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## **IMPORTANCE OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES FOR OBESE YOUTH IN SOCIALIZATION PROCESS**

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to examine the contribution of sport to obese youth during socialization, considering the socio-cultural and economic characteristics of obese adolescents. In the study participated 118 obese children members of Ankara Metropolitan Municipality Family Life and Youth Centers who played sports or participated in sport activities in the 15-18 age range. As a data collection tool, the socialization scale consisting of 69 questions developed by Sahan (2007) was used. A computer-aided data analysis program was used in the research data. Frequency analysis was applied first and tables were made during the analysis of the data. The percentages of the variables in the sample were determined, and the characteristics of the sample were evaluated generally in these tables. Analysis procedures were applied according to hypotheses later. The data were evaluated by the Scheffe test, the Mann Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis Nonparametric test. As a result of the research; it was found that there was no significant difference between the levels of socialization of obese youth according to the age variable and there was a significant difference between sexes, household income levels and the sports and socialization levels of obese youth who are interested and who are uninterested in sport. At the end of the research, it was observed that male obese teenagers had higher levels of socialization than female obese teenagers in terms of high income level and interest in sport.

**Key Words:** Obesity, Sports, Socialization.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Obesity, which is the result of immobility and irregular eating habits brought by this day and age, is one of the most important problems in human life. Obesity has a very negative effect on individual's daily life and relationship with society.

Obesity, which ranks first among the important health problems of the developed societies today, has begun to make unavoidable problems. The beginning of these problems is the amount of energy taken through food into the body is greater than the amount of energy used daily. A number of physical and mental health problems occur in the individual with excessive fat storage in the organism this is a chronic problem caused by obesity (WHO, 2015). Obesity is an important disorder that affects human health negatively in physiological, psychological, social, hormonal, metabolic, systemic, and esthetic terms, as well as reducing the standard of living (Mantes et al., 2011).

There are many factors that obesities affected by. The most common of these are; sex, age and race. In addition to these, it is seen that feeding behavior, socio - cultural level, and the prevalence of the presence of obese individuals in the family affect obesity (Mantes et al., 2011, Polikandrioti & Stefanou, 2009). Obesity occurs more in low-income and medium-income people in developed countries. It is less likely to occur in poor communities while in developing countries, it occurs more in medium-income and high-income people (Borg et al, 2005, Dinsa et al., 2012).

One of the treatment methods for obesity caused by lack of activity (inactivity) and excessive food consumption is regular physical activity and exercise (Zorba & Saygin, 2013). Physical activity and sport activities are the most influential and valid methods of prevention and treatment of obesity compared to other treatment methods.

Besides increasing fat-free body mass, sport activities also help to lose weight in the long term and pave the way for socialization by reducing individual's concerns about his/her body in society (Keskin, 2014, Skelton & Skelton, 1993, Ozbey, 2001, 2002).

Ensuring participation in sport activities is quite important for the development of the individual because it is connected with positive affectivity and it increases self-respect and physical and psychosocial well-being. Physical activity is recommended for young people as a potential protective assistance with regard to mental health problems and prevalence of self-harm and inability to socialize (Brosnahan, 2004). Sporting activities are considered an important means of socialization in developed countries. Adults encourage their children with game activities to participate in sports programs that enable them to develop skills and gain new experiences in the USA (Coakley, 2001). Sports organizations enable children to be together with their peers and gain experiences such as accepting rules of the game, making decisions in the game, winning and losing. The human characteristics of the child are emphasized and the athletic side of the child comes to the forefront in the organizations. Thus, the child has the opportunity to recognize his/her own body and to realize his/her physical characteristics. He/she learns not to underestimate those who are weaker than himself/herself and learns to appreciate those who are stronger than himself/herself. These experiences make it easier to adapt to similar situations that the child faces with different issues and different conditions throughout life (Ficher, 2002). Obese children perceive themselves more negatively than those who are not obese. These children's families state that obese children have more behavioral problems than normal children (Griffiths, 2011). Obesity can cause children who are overweight to have a problem of adaptation to activities that require physical performance and are exposed to discrimination by friends. These

rejected children will be reluctant to participate in social activities and will live a more sedentary life over time (Safak, 2018).

According to research, sport has an important role in the socialization of the individual because it is a social activity which enables the individual to participate in a dynamic social environment. Individuals who are interested in sport activities establish relationships with different groups of people, considering that sport is mostly a collective activity in modern societies. It can be said that sport has provided establishment and development of new friendships, and provided socialization with these aspects. Sport strengthens communication by creating an important conversation between not only the sportiest but also the audiences watching it (Cutforth, 2015).

Regular participation in physical activity through sport activities is an important factor for healthy growth, especially of children with weight problems, but also the development of the youth and their socialization.

## MATERIAL and METHODS

### Research staff

Mumcu, Kusan, Çetinkaya organized the research group participants. Zambak and Çeviker translated the article in English. Çetinkaya, Çeviker, Zambak applied spss analysis. Task of informing the attenders about the study was taken over by Çetinkaya, Kusan and Çeviker. All researchers distributed surveys and noted data from subjects.

### Test Subjects

118 young obese members of Ankara Metropolitan Municipality Family Life and Youth Centers who participated and did not participate in various sport activities attended this study.

Table 1. Distribution of Obese Participants by Sex

SEX	N	%
MALE	82	69,5
FEMALE	36	30,5
TOTAL	118	100

The table shows the distribution rates of young obese people according to gender. 82 men and 36 women of a total of 118 youth who participated in the research. 69,5% of the total participants were male and 30,5% were female.

### Data Collection Tools

According to the definition of WHO, the young people who participated in the study were found to be obese when their BMI was measured. A questionnaire method was used to collect the data and a simple random sampling method was used for the sampling. In the first part regarding whether or not the young people who participated in the study were obese,

quantitative data collection method was used consistently (Buyukozturk, 2007, Baret & Mervielde, 1997). The Socialization Scale in Sport which was developed by Şahan (2007) was used to determine the socialization process of the youth. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. In the first part, questions were asked to determine demographic characteristics. In the second part, 34 questions were posed under a socialization title, and 35 questions about sports and socialization were asked in the third part. A 5 point Likert scale was used in the questions.

### **Data Collection**

The participants were informed about the study by the researchers with the approval of the youth members of Sincan and Kuşcağız Family Life Centers which is contained within Ankara Metropolitan Municipality. The youth who did not volunteer were not included in the study.

### **Analysis of Data**

The data obtained in the study were analyzed by transferring the computer-aided program after the implementation of the study was completed. SPSS 18.0 packaged software was used for statistical analysis of the data. Then, the analysis procedures were applied according to hypotheses and the data were evaluated by the Mann Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis Nonparametric test. Frequency (f) and percentage (%) distributions were calculated, one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Scheffe multiple comparison test were performed to evaluate the demographic information about obese adolescents.

## **RESULTS**

*Table 2. Distribution of Obese Participants by Age*

AGE	N	%
15	32	27.1
16	32	27.1
17	30	25.4
18	24	20.3

In Table 2, the age distribution of obese participants in the study can be seen. 32 of the participants were 15 years old, 32 of them were 16 years old, 30 of them were 17 years old and 24 of them were 18 years old. 27.1% of the youth participating in the study were 15 years old, 27.1% of them were 16 years old, 25.4% of them were 17 years old and 20.3% of them were 18 years old.

**Table 3.** Comparison of the Level of Socialization According to the Ages of Obese Youth Attended in the Study with the Mann-Whitney U Test

<b>Age</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mean Rank</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>p</b>
15	32	32	70,38	2.405	.493
16	32	31	61,29		
17	30	30	60,15		
18	24	30	57,63		

As stated in the Table 3, it is seen that there were no significant difference between the groups according to the ages of the obese children who participated in the research. ( $p>0.05$ )

**Table 4.** Comparison of the Level of Socialization According to the Sexes of Obese Youth Attended in the Study with the Mann-Whitney U Test

<b>Socialization Level</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>STANDARDDEVIATION</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Male</b>	82	144,50	17,31	-2,516	.011
<b>Female</b>	36	101,10	38,38		

As stated in the Table 4, the differentiation between socialization levels of obese youth according to their gender was examined. According to this, the number of male obese youth was 82 and number of female obese youth was 46. It was found that average socialization level score for men was 144.50, standard deviation for men was 17.31 while the average socialization level score for women was 101.10 and standard deviation for women was 38.38. The Mann-Whitney U test was applied to see if there was any difference in the level of socialization of obese adolescents and the test values were found to be ( $Z = -2.516$   $p > 0.05$ ). According to this result, there was a significant difference between socialization levels in terms of gender difference of obese youth.

**Table 5.** Results Of One-Factor Variance Analysis For The Differences In The Views Of Obese Individuals Participating Into The Research Towards Socialization, Based On Their Families' Income Levels

<b>Variance Research</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Average of Squares</b>	<b>s-d</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>difference</b>
<b>Between groups</b>	7,695	2,332	3	7,698	,000	between 1001-2000 TL and 2001-3000TL
<b>In groups</b>	258,607	,318	116			
<b>Total</b>	282,294		116			

As stated in Table 5, it was determined that opinion scores of the participants on socialization are significantly different with regard to their families' level of income ( $F (3-116) = 7,698$ ;  $p<.01$ ). According to the Scheffe analysis which was conducted to determine the difference between groups; the differences were detected between those whose families' income was

between 1001-2000 TRY and those whose family's income was between 2001-3000 TRY. We see that income levels of families directly affect social life in this table.

**Table 6. Standard Deviation, Average and Socialization Levels of the Obese Participants in the Study According to their Interest in Sports**

INTEREST IN SPORT	N	AVERAGE	STANDARD DEVIATION	Z	p
Yes	73	128.50	20.31		
No	45	111.00	33.48	-2.574	.010

As stated in Table 6, the differentiation between sport and socialization levels of obese adolescents who participated in the research was examined. According to this, the number of obese youth who were interested in sports was 73, and the number of obese youth who were not interested in sports was 45. The socialization level of the children who were interested in sports was 128.50 and the standard deviation was 20.31, while the socialization level of the children who were not interested in sports was 111.00 and the standard deviation found was 33.48. The Mann-Whitney U test was applied to see if there were any differences in the level of socialization levels of children who were interested and were not interested in sport and the results of the test values were found as ( $Z = -2.574$   $p > 0.05$ ). There was a significant difference between the socialization levels of the obese who were interested in sport and who were not interested in sport.

## DISCUSSION

Obesity shows its face as a common problem of many people in all developed and developing countries. It is observed that obesity has become a condition that affects human life negatively and threatens public health as its prevalence increases especially on young people day by day. Sport is an important factor in helping obese youth continue their education life, get rid of health problems and the costs they incur since they are not exposed to employment problems as a result of negative discrimination, and contributes to raising healthy generations in terms of social aspects.

There is no significant difference in the level of socialization among the groups according to the age of obese people participated in the study, as shown in table 3. This may be due to the fact that ages of the youth who participated in the study are close to each other.

In a study investigating the effect of age of onset of obesity on dislike of bodies, it was determined that children who were obese before the age of 16 had more body dissatisfaction and lower self-esteem during adulthood. It is stated that this situation is connected to the fact that there are more sensibilities about body jokes in childhood and the ability to cope with them has not yet developed sufficiently (Wardle, 2002). It can be said that obese youth which in the determined age groups in our research have passed the limit of being uncomfortable with their body structures or they have entered into the behavior of accepting the situation they are in.

It was seen that there was a significant difference between the levels of socialization of the obese youth who participated in the research and the level of socialization of male participants was higher than the female participants. It can be said that the cause of this situation was due to the fact that women pay more attention to their physical appearance than men even if the perception among societies is partially different, and the expectations of the society they live in. It has been found in a research that the psychosocial burden of obesity is high and women perceive more problems in all areas than men. Again in the same research, it has been found that concerns as a general tendency for both men and women about activities such as swimming, trying and buying clothes in public space is higher (Sjostrom, et al., 2007). It was found in a similar study that physical changes in both men and women lead to increasing problems about liking their bodies and men generally seem to have positive feelings for changes in their bodies, while women are generally not satisfied with the changes. The reason for this is that the increase in body fat in women is not in line with the idea of a skinny body that is culturally ideal. This may explain why too much weight has a more negative effect on women (Pesa, et al., 2000). It has been observed that the answers given by obese youth who participated in our research had similar results with the other research results, and pressure of obesity on the physical appearance of women was more effective at the level of socialization than in men.

According to the level of family income of the obese adolescents participated in the research that we made; there was a meaningful difference between the levels of socialization and there was a linear correlation between increasing the level of income and the level of socialization, as shown in Table 5. It is seen that participation in social life and quality of life increase and there is a positive effect between income level and socialization level, as the level of income increases. It was stated in a research that family income status was effective for the socialization level of youth (Yilmaz, 2006). In a similar research, it was observed that socialization levels of the children increased as the income levels of the families increased and it decreased as the income levels of the families decreased parallelly (Targut, et al., 2003).

As seen in Table 6, there is a significant difference between levels of socialization according to obese youth who plaid and did not play sport in the research and socialization levels of the youth who plaid sport were higher. It was seen that in the researches, sport has an important role in the socialization of the person and in the communication with other people because it is a social organization that individuals participate in. In the research of Çaha (2000), it was seen that there is a significant difference between the socialization level of obese youth according to those who play sport and those who don't and socialization levels of the youth who play sport was higher than the other (Caha, 2000). Obese individuals revealed that other people underestimate them, in a similar research. Negative social attitudes towards obesity lead to the stiffening of these feelings in obese people. It has been seen in the literature that sport enables to improving self-esteem and developing a positive personality in the individual (Ucan & Caglayan, 2012). Another study found that physical problems and inactivity result in emotional problems such as loneliness and unhappiness, negative situation such as stigmatization in social problems and social exclusion of overweight children (Babaoglu, et al., 2016). Sport is the most important aid in the prevention and treatment of obesity compared to other treatment methods. In addition to increasing lean body mass, sports helps to reduce concern of the individual's about his / her body as it helps to lose weight in the long-term and it leads up to socialization (Ozbey, 2001; Ozbey, 2002). It has been determined that obese

individuals who are often stigmatized because of obesity, make an effort to cope with it and that exposing to obesity stigmatization more often is connected with bigger mental problems (Puhl & Heuer, 2010).

## CONCLUSIONS

As a result, it is thought that there is no significant difference between the groups according to the age of the obese adolescents in the research and this is due to the fact that the participants were close in age. It can be said that there was a significant difference between the socialization levels according to gender variables and male participants had higher levels of socialization than women participants. It could also be said that the result of this kind of situations were that physical appearance was more important for women because of the idea of having a skinny body that is culturally ideal. There was a significant difference between the level of socialization according to household income levels and there was a positive effect between income level and socialization level because social life and quality of life increase as the level of income increases. It was found that there was a significant relationship between the participation of obese youth in sport activities and their level of socialization, as well as the socialization level of the youth who play sport is higher. It can be said that sport has an important role in the socialization of obese youth because it is an activity that enables the individual to participate in social environments dynamically.

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