

## Coping with Loneliness: Methods Young People Often Prefer<sup>1</sup>

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Doi:10.5901/jesr.2014.v4n6p111

### Abstract

Loneliness is one of the most common distressing experiences that humans encounter and it is defined as "exceedingly unpleasant and driving experience connected with inadequate discharge of the need for human intimacy". Although common to all people, it is accepted that the nature of loneliness is a subjective experience that varies from person to person, occurring under many conditions with a multitude of causes, results and consequences. The aim of this study is to understand how common loneliness is among university students and to reveal which methods they prefer in order to cope with loneliness. With this aim, the UCLA Loneliness Scale and Coping with Loneliness Scale developed by Rokach (1989) was implemented on 429 university students. The Coping with Loneliness Scale consists of six factors including creating a social support network, distancing, acceptance and transformation, self-development and gaining awareness, ignoring, taking shelter in religion and belief, and increasing the number of activities. Results show that students prefer methods such as acceptance and transformation, self-development, gaining awareness, and increasing the number of activities. Moreover, in the research, it has been found that there is a relationship between the loneliness and avoidance and negligence positively, while it is negatively with increasing activity and creating a social support network. Among the methods for dealing with the loneliness which are used by man and woman university students, it has been found that there is a meaningful difference in favour of the men in only the avoidance and negligence. The results have been considered with literature findings.

**Keywords:** Loneliness, Coping With Loneliness, Coping Style of Loneliness, University Student, Gender,

### 1. Introduction

Loneliness is accepted as one of the most general problems that mankind experience. Loneliness which is described as the state that the person feels himself/herself misunderstood and deserted, that he/she perceives himself/herself as desolate and maladaptive and when he/she believes in the fact that there is no person to ask help from when needed or to talk to and as undesired, painful life style, is a problem that can be experienced in every age, every culture, ever socio-economic level and in every social status, particularly in developed countries. The most basic feelings and attitudes which accompany with loneliness are listed as self-alienation, senselessness, emotional obtuseness, social isolation, rejection, pain, sadness, grief, desperation, chaos and feeling of insignificance, mistrust, anger, avoidance from social relations, becoming introverted, self-doubt, psychomatic illnesses, calmness and hopelessness (Rokach, 1988).

It is accepted that loneliness is more frequently experienced in the societies with modernisation. For example, it is confirmed that the number of individuals who lead a solitary life in the United States was 9% in 1950s, while it was identified as 25% in 1992 (Olds & Schwartz, 2000). This proportion is expected as more today. Also in our country, especially in the big cities, the number of the houses which are composed of solitary individuals is increasing gradually (Ozturk, 2006). The people who face with the loneliness phenomenon are not only the adults. It is encountered that there are individuals who experience this problem in every age and in every stage of life. For example, Brigman and Roberts (1986) claimed that 30% of university students had been suffering from loneliness within recent 12 months and that loneliness was the greatest problem for 6% of them (Akt: Mchwhitter, 1990). Many studies are current which show the fact that 15,5% (Bulus, 1997), 33,2% (Eskin, 2001) and 43,3% (Karaoglu, Avsaroglu and Deniz, 2009) of the sample groups of university students suffer from loneliness in Turkey.

Some hypothetic explanations support that loneliness is experienced due to personal inabilities such as low self-reliance, fear from affinity, due to developmental insufficiencies resulting from the environments such as rejecting or

<sup>1</sup> This study was presented in the 2nd International Conference on Human and Social Sciences ICHSS 2012 Congress as verbal announcement. March 23-24 Tirana Albania

emotionally isolating family conditions, abuse or unhappiness sources, due to inability to have close relations resulting from rejecting or hostile communication, or due to translocation, leaving somebody significant or social marginality (Rokach, 2002). Eventhough, there is a belief in the fact that loneliness increases creativity and emotional endurance and helps self-realization, it is undesired because of the fact that it harms human love and intimacy feelings, it prevents the energy from being spent by meaningful ways, it can drag people to life conditions which they are not prepared for such as marriage and gang membership and it is generally accompanied by low living conditions and physical health (Rokach, 2004).

### 1.1 The Methods for Dealing With Loneliness

People try very different ways for the solution of loneliness problem. In the first place, the basic methods for dealing with the loneliness which are accepted as created by the people who suffer from loneliness, there are preferred or developed activities to configure the time spent alone. Therefore, the people whose level of loneliness is higher spend their time generally by using the internet (Chomg-Shyong, Shu-Chen and Chih- Chien, 2011; Cagir and Gurgan, 2010; Esen and Seyiz, 2011; Erdogan, 2008; Ozen and Korukcu- Sarici, 2010; Seepersad, 2004), by watching TV (Cakir and Cakir, 2011), by calling sex lines (Wolfe, 2012), by leaning to pornographic broadcasts (Chaney and Blalok, 2006) more. On the other hand, such tendencies can be both the result of the person's loneliness and the reason for his/her loneliness (Ozen and Korukcu- Sarici, 2010). Therefore, it is asserted that commercial world which is aware of this have established a loneliness industry including pornography, sex lines etc. (Wolfe, 2012). This system used for distracting attention of bored people and for decreasing their lonely feelings is frequently preferred by also lonely people. For example, it is confirmed that the lonely people who are not connected with their social environment are spending their time on the internet more and the biggest proportion of this time is associated with sexual activities (Chaney and Blalok, 2006).

Besides the methods which do not seem to be operational in dealing with the loneliness, there are also some stratagems in which people can discover themselves or which people can realize in their own lives by means of other people's help. For example, it is claimed that it is helpful for especially adolescents who are continuing their 7th, 8th or 9th classes to walk alone to increase positive affection, to configure their daily lives better, to adapt to social environment and to rehandle their social experiences (Larson, 1997). In another study with Turkish sample groups, it is found that adolescents prefer relatively passive activities, searching for relationships, increasing activity, reading-studying, thinking-dreaming in order to get rid of the feeling of loneliness (Eskin, 2001). In Nebraska, United States, it is stated that some adolescents in the rural area use methods such as finding a distracting activity, listening to music, watching TV, exercising, playing with pets, volunteering in studies, calling relatives etc. while few of them claim to use alcohol, cigarette or drugs etc. when they feel alone (Woodward and Frank, 1988).

Other ways which are considered and used in the field of mental health for dealing with loneliness are social competence education, providing with social support, creating environments for increasing the possibility of social interactions and changing non-operational social cognition (Hawkey and Cacioppo, 2010). According to the fundamental methods for the consultants who are working with lonely people offered by Booth (1983) is to change lonely people's belief in desperation and in the fact that the conditions cannot be changed. It is also important to help lonely people to make their expectations from interpersonal relations to be realistic and helping people to deal with the past painful experiences should be aimed at if there are any or they are associated with their loneliness. It is suggested to create a solution plan in order to show that loneliness is not a depression and to make the individual understand and accept the loneliness.

The person to make the most studies in the field of dealing with the loneliness with either individually or with his counterparts is Ami Rokach (Rokach, 1990; Rokach, 1999; Rokach 2000; Rokach, 2001; Rokach, 2005; Rokach, 2006; Rokach, 2009; Rokach and Brook, 1998; Rokach, Findler, Chin, Lev and Kollender, 2013; Rokach and Neto, 2000; Rokach, Orzeck and Neto, 2004). The Scale Factor of Dealing With Loneliness developed by Rokach and also used in this study is composed of six factors: *acceptance and transformation*, *gaining personal development and awareness*, *creating a social support network*, *avoidance and negligence*, *taking refuge in religion and faith*, and *increasing activity*. As a method for dealing with the loneliness *acceptance and transformation*, it is meant for the person to understand himself/herself, his/her fears, needs, desires and to understand and accept his/her loneliness, pain resulting from this loneliness. *Gaining personal development and awareness* is described as taking professional help and support, increasing his/her personal development by joining different focus groups, as person's understanding himself/herself and as increasing peacefulness with himself/herself, while *creating a social support network* is described as by refreshing current and old social networks or by creating new social connections to make the person feel connected with other

people. Another method for dealing with the loneliness, *avoidance and negligence*, is accepted as the person's negligence of the experience, usage of alcohol or drugs, or trying to decrease the pain of loneliness by some abnormal attitudes. *Taking refuge in religion and faith* is described as ensuring inner strength, feeling of belonging to, experiencing the feeling of society and as creating inner peace by means of joining in religious communities and satisfying religious requirements. Lastly, *increasing activity* is described as increasing the individual's social connections, filling the gaps with both alone and group activities besides daily responsibilities (Rokach & Brock, 1998).

The mentioned scale factor is the source for collecting data for a lot of studies conducted by Rokach and his counterparts. Therefore, for example, it is claimed that the women who have experienced domestic violence (Rokach, 2006), drug addicts (2005), psychological patients (Rokach, 2009), cancer patients (Rokach, 2000; Rocah, Findler, Chin, Lev and Kollender, 2013) use much more different methods when they are compared to normal individuals in the societies. For example, the women who have experienced domestic violence use *gaining personal development and awareness, avoidance and negligence* and *taking refuge in religion and faith* more than others who have not experienced it (Rokach, 2006). While drug users use *acceptance and transformation* less, and *avoidance and negligence* more than the rest of the society in dealing with the loneliness (Rokach, 2005).

The main purpose of this study is to find out in what frequencies the Turkish university students who continue their education use which methods in dealing with the loneliness. Moreover, in the context of this research, it is going to be examined whether there is a connection between the level of loneliness and the preferred methods and whether there is a meaningful difference due to sexes in terms of dealing with the loneliness or not.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Study Group

This research was conducted in 2013-2014 Fall term with 429 students continuing their education from different departments and levels of educations of Education Faculty who accepted to work voluntarily and was selected by basic random sampling method in Mugla Sıtkı Kocman University. 67,6% of them were women (290), 32,4% of them were men (139) between the ages of 17 and 38 ( $X:22,28$   $Ss:3,49$ ).

#### 2.1.1 UCLA Loneliness Scale

The scale factor which was developed by Russel, Peplau and Ferguson (1980) and which was adapted to Turkish by Demir (1989) includes 20 questions and it gives a loneliness point with single dimension. The more there are points taken from the scale factor, the more the loneliness point increases. The less there are points taken from the measurement, the less the loneliness point is. In the evaluations conducted to test the validity and reliability of the scale factor, the parameter of the internal consistency has been found to be .96, and the correlation parameter of the two applications has been found to be .94 by means of test-after-test method. The reliability of the test has been conducted by Beck Depression Inventory and the correlation parameter between the has been found to be .82. Again, Demir (1989) looked at the difference of the average points of the complainant and the non-complainant and the difference between the two was found to be significant ( $t=6.29 < 0.001$ ).

#### 2.1.2 The Scale of Dealing With the Loneliness

The Scale Factor of Dealing With the Loneliness including six factors 86 questions which answer 55% of the variance and include the used strategies for dealing with the loneliness has been developed by Rokach (1990) after an evaluation which is conducted with 526 adolescents and adults between the ages of 18 and 84, approximately 30\*\*, from different kinds of life conditions (Rokach, 2001; Rokach & Brook, 1998). After that, a smaller form of the same scale factor with 34 questions and six dimensions which explain the 33% of the variance has been created (Rokach, Orzeck & Brook, 2004). In the scale factor, these stratagems are classified as *acceptance and transformation, gaining personal development and awareness, creating a social support network, avoidance and negligence, taking refuge in religion and faith, and increasing activity*. The coefficient of the internal consistency of the scale factor changes between .55 and .96 for every subunit. For the whole internal consistency of the scale factor is found to be .94. The adaptation of the scale factor in Turkey has been done by Bacanlı in order to compare the methods used by the Turkish, Argentinean and Canadian sample groups in dealing with the loneliness (Rokach, Bacanlı and Rambean, 2001). Some statistical features of the

scale factor has been examined in the context of this research. In this study, the internal consistency of this scale factor has been found alpha .71,26. It is also encountered to a structure, which is limited by six factors, which has eigenvalue of 1 and more, and which is consistent with the original scale factor, explains 36,37% of the variance in the examination of the form of the scale factor.

### 3. Results

First of all in the context of the research, what kind of methods used by the university students there are and which kind of a preference list there is used in terms of dealing with the loneliness were examined. Then, it was examined what kind of a relationship there is between the loneliness and the methods for dealing with it and lastly, whether there is a difference between the methods chosen by women and men or not.

**Table-1:** The mean, standart deviation and priority order of the methods used by the university students

Başetme Yolları	N	X	Ss	Pref.
Acceptance and transformation	429	,7949	,2304	1
Creating a social support network	429	,5890	,2785	2
Taking refuge in religion and faith	429	,4406	,2386	3
Increasing activity	429	,4222	,2161	4
Gaining personal development and awareness	429	,2435	,2135	5
Avoidance and negligence	428	,1642	,1795	6

In the context of the research, first of all, the priority of the preferences of the university students in terms of dealing with the loneliness was considered. According to this; the university students prefer *acceptance and transformation* the most (X: ,7949, Sd: ,2304), secondly, *creating a social support network* (X: ,5890, Sd: ,2785), thirdly, *taking refuge in religion and faith* (X: ,4406, Sd: ,2386), and then, *increasing activity* (X: ,4222, Sd: ,2161). The last two methods preferred by the university students are, respectively, *gaining personal development and awareness* (X: ,2435, Sd: ,2135) and *avoidance and negligence* (X: ,1642, Sd: ,1795).

**Table-2:** The evaluation of the relationship between the loneliness and the methods used for dealing with it according to the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient

Coping Style	Acceptance and transformation	Gaining personal development and awareness	Creating a social support network	Avoidance and negligence	Taking refuge in religion and faith	Increasing activity
Loneliness	,007	,019	-,124(*)	,236(**)	,001	-,172(**)

(\*p< .05, \*\*p<.001

Secondly, in the context of the research, the relationship between the level of the loneliness and the methods used for dealing with it was examined. As it is seen in the Table 2, the strongest relationship between the loneliness and the methods used for dealing with it was observed in the *avoidance and negligence* dimension (r=,236, p>,05). There is a positive and significant relationship, though it is low (.01), between the loneliness and *avoidance and negligence*. The other main methods used for dealing with the loneliness which show significant relationships between the loneliness are *increasing activity* (r=-,172, p>,05) and *creating a social support network* (r=-,124, p>,05). The relationship between these and the loneliness is negative and statistically significant. Lastly, it was found that there was no significant relationship between the loneliness and other methods such as *acceptance and transformation* (r= ,007, p>,05), *gaining personal development and awareness* (r=,019, p> ,05) and *increasing activity* (r= ,001, p> ,05).

**Tablo-3:** The evaluation of the differences which are peculiar to genders by t Test in terms of dealing with the loneliness

	Gender	N	X	Ss	t	P
Acceptance and transformation	Girl	290	4,7621	1,3727	,406	,930
	Boy	139	4,7842	1,4079		
Gaining personal development and awareness	Girl	290	1,2034	1,0440	1,472	,703
	Boy	138	1,2464	1,1193		
Creating a social support network	Girl	290	1,7310	,7958	2,246	,182
	Boy	139	1,8417	,9110		
Avoidance and negligence	Girl	289	,8789	,9909	47,287	,000**
	Boy	139	1,7122	1,5381		
Taking refuge in religion and faith	Girl	290	2,2483	1,1408	3,198	,253
	Boy	139	2,1079	1,2949		
Increasing activity	Girl	290	3,7828	1,9325	,258	,931
	Boy	139	3,8345	1,9767		

(\*p< .05, \*\*p<.001)

Lastly, in the context of the research, it was examined whether there is a change according to the genders in terms of dealing with the loneliness or not. As it is seen in the Table 3, it was encountered that there was not any significant difference between the dimensions in terms of dealing with the loneliness used by men and women students such as *acceptance and transformation* (t=.406, p>0.05), *gaining personal development and awareness* (t=1,472, p>0.05), *creating a social support network* (t=2,246, p>0.05), *taking refuge in religion and faith* (t=3,198, p>0.05) and *increasing activity* (t=.258, p>0.05). The only significant difference between the two groups was observed in the dimension of *avoidance and negligence*. According to this, the average use of men of *the avoidance and negligence* method (X:1,7122, Sd: 1,5381) is more than that of women (X: ,8789, Sd: ,9909) and the difference is statistically significant (t=47,287, p<0.05).

The meaningful effects of the *acceptance and transformation*, *gaining personal development and awareness* and *taking refuge in religion and faith* can be explained as such. In reality, among the main methods for dealing with the loneliness, recommendations for accepting, understanding the problem of the loneliness of the individuals are frequently offered to the consultants who work with lonely individuals. For example, lessening the belief in being desperate and in unchangeable conditions should be shown to be the primary aims. A solution plan is suggested in order to show people that the loneliness is not a depression and to make them understand and accept their loneliness. Again, some cognitive methods are offered in order to make the expectations of these individuals to be realistic about interpersonal relationships (Hawkey and Cacioppo, 2010) and to make them deal with their painful experiences, if any or associated with their loneliness (Booth, 1983). Moreover, a process including first of all, the acceptance, preparation for the transformation and then, taking action is suggested in the field of the consultation theories. For example, The Existential Therapy suggests a process including taking responsibility, encountering and then taking action of the individual about his/her problems. Likely, The Gestalt Therapy suggests a process including first of all, the individual's acceptance of the current situation, then being aware of the fact that it is a choice and lastly, taking responsibility and initiative in terms of solving this problem (Harris, 1989, Redrived Akkoyun, 2001:57).

Lastly, it was examined whether there are differences peculiar to the genders in terms of dealing with the loneliness, in the context of the research. The only significant difference about this topic is that the men students use the *avoidance and negligence* more meaningfully than the women students. *Avoidance and negligence*, is accepted as the person's negligence of the experience, usage of alcohol or drugs, or trying to decrease the pain of loneliness by some abnormal attitudes. Furthermore, the drug addicts use the *avoidance and negligence* more than the average people in the society in terms of dealing with the loneliness (Rokach, 2005). Indeed, the problems such as alcohol or drug use are more among men than the women frequently. Also in a study conducted by Yilman (1996), the boy students are under risk mostly in terms of alcohol and drug use among the ones who continue their secondary and higher education and they use alcohol and drugs more than the girl students (Redrived, Korkut, 2004).

#### 4. Discussion

According to the research result, the Turkish university sample use mostly *acceptance and transformation* stratagem in terms of dealing with the loneliness. This strategy is followed respectively, *creating a social support network*, *taking*

*refuge in religion and faith and increasing activity. Acceptance and transformation*, as a method, is an operational method in terms of dealing with the loneliness. It makes the individual create a close connection with himself/herself by recessing quietly, join into an internal evaluation and as a result, confront his/her loneliness and accept the fact (Rokach and Brock, 1998; 111). The individual's understanding of himself/herself, his/her fears, needs and desires mean his/her ability to accept his/her loneliness and the pain resulting from this loneliness (Rokach, 1991, 2001; Rokach, Orzeck and Neto, 2004). Therefore, it is accepted that the individual can use his/her own sources better and then, can make his/her status be configurated again mentally in order to deal with the loneliness. Indeed, eventhough the acceptance and transformation is a quiet and inwardly developing process, it means directly to confront with the fearful aspects full of pain, fear and anger which are avoided to be come up against. However, without considering the health condition of the individuals after the confrontation, it is accepted that this experience includes the pleasure of discovering himself/herself and the confrontation with his/her own essence, that as a result, they arrive at a stronger and better psychological condition and at an internal harmony (Rokach, 2000). Also the individuals who suffer from the loneliness and who use the acceptance and transformation method in dealing with the loneliness say that they see loneliness as a good luck, then that they contemplate more about themselves, their lives and problems and as a result, that they can create new targets in their lives (Rokach, 1990).

For example, it is claimed that it is helpful for especially adolescents who are continuing their 7th, 8th or 9th classes to walk alone to increase positive affection, to configure their daily lives better, to adapt to social environment and to rehandle their social experiences (Larson, 1997). In another study in Nebraska, United States, it is stated that some adolescents in the rural area use methods such as finding a distracting activity, listening to music, watching TV, exercising, playing with pets, volunteering in studies, calling relatives etc. while few of them claim to use alcohol, cigarette or drugs etc. when they feel alone (Woodward and Frank, 1988). While, in one study which is conducted with the Turkish sample groups, it is found that adolescents prefer relatively passive activities, searching for relationships, increasing activity, reading-studying, thinking-dreaming in order to get rid of the feeling of loneliness (Eskin, 2001). The most preferred passive activities of the adolescents of the studies of both Woodward and Frank (1988) and Eskin (2001) can be thought as helpful operational preferences contributing to the acceptance and transformation at the same time. Therefore, the university students claim a consistent data by indicating that they use the acceptance and transformation mostly.

The second way which the university students use in dealing with the loneliness, *creating a social support network* is described as by refreshing current and old social networks or by creating new social connections to make the person feel connected with other people. This situation is a satisfying state of the people's feelings about the fact that they are connected with other people and are important for other people. Thus, it is used by the individuals against loneliness. Moreover, within the consultancy recommendations of the methods in dealing with the loneliness, creating the environment which can increase the possibility of social interaction is among the fundamental methods such as social competence education, providing with social support and changing the social cognitions which are not functional at all (Hawkey and Cacioppo, 2010).

The third method which are said to be used by the university students in dealing with the loneliness is *taking refuge in religion and faith. Taking refuge in religion and faith* is described as ensuring inner strength, feeling of belonging to, experiencing the feeling of society and as creating inner peace by means of joining in religious communities and satisfying religious requirements. Another two methods in dealing with the loneliness are *increasing activity* and *gaining personal development and awareness*. *Increasing activity* method is described as increasing the individual's social connections, filling the gaps with both alone and group activities besides daily responsibilities (Rokach, 1990; Rokach and Neto, 2000). However, in an evaluation in which the connection between the methods in dealing with the loneliness and the loneliness is researched, the increasing activity method is seen to have a meaningful connection in .01 level negatively with the loneliness. It means the fact that the more increasing the activities, the less loneliness there is. Both the adolescent Turkish group of Eskin (2001) and the American adolescent groups of Woodward and Frank (1988) claim that they use frequently the methods such as increasing activity, listening to music, watching TV, exercising, playing with pets, joining in voluntary activities.

*Gaining personal development and awareness* is, on the other hand, described as taking professional help and support, increasing his/her personal development by joining different focus groups, as person's understanding himself/herself and as increasing peacefulness with himself/herself (Rokach, 1990; Rokach and Neto, 2000). For the Turkish sample, aiming at a the increase of the personal development by personal development groups, getting personal support and by joining in different focus groups, is a newly developing life habit. Therefore, for the university students, seeing and preferring these ways as solution is not privileged in terms of dealing with the loneliness. This situation can



be also associated with cultural messages. For example, in a study conducted by Tayli and Bulut (2007), some developments which are observed in the individuals who have experienced some earthquake-like actions and positive developments called as Post Traumatic Growth, have different meanings for the Turkish and American samples separately. For example, for the Turkish sample the trauma does not mean *new opportunities*, while the scale factor of Post Traumatic Growth is conceptualised as five dimension, one of them is being *new opportunities*, the Turkish sample is scaled as four dimension without new opportunities.

A striking result of this research is that the *avoidance and negligence* is the least preferred method in dealing with loneliness among Turkish university students. As a method for dealing with the loneliness, *avoidance and negligence* is accepted as the person's negligence of the experience, usage of alcohol or drugs, or trying to decrease the pain of loneliness by some abnormal attitudes (Rokach, 1990; Rokach and Neto, 2000). Moreover, by understanding the fact that drug users use *acceptance and transformation* less, and *avoidance and negligence* more than the rest of the society in dealing with the loneliness (Rokach, 2005), it can be understood that the individuals who refuse to confront with their loneliness neglect the problem instead of confronting with it as a defend mechanism. Also, the second way in dealing with the loneliness used by the women who are exposed to domestic violence is the avoidance and negligence method (Rokach, 2006).

At the same time, the fact that the people whose level of loneliness is higher spend their time generally by using the internet (Chomg-Shyong, Shu-Chen and Chih- Chien, 2011; Cagir and Gurgan, 2010; Esen and Seyiz, 2011; Erdogan, 2008; Ozen and Korukcu- Sarici, 2010; Seepersad, 2004), by watching TV (Cakir and Cakir, 2011), by calling sex lines (Wolfe, 2012), by leaning to pornographic broadcasts (Chaney and Blalok, 2006) more, can be accepted as the signals of avoidance and negligence.

In the context of the research, the positive and negative relationship between the methods for dealing with the loneliness and the loneliness itself is examined. *Avoidance and negligence* is the strongest method to have a connection with the loneliness and the only method to have a positive connection with it. It means the more the level of loneliness increase, the more avoidance and negligence there is. On the other hand, there is a negative meaningful relationship between the increasing activity, creating a social support network and the loneliness. thus, the more avoidance and negligence there is, the more level of loneliness increase, while the most effective ways for decreasing the level of loneliness are the increasing activity and creating a social support network methods. Other ways which are considered and used in the field of mental health for dealing with loneliness are social competence education, providing with social support, creating environments for increasing the possibility of social interactions and changing non-operational social cognition (Hawkey and Cacioppo, 2010).

The meaningful effects of the *acceptance and transformation, gaining personal development and awareness and taking refuge in religion and faith* can be explained as such. In reality, among the main methods for dealing with the loneliness, recommendations for accepting, understanding the problem of the loneliness of the individuals are frequently offered to the consultants who work with lonely individuals. For example, lessening the belief in being desperate and in unchangeable conditions should be shown to be the primary aims. A solution plan is suggested in order to show people that the loneliness is not a depression and to make them understand and accept their loneliness. Again, some cognitive methods are offered in order to make the expectations of these individuals to be realistic about interpersonal relationships (Hawkey and Cacioppo, 2010) and to make them deal with their painful experiences, if any or associated with their loneliness (Booth, 1983). Moreover, a process including first of all, the acceptance, preparation for the transformation and then, taking action is suggested in the field of the consultation theories. For example, The Existential Therapy suggests a process including taking responsibility, encountering and then taking action of the individual about his/her problems. Likely, The Gestalt Therapy suggests a process including first of all, the individual's acceptance of the current situation, then being aware of the fact that it is a choice and lastly, taking responsibility and initiative in terms of solving this problem (Harris, 1989, Akt: Akkoyun, 2001:57).

Lastly, it was examined whether there are differences peculiar to the genders in terms of dealing with the loneliness, in the context of the research. The only significant difference about this topic is that the men students use the *avoidance and negligence* more meaningfully than the women students. *Avoidance and negligence*, is accepted as the person's negligence of the experience, usage of alcohol or drugs, or trying to decrease the pain of loneliness by some abnormal attitudes. Furthermore, the drug addicts use the *avoidance and negligence* more than the average people in the society in terms of dealing with the loneliness (Rokach, 2005). Indeed, the problems such as alcohol or drug use are more among men than the women frequently. Also in a study conducted by Yilman (1996), the boy students are under risk mostly in terms of alcohol and drug use among the ones who continue their secondary and higher education and they use alcohol and drugs more than the girl students (Akt. Korkut, 2004).

## 5. Conclusion and the Recommendations

According to Rokach (2004), loneliness is a part of the existence which is essential to mankind such as life, death, relaxing, enjoying, and feeling pain etc. However, it is a problem to be controlled when this is not the preference of the person and it is harmful. Therefore, ensuring the understanding how the loneliness is a problem, what its causes are, its nature, its prevalence by some research can be the first step of controlling the loneliness. Also, when working with the individuals who suffer from loneliness, the university students should be made aware of the advantages and the disadvantages of the methods used for dealing with the loneliness. For example, it should be known that the lonely people are more prone to be abused in terms of sexually, emotionally and economically by usage of non-operational alcohol or drug use, using the internet intensely, spending their time with pornographic broadcasts more. On the other hand, the stratagems contributing to the socialization of the individual such as increasing activity and the stratagems contributing to the loneliness such as shyness, lack of confidence, inability to communicate aimed at personal development and methods in order to make the individual understand and accept himself/herself and his/her own conditions, are more operational. Moreover, this situation is indicated by the frequent recommendations of the people who study in the field of mental health (Booth, 1983; Hawky and Cacioppo, 2010).

The university management and the university consultancy centers are the ones which will prepare the appropriate foundation according to these functional stratagems. Therefore, these findings should be considered in the regulations for preventing and in the discussions. To create appropriate conditions within the campus or in the city in which the university is located or within closer distances can be the primary aims on which the activities such as the daily long walkings (Larson, 1997), exercising, joining in voluntary actions (Woodward and Frank, 1988), increasing activity, searching for relationships, reading, studying (Eskin, 2001) which are considered as operational in dealing with the loneliness and as discovered by the young people by themselves, can be realised.

On the other hand, as the reason for the problem of loneliness can change for every individual, the methods for dealing with the loneliness can change according to the personal characteristics and conditions. For example, it is recommended for the homeless young people to feed pets as a functional method and it is observed to be effective (Rew, 2000). Again, it is claimed that in the people without social support, especially adults whose psychological endurance levels are higher, the nostalgia which can be also accepted as taking refuge in the past memories, can be used as a psychological resource for protection and maintenance of the individuals' mental health (Zhou, Sedikides, Wildshut and Gao, 2008). In another study, for the children who live in reformatories and who complain being neglected, visiting relatives and creating and conducting activities which can make them have connection with other children in the reformatory are used as operational solutions (Gudzinskiene, 2011). Considering this and similar examples, it will be appropriate for developing methods according to every lonely individual separately.

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