

Do Socialization Tactics Used By College Students Predict Perceived Social Support For Physical Activities Among University Students After COVID 19?

Ayşegül ÇETİNKAYA*¹ 

Günay YILDIZER¹ 

¹ Eskişehir Teknik Üniversitesi, Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Anabilim Dalı, *ESKİŞEHİR*

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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between social support and socialization tactics in university students' participation in physical activity (PA) and also evaluates these interactions after the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants of the study consisted of university students between the ages of 18-27. The data of 291 participants were included in the study. Personal information form, Social Support Scale for Physical Activity and Socialization Tactics Scale were used in the study. Data were analyzed by multiple linear regression analysis in SPSS 22. According to the findings of the study, it was determined that gender, athlete background and educational tactics were associated with parental support for PA ($F_{(9,274)}=4.292$, $p=0.000$, $adj R^2=0.12$). There was an association of peer support and having an athletic background with using educational tactics and participating in socialization processes with social tactics ($F_{(9,274)}=7.903$, $p=0.000$, $adj R^2=0.21$). The research findings revealed that the increase in parental and peer social support in physical activity participation is realized with the effect of sportive background and educational tactics. Since educational tactics play a decisive role, organizing the campus environment in a way that encourages physical activity participation may have a significant effect on the perception of peer social support. The research shows that sporting background, educational tactics and campus environment are effective for increasing participation in physical activity. Therefore, educators and campus administrators should develop various strategies to support university students' physical activity habits.

Keywords: Physical Activity, Socialization Tactics, Social Support

Üniversite Öğrencileri Tarafından Kullanılan Sosyalleşme Taktikleri COVID 19 Sonrası Üniversite Öğrencileri Arasında Fiziksel Aktiviteler İçin Algılanan Sosyal Desteği Yorduyor mu?

Öz

Bu çalışma, üniversite öğrencilerinin fiziksel aktiviteye katılımında sosyal destek ve sosyalleşme taktikleri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemekte ve ayrıca COVID-19 pandemisi sonrasında bu etkileşimleri değerlendirmektedir. Çalışmanın katılımcıları 18-27 yaş aralığındaki üniversite öğrencilerinden oluşmaktadır. Çalışmaya 291 katılımcının verileri dâhil edilmiştir. Çalışmada kişisel bilgi formu, Fiziksel Aktivite İçin Sosyal Destek Ölçeği ve Sosyalleşme Taktikleri Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Veriler SPSS 22 programında çoklu doğrusal regresyon analizi ile analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmanın bulgularına göre, cinsiyet, sporcu geçmişi ve eğitim taktiklerinin PA için ebeveyn desteği ile ilişkili olduğu belirlenmiştir ($F_{(9,274)}=4.292$, $p=0.000$, $adj R^2=0.12$). Akran desteği ve sporcu geçmişine sahip olmanın eğitsel taktikleri kullanmakla, sosyalleşme süreçlerine katılmanın ise sosyal taktiklerle ilişkili olduğu görülmüştür ($F_{(9,274)}=7.903$, $p=0.000$, $adj R^2=0.21$). Araştırma bulguları, fiziksel aktiviteye katılımında ebeveyn ve akran sosyal desteğindeki artışın sportif geçmiş ve eğitsel taktiklerin etkisiyle gerçekleştiğini ortaya koymuştur. Eğitsel taktikler belirleyici bir rol oynadığından, kampüs ortamının fiziksel aktiviteye katılımı teşvik edecek şekilde düzenlenmesi akran sosyal desteği algısı üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahip olabilir. Araştırma, sportif geçmiş, eğitsel taktikler ve kampüs ortamının katılımı artırmada etkili olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Fiziksel Aktivite, Sosyalleşme Taktikleri, Sosyal Destek

* Sorumlu Yazar: Ayşegül ÇETİNKAYA

E-mail: aysegulcetinkaya17@gmail.com

Introduction

Social support for physical activity (PA) participation has been extensively researched and has been cited as one of the most important psychosocial correlate of regular PA in various populations such as adolescents, college students, elderly and individuals with chronic diseases (Lindsay Smith et al., 2017; Leow, Lynch and Lee, 2021). Social support is referring to any behavior that assists an individual in achieving desired goals (Duncan, Duncan and Strycker, 2005). It was also described as behavior or action that assists person to adopt or maintain a specific practice that can appear in different ways such as informative/instructional support, instrumental/direct support, or psychological support (Mendonça et al., 2014). The social support is concurrent construct for many theoretical models that has been used to explain PA behavior, as these models contains different aspects of social support. To illustrate, previous studies has shown that the association between social capital theory and PA can be explained by perceived social support by the significant others such as parents, peers and teachers (Novak, Doubova and Kawachi, 2016). Social support is one of the main contributor of self-efficacy as supportive relationships may provide important experience for PA behavior (Bandura, 1997). Researchers also have extended theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), by comparing subjective norm and social support while explaining PA intentions (Rhodes, Jones, and Courneya, 2002; Courneya et al., 2000).

The source and the type of Fsocial support for PA can be specific to age, gender or special condition of participants (Ravenek and Schneider, 2009). Social support was maintained as one of the consistent social correlate of emotional, instrumental, or informational support resource for influencing PA behavior among adolescent girls (Laird et al., 2016). Despite the studies include different aspects of social support in PA behavior, the social influence from parents and peers has been consistently subject to numerous quantitative and qualitative studies for children, adolescents and college students (Farren et al., 2017; Ciarrochi et al., 2017; King et al., 2014), however effect of those sources and support types are unclear for university students, who shifts from adolescents to young adulthood (Shim et al., 2010).

Gist-Mackey, Wiley and Erba (2018) used Jablin's (2001) theoretical model of organizational assimilation process while explaining the ways in which university students perceive social support interactions during their socialization in college life.

Accordingly, college students go through anticipatory socialization, encounter, metamorphosis and exit phases during their education and in each phase, they encounter with different types of social support interactions which include informational, instrumental, appraisal and emotional interactions. One of the important point of Gist-Mackey, Wiley and Erba's (2018) study is that implications should also include college students not only as the receiver of social support, but also as agents of social support. Moreover, Weidman (1987) indicated that socialization in college is indicating social interactions between students and faculty members, and this process composed of social interactions is also a personal journey for college students, as they experience various interactions and gain different experiences. Hence it becomes important to understand college student's socialization behaviors as a social agent, while examining their perceptions related to social support in PA context. In this point of view, socialization tactics used by college students become an important focus of study as it indicates actions college students as a social agents. Bogler and Somech (2002) addressed the importance of socialization tactics used by college students for explaining the motives of ungraduated students to study in college, and highlighted that there is no single specific socialization tactics that used by college students as they all have different motives, purposes, characteristics and educational background. Starting to a college is also transition from adolescence to young adulthood, individuals need to acquire skills, values, and knowledge needed to become self-sufficient in various ways (Shim et al., 2010). However this transition period brings uncertainty and need for guidance and social support from significant others (Nazione et al., 2011). To illustrate, social support is highlighted as one of the main coping mechanisms with stress and important contributor of adapting positive health behaviors (Zaleski, Levey-Thors and Schiaffino, 1998) as well as being facilitator of PA participation during college life (Gruber, 2008). However, COVID-19 pandemic caused a lock down in countries and universities have started to distance education. To illustrate, distance education commenced in April 2020 in Turkey, with Turkish college students continuing their education online for three semesters. Considering college students are active social agents in campus setting and using different socialization strategies, it becomes important to investigate the association between those strategies and the perceived social support for PA after COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the aim of this study was to examine the association between socialization tactics used by college students and

their perceived social support in physical activities controlled for gender, educational degree, income and housing conditions.

Methods

Study Design

The research was carried out with the relational survey model, which is one of the quantitative research methods. The research was initiated after obtaining the necessary approvals from Eskisehir Technical University Science and Publication Ethics Committee. Participants voluntarily participated in the study.

Participants

Participants in this study were 291 undergraduate university students, aged between from 18-27 years old ($M= 21.10$, $SD=1.89$), from different faculties of four different universities in four different geographical regions of Turkey. The students of Kocaeli University in the Marmara Region, İzmir Dokuz Eylül University in the Aegean Region, Eskisehir Technical University in the Central Anatolia Region and Samsun 19 Mayıs University in the Black Sea Region participated in the study. 177 (60.8%) of participants were women and 114 (39.2%) of them were male. 84 (28.9%) participants indicated that they are living with their families, 67 (23.0%) participants were living with their friends from university, 22 (7.6%) were living alone in apartment, and 118 (40.5%) participants were living university dormitory. Participants were also grouped with respect to their educational attainment year in university, and 68 (23.7%) participants were in 1st grade, 81 (27.8%) were in 2nd, 71 (24.4%) were in 3rd and 70 (24.0%) were in the 4th year of education. Only 8 participants reported that they were in 4+ years of their education, and they were excluded from the study due to sufficient the sample size. The sample consisted of 168 (57.7%) participants who reported previously joined a professional sport club as an athlete. The participants of the study are studying at faculties of sport sciences, engineering, architecture, and science.

Procedure

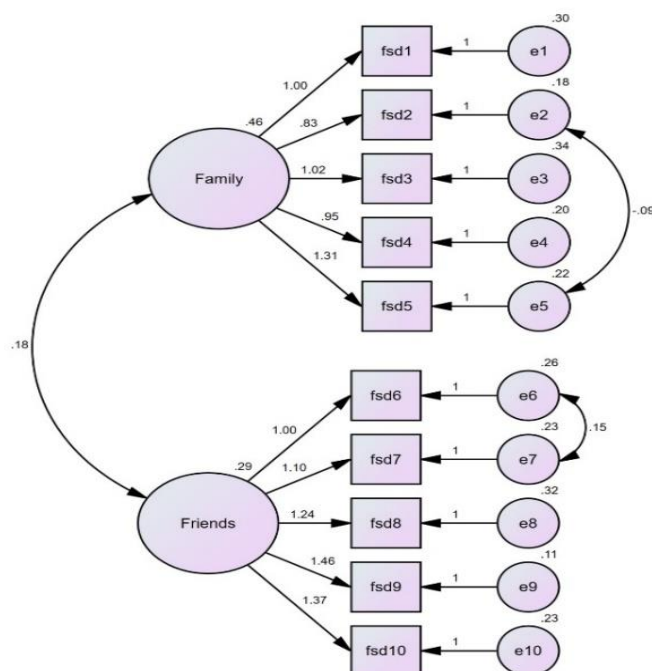
The data collection tool consisted of two sections related to demographic information and dependent variables. All participants read and approved informed consent online, and then completed 10- to 15- minute survey on their perceptions of their own socialization tactics and perceived social support for PA. Study procedures

were approved by the institutional review board of Eskisehir Technical University. Participants completed an online self-report survey via google forms.

Measures

Physical Activity Social Support Assessment Scale was developed in Portuguese language by de Farias Junior et al. (2014) for assessing the sources of support in physical activities among sample consisted of high school aged Brazilian adolescents. In this study, researchers analyzed 12 item 4-Likert type scale (1=never, 2=rarely, 3=often, 4=always), however confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and reliability values were found in reference values with 2 subscales consisted of 10 items. The subscales, namely social support from parents and social support from friends include 5 questions (How often your parents/friends encourage you for participating in PA?, How often do you participate in PA with your parents/friends?, How often do your parents/friends help you to arrive in PA facilities, How often do your parents/friends watch you while you are participating in PA?, How often do your parents/friends tell you that you are doing well in physical activities?). Küçükbiş and Eskiler (2019) conducted an adaptation of Physical Activity Social Support Assessment Scale into Turkish culture with 451 high school aged adolescents. In this adaptation study, researchers conducted both explanatory (EFA) and confirmatory factory analysis (CFA). Turkish version of Physical Activity Social Support Assessment Scale found valid and reliable among Turkish high school aged adolescents. In this study, we used this scale to assess perceived social support from parents and friends among Turkish university students. Prior to analyzing data provided by this scale, we conducted validity and reliability analyzes for university students. Accordingly, the model depicted in Figure 1 was tested.

Figure 1. Turkish Version of The Physical Activity Social Support Assessment Scale Validity And Reliability Study Model



The results of all fit indices found in CFA analysis were within recommended reference values. The Chi-Square value was 68.151 and found statistically significant, $p < 0.05$. The Chi-Square/degrees of freedom was 2.272. The analyzed other fit indices were found as RMSEA 0.066, SRMR 0.029, RMR 0.022, NFI 0.967, NNFI 0.972, CFI 0.981, IFI 0.981, GFI 0.958, AGFI 0.923. Table 1 indicates the previously reported recommended values for all fit indices used in CFA models. Accordingly, fit indices of Physical Activity Social Support Assessment Scale provide sufficient values to be valid to collect data from Turkish university students. The Cronbach's alpha values were 0.897 for social support from parents subscale and 0.910 for social support from friends subscale.

Table 1. Recommended Values for Fit Indices and Results of the CFA

Fit Indices	Recommended Values	Results of CFA	Reference
χ^2/df	$0 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 5$	2.272	Tabachnick ve Fidel (2001)
RMSEA	$0 \leq RMSEA \leq 0.07$	0.066	Steiger (2007)
SRMR	$0 \leq SRMR \leq 0.10$	0.029	Kline (2011)
RMR	$0 \leq RMR \leq 0.10$	0.022	Kline (2011)
NFI	$0.90 \leq NFI \leq 1.00$	0.967	Steiger (2007)
NNFI	$0.90 \leq NNFI \leq 1.00$	0.972	Steiger (2007)
CFI	$0.90 \leq CFI \leq 1.00$	0.981	Raykov ve Marcoulides (2000)
IFI	$0.90 \leq IFI \leq 1.00$	0.981	Kline (2011)
GFI	$0.90 \leq GFI \leq 1.00$	0.958	Hooper, Coughlan, Mullen (2008)
AGFI	$0.90 \leq AGFI \leq 1.00$	0.923	Hooper, Coughlan, Mullen (2008)

Socialization Tactics Questionnaire (STQ) was developed to asses relationship between socialization tactics used by university students and their motives to study in

Israel (Bogler and Somech, 2002). The original version of STQ contains “scholastic socialization tactics” consists of 11 items, “instrumental socialization tactics” consists of 15 items, and “social socialization tactics” consists of 6 items. The original version of the STQ contains totally 32 rated on 6-point Likert scale (1=not important at all, 6=very important). Özkan (2011) conducted the adaptation procedure of the STQ into Turkish language with sample of 1617 university students. In this adaptation study, analyzes indicated that the Turkish version of questionnaire consists 5 subscales. Although the original subscales remained the distribution of the items were changed. In the Turkish version, “scholastic socialization tactics” consists of 8 items, “instrumental socialization tactics” consists of 7 items, and “social socialization tactics” consists of 5 items, “intellectual tactics” consists of 2 items and “political tactics” consists of 2 items. The Cronbach’s alpha values were reexamined in order to analyze the data in this study, and they were 0.840 for “scholastic socialization tactics”, 0.739 for instrumental socialization tactics, 0.748 for social socialization tactics, 0.750 for intellectual tactics, and 0.792 for political tactics subscales.

Data Analysis

First of all, the missing data in the data set were examined by frequency analysis and seven incomplete questionnaires were eliminated and total of 284 data included in the analysis. The mean values and standard deviations were calculated to explain features of the study population. Then, data were analyzed with multiple linear regression analysis by using SPSS 22. Three assumptions were checked to validity of data set for the linear regression analysis. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was performed to examine normality of the data and the distribution was determined as normal, $p>0.05$. Coefficient table was examined for the possible multicollinearity, but all of the tolerance values were more than 0.1 and VIF values were less than 10 in regression models (Hair et al., 2014). The scatterplots of studentized residuals versus unstandardized predicted values inspected visually and indicated homoscedasticity in the distribution of the values. In all multiple regression models, subscales of socialization tactics, gender, class, living condition and athletic background were included as independent variables, whereas parental and peer social support for PA were included as dependent variable.

Results

A multiple regression model statistically significantly predicted parental social support for PA $F_{(9, 274)}=4.292$, $p=0.000$, $adj R^2= 0.12$. Gender, athletic background, and educational tactics were associated with parental social support for PA, $p<0.05$ (shown in Table 2). Similarly, a multiple regression model statistically significance predicted peer social support for PA $F_{(9, 274)}=7.903$, $p=0.000$, $adj R^2= 0.21$. Athletic background, educational tactics, and social tactics were significantly associated with peer social support for PA, $p<0.05$ (shown in Table 2).

Table 2. Regression Results for Family Social Support And Peer Social Support

	Family Social Support			Peer Social Support		
	B	t	Sig.	B	t	Sig
Constant	5.686	4.188	0.000	3.682	2.871	0.004
Educational Tactics	0.127	2,996	0.003	0.101	2.504	0.013
Instrumental Tactics	0.025	0.581	0.562	0.043	1.072	0.285
Social Tactics	0.014	0.231	0.817	0.130	2.333	0.020
Intellectual Tactics	-0.184	-1.469	0.143	-0.046	-0.386	0.700
Political Tactics	0.044	0.398	0.691	0.095	0.921	0.358
Gender	-0.945	-2.18	0.030	0.331	0.808	0.420
Accommodation Availability	-0.146	-0.873	0.383	0.136	0.857	0.392
Athlete Background	1.81	4.313	0.000	2.24	5.651	0.000
Classroom	0.155	0.815	0.416	0.232	1.292	0.198

We also run analysis separately for male and female college students as gender is important factor for socialization tactics, and found to be significantly associated with both parental and peer social support for PA. For female college students, a multiple regression model statistically significantly predicted parental social support for PA $F_{(8, 164)}=4.228$, $p=0.000$, $adj R^2= 0.17$. Athletic background, educational tactics were positively associated, while intellectual tactics was inversely associated with parental social support for PA, $p<0.05$ (shown in Table 3). For male college students, a multiple regression model statistically significance predicted parental social support for PA $F_{(8, 102)}= 2.269$, $p=0.028$, $adj R^2= 0.15$. Only athletic background was positively associated with parental support, $p<0.05$ (shown in Table 3).

Table 3. Family Social Support Regression Results for Female and Male University Students

	Female Family Social Support			Male Family Social Support		
	B	t	Sig.	B	t	Sig
Constant	7.318	3.818	0.000	4.467	2.416	0.017
Educational Tactics	0.135	2.415	0.017	0.084	1.311	0.193
Instrumental Tactics	-0.046	-0.832	0.407	0.132	1.925	0.057
Social Tactics	0.040	0.502	0.617	-0.072	-0.840	0.403
Intellectual Tactics	-0.481	-2.797	0.006	0.157	0.886	0.378
Political Tactics	0.178	1.128	0.261	-0.120	-0.797	0.427
Accommodation Availability	-0.098	0.455	0.650	-0.480	-1.816	0.072
Athlete Background	2.160	3.918	0.000	1.398	2.204	0.030
Classroom	0.391	1.547	0.124	-0.298	-1.047	0.297

Finally, a multiple regression model statistically significantly predicted peer social support for PA $F_{(8, 164)}=5.327$, $p=0.000$, $adj R^2= 0.21$. Athletic background, social and educational tactics, were positively associated, while intellectual tactics was inversely associated with peer social support for PA, $p<0.05$. For male college students, a multiple regression model statistically significance predicted peer social support for PA $F_{(8, 102)}= 5.859$, $p=0.000$, $adj R^2= 0.32$. Athletic background, political and intellectual tactics used by male college students were positively associated with peer social support for PA, $p<0.05$ (shown in Table 4).

Table 4. Peer Social Support Regression Results for Female and Male University Students

	Female Peer Social Support			Male Peer Social Support		
	B	t	Sig.	B	t	Sig
Constant	5.147	2.835	0.005	2.388	1.368	0.174
Educational Tactics	0.123	2,331	0.021	0.031	0.517	0.606
Instrumental Tactics	0.025	0.476	0.635	0.062	0.959	0.340
Social Tactics	0.183	2.424	0.016	0.084	1.038	0.302
Intellectual Tactics	-0.351	-2.158	0.032	0.353	2.107	0.038
Political Tactics	-0.077	-0.515	0.607	-0.188	2.647	0.009
Accommodation Availability	0.277	1.349	0.179	-0.480	-0.752	0.454
Athlete Background	2.218	4.248	0.000	2.546	4.251	0.000
Classroom	0.152	0.633	0.528	0.444	1.654	0.101

Discussion

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between socialization tactics used in PA participation and perceived social support. When the research findings were analyzed, a significant relationship was found between sportive background and

other variables included in the research in the increase of perceived social support from both parents and peers of female and male participants. One of the findings of the study is that when the female participants have a good sportive background; they receive good social support for PA from their parents and peers. Accordingly, the support that female participants receive from their peers and parents in their participation in PA is positively affected by their sportive background. Although there are studies in the literature investigating the effects of social support on PA behavior and differences are seen according to age and gender in these studies, a limited number of studies investigating the determinants of social support in the context of PA and exercise have been found.

The first significant finding of this study was educational tactics positively predicted peer social support and parental social support in female and male participants. The social support that the participant who uses educational socialization tactics at a high rate will receive from his/her parents for PA increases. Özdiñç (2005), who examined the relationship between educational socialization tactics and sport education, stated that participation in sportive processes would provide positive effects for socialization, and accordingly, individuals receiving sport education would experience socialization processes more positively. King et al. (2014) stated in their research that creating activities that encourage and support physical activity for students in the campus environment will create social norms in university students and increase perceived social support. This result shows that the campus environment is an important place in PA behaviour and that the arrangement of the campus area in a way that encourages physical activity may have effects that increase the individual's participation in physical activity. Although PA includes opportunities to socialise in campus settings, only one study has shown that sophisticated socialization tactics are associated with leisure-time PA choices among Turkish university students. In this research, it is emphasised that leisure time education is a supportive structure to make the PA processes of the individual more efficient in leisure time (Gürtekin, 2019). Since the realisation of the activities in the campus environment is affected by the environment in which it is located, university students prefer educational tactics as a means of socialization and with the presence of preferred educational tactics in the environment; It is included in the socialization processes due to educational factors. When this situation is examined, it can be interpreted that the feeling that the campus

environment is safe is an important factor for families to support participation in PA. In the study conducted by Küçükbiş and Eskiler (2019), it is emphasised that the social support received from the individual's environment is an important factor in participation in PA. In the findings of this study, it was concluded that the social support received from the individual's family and peers has a positive effect on participation in PA.

Although the research examines the effect of socialization tactics used on perceived social support for PA, self-determination is also effective in feeling high levels of social support. Socialization tactics may also influence perceived social support and these two constructs may function together to influence individuals' choices as well as adaptation to an organisation such as a university. Chong et al. (2020) suggested that socialization tactics and supportive social context are effective in satisfying autonomy, competence, and relatedness in an organisation. According to Deci and Ryan (1985), autonomy has a significant effect on the purpose and choice of PA as it is related to the individual's self-management behaviour. Gürtekin emphasised in his 2019 study that the effectiveness of intellectual tactics on the individual differs according to the purpose of participation in PA. Accordingly, the purpose of the individual will be effective in the selection of socialization tactics to be used in PA participation. According to the same study, the effect of intellectual tactics on socialisation processes varies according to physical activity participation and purpose. Within the framework of the findings of our research, it was observed that intellectual tactics and active PA environment negatively affected parental social support in female individuals. While female participants who used intellectual socialization tactics had low levels of social support for PA from their peers and parents, the use of educational tactics increased the support for PA from their parents and peers. In male participants, the use of intellectual tactics increased peer social support for PA. This finding stated as a result of the research, according to the purpose of using intellectual tactics; it has been a determinant situation in social support processes. The use of political tactics, which is active in male participants, also increases peer social support for PA.

The effect of income status on PA choices and the creation of the environment related to physical activity has been determined by previous studies. The distribution of income status affects the structure of instrumental tactics in physical activity participation. As mentioned before, the sources of social support in PA participation

differ not only for age and gender groups, but also for the income levels of university students (Maglione and Hayman, 2009). It can be said that the different income level distribution during the university period indirectly affects the participation of university students in PA. Yıldizer (2021) concluded that university students' preference for cycling as a means of transport due to their financial situation and the widespread use of bicycles in the city where the research was conducted increased the social support received from their peers for physical activity. In this context, individuals were involved in the PA process by using bicycles to provide their transport due to their financial means.

According to the results of the study, the most important factors affecting socialization tactics and perceived social support in PA participation processes were income status, sportive background, purpose of using intellectual tactics and educational tactics. In line with the findings of the study, in order to benefit positively from socialization tactics in PA processes and to feel social support more positively; factors such as encouraging arrangements for physical activity in the campus environment, educational factors for PA and increasing social capital for PA will be effective. It has been observed that social support is one of the main determinants of PA in the university period and physical activity can be an incentive in PA processes as it is one of the socialization tools of PA.

Future studies could use a variety of methods to gain a more detailed understanding of the relationship between socialization tactics and perceived social support in PA participation. In this context, studies involving participants from different age groups and cultural backgrounds could be conducted. Furthermore, more in-depth analyses of social support mechanisms and integration of theoretical frameworks such as self-determination theory may help us to better understand this relationship. Such research can provide important insights for more effective design of PA promotion policies and programmes.

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