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## Examination of the Social Skills Levels of Students Participating in Recreative Activities

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### Abstract

People are social beings and therefore they interact with each other in society. While interacting, their social skill level is also very important in terms of expressing themselves. The aim of this study is to determine the social skill levels of secondary school students who participate in recreational activities. The population of the study consists of students studying at secondary school in the central district of Çorum province. The sample consists of 361 students participating in recreational activities determined by simple random sampling method. The data collection tool consists of two parts. In the first part, the "Personal Information Form" was used by the researcher to determine the demographic information of the students. In the second part, there is the "Social Skills Assessment Scale for Children", which was developed by Matson, Rotatory and Hessel in 1983 and adapted into Turkish by Bacanlı and Erdoğan in 2003. The Social Skills Assessment Scale for Children is a 5-point Likert-type scale consisting of 47 items and two sub-dimensions. Its sub-dimensions are 'positive social behavior' and 'negative social behavior'. Considering the results of the analysis, no significant difference was found between the students' gender, licensed sports status, and the educational status of their parents and their social skill levels. There was a significant difference in the "Negative Social Behavior" sub-dimension according to the age and class variables. While it was seen that the age and class variable of the students participating in recreational activities affected their social skill levels, it was concluded that the status of doing licensed sports, gender and parental education did not have an effect. In the light of this information, it can be concluded that the level of social skills in secondary school students does not change according to demographic characteristics in general.

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### Introduction

The activities that individuals do in their leisure time contribute positively to their physical and mental development. It can be said that participation in leisure time activities helps the individual to express himself or herself better in social life and to develop socially. When social skills are examined in general terms, they are the attitudes and behaviors exhibited by people in order to gain a place in society by behaving in accordance with their social environment. The communication of individuals with improved social skills is higher than other

individuals. Social skill acquisition is a lifelong phenomenon. Every individual has to interact with his environment. In order for individuals living together in society to continue their lives in a healthy way, they need to establish the right relationships (Samancı & Uçan, 2017). Social skills, regardless of age, for every individual in the society in all social environments; Behavior patterns that affect the lives of individuals positively, enable them to establish positive communication, be successful and happy, be it school, play environment, business world (Stanley, 2010). 85% of the work will be done in the fields of personal happiness and 99% of the work will be done in the way of personal happiness (Giblin, 1995).

Over the past few years, the importance given to sports activities and organizations has been increasing in a tremendous way. Sports activities that used to be done by the wealthy in developed countries have become an activity that all segments of society are interested in, and even actively and passively participate in such activities. As a result, he emphasized that there is a high level of participation in sports in childhood. The purpose of individuals who turn to sports activities that drag the masses after them varies in a wide range from having fun, resting and having a good time, protecting their health, gaining a social environment (Alesi et al., 2016; Becker et al., 2018; Rob, 2015).

Physical activity has a very important place for children's bodies to function at their highest capacity and for them to acquire concepts and skills. Therefore, it is very important for middle school students to gain regular physical activity habits and support their development (Robbins, Pis, Pender, Kazanis 2004; Dishman et al., 2005; Moore, Yin, Hanes, Duda, Gutin, & Barbeau 2009; Carraro, Young and Robazza 2008). It is stated that participation in sports activities is important in the modernization and development of societies (Balyan et al., 2017). Today, one of the easiest ways to develop individuals physically, emotionally and socially, to expand group work, to ensure mutual solidarity and to gain community membership is sports. In addition to being a whole of physical activities, sport expresses a concept that helps people socialize by giving individuals a sense of personal and social identity and group membership (Küçük and Koç, 2016). It is seen that children who regularly do sports lead an active physical life in their future ages. From this point of view, it can be said that childhood physical activity education is important in increasing the quality of social life (Kaya, 2016). It is stated that participation in sports activities is important in the modernization and development of societies (Balyan et al., 2017). Today, one of the easiest ways to develop individuals physically, emotionally and socially, to expand group work, to ensure mutual solidarity and to gain community membership is sports. In addition to being a whole of physical activities, sport expresses a concept that helps people socialize by giving individuals a sense of personal and social identity and group membership (Küçük and Koç, 2016). It is seen that children who regularly do sports lead an active physical life in their future ages. From this point of view, it can be said that childhood physical activity education is important in increasing the quality of social life (Kaya, 2016; MacDonald et al., 2016).

Self-actualization has a prominent place in the socialization process. Socialization is the process of gaining the personality of young people (Akdeniz et al., 2016; Özkan, 2022). The socialization of young people takes place in relation with many socialization factors such as friendship, family, environmental relations, media tools, culture, art, sports and music (Suryaratri, Komalasari & Medellu, 2022). Recreative activities enable young people to be together, to belong to the group, to influence each other, and to benefit more from the activities due to their

age characteristics (Kibici, 2022). Youth institutions that offer structured and institutionalized leisure activities contribute more to the socialization of young people than non-institutionalized activities (Havitz, Kaczynski & Mannell, 2013; Marwanto, & Satryono, 2021; World Leisure and Recreation Association, 2001). It is claimed that while making positive use of leisure time is beneficial in strengthening social cohesion, it can protect especially young people and children from harmful habits (Broadhurst, 2001). It is seen that schools play a more functional role in the organization of recreational activities, which have an important place in the social lives of individuals and societies. Students make use of their spare time and participate in recreational activities in a semi-organized manner within the scope of the opportunities offered by the schools during their education. While the recreation programs prepared by the schools and the related infrastructure opportunities increase the communication between young people, they also satisfy other reasons for participation (Tükel & Temel, 2020).

Communication and social skills in sports are a subject that has been studied for a long time. Studies within the framework of communication and sports are increasing today. Team and team success in the working environment is based on good harmony and communication. Such communication in teams and learning groups also influences individual learning. Joudrey and Wallace (2009) conducted a study that statistically demonstrated the importance of recreational sports activity, especially in children. It has been observed that children show psychological symptoms in their passive leisure experiences, whereas children who participate in active recreational sports exhibit positive social behaviors. In this context, recreational sports can provide an important opportunity to improve social and communication skills in school life (Lazaridis et al., 2021; Temel & Tükel, 2021).

Participation in recreational sports is a means of socialization as well as channeling the body energy that increases in adolescence in the most appropriate way. In recreational sports, students experience an intense interaction process between their schoolmates, their family members, and other peers, especially their teachers (Weinberg & Gould, 2003). Today, the rapid increase in urbanization and the narrowing of the movement area of people cause various problems in people physically, spiritually and socially. Individuals, especially young people, whose movement space is narrowed, are starting to live virtual life in social media by isolating themselves more from the society. At this point, it is considered that sports and physical activity will play an important role in the development of an individual's communication and social skills (Berglund, Eriksson, & Westerlund, 2005).

The most dynamic segment of societies is youth. Young people are not economically and socially independent both in family and social life. Here, one of the effective tools to solve these problems is sports. Sport is an important tool for raising healthy generations and thus creating contemporary societies. While sport contributes especially to children and young people to acquire physically and mentally healthy, socially developed personalities, on the other hand, it contributes greatly to the growth of children and young people as physically constructive, creative, productive, personality, gentlemen, prudent, tolerant, moral, decent behavior, self-confident, and good human relations (Nonis, 2015).

Change has been a condition that people have been inevitably exposed to since all ages (Şahin & Çolakoğlu, 2022). During the learning process of children, they increase their social development levels by participating in recreational activities as well as academic development. Increasing the level of social development may contribute

to the development and change of some skills in children in the process. Among the skills that enable the child to be accepted by his friends, behaviors such as being able to participate in the group appropriately, obeying social rules, and communicating effectively can be listed (Putallaz et al., 1981). There are many factors that improve social skills. Social skills, which have a complex structure, are of great importance in children's social interactions with their peers. Due to this complexity of social skills, some children do not develop enough in social skills. This, in turn, reduces the interaction of children with their peers. In other words, children's interactions with their peers may be less and short-lived (Avcıoğlu, 2007; Sünbül, 2008).

Today, the rapid increase in urbanization and the narrowing of the movement area of people cause various problems in people physically, spiritually and socially (Charbonneau & Camiré, 2020). Individuals, especially children, whose movement space is narrowed, is starting to live virtual life in social media by isolating themselves more from the society. At this point, it is thought that sports and physical activity will play an important role in the development of communication and social skills of the individual. In addition, when the studies conducted in Turkey are examined, it is possible to come across many studies on the level of social skills. However, there are not many studies in the literature on participation in recreational sports and whether it affects the level of social skills. In this context, the social skills of secondary school students and their participation in recreational activities were examined with a relational approach.

## **Method**

The aim of our study is to examine the social skill levels of secondary school students participating in recreational activities according to various variables. Our study was carried out according to the scanning model used to describe a situation that has happened in the past or is still going on today (Karasar, 2020). Social skills of students were considered as the dependent variable, and social skill levels of secondary school students were analyzed according to some independent variables (grade level, gender, age, father's education level, mother's education level and sports status) that were supposed to be effective on this variable throughout the study. The universe of the research consisted of secondary school students in Çorum. The sample of the study consists of 361 students, who were selected with the appropriate sampling method and willingly participated in the survey, chosen from secondary schools in the central district of Çorum province. In our study, a scale form consisting of two parts was used in the data collection process. In the first part, "Personal Information Form" prepared by the researcher to determine the demographic information of the students, and in the second part, "Social Skills Assessment Scale for Children", which was developed by Matson, Rotatory and Hessel in 1983 and adapted into Turkish by Bacanlı and Erdoğan in 2003, was used. The 47-item scale has two factors. Factor 1 is 'Negative Behaviors' and Factor 2 is 'Positive Behaviors'. Regarding the distribution of the data, the "Kolmogorow-Smirnov" test, which is the normality test, was performed and it was found that the data were normally distributed (Yurt, 2011). The distribution and percentages of the students participating in the research were determined by "Descriptive Statistics". T test and Anova tests were used to investigate whether there was a significant difference between the social skill levels of the participants regarding the sub-dimensions of the "Social Skills Assessment Scale for Children".

## **Results**

When the distribution of the students according to the gender variable was examined, it was determined that 48.5% (n=175) were male and 51.5% (186) were female (see Table 1). As a result of examining the age variable, 40.4% (n=146) were 11 years old, 55.7% (n=201) were 12 years old, and 3.9% (n=14) were 13 years old. Considering the distribution of the participants according to the class variable, 24.4% (n=88) were in the 5th grade, 34.1% (n=123) were in the 6th grade, and 33.2% (n=120) were in the 7th grade and 8.3% (n=30) were 8th Grade.

Considering the distribution of the students according to the mother's education level variable, 33.5% (n=121) primary school, 25.2% (n=91) secondary school, 27.7% (n=100) high school and 13%, It was revealed that 6 of them (n=49) were undergraduate graduates. Considering the distribution of the students according to the variable of father's educational status, 19.9% (n=72) were primary school, 20.8% (n=75) secondary school, 30.2% (n=109) high school and 29%, It is seen that 1 (n=105) of them had a bachelor's degree. In the variable of sports status, 45.2% (n=163) of the students who do sports, 54.8% (n=198) and those who do not.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Distribution of Students

		n	%
Gender	Female	186	51.5
	Male	175	48.5
Age	11	146	40.4
	12	201	55.7
	13	14	3.9
Grade	5th grade	88	24.4
	6th grade	123	34.1
	7th grade	120	33.2
	8th grade	30	8.3
Mother's Education Status	Primary School	121	33.5
	Secondary School	91	25.2
	High School	100	27.7
	University	49	13.6
Father's Educational Status	Primary School	72	19.9
	Secondary School	75	20.8
	High School	109	30.2
	University	105	29.1
Sports Status	Yes	163	45.2
	No	198	54.8

When the social skill levels of the students were examined according to their gender characteristics, no significant difference was found between the groups in the positive and negative sub-dimensions ( $p>0.05$ ) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Independent Group t-Test Results of Social Skills Evaluation Scale Scores by Gender Variable

Gender	Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	ss	t test		
					t	df	p
Positive	Female	186	95.01	12.47	1.64	359	0.61
	Male	175	92.91	11.81	1.64		
Negative	Female	186	41.92	13.60	-1.66	359	0.25
	Male	175	44.38	14.50	-1.60		

When the social skill levels of the students were examined according to the age variable, no significant difference was found between the groups in the positive sub-dimensions ( $p>0.05$ ) (see Table 3). It was concluded that there was a significant difference in negative social skill levels according to age characteristics ( $p<0.05$ ). The source of the difference is that the mean age of 11 is significantly lower than the mean age of 12.

Table 3. One-Way Analysis of Variance Results of Social Skills Rating Scale Scores by Age Variable

ANOVA Results										
	Group	N	$\bar{X}$	ss	Var. K.	KT	Sd	KO	F	p
Positive	Age 11	146	93.555	.380	Between groups	49.49	2	24.744	0.17	.847
	Age 12	201	94.28	12.91	In-group	53406.50	358	149.180		
	Age 13	14	94.50	.95	Total	53455.99	360			
Negative	Age 11	146	39.84	10.44	Between groups	2848.29	2	1424.14	7.44	0.01
	Age 12	201	45.61	15.86	In-group	68504.83	358	191.35		
	Age 13	14	41.50	13.62	Total	71353.11	360			

When the social skill levels of the students were examined according to the class variable, no significant difference was found between the groups in the positive sub-dimensions ( $p>0.05$ ) (see Table 4). It was concluded that there was a significant difference in negative social skill levels according to class characteristics ( $p<0.05$ ). The source of the difference is that the 5th grade average is significantly lower than the 8th grade average.

Table 4. One-Way Analysis of Variance Results of Social Skills Rating Scale Scores by Grade Variable

ANOVA Results										
	Group	N	$\bar{X}$	ss	Var.K.	KT	Sd	KO	F	p
Positive	5th grade	88	91.83	11.81	Between groups	686.12	3	228.71	1.547	0.20
	6th grade	123	94.64	11.01	In-group	52769.87	357	147.82		
	7th grade	120	95.22	13.20	Total	53455.99	360			
	8th grade	30	92.80	12.32						
Negative	5th grade	88	39.59	11.43	Between groups	2544.67	3	848.22	4.401	0.00
	6th grade	123	42.57	11.30	In-group	68808.45	357	192.74		
	7th grade	120	44.7417	16.03	Total	71353.11	360			
	8th grade	30	49.1667	19.73						

When the social skill levels of the students were examined according to the characteristics of the mother's educational status, no significant difference was found between the groups in the positive and negative sub-dimensions ( $p>0.05$ ) (see Table 5).

Table 5. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results of Social Skills Evaluation Scale Scores According to Mother's Educational Status Variable

		ANOVA Results									
	Group	<i>N</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>ss</i>	Var. K.	<i>KT</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>KO</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	
Positive	Primary School	121	93.55	12.24	Between groups	64.57	3	21.523	0.14	0.93	
	Secondary School	91	93.86	11.99	In-group	53391.42	357	149.556			
	High School	100	94.62	11.88	Total	53455.99	360				
	University	49	94.06	13.31							
Negative	Primary School	121	44.19	12.57	Between groups	814.91	3	271.64	1.38	0.25	
	Secondary School	91	40.78	11.67	In-group	70538.20	357	197.59			
	High School	100	43.01	15.28	Total	71353.11	360				
	University	49	45.02	18.37							

When the social skill levels of the students were examined according to the characteristics of the father's educational status, no significant difference was found between the groups in the positive and negative sub-dimensions ( $p>0.05$ ) (see Table 6).

Table 6. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results of Social Skills Evaluation Scale Scores According to the Variable of Father's Educational Status

		ANOVA Results									
	Group	<i>N</i>	$\bar{X}$	<i>ss</i>	Var. K.	<i>KT</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>KO</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	
Positive	Primary School	72	92.3	10.99	Between groups	499.22	3	166.41	1.12	0.34	
	Secondary School	75	92.85	15.07	In-group	52956.77	357	148.34			
	High School	109	94.59	11.75	Total	53455.99	360				
	University	105	95.30	11.04							
Negative	Primary School	72	45.36	13.71	Between groups	531.55	3	177.18	0.89	0.45	
	Secondary School	75	41.96	12.68	In-group	70821.56	357	198.38			
	High School	109	42.33	12.98	Total	71353.11	360				
	University	105	43.22	16.23							

When the social skill levels of the students were examined according to the licensed sporting variable, no significant difference was found between the groups in the positive and negative sub-dimensions ( $p>0.05$ ) (see Table 7).

Table 7. Independent Group t-Test Results of Social Skills Evaluation Scale Scores According to the Variable Doing Sports

Sports Status	Groups	N	$\bar{X}$	ss	t test		
					t	df	p
Positive	Yes	163	41.62	13.90	0.68	359	0.46
	No	198	44.35	14.134	0.67		
Negative	Yes	163	95.13	12.40	-1.84	359	0.42
	No	198	93.06	11.95	-1.84		

## Discussion and Conclusion

At the end of our study, no significant difference was found between the students' gender, licensed sports status, and the educational status of their parents and their social skill levels. There was a significant difference in the "Negative Social Behavior" sub-dimension according to the age and class variables. When the social skill levels of the students were examined according to their gender characteristics, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the groups. This finding shows that students' social skill levels are not related to gender characteristics. When the literature was examined, Duman and Kuru (2010) found that the gender characteristics of the students were not an effective factor in their social level in a study conducted on Turkish students living in Germany as a different sample group. Arslanoğlu (2010) concluded that the social skill levels of the students who do and do not do sports vary according to the gender characteristics of the students, and this change is in favor of female students in a positive way. In Balyan's (2009) study, students' positive social skills differ according to gender. The positive social skill levels of girls are higher than that of boys. This is in line with previous literature that males and females perform differently in teamwork and collaborative learning settings (Banihashem et al., 2021; Noroozi et al., 2020, 2022). When we look at the difference between the genders; concluded that boys have higher negative social skills than girls. In the study of Güçlü and Yentür (2008), it was concluded that there is a significant difference in favor of female students in terms of gender variable. These findings do not show parallelism with the findings of this study. It can be said that this difference is due to the fact that the students in the studies are in different age ranges or the place they live in is different.

When the positive social skill levels of the students were examined according to their age characteristics, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the groups. It was concluded that there was a significant difference in negative social skill levels according to age characteristics. The source of the difference is that the mean age of 11 is significantly lower than the mean age of 12. Kırılmazkaya (2010) stated that the age variable did not make a difference in the Social Skills scores of the Primary School Science and Classroom Teacher Candidates, and in the Social Skills scores of the Akpınar (2010) Sports Federation employees. These studies do not show parallelism with our research. The reason for this may be thought to be due to the difference in the age range of the research groups.

When the positive social skill levels of the students were examined according to their class characteristics, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the groups. It was concluded that there was a significant difference in negative social skill levels according to class characteristics. The source of the difference

is that the 5th grade average is significantly lower than the 8th grade average. This finding shows that students' grade levels are an effective variable on their social skill levels. As the grade levels of the students increase, their social skill levels also increase. Balyan (2009) found in his research that students' positive social skill levels do not differ according to class, school type and class situation. According to the class variable, it can be concluded that there are also results contrary to our research. When the social skills assessment scale was examined according to the education levels of the parents, it was concluded that the educational status of the parents did not affect the social skills level. When the literature is examined, Kızıltan (1984) found that as the education level of the parents increases, the level of adjustment in the child increases and there is a significant difference between the education level of the parents and the level of personal adjustment, social adjustment and general adjustment of the student (Ciriş, 2004). The research does not support the research findings in this aspect. This difference is thought to be due to the age difference of the study group. When the social skill levels of the students are examined according to whether they have a license for a sports branch and whether they participate in a sports competition with this license, it has been concluded that the licensed participation in sports competitions has no effect on their social skill levels. These findings show that the licensed participation of students in sports competitions has no effect on their social skill levels. In parallel with our research, Ciriş (2004) also concluded that sports status has no effect on social skill level. There was no significant difference between students' social skill levels according to gender, licensed sports status, and educational status of parents ( $p>0.05$ ). There was a significant difference in the "Negative Social Behavior" sub-dimension according to age and class variables ( $p<0.05$ ). As a result, it can be said that it is very important for students to be directed to recreational activities in order to express themselves in social environments and adapt.

## Notes

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