

Araştırma Makalesi

The Mediating Role of Emotional Flexibility between Social Support and Life SatisfactionAzmi ÇAĞLAR^{1*}, Yusuf AKYIL², Yakup İME³, Beste ERDİNÇ⁴¹ Abant İzzet Baysal University, Faculty of Education, Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling, Bolu, Türkiye² Ministry of National Education, Avcılar Anatolian High School, Istanbul, Türkiye³ Necmettin Erbakan University, Faculty of Education, Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling, Konya, Türkiye⁴ Yıldız Technical University, Faculty of Education, Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling, Istanbul, Türkiye**Makale Bilgisi***Keywords:*emotional
flexibility,
social support,
life satisfaction**Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to examine the possible mediating role of emotional flexibility in the relationship between life satisfaction and social support among university students. A total of 344 university students, 217 female and 127 male, participated in the study. Life Satisfaction Scale, Emotional Flexibility Scale and Multidimensional Perceived Social Support Scale were used in the data collection process. Normality, descriptive statistics, reliability and correlation analyses were used to analyse the data. In addition, SEM (Structural Equation Modelling) and bootstrapping method were used in the analysis of the data. The findings of the study show that there is a positive correlation between social support, emotional resilience and life satisfaction. In addition, according to the results of this study, emotional flexibility has a partial mediating role in the relationship between social support and life satisfaction. In addition, it was determined that the increase in the level of social support positively affected both emotional flexibility and life satisfaction of university students. This situation reveals that social support has a direct effect on life satisfaction and makes a significant contribution to students' psychological well-being.

Öz*Anahtar kelimeler:*duygusal esneklik,
sosyal destek,
yaşam doyumu

Bu araştırmanın amacı, üniversite öğrencileri arasında yaşam memnuniyeti ile sosyal destek arasındaki ilişkiye duygusal esnekliğin olası aracılık rolünü incelemektir. Araştırmaya, 217 kadın ve 127 erkek olmak üzere toplamda 344 üniversite öğrencisi katılmıştır. Veri toplama sürecinde Yaşam Memnuniyeti Ölçeği, Duygusal Esneklik Ölçeği ve Çok Boyutlu Algılanan Sosyal Destek Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde normallik, tanımlayıcı istatistikler, güvenilirlik ve korelasyon analizleri kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca verilerin analizinde, YEM (Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi) ve bootstrapping yöntemi ile kullanılmıştır. Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgular, sosyal destek, duygusal esneklik ve yaşam memnuniyeti arasında pozitif yönde bir korelasyon olduğunu göstermektedir. Buna ek olarak bu çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, duygusal esnekliğin, sosyal destek ile yaşam memnuniyeti arasındaki ilişkide kısmi bir aracı rolü bulunmaktadır. Ayrıca, sosyal destek düzeyindeki artışın, üniversite öğrencilerinin hem duygusal esnekliklerini hem de yaşam memnuniyetlerini olumlu yönde etkilediği belirlenmiştir. Bu durum, sosyal desteğin yaşam memnuniyeti üzerinde doğrudan bir etkiye sahip olduğunu ve öğrencilerin psikolojik iyi oluşlarına önemli bir katkı sağladığını ortaya koymaktadır.

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Introduction

Human is a multifaceted being, possessing biological, psychological, and social attributes by nature. An assessment of an individual's life satisfaction is possible so long as he continues to have innumerable requirements in these domains and is capable of satisfying them. Uncertainties abound in life; unexpectedly, one may receive good tidings, while conversely, the opposite may transpire. It might be obligatory for the person to contend with the challenging circumstances encountered. The social dimension of an individual encompasses their social existence. Although social life may present challenges at times, it is also acknowledged that it can offer numerous benefits for an individual. Yıldız (2017) posits that the presence of social networks has a significant impact on an individual's well-being by fostering a sense of community membership. Specifically, university students may experience greater life satisfaction and reduced feelings of loneliness as the perceived social support of these networks increases. Given the positive correlation between social support and an individual's quality of life (Luo et al., 2023), social support can be considered one of several valuable resources that can assist the individual in overcoming this challenge. Furthermore, positive mental health, resilience, and life satisfaction are all factors that university students associate with social support, according to a longitudinal study (Hu et al., 2022). The concept of social support pertains to the attributes and roles of interpersonal connections that are believed to contribute to the enhancement of both mental and physical well-being (Rodriguez & Cohen, 1998). According to Shumaker and Brownell (1984), social support is a resource exchange between a minimum of two individuals and a structure in which at least one party seeks to improve the recipient's well-being. To comprehend the presence of social support in an individual's life, one must consider factors such as the availability of a trustworthy confidant, a companion who listens when one needs to talk, an individual who allows one to be fully authentic during times of difficulty, an individual who expresses appreciation, and an individual who provides consolation when one is upset (Sarason et al., 1983). The definitions underscore the critical significance of social support in the life of an individual, examining it from diverse vantage points. For instance, it is well established that social support substantially predicts both resilience and life satisfaction. (Yıldırım & Çelik Tanrıverdi, 2021). According to a longitudinal study with older adults, life satisfaction and social support are significantly and positively related (Adams et al., 2016). Another study (Uygur, 2018) found that high school pupils identified social support and self-disclosure as substantial predictors of life satisfaction. The foregoing findings indicate that social support and life fulfillment are suitable concepts to discuss together. Life satisfaction refers to an individual's level of contentment with their life in its entirety, as measured by a positive evaluation of the overall character of their existence (Veenhoven, 1996). An alternative interpretation posits that life satisfaction is an individual's

assessment of the degree of contentment they have with their present circumstances when juxtaposed with a life standard they deem suitable (Diener et al., 1985). To gain insight into the significance of life satisfaction in individuals' lives, it is beneficial to note that its correlation with psychological well-being and quality of life is moderately positive and significant (Demir et al., 2021).

The presence of unpredictability and variability in life necessitates that individuals adjust to this dynamic reality. The individual endeavors to acclimate to the diverse range of emotions evoked by these events as well as the various occurrences that transpire. An essential component of adaptation is the individual's capacity for flexibility, which can be advantageous. The concept of psychological flexibility positively impacts life satisfaction in a direct manner (Lucas & Moore, 2019). Graham and other researchers (2016) identified life satisfaction change as a predictor of psychological flexibility. Alternatively, life satisfaction is influenced by an individual's capacity for psychological flexibility. Emotional flexibility, a constituent of psychological flexibility, is characterized by the capacity to regulate one's emotional responses in response to the surrounding circumstances and to retract those initial emotions when the environment alters (Waugh et al., 2011). The person experiences a variety of emotional responses throughout the course of the day. Individuals with emotional flexibility are capable of overcoming a negative emotion and reverting to a positive one in response to a positive event that transpires following the occurrence of the negative emotion. Therefore, emotional flexibility, indicated by an individual's inability to remain fixated on a single emotion, may provide insight into their level of life satisfaction. Emotional flexibility's reference to the present emotion's sensation may indicate that the individual is cognizant of the present moment. Because mindfulness and self-compassion are two concepts that have the potential to foster emotional flexibility (Benshai et al., 2017), psychological flexibility partially mediates the significant positive relationship between emotional awareness and life satisfaction, according to one study (Çakır & Dilmaç, 2023). Put simply, psychological flexibility, which encompasses emotional flexibility as well, mediates the connection between an individual's life satisfaction and their awareness of the emotions they experience. However, the lack of research in the literature on the relationship between emotional flexibility and life satisfaction highlights the importance of investigating this topic.

Similar to emotional flexibility, social support is an additional construct that exhibits a positive correlation with both self-compassion (Alizadeh et al., 2017) and mindfulness (Xie et al., 2022). Furthermore, research examining the correlation between psychological flexibility and emotional flexibility reveals a significant finding: heightened psychological flexibility correlates with enhanced social support (Tindle et al., 2021; Tindle et al., 2022). Although the literature lacks a specific study investigating the correlation between social support and

emotional flexibility, it is generally accepted that conducting such an investigation would be beneficial. Based on the wealth of information gleaned from the literature, we formulated the subsequent hypotheses to support this investigation.

H1: Social support positively predicts emotional flexibility.

H2: Social support positively predicts life satisfaction.

H3: Emotional flexibility positively predicts life satisfaction.

H4: Emotional flexibility has a mediating role between social support and life satisfaction.

Method

Participants and Procedure

For the purposes of this study, the researchers collected data digitally and disseminated them through social media platforms. During data collection, it was emphasized that information would be collected only from university students who volunteered and that all participants should carefully review the informed consent in the scale sets. A total of 344 students, 217 female and 127 male, participated in the study. The mean age of these students was 20.34 years ($SD = 1.42$). The study protocol has been approved by the Pamukkale University Social Sciences and Humanities Research and Publication Ethics Committee (Report No: BSNCBJ3K7Y; Verification Code: 88572). The study was performed in accordance with the ethical standards laid down in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its following updates.

Measures

Life Satisfaction Scale. To measure life satisfaction, Diener and other researchers (1985), devised the scale. The scale utilizes a five-item, single-dimensional Likert scale. Dağlı and Baysal (2016) conducted a Turkish translation. The scale assigns a value of 1 to the 'Strongly disagree' option and a value of 5 to the 'Strongly agree' option. Participants accumulate a total of 25 marks on the scale. A high level of personal satisfaction is indicative of high scores. The Cronbach's alpha reliability in the Turkish adaptation was 0.88. We reevaluated the reliability coefficient for this investigation and determined it to be 0.84.

Emotional Flexibility Scale. Fu and other researchers (2018), devised the emotional flexibility scale as a means of quantifying the emotional flexibility of adolescents. İme and Ümmet (2022) translated the scale into Turkish. Ten items comprise its three subscales. Emotional communication, regulation of negative emotions, and regulation of positive emotions comprise the subscales. Participants can achieve a maximum score of 70 on the 7-point Likert scale, with 10 representing the minimum possible score (1 being false and 7

being entirely accurate). Elevated scores are indicative of heightened emotional flexibility, while diminished scores signify inadequate emotional flexibility. The reliability analysis of the Emotional Flexibility Scale yielded an overall Cronbach Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient of 0.74. The determination of the internal consistency reliability coefficient for the sub-dimensions revealed the following values: 0.94% for the adjustment of positive emotions, 0.84% for the communication of emotions, and 0.94% for the adjustment of negative emotions.

Multidimensional Perceived Social Support Scale. The scale developed by Zimet and other researchers (1988), was created to determine the dimensions of support perceived by individuals. It was adapted into Turkish by Eker and other researchers (2001). The scale consists of 12 7-point Likert-type items (1 - Absolutely No; 7 - Absolutely Yes) and the participants were asked to indicate to what extent each statement about social support was true for them. High scores on the scale indicate that perceived social support is also high. It has three sub-dimensions and is named as family support, friend support, and support from significant others.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this research was to investigate the correlation between emotional flexibility, social support, and life satisfaction among college students. We utilized SPSS, JASP, and AMOS to analyze the gathered data. We conducted analyses of normality, descriptive statistics, reliability, and correlation throughout the analysis. Following this, SEM (Structural Equation Modelling) was conducted. SEM is considered a highly effective quantitative analysis technique due to its capability of generating decisions based on multiple parameters (Kline, 2011). A two-stage SEM was utilized in accordance with Kline's (2011) guidelines for this study. We initially evaluated the measurement model, followed by the primary model. The initial phase involved assessing the verification status of the measurement model, which examines the interconnections among indicator variables, latent variables, and the interrelationships among these latent variables. After verifying the measurement model, we tested the hypothetical structural model. We considered the indices of goodness of fit suggested by Hu and Bentler (1999) to assess the outcomes of the SEM. In addition to computing degrees of freedom and chi-square (χ^2), we also computed the following metrics in this context: GFI, RFI, CFI, NFI, IFI, TLI, SRMR, and RMSEA. The critical values for GFI, RFI, CFI, NFI, IFI, and TLI are as follows: χ^2 to degrees of freedom should not exceed 5, while SRMR and RMSEA values should be below 0.08, according to Hu and Bentler (1999) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2001). Conversely, we assessed AIC and ECVI values alongside the chi-square difference test to determine the superior model among multiple models in SEM. Akaike (1987) and Browne and Cudeck (1993) determined the superior model by assessing the smallest AIC and ECVI values.

Researchers utilized the item parcellation method in SEM because of the unidimensional nature of the life satisfaction scale. Pupils demonstrate a normal distribution; the parcellation method decreases the number of observed variables and improves the reliability of personality trait-related concepts (Nasser-Abu Alhija & Wisenbaker, 2006). The researchers established two dimensions of life satisfaction through parcellation.

In this investigation, we employed bootstrapping in conjunction with SEM, providing additional evidence for the robust validation and importance of mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Through the bootstrapping procedure, we increased the sample size to 5,000 and computed confidence intervals (C.I.I.) using the bootstrap value. The observed lack of zero values within the confidence intervals provides further evidence that the mediation under consideration is substantially significant.

Results

At this stage, descriptive statistics and correlation analyses are presented. Then, the results of the measurement model and the structural model are presented. Finally, the results of the bootstrapping process are presented.

Table 1.

Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients for research variables

	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	McDonal d's ω	Cronbach' s α	Guttman' s λ_6	1	2
1- Life satisfaction	344	15.20	4.40	-.196	-.263	.859	.859	.837	-	
2- Emotional flexibility	344	45.92	9.01	.098	-.364	.755	.759	.803	.33**	-
3- Social support	344	58.31	15.6	-.247	-.663	.897	.904	.956	.48**	.44**

** $p < .001$

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics, including correlation and descriptive measures (arithmetic mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis values), for the variables. When looking at Table 1, it's clear that the variables' skewness (between -.247 and .098) and kurtosis (between -.663 and -.263) values are within the acceptable ranges set by Finney and DiStefano (2006) for normality, which are ± 2 for skewness and ± 7 for kurtosis. Upon analyzing the relationships presented in Table 1, we determined that social support and emotional flexibility ($r = .44, p < .001$), life satisfaction and life support ($r = .48, p < .001$), and emotional flexibility and life satisfaction ($r = .33, p < .001$) all exhibited significant positive correlations.

After identifying substantial relationships between the concepts, we initiated the measurement model. The measurement model comprises a total of eight observed variables and three latent variables, namely life satisfaction, emotional flexibility, and social support. The results detail the suit values in Table 2. In general, the fit values are satisfactory. Furthermore, the factor loadings exhibit a range of values from 0.55 to 0.93. Consequently, the observed values are indicative of the latent variables.

Initially, an examination was conducted of the structural model positing emotional flexibility as a complete mediator between social support and life satisfaction. The comprehensive mediation model posits that a direct correlation between social support and life satisfaction is not present. Instead, it considers the influence of social support on life satisfaction via emotional flexibility as a predictive factor. Table 2 displays the fit values for the model in which emotional flexibility functions as a complete mediator.

Table 2.

SEM Fit Indices

	N	CMIN	DF	CMIN/DF	GFI	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR	AIC	ECVI
Measurement Model	344	56.228	17	3.308	.966	.955	.926	.968	.947	.968	.081	.05	-	-
Partial Mediator Model	344	56.228	17	3.308	.966	.955	.926	.968	.947	.968	.082	.05	94.228	.275
Full Mediator Model	344	87.158	18	4.842	.947	.931	.892	.944	.912	.944	.106	.07	64.697	.173

**p<.001

We evaluated partial mediation by emotional flexibility in search of the optimal mediation model. The partial mediator model suggests that emotional flexibility and social support mediate life satisfaction, with emotional flexibility serving as a direct cause. The fit values of the test results are presented in Table 2. Each model produced acceptable fit values, and every path coefficient was statistically significant.

The chi-square difference test reveals that the addition of a direct path between social support and life satisfaction significantly contributes to the model ($\Delta\chi^2 = 30.93$, $sd = 1$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, the partial mediation model exhibits comparatively lower AIC and ECVI values than the full mediation model. The model in which emotional flexibility partially mediates the relationship between social support and the life satisfaction of university students was favored among these findings. Figure 1 illustrates the path coefficients of the model.

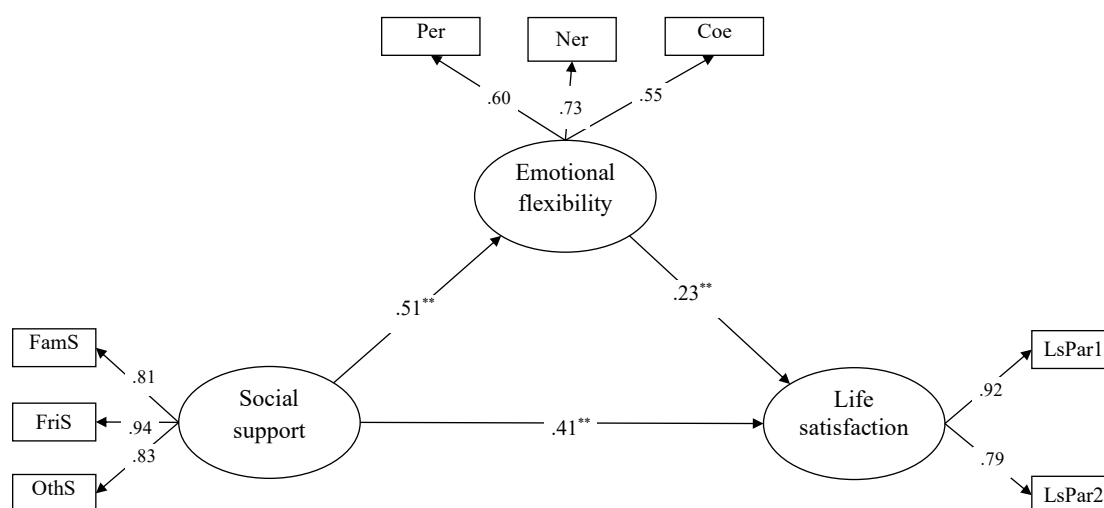


Figure 1.

Standardised Factor Loadings for the Partially Mediated Structural Model.

Note. $N = 344$; ** $p < .001$; FamS: family support; FriS: friend support; OthS: others support; Per: regulation of positive emotions; Ner: regulation of negative emotions; Coe: communication of emotions; LsPar parcels of life satisfaction

The purpose of bootstrapping was to bolster and supplement the research. As a result, the significance of each direct path coefficient is determined. Similarly, the coefficient for the indirect path is considered significant with a bootstrap value of .118 (95 % confidence interval: .040 to .217). On the basis of these findings, it is possible to conclude that university students' emotional flexibility partially mediates the relationship between their social support and life satisfaction.

Discussion

The present study investigates the role of emotional flexibility as a mediator in the association between life satisfaction and social support. The findings of the analyses indicate that emotional flexibility serves as a partial mediator in this association. Put simply, there is a positive correlation between social support and both emotional flexibility and life satisfaction. Furthermore, social support predicts life satisfaction in a direct manner. Furthermore, this study examines the hypotheses formulated in light of its discovery.

Social support, which can be received from a partner, relatives, friends, colleagues, co-workers, social ties, and even a loyal pet (Allen et al., 2002), refers to social relationships that enable people to be in a better position physically and mentally (Rodriguez & Cohen, 1998). On the other hand, emotional flexibility, as a component of psychological flexibility, is the ability of an individual to react emotionally in accordance with the conditions in which he or

she is and to get rid of his or her initial emotional reactions when the conditions change (Vaugh et al., 2011). When a positive event occurs after a negative event, the individual's ability to switch from the negative emotion he or she felt due to the previous event to a positive emotion with the new event can be realized by being emotionally flexible, while social support similarly means that the individual becomes physically and mentally better. Social support positively predicts psychological flexibility, according to the results of the present investigation. Studies in the literature demonstrate a positive and significant relationship between psychological flexibility and social support (Tindle et al., 2021; Tindle et al., 2022) and perceived social support (Daliri et al., 2022), supporting this finding as emotional flexibility is a component of psychological flexibility. Therefore, the practicality of the study's finding that emotional flexibility increases alongside social support is evident, as friends and family members can anticipate university students' emotional responses that are appropriate for the circumstances.

Upon examining the correlation between life satisfaction and social support, the current investigation reveals that a rise in social support serves as a predictor of life satisfaction growth. There are numerous studies in the literature that investigate this correlation and corroborate the results of the present investigation. A number of studies (Annak, 2005; Mahanta & Aggarwal, 2013; Topkaya & Kavas, 2015) have found a significant and positive correlation between life satisfaction and perceived social support. Higher levels of gratitude and life satisfaction are associated with greater perceived social support, according to one study (You et al., 2018). Greater levels of gratitude partially mediate this relationship. In another study, it is found that university students who perceive high levels of support from family and faculty also have high levels of life satisfaction (Yalçın, 2011). Moreover, Khusaifan and Keshky (2016) unveil the partial mediating function of social support in the correlation between depression and life satisfaction. Higher levels of depression are commonly associated with diminished life satisfaction and inadequate social support. According to the findings of this study and the information gleaned from the literature, social support significantly contributes to the enhancement of life satisfaction among university students.

Conversely, with regard to the correlation between emotional flexibility and life satisfaction, the results of this research indicate that emotional flexibility contributes in a positive way to life satisfaction. Life satisfaction refers to the extent to which an individual has a positive assessment of his or her life and quality of life based on the standards or criteria that the individual establishes, the level of contentment with the current circumstances, and the degree of enjoyment derived from life (Diener et al., 1985; Veenhoven, 1996). Vaugh and other researchers (2011), define emotional flexibility as the ability to regulate one's emotional reaction in accordance with the circumstances at hand, which is related to psychological

flexibility. The results of this research indicate that emotional flexibility is a positive predictor of life satisfaction, consistent with previous findings in the field. Given the aforementioned factors, it is plausible to assert that the development of emotional flexibility among university students may contribute to a rise in their overall life satisfaction.

In conclusion, this research found that social support, through emotional flexibility, partially mediates life contentment. Upon reviewing the relevant literature, we discovered independent associations between social support (Uygur, 2018) and psychological flexibility (Lucas & Moore, 2019) with life satisfaction, which have been confirmed by other studies. Alizadeh and other researchers (2017), established a relationship between self-compassion and social support, while Mülazım and Eldeleklioğlu (2016) found no interrelation between emotional flexibility, life fulfillment, and self-compassion. The researchers ultimately established a correlation between these notions, finding that an increase in emotional flexibility among university students could enhance their life satisfaction alongside an increase in social support.

Conclusion

The findings of the study indicate that emotional flexibility serves as a partial mediator between university students' life satisfaction and social support. That is to say, social support influences life satisfaction indirectly and directly via emotional flexibility. Researchers have identified social support as a variable that can potentially enhance the emotional flexibility and overall life contentment of college students. This study examined the interrelationships among these variables for the first time. This quantitative model describes the relationship among social support, life satisfaction, and emotional flexibility among Turkish university students. Social support enhances the emotional flexibility of individuals. As a result, it has the potential to enhance their overall life satisfaction. Life satisfaction can result from providing individuals with the necessary social support at this time, engaging them in social activities that eradicate their sense of belonging, and increasing their emotional state control. This research is expected to substantially contribute to the existing body of literature by anticipating how the expansion of social support platforms positively impacts individuals' life satisfaction.

Limitations and Future Research

It is beneficial to acknowledge the constraints of the research. To commence, the data utilized in this investigation were gathered via self-reported measurement instruments. The data's explanatory power is limited to the capabilities of the measurement instruments employed, as suggested by this finding. For future investigations, researchers can employ alternative methodologies such as peer assessment, observation, interviews, and self-report-

based measurement instruments. An additional constraint pertains to the research methodology. Even though structural equation modeling is a strong method in quantitative research and the sample size was increased to 5000 using bootstrapping, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to make causal conclusions. Consequently, assessments of causal links must be approached with prudence. The structural equation model indicates a correlation among social support, emotional flexibility, and life satisfaction. Social support is a predictor of life satisfaction. Nonetheless, a comprehensive elucidation of these causal pathways necessitates longitudinal and experimental investigations. Furthermore, the analysis is limited to the specified variables. It is possible to analyze the mediating role of various concepts in the relationship between life satisfaction and social support. Conversely, individuals will almost certainly require social support on a regular basis. Group counseling sessions or psychoeducation programs aimed at augmenting social support, with the objective of promoting emotional flexibility and life contentment, may substantially increase persons' mental well-being.

Compliance with Ethical Standards:

Approval for this study was obtained from Yıldız Technical University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee.

Conflict of Interest:

The authors declares that there is no conflicts of interest.

Informed Consent:

This study was not subject to the approval of an institutional review board as this was not required; however, the Declaration of Helsinki was adhered to. In addition, participants were informed about the purpose of the study by the author(s) before the administration of the measurements. Students were asked whether they volunteered to participate in the study. Then, the measurements were administered only to the volunteer students. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the measurements were completed.

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Sosyal Destek ve Yaşam Doyumu Arasında Duygusal Esnekliğin Aracı Rolü

Özet

İnsanlar bir toplum içerisinde yaşadıklarından dolayı sosyal hayattan bağımsız değerlendirilememektedirler. Sosyal yaşamın arkadaşlık, iş hayatı, aile hayatı gibi yönlerinin bireyler için katkılarını göz önünde bulundururken zaman zaman zorlukları da içerisinde barındırabileceği de unutulmamalıdır. Bu zorluklar bireylerden yaşamlarında uyum sağlayabilmek adına esnek olabilmelerini gerektirebilir. Bireyler karşılaştıkları çeşitli durumlara uyum sağlayabildikçe yaşamlarında daha az zorlandıkları düşünülebilir. Bireylerin yaşam doyumu bir yaşamlarından bir bütün olarak memnun olma düzeylerini ifade eder ve kişinin yaşamının genel hatlarına ilişkin olumlu bir değerlendirme ile belirlenir (Veenhoven, 1996). Bireylerin yaşamlarından edindikleri tatmin düzeyi aynı zamanda onların mutluluk ve iyi oluşları ile ilgili fikir sahibi olunmasına yardımcı olabilir. Bireylerin yaşamlarından duydukları tatminle doğrudan ilişkili olan psikolojik esneklik kavramının bir bileşeni olarak duygusal esneklik, kişinin çevresindeki koşullara karşılık duygusal tepkilerini düzenleme ve çevre değiştiğinde bu ilk duyguları geri getirme kapasitesi anlamına gelmektedir (Lucas ve Moore, 2019; Waugh ve diğerleri, 2011). Bireylerin yaşam doyumları ile pozitif yönde ilişkili olan sosyal destek ile daha fazla esnekliğin de ilişkili olduğu da bilinmektedir (Mahanta ve Aggarwal, 2013; Tindle ve diğerleri, 2022). Bireylerin sosyal yönü onların yalnız bir hayat içerisinde yaşamlarından edindikleri doyum üzerinde tehdit oluşturabilir. Bu durum sosyal desteğin insan hayatındaki önemine vurgu yapmaktadır. Tüm bunlardan hareketle mevcut araştırmanın amacı üniversite öğrencileri arasında yaşam memnuniyeti ve sosyal destek arasındaki ilişkide duygusal esnekliğin aracılık rolünü araştırmak olarak belirlenmiştir.

Bu araştırmada veriler 217 kadın ve 127 erkek olmak üzere toplam 344 üniversite öğrencisinin gönüllü katılımıyla toplanmıştır. Veri toplama araçları olarak Yaşam Doyumu Ölçeği (Dağlı ve Baysal, 2016; Diener ve diğerleri, 1985), Duygusal Esneklik Ölçeği (Fu ve diğerleri, 2018; İme ve Ümmet, 2022) ve Çok Boyutlu Algılanan Sosyal Destek Ölçeği (Eker ve diğerleri, 2001; Zimet ve diğerleri, 1988) kullanılmıştır. Bu ölçeklere ek olarak katılımcıların bazı demografik sorular sorulmuştur. Veriler çevrimiçi olarak Google Forms aracılığıyla Türkiye’de yaşayan 18 yaş ve üstündeki bireylerden toplanmıştır. Veriler yapısal eşitlik modellemesine ek olarak bootstrapping işlemi yapılarak analiz edilmiştir.

Bulgular sosyal destek, duygusal esneklik ve yaşam doyumu arasında pozitif yönlü bir korelasyon olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Yapısal eşitlik modellemesi ve bootstrapping işleminden elde edilen ek kanıtları içeren bu çalışmanın bulguları duygusal esnekliğin yaşam doyumu ve sosyal destek arasındaki ilişkide kısmi bir aracı rolü olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Aracılığın kısmi olması sosyal destek ve yaşam doyumu arasındaki doğrudan ilişkinin varlığını

da tasdik etmektedir. Çalışmanın bulguları, alanyazında var olan çalışmalarla tutarlılık göstermekle birlikte mevcut araştırmanın bir benzeri literatürde bulunmamaktadır. Dolayısıyla araştırmanın bu yönüyle alanyazını genişlettiği düşünülmektedir.

Çalışmanın sonucu yüksek düzeydeki algılanan sosyal destekteğin üniversite öğrencilerinde hem duygusal anlamda esnek olabilmekle hem de yaşamdan yüksek düzeyde doyum elde edilebilmesi ile pozitif bir ilişkiye sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Dahası sosyal destekteki artışın yaşam memnuniyetini doğrudan öngörebilmesi de söz konusudur. Araştırmanın literatüre önemli katkıları bulunmaktadır. Öte yandan öz bildirim ölçeklerinin kullanıldığı, değişkenlerin kullanılan ölçekler kapsamınca kavramları açıklayabildiği ve araştırmanın nedensel bir çıktı sunmadığı da göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır.