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STUDY OF THE FACULTY OF SPORTS SCIENCES STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS DISABLED INDIVIDUALS (CASE OF PAMUKKALE UNIVERSITY)

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The aim of the research is to examine the attitudes of Sports Sciences Faculty students studying at Pamukkale University towards disabled individuals. **Method:** The model of the research is general survey model from the descriptive survey model. The sample of the research consists of 255 students studying at Pamukkale University Faculty of Sport Sciences and participated in the research on a voluntary basis. As data collection tool “Multidimensional Attitudes Scale Toward Persons with Disabilities”, which is developed by Findler, Vilchinsky and Werner (2007) and adapted to Turkish by Yelpaze and Türküm (2018), is used. The scale is 31 items, 5-point Likert type scale consists of three dimensions (Affect, Cognition, Behaviour). SPSS package program was used in the analysis of the data. The normality structures of the distributions were examined. Based on the normality distribution results, the appropriate ones from the pairwise and multiple comparison tests were selected. **Results:** No significant difference was found between the scores obtained from the scale and the variables of gender, having a disabled person in the family, having a disabled person in the classroom, taking physical education and sports course for the disabled, and the department they were educated in. A significant difference was found in the variable of the academic year at the university, and it was determined that the 2nd grade students showed more positive attitudes towards the disabled in the total score. **Conclusion:** As a result of the research, it has been reached that the attitudes of university students towards the disabled are positive and the fact that the individuals have a disability does not change their attitudes to a large extent.

Keywords: Attitude, Disabled, Sport, University Student

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Author Contribution Statement

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A. Conceived of the presented idea. B. Developed the theory and performed the computations. C. Verified the analytical methods. D. Performed the measurements. All authors contributed to the final version of the manuscript. A. Supervised the project.

Source of Finance

During this study, no financial or spiritual support was received from any company that has a direct connection with the research subject, which could negatively affect the evaluation process of the research.

INTRODUCTION

Disability is a part of all humanity and life, and it can cause individuals to be temporarily or permanently disabled in some periods of their lives and to maintain their lives with increasing difficulties (WHO, 2011). Being disabled is a reflection of the interaction of the person with a physical or mental disability with his social environment (Tüfekçi and Kadiroğlu, 2017); It can lead to the physical, mental and social effects of the individual and their parents and to experience various problems (Girgin-Aykanat and Balcı, 2015). It is the state of being blocked, not the state of being disabled, that causes these problems and a negative picture (Burcu, 2015).

The development, socialization of the disabled individual, the progress of his/her education and his/her interaction with other individuals without disabilities at all stages of the development process are effective in the formation of the emotions, thoughts, expectations, and attitudes of the individuals. Attitudes formed have a direct impact on the personality development, education, self-confidence, social relations, and self-actualization of individuals with disabilities. Attitudes are not innate behaviours but are behaviours that occur as a result of interaction with the immediate environment, family members, social life, etc (Aydın, 1985). Therefore, it is not possible to deny that there are negative attitudes and stereotypes towards the disabled in society (Sezer, 2012). We can say that these negative attitudes and judgments that can occur in society should be changed and developed, but it should be taken into account that this process is not easy (Gençtürk and Korkut, 2020).

For this reason, it is of great importance for individuals with disabilities to determine positive and negative attitudes towards people with disabilities, to reveal the factors that affect negative attitudes towards people with disabilities, and to offer solutions to eliminate negative attitudes (Şahin and Bekir, 2016).

The educational status of the individual is a direct factor in the transformation of negative attitudes towards the disabled in society into positive. In this regard, individuals who have increased their education level to university level may be more distant from stereotypes, shallow thoughts and prejudices in society.

Looking at the literature, there have been many studies examining the attitudes of university students towards the disabled. (Gençtürk and Korkut, 2020; Şahin and Bekir, 2016; Gedik and Toker, 2018; AÇAK and Nariç, 2020; Hodge, 1998; Mathews et al., 1998; Ünsal and Keklice, 2021; Altunhan et al., 2021; Çakırer et al., 2018; Ünal and Yıldız, 2017; Özyürek, 1995; Sezer, 2012) However, studies examining attitudes towards disabled individuals in the field of sports sciences are more limited. Studies carried out in this area were investigated by Rowe and Stutts (1987) in the change of attitudes of students of physical education and sports teaching department towards the disabled in physical education and sports lessons for the disabled. In the same direction, Stewart (1990), AÇAK et al. (2016), Vural et al. (2018) examined the attitudes of students studying in various departments of the faculty of sports sciences towards disabled individuals in the field of sports sciences. Due to the limited number of studies examining the attitudes of sports sciences faculty students towards disabled individuals, it is thought that this research will contribute to this field. It can be said that making awareness and sensitivity studies in the university education process will replace the negative attitudes towards the disabled individual with positive attitudes (Nalbant, 2018). The importance of all studies done at the university level is therefore of great importance and influence.

The research aims to examine the attitudes of Pamukkale University Faculty of Sport Sciences students towards disabled individuals. The direction of the attitudes has been planned according to gender, department, degree in

university and whether there is a disabled person in family or relatives.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Model

Since it was aimed to determine the attitudes of the students of the faculty of sports sciences towards disabled individuals in terms of different variables, in this study the general survey model was used from the descriptive survey model. In the study, it was decided that the most appropriate model to be used in the analysis of attitudes would be the survey model. Because it is aimed to observe an existing situation within the framework of this problem.

Research Group

1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade students from the departments of coaching education, physical education and sports teaching, recreation, and sports management, who are studying at Pamukkale University Faculty of Sport Sciences, were selected on a voluntary basis using convenient sampling (easily accessible) method for the research. A total of 255 participants took part in the study. Surveys were sent online to the participants during the Covid 19 regulations.

All participants were informed about the research. Information was given about the possible benefits and risks of the research. A written informed consent form prepared in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki was given to all participants.

Data Collection Tool

Questionnaire technique was used as data collection method in the research. The first part of the questionnaire, which consists of two parts, included a personal information form regarding demographic information. In this section, questions that try to measure the participants' age, gender, department of education, university background in years and whether they have direct contact with the disabled are included.

“Multidimensional Attitudes Scale Toward

Persons with Disabilities” developed by Findler, Vilchinsky and Werner (2007) and adapted into Turkish by Yelpaze and Türküm (2018) was in the second part. The 5-point Likert-type scale, consisting of a total of 31 items, consisted of three dimensions. Cronbach's Alpha values for these sub-dimensions, expressed as Affect Cognition, and Behaviour, were found to be 0.85, 0.89 and 0.83, respectively. The Cronbach Alpha value determined for the whole scale was determined as 0.87. The scale has a total score feature between sub-dimensions. Affect dimension consisted of 14 expressions in total. The lowest score that can be obtained from the dimension is 14, and the highest score is 70. There are 9 expressions in total in the Cognition dimension. The lowest score to be obtained from this dimension is 9 and the highest score is 45. In the Behaviour dimension, there are 8 statements. The lowest score that can be obtained from this dimension is 8 and the highest score is 40. Finally, the lowest score that can be obtained from the total scale consisting of 31 items is 31, and the highest score is 155. While scoring the scale; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 14 in the Affect dimension and 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in the Behaviour dimension are written as negative items and should be reverse coded. After the items are reverse coded, scores can be calculated for each dimension and for the total scale. High scores in the dimensions indicate a positive attitude.

Data Collection

The measurement tool was delivered to the students through face-to-face interviews and online survey method, and voluntary participation was taken as a basis. Data were collected before and during the covid 19 pandemic. While the face-to-face method was used before the pandemic, the online method was preferred during the pandemic.

Data Analysis

SPSS statistical program was used for the analysis of the data. First of all, descriptive

statistics for the obtained data were made and normality distributions were tested by using skewness and kurtosis tests for the dependent and independent variables of the data. Then the hypothesis testing phase was started. In inferential statistics, Independent Samples t-Test was used for groups with normal distribution in pairwise comparison tests, and Mann Whitney U Test was used for comparisons between groups without normal distribution. One Way ANOVA was used because the variables used in multiple comparison tests were completely normal

distribution. Post Hoc (Tukey) tests were used for group comparisons of different dimensions.

RESULTS

In this section, descriptive and inferential statistics related to the data obtained are included. In Table 1, there are descriptive statistics values indicating the demographic characteristics of the participants, the percentage and frequency values of the scale sub-dimensions, and the mean and prevalence measures.

Table1.Descriptive statistics – percentage, frequency and mean, and prevalence measures

Variable	Group	f	%	Top.	\bar{x}	S	Min.	Max.
Gender	Female	86	33,7	255				
	Male	169	63,3					
Department	Coaching education	34	13,3	255				
	P. E. and sports teaching.	14	5,5					
	Recreation	37	14,5					
	Sports Management	170	66,7					
What year of university education	1 st Year	69	27,1	255				
	2 nd Year	59	23,1					
	3 rd Year	72	28,2					
	4 th Year	42	16,5					
	5 th and more years	13	5,1					
Are there any disabled people in the family?	Yes	16	6,3	255				
	No	239	93,7					
Are there any disabled people in your class?	Yes	56	22,0	255				
	No	199	78,0					
Have you taken physical education and sports course for the disabled?	Yes	78	30,6	255				
	No	177	69,4					
Age				255	21,60	3,13	18,00	43,00
Multidimensional Attitudes Scale Toward Persons with Disabilities								
Affect				255	43,66	10,97	20,00	66,00
Cognition				255	37,58	6,14	18,00	45,00
Behaviour				255	32,48	6,09	12,00	40,00
Total Score				255	113,75	16,64	68,00	151,00

When Table 1 is examined, it is seen that 63.3% (n= 169) of the participants with an average age of 21st 60 (S= 3.13) are male, 66.7% (n= 170) are sports management students, 28.2% of them (n= 72) have a three-year university education background. 93.7% (n=239) of the participants stated that there was no disabled person in the family and 78.0% (n= 199) in the classroom. Again, 69.4% (n= 177) of the participants stated that they did not take physical education and sports course for the disabled.

When the sub-dimension averages of the measurement tool used in the research are evaluated, it is seen that the average of the affect dimension is 43.66 (S= 10.97), the average of the cognition dimension is 37.58 (S= 6.14), and the average of the behaviour dimension is 32.48 (S= 6, 09). It was observed that the mean score of 113.75 (S= 16.64) was obtained in the total scale.

Table 2. Attitudes towards people with disabilities by gender

Sub-dimensions	Gender	N	\bar{x}	S	sd	t	p
Affect	Female	86	44,15	10,90	253	0,51	0,61
	Male	169	43,41	11,02			
Cognition	Female	86	38,30	6,21	253	1,34	0,18
	Male	169	37,22	6,08			
Behaviour	Female	86	33,28	6,24	252	1,00	0,14
	Male	168	32,08	5,99			
Total score	Female	86	115,73	17,23	252	1,36	0,18
	Male	168	112,74	16,29			

The results regarding the differences in the level of attitudes towards disabled individuals by gender are given in Table 2. According to the table results, it was seen that there was no significant difference in the total scoring and any sub-dimensions.

Table 3. The state of having a disabled family member and attitudes towards the disabled

Sub-dimensions	Are there ?	N	S.O.	S.T.	U	Z	p
Affect	Yes	16	144,75	2316,00	1644	-0,94	0,35
	No	239	126,88	30324,00			
Cognition	Yes	16	143,31	2293,00	1667	-0,86	0,39
	No	239	126,97	30347,00			
Behaviour	Yes	16	122,56	1961,00	1825	-0,28	0,78
	No	238	127,83	30424,00			
Total score	Yes	16	141,50	2264,00	1680	-0,79	0,43
	No	238	126,56	30121,00			

In Table 3, attitudinal differences related to disabled individuals according to whether there is a disabled person in the family or not were examined with the non-parametric test method. When the table is examined, it is seen that there is no difference between the groups in the total scoring and in any of the sub-dimensions.

Table 4. The state of having a disabled classmate and attitudes towards the disabled

Sub-dimensions	Are there?	N	\bar{x}	S	sd	t	p
Affect	Yes	56	42,87	12,08	253	-0,61	0,54
	No	199	43,88	10,65			
Cognition	Yes	56	36,95	6,76	253	-0,88	0,38
	No	199	37,76	5,96			
Behaviour	Yes	56	31,84	6,78	252	-0,90	0,37
	No	198	32,67	5,88			
Total score	Yes	56	111,66	18,49	252	-1,07	0,29
	No	198	114,35	16,08			

In Table 4, the results of attitudes towards disabled individuals were observed according to whether there is a disabled person in the classroom or not. According to the table, no significant difference was found between the groups in any sub-dimension and total score.

Table 5. The state of having taken physical education and sports course for the disabled and attitudes towards the disabled

Sub-dimensions	Taking the course	N	\bar{x}	S	sd	t	p
Affect	Yes	78	43,72	11,15	253	0,05	0,96
	No	177	43,64	10,92			
Cognition	Yes	78	37,37	6,82	253	-0,37	0,71
	No	177	37,68	5,83			
Behaviour	Yes	78	31,81	6,41	252	-1,18	0,24
	No	176	32,78	5,94			
Total score	Yes	78	112,90	17,81	252	-0,55	0,58
	No	176	114,14	16,13			

In Table 5, the differences in attitudes towards disabled individuals were examined according to whether the participants took physical education and sports course or not. According to the results of the analysis, it was determined that there was no significant difference between the groups in any sub-dimension and total score.

Table 6. Attitudes towards the disabled according to the department of education

Dimensions	Groups	N	\bar{x}	S	F	P	Difference Group
Affect	1. C. E.	34	39,97	10,67	2,39	0,07	-
	2. P.E. T.	14	48,78				
	3.Recreation	37	43,67				
	4. S. M.	170	43,98				
Cognition	1. C. E.	34	37,38	5,66	0,22	0,88	-
	2. P.E. T.	14	37,36				
	3.Recreation	37	36,92				
	4. S. M.	170	37,79				
Behaviour	1. C. E.	34	30,68	7,50	1,18	0,32	-
	2. P.E. T.	14	33,00				
	3.Recreation	37	32,92				
	4. S. M.	169	32,71				
Total score	1. C. E.	34	108,03	15,99	1,97	0,12	-
	2. P.E. T.	14	119,14				
	3.Recreation	37	113,51				
	4. S. M.	169	114,51				

In Table 6, the results of the attitudes towards the disabled are compared according to the department in which the participants are educated. When the results are examined, it is seen that there is no difference between the groups in any

sub-dimension and total score.

Table 7. Attitudes towards disabled people by university education year

Dimensions	Groups	N	\bar{x}	S	F	P	Difference Group
Affect	1 st Year				2,08	0,08	-
	2 nd Year	69	43,30	9,75			
	3 rd Year	59	47,13	10,86			
	4 th Year	72	42,12	11,02			
	5 th and more years	42	42,24	11,43			
	1 st Year						
	2 nd Year	69	38,54	5,28			
	3 rd Year	59	37,91	6,25			
	4 th Year	72	37,05	5,47			
	5 th and more years	42	35,95	7,96			
Cognition	1 st Year				1,58	0,18	-
	2 nd Year	69	38,54	5,28			
	3 rd Year	59	37,91	6,25			
	4 th Year	72	37,05	5,47			
	5 th and more years	42	35,95	7,96			
	1 st Year						
	2 nd Year	68	32,04	6,31			
	3 rd Year	59	33,80	4,82			
	4 th Year	72	32,15	6,62			
	5 th and more years	42	31,09	6,56			
Behaviour	1 st Year				2,03	0,09	-
	2 nd Year	68	32,04	6,31			
	3 rd Year	59	33,80	4,82			
	4 th Year	72	32,15	6,62			
	5 th and more years	42	31,09	6,56			
	1 st Year						
	2 nd Year	68	113,98	15,48			
	3 rd Year	59	118,85	15,68			
	4 th Year	72	111,33	16,49			
	5 th and more years	42	109,28	18,67			
Total score	1 st Year				2,75	0,03	*2 - 4
	2 nd Year	68	113,98	15,48			
	3 rd Year	59	118,85	15,68			
	4 th Year	72	111,33	16,49			
	5 th and more years	42	109,28	18,67			

In Table 7, the attitudinal differences of the participants towards the disabled according to their university education background by year were examined. According to the results of the analysis, it was determined that there was no difference between the groups in any of the sub-dimensions. There is a significant difference between the groups in total scores ($p < 0.05$). Post hoc test (Tukey) was performed to determine between which groups the difference was. According to the test results, the difference is between the participants in the 2nd and 4th year of education and in favour of the participants in the 2nd year.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When it is examined whether the attitudes of university students towards disabled people differ according to their gender, whether there is a disabled person in their family, whether there is a disabled person in their class, the state of having taken physical education and sports course for the disabled, the department they study in and the year of education at the university, in this study, an average of 113,75 points out of 155 was obtained.

When we evaluated the attitudes towards the disabled according to gender, it was found that there was no significant difference. In line with the studies, we can say that gender does not create differences in influencing attitudes (Gülderen, 1997; Ünal and Yıldız, 2017; Kaner, 2000; Çolak and Çetin, 2014; Tervo et al., 2004; Nowicki and Sandieson, 2002). Some studies reveal that women have more positive attitudes towards the disabled than men. (Hergenrather and Rhodes, 2007; Findler et al., 2007; Avcioğlu et al., 2005; Yıldırım and Dökmen 2004; McDougal et al., 2004). Şahin and Bekir (2016), on the other hand, found that men exhibit more positive attitudes towards the disabled than women. These results show us that gender is not the only determinant in changing attitudes towards people with disabilities. Obtaining different results in studies on the subject supports this view.

It has emerged as a result of the findings that university students' attitudes towards disabled individuals do not make a difference whether there is a disabled person in the family or not. When the literature is examined, there are studies showing that the attitudes of people who have a disabled person in their family or close environment are more positively mannered (Avramidis et al., 2000; Çolak and Çetin, 2014; Kargin and Baydık, 2002; Meyer et al. 2001). We can say that the findings obtained in the research contradict the studies in which positive results were obtained. We can attribute the reason for this contradiction to the fact that only 16 of the 255 participants who participated in the study had

a disabled person in their family. When we look at the other studies, we can clearly say that the presence of a disabled person in the family does not change the attitudes of the individuals (Gedik and Toker, 2018; Özida, 2008).

The fact that students are in the same class with disabled people does not change their attitudes towards disabled people. We cannot say that it is a negative situation for a disabled person to receive education in the same classroom environment with an individual without a disability. In the study of Gençtürk and Korkut (2020), in which they examined the attitudes of university students towards the disabled, it was determined that there was no significant difference in the educational environment sub-dimension of the scale according to the state of having a disabled in their family and immediate circle. In the same direction, Altıparmak and Yıldırım Sarı (2012) in their study revealed that the presence of a disabled person in the immediate environment of the individual in the sub-dimension of education does not change his/her attitude.

Courses involving disability are given in various departments of universities, both theoretically and practically. If we consider the faculties of sports sciences, physical education and sports courses for the disabled are included as compulsory or optional in sports management, coaching, recreation and physical education and sports teaching departments. It can be said that the content and quality of this course has been enriched in recent years. The findings of the study show that the physical education and sports course for the disabled do not make any difference in the attitudes of the students towards the disabled. When the studies are examined, the attitude of the individual does not change whether s/he takes a course on disability or not (Şahin and Güldenoğlu, 2013; Şahin and Bekir, 2016). We can attribute the absence of such a difference to the fact that the quality of all education and courses on disability at the university level, and the high awareness of

university students towards people with disabilities. When other studies are examined, it has been determined that physical education and sports course for the disabled change the attitudes of individuals towards the disabled in a positive way (Hodge, 1998; Akbuğa and Gürsel, 2007; Donaldson, 1980). When we look at the department of education, we cannot say that there is a difference in attitudes between departments. When we look at the studies conducted in other faculties other than the faculties of sports sciences, it is seen that there may be differences between the departments (Çakırer-Çalbayram et al., 2018; Şahin and Bekir, 2016).

The findings obtained from the research show that the education years of the students at the university change their attitudes towards the disabled. We can say that in the 2nd academic year, students exhibited more positive attitudes towards people with disabilities. In the study conducted by Vural et al. (2018) at İnönü University, School of Physical Education and Sports, Department of Exercise and Sports Education for the Disabled, it was determined that the year of education created significant differences in attitudes and the attitudes of 1st Grade students towards the disabled were more positive. In a similar study by Kargın and Baydık (2002) it was determined that lower class students had more positive attitudes than upper class students. Again, in the study conducted by Thompson, Emrich, and Moore, (2003), it was stated that students differ in their attitudes towards the class variable in the education year.

As a result, within the findings obtained; variables such as gender, year of education, having a disabled person in his family and class, and whether taking the physical education and sports course for the disabled do not greatly change the attitudes of the students towards the disabled. This shows that university students do not see disabled individuals as different from normal individuals, and the fact that an individual has a disability does not mean that other individuals exhibit negative attitudes towards that

individual. We can say that the concept of disability now is not very strange to the society, and negative perceptions of disability have been broken, albeit a little.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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