

Examining of university students' assertiveness levels and attitudes towards physical education course

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to research the assertiveness levels of university students and their attitudes toward physical education course in terms of gender, doing regular sports and academic achievement. The design of the research is descriptive. The sample of the study consists of university students who take physical education and sport course in the first aid and emergency department of Artvin Coruh University in the 2018-2019 academic year. A total of 116 university students with a mean age of 20.64 participated in the study as voluntarily. Physical Education and Sport Attitude Scale was used to measure students' attitudes and the Rathus Assertiveness Inventory was used to measure assertiveness levels. In the study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine the distribution of normality, the Pearson correlation test was used to examine the relationship between students' attitudes towards physical education and sport and assertiveness levels, the independent sample t-test in parametric distributions, the Mann Whitney U test was used in non-parametric distributions. Kruskal Wallis test was used in more than two groups because the distributions are not normal. According to the findings, there was a negative correlation between the assertiveness levels of students and their attitudes toward physical education course. There was a significant difference between the attitudes towards physical education course in terms of gender, on the contrary, there was no significant difference between assertiveness levels in terms of gender. There was no significant difference between assertiveness levels and the attitudes towards physical education course in terms of doing regular sports and there was no significant difference between assertiveness levels and the attitudes towards physical education course in terms of academic achievement. As a result, although there was a negative relationship between attitudes of university students towards physical education and sports course and assertiveness levels, it was observed that attitudes towards the course are more positive in favor of male students. There were no significant differences between the levels of assertiveness and attitudes towards physical education and sports courses in terms of doing regular sports and academic achievement levels.

Keywords: Physical education, sport course, assertiveness, attitude.

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INTRODUCTION

The quality of communication created by the individual depends on the level of interaction and social skills of the individual. Assertiveness is defined as a positive behavior developed in response to two opposing situations (avoidance and aggression) in interpersonal communication. Assertive behaviors play an active role in the communication of the individual in daily life (Karagözoğlu et al., 2008). In English, the word

“assertiveness” has several Turkish equivalents such as assertive, sociable, aggressive and self-revealing. Of these, the most appropriate use was found to be aggressive (Toros et al., 2017).

Alberti and Emmons (1973) described an assertive person as someone who knew their rights, along with those who were sensitive to the people around them. Taşkın (2004) defined assertiveness as the "ability to do".

Andrew Salter was the first practitioner of assertive behavior therapy for individuals who were worried and felt guilty for not expressing their feelings directly and freely. Assertiveness behavior includes intense and long-term studies of self-expression with the model created by Salter and developed by Wolpe (Tegin, 1990). There was a positive relationship between assertive behavior and self-confidence (Alagül, 2004).

Lazarus defined assertiveness as a form of behavior composed of four complementary features and listed these characteristics as follows: a. The ability to say "no", b. Ability to request and desire, c. Ability to express positive and negative emotions, d. Ability to initiate, maintain and terminate a behavior (Büyükyazı et al., 2003) (Pine, Printers Özçelik, Çetin, Salman and Çekin, 2010).

Alberti and Emmons stated three types of behavior; 1. Nonassertive behavior; is to give up one's own rights, in other words, to avoid getting one's own rights. 2. Aggressive behavior; the refusal to accept the rights of others; 3. Assertive behavior; is one's own and other people's rights to accept (Ersan and Dogan, 2002).

Attitude is an emotional state of readiness or tendency of individuals to be accepted or rejected by a particular person, group, institution, or thought. Attitudes arise from beliefs about the object that is the subject of the attitude (Özgüven, 2000). The attitude is multi-dimensional. These dimensions are emotional, cognitive and behavioral. Besides, the direction, degree and intensity dimensions of the attitude are also important in measuring attitudes. The direction of the attitude is the emotional quality of being positive or negative. The degree of attitude indicates the level of the emotional tone of the dimensions of acceptance or rejection of attitude. The intensity of the attitude indicates the possibility of being turned into an outward behavior and its status as being strong or weak in other areas of attitude (Özgüven, 2000).

Students usually develop attitudes towards course subjects, teachers, and classmates in school life. Attitudes often play an effective role in the emergence of positive or negative behaviors. In this context, attitude is expressed as learned tendencies that push the individual to show certain behaviors against certain people, objects and situations (Demirhan and Altay, 2001). When it is examined the factors that affect attitudes can be listed as; culture-related (gender, idols, differences of interests), social-related (family, sports background, skill level, peer relationships, physical education and sports perceptions) and school-related (teacher factor). (Kangalgil et al., 2006).

When the literature is searched, although there is not much research about the attitudes of university students towards physical education and sports, there is no research about the same concept related to the assertiveness level of the students. Although these two different concepts are examined in terms of age, gender and education levels, these concepts will be examined for the first time in terms of gender, doing sports and

academic achievement levels in this study.

The purpose of the study is to research the assertiveness levels of university students and their attitudes towards physical education course in terms of gender, doing regular sports and academic achievement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design of the research is descriptive. Easy sampling method was preferred as the sampling method. The sample of the study consists of university students who take physical education and sport course in the first aid and emergency department of Artvin Coruh University in the 2018-2019 academic year. A total of 116 university students (65 female and 51 male) with a mean age of 20.64 participated in the study as voluntarily.

Materials

In order to measure student attitudes, a 5-point Likert-style Physical Education and Sports Attitude Scale which was developed by Demirhan and Altay (2001), consisted of 24 items, 12 positive and 12 negative. The lowest score that can be obtained from the total points of the scale is 24 and the highest score is 120. When the means were used, the lowest attitude score was 1 and the highest attitude score was 5. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.93 and the validity coefficient was 0.83. Rathus Assertiveness Inventory was used to measure the assertiveness levels. This inventory was developed by Rathus in 1973 to determine students' assertiveness (Rathus, 1973). The Turkish validity and reliability study was conducted by Acar-Voltan (1980). This scale, which is applied to determine whether the behaviors that individuals use mostly when expressing their feelings and thoughts, is consisted of 30 items, positive and negative. There are 13 positive statements and 17 negative statements. Reverse scoring is done. 30-80 points were expressed as shy, 80-130 points were expressed as moderately shy, and 130-180 points were expressed as assertive (Söyük et al., 2016).

Process

The research was carried out using a descriptive scanning model. Participants consisted of university students taking physical education and sport course in the first and emergency department of Artvin Coruh University in the 2018-2019 academic year. Participants were reached by an easy sampling method in the course area after the courses and the scales were applied after necessary explanations were made face to face.

In the study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to

determine the distribution of normality, the Pearson correlation test was used to examine the relationship between students' attitudes towards physical education and sport and assertiveness levels, the independent sample t-test in parametric distributions, the Mann Whitney U test was used in non-parametric distributions. Kruskal Wallis test was used in more than two groups because of the non-parametric distributions.

RESULTS

According to the results of the study, there was a slight negative correlation between the assertiveness levels and their attitudes toward physical education course of the students. There was a significant difference between the attitudes of students in terms of gender and there was no significant difference between assertiveness levels. There was no significant difference between assertiveness levels and the attitudes toward physical education course of students in terms of doing regular sports and academic achievement.

Gender, regular sports, academic achievement levels and percentages of university students studying in the first and emergency department of Artvin Coruh University in the 2018-2019 academic year are shown in Table 1.

When Table 2 is examined, it was found that there was a slight negative correlation between the assertiveness levels and their attitudes toward physical education course of the students ($r = -.241$; $p = .009$).

When Table 3 is examined, it was found that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of students in terms of gender ($p < .05$), and there was no significant difference between assertiveness levels ($p > .05$).

When Table 4 is examined, it was found that there was no significant difference between assertiveness levels ($U = 730$, $p > 0.05$) and the attitudes towards physical education course of students ($U = 736.5$, $p > 0.05$) in terms of doing regular sports.

As shown in Table 5, it was found that there was no significant difference between assertiveness levels χ^2 ($sd = 2$, $n = 116$) = 1.578, $p > .05$) and the attitudes towards physical education course of students χ^2 ($sd = 2$, $n = 116$) = 5.196, $p > .05$) in terms of academic achievement.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of participants.

		n	%
Gender	Female	65	56
	Male	51	44
Doing regular sports	Yes	19	16.4
	No	97	83.6
Academic achievement	Worse	11	9.5
	Moderate	82	70.7
	Good	23	19.8

Table 2. The relationship between assertiveness levels and attitudes towards physical education course of the students.

Variables	Assertiveness level	
	r	-.241**
Attitude Towards the Course	p	.009
	n	116

** = slight.

Table 3. Attitudes towards physical education course and assertiveness levels of students t-test results in terms of gender.

	Gender	n	X	ss	t	P
Attitude	Female	65	94.04	14.15	2.514	.013*
	Male	51	100.86	14.92		
Assertiveness level	Female	65	101.84	9.51	1.407	.148
	Male	51	98.82	12.81		

* $p < .05$.

Table 4. Attitudes towards physical education course and assertiveness levels of students Mann Whitney U test results in terms of doing regular sports.

	Regular sports	N	X	Total	U	p
Attitude	Yes	19	68.24	920.00	736.500	0.167
	No	97	56.59	5866.00		
Assertiveness levels	Yes	19	98.42	1296.50	730.000	0.153
	No	97	60.47	5489.50		

Table 5. Attitudes towards physical education course and assertiveness levels of students Kruskal Wallis test results in terms of academic achievement.

	Academic achievement	N	X	Sd	X ²	p
Attitude	Good	11	43.50	2	5.196	0.074
	Moderate	82	57.18			
	Worse	23	70.39			
Assertiveness levels	Good	11	50.50	2	1.578	0.454
	Moderate	82	60.98			
	Worse	23	53.50			

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, participants consisted of university students taking physical education and body-building course in the first and emergency department of Artvin Coruh University in the 2018-2019 academic year. According to the findings obtained from the study, it is thought that there is a small number of participants who do regular sports, which may be related to the fact that the part of the students they study does not have an effect on encouraging sports, but the number of people who perceive the academic course success at a moderate level is around 70 percent of the total sample. According to Table 2, there was a negative correlation between students' assertiveness levels and their attitudes toward physical education course. In the literature, no source was found, where the relationship between these two variables was previously examined. It was observed that Students who have positive attitudes towards physical education course have a low level of assertiveness, at the same time, students who have negative attitudes towards the course have a high level of assertiveness level due to the fact that there was a slight correlation between the two variables. We mentioned that assertiveness behavior is positively correlated with the concept of self-confidence. As a result of a study conducted by Alemdağ et al. (2014), a positive correlation was found between the attitudes of the participants towards physical education course and their self-efficacy; It has been determined that attitudes have important contributions in predicting the concept of self-efficacy. If

there is no previous research between attitude and assertiveness, Hutzler et al. (2005) and Morgil et al. (2004) in their research; It was concluded that the positive increase in attitudes positively affected the self-efficacy perception. The findings obtained from our study do not support the findings that predict the relationship between attitude and self-efficacy. Students' positive attitudes towards the course can be interpreted as not contributing positively to assertiveness levels.

According to Table 3, it was found that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of students in terms of gender and there was no significant difference between assertiveness levels. It was observed that male students had higher attitude points towards the course than female students and their attitudes were more positive. According to the study conducted by Alemdağ et al. (2014), it showed that there was a significant difference between the scores obtained from the Attitude Scale for Physical Education Course and the difference was in favor of men in terms of gender.

In other studies, the results (Matanin and Collier, 2003; Oncu, 2013; Arslan and Altay, 2009; Oncu and Cihan, 2012; Yildiz, 2010; Alemdag et al., 2014) are in line with the results of the research. In the study conducted by Kahramanoğlu and Ay (2013) in order to examine the competency perceptions of students studying in the primary school teaching section, they found that there was no significant relationship between the competency perceptions of the male and female primary school teachers and assertiveness. Heybet (2010) found that assertiveness levels did not differ in terms of gender in

his study. Mollaoğlu and Alptuğ (2013) did not find a significant difference between male and female students in terms of assertiveness in their study on university students. The fact that the assertiveness scores did not differ according to gender was similar to other studies in the literature, and it is known that the students in the emergency and first aid department participating in the research did not take any formations related to physical education courses until the last grade during their undergraduate education. Considering that physical education is a course in which physical strength is at the forefront and more often sports branches for men are developed in our country and the conditions may be more favorable for men to do sports, the results may be considered as a possible result in favor of men.

According to Table 4, it was found that there was no significant difference between assertiveness levels and the attitudes towards physical education course of students in terms of doing regular sports. In other words, no significant difference was observed between attitudes and submissiveness levels towards physical education course between students who did and did not do sports. The findings of the study are similar to those of Mollaoğlu and Alptuğ (2013). In the study of Mollaoğlu and Alptuğ (2013), no significant difference was found between the university students who do sports and do not do sports in terms of assertiveness levels. In the study of Yalçınkaya et al. (2002), while the assertiveness levels of university students do not differ according to their doing sports status, their perceptions about their positive attitude towards sports differ according to their doing sports status. According to his studies, the finding is in favor of "always" doing sports. This shows that those who are more interested in sports do sports every day. According to the findings of the study, there is no difference between attitude towards physical education and sports and assertiveness levels in terms of doing and not doing sports. But; In the studies conducted about doing sports or not, it is found that those who do sports are more alive, extroverted, more hardworking, more patient, ready to establish a social relationship, easier to adapt to a new situation, and emotionally more balanced (Tiryaki et al., 1991). In addition, sports activities are thought to be effective on individuals' assertiveness levels (Büyükyazı et al., 2003) and their results do not match. As a reason, it can be thought that students do not feel sports are in an important order in their lives and do not have a perception of the positive effects of sports.

For students participating in this study, it was found that there was no significant difference between assertiveness levels and the attitudes towards physical education course of students in terms of academic achievement. In other words, according to students' perception of academic achievement as good, moderate and worse, there was no significant difference in their attitude towards course and their assertiveness levels. Whether students' attitudes towards the course are

positive or whether they are assertive has neither increased nor decreased their academic achievement. In the study conducted by Akandere et al. (2010) in order to examine the attitudes and academic motivations of secondary education students toward physical education course, there is an increase in the academic motivation of students who have positive interest and attitude toward physical education course, and accordingly, academic achievement motivation with attitude towards physical education course. It has been observed that there is a positive relationship between. In the study on university students, Dinçyürek (2010) found that university students showed significant differences in their academic success in terms of assertiveness levels. Again, Gökalan (2000) revealed that there was a significant relationship between students' assertiveness levels and academic success.

As a result, although there was a negative relationship between the attitudes towards physical education and sports course and the assertiveness levels of the university students participating in the study, it was observed that their attitudes towards the course were more positive in favor of male students. No significant differences were found between the attitude levels towards physical education and sports course and assertiveness levels in terms of regular doing sports and academic achievement levels. Based on these results, we can present the following suggestions.

- It is thought that teachers 'preparing a lesson environment in which students can express themselves comfortably may have a positive effect on students' assertiveness levels.
- It is thought that transferring the feeling that the student is valuable for the course, for the department and the university will increase the student's attitude towards the course, his/her assertiveness level and academic achievement.
- It is thought that allowing the student to display his/her different abilities related to that course or about other courses and will affect the student's attitude towards the course, level of assertiveness and will increase academic achievement.
- It is thought that making the course attractive and interesting and providing the student's interactive participation in the course will affect the student's attitude towards that course positively and also affect the academic achievement positively.
- It is considered that maintaining the participation of women students, especially regarding physical education and sports activities and making attractive participation in this course will positively affect the attitude towards the course.
- To positively support students' academic achievement throughout their lives; It is evaluated that providing assertiveness education that will increase their assertiveness levels, and supporting them with training

that affect positively, such as psychodrama, will increase students' self-efficacy and self-esteem.

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