

# The Effect of Sports Attitude on Healthy Lifestyle Behavior in University Students

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**Abstract.** *Study Objectives:* In this study, it was aimed to determine the effect of university students' sports attitudes on healthy lifestyle behavior and to examine the relationship between these two variables. *Methods:* A total of 749 students who studied in different departments at Bingöl University during the 2019-2020 academic year participated in the study as volunteers (Age:  $21.71 \pm 2.20$ ). In the research, besides the personal information form, "Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors Scale-II" and "Sports Attitude Scale" were used. In the analysis of the obtained data, Pearson Correlation and Linear Regression analysis were applied using the SPSS package program. *Results:* It was determined that there was a moderate positive relationship between the sports attitude and healthy lifestyle behavior in university students. In addition, it was determined that sports attitude predicted the healthy lifestyle behavior variable by 18%. *Conclusion:* It was seen that students' sports attitudes had a positive effect on healthy lifestyle behaviors. This result shows that students have information about the important roles of sports in health (motivation, stress management, coping with depression, physical ability, regular eating habits, etc.).

**Keywords:** University student, Sports attitude, Healthy lifestyle behavior

## Introduction

The positive interaction between human and sport has continued from the early ages until today. When it is analyzed anthropologically, it is known that the first aim of sports is different. However, one of the main goals in sports today is the desire to live healthy. Individuals' approach to sports and their positive attitudes towards being healthy affect their quality of life positively.

Sports are all the actions that people take to develop and demonstrate their physical, psychological, and intellectual abilities in a predetermined order and certain rules in their activities, alone or collectively (1). Regularly attended sports activities play an important role in being happy individuals and increasing life quality by contributing to the elimination of bad habits, psycho-social strengthening of young people,

and prevention of various chronic diseases at a later age with a healthy development (2, 3). Participation of individuals in active physical activities and sports contributes to the development of their characteristics such as self-discipline, fair play, teamwork, leadership skills, as well as their physical, psychological, and social development. In this context gaining a positive attitude towards the sport from an early age is very important (4).

It can be defined as cognitive and emotional preparation, which has the effect of a dynamic effect or a direct effect on the behavior of the individual towards any situation or object that occurs as a result of attitude, experience, and experiences (5). Attitudes are gained through experiences, they continue for a certain period and help the individual understand their environment by ensuring regularity in the interaction between the individual and the object (6). People's behavior in the

face of any event, phenomenon, or situation determines their attitude. For this reason, concrete concepts such as an object, situation, people or groups of people, etc. can be the subject of attitude, as well as abstract concepts such as happiness, anger, sadness or glory, etc. (7). Another concept in which attitude interacts is a sport. Sports attitude can affect people in positive or negative ways, leading to behaviors that result in doing sports or not. Considering the positive effects of sports on people, it is very important to develop healthy attitudes towards sports from an early age.

Health can be defined as not only the absence of illness or disability but also a complete state of well-being in terms of mental, physical, and social aspects. Health understanding today; the family adopts a health-centered care approach that protects, develops, and maintains the health of the individual and the community. Due to this approach, it is aimed to enable the individual to make the right decisions that are necessary for his/her health by adopting the behaviors that will form and maintain a full favor (8).

Healthy lifestyle behaviors aim to improve the individual's general health status at the highest level rather than preventing any disease or disability (9). It is defined as a healthy lifestyle in which an individual chooses, regulates, and controls all behaviors that affect his or her health by choosing appropriate behaviors to improve his or her health capacity while planning daily activities (10).

Walker et al. (1987) gathered healthy lifestyle behaviors under the headings of stress management, the responsibility to protect, and improve health, self-realization, interpersonal relationships, regular physical activity, and balanced nutrition. Stress management is coping with the stressful situations that the individual encounters by using his/her physiological and psychological resources effectively (11). Health responsibility is to increase the health information, take active responsibility, and apply for professional support if necessary, by giving importance to health for the individual to reach a full favor. The main factor that a person needs to feel physically well is a physical activity and the most important issue that must be paid attention to maintain this is eating habits. Nutrition includes adequate and balanced

meals created with conscious food selection (12, 13). The nutrients that provide the energy necessary for a long life to grow, develop, healthy and productive should be taken into the body in a sufficient and balanced way without losing their nutritional properties in a way that does not harm health (14). For the individual and the society to reach the targeted quality of life, it is thought that they should make healthy living a life philosophy by increasing their knowledge levels related to these lifestyle behaviors. In this context, university students are important in spreading this lifestyle. Because the university is a healthy, vigorous, dynamic, energetic, and active period for students. This period is very important in the formation of students' personalities in terms of social behavior. For this reason, it is considered that any education to be offered to students in this period should be planned and implemented carefully. Because these trainings will contribute to the physical, psychological, and social development of students.

With this information, determining university students' sports attitudes and healthy lifestyle behaviors, and taking necessary measures can play a key role in raising healthy generations. For this reason, this study, which was carried out to determine the effect of university students' sports attitudes on healthy lifestyle behaviors, aims to provide significant contributions to the literature by developing sports awareness and raising healthy individuals.

## Material and Method

### *Research Model*

The study was designed as a cross-sectional quantitative study.

### *Participants*

A total of 749 students who studied in different departments at Bingol University during the 2019-2020 academic year participated in the study as volunteers (Age:  $21.71 \pm 2.20$ ). While obtaining data from these students, face-to-face survey method was used.

### Data Collection

In the research, personal information form of participants, sports attitude, and healthy lifestyle behaviors scale were used as data collection tools.

*Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors Scale-II:* To measure the health promotion behaviors of the individual in relation to about the healthy lifestyle, the healthy lifestyle behavior scale-2 developed by Walker et al. (1987) and revised by Walker and Hill-Polerecky (1996) was adapted to Turkish by Bahar et al. (2008) (11, 12, 13). It is a 4-point Likert-type scale (1-Never, 2-Sometimes, 3-Frequently, 3-Regularly), consists of 52 items and 6 sub-dimensions (health responsibility, physical activity, nutrition, spiritual development, interpersonal relations, and stress management). The overall score of the scale gives the score of healthy lifestyle behaviors. The lowest score is 52 and the highest score is 208 for the entire scale. While the overall Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was .92, it was found in sub-dimensions as health responsibility .77, physical activity .79, nutrition .68, spiritual development .79, interpersonal relations .80, and stress management .64. In the current study, this coefficient was found to be .91 for the overall score of the scale, and it was found in sub-dimensions as health responsibility .76, physical activity .77, nutrition .66, spiritual development .70, interpersonal relations .71, and stress management .61.

*Sports Attitude Scale:* This scale was developed by entürk (2012) to determine the individual's attitude towards sports (15). The 5-point Likert type (1-Never disagree, 5-Strongly agree) scale consists of 25 items and 3 sub-dimensions (interest in sports, living with sports, doing active sports). The minimum score that can be obtained from the scale is 25 and the maximum score is 125. The high score indicates a high sports attitude. The overall Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .97, and in the sub-dimensions, these coefficients were found to be .98 for interest in sports, .98 for living with sports, and .95 for active sports. In the current study, these coefficients were found to be .92 for the general score of the scale, while in the sub-dimensions it was .84 for interest in sports, .72 for living with sports, and .72 for doing active sports.

### Statistical Analysis

SPSS 24 (Statistical Package for Social Science) was used to analyze the obtained data in the research. The skewness and kurtosis values were checked for normality testing of the data. These values were checked and evaluated between  $-1$  and  $+1$  (16). As a result of this evaluation, it was seen that the data showed normal distribution. Accordingly, Pearson Correlation and Linear Regression analysis were used for the statistical evaluation.

### Results

The details of the relationship between the sports attitude and the healthy lifestyle behavior of the university students participating in the research and the effects of analysis based on the effect and relation were presented in this section in Table 1-2.

When the result of the pearson correlation analysis was analyzed, it was determined that there was a positive medium relationship between the sub-dimensions of the sports attitude and the sub-dimensions of healthy lifestyle behavior ( $p < .01$ ).

As a result of linear regression analysis to determine the effect of sports attitude on healthy lifestyle behavior, it was determined that sports attitude predicted healthy lifestyle behavior variable by 18% (adj.  $R^2 = .180$ ). In other words, it was observed that the sports attitude had a statistically significant effect on the healthy lifestyle behavior variable ( $\beta = .425$ ;  $p < .01$ ).

### Discussion

In this study, which was carried out to determine the effect of the attitudes of the university students participating in the research on the healthy lifestyle behavior and the relationship between them, it was observed that there was a moderate positive relationship between the sports attitudes and the dimensions of healthy lifestyle behavior. In addition, it was determined that sports attitude predicted the healthy lifestyle behavior variable by 18%. It was determined that as the sports attitude level of students increased, the level of healthy

**Table 1.** Correlation analysis regarding sports attitude and healthy lifestyle behavior level

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	r	1										
	p											
2	r	.751**	1									
	p	.000										
3	r	.693**	.657**	1								
	p	.000	.000									
4	r	.882**	.821**	.855**	1							
	p	.000	.000	.000								
5	r	.314**	.313**	.349**	.306**	1						
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000							
6	r	.315**	.357**	.420**	.378**	.640**	1					
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000						
7	r	.312**	.302**	.332**	.302**	.680**	.624**	1				
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000					
8	r	.369**	.385**	.358**	.392**	.413**	.459**	.410**	1			
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000				
9	r	.319**	.338**	.302**	.324**	.420**	.385**	.404**	.618**	1		
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000			
10	r	.323**	.327**	.328**	.314**	.558**	.575**	.585**	.603**	.494**	1	
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		
11	r	.412**	.430**	.444**	.425**	.795**	.787**	.790**	.744**	.706**	.808**	1
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

n = 749; \*\*p < .01

1- Interested in Sports; 2- Living with Sports; 3- Doing Active Sports; 4- Sports Attitude (Total); 5- Health Responsibility; 6- Physical Activity; 7- Nutrition; 8- Spiritual Development; 9- Interpersonal Relations; 10- Stress Management; 11- Healthy Lifestyle Behaviors (Total)

**Table 2.** The effect of sports attitude on healthy lifestyle behavior

Dependent variable: Health Lifestyle Behavior					
Variable	B	Standard Error	$\beta$	t	p
(Constant)	1.656	.068		24.464	.000
Sports Attitude	.010	.001	.425	12.850	.000

$R^2 = .181$ ;  $_{adj}R^2 = .180$

F = 165.128; p < .01

lifestyle behavior increased. In line with these results, it is thought that students' awareness of the positive roles of sports on health is sufficient and sports cultures are developed. In addition, it can be said that family, social media, and education was taken at the university and the social environment plays an important role in the sports attitudes and health to become a lifestyle of students. When the literature on the subject is examined, the physical, psychological, social, and cognitive well-being of human health, sustaining their activities, and taking

action; it needs regular exercise to be mobile. In addition, health problems caused by immobility (obesity, body composition disorders, mental problems, premature osteoporosis, low back and back pain, hypertension, bad cholesterol increase, diabetes, musculoskeletal problems, cardiovascular disorders, psycho-social disorders) stated that physical activity and sports have protective and therapeutic properties in their removal (17, 18, 19).

Von Bothmer, and Fridlund (2005) researching university students' motivations for healthy living, being physically active was strongly associated with access to facilities for exercising. One way to promote students' health would be to create facilities for sporting and calisthenics at university campuses, which could also increase communal physical activity (20). In a study conducted by university students, Söyleyici (2018) found that students who do sports have more positive views on healthy lifestyle behavior total score and interpersonal relationships and stress management than their non-sports students, and there is a statistically significant difference between them (21). Hawk et al. (2002) reported that healthy lifestyle behavior scores of students who do regular sports are higher than students who do not do regular sports in their study to examine the level of healthy life behavior among university students (22). In a study conducted by Sarca (2019) on university students, physical education and sports, physical activity, or wellness, nutrition, etc. during university education. It has been reported that students taking lessons have higher sports attitudes than students who do not take these courses (23). Bailey (2006) stated in his study that he investigated the effect of physical education and sports on students, that students showed improvement in the areas of emotional, cognitive, health development, social, physical, and lifestyles (19). In a study conducted by Kılıcı (2019) on high school students, it was determined that attitude towards physical education and sports class has a moderately positive relationship and attitude towards physical education and sports course predicts healthy lifestyle behavior level by 20.6% (24). Koff and Bauman (1997) emphasized that individuals who exercise fitness as physical activity act more consciously about healthy nutrition, develop themselves in stress and time management, and make it a lifestyle (25). In a study conducted by Kılıç (2017) on physical education and sports teachers, it was found

that healthy lifestyle behavior levels of teachers who do regular sports and exercise are higher than teachers who do not exercise and exercise regularly (26). In a study conducted by Akarsu (2018) on women, it was observed that there was a positive correlation between physical activity level and healthy lifestyle behaviors (27). Galan et al. (2017) Designing an effective approach to sport for the integration in higher education institutions (the effects of yoga practice), sport for all is an avenue for engaging in developmentally appropriate physical activities designed for students to boost their fitness, gross motor skills, and health as well as form students' reflective ability on motor activity and give them the necessary knowledge, capacity, and skills (28). Kelinske, Mayer, and Chen (2001) reported that university students' participation in sports improved their socialization, competition, health, fitness, and leadership (29). In a study conducted by Yalçın and Ayhan (2020) on women participating in sports activities, physical appearance perfectionism, and psychological well-being had a positive effect on self-confidence. This also contributes to the positive attitude of the participants towards sports and to increase their healthy lifestyle levels accordingly (30).

## Conclusion

It was seen that students' sports attitudes had a positive effect on healthy lifestyle behaviors. This shows that students have information about the important roles of sports in health (motivation, stress management, coping with depression, physical ability, regular eating habits, etc.). To make students adopt a healthy lifestyle and make sports a focal point of life, awareness-raising activities and trainings can be held. Since the university period is the transition period from childhood to adulthood and the lifestyle of the individual is formed during this period, if there is no adoption of the habit of doing sports, suitable environments can be created and acquired for this habit.

## *Conflicts of interest*

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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