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ANALYSIS / RESEARCH

## Negative Problem Orientation and Wellbeing in Emerging Adulthood: The Mediating Roles of Optimism and Resilience

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### Abstract

Understanding the role of problem orientation for wellbeing during emerging adulthood is crucial to assist this cohort in successfully navigating the challenges of the transitional period. In this context, the present study investigates the interplay between negative problem orientation (NPO), resilience, optimism, and wellbeing among emerging adults. For this cross-sectional study, NPO, optimism, resilience, and wellbeing scales were administered to a total of 355 emerging adults (77% female,  $M_{age} = 21.33$ ,  $SD = 2.35$ ). The results revealed that NPO both directly and indirectly predicted wellbeing through optimism. However, contrary to the common assumption about positive resilience outcomes, no significant mediating effects of resilience between NPO and wellbeing were observed. The study concludes with a discussion of the findings' theoretical and practical implications.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Negative Problem Orientation, Optimism, Resilience, Wellbeing, Emerging Adulthood

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## Özet

Beliren yetişkinlik döneminde problemlere karşı tutumların iyilik halindeki rolünü anlamak, bu gruba geçiş döneminin zorluklarını başarıyla aşmalarında yardımcı olmak için çok önemlidir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma beliren yetişkinler arasında problemlere karşı olumsuz tutum (POT), dayanıklılık, iyimserlik ve iyilik hali arasındaki etkileşimi araştırmaktadır. Bu kesitsel çalışma için, toplam 355 beliren yetişkinlik döneminde olan bireye (%77 kadın,  $Ort= 21.33, SS = 2.35$ ) POT ölçeği, iyimserlik, dayanıklılık ve iyilik hali ölçekleri uygulanmıştır. Sonuçlar, POT'un hem doğrudan hem de iyimserlik aracılığıyla dolaylı olarak iyilik halini yordadığını ortaya koymuştur. Ancak, dayanıklılığın olumlu sonuçlarına ilişkin yaygın varsayımın aksine, dayanıklılığın NPO ve iyilik hali arasında anlamlı bir aracılık etkisi gözlenmemiştir. Bulgular hem teorik hem de pratik çıkarımlar açısından tartışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Olumsuz Sorun Yönelimi, İyimserlik, Dayanıklılık, İyilik Hali, Beliren Yetişkinlik

## Introduction

Emerging adults encounter numerous challenges inherent in a multifaceted and demanding academic environment. In this context, maintaining a positive problem orientation is paramount (D'Zurilla et al., 2004). Previous studies on problem orientation found that a negative problem orientation (NPO) correlates with various adverse outcomes, including but not limited to heightened levels of stress, anxiety, depression, diminished self-efficacy, and constrained adaptability (D'Zurilla & Nezu, 1999; Ladouceur et al., 1998). An overarching scholarly consensus is that, considering that emerging adults exhibit a lesser degree of negative problem orientation in their educational pursuits, they are more inclined to achieve heightened levels of life satisfaction and academic accomplishment. Accordingly, Ridner et al. (2016) suggested a shift in focus from criticizing emerging adults problem-solving approaches to understanding the affective and cognitive attributes individuals display when faced with challenges.

Conceptually, negative problem orientation is based on cognitive theory that emphasizes the role of cognitive schemas in shaping individuals' perceptions and interpretations of their experiences (Robichaud & Dugas, 2005). Negative problem orientation is a cognitive distortion where individuals hold negative thoughts and beliefs about their problems. These negative thoughts elicit negative emotions, eventually resulting in maladaptive health behaviors, undermining individuals' wellbeing (D'Zurilla & Nezu, 1999). To date, evidence shows that individuals with higher levels of NPO are prone to poorer emotional wellbeing (Chang et al., 2009). NPO undermines individuals' ability to solve a problem and generates feelings of helplessness and hopelessness when confronted with challenges. Therefore, people with high NPO are likely to view challenges as threats and not as opportunities for self-realization (D'Zurilla et al., 1998).

Despite the intrinsic relatedness of NPO and negative thinking, the two constructs differ in focus. While NPO suggests a cognitive-emotional mental set within a problem, implying a threat to individuals' wellbeing, doubts about solving the problem on one's own, and skepticism about its successful solution, negative thinking embraces a broader scope of cognitive patterns that adversely affect individuals' perception of life contexts (Elliott et al., 1995; Nezu, 2004). For instance, a tendency toward NPO affects academic performance and has

adverse consequences for social wellbeing (Chang et al., 2009). NPO also impacts social relations—accordingly, individuals with high NPO may struggle with communicating well and finding friends, which can elicit feelings of loneliness and thus lower their wellbeing (Chu et al., 2018).

A deeper understanding of the correlation between NPO and wellbeing can be derived from considering positive psychology concepts—namely, those of resilience or optimism necessary for keeping physically and emotionally healthy. The effect of a problem-solving attitude on other mental constructs, such as resilience and optimism should not be underestimated because it is shown how NPO impacts people's interpersonal skills (Rich & Bonner, 2004). The present study studies resilience or optimism as mediating variables in the relationship between NPO and wellbeing.

Resilience is the ability to adapt and bounce back from adversity and demonstrate mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility in facing challenges (Prince-Embury, 2013). This ability impacts an individual's overall wellbeing. Resilient individuals are better equipped to regulate their emotions and manage stress effectively (Dumont & Provost, 1999). They can also maintain a positive outlook even in the face of adversity, which helps them experience greater wellbeing (Samsari & Soulis, 2019). As a result, resilient individuals cope more easily with negative emotions (e.g., anxiety and depression) and have a sense of emotional stability (Cohn et al., 2009). In addition, resilience is closely linked to psychological wellbeing, which encompasses self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, positive relations, autonomy, and environmental mastery (Ong et al., 2006). In this relation, Masten and Obradovic (2006) argued that resilience is related to a positive component of the process of adapting to difficulties. Previous research on resilience primarily explored its connections to coping with stress, competence, emotional intelligence, optimism, humor, patience, acceptance, faith, and self-esteem (Ahern, 2006). Individuals with a high level of negative problem orientation may struggle to develop resilience because their tendency to view problems pessimistically can hinder their ability to confront and overcome difficulties effectively. Such individuals may lack the belief in overcoming obstacles, weakening their resilience. Conversely, individuals with higher levels of resilience are more likely to approach problems with a constructive mindset, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth, rather than as insurmountable barriers. Accordingly, resilient individuals are better equipped to navigate through setbacks and setbacks, which can mitigate the negative impact of a pessimistic problem orientation (Öz & Bahadır-Yılmaz, 2009).

Optimism, the other mediating variable explored in this study, is defined in positive psychology as a cognitive disposition characterized by the expectation of positive outcomes (Arslan & Yıldırım, 2021). Optimistic individuals view setbacks as temporary, specific, and external and attribute adverse events to external factors, rather than internal deficiencies (Carver et al., 2010). This positive mindset bolsters psychological wellbeing and promotes adaptive coping strategies (Scheier et al., 2001). Optimism was reported to be associated with improved subjective wellbeing during challenging times, thus emphasizing the importance of positive outcome expectancies in promoting psychological health (Alloy et al., 2006). Previous research reported a reciprocal relationship between NPO and optimism whereby interventions targeting cognitive distortions with a specific focus on fostering optimism were found to decrease negative problem orientation among young adults with concurrent depressive symptoms (Wilson et al., 2011). Furthermore, individuals with an optimistic disposition were found to exhibit a propensity to resolve problems encountered expeditiously (Chang & D'Zurilla, 1996). Due to their positive expectations for the future, optimistic individuals experience less anxiety in facing daily challenges (Trunzo & Pinto, 2003), have more positive emotions (Lai et al., 2005), and report increased life satisfaction (Bailey et al., 2007).

Since being optimistic comprises many factors contributing to wellbeing, it is essential to understand the impact of NPO on wellbeing. Such factors—including self-esteem, life satisfaction, and optimism (Caprara, 2009)—are closely intertwined with success in different domains such as health, academic achievement, and job effectiveness (Baumeister et al., 2003). By contrast, NPO is associated with a range of adverse outcomes, such as worry, anxiety, and depression. NPO also affects optimism and resilience, promoting more adaptive problem-solving strategies and coping with stress and adversity (Campbell-Sills et al., 2006; Kircaburun et al., 2017). In previous research, resilience was linked to many positive outcomes, including improved mental health, greater life satisfaction, and better coping skills (Smith et al., 2008). In addition, optimism was reported to be associated with adaptive behaviors, cognitive flexibility, and more appropriate coping strategies, which can mediate the negative impact of NPO on overall wellbeing (Conversano et al., 2010). Said differently, optimistic individuals tend to have a more positive affectivity, which is linked to a better perception of health and wellbeing (Vera-Villarroel et al., 2016).

### **Present Study**

The aim of the present study is two-fold. First, we aim to investigate the effect of NPO on wellbeing. The second goal is to explore the mediating role of optimism and resilience in the relationship between NPO and wellbeing. Investigating these associations may help to promote prevention and intervention strategies for emerging adults. Examining the relationships between these factors can provide valuable insights into strategies for promoting positive outcomes and mitigating the detrimental effects of NPO on wellbeing during emerging adulthood. Consequently, the results of this study can contribute to the current understanding of the implications of positive psychological constituents in individuals, particularly concerning wellbeing. In line with these research goals, the hypotheses addressed in this study are as follows:

**H1:** NPO would negatively correlate with emerging adults' wellbeing.

**H2:** NPO would negatively predict optimism and resilience.

**H3:** Optimism would play a mediating role in the relationship between NPO and wellbeing.

**H4:** Resilience would play a mediating role in the relationship between NPO and wellbeing.

### **Method**

#### **Procedure and Data Collection**

All materials and procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the researcher's university (2023/221). Data were collected from university students in emerging adulthood, specifically those aged between 18 and 35 years. Participants older than 35 years were excluded from the study. Prior to participation, an informed consent form outlining the study's purpose, confidentiality measures, and voluntariness was obtained from all the participants. Data were collected using an Internet-based survey administered through Google Forms. Instructors were requested to distribute the survey link to students via mass email and online classroom portals.

#### **Participants**

Of the 355 university student participants who participated in the study, 23.1% were male and 76.9% were female. The mean age of the participants was determined as  $21.33 \pm 2.35$  years and 13.2% were in the 18-19 age group, 68.2% were in the 20-22 age group, and 18.6% were in the 23 and older age group. The academic grade point average of the participants was determined as  $2.90 \pm 0.40$  and 13.5% had a GPA of 2.50 and below, 49.3% between 2.51 and 3.00, 34.4% between 3.01 and 3.50, and 2.8% between 3.51 and 4.00. 15.8% of the participants are in 1st grade, 58.9% are in 2nd grade, 5.6% are in 3rd grade, and 19.7% are in 4th grade (Table 1).

**Table 1. Distribution of participants according to demographic characteristics**

Demographic Variable	Groups	n	%
Gender	Male	82	23.1
	Female	273	76.9
Age groups (21,33±2,35)	18-19 years	47	13.2
	20-22 years	242	68.2
	23 years and above	66	18.6
Academic grade point average (2,90±0,40)	2.50 and below	48	13.5
	2.51-3.00	175	49.3
	3.01-3.50	122	34.4
	3.51-4.00	10	2.8
Grade	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	56	15.8
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	209	58.9
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	20	5.6
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	70	19.7

## Measures

### Sociodemographic Form

The characteristics of the participants were collected using a sociodemographic data form developed by the researcher. The form gathered data on age, gender, grade point average (GPA), and grade.

### Negative Problem Orientation Scale (NPO)

The NPO scale developed by Gosselin et al. (2005) and translated to Turkish by Akyay (2016) was used. This scale consists of 12 items and measures the inability of individuals to solve daily life problems. The items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “does not fit at all” to 5 = “fits extremely well.” The total scores of the NPO range between 12 and 60, with a higher score indicating a higher NPO. The original scale’s internal consistency was reported as .93. Scale adaptation was performed in healthy individuals with an average age of 33 years. Akyay (2016) reported the scale’s internal consistency as .90 and test-retest reliability as .87. The scale’s internal consistency in the present study was found to be .93.

### Brief Resilience Scale (BRS)

The Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) developed by Smith et al. (2008) and translated into Turkish by Haktanir et al. (2016) was used. This scale evaluates individuals’ ability to bounce back or recover from stress and includes six items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “1 = Strongly Disagree” to “5 = Strongly Agree”. The scores range from 6 (lower resilience) to 30 (higher resilience). The scale was found to have a strong convergent and discriminant predictive validity, with internal consistency estimates ranging from .80 to .91 (Smith et al., 2008). The internal consistency of the scale in the present study was found to be .82.

### Optimism and Pessimism Questionnaire (OPQ)

The OPQ, designed by Arslan and Yıldırım (2021) to evaluate pessimism and optimism in young Turkish adults, was used. This scale consists of six self-report items like “I hope many things will be better in the future.” The items are rated on a 5-point rating scale, ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree”. The internal consistency of the scale was reported to be .83 (Arslan & Yıldırım, 2021). The reliability coefficient in the present study amounted to .81.

### Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

Students' wellbeing was evaluated with the SWLS, designed to measure individuals' cognitive assessments and judgments of life (Diener et al., 1985). The scale consists of five self-report items, such as "The conditions of my life are excellent." The items are rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree". The scale was adapted into Turkish by Durak et al. (2010) and had satisfactory internal reliability in the Turkish sample. The internal consistency of the scale in the present study was found to be .91.

### Data Analysis

Before proceeding to data analysis, the suitability of the data set for multivariate analyses was tested. First, we ensured no missing values since the data were collected online with forced answers. Outliers were checked using Mahalanobis distance; one outlier was detected and removed from the data set. Skewness and kurtosis values indicated the normality of the data set. Finally, tolerance levels exceeded .10, and variance inflation factor (VIF) values ranged between 1.20 and 1.59. In addition, no correlation coefficient was higher than .80. These results indicated that there was no multicollinearity problem. Therefore, pre-screening results showed that the data were suitable for multivariate analyses. Table 2 reports correlation coefficients and descriptive statistics. Bootstrapping analyses were run to test the mediators of resilience and optimism in the relationship between negative problem orientation and wellbeing using 10.000 bootstrapping samples.

### Results

The correlations and descriptive statistics of the study variables are shown in Table 2. Participants had a mean score of 2.15 (SD = 0.88) for NPO, 2.91 (SD = 0.79) for resilience, 3.13 (SD = 0.52) for wellbeing, and 3.67 (SD = 0.87) for optimism. The results of correlation analyses revealed that NPO had significant negative correlations with resilience, optimism, and wellbeing; by contrast significant positive correlations were found between resilience, optimism, and wellbeing.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among the Variables**

Demographic Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Negative Problem Orientation	-			
2. Resilience	-.52***	-		
3. Optimism	-.47***	.39***	-	
4. Wellbeing	-.29***	.12**	.38***	-
$\bar{X}$	2.15	2.91	3.67	3.13
SD	.88	.79	.87	.52
Skewness	1.02	.16	-.58	-.68
Kurtosis	.54	-.34	-.16	.34

\*\* $p < .05$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

### Testing the Direct Effects on Wellbeing

A two-step hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to test the effects of negative problem orientation, resilience, and optimism (independent variables) on wellbeing (dependent variable). As consistent with the

purpose of this study, negative problem orientation was tested in the first step. Results showed that negative problem orientation negatively predicted wellbeing and explained 9% of the variance. In the second step, resilience and optimism were added to the model and explained an additional %8 of the variance. While resilience did not have a significant effect, optimism positively predicted wellbeing. When resilience and optimism were added to the model, the effect of negative problem orientation diminished, which indicated the potential mediating roles of resilience and optimism (Table 3). However, further bootstrapping analysis was conducted to test the significance of the mediating variables.

**Table 3. Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis on Predicting Wellbeing**

Variables	R <sup>2</sup>	Δ R <sup>2</sup>	B	SE	β	t	F
Step 1							
<b>Negative Problem Orientation</b>			-.18	.03	-.29	-5.77***	33.25***
Step 2							
		.08					
<b>Negative Problem Orientation</b>			-.12	.04	-.20	-3.29**	23.02***
<b>Resilience</b>			-.07	.04	-.11	-1.91	
<b>Optimism</b>			.19	.03	.32	5.67***	

\*\*p < .05, \*\*\*p < .001

**Testing the Mediating Effects of Resilience and Optimism**

A parallel mediation analysis was conducted using bootstrapping analysis with a 10,000 random resampling to test the mediating effects of resilience and optimism. The results are shown in Figure 1. Results showed that 95% confidence intervals for resilience included zero [-.01 to .08], which indicated a non-significant mediating role. Regarding mediating roles of optimism, confidence intervals did not include zero [-.13 to -.05], so optimism significantly mediated the effects of negative problem orientation. However, when considering the significant direct effect of negative problem orientation on wellbeing, the mediating role of optimism was partial. According to those results, a higher level of negative problem orientation was associated with diminished optimism, which in turn related to lower levels of wellbeing.

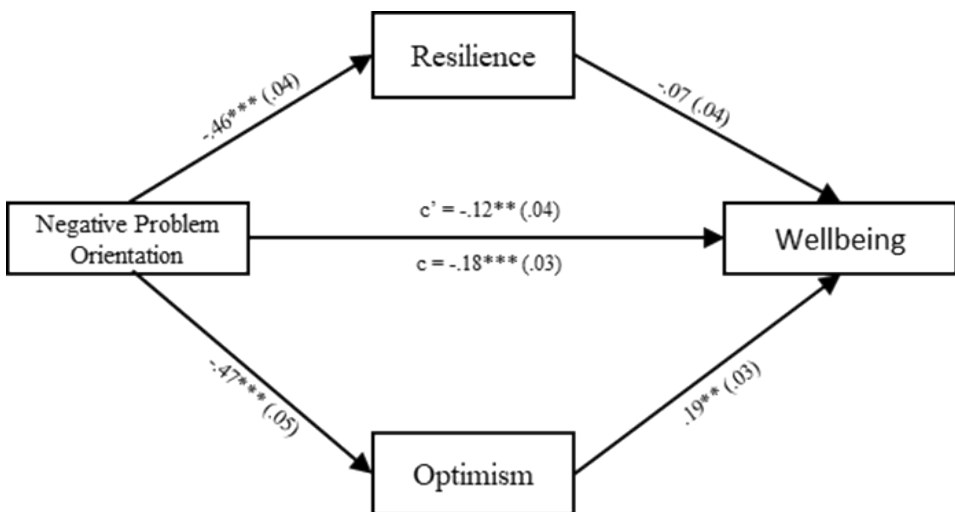


Figure 1. The mediating effect of resilience and optimism on the association between negative problem orientation and wellbeing. All presented effects are unstandardized, and standard errors are shown in parentheses. *c'* value represents the direct effect of negative problem orientation on wellbeing; *c* value represents the total effect of negative problem orientation on wellbeing.

\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

## Discussion

While previous research identified a wide range of variables that can foster positive problem orientation among emerging adults (Clarke et al., 2017), the role of emerging adults' psychological resources in the relationship between NPO and wellbeing has been scarcely investigated. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by exploring the mediating role of optimism and resilience in the relationship between NPO and wellbeing. Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions that present meaningful implications for theory and practice can be drawn.

First, the results confirmed the negative correlation between NPO and wellbeing (H<sub>1</sub>). This finding is consistent with previous research showing that emerging adults with high NPO, who tend to have maladaptive coping strategies and approach challenges with a pessimistic mindset, have a diminished level of wellbeing (Ciarrochi et al, 2009; Malouff et al., 2007). Conversely, positive problem orientation operates in conjunction with various variables, frequently serving as alternative indicators of wellbeing (Chang, 2017). These indicators include self-esteem, life satisfaction, and optimism, all of which positively correlate with wellbeing and success across diverse domains of functioning, such as health, academic achievement, and job performance (Baumeister et al., 2003; Caprara, 2009). The direct effect of NPO on wellbeing observed in this study aligns with the conceptualization that individuals with high NPO may struggle with persistent negative perceptions of problems, which can erode their wellbeing directly.

Second, in support of H<sub>2</sub>, we found that NPO negatively correlated with optimism and resilience (H<sub>2</sub>). Furthermore, we found evidence in support of the mediating role of optimism in the relationship between NPO and wellbeing (H<sub>3</sub>). However, the data analysis did not support hypothesis that resilience would mediate the relationship between NPO and wellbeing (H<sub>4</sub>).

The current study's results revealed that NPO significantly predicted wellbeing both directly and indirectly through optimism. This finding underscores the critical role of optimism in mediating the relationship between NPO and wellbeing. Specifically, higher levels of NPO were associated with lower levels of optimism, which in turn negatively impacted wellbeing. This is consistent with previous research suggesting that negative problem orientation can undermine individuals' ability to maintain a positive outlook, diminishing their overall sense of wellbeing (Bouchard et al., 2017; Chang & D'Zurilla, 1996; Zaheer & Khan, 2022; Zheng et al., 2024). As emerging adults encounter various life transitions, including academic and career pressures, an optimistic outlook can facilitate adaptive coping and reduce the psychological burden associated with negative problem orientation. Moreover, optimism boosts emerging adults' positive problem orientation and facilitates the successful culmination of NPO into wellbeing (Chang & D'Zurilla, 1996; Trunzo & Pinto, 2003).

Previous studies have indicated that the commonly held belief regarding the impact of resilience on wellbeing may not always align with empirical evidence (Cam & Alkal, 2020; Southwick et al., 2014). In the present study, while optimism positively predicted wellbeing, resilience did not have a significant direct or indirect effect on wellbeing. One of the reasons underlying this pattern of results could be that resilience widely varies across



contexts and is diversely defined on individual, familial, organizational, societal, and cultural levels (Richardson & Chew-Graham, 2016). Accordingly, empirical research on resilience requires a multi-level analysis that includes genetic, epigenetic, developmental, demographic, cultural, economic, and social factors (Southwick et al., 2014). Another possible explanation might be that the characteristics of the sample could have affected the relationship between resilience and wellbeing in the present study (Mguni et al., 2012; Pretsch et al., 2012). Specifically, the sample primarily consisted of emerging adults who have not faced significant adversity or challenges yet, so the protective role of resilience might not be as apparent (Leung et al., 2022).

Furthermore, it was previously argued that resilience is of tenuous scientific utility because it reflects ontogenetic instability (Kaplan, 2013). In addition, young adults who face significant adversities, particularly those who exhibit successful adaptation, frequently contend with latent psychological challenges over time, including issues such as depression and post-traumatic stress (Luthar et al., 2015). This phenomenon might be linked to overwhelmed stress response systems observed in resilient individuals enduring adverse environments.

### **Implications**

The present study contributes to extant knowledge on problem orientation in emerging adulthood. Previous research demonstrated how individuals use positive psychological traits (i.e., hope, self-efficacy, and grit) to overcome their adverse mindset regarding problem-solving features (Tras et al., 2013; Söğüt et al., 2022). The present study extends the principle of mindset in NPO by linking it to positive elements. The results reveal how the optimistic mechanisms work to boost positive problem orientation. Optimism can contribute to future-proofing in wellbeing analysis by diminishing NPO. Therefore, developing a more positive problem orientation, characterized by optimism and a constructive approach to problem-solving, can help individuals to make better decisions and improve their overall wellbeing.

The findings also provide several useful implications for practice. Specifically, we observed that not all psychological capacities influence the relationship between problem orientation and wellbeing. While resilience is associated with many positive outcomes, ranging from enhanced problem-solving skills to greater wellbeing and adaptability in the face of adversity (Lee et al., 2013), the mediating role of resilience in the relationship between NPO and wellbeing was not supported by current study's results. Resilience does not imply an absence of difficulty or distress. It can be influenced by various factors such as personal mastery, cognitive abilities, adaptability, attachment patterns, spirituality, neurobiological changes, and systemic influences (Southwick et al., 2014). We can better anticipate future risks by focusing on these psychological resources alongside a wellbeing lens. Therefore, the findings suggest that resilience is a complex construct and its role in the relationship between NPO and wellbeing warrants further research.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Wellbeing is a multifaceted construct that various factors beyond optimism and resilience can influence (Anglim et al., 2020; Yuen & Wu, 2024). Furthermore, the relationship between problem orientation and wellbeing might be dynamic and context-dependent (Ciarrochi et al., 2009). In a particular context, social support, thinking skills, coping strategies, and environmental stressors may have overshadowed the effects of resilience on wellbeing (Luthar et al., 2015). Exploring these potential mediators or moderators could provide deeper insights into this dynamic interplay.

This study is a cross-sectional study. While resilience is generally associated with better outcomes over time, its effects might not be immediately evident or might vary across different stages of life or in different situations

(Wang et al., 2022). Emerging adulthood is a time of rapid psychological and emotional development, and individuals may still be developing the emotional regulation skills and self-awareness needed to build resilience. This period is also frequently characterized by increased risk-taking behaviors and experimentation, which can undermine resilience efforts (Mouatsou & Koutra, 2023). As a result, while resilience is an essential trait for navigating the challenges of adulthood, it may not always be fully effective during this transitional period. Therefore, longitudinal studies tracking individuals over time could help to capture these nuanced dynamics. To conclude, this study highlights the critical importance of understanding NPO in emerging adulthood and provides novel insights into the connections between NPO, optimism, resilience, and wellbeing. While optimism emerged as a significant mediator in the relationship between NPO and wellbeing, the mediating role of resilience was not supported by the results, thereby challenging prevailing assumptions about its role in this context.



## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

# Beliren Yetişkinlikte Olumsuz Problem Yönelimi ve İyilik Hali: İyimserlik ve Dayanıklılığın Aracı Rolü

*Mehmet Avcı\**

### Giriş

Beliren yetişkinlik döneminde bireyler çok yönlü ve zorlu bir akademik ortamın doğasında bulunan çok sayıda zorlukla karşılaşmaktadırlar. Bu bağlamda, olumlu bir sorun yöneliminin sürdürülmesi son derece önemlidir (D'Zurilla ve ark., 2004). Problem yönelimi üzerine yapılan çalışmalar, olumsuz problem yöneliminin, artan stres, kaygı, depresyon, azalan öz yeterlilik ve kısıtlı uyum yeteneği gibi çeşitli olumsuz sonuçlarla ilişkili olduğunu ortaya koymuştur (D'Zurilla ve Nezu, 1999; Ladouceur ve ark., 1998). Beliren yetişkinlik dönemindeki bireylerin eğitim süreçlerinde daha az olumsuz sorun yönelimi sergiledikleri düşünüldüğünde, yüksek düzeyde yaşam memnuniyeti ve akademik başarı elde etmeye daha meyilli oldukları bilinmektedir. Bu doğrultuda, Ridner ve arkadaşları (2016), gelişmekte olan yetişkinlerin problem çözme yaklaşımlarını eleştirmek yerine, bireylerin zorluklarla karşılaştıklarında sergiledikleri duygusal ve bilişsel nitelikleri anlamaya odaklanılmasını önermektedir. Bu bağlamda olumsuz problem yönelimi ve iyilik hali arasındaki ilişkinin daha iyi anlaşılması için pozitif psikoloji kavramlarından dayanıklılık ve iyimserlik gibi zihinsel yapıların incelenmesi gerekmektedir. Rich ve Bonner (2004) bu faktörlerin bireylerin hayatında ve özellikle iyilik hallerinde önemli unsurlar olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Bu kapsamda, araştırmanın genel amacı beliren yetişkinlik döneminde dayanıklılık ve iyimserlik faktörlerinin olumsuz problem yönelimi ve iyilik hali ilişkisinde nasıl rol oynadıklarını incelemektir.

### Yöntem

Çalışmada ilk olarak, olumsuz problem yöneliminin iyilik hali üzerindeki etkisini araştırmak amaçlanmıştır. İkinci amaç ise olumsuz problem yönelimi ile iyilik hali arasındaki ilişkide iyimserlik ve dayanıklılığın aracı rolünü araştırmaktır. Veriler, yaşları 18 ila 35 arasında değişen beliren yetişkinlik dönemindeki 355 üniversite öğrencisinden toplanmıştır. Araştırma verilerini toplamak için sosyodemografik form, Negatif Problem Yönelimi Ölçeği, Kısa Dayanıklılık Ölçeği, İyimserlik ve Kötümserlik Anketi ve Yaşam Doyumu Ölçeği kullanılmıştır.

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## Tartışma ve Sonuç

Sonuçlar, olumsuz problem yönelimi ile iyilik hali arasındaki negatif korelasyonu doğrulamıştır. Ayrıca olumsuz problem yöneliminin iyimserlik ve dayanıklılık ile negatif ilişkili olduğu bulunmuştur. Sonuçlar, olumsuz problem yönelimi ile iyilik hali arasındaki ilişkide iyimserliğin aracı rolünü desteklerken, dayanıklılığın bu ilişkide aracılık rolü oynayacağı hipotezini desteklememiştir. Beliren yetişkinlik döneminde iyimser bakış açısının olumlu sorun yönelimini artırarak, bireylerin stres düzeyleri ve gelecek kaygıları gibi iyilik hallerini olumsuz etkileyen unsurların azaltılmasında etkili olacağı öngörülmektedir. İyilik hali, iyimserlik ve dayanıklılığın ötesinde çeşitli faktörlerin etkileyebileceği çok yönlü bir yapıdır. Bu bağlamda, gelecekteki araştırmalarda sosyal destek, bilişsel beceriler, başa çıkma stratejileri ve çevresel stres faktörlerinin incelenmesi yoluyla olumsuz bakış açılarında karşı koruyucu önlemlerin geliştirilmesi önerilmektedir.

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