

The Importance of Physical Education and Sports in the Development of Society

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To Cite This Chapter:

Gultekin, O., Azili, E., & Sahin, Y. (2025). The importance of physical education and sports in the development of society. In F. Alincak (Ed.), *Current studies in sports science* (pp. 97–106). ISRES Publishing.

Introduction

Today, it is widely accepted across all segments of society that sports are an essential activity for individuals to develop their skills, maintain their health, and improve their overall well-being. Encouraging individuals to participate in sports not only increases their physical fitness, but also serves as a critical factor in facilitating the maximization of their productivity and performance in their activities (work, education, etc.). In this context, the direct positive effects of sports on an individual's overall quality of life and productivity have become a scientifically and socially proven necessity (Ramazanoğlu and Ramazanoğlu, 2004). The principle that human beings are ends in themselves rather than mere means should be adopted; therefore, mobilizing all resources and efforts for the individual's well-being, rather than using the individual for other purposes, should be a valid norm. Consistent with this philosophical approach, continuous efforts should be made for the individual's peace, comfort, happiness, and intellectual and spiritual development. In line with this inclusive goal, directing all individuals toward sports and ensuring their access to sporting activities, regardless of age, gender, or professional status (young-old, female-male, employed-unemployed), should be accepted as a fundamental requirement (Atıcı, Alincak and Toyçu, 2021).

Sports engage various segments of society, including individuals with physical disabilities, without distinction (Amman, 1999). Sports, which have become an integral part of human life, play an important role in ensuring that people remain healthy, successful, and happy throughout their lives and maintain high morale (Yalçınkaya, Saracaloğlu and Varol, 1993). The effects of sports on individuals include the development of personal virtues and social integration. While providing individuals with qualities such

as discipline, patience, and energy, sport also integrates them into social groups and the wider community, raising the ethical and moral level of individual-society relations. Furthermore, sporting activities bring people together around common goals, reinforcing a sense of cooperation and collaboration. Thanks to this collective experience, sport acts as an important social control and participation mechanism that reduces the individual's social isolation (loneliness) and prevents the tendency to act irresponsibly alone (Erkal, 1992). Societies have become compelled to solve the problems of individuals and seek remedies. This is because the peace, happiness, and health of individuals will also be reflected in society (Karahüseyinoğlu, Arslan and Ramazanoğlu, 2003). The challenges individuals face in their daily lives, and especially the intense stress factors inherent in urban living, combined with the fear of falling behind or being inadequate in the face of advancing technology (technological stress), create significant psychological pressures. Sports activities emerge as an effective mechanism for escaping this environment of anxiety and stress. This function of sports encompasses a critical dimension that serves not only the individual's mental relaxation but also the goal of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and physical well-being (the idea of being healthy). Therefore, sports offer both a psychological and physiological solution in coping with the challenges of modern life (Koruç and Bayar, 1992).

Aim of Study

The purpose of this study is to highlight the importance of physical education and sports in the development of society.

The Relationship Between Sport and Social Phenomena

Every social phenomenon is a historical phenomenon, and every historical phenomenon is a social phenomenon (Goldmann, 1977). Sport also appears as a social and cultural phenomenon between societies and within society itself (Atalay, 1998). Human existence has brought about certain associations, and significant progress has been made towards becoming a society alongside existence. People have formed communities, consciously or unconsciously, and this formation has necessitated that they find common ground. In other words, patterned behaviors have become apparent within societies (Katz and Kahn, 1977). Since the physical and physical development of individuals are compatible, they can be highly productive in terms of being healthy, hardworking and peaceful in society (Ayan, Alıncak, & Tuzcuoğulları, 2015). The lack of knowledge about physical activity causes people to misunderstand the effectiveness of physical activity and the link between physical activity and health (Karabaş & Alıncak, 2019).

After humans began living together, they entered into relationships with each other, and the interactions created by these relationships ultimately gave rise to meanings, values, rules, and forms of governance (Güven, 1992).

One of these formations is society. Society is a reality that makes humans human, determines the values they believe in, and influences their behavior and thoughts. It is the largest human group formed by social beings living in a specific place, whose members share a common way of life (Öztürk, 1998). Therefore, regardless of its size, level of civilization, economic activity, language, religion, values, and rules, any human group that shares a common way of life constitutes a society (Yetim, 2000).

With the formation of societies, processes of influencing and being influenced began as a result of sharing among people. This process revealed the characteristics of people as a society, as well as their culture and way of life. Human culture and forms of governance are also products of humans living together (Kongar, 1985). Everything that occurs within society, with a clear beginning and end point, presents itself as a social event. A social phenomenon, on the other hand, is a development that emerges within a process whose start and end times and location cannot be precisely determined (Öztürk, 1998). In today's world, which is entering a new century, the concept of sport, like many other areas, has undergone rapid change and, along with itself, has also brought about change in many areas dependent on it. It is a well-known fact that sport has had a very strong and hidden connection with society throughout history (Terekli et al., 2000).

The Role of Sports in Society

Sport is one of the factors that make the individual an individual, combined with the freedom, enlightenment, responsibility, constructive and creative life of individuals, in short, with the level of life befitting the individual. If we take into account that man is a being who is obliged to move due to his nature, then we can realize this need for movement in the most positive way through play, then let's add to these the human need for tension and joy purification and recreation. Then let us see these as a whole in the life of man. Then we realize how important sports are for the individual (Türkel, 2010). Sport is recognized as one of the fundamental cultural elements that unite human communities and shape them into a national identity (nation) (Güven, 1992). In addition to being an individual activity, the literature emphasizes that sport possesses a strong social phenomenon quality. In addition to the various methods and tools used to ensure the survival of societies, preserve their cultural heritage, and ensure their development, sports and sporting activities are also seen to be effective. Sports play an important role, particularly in ensuring social solidarity, as a center that brings individuals closer together and unites them (Öcalan and Ramazanoğlu, 2003). The educational process, which is a series of activities aimed at the continuous development and acquisition of knowledge, behavior, and skills, naturally includes sports and sporting activities. Therefore, as a social phenomenon, sport should be examined in detail within the framework of the education system (Erkal, 1992). The level of development of sport in modern societies is directly related to the completion of the education and training infrastructure and is

closely linked to gender equality, educational level, and the existence of appropriate sporting environments. The current dynamics of sports culture indicate a growing interest in sporting activities, both among passive spectators and active participants. However, it is known that in some societies, such as Turkey, women face limitations in terms of economic independence, employment, and socialization opportunities. In contrast, it has been observed that women's participation rates in sports are increasing in developed countries (Açıkada and Ergen, 1991).

Infrastructure deficiencies, often stemming from inadequate services, are among the primary obstacles to the widespread adoption of sports at the societal level. The current inadequate level of sports is one of the significant reasons for the limited scope of sporting activities and organizations. However, societies with intense, widespread, and developed sporting activities have the potential to build a strong and happy future.

The obligation to participate in sports exists in every social stratum, from the least developed societies to the most advanced ones (Dpt, 1983). Sport is a dynamic phenomenon influenced by its social and cultural environment (Karaküçük, 1995). While sport contributes to the advancement of society by influencing it, society has also supported the development of sport. This mutual interaction demonstrates that society and sports are inseparable parts of a whole.

Although the origins of the concept of sports are generally traced back to ancient times, activities equivalent to sports have existed throughout the history of human society. The importance of ancient times in the history of sports stems from the depth with which its activities have been documented for posterity. Interestingly, the word "sport" did not exist in ancient times; instead, two main types of activities were prominent: "Gymnastics" (today's equivalent of "Physical Education") and 'Agonistic' (today's equivalent of "Competitive Sports"). This duality can be considered the cornerstones of sport. However, today, sport has gone beyond mere competition, gaining a dimension of "sporting struggle" or "sporting endeavor" that "includes competition." The earliest uses of the word "sport" generally included meanings such as entertainment, relaxation, and recreation (Erdemli, 1996).

Sports contribute to individuals gaining values such as self-confidence, teamwork, mutual support, and behavioral integrity, while also serving a range of purposes that promote and enhance physical and mental health. This activity, which is easily embraced by the masses, plays a critical role in ensuring the physical development of society and preventing individuals from being drawn into social and mental crises (Keten, 1974).

In this context, it is evident that sport is a multidimensional phenomenon that combines physical, mental, and spiritual elements. Sport requires movements to be performed

within specific rules and a spirit of competition. Therefore, sport represents the entirety of purposeful and conscious movements that individuals perform within a specific set of rules in pursuit of their goals of competing, racing, having fun, and achieving a healthy lifestyle (Abakay et al., 2015).

For a more comprehensive understanding of sport, it is essential to examine it within social conditions (Alemdar, 2000). The sociology of sport focuses on explaining the social characteristics of sport by treating it as a continuous and significant social phenomenon, rather than merely as physical superiority or competition (Öztürk, 1998). It should not be forgotten that sport is one of the most effective and attractive tools for leading a balanced, strong, healthy, productive, and long life and for achieving a workforce with these qualities as a society. Sport is not just about winning degrees, breaking records, or competing; it primarily represents participation, doing, and living. At its core, sport is an activity based entirely on the principles of movement and competition, encompassing a series of customary training sessions and competitions in this regard (Ataman, 1978).

Importance of Sports

According to sports sociologists, the fundamental definition of sport encompasses activities conducted in a competitive environment with regulated and approved rules. These rules are determined and regulated by the relevant authorities (Abakay et al., 2017). Today, sport has become an integral part of human life. Therefore, regardless of age, sports practiced consciously and systematically, based on scientific foundations, play a critical role in maintaining an individual's lifelong health, success, happiness, and high morale (Yalçınkaya and Saracaloğlu, 1993).

At the societal level, solving individual problems and ensuring their well-being has become essential, as individual discomfort directly impacts society. Since the human element is one of the most important building blocks of society, the peace, happiness, and health of individuals also form the basis of social well-being. Sport plays an important role as a means of socialization within society and is effective in developing relationships between individuals and society. While sport contributes to the socialization of individuals, it is also influenced by the social and cultural conditions in which they operate (Karaküçük, 1995). Socialization in sporting environments can foster a closeness between people, free from self-interest, and foster a humanistic bond (Erkan, 1972). There are inextricable links between the social environment created by people and the development of sports (Taşmektepligil and İmamoğlu, 1996). This relationship is reciprocal: sports have both influenced society and helped it progress, while society has contributed to the development of sports. This reciprocal interaction is constantly evolving depending on the characteristics of the influencing and influenced factors. An individual's interest in and commitment to sports necessitates compliance with the rules of living within society. Sports are a vital factor in physical, spiritual, and social

development (Dpt, 2000). Furthermore, sports should be used as an effective tool for the healthy development and strengthening of human resources, a key element of socio-economic and cultural development (Sezgin, 1973). Sport is an activity that contributes to the active participation of individuals in social spheres and thus to their socialization. Sport brings modern societies together, encouraging different communities, cultures, colors to engage in various activities and interact together, thus strengthening social relations. Sport takes individuals out of their own limited environment and allows them to communicate and interact with different parts of the larger world. In this respect, sport enables people of different nationalities and different thoughts and beliefs to establish new relationships and develop new friendships and promotes social cohesion. Sporting activities involve not only those who play sports, but also those who watch, manage and operate these activities in the process of socialization through warm relationships. Sport contributes to the formation of a social society by improving human relations regardless of color, language, race or religion. This incredible effect of sport minimizes conflict and tension between people by making itself more attractive, thus contributing to the creation of a family consciousness in the same team or group of individuals from different social classes. According to many researchers, sport serves as a catalyst between societies in terms of social change (Yorulmazlar & Terlemez, 2020). It is seen that individuals develop psychomotor characteristics and communication skills with sports activities (Alıncak et al. 2015).

Sports facilitate compliance with certain rules of society that have developed spontaneously but cannot be imposed. Sporting activities, which play a critical role in regulating an individual's relationship with society and ensuring compliance with social rules, are considered important tools for both improving individual-societal relationships and enhancing social well-being. Sports enhance individuals' abilities to understand, assume responsibility, and establish order for cooperation. By fostering perseverance and energy, and by fostering a sense of belonging to a social group and society, they morally strengthen individual-societal relationships (Erdemli, 1996). The various pressures and stresses faced by individuals trying to keep up with the demands of the developing age and closely following technology create a burden on the societal level. In today's world, under the influence of mechanization and technology, sports stand out as a means of coping with these pressures and stresses. Sporting activities are one of the easiest ways to escape the intense stress of city life, the daily hassles, and the future anxiety caused by falling behind in technological advancements (Koruç and Bayar, 1992).

In addition to its role in regulating individual-societal relations, sports also play an important role in regulating industrial, commercial, and cultural relations as societies take steps toward becoming a global community (Ozan, 2002). Sports is an activity that brings together people from different countries, regardless of religion, language,

nationality, or race, in a voluntary, willing, and conscious struggle, uniting them and fostering competition (Akgün, 1973). Sports activities play an important role in the social structure not only in terms of spiritual influence but also in terms of trade, industry, and tourism, leading to positive developments in almost every segment of society. In particular, it is one of the natural and practical ways for countries to introduce their own culture and heritage to other societies. Through sports, societies can introduce the values that sustain them, such as customs, traditions, and norms. The promotion of a country's historical beauties and tourist areas leads to significant developments in tourism, industry, and trade. Sporting activities are not only a social and intellectual event that can reach all segments of society, but they also have industrial and commercial characteristics and therefore occupy an important place in national economies (Fişek, 1980).

In recent years, sports have become increasingly popular thanks to the policies of political powers and the contribution of mass media (Alemdar, 2000). It is a well-known fact that sports and society have become inseparable, from the most developed to the least developed societies. When social scientists discuss models for creating happy and peaceful individuals, the phenomenon of sport is among their common denominators. Every society, from the most backward to the most advanced, has a need for sport (Dpt, 1983). Societies where sporting activities are intense, widespread, and developed are candidates for being strong and happy (Gsgm, 1991). Sport is an activity that develops people's social and individual characters. People who play sports gain values such as friendship, respect, solidarity, compliance with rules, self-confidence, struggle, order, discipline, health, body awareness, aggression control and respect for the opponent (Alıncak et al. 2017; Duman & Kuru, 2010).

Conclusion

In conclusion, sports have become an integral part of human life, playing a vital role in ensuring that individuals remain healthy, successful, and happy throughout their lives, while also maintaining high morale. Sports are a critical factor in alleviating social isolation and preventing the tendency to act irresponsibly alone. Through sporting activities, individuals experience a sense of shared purpose and collective action. This contributes to the emergence of unity, solidarity, and common ideals within society. Societies with such a strong structure are very difficult to dissolve or destroy. Therefore, sport should be recognized as an indispensable phenomenon in terms of physical, mental, and social development.

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