

Investigating Levels and Predictors of Life Satisfaction among Prospective Teachers

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Suggested Citation:

Uz-Baş, A. (2011). Investigating levels and predictors of life satisfaction among prospective teachers. *Eğitim Araştırmaları-Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 44, 71-88.

Abstract

Problem Statement: Life satisfaction has been conceptualized as a judgmental or cognitive component of subjective well-being. Life satisfaction among college students is an important research area for several reasons. Modern college students are in a transitional social period, during which they encounter many confusions and challenges. **Strengthening prospective teachers' life satisfaction is particularly essential, in light of teachers' responsibility for training children and adolescents and for being role models.**

Purpose of Study: The purpose of the study was, first, to assess the level of life satisfaction of prospective teachers and, second, to determine the correlates and predictors of life satisfaction.

Methods: A total of 272 college students in Turkey participated in the present study. All participants were recruited from different departments of the faculty of education. The Beck Depression Inventory, The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, Satisfaction with Life Scale and a demographic information form were used to gather data.

Findings and Results: The results showed that prospective teachers were quite satisfied with their lives. The results of correlation analysis indicated that life satisfaction was significantly and negatively correlated with depression scores and significantly and positively correlated with perceived social support subscores and total scores. Furthermore, significant gender differences were found for the life satisfaction scores. Female students scored significantly higher than male students on life satisfaction. Moreover, the life satisfaction scores significantly differed according to participants' preferences for department and estimated

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probability of finding a job. Finally, stepwise regression analysis revealed that depression, department preference, general social support, and gender accounted for 34% of variance in life satisfaction scores.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The above findings have important implications for mental health professionals who work with college students. They indicate that it is important for mental health professionals to inform students of the necessity of seeking help immediately when they feel depressed and to help students cope with this common college student problem. It is also important to help students develop new support systems and establish effective interpersonal relationships. Finally, the findings of this study may be utilized by high school counselors. To enhance students' life satisfaction, high school counselors should help students enhance their self-awareness, develop career management skills, and become aware of the links between career choice and well-being.

Keywords: life satisfaction; prospective teachers; predictors.

Life satisfaction has been conceptualized as a judgmental or cognitive component of subjective well-being (Pavot, Diener, Colvin, & Sandvik, 1991). Jagodzinski (2009) has reported that life satisfaction is directly related to goals and wishes for today and the future, as well as personal expectations of reaching or fulfilling such goals. Several studies have been conducted on the correlates and determinants of life satisfaction among college students. Previous research on correlates of life satisfaction has shown that life satisfaction is significantly related to some socio-demographic variables, including socio-economic status (Chow, 2005), financial behavior (Xiao, Tang, & Shim, 2008), marital status (Kim & McKenry, 2002), culture (Oishi, 2006; Yetim, 2003), sleep disturbance (Arrindell, Heesink, & Feij, 1999), and personality characteristics (Arrindell, Heesink, & Feij, 1999; Herringer, 1998). In a recent study, Martikainen (2009) concluded that both social and personal factors are related to levels of life satisfaction and the factors influencing these levels. Furthermore, many researchers have attempted to determine predictors of life satisfaction among college students. The findings of these studies have shown that self-esteem (Cha, 2003; Chow, 2005; Çeçen, 2008), depression (Hong & Giannakopoulos, 1994), physical health (Pilcher, 1998), and some psychological constructs such as optimism (Cha, 2003), emotional stability (Lounsbury, Saudargas, Gibson, & Leong, 2005), and individualism (Yetim, 2003) are major determinants of life satisfaction. According to Diener (1994), almost half of the variance in life satisfaction is due to genetic variability, and traits are the strongest predictors of life satisfaction.

Life satisfaction among college students is an important research area for several reasons. Modern college students are in a transitional social period, during which they encounter many confusions and challenges (Ren, 2009). Many college students live without their families and are expected to adapt to new environments, manage their budgets, and succeed academically. In the context of developmental tasks, they are also expected to select a mate, get started in an occupation, take on civic

responsibility, and so on (Havighurst, 1972). All these features of the period of higher education may have an impact on students' life satisfaction.

A number of factors that may be associated with life satisfaction during the college years are discussed in the present study. Some of these factors can be said to be associated with developmental features. These variables include family income, living arrangement, department preference and estimated probability of finding a job. Numerous studies have explored the relationship between income and life satisfaction. In a comprehensive study, Diener and Diener (2002) concluded that there is generally a weak correlation between income and subjective well-being and have noted that this correlation appear to be larger in poorer nations. Veenhoven (1995) has reported that income correlates less strongly with subjective well-being in college student samples than in adult samples. On the other hand, some studies conducted in Turkey have found that there are significant differences in the subjective well-being of students, according to their perceived economic level (Tuzgöl-Dost; 2006), and have indicated that socio-economic level is a significant predictor of life satisfaction (Dilmaç & Ekşi, 2008). Previous studies addressing relationships between life satisfaction and living arrangement, department preference, and estimated probability of finding a job are limited (Gündoğar, Gül, Uskun, Demirci, & Keçeci, 2007; Chow, 2005; Tuzgöl-Dost, 2007). The findings of these studies have shown that living condition, department preference, and job expectations or expectations for the future are significant predictors of life satisfaction. Therefore, these variables were included in this study as possible predictors of life satisfaction.

Another variable considered in this study is perceived social support. There are several conceptualizations of social support, including social embeddedness, received support, and perceived support (Barrera, 1986). In this study, "perceived" social support was investigated, and social support was considered to be a multidimensional concept that included support from friends, family, and significant others. Research has shown that social support may be used by individuals as a shield, to protect themselves from perceived pressures experienced within their environments or situations, so that they can maintain and continue their normal development (Lopez & Salas, 2006). In the context of the afore-mentioned developmental issues in higher education, it can be speculated that social support from others may play an important role in overcoming these difficulties. Although the relationship between life satisfaction and perceived social support has been studied extensively in elderly people (Lou, 2009), and among those who have chronic diseases (Young, 2006), the relationship of life satisfaction to perceived social support among younger people has been examined to a much lesser extent (Danielsen, Oddrun, Hetland, & Wold, 2009). The few studies that exist have supported the notion that there is a significant correlation between life satisfaction and perceived social support (Sheldon & Hoon, 2007; Young, 2006). Consistent with previous research, it was expected that there would be a significant positive correlation between social support and life satisfaction among prospective teachers. Additionally, social support was expected to be a significant determinant of life satisfaction.

In this study, the relationship between life satisfaction and depression was also investigated. Previous studies on college students from a variety of nations have shown that lower levels of depression are associated with higher levels of life satisfaction (Durak, Senol-Durak, & Senoz, 2010; Gündođar et al., 2007; Simpson et al., 1996; Saunders & Roy, 2000). Consistent with the literature, in this study, it was expected that lower depression would be associated with greater life satisfaction and that depression would significantly predict life satisfaction among prospective teachers.

Finally, participants' genders and grades were assessed in the present study. Previous studies on the correlation between college students' gender and life satisfaction are contradictory. Although some researchers have found no significant gender differences in college student samples (Chow, 2005), others have found that females are more satisfied with life than males (Arrindell, Heesink, & Feij, 1999; Joshanloo & Afshari, 2009), while yet others have found that the life satisfaction levels of male college students are higher than those of female students (Cha, 2003). The findings of previous research conducted in Turkey are similarly inconsistent. Gündođar et al. (2007) reported that females had higher scores than males on life satisfaction, while Yetim (2003) found that males had higher scores than females on life satisfaction. Tuzgöl-Dost (2007) found that female university students scored higher on subjective well-being than male university students. Regarding grade level differences, in a recent study, no grade level differences were found for the life satisfaction of teacher candidates (řahin, 2010). On the other hand, the life satisfaction of students with higher grades appears likely to differ from the same for students with lower grades, in some respects. Students with higher grades are more likely to need to find a job and become independent. Also, at the end of the academic year, they are required to pass an exam without which employment opportunities are very limited in Turkey. For these reasons, it was expected that higher grades would be associated with lower life satisfaction and that grades would be a significant predictor of life satisfaction.

Several studies have explored the correlates and predictors of the life satisfaction of college students, but few studies have focused on prospective teachers' life satisfaction (Cihangir-Çankaya, 2009; řahin, 2010). Thus, the purpose of this study was, first, to assess the life satisfaction levels of prospective teachers and, second, to determine the correlates and predictors of life satisfaction. Although the experiences of college students from the faculty of education, i.e., prospective teachers, may be similar to those of other college students who come from other faculties, in terms of correlates and/or determinants of life satisfaction, the strengthening of prospective teachers' life satisfaction is a particularly important issue because of their responsibility for training children and adolescents and for being role models. It can be speculated that having knowledge about prospective teachers' life satisfaction and improving their well-being will partially contribute to improving new generations' well-being.

Method

Participants

A total of 272 college students (191 female and 77 male) from Dokuz Eylül University participated in the present study. Participants were selected randomly. Four participants failed to indicate their gender. All participants were recruited from different departments of the faculty of education, and, therefore, participants were defined as prospective teachers. The mean age of the sample was 21.52 years old ($SD = 2.11$). Socio-demographic characteristics are presented in Table 2.

Measures

Beck Depression Inventory (BDI). The BDI is a 21-item self-report questionnaire that evaluates depressive symptomatology (Beck et al., 1961). The responses for each item are scored on a 3-point scale, with higher scores representing higher scores on depression. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Tegin (1980) and Hisli (1988; 1989). **The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be .80 in the current study.**

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS). The MSPSS was developed by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley (1988) to assess individuals' perceptions of the adequacy of social support they receive from family, friends, and significant others. The MSPSS has 12 items and 3 subscales. Each subscale has 4 items (family subscale: items 1, 2, 7, 10; friend subscale: items 3, 4, 8, 12; and a significant other subscale: items 5, 6, 9, 11). The response alternative for each item ranges from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree), constituting a 7-point scale. For each subscale and the total scale, higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived social support (Zimet et al., 1988). The scale was adapted into Turkish by Eker, Arkar, and Yıldız (2001). **The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were found to be .94, .85, .90, and .85 for the family subscale, friends subscale, a significant other subscale, and the total scale, respectively, for the sample in the present study.**

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). The SWLS was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985). The SWLS is perhaps the most commonly used measure of life satisfaction. It has only 5 items, and the responses for each item range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicate higher levels of satisfaction with life. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Köker (1991). A recent study conducted in Turkey suggested that psychometric properties of the SWLS were satisfactory in three separate and independent samples (Durak, Senol-Durak, & Senoz, 2010). **In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was .73.**

Demographic information form. The demographic information form was prepared by the researcher to gather information about participants' socio-demographic characteristics. Data concerning participants' sex, grade, academic department, monthly family income, and living status were collected. Furthermore, participants were asked whether they preferred to study in their departments and whether they expected to find a job after graduation.

Procedure

To collect data, a booklet was prepared by the researcher. The first part had a cover page containing an explanation of the study, followed by a demographic

information form. In the second part, the three scales were presented. These booklets were given to the students in their classrooms. It took 15-30 minutes to fill out the scales. Data collection was undertaken by the author. The study was conducted during the 2008-2009 academic year.

Data Analysis

Prior to carrying out the main statistical analyses, all the study variables were examined, using a variety of SPSS programs, for accuracy of data entry, missing values, and the assumptions of multivariate analysis. Univariate outliers were identified by inspecting z scores and graphical methods. There were no cases with **standardized scores in excess of ± 3.29** . Histograms of the variables revealed approximately normal distributions for each variable and indicated that there were no univariate outliers. Mahalanobis distance values were examined, to identify possible multivariate outliers. With the use of a $p < .001$ criterion for Mahalanobis distance, no outliers were found (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Evaluation of assumptions of normality, linearity, and the homoscedasticity of residuals were satisfactory. During data analysis, descriptive statistics for each of the variables were calculated. The relationship between life satisfaction score and depression, as well as perceived social support subscale score and total score, were examined using Pearson correlations. Gender differences in life satisfaction scores were examined using an independent samples t-test. To investigate whether life satisfaction scores showed significant differences, according to grade, living status, family income, department preference, and estimated probability of finding a job, an analysis of variance (One-Way ANOVA's with Post Hoc Scheffe multiple comparison test) was conducted. Finally, multiple regression analysis (stepwise method) was used to **explore predictors of participants' life satisfaction**. Data were processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 15.0 for Windows).

Results

Descriptive Results of the Study Variables

The means and standard deviations of the major scales are summarized in Table 1. The total mean score for the SWLS was 22.34 ($SD = 6.86$). The mean score was slightly above the neutral point, indicating that prospective Turkish teachers seemed relatively satisfied with life. Pavot and Diener (1993) have noted that on the SWLS, a score of 20 represents the neutral point, i.e., the point at which a respondent is about equally satisfied and dissatisfied.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for the Study Variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Depression	11.28	6.73	0-35
Social support from a significant other	16.40	9.88	4-28
Social support from family	22.75	5.63	4-28
Social support from friends	22.88	5.40	4-28
General social support	62.03	14.34	22-84
Life satisfaction	22.34	6.86	5-59

Relationship between life satisfaction and socio-demographic characteristics

An independent samples t-test revealed significant gender differences ($t = 3.97$, $p < .001$). Female students ($M = 23.42$, $SD = 6.75$) scored significantly higher than male students ($M = 19.84$, $SD = 6.49$) on the SWLS.

Table 2
SWLS Scores by Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Socio-demographic variables	n (%)	M	SD	F
<i>Grade</i>				
First	72(26.5)	21.04	7.70	1.398
Second	46(16.9)	23.52	5.83	
Third	101(37.1)	22.64	6.68	
Fourth	53(19.5)	22.51	6.75	
<i>Academic department</i>				
Primary mathematics education	38(14.0)	21.00	6.25	2.055
Primary school education				
Psychological counseling and guidance	36(13.2)	21.36	9.00	
Social studies education	89(32.7)	24.16	5.62	
Primary science education	41(15.1)	21.17	7.88	
Preschool education	31(11.4)	22.39	5.48	
	37(13.6)	21.57	7.16	
<i>Living arrangement</i>				
Home with family	44(16.2)	21.71	5.75	.200
Home with friends	109(40.2)	22.44	7.58	
Dormitory	119(43.6)	22.43	6.34	
<i>Family income (in Turkish liras)</i>				
High (more than 3000)	12(4.4)	22.25	7.05	.085
Middle (1000-3000)	151(55.5)	22.45	6.20	
Low (less than 1000)	109(40.1)	22.09	7.66	
<i>Preference for the department</i>				
The highest preference	64(23.6)	26.48	6.94	16.721***
Higher preference	175(64.6)	21.83	5.96	
Lower preference	27(10.0)	17.48	6.79	
The least preference	6(2.2)	16.17	8.13	
<i>Estimated probability of finding a job</i>				
Very high	82(30.2)	24.49	6.29	6.295**
High	159(58.5)	21.75	6.83	
Low	31(11.4)	20.29	6.76	

** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

As seen in Table 2, significant differences were found in life satisfaction scores, according to preference for department [$F(3,271) = 16.721$, $p < .001$] and estimated

probability of finding a job [$F(3,271) = 6.295, p < .01$]. Participants who reported the highest preference for their departments had higher levels of life satisfaction scores than the other participants. On the other hand, participants who considered their job-finding prospects to be very good had higher life satisfaction scores than those who considered their job-finding prospects to be only good or poor. For the variables grade, living arrangement, and family income, no significant differences in life satisfaction score were observed.

Relationship between life satisfaction and depression, perceived social support subscales and total scale

Pearson correlations were calculated between all the scales and are presented in Table 3. As predicted, life satisfaction was found to be significantly and negatively correlated with depression ($r = -.47, p < .01$). In other words, increased life satisfaction was significantly correlated with decreased depression. Additionally, life satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with perceived social support for the total scale ($r = .39, p < .01$). In terms of the subscales of the MSPSS, similarly, life satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with social support from friends ($r = .35, p < .01$), social support from family ($r = .35, p < .01$), and social support from a significant other ($r = .18, p < .01$). These findings indicate that participants who reported higher levels of social support from family, friends, and significant others, in addition to overall social support, were more satisfied with their lives.

Table 3
Pearson correlations between all study measures

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Depression	-					
2. Support from a significant other	-.20**	-				
3. Support from family	.23**	.15*	-			
4. Support from friends	.27**	.21**	.38**	-		
5. General social support	.32**	.78**	.63**	.66**	-	
6. Life satisfaction	.47**	.18**	.36**	.35**	.39**	-

* correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

** correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Predictors of life satisfaction

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to explore predictors of participants' life satisfaction. The results are summarized in Table 4. Four models were tested by adopting stepwise regression. With the first model, only depression

scores were entered. The model explained 18% of observed variance ($\beta = -.44$, $p < .001$). Depression was a significant predictor of the life satisfaction of prospective teachers. Those participants who received higher depression scores were more likely to have lower levels of life satisfaction. With the second model, preference for department was entered, and the model explained 27% of variance. Preference for department was the other significant predictor of life satisfaction ($\beta = -.30$, $p < .001$). Those respondents who reported that they were satisfied with their departments were more likely to have higher levels of life satisfaction. With the third model, perceived social support was entered. This model explained 33% of variance. Perceived overall social support was also a significant predictor of life satisfaction ($\beta = .25$, $p < .001$). Those respondents who perceived more social support were more likely to have higher levels of life satisfaction. Finally, with the fourth model, gender was entered. This model explained 34% of variance. Gender was found to be a significant predictor of life satisfaction among prospective teachers ($\beta = -.12$, $p < .05$). Females were more likely to have higher levels of life satisfaction than males.

Table 4
Results of Stepwise Regression Analyses Predicting Life Satisfaction

Predictor variables	B	SE	β	t
<i>Step 1</i>				
Constant	27.51	.76		36.40
Depression	-.46	.06	-.44	-7.70***
$R = .44$, $R^2 = .18$, Adjusted $R^2 = .18$				
<i>Step 2</i>				
Constant	32.688	1.19		27.40
Depression	-.38	.06	-.36	-6.57***
Preference for department	-3.20	.59	-.30	-5.43***
$R = .53$, $R^2 = .27$, Adjusted $R^2 = .27$				
<i>Step 3</i>				
Constant	24.21	2.12		11.41
Depression	-.31	.06	-.30	-5.46***
Preference for department	-3.04	.57	-.29	-5.37***
General social support	.12	.03	.25	4.75***
$R = .58$, $R^2 = .33$, Adjusted $R^2 = .32$				
<i>Step 4</i>				
Constant	27.09	2.46		11.00
Depression	-.32	.06	-.30	-5.51***
Preference for department	-2.95	.56	-.28	-5.25***
General social support	.11	.03	.23	4.17***
Gender	-1.76	.78	-.12	-2.25*
$R = .59$, $R^2 = .34$, Adjusted $R^2 = .33$				

* $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$

Discussion

Regarding level of life satisfaction, given that the neutral point of the scale is 20.0 (Pavot & Diener, 1993), the results showed that prospective Turkish teachers were quite satisfied with their lives. This finding is consistent with previous studies conducted in Turkey (with means such as 21.9, 21.7, and 23.0). Compared with other nations, the mean for Turkish students was lower than the mean for students in western countries (who had means such as 26.2). However, the mean for Turkish students was higher than the mean for Chinese college students (who had means such as 16.1) and Korean college students (who had means such as 19.9). In a recent study conducted by Joshanloo and Afshari (2009), a similar mean score (22.2) was found for Iranian students. Indeed, previous research has found large international differences in mean levels of life satisfaction. According to Diener, Diener, and Diener (1995), individualism persistently correlates with subjective well-being, and the levels of life satisfaction of college students sampled in western countries, which have individualistic cultures, are high compared to the same in nations that have collectivist cultures. Given this explanation, the findings of the present study support **the view previously put forward by İmamoğlu and Gültekin (1993). According to them, Turkish culture cannot be evaluated as merely collectivistic, and the Turkish cultural experience includes both individualistic and collectivistic features.**

The results of the correlation analysis revealed that life satisfaction was significantly correlated with depression and perceived social support. Depression was found to be strongly and negatively correlated with life satisfaction, which means the hypothesis that higher levels of depression would be associated with reduced life satisfaction was supported. These results are consistent with the findings of previous research (Durak, Senol-Durak, & Senoz, 2010; Simpson et al., 1996; Saunders & Roy, 2000; Gündoğar et al., 2007), **which has reported a significant negative correlation between life satisfaction and depression.** Regarding perceived social support, the total social support scale and all three subscales were found to be positively correlated with life satisfaction. In other words, the findings suggested that higher levels of perceived social support are associated with higher levels of life satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the results of earlier research (Durak, Senol-Durak, & Senoz, 2010; Danielsen et al., 2009), suggesting that perceived social support plays a critical role in the well-being of students.

The findings on the relationship between life satisfaction and sociodemographic variables showed that participants' life satisfaction scores differed significantly, according to preference for department and estimated probability of finding a job. Those who reported highest preference for their departments and those who considered their job-finding prospects very good scored higher on life satisfaction. The findings regarding preference for department indicate that prospective teachers' well-being is significantly related to whether they are studying in their preferred departments. It also highlights the importance of career choice, in general. On the other hand, consistent with expectations, the findings regarding job-finding probabilities indicate that higher expectations of finding a job are correlated with greater life satisfaction among prospective teachers. These results can be explained in the context of developmental task theory. According to Havighurst's developmental

task theory, getting started in an occupation is a developmental task of young adulthood. Accordingly, perceived higher employment opportunities are associated with greater life satisfaction among prospective teachers. For the variables living arrangement and family income, no significant differences in life satisfaction score were observed. Regarding living arrangement, the findings of this study were inconsistent with a previous study by Chow (2005), which found that better living conditions were significantly and positively related to life satisfaction among Canadian university students. This inconsistency may be partly explained by methodology. Although Chow (2005) assessed students' satisfaction with living conditions, this study assessed only the living arrangements of students.

The results for family income were inconsistent with those of previous studies by Diener and Diener (2002) and Veenhoven (1995), who have suggested that there is a weak correlation between income and subjective well-being. Two studies conducted in Turkey have also found that there are significant differences in the well-being or life satisfaction of students, according to their economic levels (Dilmaç & Ekşi, 2008; Tuzgöl-Dost, 2006). This unexpected finding could be explained by the career characteristics of participants. The teaching profession is generally recognized as a job-guaranteed profession by Turkish students. As a result, it may be that those students studying in the faculty of education think that they will have a regular income in the near future and, therefore, do not much care about current family income level. Similarly, Diener and Diener (2002) have reported that poverty during college is often seen as a temporary state, and the influence of income is contextual, depending on the life circumstances of the respondents being studied. For these reasons, a significant relationship between family income and life satisfaction may not exist. However, the argument expressed here needs to be supported by future research.

The present study also examined gender and grade differences in relation to level of life satisfaction. Regarding gender differences, females appeared to have higher life satisfaction scores than males. This result is consistent with several previous studies conducted in Turkey (Şahin, Zade & Direk, 2009; Tuzgöl-Dost, 2007). It is also consistent with Diener, Suh, Lucas, and Smith's review (1999). They concluded that sex differences in well-being are slight, but when differences are observed, women usually report higher subjective well-being. On the other hand, contrary to expectations, differences in grades were observed to produce no significant effects on level of life satisfaction. It was expected that lower grades would be associated with greater life satisfaction, a hypothesis based on the notion that higher grades could be associated with greater difficulties related to graduation. The unexpected results obtained can be explained, perhaps, as due to unforeseen lower grades. Further research is needed to examine the effects of grade differences on life satisfaction in different and larger samples.

Finally, the present study aimed to determine predictors of life satisfaction among prospective teachers. Stepwise regression analysis revealed that depression, department preference, general social support, and gender were the most significant predictors of life satisfaction among prospective teachers. Depression appeared to be the most important predictor of life satisfaction. Department preference was another

predictor of life satisfaction and was found to be the most important socio-demographic variable contributing to life satisfaction. As noted in the variance analysis results, this finding highlights the importance of career choice. Differences between the students who reported the highest departmental preference and the students who reported the least preference were quite remarkable (26.5 and 16.2, respectively). **This finding indicates that students' career choices significantly affect their life satisfaction.** As predicted, overall social support was also found to be a significant predictor of life satisfaction. This finding supports previous findings, which have shown that perceived social support plays a critical role in the well-being of students (Danielsen et al., 2009). Finally, gender appeared to be a significant predictor of life satisfaction. This finding is consistent with a study by Joshanloo and Afshari (2009), who found that sex significantly predicted life satisfaction, showing that female students were more satisfied with their lives than male students. On the other hand, this finding is inconsistent with a previous study by Chow (2005), who found that sex was not a significant predictor of life satisfaction. Although depression, department preference, perceived social support, and gender together explain a significant amount of variance in life satisfaction, a large amount of variance remains unexplained. Future research is suggested to investigate other variables that predict the life satisfaction of prospective teachers, as well as other college students.

The findings of this study have important implications for mental health professionals who work with college students. According to the results outlined above, regarding the relationship between life satisfaction and depression, it is **important for mental health professionals aiming to enhance students' overall life satisfaction to inform students of the importance of seeking help immediately when they feel depressed and to help students cope with this common college student problem.** What is more, mental health professionals should help students develop new support systems and establish effective interpersonal relationships. Many college students have left their families and close friends, which can lead to maladaptive feelings. Furthermore, campus counselling and guidance services, as a main source of social support, should help students during the transitional college period. Finally, the findings of this study may be utilized by high school counselors, as they broadly indicate the importance of vocational counseling and guidance services. According to the results, high school counselors seeking to enhance **students' life satisfaction should help students enhance their self-awareness, develop career management skills, and become aware of the links between career choice and well-being.**

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Öğretmen Adaylarında Yaşam Doyumu Düzeyleri ve Yordayıcıları (Özet)

Problem Durumu

Yaşam doyumu, öznel iyi-oluşun bilişsel ya da yargılamaya yönelik bir boyutu olarak kavramsallaştırılmaktadır. Yaşam doyumunun bugüne ve geleceğe dair amaç ve isteklerle, aynı zamanda bu amaç ve isteklere ulaşmak konusunda kişinin beklentisiyle doğrudan ilişkili olduğu belirtilmektedir. Üniversite öğrencilerinde yaşam doyumunun ilişkili olduğu değişkenler ve yaşam doyumunun yordayıcıları hakkında çok sayıda araştırma yapılmıştır. Önceki araştırmaların sonuçları, yaşam doyumu ile sosyo-ekonomik düzey, finans davranışı, evli olma, kültür, uyku bozuklukları ve bazı kişilik özellikleri arasında anlamlı ilişkiler olduğunu göstermiştir.

Üniversite öğrencilerinin yaşam doyumlarının araştırılması çeşitli nedenlerle önem taşımaktadır. Öncelikli olarak üniversite öğrencileri topluma geçiş sürecinde bulunmakta ve bu süreçte pek çok karmaşık ve zorlayıcı durumlarla karşı karşıya gelmektedirler. Ayrıca pek çok üniversite öğrencisi ailelerinden ayrı yaşamakta, yeni bir çevreye uyum sağlamaları, bütçelerini uygun şekilde idare etmeleri ve akademik yaşantılarında başarılı olmaları beklenmektedir. Gelişim görevleri yaklaşımı çerçevesinde, kendileri için bir eş seçmeleri, bir işe yerleşmeleri ve toplumsal sorumluluk almaları gibi bir dizi görevi yerine getirmeleri beklenmektedir. Yüksek öğrenim döneminin tüm bu özelliklerinin üniversite öğrencilerinin yaşam doyumları üzerinde etkileri olması beklenebilir.

Araştırmanın Amacı

Bu araştırmanın iki amacı vardır. Birincisi, öğretmen adaylarının yaşam doyumu düzeylerini değerlendirmek ve ikincisi yaşam doyumunun ilişkili olduğu değişkenleri ve yaşam doyumunun yordayıcılarını belirlemektir. Bu çalışma özellikle öğretmen adaylarının yaşam doyumlarına odaklanmaktadır. Öğretmenlerin çocuk ve gençlerin yetişmeleri konusunda sorumluluk almaları ve onlar için önemli birer rol modeli olmaları dikkate alındığında, öğretmen adaylarının yaşam doyumu düzeylerinin ve yaşam doyumu düzeylerini yordayan değişkenlerin belirlenmesi ve yaşam doyumlarının geliştirilmesine yönelik çalışmaların özellikle önem taşıdığı söylenebilir.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi

Araştırma Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Buca Eğitim Fakültesi'nin Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği, Sınıf Öğretmenliği, İlköğretim Sosyal Bilgiler Öğretmenliği, İlköğretim Fen Bilgisi Öğretmenliği, İlköğretim Matematik Öğretmenliği ve Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık bölümlerine devam eden öğrenciler arasından random olarak seçilen toplam 272 öğretmen adayıyla yürütülmüştür. Katılımcıların 191'i kız (% 71) ve 77'si (% 28.6) erkektir. Katılımcıların yaş ortalaması 21.52'dir ($SD = 2.11$).

Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak Beck Depresyon Ölçeği, Çok Boyutlu Algılanan Sosyal Destek Ölçeği, Yaşam Doyumu Ölçeği ve araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan bir demografik bilgi formu kullanılmıştır. Bilgi formu aracılığıyla katılımcıların cinsiyeti, sınıf düzeyi, bölümü, aylık aile geliri ve yaşadığı yer

hakkında veri toplanmıştır. Ayrıca katılımcılara devam ettikleri bölümü ne düzeyde tercih ettikleri ve mezuniyet sonrası iş bulma olasılıklarını ne düzeyde değerlendirdikleri sorulmuştur.

Araştırmaya ait veriler 2008-2009 akademik yılının bahar döneminde toplanmıştır. Verilerin analizi sürecinde, araştırmada ele alınan değişkenlere ilişkin betimsel istatistikler hesaplanmıştır. Yaşam doyumu ile depresyon, algılanan sosyal destek toplam ve alt ölçekleri arasındaki ilişkiler Pearson korelasyon tekniği ile hesaplanmıştır. Yaşam doyumu puanlarının cinsiyete göre anlamlı olarak farklılaşıp farklılaşmadığını değerlendirmek için bağımsız örneklem t-testi, araştırmada ele alınan sosyo-demografik değişkenlere göre anlamlı olarak farklılaşıp farklılaşmadığını değerlendirmek amacıyla ise tek yönlü varyans analizi kullanılmıştır. Yaşam doyumunun yordayıcılarını bulmak amacıyla çoklu regresyon analizi (stepwise yöntemi) yapılmıştır. Araştırmaya ait veriler SPSS 15.00 paket programında değerlendirilmiştir.

Araştırmanın Bulguları

Araştırmadan elde edilen yaşam doyumu düzeyine ilişkin bulgular, katılımcıların yaşam doyumu puan ortalamalarının 22.34 olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Pavot ve Diener'in ölçeğin nötr puanı olarak verdikleri 20.0 puanı göz önüne alındığında, Türk öğretmen adaylarının yaşam doyumu düzeylerinin biraz yüksek olduğu söylenebilir. Yaşam doyumu üzerine önceki araştırmaların sonuçları, bireyci kültürün egemen olduğu Batılı ülkelerde yaşayan üniversite öğrencilerinin yaşam doyumu düzeylerinin, kolektivist kültüre sahip olan ülkelerde yaşayan üniversite öğrencilerinin puanlarından yüksek olduğunu göstermektedir. Araştırmadan elde edilen sonuçlar, Türk öğretmen adaylarının yaşam doyumu düzeylerinin Batılı ülkelerde yaşayan üniversite öğrencilerinin yaşam doyumu düzeylerinden düşük, Çin ve Kore gibi kolektivist kültüre sahip olarak değerlendirilen ülkelerde yaşayan üniversite öğrencilerinin yaşam doyumu düzeylerinden yüksek olduğunu göstermektedir.

Araştırma kapsamında yapılan korelasyon analizi sonuçları, yaşam doyumu ile depresyon puanları arasında negatif yönde, algılanan sosyal destek toplam ve alt ölçek puanları arasında ise pozitif yönde anlamlı ilişkiler olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca, yaşam doyumu puanlarının cinsiyete göre anlamlı olarak farklılaştığı, kızların yaşam doyumu puanlarının erkeklere göre daha yüksek olduğu bulunmuştur. Yaşam doyumu puanlarının katılımcıların bölüm tercihlerine ve iş bulma olasılıklarını değerlendirmelerine göre de anlamlı olarak farklılaştığı bulunmuştur. Devam ettikleri bölümün en çok istedikleri bölüm olduğunu belirten katılımcıların yaşam doyumu puanları, geriye kalan diğer katılımcıların puanlarından; iş bulma olasılıklarını çok yüksek olarak değerlendiren katılımcıların yaşam doyumu puanları ise iş bulma olasılıklarını daha düşük düzeylerde değerlendiren diğer katılımcılardan anlamlı olarak daha yüksek bulunmuştur. Son olarak, aşamalı regresyon analizi sonuçları, depresyon puanları, bölüm tercihi, sosyal destek toplam puanları ve cinsiyetin birlikte yaşam doyumu puanlarındaki varyansın % 34'ünü açıkladığını göstermiştir.

Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Önerileri

Araştırmadan elde edilen sonuçların üniversite öğrencileri ile çalışan ruh sağlığı uzmanlarına yönelik bazı önemli doğrularını vardır. Araştırmadan elde edilen depresyon ve yaşam doyumu arasındaki ilişkiye dair bulgular, üniversite öğrencileriyle çalışan psikolojik danışmanların, üniversite öğrencilerinin yaşam doyumlarını artırmak amacıyla, depresif özellikler gösteren öğrencileri ivedilikle yardım almaları konusunda bilgilendirmeleri ve üniversitelerin psikolojik danışma merkezlerine ya da diğer ruh sağlığı merkezlerine yönlendirmelerinin önemine işaret etmektedir. Diğer taraftan bulgular, üniversitelerin psikolojik danışma merkezlerinin üniversite öğrencilerine yeni girdikleri bu ortamda, yeni sosyal destek sistemleri geliştirmeleri ve etkili kişilerarası ilişkiler kurmalarına yönelik yardım hizmetleri sunmalarının gereğini vurgulamaktadır. Üniversitelerin psikolojik danışma merkezlerinde görev yapan uzmanların, başlıca sosyal destek kaynaklarından biri olarak bu geçiş süreçlerinde üniversite öğrencilerine yardımcı olmaları beklenmektedir.

Araştırmadan elde edilen bulguların lise öğrencileri ile çalışan psikolojik danışmanlar açısından da önemli doğrularına sahip olduğu söylenebilir. Araştırma sonuçları, bölüm tercihinin öğretmen adaylarının yaşam doyumu düzeylerinin anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olduğunu göstermiştir. Araştırmadan elde edilen bu bulgu, liselerde sunulan mesleki danışma ve rehberlik hizmetlerinin önemine işaret etmektedir. Buna göre, okul psikolojik danışmanlarının öğrencilere meslek seçiminin önemi, kişisel farkındalıklarının artırılması, mesleki tercih yapma ve karar verme becerilerinin geliştirilmesi ve öğrencilerin meslek seçimi ile yaşam doyumu arasındaki ilişkilerin farkında olmaları konusundaki çalışmalara özellikle önem vermeleri önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yaşam doyumu; öğretmen adayları; yordayıcılar.