



**ROLE OF SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN THE  
SOCIALIZATION PROCESS OF STREET CHILDREN  
(A PILOT STUDY)**

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**Abstract:**

This article deals with the socio-cultural and socio-economical features of the street children and the effect of sport activities upon their socialization. The study was carried out upon 133 children who live or work in the streets of Ankara with or without home fitting perfectly well in the description of “street children” who had been involved in sports at various degrees before... the data were collected by the use of the 69 question socialization scale developed by Şahan (2007). The data obtained were evaluated by the use of SPSS statistical software. The data were first subjected to frequency analysis and listed in tabular manner. The percentage of the variables in the sample was determined and the features of the sample were first subjected to a general evaluation process. Then the analysis process to be applied to hypotheses was started and the raw data were evaluated by the use of Mann Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis Non-parametric Test. It was concluded that there was not a statistically significant difference between the socialization levels of the children interested and not interested in sports according to gender and the income levels of the families. On the other hand, there was significant difference in the socialization levels of the children if the interest in sports and family income parameters are considered together.

**Keywords:** street children, physical education, sports, socialization

## 1. Introduction

Childhood period is an important developmental stage and the childhood years are of great importance for the achievement of a productive maturity. The children have certain needs and the satisfaction of these needs is of utmost importance as regards to their future mental development. However, the considerable portion of the children of the world lacks in adequate life standards (Acar, 2010).

The case of the children living or working in streets is a problem which is at the top of the world's agenda which requires urgent measures to be taken. Today it is estimated to be 200 million children living in streets deprived from adequate education, health services even from basic rights (Güngör, 2008). These are generally the children of the families who emigrated from rural areas to urban areas due to the reasons such as land reform, drought, poverty, population boost and redundancy (Swift, 1989). The street children left their homes or lost their ties with their parents due to the reasons such as being deserted, neglected or subjected to violence (Ennew, 2003).

The children living in streets work in very hard jobs starting at very early ages which jeopardize their development, health, education and futures. The type of job, the working hours and working conditions can pose a great risk for the children (O'Donnel, 2004).

The entrance of the children to the working world without living their childhood causes them to be alienated from the society and the inhibition of their socialization development. However, socialization is a lifelong dynamic process starting from the birth. The child improves his /her beliefs, targets, skills, and virtues he/she uses for his/her guidance, during this process.

Socialization is defined as the development of the values and behaviors in accordance to the norms valid in the society (Binbaşıoğlu, 1982). It is also described as acquiring the cultural values of the society, to get ready entering the adult world and implement these behaviors and skills in his/her life (Bilen, 1994). The socialization process is also described as the person being able to carry out the responsibility and the duties appropriate to his/her capacity, to establish good coordination with the others and act in good accordance with customs of his/her family and the society (MEB, 2007). Although the major factors affecting the socialization process of children are family, social environment and mass communication devices; doing sports have been found to be highly effective upon this process.

Sports are a collective activity which enables the children to easily establish social interaction with different people and groups. It also makes the people leaving

their narrow worlds, establishing close ties, exchanging thoughts and interacting with each others (Çaha, 1999). Spots essentially, mean all the physical activities that involve all kinds of voluntary participation (Başoğlu and Şekeroğlu, 2016). This study tries to elucidate the role of sports in socialization process of the street children.

## **2. Method**

This part is related to the experimental group, data collection tools, collection of data and analyses of the data.

### **2.1 Experimental Group**

This study is participated by 133 children (male 82, female 51; age of between 11-17) who perfectly fit the description of the street children who live or work in the street of Ankara, homeless or with home and did sports or participated in no sportive activity.

### **2.2 Data Collection Tools**

The data collection scale used for the street children was the survey method prepared from socialization scales such as Hacettepe Personality Inventory, Sociology-Autonomy Scale, Social Comparison Scale, Social Comparison, Acquaintance Scale and Personal Information Form successfully applied before. The scale prepared was subjected to a pilot study and the unnecessary, confusing or misleading questions were discarded from it. The first part of the survey was consisted of the questions related to the demographic information of the participants. The second part contains 34 questions under the title of socialization. The third part was consisted of 35 questions under the heading of socialization and sports. The questions were constructed as a 5 choice Likert type survey questions (Şahan, 2007).

### **2.3 Collection of Data**

After taking the necessary permission and ethics committee from Gazi University Physical Education and Sports Faculty, the researchers briefed the street children on the study they were about to participate. But also, families of children with their families, joined the family without her consent allowing the foundation to protect the street children were taken and recommendations. The children mainly came from Altındağ, Mamak and Çankaya towns of Ankara. The children reluctant to participate at the study were not chosen.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

After the completion of the data collection process the data obtained were transferred to the SPSS (21) program for the final analysis. The first step of the data evaluation was the frequency analysis and forming the related tables. The percentages of the variables in the whole sample were tabulated in a format form for a general evaluation. The second step was the detailed analyses of the hypotheses established by the use of Mann Whitney U test (Altunışık et al., 2004) and Kruskal-Wallis Nonparametric Test (Neuman, 1999). The results were listed in a tabulated manner.

## 3. Results

**Table 1:** The socialization levels of the children according to their gender

The factor related to the socialization	Male		Female		Mann-Whitney U Test	
	Mean	SD.	Mean	SD.	Z	SİG. (p_value)
1. I prefer to be as far away as from the crowded areas.	3.02	1.26	3.06	1.31	-.096	.923>0.05
2. I act selectively in the establishment of relation with the persons in a crowd of people.	3.65	1.32	3.50	1.50	-.342	.733>0.05
3. A person can easily establish relations with me in a crowd of people.	3.88	1.24	3.74	1.27	-.697	.486>0.05
4. I act as a leader to the society in social events.	2.68	1.21	3.00	1.05	-1.592	.111>0.05
5. I love to participate all sorts of social activities.	3.75	1.22	3.98	1.14	-1.048	.295>0.05
6. I prefer to help the people rather than involving discussion with them in front of the people.	4.20	1.07	4.08	1.25	-.060	.952>0.05
7. I am quite successful in orienting people in social events.	3.06	1.15	3.34	.84	-1.314	.189>0.05
8. I feel reluctant to establish dialogues with the people I meet for the first time.	3.08	1.32	2.62	1.30	-1.939	.053>0.05
9. I generally feel secluded in the society.	2.98	1.51	2.41	1.28	-2.105	.035<0.05
10. I easily establish coordination with the people in the society.	4.01	1.10	3.58	1.12	-2.448	.014<0.05
11. The people who attend social activities are in peace with themselves.	4.00	.96	3.79	1.16	-.804	.421>0.05
12. I could acquire and express my personal skills and virtues by participating the social activities	3.93	1.09	3.74	1.17	-.966	.334>0.05
13. If I am together with the person I love, I forget all my troubles and worries.	3.87	1.16	3.68	1.25	-.827	.408>0.05

14. I am in the opinion that the society will be much better if the people are allowed to act as they wish.	3.56	1.21	3.34	1.33	-.949	.343>0.05
15. I don't justify the people who violate social rules.	3.81	1.22	3.86	1.32	-.417	,677>0.05
16. I am a person who is firmly attached social values (customs, beliefs etc.).	3.30	1.39	3.03	1.34	-1.159	,246>0.05
17. The behavior of the people who act against the social values disturbs me.	3.70	1.31	3.56	1.34	-.666	.505>0.05
18. I cannot be tolerant against the people who violate the social reconciliation.	3.72	1.11	3.12	1.31	-2.594	.009<0.05
19. I contribute to the decisions taken about the family.	3.69	1.17	3.93	1.06	-1.131	,258>0.05
20. I don't like to obey the decisions taken by the respected people of the family every time.	3.39	1.40	2.80	1.17	-2.573	.010<0.05
21. My family is always tolerant towards my opinions and behaviors.	3.49	1.34	3.76	1.15	-1.002	.317>0.05
22. The difference between the values of my family and the society does not concern me.	3.30	1.16	3.26	.99	-.469	.639>0.05
23. My family plays a decisive role in the determination of my friends.	3.32	1.28	3.34	1.31	-.118	.906>0.05
24. I am quite disturbed with the people making judgment about my actions and try to lead me.	3.83	1.22	3.80	1.19	-.273	.785>0.05
25. School is an effective factor for the people coming from different cultures, meeting each other and promotes the social integration.	3.92	1.07	3.83	1.07	-.558	.557>0.05
26. School plays an important role of the person adapting to respect the social and personal rights.	3.78	1.11	3.92	.92	-.474	.636>0.05
27. I do not like to make selections based on age, gender, belief etc. when I attend social activities.	3.46	1.31	3.37	1.48	-.178	.858>0.05
28. When people are in need I do not hesitate to act in a way even if it opposes my personality?	3.46	1.19	3.06	1.15	-1.911	.056>0.05
29. I like meeting new people and organizing social activities.	3.74	1.29	4.05	1.17	-1.497	.134>0.05
30. The school is the first step in the establishment of social dialogue among the people coming from different groups.	3.79	1.13	3.97	1.16	-1.270	.204>0.05
31. I respect the values of the people coming from different cultures.	4.14	1.07	3.89	1.19	-1.307	.191>0.05
32. Everybody should be able to freely live and express their own cultural values.	4.20	1.05	3.96	1.23	-1.074	.283>0.05
33. Different cultural values are the basic dynamics of social peace and harmony.	4.00	1.15	3.58	1.09	-2.379	.017<0.05
34. The main value which makes us different than	4.00	1.04	3.56	1.17	-2.191	.028<0.05

other cultures is the fact that people coming from different cultures are able to live together in peace and harmony.						
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It is seen from the table the socialization level of the children shows a significant difference in 6 out of 34 articles according to their gender. Therefore, according to Mann-Whitney U results of the table there is not a significant change in the socialization levels of the children according to their gender.

**Table 2:** The socialization levels of the children according to their interest in sports

Interest in sports	N	Mean value	Standard deviation	Z	SİG. (p_value)
Yes	102	123.36	17.94	-1.509	.131
No	31	111.19	31.05		

The table compares the relation between the interest of sport and socialization levels of children. The number of children who had an interest and no interest in sports are 102 and 32. It is instantly apparent that the socialization levels and the standard deviation of the children who have an interest upon sports' were much higher than the children have no interest in it. The average socialization point of the children who have an interest in sports is much higher than the ones who have no or little interest (123.26 vs. 111.19). The significance of these results is verified by the use of Mann-Whitney U test and the test values were found as  $Z = -1.509$   $p > 0.05$  which indicate that there is not a statistically significant difference between the socialization level of the children who have an interest in sports and the children who have very little or no interest in it.

**Table 3:** The socialization levels of the children according to family income

	Average value	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum	$\chi^2$ statistics	Significance (p_value)
<b>Total socialization points</b>	120.52	22.18	39.00	157.00	12.332	.031
<b>Family income</b>	1066.49	600.22	130	3900		

Table 3 shows the socialization levels of the children according to family income. The average and the standard deviation values of the social levels of the children were found to be 120.52 and 22.18. The average income and the standard deviation of the family income were 1066.49 and 600.22. The socialization levels of the children according to family income was subjected to Kruskal-Wallis one way Anova test and

the test results were found to be  $\chi^2=12.332$  and  $p<0.05$ . This results indicate that the socialization levels show a significant difference with the income level the families.

**Table 4:** The socialization levels of the children participated the study according to gender and sports

The factors related to socialization and sports	Male		Female		Mann-Whitney U Test	
	Average	Std. dev.	ORT	STD. SAP.	Z	SİG. (p_value)
1. The factors for choosing the sport I am interested are my personal interest and skills	3.03	1.40	3.03	1.24	-.044	.965>0.05
2. I found myself much more successful in individual sports	3.45	1.65	3.64	1.30	-.056	.955>0.05
3. If I decide to do something in sports, I don't care about the opinions of the others.	3.46	1.30	3.94	1.22	-1.965	.049<0.05
4. I like doing sports with the people from every age group, gender and income levels.	2.46	1.07	2.91	1.17	-1.724	.085>0.05
5. I don't behave the way outside my principles in order to satisfy the other people.	3.61	1.47	3.91	1.09	-.626	.531>0.05
6. It is not important for me to be appreciated or loved by the other people in sport activities.	4.09	1.35	4.17	1.07	-.289	.773>0.05
7. The people may know me much better in sports activities.	2.77	1.05	3.29	1.02	-2.352	.019<0.05
8. One of the most favorite things in my life is doing sports with the people I don't know.	2.90	1.35	2.91	1.32	-.050	.960>0.05
9. I feel secluded in team sports.	2.51	1.36	2.84	1.47	-.980	.327>0.05
10. I don't like to keep my feelings under control throughout the sporting activities.	3.30	1.36	4.01	.99	-2.564	.010<0.05
11. I always take the role of the team leader in team sports.	3.63	1.21	4.01	.97	-1.469	.142>0.05
12. I am successful in directing the team in sporting activities.	3.63	1.40	3.93	1.02	-.703	.482>0.05
13. The people doing sports are reconciled with themselves.	4.00	1.25	3.74	1.18	-1.326	.185>0.05
14. I prefer the solution of the problems during the sporting activities rather than discussing them.	3.10	1.44	3.58	1.18	-1.630	.103>0.05
15. I love to assist the organization of the sporting activities.	3.61	1.49	3.90	1.17	-.693	.488>0.05
16. I like to participate in every type of sporting activities.	3.06	1.38	3.24	1.37	-.604	.546>0.05
17. I always fight for my rights and say the truth	3.53	1.33	3.68	1.32	-.622	.534>0.05

even if the other people reject me.						
18. I prefer team sports activities.	3.06	1.33	3.62	1.17	-2.119	.034<0.05
19. Sports establish the integration between the societies.	3.72	1.25	3.80	1.11	-.155	.877>0.05
20. I express myself in a more unrestricted manner in sports activities.	3.10	1.25	3.20	1.37	-.425	.671>0.05
21. Sport activities establish the social integration.	3.64	1.40	3.58	1.24	-.469	.639>0.05
22. Can the behavior which does not comply with the norms be tolerated in sports activities (obscene words and behaviors not complying with the sportsmanship).	3.00	1.19	3.37	1.06	-1.634	.102>0.05
23. I prefer to have my own values rather than being a member of a group	3.03	1.35	3.42	1.26	-1.375	.169>0.05
24. Sports make a positive contribution to the communication between the people.	3.62	1.37	3.88	1.16	-.815	.415>0.05
25. I quickly adopt to score in every sporting activity.	3.56	1.25	3.98	.99	-1.624	.104>0.05
26. I can establish communication much more easily with others in sporting activities.	3.53	1.22	3.92	.97	-1.628	.103>0.05
27. Sport education plays an important role for training the people which serves well for the society.	3.19	1.51	3.50	1.33	-.892	.372>0.05
28. Sport enables the exploration of the individual skills.	2.93	1.31	3.42	1.13	-1.938	.053>0.05
29. Sports make the people develop positive feelings against others in the society.	3.54	1.41	3.96	1.19	-1.491	.136>0.05
30. It is difficult for me to be away from the people I love.	3.40	1.45	4.00	1.00	-1.916	.055>0.05
31. I love to spend my spare time with other people.	3.73	1.38	4.15	1.01	-1.308	.191>0.05
32. I love to do sports with my friends.	3.74	1.38	4.22	1.01	-1.666	.096>0.05
33. My family and my surroundings have the pivotal role in the selection of the sport I am doing.	3.61	1.20	3.91	1.12	-1.312	.189>0.05
34. I prefer helping other people rather than they are helping me.	3.32	1.37	3.99	.96	-2.434	.015<0.05
35. I prefer to do activities to make the people enjoy rather than doing individual activities.	4.85	1.56	4.52	1.27	-1.301	.172>0.05

The table indicates that there are only five articles among 34 that significant differences were observed in the socialization levels of the children according to their gender. Therefore, according to the Mann-Whitney U test data in general there is a not



significant change in the socialization levels of the children related to sports on gender basis.

**Table 5:** The socialization level of the children who participated the study according to their interest in sports

Interest in sports	N	Average value	Standard deviation	Z	Significance (p_value)
Yes	102	128.50	20.31	-2.574	.010
No	31	111.00	33.48		

The table lists the difference in the socialization level of children according to their interest in sports. According to the Table the number of children who are interested in sports in various degrees is three times higher than the number of children who have no interest in it (102 versus 31).The average socialization points of the children interested in sports are 128.50 with a standard deviation of 20.31 while these figures are 111.00 with standard deviation of 33.48 for the students who have no interest in it. The result of Mann-Whitney U test are  $Z = -2.574$   $p < 0.05$  which show that there is a statistically significant difference in the socialization levels of the ones who are interested and not interested in sports.

**Table 6:** The socialization level of the children who participated the study according to the family income

	Average value	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum	$\chi^2$ statistics	Significance (p_value)
Total Socialization points	124.42	25.01	45.00	175.00	17.332	.314
Income level of the family	1066.49	600.22	130	3900		

Table 6 compares the relation of the socialization level of the children according to the income levels of their families. The average socialization value was found to be 124.42 with a standard deviation of 25.01. The average family income level of the families of the children was found to be 1066.49 TL with a standard deviation of 600.22TL. The results of Kruskal-Wallis one way Anova test are found to be  $\chi^2=17.332$  and  $p > 0.05$  which shows that the difference in socialization level of the children according to their family income is of statistical significance.

#### 4. Discussions and Conclusions

Street children are a very delicate subject which needs a thorough investigation to take the necessary steps. The development a healthy generation and the eradication of this problem are largely dependent on the uninterrupted education of these children and their integration with the society. One of the basic and a very effective tool of their social integration and socialization process is sports.

As a social concept sports plays an important role for the development and changing the personalities of the people and establishing a healthy generation. When we consider the effects of sports upon the socialization process, it is obvious that it has a great potential for the establishment of an ever lasting peace by promoting the fraternity among the people and countries (Özdinç, 2005).

This study carried out upon the socialization levels of the street children revealed a significant difference according to their gender (Table 2).

The Kruskal-Wallis one way Anova test results reveal that the socialization levels of the children is not significantly related with the income levels of the families. These results are in good compliance with the results presented in the Tunçalp's (2011) article entitled "The Role of Physical Education and Sports Activities on The Socialization Process of The Selected Secondary Education Students" and the study of Turgut et al (2003).

The street children alienated from their home, due to the lack of parental control, adopt streets as their new habitat, and leave their education uncompleted which deprives them from the socio cultural development compared the ones who completed their educations. The biggest factor for the socio- cultural development of the children is the school and its absence weakens their social ties, forces them to live in abject conditions in streets, and makes them susceptible to all sorts of crimes. Therefore, every effort must be made to have them continue their education by the use of social, cultural and sportive activities. The families with the low income levels must be assisted by the governmental and non-governmental organizations to urge their children for the participation of the sports activities.

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