

Examination of Constant Anxiety Statuses of Prisoners Who Attend Recreational Activities¹

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Abstract

This study was carried out to determine the constant anxiety levels of prisoners who attend recreational activities with regards to certain variables. The study was carried out using the general survey model, and the sample comprised 256 volunteer prisoners selected by simple randomization method, who were subject to supervised release in the province of Gaziantep. The trait anxiety inventory was used in the study. When analyzing the data, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used for data compatibility, followed by Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal-Wallis H test, and for paired comparison of the groups with a significant difference, Bonferroni correction tests were used. As a result of the study, it was observed that the anxiety statuses of the prisoners in the sample demonstrated differences throughout the period of attendance at recreational activities in terms of the mean rank scores by independent variables. The anxiety status of the prisoners who are single, non-smokers, aged 39 or above, with an earning higher than the minimum wage, and a sentence duration of 3-4 years during their attendance at the activities was observed to be higher than those of the prisoners in the other groups. Additionally, it was determined that there were no statistically significant difference the prisoners' marital status, education and sentence duration variables in terms of constant anxiety status, whereas there was a significant difference in smoking status, age and wage level variables.

Keywords: Anxiety, Leisure Time, Constant Anxiety, Competition, Prisoner, Recreation.

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Introduction

Feelings such as anger, worry, fear, pleasure and love are basic feelings that are accepted by the entire society (Goleman, 2011). One of these basic feelings, fear, has an aspect that cannot be attached to a certain cause, which is anxiety (Özel, 2012).

In a broader sense, anxiety is a reactionary emotion existing in human nature against environmental and psychological events. More specifically, it can be defined as a mental state felt consciously although its cause and the onset are not intentional, accompanied by physiological changes such as sweating and paleness. Anxiety is the state of worry and stress about the future. Waiting for an unknown and incomprehensible danger may create anxiety in somebody, in the form of restlessness and stress (Yavuz, 2002).

Anxiety, a normal feeling experienced by almost everyone in daily life, is a state of mind with varying levels from mild worry to panic, and may cause psychological disorders when it deviates from its normal course (Atkinson, 1995).

In this context, anxiety, which is a process of internal and external events that occur unexpectedly and uncontrollably, is classified into two types; situational and constant anxiety. Situational anxiety is the individual's fear in distressed situations that they are experiencing, and is the indicator of the individual's feelings such as stress and restlessness. A constant state of anxiety is the addiction of the individual to anxiety experience (Aral, 1997). It refers to a state of anxiety which does not emerge in a certain situation or time, but which is relatively constant. Individuals with this type of anxiety can be anxious at any time and situation (Terzioğlu, et al., 2013).

The feelings of anxiety may vary between individuals. However, there are some generally accepted approaches. A significant cause of anxiety is the fear of being unsuccessful. The feeling of anxiety may be experienced differently by successful and unsuccessful athletes. It is said that post-competition anxiety is higher in unsuccessful athletes (Budak, 2000). Anxiety can adversely affect the decision-making capabilities of athletes. As the anxiety level increases, an athlete may have difficulty in making the right decisions and demonstrating their skills. Extreme anxiety felt during the times of competition may make the athletes forget some moves they are quite familiar with, and have practiced many times, and may also confuse them, causing them to make the wrong moves (Gümüş, 2002). High levels of anxiety adversely affect athletes' performance (Gould and Krane, 1992). In that regard, it is stated that athletes may have to perform in the state of anxiety they have been experiencing at the beginning of the competition (Akarçeşme, 2004).

Prisons are places where persons arrested or sentenced are confined throughout the duration of their sentence. Prisoners in prisons have to live with strangers like them who committed crime, with varying education levels, socio-economic statuses and cultural values, isolated from society (Özkaya and Ali, 2002). The feeling of social restriction and supervision, exaggerated interpretation of the emotional feedback associated with stress or shame, and increased worry about what people would think and the fear of being judged (Gümüş, 2010) are the well-known social concerns at prisons (Özel, 2012). In this context, it is important to know the causes and levels of anxiety for athlete prisoners who are interested in recreational sports events to cope with anxiety (Başaran et al., 2009). Many top performing athletes owe their capabilities not only to their physical and physiological capacities, but also to their psychological characteristics, and athletes who use their psychological properties have been

observed to have the skills of preparing themselves for competitions psychologically, getting motivated, managing their anxiety and setting goals (Koç, 2004).

In light of this information, the main question for this study is to try to determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in constant anxiety levels of prisoners attending recreational sports activities in terms of the independent variables of marital status, smoking status age level of income and sentence duration.

Materials and Methods

The study population consisted of prisoners under supervised release in the province of Gaziantep (SODES, 2017), and the sample was composed of 256 volunteer prisoners selected by simple randomization method from this population. According to Arli and Nazik (2001), in descriptive studies, the number that should be reached in small populations needs to be 20%. Therefore, the sample size can be said to be representing the population.

‘General Survey Model’, one of the descriptive survey methods, was used in the study. The Trait section of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory developed by Spielberger et al. (1970) and adapted to Turkish by Öner and LeCompte (1983) was used to collect the data necessary for the study. Alpha reliability coefficient of the inventory was calculated as 0.94. Alpha reliability coefficient was specified as 0.71 for this study. The fact that Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient is above 0.70 shows that the inventory is reliable (Arseven, 2001). Compatibility of the data collected with the normal distribution was determined by using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The result obtained showed that the variables are not distributed normally, and non-parametric Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal-Wallis H Test were used in our study. In the paired comparison of the groups detected to have a significant difference as a result of the Kruskal-Wallis H test, Bonferroni correction, a multiple comparison test, was used. The statistical significance level was accepted as Alpha (α), and the margin of error was accepted as $p < .05$.

Results

This section contains the data obtained from prisoners who participated in the study, and the statistical findings related to these data.

Table 1.The Constant Anxiety Statuses of Prisoners with Regards to the Marital Status Variable

Marital Status	N	%	Mean Rank	U	Z	P
Married	168	65.6	125.58	6,902,000	-.872	.383
Single	80	34.4	134.07			
Total	256	100				

It was determined that there is not a significant difference in the perception of constant anxiety of married and single prisoners ($p > 0.05$). Given the mean rank scores of the participants, it is plausible to say that single prisoners feel more constant anxiety in recreational activities as compared to married prisoners.

Table 2.Constant Anxiety Statuses of Prisoners with Regards to the Smoking Status Variable

Smoking	N	%	Mean Rank	U	Z	P
Yes	214	83.6	124.42	3,621,500	-1.991	.046
No	42	16.4	149.27			
Total	256	100				

As a result of the non-parametric Mann Whitney-U test carried out to determine whether the trait anxiety inventory scores of prisoners differ significantly with respect to the smoking variable, a statistically significant difference at the level of $p < 0.05$ was detected in favor of the non-smoker prisoners.

Table 3.Constant Anxiety Statuses of Prisoners with Regards to the Age Variable

Age	N	%	Mean Rank	X ²	sd	P
a) 18-24	40	15.6	134.8	8.387	3	.039
b) 25-31	85	33.2	133.58			
c) 32-38	91	35.5	111.91			<i>Bonferroni</i>
d) 39 and above	40	15.6	149.14			d-c
Total	256	100				

As a result of the Kruskal Wallis-H test carried out to determine whether the mean ranks of constant anxiety differ significantly with respect to age variable, the difference between the age groups of prisoners was found to be statistically significant ($x^2=8.387$; $sd=3$; .05). After the Bonferroni correction test used in paired comparison of the dimension with significant difference, the difference was found to be between the age group 32-38, and the age group 39 and above, in favor of the age group 39 and above ($U=1271.500$; $z=-2.745$; .008).

Table 4.Constant Anxiety Statuses of Prisoners with Regards to the Level of Income

Level of Income	N	%	Mean Rank	X ²	sd	P
a) Unemployed	148	57.8	118.45	23.060	2	.000
b) Minimum wage	69	27	120.49			
c) Over minimum wage	39	15.2	180.81			<i>Bonferroni</i>
Total	256	100				c-a/c-b

As a result of the Kruskal Wallis-H test carried out to determine whether mean ranks of constant anxiety differ significantly with respect to level of income variable, the difference between the income groups of prisoners was found to be statistically significant ($x^2=23.060$; $sd=2$; .05). After the Bonferroni correction, which is used in the paired comparison of groups with significant difference, the difference was found to be between the income group over the minimum wage level and the income group at the minimum wage level ($U=1531.000$; $z=-4.511$; .01), and the unemployed group ($U=660.500$; $z=-4.388$; .01), in favor of the income group over the minimum wage level.

Table 5.The Constant Anxiety Statuses of Prisoners with Regards to the Sentence Duration Variable

Sentence Duration	N	%	Mean Rank	X ²	sd	P
1-2 years	150	58.6	129.55	1.755	2	.416
3-4 years	54	21.6	136.15			
5 years and above	52	20.3	117.52			
Total	256	100				

It was determined that there was not a significant difference in the perception of constant anxiety of prisoners with respect to sentence duration variable ($p > 0.05$). Given the mean rank scores of participants, it is plausible to say that prisoners sentenced to 3 to 4 years feel more constant anxiety in recreational activities as compared to other prisoners.

Discussion and Conclusion

Although the anxiety statuses of prisoners who attend recreational sports activities during their attendance demonstrate differences in terms of mean ranks by independent variables, the fact that such negative perception was formed among the participants was determined based on mean statistical rank scores. Therefore, it can be said that the participants have concerns of failing in these activities, and as a result, not being accepted by the community. Additionally, another reason for the situational and constant anxiety values of the participants being high could be attributable to the fact that during the activity period, participants are under a high level of stress (Baştuğ, 2009). It has been said that the social support gained by recreational sports activities have a significant effect on physical health, and physical health has a significant effect on anxiety that may occur (Paukert et al., 2010). The literature contains studies that demonstrate that anxiety increases before and during competitions (Gould and Krane, 1992; Jones and Cale, 1991).

It was determined that there is not a significant difference in the perception of constant anxiety of married and single prisoners. Given the mean rank scores of the participants, it is plausible to say that single prisoners feel more constant anxiety in recreational activities as compared to married prisoners. Literature reviews show study results which indicate both that single prisoners feel more state of anxiety than others (Demir, 1998), and that married prisoners feel more constant anxiety than the single ones (Özel, 2012). There are also study results indicating both that there is not a statistically significant difference in the constant anxiety statuses with respect to marital status (Demir, 1998), and that there is a significant difference (Özel, 2012).

In the study, a statistically significant difference was detected in constant anxiety with respect to prisoners' smoking or non-smoking status. It was seen in the mean rank scores that, non-smoking prisoners felt the stress during the competition more, and smoking prisoners said that they could overcome the negative pressure easily.

In the study, a statistically significant difference was found in the mean ranks of prisoners with respect to age group variable. This finding can be interpreted as such that older prisoners feel more anxiety during recreational sports activities than the younger ones. Because achieving something, being successful, being appraised by friends and even being accepted by society can be important for the prisoners of this age group. In their related study, Başaran et al. (2009) state that anxiety scores of participants with a lower sports age are higher than the ones with a higher sports age. In his/her study carried out on football players, Koç (2004)

stated that as the age of the participants increases, they are affected by the factors increasing their anxiety levels less, and they are more in control of their feelings. Additionally, some studies carried out on different participant groups indicate that there is not a significant difference in the anxiety levels of athletes with respect to age group before or during the competition (Bingöl et al., 2012; Erbaş, 2005; Yücel, 2003, Erenler, 2007). However, there are also results which state that there is a significant difference in the anxiety level with respect to age (Coşkun, 1998, Fidanoğlu, 2006).

In the study, a statistically significant difference was found in the mean ranks of prisoners with respect to the income group variable. The significant difference was found to be between the income group with an income level higher than minimum wage, and the income groups at the level of minimum wage, and unemployed prisoners, and it was determined that the constant anxiety level was higher in favor of the income group with an income level higher than minimum wage. The studies in the literature contain results indicating that the anxiety felt increases as the economic level decreases (Canbaz, 2001; Kaya and Kübra, 2004), whereas the anxiety level decreases as the economic level increases (Coşkun, 1998; Yıldız, 2007). There are also studies suggesting that anxiety level increases as the economic level increases (Özel, 2012). Similarly, some studies state that there is not a statistically significant difference between the income level and the level of constant anxiety (Çakmak and Murat, 2005; Özel, 2012).

It was determined that there is not a significant difference in the perception of constant anxiety of prisoners in the sample with respect to the sentence duration variable. Given the mean rank scores of participants in the sample, it is plausible to say that prisoners sentenced to 3 to 4 years feel more constant anxiety in recreational sports activities as compared to other prisoners. On the other hand, in their study, Durak and Faruk (2010) observed that the stress and anxiety associated with prison is higher in prisoners who have recently been imprisoned as compared to prisoners who have been in prison for longer periods. In another study conducted on the athletes of team sports found out that there was no significant difference between anxiety levels of the athletes in terms of gender variable (Turkmen et al., 2013). As the present study didn't include gender as a variable, future studies should also be conducted using gender as a research variable.

In conclusion, it has been determined that the anxiety status of the prisoners exhibited differences by the mean rank scores with respect to independent variables. The data obtained show that prisoners who are single, who do not smoke, who are at the age of 39 or above, who are primary school graduates, whose income is higher than the minimum wage, and who have a sentence duration of 3-4 years feel more constant anxiety when attending to recreational sports activities.

Recommendations

Prisoners attending recreational sports activities might feel a great deal of stress accompanied by anxiety during an event. In this context, authorities organizing these events should convey messages to prisoners stating that both winning and losing are normal outcomes, and instead of creating result-oriented expectations, they should design programs to keep the prisoners away from negative moods. The concerned persons should design programs to help the prisoners develop their psychological skills, and to acquire these skills.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors have not declared any conflicts of interest.

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