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Investigating female pre-service preschool teachers' attitudes towards sport

Osman Dalaman

Department of Primary Education, Ahmet Keleşoğlu Education Faculty, Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Turkey.

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The purpose of this study was to investigate female pre-service preschool teachers' attitudes towards sport in relation to the variables of grade level, the state of having done sport in the past, the reason for not doing sport in the past, the state of doing sport regularly, the level of interest in sport and the existence of a family member doing sport. Participants included 383 pre-service preschool teachers attending Ahmet Keleşoğlu Education Faculty of Necmettin Erbakan University in the 2015 to 2016 academic year. In determining participants' attitudes towards sport, "The Scale of Attitudes towards Sport" was used. In the statistical analysis of the collected data, frequency analysis, Kruskal Wallis H test and Mann Whitney U test in SPSS 22.0 program were used. At the end of the study, it was found that female pre-service preschool teachers' levels of psychosocial development, physical development and total attitude levels are high yet their mental development attitude level is medium. When the data were evaluated on the basis of the demographic features, it was found that their attitudes towards sport vary significantly depending on the variables of the state of having done sport in the past and the state of doing sport regularly ($p < 0.05$). However, their attitudes towards sport do not vary significantly depending on the variables of grade level, the reason for not having done sport in the past, the level of interest in sport and the existence of a family member doing sport ($p > 0.05$). As a result, it can be argued that having done sport in the past and doing sport regularly at present positively affect the attitudes towards sport.

Key words: Preschool teaching, sport, attitude.

INTRODUCTION

A whole body of conscious movements referring to physical, mental and spiritual phenomena, carried out around certain rules, requiring a spirit of struggle, and done for the sake of having fun, competing, racing and achieving a healthy life is defined as "sport" (Ramazanoğlu et al., 2005: 155). As can be understood

from this definition, sport activities are constituted by physical activities in which motivation to win is in the foreground. In addition to this, sport is a phenomenon requiring physical, technical and mental efforts creating a sense of aesthetic in spectators and integrated with disciplines such as psychology, bio-mechanic and

E-mail: osmndalaman@gmail.com.

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physiology (Çoban and Ünveren, 2007).

Participation in sporting events has a great importance for they affect human life in many aspects positively (Güner, 2015; Şahan, 2008). At the forefront of the benefits brought about by sport to human life are physical. It is known that participation in sport activities has improved joint, muscular and connective tissues as well as increasing the physical condition of the person (Açak, 2006).

In the literature, as well as physical and conditional benefits of sport, its psychological and social benefits have been emphasized, and its protective role in increasing the general health level and preventing some metabolic diseases have been pointed out. The experimental and descriptive findings in the literature demonstrate the physical (Karadağ, 2012; Ağaoğlu et al., 2008), psychological (Armstrong and Oomen-Early, 2009; Dunn et al., 2005) and social (Özkan, 2011; Nebioğlu, 2006) benefits of sport and support the idea that sport has a protective role in enhancing the general health status and preventing some diseases (Gökhan et al., 2011; Tsai et al., 2004; Sigal et al., 2007; Snowling and Hopkins, 2006).

The reactions of people towards objects and phenomena in their environments are expressed as "attitude". As can be understood from this definition, attitudes are types of behaviors exhibited by people towards events and situations faced by them. However, people's attitudes are not limited to events or phenomena. As such, people can demonstrate attitudes towards a design, an abstract phenomenon, an object and a person in their daily lives. Attitudes possessed by people are shaped by the features of the geographical region they are living in, their knowledge level, socialization processes and life experiences (İnceoğlu, 2010).

Attitudes are made out of three elements: mental, affective and behavioral. These elements constituting attitudes are in interaction with each other, and there is a harmony between them (Özkan, 2011; İnceoğlu, 2010). The process of perceiving a state or a concept by an individual is defined as the mental element. Emotions emerging when people are confronted with states or events make up the affective element. Conversion of evaluations made for the stimulus involved in encountered states or events into behaviors makes up the behavioral element (Karadağ, 2012).

In this regard, the only element of the attitude that can be observed is the behavioral element. People create their perception of any object on the basis of their emotions, beliefs and value judgments. Also, reactions towards any object remain at a certain level (Üresin, 2012). As there is a connection between attitudes and behaviors exhibited by people, knowing the direction of an individual's interest in the stimulus can help predict the behavior to be displayed. This is of great importance because when the connection between the attitude and behavior is well known, proper training can be given to

individuals for their future career and the content of such training can be designed to improve individuals' attitudes (Üstüner, 2006).

Given the aforementioned above, it is clear that attitudes directly or indirectly affect behaviors of people. In this connection, people's attitudes towards sport can have important influences on their motivation to do sport and sport-related behaviors. As known well, the gender within the social structure affects attitudes towards sport (Chung and Phillips, 2002). The research, in this regard, has revealed that when compared to males, females' attitudes towards sport are more negative (Kangalgil et al., 2006; Yağcı, 2012). For example, Swanepoel et al. (2015) found male students in universities to be more inclined to sport compared to their female peers. Indeed, the results of Tereza and Dosil (2015) study showed that the attitudes towards sport were more positive in younger male individuals who regularly engaged in sports and whose parents also engaged in physical activities. Therefore, in order to improve females' orientation and the factors affecting their attitudes towards sport should be well explored.

In this respect, the current study aims to investigate female pre-service preschool teachers' attitudes toward sport in relation to the variables of grade level, the state of having done sport in the past, the reason for not doing sport in the past, the state of doing sport regularly, the level of interest in sport and the existence of a family member doing sport.

Specifically, the following six questions guided the study:

1. Does the variable of grade level affect female pre-service preschool teachers' attitudes towards sport?
2. Does the variable of having done sport in the past affect female pre-service preschool teachers' attitudes towards sport?
3. Does the variable of not doing sport in the past affect female pre-service preschool teachers' attitudes towards sport?
4. Does the variable of doing sport regularly affect female pre-service preschool teachers' attitudes towards sport?
5. Does the variable of interest in sport affect female pre-service preschool teachers' attitudes towards sport?
6. Does the variable of a family member doing sport affect female pre-service preschool teachers' attitudes towards sport?

METHODOLOGY

Research model

In the current study, one of the observation-based research models frequently used in the fields of education and sports, the survey research method was used. The survey method is used by researchers who want to find answers to their questions and test whether their research hypotheses are correct or not. To this end, researchers develop some hypotheses and use questionnaires or scales in order to test them. The survey method also allows the

Table 1. Demographic features of the participants.

Variable	Sub-variables*	N	%
Grade level	1st year	76	19.8
	2nd year	80	20.9
	3rd year	143	37.3
	4th year	84	21.9
The state of having done sport in the past	Never	89	23.2
	Sometimes	269	70.2
	Always	25	6.5
The reason for not doing sport in the past	My family did not let	15	16.9
	I did not have time	63	70.8
	Economic reasons	11	12.4
The state of doing sport regularly	1-3 days a week	176	46.0
	4-6 days a week	27	7.0
	Everyday	12	3.1
	I do not do any sport	168	43.9
Interest in sport	Through newspapers	19	5.0
	Through social media	216	56.4
	Through television	89	23.2
	Through sport contests	26	6.8
	I am not interested	33	8.6
A family member doing sport	Father	19	5.0
	Mother	22	5.7
	Sibling	138	36.0
	No one	204	53.3

*The participants chose the most suitable one from the choices.

investigation of the target features of large samples (such as age, gender, marital status, etc.), thus, it is also known as descriptive research (Can, 2014).

Study group

The study was conducted with 383 female pre-service preschool teachers attending the Department of Preschool Education at Ahmet Keleşoğlu Education Faculty of Necmettin Erbakan University in the 2015 to 2016 academic year.

Some demographic features of the participants are shown in Table 1. According to Table 1, most participants were from the third grade level (37.3%), do sport sometimes at present (70.2%), did not have time to do sport in the past (70.8%), do sport 1 to 3 days a week (46%), developed interest in sport through social media (56.4%) and generally do not have any family member doing sport (53.3%).

Data collection

In the collection of the data, "The Scale of Attitudes towards Sport" (Appendix A) developed by the researcher on the basis of a literature review was used. In addition to this, for the development of the scale, the items of Koçak (2014) were adapted. There are

totally 27 items in the scale, and it is formed through a five-point Likert structure. The response alternatives to the scale items are strongly agree (5), agree (4), undecided (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The scale has three sub-dimensions, and the high scores obtained from a specific sub-dimension indicate that a participant's attitude regarding the corresponding sub-dimension is high. The sub-dimensions of the scale and the items belonging to them are as follows:

- (1) Psychosocial development items: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15.
- (2) Physical development items: 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22.
- (3) Mental development items: 23, 24, 25, 26, and 27.

The results related to the reliability of the scale are shown in Table 2. According to Table 2, the reliability of the whole scale (0.904) as well as the reliability for each sub-dimension was found to be high (0.860 for psychosocial development, 0.789 for physical development, 0.837 for mental development).

Statistical analyses

In the analysis of the collected data, SPSS 22 program package was used. As the data regarding the scores obtained from each

Table 2. The results of the reliability analysis of the scale.

Sub-dimensions	The number of items	Cronbach's alpha
Psychosocial development	15	0.860
Physical development	7	0.789
Mental development	5	0.837
Total	27	0.904

Table 3. Descriptive statistics related to the participants' attitudes towards sport.

Sub-dimensions	N	X	Ss
Psychosocial development	383	4.22	0.461
Physical development	383	4.56	0.442
Mental development	383	3.94	0.701
Total	383	4.25	0.421

sub-dimension of "The Scale of Attitudes towards Sport" and the whole scale did not exhibit a normal distribution, Kruskal Wallis H test, one of the non-parametric tests, was used to compare the sub-dimensions according to the study variables. In the case of a difference between groups found as a result of the analysis, Mann Whitney U test (as a post hoc test) was used to determine between which groups the differences existed.

FINDINGS

Here, research findings are presented. Table 3 shows descriptive statistics related to the participants' attitudes towards sport.

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that the participants' psychosocial development, physical development and total attitude levels are high while their mental development attitude level is over medium.

Table 4 compares the participants' attitudes towards sport depending on the grade level variable. When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the participants' psychosocial, physical and mental development and total attitude levels do not vary significantly depending on the grade level variable ($p>0,05$). Table 5 compares the participants' attitudes towards sport depending on their state of having done sport in the past.

When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that while the participants' physical development attitude levels do not vary significantly depending on their state of having done sport in the past ($p>0,05$), their psychosocial development, mental development and total attitude levels vary significantly ($p<0,05$). The significant difference found at the levels of psychosocial development and total attitude is because the attitude level of the participants having always done sport is higher than those of the participants having sometimes done sport or having never done sport. The significant difference found at the mental development attitude level

is because the attitude levels of the participants having always done sport and having sometimes done sport are higher than that of the participants having never done sport.

Table 6 compares the participants' attitudes towards sport depending on their reasons for not having done sport in the past. When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that the participants' psychosocial development, physical development, mental development and total attitude levels do not vary significantly depending on their reasons for not having done sport in the past ($p>0,05$).

Table 7 compares the participants' attitudes towards sport depending on their state of doing sport regularly. When Table 7 is examined, it is seen that while the participants' physical development attitude levels do not vary significantly depending on their state of doing sport regularly ($p>0,05$), their psychosocial development, mental development and total attitude levels vary significantly depending on their state of doing sport regularly ($p<0,05$). The significant difference found at the levels of psychosocial development and total attitude is because of the difference between the attitudes levels of the participants doing sports 1 to 3 days a week and every day and that of the participants not doing any sports. The significant difference seen at the mental development attitude level is because the attitude level of the participants doing sports 1 to 3 days a week is higher than that of the participants not doing any sports.

Table 8 compares the participants' attitudes towards sport depending on their interest in sport. As shown in Table 8, the participants' psychosocial development, physical development, mental development and total attitude levels do not vary significantly depending on their interest in sport ($p>0,05$).

Table 9 compares the participants' attitudes towards sport depending on the existence of a family member doing sport.

Table 4. Comparison of participants' attitudes towards sport depending on grade level.

Sub-dimensions	Grade level	N	X	Ss	Mean rank	χ^2	p
Psychosocial development	1 st year	76	4.17	0.487	182.41	0.910	0.823
	2 nd year	80	4.25	0.432	197.56		
	3 rd year	143	4.23	0.457	195.09		
	4 th year	84	4.22	0.477	190.11		
Physical development	1 st year	76	4.48	0.521	180.61	1.717	0.633
	2 nd year	80	4.52	0.485	186.09		
	3 rd year	143	4.60	0.377	197.84		
	4 th year	84	4.59	0.419	198.00		
Mental development	1 st year	76	3.96	0.767	198.78	2.330	0.507
	2 nd year	80	3.94	0.704	192.93		
	3 rd year	143	3.97	0.677	197.15		
	4 th year	84	3.86	0.682	176.22		
Total	1 st year	76	4.21	0.430	181.66	1.169	0.760
	2 nd year	80	4.26	0.428	197.03		
	3 rd year	143	4.27	0.408	196.70		
	4 th year	84	4.25	0.431	188.56		

Table 5. Comparison of attitudes towards sport depending on the state of having done sport in the past.

Sub-dimensions	State of having done sport in the past	N	X	Ss	Mean rank	χ^2	p	Between-groups difference
Psychosocial development	Never	89	4.15	0.449	173.16	9.043	0.011	1<3, 2<3
	Sometimes	269	4.22	0.464	193.02			
	Always	25	4.46	0.409	248.10			
Physical development	Never	89	4.48	0.545	180.71	1.427	0.490	-
	Sometimes	269	4.58	0.401	194.56			
	Always	25	4.59	0.438	204.60			
Mental development	Never	89	3.78	0.727	166.66	7.970	0.019	1<2, 1<3
	Sometimes	269	3.97	0.697	197.02			
	Always	25	4.17	0.556	228.20			
Total	Never	89	4.16	0.429	170.34	8.340	0.015	1<3, 2<3
	Sometimes	269	4.27	0.416	194.67			
	Always	25	4.43	0.384	240.34			

When Table 9 is examined, it is seen that the participants' psychosocial development, physical development, mental development and total attitude levels do not vary significantly depending on the existence of a family member doing sport ($p>0.05$).

DISCUSSION

In this study, it was found that female pre-service

preschool teachers' attitudes towards sport do not vary significantly depending on their grade level. This might be because at all the grades of their undergraduate education, they are offered similar sports activities and facilities, their expectations from sport might be identical and they may have similar free time to allocate sport. In a similar study conducted by Aydin (2013), it was reported that university students' attitudes towards physical education and sports are positive in general.

The findings reported in the literature indicate that most

Table 6. Comparison of attitudes towards sport depending on the reason for not having done sport in the past.

Sub-dimensions	The reason for not having done sport in the past	N	X	Ss	Mean rank	χ^2	p
Psychosocial development	My family did not let	15	4.22	0.497	49.33	0.832	0.660
	I did not have time	63	4.14	0.460	44.83		
	Economic reasons	11	4.06	0.309	40.05		
Physical development	My family did not let	15	4.51	0.610	48.47	0.377	0.828
	I did not have time	63	4.46	0.558	44.03		
	Economic reasons	11	4.56	0.386	45.82		
Mental development	My family did not let	15	3.84	0.596	47.17	0.436	0.804
	I did not have time	63	3.78	0.775	45.25		
	Economic reasons	11	3.69	0.641	40.59		
Total	My family did not let	15	4.22	0.474	50.47	0.892	0.640
	I did not have time	63	4.16	0.444	44.25		
	Economic reasons	11	4.11	0.277	41.82		

Table 7. Comparison of attitudes towards sport depending on the state of doing sport regularly.

Sub-dimensions	State of doing sport regularly	N	X	Ss	Mean rank	χ^2	p	Between-groups difference
Psychosocial development	1-3 days a week	176	4.29	0.464	210.03	13.940	0.003	1>4, 3>4
	4-6 days a week	27	4.22	0.512	191.00			
	Everyday	12	4.43	0.398	241.83			
	Never	168	4.13	0.441	169.72			
Physical development	1-3 days a week	176	4.62	0.405	207.34	7.267	0.064	-
	4-6 days a week	27	4.47	0.441	167.30			
	Everyday	12	4.62	0.382	202.46			
	Never	168	4.50	0.475	179.15			
Mental development	1-3 days a week	176	4.04	0.686	207.57	9.424	0.024	1>4
	4-6 days a week	27	3.83	0.634	172.65			
	Everyday	12	4.20	0.734	231.25			
	Never	168	3.84	0.711	175.99			
Total	1-3 days a week	176	4.32	0.416	211.63	14.342	0.002	1>4, 3>4
	4-6 days a week	27	4.21	0.439	178.26			
	Everyday	12	4.43	0.424	237.13			
	Never	168	4.17	0.409	170.42			

of the university students had the habit of doing sport in their past lives (Ergül et al., 2015). In the current study, it was found that the state of having done sport in the past may have significant effects on their current attitudes towards sport.

The findings revealed that the psycho-social development and mental development and total attitude levels of the pre-service teachers having done sport

“always” and “sometimes” are higher than those of the pre-service teachers having done sport “never”. On the other hand, female pre-service preschool teachers’ attitudes towards sport were found to be not varying significantly depending on their reasons for not having done sport in the past. These findings indicate that the reasons for not having done sport in the past do not affect their current attitudes towards sport; yet the habit of

Table 8. Comparison of attitudes towards sport depending on interest in sport.

Sub-dimensions	Interest in sport	N	X	Ss	Mean rank	χ^2	p
Psychosocial development	Through newspapers	19	4.18	0.417	181.74	2.882	0.578
	Through social media	216	4.21	0.445	191.43		
	Through television	89	4.25	0.492	198.24		
	Through sport contests	26	4.32	0.475	212.83		
	Not interested	33	4.13	0.498	168.38		
Physical development	Through newspapers	19	4.41	0.410	141.95	7.006	0.136
	Through social media	216	4.56	0.454	194.11		
	Through television	89	4.60	0.433	203.27		
	Through sport contests	26	4.46	0.437	162.87		
	Not interested	33	4.60	0.394	199.56		
Mental development	Through newspapers	19	3.73	0.486	148.66	7.595	0.108
	Through social media	216	3.92	0.689	188.04		
	Through television	89	4.02	0.770	208.54		
	Through sport contests	26	4.12	0.599	220.02		
	Not interested	33	3.83	0.740	176.17		
Total	Through newspapers	19	4.16	0.348	166.13	2.718	0.606
	Through social media	216	4.25	0.417	191.35		
	Through television	89	4.29	0.433	201.52		
	Through sport contests	26	4.31	0.435	204.15		
	Not interested	33	4.20	0.446	175.88		

Table 9. Comparison of attitudes towards sport depending on the existence of a family member doing sport.

Sub-dimensions	Family member	N	X	Ss	Mean rank	χ^2	p
Psychosocial development	Father	19	4.35	0.479	223.84	2.206	0.531
	Mother	22	4.21	0.484	186.07		
	Sibling	138	4.23	0.445	195.82		
	No one	204	4.20	0.469	187.09		
Physical development	Father	19	4.62	0.330	197.26	0.360	0.948
	Mother	22	4.56	0.351	182.98		
	Sibling	138	4.55	0.432	189.38		
	No one	204	4.56	0.467	194.26		
Mental development	Father	19	4.06	0.636	209.95	4.845	0.183
	Mother	22	3.66	0.899	155.23		
	Sibling	138	4.01	0.651	203.18		
	No one	204	3.91	0.711	186.73		
Total	Father	19	4.36	0.415	223.89	2.759	0.430
	Mother	22	4.20	0.483	177.23		
	Sibling	138	4.27	0.408	197.56		
	No one	204	4.24	0.423	186.86		

doing sport in the past can be argued to positively affect the current attitudes towards sport. The reason behind

the positive effect of having done sport in the past on the attitudes towards sport might be because their level of

awareness of the benefits and importance of sport is higher than that of those not having done sport.

Similar findings were reported in the literature by studies conducted on young people showing that participation in sport activities positively affect the attitudes towards sport (Alpaslan, 2008; Hünük, 2006; Akandere et al., 2010). Similarly, being sedentary or active during the daily life has also been shown to be the determinants of the attitudes towards sport (Kamtsios and Digelidis, 2008).

The current study also revealed that the means through which female pre-service preschool teachers are interested in sport such as printed and visual media or sport contests do not have significant effect on their attitudes towards sport. However, their state of doing sport regularly was found to be significantly influential on their attitudes towards sport. In this connection, the findings show that psychosocial development, mental development and total attitude levels of female pre-service preschool teachers' doing sports 1 to 3 days a week are higher than those of not doing any sports.

As known well, there is a significant correlation between attitudes and behaviors (Karadağ, 2012). Thus, it is expected that of those female pre-service preschool teachers having positive attitudes towards sports do sport 1 to 3 days a week and those having poor attitudes towards sport do not participate in sports activities at all. Similar studies in the literature also reported that active participation in sport activities regular affect attitudes towards sport positively (Cimilli, 2017; Kangalgil et al., 2006; Yağcı, 2012).

The current study also found that the existence of a family member doing sport does not significantly affect female pre-service preschool teachers' attitudes towards sport. Though there are no studies investigating the same subject on university students, there are some studies conducted on secondary school students and they concluded that the existence of family members doing sport affects the attitudes towards sport positively (Çelik and Pulur, 2011; Kılıç, 2015). In the current study, however, it was found that the existence of a family member doing sport does not significantly affect female pre-service preschool teachers' attitudes towards sport and this might be because university students are physically and psychologically distant from their families and they are at their developmental process of making their own decisions.

As a conclusion, it was found that having done sport in the past and doing sport regularly at present have positive effects on female pre-service preschool teachers' attitudes towards sport. The main reason for this finding can be fact that participation in sport positively affects attitudes towards sport and the findings of the study concur with the relevant literature. In light of the findings of the study, the following suggestions can be offered.

1. Some arrangements can be made to impart the awareness of sport to female pre-service preschool

teachers so that their attitudes towards sport can be enhanced. In addition, the course "Physical Education and Games" offered just for one term to pre-service preschool teachers can be extended across the teacher education programs and grade levels.

2. In order to enhance female pre-service preschool teachers' participation in sport activities, extracurricular sport activities and leisure time activities can be organized. Moreover, the number of sport facilities where students can be engaged in sport activities can be increased.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Appendix A. The scale of attitudes towards sport.

The items in this scale were developed to elicit your attitudes towards sport. Your responses to the Scale items must reflect your own opinions. While indicating your response to each item, first read the item carefully and then mark the option with (X) that reflects your opinion best. Your responses will be kept confidential and will not be used for other purposes, but only for the current study purpose. Please do not leave any item unanswered. I am grateful for your help.

1	Grade level	1 st grade ()	2 nd grade ()	3 rd grade ()	4 th grade ()		
2	The state of having done sport in the past	1. Never ()	2. Sometimes ()	3. Always ()			
3	If you did not do sports, why?	1. My family did not let me ()	2. I did not have time ()	3. Due to some economic reasons ()			
4	I do sports regularly	1-3 days a week ()	2. 4-6 days a week ()	3. Every day ()			
5	The state of interest in sports	1. I read sports news from the newspaper ()	2. I follow sports events in the social media ()	3. I watch sports on TV ()	4. I go to sport contests ()		
6	The member of my family doing sports	1. Father ()	2. Mother ()	3. Sibling ()	4. Nobody ()		
[1] Attitudes	[2] Strongly agree	[3] Agree	[4] Undecided	[5] Disagree	[6] Strongly disagree		
		Doing sports	5	4	3	2	1
Psycho-social development	1	Helps to cope with stress.					
	2	Increases the social status.					
	3	Makes people happy.					
	4	Reduces anxiety.					
	5	Increases self-confidence.					
	6	Decreases boredom.					
	7	Increases success at work.					
	8	Increases success in social life.					
	9	Helps to control anger.					
	10	Improves emotional well-being.					
	11	Provides protection against depression.					
	12	Helps to relax.					
	13	Improves leadership characteristics.					
	14	Enables to socialize.					
	15	Raises the consciousness of responsibility in social life.					

Appendix A. Contd.

Physical development	16	Helps to control weight.					
	17	Is necessary for the physical development of children.					
	18	Increases the quality of life.					
	19	Increases the capacity of work.					
	20	Makes people fit.					
	21	Protects against illnesses.					
	22	Strengthens skeletal structure.					
Mental development	23	Promotes creativity.					
	24	Keeps the memory strong.					
	25	Enhances decision-making performance.					
	26	Improves thinking skills.					
	27	Improves strategy development skills.					