

Investigation of the effects of recreational purpose gymnastic studies on the quality of life of children aged 4-12 years

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the effects of recreational gymnastics training on the quality of life of children aged 4-12 years. The research is a structured case study with the parents of children attending a private gymnasium in Giresun. 7 questions prepared by the researcher as a data collection tool were directed to the parents in the form of a focus group interview, and voice recordings and written notes were taken during the interview. The average age of children ($n = 30$) is $X = 7.76 \pm 2.25$ years, with 22 of them (73.3%) female and 8 (26.7%) male. 66.7% of the families gave their children to gymnastics for healthy life and social development purposes, gymnastics increased flexibility, positively affects the postural structure, 80% of the sports activities after the study, the interest increased positively, the quality of life changed positively by 70%, school success It is stated that the rate of increase in the rate of 30%, does not contribute to the change of technological addiction status, and a high rate of 96% will continue to support working in gymnastics and other branches.

Keywords: Gymnastics, child, quality of life.

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INTRODUCTION

Human beings meet intrinsic movements such as pushing, pulling and kicking in their natural form while they are in the womb. In the later stages, they began establishing relationships with and getting to know their immediate environment with movement such as rolling, standing in balance, crawling and walking. The movement is the most important assistant of human in getting to know his environment. Even though the movement characteristic or skill of human beings are similar to animal movements, it combined with his intellectual structure and helped the process of increasing the quality of life in favor of human (Özcan and Yıldırım, 2011).

Recreation refers to the activities that people do in their spare time to regain, protect or maintain their physical and mental health affected by intense workload, routine lifestyle or negative environmental effects (Karaküçük, 2001). On the other hand, "while sports provide an important movement areas for meeting the recreative needs of people, recreation plays an important role in the

social widespreading of sports and gaining sports achievements" (Küçüktopuzlu et al., 2003).

As a recreative sports branch, gymnastics can be defined as physical activities that improve endurance, strength, flexibility, agility, coordination and body control. Gymnastics, which allows children to perform their body, muscle, bone and joint functions, contributes to the development of children's physical development features as well as creativity and aesthetic feelings. Gymnastics directly affects the psychomotor development of children, therefore, it also contributes to their social development by helping children learn how to move their bodies and communicating with their friends in various ways (Mülazımoğlu, 2012). Childhood period is an important developmental stage and the childhood years are of great importance for the achievement of a productive maturity (Turkay et al., 2017).

Socialization refers to the formation that encompasses human behaviors towards other people and improves behaviors for life. Some actions taught to children ensure

establishment of social relationships between them and their environment. With advancing ages, individuals take various roles in life such as student, friend, spouse. Then, every child's environment at home is different from that of others. Children enter a social circle among other friends with their habits from this different environment (Zülkadiroğlu, 2004).

Quality of life defines the subjective perception of one's own health in the sociocultural environment in which he lives. Quality of life is the state of being satisfied and happy with what they want and possess in the fields they consider important in their lives (Taşpınar, 2013). Also Turkey and Gökyürek (2015) showed the fact that doing sports have a positive effect upon the personality of the children as well as their physical development.

Regular physical activity can make significant differences in the healthy development and growth of children and youth, breaking of unhealthy habits, socializing, protection from various chronic diseases that may be encountered during adulthood, treating these diseases or supporting the treatment, ensuring that the elderly have an active old age, in other words, improving the quality of life throughout the life (Menteş et al., 2011).

Technological developments and changing living conditions have caused individuals to adopt a sedentary lifestyle and consequently, resulted in an unhealthy society. Supporting this lifestyle adopted by individuals have with physical activities helps individuals to start a quality life process (Özbay and İlhan, 2013). Besides, when examined the current education and training programs being implemented in our country, it is seen that the students' course load is heavy and therefore, they are away from physical activities (Koşar, 2011).

Children's participation in sports activities is largely related to their parents' perspective in this regard. Parents' approach in this regard is almost the most determining factor in whether their children participate in these activities or not. While some families are aware of the positive effect of sports on child development and socialization process and support their children's participation in these activities, most families do not want their children to participate in such activities. Today, families approach sports more positively than before and encourage their children to do sports (Güven and Öncü, 2006).

According to the data given in the "Turkey Nutrition and Health Survey 2010"; 56.2% of adolescents aged 12-14 and 57.8% of adolescents aged 15-18 are not involved in any physical activity at all. The rate of those who do physical activity every day is 26.2 and 14.6%, respectively, and this rate decreases with increasing age (T.R. Ministry of Health, 2014).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study is a case study with parents of 30 children (8

males and 22 females) with an average age of 7.77 ± 2.25 years who continue basic gymnastics training in a private gym in Giresun. Case study, which is a research strategy, is used in many cases to contribute to our knowledge about individual, group, organizational, social, political and events. It is not surprising that the case study is a common research strategy in psychology, sociology, political science, social affairs, business (Gilgun, 1994; cited in: Yin, 2003), community planning (Ghuri and Grønhang, 2002; cited in: Yin, 2003). In all these cases, the differential requirement for case study was born to understand complex social events (Aytaçlı, 2012). In order to obtain data on the research problem, focus group interviews were made with the parents and voice recordings were taken with the SONY brand voice recorder during the interviews. Later, it was deciphered in the Word file on computer based on privacy. In the multi-focus group meeting, parents were asked 7 questions about children's behavior in addition to demographic information (Table 1). After the obtained data is tabulated, SPSS 24 program was used to calculate the percentages and it is explained in the findings section.

FINDINGS

When Table 2 is examined, the age, gender and ongoing education information of the children receiving gymnastics education are shown. According to this, more than half of the participants in the research are girls. The age distribution of the group consists of children between the ages of 4-12. In our study, the number of children aged 7 and 8 is higher than others. Educational status is as expected in proportion to their age and we can say that children of primary school age are involved in gymnastic education.

Table 3 shows the educational status of the parents and it is understood that the majority of the families who support their children to receive gymnastics education are university graduates.

According to Table 4 the reason they chose gymnastics, 12 (40.0%) families are for healthy life, 8 (26.7) are for social development, 5 (16.7%) are the beginning of sports education, 4 (13.3%) are for physical development. His thoughts about gymnastics are with a few examples; They stated that "gymnastics contributed to physical development", "I found this branch appropriate because I think it is a field that will make my child love sports and I want him to gain confidence".

According to the answers given in Table 5, the answer was reached that the children participating in gymnastics are healthier. In addition, there was an increase in children's desire to move and self-confidence.

In Table 6, while the parents of most children who participated in gymnastics studies (43.3%) were willing-repeaters, (33.3%) responded as no specific difference.

As seen in Table 7, after the participation in the studies,

Table 1. Questions prepared by the researcher for focus group interviews.

No.	Questions
1.	What do you think about gymnastics? Why did you give your child to gymnastics education?
2.	How did your child develop after gymnastics training?
3.	Has your child's attitude changed at home after gymnastics training?
4.	Have your child's quality of life changed after gymnastics training?
5.	Has there been a positive or negative change in school education and lessons?
6.	Did your child change the level of technological addiction after gymnastics training?
7.	Do you want to continue this forward-looking sport? Did your child have such a request?

Table 2. General information of children receiving gymnastics education.

Gender	f	%	Age	(%)
Female	22	73.3	N1- 4 age	3.3
Male	8	26.7	N4- 5 age	13.3
Total	30	100.0	N4- 6 age	13.3
			N7- 7 age	23.3
			N5- 8 age	16.7
Education status	f	%		
Nursery	1	3.3	N2- 9 age	6.6
Preschool	6	20.0	N1- 10 age	3.3
Primaryschool	17	56.7	N4- 11 age	13.3
Middleschool	6	20.0	N2- 12 age	6.6
Total	30	100.0	Total (N30)	100.0

Table 3. Parents education status.

Graduation degree	f	%
High school	3	10.0
University	27	90.0
Total	30	100.0

Table 4. What do you think about gymnastics? Why did you give your child to gymnastics education?

Answers	f	%
Healthy lifestyle	12	40.0
Social development	8	26.7
Physical development	4	13.3
Beginning of sports training	5	16.7
Interest	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

Table 5. How did your child develop after gymnastics training?

Answers	f	%
Movement request increased	6	20.0
Self confidence increased	4	13.3
More social	2	6.7
Healthier	9	30.0
No change / could not observe	9	30.0
Total	30	100.0

Table 6. Has your child's attitude changed at home after gymnastics training?

Answers	f	%
Partially	3	10.0
Positive change	3	10.0
Willing repetitive	13	43.3
Disciplined	1	3.3
No specific difference	10	33.3
Total	30	100.0

Table 7. Have your child's quality of life changed after gymnastics training?

Answers	f	%
Positive change	20	66.7
More disciplined	1	3.3
Unable to observe	1	3.3
No specific difference	8	26.7
Total	30	100.0

most of the children (66.7%) showed a positive change in the quality of life, while in some (26.7%) there was no specific difference.

In Table 8, there was no specific difference in 20 (66.7%) of children after the study, while 9 (30.0%) showed a positive change.

Table 8. Has there been a positive or negative change in school education and lessons?

Answers	f	%
Positive change	9	30.0
Unable to observe	1	3.3
No specific difference	20	66.7
Total	30	100.0

Table 9. Did your child change the level of technological addiction after gymnastics training?

Answers	f	%
Positive change	1	3.3
No addiction	9	30.0
No specific difference	12	40.0
Partially	8	26.7
Total	30	100.0

Table 10. Do you want to continue this forward-looking sport? Did your child have such a request?

Answers	f	%
To be continued	22	73.3
Family will support	4	13.3
Directing to another branch	3	10.0
Will not continue	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

As it can be seen in Table 9, in case of technological dependency of children after work, 12 (40.0%) did not have a certain difference, 9 (30.3%) did not have a technological dependence, and 8 (26.7%) partially decreased.

According to the answers given in Table 10, most parents said that after the study, their child would continue their gymnastics education.

DISCUSSION

A study conducted by Tiryaki states that those who do sports are more social, more daredevil and more extrovert than those who do not (Tiryaki, 2000). Dalkılıç examined the relationship between middle school students' level of participation in sports activities and communication skills, and determined a correlation ($p < 0.01$) between participation in sports activities and communication skill level scores (Dalkılıç, 2011). In their study involving children aged 7-14 years, Yalçın and Balcı found that the majority of children who go the sports school had a significant improvement in their physical behaviors (mobility, bad temper, eating habits, laziness,

obedience to the words of parents, etc.) as well as a significant improvement in their social behaviors (introversion, emotionality, behaviors in the circle of friends and family environment, etc.) (Yalçın and Balcı, 2013). İlhan states that regular physical education and sports activities increase the socialization levels of children with trainable mental disabilities. That study also found that the goals of those who choose gymnastics from sports branches for both physical and social development are in line with other studies (İlhan, 2008).

Karadağ conducted a study involving 166 people aged 13-16 years in the orphanages to evaluate the relations among the physical activity level, mental symptoms and quality of life levels of adolescents in 2008 and found that those who are involved in sports have higher quality of life scores, lower overall mental symptom and depression scores, less desire to hurt someone and break/shed things, and higher frequency of studying and reading books/newspapers (Karadağ, 2008).

Yalçın and Balcı (2013), according to the findings obtained from their study involving children aged 7-14 years, the responses given by the parents of the students attending the sports school suggest that there is a significant increase in the school success of the majority of students. 50 (54.9%) of the 91 student parents who took part in the study emphasized that their children's school success significantly increased due to their participation in sports activities. Another finding from the same study suggests that the majority of children attending the sports school have a significant improvement in their physical behaviors (mobility, bad temper, eating habits, laziness, obedience to the words of parents, etc.). 66 (72.5%) of the 91 student parents who took part in the study stated that the physical behaviors of their children, especially their eating habits, have been positively affected to a significant extent, and another finding obtained from the study shows a significant improvement in social behaviors (introversion, emotionality, behaviors in the circle of friends and family environment, etc.) of the majority of the children attending the sports school. 77 (84.69%) of the 91 student parents who took part in the study emphasized that there was a significant positive change in their child's social behavior, especially regarding friend relationships.

A study conducted by Adsız in 2010 concluded that the sports activities carried out regularly under the supervision of a coach had a positive impact on attention development in the 4th and 5th grade children of primary education. As a result of the study, it was concluded that children participating in sports activities are more attentive by 83% compared to the children who are not involved in sports activities (Adsız, 2010).

A study conducted by Şenses in 2009 concluded that doing sports under a license does not affect the courses negatively in general and even the male students who are involved in school sports have higher academic success. The study conducted by Şenses on 1142 students from 5 different primary schools concluded that

the course achievements of students engaged in sports under a license were higher than those of students who did not participate in regular sports activities (Şenses, 2009).

The increase in the school success of a group of 30% after this study is consistent with other studies. However, the high number of opinions that there is no significant change can be associated with the less start-up processes and the small age of the children included in the study.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the data obtained from this study, the following results were achieved: According to the views of parents, it was concluded that school achievements of children who regularly carry out sports activities have been positively affected as expressed by different sentences. It was observed that children who regularly carry out sports activities become more regular in school life with increased discipline levels and sense of responsibility.

Despite the fact that the improvement of the physical structures and social behaviors of children who regularly carry out sports activities is expressed by various sentences, it was observed that these behaviors and quality of life were positively affected after participation in sports activities.

Within the framework of these results arising from the study, it is recommended that parents guide their school-age children to the sports branch they are interested in and ensure that their children participate regularly in sports activities. In addition to the result obtained from the study pointing out the positive effect of participation in sports activities on school success, physical and social behaviors, the relevant units of the Ministry of National Education and the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Youth and Sports must tell the parents through meetings, visual and printed media channels that their children's school achievements, physical and social behaviors can be changed in a controlled manner.

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