

Original Article

Levels of approaching and avoiding emotional situations of the students studying in the faculties of sport sciences

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Abstract:

Objective: The present study has the purpose of determining the levels of approaching and avoidance of the students studying in the faculties of Sports Sciences in universities to emotional situations. The population of the study comprises 405 people studying in the Faculties of Sports Sciences in various universities, 155 of which is female and 250 male. *Methods:* The study group was determined using the random cluster sampling method. In the study, the “Need for Affect Scale” was employed. *Results:* Of the students of the faculties of sports sciences taking part in the study, the average score for approaching the environments involving emotion was found to be positive with $x=+8.70$, and the average score for avoiding was found to be negative with $x=-4.18$. Accordingly, it was determined that the students’ motivation for approaching the environments involving emotions was slightly higher than the medium level, and their avoidance level was slightly lower than the medium level ($p<0.05$). While a significant differences were determined between the students’ levels of approaching and avoiding emotions depending on the universities they study in, it was found out that the female students’ levels of approaching the environments involving emotions were significantly higher than those of the male students ($p<0.05$). When the total scores were examined, it was found out that the female students’ total scores were higher than those of the male students ($p<0.05$). *Conclusions:* Consequently, it was determined that the motivation of the students studying in the faculties of Sports Sciences for approaching the environments involving emotions was slightly higher than the medium level and their avoidance level was slightly lower than the medium, and that this results were affected by the city they live in, as well as by their gender.

Keywords: Need for Affect, exercise, physical education, students

Introduction

The data from the U.S. National Health Center suggests that 67 % of the human deaths and basic health problems such as diseases involve heart conditions, cancers and paralyses, that a great deal of these result from lifestyles, and that the situation in Turkey is similar as well (Dogan, 2006). While studies have shown that exercise, a healthy lifestyle, balanced nutrition and coping with stress could prevent many health problems (Cheng & Lam, 1997; Jampol, 1989), irregular and uncontrolled lifestyle has been associated with a number of physical and psychological disorders such as depression and an increase in the anxiety levels (Epstein et al., 2002; Degges-White et al., 2003). Exercise and physical activity are able to affect the psychological status and personality development of people. Participation in physical activity and sports allows people to get out of their limited world to enter into different environments and dialogues. It has also been suggested that the personality development could be supported by means of sports (Salar et al., 2012). The physical health and wellbeing of individuals are considered to be closely associated with their lifestyles. By means of suitable training programs which will raise awareness on the issue, individuals can be directed to prefer health lifestyles that would improve their wellbeing. Small changes people make in their lifestyles can affect them positively in emotional terms (Ardeli, 2001; Sweeney & Witmer, 1991; Myers et al., 2000). While trying to keep up with the rapid changes and development in today’s fast-paced world, people most of the time ignores their own psychological state. Universities, which are the institutions where the young people who are supposed to govern the people in the future are trained and educated, are also environments creating stress and anxiety themselves. Thus, university students need to have the knowledge and skills to improve their own psychological states in the first place. Research has shown that various training programs implemented in this period are effective (Burkett et al., 2002). As well as improving the social structure of the individuals, various exercise activities can also create difference between the individuals who are interested in sports and the ones who are not in terms of social inclusion (Salokun, 1990). After it was found out that the psychological factors in the sports and exercise environment had an effect on the performance, the studies conducted in this field have accelerated. Especially the emotional state of the individuals doing sports and the behaviors they demonstrate depending on this have

been the focus of interest for the researchers in the field of sports and exercise psychology in recent years (Jackson et al., 2001; Barzouka et al., 2015; Carlos et al., 2015).

The present study has the purpose of finding out the levels of approaching and avoiding emotional situations among the students studying in the Faculties of Sports Sciences in universities and doing sports, and determining whether various variables such as the branch of sports, the university department and the family affect this situation.

Material & Methods

Study Group

The study was initiated after obtaining the required permissions from the Ethical Council of the University of Usak. The population of the study comprised the university students studying in various departments of various Faculties of Sports Sciences. The study was conducted in accordance with the general scanning method. The random cluster sampling method was employed. While the dependent variable of the study was determined to be the levels of emotional state involving approaching and avoiding emotional situations, the independent variables were determined to be the demographical characteristics. The data collection group of the study comprises the university students studying in the departments of coaching, teaching and sports management in the provinces of Ankara, Konya, Usak, Burdur, Mugla and Adana. Of the 405 students participating in the study, 155 (38.27 %) were female and 250 (61.73 %) were male, and 62 (15.31 %) were from Ankara University, 65 (16.05 %) from Selcuk University, 68 (16.79 %) from the University of Usak, 75 (18.52 %) from Mehmet Akif Ersoy University, 67 (16.54 %) from Cukurova University, and 68 (16.79 %) from the University of Mugla. In order to collect the study data, the students in the previously determined sample group were informed about the times when the scales would be applied. The “Emotional State Scale” was applied on this declared times. Before the application, instructions about the scales were read to the participants, they were informed about the application, and any questions from the students about the application were answered. By means of this application, answer was sought for the question whether the students’ levels of motivation for approaching and avoiding the environments involving emotions vary depending on the variables of the university they study in, the department they study in, their genders, the sports branch they perform and the city they live in.

Need for Affect Scale

Being developed by Maio and Esses (2001) in order to measure the emotional needs of people, the ‘Need for Affect Scale’ is a self-report instrument evaluating the motivation of individuals for approaching and avoiding the environments involving emotions. While the scale included 29 entries in the early applications of the study, the researchers omitted the three entries in the last part of the study since they were found to be demonstrating a low internal consistency. The scale included a total of 26 entries, 13 being in its sub-dimension ‘approaching emotions’ and 13 being in the sub-dimension of ‘avoiding emotions’. The Need for Affect Scale is a multidimensional scale composed of 26 entries reflecting approaching and avoiding emotions. The 2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 13th, 15th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 24th and 26th entries of the scale belong to the sub-dimension ‘approaching’, while the 1st, 3rd, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 14th, 16th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd and 25th entries belong to the sub-dimension ‘avoidance’. The participants are requested to state their opinion about the expression stated in the entry by means of the seven-point response ranging from ‘-3’ (strongly disagree) to ‘+3’ (strongly agree). Thus, the scores that possibly can be made in each sub-dimension ranges between -39 and +39. The higher scores obtained in the scale mean that the participant in question has a higher motivation for approaching emotions and the lower points mean lower motivation for approaching emotions. Adaptation of the scale to Turkish was carried out by Duyan *et al.* (2011) its Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient concerning the ‘Approaching’ sub-dimension for which the result of validity and reliability obtained was found to be 0.82; and its Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient concerning the ‘Avoidance’ sub-dimension was found to be 0.84.

Statistical Analysis

The data obtained at the end of the study was analyzed by means of the SPSS 13.0 statistical program. The frequency test was used in determining the demographical characteristics of the individuals taking part in the study; while arithmetic mean was employed in order to determine their levels of approaching and avoiding; and the Independent Samples t-test and one-way ANOVA test were used in order to determine whether their levels of approaching and avoiding differed depending on the university and department they studied in and their gender. The level of significance was taken to be 0.05.

Results

When the demographical characteristics of the students of the Faculties of Sports Sciences taking part in the study are examined, it has been determined that 128 (31.60 %) of them studied in the department of Teaching, 168 (41.48 %) in Sports Management, and 109 (26.91 %) in Coaching. Of the participating students,

250 is male (61.73 %) and 155 (38.27) female. Of these students, 110 (%27.16) performed in the branch of soccer, 54 (%13.33) Track and Field, 24 (%5.93) Wrestling, and 39 (%9.63) in Volleyball. As to the provinces where the participant lived, 65 (%16.05) were from the province of Konya, 68 (16.79 %) from Usak, 62 (15.31 %) from Ankara, 75 (18.52 %) from Burdur, 67 (16.54 %) from Adana, and 68 (16.79 %) from Mugla (Table 1).

Table 1. The demographical characteristics of the study group

Variables	Parameters	N	%
Department	Teaching	128	31,60
	Sports Management	168	41,48
	Coaching	109	26,91
Gender	Male	250	61,73
	Female	155	38,27
Sports Branch	Soccer	110	27,16
	Track and Field	54	13,33
	Wrestling	24	5,93
	Volleyball	39	9,63
City of Residence	Konya	65	16,05
	Usak	68	16,79
	Ankara	62	15,31
	Burdur	75	18,52
	Adana	67	16,54
	Mugla	68	16,79

Among the students participating in the study, the average score for approaching the environments involving emotions was found to be positive with a value of $x=+8.70$; while the average score for avoiding such environments was found to be negative with a value of $x=-4.18$. The scores which can be taken for this scale varies between -39 and +39. Accordingly, the students' motivation for approaching the environments involving emotions is slightly above the medium level, while their level of avoiding such environments is slightly below the medium level (Table 2).

Table 2. The Group's level of approaching and avoiding the environments involving emotions

	N	Min.	Max.	M	SS
Approaching Level	405	-28	37	8,70	12,03
Avoiding Level	405	-37	33	-4,18	12,42
Total	405	-57	62	4,61	18,46

Table 3. Evaluation of the levels of approaching and avoiding the environments involving emotion based in the universities studied in

	Universities	N	M	SS	P	Difference
Approaching	Selcuk Univ.	65	9,62	12,30		
	Usak Univ.	68	9,25	12,20	0,018	3-6
	Ankara Univ.	62	5,97	11,01	0,036	4-5
	M.Akif Ersoy Univ.	75	10,12	12,80	0,001	5-6
	Cukurova Univ.	67	4,22	11,31		
	Mugla Univ.	68	12,62	10,77		
Avoiding	Selcuk Univ.	65	-3,91	13,27		
	Usak Univ.	68	-5,22	12,91		
	Ankara Univ.	62	-1,47	11,11	0,039	4-6
	M.Akif Ersoy Univ.	75	-7,07	11,16		
	Cukurova Univ.	67	-5,93	10,96		
	Mugla Univ.	68	-0,99	14,01		
Total	Selcuk Univ.	65	3,97	20,50	0,022	1-6
	Usak Univ.	68	4,03	18,00	0,021	2-6
	Ankara Univ.	62	4,35	16,31	0,036	3-6
	M.Akif Ersoy Univ.	75	2,41	18,40	0,003	4-6
	Cukurova Univ.	67	-0,79	16,72	0,000	5-6
	Mugla Univ.	68	13,78	17,81		

P<0,05

When evaluated depending on the universities the student study in, significant differences were found between the levels of approaching the environments involving emotions of the students from Ankara University and those from the University of Mugla, between the students from M. Akif Ersoy University and those from Cukurova University, between the students from Cukurova University and those from the University of Mugla ($P<0.05$). When the group averages were evaluated, it was found that the approaching scores of the students from the University of Mugla and from M. Akif Ersoy University were significantly higher than the approaching scores of the students from the Universities of Ankara and Cukurova ($P<0.05$). As for the avoidance scores, the avoidance scores of the students from M. Akif Ersoy University were found to be significantly lower than those of the students from the University of Mugla ($P<0.05$). When compared based on the total scores, the average total score of the students from the University of Mugla was found to be significantly higher than the average total scores of the students from the other universities ($P<0.05$) (Table 3).

Table 4. Evaluation of the levels of approaching and avoiding the environments involving emotions

	Gender	N	M	SS	P
Approaching	Male	250	7,57	11,63	0,016
	Female	155	10,52	12,47	
Avoidance	Male	250	-5,08	11,54	0,066
	Female	155	-2,74	13,64	
Total	Male	250	2,64	17,54	0,006
	Female	155	7,78	19,50	

$p<0,05$

In the evaluations conducted by taking the gender into account, it was found that the female students' levels of approaching the environments involving emotions were significantly higher than those of the male students ($p<0.05$). When the total scores were examined, it was determined that the female students had higher total scores comparing to male students as well ($p<0.05$) (Table 4).

Discussion and conclusions

Research suggest that people need to express their emotional life and that mutual communication has an important part in meeting this requirement (Rime & Zech, 2001; Dil & Aykanat, 2013). The average score for approaching the environment involving emotion of the students studying in the Faculties of Sports Sciences was found to be positive with a value of $x=+8.70$, while their average avoidance score was found to be negative with a value of $x=-4.18$. Accordingly, the students' motivation for approaching the environments involving emotions was slightly higher the medium level; and their motivation for avoiding such environments was slightly lower than the medium level ($p<0.05$; Table 2). During their lives, individuals embark on many different emotional quests. They tend to suppress some emotions while they want to experience some others. While approaching emotions are related to a positive emotional life, the negative emotions are associated with the motive of avoidance (Lang, 1995). Meeting their basic psychological needs allows the candidate teachers to satisfy their needs for adequacy, autonomy and connectedness, and thus allows them to express more need for affect. The general wellbeing and lower exhaustion levels of students may contribute to their stronger commitment to their tasks. Since less tension will be experienced when individuals reveal their own authentic selves in the relationship between the satisfaction of the basic psychological needs of candidate teachers and their need for affect, it is also probable that they can better focus on to the process of learning and on their students, and thus being able to better meet the needs of their students (Klassen et al., 2012). Teachers who can reveal their authentic selves can better meet psychological needs. In addition, people can be expected to better meet psychological needs and to be in the need for affect to the extent that they can reveal their authentic selves (Kapikiran, 2015). When evaluated depending on the universities the student study in, significant differences were found between the levels of approaching the environments involving emotions of the students from Ankara University and those from the University of Mugla, between the students from M. Akif Ersoy University and those from Cukurova University, between the students from Cukurova University and those from the University of Mugla ($P<0.05$). When the group averages were evaluated, it was found that the approaching scores of the students from the University of Mugla and from M. Akif Ersoy University were significantly higher than the approaching scores of the students from the Universities of Ankara and Cukurova ($P<0.05$). As for the avoidance scores, the avoidance scores of the students from M. Akif Ersoy University were found to be significantly lower than those of the students from the University of Mugla ($P<0.05$). When compared based on the total scores, the average total score of the students from the University of Mugla was found to be significantly higher than the

average total scores of the students from the other universities ($P < 0.05$). It was also determined that the female students' level of approaching the environments involving emotions were significantly higher than those of the male students ($p < 0.05$). When the total scores were examined, the female students were again found to have higher scores comparing to the male students ($p < 0.05$; Table 3, 4). The results of the previous studies also are in parallel with the data obtained from the present study, suggesting that males are more inclined to escape from emotional situations, while females are more willing to approach in such cases (Kring & Gordon, 1998). In addition, there are also studies suggesting that the emotional responds of individuals differs depending on their gender (Nolen-Hoeksema & Girgus, 1994; Fujita et al., 1991). It has been reported that excessive self-confidence affects the satisfaction from the obtained results and that the individuals with excessive self-confidence find the results they obtain less adequate and feel less satisfaction from them (McGraw et al., 2004). Studies also have reported that the ways individuals arrange their emotions also differ (Tamir et al., 2007), that the need for affect differs in each individual, and that the need for affect is as effective in explaining the behaviors and attitudes of individuals as the cognitive structures (Haddock et al., 2008).

The data obtained from the present study shows that the motivations of the students studying in the "Faculties of Sports Sciences" for approaching the environments involving emotions are slightly higher than the medium level, and their avoidance levels were found to be slightly lower than the medium level. It was determined that the city they lived, as well as their gender, also affected this situation. In the light of the results of the study, the expert researchers' training activities which raise the level of emotional awareness and psychological wellbeing among students and develop their skills for approaching emotions can be suggested. It can also be considered to conduct experimental studies with wider sample groups in which other departments of the faculties of sports sciences are also included and control groups are used and the other subjects that may be related to approaching and avoiding emotions are also addressed.

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