

Full Length Research Paper

Trait anxiety levels of university students studying at sports departments

Özgür Bostancı

Ondokuz Mayıs University, Yaşar Doğu Faculty of Sports Science, Samsun, Turkey.

Received 06 July, 2014; Accepted 3 October, 2014

The purpose of this study is to examine the trait anxiety levels of freshmen and seniors studying sports at different departments of Ondokuz Mayıs University Yaşar Doğu Faculty of Sports Sciences. A total of 270 freshmen and senior students studying at Physical Education Teaching, Coaching Education and Sport Management departments participated in the study. State-Trait Anxiety Inventory was used as the data collection tool. The trait anxiety levels of students studying at different departments were found to be high (over 41) regardless of gender. When the trait anxiety levels of freshmen and seniors were analyzed, no significant difference was found between the anxiety levels of physical education teaching students and coaching education students; while there was a statistically significant difference between the anxiety levels of sport management students ($p < 0.005$). A significant difference was found between the trait anxiety levels of sport management freshmen students and physical education teaching students ($p < 0.001$). In addition, a significant difference was found between the anxiety levels of coaching education students and physical education teaching students ($p < 0.005$). No significant difference was found between the trait anxiety levels of seniors studying at different departments. In addition, no significant difference was found between the trait anxiety levels of male and female freshmen and senior students studying at different departments ($p > 0.05$). As a result, it has been concluded that university students have anxiety in general because they think their expectations will not be met or because of the difficulties and uncertainties they encounter in their university years.

Key word: Anxiety, anxiety and sports, trait anxiety.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the number of difficulties and uncertainties people encounter in living conditions has been increasing. The difficulties in living conditions, especially the fact that there is no life guarantee, employment guarantee or health guarantee and the uncertainties in all these areas make people uneasy and anxious. A person who does not have peace and who is anxious all the time cannot be expected to be psychologically healthy, dynamic or

productive.

Anxiety is defined as "an unpleasant situation characterized with the feeling that something dangerous will happen, uneasiness, tension and fear" associated with uncertainties (Linn, 1980). Not knowing what will happen in the future is one of the main anxiety reasons for people. Knowing that something negative will happen is preferred to not knowing what will happen at all.

E-mail: bostanci@omu.edu.tr. Tel: +90 542 693 63 18

Authors agree that this article remain permanently open access under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Throughout history, one of the reasons that have made human beings think is the drive to clear away uncertainty (Cüceloğlu, 2006). Anxiety is distinguished as a characteristic autonomous system activity that involves change in the breathing rate, increase in the heart rate, growing pale, dryness of the mouth, sweating, tension in the muscles of the skeleton and shaking (Linn, 1980). The origins of anxiety go back to experiences in childhood. These experiences originate from the child's relationships with his/her parents, close friends and teachers. Anxiety develops with the presence of anxious people around him/her. During the adolescence period, the attitudes of parents and other adults affect the anxiety level (Gençkan, 1984). In addition, the reason of anxiety is "unspecified fear" (Özerkan, 2004).

Spielberger (1966) defines trait anxiety as the condition in which a person has a tendency to consider or interpret most of the situations he/she is in as stressful. Trait anxiety cannot be observed directly; however, it can be understood from the intensity and frequency of state anxiety and reactions which are detected under different conditions and at different times. According to Spielberger, state anxiety, another type of anxiety, is a state of nervousness, fear or unhappiness which is not felt under "normal" conditions, but it is felt under specific conditions when a person's individuality or interests are threatened and as soon as the threat goes away, these feelings disappear (Öner and Compte, 1985). Anxiety is a frequently experienced feeling by students in every stage of their education. Students experience these feelings mostly in exams while sports people experience them mostly in competitions.

During the period of education, most of the feelings students experience about their lessons before exams are state anxiety. Rask et Al., in their study about subjective well-being indicators in adolescents, stated that viewing school as necessary, significant and useful for a good job and good future increases life content (Rask et al., 2002). However, it is inevitable for students who are very close to graduation to feel anxious about not being able to meet their expectations about their occupation.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

A total of 270 freshmen and senior students studying at Ondokuz Mayıs University Yaşar Doğu Faculty of Sports Sciences, departments of Physical Education Teaching, Coaching Education and Sport Management participated in the study. State-Trait Anxiety Inventory was used as the data collection tool. The inventory was developed in 1964 by Spielberger et al. and it aims to evaluate the level of trait anxiety in individuals. The inventory was adapted to Turkish by Öner (1977).

Trait anxiety inventory requires students to choose one of the four options –Almost never, Sometimes, Often, Almost always–relating to how they feel while they are reading the items in the inventory. At the end of the evaluations, necessary statistical analyses were made. Scores were given to the answers and trait anxiety level scores were measured. Scores between 41 and 80

express a high level of anxiety.

Analysis of data

SPSS 19 package program was used for the statistical analysis of data. Kolmogorov-Smirnov was used to check whether the data had a normal distribution and it was found that the data did not have a normal distribution. Mann Whitney-U test was used to check whether there was difference between two groups. Kruskal Vallis test was used to check whether there was difference between three groups and paired comparisons were made by using Mann Whitney U test. Since the number of comparison was 3, the level of significance taken into consideration in each Bonferroni corrected Mann-Whitney U test was $0.05/3=0.0167$

FINDINGS

When the trait anxiety levels of freshmen and seniors were analyzed, no significant difference was found between the anxiety levels of physical education teaching students and coaching education students while a significant difference was found between the anxiety levels of sport management students ($p<0.05$) (Table 1).

The results of the comparison of trait anxiety levels of freshmen students studying at different departments showed that sport management students had the highest level of anxiety while a significant difference was found between these students and the freshmen students studying at physical education teaching department ($p<0.001$) (Table 2). In addition, a significant difference was found between the anxiety levels of sport management students and the students studying at physical education teaching department ($p<0.05$).

No significant difference was found between the trait anxiety levels of senior students studying at different departments. In addition, no significant difference was found between the trait anxiety levels of male and female freshmen and senior students studying at all three departments (Tables 3 and 4).

RESULT AND CONCLUSION

The trait anxiety levels of freshmen and senior students of Physical Education Teaching, Coaching Education and Sport Management departments were determined as high anxiety scores over 41. No significant difference was found between the trait anxiety levels of freshmen and senior students of Physical Education Teaching and Coaching Education departments ($p>0.05$); while a significant difference was found between the trait anxiety levels of freshmen and senior students of Sport Management department ($p<0.05$). Öztürk (2008), in his study conducted on the students of Celal Bayer University Department of Physical Education and Sports Teaching, found out that sophomore students had higher levels of trait anxiety than senior students. According to the results of the study, the year that the students were

Table 1. Trait anxiety levels of freshmen and senior students.

Variables		n	Average \pm S. deviation	Median (min,max)	p
Physical Education Teaching	Freshmen	62	43.08 \pm 5.20	45.50 (35, 64)	0.893
	Seniors	50	42.82 \pm 4.35	43.00 (35, 55)	
Coaching Education	Freshmen	40	45.45 \pm 6.20	44.00 (36, 69)	0.996
	Seniors	40	45.15 \pm 5.64	44.00 (36, 61)	
Sport Management	Freshmen	38	45.63 \pm 4.65	46.50 (35, 53)	0.003*
	Seniors	40	42.67 \pm 4.72	42.00 (36, 59)	

*p<0.05.

Table 2. Comparison of Trait Anxiety Levels of Freshmen Students Studying at Different Departments.

Variables		n	Average \pm S. deviation	Median (min, max)	p
Freshmen	Physical Education Teaching (1)	62	43.08 \pm 5.20	45.50 (35, 64)	3>1**
Freshmen	Coaching Education (2)	40	45.45 \pm 6.20	44.00 (36, 69)	2>1*
Freshmen	Sport Management (3)	38	45.63 \pm 4.65	46.50 (35, 53)	

**p<0.001 *p<0.05.

Table 3. Comparison of trait anxiety levels of senior students studying at different departments.

Variables		n	Average \pm S. deviation	Median (min, max)	p
Seniors	Physical Education Teaching (1)	50	42.82 \pm 4.35	43.00 (35, 55)	0.082
Seniors	Coaching Education (2)	40	45.15 \pm 5.64	44.00 (36, 61)	
Seniors	Sport Management (3)	40	42.67 \pm 4.72	42.00 (36, 59)	

Table 4. Comparison of trait anxiety levels of female and male students.

Variables	n	Average \pm S. deviation	Median (min; max)	p
Female Students	73	43.73 \pm 5.42	43.00 (35, 69)	0.511
Male Students	197	44.08 \pm 5.20	43.00 (35, 64)	

studying (second year) affected the students' trait anxiety level. This result is in parallel with the results of our study regarding the students of Sport Management department. The reasons why freshmen students of Sport Management department had higher trait anxiety levels different from senior students may be being placed in their departments after an aptitude test following a tough university exam, not being placed in a department they wanted to study, staying on their own in a different city, the uncertainties in their lives, meeting the difficulties of university life, difficulty of adaptation, their socio-economic level and

occupational anxieties that they think they will experience in the future regarding their department.

Özen et al. (2010), in their study conducted on the state and trait anxiety levels of 4850 students studying at Bursa Uludağ University, found out that the trait anxiety scores of 36.7% of the students were over 45. They stated the reasons for this result as family relationships, difficulty of the lessons, difficulty in adapting to university life, difficulty in solving problems independently, negative life experiences and their contentment about the department they are studying. In a study, Turgut et al.

(2004) conducted on 730 students studying at 11 different School of Physical Education and Sport which have departments of Sport Management and Coaching Education, it was found that 72.3 % of the students were anxious about finding a job after graduation. In his study, Özgül (2003) did not find a significant difference between the trait anxiety levels of students who did sports and who were studying at physical education department and the students who did not do sports and who were studying at different departments. The average trait anxiety level of all students was found to be 45 in this study. In their study, Taşmektepligil et al. (2009) found out that the employment expectations of students studying at the department of physical education teaching were significantly different and that the employment expectations of students decreased as their years of study increased. In our study, the highest trait anxiety level of freshmen students from different departments belonged to the students of sport management department and they were significantly different from the levels of the students studying at physical education teaching department ($p < 0.001$). In addition, a significant difference was found between the anxiety levels of the students of coaching education department and the students of physical education teaching department ($p < 0.05$). In his study, Öztürk (2008) found that the trait anxiety levels of senior students were significantly lower than those of the juniors, sophomores and freshmen. He explained this result by stating that seniors were close to graduation and thus more self-confident and that they may have a decrease in their trait anxiety levels since they were determined about their future goals. Our study did not find a significant difference between the trait anxiety levels of the students of different departments which was in parallel with Öztürk's study.

Özgül (2003) did not find a significant difference between the state anxiety scores of students studying at physical education department in terms of gender while the trait anxiety levels of female students were significantly higher. Özgül explained this situation with the difficulties female students experienced in their school life, also with the lack of confidence they felt since they were away from their families and with female students' tendency to show extreme emotional reactions such as uneasiness and showing too much sensitivity under stress. Develi (2006) did not find a significant relationship between physical education teachers' gender and trait anxiety scores in his study. Likewise, Ögüt (2004) did not find a significant difference between gender and trait anxiety total scores. There was no significant difference between gender and trait anxiety levels of sportspeople in Gündüz (1985)'s study. Vurgun (1998)'s study did not show any significant difference in terms of gender and trait anxiety levels of male and female athletes. In addition, trait anxiety scores of female students were lower than those of male students. In our study, no significant difference was found between trait anxiety levels of male and female students from different

departments. Our results are in parallel with Vurgun's results. Trait anxiety levels of female students are lower than those of male students in our study.

As a result, it has been concluded that university students studying sports are anxious since they think that their expectations will not be met or their anxiety results from the difficulties and uncertainties they encounter at school.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

REFERENCES

- Cüceloğlu D (2006) İnsan ve Davranışı. Remzi Kitabevi, İstanbul, pp.265-441.
- Develi E (2006). The investigation of the permanent worry state of physical education teachers who work at elementary schools in Konya. Unpublished M.sc. Thesis, Selçuk University, Konya, Turkey.
- Gençkan E (1984). "İnsan Olmak", Adem yayıncılık, İstanbul, s.65.
- Gündüz N (1985). An Investigation on the relationship between anxiety and athletic performance in secondary school students, PhD Thesis, Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir, Turkey pp.59-61.
- Linn L (1980). Diagnosis and Psychiatry Symptoms of Psychiatry, The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, pp.783-823.
- Ögüt R (2004). Sporda Sürekli Kaygı Düzeyi İle Benlik Saygısının Karşılaştırılması, Yayınlanmamış M.sc. Thesis Ege University, İzmir, Turkey
- Öner N, Le Compte A (1985). Süreksiz Durumluk-Sürekli Kaygı Envanteri El Kitabı, Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul.
- Öner N (1977). Durumluk-Sürekli kaygı Envanterinin Türk Toplumunda Geçerliliği, PhD Thesis, Hacettepe University, Ankara.
- Özgül F (2003). State and trait anxiety of the students in Cumhuriyet University School of Physical Training and Sports, M.sc. Thesis, Cumhuriyet University, Sivas, Turkey
- Özen Ercan I, Irgil E, Sigirli D (2010). Anxiety Prevalence And Affecting Factors Among University Students. Asia Pac. J. Public Health 22(1):127-33.
- Özkeran KN (2004). Spor Psikolojisine Giriş: Temel Kavramlar, Nobel Yayın Dağıtım.
- Öztürk A (2008). Examination the relationship between trait and state and anxiety and academic achievement in Physical Education Teacher Education Student in Celal Bayar University, Pamukkale University, M.sc. Thesis, Denizli, Turkey pp.33-36.
- Rask K, Astedt-Kurki P, Laippala P (2002). Adolescent subjective well-being and realized values. J Adv Nurs, 38:254-263.
- Spielberger C (1966). Theory and Research Anxiety, Anxiety and Behavior, New York pp.3-20s.
- Taşmektepligil Y, Hazar F, Ağaoğlu SA, Öğreten N, Terzioğlu EA (2009). The Employment Problems and New Job Opportunites of Persons Graduated From Physical Education and Sports Area. J. Educ. Faculty 11(2):99-116.
- Turgut M, Gökyürek B, Yenel İF (2004).. Determination of the preference causes and expectations of the students having coucation in the areas of trainer education administration and sports management in the schools of physical education and sports. J. Kirşehir Educ. Faculty 5(1):91-99.