

Analysis of Loneliness Levels of University Students with Regard to Sport and Different Variables

 Murat Ozan¹ and  Erdogan Tozoglu²

^{1,2} Kazim Karabekir Education Faculty, Department of Physical Education and Sport, Ataturk University, Erzurum, Turkey.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Original Research Paper

Doi:

Received January, 2020

Accepted March, 2020

Keywords:

Education

Exercise

Loneliness

University Students

ABSTRACT

The object of this study is to analysis of loneliness levels of university students with regard to sport and different variables. The study is applied to 368 sample individuals of which, 135 are female and 233 are male, in 2018-2019 academic year of Ataturk University, Faculty of Education. UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS), which was translated to Turkish by Demir, in 1989, is used in the study (1). SPSS 21 package program is also used for the analysis of the data. Frequency distribution while determining the demographics for the analysis of the data and T test in order to investigate the relationship between two independent variables and loneliness levels are also made use of in the study. On the other hand, analysis of Anova tests are practiced on to investigate the relationship between two independent variables and loneliness levels. The difference between the variables is interpreted based on p0.05 significance level. According to the findings, there is a significant difference between the students' gender, family structure, work out routines, and loneliness levels. On the contrary, it is also confirmed that there is no significant difference among age, weekly work out routines, sports branch variables and breakoff phenomenon. It is concluded that breakoff phenomenon levels for women and exercising students are higher than male and non-exercising students. It is believed that students who do not experience breakoff phenomenon through learning process or students, who answer the necessities of their life and others', make themselves happier and become more successful. Therefore, it is emphasized to determine the variables that might lead people to feel lonely and is underlined to carry out studies, which will provide positive results on these variables.

1. Introduction

In the literature, loneliness has been defined in different ways by various authors. They describe a situation with loneliness as objective conditions, a purely subjective state, and an existential state.. But what they all have in common is that they see loneliness as a painful situation for a human. Peplau and Perlman (1982) perceive loneliness in the dimension of human relations and define it as a feeling that a person's actual relationships cannot meet their expectations. Accordingly, one can feel lonely while being with different people objectively without any reason. (11). Mijuskovic, on the other hand (1987) states that every human being is existentially lonely, and that the instinct to avoid loneliness is the primary force that affects human behavior. (7). Loneliness is also seen that commonly

experienced among college students (2). For young people who come away from their families to the university environment, the efforts of adapting to a new school, a new city and a foreign environment with the ideals of being a member of a group, having a profession and directing the future create different problems for many students, and students can become alienated from the traditional order and themselves. (17).

According to the researches, types of loneliness are mentioned as social loneliness and emotional loneliness. Social isolation, the individual's worldview and interests shared by the disconnection of the social network of peers or caused by the poor; defined as the lack of social relations or the absence of an individual within a community that will accept him / her. It is stated that individuals with this type of loneliness may have thoughts such as distress, feeling rejected by their friends. (15). And emotional loneliness refers to the absence of close, intimate emotional relationships between people. Emotional loneliness refers to the disappearance of very important relationships as a result of events such as death and divorce. The elimination of such loneliness can be achieved through the establishment of important relationships similar to pre-existing ones. (13,14).

The human being, which has been striving to survive since its existence, has provided education opportunities to future generations with its cultural accumulation. In this process, humanity has also contributed to the holistic education of the individual by creating a unique sports culture. (16). Sports is a very important communication tool that creates the chance and opportunity to establish close relationships. Those who do sports, say that they have acquired a social environment and friends. Sport is seen as a social behavior that appeals to our body and soul. Sport is effective in ensuring the social harmony of the individual and securing the mental and physical health of the individuals. (9). It is known that sports and physical activities, which are suggested to give effective results in socialization within the recreational activities, have positive effects on body health and benefits for mental health. Through sports activities, individuals are given the ability to work together. Through sports activities, individuals learn to accept winning and losing, share, help, and respect others' views and thoughts. It is stated that social responsibility feelings developed as a result of the people working together, and socialization process is ensured in the society as a result of the development of the sense of social responsibility. (12).

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The aim of this study is to investigate the loneliness attitude levels of university students in terms of different variables. This study was conducted on a total of 368 sample individuals, 135 females and 233 males aged 19-23 years of age, studying at Kazım Karabekir Education Faculty of Erzurum Atatürk University in 2018/2019 academic year.

2.2. Data Collection Tool

The independent variables used in the study were prepared by the researcher. In order to determine the loneliness attitudes of the individuals, the UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS) which was originally developed by Russel, Peplau and Ferguson and adapted to Turkish by (Demir, 1989) was used. The UCLA loneliness scale consists of 20 items, 10 of which are straight and 10 of which are coded in the opposite direction. Individuals are asked to indicate on a four-point Likert-type scale how often they experience situations in the items. The items with positive expressions in the scale are scored by giving to "never live" 4, "rarely live" 3, "sometimes live" 2, "often live" 1 point; on the contrary, items with negative expressions are scored by giving "never live" 1, "rarely live" 2,



“sometimes live” 3, “often live” 4 points. The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 80 and the lowest score is 20. Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.96. As the score obtained from the scale increases, the level of loneliness increases as well (1).

2.2. Statistical Analyses

In the analysis of the data, frequency distribution was used to determine the demographic characteristics, T test was used to investigate the relationship between two independent variables and loneliness attitude level, and Anova Variance analysis tests were applied to examine the relationship between more than two variables and loneliness attitude level. LSD test was used to determine which group caused the differences. All these tests were analyzed in SPSS 21 package program and the significance level was taken as $p < 0.05$.

3. Results

In this section, frequency distributions related to demographic characteristics, Independent-Samples T test results to determine the relationship between two independent variables and loneliness attitude level, and One-Way Anova test results are given to determine the relationship between more than two variables and loneliness attitude level.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Students Participated In Research

Variable	Group	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	135	36,7
	Male	233	63,3
	Total	368	100,0
Age	19 age and under	23	6,3
	20-22 ages	136	37,0
	23 age and older	209	56,8
Family Structure	Elementary Family	204	55,4
	Extended Family	142	38,6
	Fragmented Family	22	6,0
Do you do sports?	Yes	239	64,9
	No	129	35,1
	Total	368	100,0
Weekly Sporting Time	3 hours ve less	134	36,4
	4-5 hours	58	15,8
	6 hours and more	47	12,8
	I don't do sports	129	35,1
Sport Type	Team Sport	46	12,5
	Individual Sport	114	31,0
	Both	79	21,5
	I don't do sports	129	35,1

The research was conducted on a total of 368 students, 135 women and 233 men, aged 19-23 and over. It was determined that 239 of the students did sports and 129 did not. It was found out that the students doing sports mainly do for 3 hours or less per week and the ratio of students doing individual sports is high.

Table 2. Students' T-Test Results According to Gender and Loneliness Attitude Levels

Gender	N	X	Ss	t	p
--------	---	---	----	---	---



Female	135	53,87	6,474	2,526	0,016 *
Male	233	52,26	5,544	2,424	

Among the averages of female and male students' scores on the loneliness attitude scale is found with a significant difference at P; 0.05 level. It is concluded that the loneliness attitude levels of female students are higher than that of male students.

Table 3. Average of Students' Ages and Scores from Loneliness Attitude Scale and Values of Differences Between Standard Deviations and Means

Age	N	X	Ss	F	P
19 age and under	23	52,30	7,963	,11	,89
20-22 ages	136	52,85	4,654		
23 age and older	209	52,92	6,446		
Total	368	52,85	5,945	0	6

The mean scores of students at different age levels from the loneliness attitude scale are with no significant difference at P; 0.05 level. Although there is no significant difference, it is observed that the level of loneliness attitude increases with a small percentage of ageing.

Table 4. Mean Scores of the Students' from Family Structures and Loneliness Attitude Scale and Values of Differences Between Standard Deviations and Means

Family Structure	N	X	Ss	F	P	Difference
Elementary Family (a)	20	52,	6,14	110	,004*	c > a c > b
Extended Family (b)	14	52,	5,45			
Fragmented Family (c)	22	57,	5,79			
Total	36	52,	5,94			
	8	85	5			

The mean scores of the students who have different family structure from the loneliness attitude scale are with a significant difference at the level of P; 0,05. It is found that the loneliness attitude levels of the students in the fragmented family structure are higher than the students in the core and extended family structure.

Table 5. T-Test Results According to Students' Sports Status and Loneliness Attitude Levels

Sports Status	N	X	Ss	t	p
Yes	239	53,36	5,879	2,218	0,027 *
No	129	51,92	5,976	2,208	

The mean scores of the students who do sports and who do not do sports from the loneliness attitude scale are found with a significant difference at the level of P; 0.05. It is found that loneliness attitude levels of students who do sports are higher than students who do not do sports.

Table 6. Mean Scores of the Students' Scores from Family Structures and Loneliness Attitude Scale and Values of Differences Between Standard Deviations and Means

Weekly Sports Time	N	X	Ss	F	P
3 hours and less	134	53,40	6,300	,01	,98
4-5 hours	58	53,26	5,866		
6 hours and more	47	53,36	4,632		
Total	239	53,36	5,879	1	9

The mean scores of loneliness attitude scale scores of the students with different weekly sports activities are with no significant difference at $P;0.05$ level.

Table 7. Averages of Students' Scores from Family Structures and Loneliness Attitude Scale and Values of Differences Between Standard Deviations and Means

Sports Type	N	X	Ss	F	P
Team	46	54,46	3,650	1,58	,20
Individual	114	53,47	6,669		
Both	79	52,54	5,652		
Total	239	53,36	5,879	9	6

The mean scores of the students' sport type and loneliness attitude scale are with no significant difference at $P;0.05$ level.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The study was conducted on 368 students, 135 females and 233 males, aged 19-23 years. It was found that 239 of the participants in the study do sports and 129 of them do not. It's found out that the students doing sports mainly do for 3 hours or less per week and the ratio of students doing individual sports is high.

It has been determined that there is a significant difference between the averages of the scores obtained by female and male students from the loneliness attitude scale. It was found that the loneliness attitude levels of female students are higher than male students. Kutlu, in the study of the loneliness levels of the young people staying in the orphanage and their families, found that the loneliness levels of the girls are higher than the boys. (3). Medora et al. (1987) found that loneliness levels of female students are higher than male students. (5). Other studies show that there is a significant relationship between gender and loneliness levels and it is in parallel with the results of our study.

It is determined that there is no significant difference between the averages of the scores of students at different age levels from the loneliness attitude scale. Similar results are also obtained in similar studies. (7). In a study conducted with university students of different cultures, it is reported that age do not affect the level of loneliness. (4). Other studies have shown that there is no significant relationship between age and loneliness levels and it is in parallel with the results of our study. In the validity and reliability study of the loneliness scale, Demir found that the loneliness level decreased with increasing age. (1).

It has been determined that there is a significant difference between the averages of the scores of students with different family structures from the loneliness attitude scale. It has been found that the loneliness attitude levels of the students in the fragmented family structure are higher than the students in the elementary and extended family structure. In the study conducted by Yılmaz et al. on university students, it has been determined that there is no difference between loneliness and family structure. (17). The result of the study by Yılmaz et al. shows difference with

the result of ours.

It has been found that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the students who do sports and who do not from the loneliness attitude scale. It has been found that loneliness attitude levels of students who do sports are higher than students who do not. In the research that Yazıcılar have done, it is stated that female students who do sports have a lower level of loneliness than those who do not. (16). In the study conducted by Özçelik et al. on university students, a significant difference was found between loneliness and sports (9). The conducted researches are in line with the results obtained in our study.

It has been found that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the students who have different sports duration weekly from the loneliness attitude scale. In studies investigating the relationship between exercise frequency and loneliness level, it is stated that those with high exercise frequency have lower levels of loneliness compared to those who have less frequency. (9,16,10, 2). The conducted researches are in line with the results obtained in our study.

It has been determined that there is no significant difference between the type of sports that the students do and the scores they get from the loneliness attitude scale. In the study carried out by Özçelik et al. on university students, he found that there is no statistically significant difference as a result of the comparison between the branch of sports and loneliness. (9). It is in line with the results obtained in our study.

The study we have done and the others in the literature suggest that the individuals who have different demographic characteristics are needed to be directed to sportive activities to decrease their loneliness levels and to be successful in the process of school, work and social life.

References

1. Demir, A. (1989). U.C.L.A. Validity and Reliability of Loneliness Scale. *Journal of Psychology*,7:14-18.
2. Duy, B. (2003). The Effect of Group Counseling Based on Cognitive-Behavioral Approach on Loneliness and Non-Functional Attitudes. Ankara University, Institute of Educational Sciences, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Ankara.
3. Hopman RM, Westhoff MH. (2002). Health education and exercise stimulation for older people: development and evaluation of the program –Healty and Vital-, *Tijdschr Gerontol Geriatr*.;33 (2):56-63.
4. Kutlu, M. (2003). Examination of the loneliness levels of the students staying in the orphanage and with their families according to various variables. VIIth National Psychology and Guidance Counseling Congress Book of Abstracts, Ankara: Pegem Publishing.;11.
5. Le Roux A, Connors J. A. (2001). Cross-Cultural Study Into Loneliness Amongst University Students South African J Psychol; 31: 46.
6. Medora, N., Woodward, J. C., & Larson, J. (1987). Adolescent loneliness: A cross-cultural comparison of American and Asian Indians. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 21, 391-402
7. Mijuskovic, D. (1987). Clock Distribution in Application Specific Integrated Circuits. *Microelectronics Journal*, 18(4):15-27.
8. Orzeck T, Rokach A. (2004). Men Who Abuse Drugs and Their Experience of Loneliness. *Eur Psychologist*;9:163-9.
9. Özçelik, İ. Y., İmamoğlu, O., Çekin, R., & Başpınar, S. G. (2015). The Effect of Sport on University Students' Loneliness Levels. *Journal of Sports and Performance Research*,6(1), 12-18.



10. Page RM, Tucker LA. (1994). Psychosocial Discomfort and Exercise Frequency: Epidemiological Study Of Adolescents, Adolescence. National Library of Medicine.;29 (113):183-91.
11. Peplau, L. A., & Perlman, D. (1982). Perspectives on Loneliness. Loneliness: A Sourcebook of Current Theory, Research and Therapy, 1-20.
12. Şahan, H. (2008). The Role of Sports Activities in University Students' Socialization Process KMU İİBF Magazine Yıl:10 Sayı:15 December.
13. Şişman, M., & Turan, S. (2004). Job Satisfaction and Social-Emotional Loneliness Levels of Employees in Terms of Some Organizational Variables. Journal of Social Sciences,5(1).
14. Şişman, M., & Turan, S. (2004). Education and School Management. Education and School Management Handbook. Ankara: Pegem A Publishing.
15. Uzuner, M. E., & Karagün, E. (2014). Investigation of Loneliness Levels of Recreational Sports.
16. Yazıcılar İ. (2004). Investigation of loneliness levels of young and non-sports young people. Celal Bayar University, Manisa, Unpublished Master Thesis,
- Yılmaz, E., Yılmaz, E., & Karaca, F. (2008). Investigation of Social Support and Loneliness Levels of University Students. Journal of General Medicine,