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The Moderating Role of Gender in the Relationship Between Purpose in Life and Self-Confidence

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Abstract

For people to reach their life goals, self-confidence is a critical component. Self-confidence can have a positive or negative effect on a person's ability to determine his/her goals and fulfill her life roles. The aim of this study is to investigate the role of self-confidence in identifying life goals and to reveal whether this role differs by gender and generation. Data for the study, which was designed as a cross-sectional study, were collected online between February and March of 2021. The study sample consisted of 396 participants between the ages of 18-60, 136 of whom were males and 260 of whom were females. A questionnaire consisting of the Demographic Information Form, Self-Confidence Scale, and Life Goals Scale was used as a data collection tool. In the data analysis, Spearman's Product Moments Correlation Analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the scales. Subsequently, mediation analyses were conducted using Hierarchical Regression and Process Macro to investigate the predictive effects of gender, generational differences, and self-confidence on purpose in life. Results from the two-model Hierarchical Regression indicated that gender and self-confidence were significant predictors of purpose in life. Self-confidence accounts for 23% of the purpose in life. A 1-point increase in self-confidence leads to a 0.48-point change in life purpose. Self-confidence has less effect on the meaning of life in males than in females. As self-confidence increases, the purpose in life increases more in females than in males. The generation gap has not been found to be a predictive variable in the relationship between self-confidence and purpose in life. Given that self-confidence is formed later in life, particularly through the influences of familial and environmental factors, it is important to plan and implement strategies that will change social

Keywords: Life Purpose, Self-Confidence, Gender, Generational Differences

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Yaşam Amacı ve Özgüven Arasındaki İlişkide Cinsiyetin Moderatör Rolü

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Öz

İnsanların yaşam amaçlarına ulaşmasında özgüven sahibi olmaları önemli bir faktördür. Özgüven, insanın yaşam sürecinde hedeflerini belirlemesinde ve yaşam rollerini yerine getirmesinde olumlu veya olumsuz etkide bulunabilmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, özgüvenin yaşam amacının belirlenmesindeki rolünü araştırmak ve bu rolün cinsiyet ve kuşaklara göre farklılık gösterip göstermediğini ortaya koymaktır. Kesitsel bir çalışma olarak tasarlanan araştırmanın verileri online ortamda Şubat-Mart 2021 de toplanmıştır. Araştırmanın örneklemini 18-60 yaş arası 136 sı erkek 260'ı kadın olmak üzere 396 katılımcı oluşturmaktadır. Veri toplama aracı olarak Demografik Bilgi Formu, Özgüven Ölçeği ve Yaşam Amaçları Ölçeğinden oluşan anket formu kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde ölçekler arası ilişkiyi tespit etmek için Spearmen Momentler Çarpım Korelasyon Analizi yapılmıştır. Daha sonra cinsiyet, kuşak farkı ve özgüvenin yaşamın amacı üzerindeki yordayıcı etkilerini incelemek için Hiyerarşik Regresyon ve Process Makro kullanılarak aracılık analizleri yapılmıştır. İki modelli Hiyerarşik Regresyon sonucundan elde edilen sonuçlara göre cinsiyet ve özgüvenin yaşamın amacı üzerinde anlamlı düzeyde yordayıcı bir etkiye sahip olduğu görülmüştür. Özgüven yaşam amacının %23 ünü açıklamaktadır. Özgüvendeki 1 puanlık artış yaşam amacında .48 puanlık değişime neden olmaktadır. Özgüvenin yaşamın anlamı üzerindeki etkisi kadınlara kıyasla erkeklerde daha azdır. Özgüven arttıkça kadınlarda erkeklere kıyasla yaşamın amacı daha fazla yükselmektedir. Kuşak farkının özgüven yaşam amacı ilişkisinde yordayıcı bir değişken olmadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Özgüvenin sonradan, ailesel ve çevresel faktörlerin etkisiyle oluştuğu göz önüne alındığında anne-baba tutumları başta olmak üzere eğitimin her kademesinde kadınlarla ilgili toplumsal roller ve kalıp yargıları değiştirecek plan ve uygulamalara ihtiyaç vardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yaşam Amacı, Özgüven, Cinsiyet, Kuşak Farklılıkları

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Introduction

Self-confidence, which refers to developing positive, good feelings about oneself and being satisfied with oneself, is a characteristic that affects human life throughout all stages of development from childhood to adulthood. Self-confidence, which is defined as feeling valuable (Bandura, 1997), being at peace with oneself and having confidence in one's abilities (Richards, 2016), requires being at peace with others in the context of mutual human relations, being in good relationships, and also "trusting others and trusting the positive impression of others" (Altıntaş, 2015, p. iii). Variables, including parental attitudes (Sarkin, 2012; Sağat, 2016; McKay & Fanning, 2017), teacher attitudes, academic achievement, (Çevikbaş, 2013), relationships with the living environment, physical appearance (Yanarca-Uras, 2004), gender, and socio-economic level (Bilgin, 2011; Kandıkırık-Kılıç, 2013) are among the important determinants (Gökmar, 2010; Turan-Başoğlu, 2007) in formation and development of the self-confidence, which is an acquired (Lauster, 2003) and developable skill (Bilgin, 2017). The term "self-confidence" is classified by Lindenfield (2018, p. 26) into two categories: internal and external. Internal self-confidence is a combination of beliefs and positive judgments that the individual feels satisfied with himself/herself, while external self-confidence is the image and behavior that individuals create as being confident when interacting and communicating with others.

In addition to accepting and loving oneself for who one really is, having self-efficacy, self-forgiveness, and self-responsibility, self-confidence is directly related to self-esteem and sometimes used synonymously (McKay & Fanning, 2017), which can positively or negatively impact one's ability to accomplish their goals and fulfill their responsibilities in life. Generally, individuals with high levels of self-confidence can communicate well with others (Humphreys, 2001; Bilgin, 2017), are not easily discouraged when faced with challenges, possess a strong sense of responsibility, are optimistic, and are highly motivated to succeed (Bilgin, 2011; Kağıtçıbaşı & Cemalçılar, 2014; Soner, 2000). As Tarhan (2020) points out, self-confidence and arrogance should be distinguished; arrogant individuals have the characteristic of believing themselves superior and looking down on others. Furthermore, individuals with low self-confidence have difficulty communicating with others as a result of their sense of worthlessness (Lauster, 2003, p.35). The fear of rejection prevents them from exchanging love and failure prevents them from accepting responsibility (Bilgin, 2017; Turan-Başoğlu, 2007; Soyer, 2019). Self-confidence, which is effective in mental well-being, success, and happiness (Soner, 2000; Cheng & Furnham, 2002; Kaya, Taştan, 2020; Aydiner, 2011), plays a key role in determining the purpose in life (Lindenfield, 2004). Individuals with a high sense of self-confidence are not fearful of taking risks to accomplish their goals and are capable of pushing themselves beyond their capacity limits to overcome challenges.

The meaning and purpose in life have been addressed by different disciplines such as philosophy, religion, sociology, and psychology, and each discipline has attempted to define the concept from its unique perspective. The concepts of meaning and purpose are often used interchangeably in the existential questioning of life. Although there is a bidirectional relationship between them (Göka, 2013; Rainey, 2014), they are actually different concepts. Meaning refers to a more comprehensive sense of belief, whereas purpose refers to a person's quest for meaning (Damon et al., 2003, p.121; Monis &

Tokur, 2021, p.153). As Schopenhauer (2010, p.17) points out, almost every person encounters anxiety, toil, hardship, and distress at some point in their lifetime. By having a purpose in life, people can overcome these challenges. A person's purpose is unique and varies depending on the values and personality traits they possess (Frankl, 2009, p.101). According to May (1997), the purpose of life is to live each moment freely, honestly, and responsibly. Individuals who can realize this experience true satisfaction, peace, and joy in life. A lack of meaning and purpose means to be devoid of goal, quality, value, and direction because there is nothing to live for (Eagleton, 2007).

Life purpose is affected by a variety of factors. Characteristics such as loneliness, stress level, and addiction affect life purpose negatively, whereas psychological resilience, high life satisfaction, and happiness affect it positively (as cited by Monis, and Tokur, 2021). When determining a person's life purpose, it is important that they know themselves and are aware of their values and feelings (Shulman & Nurmi, 2010). This is because people choose the most appropriate goal for themselves by taking into account their capacities and characteristics such as personal development, career choice, financial gain, physical appearance, social responsibility, and individual awareness (Aydiner, 2011; Cüceloğlu, 2003). To achieve a goal where one can fully utilize one's potential and live a fulfilling life, one requires self-confidence.

The aim of this study is to determine the role of self-confidence in the formation of life purpose and to investigate whether this role differs in terms of gender and generational differences. To ensure that individuals from generations defined by different personality traits could participate in the survey and to achieve a sufficient number of participants, generations X, Y, and Z were included in this study. A review of the literature indicates that the majority of studies on self-confidence are conducted with adolescents and young adults (Bilgin, 2017; Çalığışu & Sürücü, 2020; Özcan & Fırat, 2020). Meanwhile, life purpose studies were mostly conducted with psychological characteristics and demographic variables (Çelik, 2019). Within this respect, it is considered that determining the self-confidence level and life goals of three generations and revealing the role of gender and generational differences in this relationship will make a remarkable contribution to the literature.

In line with this main objective, the answers to the following research problems were sought.

1. Do individuals' life goals and self-confidence levels differ according to gender and generation?
2. Is there a statistically significant correlation between life purpose and self-confidence?

Method

Design of Study and Participants

With a cross-sectional research design, this study used a convenient sampling technique. Three hundred and ninety-six individuals who can be reached and agreed to participate in the research online were included in the study. In terms of the scale and its items and the number of variables, a sample size of 396 people was considered sufficient (Yucel-Karakaya & Alparslan, 2022; Chen et al., 2017). Data was collected on surveey.com between February and March 2021. The link to the online data collection

tools directed without provincial restrictions was shared on social media and WhatsApp platforms. Participants were informed about the purpose and method of the study. The information and consent form was made available on the first page of the web page and it was stated that if they wanted to participate when they clicked the "Continue" button, it would mean that they read and accepted the "Informed Voluntary Consent Form". A statement was made on the web page informing participants that they were free to leave the study at any time, and if they left, the items they answered previously would be removed from the study. To be eligible for the study, participants had to be over 18 years of age and under 60 years of age. Those participants who read and accepted the information text and clicked on the link were able to access the research scales.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis have been developed as a result of the literature review conducted in line with the objective of the study.

H1= The purpose of life differs according to gender and generations.

H2= Self-confidence predicts the purpose in life.

H3= Gender has a moderating role in the relationship between self-confidence and purpose in life A rise in self-confidence leads to an increase in life purpose more so in females than in males.

The hypothesis model is shown in Figure 1

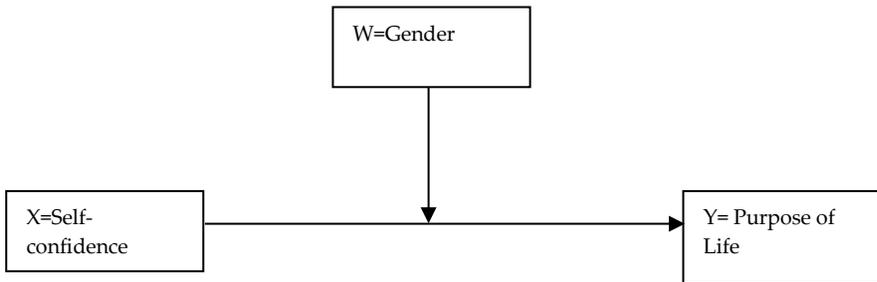


Figure 1. Hypothesis Model

Data Collection Tools:

Participants were administered the Demographic Information Form, Self-Confidence Scale, and Purpose in Life Scale prepared by the researchers.

Personal information form: In this form, the gender, age, marital status, and economic status of the participants were asked.

Self-Confidence Scale: The Likert-type five-step scale, developed by Akın (2007), consists of 33 items. The rating of the scale is ("1" Never, "2" Sometimes, "3" Often, "4" Usually, and "5" Always). The scale has 2 sub-dimensions: Internal Self-Confidence and External Self-Confidence. The scale has a maximum score of 165 and a minimum score of 33. A high score on the scale with no reverse-worded items indicates a high level of

self-confidence. On the Self-Confidence Scale, a score of <2.5 indicates low self-confidence, a score between 2.5 and 3.5 indicates moderate self-confidence, and a score of ≥ 3.5 indicates high self-confidence. The alpha model was applied for reliability studies, and corrected item-total correlations were examined for item analysis. The Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was found to be $r = 0.80$.

Life Goals Scale: The scale developed by Aydiner (2011) is a five-point Likert scale and is scored as 1 (Never), 2 (A little), 3 (Partially), 4 (A lot), and 5 (Very much). Consisting of 31 items, the scale has five sub-dimensions: "personal development", "material gain", "physical appearance", "social responsibility", and "self-awareness". The Cronbach Alpha value of the data collected within the scope of this study was found to be $r = 0.85$.

Data Analysis: Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 22.00 and Process macro for SPSS). Tests were conducted on a bootstrap sample of 5000 at 95% confidence intervals. To test whether sociodemographic variables and self-confidence have a predictive effect on purpose in life, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. Process macro Model 1 was used to test the moderating role of gender on self-confidence and purpose in life.

Ethical Aspect of the Study: The ethical approval was obtained from the Necmettin Erbakan University, Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research Ethics Committee with the decision dated 19/02/2021 and numbered 2021/49. The study group was informed about the purpose and content of the study and sent a voluntary consent form, and those who signed the consent form were able to continue the survey.

Results

A total of 396 subjects meeting the eligibility criteria were included in the study. The demographic information of the participants is shown in Table 1. The age variable was grouped as Generation Z for those born after 2000, Generation Y for those born between 1981 and 1999, and Generation X for those born between 1961 and 1980.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Participants (n=396)

Variables	N	N	%
Gender	Female	260	65,7
	Male	136	34,3
Generation (Age)	x	57	14,8
	y	195	49,2
	z	144	36,0
Marital status	Single	280	70,7
	Married	116	29,3
Income Level	Low	60	4,8
	Middle	317	80,1
	High	19	15,2

In this study; Non-Parametric tests were used since Skewness & Kurtosis values indicate that the data are not normally distributed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2015). Table 2 shows the mean scores of the scales and margins of error.

Table 2. Research items, mean and skewness kurtosis values of variables (n=396)

Variables	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Self-Confidence	3,82	,594	-,848	2,151
SC1: Internal self-confidence	3,83	,617	-,845	2,028
SC2: External self-confidence	3,82	,642	-,757	1,285
Purpose in Life	3,69	,524	-601	1,721
PL1: Personal development	4,48	,586	-2,270	2,288
PL2:Material gain	2,58	,904	,282	-,528
PL3: Physical appearance	3,01	,890	,142	-,468
PL4: Social responsibility	4,19	,822	-1,351	1,981
PL5: Self-awareness	4,20	,730	-1,123	1,705

PL= Purpose in Life ; SD= Standart deviation; SC= Self-confidence

According to Table 2 The self-confidence level of the sample is considered as "high" since a score of less than 2.5 on the Self-Confidence Scale indicates low, between 2.5 and 3.5 medium, and 3.5 and above indicates a high level of self-confidence. Personal development (4.48 ±.586), Social responsibility (4.19±.822), and Self-awareness (4.20±.730) averages of the sub-dimensions of the Life Purpose Scale, respectively, indicate that they have a high level of purpose in life, while material gain (2.58 ±.904) and physical appearance (3.01 ±.890) sub-dimensions indicate that they have a moderate level of purpose in life

Table 3. The relationship between all dimensions of self-confidence and purpose in life scale*

Spearman's Rho	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 Internal self-confidence	-						
2 External self-confidence	,785**	-					
3 Personal development	,482**	,478**	-				
4 Material gain	,064	,094	-,004	-			
5 Physical appearance	,098	,141**	,213**	,654**	-		
6 Social responsibility	,420**	,451**	,724**	-,020	,249**	-	
7 Self-awareness	,464**	,488**	,668**	,130**	,322**	,576**	-
Cronbach Alpha	,888	,900	,896	,871	,822	,858	,722

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*weak ≤ 0.29 . 0.30 \leq moderate ≥ 0.69 . high ≥ 0.70 (Çokluk et. al.,2012)

Table 3 shows the Cronbach Alpha values of the variables and the correlation analysis between the variables. Taking into consideration the literature approach which is widely accepted (George & Mallery, 2003; K. Castro, 2016), scale reliability is acceptable (0.6 $\leq\alpha$ <0.7). Internal self-confidence is positively correlated with personal development

($r=0.482$; $p<0.001$), social responsibility ($r=0.420$; $p<0.001$), and self-awareness ($r=0.464$; $p<0.001$) at a moderately significant level.

External self-confidence had a positive significant correlation with personal development ($r=0.478$; $p<0.001$), physical appearance ($r=0.141$; $p<0.001$), social responsibility ($r=0.451$; $p<0.001$), and self-awareness ($r=0.488$; $p<0.001$) variables. The correlation was at a moderate level in the personal development and self-awareness sub-dimensions, whereas it was at a low level in the physical appearance sub-dimension.

Findings related to hierarchical regression

Hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to investigate the predictive effects of gender, marital status, generation, economic status, and self-confidence on purpose in life. In this context, firstly, the multicollinearity problem was analyzed and it was determined that the Durbin-Watson value was 2.01. Moreover, tolerance and VIF values were also analyzed, and no multicollinearity was found.

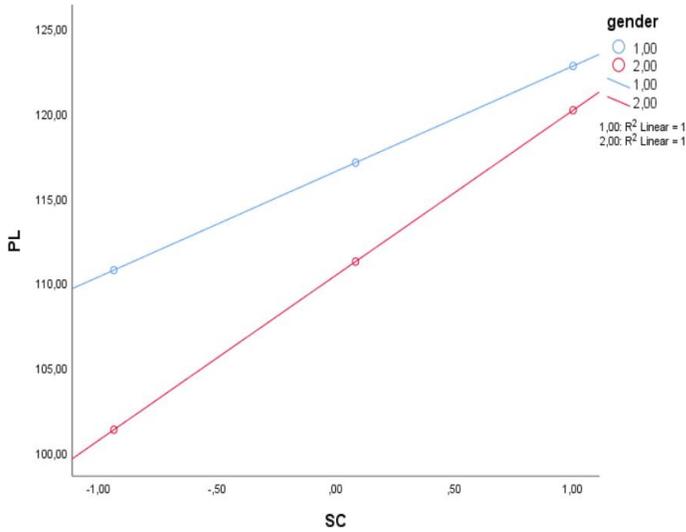
Table 4. Two-model Hierarchical Regression Analysis (n=396)

	Variable	B	Standard Error	β	t	p
Model 1 $R^2=.05$	Constant	111,28	5,64		19,74	,000
	Gender	-3,69	1,74	-,11	-2,12	,035
	Marital Status	5,28	2,15	,15	2,46	,014
	Income Level	-1,33	1,86	-,04	-,71	,477
	Generational differences	,94	1,47	,04	,64	,525
Model 2 $R^2=.27$	Constant	56,49	7,04		8,03	,000
	Gender	-4,81	1,53	-,14	-3,14	,002
	Marital Status	5,50	1,88	,15	2,93	,004
	Income Level	,04	1,64	,00	,03	,98
	Generational differences	2,17	1,29	,09	1,68	,094
	Self-confidence	,40	,04	,48	10,94	,000

Table 4 shows that socio-demographic variables and self-confidence have a significant predictive effect on purpose in life ($R=0.52$, $R^2=0.27$ $F=28.78$, $p<0.05$). Furthermore, the effect levels of the predictor variables on purpose in life were analyzed with regression models and it was revealed with Model 1 that socio-demographic variables accounted for 5% of the change in R^2 value ($R=0.21$, $R^2=0.05$ $F=4.66$, $p<0.05$). According to Model 1, gender was significant predictors, whereas generational level were not significant predictors. Thus, H1 was partially confirmed. In Model 2, self-confidence accounted for an additional 23% of the variance on purpose in life. When the standardized beta (β) coefficient values are examined, it is noticed that a 1-point change in self-confidence causes a 0.48-point change in purpose in life. Hence, H2 was confirmed.

Findings Related to Moderator Analysis

The moderating role of gender in the relationship between self-confidence and purpose in life was tested with the Process Macro extension Model 1 (Hayes, 2018). Tests were conducted on a bootstrap sample of 5000 at 95% confidence intervals. The tested model is visualized below.

Figure 2. The relationship between self-confidence and purpose of life by gender

PL= Purpose of Life; SC= Self-confidence

Table 5. Values related to the moderating role of gender in the effect of self-confidence on purpose in life

		Coeff.	SE	t	p
Constant	i_0	105,30	14,12	7,46	,000
Self-confidence(X)	b_1	7,42	,72	10,27	,000
Gender (W)	b_2	-2,91	,72	-4,02	,000
Self-confidence x Gender (XW)	b_3	1,67	,72	2,32	,021

$R^2=,23$; $MSE=204,35$; $F_{(3,392)}=39,97$; $p<.05$

When Table 5 and Figure 2 are examined, it is understood that the moderating role of gender in the relationship between self-confidence and purpose in life is significant ($B=-291$, $p>.05$). Therefore, hypothesis H3 was confirmed. Hence, self-confidence has less effect on the purpose in life in males than in females. Put differently, as self-confidence increases, the purpose in life increases more in females than in males.

Discussion

In this study, the relationship between purpose in life and self-confidence as well as the role of gender and generation gap in this relationship was investigated. First, Spearman correlation analysis was conducted between the variables, and then a two-model hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to determine the role of self-confidence and purpose in life sub-dimensions and demographic variables in the relationship between purpose in life and self-confidence.

Study results indicate that self-confidence has a significant effect on determining the purpose of life. According to the correlation analysis, a positive correlation was found between internal self-confidence and the personal development, social responsibility,

and self-awareness sub-dimensions of life purpose, while a positive correlation was found between external self-confidence and the personal development, social responsibility, self-awareness, and physical appearance sub-dimensions. There are quite a few studies in the literature regarding the relationship between self-confidence and purpose in life. In Bilgin's (2017) study with adolescents, it was concluded that self-confidence was effective on purpose in life. Individuals with high self-confidence take risks and take action in line with the goals they set for their future, including career, education, and family structure (Malin, Quinn, & Moran, 2014), can critically assess themselves (Kavenuke, 2020; Hong et al, 2021) and show less frustration in the face of negative consequences. In this case, a reciprocal interaction is likely. A high level of self-confidence contributes to the realization of purpose in life, which in turn can enhance self-confidence (Bilgin, 2017). In this regard, studies suggest that life purpose is positively correlated with variables such as psychological well-being, happiness, and self-esteem, whereas it is negatively correlated with variables such as loneliness and stress (Bauer & McAdams, 2004; Peterson, et al., 2005; Mascaro & Rosen; 2005). Hence, having a purpose enhances one's self-confidence as it promotes subjective well-being and self-esteem.

According to the results of Model 1 of the two-model hierarchical regression analysis, gender had a significant predictive effect on life purpose, whereas the generation gap was not a significant predictor. Inglehart (2008) notes that as one moves from the older generations to the younger generations, there is a shift from "materialist values", which include economic and physical security, to "post-materialist values", which include autonomy and self-expression. In the literature, Generation "X" is defined as a competitive, realistic, hardworking, and contented generation, while Generation "Y" is defined as creative, free-spirited, and technology enthusiasts, and Generation "Z", born after 2000, is defined as emotional and normative (Bayhan, 2020). In the light of this information, we thought that the generation gap could be a significant predictor of both self-confidence level and purpose in life. However, this was not confirmed in our study. According to this result, H1 was partially confirmed.

According to the results of Model 2, self-confidence accounted for 23% of the variance on purpose in life. It was found that a 1-point increase in self-confidence caused a change of 0.48 points on the purpose in life. According to this result, H2 was confirmed. The main driving force that makes human life meaningful and connects it to life is having a purpose. A purpose such as this, which everyone finds aligned with their values, is unique (Frankl, 2009). Individuals with high self-confidence can set more achievable and realistic goals regarding their capabilities (Turan-Başoğlu, 2007). On top of that, those with high self-confidence are more combative in overcoming the obstacles and challenges they face in achieving their life goals, enabling them to live a more fulfilling life by achieving their life goals.

Based on the results of Model 1 of the two-model hierarchical regression analysis, gender was found to have a moderating role in the relationship between self-confidence and purpose in life. Thus, H3 was confirmed. Self-confidence, therefore, has a lesser effect on the purpose in life of males than of females. Put another way, as self-confidence increases, the purpose in life increases more in females than in males. Upon reviewing the literature, no study was found investigating the role of gender in the relationship between self-confidence and purpose in life. However, different findings

are encountered in studies with different independent variables related to self-confidence. According to some studies, gender does not significantly affect self-confidence (Gencer, 2019; Merey, 2010), whereas in others, women have lower self-confidence levels (Kukulu et al., 2012) and in others, men have lower self-confidence levels (Karagozoglu et al., 2008).

The finding that there is a significant correlation between gender and life purpose supports the literature. In the study by Monis & Tokur (2021), it was found that men differed significantly from women in the material gain dimension of life purpose, and women differed significantly from men in the social responsibility and self-awareness dimensions. This might be attributed to gender roles. The biological differences of individuals are interpreted culturally in the society in which they live. Tradition and cultural codes see the economic burden of living of the family as the responsibility of the man, while the duty of the woman is to ensure the continuation of the family and domestic roles (Acar & Savran, 2008). Women are assigned social roles as well as domestic responsibilities as part of the modernization process and are expected to fulfill their national responsibilities through sacrifice and renunciation (Berkay, 2012). Consequently, social expectations are formed about what women and men are capable of, how much they can benefit from opportunities and rights, and what professions they can enter. Women are expected to be patient, understanding, and sacrificing, as well as take on the burden of serving and caring for their families, while men are expected to be strong and participate in decision-making mechanisms (Günay & Bener, 2011). This situation can have a positive or negative impact on women's and men's self-confidence, differentiate their life purpose, and direct their perspectives on life and future expectations.

Self-esteem plays a key role in the formation of self-confidence. A study has suggested that self-esteem in women is also associated with social networks as well as the quantity and quality of interpersonal communication (Joseph et al., 1992). Social acceptance increases self-confidence by reducing negative judgments about oneself. Self-confidence, which is an important psychological requirement for women's self-esteem, also determines their attitudes and behaviors toward the events they encounter in daily life. Lack of self-confidence causes women to feel worthless (Tarhan, 2015), and negatively affects their relationships with their family and environment, especially with their family, their professional life, academic success, and entrepreneurship (Kirkwood, 2009).

Conclusion

Ultimately individual, familial, environmental factors and cultural codes of the society in which the individual lives are influential on the relationship between self-confidence and life purpose that we investigated in this study. In individualistic societies, independent self-acquisition is encouraged; however, in collectivist societies, dependent self-acquisition is supported (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In the patriarchal social structure, assertive, risk-taking, and entrepreneurial characteristics are approved for men, while passive, submissive attitudes are approved for women. To become individuals with a high sense of purpose, aware of their social and individual responsibility, and with healthy social communication networks, women must be raised and empowered as self-confident individuals. It appears impossible that an individual whose education, work, and even home life are controlled and supervised by others can

have a high sense of self-confidence and define his or her life purpose based on his or her inner thinking, feelings, and meanings. Given that self-confidence is formed later in life, particularly through the influences of familial and environmental factors, it is important to plan and implement strategies that will change social roles and stereotypes about women at every educational level, including parental attitudes.

Limitations

This study has some limitations. First of all, since the study was cross-sectional, the data were collected during the period in which COVID-19 restrictions were in effect. Participants are likely to be more questioning during this period, especially about their life goals. This might have affected their responses. Secondly, the simple randomness of the sampling technique limits the generalizability of the results. Depending on an individual's development stages and life cycle, self-confidence and life goals may differ. There is a need for longitudinal studies on this issue. The strength of the study is that it reveals the effect of self-confidence on the determination of life purpose and the moderating role of the gender variable in this relationship, which we have not found in the literature. There is a need for further studies investigating the effect of different independent variables on self-confidence and purpose in life.

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