# Contact Disturbances, Self-Esteem and Life Satisfaction of University Students: A Structural Equation Modelling Study

**Özlem TAGAY¹**

## Abstract

*Problem Statement*: A literature analysis revealed that contact disturbances, self-esteem and life satisfaction have been examined in different studies separately. In particular, the researchers observed that the studies conducted on Gestalt contact disturbances are limited in number. In this study, the variables of contact disturbances, self-esteem and life satisfaction have been examined all together, and their correlations with one another will be examined though path analysis in the structural equality model.

*Purpose of Study*: The aim of the study is to test the model developed in order to determine whether there is a causal relationship among contact disturbances, self-esteem and life satisfaction of university students.

*Method:* This study utilised a qualitative and relational model to examine the correlations among variables. Data for the study was collected through the Gestalt Contact Disturbances Scale, the Short Form of Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory and the Life Satisfaction Scale. The data were analysed using SPSS and LISREL programs. Students in the research group were composed of a total of 414 students (290 females and 124 males) studying in various departments of the faculty of education of Mehmet Akif Ersoy University.

*Findings:* The standardised path values were found to be 0.18 and 0.75 between the contact disturbances potential variables and self-esteem, and 0.61 between the self-esteem potential variable and the life satisfaction potential variable. When the model was tested it was observed that statistically significant correlations were present between contact level and self-esteem (t = -3.42, p<.05), full contact level and self-esteem (t = -8.96, p<.05), dependent contact level and self-esteem (t = 3.14, p<.05), post-

¹ Assist.Prof.Dr. Mehmet Akif Ersoy University  Education Sciences-Guidance and Counseling Department. E-mail ozlemtagay@gmail.com

contact level and self-esteem (t = 2.35, p<.05), and self-esteem and life satisfaction (t = 8.81, p<.05).

*Conclusion and Suggestions*: The structural model developed based on the causal correlations between contact disturbances, self-esteem and life satisfaction was verified. The researcher also observed that the fit indices of the structural model developed generally met the acceptance value conditions; t values of correlations among all values were significant. Researchers can develop models by using Gestalt contact disturbances and different concepts and can carry out comparative studies by examining Gestalt contact disturbances of different ages and professional groups. Furthermore, psychological counsellors who apply Gestalt therapy can use the Gestalt contact disturbances scale in their studies.

*Key Words*: Gestalt, contact disturbances, self-esteem, life satisfaction.

## Introduction

As a social being, a human should live along with other humans in order to survive in his environment. Humans accommodate the model's needs and grow mature owing to their relationship with the environment. In other words, a human goes into contact with other human beings and their nature. The approach that focuses most on the concept of contact is Gestalt Therapy. Contact is an important concept used in Gestalt Therapy to understand the individual.

In Gestalt Therapy contact is required for realisation of development. Once contact is made with the environment, change is inevitable. Contact takes place through activity such as seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and moving. An effective contact is communication of an individual with others and his environment without losing his sense of self. Humans make contact with others and their environments within their own borders. They are sometimes afraid of establishing proper contact. Humans need to protect themselves from the environment; they think that they will be harmed if they go into contact with it (Jacobs, 2007).

In Gestalt therapy, the focus of the therapy process is on contact but would also involve the process of contact disturbances and the awareness of them. What gives the therapy its shape and what is in the forefront of the therapy is the contact itself. People get into contact by hearing, touching, smelling, seeing, tasting, speaking and moving (Voltan-Acar, 2006). The relationship of an organism with the environment is often called a "Contact Process," "Contact Cycle" or "Gestalt Formation and Undoing Cycle" in the Gestalt Approach (Kirchner, 2000). Spagnuolo (2005) suggests that the contact cycle is composed of fore-contact, contact, full contact and post-contact processes. In the fore-contact stage, the individual takes in a newly-emerging situation. This projection expresses a contact disturbance and it takes place during the contact stage. If it is an appropriate situation for the person, the individual accepts it, and it is therefore balanced. If it is not appropriate and if the individual cannot cope with it healthily, the said individual then deflects or makes a retroflection of it, which expresses the full contact stage. If the situation is not appropriate for the individual, the said individual does not accept it or simply rejects

it by saying "no." If the individual fails to finalize this stage healthily, the individual will eventually withdraw; or, in other words, terminate the contact, or enter the post-contact stage. Lack or ambiguity of borders in the contact process, or using the confluence of borders, is an unhealthy situation. It might result in problems if an individual misuses the confluence of borders beyond the contact stage. In the post-contact stage, the individual normally digests the contact and internalizes this new situation the individual has acquired. The individual would be satisfied with its self and the process the individual went through. If the individual experiences a problem in the contact process and uses contact disturbances, the process is interrupted and not finalised (Kirkpatrick, 2005).

In the Gestalt Contact Disturbances Scale developed in accordance with Turkish culture, the factor containing the projection contact disturbance items is called "contact," while the factor containing retroflection and deflection contact disturbance items is called "full contact;" the factor containing confluence of borders and proflection contact disturbance items is called "dependent contact," and the factor containing the withdrawal contact disturbance items is called the post-contact (Tagay and Voltan-Acar 2012a). Projection disturbance, which exists in the contact stage, is a process in which an individual directs towards other people his inherent feelings, behaviours and thoughts that he rejects and projects them as if they do not belong to the said individual (Latner, 1992).

In retroflection, contact disturbances occur during the full contact stage in which the individual focuses on his own feelings and thoughts. Individuals who have retroflection contact disturbance do not take action towards their environment, but rather flex it back upon themselves (Sills, Finch and Lapworth, 1998). Examples of retroflection include self-hatred, self-love, self-control, narcissism, nail-biting, lip-biting and eating disorders. Retroflection may do harm to the individual if conducted unwittingly (Voltan-Acar, 2006).

In deflection contact disturbance, individuals are unable to express their feelings directly and they use indirect ways to do so. These individuals display irrelevant behaviours to divert from the primary topic in their interpersonal relations, and they frequently make jokes in order to ignore the issue when people talk about topics that irritate them (Kepner, 1982). In other words, in deflection contact disturbances it is more likely that the individual would use diversion away from the person who is to be contacted directly. Retroflection and deflection contact disturbances exist in the full contact stage.

The dependent contact stage is composed of the confluence of borders contact disturbance and proflection syndrome contact disturbance. In confluence of borders contact disturbance, the border between the individual and others becomes vague (Latner, 2000). In proflection syndrome contact disturbance, individuals treat others in the way that they would like to be treated. When individuals fail to express their needs or their desires, they help by accommodating the needs of others, which they do unwittingly (Voltan-Acar, 2006).

In the withdrawal contact disturbance of the post-contact stage, individuals might sometimes need to withdraw to digest the situation after some intensive experience. Withdrawal is necessary to move away from the environment, to rest one's head and to process what has been experienced. Sometimes, one might need to

withdraw in order to draw a boundary. These are healthy withdrawals. An unhealthy withdrawal is the one that an individual experiences unwittingly (Voltan-Acar, 2006).

In addition to contact, another concept that also gives shape to the relationships of one individual with others is self-esteem. Sam, Sam & Öngen (2010) suggest that the concept of self is defined as the whole of perceptions, feelings and thoughts that are fundamental and very critical to human personality. In other words, the concept of self is the way an individual perceives and comprehends himself. Self-esteem is the totality of expectations an individual has of himself to be accepted or rejected, as well as the thoughts of the individual about himself.

The summation of the facts suggests that if an individual has a positive attitude about his self-evaluation, his self-esteem will be high; whereas, if the individual has a negative attitude, his self-esteem will be low. With respect to the studies, the individuals who would prove to have a high self-esteem were those people who respect themselves and consider themselves as valuable figures within society. On the other hand, a person with lower self-esteem would always consider himself negatively (Rosenberg, 1965; Fennell, 1997). Studies suggest that individuals with high self-esteem can establish close relationships and have strong overcoming skills (Baumeister, Campell, Kruger & Vohs, 2003).

An analysis of studies on self-esteem reveals that researchers examined the correlations of self-esteem with academic performance, interpersonal achievements, happiness and a healthy lifestyle (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohs, 2003), with recklessness (Kahriman, 2005), with approaches to coping with stress (Hamarta, Arslan, Saygın & Özyeşil, 2009), with loneliness and psychological resilience (Güloğlu & Karaırmak, 2010), with social support and despair (Savi Çakar & Karataş, 2012), with loneliness and life satisfaction (Kapıkıran, 2013), and with social support and subjective well-being (Kong, Zhao & You, 2013).

Furthermore, when the researcher analysed the studies, they noted several that suggest a correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction (Chow, 2005; Zhank, 2005, Kapıkıran, 2013). Life satisfaction is among the subjects of psychology that focuses on the positive attributes of human nature. Diener & Diener (1995) suggests that life satisfaction emphasizes the cognitive aspect of subjective well-being as a concept concerning the happiness of individuals. Life satisfaction is not satisfaction about a given situation; rather, it encompasses satisfaction with life in general. Happiness expresses a state of well-being from different aspects, such as morale (Wilson & Peterson, 1988).

A literature analysis revealed that contact disturbances, self-esteem and life satisfaction were examined in different studies separately. In particular, the researchers observed that the studies conducted on Gestalt contact disturbances are limited in number. In this study, the variables of contact disturbances, self-esteem and life satisfaction have been examined all together, and their correlations with one another will be examined though path analysis in structural equation modelling. The aim of the study is to test the model developed in order to determine whether there is a causal relationship among contact disturbances, self-esteem and life satisfaction of university students.

**The Structural Model Proposed**

The study first defined three potential variables on a theoretical basis: Gestalt contact disturbances, self-esteem and life satisfaction. Gestalt contact disturbances have four sub-dimensions: contact, full contact, dependent contact and post-contact. The Short Form of Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory and Life Satisfaction Scale determine the total score. The structural model proposed is presented in Figure 1. In order to verify the structures established in the model proposed, first the measurement model was examined along with the data collected under this study, and then the correlations among these structures were analysed by means of structural equation modelling.
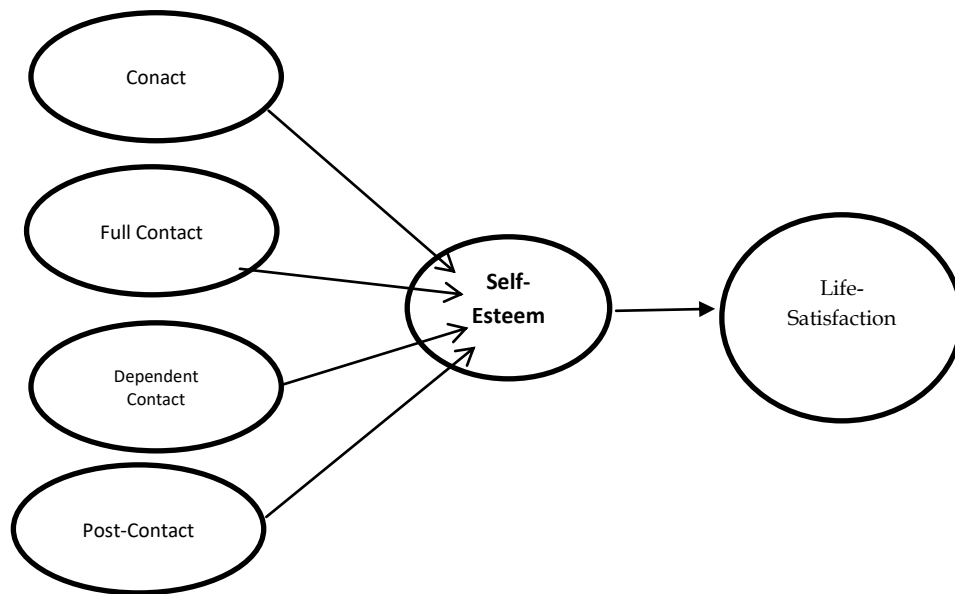


*Figure I. The Structural Model Proposed*

## Method

*Research Design*

This study utilised a qualitative and relational model to examine the correlations among variables. Data for the study were collected through the Gestalt Contact Disturbances Scale, the Short Form of Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory and the Life Satisfaction Scale. The model established was tested using Structural Equation Modelling.

*Research Group*

Students in the research group were composed of a total of 414 students (290 females and 124 males) studying in various departments of the faculty of education of Mehmet Akif Ersoy University. For the research group that received the questionnaire in academic year 2011-2012, we originally reached out to 445 students. However, 31 students were excluded from the analysis because they failed to fill out the questionnaire completely.

*Research Instrument*

In this study, the Gestalt Contact Disturbances Inventory, Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory and the Life Satisfaction Scale were used as data collection tools.

**Gestalt Contact Disturbances Scale**: The study used the Gestalt Contact Disturbances Scale (GCDS) developed by Tagay (2010b) in order to measure the contact disturbances of university students. GCDS is composed of 24 items and 4 sub-scales such as contact, full contact, dependent contact and post-contact. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of GCDS was found to be .61 for the sub-scale of contact, .79 for the sub-scale of full contact, .75 for the sub-scale of dependent contact and .60 for the sub-scale of post-contact. Test re-test reliability coefficient was found to be .74 for the sub-scale of contact, .77 for the sub-scale of full contact, .69 for the sub-scale of dependent contact and .65 for the sub-scale of post contact. The verifying factor analysis tested the four-factor structure and revealed that the model tested had very good fit indices.

**Short Form of Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory:** This study used the short form of Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory developed by Coopersmith (1974) and adapted into Turkish by Pişkin (1996). The answers given to the inventory, composed of twenty-five items, are yes (1) or no (0). The higher the scores were, the higher the self-esteem of individuals was interpreted to be. Internal consistency reliability coefficients of the inventory ranged from .75 to .83, while the validity coefficients obtained through the test-retest method ranged from .70 to .80. The reliability coefficient of the inventory calculated by means of the Kuder Richardson (KR-20) formula was .74 (Pişkin, 1996). In this study, the KR 20 coefficient of the inventory was found to be .85.

**Life Satisfaction Scale:** The Life Satisfaction Scale was developed by Diener, Emmons, Laresen & Griffin (1985) and translated into Turkish by Köker (1991). The scale consists of five items regarding life satisfaction. Each item is answered according to a system ranked from 1 to 7 (1: not suitable at all – 7: very suitable). Aiming to measure overall life satisfaction, the scale is appropriate for all age groups from adolescents to adults. Translation of the scale into Turkish and the validity study of the scale by means of the face validity method were conducted by Köker (1991). The item analysis revealed a sufficient correlation between the scores received from each item of the scale individually and the total scores. The test-retest reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .85.

*Data Analysis*

This study examined by means of structural equation modelling whether there is a causal relationship among Gestalt contact disturbances, self-esteem and life satisfaction of university students. SPSS and Lisrel software were used in the analysis of the data obtained.

**Structural Equation Modelling (SEM**): Structural Equation Modelling is a statistical method that allows researchers to examine the correlations among a series of variables. In this type of analysis, the basic problem of the researcher is to express whether a model that the researcher puts forward by referring to the field literature is verified by the data (Tatlıdil, 1992). In structural equation modelling there are two primary models: the measurement model and the structural model. Measuring the model used in the study at the start of the analysis of the structural equation modelling is presumed (Sümer, 2000; Şimşek, 2007).

In line with the purpose of this study, the researcher used the Structural Equality Model to test the model developed for examining whether there is a causal relationship among Gestalt contact disturbances, self-esteem and life satisfaction of university students. The study utilized two-tier structural equation modelling that allows the researcher to first test the measurement model by means of verifying factor analysis and then to test the cause-effect correlations among the above-mentioned variables through path analysis.

## Results

In this study, the researcher first examined the reliability of scales and the validity of the structure. The measurement models were tested. Then, the structural model was tested in both groups in line with the two-tiered method. Reliability of the scales was analysed by means of Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency co-efficient and McDonald's Omega values.

**Tablo 1.**

*Factors, factor loads, R2, Cronbach Alpha and McDonald's Omega Values concerning Gestalt Contact Disturbances Scale Items*

| Sub-Dimensions | Item | $\lambda_i$ | $R^2$ | $a$ | $\omega$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Contact Items | 3 | 0,46 | 0,79 | | |
| | 7 | 0,72 | 0,48 | | |
| | 14 | 0,76 | 0,43 | 0,69 | 0,72 |
| | 18 | 0,45 | 0,8 | | |
| | 21 | 0,5 | 0,75 | | |
| Full Contact Items | 1 | 0,57 | 0,68 | | |
| | 2 | 0,47 | 0,78 | | |
| | 5 | 0,48 | 0,77 | | |
| | 8 | 0,44 | 0,81 | | |
| | 11 | 0,49 | 0,76 | 0,70 | 0,70 |
| | 17 | 0,33 | 0,89 | | |
| | 19 | 0,51 | 0,74 | | |
| | 20 | 0,46 | 0,79 | | |
| Dependent Contact Items | 9 | 0,44 | 0,81 | | |
| | 10 | 0,39 | 0,84 | | |
| | 12 | 0,45 | 0,8 | | |
| | 13 | 0,43 | 0,81 | 0,68 | 0,67 |
| | 15 | 0,65 | 0,58 | | |
| | 16 | 0,54 | 0,71 | | |
| | 23 | 0,36 | 0,87 | | |
| Post Contact Items | 4 | 0,26 | 0,96 | | |
| | 6 | 0,39 | 0,88 | 0,53 | 0,62 |
| | 22 | 0,83 | 0,47 | | |
| | 24 | 0,69 | 0,59 | | |

An analysis of factors, factor loads, R², Cronbach's Alpha and McDonald's Omega Values concerning Gestalt Contact Disturbances Scale Items suggests that

Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the GCDS sub-dimensions were 0.53-0.70. and McDonald's Omega values ranged between 0.62 and 0.72. As the researcher examined these values, it was determined that sub-dimensions of the scale had sufficient evidence for internal consistency and structural reliability. When the researcher looked at the factor loads and $R^2$ values of items in Table 1, it was observed that GCDS was composed of items that can measure the structure of contact disturbances and that psychometric attributes of GCDS were at sufficient levels.

**Tablo 2.**

*Factors, factor loads, R2, Cronbach Alpha and McDonald's Omega Values concerning Life Satisfaction Scale Items*

| *Dimension* | *Item* | $\lambda_i$ | $R^2$ | *a* | $\omega$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Life satisfaction items | 1 | 0,71 | 0,49 | | |
| | 2 | 0,71 | 0,5 | | |
| | 3 | 0,84 | 0,3 | 0,83 | 0,85 |
| | 4 | 0,75 | 0,44 | | |
| | 5 | 0,64 | 0,59 | | |

As factor loads, $R^2$, Cronbach Alpha and McDonald's Omega Values concerning Life Satisfaction Scale Items were analysed, it was found that Cronbach's     Alpha coefficient for the Life Satisfaction Scale was 0.83 and McDonald's Omega value was 0.85. These values suggest that the scale had sufficient evidence for internal consistency and structural reliability. When the researcher examined the factor loads and $R^2$ values of the items in Table 2, it was found that the Life Satisfaction Scale was composed of items that can measure the structure of life satisfaction, and psychometric attributes of the life satisfaction scale were at sufficient levels.

**Tablo 3.**

*Factors, factor loads, R2, Cronbach Alpha and McDonald's Omega Values concerning Self-Esteem Scale Items*

| Boyut | Madde | $\lambda_i$ | $R^2$ | a | $\omega$ |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|
| | 1 | 0,17 | 0,97 | | |
| | 2 | 0,23 | 0,95 | | |
| | 3 | 0,44 | 0,8 | | |
| | 4 | 0,3 | 0,91 | | |
| | 5 | 0,23 | 0,95 | | |
| | 6 | 0,42 | 0,82 | | |
| | 7 | 0,31 | 0,91 | | |
| | 8 | 0,1 | 0,99 | | |
| | 9 | 0,52 | 0,73 | | |
| | 10 | 0,45 | 0,79 | | |
| | 11 | 0,2 | 0,96 | | |
| | 12 | 0,52 | 0,73 | | |
| Self-Esteem Items | 13 | 0,52 | 0,73 | 0,79 | 0,80 |
| | 14 | 0,16 | 0,98 | | |
| | 15 | 0,49 | 0,76 | | |
| | 16 | 0,47 | 0,78 | | |
| | 17 | 0,46 | 0,79 | | |
| | 18 | 0,29 | 0,92 | | |
| | 19 | 0,33 | 0,89 | | |
| | 20 | 0,53 | 0,72 | | |
| | 21 | 0,37 | 0,87 | | |
| | 22 | 0,44 | 0,8 | | |
| | 23 | 0,41 | 0,83 | | |
| | 24 | 0,54 | 0,7 | | |
| | 25 | 0,26 | 0,93 | | |

Factors, factor loads, R², Cronbach's Alpha and McDonald's Omega Values concerning Self-Esteem Scale Items suggested that the Cronbach Alpha's coefficient of CSEI was 0.79 and the McDonald's Omega value was 0.80. As these values were analysed, it was observed that the scale had sufficient evidence for internal consistency and structural reliability. When the researcher examined the factor loads and R² values of the items in Table 3, CSEI was composed of items that can measure the structure of life satisfaction, and psychometric attributes of the life satisfaction scale were at sufficient levels.

### Findings on the Testing of the Measurement Model

Before the measurement model was tested in the study, item parcels were formed for the potential variable of self-esteem. The parcel formation decision was made mostly in order to accommodate the basic assumptions of the method and to reduce the number of parameters (Bandalos & Finney, 2001; Hagtvet & Nasser, 2004). In the measurement and structural models, the 25-item potential variable of self-esteem was included into the analysis by forming five parcels.

As a result of the analysis, the chi-square value calculated for the measurement model ($\chi^2$ = 215.76, sd = 73) was found to be significant at the level of *p = .00*. When the proportion of the chi-square value to the degree of freedom ($\chi^2$/sd = 2,95) was examined, the fact that it was lower than 5 points demonstrated a good fit. When the researcher analysed the goodness of fit indices of the measurement model, it was found that it took the following values: RMSEA = .07, RMR = .58, GFI = .93, AGFI = .90 and CFI = .96. This suggests that the measurement model was a good one. Furthermore, when the researcher examined the standardised and non-standardised factor loads, standard errors and t statistics results of each observed variable on each potential variable, the researcher determined that all of the factor loads of the variables observed on potential variables were statistically significant, suggesting that the measurement model was an acceptable model as a whole and that the correlations among the structures could be analysed using Structural Equation modelling.

### Findings on the Testing of Structural Equation Modelling

In the second stage of the study, after the measurement models were verified, sub-scales were totalled and potential variables were defined. The structural model is shown in Figure 2.
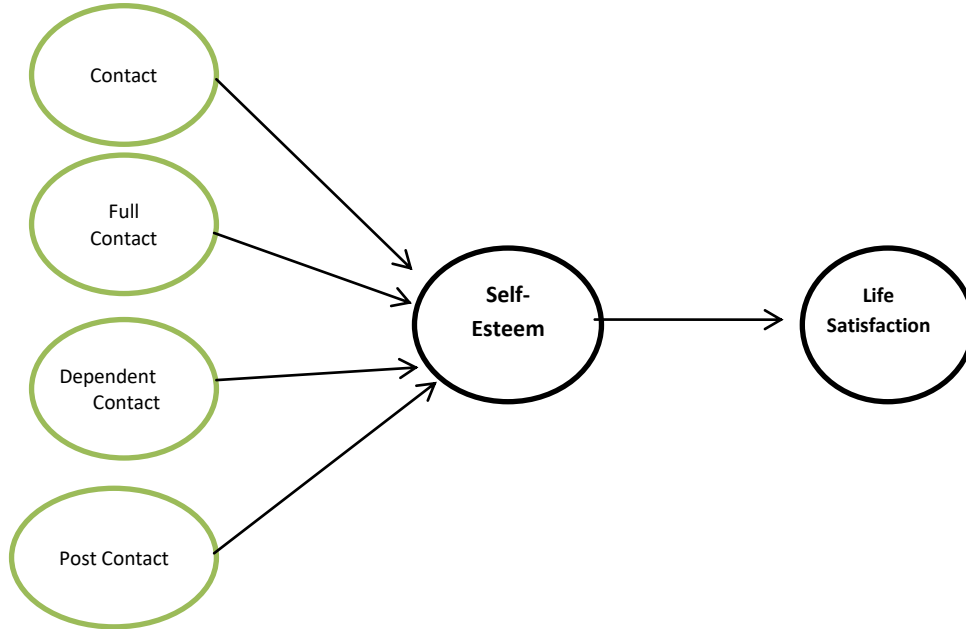
*Figure 2. Standardised Values for the Structural Model*

As can be seen in Figure 2, when the researcher analysed the standardised path values they were found to be 0.18 and 0.75 between contact disturbances potential variables and self-esteem, and 0.61 between the self-esteem potential variable and the life satisfaction potential variable. In the literature, standardised path value criteria are considered to be a low fit at 0.10, medium fit at 0.30 and good fit at 0.50 (Şimşek, 2007).

When the t value of the model was tested (as shown Figure 3), it was observed that statistically significant correlations were present between contact level and self-esteem (t = -3.42, *p<.05*), full contact level and self-esteem (t = -8.96, *p<.05*), dependent contact level and self-esteem (t = 3.14, *p<.05*), post-contact level and self-esteem (t = 2.35, *p<.05*), and self-esteem and life satisfaction (t = 8.81, *p<.05*). The chi-square value of the model was $\chi^2$ = 805.92, sd = 502 and was significant (*p = .00*). When we analysed the proportion of the chi-square value to the degree of freedom level ($\chi^2$/sd = 1.61) it was observed that the fact that it was lower than two pointed to a perfect fit. When we examined the goodness of fit indices concerning the structural model, we calculated the following values: RMSEA = .038, RMR = .20, SRMR = .059, GFI = .90, AGFI = .88 and CFI = .96. These values suggest that the structural model established was a good fit.

Chi-Square=805.92, df=502, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.038
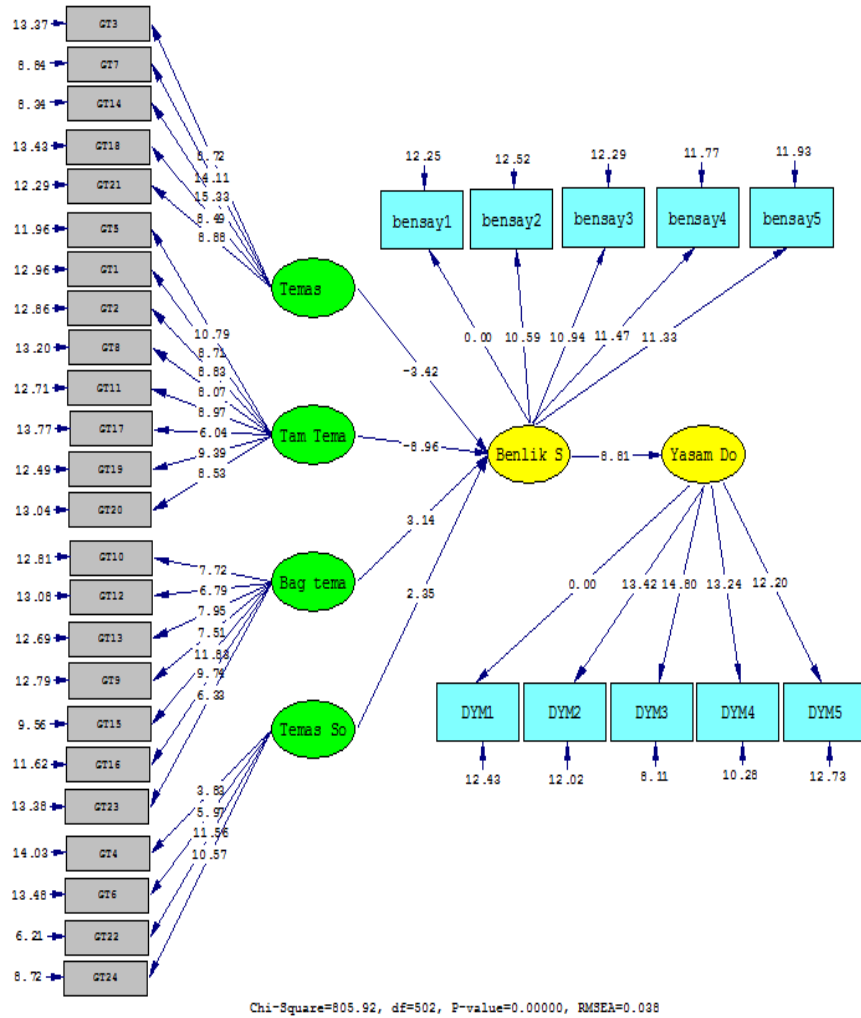
When the findings of this study are examined, it can be seen that the structural model developed based on the causal correlations between contact disturbances, self-esteem and life satisfaction are verified. The fit indices of the structural model developed have generally met the acceptance value conditions; t values of correlations among all values were significant.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined a structural model explaining a causal correlation among contact disturbances, self-esteem and life satisfaction of university students. In the first stage of the study, the measurement model was tested and it was determined

that the measurement model proposal could be used to test the structural model. Then, the structural model proposal was tested and verified according to the measurement models verified. The results obtained concerning the structural model suggest a causal correlation among contact disturbances, self-esteem and life satisfaction of university students.

When the results analysed, a significant negative correlation was found between contact level a sub-dimension of contact disturbances and self-esteem. An analysis of the field literature led the researcher to observe that there was no similar study on contact disturbances. The findings were obtained in this study were therefore discussed in accordance with the Gestalt Therapy Approach. The contact disturbance in the contact dimension is projection. Latner (1992) suggests that projection is a process in which an individual directs towards other people his own feelings, behaviours and thoughts that he rejects and projects them as if they do not belong to him. Self-esteem involves an individual knowing his own characteristics and knowing and accepting what he or she really is. It is therefore well accepted that individuals with lower self-esteem have a higher contact disturbance level.

The findings of this study suggest a significant negative correlation between full contact disturbance and self-esteem. In the sub-dimension of full contact disturbance there are retroflection and deflection contact disturbances. Retroflection is the process of converting inside the energy that is supposed to be converted outside (Brown, 2004). Individuals using the retroflection contact disturbance always blame themselves, try to be in control and have a negative self-image. They have difficulty expressing their needs and receiving help (Clarkson, 1994; Perls, 1973). Therefore, one can suggest that individuals with full contact disturbances have lower self-esteem due to the impact of the negative messages they receive from the environment. The researcher observed that these findings in the field literature support the findings of this very study which is: "university students with higher full contact disturbances had a lower self-esteem."

Another finding of the study puts forward a significant positive correlation between dependent contact disturbance and self-esteem. The sub-dimension of dependent contact disturbance includes confluence and proflection. Individuals using the confluence contact disturbance are afraid of breaking others and find it very difficult to say no (Kepner, 1982). In collectivist societies, individuals have difficulty making decisions or speaking on their own behalf. Similarly, commitment to family is healthy and well-supported for people in the Turkish culture (Göregenli, 1997; Hortaçsu, 1997). Tagay and Voltan-Acar (2012b) argues that one can encounter the confluence of borders contact disturbance in Turkish society far more than in western societies. It is obvious that cultural factors and upbringing may have an impact on the utilisation and extensiveness of contact disturbances. Therefore, one can suggest that, considering that the behaviours of individuals displaying obedience, harmony and loyalty to authority would be supported and approved, these individuals would have a higher self-esteem, especially in Turkish culture where these traits are expected.

In proflection, an individual treats his own environment exactly in the way that he treats himself (Clarkson, 1994). Therefore, as in the case of confluence, the researcher can put forward that proflection is a situation consolidated by the society

and that individuals displaying this behaviour are supported. Since the behaviours of such individuals are supported, we can suggest that it can contribute to their high self-esteem.

Another finding of the study suggests a significant positive correlation between post-contact disturbance and self-esteem. In the sub-dimension of post-contact there is the withdrawal contact disturbance. Withdrawal is healthy when it is for an individual to rest his own head, digest whatever the individual is going through and to draw boundaries with others, if not unwittingly. Once the contact cycle is over, an individual withdraws from contact until a new need arises. Withdrawal contact disturbance appears in the final stage of the contact cycle and is considered to be post-contact (Tagay 2010a).

The final finding of the study was a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction. As stated before, self-esteem is associated with an individual seeing himself to be positive and valuable. Veenhoven (1996) defines life satisfaction as an individual's evaluation of individual's life in accordance with his own criteria. It is expected that an individual's evaluations of himself has an impact on life satisfaction. There are studies conducted on self-esteem and life satisfaction. Dilmaç & Ekşi (2008) and Rey, Extremera & Pera (2011) all stated a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and life satisfaction in their studies.

Some recommendations have been formulated based on the conclusions of this study. Firstly, researchers can develop models by using Gestalt contact disturbances and other concepts and can carry out comparative studies by examining Gestalt contact disturbances of different ages and professional groups. Furthermore, psychological counsellors who apply Gestalt therapy can use the Gestalt contact disturbances scale in their studies. Additionally, they can take into consideration cultural factors and elements in their psychological counselling processes.

## References

Bandalos, D. L., & Finney, S. J. (2001). Item parceling issues in

structural equation modeling. In M. G. A. & S. R. E. (Eds.), *New developments and techniques in structural equation modeling.*

Baumeister, R.F., Campbell, J.D., Krueger,J.I. & Vohs,K.D.(2003) Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success,happiness, or healthier lifestyles?, *American Psychological Society,* 4(1):1-44.

Brown, J. R. (2004) Conflict emotions and appreciation of differances, *Gestalt review* 8 (3), 323-335.

Chow, H. P. (2005). Life satisfaction among university students in a Canadian prairie city: a multivariate analysis. *Social Indicators Research*, 70, 139–150.

Clarkson, P. (1994). *Gestalt counselling in action.* Londra: Sage Publications.

Coopersmith, S. (1974). *The Antecedents of Self-esteem.* San Francisco: W.H. Freeman

Diener, E., & Diener, M. (1995). Cross-cultural correlates of life satisfaction and self-esteem. Journal of

Personality and Social Psychology, 68, 653–663.Fennell M. (1997). Low self-esteem: A cognitive perspective. *Behav Cognitive Psychother, 25*, 1–25.

Göregenli, M. (1997). Individualist and collectivist tendencies in a Turkish sample. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 28, 787–794.

Güloğlu, B., Karaırmak, Ö. (2010). Üniversite öğrencilerinde yalnızlığın yordayıcısı olarak benlik saygısı ve psikolojik sağlamlık [Self Esteem and Psychological Resilience as Predicting of Loneliness in University Students ], *Aegean Educational Sciences Journal*, 11(2): 73-88.

Hagtvet, K. A., & Nasser, F. M. (2004). How Well Do Item Parcels Represent Conceptually Defined Latent Constructs? A Two-Facet Approach. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 11*(2), 168-193. doi: 10.1207/s15328007sem1102_2.

Hamarta, E., Arslan, Ç., Saygın, Y. & Özyeşil, Z. (2009) Benlik saygısı ve akılcı olmayan inançlar bakımından üniversite öğrencilerinin stresle başa çıkma yaklaşımlarının analizi. [An analysis of approaches for overcoming stress in university students from the perspective of self-esteem and irrational beliefs]. *Values Education Journal,* 7 (18): 25-42.

Hortaçsu, N. (1997). Cross-cultural comparison of need importance and need satisfaction during adolescents: Turkey and the United States. *Journal of Genetic Psychology,* 158, 287-297.

Jacobs, S. (2007). *The implementation of Humour as deflective technique in contact boundary disturbance.* Master of Diaconiologh, Universty of South Africa

Kahriman, İ. (2005). Karadeniz teknik üniversitesi Trabzon sağlık yüksekokulu öğrencilerinin benlik saygıları ve atılganlık düzeylerinin bazı değişkenler açısından incelenmesi, *C.Ü Sağlık Meslek Yüksekokulu Dergisi,* 9(1):24-32.

Kapıkıran, Ş. (2013). Loneliness and life satisfaction in Turkish early adolescents: the mediating role of self esteem and social support, *Soc Indic Res,* 111:617–632.

Kepner, J.I  (1982) Questionnaire measurement of personality styles from the theory of gestalt therapy. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Kent State University , Ohio.

Kirchner, M. (2000). Gestalt therapy theory: An overwiew. *Journal of Gestalt Therapy* 4, (3).

Kirkpatric, K.L.(2005). *Enhancing self compassion using a Gestalt two-chair intervention* Doctor of philosophy, the University of Texas at Austin.

Kong, F., Zhao, J., You, X. (2013).  Self-esteem as mediator and moderator of the relationship between social support and subjective well-being among chinese university students, *Soc Indic Res,*  112:151–161

Köker, S.(1991). [*Normal ve sorunlu ergenlerin yaşam doyumu düzeyinin karşılaştırılması*]. A *comparison of life satisfaction levels of normal and problematic adolescents*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Ankara University, Institute of Social Sciences, Ankara.

Latner, J. (1992). *The theory of gestalt therapy.* Gestalt Institute of Cleveland Pres.

Perls, F.S. (1973). *Gestalt approach eye witness to therapy science and behaviour.* United States of America Books:Inc.

Pişkin, M. (1996). *Self- esteem and locus of control of secondary school children both in England and Turkey*. Unpublished doctoral disertation, University of Leicester, Leicester.

Rey, L., Extremera, N., Pena, M. (2011). Perceived emotional intelligence, self-esteem and life satisfaction in adolescents, Psychosocial Intervention, 20 (2), p. 227-234

Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent: Self-image.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Sam, N., Sam, R. & Öngen, B. (2010) Üniversite öğrencilerinin çevresel tutumlarının yeni çevresel paradigma ve benlik saygısı ölçeği ile incelenmesi. [An analysis of environmental attitudes of university students with a new environmental paradigm and a self-esteem scale]. *Academic Perspective Journal*, No 21.

Savi-Çakar, F. & Karataş, Z. (2012) Ergenlerin benlik saygısı, algıladıkları sosyal destek ve umutsuzluk düzeyleri: bir yapısal eşitlik modeli çalışması. [The self-esteem, perceived social support and hopelessness in adolescents: the structural equation modeling]. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice - 12(4)*, 2397-2412.

Sills, C., Finch, S., ve Lapworth, P. (1998). *Gestalt counselling.* United Kingdom: Winslow Press Limited.

Spagnuolo-Lobb, S. M. (2005) Classical gestalt therapy theory (Ed:

Woldt & Toman) *Gestalt therapy history theory and practise* (pp 21-41), California: Sage Publications.

Sümer, N. (2000). Yapısal eşitlik modelleri (Structural equality models: Basic Concepts and Practical Samples). *Turkish Psychology Lectures*, *3* (6) 49–74.

Şimşek, Ö. F. (2007). *Introduction to Structural Equality Modelling, Basic Principles and LISREL Applications*. Ankara: Ekinoks Publications.

Tagay, Ö. (2010a). Üniversite öğrencilerinin temas engellerinin bazı değişkenler açısından incelenmesi [Studying of the gestalt contact disturbances of university students according to some variables]. *Journal of Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Education Faculty,* 10 (9), 71-86.

Tagay, Ö. (2010b). *Gestalt temas engelleri ölçeğinin geliştirilmesi ve üniversite öğrencilerinin temas engellerinin incelenmesi.* [Developing gestalt contact disturbances scale and studying of the gestalt contact disturbances of university students], Doctoral Dissertation, Hacettepe University, Institute of Social Sciences.

Tagay, Ö., Voltan-Acar, N. (2012a). Gestalt temas engelleri ölçeğinin geliştirilmesi. [Developing gestalt contact disturbances scale]. *Turkish Journal of Psychology Counseling and Guidance,* 4 (37), 61-72.

Tagay, Ö., Voltan-Acar, N. (2012b) Contact disturbances and the contact cycle in gestalt therapy according to Turkish culture, *Gestalt Journal of Australia and New Zealand* 9 (1): 20-32.

Tatlıdil, H. (1992). *Uygulamalı Çok Değişkenli İstatistik.* [*Applied Multi-Variable Statistic*]. Academy Printing House, Ankara 85- 89

Wilson, M.S., Peterson, W.G., (1988). Life satisfaction among young adults from rural families. *Family Relations*, 37, 84-91.

Veenhoven, R. (1996). Is happiness relative? Social Indicators Research, 24, 1-34.

Voltan-Acar, N. (2006). *Ne kadar farkındayım?* [How much am I

aware]? Gestalt therapy. Ankara: Nobel Pres.

Zhang, L. (2005). Prediction of Chinese life satisfaction: contribution of collective self-esteem. *International Journal of Psychology*, 40(3), 189–200

## Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Temas Engelleri, Benlik Saygısı ve Yaşam Doyumu Düzeyleri: Bir Yapısal Eşitlik Modeli Çalışması

## Özet

*Problem Durumu:* İnsanoğlu çevre ile kurduğu ilişki sayesinde ihtiyaçlarını karşılar, büyür ve olgunlaşır. Sosyal bir varlık olan insan, yaşamını sürdürmek için diğer insanlarla bir arada yaşamak durumundadır. Başka bir deyişle insan sosyal bir grup içerisinde diğer insanlarla, çevresiyle temas kurar. Temas kavramına daha çok odaklanan yaklaşım türü Gestalt terapidir. Temas Gestalt terapide bireyi anlamak için kullanılan önemli bir kavramdır. Alan yazın incelendiğinde temas engelleri, benlik saygısı ve yaşam doyumunun farklı çalışmalarda ayrı ayrı ele alındığı

görülmektedir. Özellikle Gestalt temas engelleri konusunda yapılan araştırmaların sınırlı sayıda olduğu görülmektedir. Bu araştırmada temas engelleri, benlik saygısı ve yaşam doyumu değişkenleri birlikte ele alınarak aralarındaki ilişki yapısal eşitlik modelinde yer alan yol analizi ile araştırılacaktır. Bu açıdan araştırmanın özgün bir çalışma olduğu düşünülmektedir.

*Araştırmanın Amacı*: Araştırmanın amacı üniversite öğrencilerinde temas engelleri, benlik saygısı ve yaşam doyumu arasında nedensel bir ilişki bulunup bulunmadığını açıklamaya yönelik geliştirilen modeli test etmektir.

*Araştırmanın Yöntemi:* Bu araştırmada, değişkenler arasındaki ilişkileri incelemeye yönelik niceliksel ve ilişkisel model kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada ilk olarak, teorik düzeyde üç örtük (gizil) değişken tanımlanmıştır. Bunlar: Gestalt temas engelleri, benlik saygısı ve yaşam doyumudur. Önerilen modelde kurulan yapıların doğrulanması amacıyla araştırma kapsamında toplanan veriler ile önce ölçüm modeli incelenmiş daha sonra bu yapılar arasındaki ilişkiler yapısal eşitlik modeli ile araştırılmıştır.

Araştırmanın verileri Gestalt Temas Engelleri Ölçeği, Coopersmith Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği Kısa Formu ve Yaşam Doyumu Ölçeği kullanılarak toplanmış ve kurulan modeli test etme işlemi Yapısal Eşitlik Modeli ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma grubu Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesine devam eden 290'ı kız, 124'ü erkek olmak üzere toplam 414 öğrenciden oluşmaktadır.

*Araştırmanın Bulguları:* Çalışmada, öncelikle ölçeklerin güvenirliği ve yapı geçerliği incelenmiştir. Ölçme modelleri test edilmiş, daha sonra doğrulanan ölçme modellerine dayalı olarak ölçeklerin alt ölçek toplam puanları alınmış ve tek aşamalı yönteme göre her iki grupta da yapısal model test edilmiştir. Ölçeklerin güvenirliği Cronbach Alfa iç tutarlılık katsayısı ve McDonald'ın Omega değerleri kullanılarak incelenmiştir. Araştırmada modelin sınamasına ilişkin t değerleri incelendiğinde temas düzeyi ile benlik saygısı arasında (t = -3.42, p<.05), tam temas düzeyi ile benlik saygısı arasında (t = -8.96, p<.05), bağımlı temas düzeyi ile benlik saygısı arasında (t = 3.14, p<.05), temas sonrası düzeyi ile benlik saygısı arasında (t = 2.35, p<.05) ve benlik saygısı ile yaşam doyumu arasında (t = 8.81, p<.05) kurulan ilişkilerin istatistiksel olarak anlamlı olduğu görülmüştür.

*Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri:* Bu araştırmada üniversite öğrencilerinde temas engelleri, benlik saygısı ve yaşam doyumu arasındaki nedensel ilişkiyi ortaya koyan bir yapısal model değerlendirilmiştir. Araştırmanın ilk aşamasında ölçme modelleri test edilmiş ve önerilen ölçüm modelinin yapısal modeli sınamada kullanılabileceği belirlenmiştir. Ardından doğrulanan ölçme modellerine dayalı olarak önerilen yapısal model test edilmiş ve doğrulanmıştır. Araştırmanın sonucuna göre; üniversite öğrencilerinin temas ve tam temas engeli ile benlik saygısı arasında negatif; bağımlı temas ve temas sonrası engeli ile benlik saygısı arasında pozitif ilişki bulunmuştur. Başka bir deyişle, temas ve tam temas engeli yüksek olan üniversite öğrencilerinin benlik saygıları düşük iken bağımlı temas ve temas sonrası engeli yüksek olan üniversite öğrencilerinin benlik saygıları da yüksektir. Ayrıca araştırmada benlik saygısı ile yaşam doyumu arasında pozitif düzeyde anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Özetle yapısal modele ilişkin elde edilen sonuca göre temas engelleri, benlik saygısı ve yaşam doyumu arasında nedensel bir ilişki

bulunmaktadır. Gestalt temas engellerinin başka önemli kavramlarla kullanıldığı araştırmalar yapılabilir. Ayrıca başka yaş grupları ile de benzer araştırmalar yapılabilir. Ayrıca Gestalt Terapiyi kullanan uygulayıcılar çalışmalarında Gestalt Temas Engelleri ölçeğini kullanabilir.

*Anahtar Sözcükler: Gestalt, temas engelleri, benlik saygısı, yaşam doyumu*