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The Study of the Relationship between Individual Perception of Loneliness and Socialization with Recreational Activities: A Research on University Students¹

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Abstract

Recreational activity is an important means of socialization, as well as providing psychological relief in order to achieve socialization and to overcome loneliness. Accordingly, the aim of the study is to analyze the relationship between the perception of loneliness and socialization with recreational activities. Another aim of this study is to analyze whether there is a statistically significant difference between the demographic variables and the sense of loneliness of the individuals. In this context, relations between variables were tested using the data based on the questionnaire applied to university students studying at state universities in Konya and the theoretical hypotheses were tested. In addition, in the analysis of the research, descriptive statistics, difference tests were used to determine the difference between demographic variables and loneliness perception and correlation analysis was used to determine the relation between loneliness variable and the variable of socialization with recreational activities. As a result of the analyses, it was detected that there was a positive and meaningful relationship between loneliness perception and the variable of socialization with recreational activities. In this respect, as mentioned in the findings, it was determined that the individuals who have perceptions of loneliness are trying to increase their level of socialization by participating in recreational activities.

Keywords: Perception of Loneliness, Recreational Activities, Socialization, Communication, Individual

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Introduction

With the increase in the technological developments, the time that the individuals allocate to themselves and to their environments decreases, which isolate the individuals from themselves and from the society they live in (Ekinçi et al., 2015: 72). Today, the over-use of technology that the individuals are exposed to in their daily lives, subjected the individuals to various negativities that originated from the existence in loneliness and virtual reality. That is why in their spare times, individuals tend to predominantly socialization experiences that have high level of interaction between individuals (Argan et al., 2013: 3).

It is always mentioned that individuals, who comprise the community, inherently tend to stay together. It is known that the individuals who are not being together with others, generally experience negative emotions, particularly loneliness. In terms of coping with loneliness and providing socializing, recreative activities not only help relief in natural environment but also are important means of providing socialization (Uzuner and Karagün, 2014: 111).

Socialization level is enhanced with participation in various group activities in social life. The leading of these are recreative applications. Individual increases the social perception or socialization level with recreation applications, thus participate in the life more actively. Recreative applications help improve self-confidence, self-realization, and self-esteem. With the help of this improvement, the individual obtains a better position in the social life. At this point, recreative applications make great contributions to individuals for social integration (Atalay, Akbulut and Yücel, 2013: 18).

In this study, it is aimed to examine relationship between individual perception of loneliness and socialization with recreational activities. Accordingly, literature review is made in the first phase, in which similar studies conducted before were analyzed. The data was collected by using “UCLA Loneliness Perception Scale” and “Socialization Scale in Recreational Activities”. The data obtained was statistically analyzed according to the aim of the study and the results were taken.

Literature Review

Loneliness

Loneliness is defined as the unfavorable subjective psychological situation which originates from the discrepancy between the existing social relations and desired social relations (Perlman and Peplau, 1984:15). Although loneliness is evaluated as the synonym of “being alone”, it doesn’t mean the same. The individual may feel alone while there is none around, but he/she can feel alone within the crowds or within other people as well (Buchholz and Catton, 1999: 204).

Loneliness is a sense that can affect the whole life of an individual. It can cause the person to feel lonely, to think that the life is aimless and useless, and to experience the emotion of emptiness and abandonment. This emotion can affect their life perception and life satisfaction. Thus, the loneliness emotion of the individuals can be correlated with the satisfaction that they get from life, in other words life satisfaction (Yılmaz and Altınok, 2009: 456).

Loneliness is the cognitive and emotional compulsion situation which originates from the interaction of individual and outer environmental factors, and which hurts and frustrates people, kills their hopes. For instance; individually lack of self-perceiving, self-awareness, and self-esteem; environmentally effects of factors such as losing a relative, divorce,

migration, social stress, uncertainty, chaos, and lack of social interaction and communication etc. and many other factors mutually stimulate each other and drag individual to alienation and loneliness. On the other hand, interaction and communication is a phenomenon that connects the person to life, socializing and building the individual. From this point of view, loneliness is the imprisonment in oneself, while interaction and communication is the basic activity which frees the person from imprisonment, brings one into being, and enriches the person (Armağan, 2014: 28).

Recreation and Socialization

According to Neumeyer (1958), in general terms, recreation is defined as any kind of activity that is performed individually or collectively in spare times for enjoyment and satisfaction, and that is freely decided among alternatives by the individuals. According to Torkildsen's (2005) definition, recreation is the volunteered activity or experience that the individuals participate and freely decide among alternatives in their spare times in order for satisfying desires and wishes (Argan et al., 2013: 18).

Recreation is generally defined as the voluntarily chosen individual or group activities, which are in spare time not related with the time allocated for work or obligatory needs, and which are aimed to get pleasure and delight to recover, protect and maintain mental and physical health that is affected or endangered by the intense work burden, routine life style, or negative environmental factors (Karaküçük, 1997: 54).

Çelik (1996) defines socialization as the process of learning and adoption of a doing, perceiving, and thinking styles of a certain society at the end of mutual interaction of a person with other people. For Kenyon and Pherson (1974) socialization is assimilation and development of knowledge, skill, value, tendency, and personality perceptions that are necessary for fulfilling existing or expected duties in the society (Atalay, Akbulut and Yücel, 2013: 20).

Healthy socialization has numerous positive effects on the individual. Ultimately, self-confidence, and rules and values system of an individual develops. Socialization also helps understanding and tolerance towards others. Socialization helps social integration realized (Coşgun, 2012: 5).

Human beings inherently created with social features. They do not only meet their basic physiologic needs in their relations with each other. They meet their social needs such as participation, adoption, and intimacy as well. Socialization is a long process. Recreation activities are a service process for socialization. Particularly the habits adopted in the spare times affect the whole life. With socialization process, the individual learns the role expectaitons of the society that he/she lives in (Ağduman, 2014: 10).

Recreation activities have an important place in one's socialization because they provide participation of the individual to the dynamic social environments. All of the human beings are socialized by participating in plays, sports, and other activities in the childhood. All kinds of recreation activities form a social experience (Doğduay and Yenigün, 2012: 1014). Especially as a result of economic development, reduction of working hours, and increase of family income, people found more chance to take part in various leisure time activities to fulfill their social needs (Türkmen, 2013: 2141).

Method

The aim of this research is to examine the relationship between individual perception of loneliness and socialization with recreational activities. Additionally, another aim of this study is to analyze whether there is a statistically significant difference between the demographic variables and the sense of loneliness of the individuals.

The universe of the research is composed of the students who are studying in state universities in Konya province. Sample group is comprised of 371 students studying at Necmettin Erbakan University Faculty of Tourism, Recreation Department and Selçuk University Faculty of Sport Sciences, Recreation Department. The research was conducted with convenience sampling method, which is one of the non-probability sampling methods, due to the time limitation, cost, and difficulty in reaching to all of the members of the research universe. 372 students participated in the survey, 6 of which were excluded from the evaluation due to missing information or mistakes. Accordingly, the analyses are conducted on 366 questionnaire forms.

The questionnaire form used in the research consisted of two sections. The first section of the survey is comprised of the questions to determine the demographic features of the participants. “*UCLA Loneliness Perception Scale*” that was adapted to Turkish by Durak and Şenol-Durak (2010), and “*Socialization Scale in Recreational Activities*” which was developed by Şahan (2007) were used in the second section. The questionnaire forms in this section are comprised of 44 questions. The articles in the questionnaire form were evaluated by the five point Likert scale such as “Strongly Disagree (1)”, “Disagree (2)”, “Undecided(3)”, “Agree (4)”, “Strongly Agree (5)”.

SPSS 22.0 program was used in the data analysis. The difference between the loneliness perception levels of the participants was observed with independent variables T-Test analysis according to the gender, age difference, and the university variables; while the difference between the loneliness perception levels of the participants was observed with one-way ANOVA analysis. In order to measure the relation and the direction of the relation, between the loneliness perception variable and socialization with recreational activities variable, correlation and regression analyses were used respectively.

Findings

In the analyses, firstly the distributions of the participants based on socio-demographic features were evaluated with frequency analysis. Demographic data regarding gender, age, educational status of parents, and the universities that the students are studying was shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Features of the Participants

Demographic Variables	Value	Frequency	Percentage	Demographic Variables	Value	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	224	61,2	Education Status (Father)	Primary	133	36,3
	Female	141	38,5		Secondary	87	23,8
					High School	103	28,1
	Lost Value	1	0,3		University	40	10,9
	Total	366	100		Lost Value	3	0,8
				Total	366	100	
Age	16-20	224	61,2	Education Status (Mother)	Primary	144	39,3
	21-25	142	38,8		Secondary	78	21,3
					High School	49	13,4
	Total	366	100		University	12	3,3
					Lost Value	83	22,7
			Total	366	100		
University	Necmettin Erbakan University	187	51,1	University	Selçuk University	179	48,9
				Total	366	100	

When Table 1 is examined it is seen that 61,2 % of the participants are male while female participants account for 38,5 %. Moreover, 61,2 % of them are in between 16-20 ages, while 38,8 % of them are in between 21-25 ages. On the other hand, when the universities that the participants were studying at are examined, it is seen that 51,1 % of them are students at Necmettin Erbakan University, while Selçuk university students account for 48,9 %. When the educational status of the parents of the participants are examined, it is determined that 36,3 % of the fathers are graduate of primary school, 23,8 % secondary school, 28,1 % high school, and 10,9 % university; while 39,3 % of the mothers are graduate of primary school, 21,3 % secondary school, 13,4 % high school, and 3,3 % university.

Both “*Loneliness Perception Scale (Cronbach’s Alpha; $\alpha=,797$)*” and “*Socialization Scale in Recreational Activities (Cronbach’s Alpha; $\alpha=,888$)*” scales were determined to be quite reliable according to the results of reliability analysis.

When the results of the T-Test and ANOVA analysis regarding the difference between loneliness perceptions based on the demographic features of the (gender, age, educational status of parents, university studied at) participants are analyzed, it is determined that there was no statistically significant difference between the perception levels of the participants regarding “Loneliness Perception”.

Table 2. Results of Correlation Analysis

		Loneliness Perception	Socialization with Recreational Activities
Loneliness Perception	Pearson Correlation	1	,393**
	Significance (Sig.)		,000
	N	366	366
Socialization with Recreational Activities	Pearson Correlation	,393**	1
	Significance (Sig.)	,000	
	N	366	366

**Correlation is significant in 0.01 level.

At the end of the correlation analysis, when the Table 2 is examined, it is observed that there is a positive and 0,393 significant relation between loneliness perception variable and socialization with recreational activities variable.

Table 3. Results of Regression Analysis

Model	F value	Significance p value	R ²	Standardized Factor(Beta)	t statistics	Significance p value
Summary	66,634	,000	,155			
Loneliness Perception				,393	8,163	,000

Dependent Variable: Socialization with Recreational Activities.

The most important figure that should be interpreted on Table 3 is the F=66,634 value, which shows the significance of the model, and p=0,000 value which shows the significance level of this value. The findings obtained at the research are supporting that the model is statistically significant. The explanatory power of the established regression model is R²=,155. According to this result, 95 % change in the dependent variable is explained with the independent variable that was included into the model. With other words, 95 % part of the change in socialization with recreational activities is explained with the changes in loneliness perception. As seen on Table 3 are the imputed values of the factors (β =.393) obtained from regression analysis, and t value (t=8,163) regarding these. At the end of the research, it was determined that the loneliness perception of the individuals have a positive (β =.393) and significant (p=0,000) effect on the socialization with recreational activities variable. In this context, we can mention that the individuals with a perception of loneliness increase their socialization levels by participating in recreational activities and try to be free from the loneliness perception.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this research, which aimed to examine the relation between loneliness perception and socialization with recreational activities, it was determined that the individual tries to socialize with recreational activities in order to be free from loneliness perception she/he suffers. Additionally, it was determined that there is no statistically significant result between socio-demographic features of the participants and loneliness perception.

It was determined that there is no statistically significant difference between socio-demographic features (gender, age, educational status of the parents, and the universities of the students) of the participant students and their loneliness perception. Similarly, in the study of Uzuner and Karagün (2014) it was determined that there was no statistically significant difference between gender, age and loneliness perception. Moreover, in the study of Karademir and Öz (2016) it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between age and loneliness perception, while there was a statistically significant difference between gender and loneliness perception. In this study it was observed that female students have more loneliness perception compared to male students. In spite of that it was determined that the male students have more loneliness perception compared to female students in Armağan (2014).

When the socio-demographic findings are examined, as shown by the results of similar studies, it was determined that some variables pertaining to demographic structure do not have any effect on loneliness perception, rather it rises as the result of one's own values. In this research, no statistically significant result was obtained depending on socio-demographic variables close to the results of the previous similar researches. Accordingly, in further studies, identity, personality, and character features, which differentiate individuals from others, can be studied in order to reach a significant difference or relation with loneliness perception rather than variables in socio-demographic structure of the individual.

In the studies conducted by Atalay et al. (2013), it was determined that the individual increases the socialization level with recreational activities and thus continues to her/his life more social and free of loneliness perception in social life. In the study conducted by Ekinci et al. (2015), it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between loneliness perception and participation in recreational activities, and this result is evaluated that recreative activities help individual socialize and this factor naturally contributes individuals to not feel lonely. Similar results were reached in this study. It was determined that the individuals get free from loneliness perception they suffer by tending towards recreational activities. In the light of this information, it is thought that recreative applications help improve self-confidence, self-realization, and self-esteem, thus the individual obtains a better position in the social life, and they make great contributions to individuals for social integration.

As the conclusion, in line with the aim of the research, it was examined whether there was a statistically significant relation between loneliness perception and socialization with recreational activities. At the end of the analyses conducted, it was determined that there was a statistically significant relation between loneliness perception and socialization with recreational activities. It was observed that recreational activities have a decreasing effect on the loneliness perception and that individuals with perception of loneliness increase their socialization levels by participating in recreational activities and try to be free from the loneliness perception.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to acknowledge.

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