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**RELATIONSHIPS AMONG LIFE SATISFACTION, ANXIETY AND AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS OF
CANDIDATE TEACHERS**

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to determine the relation between life satisfaction, anxiety level and automatic thoughts of candidate teachers. The data collection tools employed in the study are Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS), State-Trait Inventory (STAI), Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire-Revised (ATQ-R). The data were analyzed through "t" test, "F" test, Kruskal-Wallis, "Scheffe" significance test and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The results of the study show that there is a negative meaningful relation between life satisfaction and negative automatic thoughts, life satisfaction and anxiety and anxiety and automatic thoughts. According to gender, a significant difference is found in students' anxiety levels. Significant differences are found between the mother's education level and life satisfaction and anxiety level and automatic thoughts. Significant differences are also found between the father's education level and anxiety and between level and negative automatic thoughts.

Keywords: Life Satisfaction, Anxiety, Automatic Thoughts,
Candidate Teacher, University Student

**ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ YAŞAM DOYUMU, KAYGI VE OTOMATİK DÜŞÜNME ARASINDAKİ
İLİŞKİLER**

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı, öğretmen adaylarının yaşam doyumu, kaygı düzeyleri ve otomatik düşünceleri arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Araştırmanın verileri, Yaşam Doymu Ölçeği (YDÖ), Sürekli Kaygı Ölçeği (STAI) ve Otomatik Düşünceler Ölçeği (ODÖ-G) kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde "t" testi, "F" testi, Kruskal-Wallis, "Scheffe" anlamlılık testi ve "Pearson Momentler Çarpımı Korelasyon Katsayısı uygulanmıştır. Bu araştırmanın sonunda, Araştırma kapsamına giren öğrencilerin yaşam doyumu ile olumsuz otomatik düşünce arasında, yaşam doyumu ile kaygı arasında negatif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki; kaygı ile olumsuz otomatik düşünce arasında negatif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki saptanmıştır. Cinsiyete göre, öğrencilerin kaygı düzeyleri arasında anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmuştur. Buna göre, kız öğrencilerin kaygı düzeyleri erkek öğrencilere göre daha yüksek düzeydedir. Annenin eğitim düzeyi ile yaşam doyumu düzeyi ve olumsuz otomatik düşünceleri arasında anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmuştur. Babanın eğitim düzeyine göre, kaygı düzeyi ve olumsuz otomatik düşünceleri arasında anlamlı bir farklılık saptanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yaşam Doymu, Kaygı, Otomatik Düşünme,
Öğretmen Adayı, Üniversite Öğrencisi

1. INTRODUCTION (GİRİŞ)

University students feel strongly the problems of self adaptation, adaptation into the environment, establishing a status in the society, finding self-identity, the need to be approved by the society he is in (Öner and Gençdoğan, 2007). The problems of university students have a wide range from interpersonal relations to neurotic tendencies. These problems may appear in the academic world, family, social adaptation, depression and similar cases (Özbay, 1996).

Life satisfaction means to be good with respect to different aspects such as happiness and morale, and positive feelings' being dominant over negative feelings in daily relationships (Vara, 1999). Life satisfaction, in a sense, can be defined as the degree of the achievement of goals set by the individual (Koç, 2001). It can be explained that life satisfaction is a significant component of total happiness whereas life dissatisfaction is a symptom of general stress (Diener, 2000). It is argued that education opportunities and facilities in a country have a direct impact on life satisfaction, satisfaction taken from academic life increases life satisfaction; social policies to be developed in a country are to aim at increasing life satisfaction (Chow, 2005; Diener and Seligman, 2004). Lately, in our country it can be observed that there is an increase in the number of studies conducted on variables affecting life satisfaction (Deniz, 2006; Bulut, 2007; Çivitçi, 2007; Gündoğar, 2007, 2008; Cenkseven Önder and Furtal, 2008; Hiloğlu, Cenkseven and Önder, 2010). Life satisfaction is conceptualized as, "a cognitive, global appraisal that people make when considering their contentment with their life as a whole or in regard to specific domains of life such as family, environment, friends, and self" (Suldo & Huebner, 2006).

In general, anxiety can be defined as an emotional reaction, which is inherent in human beings, to the environmental and psychological events. The first years of university education are spent during a period of adolescence when young people have peculiar psychological characteristics. In classrooms, a number of other anxieties may be observed. Learners may feel *cognitive tension* when their expectations about the content and organization of a course are not met, and *affective tension* when there is unsatisfactory interaction with other learners or the instructor (Spielmann and Radnofsky, 2001). There are some studies which show that adolescents have a lot of anxiety during these years (Brady and Kendall, 1992; Akboy, 1990; Baltaş, 1986; Öner and Le Compte, 1983).

Beck, who explains depression in cognitive terms, puts forward that depressive individuals have a tendency to assess themselves, their environment and their future in a negative way, and have some cognitive distortions in their thinking. These cognitive distortions can also be explained in terms of automatic thoughts (Beck, 1976). It has been indicated that anxiety and depression cause alcohol and drug addiction, anti-social behavior, decrease in abilities, increase in non-attendance to school, lack of motivation and decrease in the success of students (Cai, 2000). Students are prone to have more psychiatric problems including depression because of their interpersonal and emotional conflicts as well as economical and academic problems (Talaei, Saghebi and Rezaei, 2008).

Automatic thoughts of individuals are the forms of their perceiving / understanding / interpreting the social stimuli effecting their social skills as well as their psychological power of overcoming problems and also that form pressure on individuals. Thus, negative attitudes prevent individuals from acting in society effectively and getting satisfied with their lives. With such destructive features, automatic thoughts are thought to be irrational forms of ideas that are the basics of psychological deficiencies (Ellis, 1968:8). In a sense, automatic thoughts are the attitudes accompanied by negative attitudes and automatically taking place

against the will of individuals (Türküm, 1999). Ellis (1988) pointed out an obvious relationship between the means of thinking and negative attitudes.

Studies on the relationship between stress and life satisfaction pervade the related literature, but there are only a few studies related to life satisfaction, anxiety and automatic thoughts. The results of this study on the life satisfaction, anxiety and automatic thoughts of university students are important to take the necessary steps to be able to increase the life satisfaction levels of students. The purpose of the study is to determine whether there is a significant relationship among the life satisfaction, anxiety level, and automatic thoughts of teacher candidates and some other variables. It also aims to examine the relationships among the life satisfaction, anxiety level, and automatic thoughts of the students.

1.1. Problem Statement (Problem Cümlesi)

Is there any significant relationship among the life satisfaction, anxiety level and automatic thoughts of teacher candidates?

1.1.1. Sub-problems (Alt problemler)

- Is there any relationship among the life satisfaction, anxiety level and automatic thoughts of teacher candidates?
- Is there any relationship between the life satisfaction, anxiety level and automatic thoughts of teacher candidates and gender and education level of parents?

2. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE (ÇALIŞMANIN ÖNEMİ)

The aim of the study is to determine the relation between life satisfaction, anxiety level and automatic thoughts of candidate teachers. The data collection tools employed in the study are Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS), State-Trait Inventory (STAI), Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire-Revised (ATQ-R). The data were analyzed through "t" test, "F" test, Kruskal-Wallis, "Scheffe" significance test and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The results of the study show that there is a negative meaningful relation between life satisfaction and negative automatic thoughts, life satisfaction and anxiety and anxiety and automatic thoughts. According to gender, a significant difference is found in students' anxiety levels. Significant differences are found between the mother's education level and life satisfaction and anxiety level and automatic thoughts. Significant differences are also found between the father's education level and anxiety and between level and negative automatic thoughts.

3. METHOD (YÖNTEM)

The sampling of the research is composed of the students in Faculty of Education at a private university in TRNC in the academic year 2008-2009; 150 students participated in the study.

3.1. Data Collection Tools (Veri Toplama Araçları)

3.1.1. Life Satisfaction Scale (LSS) (Yaşam Doyumu Ölçeği YDÖ)

The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) is a measure of life satisfaction developed by Ed Diener and colleagues (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). The Satisfaction With Life Scale is a five-item scale that "is designed around the idea that one must ask subjects for an overall judgement of their life in order to measure the concept of life satisfaction" (Diener et al., 1985, pp. 71-72). Life satisfaction is one factor in the more general construct of subjective well being. Theory and research from fields outside of rehabilitation have suggested that subjective well being has at least three components, positive affective appraisal, negative affective appraisal, and life satisfaction. Individuals

indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement on a 7-point Likert-type scale

3.1.2. State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) (Sürekli Kaygı Ölçeği)

This twenty-item anxiety inventory was developed by Spielberger et al. to measure trait anxiety levels of individuals (1970), and it was adapted into Turkish and standardized by Öner and Le Compte (1983). The total score varies between 20 and 80. It clearly differentiates between the temporarily condition of "state anxiety" and the more general and long-standing quality of "trait anxiety. It helps professional distinguish between a client's feeling of anxiety and depression.

3.1.3. Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire-Revised (ATQ-R) (Geliştirilmiş Otomatik Düşünceler Ölçeği)

In this study, revised form of Automatic Thoughts Questionnaire, developed by Kendall, Howard and Hays (1989), is used. The reliability and validity of the new questionnaire, which has 10 additional positive statements to ATO-30, was made by Bozkurt. In the reliability study of the scale with senior high school students, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was found to be ($r=.92$) (Bozkurt, 1998).

3.1.4. Personal Information Form (Kişisel Bilgi Formu)

Information about the students' families and individual traits is gathered by means of personal information questionnaire of ten items.

3.2. Analysis of Data (Verilerin Analizi)

In analysis of data, "t" test is used for two variables in order to find out whether there is a difference between the groups; "F" test and Kruskal-Wallis test are used for more than two variables. "Scheffe" Significance Test is used in order to determine which groups significant differences between the variables stem from. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is used to be able to see whether there is a correlation among the scales and to set the direction of the correlation if there is any.

4. FINDINGS (BULGULAR)

As it is seen in Table 1, there is a positive significant correlation between the life satisfaction and negative automatic thoughts of the participant students ($r=-0.321$, $p<.001$) and life satisfaction and anxiety ($r=-.295$, $p<.001$); there is a positive correlation between the negative automatic thoughts and anxiety ($r=-.371$, $p<.001$).

Table 1. The correlation among life satisfaction, anxiety and positive and negative thought levels of the students

(Tablo 1. Öğrencilerin yaşam doyumu, kaygı, olumlu ve olumsuz otomatik düşünce düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkiler)

Dependent Variable		1	2	3	4
(1)Anxiety	Pearson Cor.		-.295**	.079	.371**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.352	.000
	n		140	140	140
(2)Life Satisfaction	Pearson Cor.	-.295**		-.153	-.321**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.072	.000
	n	140		140	140
(3)Positive Thinking	Pearson Cor.	.079	-.153		-.005
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.352	.072		.953
	n	140	140		140
(4)Negative Thinking	Pearson Cor.	.371**	-.321**	-.005	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.953	
	n	140	140	140	

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2. t-test results of the students' life satisfaction, anxiety and automatic thought levels with regard to gender
(Tablo 2. Cinsiyete göre, öğrencilerin yaşam doyumu, kaygı ve otomatik düşünce düzeylerinin t- testi sonuçları)

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	n	mean	St. Deviation
Anxiety	Female	113	49.734	4.795
	Male	27	45.148	4.833
Life Satisfaction	Female	113	25.885	5.121
	Male	27	27.296	4.581
Positive Thinking	Female	113	64.380	8.212
	Male	27	65.777	6.710
Negative Thinking	Female	113	66.238	21.554
	Male	27	65.963	16.108

As it is seen in Table 2, there is a significant difference among the anxiety levels of the students with regard to gender ($t=4.436$, $p<.05$). According to the results, anxiety level of female students is higher than that of the male students.

Table 3. ANOVA results of the students' life satisfaction, anxiety and automatic thoughts levels with regard to the education level of the mother
(Tablo 3. Annenin eğitim düzeyine göre, öğrencilerin yaşam doyumu, kaygı ve otomatik düşünce düzeylerinin ANOVA sonuçları)

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	n	mean	St. Deviation
Anxiety	Illiterate	6	51.000	3.794
	Primary school	7	48.142	6.491
	Secondary school	41	48.609	5.531
	High school	14	50.285	6.268
	University	33	47.424	4.657
	Post-graduate	39	49.589	4.405
	Total	140	48.850	5.118
Life satisfaction	Illiterate	6	20.833	3.544
	Primary school	7	25.714	7.543
	Secondary school	41	26.414	5.713
	High school	14	23.571	7.900
	University	33	27.969	2.506
	Post-graduate	39	26.179	3.355
	Total	140	26.157	5.036
Positive Thinking	Illiterate	6	67.166	5.879
	Primary school	7	68.142	5.304
	Secondary school	41	63.170	6.530
	High school	14	62.285	6.626
	University	33	65.545	8.927
	Post-graduate	39	65.282	9.270
	Total	140	64.650	7.942
Negative Thinking	Illiterate	6	78.833	17.325
	Primary school	7	59.428	17.784
	Secondary school	41	65.365	19.453
	High school	14	78.357	20.716
	University	33	61.242	19.259
	Post-graduate	39	66.128	22.129
	Total	140	66.185	20.564

As it is seen in Table 3, there is a significant difference between the education level of the mother and life satisfaction ($KW=15.064$, $p<.01$), and between the education level of the mother and negative automatic thoughts ($KW=11.432$, $P<.001$).

As it is seen in Table 4, there is a significant difference between the education level of father and life satisfaction ($KW=19.55$, $p<.01$), and between the education level of the father and negative automatic thoughts ($KW=19.141$, $p<.001$).

Table 4. ANOVA results of the students' life satisfaction, anxiety and automatic thought levels with regard to the education level of the father (Tablo 4. Babanın eğitim düzeyine göre, öğrencilerin yaşam doyumu, kaygı ve otomatik düşünce düzeylerinin ANOVA sonuçları)

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	n	mean	St. Deviation
Anxiety	Illiterate	3	51.666	2.516
	Primary school	3	45.333	2.886
	Secondary school	16	51.375	4.485
	High school	14	48.357	4.908
	University	47	47.148	5.512
	Post-graduate	55	49.981	4.580
	Total	140	48.850	5.118
Life satisfaction	Illiterate	3	21.333	9.237
	Primary school	3	27.666	2.309
	Secondary school	16	21.812	6.462
	High school	14	27.214	5.604
	University	47	26.723	3.971
	Post-graduate	55	26.890	4.601
	Total	140	26.157	5.036
Positive Thinking	Illiterate	3	67.333	2.516
	Primary school	3	61.333	6.350
	Secondary school	16	64.750	4.739
	High school	14	64.571	8.140
	University	47	65.361	8.450
	Post-graduate	55	63.909	8.654
	Total	140	64.650	7.942
Negative Thinking	Illiterate	3	79.666	19.008
	Primary school	3	41.333	.577
	Secondary school	16	79.375	20.444
	High school	14	70.500	17.692
	University	47	62.106	18.396
	Post-graduate	55	65.981	21.659
	Total	140	66.185	20.564

5. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS (TARTIŞMA VE SONUÇLAR)

When the results of the study are considered in general, it is found out that there is a negative significant correlation between the life satisfaction and negative automatic thoughts of the participant students, and between the life satisfaction and anxiety; there is a positive correlation between the negative automatic thoughts and anxiety. Therefore, it can be concluded that negative automatic thoughts and anxiety levels decrease as life satisfaction levels increase.

As the students' level of depression increases, so does their level of anxiety. Furthermore, this also indicates that anxiety and depression are closely related (Vandervoot & Skorikov, 2002). In the studies they conducted, Gilman & Huebner (2005) stated that teenagers with high life satisfaction have more positive relationships with others, have a lower level of stress and compared to teenagers with low life satisfaction, they have a higher level of personal control feeling.

With regard to gender, there isn't a significant difference in life satisfaction levels. There hasn't been found significant differences between gender and life satisfaction levels in the researches Aysan and Bozkurt (2000) made with school psychological counselors, Dilmaç and Ekşi

(2008) with the students at Vocational High Schools, Matheny et al. (2002) with American and Turkish university students. In some studies related to life satisfaction, it is emphasized that gender, race and income have almost no role as predictors of life satisfaction (Myers and Diener, 1995).

With regard to gender there has been found a significant difference in anxiety levels. According to the results, anxiety level of female students is higher than that of the male students. Ünal, Karlıdağ and Yoloğlu (2001) had similar results in their studies. There hasn't been found any significant difference in automatic thoughts with regard to gender. Using the STAI, McCleary and Zucker (1991) found female law students had higher state and trait anxiety than male law students. Female law students also scored higher than undergraduate students for both state and trait anxiety, whereas male law students were higher than undergraduates only on state anxiety.

There has been found a significant difference between the education level of the mother and life satisfaction. According to the results, life satisfaction of the students whose mothers are senior high school or university graduates have higher life satisfaction levels than those whose mothers are primary school graduates. There has been found a significant difference between the education level of the mother and negative automatic thoughts. Tuzcuoğlu and Korkmaz (2001) have also found out in their research that the ones whose mothers' education levels are low have higher depression levels than those whose mothers' education levels are high.

With regard to the education level of the father there has been found a significant difference in anxiety levels, and between the education level of the father and negative automatic thoughts. In a similar research by Erözkan (2008), there hasn't been found a significant difference between the education level of the father and depression level. According to the results of the study, it is observed that the education level of the parents have an important effect on the anxiety levels and negative automatic thoughts of the students.

When the results are considered in general, it is thought that it is necessary to take some educational and institutional steps to increase students' life satisfaction levels in order to decrease their anxiety levels and negative automatic thoughts. Especially for the university students in TRNC, studies related to their adaptation seem to be essential to decrease their anxiety levels and negative automatic thoughts. It is considered highly urgent to take some steps to decrease the anxiety levels of female students. It is suggested that similar researches should be made with different samplings and more variables as intercultural studies. It would be better to offer consultant services to reduce the anxiety and depression of students and improve the psychological strength of these students in the early years of the university life.

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