

A Predictive of Loneliness in Sports Sciences Students: Self-Efficacy

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ABSTRACT

In this study, it is aimed to examine the predictive power of self-efficacy on loneliness in sports science students. A total of 255 sports science students, 72 female and 183 male, studying in the Coaching Education and Physical Education and Sports Teaching departments of a state university's Faculty of Sports Sciences, participated in the study, which is carried out using the correlational survey model. In the study, data are collected using the "Personal Information Form", "UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS-8)" and "General Self-Efficacy Scale". Data are analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and Regression technique. When the research findings are examined, it is determined that there is a negative and low-level significant relationship between loneliness and self-efficacy ($p < .05$). In addition, it is determined that self-efficacy had a negative predictive power on loneliness ($p < .05$). As a result, the increase in the self-efficacy of sports science students can make them less lonely.

Keywords: Sports sciences, student, loneliness, self-efficacy.

INTRODUCTION

Developing technology and modern life seem to bring some problems as well as many advantages. Changing human behaviors, technology-oriented communication tools and life style that the individual is addicted to, have brought these problems to the surface in a way that cannot be ignored. In addition to emerging problems, developing and renewing information and communication¹ technology has led to some changes². These changes have also reduced people's face-to-face social communication, leading people to loneliness.

Loneliness, which negatively affects people psychologically and causes alienation from society³, can be said as a situation that creates negative emotions, undesirable and disturbs the individual, unlike being alone⁴. Therefore, a person can be alone even when he is not alone, and even be alone without being alone⁵. Loneliness, an inevitable and limitless life phenomenon⁶, is defined as "a subjective, unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's social network lacks quality and quantity" according to Perlman and Peplau⁷. Loneliness, differences between personal experience in social relationships and expectations from these relationships⁸, and the number of people in the individual's network are less than expected or when the desired love is not received⁹, negative biological stressors that affect the health status of individuals may occur as a triggering process¹⁰⁻¹¹.

Individuals who are inadequate in their social relations are isolated from the society and feel lonely as a result of these insufficient relations¹². In the absence of this situation, the concept of self-efficacy, which is one of the factors that can affect loneliness, will be emphasized in this research, so that the individual feels more competent and sufficient. According to Bandura, who argues that Social Cognitive Theory is effective on behaviors, self-efficacy is; It is defined as "the inner belief that an individual can overcome this difficulty by self-evaluation when faced with difficulties"¹³. Self-efficacy is one of the personal factors that have a key role in the functioning of the principle of mutual determination¹⁴. In another definition, self-efficacy; It has been stated that "it is not a perceived or observed skill, but an individual's internal beliefs about what he can do

with his skills in the face of certain conditions"¹⁵. Individuals with a high perception of self-efficacy are more successful in reaching their goal in life, overcoming all kinds of difficulties they encounter for this purpose, utilizing opportunities and overcoming obstacles¹⁶⁻¹⁷. On the other hand, individuals with low self-efficacy perceptions are weaker in coping with difficulties¹⁸. When evaluated from this point of view, low self-efficacy may cause loneliness in the individual.

Sports sciences, which has a versatile working perspective, has started to be positioned in different subjects and fields in the literature. Sports sciences, which is among the study subjects in different disciplines, has been a discipline that is constantly researched and wondered in psychology. It is known that individuals who come from sports are happier, have higher self-confidence and courage¹⁹. This situation can increase the self-efficacy of the individual. It is expected that the level of loneliness will decrease in individuals with increased self-efficacy. It is thought that the concepts of self-efficacy and loneliness, which are among the subjects of study in different disciplines, are also worth investigating in sports sciences. Therefore, there is a need for current research to be conducted. Considering the given information in the context of this study, it is aimed to examine the predictive power of self-efficacy on loneliness in sports science students.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Research Model: The "correlational survey model", which is one of the quantitative methods, is used in the research. The correlational survey model has been expressed as "research models aiming to determine the existence and/or degree of change between two or more variables"²⁰.

Population and Sample of the Research: The population of the research consists of sports science students studying in the Department of Coaching Education and Physical Education and Sports Teaching in the Faculty of Sports Sciences of a state university. The sample consisted of a total of 255 sports science students, 72 female and 183 male, aged between 18 and 25 ($\bar{x}_{age} = 20,97 \pm 1,93$) selected through convenient sampling from the population mentioned. The average year of sports

experience of the students is $8,84 \pm 3,07$.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of students

Gender	n	%
Female	72	28,2
Male	183	71,8
Department Studied	n	%
Coaching Education	114	44,7
Physical Education and Sports Teaching	141	55,3
Total	255	100,0

According to Table 1, 28,2% of the participants are female (n=72); 71,8% (n=183) are male students; It is determined that 44,7% (n=114) are students of coaching education and 55,3% (n=141) are students of physical education and sports teaching department.

Data Collection Tools: "Personal Information Form", "UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS-8)" and "General Self-Efficacy Scale" are used in the research. Detailed information about measuring tools is given below.

Personal Information Form: In the demographic information form used in the research, it is aimed to reach information such as gender, age, department and sports years of the students.

UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS-8): The UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS-8), which is used to determine the loneliness levels of sports science students, is developed by Russell and others²¹ and adapted to Turkish culture by Doğan and others²². The scale is in 4-point Likert type and consists of 8 items. Higher scores from the scale indicate higher levels of loneliness. In the adaptation study in Turkish culture, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale is found to be .72²². In this study, the Cronbach Alpha (α) internal consistency coefficient of the loneliness scale is determined as .81.

General Self-Efficacy Scale: The "General Self-efficacy" scale is used to determine the self-efficacy levels of sports science students. The scale is developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem²³ and adapted to Turkish culture by Yeşilay, Schwarzer and Jerusalem²⁴. The scale is 4 likert type and consists of 10 items. Higher scores on the scale indicate higher self-efficacy. The scale has been adapted in 33 languages in the literature. In the samples taken from 23 countries for the measurement tool, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients ranged from .76 to .90, while it is found to be .80 in the majority. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha (α) internal consistency coefficient of the self-efficacy scale is determined as .88.

Data Collection: The measurement tools to be used in the research are reproduced and made ready. The measurement tools prepared are collected through face-to-face interviews in the classroom environment through voluntary participation in a way that did not interfere with the lessons of the students. Research data are collected in December of the 2019-2020 academic fall semester.

Analysis of Data: In order to decide on the statistical operations to be performed in the research, the conformity of the data to the normal distribution is examined by taking into account the skewness and kurtosis values. After the statistical process, it is determined that the data are distributed in the range of -1,5...+1,5. These values are accepted as suitable for normal distribution²⁵. Data are

analyzed in SPSS program using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and Regression technique.

RESULT

Table 2: Results of the relationship between loneliness and self-efficacy

		Self-efficacy
Loneliness	r	-,29**
	p	,00

Table 2 shows the results of Pearson correlation analysis showing the relationship between loneliness and self-efficacy. As a result of the analysis, low-level significant negative correlations are found between loneliness and self-efficacy ($r=-.29$; $p=.00$).

Table 3: Regression analysis results for predicting loneliness

Model	B	Std. Error	β	t	p
Stable	17,90	1,26	---	14,26	,00
Self-Efficacy	-,21	,04	-,29	-4,85	,00
R= ,29	R ² _{adj} = ,08				
F _(1,253) = 23,52	p= ,00				

Dependent Variable=Loneliness

Method: Enter

Table 3 presents the results of the simple linear regression analysis performed to determine the predictive power of self-efficacy on loneliness. As a result of the analysis, it is determined that the regression model is statistically significant. When the t-test results regarding the significance of the regression coefficients are examined; self-efficacy ($\beta=-.29$; $t=-4,85$; $p=00$) is found to be a significant predictor of loneliness. It can be stated that 8% of the total variance of loneliness is explained by self-efficacy.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, it is aimed to examine the predictive power of self-efficacy on loneliness in sports science students. As a result of the research, a negative and low-level significant relationship is found between the loneliness of sports science students and their self-efficacy. In addition, it is concluded that self-efficacy predicted loneliness significantly and self-efficacy had 8% of the total variance in explaining loneliness. The result of this research has provided evidence that sports science students should keep their self-efficacy high so that they do not fall into loneliness.

Loneliness, which is a universal emotional and psychological experience²⁶; it is also seen as a normal experience that leads to deeper self-awareness, time to be creative, and an opportunity for self-realization and discovering the meaning of life²⁷⁻²⁸. Loneliness, which is one of the important problems of the modern age, has become one of the factors that increase rapidly among individuals and negatively affect human life²⁹. So much so that societies with an increase in lonely people may break up³⁰ and when these problems are not resolved, the psychological status of individuals may be negatively affected³¹. Although loneliness has increased in the general population, it has been stated that this increase has exceeded 60% among university students²⁶ and this should be seen as an important problem³². One of the ways to

reduce loneliness is to have a good ability to cope with unwanted events in life. As a matter of fact, self-efficacy is the ability to produce solutions in the face of undesirable events³³ and active coping efforts^{34-35,44}. Therefore, high self-efficacy can reduce loneliness.

It is possible to come across studies in the literature that reveal the existence of a relationship between loneliness and self-efficacy^{36-37,42,43}. Aydın, Yazıcı and Altun³⁶ as a result of the research they conducted with the participation of secondary school students, found negative significant relationships between students' loneliness and self-efficacy. Şahan and Ceyhan³⁷ in their research on fine arts high school students in Eskişehir found negative significant relationships between students' loneliness and their perceptions of efficacy. In addition, it has been determined that the concept of social competence under the concept of competence in the literature is examined with loneliness. The results indicated that there are negative relationships between social competence and loneliness³⁸⁻³⁹⁻⁴⁰⁻⁴¹. Based on the information in the literature and the results of the current research, it can be stated that the effect of self-efficacy is important in reducing loneliness.

As a result, a negative and low-level significant relationship is found between the loneliness of sports science students and their self-efficacy. In addition, it is concluded that self-efficacy significantly predicted loneliness in a negative way. It can be said that sports affect self-efficacy positively and in this context, it will be possible for children and young people to cope with loneliness by directing them to sports. It is recommended to carry out researches that will include athletes from different sports branches to teacher candidates in different branches and compare those who do and do not do sports.

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