


PARALYMPIC ATHLETES

The Relationship Between Quality of Life Level and Social Appearance Anxiety Level of Physically Handicapped Boccia Athletes

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between quality of life level and social appearance anxiety levels of physically disabled boccia athletes. The population of 2018–2019 Boccia Championships for the Physically Disabled Turkey was invited to participate (N = 97 athletes), and sampling was determined by simple random sampling (n = 83); data from 80 athletes were used. The quantitative study was performed by applying the linkage method to the screening model. Questionnaire technique was used as the data collection method. The descriptive form, quality of life scale, and social appearance anxiety scale were applied to the participants. Correlation and regression analysis were used for statistical analysis. When the direction and level of the relationship between quality of life and social appearance anxiety were examined, a high level and positive relationship between quality of life and social appearance anxiety was found. There is a significant relationship between quality of life and social appearance anxiety. Regression coefficient values of quality of life level contribute to social appearance anxiety level. As a result, a high and negative relationship was found between quality of life and social appearance anxiety. This study found that the quality of life level of the physically disabled individuals engaged in boccia sport contributed to social appearance anxiety level. In other words, it has been determined that the determinants of quality of

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life are an important or priority variable in social appearance anxiety of physically disabled boccia athletes.

Being disabled affects a person physically and mentally and makes it difficult for them to participate in social life. In this context, the inability of physically disabled people to perceive themselves as inadequate due to their disabilities leads to low perception of quality of life and lack of motivation and affects social anxiety levels in case of not using their existing potential (Duman et al., 2011). Regardless of the disability status and degree of disability of the individual, being able to move, exercise, and participate in sport activities gives pleasure to the individual, and the mobility they develop through these activities positively affects their quality of life and motivation.

Especially the intensity of urban life and the disability of the society toward the negative ideas and behaviors toward individuals can negatively affect the adaptation process of the individual to social life. In this case, sport is an important factors contributing to the individual's participation in social life, besides physical and mental development. For this reason, it is thought that sport phenomenon will have a positive effect on all individuals as well as a positive effect on disabled individuals. Sport, which is an educational activity, reveals the power of individuals to express their common goals and the sense of appreciation (Erkal, 1992). It is thought that meeting the disabled people with sports in the city life and creating suitable sports areas for these individuals, providing accessibility and accessibility of these areas, and making sports branches suitable for all the disabled groups within these areas will accelerate the process of adaptation to social life and increase the quality of life of individuals. Boccia stands out among the sports branches developed for individuals with new and developing physical disabilities.

In the light of this information, the following definitions of "Boccia, Quality of Life, Social Appearance" are important for the integrity of this study. Boccia is an appropriate branch developed for all disability groups, especially for individuals with severe physical disabilities (cerebral palsy or neurological conditions requiring wheelchair use), aiming to improve their quality of life and facilitating the integration of the disabled individual into the society.

Boccia is played on a smooth surface where these players play by throwing or rolling the colored balls as close as possible

to a white target ball known as a “jak.” The pitch of the game is 12.5 m × 6 m and the shooting area is divided into six throwing boxes. All measurements of the boundary lines are measured through the corresponding line (Foundation of Health Social and Education in Soma, n.d.). The player who places the most balls near the jak ball wins the game. Individual or doubles matches consist of four chapters, with six chapters in team matches. After each episode, the athlete who sends the ball closest to the jak gets a double or team point and receives an additional score for each ball that is closer to the jak than the opponent’s ball. Each athlete throws six balls per pair or team and the game continues (Foundation of Health Social and Education in Soma, n.d.). Quality of life is the totality of emotion, thought, and consciousness levels based on subjective evaluation of the individual’s own life (Tekeli, 2010). Individuals’ anxiety levels in social life can directly affect their quality of life. While the concept of quality of life is defined as the totality of subjective perception, emotion, and cognition processes based on the evaluation of the individual’s own life, it is an expression of individual well-being and includes the expressions of subjective satisfaction related to various aspects of life. The quality of life scale provides information on psychological health, general health and life satisfaction, general health and quality of life, physical health, and social and environmental domains (Çivi, 2011).

Social appearance concerns how individuals evaluate outside individuals, including their physical appearance. It also covers anxiety situations from height to clothing style. According to Harter (1983), how an individual feels about their appearance, that is, physical respect, is the most important factor that affects all self-esteem. However, the meaning given to appearances and evaluations about appearances may vary according to the time and culture of the society (Özcan et al., 2013).

For this reason, it is thought that sport plays an important role in eliminating movement deficiencies based on mobility limitation for physically disabled people. This is because it provides the individual the opportunity to develop self-confidence through sports, to develop perception skills, to strengthen communication, and to develop a sense of self-confidence (Eroğlu & Acet, 2017). Many researchers have examined behaviors that affect quality of life level and social

appearance anxiety level, and although it is thought that physical activity constitutes positive components in self-assessment, the relationship between these two components and physical activity is still unclear (Fox, 2000; McAuley & Rudolph, 1995).

It is expected that the results from this study may provide suggestions for strengthening the quality of life and social appearance anxiety levels of physically disabled individuals doing boccia sports.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study came from the population of athletes from the 2018–2019 Boccia Championships for the Physically Disabled Turkey ($N = 97$), and sampling was determined by simple random sampling ($n = 83$). After the participants were informed about the study, participation in the study was conducted on a voluntary basis. After the answers given to the scales were examined, the scales that were filled in incomplete or incorrectly were not considered and the scales of 80 participants were considered.

Measurements and Procedures

The aim of this study was to evaluate the relationship between quality of life and social appearance anxiety of physically disabled boccia athletes. In this direction, the relational screening method was used to determine the presence and/or degree of co-change between two or more variables (Ekici & Hevedanlı, 2010; Karasar, 2008).

A descriptive form created by the researcher consisted of three questions: age, gender, and participation in the competition. The data were collected by questionnaire technique. The scales were applied to the participants on a voluntary basis. The 16-item, 5-point Likert-type one-dimensional scale developed by Doğan (2010), SSIQ, consists of cognitive, affective, and behavioral expressions related to appearance anxiety of individuals. Doğan determined the reliability coefficient of the scale as 0.88. In this study, the reliability coefficient of the scale was 0.87. It was developed by Rand Corporation

in 1992 to measure the quality of life of the participants. Koçyiğit et al. (1999) used the short-form 36 (SF-36) of the Turkish Quality of Life Scale. Nine items of the scale were used to measure emotions as a single dimension (Aksungur, 2009). The scale is a 5-point Likert rating, graded as (1) *I disagree*, (2) *rarely*, (3) *sometimes*, (4) *most of the time*, and (5) *always*.

Statistical Analysis

The data obtained from the descriptive information form and social appearance anxiety scales were analyzed in SPSS 25. Personal information about the candidates, inventory averages, and factor scores were given by determining frequency and percentage values. Parametric and nonparametric distribution of scores, parametric and nonparametric distribution curves, and skewness-kurtosis values were examined. Data show parametric distribution. Pearson correlation and regression analysis were used for statistical analysis.

Results

Table 1 shows the Cronbach's alpha values for each scale; the overall scales are reliable enough. The data provided by the participants with the scales show an acceptable level of consistency.

When the direction and level of the relationship between quality of life and social appearance anxiety were examined (Table 2), a high level and negative relationship between quality of life and social appearance anxiety ($r = -0.803$, $p = 0.000$) was found.

Table 3 shows a significant relationship between quality of life and social appearance anxiety ($R = -0.803$, $R^2 = 0.644$; $p < 0.001$). A regression coefficient value of 1.582, t value of 11.883, p value of 0.000 of quality of life level contribute to social appearance anxiety level. In other words, it was found that quality of life is a determining or important variable in determining social appearance concerns of physically disabled boccia athletes. The 644 R -squared value, which was determined as a result of statistical analysis, reveals that quality of life is a predictor of social appearance anxiety level and explains about 64.4% of the total variance.

Table 1*Results of Reliability Analysis of Scales*

Variable	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha coefficients
Quality of life	9	0.77
Social appearance anxiety	16	0.87

Table 2*Relationship Between Quality of Life and Social Appearance Anxiety*

Variable	Quality of life	Social appearance anxiety
Quality of life		
<i>r</i>	1	
<i>p</i>	-	
<i>n</i>	80	
Social appearance anxiety		
<i>r</i>	-0.803	1
<i>p</i>	0.000**	-
<i>n</i>	80	

Note. $n = 80$ ($r = -0.803$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.001$).

** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3*Regression Analysis of Prediction of Social Appearance Anxiety*

Variable	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Quality of life	1.582	11.883	0.000**
	$R = -0.803$	$F(1, 78) = 141.195$	
	$R^2 = 0.644$	$p = 0.000$	

Note. $n = 80$. $r^2 = 0.644$, $F(1, 78) = 141.195$, $p = 0.000$, $p < 0.001$.

** $p < 0.01$.

Discussion

A high level and negative relationship between quality of life and social appearance anxiety has been found. In other words, as the quality of life of physically disabled boccia athletes increases, it is seen that social appearance anxiety decreases. In the literature examination, there were studies examining the relationship between quality of life and social appearance anxiety, but no study examining the quality of life and social appearance anxiety of physically disabled individuals was found. Göksel et al. (2018) found a negative correlation between subjective happiness and social appearance anxiety scores of individuals. Toprak and Saraç (2018) found no statistically significant relationship between weight phobia and social appearance anxiety levels of male and female athletes. Erdemir et al. (2013) found a significant correlation between acne quality of life and social appearance anxiety in patients with acne vulgaris. Özkatar and Pekel (2019) found a negative correlation between life satisfaction and alienation, weakness, and irregularity subdimension, and a high positive relationship between life satisfaction and social isolation subdimension. It is known that sport plays an important role in the development of quality of life, self-esteem, socialization levels of individuals, and social appearance anxiety levels of individuals in terms of inclusion of individuals with physical disabilities. Therefore, sportive activities are an important activity for the disabled (Kalyon, 1997).

There is a significant relationship between quality of life and social appearance anxiety. It is seen that quality of life level contributes to social appearance anxiety level. In other words, it was found that quality of life is a determining or important variable in determining social appearance concerns of physically disabled boccia athletes. Inadequate level of studies investigating the quality of life and social appearance anxiety of physically disabled athletes in the literature has limited the discussion of the research findings.

As a result, a high and negative relationship was found between quality of life and social appearance anxiety. As the quality of life of physically disabled boccia athletes increases, it is seen that social appearance anxiety decreases.

It was found that the quality of life level of the physically disabled individuals engaged in Boccia sport contributed to the social

appearance anxiety level. In other words, it has been determined that the determinants of quality of life are an important or priority variable in social appearance anxiety of physically disabled boccia athletes.

In addition to the importance of making sports for people with disabilities, it is thought to be useful to determine whether there is any difference in the quality of life and social apprehension concerns of these people with the sport phenomenon.

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