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Original article

## WHY DOES MY CHILD SWIM? MECHANISM OF PARENT GUIDANCE

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### Abstract\*

*Aim:* The aim of this research is to examine thoroughly the reasons why the parents guide their children to swim. The research was designed in screening model in qualitative research approaches.

*Methods:* Study group of the research is composed of the parents of 303 (177 male; 126 female) children with the age range of 10-15 who attended the summer school of 2015 in the swimming pool at Gazi University in the city center of Ankara. As a data collection tool, unstructured interview form was used in order to get to the bottom of the personal opinions and judgments of the parents. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage and mean) and content analysis were used in data analysis.

*Results:* When examined the findings of the study, four themes regarding opinions of the parents were obtained. It was detected that the fact that the children are guided by their family to swim and the children themselves are eager to swim lie at the bottom of why the children who are swimming are doing this sport. It was appeared that they are mostly affected by their peers in terms of environmental interaction. Parents associated swimming mostly with physical development and healthy life among the developmental dimensions of their children. It was determined that the presence of the facilities in the vicinity, suitability thereof for the religious belief, and the desire of the parent for being alone and resting are among the other reasons why the parents guide their children to swim.

*Conclusions:* It was concluded that the parents participating in the research have a relatively high awareness level with respect to the positive contribution of swimming to all the developmental dimensions; and in terms of the tendency to this sport, guidance of the parents is more effective than the desire of the children.

*Keywords:* Children, Parent, Swimming, Qualitative Research

### Introduction

Movement is one of the factors of organism. Nowadays, sport has become a necessary activity for healthy and balanced life. It is accepted by everyone that sparing time for sport is important for healthy life (Yılmaz, 2012).

In terms of sparing time for sport and providing a participation in it, primarily guidance of small children to sport is important; because sport activities play a great role on development and growth of children healthfully (Erkan, 1998). Particularly, in the many of conducted scientific studies, the contribution of swimming branch to physical and spiritual development of children was revealed (Hanula, 1998; Bozdoğan, 1986; Tilborg, 2007; Sanders, 2007), and a lot of studies were carried out in terms of guiding children to this branch (Sevim, 2002). Swimming is a sport that can be started at the very young ages, maintained till the very big ages; and just as it can be performed when the individual is healthy, it can contribute to recovery (Troup).

Also, it gains the behaviors of self-confidence and playing friendly by developing the characteristics of dynamism and endurance. In this

context, among the activities, aim of which is the psychological, physiological, mental and sociological development of individual, swimming takes an important place (Urartu, 1995). Just as in all sports, swimming sport has an important contribution to the personal development of individual, such as living systematically and regularly, avoiding acquiring bad habits (Erkan).

Swimming is a popular sport for every age groups and in musculoskeletal system, it provides very good cardiovascular condition without the necessity of weight activities. Therefore, swimming is a very good exercise way for obese children. Because of high temperature and moisture, it is a good option for individuals with asthma (Çelebi, 2008). Swimming sport is performed in the horizontal position, and since the bodyweight is upright to skeletal system, complaint such as skeletal disorders aren't encountered, it forces the links less (Selçuk, 2013), enhance the capacity of lungs to high level, develops the endurance and flexibility (Bozdoğan, 2003). To obtain the sportive efficiency in this sport branch, sport candidate needs to start at small ages and to take support from family (Hanula, 2001). In this context, family is the

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first unit that provides child to the world of sport. The first and strong effect of family on sport and socialization determines whether the child participates in sport and if yes, how s/he will play sports. The positive perspectives of families increase the interests of generation for sport (Aslan, 2002).

#### The Aim of Study

In this study, it was aimed to determine the reasons why the parents guide their children to swim. Within this general aim, answer for following sub-problems was sought.

#### Method

In this section, information related to model, research group, data collection and analysis used in research are included.

#### Research Model

In this research, qualitative research approach was used to collect thoroughly and detailed data about research subject, to learn directly the personal perceptions, experiences and perspectives of participants and to understand and explain the present situations (Büyüköztürk et al., 2009). This approach concentrates on the subjects such as close and sincere relationship of studied subject or group, how the phenomenon and experiences reveal and how they are explained (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The research was designed with interwoven mono case (Yin, 2003), one of the case studies identified as analyzing or defining of an example, phenomenon or social unit in intensive, totalitarian way (Merriam, 1998). The most typical characteristic of state study is that it examines thoroughly by focusing on a current phenomenon, event, situation, individual or group (Ekiz, 2009),

the most typical characteristic of interwoven mono case design is that it studies by splitting up the each situation, included in research or obtained, with various subunits in itself (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013).

#### Research Group

Study group of the research is composed of the parents of 303 (177 male; 126 women) children with the age range of 10-15 who attended the summer school of 2015 in the swimming pool at Gazi University in the city center of Ankara. Maximum variation sampling method, one of the purposeful sample methods that were revealed within the tradition of qualitative research, and used frequently, and enable situations to be studied deeply (Patton, 2014) was used. In this sample, criteria considered as important for selection are determined and it is thought that sample selected according to these criteria represents the population with all qualifications (Tavşancıl and Aslan, 2001). Criterion sample is to study situations that fulfill a range of predetermined criteria. Criterion or criteria can be created by researcher (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). As a criterion, sample group suitable for research was selected. In this context, within the purposeful sample method, parents who are study group were determined in a way that is suitable for purpose. Demographic characteristics of study group are included in Table

#### Data Collection

Research data were received from the parents of children with the age range of 10-15 who attended the summer school of 2015 in the swimming pool at Gazi University in the city center of Ankara.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of parents whose children participated in swim sport.

| Category | Sub Category | F   |
|----------|--------------|-----|
| Sex      | Male         | 177 |
|          | Female       | 126 |

This study was prepared with open-ended question method, one of the unstructured interview technics that Punch (2005) suggests, giving an opportunity to participants to express deeply and freely their thoughts about specific subject, including no pre-prepared elevations for answers.

The purpose of using interview technic is to try to understand the experiences of humans and how the humans express these experiences. Therefore, concentrated point is other humans' stories, descriptions and thoughts (Seidman, 1991). Interview is a technic used to learn the behaviors, emotions that we can't observe and how the humans describe the surrounding world (Merriam,

1998). In present study, it was tried to obtain in-depth information by reaching to the reasons why the parentguide their children to swimming sport with data collection.

Primarily literature scanning was done for the purpose of determining the reasons why the parent guide their children to swimming sport (Özsandıkçı, 2010; Kayıkçı, 2006; Pharr, Irwin, and Irwin, 2014; Philip Veliz, Boyd, McCabe, 2015). Also, major problems were provided basis by scanning the scientific publications related to research. The clarity and lucidness of the questions were tested by asking the prepared questions to four academician and three parents as a pre-interview. In

the light of the conducted interviews, questions' level of expressing the same meaning on the entire participants was tested, and the net shape of the form was given after correcting the lacking points. The aim of study was explained to the participants, and it was stated that obtained data would be used only for the scientific study. In the interviews carried out based on voluntariness, at the start of interview, it was specified to participants that they could end the interview whenever they want and in obtained data their identities wouldn't be uncovered. In this context, it was asked from the parents to fill up the form. Within the internal validity of questions in interview form, it was paid attention that questions are lucid and brief.

#### Data Analysis

Before the data analysis, data obtained from participants were coded from K1 to K205. These coding make it easier for participants' opinions and themes to be supported. In the process of converting the opinions received from research to data, content analysis was used. Because content analysis gathers the data parallel with each other as part of specific concepts and themes, and interprets by regulating these in a way that reader can understand (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2013). Content analysis is a systematic, repeating technic that with

codes based on specific rules, some words of a text is summarized with smaller content categories (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz and Demirel, 2009). Firstly, frequencies and common opinions obtained from participants were figured out and coded; because in qualitative analysis, coding is first and fundamental process for analysis towards examining the contents of data (Punch, 2005). Later, themes and categories were reached by gathering codes according to their common features. Categories under the revealed themes were interpreted by explaining in interrelated way and results were acquired (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). For data analysis, descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage and mean) were used.

#### Results

In this section, interpretations and findings obtained from the content analysis of conducted interview with participants are included. In the direction of data obtained from participants, opinions with highest and lowest frequency are included.

In table 2, parents were asked why the children participate in swimming sport. In this context, analysis and frequency distributions of opinions towards the basic reasons why children participate in this sport were presented.

**Table 2.** The reason why children participate in swimming sport

| Category                         | f   | % |
|----------------------------------|-----|---|
| Encouragement/Pressure of Family | 83  |   |
| Request of Child                 | 71  |   |
| Peer Effect                      | 10  |   |
| Doctor Advice                    | 7   |   |
| Teacher Advice                   | 5   |   |
| Brother/Sister Effect            | 5   |   |
| Total                            | 181 |   |

According to Table 2, there are 6 categories of theme belonging to reasons why the children participate in swimming sport. These are encouragement/pressure of family (f=83), request of child (f=71), peer effect (f=10), doctor advice (f=7), teacher advice (F=5), brother/sister effect (f=5). While 181 of participantsspecified the reasons for participation, it was determined that children participated in swimming sport most because of encouragement/pressure of family.

K198's opinion on the category of encouragement/pressure of family: "... I guide my daughter to swimming sport because of its influence of human health, development and psychology."

K25's opinion on the category of encouragement/pressure of family: "My son still

doesn't

know the benefit of swimming and doesn't want to go to swim, so I take him to swim forcefully."

K23's opinion on brother/sister effect: "My daughter wants to go regularly to swim like her brother as she sees her brother regularly going to swim. Also, the effect that close friends of her go to swim is big.

In table 3, frequencies and analysis of parents' opinions towards which development dimension of children the swimming sport will affect positively are included.

**Table 3.** The reasons of parents for guiding their children to swimming sport because of its contribution to development dimensions of children

| Category                  | Sub Category  | f   | % |
|---------------------------|---|-----|---|
| Physical Development      | Motor development                                   | 150 |   |
|                           | Skill development                                   | 56  |   |
|                           | Working off energy                                  | 32  |   |
|                           | Closeness of children to sport                      | 2   |   |
|                           | Coordination  | 2   |   |
|                           | Total   | 242 |   |
| Psychological Development | Being psychologically good                          | 83  |   |
|                           | Discipline  | 41  |   |
|                           | Learning to win and lose                            | 46  |   |
|                           | Self confidence                                     | 25  |   |
|                           | Competitive spirit                                  | 11  |   |
|                           | Feeling of Success                                  | 9   |   |
|                           | Curiosity   | 8   |   |
|                           | Being happy   | 5   |   |
|                           | Feeling safe in water                               | 3   |   |
|                           | Getting over adolescence softly                     | 3   |   |
|                           | Overcoming water fear                               | 2   |   |
|                           | Being popular                                       | 1   |   |
| Total                     | 237   |     |   |
| Social Development        | Socializing   | 75  |   |
|                           | Entertaining  | 21  |   |
|                           | Increasing the Communication                        | 8   |   |
|                           | Being Sharer  | 5   |   |
|                           | Acting as a team                                    | 2   |   |
|                           | Learning the up-down relation                       | 1   |   |
|                           | Moral Development                                   | 1   |   |
| Total                     | 113   |     |   |
| Health Development        | To be healthy                                       | 72  |   |
|                           | Keeps away from bad habits (cigarette, drugs, etc.) | 16  |   |
|                           | Having less risking of injuring                     | 5   |   |
|                           | Preventing obesity                                  | 4   |   |
|                           | Therapy effect of water                             | 3   |   |
| Total                     | 100   |     |   |
| Cognitive Development     | Mental Development                                  | 26  |   |
|                           | Academic Success                                    | 12  |   |
|                           | Obeying Rules                                       | 10  |   |
|                           | Perceiving as punishment and award                  | 1   |   |
| Total                     | 49  |     |   |
| Cultural Approach         | Habit of valuing the leisure time                   | 20  |   |
|                           | Gaining lifelong sport habit                        | 17  |   |
|                           | Creating sport culture                              | 5   |   |
|                           | Spending Time Productively                          | 3   |   |
| Total                     | 45  |     |   |
| Other                     | To learn How to swim                                | 40  |   |
|                           | Being one of the basic sports                       | 5   |   |
| Total                     | 45  |     |   |
| General Total             |   | 831 |   |

According to Table 3, 7 categories belonging to theme that the reasons of parents for guiding their children to swimming sport because of its contribution to development dimensions of children were obtained. These are physical development, psychological development, social development, healthy development, cognitive development,

cultural approach and other. Sub categories with the highest frequency in these categories are respectively; motor development (f=150), being psychologically good (f=83), socializing (f=75), to be healthy (f=72), mental development (f=26), habit of valuing the leisure time (f=20), to learn how to swim (f=40).



K103's opinion on sub category of motor development; "...I want the motor development of my two children to be better. Therefore, Swimming is a good chance for the contribution of their motor development..."

K112's opinion on the sub category of being psychologically good; "We are going to swim because of its relaxing effect, I think that as long as my son swims, he will be good psychologically."

K152's opinion on the sub category of socializing; "We are sending him so that he can make new friendships, socialize."

K212's opinion on the sub category of to be healthy; "I send my children so that they can be healthful, fit through swimming."

K132's opinion on the sub category of mental development; "We think that swimming contributes to mental development of individual as much as physical development. Therefore, we are regularly sending our daughter to swim."

K63's opinion on the sub category of habit of valuing leisure time; "Thanks to swimming, he can value his leisure time."

K42's opinion on the sub category of to learn how to swim; "...I want my daughter to learn how to swim."

In Table 4, analysis and frequencies of parents' opinions about their other reasons for encouraging their children to swimming sport were presented.

**Table 4.** Other reasons why the parents guide their children to swimming sport

| Category          | Sub Category                           | f  | % |
|-------------------|--|----|---|
| Personal Reasons  | Desire of rest by being alone          | 8  |   |
|                   | So that child has a different branch   | 2  |   |
|                   | So that s/he plays any sport           | 2  |   |
|                   | Providing substructure to other sports | 2  |   |
|                   | Total                                  | 14 |   |
| Financial Reasons | Closeness of Facility                  | 7  |   |
|                   | Free of Charge                         | 1  |   |
|                   | Total                                  | 8  |   |
| Inner Reasons     | ** suitable for religious belief       | 2  |   |
|                   | Total                                  | 2  |   |
|                   | General Total                          | 24 |   |

\*\*It was determined that according to Beyhaki ve Tayalisî, Sünen, 2096 sayings of Mohammed, the prophet of Islam, he says "Teach your child how to swimming" and participants were influenced by this statement.

According to Table 4, there are 3 categories belonging to theme that other reasons why the parents guide their children to swimming sport. These are personal reasons, financial reasons and inner reasons. Sub categories with the highest frequency in these categories are respectively; desire of rest by being alone (F=8), closeness of facility (F=7) and suitable for religious belief (F=2). K8's opinion on the sub category of desire of rest by being alone: "After a tiring work day, I send my children to go to swim so that I can be alone at home and rest."

K126's opinion on the sub category of closeness of facility; "We have a pool in our housing-state. It is necessary to use it."

K3's opinion on the sub category of suitable for religious belief; "Swimming is one of the sports that we need to teach to our children as our prophet Mohammed said. That it is suggested by religion is one of the reasons why I send my child to swim."

### Discussion

In this section, under specific categories and sub categories, it was tried to examine deeply the reasons why the parent guide their children to swimming sport.

The first sub problem of research is the reasons why children participate in swimming sport. As a result of analysis conducted for this problem, 6 categories towards swimming sport were obtained. These are "encouragement/pressure of family, request of child, peer effect, doctor advice, teacher advice, brother/sister effect". According to this; it was concluded that general of parents play an important role on children' preferring to swimming sport, child wants to go to swim because s/he wants and there is a sister/brother effect. In parallel with present research findings, in the study of Kayıkçı (2006) "Families' Support and Pressures on Extracurricular Sportive Activities of 7-12 Age Grouped Children and Effect of This on Children" and in the study of Pharr, Irwin & Irwin (2014) "Parental Factors That Influence Swimming in Children and Adolescents. International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education", it was concluded that the role of parents on encouraging the children to swim is important. In the study of Özsandıkçı (2010) "Examination of Family Effect on Participation in Swimming Sport", it was detected that there is a peer effect on children's preferring to swim. The categories representing the reasons that the parent guide their children to swimming sport



because of its contribution to development dimensions which is the second sub problem of research are included. According to this, it was revealed that parents send their children so that with swimming sport, they can “support the physical, mental developments of children; provide them to socialize, to be health, to be good psychologically, to learn how to swim and to gain the habit of valuing leisure time”. When examined the literature, researches with similar findings can be appeared. In the study of Özsandıkçı (2010), it was figured out that the reason why parents send their children to swimming sport is to enable their children to learn how to swim, thus they have thoughts that children will develop physically and psychologically. Also, in the study of Pharr, Irwin and Irwin (2014) “Parental Factors That Influence Swimming in Children and Adolescents. International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education”, the result that families guide their children to swimming sport in order to provide their physical developments is parallel with present research results. In research, it was determined that in terms of health parent guide their children to swimming sport and by this means children will be protected from the harmful habits such as alcohol, cigarette and drugs. In the study of Philip Veliz; Boyd, McCabe (2015), it was concluded that individuals who participated in swimming for 30 days shrank away harmful habits (cigarette, drugs etc.). When considered these results, it can be said that swimming sport has a positive effect on development dimensions and life of children, kept

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the children away from harmful habits and in this respect swimming is important. Other reasons why the parent guide their children to swimming, other sub problem of research, are personal reasons, financial reasons and inner reasons.

As a result, it was concluded that awareness levels of parents, participated in research, related to swimming's positive contribution to entire development dimensions are increase; rather than request of children, guidance of parents to this sport is more effective and because of the contributions of swimming branch to development dimensions of children, swimming sport is preferred by parents.

In the consequence of findings obtained from research, following suggestions can be presented:

- This study can be applied on swimming course in different places.
- Interview can be done with children participating actively in swimming.
- Children opinions can be received in case parents attend the swimming with children.

#### Conclusions

It was concluded that the parents participating in the research have a relatively high awareness level with respect to the positive contribution of swimming to all the developmental dimensions; and in terms of the tendency to this sport, guidance of the parents is more effective than the desire of the children.

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