

Secure Attachment and Mental Well-Being: Gratitude, Hope and Ego-Resiliency as Mediators

Güvenli Bağlanma ve Mental İyi Oluş:
Şükran Duyma, Umut ve Psikolojik Sağlamlığın Aracılığı

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Öz. Bu çalışma, lisans öğrencileri üzerinde paralel çoklu aracılık modeli ile güvenli bağlanma, şükran duyma, umut, psikolojik sağlamlık ve mental iyi oluş arasındaki ilişkileri incelemek üzere tasarlanmıştır. Araştırmanın katılımcıları, Türkiye'nin güneyindeki bir devlet üniversitesinden seçilen 18-23 yaşları arasındaki 214 kadın ve 145 erkek, toplam 359 lisans öğrencisinden (% 60 kadın ve % 40 erkek) oluşmaktadır. Verilerin toplanmasında, İlişki Ölçekleri Anketi, Şükran Ölçeği, Sürekli Umut Ölçeği, Ego Sağlamlığı Ölçeği ve Warwick-Edinburgh Mental İyi Oluş Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın bulguları, güvenli bağlanma, şükran duyma, umut, psikolojik sağlamlık ve mental iyi oluş arasında pozitif yönde anlamlı ilişkiler olduğunu göstermiştir. Aracılık analizinden elde edilen bulgular, önerilen modelde şükran duyma, umut ve psikolojik sağlamlığın paralel çoklu aracılığının istatistiksel olarak anlamlı olduğunu ve tüm değişkenlerin mental iyi oluştaki varyansın yaklaşık % 57'sini açıkladığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler. Güvenli bağlanma, şükran duyma, umut, psikolojik sağlamlık, mental iyi oluş

Abstract. This research study was designed to examine the relationships among secure attachment, gratitude, hope, ego-resiliency, and mental well-being in undergraduates by proposing a parallel multiple mediation model. The participants of this study were comprised 214 females and 145 males, a total of 359 undergraduates (60% female and 40% male) between 18 to 23 years old who were recruited from a state university in south of Turkey. To collect data, Relationship Scales Questionnaire, Gratitude Scale, Dispositional Hope Scale, Ego-Resiliency Scale, and Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale were applied. The results showed that secure attachment, gratitude, hope, ego-resiliency, and mental well-being were positively correlated. The findings from the mediational analyses also indicated that the parallel multiple mediation of gratitude, hope and ego-resiliency in the hypothetical model was statistically significant and explained approximately 57% of the variance in mental well-being.

Keywords. Secure attachment. gratitude. hope. ego-resiliency. mental well-being

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In recent decades, positive psychology approach has focused on the positive personality traits that support individuals to overcome adversity and create meaningful life experiences (Seligman, 2002). Since the emergence of positive psychology approach, one of the most researched topics has been well-being. On the concept of well-being, an ongoing debate between researchers and experts continues. The concept of “mental health” was first introduced by The World Health Organization (WHO) in 1948 as “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.” (as cited in Faculty of Public Health, 2010). Since then various definitions of well-being have been proposed in the literature. Kiefer (2008) stated that “well-being can be defined in terms of an individual's physical, mental, social, and environmental status with each aspect interacting with the other and each having differing levels of importance and impact according to each individual” (p. 244). On the other hand, recent conceptuality of well-being has specified in two domains that emerged from the hedonic and eudaimonic views which are basically assigned to the Greek philosophers, Aristippus and Aristotle, respectively. Hedonic well-being, also known as subjective well-being, is defined as positive emotions and mental experiences that occur frequently, negative emotions and moods being rarely experienced and a high level of life satisfaction (Diener, 1984). The eudaimonic well-being conceptualized by the psychological well-being model of Ryff (1989), describes eudaimonia (“eu” = good and “daimon” = spirit) with terms like welfare, happiness, and flourishing while focusing on how individuals struggle to demonstrate full functionality and gain awareness of their unique talents.

Mental well-being is generally used in the literature similarly with “positive mental health” (Tennant et al., 2007) and encompasses of both hedonic and eudaimonic views (Stewart-Brown & Janmohamed, 2008). Stewart-Brown (2013) states that mental well-being is more than happiness that includes both the body and the mind and involves living well for both the individual and those around him. Peace, happiness, self-confidence and commitment to the world are parts of mental well-being. Mental well-being includes not only the resources needed for satisfactory and stable relationships, but also important results regarding health and social issues (Tennant et al., 2007). Lopez et al. (2013) reported that positive emotions, life satisfaction and general health were positively correlated with mental well-being on college sample. McKay and

Andretta (2017) also found, on a sample composed by 2721 high school students in Scotland and Northern Ireland, that mental well-being was positively correlated with self-rated health and negatively correlated with psychosomatic symptomatology. Individuals who feel that they have positive mental well-being have self-efficacy to accomplish their goals and the capacity for influencing others. They also show resilience because they have necessary skills and resources to deal with after troublesome situations (Trenoweth, 2017). These findings suggest that the research concerning the contributing factors on mental well-being has important outcomes in understanding positive youth development. The current research is therefore aims to examine the relationships among secure attachment, gratitude, hope and ego-resiliency in undergraduate students.

Secure Attachment

A number of studies have shown that attachment style is a potentially important predictor of individuals' well-being (Homan, 2018; Karreman & Vingerhoets, 2012; Raque-Bogdan, Ericson, Jackson, Martin, & Bryan, 2011; Wei, Liao, Ku, & Shaffer, 2011). Attachment theory, originated by Bowlby (1969/1982), asserts that internal working models of attachment based on children's early attachment relationships in their first year of life, develop in childhood and remain relatively stable over the course of an individual's lifetime. Expanding Bowlby's views on secure (sees self as competent and others as trustworthy) and insecure (sees self as incompetent and others as not trustworthy) attachment style, Ainsworth (1978) classified three attachment styles: "secure, insecure-avoidant, and insecure-ambivalent". Based on Bowlby's (1969/1982, 1973) view of internal working models of the self and the others, several researchers have extended the study of attachment into adult relationships. Hazan and Shaver (1987, 1994) and Bartholomew (1990) are the pioneers who proposed that in addition to primary attachment relationships, current attachment relationships, including those with peers, are important to adolescent and adult adjustment and development.

Undergraduate students are in the period of emerging adulthood which is a critical time in lifelong development (Arnett, 2000). They separate from their homes and families, interact with unfamiliar people and cultures, confront many new interpersonal, social, and academic demands, and feel confused related to emerging adulthood (Benn, Harvey, Gilbert & Irons, 2005; Arnett, 2000). Attachment styles of the individuals in this critical period have important role in

development of close relationships (Parade, Leerkes, & Blankson, 2010). Securely attached individuals have more confidence and supportiveness in interactions with peers as they have secure internal working models (Bolwby, 1969/1982). They are also more comfortable in close relationships and have greater trust in romantic partners (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Previous studies showed that while attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance was negatively related to subjective well-being and life satisfaction of college students (Lane, 2016; Wei et al., 2011; Tepeli-Temiz & Tarı-Cömert, 2018), secure attachment style was positively correlated with subjective well-being (La Guardia Ryan, Couchman, & Deci, 2000, Odacı & Çıkrıkçı, 2014; Terzi & Çankaya, 2009). In a study by Permuy, Merino, and Fernandez-Rey (2010) individuals having attachment styles with a positive model of self (secure and dismissing) obtained significantly lower depression scores than those having attachment styles with a negative model of self (preoccupied and fearful). A recent study by Kerstis, Åslund and Sonnby (2018), on a sample of 3,988 adolescents, showed that secure attachment style had negative correlation with depressive symptoms. Research also suggest that secure style is linked to higher well-being in a community sample (Karreman & Vingerhoets, 2012; Marrero-Quevedo, Blanco-Hernández, & Hernández-Cabrera, 2019).

Gratitude

One important characteristic connected to secure attachment and mental well-being is gratitude. In literature, there is a lack of consensus in conceptualization of this positive concept. For instance, some authors have defined gratitude as a moral effect that is always directed towards apprising the useful acts of the others (McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, & Larson, 2001). Other researchers defined gratitude as “part of a wider life orientation towards noticing and appreciating the positive in the world” (Wood, Froh, & Geraghty, 2010, p. 891). Studies on both state and dispositional gratitude have provided ample evidence that it has many beneficial qualities linking well-being. Watkins, Woodward, Stone, & Kolts (2003) found positive relationships between dispositional gratitude and subjective well-being. Dispositional gratitude was also positively correlated with measures of psychological well-being (Wood, Joseph, & Maltby, 2009). Lin and Yeh (2014) reported that gratitude was related to active coping styles, social support, and well-being of undergraduate students. In an experimental study it was demonstrated that the letters of gratitude improved subjective well-being of college students (Toepfer & Walker, 2009). Previous studies also provided

evidence that attachment style is an important predictor of dispositional gratitude. Based on attachment theory, Mikulincer, Shaver and Slav (2006) tested the relationship between attachment orientations and gratitude on a sample of undergraduates and reported that avoidant attachment correlated negatively with dispositional gratitude and with the experience of secure-base emotions. Dinh (2016) also demonstrated that both state and trait gratitude were predicted by individual differences in attachment styles suggesting that the cognitive information network between attachment security and gratitude was similar.

Dispositional Hope

Based on Bowlby's views in attachment theory, this study proposes another variable that may explain the connection between secure attachment and mental well-being. The current study is built on Snyder's theory in which hope is conceptualized as a cognitive set with two reciprocally components: agency and pathways (Snyder et al., 1991). Pathways thinking is related to one's perceived abilities at producing achievable paths to desired goals. Agency is the motivation of individual signifies the perceived ability to employ the alternatives to pursue a goal (Snyder, Rand, & Sigmon, 2005). Prior studies showed that dispositional hope is related to academic achievement, positive affect, feelings of worth, low level of depression, social competence and meaning in life (Snyder, Cheavens, & Michael, 1999; Snyder et al., 1996; Snyder, McDermott, Cook, & Rapoff, 1997; Feldman & Snyder, 2005). Snyder, McDermott, et al. (1997) also described the relationship between attachment and hope as "Hope flourishes when the child establishes a strong bond to one or more caregivers during this infant to toddler stage.... Instilling hope in children is based, in part, on their perceived security. Secure early attachments relate to a sense of empowerment and goal-directed thought.". Cognitive effects of secure attachment on hope provides the individuals to consider their conditions in a positive point of view (Quick, Nelson, Matuszek, Whittington, & Quick, 1996). Research has also provided evidence for hope as an important predictor of well-being. The study by Bailey, Eng, Frisch, & Snyder (2007) on a sample of 332 university students revealed that agency factor was the better predictor of life satisfaction. Considering the possibility of positive consequences, hopeful students focus on success and therefore, experience less distress and greater positive affect (Snyder et al., 1991). In their longitudinal study among high school students, Ciarrochi, Heaven and Davies (2007) found that hope predicted self-esteem, positive attributional style and emotional well-being. A recent mediation model study by Demirtaş,

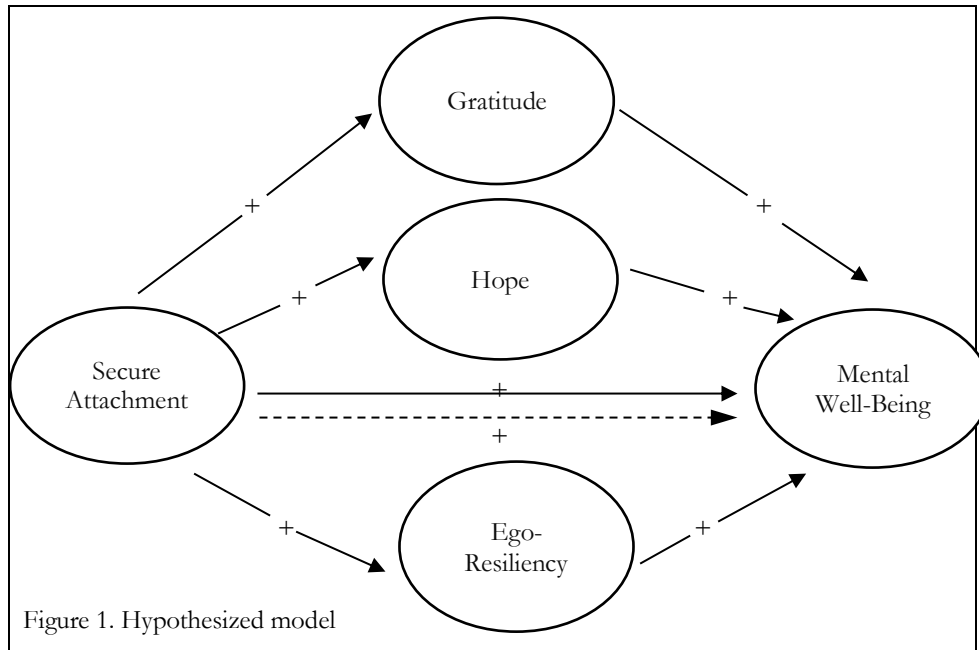
Baytemir and Güllü (2018) confirmed the association between hope and mental well-being via constructive thinking. Hopeful individuals are considered to experience positive emotions and tend to view obstacles to success as challenges that need to be overcome rather than stress factors (Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2002). These characteristics are effective in protecting the undergraduates from stress and negative experiences.

Ego-Resiliency

In this study, ego resiliency has been proposed as another construct that may serve as a mediation between secure attachment and mental well-being. Ego-resiliency is defined as “the dynamic capacity of an individual to modify a characteristic level of ego-control, in either direction, as a function of the demand characteristics of the environmental context, so as to preserve or enhance system equilibration.” (Block & Kremen, 1996, p. 351). Ainsworth (1979) asserted that the infants with secure attachment style are later “more curious, more self-directed and more ego-resilient”. In review of 32 studies, Rasmussen et al. (2018) concluded that secure attachment was related to resilience. The authors suggested that the individual differences of resilient people including emotion regulation, self-esteem, enduring relationships are associated with early attachment orientations that determine the characteristics of resilience. Resilient people are considered as typically able to adjust their level of control in consistent with the situational context (Letzring, Block, & Funder, 2005). 10-year longitudinal study by Alessandri, Eisenberg, Vecchione, Caprara and Milioni (2016) showed that ego-resiliency remained significantly stable until the end of high school, and then received a stage of relative increase. Klohnen (1996) found that ego-resiliency was associated with effective functioning in diverse areas of life. In a recent study on two different cultural sample including university students, ego-resiliency positively correlated to mental-well-being (Zubair, Kamal, & Artemeva, 2018). Ego-resiliency has also been demonstrated to negatively correlated with perceived stress on a sample of university students (Rogers, 2018). These findings were substantiated in a study in which undergraduates with high level of resilience was found to maintain more positive thoughts and report higher levels of life satisfaction and lower levels of depression (Mak, Ng, & Wong 2011).

The Current Study

Emerging adulthood is a critical period in lifelong development (Arnett, 2006). Undergraduate students as emerging adults are confronted with various life transitions and have to make decisions about their future and take on new responsibilities. Therefore, this period of development, in which individuals experience a lot of change in their lives, is associated with a high risk of mental health (Gore & Aseltine, 2003). The positive psychology approach, emphasizes the strengths of a person and maximizes human functionality, seeks to understand and increase well-being (Sheldon, Fredrickson, Rathunde, Csikszentmihalyi, & Haidt, 2000). In accordance with the goal of the positive psychology approach, the present study has been designed to investigate the roles of gratitude, hope and ego resiliency in relationship between secure attachment and mental well-being of undergraduates. Based on the theoretical support and explanations above, the prediction was that securely attached students have high gratitude, hope, and ego-resiliency and, as a result, are more likely to have high mental well-being (Figure 1).



METHOD

Participants

A total of 359 undergraduates, 60% females (214) and 40% males (145) (mean age 19.97) took part in the study. A convenience sample of undergraduates from a state university in south of Turkey was used. The participants of the current study were attending the various departments of Faculty of Educational Sciences. All the students voluntarily participated in the research (not given extra credit or compensation) in classroom settings. The data were collected at the beginning of first term (fall) of the 2018–2019 academic year.

Measures

Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ). The scale was composed by Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) using “Hazan and Shaver's (1987) three-category attachment measure”, “Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) four-category attachment measure” and “Collins and Read's attachment subscales (1990)”. RSQ was translated into Turkish Culture by Sümer and Güngör (1999). The authors reported that two different attachment styles take place in the same factor with different markers and the internal-consistency coefficient values vary between .27 and .61. Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) explained the reason of the internal consistency coefficients of the subscales were low that the subscales consisted of a small number of items and included two models of both self and others. In order to measure the four-attachment style (secure, dismissing, preoccupied, and fearful), the participants are asked to value 17 statements considering their relationship with others. In this study, only secure attachment scores were used. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .56. Sample items of secure attachment style are “I find it easy to get emotionally close to others.”, “I am comfortable depending on other people.”.

Gratitude Scale. Gratitude Scale was created to determine the dispositional gratitude on a sample of Turkish undergraduates (Kardaş & Yalçın, 2019). The scale has six factors including positive social comparison, focusing on the positive, recognizing the contributions of the family and the environment, feeling of abundance rather than deprivation, gratitude for small things and expressing gratitude. It was reported that the exploratory factor analysis,

conducted on 350 undergraduates, revealed that the scale comprised 25 items and 6 factors and explained 58 % of the total variance and confirmatory factor analysis showed a six-factor structure with an acceptable overall fit. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were found to be between .70 and .88. In the current study, the total score was used. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .89. The highest score is 125 and the lowest score is 25 that a participant can receive on the scale. Sample items of the scale are "I believe that life is full of beauty.", "Even a small event can increase my feelings of gratitude."

Dispositional Hope Scale. The scale aims to determine the level of dispositional hope of individuals aged 15 and over (Snyder et al., 1991). The scale is a 8-point Likert-type measurement tool that comprises 12 items (4 items for pathways, 4 items for agency, 4 items for filler). The scores changes between 8 and 64 that a participant can receive on the scale. The findings of confirmatory factor analysis showed that original two-factor structure of the scale has been confirmed in Turkish Culture (fit index values: GFI = .96, AGFI = .92, RMR = .08, NNFI = .94, RFI = .90, CFI = .96 and RMSEA = .077) (Tarhan & Bacanlı, 2015). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .84 and test-retest reliability coefficient was calculated as .86. In the current study, the total score was used. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .81. Sample items of the scale are "Even when the others get discouraged, I know I can find a way to solve the problem.", "I meet the goals that I set for myself."

Ego-Resiliency Scale. The measurement tool, created by Block and Kremen (1996), comprises 14 positively worded items in 4-point Likert type. The process of developing the scale was carried out on 98 participants between the ages of 18-23. Cronbach's alpha coefficient calculated for the whole scale was reported as .76. The scale was reapplied to the same participants 5 years later, and the uncorrected attenuation coefficient was calculated as .51 for women, .39 for men, and the corrected attenuation coefficient was .67 for women and as .51 for men. In evaluating the psychometric properties of Turkish Form, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were performed, 3-factor model (personal strengths relating recovery, positive self-appraisals and openness to new experience) emerged that explained 47% of the variance in ego-resiliency (Kararmak, 2007). The high score received from the scale is an indicator of high ego-resiliency. The scores change between 14 and 56. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .76 in this study. Sample items of the scale are "I quickly get over and recover

from being startled.”, “I enjoy dealing with new and unusual situations.” and “I would be willing to describe myself as a pretty “strong” personality.”

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale. The scale, created by Tennant et al. (2007), consists of 14 positive substances including psychological well-being and subjective well-being and aims to measure mental well-being. High scores are indicative of high mental well-being. The scores change between 14 and 70. In evaluating the psychometric properties of Turkish Form, confirmatory factor analysis was performed. It was reported that one-factor structure of the measurement tool was confirmed in Turkish Culture and the factor loadings of the scale items ranged between .55 and .82 (fit index values: $X^2 / df = 3.71$, RMR = .05, NNFI = .95, RFI = .93, CFI = .96) (Keldal, 2015). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .89 in this study. Sample items of the scale are “I’ve been thinking clearly.”, “I’ve been feeling confident.” and “I’ve been dealing with problems well.”.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics, Pearson’s correlation method, an approach based on Ordinary Least Squares Regression, and Bootstrapping were used in the analysis of the data. Utilizing Mahalanobis distance, 8 outliers were removed from the data set, as they exceeded the chi-square critical value. The analyses were conducted with 359 observations. The values of kurtosis and skewness were calculated to determine normal univariate distribution. As the values of skewness and kurtosis showed acceptable ranges in the region of -1.5 to +1.5, it was concluded that the data was normally distributed (Table 1).

A multiple mediation model which involves “simultaneous mediation by multiple variables” (Preacher & Hayes, 2008, p. 880), was also used in the present study. According to Hayes (2009) “if zero is not between the lower and upper bound, then the analyst can claim that the indirect effect is not zero with ci% confidence.” (p. 412). In addition, a contrast test was used to determine specific indirect of the variables and stronger mediators in the model. The Bootstrapping analysis of the study was conducted by "Multiple Mediation Model 4" through PROCESS Macro 3 using IBM SPSS 24.0 (Hayes, 2017). A P-value of .05 was considered on the borderline of statistical significance.

RESULTS

Descriptives and Correlations

Pearson's correlation coefficients were utilized to determine the relationships among the variables. The means, standard deviations, and correlations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation Coefficients Related to Research Variables.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Secure Attachment	–				
2. Gratitude	.13*	–			
3. Hope	.19**	.48**	–		
4. Ego-Resiliency	.26**	.42**	.63**	–	
5. Mental Well-Being	.28**	.56**	.66**	.63**	–
Mean	20.01	96.61	48.44	39.74	51.76
Standard Deviation	4.53	13.17	7.86	6.18	9.12
Skewness	.08	-.64	-.57	.16	-.61
Kurtosis	.05	.70	.61	-.09	.52

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 1 shows that secure attachment is positively correlated with gratitude ($r = .13, p < .05$), hope ($r = .19, p < .01$), ego-resiliency ($r = .26, p < .01$) and mental well-being ($r = .28, p < .01$). Gratitude is positively correlated with hope ($r = .48, p < .01$), ego-resiliency ($r = .42, p < .01$) and mental well-being ($r = .56, p < .01$). Hope is positively correlated with ego-resiliency ($r = .63, p < .01$) and mental well-being ($r = .66, p < .01$). There is also a positive relationship between ego-resiliency and mental well-being ($r = .63, p < .01$).

Mediation Model Analysis

The findings for the parallel mediating roles of gratitude, hope and ego-resiliency in the relationship between secure attachment and mental well-being are presented in Figure 2.

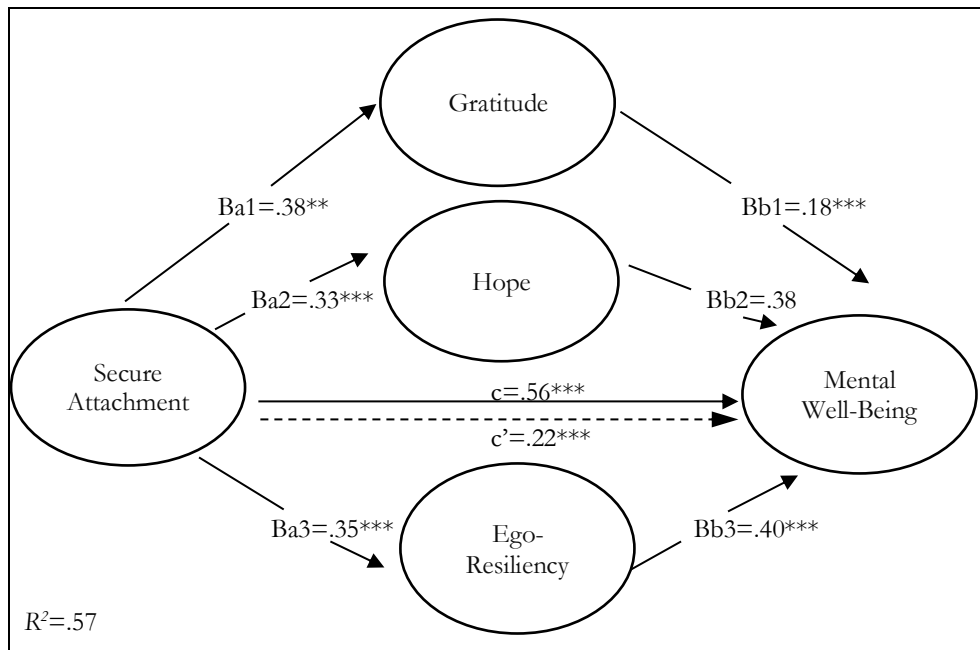


Figure 2. Parallel-Multiple Mediation of Gratitude, Hope and Ego-resiliency between Secure Attachment and Mental Well-Being. Values. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$

As presented in Figure 2, the total effect of secure attachment on mental well-being is statistically significant ($c = .56$, $SE = .10$, $t = 5.55$, $p < .001$) (Step 1). The direct effects of secure attachment on gratitude ($B = .38$, $SE = .15$, $t = 2.49$, $p < .01$), hope ($B = .33$, $SE = .09$, $t = 3.71$, $p < .001$) and ego-resiliency ($B = .35$, $SE = .06$, $t = 5.10$, $p < .001$) are statistically significant (Step 2) as well as the direct effects of gratitude ($B = .18$, $SE = .02$, $t = 6.80$, $p < .001$), hope ($B = .38$, $SE = .05$, $t = 7.17$, $p < .001$) and ego-resiliency ($B = .40$, $SE = .06$, $t = 6.02$, $p < .001$) on mental well-being (Step 3). When secure attachment and mediating variables (gratitude, hope and ego-resiliency) were entered simultaneously into the model (Step 4), the direct effect of secure attachment on mental well-being

decreased but the significance level did not change ($B = .22$, $SE = .07$, $t = 3.08$, $p < .01$). These results support that the mediational model is significant ($F_{(4-121)}$, $p < .001$) and explained 57% of the variance in mental well-being. The comparison of the direct and specific indirect effects of secure attachment through gratitude, hope and ego-resiliency on mental well-being are presented in Table 2.

Indirect Effects of Secure Attachment on Mental Well-Being through Gratitude, Hope and Ego-Resiliency

The indirect effects were tested using bootstrapping with 10,000 bootstrap samples. The estimates were taken within 95% confidence intervals, and the bias corrected and accelerated results are presented in Table 2. Because of the unequal distribution of men and women in the sample, gender was used as a covariate in the analyses.

Table 2. Comparison of the Indirect Effects of Secure Attachment on Mental Well-Being through Gratitude, Hope and Ego-Resiliency

Effects	Point Estimate	SE	Bootstrapping 95% BCa Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
Total Indirect Effects	.3464	.0779	.1958	.5006
Gratitude	.0717	.0296	.0166	.1342
Hope	.1295	.0437	.0529	.2244
Ego-Resiliency	.1452	.0354	.0801	.2192
Contrasts				
C1	-.0063	.0046	-.0161	.0024
C2	-.0081	.0045	-.0172	.0007
C3	-.0017	.0055	-.0121	.0097

$N = 359$, $k = 10000$, $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$, Control Variable = Gender, BCa: Bias Corrected and Accelerated 10000 bootstrap samples. C1 = gratitude-hope, C2 = gratitude-ego resiliency, C3 = hope-ego resiliency

Table 2 shows that the total indirect effect (the difference between the total and direct effect /c-c') of secure attachment on mental well-being through gratitude, hope and ego resiliency is statistically significant (point estimate = .3464 and 95% BCa CI [.1958-.5006]). In addition, the mediators in the hypothesized model were

examined individually. The findings revealed that the mediation of gratitude (point estimate= .07 and 95% BCa CI [.0166, .1342], hope (point estimate= .1295 and 95% BCa CI [.0529, .2244] and ego-resiliency (point estimate= .1452 and 95% BCa CI [.0801, .2192] were found to be statistically significant. In order to determine the powers of mediating variables, paired comparisons were also conducted. As presented in Table 2, three comparisons were not found to be statistically significant which means that the mediating variables had no differences in terms of mediation power.

Discussion and Conclusion

Study findings showed that all variables were correlated positively and the parallel mediating roles of gratitude, hope and ego-resiliency were statistically significant in the model. The mediational hypothetical model explained approximately 57% of the variance in mental well-being. According to the findings of model contrasts, the mediating variables had no differences in terms of mediation power.

Secure Attachment and Mental Well-Being

Secure attachment style positively correlated with mental-being in this study as shown in previous studies (Lane, 2016; Karreman & Vingerhoets, 2012; Odacı & Çikrikçi, 2013; Tepeli-Temiz & Tarı-Cömert, 2018; Terzi & Çankaya, 2009; Permuy et al., 2009; Wei et al., 2011). Barnum and Perrone-McGovern (2017) found direct relationship between attachment security and subjective well-being on a sample of undergraduates. This finding confirmed in a study conducted by Baytemir (2016) in which adolescents' attachment to parents and peers positively correlated with subjective well-being. Lane (2016) suggested that secure attachment is an essential feature in the degree of distress in adjustment to college life. Secure attachment style was also reported to be associated with higher well-being in a community sample (Karreman & Vingerhoets, 2012). Secure attachment facilitates an attitude of kindness and acceptance toward the self (Homan, 2018) and it is characterized by internal regulatory mechanisms that provide people to be flexible and constructive in their interpersonal relationships (Simmons et al., 2009). Securely attached individuals have confidence that the attachment figure will respond to their needs and have close relationships as a "secure base" (Ainsworth, 1979, p. 934). Previous research has

highlighted that individuals with secure attachment experience autonomy, environmental mastery, and self-acceptance which in turn contribute to greater psychological well-being (Marrero-Quevedo et al., 2019). Based on the literature, the findings of the present study suggest that securely attached undergraduates have higher mental well-being.

The Mediating Roles of Gratitude, Hope and Ego-Resiliency

In the current research, the mediating role of gratitude was found to be statistically significant. The present finding is in consistent with the previous research which suggested that insecure attachment has been associated with lower dispositional gratitude (Mikulincer et al., 2006). Based on attachment theory, positive working models of self and others are associated with the schematic bias present in grateful people (Dinh, 2016). The results of the current study are consistent with the view of attachment theory in which it was theorized that secure base expectations impact on a person's expectations of others' intentions in context, affecting gratitude arousal (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). In an experimental research, Lyubomirsky, Dickerhoof, Boehm and Sheldon (2011) revealed that the undergraduate students who regularly practiced gratitude reported greater increases in well-being. Grateful people benefit from positive memories in which they were the receiver of goodness (Emmons & Crumpler, 2000). Research has also shown that gratitude not only enhances well-being but also decrease the impact of negative life experiences. For example, Kashdan, Julian, Merritt and Uswatte (2006) found that war veterans without post-traumatic stress disorder exhibited significantly higher dispositional gratitude than those with PTSD. Lin (2017) also reported that high level of gratitude made a significant unique contribution to psychological well-being of university students. An experimental study by Noor, Abdul Rahman and Mohamad Zahari (2018) demonstrated that the gratitude intervention enhanced life satisfaction as well as reduced distress of undergraduate students. Emmons and McCullough (2017) also found that the gratitude intervention groups exhibited higher well-being. One explanation for the mediating role of gratitude in relationship between secure attachment and mental well-being is considered to be a function of the adaptive coping strategies used by securely attached individuals which was developed through their interpersonal interactions with significant others in times of need (Mikulincer et al., 2003). Wood et al. (2008) also proposed the schematic hypothesis to explain the relationship between

gratitude and well-being. The authors suggested that grateful people tend to interpret “help” as more valuable to them which contribute to development of gratitude and consequently, increased well-being.

Consistent with attachment theories, the mediating role of hope was found to be statistically significant. This result is consistent with the view that secure early attachments connect to a sense of empowerment and goal-oriented thought (Snyder, McDermott, et al., 1997). A research study by Ong, Edwards and Bergeman (2006) showed that high-hope participants demonstrated decreased stress reactivity and more effective emotional recovery. Cognitive effects of secure attachment on hope are made potential by unique internal regulatory processes that provide them to consider their conditions in a positive point of view (Quick et al., 1996). Consequently, they have a sense of safety in life to achieve to their goals. Yalçın and Malkoç (2014) reported that hope levels of university students mediated the link between meaningful life and subjective well-being. Hope is a significant component for mental well-being of the individual. Hopeful individuals have beliefs that can cope with adversity, even if they are as hard as others. Instead of experiencing negative emotions, hopeful individuals have alternative pathways instead of experiencing negative emotions. Therefore, the contribution of hope (as an individual difference) on well-being is noteworthy.

The present results also reveal that ego-resiliency served to mediate between secure attachment and mental well-being. As stated by Ainsworth (1979) the infants with “secure base” orientation develop ego-resiliency in their later life. This finding confirms earlier studies in the literature. For example, Çapan (2018) found positive correlation between secure attachment and ego-resiliency of university students. It was also reported that secure attachment scores of university students positively correlated with resilience scores (Shibue & Kasai, 2014). Karreman and Vingerhoets (2012) found that secure attachment related to reappraisal and resilience, partly mediation effect on well-being. Atwool (2006) stated that combining attachment theory and the construct of resilience clarify our comprehension of relationship experiences necessary to promote positive adaptation.

In line with the previous studies, the current research found significant positive relationship among gratitude, hope and ego-resiliency which are positive

psychological constructs related to each other. A study conducted by McCullough, Emmons and Tsang (2002) on undergraduate students found that gratitude at the dispositional level positively correlated with dispositional hope. In recent research Witvliet, Richie, Root Luna and Van Tongeren, (2018) examined the predictive role of gratitude on hope and happiness. It was reported that trait gratitude predicted trait hope and happiness strongly and state hope level and happiness level of the undergraduate students in grateful remembering condition group (vs. control) increased significantly. Li, Yang, Liu and Wang (2016) also reported that the predictive roles of hope and resilience on life satisfaction of cancer patients was significant. Collins (2009) found, on a sample of 537 undergraduates, that hope moderated the relationship between life events and resilience. Charles (2013) found a highly significant positive relationship between hope and resilience on a sample of late adolescents.

Limitations and Implications

The current study has two important limitations including the participants as they were chosen through convenience sampling method and cross-sectional design as the causal relationships cannot be concluded. Future research will therefore need to involve experimental studies in order to investigate causal relationships. Another limitation of the study is low reliability of secure attachment sub-scale. Low reliability of the measurement tool may hinder detection of the higher expected effects. Future research may consider the usage of more reliable measure for investigating secure attachment orientation.

Notwithstanding these limitations, this research provides a comprehension on the link between secure attachment and mental well-being by investigating the mediating roles of gratitude, hope and ego-resiliency. Based upon the findings of this study, it may be suggested for researchers to develop psycho-educational programs for the function of prevention and development of psychological counseling and guidance programs suggesting that interventions focused on secure attachment, gratitude, hope and ego-resiliency will enhance mental well-being. Furthermore, based on the notion that securely attached individuals are socially skilled (for example, DiTommaso, Brannen-McNulty, Ross and Burgess, 2003) the researchers may investigate the mediating roles of social skills in relationship between attachment style and gratitude, hope, psychological resilience and mental well-being. In addition to social skills, peer and romantic

relationship satisfaction is an important factor on secure attachment of emerging adults. Therefore, the researchers are recommended to investigate the roles of peer and romantic satisfaction in the tested model in this study. In addition to cross-sectional research, experimental and longitudinal studies will have an important contribution to the field in order to reveal complex causal relationships. Finally, the current study (with the previous and subsequent studies) is considered to provide a basis for the establishment of the programs focusing on supporting the positive development of emerging adults.

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Yazar Katkıları / Author Contributions

Çalışma tek yazarlıdır.

The study has a single author.

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This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards as well as the 1964 Helsinki Declaration.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş: Pozitif psikoloji yaklaşımı, bireylerin yaşamda karşılaştıkları sıkıntıların üstesinden gelebilmeleri ve anlamlı yaşam deneyimleri oluşturabilmeleri için gerekli olumlu kişilik özelliklerine odaklanmaktadır (Seligman, 2002). Pozitif psikoloji yaklaşımının ortaya çıkışından bu yana “iyi oluş” kavramı en çok araştırılan konulardan birisi olmuştur. İyi oluşa ilişkin hem hedonik hem de eudaimonik görüşleri kapsayan mental iyi oluş (Stewart-Brown ve Janmohamed, 2008) literatürde, “pozitif ruh sağlığı” yerine de kullanılmaktadır (Tennat ve ark., 2007). Literatürde pek çok çalışma, bağlanma stillerinin bireylerin pozitif ruh sağlığının potansiyel olarak önemli bir belirleyicisi olduğunu göstermektedir (Homan, 2018; Karreman ve Vingerhoets, 2012; Raque-Bogdan, Ericson, Jackson, Martin ve Bryan, 2011; Wei, Liao, Ku, & Shaffer, 2011). Pozitif psikoloji yaklaşımının amacına uygun olarak, bu çalışma, üniversite öğrencilerinin güvenli bağlanma ve mental iyi oluşları arasındaki ilişkide, şükran duyma, umut ve psikolojik sağlamlık değişkenlerinin aracılığını araştırmak üzere tasarlanmıştır. Kuramsal açıklamalara dayanarak, güvenli bir şekilde bağlanmış öğrencilerin yüksek düzeyde şükran duyma, umut ve psikolojik sağlamlığa sahip olduğu ve sonuç olarak, mental iyi oluş düzeylerinin yüksek olduğu öngörülmüştür.

Yöntem: Katılımcılar, Akdeniz Bölgesi’ndeki bir devlet üniversitesinde lisans eğitimi alan 359 öğrenciden oluşmaktadır. Katılımcıların 214’ü kadın (%60), 145’i (%40) erkektir ve yaş ortalamaları 19.97’dir. Verilerin toplanmasında İlişki Ölçekleri Anketi, Şükran Ölçeği, Sürekli Umut Ölçeği, Psikolojik Sağlamlık Ölçeği ve Warwick-Edinburgh Mental İyi Oluş Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde betimsel istatistikler, Pearson korelasyon yöntemi, sıradan en küçük karelere dayalı regresyon ve bootstrapping kullanılmıştır. Basıklık ve çarpıklık değerleri -1.5 ile +1.5 aralığında yer aldığından verilerin normal dağılımdan önemli bir sapma göstermediği sonucuna varılmıştır. Çalışmada, çoklu değişkenlerle eşzamanlı aracılık içeren bir aracılık modeli kullanılmıştır. Bu aracılık modelinde, % 95 güven aralığında sıfır yer almadığı takdirde, dolaylı etkinin sıfırdan anlamlı düzeyde farklı olduğu sonucuna varılabilir ($p < 0.05$) (Hayes, 2012). Ayrıca, modeldeki daha güçlü aracı değişkenleri belirlemek amacıyla karşılaştırma testi kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın bootstrapping analizleri IBM SPSS 24.0 kullanılarak PROCESS Macro 3 aracılığıyla "Çoklu Aracılık Modeli 4" ile yapılmıştır. İstatistiksel anlamlılık değeri .05 düzeyinde kabul edilmiştir.

Bulgular: Pearson korelasyon analizi bulgular, güvenli bağlanma ile mental iyi oluş ($r = .28, p < .001$) arasında pozitif yönde ilişki olduğunu göstermiştir. Bunun yanında güvenli bağlanma ile şükran duyma ($r = .13, p < .05$), umut ($r = .19, p < .001$) ve psikolojik sağlamlık ($r = .26, p < .001$) arasında pozitif yönde ilişkiler vardır. Ayrıca mental iyi oluş ile şükran duyma ($r = .28, p < .001$), umut ($r = .66, p < .001$) ve psikolojik sağlamlık ($r = .63, p < .001$) arasında pozitif yönde ilişkiler bulunmuştur.

Paralel çoklu aracılık analizlerinden elde edilen sonuçlar şükran duyma, umut ve psikolojik sağlamlığın aracılığının, güvenli bağlanma ve mental iyi oluş arasındaki ilişkide anlamlı olduğunu ortaya koymuştur ($F_{(4-121)}, p < .001$). Modeldeki tüm değişkenler mental iyi oluştaki varyansın %57'sini açıklamaktadır. Modelde yer alan aracı değişkenlerden daha güçlü olanı ortaya koymak için gerçekleştirilen analizler, istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık olmadığını göstermiştir.

Tartışma & Sonuç: Bu araştırma bazı sınırlılıklara sahiptir. Bunlardan birisi katılımcılarının uygun örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilmesidir. Araştırmanın diğer sınırlılığı ilişkiler arasındaki nedenselliği ortaya koyamadığı için araştırmanın kesitsel desende gerçekleşmesidir. Karmaşık nedensel ilişkileri ortaya koyabilmek amacıyla deneysel ve boylamsal çalışmalar yapılması alana önemli katkı sağlayacaktır. Çalışmanın bir başka sınırlılığı ise, güvenli bağlanma alt ölçeğinin düşük güvenilirlik katsayısına sahip olmasıdır. Ölçme aracının düşük güvenilirliği, beklenen yüksek etkilerin ortaya çıkmasını engelleyebilir. Bu nedenle gelecekteki araştırmalarda güvenilirliği yüksek ölçme araçlarının kullanılması önerilebilir. Bu sınırlılıklara rağmen, araştırmanın üniversite öğrencilerinde güvenli bağlanma, şükran duyma, umut, psikolojik sağlamlık ve mental iyi oluş arasındaki ilişkilerin anlaşılmasına katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir. Son olarak, bu çalışmanın (önceki ve sonraki çalışmalarla birlikte), beliren yetişkinlerin pozitif gelişimini desteklemeye odaklanan programların oluşturulmasına temel teşkil ettiği düşünülmektedir.