. Relationship between the place where kindergarten teachers do sport in their free time and professional seniority.

Variable		1-3 years	4-6 years	7-9 years	10 years and above	df	X ²	p
At school	n	54	64	41	23	-	-	-
	%	29.7	35.2	22.5	12.6	-	-	-
At private sport facilities	n	41	11	20	18	-	-	-
	%	45.6	12.2	22.2	20	-	-	-
At home	n	14	8	7	2	12	39.14	0.00
	%	45.2	25.8	22.6	19.4	-		
In nature	n	14	4	7	6	-	-	-
	%	45.2	12.9	22.6	19.4	-	-	-
In municipal facilities	n	26	14	4	0	-	-	-
	%	59.1	31.8	9.1	0	-	-	-

In Table 7, significance level between the place where kindergarten teachers did sport in their free time and Professional seniority was found statistically at the level of $p < 0.05$. Regarding the data in Table 7, it was found that kindergarten teachers who had 1 to 3 years experience in terms of professional seniority highly preferred municipal facilities at the rate of 59.1% (126 persons), those who had 4 to 6 years experience prefer school at the rate of 20% (18 persons), those who had 7 to 9 years experience preferred home at the rate of 22.6% (7 persons) and those who had experience for 10 years and preferred private sport facilities at the rate of 20.% (18 persons).

DISCUSSION

Regarding the kindergarten teachers participating in the

survey, it found that they were between the ages of 26 to 35 at max, they had 1 yo 3 years experience at most regarding working, they were mostly married, more kindergarten teachers had 1 child at least and regarding their income status, they mostly had middle income. Research result showed similarities with some other scientific researches. As a result of the scientific study conducted by Yildirim (2007) concerning the connection between the level of burnout and and desperation among kindergarten teachers, most of them refer to themselves as middle class regarding their economic level (Yildirim, 2007).

Considering the distribution of the activities in which kindergarten teachers participate in their free time, they preferred the propositions such as "I mostly do sport", and at the lowest level, I play an instrument and take part in the activities like chorus in comparison with others. Research result shows similarities with some scientific

researches, while showing differences with some others. In Pala (2012) postgraduate thesis, finding and evaluating the recreational habits and vocational satisfaction of Physical Education and Sports teacher (İstanbul-Pendik sample), it is seen that Physical Education and sports teachers prefer doing sports at the rate of 42.2 % by choosing "totally agree" when they are asked about their favourite free time activity (Pala, 2012). In Binarbasi (2006) postgraduate thesis, finding and evaluating the recreational habits and vocational satisfaction of Physical Education and Sports teacher who were employed in the province of Kutahya, similar results with this study were obtained as well (Binarbasi, 2006).

The reasons for kindergarten teachers to take part in recreational activities are mostly for physical fitness and being healthy and just to spend time at the lowest level. Research result shows similarities with some scientific researches, while showing differences with some others. As a result of a study named Recreation problems of the female students who accommodate in higher education credit and hostel institution conducted by Ozmaden (1997) (The Province of Ankara sample) it was determined that the most common reasons for them to participate in recreational activities are that they can be with their friends and these activities are the best they can do and suitable for their capabilities as well as providing them with a beautiful environment (Arslan, 1996). As a result of a study named the role of the sports in the recreational habits of secondary school teachers, it was determined that male teachers prefer to be with their friends in their Spare time (Tunçel, 1999). As a result of the study conducted by Soyer and Can (2008) named Comparison of University Students' Recreational Habits and Their Sportive Tendency in terms of Their Professional Tendency, it is seen that they highly prefer recreational activities so that they can spend time with their friends (Soyer and Can, 2008).

Considering the feelings of the kindergarten teachers after participating in recreational activities, it is seen that they highly prefer the propositions such as "I mostly feel relaxed and satisfied and I find it enjoyable and exciting (56.1 %)", and they prefer the propositions such as "I feel tired and bored" and "it provides new experiences" at the lowest level (2.2 %). Research result shows similarities with some scientific researches, while showing differences with some others. As a result of the study conducted by Pala (2012), 59.8 % of the teachers answered as "I totally agree" to the proposition of "I find it relaxing and helpful to get rid of the feeling of boredom (Pala, 2012). As a result of the study conducted by Arslan (1996) on the effect of Recreational activities, students stated that they mostly find it relaxing and helpful to get rid of the feeling of boredom (Arslan, 1996). Similarly, as a result of the study conducted by Ozmaden (1997) on the effect of Recreational activities, students stated that they mostly find it relaxing and helpful to get rid of the feeling of boredom (Ozmaden, 1997).

Kindergarten teachers' frequency of participation in

recreational activities and their marital status and the reasons for their participation in recreational activities calculated, tabulated and interpreted by applying χ^2 (chi-square) test and significance level was found as $p < 0.05$ ($p = 0.00$ and $p = 0.00$, respectively), however there couldn't be found a significance level at the level of $p < 0.05$ regarding the activities they participated in and their marital status calculated by applying χ^2 (chi-square) test ($p = 0.14$).

A significance level between the branch of sports teachers do in their free time and their marital status was found statistically at the level of $p < 0.05$. It is seen that Kindergarten teachers who are married highly prefer walking as sports at the rate of 76.3% (167 persons), while those who are single prefer aerobic-step/Pilates at the rate of 52.9% (27 persons).

A significance level between the place where kindergarten teachers do sport in their free time and their marital status was found statistically at the level of $p < 0.05$. It is seen that Kindergarten teachers who are married highly prefer the school to do sports at the rate of 76.3% (139 persons), while those who are single prefer private sport facilities at the rate of 51.1% (46 persons).

A study conducted by Avci et al. (2001) shows that educators working at pre-school education institutions call the physical conditions and educational tools and materials into question further when their working hours increase and as a result their expectations also increase in parallel with the increase in their working hours (Avci et al., 2001). The study conducted by Alexandris and Carroll (1997) indicates that age has a significant effect on recreational and sportive activities.

As a result of the study, it is stated that kindergarten teachers taking part in the research mostly consist of young people, and regarding their Professional seniority, they are mostly new teachers (have 4 to 6 years experience), they are mostly married and almost half of them haven't got any children and they mostly have medium income as for their income status.

Considering the distribution of the activities the teachers participate in, it is seen that they actively do sports and at the lowest level, they play an instrument and take part in the activities like chorus and considering the places where they participate in the sports activities in their free time, they participate in the activities mostly at school and at the lowest level at home or in nature. Regarding their participation in sports activities, it is seen that they mostly prefer walking and at the lowest level they do the other sports (athletics, swimming and outdoor sports).

Regarding the main reasons for them to take part in recreational activities, it is seen that they participate in recreational activities mostly for physical fitness and being healthy and at the lowest level to spend time. After participating in recreational activities it is seen that they mostly feel relaxed and satisfied and find this activity entertaining and exciting, on the other hand it is seen that they feel tired and bored and gain new experiences at the

lowest level. It is seen that recreational activities highly increase the vocational success.

Considering the Kindergarten teachers' frequency of participation in recreational activities, reasons for their participation and the activities they prefer, it is seen that teachers who are married participate in the activities more often than single ones. It is seen that Kindergarten teachers who are married highly prefer walking as sports while those who are single prefer aerobic-step/pilates.

It is seen that Kindergarten teachers who are married mostly prefer to do sports at school in their free time, while single ones prefer private sport facilities. Kindergarten teachers who have 1 to 3 years experience in terms of professional seniority highly prefer municipal facilities, those who have 4 to 6 years experience prefer school, those who have 7 to 9 years experience prefer home and those who have experience for 10 years and over prefer private sport facilities.

Conflict of interests

The author has not declared any conflicts of interest.

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