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# Niveles de integración social de los deportistas: un análisis multivariable

## Levels of social integration of athletes: an analysis multivariable

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**Recibido:** 04 de enero de 2021

Aceptado: 20 de julio de 2021

## Abstract

The aim of the present study is to investigate the social integration dimensions of athletes in terms of different variables. A total of 213 athletes voluntarily participated in the study, and data collection tools included personal information form to elicit demographic information and the "Social Integration in Sports Scale", the validity and reliability study of which was approved by Cronbach's Alpha = 0.96). In the analysis of the data obtained, SPSS 22.0 package program was used, and Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal-Wallis Test were performed. As a result of the analysis, in general a significant difference was found in terms of the emotional development, physical development, development of relations in group, social development and national cultural development of athletes according to different demographic characteristics (p<0.05). Consequently, when the analyses performed and the relevant literature are examined, it can be stated that doing sports has positive effects on the social integration levels of individuals.

Keywords: Sports, Athletes, Sociology, Social Integration, Relations in group.

## Resumen

El objetivo del presente estudio es investigar las dimensiones de integración social de los deportistas en términos de diferentes variables. Un total de 213 atletas participaron voluntariamente en el estudio, y las herramientas de recolección de datos incluyeron el formulario de información personal para obtener información demográfica y la "Escala de Integración Social en el Deporte", cuyo estudio de validez y confiabilidad fue aprobado por Alfa de Cronbach = 0,96. En el análisis de los datos obtenidos se utilizó el programa paquete SPSS 22.0 y se realizaron las pruebas U de Mann-Whitney y las pruebas de Kruskal-Wallis. Como resultado del análisis, en general se encontró una diferencia significativa en cuanto al desarrollo emocional, desarrollo físico, desarrollo de relaciones en grupo, desarrollo social y desarrollo cultural nacional de los deportistas según diferentes características demográficas (p <0.05). En consecuencia, cuando se

<sup>a</sup>Correspondencia al autor E-mail: gamze\_dryhngl@hotmail.com examinan los análisis realizados y la literatura relevante, se puede afirmar que la práctica de deporte tiene efectos positivos en los niveles de integración social de los individuos.

Palabras clave: Deportes, Deportistas, Sociología, Integración social, Relaciones en grupo.

## Introduction

From the moment a person is born, s/he develops a sense of self by interacting with his/her environment (Mckay & Fanning, 2018). Since human being is a social being, his life journey creates an urge to become a member of a group by adopting the feeling of "us". Human beings' having the fear and anxiety of not being able to live without others and the fear of being alone is based on the complex phenomenon of socialization (Yilan, 2012; Kiliç, 2012; Pieper, 2012). Therefore, human beings maintain their lives as a social being that has the fear of not being able to interact with others.

In the sociological sense, society is formed by different groups, institutions and classes within its structure, and their continuous network of interrelations, and so it is defined as a concept including integrity (Bottomore, et al., 2006; Peters, 2020). The harmony between the elements that make up the society is the main focus of the studies about social integration (Karaca, 2012). Individuals' developing sense of belonging to society is ensured by societies' adoption of social integration (Fichter, 2009). Even Perceived Coaching Behaviors are effective in this situation (Sari & Bayazıt, 2017). According to Bradbury et al. (2020), social integration creates the belief in the individual that life is controllable, it provides a sense of meaning in life and enhances self-confidence, contributes to understanding of self, promotes a positive effect and practices social norms.

Also, social integration is specified as the socialization process and it refers to the interaction process that enables the transmission of internal and external behaviour patterns in accordance with a specific purpose within a group in which an individual is involved (Aslantürk & Amman, 1999). Many factors such as rapidly growing social networking sites and the evolution of social behaviours affect the social integration process of individuals (Vromen, Xenos, & Loader, 2015).

According to the definition provided by Yilmaz, Karli and Yetim (2006), social integration is the integrity of not only the material but also spiritual cultural elements, and their complementing each other in a meaningful way and forming a functioning whole. Coşkun (2004), on the other hand, defined social integration as harmony, union, unity and balance. In short, social integration can be defined as managing a process of commitment, harmony, balanced life and unification by minimizing the differences of individuals who make up the society in order to enable them to serve for the same purpose.

It can be seen that sports have a special place due to its unique characteristics and the features it embodies within itself (Ünlü, 2020). Today, sports are viewed as a means of social integration since it helps individuals to be involved in social groups and integrate with the society (Özdinç, 2005; Doğan et al., 2018). Each individual may have one or more reasons for participating in sports (Ekıncı, Bıskın & Ustun, 2017). For its part, Diaz et al. (2019) and Blauwet and Willick (2012) stated in the studies they conducted that sports is an essential factor in the social integration of individuals with disabilities. Therefore, various sports activities performed by individuals for different purposes reduce their feelings of inferiority while increasing their level of communication with other individuals and integrating them with the group they belong to (Rusu & Rusu, 2017).

According to Yetim (2015), besides its benefits in terms of social integration, sports also reintegrate people into society by making them stronger, improving their social and cultural tastes, increasing their sensitivity and cooperation skills. In addition, it strengthens the understanding of cooperation by developing the sense of love and respect for other people and encouraging social friendship. Also, it contributes to both individual and social development by raising individuals who are socially responsible and have the habits of working and resting in a planned way (Yetim, 2015).

For the other hand, sports activities performed both recreationally and professionally also have a function to reintroduce some excluded groups into society such as women, ethnic minorities, the poor, the disabled, the elderly, young people/children (Collins & Kay, 2003: 25-6) and sexual minorities (Silva & Howe, 2012). Sport is a major phenomenon that fulfils the function of social integration not only today but also from past to present. As a general evaluation, an individual's sense of belonging to the society in which they live will greatly contribute to their social integration. It can be concluded from the literature review that one of the most important tools in this process is sports. Accordingly, the purpose of our study is to investigate the social integration levels of athletes in terms of several variables.

#### Methodology

This study was designed according to survey model, one of the quantitative research methods. Survey models are the research approaches that aim to describe a past or present situation as it is (Karasar, 2009). A total of 213 athletes, including female (n = 62) and male (n = 151) professional athletes from different branches in Ankara province, voluntarily participated in the study. Data collection tools used in the study are personal information form prepared by the researchers to elicit information about the participants' gender, age, reasons for starting sports,

financial gain from sports and time spent for sports and the "Social Integration in Sports Scale" whose validity and reliability study was conducted by Doğan (2011).

The analysis of the data obtained was performed using SPSS 22.0 package program. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to analyse whether the data showed normal distribution or not, and it was determined that it did not show normal distribution. The demographic information of the participants was presented by frequency and percentage, and Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal-Wallis Test were used in group comparisons. Data analysis was evaluated at 95% confidence interval and p <0.05 significance level (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.96).

#### Results

This study was conducted in order to evaluate the social integration levels of athletes in terms of gender, age, sports age, reasons for starting sports, and earn financial earning from sports. The results obtained are presented in the tables below.

### Table 1

Frequency and percentage distributions

Gender	F	%
Female	62	29,1
Male	151	70,9
Age	f	%
18-22	86	40,4
23-27	72	33,8
28-32	30	14,1
33-+33	25	11,7
What is your reason to start sports?	f	%
Family	40	18,8
Friends	21	9,9
My teachers	27	12,7
My Own Choice	114	53,5
Successful Athletes	11	5,2
Do You Earn Financial Earning From Sports?	f	%
Yes	87	40,8
No	126	59,2
What is Your Sports Age?	f	%
1-10 years	99	46,5
11-20 years	86	40,4
21 years and above	28	13,1

#### Table 2

Mann-Whitney U test results on the differentiation of the social integration general and sub-dimensions

	Gender	Ν	Mean Ranks	U	Р
All Scale	Male	151	101,09	3916,0	,06
	Female	62	119,34	3910,0	,00
Emotional	Male	151	101,09	3789,0	,02*
Development	Female	62	121,39	5789,0	,02
Physical	Male	151	100,71	3730,5	,01*
Development	Female	62	112,97	5750,5	,01
Development of	Male	151	104,55	4311,0	,36
<b>Bilateral Relations</b>	Female	62	112,97	4311,0	,50
National Cultural	Male	151	103,74	4188,0	,21
Development	Female	62	114,95	4100,0	,21
Community	Male	151	102,90	1062 5	12
Development	Female	62	116,98	4062,5	,12
Development of	Male	151	103,64	4172.0	20
Personal Skills	Female	62	115,19	4173,0	,20
Development of	Male	151	101,06	2784.0	02*
Group Relations	Female	62	121,47	3784,0	,02*
*p<0,05					

According to the results of the Mann-Whitney U test conducted to test whether there was a statistically significant difference in the athletes' general social integration and in its subdimensions according to the gender variable, a significant difference was found in the subdimensions of emotional development (U=3789,0, p= ,02 ,p<0.05), physical development (U=3730,5, p= ,01, p<0.05) and development of relations in group (U=3784,0, p= ,02 ,p<0.05).

#### Table 3

Mann-Whitney U Test results on the differentiation of social integration general and sub-dimensions

	Earning Financial	Ν	Mean Ranks	U	Р	
	Income					
All Scale	Yes	87	118,80	4454.0	0.2*	
	No	126	98,85	4454,0	,02*	
Emotional Development	Yes	87	115,17	4770,5	10	
Emotional Development	No	126	101,36	4770,3	,10	
Physical Davelonment	Yes	87	106,40	5428,5	00	
Physical Development	No	126	107,42	5428,5	,90	
Development of Bilateral	Yes	87	119,36	1106 0	01*	
Relations	No	126	98,47	4406,0	,01*	
National Cultural	Yes	87	120,96	1266 5	00*	
Development	No	126	97,36	4266,5	,00*	
Community Development	Yes	87	119,83	1265 0	01*	
	No	126	98,14	4365,0	,01*	
Development of Personal	Yes	87	117,77	4544.0	02*	
Skills	No	126	99,56	4544,0	,03*	
Development of Group	Yes	87	114,45	1922 0	12	
Relations	No	126	101,86	4833,0	,13	
*p<0,05						
1, ,						

According to the results of the Mann-Whitney U test conducted to test whether there was a statistically significant difference in the athletes' general social integration and its subdimensions according to the financial gain status, a significant difference was found in the general scale (U=4454,0, p= ,02 ,p<0.05), in the sub-dimensions of the development of Pair Relations (U=4406,0, p= ,01 ,p<0.05), National Cultural Development (U=4266,5, p= ,00 ,p<0.05), Social Development (U=4365,0, p= ,01 ,p<0.05), Development of Personal Skills (U=4544,0, p= ,00 ,p<0.05). However, it was determined that there was no significant difference in the subdimensions of physical development and development of group relations according to financial gain variable.

#### Table 4

	Reasons for Starting	Ν	Mean	$\mathbf{X}^2$	sd	р	U-Test
	Sports		Rank				
	Family	40	128,41				
	Friends	21	95,46				
All Scale	My teachers	27	118,31	9,51	4	0,05	1-5
	My Own Choice	114	101,54				
	Successful Athletes	11	80,00				
	Family	40	121,46				
Emotional	Friends	21	96,83				
	My teachers	27	112,22	6,017	4	,19	
Development	My Own Choice	114	105,61				
	Successful Athletes	11	75,41				
	Family	40	113,48				
Dhysical	Friends	21	86,62				
Physical	My teachers	27	113,06	4,09	4	,39	
Development	My Own Choice	114	108,69				
	Successful Athletes	11	90,00				
	Family	40	112,50				
Development of	Friends	21	104,83				
Bilateral	My teachers	27	123,07	7,49	4	,11	
Relations	My Own Choice	114	100,49				
	Successful Athletes	11	82,82				

Differentiation status of the participants and the reasons for starting sports according to the Wallis test

\*p<0,05

#### Table 4 (continue)

	<b>Reasons for Starting</b>	Ν	Mean	$\mathbf{X}^2$	sd	Р	<b>U-Test</b>
	Sports		Rank				
	Family	40	132,15				
National	Friends	21	101,17				
Cultural	My teachers	27	122,26	13,01	4	,01	1-5
Development	My Own Choice	114	97,82				
	Successful Athletes	11	84,32				
	Family	40	132,20				
Community	Friends	21	105,14				
Community	My teachers	27	105,15	8,75	4	,06	
Development	My Own Choice	114	9,79				
	Successful Athletes	11	98,18				
	Family	40	116,80				
Development of	Friends	21	93,50				
Development of Personal Skills	My teachers	27	118,15	5,21	4	,26	
Personal Skills	My Own Choice	114	106,00				
	Successful Athletes	11	80,09				
Development of Group Relations	Family	40	115,58				
	Friends	21	95,19				
	My teachers	27	121,78	4,11	4	,39	
	My Own Choice	114	103,98				
	Successful Athletes	11	93,36				

Differentiation status of the participants and the reasons for starting sports

According to the result of the Kruskal-Wallis test conducted to test whether there was a statistically significant difference in the general social integration of the participants in the study and the sub-dimensions of the scale according to the reasons for starting sports, the difference in the national cultural development sub-dimension according to the reasons for starting sports was determined to be statistically significant at 95% confidence level ( $X^2=13,01$ , sd=4, p=,01). In order to understand from which group, the difference originated in the national cultural development sub-dimension, the Mann Whitney U test was conducted, and it was determined that the difference was between the first group which is the family (Mean Rank = 132.15) and the fifth group consisting of successful athletes (Mean Rank = 84.32). The significant difference between the first group (Mean Rank = 128,41) and the fifth group (Mean Rank = 80,00).

## Table 5

Differentiation of social integration general and sub-dimensions of the participants according to the sports age variable

	Sports Age	n	Mean Rank	$\mathbf{X}^2$	Sd	Р	U-Test
	1-10	99	97,59				
All Scale	11-20	86	117,70	4,92	2	,85	
	21-+21	28	107,41	,		<i>,</i>	
Encetter al	1-10	99	96,65				
Emotional	11-20	86	120,17	6,95	2	,03	1-2
Development	21-+21	28	103,13				
	1-10	99	94,29				
Physical Development	11-20	86	118,87	8,27	2	,01	1-2
5 1	21-+21	28	116,32	,		,	
	1-10	99	96,82				
Development of	11-20	86	118,87	6,01	2	,05	1-2
Bilateral Relations	21-+21	28	106,54				
	1-10	99	99,56				
National Cultural	11-20	86	113,80	2,81	2	,24	
Development	21-+21	28	122,43				
<b>O</b> ;	1-10	99	102,40				
Community	11-20	86	111,56	1,08	2	,58	
Development	21-+21	28	109,25				
Dereste and	1-10	40	99,45				
Development of Personal Skills	11-20	21	118,57	5,27	2	,07	
	21-+21	27	98,14				
	1-10	40	97,66				
Development of Group	11-20	21	117,91	5,23	2	,07	
Relations	21-+21	27	106,52				

According to the result of the Kruskal-Wallis test conducted to test whether there was a statistically significant difference in the general social integration of the participants in the study and the sub-dimensions of the scale according to the time spent for sports, the difference in the sub-dimensions of emotional development ( $X^2$ =6,95, sd=2, p=,03), physical development ( $X^2$ =8,27, sd=2, p=,01) and development of pair relations ( $X^2$ =6,01, sd=2, p=,05) was determined to be statistically significant at 95% confidence level. In order to understand from which group, the difference originated in the sub-dimensions, the Mann Whitney U test was conducted, and it was determined that the difference was between the first group which indicated one to ten years and the third group indicating 20 years and above.

#### Discussion

In the present study we conducted, when the social integration levels of the participants were examined according to gender variable, a statistically significant difference was found between the males and females in terms of emotional development, physical development and the development of relations in group (p> 0.05), whereas there was no significant difference in terms of the sub-dimensions of development of pair relations, national cultural development, social development and development of personal skills (p> 0.05).

When the Mean Ranks of the social integration general scale and its sub-dimensions were compared according to the gender variable, it was found that the mean scores of female participants were higher than the male participants. It can be stated that the higher mean of the females in emotional development, pair relations, emotional development, national cultural values, group relations sub-dimensions is due to the fact that they are more emotionally dominant than men. Female athletes have a different structure than their male counterparts, both hormonally, morphologically, psychologically (Aktaş Üstün & Üstün (2020) sociologically. When some other studies on this subject in the literature are reviewed, it was seen that Doğan (2011) examined the effect of Folk Dances on Social Integration and stated that there is no difference according to the gender variable and that folk dances include a performance conducted together and in harmony. While Bilgin (2020) found a significant difference in the physical development sub-dimension, İşik (2019) found a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of physical development, national cultural development and development of relation in group. Jinxia (2010), and Lenger and Schumacher (2016) emphasized the importance of socialization of individuals by highlighting the social dimension of sports. Ferreira et al. (2018) stressed the importance of sports specifically in the social integration of athletes with disabilities in their studies on the social integration of athletes.

When we examined whether there was any difference in the general social integration and its sub-dimensions of the participants in our study according to the variable of financial gain from sports, the results we obtained demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference in the development of pair relations, national cultural development, social development and development of personal skills (p < 0.05). It has been supported by several studies conducted that the financial gains of athletes from sports have a negative impact on both their performance and their social life. Lastra, Bell and Bond (2018), Hill (2015), and Galariotis, Germain and Zopounidis, (2018) stated that the financial problems experienced by athletes are the main risk factor leading them to rake off and that financial gain from sports is of great importance for athletes.

When we examined whether there was any difference in the social integration levels of the participants according to the reasons for starting sports, a statistically significant difference was found in the sub-dimension of national cultural development and the social integration scale general scores (p <0.05). It was determined that this difference in social integration general scale and national cultural development sub-dimension was between the first and fifth groups (Family-

Successful Athletes). Gündoğdu (2017), Kutanis, and Çakal (2015) showed that individuals can be inclined to do sports due to reasons such as suffering from health problems and achieving their socialization desires, and that factors such as environment, family and teachers are among the most important factors that encourage an individual to do sports (Gündoğdu, 2017). Jones et al. (2017), in their studies on the participation of transsexual people in sports, revealed that these individuals tend to do sports in order to feel well physically and to be accepted in the society. Çimen and Yaman (2020) stated in their studies that family support is crucial for individuals to take up sports. Güven and Öncü (2006) emphasized that children who started sports at an early age belonged to the families with members doing sports.

When the social integration levels of the participants were examined according to the variable of time spent for sports, a significant difference was found in the sub-dimensions of emotional development, physical development and development of pair relations (p <0.05), and this significant difference was determined to be in the first and second group (1-10 years and 11-20 years). Küçükbaş and Duman (2020), on the other hand, reported in his study that no significant difference was found between age and social integration. Polat, Akoğlu, and Üzüm (2019) investigated the relationship between athletes' social integration levels and personality types and found that considering the social integration sub-dimensions the highest arithmetic mean is in the physical benefit and the lowest one in moral development according to the athletes' age variable. As a result, a significant difference was found in the emotional development, physical development of relations in group according to the gender variable.

There are some limitations in this study that could be addressed in future research. First of all, the athletes that make up the sample group of our study live in the same city. Studies can be done with athletes with different social structures. Another limitation of the study is that it is designed as a quantitative study on an online platform. Studies can be done using different methods because the level of social integration is an emotion that can be affected by many factors. Therefore, different variables of the athletes can be taken into consideration and studies on their social integration levels can be done.

#### Conclusion

For the other hand, the difference obtained may be due to the fact that the emotional development of female athletes develops faster than male athletes. No significant difference was found in the emotional and physical development sub-dimensions of social integration according to their financial gain status. It can be thought that the financial gain status of athletes is an important factor in their level of social integration. When the reasons for starting sports and social integration conditions were analysed, a significant difference was found in the general scores of

the scale and the national cultural development sub-dimension, and this significant difference was found between the family and the successful athletes group.

In the analysis of the social integration levels of the athletes and the time spent for sport, a significant difference was revealed in the sub-dimensions of emotional development, physical development and pair relations. When the results obtained are evaluated in general, it can be said that especially the time spent for sports and financial gain status of the athletes are effective on the social integration levels of the athletes. In general, it should be ensured that the integration levels of the athletes differ in terms of different variables, that these variables are made more positive and the athletes' achievements are beneficial.

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