Operative Issues of Private Sports Centers in Turkey: A Case Study of Sports Centers in Ankara

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The purpose of this study is to determine the operative problems of step-aerobics and fitness sports centers operating in Ankara certified by the General Directorate for Youth and Sports. The quality, personnel, customer and health services of the facilities were examined; as these are the main sources of the problems. This study preliminarily targeted 56 private step-aerobic and sports facility directors in Ankara, whereas only 51 directors participated. The researchers applied the questionnaire prepared for this study. The findings of the study showed that there exist issues of sports center quality control and assurance, health services, and right staff for the right tasks. Moreover, recommendations as to solutions to some issues are proposed.

key words: Private sports centers, sportive activity, operative issues

Introduction

Technological developments, scientific innovations and accordingly, life expectancy of people have contributed to the need and necessity of pursuing a healthy and qualitative life. Therefore, people are more in search of a better physiological, psychological and social way of life than before, and many being aware of these facts have started doing sports. The idea of working out for a healthy life began at the beginning of 20th century, and scientific studies started on the benefits and importance of exercise on the health of society (Açıkada & Ergen, 1990).

Regular participatory sports improve basic physiological functions of organism and increase life expectancy as well as meet the needs of socialization and group membership. In addition, Erkan (1998) stated that regular exercises may help enhance the resistance to the daily stresses of life. Great masses have always favored the ‘Physical Fitness’ exercise programs in USA. Far East countries such as
China and Japan have been organizing fitness programs nationwide and pioneered the healthy society approach. However, in Turkey the importance of regular exercises in terms of health, fitness and mental health has not been yet fully realized. It takes too much time and effort to establish concepts like ‘life long sports’ or ‘exercise in every period and age’ (Ekenci & Imamoğlu, 2002).

Private sports centers are among institutions having important roles in making sports widespread throughout for any person in the society regardless of their age, gender, education level and some physical capacities as well as making sports a life long concept. Therefore, having these responsibilities and functions, private sports centers are expected to suffice in serving the individualistic purpose of use (Uz, 2001). In our contemporary world, doing stress free and healthily sports requires exercising in healthy places, with a well-trained management and staff. Intensity and frequency of the exercises should be planned accordingly; one should also consider the recommendations of the experts. A check-up should be required for all before starting workouts, individuals should not exceed their physical capacities and limits (Erkan, 1998; Ekenci & Imamoğlu, 2002).

The purpose of this study is to determine the operative problems of private step-aerobic and fitness sport facilities and to find proper solutions to these problems.

In Turkey, the lack of state run sports centers led to the establishment of private ones. Even the efficiency and quality of service at private sports centers possibly affect the continuity and habit formation of participatory sports. Therefore, problems related to ‘quality control and guarantee,’ ‘health services,’ ‘public relations,’ and ‘recruitment of staff’ in aerobics and fitness centers in Ankara were defined and solutions proposed. Participatory sports in healthy conditions could affect the individual positively and makes one form the habit of attending regularly to the activities provided by the facilities. This will lead to an increase in the number of people doing sports and help create healthy new generations. Consequently, analysis and solutions for the current conditions at the private centers should be handled seriously at the right time.”

Methods

At the very beginning, this research targeted 56 directors of private step-aerobic and fitness sports facilities in Ankara. However, only 51 directors were available for