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**THE ANALYSIS OF THE AWARENESS STAGE OF STUDENTS THAT STUDY IN  
THE FACULTY OF SPORT SCIENCES TOWARDS THE EFFECT OF SPORT ON  
INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL DISABILITY**

**(SAMPLE of FIRAT UNIVERSITY)**

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**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this research is to determine the opinions of students that study in the faculty of sport sciences on the developments of sport in social, physical, mental and psychological dimensions upon individuals with mental disability according to some variables, and to figure out and to evaluate their awareness levels on this topic.

92 female and 132 male students (at total 224 students) that still actively study in the faculty of sport sciences of Firat University in 2015-2016 academic year spring term participated in this research voluntarily.

In research as a data collection tool, beside 5 question personal info form prepared by researcher to determine the personal info distribution of participants, 32 question “Awareness Scale for The Effect of Sport on

Individuals with Mental Disability” developed by Ilhan E,L and Esenturk O (2015) were used. Scale was comprised of 32 articles and one dimension. For the entire scale, Croanbach Alpha reliability coefficient is 0.989.

As a result; it was determined that awareness levels of female students compared to male students that study in the faculty of sport sciences in Firat University towards the developments of sport in social, physical, mental and psychological dimensions upon individuals with mental disability are higher ( $p<0.05$ ), there is no meaningfully difference among the awareness stages of individuals with mental disabilities who take physical education and sport lesson on handicapped towards the effects of sport on mentally handicapped ( $p<0.05$ ).

**Key Words:** individuals with mental disability, awareness, sport

## INTRODUCTION

Human being is a social creature. Social relations in cultural conditions have effects on society, culture and structure of individual. The whole life of individual is spent in an effort for adapting her/himself. This effort of adaptation displays development as of birth. Socialization is a formation that many complicated factors affect. In a sense, it was aimed from the socialization of individual to learn the culture s/he lives in and the other cultures connected with indirectly this culture. In another sense, socialization is that individual learns to obey the rules and values of group and adopts the system of these values. This learning process continues throughout the whole life from birth to death and within this period, relations of individuals with people and other environment factors play an important role on social adaptation (Yavuzer H, 2000).

Social development is all of societal features such as relations that person have with other people as of birth to the adult times, interests, emotions, attitude and behaviors they develop against them. In other words, socialization is a process of developing inadequate behavior for norms and value judgment which are valid in one's environment (Binbaşıoğlu C, 1995).

In terms of adaptive behavior fund that is an important point for adaptation of individual into society, individuals with mental disabilities shows inability. These inability make the social adaptation of individual into society hard, even make it impossible unless essential educational and psychological precautions aren't taken (Ersoy Ö, Avcı N, 2000).

Mental disability is that general mental functions of individual is under normal condition and moreover it is defined as inability in two or more of adaptive behaviors such as communication, self-care, domestic life, social skills, academic functions, guiding oneself, health, security, leisure and work (Ataman, 2005; Bertoti, 1999; Eripek, 1996; İlhan, 2008; Kerbs, 1995; Masi, 1998).

People with mental disability don't show performance at the level of expectations of society in terms of mental and physical activities and thus they have difficulty in adapting into environment they live in. It is possible to observe the entire or more positive effects of sport on individual that shows normal development upon also people with disabilities. Every sport activity is primarily a social experience for the handicapped. Furthermore, sport influences

differently the whole individuals that are in natural environment and supports the entire development dimensions. In our day, individuals with disability manage successfully many of the sport branches that individuals showing normal development. Participating in sport activities provide great benefits to individual on strengthening the muscles, development of coordination, balance, attitude control, flexibility, respiratory and circulating system, and preventing from spasticity (Ilhan , Esenturk , 2015).

Herguner (2015) “Sports is the performance enhancing, socializing and instructive psycho-motor activities based on mental and physical competition, assessed by the units of measurement for weight, length, time and the score, requiring planned work and obedience to the rules, performed with or without equipment, individually or as a team, by using different areas and with various purposes”(Herguner, Bar, Yaman 2016). When handling the features of social, emotional, physical, mental and movement development of individuals with mental disability, sportive activities in terms of removing many missing or failing negations serve for many purposes such as developing the feeling of belonging to group or society, aggrandizing the positive self-concept, gaining mental skills, supporting physical and psychological health. Sport activities are effective mechanisms that involve the dynamics that will overcome the negative characteristics of individuals with mental disability and considered as a rehabilitation tool from this aspect. Social interaction chances and being in an active life style can contribute to decrease the loneliness anxiety (Ilhan , Esenturk, 2015).

Because of its feature of being a social activity that provides participation for individual in dynamic social environments, sport has an important role on one’s socialization. In modern societies, sport is considered mostly as a collective activity; therefore through sportive activities individuals interesting in sport get in social relation with different human groups. Sport helps individual get rid of narrow point of view and provide chances for individual to be in contact with people from different religious, thoughts in other environments, to be affected by them and to affect them. From this aspect, it can be said that sport plays a great role in building and consolidating new friendships and social cohesion, and particularly reintegrating people with disabilities into society (Yetim A, 2005).

Awareness is that individual is informed about things needed to be known in addition to explain the meaning of environment s/he lives in with all senses, pays attention or displays sensitivity to a thing needed to be comprehended.

According to Hutton and Baumeister (1992), it is stated that high level of awareness strengthens the relation of attitude-behavior. Existence of handicapped in a society reveals their problem and requirement of integration into society. Among the entire children in handicapped groups, children with mental disability live by depending on other individuals in terms of mental functions. Therefore, it is considered that the fact that at what level individuals in society know the sport and being aware of at what level sport affects the social, physical, mental and psychological development of children directly or indirectly is important in terms of guiding the individuals with mental disability to sport.

In consideration of these explanations, the aim of this research is to determine the opinions of students that study in the faculty of sport sciences on the developments of sport in social, physical, mental and psychological dimensions upon individuals with mental disability according to some variables, and to figure out and to evaluate their awareness levels on this topic.

## **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

**Study Group:** 92 female and 132 male students (at total 224 students) that still actively study in the faculty of sport sciences of Firat University in 2015-2016 academic year spring term participated in this research voluntarily.

**Data Collection Tool:** In research as a data collection tool, beside 5 question personal info form prepared by researcher to determine the personal info distribution of participants, 32 question “Awareness Scale for The Effect of Sport on Individuals with Mental Disability” developed by Ilhan E,L and Esenturk O (2015) were used.

Scale was comprised of 32 articles and one dimension. The variance one dimension expresses is 75.083%. For the entire scale, Croanbach Alpha reliability coefficient is 0.989. This scale is a measuring scale based on individual giving info about her/himself (self-report).

**Data Collection:** Questionnaire technique within field study was used based on information that is obtained. Questionnaire technique was preferred because of the features of giving the researcher very fast and easy access to information and making it easier to reach larger sample group. 5 point Likert Scale was used to evaluate the reactions of participants for articles. In Likert scales, it is asked from individuals to grade the statements over 5 categories.

Because when the number of category gets down from 5, information loss occurs in terms of scale level; when it gets up, then significant differences couldn't be provided among the categories (Erkus, 2014). Options of positive statements are "Totally Agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree", "Totally Disagree"; and pointed as 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Options of negative statements are reversely pointed as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

**Data Analysis:** Statistical analysis of findings obtained was done in SPSS 17 package program. Frequency and percentage (%) calculations were used to determine the demographic characteristics of research group and "t-test" (independent samples t test) from parametric tests was used to measure whether there is difference among variables.

## FINDINGS

**Table 1: Awareness Point Averages of Students according to Gender Variable**

Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	sd	t	p
Female	92	13,99	19,51	2,88	0,004*
Male	132	13,18	20,67		
Total	224				

\* $p < 0,05$  is statistically significant.

In table 1, there are point averages of awareness levels of students participating in research towards social, physical, mental and psychological development of sport on individuals with mental disability according to gender variable. It was appeared that awareness levels of female students compared to males are higher and there is statistically meaningful difference between them ( $p < 0,05$ ).

**Table 2: Awareness Point Averages of Students according to Playing Sport Regularly Variable**

Playing Sport Regularly	N	$\bar{x}$	sd	t	p
Yes	128	13,60	20,16	1,26	0,206
No	96	13,24	21,32		
Total	224				

\* $p < 0,05$  is statistically significant.

In Table 2, it was stated that according to state of students playing sport regularly who are within research, awareness dimension point averages towards sport's effect on development of individuals with mental disability. According to Table 2, it was determined that students playing sports regularly have higher awareness point averages, but there is statistically difference between them and students who don't play sports regularly ( $p > 0,05$ ).

**Table 3: Handicap Type Rates of Students in Their Family or Relatives**

Handicap Type	N	%
Mentally	12	30,8
Hearing	6	15,4
Visually	4	10,3
Physically	17	43,6
Total	39	100

In Table 3, handicap types of individuals who are handicapped were determined in students' families and relatives. Accordingly, it was appeared that there are at total 39 persons who have handicapped individuals in their family or relatives, the most type of handicap is physically handicapped 43.8%, mentally handicapped are 30.8%, hearing handicapped 15.4%, visually handicapped are 4%.

**Table 4: Awareness Point Averages of Handicapped according to Variable of Physical Education and Sport Lesson**

Handicap Lesson	N	$\bar{x}$	ss	t	p
Yes	114	13,39	19,57	0,692	0,490
No	110	13,58	21,63		
Total	224				

\* $p < 0,05$  is statistically significant

In Table 4, when considering the awareness stages and point averages of students who take and don't take the physical education and sport lesson on handicapped towards the sport's effect on individuals with mental disabilities, statistically meaningful difference between the students who take and don't take the physical education and sport lesson on handicapped weren't seen ( $p > 0,05$ ).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the direction of research findings, it was appeared that awareness levels of female students towards developments of sport on individuals with mental disability in social, physical, mental and psychological dimensions are higher compared to male students (table 1  $p < 0,05$ ). It can be said that compared to male students, female students' awareness stages towards sport creating development on individuals with mental disability are at higher level and meaningful.

It was figured out that awareness point averages of students playing sport regularly are higher than students who don't play regularly; however, statistically meaningful difference between them weren't encountered (table 2,  $p > 0,05$ ). Sonuc A (2012) stated that young individuals with mental disability who play sport regularly and systematically tend to control the anger. İlhan L (2008) revealed the importance of creative activities on individuals with

disabilities in terms of integration with environment and society, building friendship and creating social acceptance. When looking the researches, positive developments occur in daily life of individuals with mental disabilities. Babkes (1999) evaluated the socializing and intra-family behavior characteristics of individuals with mental disability who play actively sports and their friends who don't play sports and stated that ones who play sports displayed more social behavior characteristics than ones who don't play sports. The fact that there is no meaningful difference between the awareness levels of students within research who play regularly sports and who don't play sports towards sport's positive developments on individuals with mental disabilities showed that the knowledge of students about sport's effects on individuals with mental disabilities isn't still at the desired level.

39 students out of 224 students within research stated that they have individuals with disabilities in their family or relatives (Table 3). When considering the number of handicap types of these individuals with disabilities, it was figured out that physically handicapped has the most number with 17 persons, and mentally handicapped with 12 persons, hearing handicapped 6 and visually handicapped with 4 persons. It was seen that there are individuals with disabilities in four types of handicap in students' family and relatives and when looking at the positive effects of sport on individuals with disabilities, it is thought that students taking education by informing them about this subject will be an acquisition for individuals with disabilities.

When considering the awareness stages and point averages of students who take and don't take the physical education and sport lesson on handicapped towards the sport's effect on individuals with mental disabilities, statistically meaningful difference between them weren't seen (Table4,  $p>0,05$ ). Approach based on knowledge has effect on attitudes for individuals with disabilities and developing the perception of them (Hasting, Hewes, Lock ve Witting, 1996, Özyürek, 1995; Tait ve Purdie 2000).

In the study of Gürsel F (2006) it was determined that Physical Education and Sport Lesson on Handicapped affected positively general attitudes of students in the department of Physical Education Sport Teacher for individuals with physically handicapped. Study gave a different result with research. While in study there is positive effect of sport on individuals with physically handicapped, in research it is appeared that there is dissolution when considering the effects of sport on mentally handicapped.

It was seen that there was no meaningful difference between the awareness levels, which sport creates on the individuals with mental disabilities, of students in the Faculty of Sport Sciences in Firat University who take physical education and sport lesson on handicapped and those who don't, and students who took this lesson have no inadequate knowledge and equipment about this lesson.

As a result, awareness levels of female students in Sport Sciences in Firat University towards the effect of sport on development in social, physical, mental and psychological

dimensions on individuals with mental disability compared to males are at higher level, the fact that there is no meaningful difference between the awareness stages of students who play regularly sports and who don't and between students who take the physical education and sport lesson on handicapped towards sport's effect on mentally handicapped is a new research subject, and it was clarified that knowledge of students isn't at desired level about this subject.

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