



## Investigation of Happiness Levels of Physical Education and Sports College Students\*

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the happiness levels of physical education and sports college students studying in Konya, Burdur, and Ankara. A total of 229 students, 64.6% female, and 35.4% male, participated in the study in the 2019-2020 academic year. The "Oxford Happiness Scale" developed by Hills and Argyle (2002) and adapted into Turkish by Doğan and Çötök (2011) was used as a data collection tool in the study. Percentage distribution and frequency values of the students participating in the study were determined by descriptive statistics and skewness and kurtosis test was applied as the normality test. Due to the normal distribution of the data, the independent samples t-test and ANOVA test, which are parametric tests, were applied ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). According to the findings obtained in the research; In the comparison made between the genders of the students, a significant difference was observed between the groups in favor of female. In the comparison made according to the age variable of the students, it was observed that there was a significant difference in favor of 19-year-old students. It was found that there is a significant difference in the comparison made between the sports purposes of the students. Another finding is that there is a significant difference between students' living a healthy life variable and their level of happiness. However, in the comparisons made according to the social life variable of the students, it was found that there was no significant difference between the groups. As a result, it has been determined that the happiness levels of physical education and sports college students are significantly effective according to their goals of engaging in sports.

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Sport sciences, physical education, happiness, students, sport

### 1. Introduction

The overall aim of education is undoubtedly to enable developing individuals to adapt to society in a healthy, happy, and effective way (Varış et al., 1998). To achieve this harmony, when we look at the programs implemented in schools, we see that general and specific objectives have been determined and some arrangements have been made in this direction; In this context, it should not be ignored that educational institutions have an important place in the process of realizing educational objectives and gaining values to students. Accordingly, although there is not a definite consensus on what values to teach students, the values to be taught in school culture and the values that are expected to be transformed into behavior, love, respect, honesty, benevolence, patriotism, independence, solidarity, as well as happiness which is the subject of our study (subjective well-being) can be listed as (Acun, 2018).

Determining the happiness levels of university students is an important factor. Happiness is closely related to self-improvement, enrichment of personal life, and reaching its goals. Happiness can be defined as pleasure and joy taken from life, as well as perceiving their situation, feeling good, and enjoying life in the

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system of individuals' culture and values. Within the scope of happiness, people's psychological states, physical functions, social relationships, interactions with the environment and beliefs take part (Arslantaş et al., 2006). In this direction will be qualified to contribute to the literature by researchers at the happiness concept point is thought to work with physical education and sports sciences students of the owners should be happiness levels greater detail in the importance of the work done in the name of trying to define. When the literature was examined, it was seen that many studies on happiness were done in the field of working and job, and it increased the need for more studies in different fields. It is a known fact that physical education and sports, which is one of these areas, have an impact on healthy living. Inevitably, it will positively affect the happiness of individuals their healthy life. In some studies, conducted in this field, it has been stated that sports can be evaluated as an auxiliary factor in increasing happiness levels. However, literature reviews show a limited written descriptive study on the determination of the happiness levels of individuals in the field of physical education and sports or the happiness levels that should be shown at the appropriate performance level. Some studies on this subject often emphasize that the subject should be examined from different angles (Okçu & Pilatin, 2018). With this study, which aims to examine the happiness levels of physical education and sports college students studying in different provinces, it is thought that it can be of great importance in raising the happiness levels that contribute to the success and performance of students in educational institutions.

### **1.1. Happiness**

Although the concept of happiness, which is an important subject for people dating back centuries, has been tried to be understood and defined by many people, its definition is a quite wide and difficult notion to explain. Happiness as definition; It is the word of felicity derived from the root of Arabic said, a tendency that people want and do not want to give up (Sevindik, 2015), feeling good, enjoying life (Layard, 2005), positive emotions are more than negative emotions (Argyle, Martin & Crossland, 1989; Diener, 1984), such as statements are based on psychological processes that include individual values and goals (Agid et al., 2012). Also, Aristoteles happiness as the ultimate purpose of human life, Plato as the best one, Freud as the fulfillment of desires to have a healthy and happy spirit and Descartes as spiritual satisfaction and inner pleasure defined (Kaya, 1983; Gökberk, 1996; Özgen, 1997; Kara, 2010).

When the concept of happiness, which is also called subjective well-being, is evaluated in general, it is explained with three variables that are interrelated but examined independently. These are positive emotions more often, and negative emotions less frequent and life satisfaction (Myers & Diener, 1995). People experience a high level of subjective well-being, that is, happiness when they experience too many positive emotions or little negative emotions, do remarkable activities, have joy or low levels of suffering, and are satisfied with their lives (Diener, Gohm, Suh & Oishi, 2000).

Happiness; defined as a positive assessment of a person's overall quality of life (Veenhoven, 2000). The concept of happiness is an important value throughout the lives of all individuals, and individuals aim to achieve happiness. In psychiatry, studies have been conducted on negative concepts such as anxiety, anxiety, and stress, and fewer studies have been conducted on positive concepts such as happiness (Tuzgöl, 2004).

Happiness, besides feeling good, provides many benefits. According to the findings obtained as a result of scientific research, it has been determined that happy people make friends, happy people have better health, their immune systems work better, and enjoy interpersonal relationships. Besides, happiness, which is expressed as the state of satisfaction and pleasure, is closely related to the self-realization, the best use of its potential and strength, achieving better gains, finding meaning in life and leading a virtuous life (Lama & Cutler, 2009; Stein & Book, 2003; Köydemir & Mısıır, 2015).

According to Martin Seligman, the factors that determine the individual happiness level are understanding of happiness, living conditions, and voluntary activities. Seligman formulates the level of happiness as the sum of these three understandings (Seligman, 2002). Also, Sonny Lyubomirsky, who has many types of research on happiness, revealed his happiness levels in percentiles. According to him, the level of happiness determined by birth or genetics constitutes 50% of happiness. Conditions such as marriage, earnings, or appearance determine 10% of happiness. The back 40% of happiness means that it comes from deliberate activities or what we can do to change our level of happiness (Lyubomirsky, 2008).

Individuals' positive emotions such as joy, trust, hope, and joy are living more than negative emotions such as anxiety, sadness, anger in anticipation about the future, and life satisfaction in business and private life can be expressed as an indicator of happiness (Eryılmaz, 2011). Other factors that affect the level of individual happiness are the conditions that the individual is in. Some conditions such as geographical location, culture, social support, work, education, health, gender affect the level of happiness of the person (Carr, 2016).

Some experts have suggested that having money can also be effective in determining the level of happiness. However, no universal truth has been found on this issue. Because studies have found that poor people are happier as they escape from poverty, but once they deprived them, the link between money and happiness is broken (Lyubomirsky, 2008). It has been determined that the richness of the person is not a function that increases happiness. The situation that created this has been linked to the desire of people to always want better. Because after people adapt to the materials they have, they want the better from those materials. So the more people earn, the more they tend to want. This situation prevents the person from being happy with what they have and causes him to constantly strive to achieve the better (Frey & Stutzer, 2002; Veenhoven, 1991).

Happiness is not to have some material things. A bigger house, more luxury car, more money, fame, authority, etc. things are tools to be happy in the short term; but it is not happiness itself and it never replaces happiness. Their deprivation can be painful, but its existence cannot guarantee happiness (Biçer, 2016).

According to Uslu, happiness is about knowing and cannot realize realistic actions to be happy without knowing what happiness is (Uslu, 2018). Veenhoven explains happiness as the experience process of life. According to him, happiness is continuous in a short time and cannot be spread permanently throughout life (Veenhoven, 2000). Happiness provides a healthy mind, gives strength to resist events, and increases endurance, improves the capacity to cope with trauma (Lama & Cutler, 2009). The happiness which has an important place for human life to determine of relation with sports for a healthy life is important in terms of contributing to the literature on this subject.

## **1.2. Relationship between Sports and Happiness**

In the regulation of today's social life, both physical and mental health level is important in terms of social harmony. In this context, sports should be seen as a very important factor for the social life of individuals (Şahan, Akpınar, Ulukan & Akpınar, 2008). Also, the adaptation of the individual to the society, an effective method used to increase the discipline, morale, and motivation that contributes greatly to the psychological and physiological development, tastes the feeling of winning and losing, and enhances the motivation of a game that gives happiness to the individual, and is a form of presentation bound by the rules (Kat, 2009). Sport is a pedagogical, biological, and social field of activity that develops its physical activity and motor skills in mental, spiritual, and social behavior within certain regulations and aims to use these qualities within certain rules (Koludar, 1988). Accordingly, happiness, which is accepted as one of the reasons that encourage people to do sports; appears to benefit individuals physically and spiritually.

Since the past, people have been constantly seeking happiness (Annas, 1993; Gilman, Huebner & Laughlin, 2000). The reason for this is that the individual's desire to be happy has an important place among the basic needs of human life and increases the characteristics of happy individuals such as success, performance, life satisfaction and subjective well-being (Sarıçam & Canatan, 2015). It is accepted that competing or competitiveness which is inherent in sports, generally develops from the motivation of success and performance. The focus of the need for success theory is that some individuals get higher satisfaction than success based activities (Tiryaki & Gödelek, 1997). In this context, it is thought that the reason for the increase in the happiness levels of individuals who do sports is related to their success due to their performance in the field of sports. Moreover, it is known that it triggers happiness life of healthy.

As seen in happiness research, it is seen that happy people are healthier than unhappy, they get more satisfaction from life, they have high creativity, and they are very successful in interpersonal and emotional relationships. According to research results, it is known that happiness has positive effects on people (Aksoy, Aytar & Kayter, 2017). Happiness, which is supported by individual abilities, social and personal

resources, appears to affect physical competence. Physical fitness is seen as an essential factor in individuals' healthy lives. It is known to affect happiness in a healthy life.

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## **2. Methods**

In this section, information was given about the research model, participants, data collection tool, and data analysis.

### **2.1. Research Model**

The research is a study in the survey model. Survey models are research approaches aiming to describe a situation that exists in the past or still as it exists. The event, individual or object that is the subject of the research is tried to be defined in its conditions and as it is. No effort is made to change or influence the variables in any way. There is something to be known and is there. The important thing is to be able to "observe" and describe it appropriately (Karasar, 2005).

### **2.2. Participants**

The participants of the study are 229 students studying at the Physical Education and Sports College in Konya, Burdur and Ankara were included in the study group. The concept defined as the community in which the research results are interpreted is called the universe. (Büyüköztürk et al., 2012). The universe of the research conducted in this context is the students studying at Physical Education and Sports Colleges in Konya, Burdur, and Ankara. The group that takes place in the universe and is researched and generalized to the universe is called the sampling (Büyüköztürk, 2017). The sample of the study consists of 229 students who were determined the doing active sport in Physical Education and Sports College in Konya, Burdur, and Ankara by using the "Simple Selectionless Sampling" method. Participants answered the Oxford Happiness Scale on a volunteer basis.

### **2.3. Data Collection Tools**

**2.3.1. Personal information form.** Within the scope of the study, a personal information form was created for a demographic evaluation of students studying in a university situated to the Ankara, Burdur, and Konya. The form aimed to collect information about physical education and sports college students' gender, age, the purpose of sports, social life, and healthy life carried out.

**2.3.2. Oxford happiness scale.** In the study, Oxford Happiness Scale, which was originally developed by Hills and Argyle (2002) to measure happiness, and it is adapted to Turkish by Doğan and Çötök (2011) was used as a data collection tool. The Oxford Happiness Scale has one sub-dimensions, 7-item, and 5-point Likert type. Statements 1 and 7 are reversed. The lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 7, and the highest score is 35. The increase in the scores obtained from the scale indicates a high level of happiness in the individual (Hills & Argyle, 2002; Doğan & Çötök, 2011). Also, Cronbach alpha was calculated for the whole scale as .76.

### **2.4. Data Analysis**

Within the scope of the research, the data obtained from the measurements were tried to be evaluated by using the SPSS 25 program. The happiness scores of the students in the research group were evaluated by considering the characteristics of the data in line with the independent variables. In this context, independent samples t-test was used for groups with two different independent variables, and the ONE-WAY ANOVA test was used for groups with 3 or more independent variables. Also, personal characteristics, frequency, and percentage values were analyzed. In the research, the level of significance was accepted as  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

## **3. Results**

In this section, the findings obtained from the analysis of the research data are presented in the tables and interpreted. The findings obtained from the study were evaluated by the total scores obtained from the

Oxford Happiness Scale used in the study and investigations were made according to the variables accepted as independent variables. The distribution of students in the study group is given in the table below.

**Table 1.** Physical Education and Sports College Students' Frequency and Percentage Analysis

Variables	N	f	%
Gender	Female	148	64,6
	Male	81	35,4
Age	18	119	52,0
	19	31	13,5
	20	48	21,0
	21	31	13,5
	Self-improvement	64	27,9
Purpose of Sports	Healthy life	82	35,8
	Vocational career	18	7,9
	Participating in Socio-cultural Activities	25	10,9
	Personal skill and ability	32	14,0
	Other of them	8	3,5
Social Life	Participating in Social Activities	148	64,6
	Those who do not want to participate in social activities except for mandatory situations	58	25,3
	Never Participating in Social Activities Including Mandatory Cases	23	10,1
	Yes	108	47,2
Healthy Life	No	34	14,8
	Partial	87	38,0

As seen in Table 1, it is determined that 64.6% of the students participating in the research are women and 35.4% are men. Looking at the age distribution of the participants; It was determined that 52% were in the age category of 18, 13.5% were in the category of 19.21% were in the category of 20 and 13.5% were in the category of 21. The purpose of doing sports is personal development with 27.9%, 35.8% healthy life, 7.9% professional career, 10.9% participation in socio-cultural activities, 14.0% personal skills and abilities, and 3.5% was found to be in the other category. When the distribution of social life was analyzed, it was determined that 64.6% were in the category of participation in social activities, 25.3% of them did not want to participate in social activities except compulsory situations, and 10.1% did not participate in social activities, including compulsory situations. Finally, when looking at the distribution of healthy living, it was determined that 47.2% was in the category of yes, 14.8% of them were in the category of no and 38%.

Happiness levels of the students participating in the research are given below according to gender.

**Table 2.** Happiness Levels according to the Gender Variable of the Students Participating in the Research Subtest Independent Examples T-Test Results

	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t	p
Happiness	Female	148	22,27	5,459	0,825	0,003*
	Male	81	19,91	6,004		

As seen in Table 2, it was determined that the happiness levels of female (N = 148) students  $\bar{X} = 22,27 \pm 5,459$  and the happiness level of male (N = 81) students  $\bar{X} = 19,91 \pm 6,004$ . It was found that the happiness levels of the students participating in the study differ significantly in favor of females ( $t = 0.825$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Also, it can be said that the happiness levels of the students participating in the research area in the middle level.

The happiness levels according to the age variable of the students participating in the research are given below.

**Table 3.** Happiness Levels according to Sports Age Variable of the Students Participating in the Research Subtest ONE-WAY ANOVA Test Results

	Age	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	F	p
Happiness	18	119	23.17	5,131	16,347	<b>0,000*</b>
	19	31	23.29	4,360		
	20	48	18.08	5,873		
	21	31	18.09	5,491		
	Total	229	21,43	5,756		

As seen in Table 3, as a result of the comparisons made between age groups, it is determined that there is a significant difference between the happiness levels of the athletes participating in the research. ( $F = 16.347$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). It was observed that this difference was in favor of 19-year-old students ( $\bar{X} = 23,29 \pm 4,360$ ).

The happiness levels of the students participating in the research are given below according to the purpose of doing sports.

**Table 4.** The Happiness Levels according to Purpose of Sports Variables of the Students Participants in the Research Subtest ONE-WAY ANOVA Test Results

	Purpose of Sports	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	F	p
Happiness	Self-improvement	64	20.12	5.708	2,378	<b>0,040*</b>
	Healthy life	82	21.59	5.402		
	Vocational career	18	19.72	6.560		
	Participating in Sociocultural Activities	25	21.80	6.557		
	Personal skill and ability	32	23.75	5.370		
	Other of them	8	23.75	3.770		
	Total	229	20.12	5.706		

As seen in Table 4, it includes the results of comparisons made between the groups of sports purposes. ( $F = 2.378$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). It has been observed that this difference is in favor of students doing sports for personal skills and abilities ( $\bar{X} = 23,75 \pm 5,370$ ).

The happiness levels of the students participating in the research are stated below according to the healthy life variable.

**Table 5.** The Happiness Levels according to Healthy Life Variables of the Students Participating in the Research Subtest ONE-WAY ANOVA Test Results

	Healthy Life	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	F	p
Happiness	Yes	108	22,22	6,259	6,680	<b>0,002*</b>
	No	34	18,23	5,303		
	Partial	87	21,71	4,839		
	Total	229	21,43	5,756		

As seen in Table 5, it is seen that there is a significant difference between the happiness levels scores of the students who participated in the research as a result of the comparisons made between healthy living groups ( $F = 6,680$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ). It was observed that this difference was in favor of students who stated that they lived healthily.

The findings of happiness levels according to the social life variable of the students participating in the study are given in the table below.

**Table 6.** Happiness Levels according to the Social Life Variable of the Students Participating in the Research Subtest ONE-WAY ANOVA Test Results

	Social Life	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	F	p
Happiness	Participating in Social Activities	148	21.30	5.726	0,453	0,636
	Those who do not want to participate in social activities except for mandatory situations	58	21.34	5.756		
	Never Participating in Social Activities Including Mandatory Cases	23	22.52	6.089		
	Total	229	21,43	5,756		

As seen in Table 6, as a result of comparisons between social life groups, there was no significant difference between the happiness levels scores of the students participating in the study ( $F = 0.453$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ).

#### 4. Discussion

In this study, happiness levels of 148 females, 81 males, 229 students in physical education, and sports college were examined in terms of different personal variables, and the happiness levels of students were tried to be explained.

When the findings obtained from the research are examined; according to the gender variable, there was a significant relationship between the groups according to the scores they received from the physical education and sports college students who participated in the study ( $p < 0.05$ ). It has been observed that this difference is in favor of women. It is thought that this is due to the higher number of female participants. In most of the literature scans, it was found that males were slightly happier than females, though with a slight difference (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). Again, many studies examining the effect of gender on happiness were found that female happier than men (Wood, Rhodes & Whelan, 1989). In a study conducted in this field, it was found that there was no significant difference. In this case, it is concluded that gender difference does not have a determining effect on happiness (Wood, Rhodes & Whelan, 1989; Diener, Ryan, 2009). In their study, Eroğlu and Parlar (2018) concluded that, contrary to our findings, the gender status variable does not make a significant difference in perception of happiness (Eroğlu & Parlar, 2018). In the master's thesis by Yazgeç (2019), there was no determined significant difference between gender and happiness (Yazgeç, 2019). It is seen that the results of these studies do not support the results of our study.

In the study, according to the age variable, there was a significant relationship between the groups according to the scores they got from the happiness scale ( $p < 0.05$ ). It has been determined that this difference is in favor of younger students. It can be said that the reason for this is happiness arising from delightful feelings such as winning the university and settling in the area they want. In some studies or opinions on the impact of happiness on age, young people were found to be happier than the elderly, in some studies, it was determined that the elderly were happier because they had more experience and success. Again, a different view in this area; an increase in the rates of happiness at a young age, decrease in happiness rates in middle ages and it was determined that happiness gets regained as the age gets older (Conceicao & Bandura, 2008; Tan, Tambyah, Kau, 2006; Blanchflower & Oswald, 2004).

According to the variable of the purpose of doing sports in the study, it was determined a significant difference between the groups according to the scores they got from the happiness scale ( $p < 0.05$ ). It has been determined that this difference is in favor of participation in socio-cultural activities, healthy life, and personal development. In this context, it can be said that the students give importance to their quality of life. It can, also, be said that individuals are aware of the importance of doing sports for a healthy life. While many studies support that sports have positive effects on happiness, there is not a found study examining the effect of the purpose of sports, which is a more special concept, on happiness.

In the study, it was seen that there was a significant difference between the healthy life variable and happiness levels of the students ( $p < 0.05$ ). As a result of the analysis, it was seen that individuals who lead healthy lives are happier than those who stated that they do not lead healthy lives. As a result of the

literature surveys, similar studies are supporting our study. In the master thesis by Mumcu (2019), it was found that those who felt very good in the general health perception category had higher levels of happiness than those who stated that they did not feel well (Mumcu, 2019). It was observed the result of this study is similar to the result of our study. In the literature, it was stated in a similar study that individuals who exercise regularly lead a healthy life and therefore feel happy (Llyod & Little, 2010). Again, in a different study, the effects of regular exercise on the health and happiness level of individuals were investigated and it was stated that recreational exercises such as cycling or walking had positive effects on the health and happiness levels of individuals (Rascute & Downward, 2010). In another study examining the concepts of well-being and happiness, it is stated that there is a significant increase in the levels of well-being of individuals who regularly participate in fitness and yoga exercise groups (Mochon, Norton & Ariely, 2008).

However, it was found that there was no significant difference between the groups in the comparisons of the scores of the students participating in the study from the happiness scale according to the social life variable ( $p > 0.05$ ). The variable of social life was examined as participation in social activities, not wanting to participate in social activities other than compulsory situations and not wanting to participate in social activities, including compulsory situations, and it was found that social activities did not affect happiness. It is thought that this is because most of the participants did not participate in social activities. As a matter of fact, since the situation of not wanting to participate in social activities is due to the individual's own will, it did not affect the happiness levels of the people. As a similar study, according to the findings obtained in a study conducted by Özdemir et al., there was no significant difference between happiness and self-perception of social life (Özdemir et al., 2018). As a result of the literature review, there are not many studies between social life variables and happiness.

## **5. Conclusion**

In this study, happiness levels of 148 female, 81 male, 229 students in physical education, and sports college were examined in terms of different personal variables, and the happiness levels of the students were tried to be explained according to different variables.

As a result of the research, it was determined that the happiness levels of the students of physical education and sports college were at a medium level. It was determined that the happiness levels of female students participating in the research were higher than male students.

As a result of the comparisons made between the age groups of the students participating in the research, it was determined that there was a significant difference between the happiness levels of the students. It was determined that this difference was in favor of 19 years, old students. Also, it was observed that younger students had higher levels of happiness than older students. As a result of the comparisons between the aims of doing sports, it was determined that there was a significant difference between the happiness levels of the students who participated in the research. It was determined that the difference was in favor of students doing sports for the aim of personal skills and abilities. It can be said that the happiness levels of students who do sports for personal skills and talent have higher happiness levels than those who participate for other purposes. Also, it was observed that the level of happiness of the students who purposeful participation in socio-cultural activities, healthy life, and personal development was medium-level. As a result of the comparison between the perception of healthy life and happiness level of the students participating in the study, it was observed that there was a significant difference between happiness levels scores. It was determined that the participants who stated that they had a healthy life had a higher level of happiness compared to those who stated that they did not have a healthy life.

As a result of the comparison between the social lives and happiness levels of the students participating in the research, it was observed that there was no significant difference. However, when the average scores of the students were examined, it was determined that the happiness levels of the students who did not participate in social activities, including compulsory situations, were higher than those who participated in social activities.

## **6. Suggestions**

Suggestions that can be presented with the idea of contributing to future research to contribute to science; Comparison can be made by determining the happiness levels of students between physical education and



sports programs. By observing the relationship of students' happiness levels with different scales, parameters affecting happiness can be determined. It can be examined in terms of different variables. It may be thought that the renewal of the research in different and larger samples may contribute to the development of the information on the subject and to make generalizations.

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