

Research Article

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**THE EFFECT OF WELL-BEING ON LIFE SATISFACTION:
A STUDY ON STUDENTS****İYİLİK HALİNİN YAŞAM DOYUMUNA ETKİSİ:
ÖĞRENCİLERE YÖNELİK BİR ARAŞTIRMA**

Beyza ERKOÇ¹
Fethi GÜNGÖR²

CORRESPONDENCE

¹ Assistant Professor, Bülent Ecevit
University, Faculty of Health
Sciences, Department of Social
Work,
ORCID ID: 0000-0002- 0035-6782

² Prof. Dr., Yalova University,
Faculty of Economics and
Administrative Sciences,
Department of Social Work,
ORCID ID: 0000-0002- 0035-6782

ABSTRACT

Well-being and life satisfaction are concepts that are frequently emphasized in today's world. The individuals' desire to maximize the satisfaction they get from their lives has been effective in increasing the importance of these concepts. Universities are major factors in individuals having maximum life satisfaction. This study aimed to identify the effects of well-being on the life satisfaction of vocational school of higher education students and the relationship between these two factors. The study was conducted in December 2018, in Yalova. At the end of the study, it was determined that the level of well-being of the participants was high and their life satisfaction was medium level. It was determined that there was a positive and moderate relationship between well-being and life satisfaction. Moreover, it was determined that well-being had a positive effect on life satisfaction. These results show that well-being is a determinant of life satisfaction. In the frame of these results, some suggestions were made for promoting the well-being and life satisfaction.

Keywords: Well-being, Life Satisfaction, Students.

ÖZ

İyilik hali ve yaşam doyumu günümüz dünyasında üzerinde sıkça durulan kavramlardır. Bireylerin hayatlarından aldıkları tatmini maksimum seviyeye çıkarmak istemeleri kavramların öneminin artmasında etkili olmuştur. Bireylerin azami hayat tatmini yaşamalarında üniversiteler büyük bir etkindir. Bu çalışma ile meslek yüksek okulu öğrencilerinin iyilik hallerinin yaşam doyumlarına etkisinin ve bu iki değişken arasındaki ilişkinin tespit edilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırma Aralık 2018 tarihinde Yalova'da gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda araştırmaya katılanların iyilik halinin yüksek, yaşam doyumunun ise orta düzeyde olduğu belirlenmiştir. İyilik hali ile yaşam doyumunu arasında pozitif yönlü ve orta düzeyde bir ilişki olduğu belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca iyilik halinin yaşam doyumunu pozitif yönde etkilediği belirlenmiştir. Bu sonuçlar iyilik halinin, yaşam doyumunun bir belirleyicisi olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu sonuçlar çerçevesinde öğrencilerin iyilik halinin ve yaşam doyumunun artırılmasına yönelik bazı önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İyilik Hali, Yaşam Doyumu, Öğrenci.

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INTRODUCTION

Universities are of great importance in the development of societies. In universities, students do not only receive education and training activities related to their chosen professions. In addition to this, the school environment offers great opportunities for them to socialize. The students who complete their education process contentedly show up as individuals who are more active in their lives, more satisfied in their professional lives and have better socio-economic status. In the opposite situation, it is inevitable that the students who had problems during their university education, will have a decrease in their quality of life; they will take a break or withdraw from education, become unhappy in their professions or turn to another profession. Therefore, for the benefit of students, universities and the future of the society, it is essential for students to have a high level of life satisfaction during their university education and to identify and solve them if they face any problems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Well-being

Well-being is an active process which allows individuals to be aware of their own existence and provides an opportunity for them to make their own choices (National Wellness Institute). Well-being is defined as the cognitive and affective evaluations of the individual as a whole. These assessments include cognitive satisfaction and satisfaction judgments, as well as emotional responses to events. Therefore, well-being is a very broad concept that includes a high level of positive emotion and mood, and life satisfaction, and a low level of negative emotion and mood (Diener et al., 2011: 187).

People define the state of well-being differently according to their own set of beliefs and values. The family structures of people, the societies in which they live, and their social positions determine their well-being (Bolsoy and Sevil, 2006: 79). The state of well-being is a holistic lifestyle with many dimensions, which needs to be evaluated as an active process that varies from person to person. In this respect, individuals with high perceptions of well-being, besides having accomplished their goals in their lives, should make constant efforts to maintain and improve their current situation and shape their lives accordingly (Kayış, 2017: 27-28).

Although the state of well-being is included in World Health Organization (WHO) definition of health as "not merely the absence of disease or infirmity but a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being" (quoted from WHO by Tengilimoğlu et al., 2012: 69), this definition puts more emphasis on the health of individuals. However, the concept of "well-being" carries much more dimension within itself. There are many dimensions of well-being (Foster et al., 2007: 15-16; Korkut Oven et al., 2017: 1462). These dimensions are briefly described below:

- **Physical well-being:** This dimension, which emphasizes the physical aspect of well-being, requires active and continuous effort. In general, it includes activities such as proper nutrition, regular sleep, avoiding substance addictions, engaging in physical activity, self-care, and adopting a healthy lifestyle.
- **Emotional well-being:** This is the dimension of the state of well-being related to the inner world of the individual. It includes the ability of individuals to realize their emotions, to control them, to cope with stress, to have self-esteem, and to develop positive emotions about themselves and their future.
- **Social well-being:** This dimension, which puts an emphasis on the social, environmental and natural dimension of the state of well-being, includes social support provided to individuals through their relationships with their families, friends and others.
- **Intellectual well-being:** This dimension, which constitutes the cognitive aspect of the state of well-being, is defined

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by the active intellectual life of individuals. It involves the development and improvement of individuals and society by acquiring, using, sharing and applying information.

- **Spiritual well-being:** This dimension, which involves the individuals' search for the purpose and meaning of their lives and setting goals for themselves, expresses a process that is innate and continuous. Spiritual well-being is about individuals' connection with other individuals, society, nature, the universe, and supernatural forces.
- **Professional well-being:** This dimension is related to the individuals' personal satisfactions and their work in paid or unpaid jobs to contribute to society.
- **Environmental well-being:** This dimension, which is based on reciprocity (balance, effect, control), is related to the much wider environment (home, work, society, nature, world, universe) of the individual.

Life Satisfaction

The concept of life satisfaction, which explains the satisfaction of people in their lives in general, is a concept with an emotional background and it's very important for individuals. The broad meaning and the complex structure of the concept of life makes it difficult to make a definition about life satisfaction and to reveal what affects life satisfaction. Therefore, there is no consensus on the concept of life satisfaction (Polatçı, 2015: 30). Life satisfaction is the extent to which individuals evaluate the general quality of their lives in a positive way. In other words, it is about how much people enjoy the life they lead. This concept describes positive emotions associated with life (Kaba et al., 2017: 2).

Life satisfaction is one of the concepts related to the happiness of individuals, and it represents the cognitive side of individual well-being (Dost, 2007: 133). Life satisfaction is a very important concept in terms of mental health of people (Kaya, 2011: 174). Being happy in daily life, finding a meaning in life, being consistent in achieving your goals, having positive personal traits, feeling good physically, feeling secure financially and etc. are among the factors that affect the life satisfaction (Keser, 2003, cited by Kaya, 2011: 173-174). In positive psychology, happiness is conceptually used as "subjective well-being" in general. Subjective well-being has three interrelated elements. The first one is positive effect, the second one is negative effect and the third one is life satisfaction. While the first two affects explain the likes and dislike of the individuals, life satisfaction includes cognitive assessments of individuals related to their lives. The definition of life satisfaction is the general judgments and evaluations of individuals about their lives (Çivitci, 2012: 322).

Individuals feeling satisfied with their lives by evaluating their lives according to their own criteria and having more positive emotions and less negative emotions are indications that their subjective well-being is positively high (Demolished and Demir Güdül, 2015: 299). Subjective well-being alone is an important concept. Besides, since it provides satisfactory relations, increases productivity and it has positive effects on psychological and physical health, it should be handled with care both in terms of individual and social sense (Gündoğar et al., 2007: 15).

Relationship between Well-being and Life Satisfaction

The concepts of life satisfaction and well-being encompass all lives of individuals. They also have both individual and social consequences. We can say there is a relational interaction between these two concepts. The hypotheses of the research that is made in the light of this information are identified as follows:

H1: There is a positive relationship between well-being and life satisfaction.

H2: Well-being has a positive effect on life satisfaction.

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METHOD

The research was conducted in December 2018 with 414 associate students studying at Yalova University, Thermal Vocational School. The data were collected by using survey method. The required permission was obtained from the institution for the research.

Data Collection Tools

The survey form used to collect the data in the research consists of three sections. The first part consists of demographic questions including information about the gender, age and departments of the students.

In the second part, the "Well-being Scale" was used. It was developed by Diener et al. (2009) and Fidan and Usta (2013) performed a Turkish validity and reliability study on it and adapted it to Turkish. The scale consists of 8 items.

In the third chapter, "Life Satisfaction Scale" was used. It was developed by Diener et al. (1985) and Dağlı ve Baysal (2016) performed a Turkish validity and reliability study on it and adapted it to Turkish. The scale consists of 5 items.

Expressions in the well-being scale and life satisfaction scale were measured using the 5-point Likert-type scale with the options "1 = strongly disagree", "2 = disagree", "3 = partially agree", "4 = agree" and "5 = strongly agree".

Data Analysis

SPSS Statistics 23.0 software package was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage distributions, mean deviation, standard deviation) were calculated in the data analysis. Since Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed that the data did not come from normal distribution ($p < 0.05$), Spearman's correlation and linear regression analysis was performed to determine the relationship between well-being and life satisfaction. The findings were evaluated at 95% confidence interval and 5% significance level.

Limitations of the Study

The fact that the study was carried out on a vocational school and that all students could not be reached due to absenteeism, internship, etc. renders this study limited. At the same time, in such a study that directly measures the relationship and effect between well-being and life satisfaction, the limited number of subjects both limited the study and made it difficult to make comparisons.

RESULTS AND COMMENTS

130 students (31.4%) who participated in the study were male and 284 (68.6%) were female. 81 of them (19.6%) were in the department of Health Care Management, 102 (24.6%) were in the department of Elderly Care, 103 (24.9%) were in the department of Physiotherapy, 128 (30.9%) were in the department of First and Emergency Aid.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variables	n	Avg.	Standard Dev.	Min.	Max.
Well-being	414	3,48	0,72	1,00	5,00
Life Satisfaction	414	3,06	0,86	1,00	5,00

According to Table 1, the well-being of the participants was high and life satisfaction was moderate.

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Table 2: Correlation Analysis of Relationship between Well-being and Life Satisfaction

		Life Satisfaction
Well-being	r	0,62
	p	0,00
	n	414

According to the correlation analysis results in Table 2, there is a statistically significant relationship between well-being and life satisfaction ($p < 0.05$). According to the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.62$), there is a positive and moderate relationship between well-being and life satisfaction.

Table 3: Effects of Well-being on Life Satisfaction

	β	t	p
Invariant	0,44	2,77	0,01
Well-being	0,75	16,71	0,00
	$R^2 = 0,404$		
	$F = 279,25$		
	$p = 0,00$		

Dependent Variable: Life Satisfaction

According to the results of regression analysis in Table 3, it was determined that well-being had a positive effect on life satisfaction ($\beta = 0.75$, $t = 16.71$, $p < 0.05$). It is seen that 40.4% of the changes in life satisfaction are explained by well-being ($R^2 = 0.4404$). These results show that well-being is a determinant of life satisfaction.

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DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aimed to determine the effects of well-being of the students of vocational schools on their life satisfaction and the relationship between these two variables. Two hypotheses have been developed for these purposes. As a result of the analyses conducted to test these hypotheses, a positive and moderate relationship was identified between well-being and life satisfaction. According to this result, H1 hypothesis was accepted. Again, as a result of the analysis, it was determined that well-being had a positive effect on life satisfaction. According to this result, H2 hypothesis was also accepted. The results of the research conducted by Argan et al. (2018: 55-56) also support the results of this research.

Another result obtained from the study is that the participants' well-being was high, and their life satisfaction was moderate. It is desirable for the students to have a high level of well-being. The students who have high levels of well-being grow up as individuals who can make their own choices in their lives and improve themselves in cognitive and affective terms. Such individuals are more advantageous in achieving their goals than individuals with low well-being. It is not desirable that life satisfaction is medium level. Students, who cannot provide enough life satisfaction, are more likely to be unhappy, to not enjoy life, to not expect much from the future, and to see their lives as meaningless compared to the students with high life satisfaction. Köksal's (2015: 31-33) and Tuzgöl Dost's (2007: 140) research results support the results of this research.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the results of the study, the following suggestions may be presented:

- In the vocational school in question, it is necessary to carry out the required studies in order to ensure the continuity of the well-being of the students with high level of well-being and to increase their medium-level life satisfaction. Therefore, it may be suggested to conduct in-depth interviews with the students in order to reveal the reasons that decrease their life satisfaction in particular and to take necessary steps to eliminate the identified reasons.
- Another suggestion is conducting and evaluating this study with more participants from universities in Turkey, and by comparing them, doing new researches to determine what kind of studies can be carried out to maximize students' well-being and life satisfaction.
- Necessary regulations can be made in universities for these two concepts which are important for students. For example, it may be suggested to expand the social spaces within the university, to create platforms where students can express themselves freely, and to establish student wellness centers where social workers, psychologists and sociologists are employed, and students should always be able to access them and receive counseling services.
- In order to increase the well-being and life satisfaction of the students, the activities that can be carried out by the local government of the region in which the university is located are also important. For example, opportunities like student clubs, social activity centers, social activities, etc. will positively affect students' well-being and life satisfaction.
- The work of non-governmental organizations is also important to increase the well-being and life satisfaction of students. Projects with students, voluntary social activities, lobbying activities, etc. it will serve this purpose.
- It is also important to rally the political institutions in order to increase students' well-being and life satisfaction. The projects that will be developed by considering the students' feedback to increase their well-being and life satisfaction can be given as an example in this regard.

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