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## **EXAMINING THE UNIVERSITY SPORTS ENVIRONMENT: A STUDY ON TURKISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

*Research article*

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## EXAMINING THE UNIVERSITY SPORTS ENVIRONMENT: A STUDY ON TURKISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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### Abstract

While studies have been conducted to determine the social-emotional development and learning outcomes associated with participation in sports facilities, very few studies have been conducted on the university sports environment. It is important to know why university recreation centers are important for student life and to understand what benefits students derive from the program as a whole (Miller, 2011). For this reason, our study aims to examine the attitudes of Turkish students towards university sports environments. In the research, the university sports environment scale developed by Shin, Chiu and Lee (2018) and adapted into Turkish by Yılmaz and Esentürk (2020) was used. Homogeneity and cronbach alpha reliability analysis were performed on the measurement tool. After these analyses, an independent t-test for paired groups and ANOVA test (Benferoni) for groups of three or more were performed. SPSS program was used for these analyses. In addition, FDR analysis was performed with Graphpad Prism 9 program to avoid type I error. When the results of the study are examined; It has been determined that there are significant differences in gender, age, being a student of sports sciences and welfare level.

*Keywords:* Sports, Sports Management, Sports Psychology, Sports Sociology.

### 1. Introduction

For young adults, the transition from high school to college can be daunting. Because environmental change may cause pressure on them (Keller et al., 2007). Therefore, in another study, it is said that physical activity practice was suddenly abandoned after finishing high school (Castro-Sánchez, Zurita-Ortega and Chacón-Cuberos, 2019). Contrary to this, studies are showing that physical activity and exercise increase during university periods (Thomas et al., 2019). It is thought that university environments have a greater or lesser effect on these results. For this reason, it is thought that our study will make an important contribution to the literature by examining university sports environments.

The relationship between sports and education is of great importance. Because sports play an important role in the individual's awareness of a healthy life (Linnér et al., 2019; Stambulova et al., 2015). In addition, it is an important supporter in sports environments in the formation of healthy individuals (Wang and Gao, 2021). To reach this environment and to spread sports to large masses in the society, providing state contribution will produce positive results (Collins, 2007; Collins, 2008). The dissemination of sports in university environments not only protects physical health, but also protects against harmful habits such as alcohol. For this reason, sports environments can be considered important for young people to have a good quality of life (Lorente et al., 2003; Peretti-Watel et al., 2002). Also, the importance of sport in promoting self-awareness, health and well-being is enormous. Encouraging participation in

sports can improve self-acceptance and self-determination. Pursuing these positive effects can motivate individuals to start and maintain regular exercise routines (Gülü and Ayyıldız, 2022; Gülü and Yapıcı, 2022; Toselli and Spiga, 2017). Sports environments can contribute to individuals having an entrepreneurial structure. Universities, in particular, can help develop students' entrepreneurial skills by adopting educational policies to promote entrepreneurship. In this respect, it will be beneficial to use sports environments as a tool in universities (González-Serrano et al., 2017).

Most of the time, the individual factor affecting students' doing sports is wages. The fact that the usage fees of the sports facilities are expensive and therefore the financial opportunities are limited can be said as a factor affecting the students' doing sports. The concept of time has emerged as another result of the factors affecting students' doing sports. Regarding this, it can be said that the students could not find time to do sports because the lesson hours in the participant statements were not suitable, the lessons were intense and the lesson hours were not planned according to the hours when the facilities were open. In the research, sports culture emerged as another result of individual factors affecting students' doing sports. The friendly environment of university students is indifferent to sports, which affects their ability to do sports, and at this point, a sports culture is not formed in the students. In addition, it is stated in the statements of the participants that the use of the Internet leads the students to inactivity and that the students do not do sports due to laziness. In this context, it can be concluded that students do not have a sports culture in this direction (Sivrikaya and Pehlivan, 2015).

Psychological studies on the perspective of university students on sports and exercise have been given little attention (Elgi et al., 2011; Kilpatrick et al., 2005). This study aims to examine university sports environments from the perspective of Turkish university students.

#### Sub-problems of the study

- Is there a significant difference in terms of gender variable towards university students' attitudes towards university sports environments?
- Is there a significant difference in terms of the welfare level variable of university students' attitude towards university sports environments?
- Is there a significant difference in terms of the age variable of university students' attitude towards university sports environments?
- Is there a significant difference in terms of university students' attitude towards university sports environments in terms of the variable of being educated in the faculty of sports sciences?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Research model

In this study, the quantitative method was used and it conducted as a descriptive survey, which is one of the survey models.

### 2.2. Study group

The study group of the research consisted of 448 university students aged between 18-29 who were interested in team sports and individual sports. The demographic information about the participants are given in Table 1 below.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics

Variable	Group	N	%	Total
Gender	Female	185	41.3	448
	Male	263	58.7	
Age	18-20 years	142	31.7	448
	21-23 years	236	52.7	
	24 years and older	70	15.6	
Are you studying a faculty on sports?	Yes	214	47.8	448
	No	234	52.2	
Welfare status	High	92	20.5	448
	Middle	238	53.1	
	Low	118	26.3	

### 2.3. Data Collection Tools

The data collection tool consists of two parts. In the first part, there is a personal information form and a total of 4 demographic information is included. In the second part, there is the university sports environment scale developed by Shin, Chiu and Lee (2018) and adapted into Turkish by Yılmaz and Esentürk (2020). In this section, 14 questions, 4 sub-dimensions and a 7-point likert type.

### 2.4. Analysis of Data

When the reliability coefficients of the data were examined, it was determined that all sub-dimensions were reliable at a level above 0.70. In addition, when the kurtosis and skewness values are examined, it has been determined that they are in the range of -2+2. According to Weaver and Wuensch, (2013), -2+2 values indicate that the data is homogeneously distributed. In addition, according to Kalaycı (2010), a cronbach alpha value above 0.70 is considered reliable.

Due to the homogeneous distribution of the data, parametric tests were applied. In other words, the t-test for paired groups and the ANOVA test for groups of three or more were performed. If there was a significant difference in the ANOVA test, the post-hoc (Benferoni)

test was performed to see which groups the difference was between. Since more than one test was performed in our study, false discovery rate analysis was performed with the Graphpad 9 program to prevent Type I errors. As a result of the analysis, the p values were revised again.

### 3. Findings

**Table 1.** Results of the t-test analysis according to the gender variable of the participants

Variable	Group	N	$\bar{x}$	Sd.	Df.	p
<b>Sports Lessons</b>	Female	185	3.45	.99	314.064	.000
	Male	263	4.13	.72		
<b>Sports Facilities</b>	Female	185	3.84	1.08	392.048	.000
	Male	263	4.31	1.07		
<b>University Sports Teams</b>	Female	185	3.36	1.02	308.338	.000
	Male	263	4.46	.72		
<b>University Club Sports</b>	Female	185	3.70	.93	372.216	.000
	Male	263	4.20	.85		

Looking at Table 1, it has been detected that additional participants are significantly higher than female participants. In other words, it was determined that male university students were significantly higher in the sub-dimensions of university sports environments than female university students ( $p>0.01$ ).

**Table 2.** ANOVA test analysis according to the age variable of the participants

Variable	Group	N	$\bar{x}$	Sd.	F	ANOVA	
						P	Benferoni
<b>Sports Lessons</b>	18-20 years (1)	142	3.54	.91	12.365	.000	2,3>1
	21-23 years (2)	236	3.98	.84			
	24 years and older (3)	70	4.03	.97			
<b>Sports Facilities</b>	18-20 years (1)	142	3.76	1.02	20.211	.000	1>2>3
	21-23 years (2)	236	4.15	1.03			
	24 years and older (3)	70	4.73	1.18			
<b>University Sports Teams</b>	18-20 years (1)	142	3.75	.94	7.448	.001	2,3>1
	21-23 years (2)	236	4.08	.95			
	24 years and older (3)	70	4.26	1.23			
<b>University Club Sports</b>	18-20 years (1)	142	3.72	.95	11.546	.000	2,3>1
	21-23 years (2)	236	4.07	.83			
	24 years and older (3)	70	4.30	.99			

$p<0,05$

Looking at Table 2, in the ANOVA analysis made according to the age variable of the participants, it has been detected that the university students over the age of 21 are significantly

different from the university students over the age of 18-20 in the sub-dimension of sports lessons, sub-dimension of university sports teams and sub-dimension of university club sports. In the sports facilities sub-dimension, it is seen that the attitude increases significantly as age increases ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 3.** The t-test analysis results according to the variable of studying on the sports faculty of the participants

Variable	Group	N	$\bar{x}$	Sd.	Df.	p
<b>Sports Lessons</b>	Yes	214	4.37	.58	54.853	.000
	No	234	3.37	.89		
<b>Sports Facilities</b>	Yes	214	4.46	1.00	.235	.000
	No	234	3.80	1.09		
<b>University Sports Teams</b>	Yes	214	4.60	.60	75.292	.000
	No	234	3.47	1.01		
<b>University Club Sports</b>	Yes	214	4.41	.70	10.457	.000
	No	234	3.61	.93		

Looking at Table 3, it was detected that university students in the field of sports sciences were significantly higher in the sub-dimensions of university sports environments than university students in the other department ( $p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 4.** ANOVA test analysis according to the welfare level of the participants

Variable	Group	N	$\bar{x}$	Sd.	F	ANOVA	
						P	Benferoni
<b>Sports Lessons</b>	High (1)	92	4.63	.44	308.858	.000	1>2>3
	Middle (2)	238	4.09	.71			
	Low (3)	118	2.74	.35			
<b>Sports Facilities</b>	High (1)	92	4.83	1.03	97.899	.000	1>2>3
	Middle (2)	238	4.32	.96			
	Low (3)	118	3.15	.70			
<b>University Sports Teams</b>	High (1)	92	4.84	.56	140.980	.000	1>2>3
	Middle (2)	238	4.16	.85			
	Low (3)	118	3.04	.82			
<b>University Club Sports</b>	High (1)	92	4.66	.74	86.144	.000	1>2>3
	Middle (2)	238	4.10	.86			
	Low (3)	118	3.27	.62			

$p < 0,05$

Looking at Table 4, in the ANOVA analysis performed according to the welfare level variable of the participants, it was determined that as the welfare level increased in all sub-

dimensions, their attitudes towards university sports environments increased significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ).

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusions

Due to social pressure in Iran, women's point of view toward sports is negative (Mirsafian et al., 2014). In our study, it is seen that women are significantly lower than men in the university sports environment. The reason for the lower average score of women in our study may be due to fewer sports environments for women rather than social pressure. Positive discrimination can be made to encourage women to participate in more sports. Because Ayyıldız et al. (2019) concluded in their study that the quality of life increases as the level of women's participation in physical activity increases.

Sports environments for university students between the ages of 18-30 are mostly neglected. However, significant support should be given to university students, who constitute a very important part of society. This support can be provided by expanding the facilities on campus (Leslie, Sparling and Owen, 2001). In a study conducted in the USA, it was observed that there was a significant decrease in the participation of young people in physical activity from high school to university. It is considered important to investigate this situation (Douglas et al., 1997). In our study, it is seen that while the attitude towards sports facilities increases as the age increases, the interest of the participants aged 21 and over in sports courses, university sports teams and university sports clubs increases. There is a remarkable point among the results. Participants in the first years of university have the lowest average score in the sub-dimensions of the university sports environment. It is thought that this situation stems from the process of getting used to the university.

Within the campus, participation in recreational sports creates an important sense of community (Elkins, Forrester and Noël-Elkins, 2011). This feeling; includes many elements such as sports action with friends, fitness, popularity, social status, health, sports activities and relaxation through sports (Kondric et al., 2013). Individuals who receive sports training can inevitably live more effectively in the socialization process and sports environments (Özdiñç, 2005). It is seen that the students studying in the faculty of sports sciences are significantly higher in the sub-dimension of university sports environments than the students in the other department ( $p < 0.01$ ). Since it is always in sports facilities, university sports teams, university sports clubs and sports-related courses, a result has been reached between our expectations. Because university students who receive education about sports act more consciously because they take a more active role in sports environments.

Increasing the level of well-being provides a positive effect in sports environments. Because the welfare level facilitates the accessibility to sports (Ayyıldız et al., 2019; Ayyıldız and Sunay, 2021). These results show parallelism with our study. It is seen that as the welfare level increases in university sports environments, positive attitudes towards sports environments increase in all sub-dimensions. It should be ensured that everyone can use sports opportunities by making positive discrimination toward university students with low welfare levels.

As a result, positive discrimination is required in order for female students and students with low welfare levels to participate in sports environments. Students who are new to the university should be given an orientation that introduces sports environments. The results show that university students should be more active in sports environments. In this context, university administrations should take measures to make the campus environment more attractive.

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