

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15758311>

EXAMINATION OF THE EFFECT OF SPORTS HABITS ON THE SOCIAL ADAPTATION AND GOOD CITIZENSHIP STATUS OF SYRIAN CHILDREN UNDER TEMPORARY PROTECTION LIVING IN TÜRKİYE

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the effect of sports habits on the social adaptation and good citizenship status of Syrian children under temporary protection living in Türkiye. In this context, the population of the research consists of Syrian children in the 7th and 8th grades living in Türkiye. The sample of the research consists of 332 Syrian children living in Kayseri, selected through random sampling at the 7th and 8th grade levels. The data collection tools used in the study are the demographic information form, social adaptation scale, and good citizenship perception scale. Statistical package program SPSS 23 was used to analyze the data. Nonparametric tests were employed in the study due to the data not exhibiting a normal distribution. The Mann-Whitney U test was used for pairwise comparisons, and the Kruskal-Wallis test was used for multiple comparisons to examine the differences between variables. As a result of the analyses, significant differences were found in the children's social adaptation levels according to the variables of regular sports activities, age, mother's education level, father's education level, monthly income, and family members who do sports; however, no significant differences were observed in the variables of gender, education, receiving help from Turkish individuals, desire to go to Europe or the USA, parental status, length of stay in Türkiye, and number of siblings. In the good citizenship perception scale, significant differences were found according to the variables of gender, parents' status, father's education level, length of stay in Türkiye, and monthly income. However, no significant differences were observed in the variables of regular sports activities, education, receiving help from Turkish individuals, desire to go to Europe or the USA, age, mother's education level, number of siblings, and family members who do sports.

Keywords: Good citizenship perception; social adaptation; sports habits; syrian children.

INTRODUCTION

Migration is the act of relocating individuals or masses for economic, social, and political reasons. Due to the often abrupt nature of environmental changes following migration, individuals' adaptation processes can be adversely affected (Gün & Bayraktar, 2008).

Social conflict is regarded as a consequence of migration, and it is acknowledged that humankind has faced the problem of social conflict since the dawn of history. Given the basis of different

interests and values, conflict represents the persistent and widespread nature of struggles between societies or nations. Therefore, considering that these effects can spread throughout the entire society, conflict is regarded as a fundamental phenomenon (Ünlü et al., 2018).

An immigrant is a foreigner who voluntarily leaves their place of residence, often for economic reasons or due to dissatisfaction with their social environment, and relocates to a different country legally or illegally to live there (Ziya, 2012).

A refugee is a person who is outside the country of which they are a citizen because of a justified fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, and who cannot or does not want to return to their country due to these fears (Jastram et al., 2001).

Migration can be defined as people moving away or being forcibly removed from the lands where they live their lives, the social environments they are accustomed to, and the economic opportunities they have, and starting to live in different places (Akıncı et al., 2015).

Adaptation is a biologically based concept that evaluates any living being in terms of its mutual interaction with the environment. All the changes that occur in human life have facilitated the concurrent development and occurrence of the adaptation process. This concept, which constitutes the fundamental element of Darwin's theory of evolution, briefly refers to the adaptation of humans to the natural environment with which they interact. According to this concept, living is a continuous process of adaptation. From a psychological perspective, since every living being has needs that must be met depending on its interaction with the environment, the adaptation process encompasses the effort expended to eliminate the obstacles that prevent these needs from being fulfilled (Erdoğan et al., 2005). In summary, adaptation refers to an individual's ability to establish a balanced relationship with both themselves and their environment, and to enhance and sustain this relationship (Geylan, 2010).

Citizenship first emerged in Ancient Greece and has evolved over time, spreading globally (Heater, 2004). However, with developments during the Age of Enlightenment, the concept of citizenship underwent significant changes. Together with the French Revolution, in the 1789 French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the terms human and citizen were jointly utilized, bringing a new dimension to the concept of "citizen" (Memişoğlu, 2014). The term citizenship has undergone numerous stages of evolution before arriving at its current definition. There are various interpretations of today's concept of citizenship, which engages the entire society and targets equality of rights. Some scholars define citizenship as the individual's awareness of their rights and responsibilities and their active participation in social affairs (Goodman&Adler, 1985).

A good citizen is unselfish, puts their own interests and desires in the background, and is aware that their life, security, and peace at work are due to the loyalty and sacrifice of people both near and far (Hocaoğlu, 2001).

As a result of the humanitarian crisis in Syria, many Syrians have migrated to Türkiye. A significant portion of these migrants are children and young people. Consequently, these individuals are required to live with Turkish citizens in Türkiye. Consequently, these individuals find themselves living alongside Turkish citizens in Türkiye. Therefore, it has become crucial for immigrants to integrate into the society where they live. Research on the impact of sports on the integration and socialization of immigrant children in Türkiye appears to be limited, although it has emerged as a popular subject in international studies in recent years.

Physical education, sports, and recreation are significant tools for fostering social cohesion. It is essential to demonstrate the role of sports in facilitating the adaptation among people from diverse cultures residing within the same boundaries. This study aims to explore the impact of sports habits on the social adaptation and good citizenship of children under temporary protection in Türkiye.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was approved by the Erciyes University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee and was conducted in compliance with the ethics committee's guidelines. In this study, a screening model was used to assess the effects of sports habits on the social adaptation and good citizenship of Syrian children continuing their education in 7th and 8th grades at a middle school.

Study Group

The population for this study consists of Syrian children in the 7th and 8th grades residing in Türkiye. The sample includes 332 Syrian children from the same grades in Kayseri, selected through random sampling.

Table 1. The demographic characteristics of the study population.

Collection category		n	%
Gender	Women	159	47,9
	Men	173	52,1
Age	11 and under	23	6,9
	12	49	14,7
	13	95	28,6
	14	107	32,3
	15 and over	58	17,5
Education level	Grade 7	212	63,5
	Grade 8	120	36,5
Regular Sport	Yes	207	62
	No	125	38
Parental status	Married	296	89,1
	Divorced	14	4,2
	Mother or father dead	22	6,6
Mother education	Primary school	55	16,5
	Secondary school	123	37
	High school	125	37,7
	University	29	8,8
Father education	Primary school	43	12,9
	Secondary school	126	37,9
	High school	97	29,3

	University	66	19,9
Years of residence in Turkey	1-3 Years	29	8,7
	4-6 Years	73	21,9
	7-9 Years	188	56,7
	Collection category	n	%
Monthly income	10+ Years	42	12,7
	2000-3000	157	47,2
	3000-4000	91	27,5
	4000-5000	68	20,5
Siblings	5000-6000	16	4,8
	0-1	12	3,6
	2-3	106	31,9
	4-5	119	35,9
Does anyone in your family do sports	6+	95	28,6
	Yes	181	54,8
	No	151	45,2
Help From Turkish Individuals	Yes	219	66
	No	113	34
Intentions to go to Europe or America	Yes	118	36
	No	214	64
Total		332	%100

Data Collection Instruments

This phase is composed of three parts.

Demographic Information Form In the demographic information form designed by the researcher, the following demographic characteristics of the children are included: age, gender, education level, regular participation in sports, favored sport, parental status, parents' education levels, years of residence in Türkiye, monthly income, receipt of assistance from Turkish individuals, intentions to move to Europe or America, number of siblings, and participation in sports by any family member.

Social Adaptation Scale At this stage, the questionnaire from the Social Adaptation Scale developed by Aydoğdu and Gürsoy (2020) was administered to the children. This scale comprises 55 questions and utilizes a 5-point Likert scale.

Good Citizenship Perception Scale In the third section, the Good Citizenship Perception Scale developed by Çiçek (2018) was utilized to assess the students' perceptions of good citizenship. The survey, consisting of 33 questions, is in the 5-point Likert type.

Data Collection

Participant inclusion in the study was based on voluntary participation. Prior to administering the scales, the necessary permissions were secured from the Kayseri Provincial Directorate of National Education. The study was conducted in 10 middle schools affiliated with the Kayseri Provincial

Directorate of National Education, involving a total of 370 students; 332 of these surveys were deemed valid and included in the analysis. The surveys were carried out through visits to each school individually. School administrators and volunteer teachers were provided with detailed information about the surveys.

Statistical Analysis

Data in this study were analyzed using the statistical software SPSS 25. The normality of the data distribution was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which indicated that the data were not normally distributed. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U test was applied for pairwise comparisons, and the Kruskal-Wallis test was used for multiple comparisons.

RESULTS

Table 2. Mann Whitney U Test Results of Volunteers Social Adaptation Levels According to Different Variables

	N	Mean rank	Row total	U	P
Regular Sport					
Yes	207	165,41	28450	11230	0,044*
No	125	167,68	26828		
Gender					
Male	172	165,41	28450	13572	0,830
Female	160	167,68	26828		
Education level					
Grade 7	212	158,28	33556	10978	0,50
Grade 8	120	179,75	21390		
Help From Turkish People					
Yes	219	171,56	37572	11265	0,181
No	113	156,69	17706		
IGEA					
Yes	118	178,79	21097	11176	0,083
No	214	159,72	34181		
DAFDS					
Yes	181	176,03	31861	11941	0,048*
No	151	155,	23417		

Abbreviations: IGEA: Intentions to go to Europe or America; DAFDS: Does anyone in the family do sports.

Table 3. Kruskal Wallis Test Results For Social Adaptation Levels of Volunteers According to Different Variables

	N	X	S.D.	Mean Rank	Kruskal Wallis H	X2
P						
Parental status						
Married	296	3,7756	0,73318	167,13	0,344	0,842
Divorced	14	3,6442	0,73277	151,79		
Mother or father dead	22	3,7835	0,64326	167,41		

	N	X	S.D.	Mean Rank	Kruskal Wallis H X2	P
Age						
11 and under a	23	3,5399	1,00432	39,50		
12 b	49	3,72	0,83027	146,95		
13 c	95	3,6224	0,77691	172,25		
14 d	107	3,89	0,52681	145,43		
15 and over e	58	3,9210	0,68528	174,37	11,408	0,022* c>e
Mother Education						
Primary school a	55	3,5164	0,81502	132,16		
Secondary school b	123	3,8488	0,62088	174,31		
High school c	125	3,767	0,77848	169,50	9,120	0,028* b>a
University d	29	3,9348	0,63656	185,55		
Father education						
Primary school a	43	3,7366	0,64575	155,65		
Secondary school b	126	3,7154	0,75768	158,95		
High school c	97	3,6613	0,76586	150,53	18,497	0,000* d>b,c
University d	66	4,0584	0,57968	211,45		
Years of residence in Turkey						
1-3 Years	29	3,6075	0,70003	139,14		
4-6 Years	73	3,7273	0,70549	153,66		
7-9 Years	188	3,7595	0,77881	170,48	6,481	0,090
10+ Years	42	4,0078	0,44741	189,88		
Monthly Income						
2000-3000a	157	3,6982	0,70369	152,99		
3000-4000b	91	3,7207	0,79338	164,90		
4000-5000c	68	3,9380	0,71381	191,91	9,866	0,020* d>a
5000-6000d	16	4,0523	0,38477	200,13		
Siblings						
0-1	12	3,6636	1,21200	183,00		
2-3	106	3,7449	0,74063	163,73		
4-5	119	3,7678	0,74759	167,29	0,451	0,929
6+	95	3,8161	0,60472	166,52		

Table 4. Mann Whitney U Test Results of Volunteers Levels of Perception of Good Citizenship According to Different Variables

	N	Mean Rank	Row total	U	P
Regular Sport					
Yes	207	162,69	33677	12149	0,352
No	125	172,81	21601		
Gender					
Male	172	149,15	25653	10775,5	0,001*
Female	160	185,15	29624		
Education					

Grade 7	212	161,85	34312	11734	0,292
Grade 8	119	173,39	20634		
Help From Turkish Individuals					
Yes	219	171,99	37666	11171	0,147
No	113	155,86	17612		
IGEA					
Yes	118	176,1	20783	11490	0,175
No	214	161,19	34495		
DAFDS					
Yes	181	165,48	29951,5	13480	0,832
No	151	167,73	25326		

Abbreviations: IGEA: Intentions to go to Europe or America; DAFDS: Does anyone in the family do sports.

Table 5. Kruskal Wallis Test Results of Volunteers Levels of Perception of Good Citizenship Levels According to Different Variables

	N	X	S.D.	Mean	Kruskal Wallis H
Rank					
Family marital status					
Married a	296	3,5511	0,50938	162,32	9,133 0,010* c>a
Divorced b	14	3,5714	0,52444	160,93	
Mother or Fahter dead c	22	3,8760	0,41093	226,23	
Age					
11 and under	23	3,6574	0,61660	121,50	5,804 0,446
12	49	3,5362	0,49536	178,41	
13	95	3,5120	0,48765	160,98	
14	107	3,5862	0,51842	154,14	
15 and over	58	3,6489	0,49390	170,60	
Mother education					
Primary school	55	3,4711	0,45146	152,35	1,860 0,602
Secondary school	123	3,5923	0,49988	167,68	
High school	125	3,6056	0,54157	172,85	
University	29	3,5496	0,50711	160,97	
Father education					
Primary school a	43	3,4700	0,40813	151,67	11,938 0,008* d>a,c
Secondary school b	126	3,5786	0,52188	165,94	
High school c	97	3,4905	0,49761	150,69	
University d	66	3,7530	0,52266	200,47	
H					
Rank					
Years of residence in Turkey					
1-3 Years a	29	3,4305	0,62310	134,76	11,922 0,008* d>b
4-6 Years b	73	3,453	0,49600	143,04	
7-9 Years c	188	3,612	0,49572	174,80	

10+ Years d	42	3,7071	0,45848	192,05		
Monthly income						
2000-3000 a	29	3,4939	0,49027	152,60		
3000-4000 b	73	3,5788	0,53815	165,30		
4000-5000 c	188	3,7362	0,51763	196,24	10,336	0,016* c>a
5000-6000 d	42	3,6326	0,31196	183,38		
Siblings						
0-1	12	3,6616	0,53289	189,50		
2-3	106	3,5283	0,56621	155,83		
4-5	119	3,5737	0,49010	167,63	2,608	0,456
6+	95	3,6124	0,46407	174,07		

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the study's results revealed that participants who regularly engaged in sports activities exhibited higher levels of social adaptation than those who did not. Furthermore, related studies in the literature also support the findings of our research. The consensus within the literature suggests that individuals who engage in regular sports tend to be more socially extroverted, better equipped to establish social relationships, more emotionally stable, and more adept at adapting to new situations (Webb, 1969; Şenduran, 2006).

No significant differences were observed in the social adaptation levels of participants based on gender. The literature shows varied results in studies that examine social adaptation concerning gender (Al-Hattami&Al-Ahdal, 2014; Güçlü&Yentürk, 2008). Variations in research results may be attributed to individuals' developmental characteristics related to gender, their levels of interest and skills, and the roles and responsibilities associated with their social identities. Additionally, no significant differences were found in the social adaptation levels of participants based on educational variables.

The examination of relevant studies in the literature reveals diverse results (Osmanlı, 2018; Öztemel, 2010). The reason for this variation may be associated with the fact that participants in these studies hail from different age groups and geographic regions. No significant differences in social adaptation levels were found between participants who perceived adequate support from Turkish individuals and those who did not. Furthermore, helping behaviors are noted to enhance the adaptation levels of migrants (Mashuri et al., 2013).

No significant differences were observed in the social adaptation levels between participants who believed they received sufficient help from Turkish individuals and those who did not. Additionally, helping behaviors have been found to enhance the adaptation levels of migrants (Mashuri et al., 2013). It is argued that enhancing positive intergroup attitudes and reducing prejudices can be effectively facilitated by the presence of conditions for intergroup contact and friendship; however, these should not be viewed as solutions to all problems (Hewstone, 2003). Not all forms of contact reduce prejudice; in some instances, contact may engender prejudices, especially if it involves an element of threat (Pettigrew&Tropp, 2011).

No significant difference was observed in terms of social adaptation levels between participants who wanted to go to Europe or America and participants who did not intend to go to Europe or America. Previous studies have yielded results consistent with our findings (Paksoy et al., 2012). From these results, it is estimated that individuals who are considering going to Europe or the USA are not due to adaptation problems but for the purpose of living in better conditions.

It was observed that the social adaptation levels of participants whose family members do sports are significantly higher than the social adaptation levels of participants who do not have anyone in their families who does sports. Studies have shown that the social harmony in the families of individuals who do sports is higher than that of those who do not do sports (Özçetin, 2013; Leanard, 1988).

No significant differences were found in the social adaptation levels of participants based on their parents' marital status (together, divorced, or one parent deceased). Children residing with their families generally exhibit fewer social and serious psychological issues than those from separated families (Amato&Keith, 1991). Divorce is not solely associated with negative impacts on children's mental health; but sometimes it can also have positive effects. Resolving conflicts, establishing a stable single-parent household, improving relationships with both parents or minimizing contact with a problematic parent have been found to positively influence a child's well-being (Alegöz et al., 2017). Moreover, Amato noted in his longitudinal study that children from unhappy marriages that ended in divorce often experienced more positive outcomes than those whose parents remained together unhappily (Amato, 2000).

Significant differences were found in the social adaptation levels among participants based on their ages (significant differences were observed between ages 12 and 10, 13 and 10, 14 and 10, and 15 and 10 years. No significant differences were observed in other age groups). Literature review suggests that social adaptation levels increase with age (Yeğen, 2008; Küçükali, 2016).

When comparing participants' maternal education levels, it was found that the social adaptation levels of children whose mothers had completed secondary school were significantly higher than those whose mothers had only completed primary school. No significant differences were found among other groups. Similarly, when comparing paternal education levels, significant differences were observed between groups where fathers had completed secondary school and university versus those where fathers had completed only high school; no significant differences were noted among other groups. The research underscores robust correlations between parental education levels and child rearing, as well as child development, demonstrating that parents' personality traits and the concrete skills they acquire through education can significantly enhance their children's educational and developmental outcomes, leading to healthier and more successful children (Duncan&Magnuson, 2003).

No significant differences were observed in the social adaptation levels of participants relative to their length of stay in Türkiye. Reviewing similar studies in the literature reveals varying outcomes in social adaptation based on the duration of stay; however, the consensus suggests that longer

residency tends to improve adaptation and reduce problems (Zhang&Goodson, 2011). The findings of this study may be attributed to the personal characteristics of the participants.

While significant differences were observed in the social adaptation levels between groups with monthly incomes of 2000-3000 TL (Turkish Lira) and those with 5000-6000 TL, no significant differences were found among other income groups. (the TL/USD exchange rate at the time of the study was 1/16). Although studies examining the relationship between individuals' economic status and social adaptation levels yield varied results, the prevailing finding is that individuals with higher incomes tend to exhibit higher levels of social adaptation (Baş, 2003; Pekşen et al., 2005).

No significant differences were observed between participants' number of siblings and their levels of social adaptation. Children lacking a robust communication infrastructure, or where it is inadequate, may opt out of participating even in a suitable communication environment, exhibiting introverted and detached behaviors. This scenario could explain the stagnation observed in children's communication skills.

No significant differences were observed in the good citizenship levels between participants who engage in regular sports activities and those who do not. It is reported that sports facilitate a shared focus on common goals and foster a sense of collective action among individuals (Yaşar et al., 2018).

The absence of significant differences between groups in our study may be attributed to the children not yet having reached sufficient maturity and their experiences with challenging situations such as war in their home countries. The level of good citizenship among female participants is significantly higher than that of male participants. Studies in this context have found that female students generally possess a higher understanding of citizenship, are more likely to adopt democratic behaviors, and have a heightened perception of democracy (Ersöz&Duruhan, 2015; Amadeo et al., 2002). No significant differences were observed in good citizenship levels based on educational variables. The lack of significant differences between groups is believed to be due to the participants consisting solely of 7th and 8th graders.

No significant differences were observed between groups in terms of receiving help from Turkish individuals. If two distinct groups undergo a reclassification process and recognize themselves as a single, more inclusive supergroup, this new shared identity promotes more cooperative and socially responsible behaviors among them, and the frequency of helping behaviors increases (Dovidio et al., 2017; Gaertner&Dovidio, 2005). The findings of our study suggest that recipients of help may either not perceive this assistance or exhibit no change in their perception of good citizenship due to personal challenges.

No significant differences were observed between groups regarding participants' intentions to move to Europe or America. Similarly, no significant differences were found based on responses to whether family members engage in sports. Research indicates that the family dynamics of

individuals who participate in sports are more positive compared to those who do not engage in sports (Snyder&Spreitzer, 1973).

Significant differences were observed in the good citizenship levels of participants based on their parents' marital status (together, divorced, or one parent deceased). Specifically, participants whose mother or father had died exhibited significantly higher good citizenship levels compared to those with both parents together. The impact of family and environmental factors on perceptions of good citizenship is well recognized. The results of our study may suggest that children who have lost a parent demonstrate greater dedication in maintaining their self-discipline. No significant age-related differences were found among participant groups. While literature predominantly suggests that perceptions of good citizenship increase with age (Kapusizoğlu, 2021; Aydemir&Aksoy, 2010), no significant differences were detected in our study, possibly due to the participants not having reached a sufficient level of maturity.

No significant differences were observed between participants' levels of good citizenship and their mothers' education levels. However, participants whose fathers were university graduates exhibited significantly higher levels of good citizenship compared to those whose fathers had only completed primary or high school education. No significant differences were noted in other groups. Extensive research in the literature underscores the influence of parents' educational levels on their child-rearing practices and, consequently, on their children's democratic attitudes and behaviors (Kaldırım, 2005; Kuş, 2012). The absence of a significant correlation between mothers' education levels and good citizenship perception among the participants is hypothesized to stem from the children's displacement from their home country and the associated adaptation challenges.

Among the participants, those who have lived in Türkiye for 10+ years showed a significant difference in outcomes compared to those living in Türkiye for 4-6 years, with the longer residency group experiencing fewer issues. No significant differences were observed among other duration groups. The literature consistently shows that the longer foreign nationals reside in a country, the fewer psychological problems they tend to report (Zhang&Goodson, 2011).

Regarding the monthly income variable, participants with a monthly income between 4000-5000 TL exhibited significantly higher levels of good citizenship compared to those earning 2000-3000 TL. No significant differences were found in other income brackets. Research indicates that higher income levels correlate with increased good citizenship levels (Ünal, 2014; Ersoy, 2014). Additionally, no significant differences were detected concerning the number of siblings; studies assessing effective citizenship competencies, values, and knowledge skills relative to sibling count also found no notable differences (Aydemir&Aksoy, 2010).

CONCLUSIONS

According to the findings from this study, individuals who engage in regular sports activities demonstrate significantly higher social adaptation levels compared to those who do not participate in sports. Notable differences were also observed in variables such as participation in sports by family members, age, parental education levels, and monthly income. No significant differences

were observed in the variables of gender, education, receiving help from Turkish individuals, intentions of migrating to Europe or the USA, parental status, duration of stay in the country, and number of siblings. However, significant differences were noted on the good citizenship perception scale concerning gender, parental status, father's education level, duration of stay in the country, and monthly income, whereas no significant differences were found regarding regular sports participation, education, receiving help from Turkish individuals, migration intentions, involvement in sports by family members, age, and mother's education level. The primary limitation of this study stems from the age range of the participants, who were between 10 and 15 years old. Future research could benefit from focusing on different age groups. Additionally, this study solely involved volunteers who migrated from Syria; it is recommended that future research includes volunteers from various countries.

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