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ANALYZING LONELINESS AND LIFE SATISFACTION OF WRESTLERS REGISTERED TO TURKEY OLYMPICS PREPARATION CENTER (TOPC)

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to identify the loneliness and life satisfaction of wrestlers registered to Turkey Olympics Preparation Center (TOPC Project) and understand how it is affected by demographic variables. Data collected from 40 wrestlers selected from various cities of Turkey and already being trained in Olympics preparation center. During the collection of research data; "UCLA Loneliness Scale" which developed by Russell, Peplau & Cutrona (1980)) and transleted into Turkish by Demir (1989), and ""The Satisfaction Scale" which developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) and transleted into Turkish by Yetim (1991) were used. T-test and Anova analysis used to understand how loneliness and life satisfaction level of these sportsmen changes according to some demographic variables. To understand the relation between sportsmen loneliness and life satisfaction levels, pearson correlation analysis is used.The results show that, loneliness and life satisfaction of sportsmen have no statistically significant difference with education, marial status, family type, age, birth place, date of performing sports variables; while statistically significant difference found between the achievements of sportsmen and loneliness and life satisfaction. Positive and medium level relation found between loneliness and life satisfaction. According to the findings of the analysis, loneliness level of wrestlers contributed to the study is found to be medium, while life satisfaction level is high.

Keywords: Loneliness, Life Satisfaction, Wrestling, Olympic

TÜRKİYE OLİMPİYAT HAZIRLIK MERKEZİ (TOHM PROJESİ) KAPSAMINDAKİ GÜREŞÇİLERİN YALNIZLIK VE YAŞAM DOYUMLARININ İNCELENMESİ

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı Türkiye Olimpiyat Hazırlık Merkezi (TOHM Projesi) kapsamındaki üst düzey güreşçilerin yalnızlık ve yaşam doyum düzeylerini ortaya çıkararak demografik değişkenlere göre nasıl şekillendiğini belirlemektir. Türkiye'nin çeşitli illerinden seçilen ve olimpiyat hazırlık merkezinde eğitim gören 40 güreşçiden veri toplanmıştır. Araştırma verilerinin toplanmasında; Russell, Peplau & Cutrona (1980) tarafından geliştirilmiş olup, Demir (1989) tarafından Türkçeye çevrilen "Yalnızlık Ölçeği"; Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) tarafından geliştirilen ,Yetim (1991) tarafından Türkçe uyarlaması yapılan "Yaşam Doyumu Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır. Sporcuların yaşam doyumu ve yalnızlık düzeylerinin bazı demografik değişkenlere göre nasıl şekillendiğini belirlemek için T-testi ve Anova analizi yapılmıştır. Sporcuların Yalnızlık ve yaşam doyum düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemek için ise pearson korelasyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen sonuçlara göre sporcuların yalnızlık ve yaşam doyum düzeyleri ile; eğitim, anne baba durumu, aile tipi, yaş, doğum yeri, spor yapma yılı değişkenleri arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı fark bulunmaz iken; sporcuların elde ettiği dereceler ile yalnızlık ve yaşam doyumu arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı fark bulunmuştur. Yalnızlık ve yaşam doyumu arasında ilişki düzeyine bakıldığında pozitif yönde orta düzeyde bir ilişki tespit edilmiştir. Araştırma bulgularına göre olimpiyat hazırlık merkezinde bulunan sporcuların yalnızlık düzeylerinin orta düzeyde, yaşam doyum düzeylerinin ise yüksek düzeyde olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır

Anahtar Kelimeler; Yalnızlık, Yaşam Doyumu,Güreş,Olimpiyat

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INTRODUCTION

Today, performance in sport has been explained as the physiological, biomechanical and psychological efficiency an athlete shows during activity. Reaching optimal and outstanding performance depends on an athlete's developing both psychological and physiological skills and rising to a specific level in line with his goals[17]. In parallel with this, one of the important psychological factors in athletes' performance development and success is the satisfaction they get from life. Due to intense trainings and great desire of winning, athletes can have difficulties in their lives. Studies have concluded that these difficulties cause athletes' life satisfaction levels to decrease[13]. On the other hand, some athletes enjoy such difficulties to reach their goals and this in turn increases their life satisfaction[2]. An athlete's having high life satisfaction can reveal his wishes to maintain his skills and to be superior to other athletes. Thus, it can be said that sportive activity process, the goals discusses within this process and reaching these goals will cause an athlete to find his life satisfying. It will be an expected result for athletes who find their lives satisfying to be more associated with sportive goals and goal orientation[27]. Life satisfaction, which was conceptualized by Neugarten at the beginning of 1960s means how much pleasure individuals get from their lives as a whole subjectively[7]. Life satisfaction is defined as a cognitive component of subjective well being and as a result which emerges with the comparison between where a person views himself within life and what the person expects from life[22]. According to Karause (2004), life satisfaction has been defined as the consistence between individuals' goals and what they have achieved so far. When there is not a big gap between individuals' goals and what they succeed, they have high life satisfactions; otherwise, they experience a very big disappointment and sorrow[18]. Life satisfaction can be associated with being pleased with life, income, common relationships, lack of anxiety or depression, employment, positive self respect and religious beliefs[3]. Individuals experience positive and negative feelings under objective and subjective conditions within their lives. While the dominance of positive feelings creates satisfaction and happiness, negative feelings create dissatisfaction and unhappiness. Thus, an individual's attitudes and behaviors towards life come his way as a good or bad life. An individual's feeling good is explained with the state of subjective well-being which expresses the individual's functional thoughts about his life and an integration of positive feelings[20]. The concept of subjective well-being has three basic elements. These are functional feelings defined as positive feelings left by pleasant experiences such as joy and happiness; non-functional feelings which express negative feelings such as hatred, regret, anger and sorrow and life satisfaction which occurs as a result of the comparison between an individual's expectations and the functional feelings he is in. Social support is one of the most important concepts influencing life satisfaction[4]. Loneliness, which is defined as an emotional absence at the point when an individual cannot fulfill life satisfaction, attracts attention. Loneliness is a psychological situation resulting from weak communication and socializing skills[12]. According to another definition, it is defined as contradictory feelings that emerge when an inconsistency is perceived between an individual's existing social relationships and the relationships he desires[23]. Less number of social activities does not mean that people feel lonely or are less pleased with their social relationships[1]. People can feel lonely as a result of "life events" that can cause some changes in social behaviors and social web (such as loss of a spouse, divorce, moving, age, etc)[33] and since they have different perspectives because of their life styles and characteristics, they can have

different preferences of social relationships and social interaction[36]. This can also influence the perceptions of satisfaction from social life. Thus, in addition to more quantitative measurements of social activities, it is important to focus on feelings of loneliness and life satisfaction. Durak and Şenol-Durak (2012) assessed loneliness as a situation which occurs in association with events such as family communication, social activity, social support, social skill, positive/negative mood, anxiety, depression and life satisfaction[11]. A great number of researchers claimed that types of loneliness have many different dimensions. According to Weiss (1984), people experience two kinds of loneliness, which are social loneliness and emotional loneliness[35]. When the literature on sport and exercise psychology is examined, studies can be found about loneliness and life satisfaction concepts which are conducted on athlete groups doing various sport branches. For example, Uzuner, (2014) studied the loneliness levels of individuals doing sport for recreative purposes[32]; Özdemir (2010) studied alexithymia and loneliness levels of orienteering athletes[21]; Toy (2015) studied the association between goal orientation and life satisfaction of free and Greco-Roman wrestlers[30]; Toros (2001) studied life satisfaction and goal orientation and motivational climate in elite and non-elite athletes[29]; Duman et al. (2011) studied life satisfaction and self confidence in disabled athletes[10]; Tekin, et al. (2010) studied loneliness levels in combat sport and team sport athletes[26] and Gür et al. (2012) studied on loneliness in visually impaired athletes[14].

It has been thought that the loneliness and life satisfaction levels of athletes in Olympic Preparation Centers which are founded to enable a common and standard application in choosing, training and developing the performances and social development of athletes who will participate in the Olympics in wrestling sport, which is known as “ancestral sport” in Turkey, should be examined in the light of science since these athletes are away from their families and social environment due to intense camp period, competitions and tiring trainings. In line with these, the purpose of this study is to find out the life satisfaction and loneliness levels of wrestlers and to examine these two concepts according to athletes’ characteristics.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

All the information about research model, universe and sample and data analysis is explained in detail in this section.

Research Model

The purpose of the study is to examine the loneliness and life satisfaction levels of wrestlers within the context of Turkey Olympic Preparation Center (TOHM Project) since they are away from their families, the city they live in and their friends. In addition, the association between life satisfaction and loneliness will also be examined. Thus, the study model is determined as descriptive and relational survey method.

Participants

The universe of the study consists of top level talented wrestlers who can represent the country in international competitions and who will or can participate in the Olympics and who are boarding at Turkey Olympic Preparation Center (TOHM) within the body of Kahramanmaras Provincial Directorate of Youth Services and Sports. Since these are specially talented athletes from various provinces, the universe of the study is limited to 40 individuals and all of the universe has been reached. Athletes were interviewed face-to-face and scales were filled in by the athletes and the research data were collected.

Data Collection Tools

Following the literature review conducted to find out the loneliness and life satisfaction levels of athletes who constitute the universe of the study, the scales explained below and the personal information form prepared by the researcher were used as data collection tools. The personal information form included independent variables such as age, place of birth, parents' educational status, degrees, family type, years of doing sport, years of working with the coach to find out the demographic information of the athletes. Table 1 shows the numbers and percentages of the athletes in each group.

Table 1. Demographic features of the study group

Variables	f	%	Variables	f	%
Age			**Educational status**		
15age	22	55.0	Secondary	36	90.0
16age	13	325	High school	4	10.0
17age	5	12.5	**Birth place**		
Marial status			Burg	9	22.5
Married	35	87.5	Town	19	47.5
Divorced	5	12.5	province	12	30.0
Family Type			**Sporting year**		
Nuclear family	25	62.5	1-3 years	6	15.0
Extended family	13	32.5	3-5 years	18	45.0
Year worked with coach			6> years	16	40.0
1year	15	37.5	**National Degrees**		
2year	12	30.0	First Degree	10	25.0
3year	9	22.5	Second Degree	15	37.5
4year	4	10.0	Third Degree	10	25.0
			No Degree	5	12.5

The Satisfaction with Life Scale has 5 items and it is assessed with a 7-Likert type scale as "strongly disagree" – 1 (1-185), "disagree" – 2 (1.86-2.71), "slightly disagree" – 3 (2.72- 3.57), "neither agree nor disagree" – 4 (3.58- 4.43), " slightly agree" – 5 (4.44 -5.29), "agree" – 6 (5.30-6.15), "strongly agree"-7 (6.16 -7.00). In the original form of the scale, Alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was found as 0,87 by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985)[8]. The criterion-referenced validity of the scale was found as 0,82. In the Turkish adaptation of the scale, Yetim (1991) found Alpha reliability coefficient as 0,86 and test-retest reliability coefficient as 0,73[37]. In this study, reliability coefficient of the scale was found as 0.64 and when the distinctiveness index (item-total correlation) of each item was examined, they were found to be greater than 0.40. This result is associated with the number of samples. Table 2 below shows item-total correlation.

Table 2. Life satisfaction scale item total correlation analysis result

Total Score	İtem 1	İtem 2	İtem3	İtem 4	İtem5
	.74*	.74*	.74*	.50*	.50*

Loneliness Scale

UCLA Loneliness Scale is a one-dimensional 20-item scale developed by Russell, Peplau&Cutrona (1980). The scale was prepared in 4-Likert type as "I never feel this way" -1 (1- 1.75), "I rarely feel this way"- 2 (1.76-2.50), "I sometimes

feel this way" - 3 (2.51-3.25), "I often feel this way" - 4 (3.26-4.00). The scale was adapted into Turkish and examined for validity and reliability by Demir (1989)[6]. In the Turkish adaptation of the scale, Alpha reliability coefficient was found as 0,96 and test-retest reliability coefficient as 0,94. In this study, Croanbach Alpha (α) was found as .71.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of data, descriptive statistics such as percentage, frequency, arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used. In addition, coefficient of skewness values of the distribution of Life Satisfaction and Loneliness Scales results were examined to decide for parametric or non-parametric tests and it was found that the coefficient of skewness values of both tests were found to be between -1 and 1 (Life Satisfaction $_{skewness}$:-.60,Life Satisfaction$_{kurtosis}$:-10; Loneliness$_{skewness}$:-.51: Loneliness$_{kurtosis}$:-91). For this reason, parametric tests were used. Independent samples t-test was used for paired comparisons, while Anova test was used for multiple comparisons. To understand the relation between sportsmen loneliness and life satisfaction levels, pearson correlation analysis is used.

RESULTS

As the first problem of the research, "Athletes' loneliness levels" were discussed. The average of the answers given to loneliness scale by the athletes was found as ($\overline{X}$ = 60.72, sd=7.14). In terms of items, average level of loneliness ($\overline{X}$ =3.03) corresponds to the interval "I sometimes feel this way" 3 (2.72- 3.57) in the scale. According to these results, it was concluded that the athletes have a moderate level of loneliness.

As the second problem of the research, "Athletes' life satisfaction levels" were discussed. In terms of items, average of the life satisfaction scale ($\overline{X}$ =23.92, sd=4.78). In terms of items, average of the life satisfaction scale ($\overline{X}$ =4.78) corresponds to the interval " slightly agree" – 5 (4.44 -5.29) in the scale. According to these results, it was concluded that the athletes have a high level of satisfaction.

In addition, the following tables show how the life satisfaction and loneliness averages of the athletes differ in terms of demographic variables.

Table 3. Life satisfaction and loneliness scores according to gender, educational status, marial status, family type

Life Satisfaction	**Group**	**n**	$\overline{X}$	**sd**	**t**	**p**
Educational	Secondary	36	23.75	4.98	.65	.55
	High school	4	25.50	5.06		
Marial status	Married	35	24.11	4.91	.57	.59
	Divorced	5	22.60	5.63		
FamilyType	Nuclear family	25	23.48	5.51	1.12	.27
	Extended family	13	25.07	3.25		
Loneliness	**Group**	**n**	$\overline{X}$	**sd**	**t**	**p**
Educational	Secondary	36	61.22	7.24	1.89	.11
	High school	4	56.25	4.64		
Parent status	Married	35	61.65	6.61	1.98	.10
	Divorced	5	54.20	8.01		
Family Type	Nuclear family	25	59.60	6.99	-1.77	.08
	Extended family	13	63.38	5,82		

*p<0.05

According to Table 3, the Life Satisfaction levels of athletes were not significantly influenced by variables such as educational: (t=.65, p=.56); marial status (t=.50, p=.59); family type; (t=-1.77, p=.08). Also it was found that the Loneliness levels of athletes were not significantly influenced by variables such as educational: t=1.89, p=.11); marial status: (t=1.98, p=.10); family type: (t=-1.77, p=.08).

Table 4.Distribution of life satisfaction averages of athletes in terms of some characteristics

Variable	Group	N	$\overline{X}$	sd	F	p	Diff.
Age	15age	22	24.09	4.67			
	16age	13	23.69	5.73	.02	.97	
	17age	5	23.92	5.06			
Years of Doing Sport	1-3 years	6	24.83	4,57			
	3-5 years	18	23.61	4.85	.13	.87	
	6≥years	16	23.93	5.45			
Place of Birth	Burg	9	22.88	4.01			
	Town	19	24.52	4.31	.33	.72	
	Province	12	23.75	6.59			
National Degrees	First Degree	10	24.50	5.81			
	Second Degree	15	23.66	4.32	3.64	**.02***	3<4
	Third Degree	10	26.50	3.53			
	No Degree	5	18.40	3.58			

According to Table 4 while the Life Satisfaction levels of athletes were not significantly influenced by variables such as age, years of doing sport and place of birth (age: F=.02, p=.97; years of doing sport: F=.13, p=.87; place of birth: F=.33, p=.72) it was found that the national degrees of athletes influenced their Life Satisfaction levels significantly (F=3.64, p=.02). According to Bonferroni test results, the difference was between Life Satisfaction of athletes who did not have a national degree was ($\overline{X}$ =18.40, sd 3.58) while loneliness level of athletes who had the third degree was ($\overline{X}$ =26.50, sd=3.53).

Table 5.Distribution of loneliness averages of athletes in terms of some characteristics

Variable	Group	N	$\overline{X}$	sd	F	p	Diff.
Age	15age	22	62.90	1.50			
	16age	13	57.92	6.19	2.46	.09	
	17age	5	58.40	7.89			
Years of doing sport	1-3 years	6	61.83	6.91			
	3-5 years	18	62.11	6.67	1.02	.36	
	6>years	16	58.75	7.69			
Place of birth	Burg	9	60.33	8.13			
	Town	19	60.68	7.18	.02	.97	
	Province	12	61.08	6.92			
National Degrees	First Degree	10	61.90	5.62			
	Second Degree	15	59.26	7.27	**5.95**	**.02***	4<1
	Third Degree	10	65.90	4.14			4<3
	No Degree	5	52.40	6.10			

**p<0.05*

According to Table 5, while the loneliness levels of athletes were not significantly influenced by variables such as age, years of doing sport and place of birth (age: F=2.46, p=.09; years of doing sport: F=1.02, p=.36; place of birth: F=.02, p=.97), it was found that the national degrees of athletes influenced their

loneliness levels significantly (F=5.95, p=.02). According to Bonferroni test results, loneliness level of athletes who did not have a national degree was ($\overline{X}$ =52.40, sd=6.10); while loneliness level of athletes who had the first degree was ($\overline{X}$ =61.90, sd=5.62) and those who had the third degree was ($\overline{X}$ =65.90, sd=4.14)

Table 6. Relation between athletes' loneliness and life satisfaction levels

		Loneliness	Satisfaction
Loneliness	r	1	,566**
Satisfaction	r	,566**	1

The results of the association between athletes' loneliness and life satisfaction levels, which was another question of the research, showed a positive moderate association between these two variables (r=.56, p=.00). According to the results, as the loneliness levels of athletes increase, their life satisfaction levels also increase.

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Life satisfaction shows the result of comparing an individual's expectations with the existing situation. In addition, athletes' general life conditions and the satisfaction they get from life are among factors which influence sportive performance. If the life conditions expected by the individual and the life conditions the individual has are close, the individual's life satisfaction can increase[31]. The results of this study showed that wrestlers had high life satisfaction scores. When the international success of the wrestlers in the study were considered, it can be said that rather than competing in the national team, top level success the athletes had (European, Balkan championship, national degrees) causes them to have high life satisfaction scores. At the same time, being in a special project, the sufficiency of the opportunities given, goal oriented training and the success gained at the end can cause them to have high levels of life satisfaction. In literature, it has been concluded in a study conducted on elite and non-elite athletes that life satisfaction of elite basketball players is higher than that of non-elite players[28]; in their study they conducted on 19 elite wrestlers participating in free style and Greco-Roman national team preparation camp, Keskin, Kabadayı, Bostancı & Bayram (2016) concluded that the wrestlers had high life satisfaction levels[16]. In a study which examined the factors associated with the well-being of university students, Doğan (2006) found that university students who were supported by their friends and families, who did physical exercise and who had positive thoughts about their futures had higher well-being[9].

It was concluded that the students in the study had moderate levels of loneliness. The need to communicate with people and to build new relationships with people depends on a person's social state. The athletes who made up the sample of the study were staying at Turkey Olympics Preparation Center (TOHM) and their environment consisted of only coaches, academic advisors, sport physician, sport psychologist, conditioner and the staff responsible for support services. Most of their time passed with intense training, competitions and intense camp periods. Athletes have limited opportunities to communicate with their families, people from their environment and new people. For these reasons, it can be thought that their loneliness levels were moderate according to the results of the study. At the same time, it is stated that athletes who do individual sports are more introvert when compared with athletes who do team sports, they have high sense of belonging and they give particular importance to proving themselves and to doing this alone[19].

Since wrestling is an individual sport, it can be said that this is one of the factors why their loneliness levels were found to be moderate in the study.

In this study, athletes' life satisfaction and loneliness levels were associated with their demographic characteristics. Analyses results showed that athletes' life satisfaction and loneliness levels did not differ in terms of variables such as parents' education, family type, age, place of birth and years of doing sport. It can be interpreted as an expected result for the wrestlers not to differ in terms of their demographic characteristics since they were among the same age group or their ages were close to each other, and they had similar variables such as team climate, educational status, age of doing sport, and since they had similar physical and psychological effects such as trainings, camps and competitions. When the literature is reviewed, it can be seen that Toy (2015) did not find an association between wrestlers' ages, experience (years of doing sport) and their life satisfaction[30]. In addition to this result, Tabuk (2009) and Toros (2001) found a positive association between the period of time the athlete has been a professional and life satisfaction[25,28].

Results of the study showed differences between the degrees athletes won and loneliness and life satisfaction. The difference was between athletes who had degrees and those who did not. All the wrestlers in the research group are national athletes in their own age category and their goal is to have degrees in Turkey, Europe and World Championships, and especially Olympics. Thus, since some of the athletes had such successes in their age categories, it can be said that the athletes who reached their goals had high life satisfaction levels. In a study on the association between free style, Greco-Roman style and all wrestlers and the variable of competing in the national team, Toy (2015) did not find a difference between the two variables[30]. This result is not in line with the results of our study. In our study, it was concluded that as the loneliness level of athletes increased, their life satisfaction levels also increased. When studies in literature were reviewed, while studies were found which showed a negative association between loneliness and life satisfaction, Çivitçi & Fiyakalı (2009), Kapıkıran & Yağcı (2012) found that as life satisfaction level increased, levels of loneliness decreased[5,15]. This result is not in parallel with the results of our study.

The results of the study show that life satisfaction levels of the athletes are high since the Olympic preparation center aims to support their social and personal development as well as their performance and it is thought that the athletes have moderate levels of loneliness since they live in this center day and night to prepare for the Olympics. The attainments they gain psychologically and physiologically in these centers cause a positive association between the athletes' loneliness levels and their life satisfaction. One of the most important results of the study is the low life satisfaction of athletes who do not have degrees. Thus, such athletes should be supported more. This project of Youth and Sport Ministry takes place in 17 different branches in Turkey. It is thought that conducting this study in other branches and comparing the results will increase the quality of athletes and they will be able to reach their goals more easily.

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