



RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA YAZISI

Emerging Adults' Perceived Life Skills, Self - Regulation, Emotional Regulation, Helicopter Parenting and Autonomy Supportive Behaviours

Beliren Yetişkinlikte Algılanan Yaşam Becerileri, Öz Düzenleme, Duygu Düzenleme, Helikopter Ana-babalık ve Özerklik Destekleyici Davranışlar

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Abstract:

Life skills have an inclusive effect on various emotional and social aspects of emerging adults' development. Helicopter parenting is quite common among today's parents towards their children at various ages including emerging adult children. The relationship between life skills and psychological variables such as emotional regulation, helicopter parenting and autonomy supportive behaviours is important for emerging adults. The aim of this study is to examine the role of self-regulation, emotional regulation, autonomy supportive behaviours and helicopter parenting on emerging adults' perceived level of life skills. For this purpose, 451 emerging adults (21.7 % male and 78.3 % female) between the ages of 18 and 27 (M = 21.3, SD = 1.92) participated in this study from a comprehensive university from central Turkey. Students' Perception for Life Skills Questionnaire, Helicopter Parenting and Autonomy Supportive Behaviours Scale, Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale and Self-Regulation Questionnaire were administered to volunteer participants. Stepwise regression analyses revealed that perceived life skills predicted by self-regulation ($\beta = .45$, $t = 10.872$, $p = .000$) and autonomy supportive behaviours ($\beta = .14$, $t = 3.43$, $p = .001$). Results are presented and discussed under the light of life skills and related variables.

Keywords: Emerging adults, life skills, autonomy supportive behaviours, self-regulation, helicopter parenting, emotional regulation

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Öz:

Yaşam becerileri, beliren yetişkinlerin gelişimini çeşitli duygusal ve sosyal boyutlarda etkilemektedir. Beliren yetişkinlik de dahil olmak üzere çeşitli yaş dönemlerinde çocukları olan günümüz anababalarında helikopter anababalık yaygındır. Yaşam becerileri ile duygu düzenleme, helikopter anababalık ve özerkliği destekleyici davranışlar gibi psikolojik değişkenler arasındaki ilişki beliren yetişkinler için önemlidir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, öz düzenleme, duygu düzenleme, özerkliği destekleyici davranış ve helikopter ana-babalığın, beliren yetişkinlerin algılanan yaşam becerileri düzeyi üzerindeki rolünü incelemektir. Bu amaçla, Türkiye'nin merkezindeki bir üniversiteden yaşları 18-27 arasında değişen ($M = 21.3$, $SD = 1.92$) 451 beliren yetişkin (%21.7 erkek ve %78.3 kadın) bu çalışmaya katılmıştır. Yaşam Becerilerine Yönelik Öğrenci Algısı Formu, Helikopter Ana babalık ve Özerklik Destekleyici Davranışlar Ölçeği, Duygu Düzenleme Güçlüğü Ölçeği ve Öz Düzenleme Ölçeği gönüllü katılımcılara uygulanmıştır. Yapılan aşamalı regresyon analizi, algılanan yaşam becerilerinin öz düzenleme ($\beta = .45$, $t = 10.872$, $p = .000$) ve özerkliği destekleyici davranışlar ($\beta = .14$, $t = 3.43$, $p = .001$) tarafından yordandığını ortaya koymuştur. Sonuçlar yaşam becerileri ve ilgili değişkenler ışığında sunulmakta ve tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Beliren yetişkinlik, yaşam becerileri, özerklik destekleyici davranış, öz düzenleme, helikopter ana-babalık, duygu düzenleme

Introduction

There have been major changes in the processes of today's youth development including longer education and later transition to adulthood (Arnett, 2014). These changes bring a need for new skills to youth for education and career opportunities. The concept and content of life skills have been extended with the technological and global changes in the 21st century and necessary skills for life have also been changed. In the 21st century, students are expected not only to have strong skills in areas such as language, art, mathematics, and science but also to have skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, continuity, collaboration and curiosity (World Economic Forum, WEF, 2016). The need for change in skills over time covers different age groups and life stages.

Awareness is rising about the importance of life skills for young people. Various definitions have been made of life skills by different organizations. ATCS (Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills) defines life skills as the Way of Thinking, Way of Working, Work Tools, Life on Earth and Main Curriculum (Binkley et al., 2010). OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) handles the term with Using Tools Effectively, Interacting in Heterogeneous Groups and Acting Autonomously (Ananiadou & Claro, 2009). P21 (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2009) discusses life skills in 5 headlines: Learning and Innovation Skills, Information, Media and Technology Skills, Life and Career Skill, Basic Subjects and Interdisciplinary Themes.

Although each classification has different aspects and themes, WEF conducted a meta-analysis of research about 21st century skills which distilled the research into 16 skills in three broad categories: Foundational literacies, competencies and character qualities. Foundational literacies include literacy, numeracy, scientific literacy, information and communication technologies literacy, financial literacy, cultural and social literacy; competencies include critical thinking and problem solving, creativity, communication, collaboration and character qualities include expressing curiosity, initiative, persistence/grit, adaptability, leadership and social and cultural awareness (WEF, 2016). Studying life skills from emerging adults' perspective is significant in terms of understanding today's young people and having a solid

base for developing programs and interventions as well. New studies are emerging that help understand the life skills or 21st century skills of Turkish youth, such as Özyurt (2020).

Helicopter Parenting and Autonomy Support in Emerging Adults

As children grow older, extreme parental involvement can affect children's life from social, academic and psychological aspects. Helicopter parents are defined as parents who are hovering around their children in order to protect them against stress, solve their problems for them and provide continuous support and approval (Hirsch & Goldberger, 2010). Helicopter parents are exaggeratedly protective, involved and interested in their children's lives and they tend to remove any obstacles instead of their children (Luebbe et al., 2018; LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Odenweller, Booth-Butterfield & Weber, 2014).

Helicopter parenting is reported as having a continuing effect on adolescents and emerging adults. Helicopter parenting was found to be related to anxiety, depression, psychological well-being (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011); locus of control (Kwon, Yoo & Bingham, 2016); self-efficacy (Reed, Duncan, Lucier-Greer, Fixelle & Ferraro, 2016) and entitlement (Segrin, Woszidlo, Givertz, Bauer & Taylor Murphy, 2012) among growing children. Results in the literature strongly support that helicopter parenting behaviours mostly have negative effects on emerging adults' developmental processes. Schiffman et al. (2014) reported that helicopter parenting behaviours related to lower feelings of autonomy, competence and relatedness.

Autonomy supportive behaviours and helicopter parenting (psychological control/ dependence) are opposite ends of a dimension (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010). Autonomy support is a positive and encouraging parental behaviour, supporting their children's independence and capacity to solve problems (Grolnick & Ryan 1989; Soenens et al., 2007). Also, these behaviours affect children's wellbeing through the sense of autonomy, which is one of the basic needs (Deci & Ryan 2008; Ryan & Deci 2000; Soenens et al., 2007).

Although the number of studies conducted in Turkey is limited, the concept of helicopter parenting has started to gain importance. The Perceived Helicopter Parental

Attitude Scale was developed by Yılmaz (2019) and another scale study was carried out by Ertuna (2016) with emerging adults. In another study, a high level of negative relationship was found between basic life skills and helicopter parenting (Yılmaz & Büyükbeci, 2019).

Emotional Regulation Among Emerging Adults

Emotions of individuals vary regarding time, circumstances, and many different conditions, affecting many decisions and behaviours of people at all ages. Besides, emotional regulation is a complex and multidimensional process that includes biological, social, behavioural, conscious and unconscious cognitive processes (Garnefski, Kraaij & Spinhoven, 2001), it is a key factor for individuals' well-being, emotional-social adaptation, physical and psychological health (Gratz, 2007; Gross & John, 2003; Gross, 2001, 2008).

Gratz and Roemer's (2004) explained emotional regulation comprehensively and emphasize the difficulties in emotional regulation. They conceptualized emotional regulation as "a) awareness and understanding of emotions b) acceptance of emotions, c) ability to control impulsive behaviours and behave in accordance with desired goals when experiencing negative emotions, d) ability to use situationally appropriate emotional regulation strategies flexibly to modulate emotional responses as desired in order to meet individual goals and situational demands" (Gratz & Roemer, 2004; p.42-43) and having difficulty and/or deficiency in these skills is stated as difficulties in emotional regulation. In this study, the difficulties of emotional regulation were examined as explained by Gratz and Roemer (2004).

As Arnett (2014) clarified, emerging adulthood includes new and challenging developmental tasks with emotional challenges. However, this period, which also includes various opportunities, is an important developmental period for developing and strengthening emotional regulation strategies (Rawana, Flett, McPhie, Nguyen & Norwood, 2014). Self-regulation and emotional regulation skills predict positive development in emerging adulthood (O'Connor et al., 2011). This finding shows that understanding emotional regulation skills, especially in emerging adults is worthy of notice.

When the studies on emerging adults and difficulties of emotional regulation are considered, it is seen that the general difficulties are mainly related to structures such as stress and pathological internet use, basic psychological needs, perceived parental styles and risky behaviours, positive affectivity and authentic personality (Yorulmaz, Civgin & Yorulmaz, 2020; Ayseli, 2019; Curun, Beydoğan Tangör & Çolakoglu Kaya, 2020). Results of various studies point out the importance of having and using emotional regulation skills.

Self-Regulation Among Emerging Adults

Self-regulation includes the regulation of emotions, thoughts, and behaviours by considering an individual's needs (Kuhl, 2000). In other words, it can be considered as a multidimensional process that includes how individuals decide what to feel, what to think, and what to do. According to Hoyle (2010), effective self-regulation is essential for healthy psychological functioning which is an important skill affecting many areas of life. Self-regulation also includes purposive processes (Carver & Scheier, 2011) and the capacity to change responses (Bauer & Baumeister, 2011).

Self-regulation, which is an important skill for being "a successful individual" in today's world (Jakešová, Kalenda & Gavora, 2015), is considered as a critical capability that is effective in coping with stressful life events during university years which includes changing and increasing personal, social and academic challenges. It gains importance in emerging adulthood, which is the transition to adulthood and the period of making major life decisions.

Self-regulation skills are related to academic achievement (Duru, Duru & Balkıs, 2014), academic self-efficacy (Jakešová et al., 2015), self-efficacy (Duchatelet & Donche, 2019), psychological well-being (Durand-Bush, McNeill, Harding & Dobransky, 2015), coping with stress (De la Fuente & Cardelle-Elawar, 2011) any many other critical factors. In the light of these important relationships, self-regulation is considered critical for understanding life skills.

Considering the connection between self-regulation and emotional regulation, emotions are thought of as a component of the general self-regulation system (Butler, 2011). Emotional regulation is considered as a part of self-regulation and used to describe the emotional and motivational aspects of self-regulation. While emotional regulation can provide instant physical/psychological well-being; the regulation of cognitions may indicate an internal process related to a future goal (McClelland, Ponitz, Messersmith & Tominey, 2010).

Current Study

In understanding the perceived life skills of emerging adults, it is important to highlight certain psychological factors in predicting the level of perceived life skills. In this study, helicopter parenting and autonomy supportive behaviours were considered as important possible predictors of life skills. In addition, two other constructs self-regulation and emotional regulation were considered as critical variables for predicting the perceived life skills. As in other cultures, emerging adulthood is a complicated developmental period for Turkish people (Atak & Çok, 2010; Doğan & Cebioğlu, 2011) and investigating both personal and parental variables together in predicting life skills seemed important. An understanding of the explanatory variables predicting life skills in emerging adulthood is limited and less known. This study aimed to examine the perceived life skills in terms of the familial (helicopter parenting and autonomy supporting behaviours) context and personal context (self-regulation and emotional regulation).

Methods

Participants

Participants were 451 emerging adults studying at 5 different faculties of a foundation university located in central Turkey. The participants included 21.7 % male and 78.3 % female between the ages of 18 and 27, (M = 21.3, SD = 1.92). The data has been collected from sophomore and senior students. A total of 264 (58.5%) of the participants were sophomores, and 187 (41.5%) were senior students.

Measures

The participants completed a personal information form, the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS), the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ), the Helicopter Parenting and Autonomy Supportive Behaviours Scale and the Students' Perception for Life Skills Questionnaire.

Personal Information Form

A demographic information form was used to obtain information about participants' age, gender, faculty and the program they were already enrolled in.

Students' Perception for Life Skills Questionnaire

The Students' Perceptions for Life Skills Questionnaire is a 16-item self-report questionnaire that measures perceptions of competence in terms of WEF's (2016) life skills which was formulated by the researchers. The questionnaire is a 5-point Likert-type scale and students rated their perceptions of competence from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The measure consists of 16 items and includes three subdimensions which are Foundational Literacies, Competencies and Character Qualities. The Cronbach's alpha for Foundational Literacies was .76, for Competencies .75, for Character Qualities .82 and the total questionnaire was 0.89. The subdimensions explained 56% of the total variance.

Helicopter Parenting and Autonomy Supportive Behaviours Scale

The Helicopter Parenting and Autonomy Supportive Behaviours Scale is a 6-point Likert-type scale and developed by Schiffrin et. al (2014) to measure the effect of helicopter parenting behaviours on the psychological well-being of college students. The scale is a 15 item self-report questionnaire that consists of two subdimensions that are helicopter parenting and autonomy supportive behaviours. The Cronbach's alpha of helicopter parenting was found .77 and .71 for autonomy supportive behaviours. The original measure was adopted to Turkish, reliability and validity analyses were conducted by Çok, Güçlü, Özdoğan and Topuz (2022). The Cronbach's alpha for each subdimension of helicopter parenting and autonomy supportive behaviours was .80 in this study.

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS)

The Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS; Gratz & Roemer, 2004) is a 36-item self-report questionnaire to measure difficulties in emotional regulation and includes six subdimensions. The scale is a 5-point Likert-type scale and higher scores indicate the difficulty of emotional regulation. The Cronbach's alpha was found .93 for the total scale. The adaptation study of the original scale was conducted by Rugancı and Gençöz (2010). The Turkish version of this scale includes 36 items and the same subdimensions as the original scale. The Cronbach's alpha for the total questionnaire was 0.94 in the Turkish adaptation and the six sub-dimensions explained 62% of the total variance. The Cronbach's alpha for the total questionnaire was 0.92 in this study.

Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ)

The Self-Regulation Questionnaire was developed by Brown, Miller and Lawendowski (1999) to measure behavioural self-regulation. The original scale is a 5-point

Likert type and consists of 63 items and 7 sub-dimensions. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Aydın, Keskin and Yel (2013). The adapted scale consists of 51 items and includes three sub-dimensions. The Cronbach's alpha for the total questionnaire was 0.87 in the Turkish adaptation the sub-dimensions explained 35% of the total variance. The Cronbach's alpha value for the total questionnaire was found 0.90 in this study.

Procedure

Data was collected from emerging adults attending a large foundation university located in central Turkey. The study was conducted with the approval of the university's ethics committee dated 17.07.2019 and numbered 17162298.600-275, carried out with students studying in eight different programs in five faculties. Before the data collection, researchers informed the participants about the study and confidentiality. After signing informed consent, volunteer participants responded to the measuring tools in 20 to 25 min. Names-surnames of the participants were not obtained for confidentiality.

Data Analysis

The first dataset consists of 460 participants. Before performing the regression analysis, preliminary analyses for assumptions were tested. The total missing for the data set was less than %5. For univariate outliers, Z scores were used, and 6 cases were deleted; for multivariate outliers (Mahalanobis distance larger than the critical value at .001 level) 3 cases were omitted and 451 cases in total were used for the analyses. For univariate normality, skewness index (below 3.0) and kurtosis (below 10.0) index indicate normal distribution (Kline, 2011). Multicollinearity was not an issue in the dataset (VIF<10, CI<30). The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 for Windows was used to analyze the data.

First, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were performed. Pearson correlations were examined to understand the relationship between the variables. Second, data were analyzed by linear multiple regression analysis to see how Students' Perception for Life Skills Questionnaire is predicted by the independent variables. The stepwise regression analysis method was used to examine which independent variables give a statistically significant contribution to predicting the perception of life skills level.

Results

To analyze the relationship between the variables, correlations are examined between students' perceived level of life skills, self-regulation, emotional regulation and helicopter parenting and autonomy support. Table 1 includes a correlation matrix of all variables. The means and standard deviations of all variables are also presented.

Table 1. Bivariate Pearson correlations among the perceived level of life skills, self-regulation, emotional regulation and helicopter parenting and autonomy support

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1 Perceived level of life skills	1	.49**	-.35**	.08	.25**
2 Self-regulation		1	-.64**	-.03	.23**
3 Difficulties in emotional regulation			1	.09*	-.12*
4 Helicopter parenting				1	.55**
5 Autonomy support					1
M	61.35	175.66	86.18	27.65	24.44
SD	10.32	22.17	21.70	9.26	7.28

*p< .05, **p< .01

Bivariate correlations revealed that students' perception of life skills was negatively and significantly related to difficulties in emotional regulation ($r=-.35$, $p=.000$), positively significantly related to self-regulation ($r=.49$, $p=.000$) and autonomy supportive behaviours ($r=.25$, $p=.000$). However, the student's perception of life skills was not significantly related to helicopter parenting. Self-regulation was negatively significantly related to difficulties in emotional regulation ($r=-.64$, $p=.000$) and positively significantly related to autonomy supportive behaviours ($r=.23$, $p=.000$). Difficulties in emotional regulation were positively significantly related to

helicopter parenting ($r=.09$, $p=.046$) and negatively significantly related with autonomy supportive behaviours ($r=-.12$, $p=.014$). Finally, helicopter parenting was positively and significantly related to autonomy supportive behaviours ($r=.55$, $p=.000$).

The independent variables of this study are self-regulation, difficulties in emotional regulation, helicopter parenting and autonomy supportive behaviours, the dependent variable is perceived life skills. The results of the stepwise regression are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of stepwise regression analysis

	B	β	t	P	R ²	ΔR^2	F
Model 1							
Constant	21.50		6.33	.000			
S-R	.227	.49	11.82	.000	.24	.24	139.85
Model 2							
Constant	19.25		5.63	.000			
S-R	.211	.45	10.84	.000			
ASB	.204	.14	3.43	.001	.26	.02	77.51

S-R: Self-regulation, ASB: Autonomy supportive behaviours

The analysis was completed in two stages. First, self-regulation has entered the model ($\beta =.49$, $t =11.82$, $p =.000$) and predicted the perceived life skills (24%) $R^2 = .24$, $F(1, 449) = 139.85$, $p <.05$. Second, self-regulation ($\beta =.45$, $t =10.84$, $p =.000$) and autonomy supportive behaviours has entered the model ($\beta =.14$, $t = 3.43$, $p =$

.001) and autonomy supportive behaviours predicted life skills (2%) $R^2 = .02$, $F(2,448) = 77.51$, $p <.05$. Self-regulation and autonomy supportive behaviours together explained %26 of the variance. Helicopter parenting, one of the two dimensions included in the scale of helicopter parenting and autonomy supportive behaviours has not

entered the model. Difficulties in emotional regulation did not significantly predict the perceived level of life skills.

Discussion

Life skills are critical for adaptation and mental health of all age groups today in the globalized and constantly changing world. Research about understanding and developing life skills has increased recently (Chu, Reynolds, Tavares, Notari & Lee, 2017; Kivunja, 2015). Therefore, the present study is important in searching for the predictors of perceived life skills of emerging adults. The main purpose of the study is to investigate how helicopter parenting, autonomy supportive behaviours, self-regulation and emotional regulation explain the perceived life skills of emerging adults in a group of university students. The results concluded that only autonomy supporting behaviours and self-regulation predict perceived life skills.

Self-regulation is the strongest predictor of perceived life skills in this study. Life skills take an active role in solving problems, making decisions and choices (WHO, 1999). Self-regulation includes life skills components such as critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity. Also, self-regulation is a part of life skills as a cognitive skill in individuals' thinking and decision-making processes (Binkley et al., 2010). Considering these, self-regulation is important for developing and using life skills. On the other hand, emotional regulation did not significantly predict the perceived level of life skills. This can be explained by the fact that self-regulation is seen as a broader pattern that includes emotional regulation (Butler, 2011). Emotional regulation is thought to be suppressed by self-regulation in this study.

Autonomy supportive behaviours are another predictor of the life skills for this study. Recently observation reports are indicating less autonomy support and more active parenting of university period emerging adults. Aside from parental autonomy support, teachers' autonomy supportive behaviours are also positively related to life skills development (Cronin et al., 2019). Autonomy support is related to various key factors such as intrinsic life goals and well-being (Lekes, Gingras, Philippe, Koestner & Fang, 2010). Although autonomy supportive behaviours effect life skills the relationship is also vice versa. The study investigating the effect of life skills training on autonomy revealed that the group who had life skills training showed significantly higher scores (Ghasemian & Kumar, 2017).

Emerging adulthood is a developmental transition from adolescence to adulthood and critical changes occur in this period. Life skills of student emerging adults still in the process of developing research field. Özyurt (2020) already adopted the original 21st Century Skills scale for teacher candidates which probably will lead to the realization of further studies. Therefore, it is necessary to show how these important psychological constructs affect perceived life skills. Due to the increased interest in helicopter parenting for growing children (Kwon et al., 2015; Segrin et al., 2012) study included this parenting as one of the possible predictors of perceived life skills. Despite the autonomy supportive behaviours, helicopter parenting did not predict the life skills of emerging adults. The lack of support for autonomy was found related to

helicopter parenting (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012) and the autonomy supportive behaviours are related to life skills (Ghasemian & Kumar, 2017). Thus, helicopter parenting and autonomy supportive behaviours are handled separately in this study, the relationships of the variables may be seen over autonomy supportive behaviours.

Conclusion

This research provides some important understanding and improving life skills of university age emerging adults. The life skill programs have been applied various times to different samples to investigate substance misuse (Wenzel, Weichold & Silbereisen, 2009) and depression (Yano, Kase & Kazuo Oishi, 2021). Besides these negative outcomes, life skills have been handled with mental health. The Life Skill Training (LST) program has been reported to increase mental health among university students (Savoji & Ganji, 2013). These essential skills serve as a critical key for emerging adults' healthy development. Possible intervention programs on life skills may consider the importance of autonomy supporting behaviours and self-regulation for improving life skills among students. Implications of the study may be also useful for university counseling centers as well.

Limitations

This study has certain limitations such as having participants from the same university, number of participants, etc. Further research investigating predictors of life skills may be conducted on larger and more heterogeneous groups. Nonstudent groups such as emerging adults in work life and NEET (not in employment, education or training) should be also included in future research. Furthermore, important variables in understanding life skills such as resilience, well-being, and other positive and negative psychological constructs may be included in future research. Thus, both in terms of variables and in terms of wider emerging adult groups, future studies may be expanded.

Declarations

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

Before starting the study, ethical approval was obtained from Başkent University Ethics Committee with the decision dated 17.09.2019 and numbered 34611. The data were collected in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration, each participant was informed through a voluntary consent form, and their consent was taken.

Consent for Publication

Not applicable.

Availability of Data and Materials

Data sets used and/or analyzed during the study can be obtained from the relevant author upon appropriate request.

Competing Interests

The author declares that no competing interests in this manuscript.

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Authors' Contributions

CHG, HKÖ and FÇ contributed to the construction of the research question, review of the literature and design of the study. CHG and HKÖ contributed to data collection. CHG contributed to statistical analysis. All the authors contributed to the writing and interpretation of the article. All authors have read and approved the final version of the article.

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