

Prediction of Psychological Well-Being Levels of Housewives Living in Rural Areas According to Some Variables

Kırsal Kesimde Yaşayan Ev Hanımlarının Psikolojik İyi Oluş Düzeylerinin Bazı Değişkenlere Göre Yordanması

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Öz

Psikolojik iyi oluş, karşılaşılan sorunlarla kolaylıkla baş edebilmeyi ve dünyaya olumlu bir bakış açısıyla bakmayı sağlamaktadır. Kırsal kesimde sosyal desteğin, sosyal etkinliklerin ve ekonomik kaynakların sınırlılığı, geleneksel cinsiyet rolleri ve beklentilerin belirginliği, eğitim ve kariyer fırsatlarına erişimin zorluğu gibi pek çok neden burada yaşayan ev hanımlarının psikolojik iyi oluşlarını olumsuz yönde etkileyebilmektedir. Bu düşüncelerden hareketle, kırsal kesimde yaşayan ev hanımlarının psikolojik iyi oluş düzeylerini yaş, medeni durum, aile gelir durumu, eğitim seviyesi, çocuk sayısı ve mutluluk seviyesini içeren değişkenlere göre yordamak amacıyla bir araştırma planlanmıştır. Araştırmanın çalışma grubu, Erzurum ili Oltu ilçe merkezinde yaşayan ev hanımlarından oluşmaktadır. Araştırmada “Kişisel Bilgi Formu”, “Psikolojik İyi Oluş Ölçeği” ile “Oxford Mutluluk Ölçeği Kısa Formu” kullanılarak veriler toplanmış ve istatistiksel analizler yoluyla değerlendirilmiştir. Sonuçlar, ev hanımlarının mutluluk düzeylerinin psikolojik iyi oluş düzeylerini yordadığını, eğitim düzeyi yüksek, ekonomik durumu iyi olan ev hanımlarının psikolojik iyi oluş düzeylerinin daha yüksek olduğunu göstermiştir. Bu bulgular, kırsal kesimde yaşayan ev hanımlarının psikolojik iyi oluş düzeyleri için eğitim ve sosyal destek programlarının önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kırsal yerleşim alanı, psikolojik iyi oluş, mutluluk, sosyal politika

Abstract

Psychological well-being enables people to cope with problems easily and to look at the world from a positive perspective. Many factors such as limited social support, social activities and economic resources in rural areas, the prominence of traditional gender roles and expectations, and the difficulty in accessing educational and career opportunities can negatively affect the psychological well-being of housewives living there. Based on these considerations, the present study was designed to predict the psychological well-being levels of housewives living in rural areas according to variables including age, marital status, family income status, education level, number of children and happiness level. The study group was made up of housewives living in Erzurum's Oltu district center. The study data were collected using the “Personal Information Form”, “Psychological Well-Being Scale” and “Oxford Happiness Scale-Short Form” and evaluated using statistical analysis. The results revealed that housewives' happiness levels predicted their psychological well-being levels, and the psychological well-being levels of housewives with higher education level and better economic status were higher. These findings emphasize the importance of education and social support programs for the psychological well-being levels of housewives living in rural areas.

Keywords: Rural settlement, psychological well-being, happiness, social policy

Geliş Tarihi/Received 06.04.2025
Kabul Tarihi/Accepted 24.09.2025
Yayın Tarihi/Publication Date 27.02.2026

Cite this article as: Başerer Berber, Z. & Taşçı, Ç. (2026). Prediction of psychological well-being levels of housewives living in rural areas according to some variables. *Current Perspectives in Social Sciences*, 10.53487/atasobed.1670719



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Introduction

Psychological well-being is a state that goes beyond happiness experiences, covering the realization of individual self and self-potential. Having psychological well-being means being able to cope with the problems encountered easily and to look at the world from a positive perspective (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

There are six commonly used dimensions of psychological well-being. In the literature, these six dimensions are also referred to as Ryff's Six-Factor Model of Psychological Well-Being. These factors are (1) positive relations with others, (2) environmental mastery, (3) self-acceptance, (4) autonomy, (5) personal growth and (6) purpose in life. Positive relations with others refer to having genuine, warm and satisfying relationships with other people and being interested in their well-being. Environmental mastery involves individual's capacity to manage and control his/her environment by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the environment to meet one's needs and values. Self-acceptance means having a positive attitude towards oneself and one's past experiences, recognizing and accepting one's own characteristics. Autonomy basically refers to the degree of self-determination and independence of the individual. Personal development is defined as one's feeling of continuous evolution and growth and one's feeling that he/she developed his/her own potential. Finally, purpose in life refers to having goals and objectives in life and feeling that life has meaning (Linley, 2013; Ryff, 1989). Based on these factors, psychological well-being has many benefits such as maintaining emotional balance, supporting mental health, improving physical health, establishing healthier relationships, increasing self-confidence and self-esteem, promoting creativity and productivity, making better decisions and increasing overall life satisfaction (Boehm & Kubzansky, 2012; Fredrickson, 2007; Keyes, 2007; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). These benefits are very important benefits in creating social welfare since the psychological well-being of individuals living in a society enables them to establish healthier and more constructive relationships with both themselves and their environment. This has a positive impact on social solidarity, social adjustment and the welfare level of society in general.

Housewives living in rural areas emerge as one of the cornerstones of this process with their various responsibilities and roles in society because in rural areas, gender roles are generally more traditional and rigid (Uzan & Kantar Davran, 2023, p. 176). Therefore, housewives take on almost all of the responsibilities such as raising children, housework and caring for the elderly or the sick, thus supporting the people around them.

However, these heavy responsibilities can negatively affect the psychological well-being of housewives. This can lead to psychological problems such as depression and anxiety in housewives (Allahverdipour et al., 2021; Bansal et al., 2015; Vivian-Taylor & Hickey, 2014). In addition, the fact that housewives living in rural areas often have limited access to social support networks and resources, and limited educational and job opportunities prevents them from achieving economic independence, which can lead to a decrease in self-confidence and self-esteem. All these factors may harm the overall life satisfaction of rural housewives (Boehm & Kubzansky, 2012; Fredrickson, 2007; Keyes, 2007; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Thus, having information about the psychological well-being of individuals, especially housewives living in rural areas, is considered as an extremely important issue, and it is believed that this information will contribute to the increase of both individual and social welfare by enabling a better understanding and support of their needs.

The review of current national and international studies on the subject revealed that the studies on psychological well-being have not focused on housewives living in rural areas, instead some studies have focused on gender differences (Benjet & Hernandez-Guzman, 2001; Matud et al., 2019; Matud et al. 2022; Pinguart, & Sörensen, 2001; Roothman et al., 2003; Salleh & Mustafa, 2016; Twenge & Martin, 2020), some on older individuals (Allen et al., 2020; Chan et al., 2021; Chan et al., 2022; Carriedo et al., 2020; Jiang et al. 2021; Lábadi et al., 2022; Lopez et al., 2020; Saadeh et al., 2020; Schlosser et al. 2023; Su et al., 2022; Suh & Li, 2022), some on health workers (Chew et al., 2020; De Kock et al., 2021; Della Monica et al., 2022; Denning et al., 2021; Emmanuel Olatunde & Odusanya, 2015; Gavin et al., 2020; Johari & Omar, 2019; Madhuchandra & Srimathi, 2016; Philip & Cherian 2020; Schneider et al., 2022), some on working family members and working women (Kapoor et al., 2021; Obrenovic et al., 2020; O'Driscoll et al., 2004, Panatik et al., 2011; Rantanen, 2008; Sinha, 2017) and some have focused on university students (Arshad & Rafique, 2016; Bewick et al., 2010; Bhagchandani, 2017; Bowman, 2010; Burris et al., 2009; Carton & Goodboy, 2015; Chen, 2012; Cooke et al., 2006; Costa et al. 2013; El Ansari et al., 2013, Fehring et al., 1987; Freire et al., 2016; Geçgin & Sahanç, 2017; Hanawi et al., 2020; Honmore & Jadhay, 2015; Kilgo et al., 2016; Kim & Lim, 2012; Kim

et al., 2015; Li et al., 2019; Lolla, 2018; Ludban, 2015; Morales-Rodríguez, 2020; Padovani et al, 2014; Punia & Malaviya, 2015; Sagone & De Caroli, 2014; Sharma & Sharma, 2018; Siddiqui, 2015; Udhayakumar & Illango, 2018; Ullah, 2017; Waghmare, 2016; Wigtil & Henriques, 2015) and addressed the psychological well-being levels of these groups. On the other hand, current national and international studies on housewives living in rural areas have generally focused on the social, economic and psychological problems of housewives (Arslan & Ceviz, 2007; Demircioğlu, 2019; Karakaya, 2018; Pehlivan, Ada & Öztaş, 2017; Uçar et al., 2011), information about the work done by housewives at home (Child & Fairchild, 2013; Topçu et al., 2003), and the place of being a housewife in society (Flaming, 2013). In addition, there have been studies on the mental problems of housewives and these studies have generally focused on their psychological distress and anxiety levels (Durak et al., 2023), and burnout, depression, anxiety, stress and anger (Karaköse & Ulusoy, 2022; Matud & Bethencourt, 2000; Moral et al., 2011). However, in the literature review, no studies that directly focused on the psychological well-being levels of housewives living in rural areas have been determined.

The present study was conducted in order to fill this gap in the literature and to determine which variables affect the psychological well-being levels of housewives living in rural areas. Accordingly, the main purpose and study question was formed along the question “Which variables affect the psychological well-being levels of housewives living in rural areas?”. In order to achieve the main study purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Is there a significant difference between age, marital status, income level, education level, number of children and psychological well-being and happiness levels of housewives living in rural areas?
2. Is there a significant relationship between psychological well-being and happiness levels of housewives living in rural areas?
3. Do age, family income, number of children and happiness levels of housewives living in rural areas predict their psychological well-being levels significantly?

Method

Aiming to predict the psychological well-being levels of housewives living in rural areas according to some variables, this descriptive study employed the survey design. In the study, correlational survey design, one of the general survey designs that are based on quantitative data, was used. The main reason for this is that this design can reveal the relationships between two or more variables and the existence or degree of change between these variables (Büyüköztürk et al., 2015; Karasar, 1984). In the study, both exploratory and predictive correlational types of the correlational survey model were used. Exploratory correlation, which enables to reveal the relationship between variables, was used to determine whether there is a relationship between psychological well-being and happiness levels of housewives living in rural areas. In addition, predictive correlation was preferred in cases where the relationships between variables were examined and the other (criterion) was predicted based on one of the variables (predictor) (Büyüköztürk et al., 2015; Karasar, 1984). Accordingly, in the study, this was used to determine whether the psychological well-being levels of housewives living in rural areas were predicted by some demographic variables (age, family income status and number of children) and happiness levels.

Study Group

The study group consisted of 391 housewives living in the Oltu district center of Erzurum. Compared to other districts of the city of Erzurum, the Oltu district is a district with both a widespread population and rural settlement characteristics. As a matter of fact, in the literature, rural areas refer to areas where the economy is based on agriculture or animal husbandry, social relations are strong and face-to-face, small-scale industrial activities are carried out, social structures such as villages, markets, etc. are common, and frequent interaction with the city is established (Aydemir, 2013). Based on this, the rural characteristics of the Oltu district came to the fore more than other districts of Erzurum and Oltu was determined as the study population. According to the 2023 population numbers of Oltu, the total population of the district was 30,296 (15,186 were male and 15,110 were female) (https://www.nufusu.com/ilce/oltu_erzurum-nufusu). Moreover, a significant part of the Oltu population, including the villages, make a living from agriculture, animal husbandry and mining.

Furthermore, the reason behind the selection of the Oltu district center for the study rather than the other rural settlements, was that the Oltu is quick and easy to reach with available transportation. For this reason, easily accessible or convenient sampling was used. The calculation formula suggested by Büyüköztürk et al. (2015, p. 98) was used to determine the size of the study group. According to the suggested calculation formula, the number of sample to be selected from the universe of 30,000 people should be 651 for the upper limit and 379 for the lower limit, considering the margin of error of .05. Since the

study group consisted of housewives, the formula was re-examined by taking the female population ratio into consideration and it was determined that reaching 377 housewives was sufficient. The study was completed based on the data collected from 391 people. In terms of the demographic characteristics of the housewives participating in the study, the participants' ages ranged from 18 to 83, but the majority (39.6%) of them were women between the ages of 31-43, most of them were primary school graduates (43.7%) and the majority (84.9%) were married. Although the number of children of the participants varied between 0 and 8, the number of children of the women who participated in the study was concentrated between 2 (28.9%) or 3 (30.9%).

Data Collection

The study data were collected by administering three different measurement tools, namely the "Personal Information Form" developed by the researchers, the "Psychological Well-Being Scale" developed by Telef (2013), and the "Oxford Happiness Questionnaire Short Form" adapted into Turkish by Doğan and Çötök (2010). These paper-format measurement tools were collected face-to-face between 30.04.2024-30.06.2024. Participants signed a voluntary declaration form before the application in accordance with the ethical rules. For the research, ethics committee approval was obtained from Atatürk University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee (Session No: 6, Decision No: 71, dated 08.03.2024).

Data Collection Tools

Personal Information Form: The "Personal Information Form" included questions that are believed to be related to the psychological well-being and happiness levels of housewives such as age, marital status, family income status, education level and number of children.

Psychological Well-Being Scale: In the study, the "Psychological Well-Being Scale" developed by Diener et al. (2009, 2010) and adapted into Turkish by Telef (2013) was used to measure the psychological well-being levels of housewives living in rural areas. The one-dimensional scale consisting of eight items was developed by administering it to pre-service teachers. In the scoring of the scale, while (1) means Strongly Disagree, (7) means Strongly Agree. There is no reverse scored items in the scale. Therefore, the lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 8 and the highest score is 56. Higher total score from the scale indicates higher psychological well-being level. The validity study of the scale was conducted using exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. The analyses revealed that the total explained variance of the scale was 53% and the factor loadings of the scale items ranged between .61 and .77. For the reliability study of the scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was examined and Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .80 (Telef, 2013). Another validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Akdağ and Çankaya (2015), who adapted the scale to adult individuals. As a result of the reliability studies, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was as .81. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to determine the validity of the scale, and as a result of the exploratory factor analysis, the KMO value was found to be .835. As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis, it was determined that the scale fit in one dimension as in the original form and the Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 46.19$, $sd=18$, $p<.001$) was significant. Accordingly, it was that this scale can be used in adult individuals.

Oxford Happiness Questionnaire Short Form-OHQ-S: In order to measure the happiness levels of housewives living in rural areas, "Oxford Happiness Questionnaire Short Form-OHQ-S" developed by Hills and Argyle (2002) and adapted into Turkish by Doğan and Çötök (2010) was used in the study. The unidimensional scale consisting of seven items was developed by administering it to university students. In the scoring of the scale, (1) indicates Strongly Disagree and (5) indicates Strongly Agree. Items 1 and 7 are reverse scored. The lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 7 and the highest score is 35. Accordingly, higher total score from the scale means higher happiness level. The validity study of the scale was conducted through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. For the reliability study of the scale, internal consistency and test-retest reliability coefficients were examined. The internal consistency and test-retest reliability coefficients were found to be .74 and .85, respectively (Doğan & Çötök, 2010). Another validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Toker and Kalıpçı (2021) on adult tourism employees. As a result of the reliability study, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be Cronbach Alpha= .71. As for the validity of the scale, the results of Barlett's test of sphericity (0.21 and sig. $p<.001$) and KMO sampling value (0.779) were found as a result of factor analysis. Accordingly, it was proved that the scale is a valid and reliable measurement tool that can be used with adults.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the study data. The margin of error for the significance check of the difference between the groups was taken as the minimum level of 0.05. The findings were first presented as the number of people, arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the groups for each hypothesis. Then, in order to determine the relationship between psychological well-being and happiness levels of housewives living in rural areas, it was examined whether the distributions of these two variables were normal. For this purpose, kurtosis and skewness values were examined, and Pearson Product-Moment correlation was applied since the values provided the normality assumption (-1.5 and +1.5). Furthermore, the available data were examined to analyze the other study sub-problems. As a result of the examinations, parametric analysis techniques were used because the data were at least interval scale, the independent variables whose effects on the dependent variable were investigated were normally distributed and the variances were equally distributed (Seçer, 2015, p. 77). In this direction, t-test and ANOVA tests were used to analyze whether demographic variables showed significant differences with happiness and psychological well-being scales. The Tukey test was used to determine whether the data that were significant as a result of the ANOVA test differed between groups. Then, Multiple Regression Analysis was employed to determine the level of explanation of happiness and continuous demographic variables on psychological well-being.

Results

The study findings regarding the relationship between the scores obtained from the Psychological Well-Being Scale and demographic variables, the findings regarding the relationship between the scores obtained from the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire and demographic variables, the findings regarding the relationship between psychological well-being and happiness levels, and the findings regarding the determinants of psychological well-being of housewives living in rural areas are presented in Table 1, Table 2, Table 3 and Table 4.

Findings Regarding the Relationship between Housewives' Psychological Well-Being Scale Scores with Demographic Variables
The relationship between the psychological well-being scale scores of the housewives participating in the study and demographic variables is analyzed in Table 1. Accordingly, no significant difference was found between the psychological well-being levels of housewives and their ages, education levels and number of children ($p > .05$). In addition, the difference between the psychological well-being levels of housewives and their marital status and income levels was found to be significant. Indeed, married housewives had higher levels of psychological well-being than single housewives. Furthermore, the participants' psychological well-being increased as their income level increased (Table 1).

Table 1.

The Relationship between Housewives' Psychological Well-Being Scale Scores and Demographic Variables

	Demographic Variables	\bar{X} / s	t / F	p
Age	18- 30 Years old	45.02/7.84	.293	.830
	31-43 Years old	44.56/7.09		
	44-56 Years old	44.17/7.06		
	57 Years old and over	43.80/6.48		
Marital Status	Married	44.90/6.87	3.338	.001*
	Single	41.61/7.65		
Income Level	17000 TL and below	43.07/7.05	5.115	.006*
	17001 – 34000 TL	44.97/6.79		
	34001 TL and over	46.06/7.48		
Education Level	1. Middle school and below	43.99/6.78	1.302	.273
	2.High school and equivalent	45.21/7.50		
	3.University and above	45.17/7.94		
Number of Children	No children	44.12/8.51	.949	.417
	Single child	45.15/6.35		
	Two children	45.20/6.63		
	Three children and above	43.92/7.19		

* $p < .05$

Findings on the Relationship between Housewives' Scores on the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire Short Form and Demographic Variables

The relationship between the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire Scale Short Form scores of the housewives participating in the study and demographic variables is shown in Table 2. Accordingly, the happiness levels of the housewives who participated in the study differed significantly according to their marital status, income level and education level. In other words, the happiness level of married housewives was significantly higher than the happiness level of single housewives. Similarly, as the income levels and educational levels of housewives increased, their happiness levels also increased significantly. However, no significant difference was observed between the happiness levels of housewives and their ages and number of children ($p > .05$) (Table 2).

Table 2.

The Relationship between Housewives' Oxford Happiness Scale Short Form Scores and Demographic Variables

	Demographic Variables	\bar{X} / S	t / F	p
Age	18- 30 Years old	24.34/6.16	.990	.397
	31-43 Years old	23.71/4.72		
	44-56 Years old	23.15/4.40		
	57 Years old and over	22.97/5.12		
Marital Status	Married	23.78/4.78	2.642	.009*
	Single	21.98/5.07		
Income Level	17000 TL and below	22.55/5.04	10.111	.000*
	17001 – 34000 TL	23.53/4.49		
	34001 TL and over	25.72/4.86		
Education Level	1. Middle school and below	22.83/4.63	7.736	.001*
	2.High school and equivalent	24.65/4.89		
	3.University and above	25.26/5.49		
Number of Children	No children	24.43/5.60	1.657	.176
	Single child	24.54/4.30		
	Two children	23.81/4.32		
	Three children and above	23.05/5.07		

* $p < .05$

Findings Regarding the Relationship between Housewives' Psychological Well-Being and Happiness Levels

The relationship between the psychological well-being and happiness levels of housewives was analyzed by correlation analysis. Accordingly, a positive and moderately high ($r = .707$; $p < .05$) correlation was found between their psychological well-being and happiness levels. This indicates that as the psychological well-being levels of housewives increased, their happiness levels also increased (Table 3).

Table 3.

Correlation Results of the Measurement Tools

Measurement Tools	1	2
1. Psychological Well-Being Scale	-	
2. Oxford Happiness Questionnaire Short Form	.707*	-

* $p < .05$

Findings on the Determinants of Housewives' Psychological Well-Being

In line with the study purpose, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether the psychological well-being levels of housewives living in rural areas were predicted by age, income status, number of children and happiness. The findings of the analysis are presented in Table 4.

According to Table 4, psychological well-being levels of housewives living in rural areas were not significantly predicted by age, income status and number of children ($p > .05$), but were significantly predicted by happiness levels. In other words, even

if the psychological well-being levels of the participants were not significantly affected by age, income status and number of children when addressed individually, 49.9% of the difference in the psychological well-being levels of the participants can be explained by all of the independent variables. In addition, an increase of 1 point in the happiness levels of housewives caused an increase of .712 points in their psychological well-being (Table 4).

Table 4.

Multiple Regression Analysis Results for Variables Predicting Psychological Well-Being in Housewives

Psychological Well-Being Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Model				
						R	R ²	R ² Difference	F	Sig.
Constant	19.135	1.715		11.154	.000*					
Age	.034	.030	.052	1.151	.251					
Income Status	-1.075	.000	-.023	-.631	.528	.710	.504	.499	97.231	.000*
Number of Children	-.180	.221	-.037	-.818	.414					
Oxford Happiness	1.042	.054	.712	19.248	.000*					

* $p < .05$

Discussion

Aiming to determine which variables affect the psychological well-being levels of housewives living in rural areas, the present study examined age, marital status, number of children, family income, educational status and happiness levels were examined.

The study concluded that the psychological well-being and happiness levels of married housewives living in rural areas were higher than single housewives. As a matter of fact, the literature review showed that many studies (Chen & Chen, 2021; Çelebi & Çelebi, 2020; Glenn, 1975; Kaufman & Taniguchi, 2010; Kim & McKenry, 2002; Mastekaasa, 1992; Soulsby & Bennett, 2015; Tao, 2019; Yeşiltepe & Çelik, 2014) suggested that the psychological well-being and happiness levels of married individuals are higher. Thus, the results from the related literature are in parallel with the result of the present study. The emergence of such a result may mean that married individuals get the social, emotional and economic support they need through their spouses. At this point, it is possible to define marriage as a supportive phenomenon for individuals' psychological well-being and happiness.

The study determined that the income status of housewives living in rural areas is a factor that increases their psychological well-being and happiness levels. As the income level increased, the psychological well-being and happiness levels of housewives also increased. Such a result can be associated with the fact that economic security and financial comfort have a positive effect on the mental and emotional health of individuals. As a matter of fact, economic security is a situation that increases individuals' overall quality of life and ability to meet their basic needs, access to health services, engage in social activities (Ibragimovich, & Kholikovich, 2020). This may reduce the stress levels of housewives and enable them to have a more positive life perspective. Therefore, it is possible that as income level increases, psychological well-being and happiness levels may also increase. This result of the current study is also in parallel with similar studies such as Eroğlu and Parlar's (2018) study. Eroğlu and Parlar's (2018) study also revealed that high income level is a factor that increases psychological well-being. In other words, as material well-being increases, individuals' general life satisfaction and happiness levels also increase. This may be more evident especially for housewives living in rural areas whose economic resources are limited because increased income can significantly improve their living conditions and social opportunities.

In the study, although housewives' level of education did not make a significant difference in the level of psychological well-being, it made a significant difference on happiness. Indeed, housewives with higher levels of education were happier. The result obtained in the present study is consistent with some similar studies (Frey & Stutzer, 2000; Kendirli & Şenol, 2023).

The reason behind such a result can be the fact that the probability of depression and anxiety decreases as the level of education increases in individuals and this contributes positively to the increase in psychological well-being. As a matter of fact, Joannès et al. (2023) argued in their study that individuals with low levels of education may face depression and anxiety more and that this risk is more pronounced in women.

Furthermore, in the current study, although age, income status and number of children were not predictors of psychological well-being on their own, all variables together with happiness were revealed as a significant predictor of psychological well-being. This result is consistent with the results of similar studies (Arora & Kumari, 2024; Bultu & Dilmaç, 2018; Heizomi et al., 2015) conducted with different study groups. The high correlation between psychological well-being and happiness levels of housewives living in rural areas in the study can be explained by factors such as strong community ties, the tranquility brought by being in touch with nature, the support of traditional roles by society, and a less stressful lifestyle. These factors may increase the happiness and psychological well-being of rural housewives by making them feel valued, receive social support and lead a more peaceful life.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from this study reveal that the psychological well-being and happiness levels of housewives living in rural areas are closely related to socio-demographic variables such as marriage, income, and education. The results indicate that being married, having a high income, and a high level of education significantly positively affect women's psychological well-being. Marriage, in particular, is considered not only an individual union but also a fundamental indicator of social acceptance and belonging in rural societies. The institution of marriage provides women with social legitimacy, security, and social support, strengthening psychological balance and increasing happiness (Uecker, 2012). Similarly, income not only improves living standards but also confers social prestige and status. The stronger position women hold both within their families and in the social environment is a direct determinant of psychological well-being. Indeed, the literature emphasizes that income level is significantly related to life satisfaction and happiness (Tang et al., 2021). In addition, increasing education levels contribute to women's self-confidence, access to information, and problem-solving skills, enabling them to assume more active roles both within the family and in the social environment. Educated women's access to broader social networks, increased participation in decision-making processes, and increased personal autonomy are among the key factors supporting their psychological well-being (Liu et al., 2023).

These findings demonstrate that psychological well-being in rural areas cannot be explained solely by individual factors, but is also directly related to social values, status indicators, and social acceptance mechanisms. Indeed, in rural areas, marriage, education, and economic income stand out as the primary factors that determine women's social position and status, beyond their individual living conditions.

Consequently, social policies and services developed to support women's psychological well-being in rural areas should consider not only individual characteristics but also social structure, cultural values, and status-determining factors. In this context, in the light of the findings obtained from the research, the following suggestions can be made regarding the psychological well-being levels of housewives living in rural areas:

- Considering that married housewives have higher levels of psychological well-being and happiness, social support programs can be developed for single housewives living in rural areas. For this purpose, trainings and activities can be organized to strengthen social solidarity and social ties by emphasizing the importance of social and emotional support provided by marriage.
- Considering that the income status of housewives living in rural areas is a factor that increases their psychological well-being and happiness levels, efforts can be made to increase policies that aim to ensure that women are economically stronger and more secure. For this purpose, microcredit programs (small-scale loans given to low-income individuals or small businesses to provide financial resources) or entrepreneurship trainings can be supported.
- Considering the positive impact of education level on happiness, courses, literacy programs and vocational trainings can be developed to increase the education level of housewives living in rural areas. The number of transportation and scholarship opportunities to facilitate their access to education can be increased.
- Considering the strong impact of happiness on psychological well-being, social activities, hobby courses and psychological

support services can be offered in cooperation with social service institutions to increase the happiness of housewives living in rural areas.

- Support groups can be established in cooperation with local governments, social service institutions and non-governmental organizations to help rural housewives meet their social and emotional support needs.

Etik Komite Onayı: Bu çalışma için Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Etik Kurulu'ndan (08.03.2024 tarihli 6. Oturum, 71. Karar) etik kurul onayı alınmıştır.

Katılımcı Onamı: Çalışmaya katılan tüm katılımcılardan yazılı onam alınmıştır.

Yazar Katkıları: Fikir- Z.B.B; Tasarım- Z.B.B.; Ç.T. ; Denetleme- Z.B.B; Ç.T. ; Kaynaklar- Z.B.B.; Ç.T. ; Veri Toplanması ve/veya İşlemesi- Z.B.B.; Ç.T ; Analiz ve/veya Yorum- Z.B.B.; Ç.T. ; Literatür Taraması- Z.B.B.; Ç.T.; Eleştirel İnceleme- Z.B.B.

Hakem Değerlendirmesi: Dış bağımsız.

Çıkar Çatışması: Yazarlar, çıkar çatışması olmadığını beyan etmiştir.

Finansal Destek: Yazarlar, bu çalışma için finansal destek olmadığını beyan etmiştir.

Yapay Zeka Kullanımı: Yazarlar, yapay zeka kullanılmadığını beyan etmiştir.

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethics committee approval was obtained for this study from the Atatürk University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee (6th Session, 71st Decision, dated 08.03.2024).

Participant Consent: Written informed consent was obtained from all participants who participated in the study.

Author Contributions: Concept – Z.B.B; Design- Z.B.B.; Ç.T. ; Supervision- Z.B.B.; Ç.T. ; Resources- Z.B.B.; Ç.T. ; Data Collection and/or Processing- Z.B.B.; Ç.T. ; Analysis and/or Interpretation- Z.B.B.; Ç.T.; Literature Search- Z.B.B.; Ç.T. ; Critical Review- Z.B.B.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Financial Support: The authors declared that they received no financial support for this study.

Use of Artificial Intelligence: The authors declared that artificial intelligence was not used.

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