Investigation of Healthy Life and Physical Activity Levels of Prospective Teachers

Research Article

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ABSTRACT

Teachers are role models for students in terms of their life styles and habits. Students make a habit in their lives by imitating everything teachers do or do not do. In today's world, a healthy lifestyle and the habit of regular physical activity are important factors that can serve as role models for students. A healthy lifestyle and regular physical activity both increase the quality of life of the teacher and lead the future generations to live a healthy life and to do physical activity regularly. In this study, it was aimed to investigate the healthy lifestyles and physical activity levels of prospective teachers. For this purpose, 25 items were determined using the "Health Life Styles Scale" and applied to prospective teachers. In the conclusion of the study, it was determined that prospective teachers sometimes preferred a regular exercise program and a low-cholesterol diet. Female prospective teachers, compared to male prospective teachers, expressed that they exercised more regularly and were open to new experiences. Majority of them stated that they did not have breakfast regularly. The prospective teachers stated that they sometimes consumed vegetables, sweets and desserts at meals, and they preferred to consume milk, yoghurt and cheese 3-5 times a day. They also stated that they preferred to consume 3-4 portions of foods such as meat, chicken, fish, dried legumes and eggs every day. As a result; it was observed that the healthy lifestyle and physical activity levels of prospective teachers were low.

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Keywords:

Teacher, Healthy Lifestyle, Physical Activity

Introduction

University life is a process in which individuals' lives change significantly. During the university education, it also causes changes in personal development, individual life and health habits as well as

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vocational training. These changes in the lives of individuals are extremely important, especially in terms of their habits related to healthy living. Because the healthy lifestyles habits newly acquired during the university period determine the health level of the society by affecting the individual himself, his family and the society. (Ilhan et al., 2010).

Healthy lifestyle refers to people's entire movement and behavior to stay healthy, to avoid diseases and to maintain their physical fitness (Soysal and Karaman, 2015). According to the World Health Organization; health is not only the absence of illness or disability, but also a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being (Kostak et al., 2014). In other words, healthy living is aimed not only at preventing disease but also at improving the overall health and physical fitness of individuals. In this sense, today's perception includes understanding health-focused care that protects and enhances individual, family and community health (Kafkas et al., 2012). Today, the concept of health, which examines the physical, physiological and social status of individuals in all aspects, covers the quality of life and the level of satisfaction of individuals in this respect and has become an increasingly important issue. In this context, increasing the number of healthy individuals and minimizing adverse health conditions plays an important role in the overall objectives and plans of the World Health Organization and States (Cihangiroğlu and Deveci, 2011; Med, 2019). Because of work-life stress and workload, as well as limited nutritional habits and physical activity opportunities, teachers' energy expenditure levels in social life are very low, negatively affecting the sustainability of a healthy life. (Arslan and Ceviz, 2007) In this context, nutrition and physical activity are of great importance for the protection and development of a healthy lifestyle.

Nutrition is the consumption of nutrients that individuals need to maintain their vital activities and protect existing health (Yoncalik et al., 2017). Healthy nutrition is the use of all the nutrients that people need by taking into account their physical characteristics. Nutritional requirements vary according to the age, sex, disease and physical activity status of individuals. (Altay et al., 2018; Saygin et al., 2011; Arslan, 2018; Ermis et al., 2015). Inadequate and unbalanced nutrition that occurs as a result of changes in nutritional habits along with changing living conditions, causes serious health problems (obesity, cardiovascular diseases, etc.) (Gurbuz and Yetis, 2018). In order to prevent such adversities in the organism, nutritional and physical activity habits must be acquired at an early age, as many habits acquired. (Murphey et al., 2011).

Physical activity is expressed as physical movements (walking, running, eating, etc.) that individuals spend certain amounts of energy in everyday life. Physical activity is as important as adequate and balanced nutrition for maintaining a healthy life (Arslan et al., 2018). Physical activities from an early age create positive changes in the organism. As a result of physical activities, positive effects such as aerobic capacity, body composition, skeletal-muscle health, prevention of obesity, prevention of diabetes and preservation of physical fitness occur in the organism. (Lee et al., 2012; Danaei et al., 2009). In this context, this study was conducted to determine the healthy lifestyles and physical activity levels of prospective teachers.

Objective of the Study

In this study, it was aimed to examine the healthy lifestyle and physical activity levels of prospective teachers. For this purpose, healthy lifestyles and physical activity levels were examined and evaluated by taking the opinions of prospective teachers. The following sub-goals were sought for the achievement of the purpose.

- What are the opinions of the preservice teachers participating in the study on healthy lifestyles?
- Is there a difference between the healthy lifestyle and physical activity levels of the prospective teachers participating in the study according to the gender variable?

Material and Method

Study Model

This study, which aims to determine the nutritional habits and physical activity levels of prospective teachers, is a type of scanning model and has a descriptive quality. Studies aimed at collecting data to determine specific characteristics of a group are called scanning research (Buyukozturk et al., 2009).

Population and Sample

The population of the study constitute 1500 prospective teachers studying at the Faculty of Education at Firat University in 2018-2019 academic year. The sample of the study consists of 401 prospective teachers studying at Firat University, Faculty of Education, and the participants were selected by random method.

Data Analysis

"The Healthy Life Behaviors Scale", the reliability and validity of which was made by Bahar et al., (2008), was used to collect the data. This scale, consisting of 52 items, was reduced to 25 items by taking the opinions of a total of four experts, two in the field of classroom education and two in the field of physical education, and applied by finalizing the scale. The SPSS statistical package program was utilized for data analysis. As a result of the analysis, KMO value of the scale which was reduced to 25 items was found as .720 and Cronbach alpha value was found as .898. This result shows that the scale was valid and reliable. The data obtained from the research were analyzed using "Arithmetic mean," "percentage" and frequency. Additionally, the degree to which teacher opinions were influenced by variables based on demographic data was also performed by independent t test groups. The arithmetic mean value ranges of the scale consisting of four-point Likert were evaluated as follows:

1,00-1,75: Never

1,76-2,51: Sometimes

2,52-3,27: Frequently

3,28-4,00: Regularly

Findings

In this section, the demographic information of the prospective teachers participating in the study and the findings obtained regarding the determination of healthy lifestyles were showed in tables.

Findings Regarding the Demographic and Healthy Life Styles of Prospective Teachers

Table 1. Personal Information Related to the Research Group

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	217	54,1
	Male	184	45,9
Height (cm)	150-160	69	17,2
	161-170	125	31,2
	171-180	148	36,9
	181-and longer	59	14,7
Age	18-20	181	45,2
	21-23	146	36,5
	24 and older	73	18,2
Weight (kg)	45-55	61	15,2
	56-65	144	35,9
	66-75	139	34,7
	76 and heavier	57	14,2

The examination of Table 1 showed that 54.1 % of the prospective teachers who took part in the study were female, and 45.9 % were male; 17.2% were 150-160 cm, 31.2% were 161-170 cm, 36.9 were 171-180 cm and 14.7% were 181 cm and above; 36.5% were 18-20-year-old 18.2% were 21-23-year-old and 18.2% were 24 years old and over. 15.2% of them were 45-55 kg, 35.9% were 56-65 kg, 34.7% were 66-75 kg and 14.2% were 76 kg and above.

Table 2. Distribution of Prospective Teachers' General Views on Healthy Lifestyles

Item	Healthy Lifestyles	n	Degree Of Participation (%)				$\bar{X}$	sd
			Never	Sometimes	Frequently	Regularly		
1	I follow a regular exercise program.	401	45,6	34,4	14,5	5,5	1,79	0,88
2	I prefer a diet low in liquid and solid fat, and cholesterol.	401	23,9	59,1	11,7	5,2	1,98	0,75
3	I get enough sleep.	399	22,8	35,6	24,3	17,3	2,36	1,01
4	I cut down sugar and dessert	401	35,2	34,7	20,9	9,2	2,04	0,96
5	I exercise for 20 minutes and/or longer at least three times a week.	395	24,8	45,6	20,8	8,9	2,13	0,89
6	I eat 6-11 meals of bread, cereal, rice and pasta every day.	401	34,9	42,6	18,5	4,0	1,91	0,82
7	I do light and moderate exercise (for example, I walk 5 times a week or more).	401	17,7	34,7	33,2	14,5	2,44	0,94
8	I eat 2-4 portions of fruit every day.	401	12,5	48,9	29,7	9,0	2,35	0,81
9	In my spare time, I do entertaining physical activities such as swimming, dancing, cycling.	401	30,7	42,4	21,9	5,0	2,01	0,85
10	I eat 3-5 portions of vegetables every day.	401	6,5	54,4	27,2	12,0	2,44	0,78
11	I consult medical professionals about my health problems.	392	31,9	29,8	26,3	12,0	2,18	1,01
12	I use appropriate methods to control my stress.	401	21,9	49,4	19,0	9,7	2,16	0,87
13	I eat milk, yoghurt or cheese 3-5 times every day.	400	31,0	33,0	25,5	10,5	2,15	0,98
14	I check my body at least once a month for physical changes, dangerous signs.	401	22,7	46,9	23,7	6,7	2,14	0,84
15	I exercise during the day's work.	401	43,1	28,2	18,2	10,5	1,96	1,01
16	I eat 3-4 portions of meat, chicken, fish, pulses, eggs, snacks every day.	401	29,7	41,1	15,7	13,5	2,12	0,98
17	When I exercise, I check my pulse and heart rate.	401	38,2	35,9	16,7	9,2	1,97	0,95
18	I practice to relax and relax for 15-20 minutes a day.	401	23,4	40,4	22,7	13,5	2,26	0,96
19	I read labels on food packages that identify the nutrients, fats and sodium content.	394	25,1	31,5	23,1	20,3	2,38	1,07
20	I participate in training programs related to individual health care.	401	22,2	46,1	19,7	12,0	2,21	0,92
21	I have breakfast.	397	15,4	42,3	24,4	17,9	2,44	0,95
22	I protect myself from exhaustion.	384	19,0	47,1	23,2	10,7	2,25	0,88
23	I do muscle building exercises at least three times a week.	401	32,4	35,9	18,7	13,0	2,12	1,00
24	I'm open to new experiences and situations.	401	17,0	29,5	24,2	29,2	2,65	1,07
25	I feel at peace with myself and I feel adequate.	401	10,2	22,4	23,4	43,9	3,01	1,03

The examination of Table 2 showed that prospective teachers who participated in the study stated their opinions on the level of “sometimes” “I follow a regular exercise program” ($X=1,79$) and “I prefer a diet low in liquid and solid fat, cholesterol” ($X=1,98$) opinion clauses.

The examination of Table 2 also showed that prospective teachers stated their opinions on the level of “sometimes” for the opinion clauses; “I get enough sleep” ($X=2,36$), “I cut down sugar and dessert” ($X=2,04$), “I exercise for 20 minutes and/or longer at least three times a week” ($X=2,13$), “I eat 6-11 meals of bread, cereal, rice and pasta every day” ($X=1,91$), “In my spare time, I do entertaining physical activities such as swimming, dancing, cycling” ($X=2,01$), “I eat 3-5 meals of vegetables every day” ($X=2,44$), “I consult with the medical professionals about my health problems” ($X=2,18$), “I use appropriate methods to control my stress” ($X=2,16$).

The examination of Table 2 revealed that prospective teachers stated their opinions on the level of “sometimes” for the opinion clauses; “I eat milk, yoghurt or cheese 3-5 times every day” ($X=2,15$), “I check my body at least once a month for physical changes, dangerous signs” ($X=2,14$), “I exercise during the daily work” ($X=1,96$), “I eat 3-4 portions of meat, chicken, fish, pulses, eggs, snacks every day” ($X=2,12$), “I check my pulse and heart rate when I exercise” ($X=1,97$), “I practice to relax for 15-20 minutes a day” ($X=2,26$), “I read labels on food packages that identify the nutrients, fats and sodium content” ($X=2,38$).

The examination of Table 2 also showed that prospective teachers stated their opinions on the level of “sometimes” for the opinion clauses; “I have breakfast” ($X=2,4$), “I protect myself from exhaustion” ($X=2,25$), “I do muscle building exercises at least three times a week” ($X=2,12$); and “Frequently” for the opinion clauses; “I'm open to new experiences and situations” ($X=2,65$), “I feel at peace with myself and I feel adequate” ($X=3,01$).

T Test Results of Prospective Teachers Participating in the Study According to the Gender Variable

Table 3. Prospective Teachers' views on healthy lifestyles according to gender variable

Healthy Lifestyles	Gender	n	$\bar{X}$	Sd	t	p
I follow a regular exercise program.	Male	217	1,59	0,86	2,001	0,028*
	Female	184	2,03	0,84		
I cut down sugar and dessert	Male	217	1,78	0,90	2,147	0,016*
	Female	184	2,34	0,94		
I do light and moderate exercise (for example, I walk 5 times a week or more).	Male	217	2,35	1,00	2,202	0,006*
	Female	184	2,55	0,85		
I read labels on food packages that identify the nutrients, fats and sodium content.	Male	217	2,24	1,16	2,334	0,005*
	Female	184	2,54	0,93		
I have breakfast.	Male	217	2,30	0,94	2,418	0,003*
	Female	184	2,60	0,95		
I'm open to new experiences and situations.	Male	217	2,47	1,11	2,431	0,03*
	Female	184	2,87	0,98		

$p<.05$

The examination of Table 3 showed that according to the gender variable of prospective teachers who participated in the study, there was a significant difference in items 1, 4, 7, 19, 21 and 24 at the level of $p<.05$. There was no significant difference compared to the gender variable in other clauses.

According to table 3 it was seen that there was a significant difference as a result of the analysis made according to the gender variable of the prospective teachers participating in the study in the item 1, "I follow a regular exercise program" [$t=-2,001$; $p<.05$]. This opinion item was accepted by female teachers more than male teachers ($X=1,59$) .

The examination of Table 3 showed that there was a significant difference in the gender variable of the prospective teachers who participated in the study according to the opinion clause "I cut down sugar and sweet" which was the 4th clause [$t=-2,147$; $p<.05$]. This opinion clause was more accepted by female teachers ($X=2,34$) than male teachers ($X=1,78$).

According to table 3 it was observed that there was a significant difference in the analysis according to the gender variable of the prospective teachers who participated in the opinion item 7 "I do light and moderate exercise (for example, I walk 5 times a week or more). [$t=-2,202$; $p<.05$]. This opinion clause was more accepted by female teachers ($X=2,55$) than male teachers ($X=2,35$).

The examination of Table 3 showed that there was a significant difference in the analysis according to the gender variable of the prospective teachers who participated in the opinion clause "I read labels on food packages that identify the nutrients, fats and sodium content.", which was the 19th clause. [$t=-2,334$; $p<.05$]. This opinion clause was more accepted by female teachers ($X=2,54$) than male teachers ($X=2,24$).

The examination of Table 3 also showed that there was a significant difference in the analysis according to the gender variable of the prospective teachers who participated in the opinion clause "I have breakfast", which was the 21st clause. [$t=-2,418$; $p<.05$] This opinion clause was more accepted by female teachers ($X=2,60$) than male teachers ($X=2,30$).

The examination of Table 3 revealed that there was a significant difference in the gender of the prospective teachers who participated in the opinion clause "I am open to new experiences and situations", which was clause 24. [$t=-2,431$; $p<.05$] This opinion clause was more accepted by female teachers ($X=2,87$) than male teachers ($X=2,47$).

Discussion and Conclusions

The study revealed that 45.6% of the prospective teachers never participated in a regular exercise program, while 34.4% sometimes participated in a regular exercise program. 23.9% of the participants stated that they never preferred a diet low in cholesterol, while 59.1% stated that they sometimes preferred a diet low in cholesterol. Monteiro et al. (2019) examined the physical activity, weight status and eating habits of young adults in Brazil and according to their study, nearly half of the participants stated that they did less than 150 minutes of physical activity per week and women had more sedentary lifestyles than men. In their study, Giontella, et al. (2019) stated that the participants had a low level of physical activity and therefore a high level of obesity. Akbulut et al. (2016) examined the nutritional and health status of university students and determined that participants had incorrect nutritional habits and their physical activity levels were inadequate. Toktaş et al. (2018) stated that the levels of physical activity and nutrition were low in their study which investigated the Healthy Living physical activity levels of university students. Bozkurt and Erdoğan (2019) determined that the physical activity levels of the participants were inadequate in their study that they examined the eating habits of classroom teachers. Salameh et al. (2014) found in their study about university students that nearly one fourth (26.8%) chose low-calorie diets. Our research results showed similarities with the literature. It may be due to the lack of a regular physical activity program, irregular lifestyle and nutritional habits of the prospective teachers, as well as limited areas of sports and social activities at the university.

The prospective teachers participating in the study stated that they sometimes fulfilled the occasions referred in opinion items such as sleeping, cutting down sugar and sweets, consuming vegetables frequently at meals, exercising adequately. In addition, female prospective teachers stated that they were more likely to accept opinion items "I eat breakfast, I cut down sugar and sweets, I read the labels determining the nutrient, fat and sodium contents on food packages" more than male prospective teachers. In the study, Onurlubas et al. (2015) examined the nutritional habits of university students and found that females skipped more meals than males. Ayhan et al. (2012), in a study examining the nutritional habits of medical faculty students, stated

that red meat was consumed most, and although the consumption of bread and pastry was high, the consumption of vegetables and fruits was less. The prospective teachers' irregular eating habits and their inability to participate in exercise programs may be due to the intensity of university life. In addition, the sensitivity of female students to nutrition compared to male students may be related to the fact that female students care more about their health and physical appearance than male students.

The prospective teachers participating in the study stated that they sometimes do activities such as swimming and dancing in their spare time and they sometimes consult health personnel for health problems. Sabbağ and Aksoy (2011) examined the leisure time of university students and academic staff and found that the majority of the people watched TV, VCD, DVD, read books, did sports, friends / chat / travel, internet and music activities every day, and they stated they went cinema, theater, concert or attended university events once a week or a month. Tel and Erdoğan (2015) examined the leisure time activities of physicians and stated that the majority of them watched television, DVD, VCD, etc., read books, newspapers and magazines, listened to music and played musical instruments. Yagmur and Ocak (2012) stated that the vast majority of university students participated in sports, music and gaming activities during their free time. Prospective teachers' insufficient participation in social activities may be related to the intensity of educational activities, environmental factors and cultural differences.

The prospective teachers participating in the study stated that they consumed milk, yogurt and cheese 3-5 times a day, ate 3-4 portions of foods such as meat, chicken, fish, dried legumes, eggs every day, and sometimes read the labels on food packages related to the content of food, fat and sodium. Onurlubaş et al. (2015) stated that the students who participated in the study always consumed the most cereal products, excessive eggs, vegetables and fruits at least once a week. Onurlubaş et al. (2015) in their study in which they investigated the nutritional habits of university students, stated that students consumed most cereal products every day, eggs every other day, vegetables and fruits at least once a week. Erçim and Pekcan (2014) examined the nutritional status of young adults and stated that women's consumption of fruits and vegetables was higher than men's and determined that sodium intake, fat and grain consumption of men were higher than women. Bayır and Güçlü (2018) stated in their study in which students nutritional habits were determined, that the most skipped meal was breakfast, and they regularly consumed eggs, milk and dairy products. Kalkan et al. (2018) stated in their study in which university students' nutritional and physical activity levels were examined, the majority of them consumed milk and dairy products, vegetables and fruits every day; and dried legumes and fish at least once a week. The lack of regular eating habits of the prospective teachers may be related to the fact that the participants do not have enough knowledge about nutrition.

The prospective teachers participating in the study stated that they sometimes participated in training programs related to having breakfast, protecting themselves from getting tired, doing exercises to strengthen muscles, and individual health care. Al-Hazzaa and Albawardi (2019) in their study which they examined the eating habits of Saudi youth, stated that a great majority of them did not have breakfast regularly. Yılmaz and Özkan (2007), in their study examining the eating habits of university students, stated that most of them skipped meals and that the most skipped meals were lunch, breakfast and dinner, respectively. Ermiş, et al. (2014) stated that most of the university students participating in the study did not exercise regularly and the most skipped meal was breakfast. In the study Cinar et al. (2016) examined the healthy lifestyle behaviors of coaches working in the Turkish Wrestling Federation, they found that the majority of them occasionally exercised and the frequency of physical activity of coaches varied according to age, seniority and working year. In their study Tanriverdi et al. (2011) examined the nutritional attitudes of high school students and found that the most skipped meal was breakfast and most of the students expressed that they consumed fast food most. Arslan, et al. (2003) in their study examining the relationship between the physical activity levels and health problems of faculty members, stated that the participation rate of the majority of the faculty

members in physical activity remained low. The fact that prospective teachers do not have a regular and balanced nutrition program may be due to the irregular living conditions brought by university life.

The female prospective teachers participating in the study stated that they did regular, light and moderate exercises and accepted that they were more open to new experiences than male prospective teachers. In their study on women, Karabulut and Altun (2018) stated that 55.9% did not do exercise regularly. In their study, Özveren and Yılmaz (2018) determined that male students had higher physical activity status score averages than female students. İskender, et al. (2018) stated that the majority of university students did not have the habit of exercise in their study examining the healthy life and depression levels of university students. The fact that female students exercise regularly compared to male students may be related to the fact that women care more about their physical and aesthetic appearance than male students.

As a result, it was understood that prospective teachers did not have a regular nutritional habit, they generally skipped meals and preferred fast foods, did not participate in a regular exercise program and social activities sufficiently. In addition, it was observed that female students exercised regularly and gave more importance to nutrition and healthy living than male students.

Suggestions

- Informative trainings about healthy nutritional habits should be given to by organizing seminars and panels by public institutions and universities.
- Informative studies that will explain the importance of physical activity should be carried out by experts and trainers, and ways of doing physical activity should be taught.
- Studies can be carried out for prospective teachers to fully learn and apply the effects of healthy nutrition on our lives.
- Researchers can conduct studies to determine healthy eating patterns of teachers.
- Researchers can make studies that determine the healthy diet of teachers.
- Researchers can conduct studies to measure the knowledge levels of about healthy living.
- Researchers can make studies to measure the knowledge level of teacher candidates in terms of healthy living.
- Researchers can conduct studies to investigate how much information teachers could provide to their students about healthy living.

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