

-RESEARCH ARTICLE-

**A RESEARCH ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEATH EDUCATION AND JOB SATISFACTION LEVELS OF FUNERAL SERVICE PRACTITIONERS**

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**Abstract**

*The service sector is a labor-intensive sector that requires good customer relations and skills due to its labor-intensive characteristic and focus on quality expectations. As it is known, gaining skills and success in any job generally increases in parallel with the specialized training received on that subject. Accordingly, customer satisfaction may increase due to the experience of service providers working in service areas that require extra sensitivity, such as funeral services, and this, in turn, may affect the job satisfaction levels of employees and the quality of the service they provide. In this study, it was aimed to compare the job satisfaction levels of two groups of funeral service practitioners those who had received death education and those who had not. The literature review revealed that the studies on death and death education in Turkey are generally constructed as theoretical studies and that there are various studies showing that death education has significant positive effects especially on employees who frequently face the phenomenon of death. However, at the time of the research, there was no study in Turkey on the effect of death education on job satisfaction in the sample of funeral service practitioners. In this context, a questionnaire was applied to 111 employees working in Muğla, Denizli and Uşak Metropolitan Municipalities Funeral Services to measure their job satisfaction. According to the statistical analysis of the averages of the two groups, the job satisfaction level of the group that received death education was significantly higher than the job satisfaction level of the group that did not receive death education. In addition, it was also found that the answers given to the job satisfaction questionnaire differed between men and women in the context of gender variable and that the job satisfaction levels of men were higher than women. Based on the findings, various inferences were made. In addition, it is thought that receiving death education will have different contributions such as facilitating the work, providing a professional approach, managing traumatic situations and providing psychological support to service recipients on funeral service sector employees who have been neglected so far.*

**Keywords:** Death Education, Job Satisfaction, Funeral Services, Organizational Management.

**JEL Codes:** M12, M53, M54.

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## CENAZE HİZMETİ SAĞLAYICILARININ ÖLÜM EĞİTİM DÜZEYLERİ İLE İŞ TATMİN DÜZEYLERİ ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİYİ BELİRLEMEYE YÖNELİK BİR ARAŞTIRMA

### Öz

*Hizmet sektörü emek yoğun özelliği ve kalite beklentisine yoğunlaşması nedeniyle müşteriyle iyi ilişki geliştirmeye ve beceri gerektiren bir sektördür. Bilindiği üzere herhangi bir işte beceri ve başarı kazanmak ise, genel itibarıyla o konuya ilişkin alınan uzmanlık eğitimleri paralelinde artış gösterir. Buna göre özellikle cenaze hizmetleri gibi ekstra duyarlılık gerektiren hizmet alanlarında çalışan hizmet vericilerin yaptıkları işe ilişkin becerileri ve tecrübelerinin artmasıyla müşteri tatmini yükselebilecek bu da birbirileyle bağlantılı olarak çalışanların iş tatmin düzeyleri ile sergiledikleri hizmetin kalitesini etkileyebilecektir. Bu çalışmada cenaze hizmetleri çalışanlarından ölüm eğitimi verilen ve verilmeyen iki grubun iş tatmin düzeylerinin karşılaştırılması amaçlanmıştır. Yapılan literatür taramasında Türkiye'de ölüm ve ölüm eğitimi üzerine yapılan çalışmaların genellikle kuramsal çalışmalar olarak kurgulandığı ve ölüm eğitiminin özellikle ölüm olgusuyla sıklıkla yüzleşen çalışanlar üzerinde önemli olumlu etkiler yarattığına dair çeşitli araştırmalar bulunduğu görülmüştür. Ancak cenaze hizmeti sağlayıcıları örnekleminde ölüm eğitimi almış olmanın iş tatminine etkisine dair araştırmaın gerçekleştirildiği tarihte Türkiye'de herhangi bir çalışma bulunmamaktadır. Söz konusu örnekleme ilişkin uluslararası çalışmalar da sınırlı sayıdadır. Bu bağlamda Muğla ve Denizli Büyükşehir Belediyeleri Cenaze Hizmetleri ile Uşak Belediyesi Cenaze Hizmetlerinde çalışan ölüm eğitimi almış 57 kişi ile ölüm eğitimi almamış 54 çalışana iş tatminlerini ölçmeye yönelik anket uygulanmıştır. İki grubun ortalamalarına ilişkin yapılan istatistik analizlere göre ölüm eğitimi alan grubun iş tatmini seviyesi ölüm eğitimi almayan grubun iş tatmini seviyesine göre önemli ölçüde yüksek çıkmıştır. Ayrıca iş tatmini anketine verilen cevapların kadın ve erkekler arasında cinsiyet değişkeni bağlamında farklılığı, erkeklerin iş tatmin düzeylerinin kadınlardan daha yüksek çıktığı bulgusuna da ulaşılmıştır. Elde edilen bulgulardan yola çıkılarak çeşitli çıkarımlar yapılmıştır. Bununla beraber ölüm eğitimi almanın bugüne kadar ihmali edilen cenaze hizmeti sektörü çalışanları tizerinde işleri kolaylaşturma, profesyonel yaklaşım sağlama, travmatik durumları yönetme ve hizmet alıcılara psikolojik destek sağlama gibi farklı katkıları da bulunacağı düşünülmektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ölüm Eğitimi, İş Tatmini, Cenaze Hizmetleri, ÖrgütSEL Davranış.

**JEL Kodları:** M12, M53, M54.

“Bu çalışma Araştırma ve Yayın Etigi'ne uygun olarak hazırlanmıştır.”

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The periods of sudden losses can increase the tendency of sensitivity and depression by reducing the level of satisfaction of people depending on the mourning process (Zara, 2019). At that times individuals may exhibit unexpected behaviors due to hopelessness and sadness. Thus, the client groups which the funeral practitioners

have to face can eliminate job satisfaction of them non deliberately. The high-leveled job satisfaction of the funeral service practitioners is very important in terms of managing the abnormal reactions of the group they serve, displaying a mature and calm approach, using their self-efficacy and ultimately protecting the prestige of the organization. Since the 1960s a substantial endeavor has been undertaken to develop and refine death education programs, marking a significant turning point in the realm of thanatology (Wass, 2004). This evolution has been characterized by a meticulous focus on crucial components of death education, encompassing several pivotal dimensions. The relationship between death education and job satisfaction levels of funeral service practitioners is an important issue of study that has implications for both the well-being of funeral professionals and the quality of services provided to grieving families.

Job satisfaction involves an individual's overall job assessment and the extent to which workplace needs are fulfilled. Influenced by factors like salary, working hours, co-workers and emotional state (Jumrana et al., 2022), it's vital for well-being and performance, including funeral service practitioners. Linking job satisfaction and service quality in this sector is essential. Job satisfaction is contentment with work while service quality is meeting client needs. Satisfied employees tend to be motivated and engaged, crucial in the compassionate funeral industry. Research shows a positive link between job satisfaction and service quality across various fields (Snipes et al., 2006; Yee et al., 2010; Pantouvakis and Bouranta, 2013; Pantouvakis and Mpogiatzidis, 2013; Ariani, 2015; Ukil, 2016; Singh et al., 2019). When funeral practitioners perceive positive internal service quality-effective communication, teamwork and support-they experience higher job satisfaction. This can lead to improved service quality as content employees are more likely to exceed expectations for grieving families' needs.

Job satisfaction also has very positive effects on organizations. Among these contributions are increased organizational commitment, decreased conflicts and absenteeism, and increased tendency to exhibit extra role behavior (Tanrıverdi, 2008; Eslami and Gharakhani, 2012; Dyah Sawitri et al., 2016; Loan, 2020; Ramalho et al., 2018; Smokrović et al., 2019) There are many current studies in the literature indicating that businesses operating in the service sector will achieve positive organizational outputs and performance increases if they can provide employee satisfaction (Galvan-Vela et al., 2021; Sija, 2021; Donthu and Subramanyam, 2022; Gazi et al., 2022; Efrianto and Kartawijaya, 2023; Suryana, 2023; Perić et al., 2023).

While this study does not provide a direct assessment of service quality (It is clear that there is a need for studies investigating the mediating effect of job satisfaction on the effect of death education on service quality), it undertakes the premise that heightened job satisfaction among employees corresponds to an enhancement in service quality. The study focuses on probing the efficacy of death education in this context an aspect previously postulated in the literature to exert a positive influence on the job satisfaction levels of funeral service employees. Guided by research

hypothesis, our study proceeds as follows: firstly, a comprehensive elucidation of the content encompassed by death education will be presented. Subsequently, the methodology employed in the study will be expounded upon. The investigation will then revolve around discerning disparities in job satisfaction levels along with other pertinent demographic variables within the experimental group exposed to death education, as compared to the non-death education control group.

### **1.1. A Literature Review on Death Education and Job Satisfaction**

Unfortunately, as the references provided do not address the specific topic of death education, we can say there is no specific literature available that directly investigate the relationship between neither death education and job satisfaction or more specifically funeral service practitioners. But it is clear to understanding what death education is important in terms of explaining the effects of this education on persons job satisfaction.

Education about death, in other words death education, aims to enable people to determine their own attitudes towards the phenomenon of death (Tanhan, 2013). Therefore death education can create different competencies and different behavior patterns in each individual depending on their values and cultures.

The phenomenon of death education has gained an interdisciplinary character over time. According to the history of the concept, death education- which refers primarily to the medical support given to terminal patients- has started to include approaches from different disciplines such as psychology, religion, sociology, and philosophy over time. Death education programs which were first implemented in the US have spread to different countries.

Since each individual's process of welcoming death differs, his/her reaction to the phenomenon of death varies from person to person. In this context, death education enables individuals to realize their perspective on the phenomenon of death and helps them to gain awareness that can help them manage their reactions to death. People who receive death education can exhibit more prepared and more maturity in the face of death and can remain calmer no matter how death occurs.

Death education is carried out with different practices in the world. In general, death education practices given to health sector employees should be planned for all sector employees (fire brigade, policemen, etc.) who often face the phenomenon of death. Since death education is not taught in Turkish schools, there is no separate curriculum for this topic (Zonbul & Çelik, 2023:2). In Turkey, various death education practices for healthcare professionals serving terminal patients are organised by institutions from time to time. So, considering that funeral service workers are always confronted with the phenomenon of death, death education in this sector will inevitably contribute both professionally and individually.

As it is generally accepted, death education has three dimensions. The first one is called religious death education, which includes the faith-based teachings of

chaplains. The second one is called informative death education specific to occupations related to the intervention in the death-related process, and the last dimension is called death education which teaches individuals to cope with the anxiety and grief encountered in the death and post-death period (Morgan, 1998).

The primary purpose of death education is to reduce death anxiety and fear of death, while eliminating the unknown about death (Wass, 2004). Although individuals who constantly encounter the phenomenon of death due to their profession are prioritized every individual who wants to have this education can be included to death education programs.

On the other hand, There are very limited studies in Turkey on the purposes and results of death education. In their study, Böyükbaşı Macit and Tümlü (2019) examined the perceptions of the psychological counsellors that provided assistance to children who faced death, loss and grief before the "death education" they trained, and how the knowledge they acquired after the education reflected on their perception of efficacy. In his study, Tanhan (2013) concluded that when university students train death education, their psychological anxiety levels decrease and their psychological well-being levels increase. Bucuka (2022) examined the elements of the happy death process through the observations of chaplains. In their study, İnci and Öz (2009) concluded that death education reduced the death anxiety and depression levels of nurses and positively affected their attitudes towards the patients along the terminal period. Yalçın and Kadioğlu (2020) examined the causes of death anxiety in children and young people, its theoretical foundations, how it differs according to developmental stages, attitudes towards death and the benefits of death education.

Studies on death education in the world are quite diversified. While some of these interdisciplinary studies mainly focus on theory (Bugen, 1981; Wass, 2004; Doka, 2015; Phan et al., 2020; Testoni et al., 2021; Wang, 2021; McAfee et al, 2022; Park et al, 2023), others focus on the individual or organizational benefits of death education (Hurtig & Stewin, 1990; Maglio & Robinson, 1994; Caciattore et al, 2015; Dadfar & Lester, 2020; Chen et al, 2020; Stylianou & Zembylas, 2021; Jiang, 2023; Testoni et al., 2023).

While there are no specific researches on the relationship between job satisfaction and death education, the existing in general literature on job satisfaction and education can provide some information. Since it is known that the level of education is a factor that positively affects the employee's ability to master the job and success, it is expected that the relationship between education and job satisfaction will create positive organizational outputs. Since employee motivation in the service sector creates more sensitive and measurable instant results compared to other sectors, every factor affecting the motivation of service sector employees gains importance. This research, which examines the relationship between job satisfaction levels of funeral service employees who face the phenomenon of death

every day and death education, is unique because there is no similar research held in Turkey.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. Design, Sample and Setting**

The people who work at funeral services in Muğla, Denizli and Uşak cities were determined as the research population and a questionnaire was applied to the entire population. Since these three provinces are among the provinces with high mortality and suicide rates in Turkey according to the data of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK, 2022), the study sample was composed of funeral service employees in these three provinces. Therefore, purposive sampling method was used in the study.

The research was conducted within the framework of the ethics committee permission of Middle East Technical University Human Research Ethics Committee with protocol number 0184-ODTUIAEK-2023 and 07/04/2023. The questionnaire was designed by the researchers and consists of two parts including demographic information and job satisfaction scale. Since the number of employees working in funeral services is low, the questionnaire was delivered to all employees in Muğla, Denizli and Uşak, in other words, the questionnaire was applied to the entire research population.

The surveys were completed in approximately 4 months (01/05/2023- 10/09/2023). As part of convenience sampling the survey form was applied through face-to-face interactions resulting in a total of 111 participants. Among these participants 57 individuals had a background in death education while 54 individuals did not.

The death education delivered of the participants is an 8-week course given by theologians and health professionals. It includes topics such as the concept of death in terms of religious approaches, funeral preparation, death anxiety and coping with grief.

There were no missing values in the collected data and no participants were excluded for not meeting the criteria. 48 of the 111 participants (43.2%) were women. Furthermore, the majority of participants in the study belong to the middle age group (35-54) and their educational attainment is primarily at the level of primary and secondary school. The demographic information of participants is given in Table 1.

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics**

		f	%
State	Denizli	32	29
	Muğla	31	28
	Uşak	48	43
Age Groups	18-24	11	10
	25-34	16	14
	35-44	39	35
	45-54	31	28
	55-64	14	13
Genders	Woman	48	43
	Man	63	57
Educational Status	Elementary School	48	43
	Secondary Education	54	49
	Associate Degree	5	4
	Bachelor's Degree	3	3
	Postgraduate	1	1
Seniorities	<10 Years	41	37
	>10 Years	70	63
Death Education	Yes	57	51
	No	54	49

*Note: f represents the frequency, % represents the percentage of the relevant frequency within the group.*

## 2.2. Rating Instruments

The survey had collected demographic information from the participants and included the 1967 version of Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) which is developed by David J. Weiss, Rene V. Dawis and George W. England in 1960. The revised rating scale of the MSQ led to distributions that are more symmetrically distributed around the category of "satisfied" resulting in greater item variance. It is important to note that the MSQ manual for the 1967 version provides limited normative data. As a result, the 1967 version of the MSQ is most suitable for situations where normative data are not needed. For instance, it can be effectively used in prediction studies or when conducting comparisons within an organization where external norms are not required for analysis or interpretation. The MSQ is a questionnaire that measuring participants levels of satisfaction. The response choices in the MSQ were measured on a scale from 1 to 5 point were representing to 1: "Very dissatisfied", 2: "Dissatisfied", 3: "Neither", 4: "Satisfied" and 5: "Very satisfied". Scoring of the MSQ can also include a General Satisfaction scale. This scale uses 20 items (one from each of the twenty scales), yielding a score ranging from 20 to 100. The three scales of the MSQ consist of the following items (Weiss et al., 1967).

Minessota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) was adapted into Turkish language by Deniz and Gülist Gökcör in 1985 and has been used in many studies so far

(Zeynel, 2014). The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated as 0.770 through Cronbach's Alpha.

Minnesota Job Satisfaction Scale consists of two dimensions: intrinsic satisfaction and extrinsic satisfaction. The intrinsic satisfaction dimension consists of 12 items that include the adjectives of success, recognition, appreciation, responsibility, authority, freedom to use their skills, moral values, change and helping others, while the extrinsic satisfaction dimension consists of 8 items that express the elements of the job that are outside the individual such as business policy, control method, relations with the manager, colleagues and hierarchically lower employees, management understanding, conditions of the workplace, salary and job guarantee (Karataş & Güleş, 2010: 80).

### **3. RESULTS**

#### **3.1. Analysis**

Following the suggestions of Weiss et al., we computed the dimensions of job satisfaction level. Subsequently, we conducted an independent samples t-test (Skewness and Kurtosis of all dimensions are between at  $\pm 2$ ) to examine whether there are significant mean differences in job satisfaction levels between the group with educated and the group non-educated. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that the group of 57 participants with death education exhibited higher levels of intrinsic job satisfaction ( $\bar{x}: 46.842 \pm 6.123$ ) compared to the group of 54 participants without any education ( $\bar{x}: 33.018 \pm 9.938$ ) and as seen in the table the mean difference is statistically significant at 0.05 level ( $t_{(87,289)}: 8.766$  and  $p < .001$ ). Extrinsic job satisfaction level of educated group is also higher ( $\bar{x}: 22.859 \pm 3.889$ ) than non-educated group ( $\bar{x}: 15.814 \pm 5.285$ ). According to table, mean difference of Extrinsic job satisfaction level of educated and non-educated group are statistically significant at 0.05 level ( $t_{(97,133)}: 7.964$  and  $p < .001$ ). Finally, we can see clearly the General Job Satisfaction level of the educated group is higher ( $\bar{x}: 77.228 \pm 9.462$ ) than non-educated group ( $\bar{x}: 54.241 \pm 16.311$ ) and difference of group mean is statistically significant ( $t_{(84,091)}: 9.018$  and  $p < .001$ ) at 0.05 level.

Also, If the two groups differ in ways other than background in death education, we have controlled for these variables in the analysis too (Please see Table 3). As a result of analysis, we couldn't find any other group that statistically significant differed in terms of job satisfaction, except of gender. Our findings; revealed that demographic variables such as age, education, city and seniority do not affect statistically significant the job satisfaction of the employees. The relationship between death education, gender and job satisfaction has not been directly studied in the available references. However, there are several studies that explore the relationship between gender and job satisfaction. Oshagbemi (2003), showed that the gender and job satisfaction are uncorrelated when the effects of other variables

are controlled. In the other hand, the relationship between gender and job satisfaction is complex and can be influenced by various factors such as job quality, age education and cultural context etc. While some studies suggest that women may have higher job satisfaction than men (Carillo-Garcia et al., 2013; Mohd Suki et al., 2020; Casu et al, 2021; Köse & Avcioğlu, 2023), other studies have found no significant gender differences (Lee et al., 2020; Mayya et al., 2020; Njoki and Minja 2021; Dilmaghani, 2022; Silva et al. 2023).

In the studies in the literature, it is generally assumed that other factors other than gender are constant in studies that find that women have higher job satisfaction than men. In studies where other factors other than gender are taken into consideration, significant results were not obtained in the context of the relationship between gender and job satisfaction. This can be explained by the relationship between job satisfaction and other parameters other than gender such as experience, income level, education level, marital status, and sector of employment.

In some studies conducted around the world on the job satisfaction of employees in funeral services, it is stated that job satisfaction is related to funeral directors' service quality, career expectation, earning level, and compassion level. (Ludlum & Ludlum, 2010; Tandelilin, 2018; Grandi et al., 2023),

In addition, Pita and Torregrosa (2020) examined the gender job satisfaction paradox on a country basis and concluded that men in Turkey have higher levels of job satisfaction than female employees. The presence of gender inequality in job quality can also impact the relationship between gender and job satisfaction. Further research is needed to better understand the mechanisms underlying the relationship between gender and job satisfaction.

**Table 2. Group Statistics and t-test for Equality of Means**

Dimensions	Group	Group Statistics			t-test for Equality of Means	
		N	Mean	Std. D.	t	Sig.
Intrinsic	Educated	57	46.842	6.123	8.766	*<.001
	Non-Educated	54	33.018	9.938		
Extrinsic	Educated	57	22.859	3.889	7.964	*<.001
	Non-Educated	54	15.814	5.285		
General Job Satisfaction	Educated	57	77.228	9.462	9.018	*<.001
	Non-Educated	54	54.241	16.311		

Note: Std.D; Standard Deviation, t; t statistics for independent group, Sig.; Probability of test statistics.

\*Indicates that significant test results with 95% reliability.

**Table 3. Test for Equality of Means for Demographic Characteristic**

State		N	Mean	Std. D.	Test Stat <sup>(1)</sup> .	p.
Intrinsic	Denizli	32	40.15	10.544		
	Muğla	31	38.129	10.837	.862	.425
	Uşak	48	41.375	10.783		
Extrinsic	Denizli	32	19.750	5.4180		
	Muğla	31	18.129	5.6139	1.115	.332
	Uşak	48	20.062	6.1416		
General Job Satisfaction	Denizli	32	66.594	16.144		
	Muğla	31	62.290	18.079	1.060	.350
	Uşak	48	68.104	18.003		
<b>Age<sup>(2)</sup></b>						
Intrinsic	18-34	27	37.740	11.026		
	35-44	39	40.897	10.542	.875	.420
	>45	45	40.866	10.710		
Extrinsic	18-34	27	19.370	5.765		
	35-44	39	19.923	5.555	.238	.788
	>45	45	19.044	6.123		
General Job Satisfaction	18-34	27	63.629	17.783		
	35-44	39	67.487	17.158	.387	.680
	>45	45	66.244	17.912		
<b>Gender</b>						
Intrinsic	Woman	27	48	37.020		
	Man	45	63	42.476	-2.734	.007*
Extrinsic	Woman	27	48	17.312		
	Man	45	63	21.047	-3.531	<.001
General Job Satisfaction	Woman	27	48	60.416		
	Man	45	63	70.333	-3.065	.001*
<b>Education<sup>(3)</sup></b>						
Intrinsic	Elmnt. School	48	39.229	10.537		
	Sec. Education	63	40.793	10.886	-.761	.224
Extrinsic	Elmnt. School	48	19.083	6.042		
	Sec. Education	63	19.698	5.6472	-.552	.291
General Job Satisfaction	Elmnt. School	48	64.750	17.5153		
	Sec. Education	63	67.032	17.601	.679	.299
<b>Seniorities</b>						
Intrinsic	<10 Years	41	38.780	10.572		
	>10 Years	70	40.900	10.798	-1.011	.158

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Extrinsic	<10 Years	41	19.219	5.785		
	>10 Years	70	19.557	5.849	-.296	.384
General Job Satisfaction	<10 Years	41	64.512	17.260		
	>10 Years	70	66.942	17.734	-.709	.240

\*Indicates that significant test results with 95% reliability.

(1): Independent sample t-test was performed for with 2 category groups and ANOVA was performed for with 3 or more category groups (2): Age group of 18-24 has been combined with 25-34 and 45+ age group has been combined with 45-54 (3): Higher education level of second education has been combined, because the number of observations included in the group was small.

Based on the data presented in Table 3, we can observe the comparative job satisfaction across different demographic characteristics in three Turkish states: Denizli, Muğla, and Uşak. For intrinsic job satisfaction, Uşak exhibits the highest mean score of 41.375, followed by Denizli at 40.15, and Muğla at 38.129. The test statistic for equality of means indicates no significant difference among these states ( $p = 0.425$ ). Similarly, for extrinsic job satisfaction, Uşak again has the highest mean score of 20.062, with Denizli and Muğla at 19.750 and 18.129, respectively. The test statistic here also shows no significant difference ( $p = 0.332$ ). General job satisfaction follows the same trend, with Uşak leading at 68.104, Denizli at 66.594, and Muğla at 62.290, with no significant difference observed ( $p = 0.350$ ).

Age-wise, job satisfaction does not significantly vary across the age groups for intrinsic, extrinsic, or general job satisfaction categories. However, gender reveals a significant disparity. Men report significantly higher intrinsic (mean 42.476,  $p = 0.007$ ) and extrinsic job satisfaction (mean 21.047,  $p < 0.001$ ) compared to women, who have mean scores of 37.020 and 17.312, respectively. This pattern continues with general job satisfaction, where men report higher satisfaction (mean 70.333) than women (mean 60.416), with a significant difference ( $p = 0.001$ ). But its important to note that lower and upper two age groups were merged for increasing the number of people per group for testing.

Educational background and seniority do not show significant differences in job satisfaction levels. Those with secondary education report slightly higher intrinsic (mean 40.793) and general job satisfaction (mean 67.032) compared to those with elementary education (mean intrinsic 39.229, mean general 64.750). Similarly, employees with over ten years of experience report marginally higher intrinsic and general job satisfaction (means 40.900 and 66.942) compared to those with less than ten years of experience (means 38.780 and 64.512).

In conclusion, while job satisfaction levels in terms of intrinsic, extrinsic, and general factors do not vary significantly by state, age, education, or seniority, significant gender differences highlight the need for further investigation and potential policy interventions to address these disparities.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

In the fields of health and social work, research into death education goes back to the 1920s (Herrero et al., 2020). In these periods, the importance of death education for health professionals was taken into consideration. In the following periods, the benefits of death education for health professionals have been the subject of various researches. Then, it has been discussed whether death education should be trained in schools as being a fact that everyone faces (Mcgovern and Barry, 2000; Herrero et all., 2020; Dyregrov et all, 2013, Holland, 2008; Stylianou and Zembylas, 2018) and individual and organizational positive outcomes of death education have begun to be examined.

Research into death education has advanced notably in recent years, with studies on the purposes of education (Melich, 1989). Studies on the purpose of death education focus on the contribution of managing the pre-death period, the death process, post-death stress and trauma to various professions.

In studies on death education in the world, the effects of death education on psychological and sociological variables (Dadfar & Lester, 2020; Phan et al., 2020; Ronconi et al., 2023, Li et al., 2023) and its contributions to professional groups (Dickinson & Mermann, 1996; Zhang et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2023; Han et al., 2023) have been frequently examined. The contributions of death education to organizations are generally considered in the context of health sector businesses and service quality. Recently, there have been various discussions on the necessity of death education in schools, especially with the effect of rising suicide rates in Europe (Friesen et al., 2020; Testoni et al., 2020; Gao, 2021; Huang et al., 2021; Raccichini et al., 2023; Biancalani et al., 2023).

It is important to remind that the specific relationship between death education and job satisfaction level of funeral service practitioners has not been extensively researched in the current literature. However, considering the importance of job satisfaction in the well-being and performance of employees, it is plausible to assume that death education, which provides professionals with knowledge and skills related to their work, may have a positive impact on their job satisfaction. By enhancing their understanding of death, dying and bereavement, funeral service practitioners may be better equipped to provide compassionate and effective services, which could contribute to their job satisfaction. In addition to death education, managers should support organizations that provide various orientation trainings and psychological support that can increase job satisfaction and motivation of funeral service practitioners.

It is widely acknowledged that the effect of human involvement on service quality is a significant challenge in the service industry (Redman and Mathews, 1998; Aryee et al., 2013). This is particularly true for industries that require sensitivity and emotional engagement such as funeral services. The experience and attitudes of service practitioners play a crucial role in determining their level of satisfaction

which in turn impacts the quality of service they provide (Butt et al., 2007; Puttewar et al., 2016; Snipes et al., 2005). Furthermore, it is important to recognize that this process can also have an impact on the emotional well-being of the service recipients potentially leading to traumatic disorders.

Addressing the factors that influence job satisfaction and emotional well-being among funeral service practitioners is crucial not only for the practitioners themselves but also for the overall quality of service and the well-being of service recipients. Expanding research efforts in this area can provide valuable insights and contribute to improving the experiences of both practitioners and service recipients in the funeral service industry.

Studies on death and death education in Turkey are generally theoretical (Köylü, 2004; Tanhan, 2013; Bölükbaşı Macit and Tümlü, 2019; İnci and Öz, 2012; Şimşek and Tosun 2021; Bucuka, 2022; Öztürk et al., 2011) and also empirical studies generally focus on the psychological dimension of death education and the health sector (İnci and Öz, 2009; Bilge et al., 2013; Tepe Medin vd., 2020; Yılmaz and Vermişli, 2015; Menekli, 2014; Acehan and Eker, 2013; Ay and Gençtürk, 2013; Köse et al., 2019). Thus we can say there is no study on the relationship between death education and job satisfaction in Turkey. Whereas, death education levels of funeral services practitioners, as a particularly prominent industry, may affect their job satisfaction. In this regard, our study stands out as it goes beyond theoretical inquiry and aims to provide unique insights into the determinants of job satisfaction level in the Turkish funeral service industry, taking into account the specific cultural and societal context. By exploring and examining these factors and their indirectly impact on service quality, our study has the potential to make significant contributions to the funeral service sector and scholarly literature. We address a research gap and offers practical recommendations for job satisfaction level that indirectly has a great impact on it effecting enhancing service quality in this crucial domain for Turkey.

In conclusion, there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction levels and service quality of funeral service practitioners. Job satisfaction, particularly influenced by internal service quality and overall work environment, plays a crucial role in the ability of funeral professionals to provide high-quality and compassionate care to grieving families. By understanding and addressing the factors that contribute to job satisfaction, funeral service organizations can enhance service quality and ultimately improve the overall experience for their clients.

#### **4.1. Limitations and potential for future research**

One of the most important limitations of this study is the difficulty to reach enough number of funeral service practitioners to raise the reliability of the study. As the job itself is known to be an undesirable job, the number of employees in funeral services is low either. Another limitation is that employees working at this industry generally have a low level of education. This situation could have been a reason for

them to misunderstand the questions. Even though the research was conducted in only three provinces in Türkiye, in order to eliminate these drawbacks and to get more accurate results from the research, the majority of the questionnaires were conducted face to face and the entire population was reached. In the future, the results of the research can be generalized if a larger sample is studied. Also, it may also be suggested to conduct studies in which different variables are included and mediating or moderating effects are investigated through advanced analyses.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study reveals that death education increases the job satisfaction level of funeral service practitioners. Death education increases the performance of not only health professionals, but also all occupational groups related to the death phenomenon and its consequences, by increasing the level of expertise. Increasing job performance, on the other hand, increases positive organizational behavior variables such as organizational commitment, productivity, and extra-role behavior. However, among them, job satisfaction has a special importance as it reduces absenteeism and turnover rates. It also helps to increase organizational success and create a happy employee group. Like in the domino effect theory, this happiness supports a peaceful organizational climate which is very important for every workplace.

## **CENAZE HİZMETİ SAĞLAYICILARININ ÖLÜM EĞİTİM DÜZEYLERİ İLE İŞ TATMİN DÜZEYLERİ ARASINDAKİ İLİŞKİYİ BELİRLEMEYE YÖNELİK BİR ARAŞTIRMA**

### **1. GİRİŞ**

Ölüm, her ne kadar bireylerde kendi yaşadıkları kayıplar nedeniyle meydana gelen ölüm korkularını tetiklediği için (Munson ve Hunt, 2005) toplumlarda üzerinde düşünülmekten kaçınılan bir kavram olsa da (Willis, 2002) insanın bizzat kendi deneyim alanı dışında gerçekleşen bir olaydır. Bu yüzden insanlar, çevrelerindeki diğer insanların ölümleriyle ilgili olarak yaşadıkları deneyimlerden yola çıkarak, ölüme ilişkin tutumlar geliştirmektedirler. Bu bağlamda ölüm sadece biyolojik değil aynı zamanda sosyal bir olgudur (Tanhan ve Ari İnci, 2009:7). Kayıp zamanları yas sürecine bağlı olarak kişilerde memnuniyet seviyesini azaltarak, hassasiyet ve depresyon eğilimini artırabilir. Bu durumlarda genellikle umutsuzluk ve üzüntü nedeniyle bireyler travmatik davranışlar sergileyebilirler. Dolayısıyla cenaze işleri çalışanlarının hizmet sağladıkları grup cenaze işleri çalışanlarının iş tatminlerini ortadan kaldırabilecek yaklaşım sergileyebilmektedirler. Cenaze işleri çalışanlarının iş tatminlerinin yüksek olması ise hizmet sağladıkları bu söz konusu grubun normal olmayan tepkilerini yönetebilme, olgun ve sakin yaklaşım sergileyebilme, öz yeterliliklerini kullanabilme ve en nihayetinde kurumsal prestiji koruyabilme konusunda oldukça önem taşımaktadır. Ölüm ile ilişkin eğitim, bir başka ifadeyle ölüm eğitimi, kişilerin ölüm olgusu karşısında kendi tavırlarını belirlemelerini sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır (Tanhan, 2013:186). Yapılan literatür taramasında Türkiye'de ölüm ve ölüm eğitimi üzerine yapılan çalışmaların

genellikle kuramsal çalışmalar olarak kurgulandığı ve ölüm eğitiminin özellikle ölüm olgusuyla sıkılıkla yüzleşen çalışanlar üzerinde önemli olumlu etkiler yarattığına dair çeşitli araştırmalar bulunduğu görülmüştür. Ancak cenaze hizmeti sağlayıcıları örnekleminde ölüm eğitimi almış olmanın iş tatminine etkisine dair araştırmanın gerçekleştirildiği tarihte Türkiye'de herhangi bir çalışma bulunmamaktadır. Bu bağlamda bu araştırma cenaze hizmetleri çalışanlarından ölüm eğitimi verilen ve verilmeyen iki grubun iş tatmin düzeylerini karşılaştırmayı amaçlayan özgün bir araştırmadır.

## 2. YÖNTEM

Araştırma anket yöntemiyle cenaze hizmeti sağlayıcıları üzerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Belediyelerde cenaze hizmetleri alanında çalışan kişi sayısının azlığı nedeniyle yeterli örneklem sayısına ulaşılabilmesi ve çalışmanın geçerlilik ile güvenilirliğini artırmak için 2022 verilerine göre ölüm ve intihar oranları oldukça yüksek olan (TUİK, 2022) üç ilde görevli (Denizli, Muğla ve Uşak) tüm cenaze hizmetleri çalışanları araştırma evreni olarak belirlenmiş ve tüm evren araştırma örneklemine dahil edilmiştir. 111 adet anket formu analizlere dahil edilmiştir. Anket demografik ve istihdam özellikleri ile iş tatminini ölçen iki kısımdan oluşturulmuştur. Çalışmada Weiss vd. Tarafından (1967) oluşturulmuş olan Minnesota İş Tatmini Ölçeğinin kısaltılmış versiyonu kullanılmıştır. Söz konusu ölçek yaygın olarak kullanılan bilimsel bir ölçektir. İçsel, dışsal ve genel tatmin boyutlarını ölçen toplam 20 sorudan oluşmaktadır.

## 3. BULGULAR

Yapılan analizler sonucunda ölüm eğitimi almış 57 kişilik katılımcı grubunun eğitim almamış 54 kişilik katılımcı grubuna kıyasla daha yüksek düzeyde içsel iş tatmini sergilediği görülmüştür. Gruplar arasındaki ortalama fark istatistiksel olarak anlamlıdır. Eğitimli grubun dışsal iş tatmini düzeyi de eğitimsız gruptan daha yüksektir. Tabloya göre, eğitimli ve eğitimsız grubun dışsal iş tatmini düzeyleri arasındaki ortalama fark istatistiksel olarak anlamlıdır. Son olarak, eğitimli grubun Genel İş Tatmini düzeyi eğitimsız gruptan daha yüksektir ve grup ortalamaları arasındaki fark istatistiksel olarak anlamlıdır.

Ayrıca yaş, eğitim ve kıdem gibi demografik değişkenlerin çalışanların iş tatminini istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir şekilde etkilemediği, bu bağlamda sadece cinsiyet değişkeninin anlamlı farklılıklar sergilediği bulgularına ulaşılmıştır. Literatüre göre cinsiyet ve iş tatmini arasındaki ilişki, iş kalitesi, yaş, eğitim ve kültürel bağlam gibi çeşitli faktörlerden etkilenebilir. Bazı çalışmalar kadınların erkeklerden daha yüksek iş tatminine sahip olabileceğini öne sürerken (Carillo-Garcia vd., 2013), diğer çalışmalar cinsiyetle iş tatmini arasında önemli bir fark bulamamıştır (Njoki ve Minja 2021; Silva vd. 2023). Cinsiyet ve iş tatmini arasındaki ilişkinin altında yatan mekanizmaları daha iyi anlamak için geniş kapsamlı başka çalışmalar yapılması gerekmektedir.

#### **4. TARTIŞMA**

Sağlık ve sosyal hizmet alanlarında ölüm eğitiminin ilişkisinin araştırmalar 1920'lere kadar uzanmaktadır (Herrero vd., 2020). Bu dönemlerde sağlık profesyonelleri için ölüm eğitiminin önemi dikkate alınmıştır. İlerleyen dönemlerde ölüm eğitiminin sağlık profesyonelleri için faydalari çeşitli araştırmalara konu olmuştur. Ardından herkesin karşılaştığı bir gerçek olarak ölüm eğitiminin okullarda verilmesi gerekip gerekmediği tartışılmış (Megovern ve Barry, 2000; Herrero et all., 2020; Dyregrov et all., 2013; Holland, 2008; Stylianou ve Zembylas, 2018) ve ölüm eğitiminin bireysel ve örgütsel olumlu sonuçları incelenmeye başlanmıştır.

Ölüm eğitimi ile cenaze hizmetleri uygulayıcılarının iş tatmini düzeyi arasındaki spesifik ilişki mevcut literatürde araştırma konusu edilmemiştir. Ancak, iş tatmininin çalışanların refahı ve performansı açısından önemi göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, profesyonellere işleriyle ilgili bilgi ve beceriler kazandıran ölüm eğitiminin iş tatmini üzerinde olumlu bir etkisi olabileceği varsayılabılır. Cenaze hizmetleri uygulayıcıları, ölüm, ölmeye ve yas tutma konusundaki anlayışlarını geliştirerek, şefkatli ve etkili hizmetler sunmak için daha donanımlı hale gelebilir ve bu da iş tatminlerine katkıda bulunabilir.

İnsan katılımlının hizmet kalitesi üzerindeki etkisinin hizmet sektöründe önemli bir problem olduğu yaygın olarak kabul edilmektedir (Redman ve Mathews, 1998; Aryee vd., 2013). Bu durum özellikle cenaze hizmetleri gibi hassasiyet ve duygusal bağlılık gerektiren hizmet alanlarında geçerlidir. Hizmet sektörü çalışanlarının deneyim ve tutumları, memnuniyet düzeylerinin belirlenmesinde önemli bir rol oynamakta ve bu da sundukları hizmetin kalitesini etkilemektedir (Butt vd., 2007; Puttewar vd., 2016; Snipes vd., 2005). Ayrıca, bu süreç hizmet alıcılarının duygusal refahı üzerinde de etkili olabilecektir.

Türkiye'de ölüm ve ölüm eğitimi üzerine yapılan çalışmalar genellikle teorik (Köylü, 2004; Tanhan, 2013; Böyükbaşı Macit ve Tümlü, 2019; İnci ve Öz, 2012; Şimşek ve Tosun 2021; Bucuka, 2022; Öztürk vd, 2011) çalışmalar olup, konuya ilişkin yapılmış az sayıdaki ampirik çalışmalar ise genellikle ölüm eğitiminin ve sağlık sektörünün psikolojik boyutuna odaklanmaktadır (İnci ve Öz, 2009; Bilge vd., 2013; Tepe Medin vd., 2020; Yılmaz ve Vermişi, 2015; Menekli, 2014; Acehan ve Eker, 2013; Ay ve Gençtürk, 2013; Köse vd., 2019). Oysa özellikle öne çıkan bir sektör olarak cenaze hizmetleri uygulayıcılarının ölüm eğitimi düzeyleri iş tatminlerini etkileyebilir. Bu bağlamda, araştırma teorik araştırmanın ötesine geçerek, Türkiye cenaze hizmetleri sektöründeki iş tatminin düzeyinin belirleyicileri hakkında, spesifik kültürel ve toplumsal bağlamı da dikkate alarak, özgün bir kavrayış sağlamayı amaçlamasıyla öne çıkmaktadır.

#### **SONUÇ**

Çalışma, ölüm eğitiminin cenaze hizmetleri uygulayıcılarının iş tatmin düzeyini artırdığını ortaya koymaktadır. Ölüm eğitimi sadece sağlık çalışanlarının değil, ölüm

olgusu ve sonuçlarıyla ilgili tüm meslek gruplarının uzmanlık düzeyini artırarak performanslarını yükseltmektedir. İş performansının artması ise örgütsel bağlılık, verimlilik ve ekstra rol davranışları gibi olumlu örgütsel davranış değişkenlerini artırmaktadır. Ancak bunlar arasında iş tatmini, devamsızlık ve işten ayrılma oranlarını azalttığı için özel bir öneme sahiptir. Ayrıca örgütsel başarının artmasına ve mutlu bir çalışan grubu yaratmasına yardımcı olur.

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