

# Investigation of loneliness levels of physical education teachers

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate the loneliness levels of physical education teachers and determine them according to some variances. In the study, a descriptive survey method was used, which aimed at revealing the existing situation. The study group was comprised of 287 physical education teachers actively working at the state schools of Kayseri province in the 2019-2020 education year. In the study, Personal Information Form and UCLA Loneliness Scale were used as the data collection tools. SPSS program was used for the analysis of the data. Techniques of t test (independent-samples t-test) for paired comparisons and one-way analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) for multiple comparisons were used in the research study. According to the results of the research, loneliness levels of physical education teachers were determined to be "partially low". In addition, while there was a significant difference in the loneliness levels of physical education teachers according to age, years of service, regular exercise status and school team employment; no significant difference was determined according to gender, marital status, school type and sport branch.

**Keywords:** Loneliness, physical education, teachers.

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## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, with the development of technology and urbanization, people become more and more individualized due to the weakening of kinship and friendship relationships and difficult living opportunities. They become more introverted and then they started to become lonely by isolating themselves from society.

Loneliness is the mood caused by the weak quality of interpersonal relationships and social interaction. Loneliness is a state of emotion that the individual experiences with his own will by reducing his connection with his environment (Gün, 2006).

Loneliness is explained in the literature as an unwanted and unpleasant experience, which is almost always avoided, accompanied by anxiety, anger, sadness and feelings of feeling different from others. It seems that loneliness is associated with a wide range of psychological problems such as low self-esteem, insufficiency in social skills, depression, alcoholism, obesity and suicide (Çeçen, 2008).

Loneliness contains perceptions about values, desires and anxieties and includes reactions related to physiological and psychological behaviors related to these (Şişman and Turan, 2004). When loneliness is denied, suppressed, ignored and underestimates the dangers that may occur, it negatively affects people's life and leads them to negative activities by neutralizing their energetic state (Rokach, 2004)

Social relationships are important for individuals of all ages. All people need to interact with others in their lives. Today, interpersonal relationships deteriorate for many reasons, and a rapid increase is observed in the number of people deprived of intimacy. Loneliness is an important problem that affects the life of the individual negatively and increases day by day (Kılınc and Sevim, 2005).

The most important aspect that distinguishes teaching from other professions is that teaching is a personality profession. A teacher's private life, attitudes, behavior, exemplary affects success or quality of the teacher.

Teachers can be good teachers to the extent they are taken as an example (Ataünal, 2003). If teachers do not feel lonely at the school they work in and accept themselves as part of the school they work at, they can work more efficiently and healthily (Kaplan, 2011). The problem of loneliness that teachers experience in schools is not only limited to their own life, but also their negative impact will affect the society (Yakut and Certel, 2016).

When the studies carried out from this point are examined, studies examining the loneliness levels of physical education teachers were not found. In the literature, it is aimed to investigate the loneliness levels of physical education teachers by considering that this problem will be overcome.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research model

This was a research that was designed in the descriptive survey model. Survey model research studies are defined as the kind of studies, in which information is gathered from a large mass through multiple choice answers determined by the researcher (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006). In this study, it is aimed to investigate the loneliness levels of physical education teachers considering that this problem will be overcome.

### Study group

The study group was comprised of 287 physical education teachers who were actively working in the

2019-2020 education year in public schools in Kayseri province, Turkey, and were randomly selected. Of the physical education teachers in the study group, 97 (33.8%) were female and 190 (66.2%) were male; 226 (78.7%) were married and 61 (21.3%) were single. Descriptive information about the study group is presented in Table 1.

### Data collection tools

In this study, which was conducted to determine the loneliness levels of physical education teachers and compare them through certain characteristics, the Personal Information Form and UCLA Loneliness Scale were used as the data collection tools. The Personal Information Form was developed by the researchers in order to determine the demographic characteristics of the physical education teachers in the study group.

UCLA Loneliness Scale is a likert type scale that helps to determine the general degree of loneliness of the individual. The scale consists of 20 items that 10 are positive that shows no loneliness, and the other 10 items are negative that means loneliness; the scale ranks between "I totally agree" (1) and "I totally disagree" (4) (Russell et al., 1980). The highest score that can be obtained from the scale is 80, and the lowest score is 20. High scores indicate that individuals experience more loneliness. The validity and reliability scale studies in Turkey by Demir (1989). Demir (1989) determined the reliability of test-retest coefficient as .94 and the Cronbach alpha internal consistency as .96; for this study, the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0.71.

**Table 1.** Distribution of demographic characteristics of the physical education teachers in the study group.

Characteristics	N	%	Characteristics	N	%
Gender			Marital status		
Female	97	33.8	Married	226	78.7
Male	190	66.2	Single	61	21.3
Age			Professional experience		
20-29 years old	34	11.8	0-9 years	53	18.5
30-39 years old	168	58.5	10-19 years	167	58.2
40-49 years old	85	29.6	20-29 years	67	23.3
School type			School team employment		
Secondary school	116	40.4	Yes	227	79.1
High school	171	59.6	No	60	20.9
Doing regular exercises	N	%	Sport branch		
Yes	241	84	Individual sport	95	33.1
No	46	16	Team sport	192	66.9

## Statistical analysis

In the research, SPSS program was used for data analysis. The frequency, percentage, and descriptive statistics of the data obtained from the scale are given in tables. In order to determine the loneliness levels of the physical education teachers in the study group, certain data such as arithmetic means ( $\bar{X}$ ), standard deviation (Sd), and significance (p) were obtained. It was determined, through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, that the loneliness levels of the physical education teachers in the study group demonstrated a normal distribution ( $p > 0.05$ ). As per the comparisons; t test method was used for paired comparisons for independent groups, and one-way analysis of variance method was used for multiple comparisons. The significance level was admitted as  $p < 0.05$ .

## FINDINGS

The results concerning the overall UCLA loneliness scale scores of the physical education teachers in the study group are presented in Table 2. As a result of the analysis, physical education teachers in the study group gained  $\bar{X} = 41.49$  mean score from the overall UCLA loneliness scale. According to this result, loneliness levels of the physical education teachers in the study group were determined as “partly low”.

The results concerning the comparisons of loneliness levels of the physical education teachers in the study group in terms of gender, marital status, school type, school team, doing regular exercise and sport branch are given in Table 3. According to the results of the analysis, while there was a significant difference in loneliness levels of physical education teachers according to regular exercise status and school team employment; no significant difference was determined according to gender, marital status, school type and sport branch. In comparison to physical education teachers who exercise regularly and work school teams, loneliness levels of those teachers who do not work school team's exercise regularly were found to be significantly higher.

The results concerning the comparisons of loneliness levels of the physical education teachers in the study group in terms of age and professional experience are given in Table 4. According to the results of the analysis, it was determined that there were statistically significant differences in the loneliness levels of the physical education teachers concerning the age and professional experience. Loneliness levels of 30-39 years old physical education teachers were found to be significantly higher than those of 40-49 years old ones. Loneliness levels of physical education teachers between 20-29 years of service have been determined to be also significantly higher than physical education teachers between 0-9 and 10-19 years of service.

**Table 2.** The mean score of the physical education teachers in the study group obtained from the overall UCLA loneliness scale.

Scale	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd
UCLA Loneliness Scale	287	41.49	7.650

## DISCUSSION

According to the results of the research, loneliness levels of physical education teachers were found to be “partially low” and this indicates that the sense of loneliness was low according to statistical results. It confirms the research done; Loner and Karagün's (2014) average score of loneliness of individuals who do sports for recreational purposes is very mild, and in the study done by Gafa and Dikmeli (2019), it is found that classroom teachers had low level emotional deprivation, social friendship and loneliness in work life. In the study of Yılmaz et al. (2008) on university students, it was observed that the students' loneliness levels were low.

In the study, it was determined that loneliness levels of physical education teachers showed a significant difference according to age. According to the age status of the study conducted by Seçim et al. (2014) on university students, 119 out of 218 students between the ages of 18-20, 119 out of 106 students between the ages of 21-23, and 13 out of 22 students over the age of 24 had higher loneliness scores than the average and it was determined that the age was associated with loneliness. In the study conducted by Kaplan (2011) on teachers, it was observed that the average of teachers' loneliness points showed a significant difference according to the age variable, and 20-25 age group teachers experienced more loneliness in the work life compared to 26-30 age group teachers. In the study carried out by Özkaya (2017) on university students, it was observed that the loneliness levels of the students showed a significant difference according to the age variable and these results supported the research.

In the research conducted, it is seen that there is a significant difference according to the service year variable. Loneliness levels of physical education teachers between 20-29 years of service were significantly higher than physical education teachers between 0-9 and 10-19 years of service. According to the findings of the study in the study of Altınok and Yılmaz (2009) on school administrators, loneliness feelings of school administrators differed significantly according to the year of service variable. According to the study of Yakut (2016) on teachers, it has been determined that the participants who have seniority over 21 years experienced high loneliness in a way to make a significant difference and the results support the research.

In the study, it was seen that there was a significant difference according to the variable of regular exercise

**Table 3.** Comparison of the loneliness levels of physical education teachers in the study group concerning their gender, marital status, school type, school team, doing regular exercise and sport branch.

Characteristics	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	t	p	Difference
Gender						
Female	97	40.55	7.951			
Male	190	41.97	7.467	-1.493	.512	No
Marital status						
Married	226	41.49	7.399			
Single	61	41.50	8.582	-.011	.991	No
School type						
Secondary school	116	41.22	7.771			
High school	171	41.68	7.584	-.499	.618	No
Sport branch						
Individual sport	95	42.02	7.518			
Team sport	192	41.23	7.721	.814	.416	No
School team employment						
Yes	227	40.85	7.653			
No	60	43.91	7.197	-2.786	.006	Yes
Doing regular exercises						
Yes	241	40.75	7.345			
No	46	45.39	8.108	-3.857	.000	Yes
Total	287	41.49	7.650			

**Table 4.** The comparison of the physical education teachers in the study group about their loneliness levels in terms of age and professional experience.

Parameter	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	F	p	Difference
Age						
20-29 years old (a)	34	42.00	8.381			
30-39 years old (b)	168	42.25	7.730	3.034	.050	c<b
40-49 years old (c)	85	39.80	6.979			
Professional experience						
0-9 years (x)	53	39.81	8.253			
10-19 years (y)	167	42.72	7.565	5.285	.006	x<y
20-29 years (z)	67	39.77	6.848			z<y
Total	287	41.49	7.650			

status. Loneliness levels of physical education teachers who do not exercise regularly were found to be significantly higher than those who exercise regularly. According to the study of Altın (2019) on adolescents who do sports and do not, there is a statistically significant difference between the loneliness levels of adolescents according to the sports variable and it is seen that the loneliness point average of the students

who do sports is lower than the loneliness point average of the students who do not. According to the study done by Şengil (2014) on young people who do sports and do not, it is observed that the level of loneliness of those who do sports has a lower average than those who do not. The results mentioned are similar to the results we obtained from the research.

In the study, a significant difference was found

according to the variable of school team employment and loneliness levels of the physical education teachers who did not work school team were found to be significantly higher than those who employed the school team. Since school teamwork is an activity specific to the physical education branch, no information has been found in the literature. It can be said that teachers who do not employ school teams feel lonely.

In the research conducted, it is seen that there is no significant difference according to the gender variable. Duru (2008), Duyan et al. (2008) and Uzuner and Karagün (2014) have similar results.

It was found that loneliness levels of physical education teachers do not show a significant difference according to marital status variable. The results of the studies performed by Yukay et al. (2013) and Yakut and Certel (2016), support these results.

No significant difference was determined in the study conducted by school type variable. In the study of Yakut and Certel (2016), there was no significant difference according to the school type variable. It can be said that school type has no effect on loneliness of physical education teachers.

In the research conducted, no significant difference was found according to the sport branch variable. The results of the study carried out by Gencel (2019) on the sports branch support this research. It can be said that sports branch does not affect loneliness levels of physical education teachers.

## Conclusion

According to the results of the research, loneliness levels of physical education teachers were determined to be "partially low". In addition, while there was a significant difference in loneliness levels of physical education teachers according to age, years of service, regular exercise status and school team employment; no significant difference was determined according to gender, marital status, school type and sport branch.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Low levels of loneliness of physical education teachers; it can be said that that was in a result of their high communication skills and human relations, self-confidence, indulgence in freedom, being active and socially extroverted in all areas. As a result, there is not enough study in the literature yet. Studies on physical education and sports related to loneliness can be increased.

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