

# Analysis of elite male wrestlers' social comparison levels according to socio-demographic backgrounds

Halil BISGIN, Umit Dogan USTUN

*School of Physical Education and Sports, Dumlupinar University, Kutahya, Turkey.*

*Address correspondence to Halil Biskin, halil.biskin@dpu.edu.tr.*

## Abstract

Social comparison can be identified as a defensive tendency that people use as a means of self-evaluation. The aim of this study is to analyze social comparison levels of elite male wrestlers according to socio-demographic backgrounds such as age, participation year in wrestling; best achieved success and average monthly income. For this aim 79 elite men wrestlers volunteered. Turkish version of Alan & Gilbert's Social Comparison Scale was used as data gathering tool. Obtained data evaluated with SPSS 16 for Windows and in addition to descriptive statistical methods Frequency and Percentage, One Way ANOVA was used to determine significant differences ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). As a conclusion no significant differences were found between sampling group's social comparison levels and their ages, sports year and their best success ( $p>0.05$ ). Regarding that self-concept begins at early ages and the sport contributes to individuals, it is needed to make psychological counseling and guidance services in applying similar studies to different sample groups, widespread, easy to access and functional.

**Keywords:** Social comparison, self-esteem, elite wrestler, sports.

## INTRODUCTION

Individuals' necessity to meet their emotional, physical and social needs form basis for their behaviors. Individuals interact with others; also sometimes compare themselves with other people while they are meeting their emotional, physical and social and needs (8).

Festinger's theory of social comparison maintains that people need to have stable, accurate appraisals of them. The theory posits that people prefer to evaluate themselves using objective and nonsocial standards, but if such objective information is unavailable, then individuals will compare themselves using other people (16).

Similarly according to Suls et al. (14) comparing the self with others, either intentionally or unintentionally is a pervasive social phenomenon. Perceptions of relative standing can influence many outcomes, including a person's self-concept, level of aspiration, and feelings of wellbeing (i.e., subjective well-being) (14).

People compare themselves with others to consolidate their thoughts about themselves, to improve and/or to recognize their senses of self. Either that comparing process is conscious or unconscious at the end people have thoughts about

themselves. But this comparing process may have different effects according to the qualities of other person which are compared at different levels (5).

Social Comparison is about self-esteem. Baumeister and colleagues suggested that high self-esteem people socially compare to draw attention to their talents and abilities, while low self-esteem people opt for damage limitation, self-protection and minimizing exposure of their weak points, i.e. they are shame avoidant (1).

Wood et al. (17) indicated that high self-esteem people lose interest in social comparison when they succeed; that is they have little interest in comparing themselves with others who are inferior. However, low self-esteem people do seem to enjoy comparing themselves with inferior others when they succeed because it offers a "safe opportunity to revel in their success" (17).

According to Blanton (3) social comparison has three selves model and this model proposes that social comparison theory is a combination of two different theories. One theory is developed around motivation and the factors that influence the type of social comparison information people seek from their environment and the second is about self-

evaluation and the factors that influence the effects of social comparisons on the judgments of self (3).

According to this information the aim of this study is to measure social comparison levels of wrestlers according to socio-demographic backgrounds.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

### Sampling Group

79 wrestlers took part in this study, who are chosen according to criterion sampling method (4), who are involved in both 16<sup>TH</sup> International Victory Tournament held between May 17 and May 19 in Kepez in Antalya and Istanbul Burhan Felek National Teams Camp Education Center; Males Under 11 Greco-Roman Wrestle Camp between August 22 and September 5, 2013.

### Assessment Tool

In this study, as data collection tool personal information form and Social Comparison Scale were used to define participants' levels of social comparison. The Scale which was reformed by Allen and Gilbert (1) first translated into Turkish by Sahin and Sahin (15) then overhauled by Sahin, Durak and Sahin (1993). Social Comparison Scale is a scale that carried out to teenagers and adults, has no time limit, is bipolar and formed by 18 features. It's an easy scale which is marked on questionnaire form, and an individual can carry out himself. To provide intelligibility in the scale likert style marking between 1-6 is used. Bipolar questions are evaluated according to the points that are got from a dimension with 6 points. High points indicate positive self-schema; low points indicate negative self-schema. Scale Internal Consistency Coefficient defined as 0.87 (15,11). Oksuz and Malhan (10) have redone the validity and reliability study of the scale and defined internal consistency coefficient as 0.91.

### Analysis of the Data

SPSS for Windows 16 packet program was used for analyzing the data. Percentage (%) and Frequency (f) methods were used in order to define the participants' personal information distribution. In order to define whether the data have a normal distribution or not One Sample Kolmogorov Smirnov test was used and in order to define the meaningful differences according to that test results, One Way ANOVA statistical method was used.

## RESULTS

Participants Personal Information Distribution are given in table 1. According to the table, 32,9 % of wrestlers has been wrestling for 4 years, 35,4 % has won at least one tournament in which he took part in, 29,1 % has a monthly income equal or more than 1901 TL and 40,5 % is 14 years old.

Table 1. Frequency (f) and percentage (%) results of the participants related to their demographic features.

Factor		F	%
Participation Year in Wrestling	3 year or less	18	22,8
	4 year	26	32,9
	5 year	19	24,1
	6 year or more	16	20,3
	Total	79	100,0
Best Success	None	15	19,0
	1st	28	35,4
	2nd	18	22,8
	3rd	18	22,8
	Total	79	100,0
Monthly Income Level	1150 TL or less	17	21,5
	1151-1700 TL	18	22,8
	1701-1900 TL	21	26,6
	1901 TL or more	23	29,1
	Total	79	100,0
Age	13	17	21,5
	14	32	40,5
	15	12	15,2
	16	18	22,8
	Total	79	100,0

Table 2. ANOVA results according to age.

Factor	N	Mean	SD	F	p
Age	13	4.98	.48	.81	.48
	14	5.19	.35		
	15	5.20	.68		
	16	5.23	.58		
	Total	79	5.14		

ANOVA results according to participant wrestlers' age are given in table 2. According to analyze results there is no significant difference between participant wrestlers' age and their social comparison levels ( $F_{(3-78)}=.81$ ,  $P>0,05$ ).

In table 3 ANOVA results according to participants' year on sports are given. There is no significant difference between their year on sport and social comparison levels ( $F_{(3-78)}=.75$   $p>0,05$ ).

Table 3. ANOVA results according to participants' year on sport.

Factor	N	Mean	SD	F	p	
Participation Year in Wrestling	3 year or less	18	5.20	.37	.75	.52
	4 year	26	5.21	.32		
	5 year	19	5.10	.57		
	6 year or more	16	5.00	.71		
	Total	79	5.14	.49		

Table 4. ANOVA results according to best achieved success.

Factor	N	Mean	SD	F	p	
Best Success	None	15	5,02	,55	,59	,62
	1.	28	5,14	,50		
	2.	18	5,12	,58		
	3.	18	5,25	,31		
	Total	79	5,14	,49		

Table 5. ANOVA results according to average monthly income level.

Factor	N	Mean	SD	F	p	
Monthly Income	1150 TL or less	17	5,11	,48	,31	,81
	1151- 1700 TL	18	5,23	,57		
	1701- 1900 TL	21	5,14	,36		
	1901 TL or more	23	5,08	,55		
	Total	79	5,14	,49		

Participants' social comparison levels according to their success levels are given in table 4. According to Anova results there is no significant difference between participants' success level and their comparison levels ( $F_{(3-78)}=.59$ ;  $p>0,05$ ).

ANOVA results according to average monthly income level are given in table 5. According to the results there is no significant difference between wrestlers' average monthly income level and their social comparison levels ( $F_{(3-78)}=.31$ ;  $p>0,05$ ).

## DISCUSSION

This study held to analyze elite male wrestlers' social comparison levels according to factors of average monthly income level, year on wrestling and ratings in national/international tournaments.

According to the results of analyzes in the study there is no significant difference between participant wrestlers' age and their social comparison levels (table 2). This result collides with the results of the study by Saymer et al. (12). Saymer et al. (12) remarked there is a meaningful difference in favor of 20 aged-individuals in 18-19 aged and 20 and above aged student's opinions for sufficient or insufficient; fly-in the ointment –dear, lonely- not lonely antipathetic- simpatico items.

According to study results there is no significant difference at participants' social comparison levels according to their year on wrestling (table 3). It's thought that this is because, all participant wrestlers are elite level and due to this they have got together in many camps and know each other very well. Social Effect of Sport on teenagers has been proved by researchers (2,6,13).

According to Kilbas (9) sport act a multifarious and an important role for teenagers and teenagers lean to sport in order to make their personalities accepted and make friends. According to Er et al. (7) teenagers who take part in sport activities improve positively in socially.

Also in this study there is no significantly difference in participants' social comparison levels according to best achieved success (table 4) and average monthly income level (table 5). In the study held by Erozkun (8), he remarked that students' social comparison status is affected by their socio-economic status. According to Erozkun (8) students who have a high socio-economic status, feel themselves better, trust themselves much and perceive themselves as strong, bold and accepted among individuals.

Consequently, regarding that self-concept begins at early ages and the sport contributes to individuals, it is needed to make psychological counseling and guidance services in applying similar studies to different sample groups, widespread, easy to access and functional. Also it is needed to inform and teach to the sports people, who are very important for the future of our country's sport, that sport not only has physical benefits but also has cognitive and affective benefits.

## REFERENCES

1. Alan S, Gilbert P. A social comparison scale: psychometric properties and relationship to psychopathology. *Personal Individual Differences*, 1995; 19(3): 293-299.
2. Balyan M, Yerlikaya Balyan K, Kiremitçi O. farklı sportif etkinliklerin ilköğretim 2. kademe öğrencilerinin beden eğitimi dersine yönelik tutum, sosyal beceri ve öz yeterlik düzeylerine etkileri. *Selçuk Üniversitesi Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilim Dergisi*, 2012; 14(2): 196-201.
3. Blanton H. Evaluating the self in the context of another: The three-selves model of social comparison assimilation and contrast. In *Cognitive social psychology: The Princeton symposium on the legacy and future of social cognition* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum: 2001.
4. Büyüköztürk Ş, Kılıç Çakmak E, Akgün, Ö.E, Karadeniz, Ş, Demirel F. *Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemleri*. Ankara: Pegem Akademi Yayınları, 2012.
5. Çakmak Z, Kara H. Yöneticilerde benlik algılamalarının belirlenmesi: sanayi örgütlerinde bir araştırma. *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 2011; 30: 301-310.
6. Demirel M. Investigating guilt and shame situations of secondary school students according to participation in sport activities and different variables. *International Journal of Academic Research Part B*, 2013; 5(2): 259-263.
7. Er G, Çamlıyer H, Çamlıyer H, Çobanoğlu G, Er N. Çocuk ve ergenlerde spor etkinliklerinin davranış ve sosyal gelişim üzerine etkileri. *Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bilimleri Dergisi*, 1999; 3(3): 29-38.
8. Erözkan A. Lise Öğrencilerinin sosyal karşılaştırma ve depresyon düzeylerinin bazı değişkenlere göre incelenmesi. *Muğla Üniversitesi SBE Dergisi*, 2004; 13: 1-18.
9. Kılbaş Ş. *Rekreasyon Boş Zamanları Değerlendirme*. Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi, 2010.
10. Öksüz E, Malhan S. Sosyal karşılaştırma ölçeğinin güvenilirlik ve geçerlilik analizi. 6. Ulusal Aile Hekimliği Kongresi, Bursa, 2004.
11. Savaşır I, Şahin NH. *Bilişsel Davranışçı Terapilerde Değerlendirme: Sık Kullanılan Ölçekler*. Ankara: Türk Psikologlar Derneği Yayınları, 1997.
12. Sayiner B, Savasan E, Sözen D, Köknel Ö. Yükseköğretim gençliğinin benlik algısının çeşitli değişkenlere göre incelenmesi: İstanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi örneği. *İstanbul Ticaret Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*. 2007; 11(2): 253-265.
13. Slutzky CB, Simpkins SA. The link between children's sport participation and self-esteem: exploring the mediating role of sport self-concept. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 2009; 10: 381-389.
14. Suls J, Martin R, Wheeler L. Social comparison: why, with whom, and with what effect? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 2002; 159-163.
15. Şahin NH, Şahin N. Adolescent guilt, shame and depression in relation to sociotropy and autonomy. *The World Congress of Cognitive Therapy*, Toronto, 1992.
16. Taylor SE, Lobel M. Social comparison activity under threat: downward evaluation and upward contacts. *Psychological Review*, 1989; 96(4): 569-575.
17. Wood JV, Giordano-Beech M, Taylor KL, Michela JL, Gaus V. Strategies, of social comparison among people with low-self-esteem: Self-protection and self-enhancement. *Journal Personality and Social Psychology*, 1994; 67, 713-731.