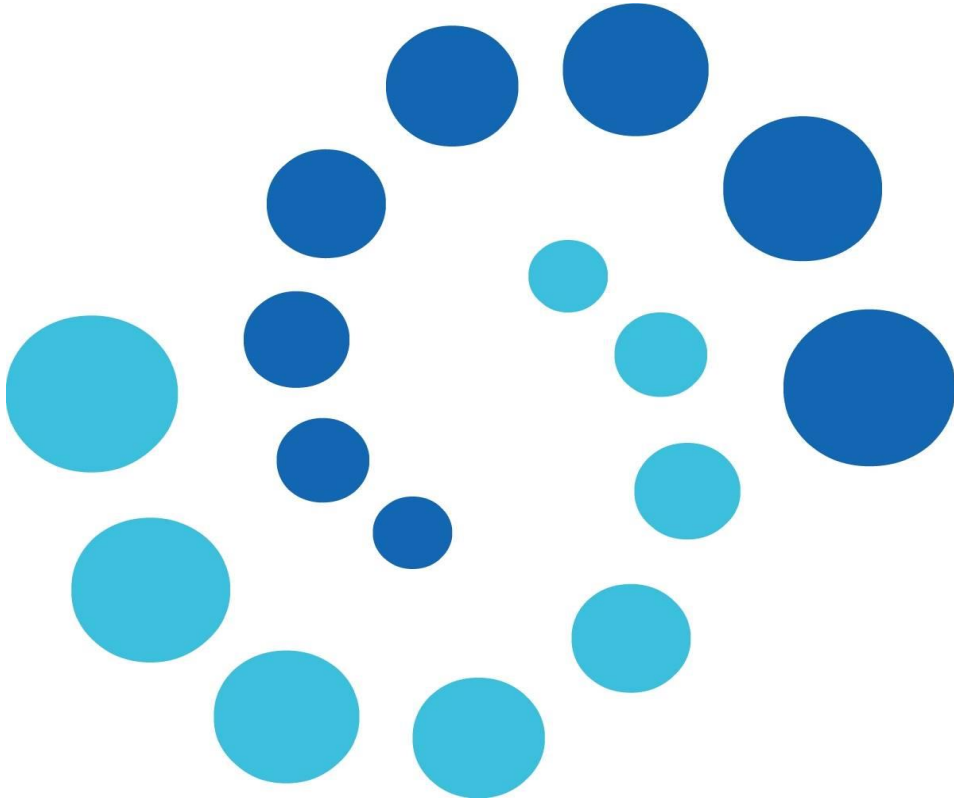




Sınrsız Eđitim ve Arařtırma Dergisi



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Meaning in Life and Lifelong Learning: The Case of Turkish Immigrants in the United Arab Emirates

Doç. Dr. Tanju DEVECİ, Khalifa University of Science and Technology, tanjudeveci@yahoo.com

Abstract: Adults' psychological well-being is greatly influenced by the meaning they attain in life. A lack of an established meaning in life may cause distress, and urge individuals to indulge in activities assisting in their quest for meaning. Immigration, be it a reason for or a result of the quest for meaning, may seriously affect people's psychological well-being. A plethora of research has investigated the issues under-privileged immigrants face, with little attention given to professional immigrants' well-being. These people's lifelong learning propensities relative to acquisition of meaning in life have not received much attention either. The complementarity between the two can increase our understanding of the psychological and educational needs of professional immigrants. To this end, this research investigated 50 professional Turkish immigrants' experiences in the UAE. It involved 30 female and 20 male adults with a mean age of 38. Data were collected using two instruments borrowed from the literature on the topic. Results showed that the participants' scores for presence of and search for meaning were above the threshold level indicating a positive attribute. The participants in the female, mid-adulthood, and greater length of stay categories received higher scores for presence of meaning in life. A weak, positive correlation occurred between presence of meaning in their lives and lifelong learning scores; however, a weak, negative correlation was detected between search for meaning in life and lifelong learning scores. Results are discussed, and recommendations are made to enhance professional immigrants' acquisition of meaning in life through engagement in lifelong learning.

Keywords: Meaning in life, Search for meaning, Presence of meaning, Immigration, Lifelong learning

Yaşamda Anlam ve Yaşamboyu Öğrenme: Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri'nde Yaşayan Türk Göçmenler Örneği

Özet: Yetişkinlerin psikolojik olarak ne kadar iyi durumda oldukları yaşamlarında elde etmiş oldukları anlam ile yakından ilişkilidir. Yaşamlarında belirli bir anlam elde edememiş bireyler mutsuz olabilirler. Bu durum aynı zamanda onların bir anlam arayışına girmelerine de neden olabilir. Bu arayışın bir nedeni ya da sonucu olan göç, bireylerin psikolojik durumunu derinden etkiler. İmkanları yetersiz, maddi durumları düşük olan göçmenlerin karşı karşıya bulunduğu sorunlar üzerine birçok araştırma yapılmış bulunmaktadır. Ancak iyi bir meslek sahibi ve toplumda nispeten iyi durumda olan yetişkin göçmenlerin iyi-oluş durumlarına ilişkin çalışmalar yok denecek kadar azdır. Ayrıca yetişkin bireylerin yaşamlarında bir anlam oluşturma ve yaşamboyu öğrenme eğilimleri arasındaki ilişki de araştırmacılardan ilgi görmemiştir. Alandaki bu boşluğu doldurmak üzere yürütülen bu çalışmaya, Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri'nde yaşayan meslek sahibi, maddi durumları göreceli olarak iyi durumda olan 50 Türk yetişkin birey katılmıştır. 38 yaş ortalamasıyla, katılımcıların 30'unu kadın ve 20'sini erkek yetişkin bireyler oluşturmuştur. Veriler, alanda daha önce geliştirilmiş olan iki farklı veri toplama aracı ile elde edilmiştir. Sonuçlar katılımcıların yaşamlarında hali hazırda var olan amaçlar ve amaç arayışlarının belirlenen eşik düzeyinin üzerinde olduğunu göstermiştir. Kadın, orta-yaş, ve ev sahibi ülkede geçirilen sürenin uzunluğu dikkate alınarak yapılan inceleme sonucunda, bu guruplardaki yetişkinlerin yaşamlarında hali hazırda var olan anlama ilişkin daha fazla puan aldıkları belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca yaşamda var olan anlam ile yaşamboyu öğrenme puanları arasında zayıf, olumlu bir korelasyon olduğu belirlenmiştir. Ancak yaşam için bir anlam arayışı ile yaşamboyu öğrenme puanları arasında zayıf, olumsuz bir korelasyon olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Sonuçlar tartışılmakta ve meslek sahibi, maddi durumları göreceli olarak iyi durumda olan göçmenlerin yaşamboyu öğrenme aracılığıyla yaşamlarında bir anlam belirlemelerine yardımcı olacak önerilerde bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yaşamda anlam, Anlam arayışı, Anlam mevcudiyeti, Göç, Yaşamboyu öğrenme

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1. Introduction

Since the introduction of Viktor Emil Frankl's philosophy of Logotherapy in his seminal book *Man's Search for Meaning* in 1946, much has been written about meaning in life. The term is derived from the Greek word which denotes "meaning," indicating that Logotherapy "focuses on the meaning of human existence as well as on man's search for a meaning" (Frankl, 1985, p. 120). It "considers man a being whose main concern consists in fulfilling a meaning, rather than in the mere gratification and satisfaction of drives and instincts ... in the mere adaptation and adjustment to society and environment" (pp. 125-126). Due to the function of meaning beyond adapting to the environment, there are so many meanings in life that not all may be meaningful at high levels, and some people may lack a plan for their entire life (Baumeister, 1991).

Realizing the full impact of significant life experiences may not be possible until a certain adult age. Having accumulated a variety of experiences, adults are more likely to succeed in making meaning out of their experiences. However, if worried about the negative consequences or disturbing feelings that may be accompanied by increased awareness, some adults may refrain from potentially highly meaningful experiences. Others, on the other hand, may find themselves in situations where their consciousness is raised unintentionally. Yet some others may purposefully seek opportunities which will give them a purpose and meaning in life. In any case, adults will experience a variety of consequences, some of which may be undesired. To circumvent such negative consequences, it will help to investigate how significant life events manifest themselves in adults' meaning in life.

One critical point in life is immigration, which has significant effects on an individual's life. There may be a myriad of reasons for a person's decision to make such a significant change. Some may make this decision voluntarily, while others may be obliged to do so. In either case, they will be required to use adaptability skills. Immigration may also serve as a catalyst causing a more fundamental change to people's perspectives on meaning, as a result of which they may find or change meaning in their lives. People may also make the decision to immigrate as a part of their existing meaning in life, which may be subject to modifications after the move.

To deal with the changes brought about in their physical and psychological environments, immigrants likely engage in a variety of learning activities. Some of these may be organized formally,

while some others may occur informally. Only if learning is perceived as a lifelong learning endeavor can immigrants' search for a meaningful life be facilitated.

Despite the weight of such a potentially metamorphic experience in adults' lives, there is a dearth of studies conducted on meaning in their lives. To the knowledge of the author of this study, nor is there a study which has investigated the relationship between immigrants' lifelong learning orientations and meaning in their lives. In an attempt to fill this gap, this study will first provide a brief review of the literature on related concepts.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Meaning in Life

The notion of "meaning" was once restricted to the arena of language since it was believed that only words, sentences, and propositions had meaning, not physical objects, humans, or events (Cottingham, 2003). Due to the philosophical position that "we can make life meaningful by our talk about it; but it cannot have a meaning" (Eagleton, 2007, p. 1), "meaning in life" has been considered as a slippery concept. This is particularly because of its close link to "meaning of life." Making a distinction between the two terms, Yalom (1980) defines "meaning of life" as a concept "refer[ring] to an overall universal pattern that implies a design outside or superior to the person" and states that "meaning in life [on the other hand] is primarily concerned with a person's personal sense of meaning, assumptions, purpose, and goals within their ecosystem" (p. 423).

With the existentialist philosophy in particular, much attention has been paid to why we are here and what makes life meaningful. In fact, existentialism is defined as "a philosophy that confronts the human situation in its totality to ask what the basic conditions of human existence are and *how man can establish his own meaning out of these conditions*" (Barret, 1962, p. 143). On the other hand, from the psychological perspective, scholars like Frankl (1985) have written extensively on how meaning is attained in the face of extreme conditions, i.e. deprivation of basic human needs such as freedom. More recently, others, especially positive psychologists, have approached the notion from the perspective of "not what's lacking" or "what doesn't work," but from "what's present" or "what works" (Boniwell, 2006). In fact, the field of positive psychology is defined as the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of

people..." (Gable & Haidt, 2005, p. 104). Consequently, such an approach to one's life brings into play the concept of "well-being" which is heavily influenced by meaning in life (Steger, 2009).

Defined as "the extent to which people comprehend and see significance in their lives, as well as the degree to which they perceive themselves to have a purpose or overarching aim in life" (Steger, 2009, p. 682), meaning in life provides satisfaction with life. Therefore, it is a source of well-being. Reker and Woo (2012) note that there are various activities, quests, and goals that generate different types of meanings in life. A combination of these ought to be integrated into a larger and higher purpose for life as a whole. The notions of situational and global meaning help illustrate this. The former refers to "attempts to understand the value and purpose of specific encounters and experiences in life that occur on a day-to-day basis" (p. 435). Reker (in Reker & Woo, 2012) notes that the sources of such meaning can be found in personal relationships, leisure activities, social and political causes, material possessions, etc. The latter is defined as "the cognizance of order, coherence, and purpose in one's existence, the pursuit and attainment of worthwhile goals, and an accompanying sense of fulfillment" (Reker & Wond in Reker & Woo, 2012, p. 434). It is comprised of three dimensions: cognitive, motivational, and affective. The cognitive dimension is related to our beliefs, worldviews, and value systems, while the motivational dimension includes our wants, needs, and goals. The affective dimension, on the other hand, concerns satisfaction, fulfillment, and happiness. These dimensions are interdependent. For example, our belief system is strengthened when we attain goals. Therefore, "a person high on global meaning has a clear life purpose, has a sense of direction, strives for goals consistent with life purposes, feels satisfied with past achievement, and is determined to make the future meaningful" (p. 435). It is also important to note that there are degrees to the level of meaning in one's life, and some periods of life might have comparatively more meaning than others (Britton, 1969). Researchers have also compared the presence of meaning in life and the search for meaning in life according to age groups (Steger, Oishi & Kashdan, 2009). It has been found that the former is usually higher among older groups, while the latter tends to be higher among younger people. Similarly, Reker et al. in Grouden and Jose (2014) found that older individuals likely have a more established sense of purpose in life.

Much energy has been devoted to understanding the effects of meaning in life on well-being. Zika and Chamberlain (1992) report that "meaning in life has a broad and pervasive influence on well-being, and ... people who lack meaning are likely to show detrimental effects in all aspect of

their psychological functioning” (p. 142). Similarly, McMahan and Dehart-Renken (2011) found that there was a positive correlation between adults’ meaning in life and various aspects of their well-being such as self-development and contribution. Baumeister and Vohs (2002) also identified that well-being achieved through self-development is positively correlated with meaning in life. Similarly, McLoughlin (2016) found a strong correlation between meaning in life and satisfaction with life. He also found that the combination of meaning in life and satisfaction with life predicted greater internal locus of control.

The relationship between college students’ well-being and meaning in life has also received some attention from researchers. A study in China, for example, revealed that students with a meaning in their lives enjoyed greater well-being (Yuchang, Mingcheng & Junyi, 2016). Another study in the same country investigated how enhancement of college students’ perception of meaning in life affects their psychological well-being (Cheng, Hasche, Huang & Su, 2015). For this purpose, the researchers designed meaning-centered group intervention sessions that focused on the processes of seeking and making meaning. They found that the intervention had positive effects on students’ sense of adequacy and self-esteem as well as satisfaction with group dynamics, thus increasing their overall well-being. They also identified a negative correlation between meaning in life and students’ levels of depression and anxiety. On the other hand, Balcerowska, Biernatowska, Pianka and Atroszko (2016) investigated the relationship between Polish college students’ learning competences and meaning in life. Results indicated that higher learning competences associated with positive emotions predicted a greater sense of meaning in life. Collectively, these results indicate that an individuals’ well-being and meaning in life have a reciprocal relationship.

2.2. Immigration and Meaning in Life

The main motivation for immigration is to increase life conditions for well-being. Ben-Sira (1997, p. 2) identifies five different types of comprehensive changes immigrants face: a) physical changes, including a new place to live and different housing; b) biological changes caused by differences in nutrition and new diseases; c) political changes in the form of a different type of government and political procedures; d) economic changes, such as different types of employment, which require adjustments to existing knowledge and skills or acquisition of new ones, e) cultural changes caused by a new language, education system, and religion; and f) social changes including interpersonal relationships and types of dominance. Collectively, these changes may be intimidating

for many individuals. One of the factors that contribute to immigrants' successful adaptation to these changes and integration into the host culture is psychological health, which refers to "the absence of negative affectivity (e.g., bad mood, loneliness), and the presence of positive affectivity (e.g., good mood, self-regard, **meaning in life**, continuity in life)" (Sedikides, Wildschut, Routledge, Arndt & Zhou, 2009, p. 368).

Immigrants may be confronted with situations in their new lives that spur them to question the meanings they attach to things, people, experiences, and their lives as a whole. For instance, in his study investigating immigrants with religious beliefs, Kwong (2003) found that hardship and loneliness caused immigrants to question and learn more about their religion as well as the meaning of life, thus making them more devout practitioners. On the other hand, some immigrants move in search of meaning in their lives. This likely makes them more willing to accept and adjust to changes. In his famous book *The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari*, Robin Sharma (2006) tells the story of Julian Mantle who strips himself of material possessions and moves to India in search of meaning in life. Having gone through several hardships and distress, he reaches his aim and returns home as a transformed person with meaning in life.

The story of Julian Mantle points to the significance of transformative learning by Mezirow (1991) who notes that experiencing disorienting dilemmas causes individuals to see the world differently from the way they did formerly. Critical reflection on meaning perspectives and meaning schemes helps them raise their awareness of factors that inhibit having a comprehensive understanding of the world. The complete experience of the ten stages of transformative learning results in a renewed person who reintegrates into life and society with new perspectives. This is often accompanied by discovery of the meaning in life. In the case of immigrants, the variety of changes they experience likely cause them to experience a type of disorienting dilemma that encourages them to reflect on meaning perspectives and meaning schemes, thus giving them the chance to take a journey of transformation. However, some may not complete the full cycle and "opt out at a certain stage due to feelings of insecurity in a new situation or the fear of what is awaiting them at subsequent stages" (Deveci, 2014, p. 3).

2.3. Lifelong Learning and Its Relationship to Immigration and Meaning in Life

Defined as "the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills, and

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understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity, and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances, and environments” (Longworth & Davies, 2013, p. 22), lifelong learning plays a key role in developing skills essential for a worthwhile life. It highlights the importance of the ability to adjust existing skills and acquire new ones as dictated by the various situations in which one is engaged (Deveci, 2018). These skills facilitate the process by which immigrants ought to adjust to a new environment. Various changes identified by Ben-Sira (1997) require lifelong learning skills. For example, economic changes may require them to learn new skills or sharpen existing ones. They could do this in the form of formalized schooling, in-service training, or informal learning through their interactions with colleagues and supervisors. On the other hand, cultural changes require utilization of lifelong learning skills to learn a new language and to live in harmony with people holding different religious beliefs.

A lack of aptitude for lifelong learning will impact immigrants’ well-being negatively. Those with limited perseverance skills are more likely to surrender when faced with difficulties. However, individuals equipped with this skill are able to set goals and persist toward them (Mostert & Spaulding, 2011). They are also able to use their interpersonal skills by soliciting social support when required. They deal with stress more successfully. Collectively, these skills help one survive in the face of difficulties, and they are “a source of strength and help for others” (p. 434). This further enhances their interpersonal and intercultural communication skills necessary for effective functioning in the host culture.

Another lifelong learning skill is motivation, which urges immigrants to learn about the new culture and seek ways of better integration. One of these ways is through language learning. According to the European Commission (2007), communication in a foreign language is an essential lifelong learning skill. It is defined as “the ability to understand, express, and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts, and opinions in both oral and written form ... in an appropriate range of societal and cultural contexts ... according to one’s wants and needs (the European Commission, 2007, p. 5). If an immigrant is able to communicate effectively in the host country’s language, he/she will be able to participate in the labor market, political process, and everyday social interaction (Isphording, 2015). Research shows that immigrants’ motivation for learning and success can be so high that their aspiration may surpass that of families in the host country. This could cause them to

make great contributions to their host countries (Schleicher, 2016). Should they recognize this reality, they will have intrinsic motivation for learning.

Immigrants' lifelong learning skills will also help them during their search for meaning in their lives in the host country. Effective use of these skills helps immigrants adapt to the new context, resulting in changes in their original identity (Ibrahim & Heuer, 2016). The new/adapted identity may be accompanied by meaning in life. The process by which people achieve this likely engages them in comparisons between the new culture and their original one. In fact, the European Commission (2007) identifies cultural awareness as one of the key lifelong learning competences and states that "a solid understanding of one's own culture and a sense of identity can be the basis for an open attitude towards and respect for cultural diversity" (p. 12).

Self-directed learning skills will help people generate learning goals, design a learning plan, choose an effective methodology for learning and adjust it where required, and monitor and evaluate the overall process (Gai, 2014). Critical thinking thanks to the use of self-directed learning skills "results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which ... judgment is based (Facione, 1990, p. 3). Therefore, immigrants' effective use of critical thinking skills will facilitate the process by which they form meaning out of their experiences, adjust their self-identity, and establish meaning in their lives. There is empirical evidence showing that critical reflection helped immigrant women in Canada recognize a feeling of changed "self" as a result of the loss of their professional, social and/or cultural "previous self" (Fursova, 2013). Their effective use of perseverance skills also increased their sense of independence and assertiveness. Consequently, they became cognizant of values regarding gender roles and behaviors expected of certain social classes. This is an example of how of an increase in awareness of various domains, including but not limited to, history, place, and culture, helps the individual to attain a sense of purpose and meaning in life (Dei, 2016). Recognition of personal and social identities further encourages engagement in and production of knowledge for further change (Dei, 2016).

3. Significance of the Study and Research Questions

The weight of changes to immigrants' life conditions in the host country can be such that they may lead to comprehensive modifications in their lives, and even total transformation, thus impacting their philosophy of life as well as meaning in life. Some may be involved in this process

consciously with purposeful efforts to search for meaning in life, while some may experience this process as a by-product of a variety of situations in which they find themselves. In either case, any lifelong learning skills they possess will facilitate the process by enabling them to persevere in the face of challenges and to exert control over the situation through autonomous learning abilities. However, a lack of such skills results in adaptation and alienation issues. This inhibits the well-being of the immigrants as well as the host countries. There is ample research investigating integration processes, and immigrants' identity development. Much of this research, however, focuses on underprivileged immigrants who move to wealthier countries from less affluent parts of the world. However, professional immigrants¹ do not seem to have received enough attention from researchers. This may be due to the expectation that their qualifications and intellectual maturity will facilitate their integration process. However, these people's higher needs such as self-actualization and meaning in life may go unnoticed. Having secured financial means, professional immigrants may be more likely to engage in philosophical and psychological endeavors. The lack of research relative to this theory limits our understanding of the acquisition of meaning in life by professional adults in foreign lands.

Also, much energy and research have been devoted to understanding the learning experiences of immigrants in general. However, there is a dearth of research into how immigrants' lifelong learning propensities help them adjust to the changes in their life conditions. That professional adults are lifelong learners may be taken for granted, and they are expected to tackle economic and psychological challenges more successfully. This assumption may be not always be reasonable unless supported by research. Much insight can be gained from an empirical study, such as this current one, in terms of the relationship between professional immigrants' meaning in life and lifelong learning orientations.

Collectively, these factors gave the impetus for this study which aims to answer the following research questions:

1. To what degree do adult Turkish immigrants living in the United Arab Emirates feel their lives are full of meaning?

¹Professional immigrants are those with high professional abilities and who move to a foreign country on job-sponsored visas (Robila, 2010, p. 39)

2. How engaged and motivated are they in their efforts to find and/or deepen their understanding of meaning in their lives?

3. What kind of a relationship exists between the participants' demographic characteristics (i.e. gender, age, and length of stay in the host country), the presence of meaning, and their search for meaning in life?

4. What kind of relationship exists between the participants' lifelong learning orientation, the presence of meaning, and the search for meaning in their lives?

4. Methodology

4.1. Participants

Fifty Turkish adult immigrants in the UAE participated in this study. Of this number, 30 were female and 20 were male. Their ages ranged between 25 and 59, with a mean age of 38. To analyze the association between the scores for meaning in life and the age variable, Levinson's classification of periods of adulthood (1986) was used to categorize the participants. To this end, ages between 17 and 40 were considered as early adulthood, and ages between 41 and 60 were considered as middle age. Eight of the participants belonged to the former, while 52 belonged to the latter.

The participants' length of stay in the host country at the time of data-collection varied between one and 17 years, with an average of four years. Residence permits in the UAE are issued to expatriates for up to three years. They need to be renewed at least every three years. Therefore, in analyzing the data according to length of stay, the participants were put into two categories: those who had been in the country for up to three years and those who had been in the country more than three years. There were 28 expatriates in the former, and 22 in the latter.

4.2. Data Collection Tools

4.2.1. The Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ)

Developed by Steger, Frazier, Oishi and Kaler (2006), MLQ is a ten-item questionnaire assessing two dimensions of meaning: presence of meaning in life and search for meaning in life. The former measures the extent to which respondents feel their lives are full of meaning. The latter, on the other hand, measures how engaged and motivated respondents are in efforts to find meaning and/or deepen their understanding of meaning in their lives. MLQ is based on a seven-

point scale requiring respondents to state how much they agree with the given statements. The options range from “Absolutely True” to “Absolutely Untrue.” The profile descriptions according to various scores follow (Steger et al., 2006).

A score of ≥ 24 in both dimensions indicates a life with meaning and purpose, yet the respondent is still openly exploring the meaning or purpose. He/she explores the response to the question “What can my life mean?” but refrains from a single answer. Such individuals are normally optimistic and satisfied with their lives though they may experience rare occurrences of depression and anxiety. They tend to be conscientious, thoughtful, laidback, and open to new experiences.

Scores of ≥ 24 in the category Presence but < 24 in Search indicates a life of valued meaning and purpose, but respondents with these score are actively exploring the meaning in their lives. It is highly possible that they are happy with their lives and that they have high self-esteem. They are likely to have understood the reason for their lives and what they desire to do with their lives. They may have traditional values and are generally certain of their views. They tend to be actively engaged in religious pursuits. They are normally friendly, sociable, organized, and hardworking.

A score of < 24 in Presence but ≥ 24 in Search indicates a lack of feeling that their lives have a valued meaning and purpose Respondents with such scores are very likely to be searching for something or someone that will give their lives meaning or purpose. The feeling of “being lost in life” likely cause them stress. They tend not to be satisfied with their lives and have limited experiences of love and joy. They may frequently experience feelings of anxiety, nervousness, sadness and depression. They are likely to question the role of religion in their lives. They may not have clear plans and may make spontaneous decisions. These people are not normally very sociable.

On the other hand, a score of < 24 on both of the measures indicates a lack of valued meaning in respondents’ lives and that they are not actively engaged in the exploration of or search for meaning in their lives. The idea of reflecting on life’s meaning does not attract such people. They are generally not satisfied with their lives or themselves and are pessimistic about the future. Their feelings of love and joy are normally rare, but they may often experience feelings of anxiety, sadness, and depression. They may not have traditional values and may likely be narrow-minded. When faced with big decisions, they tend to think they will know what the right decision will be. They tend to be disorganized, tense, and not very friendly.

The developers of the questionnaire investigated the reliability and validity of the instruments in three separate studies which revealed positive results relative to internal consistency, test-retest reliability, as well as structural, convergent, and discriminant validity (Steger et al., 2006).

4.2.2. The Lifelong Learning Trends Scale (LLTS)

Developed by Erdoğan and Arsal (2016), this 17-item scale is based on two measures: willingness to learn and openness to improvement. The scale is based on a five-point scale requiring respondents to state how much they agree with the given statements with options ranging from “Completely Agree” to “Completely Disagree.” The highest score for the scale is 85, while the lowest is 17, and the average score is 42.5. The higher score one receives, the higher his/her orientation for lifelong learning is.

Erdoğan and Arsal (2016) ensured that the scale was both valid and reliable. The former was ensured through expert feedback as well as exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis methods. The exploratory factor analysis results generated seventeen items out of a forty-nine initial scale. The total variance obtained was 43.44. Confirmatory factor analysis also confirmed that the two factors (measures) were adequate. On the other hand, the researchers tested the scale’s reliability through internal consistency, ω , and test-retest methods. They found that Cronbach’s alpha internal consistency coefficient was .86, and the ω value was .89. The test-retest reliability coefficient, on the other hand, was .76. Collectively, these data establish that the scale was valid and reliable. In this current study, the Cronbach’s alpha of the scale was found to be .90, thus indicating the scale is a reliable one to use with adult participants.

4.3. Analysis

Data gathered using the two data-collection instruments were analyzed using the SPSS 20 packet program. Student’s t-test was used to compare the data derived from the two sub-dimensions of MLQ against each other as well as according to the variables (i.e. gender, age, and length of stay). The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was used to measure the strength of association between the LLTS and the MLQ scores. A p-value less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

5. Results

The first two research questions were related to meaning in life. The first one asked to what degree the participants felt their lives were full of meaning, while the second one asked how engaged and motivated they were in their efforts to find and/or deepen their understanding of meaning in their lives. The results of data analysis in response to these questions can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Presence of and Search for Meaning in Participants' Lives

	Min	Max	Mean	SD	t	p
Presence of meaning N=50	6	35	28	6	2.2859	0.0122
Search for meaning N=50	5	35	25	8		

P<0.05

Table 1 shows that the participants' scores for presence of meaning in their lives varied between six and 35 with an average score of 28. On the other hand, their scores for search for meaning varied between five and 35 with an average score of 25. These data indicate that their scores for both dimensions were above the average score of 24 computed for the scales. This suggest that the participants' lives had valued meaning and purpose that they were exploring further. They were interested in expanding their understanding of meaning in their lives, avoiding one single answer to the question of "What can my life mean?" The scores also indicate that they were generally content with their lives and enjoyed positive feelings such as love. The participants also likely had an interest in spirituality. The scores also indicate that the participants were likely skillful in their relationships with others and were perceived as reliable, considerate, relaxed, and emotionally stable.

Table 1 also shows that the average score for presence in meaning was higher than that for search for meaning. The result of the t-test conducted to determine the level of difference statistically was affirmative ($p=0.0122<0.05$).

The third research question probed the relationship between the demographic variables and the participants' scores for presence of meaning and search for meaning. For this purpose, first the gender variable was analyzed. The results can be seen in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2
Scores for Presence of Meaning and Search for Meaning in Life according to Gender

	Female N=30				Male N=20				t	p
	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD		
Presence of meaning	20	35	29	4	6	35	26	7	1.4643	0.0748
Search for meaning	5	31	23	9	21	35	28	4	-2.55	0.007

P<0.05

As can be seen in Table 2, the female participants' average score for presence of meaning in life was higher than the male students' average score for the same dimension (29 vs. 26). This indicates that the female participants' meaning in life may be more established than that of the male participants. The standard deviation calculated for both groups also indicates that there was a greater variation in the male participants' scores than in the female participants' (seven vs. four). This may point to the female participants' possessing a more established presence of meaning in their lives. Despite this, there was no statistically significant difference between the two data sets ($p=0.0748>0.05$).

As for search for meaning in life, the male participants' score was higher than that of the female participants (28 vs. 23) at a statistically significant level ($p=.007<.05$). This indicates that the male participants were more likely to seek and/or deepen their understanding of meaning in life than their female counterparts.

The scores of both genders were also compared within themselves to identify how the two dimensions relate to each other. The results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3
Comparison of Male and Female Participants' Scores within Themselves

	Presence of meaning				Search for meaning				t	p
	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD		
Female N=30	20	35	29	4	5	31	23	9	3.4488	0.0005
Male N=20	6	35	26	7	21	35	28	4	-0.8527	0.1996

P<0.05

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Table 3 shows that the female participants' average scores for presence of meaning (29) and search for meaning (23) differed from each other at a statistically significant level ($p=.0005<0.05$). This is another indication of comparatively more established meaning in their lives, because of which they may be less likely to engage in a quest for (other) meaning(s) in their lives. However, the male participants' scores for the two dimensions was quite close (26 and 28) with a lack of statistically significant difference ($p=0.1996$). The greater variation in the scores for presence of meaning in comparison to search for meaning (seven vs. four) also indicates that a significant number of the male participants are yet to establish meaning in their lives. Due to this, they may be engaged in a greater search for meaning in life.

The results were also analyzed considering the factor of age. The results can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4
Participants' Scores according to Age

	Early Adulthood N=8				Mid-Adulthood N=42				t	p
	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD		
Presence of meaning	21	35	27	4	6	35	28	6	-0.7972	0.2146
Search for meaning	9	34	26	8	5	35	24	8	-0.842	0.2019

$P<0.05$

According to Table 4, the two age groups' average scores for presence of meaning was very close, slightly to the benefit of the mid-adulthood age group (28 vs. 27). However, the difference was not at a statistically significant level ($p=0.2146>0.05$). Regarding search for meaning, the participants in the early adulthood group received a higher score than those in the mid-adulthood group. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the data sets for search for meaning ($p=0.2019>0.05$).

The scores of both age groups were also compared within themselves to identify how the two dimensions relate to each other. The results can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5
Comparison of Age Groups within Themselves

	Presence of meaning				Search for meaning				t	p
	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD		
Early Adulthood N=8	21	35	27	4	9	34	26	8	0.1588	0.4380
Mid-Adulthood N=42	6	35	28	6	5	35	24	8	-2.509	0.007

P<0.05

Table 5 shows that the participants in the early adulthood group had similar scores for presence of meaning and search for meaning (27 and 26), despite lacking a statistically significant difference between the two. This finding may indicate that the participants in this age group likely found meaning in their lives and are more strenuously engaged in reflection on it for greater understanding. However, the greater variation in their average scores for search for meaning (SD=8) in comparison to presence of meaning (SD=4) may indicate a greater dissimilarity among the participants. The table also shows that the participants in the second age group found meaning in their lives, but they tended to be less active in their contemplation of this meaning, as is indicated by their average scores for both dimensions as well as the statistical analysis result (28 vs. 24; $p=0.007<0.05$).

The participants' scores were also analyzed considering the length of time they had spent in the host country. The results are displayed in Table 6 below.

Table 6
Participants' Scores according to Length of Stay

	1-3 years N=28				≥ 4 years N=22				t	p
	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Mean	SD		
Presence of Meaning	6	35	27	7	24	35	29	4	-0.4435	0.3297
Search for Meaning	5	35	25	9	5	32	24	7	0.4747	0.3186

P<0.05

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As is seen in Table 6, the participants' average score for presence of meaning of the first group was slightly lower than that of the second group. This finding may indicate that the longer one spends time in the host country, the more established his/her presence of meaning in life is. This positive correlation, albeit weak, was also indicated by the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) computed to measure the strength of the association between the two data sets ($r=0.1456$). However, the p values from the t -test and (r) showed that the association between the variables was not at a statistically significant level ($p=0.3297>0.05$; $p=0.3130>0.05$).

As for search for meaning, the table shows that the earlier age group participants' average score was slightly higher than the average score of those in the second age group. This indicates that the younger participants may be more likely to engage in a search for meaning in life than those in the second age group. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the data sets ($p=0.3186>0.05$). Although the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) computed between these data sets revealed a positive association ($r=0.005$), the relationship was weak. The p value of 0.9725 indicated a lack of statistical support for this as well.

The last research question was regarding the relationship between the participants' lifelong learning orientations and the presence of and search for meaning in their lives. For this purpose, first the data from LLLTS were analyzed. The results can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7
Participants' Lifelong Learning Scores

Min	Max	Mean	SD
29	83	69	10

Table 7 shows that the participants' lifelong learning scores varied between 29 and 83 with a mean score of 69. This score indicates that the average score for the whole population was significantly higher than the average score 42.5 computed for the scale, suggesting that the participants were equipped with many skills necessary for their learning to be long-lasting. In light of this finding, the participants can be said to show a good level of interest in learning overall. They can motivate themselves to learn new things and assume active responsibility for their own learning through goal-setting, identification of effective learning strategies, and utilization of learning tools and resources. The results also indicate that the participants are confident in their abilities to learn and seek the contributions of others to their learning when necessary. Collectively, these skills help them to maintain their motivation for learning and for seeking ways of further improving their skills.

To identify the association between the participants' LLLTS scores and MLQ scores, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) was computed. The results are displayed in Table 8 below.

Table 8

Pearson Product-moment Correlations of Lifelong Learning and Meaning in Life

	Presence of meaning	Lifelong learning
Presence of meaning	-	.006*;0.967 ^a
Lifelong learning	0.006*;0.9670 ^a	-
Search for meaning	Search for meaning	Lifelong learning
Lifelong learning	-0.2201*;0.1247 ^a	-0.2201*;0.1247 ^a

^aValues are product-moment correlation coefficient (r); $p < 0.05$

As is seen in Table 8, the results of the correlation analysis conducted for the lifelong learning and presence of meaning scores indicated a positive but weak relationship ($r=0.006$, $n=50$). That is, as the participants' scores for lifelong learning increased, their scores for presence of meaning in life also increased. However, the relationship between the variables was not at a statistically significant level ($p=0.997 > 0.05$). The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient used to assess the relationship between the lifelong learning scores and search for meaning in life showed that there was a weak, negative correlation between the two variables ($r=-0.2201$, $n=50$) but lacking a statistically significant association ($p=0.1247$).

6. Discussion

The results showed that the Turkish immigrants to the UAE who participated in this study had established meaning in their lives and that they were further exploring this meaning. The mean score of 28 for presence of meaning suggests that they are largely satisfied with their lives. Considering that the general composition of the participants are professional immigrants, this finding may be expected. The UAE is one of the large-scale labor importing countries (Elitok & Straubhaar, 2010) offering attractive packages to high-skilled workers. Turkish immigrants in the country fall under this category. Their comfortable financial situation guaranteed by their skilled occupations may have facilitated their quest for meaning in life, which is a corollary to their overall well-being. This suggestion is supported by previous research. Kaplan, Shema and Leite (2008) investigated the socioeconomic determinants of psychological well-being. Two of the determinants they focused on were personal growth and purpose in life. Their findings indicated that there is a

positive correlation between level of income and psychological well-being. Purpose in life has the strongest association with income, while personal growth has the third highest.

The finding related to the higher mean score of presence of meaning in comparison to search for meaning in life is important to note as well. This may indicate that the participants had already established meaning in their lives; therefore, they may not be eager to search for other meanings. They might be more interested in deepening their understanding of the meaning they have reached.

The analysis of the data considering the gender variable showed that the female participants had a higher score for presence of meaning in life than the male participants. This is supported by previous research by Chraif and Dumitru (2015). This indicates that female immigrants are more likely to enjoy well-being due to greater meaning in their lives. The observation that spirituality tends to be more important to females than to males (Wong, 1998) may have manifested itself in the female participants' higher scores regarding meaning in life in this study. The finding related to gender differences in this study may not be surprising when the male participants' higher score for search for meaning in life is considered. It suggests that the male participants were still yet to fully develop and understand meaning in their lives. Greater positive effects of meaning in life on females' well-being have also been reported in previous research (Yu, Chang, Yu, Bennet, & Fowler, 2016). Females' tendency to achieve more well-being through enhanced personal growth has occurred in other contexts too (Chraif & Dumitru, 2015; Grouden & Jose, 2014; Kaplan et al., 2008). Collectively, these findings may point to the greater presence of meaning in the lives of females who tend to "take a broader perspective when considering meaning, and consider the degree to which their whole life is imbued with a sense of meaning" (Grouden & Jose, 2014, p. 36).

Regarding the age factor, it was found that the two age groups received similar scores for presence of meaning in life, albeit to a slight advantage of the later age group. This result may indicate that the participants in the later age group might have a stronger sense of presence in their lives. However, it should be noted that the fewer number of participants in the first age group may limit attempts to make a strong enough deduction from this data. Despite this, it still provides some support for earlier research suggesting that age has a significant role in making people's meaning in life more integrated and consolidated (Dittmann, Kohli & Westerhof cited in Grouden & Jose, 2014), and shows that older individuals likely have a more established sense of purpose in life (Reker et al.

cited in Grouden & Jose, 2014; Steger et al., 2009). On the other hand, the current study revealed that the individuals in the early adulthood group received a higher score for search for meaning than those in the mid-adulthood group. This suggests that younger adults may be more likely to engage in a quest for meaning in their lives; or if they have found one, they may be more engaged in making sense of this meaning through greater reflection. This may point to their comparatively higher level of dedication to personal growth, as Kaplan et al. (2008) also found to be the case. Taken together, these findings offer at least some evidence for the theory that some periods of life may have more meaning than others (Britton, 1969).

Length of stay in the host country was another variable investigated in this study. It was found that there is a positive correlation between time of length and presence of meaning in life. This indicates that experiences gained in the host country provide incremental learning opportunities which contribute to the meaning they make out of their lives. On the other hand, those who spent a comparatively shorter time in the host country were found to be more engaged in a search for meaning in life. Although the difference between the groups was not at a statistically significant level, this finding can offer important insights. Immigrants who have recently arrived in the host country may be more enthusiastic about new experiences, and involve themselves in activities and contexts that cause them to question their meaning perspectives and schemes. The recent economic success they have achieved may also encourage these individuals to indulge in endeavors inspiring quest for meaning and purpose in life, probably more than those who have become accustomed to it through years spent in the host country. It is also possible that immigration may trigger a transformative learning experience which encourages these people to think critically about the meaning of life, their self-perceptions, and their place in the new environment.

The last question was concerning the association between the participants' meaning in life and lifelong learning tendencies. The results revealed a positive correlation between the lifelong learning orientations and presence of meaning in life. This finding is particularly important to note since it points to the complementarity between the two variables. It is highly probable that the individuals' involvement in lifelong learning enables them to exercise critical reflection on the meaning of their experiences. The well-being achieved in this way likely spurred them on to further learning experiences. This reciprocal relationship improves their experiences as immigrants, contributing to presence of meaning in their lives. However, it was surprising to see the weak,

negative correlation between the participants' lifelong learning tendencies and search for meaning. Mind that the average score for search for meaning (25) was significantly lower than that for presence of meaning (28). This may indicate the participants' comparatively low interest in intensive search activities and behaviors. Therefore, they may feel less motivated to engage in lifelong learning experiences.

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Immigration is a turning-point in one's life, and it has various impacts on immigrants. In addition to affecting the individual economically, it plays a key role in identity development and establishment of meaning in life. In the case of professional immigrants who are financially secure, the latter may be more significant. Whether these individuals search and establish meaning in their lives as a consequence of or as a reason for immigration may not necessarily matter when the final result is the main concern. The effects of this may be felt at both individual and societal levels. Unless sufficient support is provided, both individuals and society at large will suffer the consequences. Efforts are made to overcome the potential challenges. However, it seems that greater attention is paid to under-privileged populations with restricted qualifications for work. It also seems that these attempts are heavily based on vocational training. The needs and skills of professional immigrants are taken for granted, resulting in a lack of research into how their well-being is influenced by their engagement in search for meaning in their lives. This research was an attempt to fill this gap in the literature on this topic.

In the light of the findings of this research, several recommendations can be made. Meaning in life is an individual attainment, and people's experiences can differ significantly. However, our interactions with others in our social environments affect the learning process (Vygotsky, 1962); this is why our experiences related to searching for meaning in life are likely influenced by our relationships with others. With this in mind, several initiatives can be taken. For example, formal and informal learning opportunities could be arranged under the guidance of embassies. Newly-hired individuals may be contacted prior to their arrival in the host country to familiarize them with the available support systems. Individuals may be expected to acquaint themselves with their new companies and their expectations. However, social and psychological needs of soon-to-be immigrants are often left unattended. The case may be similar with those who have recently arrived. For both groups, learning communities can be established. In induction sessions in these

communities, newcomers can be partnered with those who have been in the country for some time. Experience exchanges will undoubtedly ease the settlement process. This will also benefit those who have been in the country a longer length of time. The newcomers' enthusiasm for new experiences, beginnings, and search for meaning in life will likely stimulate the more established immigrants toward interest in these pursuits.

Similar initiatives can be taken relative to age and gender factors. Encouraging individuals in early-adulthood and middle-age groups to mingle will be useful. Younger immigrants will benefit from older immigrants' experiences related to establishing meaning in life, while older people will be kept stimulated by the energy the young who are likely searching and/or deepening meaning in their lives. On the other hand, females and males may go through experiences similar to each other's. Their engagement in dialogue will provide mutual support. This is particularly important in the case of married immigrants.

On the other hand, immigrants' lifelong learning skills can be supported through purposefully developed workshops where the meaning and breadth of the concepts are explored. The attendees can be helped to identify the lifelong learning skills they have and various ways in which they can further improve them. They should be given training on the kinds of resources available to support their search for meaning. They may also be given examples of individual immigrants who have established meaning in their lives. Social gatherings will also be helpful in immigrants' integration into society. For this purpose, they ought to be able to meet locals as well as other expatriates. Doing this will help them refrain from alienating themselves from the "foreign" culture in which they reside. To support their search for meaning, intellectual meetings can be arranged. One example of this is book clubs where members read on particular topics and meet to discuss what they read. Topics could be chosen that relate to professional immigrants' experiences of personal growth that resulted from searching for meaning in life.

In the context of this study, a number of caveats need to be made. First, this study was a quantitative one, limiting the understanding of the very nature of meaning in life. Although the survey method adopted in similar studies provides data on the participants' perceptions, qualitative data generated by other types of data-gathering instruments such as interviews would shed light on the process by which individuals reach an understanding of meaning in life. Another limitation of the study stems from its relatively small size. Future studies could provide richer data by increasing

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the number of participants. An idea for further research is to investigate how cultural orientations affect meaning in life. To this end, immigrants from other cultures within the same host country can be compared.

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Yaşamda Anlam ve Yaşamboyu Öğrenme: Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri'nde Yaşayan Türk Göçmenler Örneği

GENİŞ ÖZET

Yetişkinlerin psikolojik olarak ne kadar iyi durumda oldukları yaşamlarında elde etmiş oldukları anlam ile yakından ilişkilidir. Yaşama ilişkin anlam, çevreye ve topluma uyum sağlamanın ötesindedir. Bu yaşamda çok farklı anlamlar olabileceğine işaret eder. Elde edilen anlamların hepsinin aynı düzeyde olması beklenemez ve bazı bireylerin yaşamlarına yönelik herhangi bir plan yapmadıkları da görülebilir. Yaşam tecrübelerimizin ne tür etkileri olduğunu tam olarak kavramak için yetişkinliğin belirli bir dönemini beklemek de gerekebilir. Zamanla elde ettiğimiz tecrübelerdeki çeşitlilik, bu tecrübelerden çıkaracağımız anlamları da etkiler. Ancak bazı tecrübeler beraberinde olumsuz duygulara neden olabilecek farkındalıklara da neden olabilir ve bu nedenle bazı bireyler anlamlı olabilecek deneyimlerden uzak durabilir. Bazıları ise kasıt olmaksızın bilinçlerini uyandıracak bir takım durumlara dahil olabilirler. Bazı bireyler ise yaşamlarında bir anlam bulmak üzere bilinçli bir eylem içerisine girebilirler. Bu durum farklı türden öğrenme tecrübeleri edinmelerine neden olacaktır.

Göç, yetişkinlerin yaşamlarında önemli bir dönüm noktasıdır. İnsanlar farklı nedenlerden dolayı göç etmeyi tercih etmiş olabilir. Bazıları için bu, tercihlerine bağlı da olmayabilir. İsteyerek ya da istemeyerek göç etmiş olsun, tüm göçmenlerin bir uyum sürecinden geçmesi gerekmektedir. Bu tecrübeler, göçmenlerin anlamlara ilişkin bakış açılarını da değiştirmelerine neden olabilmektedir. İlgili değişiklikler yaşamlarında bir anlam elde etmelerini sağlayabilir. Ancak bazı bireyler yaşamlarındaki hali hazırda var olan bir anlama bağlı olarak da göç etmeyi tercih etmiş olabilirler. Göç ile birlikte yaşamlarındaki bu anlamlarda bir takım değişiklikler de meydana gelebilir.

Nedeni ne olursa olsun göç eden insanlar, çevrelerine ve yeni yaşamlarına uyum sağlayabilmek için farklı öğrenme faaliyetlerine dahil olabilirler. Bunlardan bazıları örgün ve yaygın eğitim şeklinde olabilir. Diğer yandan bazıları ise algın öğrenme yoluyla gerçekleşebilir. Tüm bu öğrenme tecrübelerine yaşamboyu öğrenme penceresinden bakıldığında, göçmenlerin yaşamlarında bir anlam elde etmeleri ve dolayısıyla daha doyurucu bir yaşam sürmeleri mümkün olabilmektedir.

İmkanları yetersiz, maddi durumları düşük olan göçmenlerin karşı karşıya bulunduğu sorunlar üzerine birçok araştırma yapılmış bulunmaktadır. Ancak iyi bir meslek sahibi, toplumda nispeten iyi

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durumda olan yetişkin göçmenlerin iyi-oluş durumlarına ilişkin çalışmalar sınırlı sayıdadır. Ayrıca yetişkin bireylerin yaşamlarında bir anlam oluşturma ve yaşamboyu öğrenme eğilimleri arasındaki ilişki de araştırmacılardan pek ilgi görmemiştir. Alandaki bu boşluğu doldurmak üzere yürütülen bu çalışmaya Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri'nde yaşayan meslek sahibi, maddi durumları göreceli olarak iyi durumda olan 50 Türk yetişkin birey katılmıştır. 38 yaş ortalamasıyla, katılımcıların 30'unu kadın ve 20'sini erkek yetişkin bireyler oluşturmuştur. Veriler alanda daha önce geliştirilmiş olan iki farklı veri toplama aracı ile elde edilmiştir.

Sonuçlar Birleşik Arap Emirlikleri'nde yaşayan Türk göçmen yetişkinlerin yaşamlarında bir anlam oluşturduğunu ve bu anlamı halen incelemekte olduklarını göstermiştir. Yaşamlarında hali hazırda bulunan anlam için almış oldukları 28 puan, bu yetişkinlerin yaşamlarından önemli derecede memnuniyet duyduklarına işaret etmektedir. Mesleki ve maddi açılarından iyi bir durumda olmaları yaşamlarında bir anlama ulaşma yolundaki çabalarını kolaylaştırmış olabilir. Bu da yaşam memnuniyet derecelerini artırmış olabilir.

Kadınların, orta-yaşlıların ve ev sahibi ülkede uzun süre geçirenlerin yaşamlarında hali hazırda var olan anlama ilişkin daha fazla puan aldıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Kadın katılımcıların erkeklere oranla elde etmiş oldukları daha yüksek puanların bir nedeni, kadınların ruhanilik ile ilgili konulara erkeklerden daha fazla ilgili olabilme ihtimalleridir. Erkek katılımcıların yaşamlarındaki anlamı arayışlarına ilişkin daha yüksek puanları, onların anlam konusunda halen daha fazla bir uğraşı içerisinde olduğunu göstermektedir.

Daha ileri yaştaki yetişkin bireylerin yaşamlarında bir anlama ulaşmış olduklarına yönelik sonuçlar da dikkat çekicidir. Bununla birlikte ilk yetişkinlik yıllarındaki bireylerin yaşama dair anlam arayışlarının daha fazla olduğu görülmüştür. Ancak araştırmada orta-yaş grubunda bulunan katılımcıların sayısındaki sınırlılık, bu sonuçların araştırmanın kendi içerisinde dahi genellemesinin yapılmasına izin vermeyebilir.

Göçmen yetişkinlerin ev sahibi ülkede kaldıkları süre ile yaşamlarında var olan anlam arasında olumlu bir ilişki olduğu sonucu da bulunmuştur. Ancak, ülkede nispeten daha kısa bir zaman geçirmiş olan bireylerin anlam arayışına daha fazla girdikleri görülmüştür. Bu, ülkeye yakın zamanda gelmiş bireylerin yeni tecrübelerle daha fazla istekli olmalarından kaynaklanabilir. Bu bireyler karşılaştıkları yeni durumlardan dolayı hali hazırdaki anlam perspektiflerini sorgulamaya başlamış olabilirler.

Ayrıca maddi olarak elde etmiş oldukları olanaklar da daha zengin tecrübelerine dahil olmalarına teşvik ediyor olabilir.

Veriler ayrıca yaşamda var olan anlam ile yaşamboyu öğrenme puanları arasında zayıf ama olumlu bir ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir. Bireylerin yaşamboyu öğrenme tecrübeleri, hayatları üzerine daha eleştirel yaklaşmış olmalarına neden olmuş olabilir. Bu şekilde elde edilen farkındalık ise daha fazla öğrenme tecrübelerinin planlanmasına yardımcı olmuş olabilir. Bununla birlikte yaşamda bir anlam arayışı ile yaşamboyu öğrenme puanları arasında zayıf, olumsuz bir korelasyon olduğu ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu durum, halen yaşamlarında bir anlam oluşturamamış olan bireylerin yaşamboyu öğrenme için yoğun uğraşlar içerisine girmekten yana olmayabileceklerine işaret edebilir ya da bu bireylerin göçmen olarak geldikleri ülkede, yaşamlarında anlam oluşturmaya ilişkin ne tür tecrübelerden faydalanabileceklerinin farkında olmadıklarını gösterebilir. Ev sahibi ülkede karşılaşılan yeni bir dil, tanıdık kimsenin olmaması gibi etkenlerden dolayı yaşamboyu öğrenme fırsatlarından faydalanamıyor olabilirler. Bu durum, yaşamlarında bir anlam oluşturmalarına engel teşkil edebilir. Bu tür sorunları en aza indirmek suretiyle yetişkinlerin kendilerini geliştirmelerine yardımcı olmak için farklı çalışmalar yapılabilir. Bunlardan bazıları göçmenleri temsil eden elçilikler aracılığıyla yürütülebilir. Ortak sorunları paylaşan bireylerin bir araya gelmeleri teşvik edilebilir. Teknolojiden de faydalanarak facebook, twitter ve ilgi alanlarına göre oluşturulmuş bloglar türünden sosyal medya aracılığıyla yetişkinlerin birbirlerine destek olmaları sağlanabilir. Bu çalışmaya katılan yetişkinlerin profilleri de dikkate alındığında, okuma grupları gibi farklı yaşamboyu öğrenme gruplarının oluşturulması sağlanabilir. Bu gruplarda bireysel gelişim kapsamında yaşamda anlam teması üzerine çalışmalar yapılabilir.