SPORT AND LONELINESS IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

ÇELİK O. Burçak[1], KURTİPEK Serkan[1], YENEL Fatih[1], İLHAN E. Levent[1]

Abstract*

Aim. The aim of this research is to examine the loneliness levels of university students of Faculty of Sport Sciences and different faculties according to some variables.

Methods. A total of 230 (Male: 96; Female: 134) university students,98 of whom were from The Faculty of Sports Science and 132 were students of other faculties, participated in this research using the relational screening model. The University of California Los Angeles Loneliness Scale (UCLA) was used as a data collection tool. Mann Whitney U test was used in paired comparisons based on total loneliness score and Kruskal Wallis Test was used in relationship of more than one group.

Results. It was seen that students of Sports Sciences and other different faculties have medium-levels of loneliness and there is no significant difference between these mean scores according to age, gender and perceived income status.

Conclusion. Research can be conducted on the students who are studying in the faculties where special talent exam contents are different and it is also suggested to carry out the studies on loneliness in the athletes in terms of branch variable.

*Keywords***: University Students, Loneliness, Sports

Introduction

Loneliness is an important psychological problem that is experienced by the majority, whether old or young, in every stage of human life. Along with the rapidly increasing population and developing technology in modern societies of our age, the levels of alexithymia and loneliness in people tend to increase in parallel with the spread of computer and internet use. This is because the new way of life and individuality brought by the modernization makes it difficult for people to meet their basic needs such as love, acceptance, helping each other, sharing, trust, commitment and understanding (Koçak, 2005).

Schools are educational institutions that house hundreds of students from different cultures and different family structures. These institutions face various problems while carrying out their education and training functions. One part of these problems is student-focused problems. These problems are psychological, economic and social dimensions (Duyan et al., 2008). These problems are also reflected in the relations of individuals with their environment. Being inadequate in relationships and having individually unsatisfying social experiences can affect individuals' lives in different ways. This can cause individuals to isolate themselves from society and feel alone (Invention, 1997). Some people may feel alone even when there are many people around, and some people are happy and don't complain about it even though there aren't many people around. Loneliness, therefore, differs from being alone (Köse, 2006).

The problem of loneliness that negatively affects the academic achievements of students has been the subject of scientific research. In the research of Yildirim (2000), it was revealed that students who didn't feel lonely had higher academic achievements than those who felt lonely. Tarhan (1996) also found, in his research, a negative relationship between academic achievement and loneliness and stated that there was a significant increase in loneliness level as the academic achievement fell.

The feeling of loneliness is seen as a prominent problem in today's rapidly increasing psychological disorders and it is especially important for young people to get over this problem. Considering the socializing and cohesive effect of the sport, it is thought to be a leading figure in solving this problem. If young people can discover the rehabilitative side of the sport, they will easily overcome their psychological problems. In this regard, the research aims to determine the loneliness levels of university students by comparing the students who are studying sports with those who study in other faculties.

Methods

The research group was selected by the

availability sampling method. Participants of the study were the students of the faculty of sports sciences and other faculties. The total number of students participating in the research (96 males, 134 females) is 230.

University of California Los Angeles Loneliness Scale was used as data collection tool. The UCLA Loneliness Scale, developed to determine the general level of loneliness of the individual, consists of 20 items, 10 of which are normal and 10 are reversely coded. In each item of this scale, emotions and thoughts related to social relations are presented, and individuals are asked to specify on a four point (Likert type) scale how often they experience this situation. Items containing positive expressions are scored as "never experience: 4, rarely experience: 3, sometimes experience: 2,often experience: 1" and items containing negative expressions were scored in a total reverse way of this. The scores that the individual gets from all the items are added and the scale scores added for each individual are obtained. Theoretically, since the scoring for each item changes between 1 and 4, the highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 80, the lowest score is 20. As the score increases, the level of loneliness increases. (Demir, 1989). The score between 20-40is low level, between 41-60 medium level and between 61-80 high level of loneliness (Güloğlu and Kararmak, 2010).

SPSS 22 program was used in the data analysis. Mann Whitney U test was used in the paired comparisons, and Kruskal Wallis test was used in the other comparisons.

Results

In this section, the findings obtained as a result of analyses will be interpreted in tabular form.

Table 1: Min., max. and mean scores that participants received from the scale

	N	$\overline{X}$	Min.	Max.
Participants	230	41,50	30	70

According to Table 1, it is seen that the mean scores of all participants received from the scale is 41.50, and considering these mean scores, it is understood that university students have medium level of loneliness. It was also determined that participants had the lowest score of 30 and the highest score of 70 from the scale.

Table 2: Loneliness scores of participants according to gender

Gender	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Male	96	41,22	6,968	113,70	10915,50	6259,50	,72
Female	134	41,70	7,281	116,79	15649,50		

When Table 2 was examined, it appears that there was no significant difference in loneliness levels of the participants according to gender (U: 6259,50; p = 0.72> 0.05). The mean score obtained from scale is 41,22 for males and 41,70 for females. Thus, it was determined that male and female participants have close loneliness levels.

Table 3: Loneliness scores of participants according to age

Age	N	$\overline{X}$	Mean Rank	sd	x^2	P
20 and less	71	40,70	109,43	2	,96	,61
21-22	89	41,96	116,66			
23 and more	70	41,73	120,18			

When examined Table 3, it is seen that the highest score (41.96 score) belongs to participants aged 21-22

years, and the lowest score (40.70 score) belongs to participants aged 20 years or less. It is understood from the table that this difference between the participants in terms of age variable isn't significant $(x2 (sd = 2, n = 230: 0,96, p = 0,61 > 0.05)$.

Table 4: Loneliness scores of participants according to level of income

Level of Income	N	$\overline{X}$	Mean Rank	SD	x^2	p
Low	56	43,43	130,92			
Middle	157	40,76	109,34	2	4,50	,10
High	17	41,94	121,62			

In Table 4, it is seen that low-income university students are lonelier than the other students; and it was figured out that participants feeling lonely least were in the middle income group. However, it appears that there is nostatistically significant difference between the groups in terms of income level variable (p> .05).

Table 5: Loneliness scores of participants according to the faculties of students

Faculty	N	$\overline{X}$	SD	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Students of Faculty of Sport Sciences	98	41,74	6,88	119,12	11673,50	6113,50	,47
Students of Other Faculties	132	41,32	7,34	112,81	14891,50		

Considering the data in Table 5, it is understood that participants studying in both the faculty of sport sciences and other faculties have loneliness at medium level. It was understood from the data in table there was no statistically significant difference between the loneliness scores of the students (U: 6113.50, p = 0.47 > 0.05) in terms of faculty variable.

Discussion

As a result of the research, it was seen that both male and female university students have the feeling of loneliness at medium level and there was no statistically significant difference between the students in terms of gender variable. Beutel et al. (2017) investigated the cross-sectional baseline data of the Gutenberg Health Study (GHS) from April 2007 to April 2012. They found that loneliness was stronger in females, in partners without a partner, and living alone and without children.If one of the negative reflections of loneliness is thought to be aggression, even though it is a young age group, Coplan et al. (2007) stated that for female children, aggression have a stronger and more significant relationship with loneliness when compared to boys, lonely girls are more aggressive than lonely boys. Unlike these researches, Koc (2012) indicated that when compared with the other groups, the loneliness mean scores were found significantly higher for men,

those who never married, primary school graduates, the childless, those who lived alone, those had a chronic disease or those who used continual medication. In the research on university students, Atli et al. (2015) determined that the loneliness scores of male students were significantly higher.

As another result of the research, it was revealed that participants' loneliness levels didn't differ according to age. The results of the study are parallel to the studies of Yılmaz et al. (2008) and Certel et al. (2016). In the mentioned studies, there was no significant difference in the loneliness level of participants according to the age. Unlike the results of the research, Djukanović et al. (2015) reached the conclusion that having loneliness and depressive symptoms decreased as the age increased. Similarly, Kozaklı (2006) determined that the level of loneliness decreases, as the age increases. In the study conducted on the high school students, Erözkan (2004) stated that the loneliness scores of the first year high school students are higher than the second and third year high school students. In the research on the teachers, Yakut and Certel (2016), on the contrary to other researches, revealed that the teachers in the age range of 50-59 years feel themselves significantly lonely compared to the younger teachers.

There was no statistically significant difference in the results of the research according to the income

levels of the participants. The result of the research is similar to the results of the research of Koç and Sağlam (2009). In the research of Ünlü (2015), it was found that as the income increases, the level of loneliness increases. Pinquart and Sörensen (2001) determined that individuals with lower socioeconomic status reported greater loneliness and higher income and education were associated with less loneliness. Similarly, Özdemir and Tuncay (2008) determined that monthly income was found to be negatively correlated with loneliness, indicating that students who reported greater loneliness had lower income.

Considering the results of the research according to the faculty variable, it is seen that there is no statistically significant difference between the students of faculty of sports sciences and students of other faculties. Unlike the result of the research, Poulsen et al. (2007) found that boys with developmental coordination disorder recorded significantly higher loneliness and lower participation rates in all group physical activities, whether structured (e.g., team sports) or unstructured (e.g., informal outdoor play) than boys without developmental coordination disorder. Haugen et al. (2013) found that sport participants were scoring lower on loneliness when comparing the sport participants with the non-participants. In addition, Uzuner and Karagün (2014) specified that the scores of loneliness level of individuals playing sports with recreational purpose are at a very mild level.

Conclusion
The most important finding of this research is that the loneliness levels of the students of the faculty of sports science and the students of the different faculties are close to each other. Yet, the students who carry out undergraduate education in the field of sport sciences are individuals who were or are under the influence of sport. Accordingly, whereas similar results with many of the above-mentioned studies were expected to be obtained, it was concluded that sport doesn't have a significant effect on the levels of loneliness.In this respect, the facts that individuals who don't receive sports education today, also choose an active life in their daily lives and are conscious of participating in the events such as student communities, artistic activities, sports activities etc. in the rest of education time can be shown among the reasons emerged in the present research. In addition, because of preferring academic achievement rather than sports competence in the content of special talent exams, it is also possible to think that it is a reflection of this result that the students studying in this area

don't differ from the students who study in other faculties.

Research can be conducted on the students who are studying in the faculties where special talent exam contents are different and it is also suggested to carry out the studies on loneliness in the athletes in terms of branch variable.

References
Atli A, Keldal G, ve Sonar O, 2015, Üniversite öğrencilerinin yabancılaşma ile yalnızlık düzeyleri arasındaki ilişki. Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 12(29).

Beutel ME, Klein EM, Brähler E, Reiner I, Jünger C, Michal M, Wiltink J, Wild PS, Münzel T, Lackner KJ and Tibubos AN, 2017, Loneliness in the General Population: Prevalence, Determinants And Relations to Mental Health. BMC Psychiatry, (17).

Buluş M, 1997, Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Yalnızlık. Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 3.

Certel H, Yakut S, Yakut İ, ve Gülsün B, 2016, Öğrencilerde yalnızlık problemi. İnsan ve toplum bilimleri araştırmaları dergisi, 5(8).

Coplan RJ, Closson LM and Arbeau KA, 2007, Genderdifferences in thebehavioralassociates of lonelinessandsocialdissatisfaction in kindergarten. Journal of Child PsychologyandPsychiatry 48(10).

Demir A, 1989, U.C.L.A. Yalnızlık ölçeğinin geçerliği ve güvenirliği. Psikoloji Dergisi, 7(23).

Djukanović I, Sorjonen K. And Peterson U, 2015, Association between depressive symptoms and age, sex, loneliness and treatment among older people in Sweden. Aging&MentalHealth, 19(6).

Duyan V, Çamur Duyan G, GökçearslanÇifçi E, Sevin Ç, Erbay E ve İkizoğlu M, 2008, Lisede okuyan öğrencilerin yalnızlık durumlarına etki eden değişkenlerin incelenmesi. Eğitim ve Bilim, 33(150).

Erözkan A, 2004, Lise öğrencilerinin bağlanma stilleri ve yalnızlık düzeylerinin bazı değişkenlere göre incelenmesi. Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 4(2).

Güloğlu B ve Karaırmak Ö, 2010, Üniversite öğrencilerinde yalnızlığın yordayıcısı olarak benlik saygısı ve psikolojik sağlamlık. Ege Eğitim Dergisi, 11(2).

Haugen T, Säfvenbom, R and Ommundsen Y, 2013, Sport participation and loneliness in adolescents:

the mediating role of perceived social competence. CurrentPsychology, 33(2).

Koc Z, 2012, Determination of olderpeople'slevel of loneliness. Journal of ClinicalNursing, (21).

Koç Z ve Sağlam Z, 2009, Bir grup üniversite hemşirelik öğrencisinde yalnızlık. Aile ve Toplum, 11(4).

Koçak R, 2005, Duygusal ifade eğitimi programının üniversite öğrencilerinin aleksitimi ve yalnızlık düzeylerine etkisi. Türk Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Dergisi, 3(23).

Kozaklı H, 2006, Üniversite öğrencilerinde yalnızlık ve sosyal destek düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkilerin karşılaştırılması. Yüksek Lisans Tezi. Mersin Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Mersin.

Köse E, 2006, Liseli ergenlerde kişilik ve sosyal desteğin yalnızlığaolan etkisinin incelenmesi. Yüksek Lisans Tezi. Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Marmara Üniversitesi, İstanbul.

Özdemir U and Tuncay T, 2008, Correlates of loneliness amonuniversitstudents. Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health, 2(29).

Pinquart M and Sörensen S, 2001, Influences on loneliness in older adults: a meta-analysis. Basıc and Applied Social Psychology, 23(4).

Poulsen AA, Ziviani JM, Cuskelly M and Smith R, 2007, Boys with developmental coordination disorder: loneliness and team sports participation. American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 61(4).

Tarhan N, 1996, Sosyometrik statü, cinsiyet, akademik başarı, okul türü ve sınıf düzeyi ile ortaokul öğrencilerinin yalnızlık düzeyleri arasındaki ilişki. Yüksek Lisans Tezi. Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ankara.

Uzuner ME, and Karagün E, 2014, Rekreatif amaçlı spor yapan bireylerin yalnızlık düzeylerinin incelenmesi. Kocaeli Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, (27).

Ünlü F, 2015, Ebeveyni boşanmış bireylerde; benlik saygısı, yalnızlık ve bağlanma stilleri arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi. Haliç Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İstanbul.

Yakut S ve Certel H, 2016, Öğretmenlerde yalnızlık düzeyinin çeşitli değişkenler açısından incelenmesi. Birey ve Toplum, 6(11).

Yıldırım İ, 2000, Akademik başarının yordayıcısı olarak yalnızlık, sınav kaygısı ve sosyal destek. Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, (17).

Yılmaz E, Yılmaz E ve Karaca F, 2008, Üniversite öğrencilerinin sosyal destek ve yalnızlık düzeylerinin incelenmesi. Genel Tıp Dergisi, 18(2).