



Sports and physical activity as a preventative social support approach to loneliness and hopelessness of adolescents

Suad Sakallı Gümüş^{}**

Ayşegül Şükran Öz^{*}**

Hüseyin Kırmoğlu^{**}**

Abstract

As the first phase of a longitudinal study, this research explores the level of loneliness and hopelessness of 48 adolescents living in an orphanage and their counterparts (42) living in typical settings based on their involvement in sports and gender. T-test was conducted to identify differences among determined groups. Even though no meaningful differences were found among groups, variability in scores was notable in standard deviation (SD) scores when it comes to the degree of hopelessness based on gender and the degree of loneliness based on their involvement in sports and where they live.

Keywords: Adolescents at risk; loneliness; hopelessness; sports; physical activity; social support.

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**Assistant Professor Doctor. Mustafa Kemal University, Faculty of Education, Department of Special Education, ssakalli@umail.iu.edu

*** Assistant Professor Doctor. Mustafa Kemal University, Faculty of Education, Department of Special Education, aozi@umail.iu.edu

**** Assistant Professor Doctor. Mustafa Kemal University, School of Physical Education and Sports, hkirim@2005mail.com

Gençlerin yalnızlık ve umutsuzluđunu önleyici bir sosyal destek yaklaşımı olarak spor ve fiziksel aktivite

Suad Sakallı Gümüş*
Ayşegül Şükran Öz**
Hüseyin Kırimođlu***

Özet

Sürekli bir çalışmanın birinci aşaması olarak bu araştırma, yetiştirme yurdunda yaşayan 48 gencin ve aileleriyle yaşayan 42 gencin yalnızlık ve umutsuzluk düzeylerini spor yapıp yapmama durumları ve cinsiyet faktörüne göre incelemektedir. Gruplar arasındaki farklılıkların tayin edilmesi için T-Test uygulanmıştır. Gruplar arası karşılaştırmalarda istatistikî olarak anlamlı farklılıklar bulunmasa da, cinsiyete göre umutsuzluk düzeyinde ve spor yapıp yapmama durumları ile yaşadıkları ortama göre yalnızlık düzeyleri bakımından standart sapma skorlarında deđişkenlik gözlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Risk altındaki gençler; yalnızlık; umutsuzluk; spor; fiziksel aktivite; sosyal destek.

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**Assistant Professor Doctor. Mustafa Kemal University, Faculty of Education, Department of Special Education, ssakalli@umail.iu.edu

*** Assistant Professor Doctor. Mustafa Kemal University, Faculty of Education, Department of Special Education, aozi@umail.iu.edu

**** Assistant Professor Doctor. Mustafa Kemal University, School of Physical Education and Sports, hkirim@2005mail.com

Introduction

This study aims at exploring whether there is a difference in the level of loneliness and hopelessness of adolescents living in an orphanage and their counterparts living in typical settings based on their involvement in sports. Loneliness and hopelessness have been extensively noted in the literature as risk factors for social, psychological, physical, and cognitive wellbeing of youths (Richaud de Minzi & Sacchi, 2004). Research indicates that hopelessness is strongly associated with clinically important outcomes, such as demoralization, impaired spiritual well-being, and poor quality of life (Kissane, Clarke, Street, 2001; McLeod & Clarke, 2007). Loneliness is known to have an impact on the feeling of hopelessness, lower self-esteem, and harm the social and psychological development of youngsters (Olweus, 1993). Risk factors such as loneliness and hopelessness, increase the likelihood of harm occurring and hinders a child's positive development.

In recent years, especially in the US, preventative approaches to eliminate risk factors in order to keep the number of students to be served in special education down have been in effect. Countries with more limited resources, such as Turkey, who are responsible for the welfare of their citizens aiming at providing higher quality of life have to take such an approach in order to make the best use of their resources for more people in need. With the socio-cultural and economic transformations in Turkey, the number of families dissolving has increased dramatically (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (TÜİK), 2007). Therefore, the number of students living at orphanages is increasing. To date, however, the educational manifestations of these transformations remain largely unexamined. The ways we need to intervene with mentioned risk factors, we believe, are hidden in the lives of these youths. We predict sports and physical activity to be one effective tool that we might use in helping these youths and provide the support systems they need in overcoming variables associated with these risk factors.

Feelings of loneliness considered to be deficiencies in systems of interpersonal interaction. Absence of close emotional attachment causes emotional isolation and absence of engaging social networks causes social isolation. Relationship with parents and peers are two social contexts in which loneliness develops (Terrell-Deutsch, 1999). This is why we wanted to examine the loneliness of youth living at an orphanage who largely may face lack of close attachment to family and who are at risk of developing emotional isolation from their social

networks in comparison to their counterpart youths living with their families. Processes contributing to the inception of vulnerability to loneliness and hopelessness noted in the literature to develop throughout late childhood and early adolescence (Richaud de Minzi & Sacchi, 2004). If the social anxiety, lack of dominance, and social isolation becomes a pattern in the lives of youth, it may lead to peer rejection, negative self-perception, and an internalization of problems that includes loneliness and hopelessness (Rubin & Mills, 1991). Due to the fact that feelings of loneliness are highly related to one's life style, development of loneliness can easily be linked with the development of hopelessness feelings. Hopelessness has been commonly observed in the medically and psychiatrically ill and is experienced as existential despair, hopelessness, helplessness, and loss of meaning and purpose in life. However, many adolescents tend to experience such feelings during traumatic transitional times in their lives, which make them susceptible to feelings of incompetence causing diminished self-esteem. Tumkaya(2005) stated that having negative feelings and expectations for the future impacts one's methods of coping and ability to adapt. Yet, the educational implications of loneliness and hopelessness as a combination are largely ignored in research. The aim here is to review and summarize the literature pertaining to loneliness and hopelessness and in this context to investigate the differences between adolescents involved in sports and those who are not based on the environment they grew in (orphanage or with family).

As we try to accomplish the aim we described above, we use the preventative approach which is commonly used in Special Education specifically with students at risk. In Special Education, the common belief is that education of students at risk takes a proactive approach, a life span approach, and a team approach. The risk factors must be identified, shared with all involved stakeholders, and acted up on as early as possible providing the needed support systems throughout life in order to sustain progress. As a result, Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1989) is understood and espoused in the field of education, specifically Special Education. This theory looks at child development within the context of relationships that form a child's environment. The theory defines complex layers of environment, each of which has an impact on the child's development. Two of the most immediate layers described as having the greatest impact on child development are family and school. Paired with this understanding of the multi-layered environment and its impact on the development of the child, the life span perspective in special education has also contributed to the change

in the role of families and professionals in the well being of the child. The interrelatedness of the various contexts that surround the child implies that risk factors involved in these layers will impact long-term quality of life issues (Winton & Bailey, 1993). Instead of a narrow focus on children's school achievement, a more holistic view that accounts for quality of life issues requires that focus be on the child's psychological, social, physical, and cognitive wellbeing (Shartrand et al., 1997; Ryan et al., 1995). Epstein's (1995) theory of overlapping spheres of influence of schools, families, and communities, paralleling the systems approach, demands that professionals should pay attention to the risk factors involved in each sphere of influence.

At the family system level, research demonstrates that both risk and protective factors play a role in the development of young people (Blom, Cheney, & Snoddy, 1986; Hoey & Rhodes, 1994; Seita, 2005; Vorrath & Brendtro, 1985). The central finding is that young people living within risky systems can overcome the odds if they are nurtured within another micro system that provides a safe environment and at least one adult who is tenaciously and consistently caring. Such restorative systems include schools that hold high expectations and believe in youth, caregivers who acknowledge accomplishments, positive peers, and opportunities for young people to serve. Recent research demonstrates that protective factors within one micro sub-system--for example, the orphanage or sports activity peers and coaches--can buffer or protect young people against risks in another sub-system, such as the school or family. Even with multiple risks in one system, children can succeed if they are able to connect with caring and competent teachers, coaches, neighbors, or other adults in another system. These individuals provide support, set positive expectations, and encourage the child in finding a purpose in life (Benard, 1997). These mentors buffer the impact of risky environments, becoming, in effect, protective factors with a variety of youth in risky environments (Seita, 2005; Fisher, 2001).

With this study we aimed at determining the pre-intervention levels of loneliness and hopelessness of youths living at an orphanage and the control group living at home with their families so that in the next phase we can establish and employ a comprehensive social support program that includes sport and physical activity as a preventative approach to help youths overcome these risk factors. In recent years, there has been an increasing focus on, and interest in identifying and understanding of social and psychological impacts of physical activity involvement on youths. Several studies have found causal relationships between

physical activity and improved mood state, reduced anxiety, reduced depression, and increased social support (Australian Bureau of Statistics, May 2001; Byrne and Byrne, 1993; Cameron and MacDougall, 2000). In their review of literature Byrne and Byrne (1993) found that exercise has an anti-depressant, anti-anxiety and mood enhancing effects. Via involvement in sports students get the chance for social contact with peers, coaches, audiences, develop the ability to share, take responsibility, and be in charge of self, and indirectly take their mind off bad feelings and thoughts. The positive impact of active participation in sports and recreation on physical and mental health has been well established (National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics, 2000). Based on the literature review we conducted, we hypothesized that regular physical activity may have caused adolescents to have lower levels of hopelessness and loneliness.

Method

This research, the first phase of a longitudinal study, is descriptive and comparative in nature (Karasar, 2005; Patton, 2002; Yildirim & Simsek, 2006). Our goal was to empirically compare and describe the current state/level of loneliness and hopelessness of 90 adolescents based on the setting they live in and whether they are involved in sports. Since there was only one orphanage in the study area (city of Antakya) we used convenient sampling by directly visiting the orphanage and asking all high students (48) at the orphanage to complete our surveys. For the control group, a local high school, which most of the students at the orphanage attended, was visited and 42 classmates of our study group living with their parents were asked to complete our surveys.

We mainly tried to assess the current level of loneliness and hopelessness of our study group and control group via self-reporting. To establish an entry point for our longitudinal study, the level of loneliness and hopelessness of 16 female and 26 male adolescents who are involved in sports and 16 female along with 32 males who are not involved in sports were measured and compared. All 16 females who are involved in sports were living at the local orphanage while 6 of the females who are not involved in sports were living at the orphanage and the rest (10) were living with their families. 17 of 26 males who are involved in sports were living at the orphanage while the remaining 9 were living with their families. Of the 32 males who are not involved in sports, 8 were living at the orphanage while 24 were living with their families. UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russel, Peplau & Ferguson, 1978) to measure

the level of loneliness and BECK Hopelessness Scale (Beck et al.;1974) were utilized to measure the level of hopelessness of adolescents. In addition, in order to collect demographic data, a “demographic data form” was developed by the researchers and utilized.

SPSS 16.0 program pack was used in analyzing the data and in finding the calculated values. Data is summarized by providing the means and standard deviations. Whether the data shows a normal distribution was tested by using One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and determined that the data has a normal distribution. Because the data was normally distributed, to test the differences between groups, independent t-test was utilized. In this study, probability was set to 0.05.

Findings

Contrary to what was predicted based on the literature review and anecdotes from the field, no statistically significant difference was detected in comparisons of groups based on their involvement in sports, the environment they live in, and their gender.

Table 1. Comparison of hopelessness and loneliness levels of students who involved in sports and students who are not involved in sports based on their gender

| | | Gender | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | T | P |
|------------------------|--------------|--------|----|-------|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Involved in sports | Hopelessness | Male | 25 | 29,20 | 1,871 | 1,056 | 0,297 |
| | | Female | 16 | 30,12 | 3,722 | | |
| | Loneliness | Male | 26 | 51,08 | 13,163 | 0,375 | 0,710 |
| | | Female | 16 | 52,38 | 5,303 | | |
| Not involved in sports | Hopelessness | Male | 32 | 29,47 | 1,814 | 0,324 | 0,747 |
| | | Female | 16 | 29,69 | 2,845 | | |
| | Loneliness | Male | 32 | 53,66 | 15,197 | 0,149 | 0,882 |
| | | Female | 16 | 53,06 | 6,486 | | |

In comparing the levels of loneliness and hopelessness of students who are involved in sports and who are not, no statistically significant difference was found among groups based on the gender ($P>0,05$).

Table 2. Comparison of levels of loneliness and hopelessness based on the environment lived in and gender.

| | | Gender | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | T | P |
|-------------|--------------|--------|----|-------|----------------|-------|-------|
| Orphanage | Hopelessness | Male | 24 | 29,21 | 2,146 | 0,043 | 0,966 |
| | | Female | 21 | 29,24 | 2,488 | | |
| | Loneliness | Male | 25 | 52,48 | 12,626 | 0,017 | 0,986 |
| | | Female | 21 | 52,43 | 5,938 | | |
| Family Home | Hopelessness | Male | 33 | 29,45 | 1,583 | 1,995 | 0,053 |
| | | Female | 11 | 31,18 | 4,238 | | |
| | Loneliness | Male | 33 | 52,52 | 15,573 | 0,157 | 0,876 |
| | | Female | 11 | 53,27 | 5,884 | | |

Gender appeared to have no impact on the level of loneliness and level of hopelessness as well (Table 2). No significant difference was detected among males and females' level of loneliness and hopelessness when compared based on the environment they live in and based on whether they are involved in sports or not ($P>0,05$).

Table 3. Comparison of hopelessness and loneliness of participants who are involved in sports and those not involved in sports based on the environment they live in.

| Variables | | Environment Lived in | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | T | P |
|------------------------------|--------------|----------------------|----|-------|--------------------|-------|-------|
| Males involved in sports | Hopelessness | Orphanage | 16 | 29,00 | 1,751 | 0,705 | 0,488 |
| | | Family Home | 9 | 29,56 | 2,128 | | |
| | Loneliness | Orphanage | 17 | 50,06 | 14,528 | 0,534 | 0,598 |
| | | Family Home | 9 | 53,00 | 10,630 | | |
| Males not involved in sports | Hopelessness | Orphanage | 8 | 29,62 | 2,875 | 0,277 | 0,784 |
| | | Family Home | 24 | 29,42 | 1,381 | | |
| | Loneliness | Orphanage | 8 | 57,62 | 4,438 | 0,849 | 0,403 |
| | | Family Home | 24 | 52,33 | 17,262 | | |
| Females involved in sports | Hopelessness | Orphanage | 16 | 29,33 | | | |
| | | Family | 0 | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| sports | | Home | | | | | |
| | Loneliness | Orphanage | 16 | 53,00 | | | |
| | | Family Home | 0 | | | | |
| Females not involved in sports | Hopelessness | Orphanage | 6 | 29,00 | 3,633 | 0,737 | 0,473 |
| | | Family Home | 10 | 30,10 | 2,378 | | |
| | Loneliness | Orphanage | 6 | 51,00 | 8,485 | 0,984 | 0,342 |
| | | Family Home | 10 | 54,30 | 5,056 | | |

When participant students who are involved in sports and those who are not involved in sports compared based on the environment they live in (orphanage or home), no statistically significant difference ($P > 0,05$) was detected among the groups (Table 3).

However, when closely reviewed, even though similar means were obtained, the high standard deviation scores of males for loneliness signals the fact that the scores of males varied and that there was less consistency in how lonely they reported to be compared to the females (Table 2). The variation in reported loneliness scores seems to be more apparent in male students who are not involved in sports that live with their families and those who are involved in sports and living at the orphanage (Table 3). The degree of hopelessness seemed to slightly vary (based on SD scores) in females compared to the males regardless their involvement in sports or the environment they live in (Table 1 and Table 3).

Conclusion

In the light of these findings, the results of this study could be interpreted as follows; considering the current state of the participants in terms of their involvement in sports, it is observed that most of the adolescents living at the orphanage reported to be involved in sports. This may indicate that their involvement in sports may have had a buffering impact on the mentioned risk factors so that they scored closely with their counterparts (the group living in typical settings) in terms of loneliness and hopelessness.

Another probable cause for not obtaining significant differences in terms of loneliness and hopelessness is considered to be the conditions of the orphanage in which our sample population lived. During the visit of the researchers to the orphanage, it was observed that

life quality standards at the orphanage were pretty high to support the psychological, physical, social, and cognitive development and well-being of the students. As a matter of fact, after the visit, the researchers contemplated that there was a difference between their assumptions they had about the setting before the visit and their thoughts after the visit. This fact may lead us to think that these unique conditions may have caused adolescents living at the orphanage to score similar to their counterparts with regard to loneliness and hopelessness.

Another observation was that adolescents who live at the orphanage seems to have developed a sense of community and belonging for their orphanage which may have caused them to not reveal inconvenient information related to their psychological and social state to outsiders in their reporting. Therefore these findings have implications in terms of methodology. It should be considered that data collection should not solely rely on self reported data. In the next phase of our study, this made us consider using qualitative methods such as observation and interviews to increase reliability.

Overall, the sample we used and the conditions of our sample were unique which warrants further research. Such research will provide clues for what type of activities, under what conditions may have positive outcomes, and may create a social support network for adolescents. What is unique about sports is that they offer children an arena where they can earn attention and respect by exerting their natural abilities. Empirical research utilizing tailor-made activity programs is warranted. We recommend the development of sport or recreation programs as preventative measures for youth-at-risk and the development of sporting and recreation facilities and opportunities for communities including orphanages.

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Uzun Özet (Extended Abstract)

Yakın duygusal bağlanmalar ve sosyal çevreyle etkileşimin yokluğunda, sosyal ve duygusal kabağa çekilme duyguları ve eğilimlerinin ortaya çıktığı görülür. Yalnızlık ve umutsuzluk gençlerin sağlıklı sosyal, psikolojik, fiziksel ve bilişsel gelişimleri bakımından risk faktörleri olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Richaud de Minzi & Sacchi, 2004; Terrell-Deutsch, 1999; Weiss,1973). Literatürde yer alan çalışmalar incelendiğinde fiziksel etkinliğin ruh halinde iyileşmelere, tedirginliğin azalmasına, depresyonun düzeyinin düşmesine ve sosyal desteğin artmasına yol açtığı (Australian Bureau of Statistics, May 2001; Byrne and Byrne, 1993; Cameron and MacDougall, 2000) ifade edilmektedir.

İyi yapılandırılmış fiziksel aktivite etkinliği ve sosyal desteği kapsayan bir programın, yetiştirme yurdunda kalan gençlere, olumsuz risk faktörlerini aşmada ihtiyaç duydukları destek sistemlerini sağlayacağı şüphesizdir. Aile sistemleri arařtırmalarında hem risk faktörlerinin hem de koruyucu faktörlerin gençlerin gelişiminde rol oynadığı ortaya koyulmuştur (Blom, Cheney, & Snoddy, 1986; Hoey & Rhodes, 1994; Seita, 2005; Vorrath & Brendtro, 1985). Bu çalışmalardaki ortak bulgular, riskli çevrelerde yaşayan gençlerin, risk faktörlerinin bir başka sistemdeki koruyucu ve geliştirici ortamlar sağlayan etkenler sayesinde üstesinden gelebildikleri yönündedir. Bu tür koruyucu ve destekleyici sistemler, gençler için onarıcı bir etki yaratmaktadır. Gençlerden yüksek beklentileriyle, başarılarını takdir etmeleriyle, gençleri önemseyen ve onlara örnek teşkil eden en az bir bireyin varlığıyla, örnek teşkil edecek yaşlıların varlığıyla ve hizmet edebilmeleri için fırsatların sağlanmasıyla gençlerin içinde buldukları olumsuzlukların üstesinden gelmelerini sağlamaktadır.

Yakın zamanda yapılan arařtırmalar bir mikro alt sistemdeki koruyucu faktörlerin (örneğin yetiştirme yurdu, spor etkinliklerindeki antrenör ve/ veya yaşlılar gibi) tampon etkisi (Benard, 1997; Fisher, 2001; Seita, 2005) yaratabildiği ifade edilmektedir. Öyleyse, olumsuz duygularla başa çıkmada önleyici bir yaklaşımı hedefleyen uzun süreli bir çalışmanın ilk aşaması olan bu çalışmada, sporun, rekreasyonel etkinliklerin ve düzenli fiziksel aktivitenin, gençlerin sağlıklı ilişkiler kurmalarına yardımcı olabilecek, kendileri ve durumları hakkında daha iyi hissetmelerini sağlayacak ve potansiyellerini etkili bir şekilde kullanmalarına yardımcı olacak faydalı bir araç olabileceği hipotezinden yola çıkarak mevcut durumun tepsinin yapılmasının gerekliliği ortaya çıkmaktadır.

Bu maksatla arařtırmanın amacı, yetiştirme yurdunda kalan gençler ile aileleri ile birlikte kalan gençlerin spor yapma durumlarına ve cinsiyet değişkenlerine göre yalnızlık ve umutsuzluk düzeyleri bakımından bir farklılık gösterip göstermediğinin arařtırılması olarak belirlenmiştir. Süreli bir arařtırmanın birinci aşaması olan bu çalışma sonucunda elde edilecek bulguların, daha sonraki aşamalarda geliştirilecek sağaltım programları için bir temel teşkil edeceği düşünülmektedir.

Çalışmaya ve öngörülerimize bir başlangıç noktası belirlemek amacıyla, spor yapan (16'sı kız ve 26'sı erkek) toplam 42 sporcu genç ve spor yapmayan (16'sı kız ve 32'si erkek) toplam

48 sedanter genç olmak üzere genel toplamda 90 genç çalışmanın örneklem grubunu oluşturmuştur. Yetiştirme yurdunda ya da aile ortamında yaşayan gençlerimizin yalnızlık ve umutsuzluk düzeyleri ölçülmüş ve karşılaştırılmıştır. Katılımcılardan spor yapan bütün kız katılımcılar yetiştirme yurdunda yaşarken, spor yapmayan kız gençlerimizin 6'sı yetiştirme yurdunda ve geri kalan 10'u aileleriyle yaşamaktadır. Spor yapan 26 erkek katılımcıdan 17'si yetiştirme yurdunda, kalan 9'u da aileleriyle beraber yaşamakta iken, spor yapmayan 32 erkek katılımcıdan 8'i yetiştirme yurdunda, geri kalan 24'u ise, aileleriyle yaşamaktadır. Katılımcıların spor yapma durumlarına göre yalnızlık ve umutsuzluk düzeylerinin belirlenmesinde araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen kişisel bilgi formu, UCLA Yalnızlık Ölçeği ve BECK Umutsuzluk Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmada, betimsel araştırma yöntemlerinden biri olan genel tarama modeli kullanılmıştır. Karasar (2005) tarama modelini "var olan bir durumu, var olduğu şekliyle tanımlamayı amaçlayan araştırma yaklaşımı" olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Veri toplama metodu itibarıyla bu araştırma bir özaktarım çalışması olup, veriler örneklemde yer alan bireylerin kendilerinden ölçekler ve bilgi formu vasıtasıyla toplanmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı, ampirik olarak örneklemdaki 90 gencimizin halihazırdaki yalnızlık ve umutsuzluk düzeylerinin yaşama ortamına, cinsiyet değişkenine ve spor yapıp yapmama durumlarına dayalı olarak tanımlanmasıdır.

Elde edilen verilerin hesaplanmasında ve değerlendirilmesinde SPSS 13,0 istatistik paket programı kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde T-Test uygulanmış olup, belirlenen guruplar (evde-yetiştirme yurdunda kalan, spor yapan-yapmayan, kız-erkek) arasındaki farklılıklar ortaya çıkarılmaya ve tanımlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu çalışmada hata düzeyi 0,05 olarak kabul edilmiştir.

Elde edilen bulgulara göre katılımcılardan sporcu ve sedanter olanların umutsuzluk ve yalnızlık puanlarının cinsiyetlere göre karşılaştırılmasında, erkekler ve kızlar arasında umutsuzluk ve yalnızlık bakımından istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık tespit edilmemiştir ($P>0,05$). Ayrıca sporcu olan erkekler ile sedanter erkeklerin, umutsuzluk ve yalnızlık puanları yetiştirme yurdunda kalma ve ailenin yanında kalma bakımından karşılaştırıldığında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık tespit edilmemiştir ($P>0,05$). Yine, sporcu kızlarla sedanter kızların umutsuzluk ve yalnızlık puanları yetiştirme yurdunda kalma ve ailenin yanında kalma bakımından karşılaştırıldığında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık tespit edilmemiştir ($P>0,05$). Buna ilaveten, araştırmaya katılan katılımcılardan yetiştirme yurdunda ve ailesinin yanında kalan kız ve erkeklerin umutsuzluk ve yalnızlık puanları karşılaştırıldığında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık tespit edilmemiştir ($P>0,05$).

Bu bulgular ışığında çalışmanın sonuçları aşağıdaki gibi açıklanabilir.

Örneklem grubunun spor yapıp yapmama durumları dikkate alındığında yetiştirme yurdunda kalan gençlerin çoğunluğunun sporla uğraştığı görülmektedir. Bu durum, gruplar arasında yalnızlık ve umutsuzluk düzeylerinin (aile yanında kalma, yurttan kalma, cinsiyet değişkeni ve spor yapıp yapmama) farklılık göstermemesinde önemli bir etken olduğu kanaatini uyandırmaktadır. Sporun risk faktörleri üzerindeki tampon etkisi yetiştirme yurdunda kalan gençlerin yalnızlık ve umutsuzluk düzeylerini ailesi yanında kalan gençlerin yalnızlık ve umutsuzluk düzeylerine yaklaştırdığını düşündürmektedir.

Katılımcılar arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılığın bulunmaması sebeplerinden biri de, günümüzde yetiştirme yurtlarının yaşam kalite standartlarına yakınlaştırılmış olması olarak değerlendirilebilir. Nitekim araştırmacıların yetiştirme yurdu yaşam ortamını görmeden önceki varsayımları ve gördükten sonraki düşünceleri arasında farklılık olduğu tartışılmıştır. Bu muhakeme sonucunda beklenenin aksine yetiştirme yurdu yaşam ortamının gençlerin sosyal, psikolojik, fiziksel ve bilişsel gelişimlerini destekleyici

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niteliklere yaklaőtıđı ve bunun da ailesi yanında kalan gençlerin umutsuzluk ve yalnızlık düzeylerine paralel bir gelişim göstermesinde etken olduđu varsayılmıőtır.

Yurtta kalan gençlerin yurtlarına karşı bir aidiyet duygusu geliőtirdikleri ve içerisinde buldukları ruhsal durumları çok fazla dıő dünyaya açmak istemeyebilecekleri göz önünde bulundurulursa, özaktarım metoduyla toplanan verilerin bulgulara yansımış olabileceđi dikkate alınmalıdır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmanın diđer aőamalarında nitel çalışma metotlarına başvurulması gerekliliđini ortaya çıkmaktadır.