

Investigation of the Suitability of School Sports Halls for Visually Impaired Students

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Abstract: School sports halls should be organized considering the accessibility of disabled individuals during the planning phase. Each type of disability has its own unique challenges. Undoubtedly, visually impaired individuals are more affected by the disadvantages of disability. The aim of this study is to investigate the suitability of school gyms for visually impaired students. For this purpose, 18 schools with sports halls in the central district of Battalgazi, Malatya were the subject of our research. In order to get more accurate information from the research, questions were asked through face-to-face interviews with school administrators, physical education teachers and visually impaired students. In addition, observation results were added to the research results by the researcher. Within the scope of the interviews, school administrators and physical education teachers were asked the following questions: 'Is your school sports hall organized for disabled individuals, is there a tactile path for visually impaired individuals, what kind of measures do you take for the safety of students'. Visually impaired individuals were asked 'Do you use the tactile path, do teachers and administrators help you in terms of accessibility? Qualitative research method was used in this study. Focus group interviews were used to collect data, and a semi-structured questionnaire was used during face-to-face interviews. Interview technique was used in the interviews. Interview technique is one of the qualitative research methods. A total of 42 administrators of 18 schools included in the research

were interviewed. In addition, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 22 physical education teachers and 16 visually impaired individuals. The answers given by the participants were categorized among themselves. The results were analyzed statistically. Of the 42 administrators who participated in the interview, 33 administrators stated that school sports halls were not suitable for disabled individuals, while 9 school administrators stated that school sports halls were suitable for disabled individuals. 3 visually impaired individuals stated that they use the sensible path in the school and gymnasium. 13 visually impaired individuals stated that there is no sensible path in their schools.

Conclusion : It is concluded that most of the school gymnasiums are not accessible to visually impaired individuals. School administrators and physical education teachers help visually impaired individuals.

Introduction

As every student has needs, students with disabilities also have their own needs. These needs sometimes appear as accessibility and sometimes as equal opportunities. It is a social responsibility for individuals with disabilities to move independently in society. In our country, education for visually impaired individuals accelerated in the early 1970s and the number of schools providing education increased. Primary and secondary

schools were opened in various provinces of the country (Özyürek, et al. 1992, Köroğlu, 2022). It is important for disabled students to reach the areas where they will do sports and to benefit from sports facilities without any problems after reaching these areas (Özdemir and Ilkım 2018). With technological developments, we encounter rapidly growing cities. Unplanned settlements have made the lives of individuals in cities increasingly challenging. While even individuals without any disability are negatively affected by unplanned urbanization; individuals with disabilities are more affected by this process (Bekci, 2012). The ratio of visually impaired individuals to the total population is 0.60% (412,312 people). This information was determined according to the 2002 Turkey Disability Survey conducted by the Prime Ministry SIS and the Administration for Disabled People. Like every member of society, disabled individuals, and visually impaired individuals in particular, have the right to easy access to information and equal opportunity. According to researchers, there are many definitions of inclusion. According to Mac Milan, mainstreaming is defined as 'the process of normalization of the individual, a step in the normalization effort and is considered as the integration of children with disabilities and their normal peers for certain periods of time in terms of education and social aspects within individualized education plans and programs' (Eripek, 2007). In the world, mainstreaming education for individuals with special needs started in the mid-1900s, albeit limited. However, although there are different views on the sanctions for mainstreaming education, there are positive practices in its continuity. There is no doubt that visually impaired individuals constitute the disadvantage of disability the most. In this case, visually impaired individuals need more support (Aydın 2012). Visually impaired individuals experience the most accessibility and accessibility problems in urban life. For this reason, it is especially important to make sidewalks for visually impaired individuals (Şat & Göver, 2017). Inclusive education for visually impaired individuals was observed in 1913 (Lindsay, 2003).

Method

Focus group interviews were used to collect data, and a semi-structured questionnaire was used during face-to-face interviews. Interview technique was used in the interviews. Interview technique is one of the qualitative research methods. A total of 42 administrators of 18 schools included in the research were interviewed. In addition, 22 physical education teachers and 16 visually impaired individuals were interviewed face to face. The answers given by the participants were categorized among themselves. The data determined by the researcher using the observation technique were evaluated. Schools with a sports hall were included in the evaluation. While the schools in Battalgazi, Malatya constituted the population of the study, 18 schools that could be reached constituted the sample of the study.

Findings

A total of 42 administrators of the 18 schools included in the research were interviewed. In addition, 22 physical education teachers and 16 visually impaired individuals were interviewed face to face. The answers given by the participants were categorized among themselves. The results were analyzed statistically. Of the 42 administrators who participated in the interview, 33 administrators stated that school gyms were not suitable for disabled individuals, while 9 school administrators stated that school gyms were suitable for disabled individuals. 3 visually impaired individuals stated that they use the sensible path in the school and gymnasium. 13 visually impaired individuals stated that there is no sensible path in their schools. 18 physical education teachers stated that they did not receive any training on how to treat visually impaired individuals, while 4 physical education teachers stated that they received training for disabled individuals.

Table 1. Numerical distribution of the respondents

Number of schools	Administrator	Physical Teacher	Education	Visually Student	Impaired	Total
18	42	22		16		98

When Table 1 is analyzed, 18 schools were included in the study. 42 school administrators, 22 physical education teachers and 16 visually impaired students were consulted. A total of 98 people were interviewed

Table 2. School Administrators' Evaluation of the suitability of sports halls for disabled individuals

Is the gym suitable for people with disabilities?	
Yes	9
No.	33
Total	42

In Table 2, 42 school administrators were asked the question "Is your school sports hall designed for disabled students?" 9 school administrators answered yes, our school sports hall is suitable for disabled students to do sports. 33 school administrators answered that our school gym is not suitable for disabled people to do sports.

Table 3. Are there tactile paths for visually impaired students in schools?

Are there tactile pathways for visually impaired students in schools?	
Yes	3
No.	13
Total	16

In Table 3, 16 visually impaired students were asked if there is a sensible road in your school. 3 visually impaired students said yes, there is a sensible road. 13 visually impaired students said no, there is no sensible road.

Table 4. Education status of Physical Education teachers for visually impaired individuals

Have you received training for visually impaired individuals?	
Yes	4
No.	18
Total	22

In Table 4, physical education teachers were asked whether they received training for visually impaired students. 4 Physical Education teachers said that they received training for visually impaired students. 18 Physical Education teachers said that they did not receive any training for visually impaired students.

Discussion and Conclusion

As a result of scientific research, the most important sensory organ in the development and learning of individuals is the eye. Learning from the first years of life takes place in the classroom. 75-90% of the learning that takes place in the classroom is gained through vision. When we look at the rates, it becomes clear how important the ability to see is. With the loss of vision for various reasons, the learning level of the individual is also negatively affected. Therefore, an effective teaching program should be applied to individuals with visual impairment. In addition, since each individual has a different learning ability, programs should be created according to the needs of individuals (Levent & Sözbilir, 2017). An effective teaching program for visually impaired individuals is important for these individuals to express themselves (Okur & Demir, 2019). The most important situation for visually impaired individuals is whether they can move independently. Independent movement skills are acquired by classroom teachers or experts in the field. These experts can be classroom teachers (Altunsay Arslantekin, 2015).

When Table 1 is analyzed, 18 schools were included in the study. 42 school administrators, 22 physical education teachers and 16 visually impaired students were consulted. In total, the opinions of 98 people were received. This number was deemed sufficient within the scope of the research.

In Table 2, 42 school administrators were asked the question "Is your school sports hall designed for disabled students?" 9 school administrators answered yes, our school sports hall

is suitable for disabled students to do sports. 33 school administrators answered that our school gym is not suitable for disabled individuals to do sports. In his research conducted in 2020, Eken stated that it is difficult for visually impaired individuals to continue their lives without the help of someone else. In our research, it is seen that most of the school gyms are not suitable for visually impaired students to do sports (Eken 2020).

In Table 3, 16 visually impaired students were asked if there is a sensible road in your school. 3 visually impaired students said yes, there is a tangible road. 13 visually impaired students said no, there is no tangible road. According to Table 3, the majority of visually impaired students stated that there is no tangible road in their schools. However, there should be a sensible road for visually impaired students not only in schools but also in social environments. In his research conducted in 2021, Koç concluded that the arrangements in the transportation system, which forms a part of the urban space, facilitate the lives of visually impaired individuals (Koç 2021). In his research conducted in 2023, Şahin attributes the fact that visually impaired students are healthier and fitter to their ability to participate in physical education classes with their friends and to be together (Şahin 2023).

In Table 4, physical education teachers were asked whether they received training for visually impaired students. 4 Physical Education teachers said that they received training for visually impaired students. 18 Physical Education teachers said that they did not receive any training for visually impaired students.

It is very important for physical education teachers to be aware of visually impaired students. In particular,

physical activities that visually impaired individuals can do should be determined by physical education teachers and their applicability should be ensured.

Recommendations

- Visually impaired individuals want a healthy lifestyle just like every individual in society. For this reason, the perception of visually impaired individuals in social life should be created first.
- Measures should be taken to ensure that building entrances are easily accessible for visually impaired individuals.
- Measures should be taken to ensure that sensible paths for visually impaired individuals in public spaces serve their purpose
- It is necessary to train trainers who are experts in their field to provide physical activity for visually impaired individuals.
- School administrators should take necessary measures to ensure that disabled individuals can easily participate in physical activities.
- In order to socialize visually impaired individuals, relevant measures should be taken to ensure that they are more together with their peers.
- Local governments should increase the number of physical activity environments for people with disabilities.

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