

# Examining the Lifelong Learning Tendencies of Sport Sciences Faculty Students

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## Abstract

The aim of this research study is to investigate the lifelong learning tendency levels of sport sciences faculty students concerning some variables. The research group was consisted of 662 students who were attending the Faculty of Sport Sciences, Erciyes University, during the 2018–2019 academic year and were randomly sampled. The research was conducted with the survey model. The data of the research were collected using the Lifelong Learning Tendency Scale. SPSS program was used in the analysis of the data. According to the results of the research, it was determined that the lifelong learning tendency levels of sport sciences faculty students are at the medium level. Moreover, the lifelong learning tendency levels of the sports sciences faculty students were compared concerning certain variables such as gender, sports branch, age, department, grade level, and GPA, and it was determined that there was statistically no significant difference.

**Keywords:** education, lifelong learning, development, sports, students, tendency

## 1. Introduction

Education psychologists define learning and development as a lifelong process that occurs inside and outside the school, taking place in the family, work and other social contents and situations (Smith & Pourchot, 1998). In the rapidly changing information and technology age, in order for individuals to keep up with the situations, the need emerged to constantly improve and renew oneself. Only formal education is not sufficient to meet the emerging needs. Personal development is also important besides the formal education. For the development of any society, education must continue throughout life and individuals must constantly improve themselves throughout their lives (Can, 2011).

Lifelong learning means that all the knowledge, skills, values, competences, and qualifications that individuals acquire during their lives are acquired and renewed within the period from birth to death, and it is defined as a supportive process that enables the implementation of all these knowledge, skills, values, competences, and qualifications in real life (Candy, 2003).

Lifelong learning is the whole of individual and institutional learning. Lifelong learning includes formal learning, non-formal learning, vocational training, technical training, and all in-service and out-of-service trainings (Jarvis, 2004). Lifelong learning removes limitations on the concepts such as place, time, age, socio-economic level, education level, and offers equal opportunities for each individual (Dinevski & Dinevski, 2004).

The realization of lifelong learning in today's societies is possible by individuals gaining the *learning to learn* skill (Turan, 2005). Learning to learn, simply put, is an intellectual activity in order to produce the necessary information for new situations using the available current knowledge (Özden, 2002). Lifelong learning is a continuous process that develops an individual's competencies and potential throughout her/his life. It keeps the individual's curiosity and interest alive and encourages one to be willing to seek new information. Thus, it enables the individual to adapt to the innovations occurring both in society and in the business world and makes her/him effective in all areas of life (Akkuş, 2008).

Lifelong learning is not an alternative to formal education, but it is defined rather as the completion of incomplete and inadequate data in formal education or the discovery of previously undiscovered abilities (Berberoğlu, 2010). Lifelong learning is defined as any kind of learning activity undertaken throughout the life to develop knowledge, skills and competencies in a personal, societal, social, and/or employment-related

perspective (Duman, 2003).

In order not to lag behind the scientific and technological developments and to fulfill the necessities of the time, today's communities, especially developed countries, have made arrangements regarding education systems. It is observed that the lifelong learning approach plays an active role in these arrangements and today societies and individuals are focused on the concept of lifelong learning. Central elements in the trilogy about the nature of lifelong learning are economic progress and development, personal development and integrity, social integration, understanding democracy, and democratic activities (Aspin & Chapman, 2007).

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the context of the lifelong learning concept, certain activities were determined related with new definitions and changes, industrialization, post-industrialization, international thinking and movement, in-depth research on history and comparative education, and research about cultural and educational identity (Lengrad, 1985).

Sports science faculties train future physical education teachers, coaches, sports administrators and recreation educators (Erdoğan & Bahadır, 2016). Students of the faculty of sports sciences have to be open to learning these professions, especially in their own fields, in order to apply them efficiently. In this context, it is of vital importance to determine lifelong learning tendency levels of students of the sports sciences faculty.

### *1.1 The Aim and Significance of the Study*

Considering the technological, socio-cultural and academic developments all over the world, having lifelong learning tendency skill is getting one of the core elements of being a real globally and urban citizenship. Especially, based on the academic studies, it is achieved that lifelong tendency is related lots of technological and psychological variables which really needs to be focus on in the field. Gür-Erdoğan, Canan-Güngören, Hamutoğlu et al. (2019) investigated that lifelong learning trends have a direct and indirect impact on social entrepreneurship among prospective teachers. This finding is really required to be investigated that how it is related with the sport sciences faculty students considering their actually intensive curriculum psychical activities. In addition to this, technological developments also showed that lifelong learning tendencies have a relation between online learning environments and web 2.0 tools. The students interacting with online learning environments expressed some psychological impact of these environments on their lifelong learning tendencies. Hamutoğlu, Sezen-Gültekin, and Savaşçı et al. (2019) indicated that the students' transactional distance perceptions of being in an online learning environment are changed as their expressions by positive, negative and neutral. That means, the 21<sup>st</sup> century skill of lifelong learning tendency is really needs to be focus on and conducted with different variables. Hence, this study aims to determine the lifelong learning tendency levels of students of the faculty of sports sciences. In addition, it is aimed to examine the lifelong learning tendency levels of the students in the research group attending the faculty of sports sciences concerning age, gender, grade level, department, sports branch, and grade point average.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1 Research Model*

This study was designed in the survey model investigating lifelong learning tendency levels of students who studied at the faculty of sport sciences. Survey model research studies are defined as the kind of studies, in which information is gathered from a large mass through multiple choice answers determined by the researcher (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

### *2.2 Research Group*

The research group was consisted of 662 students, who studied at the Faculty of Sport Sciences, Erciyes University, during the 2018–2019 academic year and were randomly sampled. 279 of the participant students were female (42.1%), whereas 383 of them were male (57.9%). 117 of these students attended 1<sup>st</sup> grade, 147 students 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 215 students 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, and 183 students 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Average age of the students was 20.22 years.

### *2.3 Data Collection Tools*

The data of the research were collected using the “Personal Information Form,” and the “Lifelong Learning Tendency Scale”. In order to obtain students' demographic characteristics, a Personal Information Form that was developed by the researchers was used. In order to explore students' lifelong learning tendency levels, Lifelong Learning Tendency Scale was used. Lifelong Learning Tendency Scale, which was developed by Coşkun (2009), is a six-point likert type scale graded as “Mostly fits, partially fits, barely fits, barely doesn't fit, partially doesn't fit, doesn't fit at all”, and it is comprised of 27 items. A high average score gained from the scale means a high

level of lifelong learning tendency, whereas low average score indicates a low level of lifelong learning tendency. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale was determined as 0.91 by Coşkun (2009).

#### 2.4 Statistical Analyses

Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS program. In order to examine lifelong learning tendency levels of the students; descriptive statistics elements were used such as arithmetic averages ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviation (Sd). As per the comparisons; t test method was used for paired comparisons for independent groups, and one-way analysis of variance method (one-way ANOVA) was used for multiple comparisons. The significance level was admitted as  $p < 0.05$ .

### 3. Results

Table 1. Distribution of demographic characteristics of the participant students in the research group

<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Academic Grade</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	383	57.9	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	117	17.7
Female	279	42.1	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	147	22.2
<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	215	32.5
18–20 Years old	202	30.5	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	183	27.6
21–23 Years old	346	52.3	<b>Department</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
24 Years old or over	114	17.2	Physical Education Teaching	43	6.5
<b>GPA</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>	Coaching Education	292	44.1
Between 2.00–2.49	185	27.9	Sports Management	145	21.9
Between 2.50–2.99	332	50.2	Recreation	182	27.5
Between 3.00–3.49	145	21.9			
<b>Sport Branch</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>			
Team Sports	289	43.7			
Individual Sports	373	56.3			

Total n: 662

As is seen in Table 1, among the students in the research group, 383 (57.9%) are male and 279 (42.1%) are female; 202 (30.5%) are 18–20 years old, 346 (52.3%) are 21–23 years old and 114 (17.3%) are 24 years old or over. Of the students, 185 (27.9%) have GPAs between 2.00–2.49, and the GPAs of 332 (50.2%) are in between 2.50–2.99, while 145 (21.9%) of them have GPAs between 3.00–3.49. Among the students, 117 (17.7%) are 1<sup>st</sup> graders, 147 (22.2%) are 2<sup>nd</sup> graders, 215 (32.5%) are 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, and 183 (27.6%) are 4<sup>th</sup> graders; 289 of them (43.7%) are doing team sports, while 373 (56.3%) deal with individual sports. 43 of the students (6.5%) are attending the Department of Physical Education, 292 of them (44.1%) attending the Department of Coaching Education, 145 of them (21.9%) attending the Department of Sports Management, and 182 (27.5%) are attending the Recreation Department.

Table 2. Comparison of the students in the research group concerning their certain characteristics and lifelong learning tendency levels

<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	$\bar{X}$	<b>Sd</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Male	383	3.20	.886	.770	.442	No
Female	279	3.14	.824			
<b>Sport Branch</b>	<b>n</b>	$\bar{X}$	<b>Sd</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Team Sports	289	3.13	.858	-1.169	.243	No
Individual Sports	373	3.21	.861			
<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	$\bar{X}$	<b>Sd</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>Difference</b>
18–20 Years old	202	3.08	.845	1.724	.179	No
21–23 Years old	346	3.22	.869			
24 Years old or over	114	3.20	.853			
<b>Department</b>	<b>n</b>	$\bar{X}$	<b>Sd</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Physical Education Teaching	43	3.10	.880	1.737	.158	No
Coaching Education	292	3.13	.835			
Sports Management	145	3.32	.817			
Recreation	182	3.15	.920			
<b>Academic Grade</b>	<b>n</b>	$\bar{X}$	<b>Sd</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>Difference</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	117	3.17	.977	.291	.832	No
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	147	3.15	.883			
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	215	3.15	.742			
4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	183	3.22	.895			
<b>Grade Point Average</b>	<b>n</b>	$\bar{X}$	<b>Sd</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Between 2.00–2.49	185	3.27	.944	1.538	.216	No
Between 2.50–2.99	332	3.14	.837			
Between 3.00–3.49	145	3.14	.792			
<b>Total</b>	<b>662</b>	<b>3.17</b>	<b>.860</b>			

As is seen in Table 2, the average score that the students in the research group gained from the “Lifelong Learning Tendency Scale” was determined as  $\bar{X} = 3.17$ . According to this result, the lifelong learning tendency levels of the students in the research group attending the faculty of sports sciences can be interpreted as “medium level”. Additionally, as is seen in Table 2, the lifelong learning tendency levels of the sports sciences faculty students were compared concerning certain variables such as gender, sports branch, age, department, grade level, and GPA, and it was determined that there was statistically no significant difference.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

In various research studies, the lifelong learning tendency levels of the participants were determined at low levels by Coşkun and Demirel (2012), and Güzel (2017), and at high level by Karakuş (2013), Konokman and Yelken (2014), Ayra and Kösterelioğlu (2015), Karaduman (2015), Özgür (2016), Horuz (2017), and Kangalgil and Özgül (2018). The results of the abovementioned studies contradict with those of this research.

In various studies conducted by Coskun and Demirel (2012), Gencil (2013), Konokman and Yelken (2014), Karaduman (2015), Özçiftçi and Çakır (2015), Özgür (2016), Tatlısu (2016), Horuz (2017) and Mülhim (2018), it was determined that, according to the gender, the lifelong learning tendency levels of participants demonstrated a significant difference. The results of the mentioned research studies don't correspond with those of this research. On the other hand, in another group of study conducted by Şahin and Arcagök (2014), Kozikoğlu (2014), Yaman and Yazar (2015), Güzel (2017) and Kangalgil and Özgül (2018) it was determined that, according to gender, the lifelong learning tendency levels of the participants did not significantly differ. On the other hand, in contrast to these studies, Gür-Erdoğan, Kaya-Uyanık, Canan-Güngören, and Hamutoğlu (2018) showed in their studies that while the participants' lifelong learning tendency has a significant difference based on gender and involving with a social activity has not significantly differs. The differences with the obtained results may stem from the sample and its features (i.g. not having interests with a social activity). Although it is seen that the literature has some differences in terms of gender, it may be concluded that the results of the mentioned studies are mostly in parallel with this study.

Horuz (2017) and Tatlısu (2016) determined that, according to the age variable, the lifetime learning tendency levels of participants significantly differed. This research doesn't have parallels with the results of the mentioned studies. On the other hand, in another study conducted by Kangalgil and Özgül (2018), it was determined that, according to the age, the lifetime learning tendency levels of the participants did not significantly differ. The

mentioned study result corresponds with that of this research.

Gencil (2013), Kozikoğlu (2014), Özgür (2016), Tatlısu (2016) and Kangalgil and Özgül (2018) found that, according to the departments, there were statistically significant differences among the lifelong learning tendency levels of the participants. Abovementioned research result contradicts with those of this research. On the contrary, in other studies conducted by Karakuş (2013), Güzel (2017), and Mülhim (2018), it was determined that, according to the departments, there were statistically no significant differences among the lifelong learning tendency levels of the participants, which corresponds with this research.

In studies conducted by Coşkun and Demirel (2012), Karakuş (2013), Mülhim (2018) and Kangalgil and Özgül (2018) it was found that the participants' lifelong learning tendency levels significantly differ according to their grade levels. This research study contradicts the results of the mentioned research. Tatlısu (2016) found that participants' lifelong learning tendency levels did not significantly differ concerning the grade level. The findings of this research study comply with those of the mentioned study.

In a study conducted by Tatlısu (2016), it was determined that the lifelong learning tendency levels of the participants had statistically no significant difference concerning the sports branch. The result is in parallel with the findings of this research.

According to the results of the research, it was determined that the lifelong learning tendency levels of sport sciences faculty students are at the medium level. Moreover, the lifelong learning tendency levels of the sports sciences faculty students were compared concerning certain variables such as gender, sports branch, age, department, grade level, and GPA, and it was determined that there was statistically no significant difference.

As the conclusion of the study, that the lifelong learning tendency levels of the students attending sports sciences faculty was determined as medium level can be interpreted as a negative situation. Trainings can be provided by experts to improve the lifelong learning tendency levels of students of the sports sciences faculty. In addition, different research studies can be conducted to find the factors that negatively affect lifelong learning tendency levels. Further studies conducted with wider research groups through diversification can contribute more to the literature. Using qualitative research methods, the lifelong learning tendency levels of students of the sports sciences faculty can be examined in more detail.

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