

Sports as a Crime Prevention Instrument: A Mini Review

Merve KARABURUN¹, İbrahim BALCIOĞLU²

¹Psychologist, Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa,
Forensic Sciences and Forensic Medicine

Institute, Istanbul, Turkey

²Prof., M.D., Haliç University, Psychology
Department, Istanbul, Turkey

Corresponding Author: Merve
KARABURUN, Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa,
Forensic Sciences and Forensic Medicine,
Institute, Istanbul, Turkey.

Phone: +90 0216 908 00 90

Fax: +90 (212) 866 37 72

E-mail: mervekaraburun@gmail.com

Date of receipt: 18 November 2018

Date of accept: 07 March 2021

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to explain the importance and effect of sports as a crime prevention tool. For this purpose, it will be explained firstly the concept of crime, the relation to sport crime concept and its use as a preventive policy. Subsequently, the sample is applied on both Turkey and the world as well as prevention projects and their outcomes will be emphasized in the context of prevention of these projects. Finally, the prominence of the sport in the context of prevention of crime will be discussed.

Keywords: crime, sports, crime prevention, sports psychology

ÖZ

Suç Önleme Aracı Olarak Spor: Mini Derleme

Bu çalışmanın amacı, sporun bir suç önleme aracı olarak önemini ve etkisini anlatmaktır. Bu amaçla öncelikle suç kavramı, sporun suç kavramı ile ilişkisi ve de bir önleme politikası olarak kullanılması açıklanacaktır. Devamında ise hem Türkiye ve hem de dünyada uygulanan örnek önleme projeleri ve bu projelerin önleme bağlamındaki çıktılarına vurgu yapılacaktır. Son olarak, sporun suçun önlenmesi bağlamındaki önemi tartışılacaktır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: suç, spor, suç önleme, spor psikolojisi

INTRODUCTION

Crime is contrary to the rules that are applied in society. Crime is defined as the action that is forbidden and dangerous for the society and is subject to punishment. According to Durkheim's definition; any kind of attack on living conditions in society is a crime.¹ There are many definitions of the crime. All criminologists agree that crime is a legal concept based on political processes. The crime is not scientific but legal.² In order for an act to be considered a crime, it must be stated as a crime in the law.

Punishment or Prevention?

Evaluation of the perpetration tendency is extent to commit crime once in life of individual. There are many theories that explain crime and criminality on biological, psychological and annual axes. General interpretation is that criminal behavior is learned for communication and relationship with people in society.³ It is not possible to create a society completely free of crime. It will be the realization area of the behaviors that are defined as crimes in all societies. What is important at this point is to find the sources that push people into crime, and to carry out preventive / protective interventions. In this case, crime and prevention activities existed as long as societies existed and will continue to exist.³

It is also important that the crime be clarified and that the perpetrator is caught and handed over to the judicial authorities, as well as taking preventive and dissuasive measures against crime.⁴ The criminal justice system has a limited impact on preventing crime. Prisons have a very small effect on reducing the crime rate. In addition, it is stated in many studies that the direct cost of the crime to the justice system has reached very high numbers. It is aimed to reduce this cost with crime prevention programs.⁵ Therefore, in many societies, more emphasis has been placed on criminal prevention programs in which employees, field professionals, businessmen and citizens cooperate closely in the criminal justice system. It is aimed to prevent the emergence of crime and guilt by taking necessary measures with crime prevention studies.⁵

SPORTS AS CRIME PREVENTION MEANS

The primary purpose of sport and physical activity is not to prevent crime, but it can be an effective means of prevention. Sports and physical activity can give people a sense of belonging, loyalty and social support; this may cause suicide and crime not to be seen as an option.⁵

Certainly, sports is a reflection of the society in which it exists, and therefore includes some negative human behaviors such as violence, corruption, discrimination, hooliganism and racism. These negative human behaviors do not lose any potential positive aspects of the sport. The United Nations recommends that governments and communities benefit from the positive aspects of sports.⁵

Sportive activities are basically; It includes principles such as fair play, cooperation, solidarity and respect. Life skills learned through sport empower individuals and provide help to the individual in psychosocial sense. These features of sport are useful to people of all ages and are especially important for healthy development of young people.⁵

Organized sports programs aiming to improve self-esteem and self-esteem have been shown to prevent or reduce antisocial behavior.⁶ Sport; It is an activity that creates joy and excitement and therefore plays an important role in preventing various crimes and especially substance use.⁷⁻⁹

The "Providing Alternatives Model", which includes sports and artistic activities in order to keep young people away from the substance and to encourage a healthy lifestyle, is seen as a promising

Meets a need that youth have for excitement
Keeps young people busy and out of trouble
Makes young people feel empowered
Meets a need that youth have for risk-taking
Increases feeling of connectedness
Develops problem-solving skills
Encourages teamwork
Develops athletic abilities
Increases self-esteem
Improves cognitive abilities
Provides positive role-models and guides
Develop decision-making skills
Make them feel special
Provides employment opportunities

preventive model.¹⁰

Mellanby et al.¹¹ are of the opinion that programs for young people who use sport to promote drug prevention and community participation can have important effects on outcome. Lisha et al.¹² concluded that young people involved in sports are less likely to use cannabis over time. Pate et al.¹³ found that youth participating in organized sports are less likely to use drugs than participants who do not.

There is much evidence of the reasons why sport reduces the rate of crime in young people:⁸

AN OVERVIEW OF TURKEY AND THE WORLD IT IS USED IN SPORT CRIME PREVENTION POLICY

Sport and physical activity, which have an important role in contemporary societies, have a place in the lives of many people due to the potential to improve the quality of life. In the nineteenth century, Thomas Arnold thought that sport had an important role in moral education, and that sport was a form of character formation, playing sports a central part of the education curriculum for children in England.⁹

One of the sports-focused interventions designed to struggle criminal behavior among young people was "Midnight Basketball" programs implemented in the USA in the 1990s. These programs were designed for young men between the ages of 16 and 25 in poor areas with high criminality. The aim of the program was to reduce crimes and prevent violence.¹⁴ In Kansas City, Missouri, midnight basketball programs reduced the crime rate among young people.¹⁵ According to data from Kansas City police, in the areas where there was an midnight basketball program for children aged 10 to 21, a two-third to one-third reduction in child offenses occurred.¹⁶

In the UK, similar programs have won the support of sports councils in the UK, local authorities and institutions interested in the development of the sport, as well as all major political parties. A large amount of funding was provided to these programs by the government and NGOs. On this basis, such schemes have attracted large amounts of funding both from the government and from voluntary sector organizations interested with young people; at the moment they are of special interest in terms of the British government's agenda on social inclusion.¹⁷ Examples of these schemes include the Positive Futures enterprise started as a common partnership project between Sport England, the Youth Justice Board and the United Kingdom Anti-Drugs Coordination Unit in which approximately 35.000 young people (72% male, 28% female) took part between 2000 and June 2003.¹⁸

Northern Fly-In Sports Camps in Manitoba that focused on

building teamwork, character and self-esteem among Aboriginal young offenders and potential young offenders resulted in an average 49% reduction in youth crime in the 8 communities that offered the program.¹⁹

In a sports program organized in Bristol, United Kingdom that engaged youth at risk of offending or reoffending resulted in a 43% lower in child crime between October 1997 and January 1998 when compared to crime statistics from 12 months earlier.²⁰

A sports program sponsored by the Road Runners Club of America was organized in Alexandria, Virginia, and the crime rate decreased among young women participating in this program.²¹

In a program known as Shotmoor in the UK, boys and girls undertake adventure activities, including cycling, climbing, skiing, archery, orienteering and a ropes confidence course. Afterwards, boys and girls were seeing a broader and more tolerant gender identity.²²

In the summer of 2000 and 2001, another major project, Summer Splash, was introduced and coordinated by the UK Youth Justice Council. The aim of this project was to reduce street crimes and robberies by organizing sports and arts activities for young people aged 9-17, especially during school holidays. In all of the 10 regions where the project was implemented, the crime rate decreased by 5.2 percent between July and September.⁷ Also in England, the Bristol City Council uses sports as a central policy mechanism. This policy led to a decrease in the crime rates of young people.¹⁸

In West Yorkshire, a sports counseling program has been prepared to encourage young people to exercise sports during their free time to prevent the repetition of crime. According to the surveys, the rate of crime repetition among young offenders decreased significantly at the end of the project. Significant advances have been reported in self-esteem and self-perceptions of young people attending the 8 to 12-week sports counseling program.

Adolescence is known as a very important period of development in which biological, psychological and social changes come together that can predispose to the emergence of mood disorders.^{24,25}

Research results and clinical experience have shown that adverse psychological conditions during this period often result in substance use disorders.²⁶

Substance users tend to participate less in organized sports. Since the mental health of young people participating in sports is positively affected, appropriate conditions are created to avoid substance use. In a study conducted with youth from Mauritius, it was observed that participation in sports developed a negative attitude towards drug use among youth.²⁷

Physical activity; it has positive social consequences, including access to education, crime prevention and mental health. In a study conducted in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands, 110 physical activity and sports programs implemented were effective in crime prevention.²⁸

In our country, the Republic of Turkey Youth and Sports Ministry, prepared in 2012 the National Youth and Sports Policy as "gaining quilty young people in society and to prevent their orientation to the youth criminal behavior" has received project between the ministry goals.²⁹

In many projects supported by the European Union Ministry of Education and Youth Programs Center between 2004 and 2010, prevention activities were carried out with sports activities for disadvantaged groups.³⁰

In 2011, in cooperation with Bursa Police Department and Association of Industrialists and Businessmen in Bursa Demirtaş Organized Industrial Zone, children in collaboration with physical, mental and emotional development to be able to continue in a healthy

manner, in order to protect them from risks that could be dangerous "Umuda Spor Huzura Skor" project has been put in operation. With the project, it is aimed that children should be educated as healthy individuals by taking sports training and getting away from the risks and fusing them with other children. The project was carried out 5 times between 2011-2017. In 2017, the project was collaborated with Uludağ University for the first time and the project data were examined scientifically.³¹

Turkey in 2017, the project of the Ministry of Youth and Sports with the "Hayata Spor ile Tutunan Gençler" project; taekwondo, swimming, tennis, volleyball and kick boxing of the talent of the youth in 5 branches to be revealed, to prevent substance addiction, and the rehabilitation of those who started with the sport was aimed.³²

All these policies and organizations implemented both in our country and in the world show that sport and physical activity can play an important role as a crime prevention tool in the lives of young people.

TYPES OF SPORTS AS A PREVENTION TOOL IN CRIME PREVENTION POLICIES

Not all sports are relevant for many vulnerable and at-risk young people, and there is a clear need to adopt a needs-based rather than product-led approach.³³

Sugden and Yiannakis³⁴ suggest that certain adolescents refuse organised, competitive mainstream sport because it includes elements similar to those which they have already failed to resolve loyalty to formal rules and regulations, achievement of outside defined goals and competitive and testing situations. Serok³⁵ suggests that criminals prefer sports that have fewer rules and require less compatibility.

Sport activities should be aimed at developing personal and social skills, self-confidence and self-sufficiency. It is hoped that these will transfer to the wider social context and reduce offending behaviour.³⁶⁻³⁸ The advantage of organized sport for at-risk youth are maximized if programs are skills-based, teamfocused and learning rich.³⁹ When young people at risk are strengthened and opportunities such as peer mentorship are offered, conducting sports programs will lead to a reduction in youth crimes.⁴⁰ The development of life skills of young offenders involved in organized sports programs has been observed.⁴¹

CONCLUSION

The main objective of the sport is to improve life skills but is also an important crime prevention instrument. Sport has an important contribution to mental health, especially in individuals with mental problems, while studies have shown that sporting activities are effective in preventing vandalism and crime. Sportive activities are an effective instrument that can be used in both rehabilitation and prevention studies as it addresses to individuals of all ages and to all segments of society.

The number of adolescents who are involved in crime in the world is increasing and it is of great importance to investigate and reveal the factors that cause adolescents to crime and the factors related to crime. An examination of both the individual and social aspects of the personal, family and environmental characteristics of adolescents is important to understand the criminal behavior of the adolescent. Adolescents who have families with insufficient family relationships, parents who use alcohol or substance, and who are fragmented are more prone to criminal behavior.⁴²

Negative parental attitudes, lack of support and supervision in the family, and emotional abuse by the adolescent family were also related to criminal behavior.^{43,44} In adolescence, the adolescent's demand for

independence may cause the parent to resist his or her authority and keep a distance from his / her family.⁴⁵ During this period, adolescents are more oriented towards their friends and their relationships with the group of friends prevent family relations. It is very important for the adolescent who is in search of identity to be approved by the peer group. For this reason, the adolescent can lead to criminal behavior in order to be accepted by the peer group. At this point, sporting activities play a preemptive role in crime prevention programs as the adolescent will satisfy the feeling of appreciation and approval.

Sports activities lead to young people and adults gaining skills such as group work, entrepreneurship, adherence to rules, and self-control in complying with these rules. Individuals; develops self-esteem, self-confidence and adaptability while gaining these skills in the atmosphere of cooperation, sharing and competition. With all these developments, it has been proved that the tendencies towards behavior that would constitute a crime also decreased. Similarly, in the studies conducted with prisoners, the effect of sporting activity on crime behavior was observed.⁴⁶ Since the competitive side of adults in the crime prevention activities for adults is fed up with being in a group and acting with a group, it will have an activity that helps to control both impulse control and crime.

Countries that provide funding for research and projects on the relationship between crime and sport have produced new policies according to the results of these studies, and all analyzes of the results of these policies have revealed that sports has a great impact on the rehabilitation and prevention of crime and criminality. From this point on, crime prevention strategies can be used as a crime measurement and control strategy for both adolescents and adults.

All these data indicate that sporting activities are quite effective as a crime prevention instrument. In this context, sport and physical activity programs can be organized in order to prevent young people to turn to crime. When we consider such programs throughout our country, especially when we look at the group being pushed into crime in adolescence, children who are directed to sportive activities will be provided to stay away from risky situations as life skills will develop. By identifying risky groups on the basis of regions, activities for specific crime behavior can be organized. The relevant ministries, institutions and non-governmental organizations can play an important role in shaping the policies by working on this field. Along with this, almost all of the projects carried out in world countries on crime and sports are subject to scientific research and the project outputs are the subject of research. These researches play an important role in shaping and sustaining policies. However, it is seen that very few of the projects implemented in our country are subject to scientific evaluation and the project outputs are a research topic. The effect of this issue on the sustainability of prevention projects on crime and sport and the power of shaping policies can be the subject of another research.

REFERENCES

1. Ayhan İ, Çubukçu KM. Suç ve Kent İlişisine Ampirik Bakış: Literatür Taraması. Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi 2007; 3: 30–35.
2. Sezal İ. Sosyolojiye Giriş, Ankara, Turkey: Martı Yayınları, 2003.
3. Seyhan K, Eryılmaz M. Gelişmiş Ülkeler ve Türkiye Uygulamasında Suç Önleme Stratejileri. Liberal Düşünce 2004; 34: 5-34.
4. Bozdemir S, Argun U. Suç Önleme Sempozyumu Bildiri Kitabı. Bursa: Bursa Emniyet Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 2002.
5. Ehansi M, Dehnavi A, Heidary A. The Influence of Sport and Recreation Upon Crime Reduction: A Literature Review. Int J Environ Res Public Health 2012; 2: 98-104.
6. Saskatchewan. The Impact of Culture/Arts, Sport and Recreation on Anti-Social Behavior in Youth: Evidence and Analysis Strategic Policy and Youth Branch. Ministry of Culture 2003.
7. Department of Culture, Media and Sport. Culture can Cut Crime Says Tessa Jowell. London: DCMS, 2002; 1-42.
8. Nichols G. A Consideration of Why Active Participation in Sport and Leisure might Reduce Criminal Behaviours. Sport Educ Soc 1997; 2(2): 181-190.
9. Fletcher S. Women First: Female Tradition in English Physical Education, 1880-1980. London: The Athlone Press, 1984; 21-24.
10. Moreira A, Vovio CL, De Micheli D. Drug abuse prevention in school: Challenges and possibilities for the role of the educator. Rev Educ Pes 2005; 41: 119–135.
11. Mellanby A, Rees J, Tripp J. Peer-led and adult-led school health education: a critical review of available comparative research. Health Educ Res 2000; 15: 533–545.
12. Lisha NE, Crano WD, Delucchi KL. Participation in team sports and alcohol and marijuana use initiation trajectories. J Drug Issues 2014; 44: 83–93.
13. Pate RR, Trost SG, Levin S, Dowda M. Sports participation and health-related behaviors among US youth. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med 2000; 154: 904–911.
14. Hartmann D. Notes on Midnight Basketball and the Cultural Politics of Recreation, Race and At-Risk Urban Youth. J Sport Sci 2001; 25(4): 339-371.
15. Hawkins B. Evening Basketball Leagues the Use of Sport to Reduce African American Youth Criminal Activity. Int J Sports Sci 1998; 2(2): 68-77.
16. Kennedy K, O'Brien R. Round Midnight. NY: Sports Illustrated 1996; 85(8):32.
17. Ramella M. Positive Futures Impact Report: Engaging with Young People. London: Home Office, 2004.
18. Sport England Information Center. Positive Futures: A Review of Impact and Good Practice. London: Sport England, 2002; 4-43.
19. Winther N, Currie P. Northern Fly-In Sports Camps: A Joint Sport Development/Crime Prevention Project Presentation at the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport Conference. Edmonton, Alberta: 1987.
20. Sport England Information Center. Best Value through Sport: The Value of Sport. London: Sport England, 1999; 1-34.
21. Vibar-Bawzon J. Developing Sports as a Social Deterrence to Social Deviance: The Role of Sport on Women and Girl's Lives. Presentation at the Second Scientific International Conference; 1997.
22. Humberstone B. Gender, Change and Adventure Education. Gender Educ 2006; 2: 199-215.
23. Smith A, Waddington I. Using 'sport in the community schemes' to tackle crime and drug use among young people: Some policy issues and problems. Eur Phys Educ Rev 2004; 10: 279-298.
24. Quello SB, Brady KT, Sonne SC. Mood disorders and substance use disorder: A complex comorbidity. Sci Pract Perspect 2005; 3: 13–21.
25. Rocha TBM, Zeni CP, Caetano SC, Kieling C. Mood disorders in childhood and adolescence. Rev Bras Psiquiatr 2013; 35(1): 92–100.
26. Mohamad M, Mohammad M, Ali NAM, Awang Z. The impact of life satisfaction on substance abuse: Delinquency as a mediator. Int J Adolesc Youth 2016; 1–11.
27. Komalsingh R, Fariba M, Fereshteh A. Sports participation and drug use among young people in Mauritius. Int J Adolesc Youth 2018; 23:2: 188-197.
28. Rona M, Karla C, Rachel W, Adrian B, John E. The impact of physical activity and sport on social outcomes among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: A systematic scoping review. J Sci Med Sport 2019; 22: 1232-1242.
29. http://www.gsb.gov.tr/public/edit/files/strateji/2014_yili_faaliyet_raporu.pdf 29.10.2018'de erişildi.
30. <http://www.ua.gov.tr/docs/default-source/gençlik-programı/kabul-listesi.pdf?sfvrsn=0> 29.10.2018'de erişildi.
31. <https://www.dosab.org.tr/Detay/837/Umuda-Spor-Huzura-Skor> 29.10.2018'de erişildi.
32. <http://www.karar.com/ordu/gencler-hayata-spor-ile-tutunacak-612546#> 29.10.2018'de erişildi.

33. Coalter F, Allison M, Taylor J. The Role of Sport in Regenerating Deprived Urban Areas. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO), 2000: 55-62.
34. Sugden J, Yiannakis A. Sport and Juvenile Delinquency: A Theoretical Base. *J Sport Soc Issues* 1982; 6(1): 22-30.
35. Serok S, Blum A. Differences in Game Preference Between Delinquent and Non-Delinquent Youth. *J. Soc. Soc. Welfare* 1980; 7(3): 161-176.
36. Coalter F. Sport and Anti-Social Behaviour: A Literature Review. Edinburgh: Scottish Sports Council 1988; 2: 78.
37. Smith A, Waddington I. Using 'sport in the community schemes' to tackle crime and drug use among young people: Some policy issues and problems. *Eur Phy Educ Rev* 2004; 10 (3): 1-27.
38. West ST, Crompton JL. A Review of the Impact of Adventure Programs on At-Risk Youth. *J Park Recreat Admi* 2001; 19(2): 113-140.
39. Diana A. Youth at play: Preventing Youth Problem Behavior Through Sport and Recreation. Microform Publications; 2000.
40. Sheehan K, Di Cara JA, LeBailly S, Christoffel KK. Adapting the ang model: Peer mentoring for violence prevention. *Pediatrics* 1999; 104 (1 Pt 1): 50-54.
41. King TC, Valerius L, Collins JR. Ground Zero: A Collaborative Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention Program for At-Risk Adolescent. *J Park Recreat Admi* 1998; 16 (3): 82-94.
42. Cottle C, Ria JL, Kirk H. The Prediction of Criminal Recidivism in Juveniles: A Meta-Analysis. *Crim Justice Behav* 2001; 28: 367-394.
43. Ardeli M, Laurie D. Parents, Siblings, and Peers: Close Social Relationships and Adolescent Deviance. *J Early Adolesc* 2002; 22: 310-349.
44. Kırımsoy E. Adalet Bakanlığı'nın Gözetimi Altında Bulunan Ergenler ile Liseli Ergenlerin Algıladıkları Duygusal İstismarın ve Benlik Saygılarının Karşılaştırılması Olarak İncelenmesi. 3. Ulusal Çocuk ve Suç: Bakım, Gözetme ve Eğitim Sempozyumu. Yorum Matbaacılık, 2003: 369-398.
45. Kılıççı Y. 6-15 Yaş Öğrencilerinin Gelişimsel Güçleri Ve Kişilik Gelişimini Kolaylaştırma. İçinde: Kuzgun Y (ed). İlköğretimde Rehberlik. Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım, 2003: 43.
46. Hesapçıoğlu ST, Yeşilova H. Muş'ta Çocuk-Ergenlerde Adli Psikiyatrik Değerlendirme: Suçu Önlemeye Bir Bakış. Suç Önleme Sempozyumu 2001, 153-161.