

Investigation of Applicability of the Sports Life Coaching on the Mentally Retarded Individuals

Sümmani Ekici¹ and Ali Yigit Kocabiçak²

¹*School of Physical Education and Sport, MuglaSıtkı Koçman University, Mugla, 48000, Turkey*

²*Mugla Metropolitan Municipality, Department of Sports, Mugla 48000, Turkey*

E-mail: ¹<ekicis@mu.edu.tr>, ²<a.yigitkocabicak@hotmail.com>

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ABSTRACT The aim of this research is to investigate the effects of a sports life coaching program on the socialization levels of mentally retarded individuals. The sample consists of mentally retarded individuals in Turkey and the sample group is formed by a total of 24 educable mentally retarded individuals who are receiving special education in Mugla. Twelve of them were selected for the experiment group and the remaining twelve were placed in a control group. A 30-item Socialization Levels of Mentally Retarded Individuals questionnaire was answered by the parents. Frequency statistics were used to determine the demographic characteristics of participants, and the Wilcoxon signed-rank test and the Mann-Whitney U test were used to determine possible differences between groups. Significant differences were found between the pretest and posttest scores of the socialization level of mentally retarded individuals, the opinions of the family about sports and also, a positive impact of sports and socialization impacts of sports.

INTRODUCTION

Mental retardation is a state of an individual being subnormal in terms of general intelligence functions in addition to deficits observed in compliant behaviors resulting in developmental period. AAIDD (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities) has defined mental retardation in 1992 by the expression, "mental functions to be subnormal and to have limitations in two or more behaviors requiring learning and socialization such as communication, daily life, self-care skills, social and academic skills, self-direction, health and safety, working life, use of free time" (Demir 2001).

The disability profile was researched comprehensively by the "Turkey Disability Survey" in Turkey. According to the results of the research, the rate of population with disabilities to the total population was found 12.29 percent. Accordingly, 8,431,937 people are still continuing their lives as people with disabilities in Turkey. The mentally retarded individuals constitute 0.48 percent of that ratio. Having disabilities is not only a state or a condition affecting only the individual who has the disability but also affects the family members and immediate environment of the individual. It has been known that mentally retarded individuals constitute a significant group in the individuals with disabilities (Kiziltas 2012).

Although there are many different definitions for mental retardation, the most widely accepted definition is the one by the American Association on Mental Deficiency (AAMD). According to that definition, mental retardation is defined as being significantly below the average in terms of the general intelligence function along with lack of behavior and having adaptation problems during the development process (Patri 1990).

It should be taken into account that training and education aimed at increasing the independence of the people with disabilities, social relations, gender relations, emotional relations and sports have a significant positive impact on individuals with disabilities and invasive and psychosocial needs of those individuals should be considered when providing them education and training. Sport has a special place in terms of reintegrating individuals with disabilities into society and contributing their mental and physical development (Pehlevan 2010). Sport facilitates the integration of individuals with disabilities into society and ensures their physical, mental and social development (Eichsteadt and Lavay 1992). Sport, as an educational activity reveals the sense of ability to express common purposes and appreciation (Tosyali 2010). The life coaching for individuals with disabilities is continuously gaining importance for facilitating the life of the above-

mentioned group and providing help for their parents and family members.

Coaching is to find the source of power in somebody and to focus a target and an aim in that person. In this way, it is possible to get a successful, happy and balanced life by determining a new direction and to comply with duty, to increase performance, to develop new skills and to solve problems (Cam 2009).

The concept "Coaching" means to facilitate the revealing of the potential in the people to make them reach and achieve meaningful significant and important goals. Coaching arises in many different ways in accordance with needs and requirements of individuals and institutions. The most common ones can be arranged as career coaching, executive coaching, life coaching and instructional coaching (Barutcu and Ozbay 2009).

The disability or a disorder is the limitation of roles expected from the person due to age, gender, social and cultural factors or them to be impossible to be done. Children with disabilities are divided into four groups as visually impaired, hearing impaired, physically handicapped and mentally retarded (Ozer 2001). The World Health Organization (WHO) has made a definition and classification for the concept of disability by putting emphasis on the health aspects based on the disease outcomes. That classification is used extensively in many countries worldwide (Bilge et al. 2005).

Sport is not only a physical activity for a person with disabilities who has adjustment disorder and socialization problems but also reshapes him as a social person. Moreover, physical activity applications improve the mental and physical and health of people with mental retardation (Rosenbaum 2015). A sports coach teaches a sport to the individual and provides information. The reason for people to admit life coaches is the same with the reason for people to admit sports coaches. They seek for a person who will work alongside them, encourage and motivate them. A coach not only runs a team but also instills team players and spectators with a philosophy of life and culture (Marti 2012).

Coaching is accepted and seen as an activity that aims to help people to move forward with things, which would make them feel better or they would like to do in future. It has become administrable in almost all areas of life because

of the reason that it also solves the problem sources of individuals (Eren and Akyuz 2014).

There is not a sufficient number of studies on sports life coaching for individuals with disabilities in the literature. This study will play an important role in facilitating the lives of individuals with disabilities and burden on families and in course of their lives.

METHODOLOGY

Research Model

This research aims to measure the impact of a 12-week sports life coaching program developed for the educable mentally retarded individuals and effects of the program on socialization levels of the educable mentally retarded individuals between 15 and 33 years old and was patterned based on the pretest and posttest control group experimental model. Experimental models are the research models administered to produce data requested by the observer under the direct control of the researcher with the goal of determination of the cause-effect relationships (Karasar 2010).

A Sports Life Coaching Program was administered to the treatment group for 4 hours a day and 2 days a week during the 12 weeks. The life coaching program consists of sports branches (basketball, volleyball, cycling, and swimming), sporting events (folk dance, educational plays and games, fitness, horse therapy, Pilates, hiking, creative drama, nature camp, dancing) and social activities (movie screening, zoo trip, nature camp). The questionnaire of the impact of sport on the socialization of the participants was administered to the parents of the participants before the application as a pretest and the same questionnaire was administered one more time to the parents of the participants after the administration of the program as a posttest. The control group was subjected to the pretest and posttest but sports life coaching program was not administered to that group.

The study population covers all individuals diagnosed with educable mental retardation living in Turkey. The study population consists of 24 educable mentally retarded individuals between the ages of 15 and 33 years receiving education in Mentese county of Mugla province (12 for treatment group, 12 for control group). Before the study, the parents of the students

participating in the treatment group were informed about the sports life coaching program in detail and their signed consents were received for the participation of their children.

The questionnaire titled 'Socialization Levels of Mentally Retarded Individuals' consisting of 30 questions and developed by Demirag (2010) was used as a data collection tool to determine the socialization levels of mentally retarded individuals participating in the 12-week sports life coaching program. The questions in the questionnaire were examined and analyzed in the sub-scales Oriented Socializing (1-9), General Considerations of Parents on Sport (10-15), Considerations of Parents on Positive Impacts of Sport (16-20) and Measurement of Positive Effects of Sport (21-30).

Data Analysis

The data obtained in the research was analyzed by using the SPSS 17 software package program. Mann-Whitney U test was used to test differences between the treatment and control group based of the sports life coaching program developed that aimed at individuals with disabilities in terms of socialization levels. Mann-Whitney U test was used for the comparison of scores of treatment group and control group.

Mann-Whitney U test analyzes whether scores obtained from two unrelated samples significantly differ from each other (Buyukozturk 2005). Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used to determine differences between the pretest and posttest scores of groups subject to the research within themselves. That test is a non-parametric alternative to the 'repeated measures' t-test (Kalayci 2009).

The reliability coefficient corresponds to a value between 0.00 and +1.00. Since the reliability coefficient of this study is 0.957, it can be said that the reliability of data is quite high. The level of significance was determined as .05 and it was stated that there has to be significant difference when $p < .05$ and no significant difference when $p > .05$.

RESULTS

In this part of the research, comparison of the results of pretest and posttest questionnaires administered to the students both in the treatment and control group of whom demographic characteristics had been determined through a survey that have been done to determine the impact of Sports Life Coaching on the

socialization and comparison of the differences between the pretest and posttest scores of participants in the treatment group has taken place.

Demographic Characteristics of the Study Participants

Out of the total female students participated in the research, 7 were in the treatment group and 5 were in the control group, while 5 male students (20 percent) who participated in the research were in the treatment group and 7 were in the control group (Table 1).

Table 1: Distribution of participants by gender

	Gender			Total
	Female	Male	%	
Treatment group	7	5	50.0	12
Control group	5	7	50.0	12
Total	12	12	100.0	24

Within the participants of the study, 41.7 percent (10 people) were in the 15-20 years age range, twenty-five percent (6 people) were in the 23-26 years age range and 33.3 percent (8 people) were in the 27-33 years age range (Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of participants by age groups

	Frequency	%
15-20	10	41.7
21-26	6	25.0
27-33	8	33.3
Total	24	100.0

Out of the participants of the study, 29.2 percent (7 people) were at fifty percent level of mental retardation, 20.8 percent (5 people) were at seventy percent level of mental retardation, 33.3 percent (8 people) were at eighty percent level of mental retardation and 16.7 percent (4 people) were at ninety percent level of mental retardation (Table 3).

Table 3: Distribution of participants by level of mental retardation

Level of mental retardation	Frequency	%
50%	7	29.2
70%	5	20.8
80%	8	33.3
90%	4	16.7
Total	24	100.0

The educational status of the parents of the study participants can be seen above. Seventy-five percent (18 people) were primary school graduates, 4.2 percent (1 person) was high school graduates, and 20.8 percent (5 people) were university graduates (Table 4).

Table 4: Distribution of parents by educational status

	Frequency	%
Primary school	18	75.0
High school	1	4.2
University	5	20.8
Total	24	100.0

According to the Pretest-Posttest Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for the Treatment Group, the socialization level of the child was found ($W=96.500$, $p=0.002$; $p<0.05$), the consideration of parents on sport was found ($W=103.500$, $p=0.007$; $p<0.05$), the positive effect of sport was found ($W=89.000$, $p=.000$; $p<0.05$) and the socialization impact of sport was found ($W=89.500$, $p=.000$; $p<0.05$). Accordingly, significant differences were found at a $p<0.05$ level (Table 5).

According to the Pretest-Posttest Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for the Control Group

that can be seen in above, the socialization level of the child was found ($W=69.000$, $p=0.859$; $p>0.05$), the consideration of parents on sport was found ($W=69.000$, $p=0.860$; $p>0.05$), the positive effect of sport was found ($W=72.000$, $p=1.000$; $p>0.05$) and the socialization impact of sport was found ($W=72.000$, $p=1.000$; $p>0.05$). Accordingly, significant differences could not be found at $p<0.05$ level (Table 6).

According to the Mann-Whitney U Test Results performed in order to find whether there are differences between scores obtained from pretest results of the treatment group and control group, the socialization level of the child was found ($U=48.500$; $p=0.173$; $p>0.05$), the consideration of parents on sport was found ($U=49.000$; $p=0.180$; $p>0.05$), the positive effect of sport was found ($U=49.500$; $p=0.181$; $p>0.05$) and the socialization impact of sport was found ($U=71.000$; $p=0.954$; $p>0.05$). Accordingly, significant differences could not be found at $p<0.05$ level (Table 7).

According to the Mann-Whitney U Test Results performed in order to find whether there are differences between scores obtained from posttest results of the treatment group and control group, the socialization level of the child was found ($Z=-2.823$, $p<0.05$), the consideration

Table 5: Sports life coaching program pretest-posttest Wilcoxon signed-rank test results for the treatment group

Sub-scale		N	Arithmetic mean	Std. dev.	Wilcoxon	Z	P
Socialization Level of the Child	Pretest	12	96.50	8.04	96.500	-3.100	.002
	Posttest	12	203.50	16.96			
Consideration of Parents on Sport	Pretest	12	173.00	14.42	103.500	-2.705	.007
	Posttest	12	127.00	10.58			
Positive Effect of Sport	Pretest	12	172.50	14.38	89.000	-3.562	.000
	Posttest	12	127.50	10.63			
Socialization Impact of Sport	Pretest	12	89.50	7.46	89.500	-3.508	.000
	Posttest	12	210.50	17.54			

Table 6: Sports life coaching program pretest-posttest Wilcoxon signed-rank test results for the control group

Sub-scale		N	Arithmetic mean	Std. dev.	Wilcoxon	Z	P
Socialization Level of the Child	Pretest	12	147.00	12.25	69.000	-.177	.859
	Posttest	12	153.00	12.75			
Consideration of Parents on Sport	Pretest	12	153.00	12.75	69.000	-.177	.177
	Posttest	12	147.00	12.25			
Positive Effect of Sport	Pretest	12	150.00	12.50	72.000	.000	1.000
	Posttest	12	150.00	12.50			
Socialization Impact of Sport	Pretest	12	150.00	12.50	72.000	.000	1.000
	Posttest	12	150.00	12.50			

Table 7: Sports life coaching program treatment and control group pretest Mann-Whitney U test results

Sub-scale	N	Arithmetic mean	Std. dev.	Wilcoxon	Z	P
<i>Socialization Level of the Child</i>	Treatment 12	126.50	10.54	48.500	-1.363	.173
	Control 12	173.50	14.46			
<i>Consideration of Parents on Sport</i>	Treatment 12	173.00	14.42	49.000	-1.341	.180
	Control 12	127.00	10.58			
<i>Positive Effect of Sport</i>	Treatment 12	172.50	14.38	49.500	-1.337	.181
	Control 12	127.50	10.63			
<i>Socialization Impact of Sport</i>	Treatment 12	151.00	12.58	71.000	-.058	.954
	Control 12	149.00	12.42			

of parents on sport was found ($Z = -3.194$, $p < 0.05$), the positive effect of sport was found ($Z = -3.481$; $p < 0.05$) and the socialization impact of sport was found ($Z = -3.415$, $p < 0.05$). Accordingly, significant differences could not be found at $p < 0.05$ level (Table 8).

DISCUSSION

This study includes the comparison of pretest and posttest questionnaires that had been conducted to determine the effect of Sports Life Coaching on the socialization and the comparison of pretest and posttest differences of the participants in the treatment group. Considering the demographic characteristics of the individuals with disabilities participated in the study, of the female students, 7 (30%) were in the treatment group and 5 (20%) in the control group and of the male students, 5 (20%) were in the treatment group and 7 (30%) were in the control group. Considering the age distribution of the individuals with disabilities who participated in the study, 41.7 percent (10 people) were in the 15-20 age range, twenty-five percent (6 people) were in the 23-26 age range and 33.3 percent (8 people) were in the 27-33 age range. Considering the level of mental retardation of the individuals with disabilities participated in the study,

29.2 percent (7 people) were at fifty percent level of mental retardation, 20.8 percent (5 people) were at seventy percent level of mental retardation, 33.3 percent (8 people) were at eighty percent level of mental retardation and 16.7 percent (4 people) were at ninety percent level of mental retardation. Considering the educational status of the parents of the study participants, seventy-five percent (18 people) were primary school graduates, 4.2 percent (1 person) was high school graduates, and 20.8 percent (5 people) were university graduates.

A significant difference was found in the socialization level of the child according to the Sports Life Coaching Program Pretest-Posttest Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for the Treatment Group in ($W = 96.500$, $p = 0.002$; $p < 0.05$).

Sports recreation program was administered by Yanci (2010) to the treatment group for one hour a day, 2 days a week during a total of a 12 week-period in order to determine whether sports recreation activities have an impact on socialization and mental improvement of educable mentally retarded children. Positive improvements were observed in the socialization of educable mentally retarded children who participated in sports recreation activities on a regular basis.

Table 8: Sports life coaching program treatment and control group posttest Mann-Whitney U test results

Sub-scale	N	Arithmetic mean	Std. dev.	Wilcoxon	Z	P
<i>Socialization Level of the Child</i>	Treatment 12	126.50	10.54	23.500	-2.823	.005
	Control 12	173.50	14.46			
<i>Consideration of Parents on Sport</i>	Treatment 12	173.00	14.42	17.000	-3.194	.001
	Control 12	127.00	10.58			
<i>Positive Effect of Sport</i>	Treatment 12	172.50	14.38	12.000	-3.481	.000
	Control 12	127.50	10.63			
<i>Socialization Impact of Sport</i>	Treatment 12	151.00	12.58	13.000	-3.415	.001
	Control 12	149.00	12.42			

Babkes (1999) analyzed the socialization and family behavior characteristics of mentally retarded individuals actively involved in sport and their peers who do not involve in sport and found that those who perform sports show more social behavior characteristics compared to the others who do not.

A significant difference was found in the consideration of parents on sports according to the Sports Life Coaching Program Pretest-Posttest Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for the Treatment Group in Table 5 ($W=103.500$, $p=0.007$; $p<0.05$).

The study conducted by Sukan (2013) aimed to determine the physical activity and the socialization of moderate level in mentally retarded individuals. In conclusion of the study, parents told that they noticed a positive improvement and change in their children after their participation in sports. Kelly et al. (2015) investigated a study about mental health in sports and views of sports coaches' efficacy to support them. They concluded that coaches are in a position to help people with their mental health by way of identifying concerns and promoting engagement in sports.

According to the study results titled 'Assessment of Approaches of Parents with Mentally Retarded Children to Physical Education and Sports Activities during their Children's Special Education' conducted by Ilhan in 2009, the parents generally stated a favorable opinion towards the effect of physical education and sports on the development of their children in every way. Parents stated positive opinions in physical education and sports activities during the special education process of their children and the most desirable sport requested by the parents was found to be swimming.

Positive changes were found in family behavior and classroom behavior of those children according to the results of the study conducted by Gencoz (1997) and themed the effects of basketball training on the behavioral development of mentally retarded children.

A significant difference was found in the positive effect of sport according to the Sports Life Coaching Program Pretest-Posttest Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for the Treatment Group in Table 5 ($W=89.500$, $p=.000$; $p<0.05$).

According to the results of a study conducted by Demirdag (2010), the researcher found that sport has effects on the socialization of mental-

ly retarded children and there is a significant relationship between sports and socialization.

Pehlevan (2010) investigated and examined the effect of Turkish Folk Music on the socialization of mentally retarded children and found that folk dance trainings have a positive impact on the socialization of mentally retarded children.

Ilhan (2008) conducted a study on mentally retarded children and examined the effect of physical education and sport on their socialization levels and found positive effects of special physical education program on the socialization level of the treatment group. The researcher stated that this effect lead to a development in such areas as interacting with the others, participating in group activities and sharing. All those studies support the research.

A significant difference was found in the socialization impact of sport according to the Sports Life Coaching Program Pretest-Posttest Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for the Treatment Group in Table 5 ($W=89.500$, $p=.000$; $p<0.05$).

In the study conducted by Cevik and Kabasakal (2013), 13 mentally retarded students were included in a training program consisting of sports activities and trainings in tracks for 1 hour a day, 3 days a week during 8 weeks and in the conclusion of that study, the researchers found that sport and sports activities have a positive impact on the socialization level of mentally retarded individuals.

The study conducted by Cavdar (2011) has similarities with this study. In that study, a 14-week organized physical education and sports activities program was administered to the mentally retarded children in order to reveal the effects of that program on the socialization of those children. It was found that children in the treatment group who participated in the regular physical education and sports activities showed a significant improvement compared to the control group in all participation areas as the communication, being aware of the others, being in interaction with the others and participation to the group activities. All those studies support this research.

According to the Pretest-Posttest Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Results for the Control Group, the socialization level of the child was found ($W=69.000$, $p=0.859$; $p>0.05$), the consideration of parents on sport was found ($W=69.000$,

$p=0.860$; $p>0.05$), the positive effect of sport was found ($W=72.000$, $p=1.000$; $p>0.05$) and the socialization impact of sport was found ($W=72.000$, $p=1.000$; $p>0.05$). Accordingly, significant differences could not be found at $p<0.05$ level.

According to the Mann-Whitney U Test Results performed in order to find whether there are differences between scores obtained from pretest results of the treatment group and control group in, the socialization level of the child was found ($U=48.500$; $p=0.173$; $p>0.05$), the consideration of parents on sport was found ($U=49.000$; $p=0.180$; $p>0.05$), the positive effect of sport was found ($U=49.500$; $p=0.181$; $p>0.05$) and the socialization impact of sport was found ($U=71.000$; $p=0.954$; $p>0.05$). Accordingly, significant differences could not be found at $p<0.05$ level.

According to the Mann-Whitney U Test Results performed in order to find whether there are differences between scores obtained from posttest results of the treatment group and control group, the socialization level of the child was found ($Z=-2.823$, $p<0.05$), the consideration of parents on sport was found ($Z=-3.194$, $p<0.05$), the positive effect of sport was found ($Z=-3.481$; $p<0.05$) and the socialization impact of sport was found ($Z=-3.415$, $p<0.05$). Accordingly, significant differences could not be found at $p<0.05$ level.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that involvement in sports branches, sports activities and social activities have positive effects for mentally retarded individuals who had participated in a 12-week life coaching program administered to the mentally retarded individuals and their family members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Sports life coaching is seen to contribute positively to the socialization levels of educable mentally retarded individuals. More physical activities may be included and offered under the title of sports coaching performed for educable mentally retarded individuals and legislative regulation on that area could be improved and extended.

The importance of sports coaching and sport can be told and explained to parents and their

awareness may be raised and social responsibility projects on these issues can be carried out.

Private and public sports centers can be established for sports coaching programs and studies in that field can be extended.

Local governments may offer employment opportunities for specialist trainers by establishing units in the fields of people with disabilities and sport.

The content of the sports life coaching programs for educable mentally retarded individuals can be extended within that context and international projects can be included.

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