

Full Length Research Paper

Factors affecting recreation preferences and expectations of disabled adult learners

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Received 25 August, 2014; Accepted 19 September, 2014

Generalizing recreation services, one of the essential well-being sources of disabled persons who experience deprivation in many dimensions of life and which fulfill their learning needs, is a social responsibility. The present study aims to determine factors effective on recreation preferences and expectations of the disabled individuals who utilize from the recreation services offered by the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality. For data collection purpose, an inquiry form prepared by the researcher was used. Whereas in the analysis of the personal data, percentage (%) and frequency (f) values were used; in determination of factors affecting individuals' recreation preferences and their expectations a factor analysis was utilized. Conclusively, it was found in recreational activity selection of disabled adults, factors of "accessibility and companion factor" and "guidance factor", "psychological relaxation and socializing factor" in expectations regarding recreation; and "suitability to the adult education principles factor" were more dominant in expectations regarding recreation services.

Key words: Disability people, recreation, adult education, adult learners.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, participation in adult education activities has been increased. In adult education programs, though degrees and certificates concerning formal education can be awarded, these programs cover learning experiences concerning personal interest and development as well. The most advanced ones of these personal interest courses conducted during leisure, each of which can be considered as a recreation activity, are given by the social organizations such as park and recreation centers. These personal interest courses in various subjects are followed by many adults as a leisure activity in an increasing pace (Dattilo et al., 2012, 2).

Adult education which is targeting adults outside of the formal education especially focuses on risk groups who

suffer deprivation within the society in many angles. Among these groups, disabled individuals experience deprivation because of less education, job, social life and etc. opportunities and they reside at the bottom levels of social tilling.

In addition to limitations in social opportunities, because of scarcity in physical activities, it is more possible for them to experience adverse health conditions, depression, loneliness, and to head towards drug and alcohol abuse compared to the other individuals (California State Parks, 2005, 27).

Recreation activities provide disabled individuals opportunity to apply these activities as part of their active life style, to develop required motor skills; to increase

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physical freedom and/or mobility; to develop self-respect and self-image; and to be friend with other individuals without disability, and thus, their life quality improves and this contribute in their social integration (California State Parks, 2005, 28).

Although leisure activities have numerous positive benefits on disabled persons, studies in the literature indicate that leisure activity preferences of disabled persons are usually passive and they are usually limited with home-based activities; and their most common leisure activities are watching TV, listening to music and playing computer games (Badia et al., 2013, 329; King et al., 2003). This situation presents that sedentary lifestyle also exists for disabled individuals, which is one of the most important issues of the contemporary era and which has been shown as one of the reasons for developing recent prominent death causes such as cardiovascular sicknesses, cancer, chronic respiratory sicknesses, and diabetes (Manuha *et al.*, 2013).

Recognizing recreation activities as a protective and healer mean, accepting their individual and social benefits increasingly, allow recreation services to be included in adult education applications more extensively.

Research about recreation services and opinions of participants is important in terms of expansion of these services, development of their quality and taking more advantage from these activities by participants.

The present study aims to determine factors affecting general recreation preferences and expectations of the persons utilizing from recreational services offered to disabled persons.

METHOD

The research is a descriptive study in a scanning model, which aims to describe a situation either in the past or in contemporary day in the form it exists and which tries to describe individuals bound to their unique conditions and as they are.

The population is composed of 5560 individuals who received service from the Disabled Center in Family Life Centers within the body of Ankara Metropolitan Municipality in 2013. A group of 266 disabled persons which were found sufficient to represent the population were taken into sampling. An inquiry form organized by the researcher was used to collect data. Besides the personal information, there were 25 expressions in the five-point Likert scale form (see appendix a). The reliability study was conducted by applying the inquiry to the 45 disabled individuals outside of the sampling group. Cronbach's Alpha value was calculated as 0.94 for the inquiry study.

Collected data within the research were analyzed by means of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences 20 software. In evaluation of personal information, percentage (%), frequency (f) values; to determine the prominent factors in recreation activity preferences and participants' expectations, factor analysis were applied.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

51.5% of the participant disabled adults were males and 43.6% were females; majority (47%) of them were in the

age group of 25-44 and graduated from primary, secondary and high school (70.3%) and at medium income level (49.6%). 57.5% of them have physical, 21.4% hearing, 15.8% visual impairment, and 5.3% have multiple impairments. 44% of them were postpartum disabled. Whereas 41.4% of them were joining multiple recreational activities, the most preferred activity group was handcrafts (19.9%).

As a result of factor analysis conducted, it was determined that factors effective on selection of recreation activity by the disabled adults were concentrated on two basic factors. These factors were referred to as "accessibility and companion factor" and "guidance factor" according to their significance level in selection of recreation activities (Table 1).

"Accessibility and companion factor" is an important factor in selection of recreation activities. When weights of items on this factor were taken into consideration, it was observed that factors of "transportation opportunity, participation of other disabled friends, free of charge activity" gained importance in preference of recreation activity. Transportation and cost of activity were reported as significant factors on recreational activities of disabled persons by other studies as well (Mendez et al., 2012, 23).

The second important factor in recreational activity preference was "guidance factor" (Table 1). Respondents stated concerning the guidance factor that "physician advice and health programs on TV" were effective. It is natural disabled individuals who are more prone to physical and psychological problems are open to physician guidance in terms of recreational activities. Effective status of the health programs on TV which is the indicator sign of mass communication means would be functional as an informal learning resource in creation of awareness about benefits of leisure and recreation activities for physical and psychological health. Therefore, mass communication means must be utilized more frequently to raise public awareness. It is known that mass communication means have significant strength in terms of education and learning, but this potential is not functional for adult education in anywhere in the world adequately (Narrated by: Tekin, 1996, 111).

As a result of the factor analysis, it was determined that expectations of disabled adults to beginning of recreation activities focused on a single basic factor. This factor is referred to as "psychological relaxation and socializing factor" (Table 2).

When weights of items concerning this factor is evaluated, it can be seen that following expectations are effective on first decision of participation into recreation activities respectively: "withdrawing negative feelings such as stress, depression and etc.; meeting new people / socializing; escaping from the environment where they live; proving oneself; spending time with disabled friends" (Table 2).

Disabled individuals need same basic needs with individuals without disability in regard to recreation and

Table 1. Factors effective in preferences of disabled adults regarding recreational activity.

	% of Variance	Cumulative %		Factor Weight Value	
				1	2
Accessibility and Companion Factor	54.237	54.237	Transportation	0.883	
			Participation of disabled friends	0.823	
			Free of charge	0.806	
Guidance Factor	19.952	74.189	Physician's advice		0.943
			Health programs on TV		0.925

Table 2. Factors effective on expectations of disabled adults regarding beginning recreational activities.

	% of Variance	Cumulative %		Factor Weight Value
				1
Psychological relaxation and socializing factor	62.561	62.561	Withdrawing negative feelings such as stress, depression etc.	0.864
			Meeting new people /socializing	0.841
			Escaping from the environment where they live	0.839
			Prove oneself	0.837
			Spending time with disabled friends	0.829

leisure activities (Mendez-Hodgkinson and Cervantes, 2012, 23). It was determined that two out of the three motivations of adults without disability regarding participation in leisure activities were social communication and social stimulus; and they were participated in these courses because they wanted to escape from boredom, loneliness and disappointments of daily life (Dattilo et al., 2012, 13). The present study reveals that recreational expectations of disabled adults concerning socializing and psychological acquisitions were similar to the adults without disability.

Furthermore, it was reported by other studies that disabled individuals' participation into recreation activities was effective in buffering and decreasing depression and anxiety symptoms; and successful in providing activeness, relaxation, and social support (Kerr et al., 2012, 289-290; Wilson, 2012, 499).

Among both the factors effective in activity selection and expectations while beginning these activities, opinions of "spending time with disabled friends" and "finding other disabled friends in those activities" must be considered carefully. The main reason of this situation could be the fact that disabled persons might feel more comfortable among persons in similar circumstances.

Negative attitudes within the society toward disabled persons prevent them to participate in recreation activities significantly (Badia et al., 2013, 329). Conducted studies indicated that disabled individuals are being

ostracized because of their impairments (Rolfe et al., 2012, 267) and they believe that they are stigmatized within society by the others (Perry et al., 2008, 5). Many disabled individuals keep distance with recreation and leisure activities because of a fear that they are not recognized by the individuals without disability; and they perceive their disability as a reason not to participate activities (Mendez-Hodgkinson and Cervantes, 2012, 25).

As a result of the factor analysis to determine expectations of disabled adults from recreation services offered by the municipality, it was found that their expectations focused on single basic factor. This factor was referred to as "the factor of conformity to the adult education principles" (Table 3).

The factor of "conformity to the adult education principles" was the single important factor among the expectations of disabled adults from the recreation services offered by the municipality. Through evaluation of weights of items on this factor, it was observed that following expectations were prominent respectively; "i) activities which can be participated together with adults without disability must be arranged; ii) there must be experts; iii) activity periods must be extended; iv) trainers or instructors must treat better to the participants; v) trainers or instructors must be more educated; vi) another recreation division must be established within the municipality for more productive leisure; viii) activity variety must be increased; ix) activity time and its duration must

Table 3. Expectations of disabled adults from recreation service providers.

	% Variance	of %	Cumulative %		Factor Weight Value
					1
				Activities which can be participated together with adults without disability must be arranged	0.859
				There must be experts	0.854
				Activity periods must be extended	0.848
The factor of conformity to the adult education principles	69.192		69.192	Trainers / instructors must treat better to the participants	0.841
				Trainers / instructors must be more educated	0.830
				Another recreation division must be established within the municipality for more productive leisure	0.823
				Activity variety must be increased	0.816
				Activity time and its duration must be determined by the participant	0.780

be determined by the participant” (Table 3).

It is notable that expectation of “activities which can be participated together with adults without disability must be arranged” has the highest weight value among all expectations toward the recreation services offered by the municipality. This situation indicates that disabled adults do not have equal opportunity with the people without disability. However, the fact that disabled adults indicated this item most can be associated with their desire to be recognized by people without disability and to participate in every part of life despite of their disabilities.

The term of inclusion represents interaction of both disabled and people without disability in every area of life including education, work and recreation (Kunstler et al., 2013, 123).

It is important for disabled individuals to participate in recreation activities together with people in terms of their socializing. For disabled persons, participation in recreation activities together with their peers and persons outside of their families increases their self-confidence. Disabled and individuals without disability can benefit from each other’s learning experiences through interaction in the same recreation environment. They notice each other’s similarities and most importantly, this social environment brings about social inclusion opportunities for affiliation instead of scaring from each other. Social inclusion contributes to expansion of social chamber and development of sense of belonging for disabled persons by means of developing self-confidence feeling (Mendez-Hodgkinson and Cervantes, 2012, 26).

Acquired findings have revealed another significant circumstance in connection with this situation. It can be seen that the expectation of “being with other disabled friends” at the starting level of the recreation activities has turned into the expectation of “there must be activities that I can attend with other people who are not disabled”

after participating in the activities. Participating in the recreation activities has provided increase in the feeling of self-confidence to the disabled people and it has developed the desire and courage to share the same environment and attend the same activities with the people who are not disabled.

Increasing number of recreation opportunities in which both groups can be participated will assist overcoming negative cultural norms and negative attitudes toward disabled person in the society (Lundberg et al., 2011, 207). At the same time, social inclusion is one of the significant factors which affect life quality of disabled participants (Kunstler et al., 2013, 123).

Undetermined conditions about activities such as unknown time and place are among the most common personal obstacles for disabled adults (Mendez-Hodgkinson and Cervantes, 2012: 23). Besides the lack of information regarding activities for disabled persons, not to know where to get information constitutes another problem (Kunstler et al., 2013, 123). Other studies emphasize lack of expert personnel who can take care of disabled persons and listen to their problems and ignorance about recreation programs (Kunstler et al., 2013, 123; Mendez-Hodgkinson and Cervantes, 2012, 23; Rolfe et al., 2012, 267). Existence of expert personnel at the recreation facilities, who could take care of disabled adults will contribute elimination of social barriers within the society and enhancing accessibility to recreation services; and they will facilitate inclusion of disabled persons by society (Rolfe et al., 2012, 267-268).

It is very well known that adults are required to adjust the time which they assign for learning based on their occupational and family responsibilities. It is not appropriate to conduct adult education relying on teacher/subject foundation or leaving adults in learning conditions with certain pace and within certain limitations out of their controls. Adult education must be arranged

according to learners (Lowe, 1985, 21, 27), because adults who are required to have self-governance would like to plan and implement studies that will take place during learning period on their own (Knowles, 1996, 29). Thus, there is parallelism between educational preferences and expectations of adult disabled participants.

Moreover, expectations of disabled respondents regarding better treatment from their trainers with more expertise indicate that trainer who will give disabled adults must be competent about disabilities, and educational and psychological needs of disabled adults; and they must be well equipped with principles of adult education, learning characteristics of adults and adult psychology. In-service training to that end could be a beneficent in solution of this problem. However, educators responsible training adults whether they are disabled or not, must be specialized in "adult education".

Conclusion

Extending recreation services is most important enjoyment source of life and which contributes to satisfaction of learning need of disabled persons who suffer from deprivation in many aspects of their life is a social responsibility. Therefore, administrators and recreation providers must consider individual preferences, social support systems, their talents and educational needs so as to facilitate both disabled and persons without disability's inclusion in recreation activities.

Purpose of society-based recreation programs for disabled persons must focus primarily on enhancing their physical and mental health, fulfilling their educational needs, increasing self-confidence and self-respect by providing recreation experiences, and developing their quality of life.

Although Disabled Center of the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality provides significant contributions to handicapped community through its services, isolating Disabled Center from the other Family Life Centers and providing activities only for disabled individuals consolidates their feeling of anomie which they experience in every aspect of social life. Nevertheless, creating recreation environments that can be shared by both disabled and persons without disability will constitute the most effective means to develop their sense of belonging and contribute their social integration. Additionally, it is important to create recreation environments hosting both groups to develop awareness toward disabled persons in every aspect of social life.

While popularity of adult education and recreation programs and public interest develop, numbers of participants have been growing every day, and accordingly need for adult educator increases. However, lack of "adult education" major in undergraduate degree in Turkey increases possibility to develop such problems in services offered to adult learners frequently. For solution of problems faced everyday by disabled and adults

without disability, educators are required to be certified competent "adult educator" and there must be undergraduate education programs which train these talented "adult educators".

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Appendix a:

How much effect do the following reasons have on your choices for the municipality activities?

It is free of charge.
I have service opportunity.
My other disabled friends are here.
I can be with other people who are not disabled.
I feel myself free in this atmosphere.
Healthy life programs on TV.
Doctor's advice.

What were your expectations when you started the activities?

To be physically healthier.
Having fun- relaxing.
Learning new things.
Forgetting about my disabilities.
Being with my disabled friends.
Being with other people who are not disabled.
Meeting new people / socializing.
Going away from the environment I live.
Getting away from the negative emotions such as stress, depression etc.
Proving myself.

What are your expectations related to the activities that the municipality offers?

Kinds of activities should be increased.
The time allotted for the activities should be increased.
There should be people from whom I can get information.
I should decide on the timing and duration of the activities.
There must be activities that I can attend with other people who are not disabled.
Trainers / Instructors should treat the participants in a good manner.
Trainers / Instructors should be more educated.
There must be separate recreation units for us to spend our free time in a useful way.