



| Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi |

## Psychological Well-Being and Separation-Individuation In University Students

### Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Psikolojik İyi Oluş ile Ayrışma-Bireyleşme

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#### Keywords

1. psychological well-being
2. positive psychology
3. university students
4. separation
5. individuation

#### Anahtar Kelimeler

1. psikolojik iyi oluş
2. pozitif psikoloji
3. üniversite öğrencileri
4. ayrışma
5. bireyleşme

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#### Abstract

**Purpose:** In this modern world, a significant increase in people's wish to lead on an independent life has been a plain truth since technological advancements have gained acceleration. Hence, it is thought that searching the relation between separation/individuation and psychological well-being of people is an important problem field. The purpose of this study is to investigate the relation between well-being levels and separation/individuation levels of university students.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** In terms of participants, 285 University students (female=180, male=105; 1<sup>st</sup> year students=170, 2<sup>nd</sup> year students=115) whose ages are in the range from 18 to26 ( $M=21.35$ ,  $SD=2.50$ ) participated in the study. The data obtained from the participants were analyzed through independent *t*-test, ANOVA, Pearson Product Moments Correlation and Simple Linear Regression.

**Findings:** According to the results obtained, a significant and negative relationship was found between the psychological well-being scores of university students and their levels of separation-individuation. Besides, the psychological well-being scores was determined to predict 0.23% of separation-individuation. As the levels of separation-individuation of students increased, psychological well-being decreased. On the other hand, while the separation-individuation scores of the students were not significant according to the gender variable, the psychological well-being scores were significant. According to the class level variable, the scores of separation-individuation were found to be significant, while psychological well-being scores were not.

**Highlights:** A healthy separation-individuation strengthens students' psychological well-being positively. The results of the study were discussed within the framework of the relevant literature and suggestions were presented to the researchers for new studies.

#### Öz

**Çalışmanın amacı:** Modern dünyada teknolojik gelişmelerin hızlı bir ivme kazanmasıyla birlikte, insanların bağımsız bir hayat yaşama isteklerinde önemli bir artış olduğu açık bir gerçektir. Bu yüzden insanların ayrışmış/bireyleşmiş olmaları ile psikolojik iyi oluş arasındaki ilişkinin ne olduğunun araştırılması önemli bir problem alanı olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı üniversite öğrencilerinin psikolojik iyi oluş düzeyleri ile ayrışma-bireyleşme düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir

**Materyal ve Yöntem:** Çalışmaya yaşları 18 ile 26 arasında değişen ( $M=21.35$ ,  $SD=10.50$ ), 285 üniversite öğrencisi (kız=180, erkek=105, 1.sınıf 170, 2. sınıf 115) katılmıştır. Katılımcılardan elde edilen veriler, bağımsız *t* testi, ANOVA, Pearson Çarpım Momentler Korelasyon ve Basit Doğrusal Regresyon aracılığıyla analiz edilmiştir.

**Bulgular:** Elde edilen sonuçlara göre üniversite öğrencilerinin psikolojik iyi oluş puanları ile ayrışma-bireyleşme düzeyleri arasında anlamlı ve negatif bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Ayrıca psikolojik iyi oluş ölçeği, ayrışma-bireyleşmenin %0.23'ni yordadığı tespit edilmiştir. Öğrencilerin ayrışma-bireyleşme düzeyleri yükseldikçe, psikolojik iyi oluşlarında düşüş olduğu saptanmıştır. Öte yandan öğrencilerin cinsiyet değişkenine göre ayrışma-bireyleşme puanları anlamlı çıkmazken, psikolojik iyi oluş puanları anlamlı çıkmıştır. Sınıf düzeyi değişkenine göre ise, ayrışma-bireyleşme puanları anlamlı olduğu, psikolojik iyi oluş puanlarının anlamlı olmadığı saptanmıştır.

**Önemli Vurgular:** Sağlıklı bir ayrışma-bireyleşme, öğrencilerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarını olumlu yönde güçlendirmektedir. Çalışmanın sonuçları ilgili literatür çerçevesinde tartışılmış ve yeni çalışmalar için araştırmacılara öneriler sunulmuştur.

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## INTRODUCTION

Individuation is valid in cultures where their relations between individuals are loose and where everybody is obliged to look after him/her or his/her nucleus family. On the other hand, collectivism exists in societies where people have strong and tight ties with groups by birth and where this commitment is present throughout life, in exchange for unquestioned loyalty (Hofstede, 2011). In individualistic cultures, individuals are emotionally broken from in-groups; and their separation and self-determination needs are great. For these individuals, personal goals precede group goals. In collectivism, group goals for individuals override individual goals and the behaviors of an individual are determined in line with in-group requests and norms (Tanhan, 2020). The researchers Tanhan and Francisco (2019) found individual having a collectivistic background prioritizing community needs over their personal needs. In-group conflict is not favored and in-group harmony carries great importance. In-group is homogeneous. Obedience based socialization; social support and mutual relation are seen. In individuation, the person is autonomous from the society. Individual goals precede social goals (Tanhan & Francisco, 2019; Triandis, 1996; Triandis, McCuske, & Hui, 1990). As for individuals' cultural characteristics, these properties can be counted: autonomy of individuals; targeting individual success, competition and power; validation of beliefs that reflect independence; emphasizing values such as pleasure, competition, freedom, autonomy; individual goals and interests come before group goals and interests. In the individualist culture, the individual focuses on his own feelings, the characteristics that make him different, his personal needs and rights. In the communitarian societies in which analysis is made on the basis of "us", the individual is defined not as an autonomous / independent entity, but by the group and relationships to which he is attached. Having a social identity as collective cultural features; validation of beliefs reflecting interdependence; safety, obedience, duty, sacrifice, obligation, hierarchy, group harmony is emphasized values (Triandis, 1994).

Although the different aspects of individualistic and communitarian tendencies are in harmony in Turkish culture, it is seen that tendencies of relationally or integration outweigh more against separation. People have capacity to improve separation, integration, fusion with their thoughts, emotions, feelings, experiences, and values (Tanhan, 2019) starting from birth. The researchers explained how this capacity can lead to psychological flexibility meaning a higher functioning when it is utilized mindfully or psychological inflexibility meaning low ineffective functioning when it is not utilized mindfully (Tanhan et al., 2020). In other words, people have the basic need related with discovering their potentials; and their process, therefore, provide people with individuation and diversify them from the others (İmamoğlu, 1998; Tanhan, 2020). An adult, who leaves home in order to achieve his economic independence and set his own life, does not only physically move away from their family and his basic object of love but he also sets distance between their and the others' boundaries psychologically to be an individual (Karadayı, 1998). Separation-individuation, in terms of psychology, was conceptualized by Mahler (Mahler, 1968; Mahler, Pine, and Bergman, 1975). Separation-individuation is explained with the child's getting out of orbit of his mother and knowing himself as a separate entity (Eggert, 2007). Separation-individuation period includes the phases when the degree of understanding self and others increases and when sense of reality of outer world starts to settle. The characteristic feature of this phase is the regular increase in awareness of self and others being separate. This increase is accompanied by a sense of self, real object relationship and awareness of reality in the outer world (Mahler et al., 1975).

In the literature, the study dealing with the relationship between separation-individuation and psychological well-being is almost non-existent. Starting from this perspective, a study was designed to examine the relationship between separation-individuation and psychological well-being. Ryff (1995) reports that psychological well-being affects a person's positive self-perception, good relations, environmental domination, autonomy, the meaning of life, aiming, and continuous growth and development. Psychological well-being affects both the quality of life and psychological functionality of the person (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Similarly, they state that the concept of separation-individuation is a process that begins with separation from parents, peers, and other important individuals and extends to the development of a coherent autonomous self (Mattanah, Hancock, & Brand, 2004). Since it is related to an autonomous personality, positive self-perception and quality of life of both psychological well-being and separation-individuation, it will be appropriate to examine the relationship between these two concepts. This study aims to examine whether there is a relationship between psychological well-being and separation-individuation among university students and whether this predicts separation-individuation.

### Psychological Well-Being

Researchers have been working on different variations of well-being for a long time. One of the most important concepts in positive psychology is well-being. Well-being is a difficult concept to define because it is a structure that contains many dimensions. The concepts of subjective well-being, life satisfaction, and psychological well-being are all included in well-being (Ryff, 1989). Psychological well-being, which is handled in many ways, consists of self-acceptance, environmental superiority, meaning in life, autonomy and personal development. Psychological well-being is effective in one's being strong and powerful. When a person experiences psychological well-being, it is less likely for him/her to be at risk. Psychological well-being requires skills such as self-acceptance, autonomy, purpose in life, environmental mastery, positive relationships, and personal development. The concept of psychological well-being can be described as "the optimal level of psychological experience and function" (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 2014). Psychological well-being is based on a holistic understanding that examines the characteristics of people who lead their lives functionally and based on humanistic approaches. Psychological well-being is defined as managing the existential challenges facing the individual in life (such as pursuing meaningful goals, personal

development and establishing qualified relationships with others) (Diener et al., 2010; Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002). Psychological well-being is about life satisfaction and evaluating emotions effectively (Smedama et al., 2015). A person's life satisfaction is a part of self-knowledge and all feelings of happiness (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Psychological well-being is simply a feeling of happiness and good life and means more than satisfaction and pleasure. Psychological well-being is also an important concept in terms of expressing that true happiness and virtue can be found by doing things worth doing in life (Hefferon & Boniwell, 2014). Psychological well-being includes positive features such as autonomy, self-esteem, subjective well-being, independence, forgiveness, establishing close relationships with people and productivity (Çiçek, 2021; Demir et al., 2021; Güleç, 2016). In other words, psychological well-being is a situation related to the realization of one's potential and how compatible he/she is with it (Onraet, Von Hiel, & Dhont, 2013). Psychological well-being does not mean that the person always feels good and has positive emotions. It can also cause painful or negative emotions which are natural aspects of life. Experiencing such a situation negatively affects the psychological well-being of the person (Huppert, 2009). Individuals with high levels of psychological well-being establish high-quality relationships with the people around them, act independently, can manage their lives and environments, believe that they lead a meaningful and purposeful life and progress individually (Ryff, 2014; Ryff & Singer, 2008). At the same time, they are more likely to lead a healthy and functional life with job satisfaction (Holmen, Johnson, and O'Connor, 2018). They are more open to innovation and development (İkiz & Asıcı, 2017). On the other hand, many factors affect psychological well-being. Among these factors, contextual factors like availability of resources to practice one's culture and values (Tanhan & Francisco, 2019, gender (Gültekin, 2019; Kermen, Tosun-İlçin, & Doğan., 2016), age (Springer, Pudovska & Robert, 2011), availability of mental health services (Tanhan, 2020), personality and emotions (Houben, Nortgate & Kuppenes, 2015), economic resource (Doyumağaç, Tanhan & Kıymaz, 2020), and social exclusion, and social support (Arslan, 2018b) can be mentioned.

### **Separation-Individuation**

In the literature, separation refers to the separation from the person who provides physical and emotional care, while individuation includes the physical and psychological developmental processes of the person. In both cases, it involves the development of an independent self (Mahler et al., 1975). Separation-individuation is two complementary developmental processes. Separation occurs when the child leaves the symbiotic life with the mother, while individuation occurs when the child accepts his/her self (Mahler, et al., 2015). Separation-individuation has a profound effect on the individual's life, especially in adolescence (Lapsley & Stey, 2010). During the separation-individuation period, children gradually create different limits for themselves and begin to separate from their parents. At the same time, the child tends to establish the mental representations of his/her caregiver who promotes autonomy and individuality and tries to create his/her world (Orbach, 2007). After Mahler, who explained the concept of separation-individuation until about three and a half years old, Blos defined the puberty period of the theory (Sabaka, 2009). Among the most important functions of puberty is a successful separation-individuation experience (Fornari & Pelcovitz, 1999). Separation-individuation takes an important place from early childhood to puberty and young adulthood (Andreassen, 2009). According to Blos (1979), healthy separation-individuation develops depending on individuation, disconnection of the child's object relationship with his/her parents and establishing new and more mature relationships. For the teenager who conflicts with his/her parents, the peer group means that it has a function that allows teenagers to solve their problems and get rid of their dependence on their parents. The differentiation of the adolescent is characterized by the fact that he understands that he/she is different from the mother but that he/she is carrying the mother in him/her. Similarly, Rice (1992) associates separation-individuation, which is considered as one of the most important developments that occur during adolescence, with the separation of the individual from his/her parents; and with the fact that he/she manages to know him/her.

### **Present Study**

A healthy separation-individuation is related to having strong self and necessary resources against possible crises (Mattanah et al., 2004). It is assumed that it will be important to know the effects of these efforts on the psychological well-being of individuals who are inclined to live more independently day by day. Indeed, studies on separation-individuation are observed to be mostly about variables such as self-perceptions, early incompatible schemes (Akhun, 2012), parent relationship and adaptation to university (Rakipi, 2015), personality traits and peer relationships (Çiçek & Aslan, 2019), attachment to parents and adaptation to university (Mattanah et al., 2004), parental separation anxiety and controlled parenting (Kins, Soenen, and Beyers, 2011). In the separation-individuation process of an individual; the identity development which an individual undergoes, his/her relationship with his parents and many other factors are influential (Engler & Wiemann, 2010). In the studies carried out, it was searched with the help of studies whether Turkish community has communitarian or individualistic features and was established that this issue has not been separated from each other with clear lines (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2005). In the study carried out by Hofseted (1980), the individuation score of Turkey was found to be 37. However, this study was performed on a group, who work for IBM, and are well educated and generally have had their education in western countries, and have adopted to western values more. For all these reasons, it was alleged that this group cannot represent Turkish community and that the real case of Turkey is a lot more in communitarian. The fact that this study is performed on university students who have just started to live independently and away from their families is thought to contribute to reveal whether the community has communitarian or individualistic features. With this study, it is assumed that the level of separation-individuation that an individual has will be revealed; and it is searched how it relates to his/her psychological well-being and whether the existing level of psychological well-being predicts separation-individuation will be found out.

## METHOD

### Participants

The participants of the study consisted of 285 university students, 180 females and 105 males. The age of the participants varied between 18 and 26 ( $M = 21.35$ ,  $SD = 2.50$ ). One-way and multivariate extreme values of the data were examined, and since 17 of the participants were extreme values, they were removed from the data set and analyzed with the remaining 285 data. The distribution of the participants according to the department they attend is as follows: Child Development (31.2%), Nursing (10.8%), Elderly Care (25%), Physiotherapy (22.8%), First and Emergency Aid (12.2%). 170 of the participants attend the first class and 115-second class at university.

### Measures

#### Separation-Individuation Inventory (SII):

The scale, developed by Christenson and Wilson (1985) based on Mahler's psychodynamic theory that deals with separation-individuation, is a 10-point Likert scale and consists of 39 items. High scores obtained from the scale show that the levels of separation-individuation of individuals are low and they have problems with separation-individuation. Items 7, 15 and 18 included in the scale are inversely scored. The Turkish version of the scale was adapted by Göral between (2002) and (2010) years, and correlation coefficients in the validity-reliability of the scale turned out in a range from  $\alpha = .85$  to  $\alpha = .77$ . Also, Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was found as  $\alpha = .78$  in the study of Çiçek and Aslan (2019) on high school students. All these results show that the scale has high reliability. In the reliability analysis made within the scope of this study, the total score of the separation-individuation Cronbach alpha value turned out to be  $\alpha = .82$ .

#### Psychological Well-Being Inventory (PWBI):

It was developed by Diener et al. (2010) to measure psychological well-being, and consists of eight items. All items in the scale were positively expressed. Scale items are answered in 7 types of grading. The lowest score obtained from the scale is 8, and the highest score is 56. Obtaining a high score from the scale means that the individual has many psychological resources and strengths. The adaptation of the scale into Turkish was carried out by Telef (2013). It was determined that the scale items were collected under a single factor. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of PWBI was calculated as  $\alpha = .85$ .

### Data Analyses

In the study, primarily descriptive statistics and normality values were examined. Normality values were examined with skewness and kurtosis. The normality values of the scales were found to be between -1 and 1. These results are sufficient for the study (Field, 2009). Then the data were analyzed through independent *t*-test, ANOVA, Pearson Product Moments Correlation and Simple Linear Regression.

## FINDINGS

Before proceeding to the actual analysis, the Cronbach alpha values and the normality values of the separation-individuation scale and Psychological well-being scale, used in the study, were examined. The internal reliability coefficients of the scales were calculated as  $\alpha = .82$  for the separation-individuation scale, and  $\alpha = .85$  for the psychological well-being scale. These results show that scales have high reliability (George & Mallery, 2003). Then, Skewness and Kurtosis values were examined to see if the data used in the study were normally distributed (see Table 1). Analysis results show that the data are normally distributed (skewness and kurtosis +1 and -1).

**Table 1. Normality Values and Cronbach's Alpha**

Measures	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cro. Alpha
SII	.452	.550	.82
PSWBI	-.239	.981	.85

After obtaining the results that scales are normally distributed and their reliability levels are strong, it was examined whether the scores obtained from the university students from separation-individuation and psychological well-being scores differ according to gender and class level (see Table 2). Later, multiple regression analyses were performed on the correlation between them and whether separation-individuation was predicted by psychological well-being (see Table 3, 4). Below is the analysis of separation-individuation and psychological well-being scores of university students according to their gender and class levels.

**Table 2. Independent t-Test Results by Gender and Class Level**

Measures	Variables	N	M	SD	t	P
SII	Gender	Girl (180)	101.32	23.16	.603	.074
		Boy (105)	103.05	20.18		
	Class	1. (170)	100.91	19.60	-.933	.027*
		2. (115)	103.31	23.07		
PWBI	Gender	Girl (180)	43.3	9.27	-2.73	.026*
		Boy (105)	39.01	11.07		
	Class	1. (170)	40.82	9.84	-1.61	.58
		2. (115)	42.73	9.43		

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level.

When we look at Table 2, it is seen that the scores that the university students get from the scores of separation-individuation do not differ significantly according to gender variable ( $p > .05$ ), while psychological well-being levels differ significantly in favor of females ( $p < .05$ ). According to the class level of the students, the scores of separation-individuation differ significantly ( $p < .05$ ), while psychological well-being scores do not differ significantly ( $p > .05$ ). Pearson Product Moments Correlation analysis was performed to determine whether there is a significant relationship between university students' separation-individuation scores and psychological well-being levels (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Pearson Product Moments Correlation analysis results between University students' scores of Separation-Individuation and Psychological Well-being Scales**

Measures	Mean	SD	SII	PWBI
SII	101.75	20.93	1	-.164**
PSWBI	20.93	9.82	-.164**	1

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

According to Table 3, it is seen that there is a negative and significant relationship between the scores of the Separation-Individuation Scale and scores of psychological well-being scores ( $r = -.164$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Simple Linear Regression analysis was performed to determine whether the psychological well-being levels of university students affect separation-individuation (Table 4).

**Table 4. Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis for predicting scores of separation-individuation with psychological well-being scores**

Measures	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	t	P
Constant	116.259	5.33	—	21.790	.000**
PSWBI	-.350	.125	-.164	-2,793	.006**

$R = .164$   $R^2 = 0.27$   $\Delta R^2 = 0.23$

$F = 7,801$   $P = .006^{**}$

**Dependent Variable:** Separation-Individuation, (SII)  $**p < 0.01$

The regression model established according to the results of simple linear regression analysis is statistically significant ( $F = 7,801$ ,  $p = .00$ ). According to the multiple regression results, the psychological well-being scores was found to have a significant effect on the separation-individuation of university students ( $R = .164$ ,  $R^2 = 0.27$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The psychological well-being scores explain 0.23% of the total variance of separation-individuation. According to the standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ),

psychological well-being has a predictive effect on separation-individuation. It can be said that there is a moderate relationship between the psychological well-being levels of university students and their levels of separation-individuation.

## DISCUSSION

This study aims to investigate the relationship between the psychological well-being of university students and their levels of separation-individuation. According to the results obtained from the study, there was a negative relationship between psychological well-being and separation-individuation. Besides, psychological well-being has a negative predictive effect on separation-individuation. While the scores of separation-individuation of university students according to gender variables were not significant, psychological well-being scores were significant. According to the results obtained, it was determined that the separation-individuation scores differ significantly according to the class level of the students, while the psychological well-being scores did not differ significantly. According to the department of the university students, separation-individuation and psychological well-being scores were not significant. When the literature is examined, it is seen that the concept of separation-individuation is examined with many variables. These studies can be listed as personality and peer relationships (Çiçek & Aslan, 2019; Aslan & Çiçek, 2020), hyper-proportion (Sanhuja & Belot, 2016), marriage expectations and marriage attitudes (Kocacıbağ, 2019), the relationship between parents (Kavčič and Zupančič, 2019), young adolescence self-expression according to perceived parental sensitivity (Jiang, Yang & Wang, 2017). On the other hand, it is seen that separation-individuation in the field has practically not been studied with positive psychology. It is observed that well-being and separation-individuation have been studied only in the field of positive psychology (Floyd et al., 1999).

According to the results obtained, it was determined that there is a negative relationship between separation-individuation and psychological well-being; and separation-individuation is predicted by psychological well-being. In this case, it can be said that the scores obtained about university students from the separation-individuation scores are above average, thus they have problems in being independent and autonomous and they do not experience a healthy separation-individuation (Christenson and Wilson, 1985). In the literature, in a study that contradicts the results of this study (Floyd et al., 1999), a high level of positive correlation was found between high levels of separation-individuation and well-being. According to the results obtained in this study, the separation-individuation scores of university students according to gender variable were not significant. When the literature is examined, it can easily be seen that there are studies that are similar to the results of this study (Allen and Stoltenberg, 1995; Yahav, Vosburgh & Miller, 2007). In their study on high school students, Çiçek and Aslan (2019) found no significant difference in terms of gender. Similarly, in their study Delhaye et al. (2012) did not find a significant difference in separation-individuation scores by gender variable as well. In the literature, it is possible to find studies that contradict the results of this study (Blazina & Watkins, 2000; McChrystal & Dolan, 1999; Levpušček, 2006). Keser (2018), in his study, found that the scores of the individuation sub-dimension differ according to the gender. Similarly, Lapsley, Aalsma and Varshney (2001), in their study, conducted a study on university students, in which males had more problems with separation-individuation than females; and these scores were found to differ significantly.

Psychological well-being scores were significant in favor of female students in the gender variables of university students. When the literature is examined, there are studies parallel to the results of this research (Çiçek, 2021; Göçen, 2019; Krause and Rainville, 2018; Memiş & Duran, 2019; Yılmaz-Bingöl & Vural-Batık, 2019). In the study conducted by Kahveci (2019) on teachers, it was found that it was significant that according to gender and female psychological well-being, scores were found to be higher than that of male teachers. On the other hand, some studies contradict with the results of this research (Ersoy et al., 2019; Kermen, İlçin -Tosun & Doğan, 2016; Saleem & Saleem, 2017). In the study they conducted, Kaya, Çenesiz and Aynas (2019) investigated students' perception of social support, psychological well-being, and life satisfaction: In Van 100 Yıl University example, it was found that psychological well-being scores did not differ significantly according to gender. Similarly, Altop (2018), in the study, did not find a significant difference in the gender variable of the students' psychological well-being levels. According to the class level variable of the university students, the separation-individuation scores turned out to be significant. When looked at the literature, it is possible to come across studies that show similar results with the results of this research. Aslan and Gelbal (2016), in their study, they found that the results of the separation-individuation levels of the students differed significantly according to the grade level as a result of the measurement of the separation-individuation levels of the students from the 1<sup>st</sup> grade to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. On the other hand, there are studies in the literature that contradict with the results of this study (Buhl, 2008; Kruse & Walper, 2008). Andreassen (2009), determined that the scores of the participants did not differ significantly according to the age variable in the application performed on university students aged 18-26. It was determined that psychological well-being scores of university students were not significant according to the class level variable. When we look at the literature, there are no studies similar to the results of this research. However, when examined by age, it was found in the comparative study of Çeri and Çiçek (2021) that psychological well-being levels of people between the aged 18-67 did not differ significantly. On the other hand, in the research conducted by Aydın, Kahraman, and Kaçdurmaz, (2017) with nursing students, it was found that psychological well-being scores differed according to the class level. Another result of this study is that the scores of separation-individuation of students are low. Looking at these scores, it is possible to report that the collectivist features of Turkish community are still dominant. In one aspect, it can be evaluated that individuals are strictly stuck to group norms, and they prioritize the aims and interests of the group rather than their individualistic interests (Triands, 2011). This result shows similarities with the results of the study that İmamoğlu (1998) conducted. In his investigation of İmamoğlu (1998), although different aspects of individualist

and collectivist trends are in harmony in Turkish culture, it is seen that the tendency of the society towards integration or relationality is more dominant in general.

## LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has some limitations. The fact that this study was carried out in only one university in Turkey creates a limitation to generalizability of results obtained; on the other hand, the fact that there is no chance to compare the findings to other universities forms another limitation. Also, it can be evaluated another limitation of the study that the concept of separation individuation was studied with merely psychologically well-being parameter of positive psychology. It can be recommended that the researchers should conduct new investigations on the concept of separation individuation in terms of various age groups and in schools of different levels and with larger population; as Arslan, Allen, and Tanhan (2020) examined the role of well-being as a mediator between school bullying (victimization and perpetration) and some other constructs (e.g., behavioral and emotional problems). Besides, it can be suggested that the researchers perform studies so that they can explain the relation between separation individuation and various components of positive psychology (life satisfaction, subjective well-being, self-esteem).

## CONCLUSION

As a result, it was established that there was a negative and significant relationship between university students' well-being scores and separation individuation levels, and that psychological well-being predicted separation individuation. It was concluded that while separation-individuation scores differ significantly according to class level, psychological well-being scores are not significant. Another result of the study was that psychological well-being scores of girls were higher than boys' and they differed significant. Finally, it was determined that the separation-individuation scores according to the gender variable were not significant.

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## Statements of publication ethics

I hereby declare that the study has not unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed carefully.

## Ethics Committee Approval Information

The research was approved by Batman University Ethics Committee/Turkey (2020/2-11). All procedures performed in study involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards the 1964 Helsinki declaration. Consent form was obtained from the all participants.

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