Determining the levels of social anxiety and emotion regulation difficulties among youth participating in sports courses at youth centers

Buşra Özcan¹, Yunus Şahinler²*, Mahmut Ulukan³, Mustafa Can Koç³

¹Department of Sports Management, School of Physical Education and Sports, Siirt University, Turkey.

² Department of Exercise and Sports for Disabled People, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Istanbul Gelişim University, Turkey.

³ Department of Recreation, Faculty of Sports Sciences, Istanbul Gelişim University, Turkey.

* Correspondence: Yunus Şahinler; <u>ysahinler@gelisim.edu.tr</u>

ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between social anxiety levels and emotion regulation difficulties among adolescents participating in sports courses at youth centers. The study included 206 young individuals (64.6% female and 35.4% male), aged 11-18, attending youth center courses across Turkey. A Google Forms survey was used for data collection, applying a convenience sampling method to reach 206 youth center participants. Data were collected using social anxiety and emotion regulation scales applied to individuals residing in a specific geographical region. The findings reveal that social anxiety levels are significantly associated with demographic factors such as age, gender, and parental education (p<0.05). Furthermore, adolescents with high levels of social anxiety are more likely to experience difficulties in emotion regulation (p<0.05). The results underscore the impact of social anxiety and emotional challenges during adolescence on psychological well-being and highlight the importance of intervention programs aimed at fostering emotional and social development among adolescents. These findings can serve as a resource for future research and practical applications, contributing to the development of strategies to reduce social anxiety in adolescents.

KEYWORDS

Social Anxiety; Emotion Regulation; Youth; Mental Health; Sports Courses

1. INTRODUCTION

Youth represent the cornerstone of the future. The psychological resilience of individuals plays a critical role in the overall stability of society. Sports courses organized by youth centers assist young people in socializing, improving their communication skills, and boosting their self-confidence. Participation in recreational activities has been observed to reduce anxiety and stress levels among young people. These centers organize various sports activities, cultural events, and social programs tailored to the interests and needs of youth (Kelleş et al., 2017). Youth centers, under the Ministry of Youth and Sports, contribute to creating enjoyable experiences for young people while offering opportunities for socialization through social, cultural, and sports activities.

Research on social anxiety and emotion regulation difficulties among young people frequently demonstrates a correlation between these two constructs. For example, Steinberg and Morris (2001) argue that increased levels of social anxiety among youth have adverse effects on their overall emotional well-being. Examining the impact of courses provided by youth centers on these issues is crucial for fostering sustainable psychological health among adolescents.

Adolescence is a critical phase during which individuals shape their social identity, experience heightened emotions, and prioritize social interactions. During this period, young people interact with society, develop social skills, and strive to construct their identity. However, this process can often be fraught with challenges and anxieties. Social anxiety, in particular, is a key factor influencing how individuals feel about themselves in social environments. Studies reveal that social anxiety negatively impacts both social relationships and mental health (Hofmann et al., 1999).

Social anxiety refers to the apprehension individuals feel regarding how they are perceived or evaluated by others. Assumptions about others' perceptions significantly contribute to this phenomenon. A distinctive feature of social anxiety, compared to other anxiety types, is the interpretation and consideration of how individuals perceive themselves in social interactions, whether real or imagined. Hence, social anxiety can also be defined as evaluation anxiety (Beck & Emery, 1985). While the desire to make a positive impression is considered a source of social anxiety, one of the primary factors influencing its severity is the gender of the interacting party (Leary & Kowalsky, 1995). Research indicates that during adolescence, females are more likely than males to experience social anxiety, leading to heightened sensitivity to negative evaluations (La Greca & Lopez, 1998).

Highly sensitive individuals with social anxiety often fear being criticized or receiving negative evaluations. This vulnerability reflects a lack of self-confidence and perceived inadequacy in defending

Özcan et al.

themselves. Eriş & İkiz (2013); Işık & Taner (2006) define social anxiety as the fear of behaving in an embarrassing or humiliating manner in the presence of others. Xu et al. (2012) observed that social anxiety is more prevalent in women than in men throughout life, with women more likely to resort to medication and men to substance abuse as coping mechanisms.

Emotions play a role in generating obsessions due to their perceived necessity and interpretation of certain stimuli (Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 2014). Emotion regulation refers to the process through which individuals monitor and modify their emotional states to achieve specific goals (Thompson, 1991; Gross, 1999). This capability encompasses recognizing one's emotions, identifying solutions and objectives to manage them, and adjusting emotional states as needed (Thompson & Calkins, 1996). Difficulties in emotion regulation have been linked to negative behaviors such as aggression and selfharm. Emotion regulation challenges encompass the entirety of processes undertaken to cope with existing emotions.

Emotion regulation is a critical skill enabling individuals to comprehend, express, and manage their emotional states (Gross, 1998). Difficulties in emotion regulation may hinder individuals' ability to cope with stressful situations, thereby exacerbating social anxiety. Supporting the emotional wellbeing of adolescents and helping them manage social anxiety can have a significant societal impact. In this context, youth centers play a pivotal role in supporting young people and enhancing their social skills by offering sociocultural activities, educational programs, and support groups (Cavanagh, 2016).

This study aims to examine the impact of courses offered by youth centers on the levels of social anxiety and emotion regulation difficulties among young participants. The research investigates how demographic characteristics influence the relationship between social anxiety and emotion regulation difficulties. The findings aim to evaluate the functionality of youth centers by highlighting the impact of their courses and activities on the social anxiety levels of young people. Furthermore, the study provides recommendations for improving emotion regulation skills among youth, thereby enabling the development of well-structured future programs. The results are expected to contribute to academic literature and inform the development of policies aimed at supporting adolescents' mental health.

The following hypotheses were tested to investigate the differences in social anxiety and emotion regulation difficulty levels based on demographic variables:

H1: Social anxiety levels among adolescents vary significantly by gender, age, education level, monthly income, mother's education level, father's education level, and the number of siblings.

H2: Emotion regulation difficulty levels among adolescents vary significantly by gender, age, education level, monthly income, mother's education level, father's education level, and the number of siblings.

H3: There is a positive relationship between social anxiety levels and emotion regulation difficulties in adolescents; individuals with higher levels of social anxiety are more likely to experience greater emotion regulation difficulties.

2. METHODS

2.1. Participants

The research was conducted with the participation of 206 adolescents aged 11-18. Participants completed a 21-item Social Anxiety Scale, a 16-item Emotion Regulation Difficulty Scale, and a 7-item demographic questionnaire to collect data.

The target population of this research includes young individuals aged 11-18 attending youth center courses across Turkey. A Google Forms survey was used for data collection, applying a convenience sampling method to reach 206 youth center participants. The collected data were analyzed to test the research hypotheses and determine the effects of social anxiety and emotion regulation difficulties among youth.

2.2. Measurement Tools

The scale used to measure social anxiety levels is the "Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents," developed by Aydın & Tekinsav-Sütçü (2007). To assess emotion regulation difficulties, the study employed the 16-item short version of the Emotion Regulation Difficulty Scale, developed by Gratz and Roemer and later modified by Bjureberg et al., with the removal of the awareness subscale and reduction in item count. The validity and reliability of these scales have been previously established in the literature. Statistical analyses were used to evaluate whether the demographic groups of the respondents showed significant differences in social anxiety and emotion regulation difficulty levels.

2.3. Ethical Considerations

The necessary ethical approval for this research was obtained from the Siirt University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee, with the decision dated 01/10/2024 and numbered 2024/7674.

2.4. Statistical Analyses

The data obtained from the study were transferred to a digital environment, organized using Microsoft Excel, and analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 29.0 software. Before proceeding with the analyses, the suitability of numerical data for normal distribution was assessed using Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, Skewness and Kurtosis values, Histogram plots, and Q-Q Plot graphics. The analyses confirmed that the data followed a normal distribution. Categorical variables were presented as frequencies and percentages, while numerical variables were reported as means and standard deviations due to the satisfaction of the normality assumption. For data analysis:

- The Independent Sample T-Test was used for comparisons between two independent groups.
- The One-Way ANOVA Test was employed for comparisons among more than two independent groups.
- To examine the relationship between two numerical variables, the Pearson Correlation Test was utilized.

For all statistical tests, a significance level of p < 0.05 was considered as the threshold for statistical significance.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 includes the statistical results for the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents and its subdimensions, as well as the Emotion Regulation Difficulty Scale and its subdimensions. The mean and standard deviation for the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents were identified as 41.95 ± 11.72 , with minimum and maximum values of 20 and 77, respectively. Similarly, the mean and standard deviation for the Emotion Regulation Difficulty Scale were 33.77 ± 10.38 , with minimum and maximum values of 16 and 61, respectively. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is interpreted as follows: when $0.00 < \alpha < 0.40$, the scale is considered unreliable; when $0.40 < \alpha < 0.60$, it indicates low reliability; when $0.60 < \alpha < 0.80$, it indicates moderate reliability; and when $0.80 < \alpha < 1.00$, it indicates high reliability (Tavakol and Dennick, 2011). Upon examining the table, it is observed that the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents and its subdimensions, as well as the Emotion Regulation Difficulty Scale and its subdimensions, exhibit moderate to high reliability. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2013), when skewness and kurtosis values are between -1.5 and +1.5, the data can be considered to follow a normal distribution. Based on the skewness and kurtosis values, it is evident that the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents, its subdimensions, and the Emotion Regulation Difficulty Scale and its subdimensions.

Özcan et al.

	ve statistics for the	scales inclu	ueu in the	study	
Scale	Mean ± SD	Range	CA	Skewness	Kurtosis
	$(\overline{\mathbf{x}} \pm \mathbf{SD})$	(Min-	(α)		
		Max)			
Fear of Negative Evaluation	$14,76 \pm 5,52$	7-31	0,860	0,707	-0,002
GS-SAD	$10,57 \pm 3,65$	5-21	0,740	0,761	0,472
NS-SAD	$16,\!61 \pm 4,\!73$	6-27	0,727	-0,146	-0,354
Social Anxiety Scale for	$41,95 \pm 11,72$	20-77	0,887	0,365	-0,204
Adolescents					
Clarity	$4,23 \pm 1,61$	2-10	0,704	0,842	1,454
Goals	$7,\!68 \pm 2,\!64$	3-14	0,675	0,483	-0,192
Impulse	$6,06 \pm 2,47$	3-14	0,747	0,856	0,291
Strategies	$10,\!24 \pm 3,\!87$	5-21	0,808	0,615	-0,272
Non-Acceptance	$5,55 \pm 2,36$	3-12	0,781	0,879	0,012
Emotion Regulation Difficulty	$33,77 \pm 10,38$	16-61	0,903	0,445	-0,533
Scale					

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for the scales included in the study

Note: $\overline{x} \pm SD$ =Mean \pm Standard Deviation; CA (α)=Cronbach's Alpha (Internal Consistency Reliability); GS-SAD= Social Avoidance and Discomfort in General Situations; NS-SAD= Social Avoidance and Discomfort in Novel Situations

In Table 2, descriptive statistics on the demographic characteristics of youth participating in courses at youth centers are presented. Among the participants, 64.6% are female and 35.4% are male. The average age is 13.65, with 63.1% of participants falling within the 11-13 age group and 36.9% within the 14-18 age group. Regarding education level, 47.1% of participants are in middle school, 22.3% are in high school, and 30.6% are at other educational levels. In terms of monthly income, 54.4% of participants reported a household income of 20,000 TL or above. Examining the mother's education level, 61.2% of mothers are high school graduates, while for the father's education level, 66.5% are high school graduates. Regarding the number of siblings, 40.3% of participants have two siblings, 37.9% have one sibling, and 21.8% have three or more siblings.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics on the demographic characteristics of youth participating in courses at vouth centers

you		
Variable	n	%
Gender		
Female	133	64,6%
Male	73	35,4%
Age ($\overline{x} \pm SS$, Min-Max)	13,65±2,05	11-18
11-13 years	130	63,1%
14-18 years	76	36,9%
Education Level		
Middle School	97	47,1%
High School	46	22,3%
Other	63	30,6%
Monthly Income		

10.000-15.000 ₺	47	22,8%
15.000-20.000 赴	47	22,8%
20000 ₺ and above	112	54,4%
Mother's Education Level		
Middle School or below	80	38,8%
High School	126	61,2%
Father's Education Level		
Middle School or below	69	33,5%
High School	137	66,5%
Number of Siblings		
1	78	37,9%
2	83	40,3%
3 or more	45	21,8%

Note: $\overline{x} \pm SD = Mean \pm Standard Deviation; age values are provided with the mean, standard deviation, and range (minimum-maximum).$

Table 3 analyzes the differences between the subdimensions of the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents — Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE), Social Avoidance and Discomfort in General Situations (GS-SAD), Social Avoidance and Discomfort in Novel Situations (NS-SAD) — and the total score of the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents in terms of gender, age, education level, monthly income, parental education levels, and the number of siblings.

		FNE		GS-S	AD	NS-S	SAD	Social A	Anxiety	
								Scale for		
								Adole	scents	
	n	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\overline{x}	SD	\overline{x}	SD	
Gender										
Female	133	14,75	5,67	10,68	3,67	16,76	4,77	42,20	11,91	
Male	73	14,78	5,28	10,37	3,63	16,34	4,66	41,49	11,44	
t		0,03	86	0,59	90	0,6	05	0,410		
р		0,97	'1	0,556		0,546		0,682		
Age										
11-13 years	130	15,29	5,50	10,47	3,33	17,08	4,79	42,85	11,63	
14-18 years	76	13,86	5,47	10,75	4,16	15,80	4,54	40,41	11,80	
t		1,81	3	0,532		1,890		1,444		
р		0,07	/1	0,59	0,595		0,060		.50	
Education										
Level										
Middle	97	15,72 ^a	6,08	10,79	3,61	16,80	4,81	43,32	12,48	
School										
High School	46	$14,48^{ab}$	5,37	10,39	3,95	15,74	4,56	40,61	11,69	
Other	63	13,49 ^b	4,41	10,37	3,51	16,95	4,71	40,81	10,42	

Table 3. Gender, age, education, income, and parental education differences in the Social

 Anxiety Scale for Adolescents and its subdimensions

F		3,26	55	0,33	0,335		1,028		1,264	
р		0,04	10	0,71	6	0,3	60	0,2	.85	
Monthly										
Income										
10.000-15.000	47	14,83	4,70	10,45	3,10	16,13	4,51	41,40	10,43	
Ł										
15.000-20.000	47	14,04	5,33	9,98	3,17	15,87	5,10	39,89	11,06	
Ł										
20000 ₺ and	112	15,04	5,92	10,88	4,03	17,13	4,63	43,04	12,45	
above										
F		0,53	38	1,03	35	1,4	89	1,258		
р		0,58	35	0,35	0,357		0,228		0,287	
Mother's Educa	ation L	evel								
Middle	80	14,36	5,93	10,45	4,05	15,54	4,59	40,35	12,70	
School or										
below										
High School	126	15,02	5,25	10,65	3,38	17,29	4,70	42,96	10,99	
t		0,82	27	0,38	34	2,6	36	1,5	63	
p		0,40)9	0,701		0,009		0,120		
Father's Educa	tion Le	vel								
Middle	69	14,52	5,69	10,14	3,59	14,64	4,15	39,30	11,98	
School or										
below										
High School	137	14,88	5,45	10,79	3,67	17,61	4,70	43,28	11,41	
t		0,44	13	1,19	95	4,4	44	2,320		
р		0,65	0,658		33	<0,0)01	0,0	21	
Number of										
Siblings										
1	78	13,58 ^a	4,38	10,03 ^a	3,10	16,35	5,11	39,95 ^a	10,45	
2	83	16,47 ^b	6,14	11,34 ^b	4,18	17,45	4,58	45,25 ^b	12,56	
3 or more	45	$13,67^{a}$	5,39	10,11 ^{ab}	3,30	15,53	4,09	39,31 ^a	10,96	
F		7,05	50	3,12	21	2,627		5,834		
р		<0,0	<0,001		6	0,0	75	0,003		

Note: p<0.05; $\bar{x} = Mean$, SS = Standard Deviation; t = Independent-Samples t-Test, F = One-Way ANOVA Test; Letters (a, b, c) represent the results of post hoc tests, where differences between groups with different letters are statistically significant. FNE = Fear of Negative Evaluation, GS-SAD = Social Avoidance and Discomfort in General Situations, NS-SAD = Social Avoidance and Discomfort in Novel Situations.

A statistically significant difference was found between education level and the FNE subdimension (p < 0.05). The mean score for middle school participants was 15.72 ± 6.08 , for high school participants 14.48 ± 5.37 , and for participants with other education levels 13.49 ± 4.41 . Post hoc Scheffe test results indicated that the mean score of middle school participants was significantly higher than those of participants with other education levels.

A statistically significant difference was identified between mother's education level and the SA-DNS subdimension (p < 0.05). Participants whose mothers had middle school or lower education

levels scored 15.54 ± 4.59 , whereas participants whose mothers were high school graduates scored 17.29 ± 4.70 . The mean score of participants whose mothers had middle school or lower education levels was significantly lower than that of participants whose mothers were high school graduates.

A statistically significant difference was also observed between father's education level and the SA-DNS subdimension (p < 0.001). The mean score for participants whose fathers had middle school or lower education levels was 14.64 ± 4.15, while participants whose fathers were high school graduates scored 17.61 ± 4.70. The mean score of participants whose fathers had middle school or lower education levels was significantly lower than that of participants whose fathers were high school graduates.

Similarly, a statistically significant difference was found between father's education level and the total score of the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (p < 0.05). Participants whose fathers had middle school or lower education levels scored 39.30 ± 11.98 , whereas participants whose fathers were high school graduates scored 43.28 ± 11.41 . The total score of participants whose fathers had middle school or lower education levels was significantly lower than that of participants whose fathers were high school graduates.

A statistically significant difference was identified between the number of siblings and the FNE subdimension (p < 0.001). Participants with one sibling scored 13.58 ± 4.38 , those with two siblings scored 16.47 ± 6.14 , and those with three or more siblings scored 13.67 ± 5.39 . Post hoc Tamhane test results revealed that participants with one or three or more siblings scored significantly lower than those with two siblings.

A statistically significant difference was also observed between the number of siblings and the SA-DGS subdimension (p < 0.05). Participants with one sibling scored 10.03 ± 3.10 , those with two siblings scored 11.34 ± 4.18 , and those with three or more siblings scored 10.11 ± 3.30 . Post hoc Scheffe test results indicated that participants with one sibling scored significantly lower than those with two siblings.

Finally, a statistically significant difference was identified between the number of siblings and the total score of the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (p < 0.05). Participants with one sibling scored 39.95 ± 10.45 , those with two siblings scored 45.25 ± 12.56 , and those with three or more siblings scored 39.31 ± 10.96 . Post hoc Scheffe test results revealed that participants with one or three or more siblings scored significantly lower than those with two siblings.

		the	EIIIOU	on Keg	Julation		uny sc	ale allu	ns ioia				
		Cla	rity	Goals Ir			oulse	Strat	egies	No	on-	Emo	otion
										Accep	otance	Regu	lation
												Difficul	ty Scale
	n	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD
Gender													
Female	133	4 20	1 55	7 85	2.54	5 86	2.42	10.17	3 79	5 59	2.40	33.66	10.21
Mala	73	4 30	1 72	7,05	2,81	6.42	2,12	10,17	4.02	5.40	2,10	33.06	10,21
wiaic	15	4,30	1,72	1,57	2,00	0,42	2,33	10,37	40	3,47	2,27	55,70	10,75
ιι		0,4	F31 (72)	1,2	231	1,.	115	0,5	49	0,4	2/1	0,1	90
р		0,6	53	0,2	212	0,1	115	0,7	28	0,1	/8/	0,8	545
Age													
11-13 vears	130	3,98	1,39	7,38	2,50	5,97	2,41	9,75	3,54	5,37	2,44	32,44	10,01
14-18	76	4.67	1.85	8 20	2.80	6.21	2 57	11.00	1 26	5 87	2 10	36.04	10.66
14-10	70	4,07	1,05	0,20	2,00	0,21	2,37	11,09	4,20	5,67	2,17	50,04	10,00
years		2.0	17	2	175	0.4	-76	2.4	20	1	170		20
t		3,0)4/	2,	1/5	0,0	0/0	2,4	39	1,4	+/0	2,432	
p		0,0	003	0,0)31	0,5	500	0,0	16	0,1	143	0,0	16
Education 1	Level												
Middle School	97	4,18	1,47	7,59	2,53	6,18	2,41	10,12	3,66	5,40	2,41	33,46	10,25
High	46	1 16	1.81	8 20	2.05	6.28	2 55	10.67	1 37	6.11	2 53	35 72	11 44
riigii Saba-1	40	4,40	1,01	0,20	2,93	0,20	2,55	10,07	4,37	0,11	2,55	55,12	11,44
School	(2)	4.1.6	1.67	=	0.55	5.51	0.50	10.11	2.02	5.00	0.11	22.01	0.51
Other	63	4,16	1,67	7,44	2,55	5,71	2,50	10,11	3,83	5,38	2,11	32,81	9,71
F		0,5	571	1,1	193	0,9	910	0,3	66	1,6	553	1,1	.24
р		0,5	566	0,1	305	0,4	404	0,6	94	0,1	194	0,327	
Monthly													
Income													
10.000-	47	4.47	1.36	8.38	3.18	6.19	2.57	10.43	4.42	5.64	2.57	35.11	11.39
15,000 ₺		, .	y	- ,	- , -	- , -	y	- , -	,	-) -	<i>y</i>)	y
15.000-	47	4.06	1 48	7 15	2.00	5 47	1.89	10.30	3.04	5 4 5	1 79	32.43	7 19
20.000-	47	4,00	1,40	7,15	2,00	5,47	1,07	10,50	5,04	5,45	1,79	52,45	7,17
20.000 b	112	4.21	1 75	7 (1	2.59	6.25	2.62	10.14	2.06	5.56	2.40	22 77	11.05
20000 15	112	4,21	1,75	/,01	2,38	0,25	2,62	10,14	3,90	5,50	2,49	33,77	11,05
and													
above													
F		0,7	76	2,712		1,7	762	0,0	94	0,0)79	0,7	'83
р		0,4	162	0,069		0,174		0,9	11	0,9	925	0,4	58
Mother's E	ducatior	n Level											
Middle	80	4,45	1,56	7,90	2,86	6,15	2,65	10,90	4,17	5,83	2,74	35,22	11,23
School													
or below													
High	126	4 10	1.63	7 54	2 48	6.00	2 36	9.83	3 62	5 38	2.07	32.84	9.73
School	120	1,10	1,05	,,,,,,	2,70	5,00	2,30	,05	5,02	5,50	2,07	52,04	2,15
		1.5	17	0.0)56	0./	124	1.0	57	1 (210	1.4	12
t		1,2)+/)))	0,9	240	0,424		1,9	1,957		117	1,0	00
<u> </u>		0,1	123	0,.	540	0,6	012	0,0	32	0,1	109	0,1	Uð
Father's Ed	lucation	Level											
Middle	69	4,33	1,61	7,86	2,53	6,00	2,16	11,01	4,18	6,07	2,56	35,28	10,46
School													
or below													
High	137	4,18	1,61	7,59	2,69	6,09	2,62	9,85	3,65	5,29	2,22	33,01	10,29
t		0.6	534	0.0	577	0.2	240	2.0	49	2.0	264	1.4	85
n		0.5	527	0.4	199	0.5	811		42)25	0.1	39
<u> </u>		0,.		0,-		0,0		0,0		0,0		0,1	
rumper													
01													
Siblings	= ~				# = ·		.		~ -		a		
1	78	4,01	1,54	7,68	2,51	6,03	2,44	9,92	3,36	5,42	2,17	33,06	10,01
2	83	4,47	1,76	7,67	2,69	6,20	2,62	10,63	3,98	5,72	2,45	34,70	10,30
3 or	45	4,18	1,40	7,69	2,79	5,84	2,26	10,09	4,46	5,47	2,54	33,27	11,22
more													
F		1.6	667	0.0	000	0.3	320	0.7	09	0.3	361	0.5	64
n		0.191		1.(000	0.727		0.493		0.697		0.570	

Table 4. Gender, age, education, income, and parental education differences in the subdimensions of the Emotion Regulation Difficulty Scale and its total score

Note: p<0,05; $\bar{x} = Mean$, SD = Standard Deviation; t = Independent-Samples t-Test, <math>F = One-Way ANOVA Test; Letters (a, b, c) represent the results of post hoc tests, where differences between groups with different letters are statistically significant. Subdimensions: Clarity, Goals, Impulse, Strategies, Non-Acceptance, and the total score of the Emotion Regulation Difficulty Scale.

Table 4 presents the analysis of differences between the Emotion Regulation Difficulty Scale and its subdimensions — Clarity, Goals, Impulse, Strategies, and Non-Acceptance — in terms of gender, age, education level, monthly income, mother's education level, father's education level, and the number of siblings.

A statistically significant difference was found between age group and the Clarity subdimension (p < 0.05). The mean score for participants aged 11-13 was 3.98 ± 1.39 , while the mean score for participants aged 14-18 was 4.67 ± 1.85 . The Clarity scores of participants aged 11-13 were significantly lower than those of participants aged 14-18.

A statistically significant difference was observed between age group and the Goals subdimension (p < 0.05). The mean score for participants aged 11-13 was 7.38 ± 2.50 , while the mean score for participants aged 14-18 was 8.20 ± 2.80 . The Goals scores of participants aged 11-13 were significantly lower than those of participants aged 14-18.

A statistically significant difference was also found between age group and the Strategies subdimension (p < 0.05). The mean score for participants aged 11-13 was 9.75 ± 3.54 , while the mean score for participants aged 14-18 was 11.09 ± 4.26 . The Strategies scores of participants aged 11-13 were significantly lower than those of participants aged 14-18.

Similarly, a statistically significant difference was identified between age group and the total score of the Emotion Regulation Difficulty Scale (p < 0.05). The mean score for participants aged 11-13 was 32.44 ± 10.01 , while the mean score for participants aged 14-18 was 36.04 ± 10.66 . The total scores of participants aged 11-13 were significantly lower than those of participants aged 14-18.

Regarding father's education level, a statistically significant difference was found in the Strategies subdimension (p < 0.05). Participants whose fathers had middle school or lower education levels scored 11.01 ± 4.18 , while those whose fathers were high school graduates scored 9.85 ± 3.65 . The Strategies scores of participants whose fathers had middle school or lower education levels were significantly higher.

A statistically significant difference was also observed between father's education level and the Non-Acceptance subdimension (p < 0.05). Participants whose fathers had middle school or lower education levels scored 6.07 ± 2.56, while those whose fathers were high school graduates scored 5.29

 \pm 2.22. The Non-Acceptance scores of participants whose fathers had middle school or lower education levels were significantly higher.

These findings highlight that both age and father's education level significantly influence various dimensions of emotion regulation difficulties, particularly Clarity, Goals, Strategies, and Non-Acceptance, as well as the total difficulty score.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1- Fear of	r	1	,593	,560	,881	,331	,356	,259	,466	,487	,488
Negative	р		<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00
Evaluation	-		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
(FNE)											
2- Social	r		1	,526	,803	,357	,425	,303	,487	,515	,534
Avoidance	р			<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00
and				1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Discomfort											
in General											
Situations											
(GS-SAD)											
3- Social	r			1	,831	,255	,311	,093	,363	,324	,350
Avoidance	р				<,00	<,00	<,00	,183	<,00	<,00	<,00
and					1	1	1		1	1	1
Discomfort											
in Novel											
Situations											
(NS-SAD)											
4- The total	r				1	,370	,425	,254	,518	,520	,537
score of the	р					<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00
Social						1	1	1	1	1	1
Anxiety											
Scale											
5- Clarity	r					1	,448	,268	,493	,319	,589
	р						<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00
							1	1	1	1	1
6- Goals	r						1	,619	,639	,548	,833
	р							<,00	<,00	<,00	<,00
I								1	1	1	l
/- Impulse	r							1	,578	,463	,/5/
	р								<,00	<,00	<,00
0.04 4									1	1	1
8- Strategies	r								1	,695	,907
	р									<,00	<,00
0 N										1	1
9- Non-	r									1	,/85
Acceptance	р										<,00
											1
	r										1

Table 5. Analysis of the relationships between the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents and its subdimensions, and the Emotion Regulation Difficulty Scale and its subdimensions

10- The	р
total score	
of the	
Emotion	
Regulation	
Difficulty	
Scale	

Note: p<0,05; *r* = *Correlation coefficient*

According to Köklü et al. (2006), a correlation coefficient close to 0 or below 0.20 indicates no or very weak relationship. Values between 0.20 and 0.39 indicate a weak relationship, values between 0.40 and 0.59 indicate a moderate relationship, values between 0.60 and 0.79 indicate a strong relationship, and values between 0.80 and 1.0 indicate a very strong relationship.

The analysis shows a positive and weak relationship between the total score of the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents and the Clarity subdimension (r = 0.370, p < 0.001). A positive and moderate relationship is observed between the Social Anxiety Scale and the Goals subdimension (r = 0.425, p < 0.001). Similarly, there is a positive and weak relationship between the Social Anxiety Scale and the Impulse subdimension (r = 0.254, p < 0.001). Moderate positive relationships are found between the Social Anxiety Scale and both the Strategies subdimension (r = 0.518, p < 0.001) and the Non-Acceptance subdimension (r = 0.520, p < 0.001). Additionally, there is a positive and moderate relationship between the Social Anxiety Scale and the total score of the Emotion Regulation Difficulty Scale (r = 0.537, p < 0.001).

These findings suggest that as adolescents' social anxiety increases, their scores on the Clarity, Goals, Impulse, Strategies, and Non-Acceptance subdimensions, as well as their total scores on the Emotion Regulation Difficulty Scale, also increase. This indicates that heightened social anxiety is associated with greater emotion regulation difficulties across multiple dimensions.

4. DISCUSSION

In this study, the relationship between social anxiety levels and emotion regulation difficulties among adolescents participating in sports activities at youth centers was examined. The findings indicate a positive relationship between social anxiety and emotion regulation difficulties among adolescents. This result primarily demonstrates that social anxiety can negatively impact individuals' ability to manage their emotional states. It has been shown that an increase in social anxiety levels also affects individuals' methods of coping with stress (Baker & Hsu, 2017).

In this study, the effects of demographic variables such as gender, age, and education level on social anxiety and emotion regulation difficulties were also examined. The results showed that males

Özcan et al.

have significantly lower levels of social anxiety compared to females. This finding aligns with previous studies suggesting that males experience less anxiety in social interactions and are better at utilizing emotion regulation skills (Mahalik et al., 2003). Additionally, a significant relationship was found between adolescents' education levels and emotion regulation difficulties, with higher education levels being associated with better emotion regulation skills.

The analysis results support the H1 hypothesis (*H1: Social anxiety levels in adolescents significantly differ by gender, age, education level, monthly income, parental education levels, and number of siblings*). It was demonstrated that adolescents' social anxiety levels significantly differ based on demographic factors such as gender, age, education level, parental education levels, and number of siblings. In particular, education level and parents' educational attainment play a critical role in determining adolescents' social anxiety levels. Additionally, the number of siblings was also found to have a significant impact on social anxiety.

The analysis results support the H2 hypothesis (*H2: The level of emotion regulation difficulty in adolescents significantly differs based on gender, age, education level, monthly income, parental education levels, and number of siblings*). It was found that adolescents' levels of emotion regulation difficulty vary according to demographic factors such as age group and father's education level. Younger adolescents experience greater challenges in regulating their emotional experiences, while older adolescents demonstrate more advanced emotional processing skills. Furthermore, the findings reveal that father's education level has a significant impact on emotion regulation strategies and acceptance behaviors.

The correlation results support the H3 hypothesis (H3: There is a positive relationship between social anxiety levels and emotion regulation difficulties in adolescents; individuals with higher levels of social anxiety also experience greater difficulties in emotion regulation). An increase in social anxiety levels significantly raises the likelihood of adolescents experiencing emotion regulation difficulties, with these challenges being associated with various subdimensions (clarity, goals, impulse, strategies, and non-acceptance). These findings suggest that adolescents with higher social anxiety levels have limited ability to manage their emotional experiences, hindering their capacity for a healthier developmental process in this context.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study highlight the relationship between social anxiety levels and emotion regulation difficulties in adolescents, emphasizing the role of demographic factors in this association.

These findings underscore the importance of intervention programs aimed at reducing social anxiety and enhancing emotion regulation skills during adolescence. Future research should explore these relationships in greater detail and support them with longitudinal studies. Moreover, the effects of educational programs and psychological support services targeted at adolescents to reduce social anxiety and improve emotion regulation skills should be investigated.

6. REFERENCES

- 1. Baker, R. W., & Hsu, C. (2017). The relationship between social anxiety and emotional regulation among adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *46*(3), 632-643.
- 2. Beck, A. T., Emery, G., & Greenberg, R. L. (2005). *Anxiety disorders and phobias: A cognitive perspective*. Basic Books/Hachette Book Group.
- 3. Cavanagh, K. (2016). The role of youth centers in promoting mental health and social wellbeing in young people. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *19*(4), 516-532.
- Eriş, Y., & İkiz, F. E. (2013). Ergenlerin benlik saygısı ve sosyal kaygı düzeyleri arasındaki ilişki ve kişisel değişkenlerin etkileri. *Turkish Studies*, 8(6), 179-193. http://dx.doi.org/10.7827/TurkishStudies.4726
- 5. Faraji, H., & Tezcan, A. E. (2023). Rejection sensitivity and fear of intimacy in individuals with and without borderline personality disorder. *Firat Tip Dergisi*, 28(4), 286-295.
- 6. Gross, J. J. (1998). The emerging field of emotion regulation: An integrative review. *Review of General Psychology*, 2(3), 271-299. <u>https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.2.3.271</u>
- Gross, J. J. (1999). Emotion regulation: Past, present, future. *Cognition and Emotion*, 13(5), 551– 573. <u>https://doi.org/10.1080/026999399379186</u>
- 8. Hofmann, S. G., Heinrichs, N., & Kinoshita, L. (1999). The social anxiety scale: Validity and reliability of the scale. *Anxiety*, 5(3), 209-218.
- 9. Işık, E., & Taner, Y. I. (2006). Çocuk, ergen ve yetişkinlerde anksiyete bozuklukları. Asimetrik Paralel Yayınevi.
- Kabacoff, R. I., Segal, D. L., & Winer, C. L. (2000). The relationship between social anxiety and emotional intelligence in college students. *Journal of College Student Development*, 41(4), 407-413.
- 11. Kelleş, F., Kul, M., Karataş, İ., Mülhim, M. A., & Ünlü, Y. (2017). Gençlik merkezindeki serbest zaman etkinliklerine katılan bireylerin sosyal beceri düzeylerinin bazı demografik değişkenlere göre incelenmesi: Adıyaman ili örneği. *Uluslararası Kültürel ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi, 3*(Special Issue 2), 114-141.
- Kessler, R. C., Berglund, P., Demler, O., Jin, R., Merikangas, K. R., & Walters, E. E. (2005). Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62(6), 593–602. <u>https://doi.org/10.1001/archpsyc.62.6.593</u>
- 13. Köklü, N., Büyüköztürk, Ş., & Çokluk Bökeoğlu, Ö. (2006). Sosyal Bilimler için İstatistik. Pegem Yayınları.

- 14. La Greca, A. M., & Lopez, N. (1998). Social anxiety among adolescents: linkages with peer relations and friendships. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 26(2), 83–94. https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1022684520514
- 15. Leary, M. R., & Kowalski, R. M. (1995). Social anxiety. Guilford Press.
- 16. Mahalik, J. R., Burns, S. M., & Syzdek, M. (2007). Masculinity and perceived normative health behaviors as predictors of men's health behaviors. *Social Science & Medicine*, 64, 2201-2209. <u>https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2007.02.035</u>
- 17. McCauley, A., & Egan, J. (2018). The impact of youth programs on socialization: Correlating emotional distress with social competence. *Youth & Society*, *50*(1), 96-118.
- 18. Mo, O. (2002). Ruh sağlığı ve bozuklukları. Nobel Tıp Kitabevi.
- 19. Oatley, K., & Johnson-Laird, P. N. (2014). Cognitive approaches to emotions. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *18*(3), 134–140. <u>https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2013.12.004</u>
- 20. Qualter, P., & Gardner, K. (2012). Emotional intelligence predicts social behavior and school adjustment in children. *Emotion*, 12(5), 928-948.
- 21. Steinberg, L., & Morris, A. S. (2001). Adolescent development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, 83–110. <u>https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.83</u>
- Stepp, S. D., Scott, L. N., Morse, J. Q., Nolf, K. A., Hallquist, M. N., & Pilkonis, P. A. (2014). Emotion dysregulation as a maintenance factor of borderline personality disorder features. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 55(3), 657–666. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.comppsych.2013.11.006
- 23. Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2013). Using multivariate statistics (6th ed.). Allyn & Bacon.
- 24. Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International Journal of Medical Education*, 2, 53–55. <u>https://doi.org/10.5116/ijme.4dfb.8dfd</u>
- 25. Thompson, R. A., & Calkins, S. D. (1996). The double-edged sword: Emotional regulation for children at risk. *Development and Psychopathology*, 8(1), 163–182. <u>https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579400007021</u>
- 26. Van der Molen, J. H., & Baars, A. (2019). Emotional competence in young people: A study into the correlation between social anxiety and emotion regulation. *Journal of Adolescence*, 74, 14-23.
- 27. Xu, Y., Schneier, F., Heimberg, R. G., Pirincisvalle, K., Liebowitz, M. R., Wang, S., & Blanco, C. (2012). Gender differences in social anxiety disorder: Results from the national epidemiologic sample on alcohol and related conditions. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, 26, 12-19. <u>https://doi.org/10.1016/j.janxdis.2011.08.006</u>

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct and intellectual contribution to the work, and approved it for publication.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

FUNDING

This research received no external funding.

COPYRIGHT

© Copyright 2025: Publication Service of the University of Murcia, Murcia, Spain.