The Effect of Leisure Benefits on Loneliness of University Students

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Abstract

The study aimed to determine the differences between loneliness levels and leisure benefits according to the variables of university students and the effect of leisure benefits on loneliness. In the research, scanning model, which is one of the quantitative research methods, was used. The study group of the research consisted of 255 students, 148 males (58.0%) and 107 females (42.0%), studying at the School of Physical Education and Sports of Istanbul Gelişim University, and formed by voluntary participation. In addition to the personal information form, the UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS) developed by Russell, Peplau, and Ferguson (1978) and adapted to Turkish by Demir (1989), and Leisure Benefit Scale (LBS) developed by Ho (2008) and adapted to Turkish by Akgül, Ertüzün, and Karakucuk (2018), were used. After the data showed normal distribution, t-test, ANOVA and Pearson Correlation Test were used in the analysis. According to the research results, a difference was found between the individuals' loneliness according to the age groups and the leisure benefits according to their gender. As a result of the research, it was concluded that as the leisure benefits of the individuals increased, their loneliness decreased.

Keywords: Leisure benefits, Leisure, Loneliness, Physical benefits, Psychological benefits, Recreation, Social benefits, Students of University.

Contents

Contribution of this paper to the literature
This study contributes to the existing literature by determining the differences between loneliness levels and leisure benefits according to the variables of university students and the effect of leisure benefits on loneliness.

1. Introduction

Recreation is a variety of activities in which individuals participate in their leisure, provide personal satisfaction, and use their talents and skills (Stebbins, 2005). While McLean, Hurd, and Rogers (2008) have explained recreation as a period in which individuals express themselves efficiently, Brey and Lehto (2007) have defined them as entertainment and social activities that enable individuals to renew themselves. In summary, recreation can be explained as the sum of activities that individuals can do in their leisure alone or groups, rest, have fun, regenerate physically and spiritually, experience satisfaction and pleasure as a result of the activity (Ardahan, 2016).

Although the mystery of whether recreational activities performed in leisure are a necessity comes to mind, it is undoubtedly the fact that recreation is a need (Karakucuk & Gurbuz, 2007). Gokce (2019) has emphasized that the need for leisure activities can not only be based on a cause as the main factor on the behaviour of individuals, but the need for leisure activities may depend on many factors. Individuals need activities that are different from those that are always performed to get rid of the busy pace of their life and to regenerate physical and spiritual. In this case, it can be explained as a phenomenon that should be performed in the nature of recreation in human nature (Kilicman, 2020). Undoubtedly, the most frequently encountered name in researches in defining the state of need is Abraham Maslow. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is the most frequently used theory in the field of recreation (Beşikçi, 2020). While Maslow listed the needs of people from the bottom up as physiological and biological needs, security, belonging, respectability and self-actualization needs, he also stated that these needs are fulfiled sequentially after the first need is fulfiled (Wang, 1993). Ibrahim and Cordes (2002) mention that people intend to regenerate spiritually and physically in the remaining time after basic physiological and biological needs and security needs are met. Karakucuk and Gurbuz (2007), have stated that basic needs and security problems should disappear for individuals to be able to engage in recreational activities such as sports and arts. This mobilization, which is accepted as an orientation to recreational activities, is seen as recreational needs with similar goals as stated in Maslow's need for Self-actualization (Beşikçi, 2020).

Individuals see some benefits from the recreational activities they participate in their leisure. These benefits can be grouped into three classes as psychological, physical and social benefits (Guzel, Turker, & Turker, 2014). Munusturlar (2016) have gathered the psychological benefits that the individual gains from leisure under the headings of mental health, personal development, and personal value and satisfaction. The living conditions of the person can bring a sedentary life with them, in this case, this sedentary person can have health problems. Leisure activities involving physical movements are the best way to avoid these health problems, and doing these activities is beneficial for their physical health (Kaya, 2011). When the social benefit of recreation is examined, it is a fact that especially individuals find themselves in a social life with recreational activities. Individuals in these environments are suitable environments for the development of these relationships.

As social being, people are in constant communication and interaction with their environment. This interaction situation brings some problems with it. As a result of these problems, people are faced with the feeling of loneliness (Akgul, 2020). In the modern period, loneliness is a common issue that causes some social problems in society. Kemala (2017) has explained loneliness as a depressing situation created in individuals due to the low quality of social relationships. On the other hand, Gectan (1994) has explained loneliness as a state of emotion that is frightening for people, causes despair, prevents socialization and causes them to be alienated from their environment. Although researchers have seen the concept of loneliness from different angles, they actually have said the same thing. In generally, loneliness is an unpleasant feeling that changes in intensity that occurs in response to an individual's relational deficit (Reed, 1986). Among the personality traits of the individual, shyness, lack of social skills and self-confidence can be listed as the factors that cause loneliness (Pinar, 2020). Haliloglu (2008) has stated that psychological and cognitive factors and Keser and Karaduman (2014) have stated that the lack of communication between individuals is a factor in the emergence of loneliness.

Today, the development of technology, the increase in internet and social networks, and addiction cause loneliness and threaten people. In the age we live in, the feeling of loneliness is a situation that individuals constantly encounter. To avoid this situation or to overcome it as soon as possible, recreational activities in the leisure that individuals have are extremely important (Siyahtaş, 2020). Koçyiğit, Erdoğdu, Uyar, and Çınar (2018) have emphasized that the recreational activities that individuals participate in their leisure are important in establishing interpersonal relationships, maintaining their relationships and strengthening their sense of belonging. Ustün and Kalkavan (2013) have stated that as a result of the recreational activities in which individuals participated, individuals turned towards new friendships, aimed to meet new people, and pursued new experiences. In this context, it was thought that it was necessary to investigate the effects of various benefits obtained from recreation on individuals' loneliness. When the literature was examined, it was seen that the studies (Pınaroğlu, 2020; Siyahtaş, 2020; Uçar, 2018; Yağmur, 2015) that affected the loneliness of recreation and the asociality of individuals were limited. Therefore, this study aimed to reveal whether the benefits individuals obtain from recreational activities affected their loneliness or not.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The relational screening model describes a situation or event as it exists in research, and the relationship and effect of the variables that cause this situation are determined (Kaya, Balay, & Göçen, 2012). In this study, the relational screening model, one of the screening models, was used.

2.2. Research Group

A total of 155 students, 148 males (58.0%) and 107 females (42.0%), who studied at the School of Physical Education and Sports of Istanbul Gelişim University, participated in the study group of the study voluntarily.

2.3. Data Collection Tools
2.3.1. Personal Information Form

The Personal Information Form was prepared by the researcher to determine the gender, age and welfare levels of the individuals.

2.4. UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS)

UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS) was developed by Russell et al. (1978) and adapted to Turkish by Demir (1989). ULS consisted of 20 items, 10 of the items were reverse items. The scale was a 4-Likert type (1-I never live, 4-I live often). The maximum point that can be taken from the scale was 80 points, and the lowest score was 20 points. The more the scores increased, the more the level of loneliness increased, and this increased causes more loneliness experience for the individual. The reliability and internal consistency calculation of the scale were determined by the test-retest method. Calculations regarding the internal consistency of the scale were performed and the internal consistency coefficient was determined as .96. The scale was re-tested every five weeks, and the coefficient between the scores obtained as a result of the first test was determined as .94 (Demir, 1989).

2.5. Leisure Benefit Scale (LBS)

The Leisure Benefit Scale (LBS) was developed by Ho (2008) and adapted to Turkish by Akgül et al. (2018). The Leisure Benefit Scale (LBS) consisted of 24 items and 3 sub-dimensions, and the scale was 5-point Likert type (1-strongly disagree, 5-totally agree). Sub-dimensions were social benefits, physical benefits, and psychological benefits. The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale was determined as .83.

2.6. Data Analysis

The SPSS 20. package program was performed in the analysis of the data collected from the participants in the study. It was decided whether the data showed a normal distribution or not, according to the skewness and kurtosis. According to George and Mallery (2010), the fact that the data are in the range of -2, +2 can be accepted as a normal distribution of the data. As seen in Table 1, it is seen that the research data are in the range of -2, +2. Therefore, it was accepted that the research data showed a normal distribution. After it was understood that the data showed normal distribution, independent samples t-test and ANOVA test, which were parametric tests, were used in the analysis. Pearson Correlation test was used to determine the relationship between scales. The difference between the groups was analysed using the Tukey test. The level of significance in the analyses was set at 0.05.

3. Findings / Results

According to the results, a total of 255 individuals, 148 males (58.0%) and 107 females (42.0%), participated in the study. 109 of these participants (42.7%) were in the 18-21 age group, 114 (44.7%) were in the 21-25 age group, and 32 (12.5%) were 26 and older. When the welfare status of the participants was examined, while 52 (20.4%) of the individuals stated their opinion as "high", 181 (71.0%) of them stated "medium" and 22 (8.6%) "low".

Table-1. Distribution of Scale Scores.

Sub-dimensions		Item	n	Mean	Sd.	Skewness	Kurtosis
UCLA Loneliness Scale	Loneliness	20	255	1.92	0.60	1.30	0.080
Leisure Benefit Scale		24	255	4.62	0.85	1.24	0.062
	Physical Benefits		7	3.65	0.84	1.25	0.67
	Psychological Benefits		8	3.58	1.02	1.19	0.064
	Social Benefits		9	3.67	0.82	1.22	0.068

Table 1 consisted of the mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis values obtained from the scale scores of the participants. According to the analysis results, the mean score obtained from the UCLA Loneliness Scale was 1.92. While the mean obtained from the Leisure Benefit Scale was 4.62, 3.65 was found in the "physical benefit" sub-dimension, 3.58 in the "psychological benefit" sub-dimension, and 3.67 in the "social benefit" sub-dimension.

Table-2. T-Test Results between Loneliness and LBS Sub-dimensions according to the gender of the individuals.

	Male (N = 148)		Female (N = 107)				
	Mean	Ss	Mean	Ss	Sd	t	p
Loneliness	1.88	0.45	1.80	0.37	253	1.255	0.158
Physical Benefits	4.26	0.90	4.32	0.87	253	1.122	0.171
Psychological Benefits	4.24	0.89	4.27	0.83	253	1.321	0.148
Social Benefits	4.29	0.81	4.35	0.75	253	5.412	0.022*

Table 2 consisted of the results of the T-test conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the LBS sub-dimensions and loneliness according to the gender of the individuals participating in the study.

According to the analysis results, there was no statistically significant difference between the loneliness of individuals according to their gender ($t_{(253)}$=1.255, p>0.05).

According to the analysis results of the research, while there was no significant difference between the "physical benefit" and "psychological benefit" sub-dimensions of LBS according to the gender of the individuals (p> 0.05), a significant difference was found between the "social benefit" sub-dimension ($t_{(253)}$=5.412 p<0.05).

Table-3. ANOVA Results between Loneliness and LBS Sub-dimensions Regarding Age Groups of Individuals.

	18-21 Age Group (N = 109)		22-25 Age Group (N = 114)		26 and older (N = 32)		F	p	Difference
	Mean	Ss.	Mean	Ss.	Mean	Ss.			
Loneliness	1.86	0.45	1.85	0.44	1.93	0.35	7.578	**0.001**[*]	**2-3**
Physical Benefits	4.04	0.74	4.11	0.70	4.20	0.69	2.535	0.124	
Psychological Benefits	4.12	0.62	4.17	0.66	4.18	0.65	2.125	0.224	
Social Benefits	4.15	0.67	4.18	0.70	4.21	0.72	2.389	0.205	

In Table 3, ANOVA results were given to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the LBS sub-dimensions of loneliness according to the age groups of the individuals participating in the study.

In the analysis results, a statistically significant difference was found between the loneliness scores of individuals according to age groups (F=7.578 p<0.05).

According to the analysis results, no statistically significant difference was found between "physical benefit", "psychological benefit" and "social benefit" sub-dimensions of the Leisure Benefit Scale according to the age groups of individuals (p> 0.05).

Table-4. The Relationship between Loneliness and Leisure Benefit Scale Sub-dimensions.

	Loneliness
Physical Benefits	-0.265 0.126
Psychological Benefits	-0.254 0.000[*]
Social Benefits	-0.327 0.000[*]

Table 4 showed the correlation results between UCLA Loneliness Scale and Leisure Benefit Scale sub-dimensions according to the data collected from individuals.

According to the analysis results, there was no relationship between loneliness, and loneliness and physical benefit (p>0.05). On the other hand, a negative correlation was found between loneliness and psychological benefits (r=-.25 p<0.05), and a moderate negative correlation (r=-.32 p<0.05) between loneliness and social benefit.

4. Discussion

The study aimed to investigate the effects of leisure benefits on loneliness and to determine the relationship between the physical, psychological and social benefits obtained from leisure and loneliness. Moreover, it was aimed to determine the differences between individuals' gender and age variables and their levels of loneliness and leisure benefits.

When the mean obtained from the scales were examined, it was determined that the loneliness mean of the individuals was 1.92. When the results of similar studies were examined, the loneliness score means of individuals were found to be 2.51 in the study by Kalkan (2018), 2.68 in the study by Karakoç and Taydaş (2013), and 1.87 in the study by Siyahtaş (2020). When the result obtained in our study was compared with other research results, it can be said that the loneliness level of the individuals was low.

In the results of the study, no statistically significant difference was found between the loneliness of the individuals according to their gender Table 2. When the studies in the literature were examined, it was seen there were studies (Büyük, 2017; Karakoç & Taydaş, 2013) in which a significant difference was determined, and there were also studies in which no significant difference was determined (Eni, 2017; Yabancı, 2019). Siyahtaş (2020) was stated that the reason for the difference in loneliness between the genders in the studies was the difference in the personality traits of the individuals, environmental reasons and the psychological problems of the individuals reflected in their loneliness and this situation affected the results of the studies.

In the results of the study, a significant difference was found between "social benefit" of the Leisure benefit scale sub-dimensions according to the gender of the individuals Table 2. When mean scores were examined, it can be said that the mean scores of female individuals were higher than male individuals. In this context, it can be said that female benefits more from leisure. In the study conducted by Yalcinkaya (2019) a significant difference was found in favour of female in the "social benefit" sub-dimension according to the gender of individuals. The results of our study were in parallel with the results of the study conducted by Yalcinkaya (2019).

In the results of the study, a statistically significant difference was found between the loneliness scores of the individuals according to the age groups Table 3. According to the Tukey test conducted to determine between which groups there was a significant difference, it was determined that the significant difference was between the 21-25 age group and the individuals 26 and older. It was observed that the mean of individuals aged 26 and older was higher. As a result, it can be said that loneliness increased as age progressed.

In the results of the study, no significant difference was found between the leisure benefit scale sub-dimensions according to the age groups of individuals Table 3. When all sub-dimensions were examined, it was determined that the mean scores of individuals aged 26 and older were higher than other age groups. Although the difference was not determined to be statistically significant, it can be said that the older the age, the more benefit from leisure. When the literature was examined, in the study conducted by Yalcinkaya (2019), a significant difference was found between the benefit obtained from leisure according to age groups, while a significant difference was not found in the study conducted by Kocaer (2018).

The main aim of the study was to examine the effects of leisure benefits on individuals' loneliness. When similar studies were examined, Ekinci, Demirel, Demirel, and Işık (2015) found that leisure was a tool for individuals not to experience loneliness, Cakır, Demirel, Harmandar, and Serdar (2018) concluded that leisure

management of individuals reduced their loneliness, while Siyahtaş (2020) concluded that satisfaction achieved in leisure activities decreased loneliness.

5. Conclusion

As a result of our research, no relationship was found between the leisure benefit scale "physical benefit" sub-dimension and loneliness of individuals, and negative relationships were found between "psychological benefit" and "social benefit" sub-dimensions. In other words, it was concluded that as the leisure benefits of individuals increased, their loneliness can decrease. Especially in recent years, it has known that individuals have more leisure than in the past. On the other hand, the development of technology and the increase of social media platforms with smartphones made people more dependent on technology, and parallel to this, people became more alienated, divided and asocial by being isolated from society. Both the results of our research and the results of similar studies were shown that leisure activities and recreational activities reduce the loneliness of individuals and become a tool to socialize people by activating them more. Therefore, it can be recommended that individuals use their leisure with various recreational activities.

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