ARE THE SOCIAL ANXIETIES OF THE STUDENT-ATHLETES, THE DETERMINANTS OF THEIR SELF-ESTEEM?

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Abstract*

Aim: The aim of this research is to examine the self-esteem and social anxieties of student-athletes according to some variables and to determine the relationship between them.

Method: The research was carried out on a total of 279 student-athletes, 113 female and 166 male students, who attended different high school types in the Çankaya District of Ankara during the 2015-2016 spring semester of 2015-2016 academic year. "Personal Information Form" prepared by the researchers, "Social Anxiety Scale" that consists of 30 items and three sub-factors, which are "Social Avoidance", "Anxiety of Being Criticized" and "Individual Imbalance" developed by Özbay and Palancı (2001), and "Self-Esteem Scale" developed by Arıcak (1999) were used in research as a data collection. Data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics, t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), Pearson Correlation test and regression analysis.

*Results:*The levels of social anxiety and self-esteems of the athletes-students in the study group were found to be above the mid-level. It appeared that participants' self-esteem differed significantly according to gender and class level variables; however, it was determined that social anxiety level differs according to class level variable. In this model, it is thought that the model obtained to estimate the self-esteem levels of students with a certain confidence interval will be valid.

*Conclusions:*Research results show that self-esteems of student-athletes are a significant predictor of their social anxieties.

Keywords: self-esteem, social anxiety, student-athletes

Introduction

Relationships of adolescents with their friends and peers play an important role in the development of their personal and social skills (Ingersoll, 1989). The importance of peer relationships on the reduction of family influence upon adolescents over time and their identity development (Dusek, 1991) revealed the necessity of researching the interpersonal relationships in terms of development of adolescents. In the researches, it appears that social anxiety is the main factor for adolescents, which prevents interpersonal relationships among adolescents (Greca & Lopez, 1998).

Social anxiety is defined as the state of fear and shyness that occurs in social situations in which one is anxious about being judged (Murphy & Tasker, 2011). Social anxiety has attracted considerable attention in recent years, because it causes long-term consequences in childhood and adolescence such as loneliness, depression, peer violence, low academic and professional achievement, avoiding social activities (Biedel & Turner, 2007; Kingery, Erdley, Marshall, Whitaker & Reuter, 2010). The source of social anxiety among children and adolescents extends to early ages, even though it is accepted as an important factor in understanding the interpersonal behavior and psychological functions of adults (Leary, 1983). It is stated that this occurs between the ages of 13-14 (Akdemir & Cinemre, 1996). According to Leary and Kowalski (1995), adolescence is the period in which social anxiety is most experienced, and adolescence, which is a period when adolescents' alternative personality models are tested, new friendships are established and social interaction is intense, can be prohibitory (WPA, 1995).

The most obvious behavioral symptom of social anxiety is the avoidance of social environments (Kashdan, 2002). When being rejected, individuals with high social anxiety are inclined to avoid more of the new social interactions that can be a source of positive experiences (Hirsch and Mathews, 2000). Individuals with social anxiety have fewer friends (Beidel, Rao, Scharfstein, Wong & Alfano, 2010) and less social support when compared to individuals with no anxiety (Eng, Coles, Heimberg & Safren, 2005).

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For this reason, they are characterized in their social environment by insecurity, low self-esteem and expectations that they won't be accepted (Levinson et al., 2015).

The lack of self-esteem is at the core of social anxiety (Leary, 2001). Positive-negative emotions that the individual imposes on the self-concept constitute his self-esteem. Self-esteem, the emotional dimension of self, involves the ideas of individual about who he or she is, as well as emotions about who he or she is. Gladness, respect and worth that constitutes self-concept and related to each part of "self" i.e. generally judgments of worthiness, momentousness and reputability that individual creates as a result of evaluating him/herself are described as "self-esteem" (Arıcak, 1999). In other words, self-esteem is that individual respects, trusts, embraces, appreciates and approves him/herself (Yörükoğlu, 1986). Self-esteem has a structure that is sometimes a conclusion, sometimes a motivating reason and sometimes a buffer (Cast & Burke, 2002). Some studies revealed that individuals with high self-esteem have a high school achievement (Garzarelli, Everhart & Lester, 1993, Amount, 2013) and their social relationships are better (Cartledge & Milburn, 1995, Kuzgun, 2002). They are also successful in their academic and professional lives, perceived positively by their peers, and develop positive coping strategies (Biro et al., 2006). Since those who have low self-esteem have negative emotions about themselves, they can have a negative affection (Baumeister & Twenge, 2003), and they establish a weak bond with the society and due to this reason, they have social disagreement and problems (Şahan Yılmaz & Duy, 2013 citing from Rosenberg, 1965).

In the development of self-esteem, Ekeland et al., (2005) and Gün (2006) revealed respectively that physical activity and sport have effects on self-esteem. Doing sports contributes to positive self-development and the fact that self-esteem is high also provides to be successful in sports (Cook, 1999). The self-concept is influenced by many factors such as age, gender, success, socio-economic status, body image, ethnic group, interaction with the environment. It is possible to state the effect of participation in sports on the self-concept. In every stages of human life, the necessary self-concept is influenced by the physical activities, in which the individual participate; in short, by the movement (Aşçı et al., 1993).

There are some studies which reveal that the sport has a positive contribution to the individual's self-esteem and social anxiety levels. In the present study,

answers for the following questions were sought: Regarding student-athletes;

1. What is the level of their social anxieties and self-esteems?
2. Do their social anxieties and self-esteems change according independent variables such as gender, class level, sport branch and age for sport?
3. Is there a significant relationship between their social anxieties and self-esteems?
4. Are their social anxieties, a significant determinant of their self-esteem?

Method

This section includes research design, research group, data collection tools and data analysis.

Research Design

In the research, scanning method was used, which is used widely in social sciences, especially in sports related studies (Jones &Gratton, 2004), is conducted on large groups, opinions and attitudes of individuals in these groups for a fact or event are taken, and the facts and events are attempted to be described as they are and in their conditions (Karasar, 2005).

Research Group

The research was conducted on a total of 282 student-athletes - 117 female students and 165 male students - who study in different high school types in Çankaya District of Ankara during the spring semester of 2015-2016 academic year. 78 of the student-athletes participating in the research are in the 9th grade, 57 are in the 10th grade, 102 are in the 11th grade and 45 are in the 12th grade.

Data Collection Tools

In research, "Personal Information Form", "Social Anxiety Scale" and "Self-Esteem Scale" were used as a data collection.

Personal Information Form: 'Personal Information Form' developed by researchers contains independent variables such as gender, class, sport branch and age for sport, which are subjects to be researched, in order to gather information about the athletes subject to the research.

Social Anxiety Scale: The Social Anxiety Scale developed by Özbay&Palancı (2001) consists of 30 items three and sub-factors, which are "Social Avoidance", "Anxiety of Being Criticized" and "Individual Imbalance". The items of scales prepared in 5 point Likert type are scored as (1) 'Totally Disagree', (2) 'Disagree', (3) 'Undecided', (4) 'Agree' and (5) 'Totally Agree'. The lowest score that can be received from the scale is 30 and the highest score is 150. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated to determine the reliability of the scale and this value was calculated as 0.86 for

the present study. On the data collected within this research, the validity and reliability of the scale were re-examined by the researchers. It was determined that the item factor load values of the scale change between 54 and 81. Factor structure of the scale was tested with confirmatory factor analysis by using the Lisrel 8.8 program and the values of fit indices (x2 / sd = 3.24, CFI = 0.91, GFI = 0.93, NFI = 0.89, SRMR = 0.90 and RMSEA = 0.07) show that three factor structure of the scale was confirmed for the study group.

Self-Esteem Scale: In the research, the Self-Esteem Scale developed by Arıcak (1999) was used to measure the self-esteem levels of university students. The scale consists of 32 items and 5 factors that are "Self-worth", "Self-confidence", "Depressive affection", "Self-sufficiency" and "Achievement and productivity". Items of scale prepared in 5 point Likert type are scored as (5) "Totally Agree", (4) "Agree", (3) "Undecided", (2) "Disagree" and (1) "Totally Disagree". The lowest score that can be received from the scale is 32 and the highest score is 160. In the present study, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) provided evidence for the validity of the scale. It was figured out that the item factor load values of the scale change between 48 and 79. In order to determine the reliability, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated and this value was determined as 0.88. On the data collected within this research, the validity and reliability of the scale were re-examined by the researchers. The factor structure of the scale was tested with confirmatory factor analysis by using the Lisrel 8.8 program and the values of fit indices (x2 / sd = 3.42, CFI = 0.89, GFI = 0.90, NFI = 0.87, SRMR = 0.92 and RMSEA = 0.08) show that five factor structure of the scale was confirmed for the study group.

Data Analysis

As a statistical method in evaluating the data; frequency, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, t-test, one way variance analysis (ANOVA), Tukey multiple comparison test, Pearson Correlation test and regression analysis were used. Whether the data fulfill the preconditions for the parametric tests were determined by examining the results of the Kurtosis and Skewness (normal distribution of the data) values and the Levene (equality of variances) test (Büyüköztürk, 2008). These statistical analyzes were performed through the SPSS 22 statistical package program.

Findings

In this section; analysis results, in terms of some variables, of total scores of Social Anxiety and Self-Esteem obtained from participants are included.

Table 1. Distribution of scale scores

	Number of Items	N	M	Sd	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min	Max
Social Anxiety	30	282	70.67	18.49	0.71	0.96	34	142
Self-Esteem	32	282	119.13	19.66	-0.11	-0.77	60	160

The arithmetic mean of the total scores of the students within the study obtained from Social Anxiety Scale and Self-Esteem Scale were respectively ($\bar{x}$ = 70.67) and ($\bar{x}$ = 119.13). When the coefficients of skewness and kurtosis are examined, it is seen that the data collected within research have a normal distribution (Table 1).

Table 2. T test results according to gender

	Gender	N	X	Sd	Sd	t	P
Social Anxiety	Female	117	70.32	18.13	280	-0.26	0.78
	Male	165	70.92	18.80			
Self-Esteem	Female	117	116.24	19.49	280	-2.09	0.03*
	Male	165	121.18	19.59			

The self-esteem of the student-athletes shows a significant difference according to the gender variable (t = -2.09, p <0.05). The mean score of male participants ($\bar{x}$ = 121.18) is statistically higher than that of female participants ($\bar{x}$ = 116.24). When Table 2 was examined, it was revealed that the self-esteem scores of the participants weren't statistically significant according to gender variable (p = 0.05, p> 0.05).

Table 3. ANOVA results according to class

Dependent Variables	Source of Variance	Sd	Mean of Squares	F	P	Significant Difference
Social Anxiety	Intergroup	3	3320.960		0.002	9*-10
	Intragroup	278	92801.026	3.316		9*-11
	Total	281	96121.986			
Self-Esteem	Intergroup	3	690.797			
	Intragroup	278	108024.810	4.093	0.007	10*-9
	Total	281	108715.606			

ANOVA results shows that social anxiety scores of participants differ significantly according to class variable (F = 3.316, p <0.05). According to the Tukey multiple comparison test conducted to determine the question of between which groups the significant difference is, the social anxiety levels of the student-athletes who are studying at the 9th grade are higher than the social anxiety levels of the student-athletes at the 10th and 11th grades (Table 3).

A significant difference was found in the self-esteem scores of the students according to the class variable (F = 4.093; p <0.001). 10. Self-Esteems of the students who study in 10th grade are higher than that of the students who study in the 9th grade. As the class level increases, the self-esteem of students also increases.

Table 4. ANOVA Results according to sport branch

Dependent Variables	Source of Variance	Sd	Mean of Squares	F	P	Significant Difference
Social Anxiety	Intergroup	5	1347.707		0.56	-
	Intragroup	276	94774.279	0.785		
	Total	281	96121.986			
Self-Esteem	Intergroup	3 278	812.075			
	Intragroup	276	47454.804	0.945	0.45	-
	Total	281	48266.879			

In Table 4, ANOVA results show that social anxiety levels of participants didn't differ significantly according to the regular sport branch variable (t = 0.785, p> 0.05). In addition, the self-esteem of student-athletes didn't show any significant difference according to their sports branch (t = 0.945, p> 0.05).

Table 5. Results of correlation test conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference between the scale scores and participants' ages for sports

| | Age for Sport | | |
	N	R	P
Social Anxiety	282	0.01	0.82
Self-Esteem	282	-0.09	0.12

When Table 5 was examined, the correlation coefficient between the participants' age for sports and the scores they got from the Social Anxiety Scale is positively significant at the low level ($r = 0.01$; $p > 0.01$). It was determined that the correlation coefficient between the participants' age for sports and the scores they got from the Self-Esteem Scale is negatively insignificant at the low level ($R = -0.09$; $p > 0.01$).

The correlation coefficient between the participants' scores received from Social Anxiety and Self-Esteem Scale is negatively significant at the middle level ($r = -0.53$, $p < 0.05$). This can be expressed as the fact that the social anxiety levels of the student-athletes decrease as their self-esteem increases. As a result of Regression analysis, it was found that the social anxieties of student-athletes are the significant determinants of their self-esteems ($R = 0.531$, $R2 = 0.28$, $F = 109.68$, $p < 0.01$). In other words, 28% of total variance regarding self-esteem is explained by social anxiety of participants.

Discussion

While the mean scores of the student-athletes obtained from the self-esteem scale are above the middle level, their mean scores obtained from the social anxiety scale are higher than the mean. Some studies in the literature support the results of the research. In their study that examines whether the exercise improves self-esteems of children and young people, Ekaland et al. revealed that exercise affects participants' self-esteem positively. Similarly (Gün, 2006) and (Aşçı, 1999) determined that sport has a positive influence on the self-esteem of participants. The social anxiety levels of student-athletes in the research are above the middle level.

According to the gender variable; the findings, which were obtained as a result of the analyzes carried out to determine whether there is a significant difference between the student-athletes' scores obtained from the self-esteem scale, are parallel to the results of other related researches (Dolenc, 2008, Knox, Jeanne, Robert & Green, 2000, Puskar Et al., 2010; Qwens, Scofield & Taylor, 2003, Sahan Yilmaz

& Duy, 2013). According to the results obtained, male students have higher self-esteem than girl students. Ponsoda, Abad, Francis & Hills (2008) revealed that self-esteem differs according to gender variable and determined that males' self-esteems improve personally and females are influenced by environmental factors. It was revealed that there is no difference between the social anxiety levels of participants and the gender variable. Whereas some studies in the literature (Ebert, Loosen & Nurcombe, 2003; Sevinçok, 2000) show similarity with the present findings, there are findings that females have higher social anxiety level than males (Dilbaz & Güz, 2002, La Greca & Stone, 1993, La Greca & Lopez, 1998, Yıldırım, Çırak& Konan, 2011). In the their study on adolescences, Essau, Conradt & Petermann (1999) determined that the social anxiety level is higher in females than males, the frequency of social anxiety increases in both females and males with aging, and they get into troubles, especially when they are speaking or eating in public.

According to the results of the research, the social anxieties of the participants show a significant difference according to the class variable. The social anxiety levels of 9th grade students are higher than the social anxiety levels of 10th and 11th grade students. It was observed that as the class level increases, social anxiety levels of student-athletes decrease. In the study of Yildirim, Çırak and Konan (2011) that examine the social anxiety levels of teacher candidates, it was revealed that the social anxiety levels of the 1st grade students were higher than social anxiety levels of the 4th grade students. In the study of Witchen & Fehm (2003) applied on university students, it was figured out that the level of social anxiety was higher in lower classes. These findings can be interpreted as a positive effect of formal education on anxiety levels of students. Significant difference was also obtained in the self-esteem scores of the students according to the class variable. Self-esteems of 10th grade students are higher than 9th grade students. This can be expressed as an increase in the self-esteem of the students with the increase of their class level. In the study of Tufan

(1989) on university students, it was determined that as the class level increases, their self-esteems also increase depending on their life experiences.

In research, participants' social anxiety levels and self-esteems didn't show any significant difference according to the sport branch variable. In the study of Gacar & Yanlıç (2012) conducted on handball players, it was figured out that the athletes' self-esteem was high. Likewise, in the study on the self-esteem of the weightlifters, Karademir, Türkçapar, Ulucan & Bahadır (2013) revealed that the athletes' self-esteem was high. The general positive effect of sportive branches on the self-esteem and social anxieties of athletes can be explained as the reason for this lack of this differentiation. Another finding is that the correlation coefficient between participants' social anxiety scores and self-esteem is negatively significant at the middle level. It was also determined that the contribution of the social anxiety play an important role in expressing the self-esteem.

Conclusion

As a result, it was revealed in research that there is a significant relationship between social anxiety and self-esteem and social anxiety is the determinant of self-esteem. It can be said that there is no difference between sport branches of students and their social anxiety and self-esteem levels, and there is insignificant relationship with sport ages at the low level.

Acknowledgments

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