



Gratitude, Hope, Optimism and Life Satisfaction as Predictors of Psychological Well-Being*

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The mainstream psychology has mostly focused on the negative factors that threaten human mental health. With the emergence of positive psychology approach, the human strengths have started to be studied and the number of studies on the issue of happiness and well-being has increased. The aim of this research is to reveal the level of prediction for psychological well-being by the variables of gratitude, hope, optimism and life satisfaction. **Method:** Research sample consisted of 510 students from various faculties and departments of four different universities. The study group consisted of 359 female (70.4%) and 151 male (29.6%) university students. The age range of participants varied between 17 and 30.

Findings: All the variables discussed in the study were positively related to each other, and the variables of gratitude, optimism, hope, and life satisfaction all together accounted for about 51% of the variance of psychological well-being. Gratitude was determined as the most predictive variable for well-being and it was followed by the variables; hope, optimism, and life satisfaction, respectively. Accordingly; gratitude predicted 35.4% of the variance in well-being alone; gratitude and hope predicted 45.4% together; gratitude, hope, and optimism predicted 48.8% together; while gratitude, hope, optimism, and life satisfaction predicted 50.7% percent altogether.

Implications for Research and Practice: These findings are thought to be important in terms of revealing variables that predict well-being with a high level of variance. It is thought that these findings can be used in the field of mental health especially by the researchers and practitioners using intervention studies. Especially, since the gratitude level accounts for 35.4% of the variance in well-being alone, gratitude interventions can effectively be used to improve well-being level.

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Introduction

What makes a good and virtuous life and how to live it is one of the oldest debates in human history. This debate has continued for centuries within the framework of different worldviews, especially in the field of religion and philosophy. Psychology, a younger field of science than philosophy, has also benefited considerably from discussions and accumulations in philosophy while dealing with the subjects of happiness and good life. The history of psychology is based on observing some human behaviors experimentally in the laboratory environment. In the period from the beginning of the 19th century to the Second World War, it seems that an approach which focused on the negative aspects of life, concentrated on diagnosis and treatment, and dealt with the problematic parts of individuals rather than the strengths had been prevailing in the field of psychology. Especially after the Second World War, the influence of war, the spread of the understanding of humanism, and the need to embrace the positive aspects of life have forced a change in the dominant paradigm in psychology. The influence of the work of pioneers such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, in this framework, has begun to increase the emphasis on the strengths of people. The positive psychology approach has brought significant criticism to this pathology-oriented view and has suggested that psychology should embrace the positive aspects of life and aim to increase well-being by focusing on the strengths of individuals. In this context; Martin Seligman's speech (1999) as president of the American Psychological Association (APA) is considered as a milestone of positive psychology. In this speech, Seligman argued that psychology studies have spent half a century by examining negative mental effects of isolation, trauma, abuse, physical illness, war; but this negative focus has left psychology blind to the many instances of growth and mastery. For this reason, he proposed a new positive paradigm of psychology which focuses on positive sides of human and human strengths. This speech has prepared a basis for the formation of a positive psychology approach.

The positive psychology approach is mainly concerned with understanding issues such as happiness and well-being, positive features and activities that require intense attention, and meaningful positive relationships (Carr, 2013). In this framework, it focuses on the well-being of individuals with a paradigm of embracing positive sides of life. One of the issues that being widely discussed in this approach is the concept of well-being. While well-being is handled in the context of various conceptualizations and theoretical foundations, nowadays it is widely discussed in the distinction of subjective and psychological well-being. The basis of this distinction is also based on the discussion of *Eudaimonia-Hedonia* in the field of philosophy. In the positive psychology approach, the *Eudaimonic* tradition is studied in the works of Alan Waterman and Carol Ryff, and the hedonic approach is discussed in the works of Kahneman, Diener and Schwarz (Carr, 2013). Current debate continues in the field of positive psychology in terms of different contexts (Sheldon, Corcoran&Prentice, 2019).

Subjective well-being means individuals' avoidance from pain, having more positive experiences and more positive emotions. According to this, subjective well-

being refers to life satisfaction as a cognitive evaluation of life, less experience of negative feelings and more frequent experience of positive feelings (Diener, 2000). In this respect, subjective well-being is an approach parallel to the views of the hedonic approach which focuses on avoiding pain and reaching the pleasure. On the other hand, the concept of psychological well-being is more about being able to realize the potentials of the individual as a concept related to the "*Eudaimonia*", and it also refers to a meaningful and fulfilling life. According to this approach, fulfilling one's potential is at the heart of well-being (Carr, 2013; Hefferon&Boniwell, 2011).

One of the main issues that positive psychology concentrates on is positive feelings. Seligman (2004) classifies positive emotions as emotions related to the past, future, and present. According to this; optimism, hope, and confidence express positive feelings about the future; while satisfaction, gladness, and tranquility express about past; and physical pleasures like momentary pleasures, and persistent pleasures like joy, comfort, merriness and enthusiasm express feelings about present. In this context; gratitude, hope, and optimism are among the positive feelings that are widely discussed in the literature.

In recent years, the concept of gratitude is considered as one of the treatment factors in the field of mental health in both Turkey and abroad (Kardaş&Yalçın, 2018). Gratitude is conceptualized in various forms such as emotion, attitude, moral virtue, habit, personality trait and a coping reaction in the positive psychology literature (Emmons, 2009), and various definitions have been made about gratitude in this framework. According to this, gratitude is defined in various forms like; being grateful to the person who gives help and does a favor (Roberts, 2004), thanking for a goodness and being in a sense of gratitude (Watkins et al., 2003), a sense of gladness towards a benefit seen (Emmons, 2004), and as part of the general tendency to recognize and appreciate positive things in life (Wood, Froh&Geraghty, 2010). In various studies conducted in Turkey, Western Countries and Eastern Societies it has been demonstrated that gratitude has significant effects on; improving the mental health of individuals, increasing their well-being, strengthening social support perceptions and self-esteem, changing resilience levels positively, increasing optimism, and being a protective factor against stress and depression (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Fredrickson, 2004; Kardaş, 2017; Lin, 2015; Lyubomirsky, 2008).

Another variable that is considered as one of the factors that affect well-being is optimism. Optimism basically means being in positive expectations about the future and it is considered in relation with emotion, perseverance, problem-solving; academic, sportive, military, vocational and political achievement, being healthy, and conceptualized differently in various studies (Peterson, 2000). Theoretical approaches like personality traits, attributional styles, expectancy effect (Scheier& Carver, 1987; Seligman, 2006) are determinative in the conceptualization of well-being. Research findings reveal that optimism is significantly related to subjective resilience (Terzi, 2008), life satisfaction (Sapmaz&Doğan, 2012), depressive symptoms (Chang &Sanna, 2001), and resistance to negative experiences (Segerstrom, 2007).

Hope, as a concept related to optimism, is conceptualized in the context of ability to plan paths to achieve the goal that the individual desires in spite of obstacles and a motivation source to utilize these paths (Snyder, 2000). In this framework, hope is defined as the determination to achieve goals and belief that there can be many other ways (Hefferon&Boniwell, 2011). According to this, hope is most powerful when it depends on the valuable targets that have moderate reaching possibility and derive from challenging but not impassable obstacles. In other words, the individual does not need to hope when he is sure he will achieve his goals, and he gets desperate when he thinks he will never succeed (Carr, 2013). The approach that deals with optimism in the context of attributional styles and the theory of hope in which Snyder conceptualized hope as the energy of fighting for the important goals suggest that individuals can significantly change their levels of optimism and positive expectations. Accordingly, individuals can remain optimistic and sustain their hopes through goal setting and having positive opinions about reaching those goals, maintaining motivation to make plans to reach these goals, and feeling of agency in these processes. This will make it easier for someone to reach their goals. Research conducted suggests that hope is also a factor closely related to the level of well-being of the individuals (Dursun, 2012).

In the literature, life satisfaction is expressed as a cognitive evaluation process in which the individual's life is assessed according to certain criteria (Shin &Johnson, 1978; Diener, Emmons, Larsen &Griffin, 1985). In this framework, life satisfaction is considered as one of the components of subjective well-being. According to this, life satisfaction is one of the important concepts expressing the well-being of individuals together with positive-negative affectivity as a cognitive evaluation of life.

The aim of this research is to reveal the degree of prediction for psychological well-being by different variables like gratitude, hope, optimism and life satisfaction in the university students, according to the order of relative importance, with a regression model.

The variables discussed in the study were determined as a result of a comprehensive literature review. When the studies are examined, it is seen that the studies that predict subjective well-being are more common (Ilhan&Ozbay, 2016). In some studies, optimism's predicting the level of well-being is examined (Eryilmaz&Atak, 2011), and in some other studies relationship between psychological well-being and some demographic variables such as university department and gender is studied (Gundogdu&Yavuzer, 2012). In this respect, no study has been found that takes the variables discussed as a whole like in the present study. On the other hand, it has been found that studies related to optimism, hope and life satisfaction can be found frequently but studies related to gratitude and well-being are limited. As mentioned earlier, gratitude includes some aspects of optimism, hope and life satisfaction, and the feeling of gratitude is a concept closely related to these characteristics of the individual. In this direction, in a study which intends to predict well-being, including the variable gratitude allows us to make some comparisons between variables. On the other hand, although the findings regarding the relationship between mentioned variables and well-being have been reported,

which variable contributes to the prediction of well-being comparatively has not been examined adequately. The current study aimed to make this comparison. Considering the situations above, it is thought to be important to discuss gratitude as a predictive variable, to examine predictive levels of variables discussed comparatively on the prediction of well-being, and to reveal the relations between these variables.

Taking all these issues into consideration, it is considered that this study is important in terms of contributing to positive psychology research in the literature, providing evidence-based data for teachers and practitioners working in the field, and determining variables predicting psychological well-being. On the other hand, research findings are expected to contribute to the issue of positive youth development which has become an important subject of research in the field of mental health and foster the development of limited studies conducted in Turkey.

The following questions will be sought within the framework of the research purpose.

1. Are there any significant relationships among variables of gratitude, hope, optimism, life satisfaction, and well-being?
2. Are gratitude, hope, optimism, and life satisfaction variables significant predictors of well-being, and what is their relative order of importance in terms of predicting participants' well-being level?

Method

Research Design

This research was carried out with the quantitative research model. These studies, which describe the relationships between variables, are considered as correlational survey models in the literature (Karasar, 2011).

Research Sample

The study group, determined by convenience sampling method, consisted of 510 students from various faculties and departments of four different public universities in different regions of Turkey. In terms of gender, 70.4% (359) of the participants were female and 29.6% (n = 151) were male. The age range of the participants varied between 17 and 30, with a mean age of 21.5 (SD= 2.05).

Research Instruments and Procedures

Research data were collected from four different public universities located in different regions of Turkey. In this context, first, the data collection tools to be used in the research were determined and necessary permissions were obtained from the researchers. Afterward, necessary permissions for the application of the measurement tools were obtained from the related faculties. The aim and process of the research were explained to the participants, and it was stated that the

participation in the research was on a voluntary basis. It took about 15 minutes for each participant to complete the data collection tools.

The Flourishing Scale (Telef, 2013), Satisfaction with Life Scale (Durak, Senol-Durak & Gencoz, 2010), Gratitude Scale (Kardaş & Yalçın, 2019), Life Orientation Test (Aydın & Tezer, 1991), and Hope Scale (Akman & Korkut, 1993) were used for data collection in the study.

The Flourishing Scale: It is a measurement tool developed by Diener et al. (2010) to measure individuals' level of well-being. The scale consists of eight items answered on a 1-7 scale that ranges from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, and scores from the scale range from 8-56 (e.g. "I lead a purposeful and meaningful life"). The high score indicates a higher level of well-being. It is adapted to Turkish by Telef (2013) and the Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale is .80, and test-retest reliability score is .86. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient of the psychological well-being scale in this study was found to be .84. We performed the confirmatory factor analysis to determine the technical adequacies of The Flourishing Scale. Results from confirmatory factor analysis indicated that it had good model-data fit statistics ($\chi^2=70.532$, $df=19$, $\chi^2/df=3.71$, $p=.000$, $RMSEA=.073$ [90% confidence interval (CI) = .055-.091], $SRMR=.039$, $GFI=.97$, $CFI=.96$, $NFI=.94$, $IFI=.96$) and factor loadings (range from .57 to .65).

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS): It is a measurement tool developed by Diener et al. (1985) to determine the life satisfaction of individuals. The scale consists of five items answered on seven points Likert type survey (e.g. "In most ways, my life is close to my ideal"). High scores indicate that the perception of life satisfaction is high. Various adaptation studies have been conducted in Turkish. Durak, Senol-Durak and Gencoz (2010) conducted the adaptation study of the form used in this research. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated that SWLS had good model-data fit statistics ($\chi^2=13.274$, $df=4$, $\chi^2/df=3.31$, $p=.000$, $RMSEA=.067$ [90% confidence interval (CI) = .030-.109], $SRMR=.019$, $GFI=.99$, $CFI=.99$, $NFI=.99$, $IFI=.99$) and factor loadings (range from .65 to .75). The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient for the satisfaction with life scale in this study was found to be .83.

Gratitude Scale: It is developed by Kardas and Yalçın (2019) to measure gratitude levels of individuals. The scale consists of 25 items answered on five points Likert type survey, and higher scores indicate individuals' higher level of feeling gratitude. Scale consists of six sub-dimensions that are positive social comparison (e.g. "When I look at the world, I see much to be grateful for."), focusing on positive (e.g. "I believe life is full of beauty."), appreciating contributions of family and others (e.g. "I'm grateful to my parents for what they did for me."), feelings of abundance (e.g. "I think I'm a lucky person in life."), gratitude for simple things (e.g. "Even a small incident can increase my gratitude.") and expressing gratitude (e.g. "I have no trouble thanking for a favor."). The internal consistency coefficients are .88 for overall scale, .82 for positive social comparison, .73 for focusing on positive, .72 for appreciating contributions of family and others, .70 for feelings of abundance, .76 for gratitude for simple things and .72 for expressing gratitude. In the present study, the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient was found to be .90. Results of the second-order confirmatory

factor analysis showed that Gratitude Scale had acceptable model-data fit statistics ($\chi^2=948.04$, $df=269$, $\chi^2/df=3.52$, $p=.000$, $RMSEA=.070$ [90% confidence interval (CI) =.066-.075], $SRMR= .076$, $GFI=.84$, $CFI=.95$, $NFI=.93$, $IFI=.95$) and factor loadings (range from .43 to .78).

Life Orientation Test: It was used to measure individuals' optimism levels in the study. Developed by Scheier and Carver (1985) to measure the life orientations of individuals, this scale is a five point-Likert-type measuring instrument consisting of 12 items (e.g., "I'm always optimistic about my future"). Scores on the scale range from 0 to 32 and high scores indicate that individuals have a positive view of life. Aydin and Tezer (1991) conducted the adaptation study of the scale to Turkish. Cronbach alpha coefficient was found to be .72 in the adaptation study. In this study, the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient was found to be .71. We performed a confirmatory factor analysis for The Life Orientation Test. Results from confirmatory factor analysis indicated that it had good model-data fit statistics ($\chi^2=78.088$, $df=17$, $\chi^2/df=4.59$, $p=.000$, $RMSEA=.084$ [90% confidence interval (CI) = .066-.103], $SRMR=.066$, $GFI=.97$, $CFI=.92$, $NFI=.90$, $IFI=.92$) and factor loadings (range from .15 to .69).

Hope Scale: It was developed by Snyder et al. (1991) to assess hope levels of individuals and adapted to Turkish by Akman and Korkut (1993). Hope Scale consists of 8 items and two sub-dimensions as pathway (e.g., "I can think of many ways to get out of a jam.") and agency (e.g., "I energetically pursue my goals."). Cronbach alpha coefficient is found to be .75 in the original form. In Turkish form, this coefficient is .65, and test-retest reliability score is .66. In this study, the form adapted by Akman and Korkut (1993) was used. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed primarily on the scores obtained from the scale and inequivalence with the original form, and it was found to be having two dimensions (Atik&Atik, 2017). We also conducted the second-order confirmatory factor analysis to determine the construct validity of The Hope Scale. Results from confirmatory factor analysis revealed that Hope Scale has good model-data fit statistics ($\chi^2=49.450$, $df=17$, $\chi^2/df=2.91$, $p=.000$, $RMSEA=.061$ [90% confidence interval (CI) = .042-.081], $SRMR=.036$, $GFI=.98$, $CFI=.98$, $NFI=.96$, $IFI=.98$) and factor loadings (range from .47 to .75). In light of these results, the theoretical structure in the original form of the scale was confirmed. In this study, the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient of the Hope Scale was found to be .84.

Data Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was used to analyze the data in this study. Before data analysis, alongside the assumptions of normality, linearity and homogeneity, multivariate normal distribution, linear relationship between predictor variable and dependent variable, absence of multiple-connection problem (multicollinearity) between independent variables, variance of error terms to be constant and mean of error terms equal to zero which are all assumptions of multiple linear regression were examined (Küçükşille, 2010). After the assumptions were met, basic analyzes were carried out. SPSS 21.0 software was used for statistical analysis. Stepwise regression analysis in which order of entry of variables depends on

statistical criteria was performed. Because the study aimed to determine the most significant predictive variables of well-being in order of relative importance, stepwise regression analysis, which is a model-building rather than model-testing, might be more beneficial to define variables in order to build structural models in future researches (Tabachnick&Fidell, 2013).

Results

In a preliminary analysis, descriptive statistics of psychological well-being, life satisfaction, gratitude, optimism, and hope variables were calculated, and then difference according to gender, the relationships between these variables, and generated regression model were examined, and the findings were presented under four headings.

Descriptive statistics of the variables examined in the study

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the mean averages related to the variables covered in the present study. In this way, how the data set had a distribution was examined. Descriptive statistics calculated for variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Life satisfaction	510	5,00	35,00	20,16	6,77	-,102	-,641
Hope	510	11,00	32,00	25,34	4,10	-,601	,401
Gratitude	510	42,00	125,00	96,63	13,51	-,658	,795
Optimism	510	11,00	38,00	25,85	5,02	-,270	,031
Psychological Well-being	510	15,00	56,00	42,14	7,51	-,772	,493

When the values in Table 1 are examined, it is seen that the skewness and kurtosis values of the variables are within ± 1 values. It is stated in the literature that when the values of kurtosis and skewness are between ± 1 values, the dataset has a normal distribution (Büyüköztürk, 2013). Based on these values, it can be said that the mean scores of the variables handled within the scope of the research have a normal distribution.

Findings about relationships between variables

The relationship between the variables in the study was examined by Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and the results are given in Table 2.

Table 2
Relationships Between Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Psychological well-being	-	.596**	.501**	.516**	.527**
2. Gratitude		-	.468**	.486**	.394**
3. Life satisfaction			-	.464**	.402**
4. Optimism				-	.391**
5. Hope					-

** = $p < .01$

As shown in Table 2, significant positive relationships were found at moderate and high levels between psychological well-being and all variables. According to this, the relationship coefficients between well-being and other variables found to be; .596 ($p < .01$) for gratitude, .501 ($p < .01$) for life satisfaction, .516 ($p < .01$) for optimism, and .527 ($p < .01$) for hope.

After determining the relationships between the variables by correlation analysis, stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the predictability between the variables. However, there are some assumptions that this analysis requires. These are the absence of multicollinearity and autocorrelation between variables. Whether these requirements are met or not is examined with Durbin-Watson, Condition Index, Variance Inflation Factor/VIF, and Tolerance Value. Calculated Durbin-Watson value of this study is 1.925 while Condition Index is 24.099, VIF value is 1.494, and Tolerance Value is .677. Based on these values, it can be said that there is not a multicollinearity or autocorrelation problem among these variables. In order to determine the predictability between the variables in terms of the obtained values, stepwise multiple regression analysis was applied. The regression model for the prediction of the psychological well-being of the predictive variables in the study is given in Table 3.

Table 3
Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis Result

Model	R	R ²	SE	ΔR^2	F	p
1.	.596 ^a	0,355	6,04	0,355	279,474	,000
2.	.675 ^b	0,456	5,55	0,101	94,077	,000
3.	.700 ^c	0,491	5,38	0,035	34,481	,000
4.	.712 ^d	0,507	5,30	0,016	16,896	.000

- a. Dependent Variable: Psychological well-being
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Gratitude
- c. Predictors: (Constant), Gratitude, Hope
- d. Predictors: (Constant), Gratitude, Hope, Optimism
- e. Predictors: (Constant), Gratitude, Hope, Optimism and Life Satisfaction

It was determined that all added predictor variables to the generated model significantly predicted well-being, and according to the stepwise multiple regression analysis results, all generated models were significant. According to this, the variables that were most predictive of psychological well-being were gratitude, hope, optimism and life satisfaction, respectively. According to the results of the stepwise regression analysis, in the first model, gratitude alone predicted 35% of the well-being ($R^2 = .355$, $p < .05$). Adding the hope variable to the model, these two variables together accounted for 45 percent of the variance in well-being ($R^2 = .456$, $p < .05$); when optimism was added, these three variables together accounted for 49 percent of the variance in well-being ($R^2 = .491$, $p < .05$); and at last when life satisfaction variable was added, four variables together accounted for 50.7 percent of the variance in well-being ($R^2 = .507$, $p < .05$). This indicates that all variables are significant predictors but gratitude accounts for a large part of the variance alone for well-being.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

In this study, the relationships between psychological well-being, life satisfaction, gratitude, optimism and hope variables in university students studying in different cities and universities were examined, and the created regression model was tested. The results showed that all the variables in the study had significant positive correlations with each other. Various studies have shown a positive relationship between these variables. In this context, in various studies, a positive relationship was found between gratitude and life satisfaction (Robustelli & Whisman, 2018; Yang, Zhang & Kou, 2016) and positive relationship among gratitude, hope, and happiness (Witvliet, Richie, Root Luna, & Van Tongeren, 2019). In another study, Guse and Shaw (2018) explored the relationship between hope, meaning in life, and well-being among a group of emerging adults who were enrolled at university. The results indicated that hope might lead to the setting of meaningful goals as well as spiritually meaningful experiences; thus, increasing meaning in life and eventually, well-being.

According to the results of the stepwise regression analysis of the variables that predicted psychological well-being, it was determined that the variables that were most predictive of psychological well-being were gratitude, hope, optimism, and life satisfaction, respectively; and these findings were discussed in the context of the literature.

The results showed that the most powerful predictor of psychological well-being in the study was gratitude. According to this, gratitude alone predicted about 36 percent of the variance in well-being. Gratitude is considered as one of the treatment factors in the field of mental health, and the number of efforts to improve the well-being of individuals through gratitude interventions is increasing day by day (Lyubomirsky 2008; Nelson & Lyubomirsky 2016; Young & Hutchinson, 2012). Gratitude is accepted as having a strong relationship with various measures of well-being, and experimental studies suggest that gratitude actually causes increases in happiness. In this context, it is suggested by Watkins, McLaughlin and Parker (2019)

that grateful responding can be enhanced by training in noticing the good in one's life, and by encouraging interpretations and appraisals that have been found to promote gratitude.

Gratitude is conceptualized and measured on the basis of such perspectives as making positive social comparisons, satisfying from simple things, focusing on the positive aspects of life, expressing gratitude, and recognizing the contributions of the family and the community. This suggests that all of the features mentioned are good predictors of well-being at the same time. Accordingly, it can be said that individuals having these characteristics are more satisfied with their lives and they are happier than the people whose gratitude levels are lower. On the other hand, the fact that gratitude predicts well-being stronger than life satisfaction, hope and optimism variables, can be considered as one of the important findings of this research. In line with the findings of this research, it was revealed that gratitude is a significant predictor of well-being just like in the studies investigating the relationship between gratitude and well-being held in Turkey, gratitude intervention activities improve well-being, and gratitude predicts well-being through various variables (Eryılmaz, 2014, Kardaş, 2017, Oğuz Duran & Tan, 2013). A number of studies abroad have also shown that gratitude is a significant and powerful predictor of well-being (Chan, 2013; Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Lin, 2015), and in various studies a positive relationship was found between gratitude and life satisfaction (Robustelli&Whisman, 2018; Yang, Zhang & Kou, 2016).

In the study, hope was found to be the second most predictive variable after gratitude in predicting psychological well-being. Hope basically means that individuals have motivation about the goals to be reached and that they can make plans to achieve their goals. In this sense, it is expected that having a mission to be accomplished, having the motivation to reach these goals, and making plans that can help to reach these goals will make a meaningful contribution to the life of the individual; and thus, increase well-being. In this research, when hope entered into the regression model, it contributes 10% to the explained variance alone. This indicates that hope is one of the important variables closely related to well-being. Relationship between hope and well-being is one of the well-studied subjects in the literature. In this context, in McCullough's (2002) conceptualization of the relationship between hope and gratitude, it is argued that people having more hope and gratitude generally appreciate their past as positive and pursue more meaningful goals for future. Besides, gratitude as appreciating others' positive contributions may facilitate the felling of hope. In another research on graduate students conducted by Uzun Ozer and Tezer (2008), the results have shown that there is a significant difference in the positive effect levels between individuals whose level of hope is high and low. Similarly, in a study on undergraduate students conducted by Dursun (2012); it has been stated that hope is a significant predictor of individuals' subjective well-being levels.

Another variable associated with well-being is optimism. Optimism alone was a significant predictor in the model and when it was included in the model after gratitude and hope variables, it contributed about 3% to the explained variance.

Optimism basically means that individuals are in a positive expectation about the future. It is expected that people with positive expectations will be more flexible than those with negative thoughts, be more open to alternative thinking, and develop a more positive attitude towards the difficulties. Therefore, it is expected that optimism will be a significant predictor of well-being. In parallel with the findings in this study, various previous studies have indicated that optimism has a significant relation with well-being and it is a significant predictor of well-being. Accordingly, in a study on university students, Sapmaz and Dogan (2012) found that optimism revealed 59% of the variance in happiness and 60% of the variance in life satisfaction. The fact that the predictive rate was much higher than this research finding might be due to the difference in approach to measure happiness or the effect of possible mediating variables. Thus, when optimism was added to this study along with other variables, the effect on the prediction remained low. This indicates that there may be mediating or moderating variables in the relationship between optimism and well-being. In this framework, in a study on university students conducted by Kardas (2017), it is found that optimism is one of the significant predictors of well-being, but social support, self-esteem, and psychological need satisfaction variables play a mediating role in the tested model. This suggests that optimism can have a greater effect on well-being with some mediating variables.

Another variable that is significantly related to psychological well-being is life satisfaction. According to the findings, life satisfaction accounts for a relatively small portion of the variance in well-being in comparison with gratitude, hope, and optimism. In this research, it was revealed that gratitude, optimism, and hope as positive emotions had a significantly higher effect on the prediction of well-being. This suggests that emotional components contribute more to well-being and happiness than a general cognitive appraisal of life. This proves the general assertion of the positive psychology approach that positive emotions can be used as an important therapeutic power in well-being and happiness interventions.

An approach regarding the predictive level and order of the variables of gratitude, optimism, and hope as positive emotions, and life satisfaction as a general cognitive appraisal of life in the prediction of well-being was followed. The results show that positive emotions, especially gratitude as a current concept of psychology (Kardas&Yalcin, 2018), are powerful predictors of psychological well-being. This situation confirms the positive psychology approach's criticism to the pathology-oriented approach of mainstream psychology. According to this, positive emotions can be counted as effective sources in increasing the happiness and well-being of the individuals.

In the light of the current findings, we suggest researchers design similar investigations by varying positive emotions about the prediction of well-being, put forward new model proposals by concentrating on the mediating relationships between the variables discussed in this study, and repeat this study on different age and occupational groups. The research also has several implications for practitioners and educators. According to this; it is important to investigate positive psychology-based topics in the field of education to conduct research and applications on

character strengths in education, and study the variables that increase the well-being of students. These efforts will directly contribute to the well-being of students and indirectly increase their academic success. Besides, this study revealed that gratitude explained about one-third of the variance in well-being level. Accordingly, effective gratitude interventions in school settings can also be used in Turkey.

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Psikolojik İyi Oluşun Yordayıcıları Olarak Şükran, Umut, İyimserlik ve Yaşam Doyumu

Atf:

Kardas, F., Cam, Z., Eskisu, M., & Gelibolu, S. (2019). Gratitude, hope, optimism and life satisfaction as predictors of psychological well-being. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 82, 81-100, DOI: 10.14689/ejer.2019.82.5

Özet

Problem Durumu: 19. yüzyılın sonlarında başlayıp İkinci Dünya Savaşı'na kadar devam eden süreçte, psikoloji alanında genel anlamda hayatın negatif yönlerine odaklanan, sorunları teşhis ve tedaviye yoğunlaşan ve bireylerin güçlü yönleri yerine sorunlu yönlerine odaklanan bir yaklaşımın egemen olduğu görülmektedir. Özellikle İkinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra savaşın etkisi, hümanizm anlayışının yaygınlaşması, hayatın pozitif yönlerini kucaklamaya yönelik ihtiyaç psikolojide hakim paradigmada farklılaşmalara neden olmuştur. Bu çerçevede Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow gibi öncülerin çalışmalarının etkisiyle insanların güçlü yönlerine olan vurgu artmaya başlamıştır. Pozitif psikoloji yaklaşımı patoloji (hastalık) odaklı bu bakış açısına önemli eleştiriler getirmiş ve psikolojinin hayatın pozitif yönlerini kucaklaması gerektiğini ve bireylerin güçlü yönlerine odaklanarak onların iyi oluşlarını arttırmayı hedeflemesi gerektiğini ileri sürmüştür. Bu çerçevede ortaya çıkan ortaya çıkan çalışmalar 2000'li yılların başında Pozitif Psikoloji alanının sistematik olarak ortaya çıkmasına zemin hazırlamıştır. Pozitif psikoloji yaklaşımının yaygınlaşmasıyla birlikte mutluluk, iyi oluş, yaşam doyumunu gibi konular sıklıkla araştırılmaya başlanmıştır. Bu bağlamda bireylerin yaşam doyumlarını ve iyi oluş düzeylerini yordayan değişkenlerin ortaya konulması ve bu değişkenlere ilişkin çeşitli kuramsal ve uygulamalı çalışmaların gerçekleştirilmesi önem kazanmıştır. Bu bağlamda şükran, umut, iyimserlik ve yaşam doyumunu değişkenlerinin birbirleriyle olan ilişkilerinin ortaya konulması ve bu değişkenlerin iyi oluşu yordama düzeylerinin ortaya konulmasının yararlı olacağı düşünülmektedir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Yukarıda ifade edilenler bağlamında, bu araştırmanın amacı, üniversite öğrencilerinde şükran, yaşam doyumunu, iyimserlik ve umut düzeylerinin psikolojik iyi oluş durumunu, görece önem sırasına göre, hangi düzeyde yordadığını bir regresyon modeli ile ortaya koymaktır. Bu amaç çerçevesinde sözü edilen değişkenlerin arasındaki ilişkilerin ortaya konulması ve bu değişkenlerin iyi oluşu yordama düzeylerinin önem sırasına göre belirlenmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Diğer yandan araştırmada ele alınan değişkenlerin cinsiyete göre anlamlı farklılaşma gösterip göstermediği incelenmektedir.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Araştırma tarama modeli ile gerçekleştirilen nicel bir çalışmadır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu üniversite öğrencilerinden oluşmaktadır. Çalışmaya Van Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi, Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi, Erzincan

Binali Yıldırım Üniversitesi ve Ankara Üniversitesinde, 2017-2018 eğitim öğretim yılında çeşitli fakülte ve bölümlerde öğrenim görmekte olan 510 öğrenci katılmıştır. Araştırmaya katılanların % 70,4'ünü (359) kadın, % 29,6'sını ($n=151$) erkekler oluşturmaktadır. Katılımcıların yaş aralığı 17-30 aralığında değişmekte olup, yaş ortalaması 21,5'tir ($S_x=2,05$). Araştırmada veri toplama amacıyla Psikolojik İyi Oluş Ölçeği Yaşam Doyumu Ölçeği,, Şükran Ölçeği, Yaşam Yönelimi ve Umut Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Veri analizinde çoklu doğrusal regresyon analizinden yararlanılmıştır. Veri analizi öncesinde normallik, doğrusallık ve homojenlik varsayımlarının yanı sıra, çoklu doğrusal regresyon modelinin sayıtları olan çok değişkenli normal dağılım, doğrusallık, yordayıcı değişkenlerle bağımlı değişken arasında doğrusal bir ilişki, bağımsız değişkenler arasında çoklu bağlantı (multicollinearity) probleminin olmaması, hata terimlerinin varyansının sabit ve hata terimlerinin ortalamasının sifıra eşit olması varsayımları incelenmiştir. Varsayımların karşılandığı anlaşıldıktan sonra temel analizler yapılmıştır. Analizlerde SPSS paket programı kullanılmıştır. Veri analizi sürecinde betimsel istatistikler, iki aşamalı çoklu doğrusal regresyon analizi, bağımsız örneklem t testi ve Pearson Momentler Çarpımı Korelasyon Katsayısı yöntemlerinden yararlanılmıştır.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Araştırmada sonucunda yaşam doyumu, şükran, iyimserlik ve umut değişkenlerinden sadece yaşam doyumu düzeyinin cinsiyete göre anlamlı şekilde farklılaştığı, diğer değişkenlerde bir farklılaşma olmadığı belirlenmiştir. Diğer yandan araştırmadaki bütün değişkenlerin birbirleriyle anlamlı pozitif ilişkilere sahip oldukları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Psikolojik iyi oluşu yordayan değişkenlere ilişkin aşamalı regresyon analizi sonuçları psikolojik iyi oluşu en fazla yordayan değişkenlerin sırasıyla şükran, umut, iyimserlik ve yaşam doyumu olduğu belirlenmiştir. Araştırmada psikolojik iyi oluşun en güçlü yordayıcısının şükran duyma olduğu belirlenmiştir. Buna göre şükran duyma tek başına iyi oluştaki değişimin yaklaşık yüzde 36'sını yordamaktadır.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri: Bu araştırmada farklı şehirlerde ve farklı üniversitelerde öğrenim görmekte olan üniversite öğrencilerinde psikolojik iyi oluş, yaşam doyumu, şükran, iyimserlik ve umut değişkenleri arasındaki ilişkiler incelenmiş ve oluşturulan regresyon modeli test edilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda ele alınan değişkenlerin birbirleriyle çeşitli düzeylerde anlamlı pozitif ilişkiler içinde olduğu ortaya konulmuştur. Araştırma bulguları çerçevesinde araştırmacılara iyi oluşu yordamaya ilişkin pozitif duyguların çeşitlenerek benzer araştırmaların tasarlanması, bu araştırmada ele alınan değişkenler arasındaki aracılık ilişkilerine yoğunlaşarak yeni model önerilerinin ortaya konulması, çalışmanın farklı yaş ve meslek gruplarıyla tekrarlanması önerilmektedir. Uygulayıcıların bu araştırmanın bulgularından hareketle şükranı arttırmaya ve şükran aracılığıyla bireylerin iyi oluşlarına katkı sunmaya, iyimserlik ve umut çalışmalarını aracılığıyla iyi oluşu arttırmaya ve bireylerin yaşam doyumlarını yükseltmeye ilişkin çalışmalar yapmalarının önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İyi oluş, şükran, umut, iyimserlik, yaşam doyumu

