

# The relationship between life satisfaction and alienation level of disabled athletes (Kayseri Case)

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between life satisfaction and alienation level of disabled athletes living in Kayseri.

**Material:** The population of the study consists of 421 disabled athletes engaged in sports. The sample consisted of 109 disabled athletes identified by simple random sampling method. The study was performed by scanning method and the data was collected by survey method. Demographic information form consists of 5 questions, «Life Satisfaction Scale» which was developed by Diener et.al. and translated into Turkish by Köker, of which reliability and validity study had been conducted and the «Alienation Scale» developed by Dean and adopted into Turkish by Kinik were applied. The obtained data were recorded in the SPSS 23 package program. Mann Whitney U test was used for comparison of binary groups and Kruskal Wallis test was used for multiple comparisons. Spearman Correlation test was applied to determine the relationship between life satisfaction and alienation level sub-dimensions.

**Results:** It has been determined that there is a difference between life satisfaction and alienation level sub-dimension scores of disabled athletes according to the gender and marital status, that there is a difference according to life satisfaction level score and ages of 18-23, 24-29 and 18-23 and 30 and above in terms of alienation level and irregularity sub dimensions; and ages of 18-23, 24-29 and 18-23 and 30 and above in terms of social isolation sub dimension and that there is a statistically significant difference between their life satisfaction level score according to education status and alienation level sub dimension. It has been determined that there is a negative and medium sized relation between the level of alienation and life satisfaction, weakness ( $r = -.491, p = .050$ ) and the irregularity ( $r = -.619, p = .050$ ) sub-dimension, and that there is a positive relation between life satisfaction and social isolation sub dimension ( $r = .795, p = .050$ ).

**Conclusions:** A medium level negative relation was determined between the level of life satisfaction and alienation with gender, age, marital status and educational status and between the level of alienation with life satisfaction and weakness and irregularity sub dimensions; and a high positive relation was determined with the social isolation sub dimension.

**Keywords:** disabled individuals, alienation, life satisfaction, athletes, social.

## Introduction

It is known that disabled individuals in Turkey have intense problems in terms of integration with the society. Problems in many areas of life make it difficult for disabled individuals to live in a functional unity with the society they are a part of. Individuals who constantly struggle with problems and who cannot produce meaningful solutions will feel unhappy. This means a lower quality of life, eliminating the self-realization, a fundamental human right [1]. Quality of life indicates the result of comparing the expectations of individual with the real status, depending on life satisfaction. Because life satisfaction determines the level of individual reaching the goals he/she has set or reaching to happiness. Any increase in reaching the individual goals will increase the life satisfaction [2]. In other words, it is related how much a person likes his/her own life [3]. Improving the quality of life of the disabled individuals will be possible through integrating disabled individuals within the society at the highest level and this is also a social responsibility [4].

But today, the rapid change brought with

industrialization and technological developments causes the individual to suffer from loneliness and alienation. On the other hand, individuals are concerned about fulfilling their responsibilities in daily life, building relationships with others and maintaining a healthy life. The emergence of the phenomenon of alienation increases rapidly as these changes and developments occur [5]. In addition, alienation can be directed towards one's own self or to the parts of the self as well as towards others [6]. Considering the individuals with disabilities, it has been suggested that alienation is a disease that occurs due to social conditions and emotional personality. There are five different dimensions of alienation regarding an individual's self-perception and behavior. These are: Weakness, Futility, Irregularity, Alienation to Society and Self Alienation [7].

Finally, the restrictive, stigmatizing, discriminatory and hence obstructive attitudes of the society towards disabled individuals set up the environment where individuals with disabilities are isolated from society. In recent years, the integrative approach of social model between the disabled individuals and society has been increasingly accepted. It is stated that individuals with disabilities have a great need for such an approach [8].

*Hypothesis:* There is a relationship between the level of life satisfaction and the level of alienation of disabled individuals engaged in sports. According to some demographic characteristics of disabled individuals engaged in sports, there is a difference between the levels of life satisfaction and alienation.

*Purpose:* The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between life satisfaction and alienation level of disabled athletes living in Kayseri.

## Material and Method

### Participants

#### Forming Voluntary Groups:

For the purpose of the study, the population of the study was composed of disabled (physical, auditory and visually impaired) individuals ( $n = 421$ ) and the sample consists of voluntary disabled athletes who were selected by simple random method ( $n= 109$ ). After the participants were informed about the study, participation in the study was carried out voluntarily.

#### Measurements and Procedures.

The study was performed by scanning method and the data was collected by survey method. Personal information form (gender, age, marital status, education status), life satisfaction and alienation scale were applied to the participants.

In order to measure the level of life satisfaction of the participants, a 5-item life satisfaction scale was used, which was developed by Diener et al. [9] and translated into Turkish by Köker [10] with a validity and reliability value of 0.90. The highest score that could be obtained from the scale is 35, whereas the lowest score is 5. The reliability of life satisfaction scale is 0.90. It is stated that life satisfaction increases as the score obtained from the scale does [10]. The scale questions consist of seven scales in the Likert Type Scale; such as “I Completely Agree”, “I Strongly Agree”, “I Agree”, “I Somewhat Agree”, “Neutral”, “I Disagree” and “I Totally Disagree”. In order to measure the alienation level of participants, the “Alienation Scale”, which was developed by Dean [11] and adapted to Turkish by Kınık [5] with validity and reliability value of 0.82 was used. Alienation scale consists of 24 items and 3 sub dimensions. The Weakness dimension of the Alienation process consists of items 2, 6, 9, 13, 15, 18, 20, 21 and 23; the Irregularity dimension

of the Alienation process consists of items 4, 7, 10, 12, 16 and 19; and the Social Isolation dimension of the Alienation process consists of items 1, 3, 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 22 and 24. There are five statements in each of the 24 items in the Alienation Survey. The items in the scale are in the form of “5-Likert Type Scale” with 1 as “Never”, 2 as “Rarely”, 3 as “Sometimes”, 4 as “Mostly” and 5 as “Always”.

#### Statistical Analysis

The data obtained were recorded on computer with package program of IBM SPSS 23.0. Personal information, inventory averages and factor scores were provided by determining the frequency (f) and percentage (%) values of the participants. The parametric and non-parametric distribution of the were analyzed by focusing on parametric and non-parametric distribution curves and skewness-kurtosis values. Data have non-parametric distribution. Mann Whitney U test was used for comparison of binary groups and Kruskal Wallis test was used for multiple comparisons. Spearman Correlation test was used to determine the relationship between the sub-dimensions of Life satisfaction and Alienation level.

## Results

When Table 1 is examined, it is determined that among the disabled individuals; 54.1 % are male and 45.9 % are female, 28.4 % are between the ages 18-23, 21.1 % between the ages 24 and 29 and 50.5 % are 30 years or above; 54.1 % are single and 45.9 % are married and 26.6 % have primary school education level and 73.4 % have secondary school education level.

Table 2 indicates the comparison of life satisfaction scores and alienation level sub-dimension scores according to the gender of the participants. A statistically significant difference was found between the participants’ life satisfaction level scores and alienation level scores ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 3 indicates the comparison of life satisfaction scores and alienation level sub-dimension scores according to the age of the participants. According to the age group of the participants, there was a statistically significant difference between the ages of 18-23 and 24-29, and between the ages 18-23 and 30 ( $p < 0.05$ ). Statistically significant difference was determined regarding the level of alienation of participants under the sub dimension of

**Table 1.** Socio-Demographical Characteristics of Participants

Characteristic	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	59	54.1
	Female	50	45.9
Age	18-23	31	28.4
	24-29	23	21.1
	30 and above	55	50.5
Marital Status	Married	59	54.1
	Single	50	45.9
Educational Status	Primary School	29	26.6
	Secondary School	80	73.4

irregularity for the ages 18-23 and 24-29 and 27-29 and above 30, and under the sub dimension of social isolation for the ages 18-23 and 24-29 and 27-29 and above 30 ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 4 indicates the comparison of life satisfaction scores and alienation level sub-dimension scores according to the marital status of the participants. A statistically significant difference was found between the participants'

**Table 2.** Assessment of Participants' Life Satisfaction and Alienation Level and Perceptions According to Their Gender

Characteristic	Gender	<i>n</i>	<i>median</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>P</i>
Life Satisfaction	Male	59	14	10	20	-8.014	.000
	Female	50	30	27	34		
Weakness	Male	59	24	14	33	-1.442	.000
	Female	50	22	22	24		
Irregularity	Male	59	18	7	19	-6.104	.001
	Female	50	14	15	15		
Social Isolation	Male	59	26	15	28	-7.589	.000
	Female	50	29	30	31		

Note:  $n = 109$ ; Life Satisfaction: ( $Z = 8.014$ ;  $P = .000$ ); Weakness: ( $Z = -1.442$ ;  $P = .000$ ); Irregularity: ( $Z = -6.104$ ;  $P = .001$ ); Social Isolation: ( $Z = -7.589$ ;  $P = .000$ );  $P < 0.050$

**Table 3.** Assessment of Participants' Life Satisfaction and Alienation Level and Perceptions According to Their Age

Characteristic	Age	<i>n</i>	<i>median</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	$\chi^2$	<i>P</i>	Difference
Life Satisfaction	18-23 <sup>1</sup>	31	31	19	33	34.11	.000	1-2 1-3
	24-29 <sup>2</sup>	23	17	12	28			
	30 and above <sup>3</sup>	55	19	12	34			
Weakness	18-23 <sup>1</sup>	31	24	24	35	4.59	.101	-
	24-29 <sup>2</sup>	23	24	14	35			
	30 and above <sup>3</sup>	55	24	14	35			
Irregularity	18-23 <sup>1</sup>	31	15	15	20	17.09	.000	1-2 1-3
	24-29 <sup>2</sup>	23	16	7	20			
	30 and above <sup>3</sup>	55	16	7	20			
Social Isolation	18-23 <sup>1</sup>	31	31	25	31	40.89	.000	1-2 1-3
	24-29 <sup>2</sup>	23	26	16	31			
	30 and above <sup>3</sup>	55	26	16	31			

Note:  $n = 109$ ;  $P < .050$

**Table 4.** Assessment of Participants' Life Satisfaction and Alienation Level and Perceptions According to Their Marital Status

Characteristic	Marital Status	<i>n</i>	<i>median</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>P</i>
Life Satisfaction	Married	59	16	12	22	-9.014	.000
	Single	50	31	27	34		
Weakness	Married	59	26	14	35	-3.743	.000
	Single	50	24	24	24		
Irregularity	Married	59	19	7	20	-6.608	.000
	Single	50	15	15	15		
Social Isolation	Married	59	26	16	29	-9.509	.000
	Single	50	31	31	31		

Note:  $n = 109$ ; Life Satisfaction ( $Z = -9.014$ ;  $P = .000$ ); Weakness: ( $Z = -3.743$ ;  $P = .000$ ); Irregularity: ( $Z = -6.608$ ;  $P = .000$ ); Social Isolation: ( $Z = -9.509$ ;  $P = .000$ );  $P < .001$

**Table 5.** Assessment of Participants' Life Satisfaction and Alienation Level and Perceptions According to Their Educational Status

Characteristic	Educational Status	<i>n</i>	<i>median</i>	<i>min</i>	<i>max</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>P</i>
Life Satisfaction	Primary School	29	16	15	19	-6.123	.000
	Secondary School	80	30	12	34		
Weakness	Primary School	29	35	14	35	-3.537	.000
	Secondary School	80	24	24	26		
Irregularity	Primary School	29	20	7	20	-3.198	.001
	Secondary School	80	15	15	19		
Social Isolation	Primary School	29	25	16	25	-8.432	.000
	Secondary School	80	31	26	31		

Note: *n*= 109; Life Satisfaction: (*Z*= -6.123; *P*= .000); Weakness: (*Z*= -3.537; *P*= .000); Irregularity: (*Z*= -3.198; *P*= .001); Social Isolation: (*Z*=-9.509; *P*= .000); *P*<.050

**Table 6.** Relation Between the Life Satisfaction and Alienation Level of Participants

Characteristic	Spearman Correlation	1	2	3	4
Life Satisfaction	<i>r</i>	1			
	<i>p</i>				
	<i>n</i>	109			
Weakness	<i>r</i>	-.491	1		
	<i>p</i>	.000			
	<i>n</i>	109	109		
Irregularity	<i>r</i>	-.619	.904	1	
	<i>p</i>	.000	.000		
	<i>n</i>	109	109	109	
Social Isolation	<i>r</i>	.795	-.247	-.458	1
	<i>p</i>	.000	.010	.000	
	<i>n</i>	109	109	109	109

Note: Life Satisfaction (1)- (*r*=1); Weakness (2) - (*r*=-.409; *p*=.000); Irregularity (3) - (*r*= -.619; *p*=.000); Social Isolation (4) - (*r*= .795; *p*= .000); *P*<.001

life satisfaction level scores, their alienation level scores and perception sub dimension scores (*p* <0.05).

Table 5 indicates the comparison of life satisfaction scores and alienation level sub-dimension scores according to the educational status of the participants. A statistically significant difference was found between the participants' life satisfaction level scores and alienation level scores according to their educational status (*p* <0.05).

As it can be seen in Table 6, it has been determined that there is a negative and medium sized relation between the level of alienation and life satisfaction, weakness (*r* = -, 491, *p* =, 050) and the irregularity (*r* = -, 619, *p* =, 050) sub-dimension, and that there is a positive relation between life satisfaction and social isolation sub dimension (*r*=,795, *p*= ,050).

### Discussion

Life satisfaction is described as the individual's feeling of well-being from different perspectives such as happiness and spirits and as the dominance of positive emotion over negative ones as a result of person's good feelings in social and physical terms [12]. Alienation is a psychological state which appears as a result of individual and social processes. Therefore, the role of the individual in society and acceptance of society are important in personal self-realization [13]. The number of people with disabilities is increasing in Turkey and sport is considered as an important factor in adapting the disabled individuals to the society. Regarding the disabled individuals within the scope of this study, the importance of sport for their reintegration into the society and their life satisfaction and

alienation levels were examined to find out whether there were any differences or not.

There was a statistically significant difference between the satisfaction level score and alienation level sub-dimension scores of participants according to their gender. According to this, life satisfaction score of women with disabilities is higher than that of men with disabilities. Again, it is seen that social isolation level of disabled women as a sub dimension of alienation is higher than the disabled male individuals. In this case, it can be said that life satisfaction of disabled individuals participating in the study is affected by their gender. When the literature is examined, studies indicate that self-confidence and life satisfaction levels of the physically disabled athletes differ according to gender variable. It is reported that female athletes with physical disabilities have a higher self-confidence and life satisfaction when compared with the male athletes [14]. Culture, type of sports, self-esteem and activity [15], ability to manage the situation, and to have a feeling of significance with themselves and their environment are reported as contributing to life satisfaction [16].

When the comparison of life satisfaction and alienation level sub-dimension scores according to the age of the participants is examined; a significant difference was determined regarding the level of alienation of participants under the sub dimension of irregularity for the ages 18-23 and 24-29 and 27-29 and above 30, and under the sub dimension of social isolation for the ages 18-23 and 24-29 and 27-29 and above 30. The level of perception of life, level of alienation and sub-dimensions of perception of alienation and social isolation were high. In this case, although the sports activities of disabled individuals increase their life satisfaction levels, it is understood that social and cultural characteristics, self-realization level and ages also increase the alienation level of the disabled individuals. No studies could be found in the literature that support our research.

According to the marital status of the participants, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the level of life satisfaction and alienation level sub-dimension scores. It is seen that the single disabled individuals have higher level of life satisfaction levels than the married ones.

It is seen that weakness and irregularity levels, two sub dimensions of alienation, are higher among the married disabled athletes than the single ones; and the social isolation levels of singles are higher than the married ones. The perspective of individuals to the dimensions of alienation according to marital status differ. In general, if we consider marriage as a situation that enables the development and happiness of the individual, the high levels of life satisfaction rates and social isolation among singles in this study reveals different results. Şahin and Akpınar [17] reported that life satisfaction of married persons with disabilities was higher than that of singles. This study is not in parallel with our findings.

A statistically significant difference was found between life satisfaction level and alienation level sub-

dimension scores according to the education level of the participants.

According to the level of education, life satisfaction scores of secondary school graduates are higher. When the sub-dimensions of alienation were examined, it was found that the scores of primary school graduates in weakness and irregularity were higher and the scores of secondary school graduates were higher in social isolation dimension. When the literature is examined, Purutçuoğlu and Aksel [18] reported that the level of education affects the behavior and lifestyle of women with disabilities. Considering that the educated individual is better acquainted with self, it is stated that life satisfaction will also increase [18]. There are studies in the literature which state that there is a relation between the variables of education level and occupation status and the life satisfaction.

It has been found that there is a high positive relationship between life satisfaction of disabled individuals and alienation level's sub dimensions of weakness and irregularity in a negative level, and a high positive relation between life satisfaction and social isolation sub-dimension.

The conclusion of the fact that disabled individuals involved in sports have a certain level of life satisfaction, but also feel as isolated from society is an unexpected result. We can explain this with psychological and physical circumstances of the individual. Individuals may have been satisfied with life with the support of sports in their inner world by isolating themselves from today's society. On the other hand, individuals with disabilities may feel isolated from the society due to their physical and physiological deficiencies. We define weakness as the person's inability to influence the society he / she lives in, and to think that he / she does not have anything to change the result. In addition, irregularity is defined as the individual's adoption of unacceptable behavior by the society in order to achieve the achievement goals determined by social norms [21]. According to these explanations, it can be seen that there is a negative relationship between the life satisfaction of disabled people and weakness and irregularity.

### Conclusions

As a result, it is determined that the level of life satisfaction and alienation is related to gender, age, marital status and educational status; and that there is a medium level negative relation between the sub dimensions of weakness and irregularity; and a high level of positive relation between the life satisfaction and alienation level and social isolation sub dimension.

It is considered that the type of sports disabled individuals does, their social and cultural environment, self-esteem and physical activity level have positive contribution to their life satisfaction. In addition, when we look at the average of the variables such as gender, marital status, age, education level and occupation of the disabled individuals; we can say that sport has increased the life satisfaction of the individual. At the same time, it

is considered that the fear that the individuals' attitudes and behaviors will not be accepted within the society and that they will not have equal opportunities and rights with other individuals also increase the level of alienation.

The study group consists of physical, auditory and visually impaired people. Therefore, there are differences in life satisfaction levels and alienation levels. A separate study can be conducted for each disabled group. Thus, different disability groups can be evaluated separately and then compared with other disabled groups. On the other hand, the study consists of disabled individuals living in Kayseri only, which is a limitation of our study area. The

study can also be extended to a wider geography and thus the research area can be expanded. Despite the fact that people with disabilities have provided life satisfaction, physical and physiological insufficiency compared to other individuals in society may have caused social alienation. For this reason, training and counseling should be done within the scope of rehabilitation program which may be psychological support for disabled people.

#### Conflict of Interests

No conflicts of interest have been stated by the authors.

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