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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Women in Emerging Adulthood: Employment, Education and Related Psychological Indicators of Women in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Being a woman seems to be a challenging issue universally in various situations. Especially when the marriage age comes in emerging adulthood, women seem to come towards a place where there are several paths going on different routes. In this study, it is investigated whether women in emerging adulthood differentiate in terms of life goal setting and resilience according to the condition they are active in education and/or work life. A two-way MANOVA is used for analysis. The participant group is made up of women who are between the ages of 18-29 and who have experienced at least one stress-invoking life event. The findings show that the women in emerging adulthood do not significantly differentiate in terms of life goal setting and resilience according to the situation in which they are active, in education and/or work life. However, the scores show that the life goal setting scores of women that are active in both education and work life are higher than the other groups. Also, the women who are not active either in education or in work life have the highest resilience scores among the groups. Finally, it is shown that the highest score among the life goals belongs to career goal setting.

Keywords: Women, Employment, Education, Life Goal Setting, Resilience

Introduction

The conditions of inclusion into the work life and continuing the education life might change according to the cultural qualities of the society, especially for women. This situation seems to be a universal reality. For instance, in the EU, not having a position in work life is more prevalent for women who have a child. Thus, the interpretation is being made that becoming a parent makes this discrepancy greater in all the member countries (European Commission, 2021, p.9). For this reason, even in societies where the conditions are very advantageous for women, it can be seen that there is a strong relation between women's participation in work life and their engagements at home. The tendency of exclusion of women from education and work life increases with age. However, this is not valid for men (OECD, 2019, p.132). Furthermore, fewer women, in comparison to men, indicate that they have fair opportunities to be a part of appropriate conditions of education and work life (European Commission, 2020, p.95). It can be suggested that there are some disadvantages which are experienced by women in terms of work and education life. These disadvantages might have some psychological indicators, especially when women experience at least one stress-invoking life event.

It has been suggested that in Turkey, the main problem regarding the employment of women is the weak association of women to labour market participation. The formal data shows that domestic responsibilities play an important role in not strongly engaging in labour market participation (İlkkaracan, 2019, p.63). The NEET group (Not in education, employment, or training) ratio between women is higher because of domestic roles (Yüksel-Arabacı, 2020, p.127). From this point of view, it can be said that the maintenance of women in labour market participation might not be easy.

It is indicated that continuity in the labour market and arriving at hierarchically higher positions are related to female flexibility in work life. This flexibility can be explained via the discontinuities and periods of stability and transition that are the norm for women. According to these issues, the path of women in labour market participation has a non-linear nature. Additionally, these interruptions are linked to the relationships that women are engaged in (Caffarella and Olson, 1993, p.125). Perhaps for this reason, female flexibility was primarily a strategy used by firms to oblige women to accept underemployment (Nicole-Drancourt, 1990, p.173).

It has been suggested that this situation is also associated with the socialization practices women are in. Within this context,

gender stereotypes and gender-specific socialization practices affect individuals' viewpoints, thinking, judgements, selfconcepts and social behaviour. In childhood, girls are socialized to build caring and constructive relationships with others (Cross and Madson, 1997, p.5). The outputs of these practices continue in the following periods, for instance, the scores indicating the compassionate dimension of wisdom are shown to be higher than men (Cheraghi, Kadivar, Ardelt, Asgari and Farzad, 2015, p.3). Renowned psychologist Erik Erikson (1968) said that the identity of a woman cannot be completed until she has a close relationship. In North America, where everyone is encouraged to value autonomy and achievement, women are still encouraged to focus on relationships and are, in one way or another, required to be relationship experts. The source of this divergence is a matter of considerable debate, but women continue to be the ones who are more likely to define themselves in terms of their relationships with specific others: Children, spouses, work colleagues and friends (Oyserman and Markus, 1993, p.187). However, there are findings in the literature not validating the opinions of Erikson about the identity of women (Tesch and Whitbourne, 1982, p.1041).

Education has an important role in labour market participation and the continuance of participation of women. In Turkey, it is indicated that, as the education levels of women increase, their participation in the labour market also increases (Öçel, 2019, p.114). Nonetheless, as age increases, this association seems to take on a negative quality and also the civil status of women becomes an important factor in labour force participation (Dublen, 2014, p.90). It is stated that women in Turkey withdraw from the labour market (Yüksel-Arabacı, 2020, p.103) and that marriage has a limiting effect on labour force participation of women (Toksöz, 2018, p.128).

However, it can be stated that the relations of women with the notion of "work" are remarkable. When women are in rural regions, they were working in the grub up and harvesting processes, which are very tiresome (Morvaridi, 1992, p.567). For this reason, it was a long-awaited situation to be a housewife after migrating from a rural region to an urban region (Özbay, 2015, p.115). In summary, there are several concrete factors conditioning whether women would participate in the labour market or not. Also, there are some psychological and intellectual factors which determine the decision of whether to participate in the labour market or not. Therefore, it is compulsory to investigate the psychological indicators of women both continuing education and /or work life and not continuing. This research aims to investigate the life goal setting and resilience of women in emerging adulthood in terms of being active in education and/or work life.

Materials & Methods

This research was conducted via a relational surveillance model and has a quantitative method. A two-way MANOVA was conducted for answering the research questions. MANOVA is the generalized type of ANOVA that is used when there is more than one dependent variable (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2015, p.245).

Participants

This study consists of people in emerging adulthood. The data analysed was gathered from 260 women who were between the ages of 18-29. The sampling method is purposive sampling, and the sample consists of people who declared that they had experienced at least one stress-evoking life event. People who declared that they had not experienced any stress-evoking life events are excluded from the data set. The study was approved by the Ankara University Social Research Ethical Committee on 24th June 2019, with decision number 249.

The participants who indicated that they are working have different occupations. The occupations of the women are tradespeople, waiting staff, a pharmacist, a designer, a chef, a financier, an engineer, a teacher, a dentist, a psychological counsellor, an academic, a child development specialist, a nurse, a physical therapy aide, a dietician, a biologist, a bank employee and a photographer. There are also participants who indicated that their occupation was a student or a housewife. Table 1 shows the socio-demographic information of the participants.

The stressors experienced by the participants were: 44.9% experienced economic difficulties, 44.5% experienced the loss of a loved one and 41.9% experienced family conflict.

Instruments

The data of the research was gathered via a personal information form, the Resilience Scale (Wagnild and Young, 1993) and The Scale of Setting Life Goals with Respect to Positive Psychotherapy (Eryılmaz, 2012). These instruments are introduced below.

Resilience Scale

The Resilience Scale was developed by Wagnild and Young (1993) and adapted into Turkish by Terzi (2006). The scale consists of 24 items and is a seven-point Likert scale. The adaptation study was conducted with university students. Construct validity was

Table 1. *Socio-Demographic Information about the Participants*

Variables	Group	N	%
Age	18	13	4.8
	19	17	6.6
	20	42	16.3
	21	44	17.2
	22	47	18.1
	23	24	9.3
	24	13	4.8
	25	7	2.6
	26	7	2.6
	27	13	5.3
	28	18	6.6
	29	15	5.8
Civil status	Single	229	88.1
	Pledged for loyalty	5	1.8
	Engaged	1	0.4
	Married	25	9.7
Child	Have	13	4.8
	Have not	247	95.2
Education level	Primary	0	0
	Secondary	4	1.3
	High school	167	64.8
	Two-year degree	4	1.3
	Undergraduate	78	30.0
	Graduate	7	2.6
Work	Not working	207	79.7
	Working	53	20.3
Continue education now	Yes	179	69.2
	No	81	30.08

Note: The percentiles are calculated according to the participant group (n=260)

investigated via factor analysis. In the first factor analysis, two items showed factor loadings on both of the factors. These two items were excluded and factor analysis was carried out again. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient is .82; the test-retest reliability coefficient is .84. Item-total correlations are between .03 and .69 (Terzi, 2006, p.77).

The Scale of Setting Life Goals with Respect to Positive Psychotherapy

The Scale of Setting Life Goals with Respect to Positive Psychotherapy was developed by Eryılmaz (2010) for adolescents and the version for university students was adapted by Eryılmaz (2012). The scale consists of 9 items and is a four-point Likert scale. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted and a structure which is made up of three factors and which explains 69.55% of the total variance was attained. The three factors were career goal setting, relation goal setting and body sensation goal setting. The reliability coefficients of the subdimensions were between 0.72 and 0.85 (Eryılmaz, 2012, p.170).

Data Analysis

The data analysis of the gathered data was performed by IBM SPSS. The relationships between the variables were investigated via MANOVA. Before the analyses, the necessary conditions for multivariate techniques were checked. Extreme values, missing values, normality, linearity and homogeneity of variances, multicollinearity and singularity were checked (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2015, p.60). Missing values were explored and it was seen that they do not have a pattern. Five rows were deleted which had missing values. Univariate outlier investigation was conducted via stem and leaf graphics. The Z values of more than +3 and less than -3 were outliers (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu and Büyüköztürk, 2012, p.14). The data of 4 people who did not have Z values between

+3 and -3 were excluded from the data set. Multivariate outlier investigation was carried out via Mahalanobis distances. The data analysis was performed with the data of 260 participants.

Results

A two-way MANOVA was conducted to test the effect of the situation whether the person was working or not (independent variable with two levels) and whether she was in education or not (independent variable with two levels) on two dependent variables: Life goal setting and resilience. The means and standard deviations of the dependent variables with regard to the independent variables are given in Table 2.

Table 2. *The Scores of Life Goal Setting and Resilience According to Being in Education Life and/or Work Life*

Dependent variables	Work life	Education Life	M	SD	N
Life Goal Setting	Working	In Education	25.77	6.38	31
	Working	Not In Education	23.29	6.65	44
	Not working	In Education	25.15	5.98	140
	Not working	Not In Education	25.33	5.41	45
Resilience	Working	In Education	128.83	32.77	31
	Working	Not In Education	129.43	18.80	44
	Not working	In Education	128.99	20.74	140
	Not working	Not In Education	130.48	24.03	45

It can be seen in Table 2 that the numbers of people for each cell are more than 30 and the assumption of homogeneity of covariance matrices assumption is not violated both for life goal setting and resilience, since the significance value is bigger than .001 (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2015). The results of two-way MANOVA are presented below.

$F_{(2, 255)}=1.31$; p=.27; Wilk's Lambda= .99; partial eta squared= .01

Table 3. *The Results of Two-Way MANOVA*

		ANOVA	
Variable	*MANOVA*	*LGS*	*RES*
	$F_{(2, 257)}$	$F_{(1, 258)}$	$F_{(1, 258)}$
Group	1.31	2.289	0.019

LGS: Life goal setting, RES: Resilience

It can be seen in Table 3 that, there are no significant differences between the groups. The significance of Wilk's Lambda for independent varriables is not under .05. According to the analysis, there was not a statistically significant differentiation of life goal setting and resilience according to the work life and the actual education life.

In further investigation, the scores of the life goal setting and resilience were explored and it was seen that the life goal setting scores of the women who were active in education and work life were higher than the group who did not participate in education

but participated in work life. The highest score for life goal setting belonged to the women who were active in both education and work life (M=25.77, SD=6.38).

When resilience scores were explored, the highest resilience scores belonged to the group who were neither in education nor in work (M=130.48, SD=24.03). Finally, the life goal setting scores were explored according to the goal types and it was seen that the highest score of goal setting belongs to career goal setting (M=8.67).

Discussion

The results indicate that the life goal setting and resilience scores of women in emerging adulthood are not significantly differentiated in terms of being active in education and in work life. However, it is shown that the life goal setting scores of women who are active in both education and work life are higher than the other groups. However, it is demonstrated that the women who are not active either in education or in work life have the highest resilience scores among the groups. Finally, in terms of the goal types being set by the women, it is shown that the highest score of the life goals belongs to career goal setting.

One of the major findings indicates that the highest score of life goal setting belongs to the group which consists of women who are active both in education and in work life. Thus, it can be said that being active in education and in work life and life goal setting are processes that support each other. It is indicated that the highest score among the life goals belongs to career goal setting. Thus, it can be said that a group of women in emerging adulthood are making a career plan via being active in education and/or in work life.

However, there is a major finding indicating that the highest resilience score belongs to the women who are not active either in education or in work life. According to the literature, women are similar to men in terms of their future expectations related to career (Greene and DeBecker, 2004, p.91). Nevertheless, it is shown that women experience a major amount of stress about interpersonal life events (Hammen, 2003, p.49). For this reason, it can be said that women care about their close relationships and use a major amount of emotional effort for these relationships. It seems that women try to construe a balance between work life and their close relationships. Due to this effort, women experience a huge amount of problems with their work and life balance (Galvez, Tirado and Martinez, 2020, p.16), because women also take on the care roles at home besides these roles in work life. These cumulative roles seem to be an important stressor (Baruch, Biener and Barnett, 1987, p.130). Also, the "flexible" working conditions of women might affect the decision whether to participate in work life or not. Due to the lack of institutionalized regulations, women may work in precarious conditions (Toksöz, 2018, p.128). In summary, women seem to feel obliged to make an ultimate choice. It can be speculated that women who are neither receiving an education nor working have the highest resilience score because of the struggles that women experience in an effort to participate in education and/or work life. Women seem to avoid attrition in these struggles.

It is necessary to state that the effort exerted by women at home for their domestic roles seems to be invisible. The effort being exerted at home for domestic roles is ignored because women are not legally in work life at home. The differentiation between labour force participation and labour market participation (Elson, 1999, p.614) is evident in this situation. For this reason, it is necessary to think about the tendency of the decline of labour force participation (Toksöz, 2018, p.86) in this frame of theoretical reference. The efforts of women not indicated in the tables of economic activities are not shown in statistics (Özbay, 2019b, p.197). The concept of "work" includes caregiving, but caregiving is not generally recognised socially and economically (Duffy, Blustein, Diemer and Autin, 2016, p.127). Moreover, women themselves do not consider their work as "real work" if their effort is not spent in formal sectors (Özbay, 2019a, p.129). For instance, women in Turkey who left education, are not married yet and do not participate in work life are called "house girls". House girls complete all of the house work responsibilities but they do not receive any economic compensation for this work. They wait to get married, which will give them adult status when it happens (Çelik and Lüküslü, 2010, p.28). For this reason, it seems illogical to consider doing housework and getting economic compensation for this work. Women know this principle starting from their early childhood.

The work-family conflict experienced by women seems to have a positive effect on the intention of leaving work and a negative effect on work satisfaction (Akın and Karakulak, 2019, p.325). The time and effort spent on domestic work can cause fatigue and exhaustion, and results in increasing pressure on women. Thus, it can be said that women who are under this pressure from the work-family conflict might consider leaving work. This does not seem to be surprising because it has already been indicated by neo-classical economists that women are expected to sacrifice themselves for their domestic roles (Toksöz, 2018, p.49).

One more surprising point is that as education level increases, the conflict experienced by women is not differentiated. Though there is a close association between women's low education levels and informal employment status, the educational gains do not seem to transform into a concrete gain; this might not shield women from gender-based exclusion. However, women who have a high income prevent this conflict by assigning their responsibilities to other women (Toksöz, 2018, p.259). For this reason, some women seem to accept the reality indicating that there are specific conditions just for women. For example, women seem to accept

a disparity in the incomes between women and men, but they make a comparison of their income to the incomes of other women, making an in-group comparison (Bylsma and Major, 1994, p.241).

Essentially, women want to have both their own income and an occupation for revealing their personalities (Gilman, 1986, p.9). A type of work that brings income has an important role in strengthening women. The strengthening of women means the development of their internal strength (Toksöz, 2018, p.48). Women have an awareness of the advantages of high education levels and related work-life quality. However, they have a tendency to make a negative decision about their work life because of the cumulative pressure of the work-family conflict.

Work-life balance should be considered an important issue for making our societies fairer and more humane (Haar, Carr, Arrowsmith, Parker, Hodgetts et al., 2018, p.10). This issue is also one of the main themes of social sustainability (Galvez, Tirado and Martinez, 2020, p.1). One of the major findings of this research, which indicates that the highest resilience score is found neither in education nor in work life groupmight be that women prefer not to experience a large amount of stress. In the meantime, this situation seems to be worrisome. If an individual does not participate in the basic activities of society, that individual seems to be socially excluded (Toksöz, 2018, p.258). For this reason, women foresee the negative reflections of participating in work life, and some portion of women withdraw socially and become socially excluded.

Conclusion

The results of the research indicate that the highest life goal setting scores belong to the group of women who are active both in education and in work life. Also, the highest scores in life goal setting are shown to be career goal setting. In the meantime, the highest scores of resilience belong to the group of women who are not active either in education or in work life. When these results are assessed simultaneously, it can be suggested that women have attitudes that can be interpreted as opposite to each other. Accordingly, a group of women in emerging adulthood aim to continue their education and participate in work life. However, the group of women who are not active either in education or in work life have the highest scores of resilience after experiencing a stressful life event. The results indicated might be interpreted as women in emerging adulthood wanting to participate in work life, but in observing and/or experiencing the difficulties women encounter, they might change their attitude towards labour market participation and withdraw from work life because of the negative conditions women experience.

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