

# Investigation of the Motivations of Parents Leading Their Disabled Children to Sports

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to determine the motivations of the families that leading their children with mental disabilities to sports. The study is important to identify the ideas of the families living in the provinces of Muğla and Adana with children with mental disabilities intended for routing their children sports and the benefits of sports. A total of 35 families from Muğla and Adana provinces participated in the survey on a voluntary basis. The questionnaire of the research is excerpted from Keskin's (2006) study "Expectations of parents leading their children to sports". Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS 17 package program. The evaluation of research data is based on frequency and percentage analysis. %58,33 of the families participating in the study stated that "children spend their free time in sports", %66,66 of the families participating in the study stated that "the discharge of the child's energy in a positive way through sport spend", %52,7 of the families participating in the study stated that "children learn to control the aggressiveness of the child through sport", %50 of the families participating in the study stated that "sports will help the child to acquire new people and make new friends encounter", %33,3 of the families participating in the study stated that "mentally disabled children stay away from harmful substances (i.e. alcohol and cigarettes) thought to sporting events, %52,7 of the families participating in the study stated that "sports activities would be a positive contribution to the development of physical and physiological of the children with mental disabilities" and %33,3 stated that "want their children to be a successful athlete in the future". In conclusion, it could be stated that the parents are leading their disabled children to sports to spend children's free time in sports, to discharge their energy in a positive way through sport spend and to control the aggressiveness of the child through sport.

**Keywords:** *Family, Mental Disabilities, Sports*

## INTRODUCTION

It is well known that sport and physical education are necessary for a healthy life and important for all people. Sport is one of the most important tools for mentally retarded individuals who face many obstacles in normal life in order to make themselves accepted in the society. Regardless of the obstacles' degree, moving and taking parts in sports activities bring an indefinable happiness to each individual. This happiness triggers the individual's motivation for life. Along with sharing the loneliness with other people, sport also plays an important role in providing the progression of

physical and mental abilities in a healthy way (Akin, 2006).

Sport in children is generally about body control, body coordination; in other words, it means the development of neural and muscular systems. The development of basic movements such as running, jumping, climbing creates the basis of motor development (Erkal, 1996).

Family, on the other hand, is a social institution which provides the continuation of its type as a result of biological relationships and has biological, psychological, economic, legal, and similar aspects that transfer material and spiritual wealth formed in the society from the very beginning of socialization process to the day when mutual relations were started to be arranged according to some certain rules (Doğan, 2000).

A person's life starts with a social group and ends in a social group. Individuals need other people's help, support, and cooperation in order to meet their needs and lead their lives (Öztürk, 1998).

Sports activities which today concern people from all ages and is a natural requirement has become a sector that involve different application techniques according to individuals' characteristics and abilities and concern the whole society (Kale ve Ersen, 2003).

Mental disability is the condition which leads to a continuous slowness, discontinuation, and regression in mental developments and functions due to various reasons and as a result brings retardation and inability in effective, compatible behaviors (Baysal, 1986).

Being mentally retarded is; having mental functions under normal standards and having a limitation of two or more behaviors in terms of communication, self-care, domestic life, social abilities, academic functions, orientating yourself, health and security, leisure time, learning and socialization (Er, 2001). In order to determine an individual's disability, it is important to know to what extent not performing some activities affect that individual in fulfilling his roles required by his domestic, work, and social life (Özer, 2001).

In our society, it is not easy to be different from the majority and this is the same not only in our society but also in all societies. Individuals with a difference do not regard themselves as a part of that society and feel as if they do not belong to that majority. Therefore, identifying the children who are different and have unusual needs, determining how these needs can be met and how their diagnosis should be done are the issues that must be handled carefully (Ataman, 2003).

Parents' interest and level of knowledge have an impact on sport's becoming widespread in a conscious way, gaining a social dimension, and raising a healthy generation (Yetim, 2005) and the way parents nurture and direct their children decides how these children live and behave throughout their lives (Tümer, 2001) .

In the light of these data, the aim of this study is to research families' reasons for directing their children with mental disability to sports and determining these reasons.

## **RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND THE METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Model**

In this research, a questionnaire was used in order to reach the views of families who direct their mentally retarded children to sport or support their children's interest in sports regarding the sport's effect on physical, social,

psychological, and mental developments; to identify their attitudes towards recreations; to determine their expectations concerning children's showing a compatible personality through sports and controlling their aggression. .

### Population and Sample

While the research population was the families of mentally retarded children living in Muğla and Adana provinces, the research sample was the families of mentally retarded children who direct their children to sports and live in Muğla and Adana provinces.

### Data Collection Tools

The questionnaire applied in this research was taken from a study by Keskin(2006) called 'The Expectations of Parents Who Direct Their Children to Sports'. The questionnaire consists of two parts. In the first part, parents' distinctive features such as age, gender, and educational status were identified; in the second part, parents' reasons and expectations for directing their children to sports were defined. The questionnaire was delivered by hand to respondents and then collected.

### Data Analysis

In analyzing the questionnaires, SPSS 14 package program was used.

## FINDINGS

Comparing the age distribution of participants, it can be observed that the highest was 46-50 age range with %33,3, second was 51-55 age range with %27,7, and third was 40-45 age range with %22,2 whereas the lowest was 56-63 age range with % 16,6.

Regarding the respondents, 36 people including 16 men and 20 women participated in this study. While %55, 55 of the participants were female, %44,44 of them were male.

**Table 1. Occupational Distribution of Respondents**

Occupation	frequency	percentage
Teacher	8	22,22
Academic	1	2,77
Doctor	2	5,55
Self-employed	4	11,11
Officer	6	16,66
Worker	4	11,11
Housewife	9	25
Engineer	2	5,55
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

In Table 1, occupational distribution of respondents was provided. According to this table, the highest percentage belongs to housewife with n=9 and %25, second was teacher with n=8 and %22,22, third was officer with n=6 and %16,66, fourth one was self-employed and worker with the same percentage %11,11 and frequency n=4, it was followed by doctor and engineer with n=2 and %5,55, and the lowest percentage belongs to academic with % 2,77 and n=1.

Table 2. Educational Status of Respondents

Educational Status	Frequency	Percentage
Primary School	9	25
Secondary School	5	13,8
High School	7	19,4
Associate Degree	1	2,7
Bachelor's Degree	7	19,4
Master's Degree	2	5,5
Doctorate	3	8,3
Illiterate	2	5,5
Total	36	100

In Table 2, educational statuses of respondents were given. According to this data, the highest percentage belongs to primary school with %25 and n=9, second was high school and bachelor's degree with n=7 and % 19, 44, third was secondary school with n=5 and %13,88, fourth was doctorate with n=3 and %8,3, it was followed by master's degree and illiterate with n =2 and %5,5 whereas the lowest percentage belongs to associate degree with %2,7 and n=1.

Table 3. Respondents' Views on "I want my child to spend his free time with sports activities"

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	21	58,33
Agree	15	41,66
Total	36	100

Analyzing the responses in Table 3 with regard to "I want my child to spend his free time with sports activities", it was observed that with n=21 and %58,33 the participants replied 'strongly agree' and with n=15 and %41 they responded 'agree'.

Table 4. Respondents' Views on "I believe that my child will spend his energy in a positive way through sports"

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	24	66,66
Agree	12	33,33
Total	36	100

In Table 4, respondents' views on I think that my child can spend his energy in a positive way through sports" were given. According to this, with n=24 and %66,66 they answered 'strongly agree' and with n=12 and %33,33 they replied 'agree'.

Table 5. Respondents' Views on "I believe that my child will control his aggression through sports"

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	19	52,7
Agree	10	27,7
Undecided	6	16,6
Disagree	1	2,7
Total	36	100

In Table 5, respondents' views on "I think that my child will control his aggression through sports" were provided. According to this data, the highest was 'strongly agree' with n=19 and %52,7, then 'agree' with n=6 and %27,72, it was followed by 'undecided' with n=6 and %16,6 while the lowest was 'disagree' with n =1 and %2,7.

**Table 6. Respondents' Views on "I believe that my child will develop a compatible personality through sports activities"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	18	50
Agree	10	27,7
Undecided	8	22,2
Total	36	100

In Table 6, respondents' views on "I believe that my child will develop a compatible personality through sports activities" were presented. Regarding this data, the highest was 'strongly agree' with n=18 and %50 and it was followed by 'agree' with n=10 and %27,7 while the lowest was 'undecided' with n=8 and %22,2.

**Table 7. Respondents' Views on "I believe that sports will help my child meet new people and make new friends"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	18	50
Agree	17	47,2
Undecided	1	2,7
Total	36	100

In Table 7, respondents' views on "I believe that sports will help my child meet new people and make new friends" were provided. According to this; the highest was 'strongly agree' with n=18 and %50 and it was followed by 'agree' with n=17 and %47,2 whereas the lowest was 'undecided' with n=1 and %2,7.

**Table 8. Respondents' Views on "I believe that my child will develop a sense of responsibility through sports"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	38,8
Agree	11	30,5
Undecided	8	22,2
Disagree	3	8,3
Total	36	100

In Table 8, the distribution of respondents' views on "I believe that my child will develop his sense of responsibility through sports" was illustrated. According to this; the highest was 'strongly agree' with n=14 and %38,8, second was 'agree' with n=11 and %30,5, it was followed by 'undecided' with n=8 and %22,2, and the lowest was 'disagree' with n=3.

**Table 9. Respondents' Views on "I think that my child will avoid selfishness through sports activities"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	33,3
Agree	13	36,1
Undecided	4	11,1
Disagree	7	19,4
Total	36	100

In Table 9, respondents' answers about "I think that my child will avoid selfishness through sports activities" were presented. According to this data; the highest was 'agree' with n=13 and %36,1, second was 'strongly agree' with n=12 and %33,3, it was followed by 'undecided' with n=4 and %11,1, and the lowest was 'disagree' with n=7 and %19,4.

**Table 10. Respondents' Views on "I believe that my child will develop his sense of cooperation through sports activities"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	16	44,4
Agree	11	30,5
Undecided	5	13,8
Disagree	4	11,1
Total	36	100

In Table 10, respondents' views on "I believe that my child will develop his sense of cooperation through sports activities" were given. According to this; the highest was 'strongly agree' with n=16 and %44,4, second was 'agree' with n=11 and %30,5, it was followed by 'undecided' with n=5 and %13,8, and the lowest was 'disagree' with n=4 and %11,1.

**Table 11. Respondents' Views on "I believe that my child will have a healthier and better posture through sports activities"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	16	44,4
Agree	13	36,1
Undecided	6	16,6
Disagree	1	2,77
Total	36	100

In Table 11, respondents' views on "I believe that my child will have a healthier and better posture through sports activities" were shown. According to results; the highest percentage belongs to 'strongly agree' with %44,4 and n=16, second was 'agree' with n=13 and %36,1, third was 'undecided' with n=6 and %16,6, and the lowest was 'disagree' with n=1 and %2,7.

**Table 12. Respondents' Views on "Sports activities help my child avoid and eliminate stress"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	16	44,4
Agree	15	41,6
Undecided	3	8,3
Disagree	2	5,5
Total	36	100

In Table 12, respondents' views on "Sports activities help my child avoid and eliminate stress" were provided. According to this table; the highest was 'strongly agree' with n=16 and %44,4, second was 'agree' with n=15 and %41,6, third was 'undecided' with n=3 and %8,3, and the lowest was 'disagree' with n=2 and %5,5.

**Table 13. Respondents' Views on "Sports activities help my child increase his creativity"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	12	33,3
Agree	13	36,1
Undecided	8	22,2
Disagree	3	8,3
Total	36	100

In Table 13, respondents' views on "Sports activities help my child increase his creativity" were illustrated. Regarding the table, it was observed that responses of 'agree' with n=13 and %36,1, 'strongly agree' with n=12 and %33,3, 'undecided' with n=8 and %22,2, and 'disagree' with n=3, and %8,3 were given.

**Table 14. Respondents' Views on "My child spends his free time in an entertaining and joyful way by gaining the habit of doing sports"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	22	61,1
Agree	13	36,1
Undecided	1	2,7
Total	36	100

In Table 14, respondents' views on "My child spends his free time in an entertaining and joyful way by gaining the habit of doing sports" were given. According to this table; responses were 'strongly agree' with n=22 and %61,1, 'agree' with n=13 and %36,1, and 'undecided' with n=1 and %2,7.

**Table 15. Respondents' Views on "My child improves his self-confidence by experiencing a sense of success through sports activities"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	38,8
Agree	15	41,6
Undecided	2	5,5
Disagree	5	13,8
Total	36	100

In Table 15, respondents' views on "My child improves his self-confidence by experiencing a sense of success through sports activities" were provided. According to table; the results were 'agree' with n=15 and %41,6, 'strongly agree' with n=14 and %38,8, 'disagree' with n=5 and %13,8, and 'undecided' with n=2 and %5,5.

**Table 16. Respondents' Views on "I believe that my child will have a healthier body through sports activities"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	17	47,2
Agree	16	44,4
Undecided	3	8,3
Total	36	100

In Table 16, respondents' views on "I believe that my child will have a healthier body through sports activities" were shown. Regarding the table, the responses were 'strongly agree' with n=17 and %47,2, 'agree' with n=16 and %44,4, and 'undecided' with n=3 and %8,3.

**Table 17. Respondents' Views on "I believe that my child will develop an active life style through sports activities"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	16	44,4
Agree	10	27,7
Undecided	5	13,8
Disagree	3	8,3
Strongly Disagree	2	5,5
Total	36	100

In Table 17, respondents' views on "I believe that my child will develop an active life style through sports activities" were given. According this table, responses were; 'strongly agree' with n=16 and %44,4, 'agree' with n=10 and %27,7, 'undecided' with n=5 and %13,8, 'disagree' with n=3 and %8,3, and 'strongly disagree' with n=2 and %5,5.

**Table 18. Respondents' Views on "I believe that my child will make friends and experience the sense of sharing through sports activities"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	15	41,6
Agree	12	33,3
Undecided	4	11,1
Disagree	5	13,8
Total	36	100

In Table 18, respondents' views on "I believe that my child will make friends and experience the sense of sharing through sports activities" were presented. The responses were; 'strongly agree' with n=15 and %41,6, 'agree' with n=12 and %33,3, 'disagree' with n=5 and %13,8, and 'undecided' with n=4 and %11,1.

**Table 19. Respondents' Views on "My child gains the habit of an adequate and balanced diet through sports activities"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	14	38,8
Agree	19	52,7
Undecided	3	8,3
Total	36	100

In Table 19, respondents' views on "My child gains the habit of an adequate and balanced diet through sports activities" were illustrated. According to this table, the highest was 'agree' with n=19 and %52,7, it was followed by 'strongly agree' with n=14 and %38,8, and the lowest was 'undecided' with n=3 and %8,3.



**Table 20. Respondents' Views on "I believe that my child will avoid smoking, alcohol, and other harmful substances through sports activities"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	11	30,5
Agree	12	33,3
Undecided	11	30,5
Disagree	2	5,5
Total	36	100

In Table 20, respondents' views on "I believe that my child will avoid smoking, alcohol, and other harmful substances through sports activities" were given. The responses were; 'agree' with n=12 and %33,3, 'strongly agree' and 'undecided' with n=11 and %30,5, and then 'disagree' with n=2 and % 5,5.

**Table 21. Respondents' Views on "I directed my child to sports as I wanted him to be a successful sportsman in the future"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	1	2,7
Agree	9	25
Undecided	3	8,3
Disagree	11	30,5
Strongly Disagree	12	33,3
Total	36	100

In Table 21, respondents' views on "I directed my child to sports as I wanted him to be a successful sportsman in the future" were provided. According to this table, the results were; 'strongly disagree' with n=12 and %33,3, 'disagree' with n=11 and %30,5, 'agree' with n=9 and %25, 'undecided' with n=3 and %8,3, and 'strongly agree' with n=1 and %2,7.

**Table 22. Respondents' Views on "I believe that sports activities will have a positive effect on my child's physical and physiological development"**

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	19	52,7
Agree	14	38,8
Undecided	3	8,3
Total	36	100

In Table 22, respondents' views on "I believe that sports activities will have a positive effect on my child's physical and physiological development" were presented. The responses were; 'strongly agree' with n=19 and %52,7, 'agree' with n=14 and %38,8, and 'undecided' with n=3 and %8,3.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, a questionnaire was applied in order to determine the reasons and expectations of families who direct their mentally retarded children to sports and live in Muğla and Adana provinces.

Regarding the age distribution of respondents, it can be observed that the highest was 46-50 age range with %33,3, second was 51-55 age range with %27,7, and third was 40-45 age range with %22,2 whereas the lowest was 56-63 age range with % 16,6.

Concerning the gender distribution of respondents, 36 people including 16 men and 20 women participated in

this study. While 55% of the participants were female, 44.44% of them were male.

Regarding the occupational distribution of the respondents, it was observed that the highest percentage belongs to housewife with 25%. It was followed by teacher with 22.22%, officer with 16.66%, self-employed and worker with 11.11%, doctor and engineer with 5.55%, and the lowest percentage belongs to academic with 2.77%.

In terms of the respondents' educational status, it was pointed that highest percentage belongs to primary school with 25%, then high school and bachelor's degree with 19.44%, secondary school with 13.88%, doctorate with 8.3%, master's degree and illiterate with 5.5%, and the lowest percentage belongs to associate degree with 2.7%.

It was noted that the majority of the respondents wanted their children to spend their free time with sports activities as 58.33% of respondents answered 'strongly agree' and 41% of them replied 'agree'. It was found that these results show parallelism with the results of a similar study by Keskin (2006). It is remarkable that in this study respondents preferred their children to spend their free time with sports activities.

It was observed that concerning the statement about believing that children would spend their energy in a positive way through sports, respondents gave an affirmative response since 66.66% of them replied 'strongly agree' and 33.33% of them answered 'agree'.

Regarding the statement about believing that children would control their aggression through sports activities, the majority of respondents with 52.7% replied 'strongly agree' and 27.72% of them answered 'agree'.

It was noticed that concerning the statement about believing that sports would help children meet new people and make new friends, 50% of respondents stated 'strongly agree' and 47.2% of them remarked 'agree'.

Analyzing the percentages of a statement about believing that their mentally retarded children would avoid smoking, alcohol, and other harmful substances through sports activities, 33.3% of respondents replied 'agree' and 30.5% of them answered 'strongly agree'. Also, in a study called "The Expectation of Parents Who Direct Their Children to Sports" by Keskin (2006), it was acknowledged that parents believed that sports would keep their children away from smoking, alcohol, and other harmful substances and the percentage for male respondents was 79.2% and 75.4% for female respondents.

It was observed that the answers of the respondents who believed that sports would have a positive effect on their children's physical and physiological development was 'strongly agree' with 52.7% and 'agree' with 38.8%.

The responses about directing children to sports for being a successful sportsman in the future were as following; 'strongly disagree' with 33.3%, 'disagree' with 30.5%, 'agree' with 25%, 'undecided' with 8.3% and 'strongly agree' with 2.7%. According to this study, it was found out that the majority of parents did not direct their children to sports in order to be successful sportsman in the future.

It was not encountered a specific research about the disabled children parents' motivation leading them towards sports in literature. But in general, a lot of research can be found about motivation of families orienting children in sport. Gill et al. (1983) listed the main motivations of parents directing the children in sports as "acquire the habit of making regular sport", "team spirit", "health protection and development". Çekipkurt(2005), found that in his research made with the parents who is showing extreme interest in their child's sport; for these parents the main participation

factors are listed as physical development, athletic skill and competition. On the other hand in a study made by Kilcigil (2003) with Turkish parents, their main answers for leading their children in football were “that’s what the kid want” and “to obtain financial gain from child” has listed. Pehlivan (2009), found that the most important expectations of families referring their children to sports were “acquire the habit of making regular sport” and “to gain team spirit (sharing, cooperation, and solidarity)” in another study.

As a result, in this study, it was observed that the effective reasons for parents to direct their children to sports were that they preferred their children to spend their free time with sports activities and they believed that their children would learn how to control their aggression and spend their energy in a positive way.

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