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Basic Psychological Needs Frustration in English Language Learning: Exploring the Role of Gender, Proficiency, and Failure Experiences

İngilizce Dil Öğreniminde Temel Psikolojik İhtiyaçların Engellenmesi: Cinsiyet, Yeterlilik ve Başarı Deneyimlerinin Rolünün İncelenmesi

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Abstract. According to Self-determination Theory, when learners feel frustrated in the core dimensions of the basic psychological needs as competence, autonomy, and relatedness, their learning motivation decreases and the language learning process fails. This study aims to examine the basic psychological needs frustration of the university students learning English as a foreign language in Türkiye in relation to gender, language proficiency level, and failure experiences. In line with the research objectives, criterion sampling method was adopted while determining the participants. Adopting a correlational research design, the study was conducted with data collected from 317 students studying in the English language preparatory program at a state university in Türkiye. According to the results of the research, the students' gender and foreign language level do not have an effect in terms of the frustration of basic psychological needs. However, the fact that students receive education at the same language level again due to their past failures creates a significant difference in terms of frustration of autonomy. While it was observed that the participants received the highest frustration scores from the autonomy frustration subscale, the lowest was the frustration of relatedness. According to the results of the study, it is recommended that course content, teaching methods and instructor competencies be increased in order to increase learner autonomy, and eliminate the frustration of the basic psychological needs of English language learners.

Keywords: Basic psychological needs frustration, English language learning, Self-determination theory, University students.

Öz. Öz-belirleme Kuramına göre bireyin temel psikolojik ihtiyaçları olan yeterlilik, özerklik ve bağlılık gereksinimleri karşılanmadığında öğrenme motivasyonları azalır ve dil öğrenme süreçleri sekteye uğrar. Bu nedenle bu temel ihtiyaçların karşılanması ve engellenmemesi yabancı dil öğreniminde büyük öneme sahiptir. Bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye'de yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenen üniversite öğrencilerinin temel psikolojik ihtiyaçlar açısından yaşadıkları hayal kırıklıklarını cinsiyetlerine, dil yeterlilik düzeylerine ve başarısızlık deneyimlerine göre incelemektir. Araştırmanın amaçları doğrultusunda katılımcıların belirlenmesinde amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmış ve çalışma Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinin hazırlık programında öğrenim gören 317 öğrenciden toplanan verilerle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre öğrencilerin cinsiyetleri ve yabancı dil düzeyleri temel psikolojik ihtiyaçların engellenmesi açısından anlamlı bir etkiye sahip değilken, katılımcıların geçmişteki başarısızlık deneyimlerinin özerkliğin engellenmesi açısından anlamlı bir fark yarattığı saptanmıştır. Katılımcıların en yüksek engellenme puanlarını özerklik engellenmesi alt boyutundan aldıkları görülürken, en düşük engellenme puanı ise bağlılığın engellenmesi alt boyutunda gözlemlenmiştir. Çalışma sonuçlarına göre İngilizce öğrenenlerin özerkliklerinin artırılması ve temel psikolojik ihtiyaçlarının engellenmesinin ortadan kaldırılması için ders içeriklerinin öğretim yöntemlerinin ve eğitmen yeterliliklerinin artırılması önerilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Temel psikolojik ihtiyaçların engellenmesi, İngilizce öğrenme, Öz-belirleme kuramı, Üniversite öğrencileri.



Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş. İkinci dil edinimi alanındaki araştırmalar bu zorlu süreçteki öğrenme motivasyonun değişkenliğini bireysel faktörler, önceki öğrenme deneyimleri, duygu ile tutumlar ve öğretim yöntemleriyle ilişkilendirilmiş (Dörnyei, 2019; Dörnyei vd., 2015; Fernández-Ortega vd., 2024; Yu ve Geng, 2020) ancak psikolojik faktörlerin bu süreç ve motivasyonel değişimler üzerindeki etkisine yeterince vurgu yapılmamıştır (Du ve Yang, 2024). Bu bağlamda alanyazında öne çıkan Öz Belirleme Kuramı, bireyin temel psikolojik ihtiyaçları olarak nitelenen özerklik, yeterlik ve bağlılık (ilişkisellik) sağlandığında öğrenmenin istendik düzeylerde gerçekleşebileceğini savunur (Deci ve Ryan, 1985; Ryan ve Deci, 2000). Bu üç temel psikolojik ihtiyaçtan özerklik, dil öğreniminde motivasyon için kritik öneme sahiptir. Seçim özgürlüğü olan öğrenciler daha güçlü motive olurlar (Patall ve Hooper, 2019; Ismailov ve Ono, 2021). Yeterlik, başarı inancıyla doğrudan bağlantılıdır ve olumlu geri bildirim ve destekleyici görevler yeterliği artırır (Lanvers ve Graham, 2022). Bağlılık ise kısaca aidiyet ve olumlu bağlar kurma hissidir ve sosyal etkileşimler öğrenme motivasyonu destekler (Ryan ve Deci, 2000; Ismailov ve Ono, 2021).

Temel psikolojik ihtiyaçların karşılanması olumlu duygular ve düşük kaygı ile ilişkilendirilirken (Earl vd., 2019; Feng vd., 2025) karşılanmaması ise hem öğrenenlerin süreçteki başarısızlık ve vazgeçme eğilimlerini artırır (Lindner vd., 2023) hem de öğrenmeye katılımı azaltır (Hughes vd., 2023). Öğrenme motivasyonu ve olumlu öğrenme çıktıları bakımından temel psikolojik ihtiyaçların karşılanması büyük önem taşır (Ryan ve Deci, 2017). Ancak bu ihtiyaçların düşük düzeylerde karşılanması ile engellenmesi aynı anlama gelmemektedir. Motivasyonu sürdürmek için temel psikolojik ihtiyaçların karşılanması önemli olsa da (Ryan ve Deci, 2017) sadece karşılanması yeterli değildir (Alamer ve Lee, 2019). Temel psikolojik ihtiyaçların karşılanmasından bağımsız olarak, temel psikolojik ihtiyaçların engellenmesi, motivasyonun yanı sıra başarıda da kritik rol oynar (Alamer vd., 2023) ve yüksek engellenme durumları içsel motivasyon ile dil öğrenme başarısını olumsuz etkileyip, kaygı gibi olumsuz duygulara yol açar (Fernández-Ortega vd., 2024).

Yöntem. Bu çalışma, bir nicel araştırma tasarımı kullanarak ve kesitsel betimleyici bir yaklaşım benimseyerek, bir devlet üniversitesinde İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerde temel psikolojik ihtiyaçların engellenmesini çeşitli değişkenler bakımından araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu doğrultuda amaçlı örneklem yöntemiyle belirlenen ve bir devlet üniversitesinde İngilizce hazırlık programına kayıtlı 317 katılımcıdan elde edilen veriler 12 madde ve 3 alt boyutlu bir ölçek kullanılarak toplanmış ve nicel araştırma yöntemleriyle analiz edilmiştir.

Bulgular. Elde edilen veriler ışığında ortalama puanlar incelendiğinde, temel psikolojik ihtiyaçlardan özerkliğin engellenmesi en yüksek ortalamaya sahipken, bağlılığın engellenmesi ise en düşük ortalamaya sahiptir. Genel ölçek ortalamasına göre İngilizce öğrenen katılımcıların psikolojik ihtiyaçlarının engellenme düzeylerinin kayda değer düzeyde yüksek olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Cinsiyet değişkenine göre yapılan bağımsız örneklem t-testi sonuçları, toplam puan ve alt faktör puanlarında anlamlı bir fark oluşmadığını göstermektedir. Ancak kadın katılımcıların, erkeklere kıyasla tüm ölçek ve alt ölçeklerde daha yüksek hayal kırıklığı puanlarına sahip olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Önceki başarısızlık deneyimleri değişkeni bağlamında yapılan t-testi, özerkliğin engellenmesi alt boyutunda anlamlı bir fark ortaya koymuştur. Kadın katılımcıların özerkliğin engellenmesi puanları ($\bar{x} = 12.53$)



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erkek katılımcılara ($\bar{x} = 11.54$) kıyasla daha yüksektir. Ancak diğer alt ölçeklerde ve genel toplamda fark anlamlı bulunmamıştır. Son olarak, katılımcıların dil yeterlilik seviyesi (A2, B1, B2) göz önünde bulundurularak yapılan tek yönlü varyans analizi (ANOVA) sonuçlarına göre, dil seviyesi ile ölçek puanları arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmamıştır ($p > .05$). Ancak, B2 seviyesinde olan öğrencilerin diğer seviyelere kıyasla özerklik ve yeterliliğin engellenmesi gibi alt boyutlarda daha yüksek puanlar aldıkları gözlemlenmiştir.

Tartışma ve Sonuç. Çalışmada, geçmişte başarısızlık deneyimlerinin özerkliği engellenmesi üzerinde anlamlı bir etkisi olduğu bulunmuştur. Dil öğrenme sürecinde öğrenci özerkliği, bireylerin kendi öğrenmelerini kontrol etme kapasitesi olarak tanımlanabilir (Aryanti ve Anggaira, 2020). Yüksek özerklik becerilerine sahip öğrenciler daha motive olurlar ve öğrenme görevlerini daha iyi başarırlar (Bayat, 2011; Ma ve Ma, 2012). Bu bağlamda, öğrenme motivasyonunun artması ve daha etkili öğrenme çıktılarının elde edilmesi, dil eğitiminde başarı için önemli koşullardır (Ma ve Ma, 2012; Ünlü ve Er, 2016). Ancak, dil öğrenenlerin sınırlı özerklik deneyimleri ve dilsel kavramlara aşına olmamaları, onların özerk birer öğrenen olmalarını engelleyebilir (Aryanti ve Anggaira, 2020). Bunun yanı sıra, sınıf içerisinde öğrenme faaliyetlerine karşı olumsuz bir bakış açısının olması ve bu faaliyetleri yetersiz bulmak, özerklik kazanımının önünde bir engel oluşturabilir (İnozu, 2011). Dil öğrenme sürecinde düşük dil yeterliliği, motivasyon eksiklikleri ve öğretmenlere aşırı bağımlılık gibi faktörler de öğrencilerin özerklik gelişimini engelleyen faktörler arasındadır (Alrashidi, 2022; Jeong ve Ahn, 2022). Öğrencilerin öğrenme süreçlerinde kendi kararlarını alabilmeleri ve bu süreçte öğretmenlerin geri bildirim vererek onlara destek olmaları, özerkliği teşvik etmek için önemli bir rol oynamaktadır (Alrashidi, 2022; Jeong ve Ahn, 2022; Kim, 2014). Sınıf ortamı da özerkliği destekleyen veya engelleyen bir faktör olarak önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Öğrenenlerin özerkliklerini destekleyen bir ortamda motivasyonu ve katılımı artırılabilirken, kontrol edici ya da ilgisiz bir ortam öğrenciler için hayal kırıklığına yol açabilir (Cheon et al., 2019; Cheon et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2024). Alanyazındaki tüm bu bulgular ışığında katılımcıların başarısızlık deneyimleri önemli bir psikolojik ihtiyaç olan özerkliği engellenmesi durumuna sebep olmuş olabilir. Bu durumla başa çıkmak adına öğretmenler, öğrencilere başarısızlığı başarıya giden bir adım olarak gösterip, çaba, azim ve hatalardan ders alma değerini vurgulayabilirler (Cheon et al., 2023). Ayrıca, öğrencilere gelişim odaklı, uygulanabilir geri bildirimler vererek onları başarısızlıklarından öğrenmeye teşvik edebilirler (Lorante-Catalan, 2023). Öğrencilerin küçük başarılarını kutlamak, onların öğrenmeye devam etmeleri için motivasyonlarını güçlendirebilir (Pouzergues, 2022).

Diğer yandan yeterliliğin engellenmesi, bireylerin bir görevi tamamlamak için kendilerini yetersiz hissetmeleri olarak açıklanabilir (Alamer et al., 2023). Dil öğrenenler, iletişimsel yeterliliklerini geliştirmede dilsel, psikososyal veya örgütsel engellerle sıklıkla karşılaşır (Dronova, 2024). Dil öğrenenler, yetersizlik korkusu, olumsuz değerlendirme kaygısı ve sınav kaygısı gibi sebeplerle sıklıkla kaygı yaşarlar; bu durum, başkalarının dil yeterliliklerini değerlendirmeleriyle ilgili algılarından kaynaklanabilir (Gregersen, 2023). Duygusal kaygı ve hayal kırıklığı, özellikle öğrencilerden aktif katılım beklenen öğrenme ortamlarında öğrenme performansını olumsuz etkileyebilir (Ren, 2021). Mevcut araştırma sonuçları yeterlilik ihtiyacının engellenmesi durumunun orta düzeylerde olduğunu, ancak araştırma değişkenlerine göre anlamlı bir fark bulunmadığını ortaya koymuştur.



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Bağlılığın engellenmesi ise başkalarıyla bağlantı kurma psikolojik ihtiyacını ifade eder (Alamer et al., 2023). Bu ihtiyaç, kişilerarası kabul ve yakınlık gibi unsurları içerir (Kaefer ve Chiviawosky, 2022). Dil öğrenme sürecinde, öğretmenlere ve arkadaşlara güven duymak, öğrencilerin öğrenme deneyimlerini iyileştirebilir (Puozzo, 2018). Bağlılık ihtiyacının tatmini, içsel motivasyonu, olumlu duyguları ve öz-yeterliği artırarak, etkili öğrenme için kritik bir rol oynar (Kaefer ve Chiviawosky, 2022). Çalışma bulguları, bağlılığın engellenmesi boyutunda en düşük engellenme düzeylerinin görüldüğünü ve bu konuda incelenen değişkenler bağlamında anlamlı farkların bulunmadığını göstermektedir.

Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, dil öğrenme sürecinde öğrencilerin özerklik, yeterlilik ve bağlılık ihtiyaçlarını desteklemenin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Öğrencilere daha fazla özerklik fırsatı sunmak, başarısızlıkla başa çıkmalarına yardımcı olacak yapıcı geri bildirimler sağlamak ve güvenli ilişkiler kurmalarını teşvik etmek, öğrenme motivasyonlarını artırabilir. Ayrıca, dil öğretim programlarının ve öğretmenlerin, öğrencilerin bağımsız düşünme becerilerini destekleyecek şekilde geliştirilmesi gerekmektedir. Bu bulgular, dil öğrenme ortamlarının daha etkili ve destekleyici hale getirilmesi için önemli çıkarımlar sunmaktadır.



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Introduction

Recent decades have seen consensus among researchers in the field of second language (L2) acquisition and learning regarding the dynamic, context-dependent, and individualistic characteristics of L2 motivation (Dörnyei et al., 2015). Research on the antecedents of L2 motivational changes indicates that such changes can be linked to factors such as prior English-learning experience (Dörnyei, 2019), emotions (Fernández-Ortega et al., 2024), school years (Noels et al., 2019), and the education system (Yu and Geng, 2020). Although numerous studies have examined the antecedents of L2 motivational changes, there has been insufficient focus on the influence of individuals' psychological factors on their motivational shifts (Du and Yang, 2024).

As a motivational theory, Self-determination Theory (SDT) posits that tasks are performed and learnt best when individuals attain autonomy, competence, and relatedness regarding these tasks (Deci and Ryan, 1985; Earl et al., 2019; Hsu et al., 2019; Ryan and Deci, 2000). The theory identifies these three components as the basic psychological needs (BPNs), which are deemed to be essential nutrients for growth, development, and well-being. As the components of BPNs, autonomy refers to the need for learners to feel in control of their learning, relatedness involves the need to feel connected to others, and competence pertains to the need to experience mastery and effectiveness in their learning (Ryan and Deci, 2017).

Considered as a fundamental psychological need, autonomy is crucial for maintaining motivation and engagement in language learning. When learners have the freedom to choose their learning activities and goals, they are more likely to be motivated and persistent (Patall and Hooper, 2019). Providing learners with options in their learning process, such as selecting topics of interest or choosing between different types of assignments, can enhance their sense of autonomy (Ismailov and Ono, 2021). Competence, which can be explained as the need to feel effective and capable of achieving success in learning tasks, is linked to learners' confidence and their belief in their ability to succeed. When learners experience success and receive positive feedback, their sense of competence is reinforced, leading to higher motivation (Lanvers and Graham, 2022). Structured feedback and scaffolded learning tasks that gradually increase in difficulty can help learners build their competence and confidence. Lastly, relatedness, which is simply the need to feel connected to others and to belong to a learning community, is another universal psychological need to be satisfied in order to attain desirable learning outcomes. Social interaction and a sense of belonging are vital for emotional engagement and motivation, and learners who feel supported by peers and instructors are more likely to stay motivated and engaged (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Creating opportunities for collaborative learning, peer feedback, and social interaction can foster a sense of relatedness among learners (Ismailov and Ono, 2021).

The satisfaction of these basic psychological needs has been found to be associated with positive emotional outcomes, such as enjoyment, and lower anxiety in language learning (Earl et al., 2019; Feng et al., 2025). In other words, learners who report higher satisfaction of their basic psychological needs demonstrate more positive emotional outcomes, while those with lower satisfaction report the opposite pattern. On the other hand, a negative correlation exists between

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the satisfaction of needs and the drop-out tendencies (Lindner et al., 2023). In contrast to need satisfaction, need frustration has garnered less scholarly focus. The findings indicated a negative association with students' learning engagement and motivation (Hughes et al., 2023).

There has been sufficient evidence in the literature proving that the BPNs need to be satisfied to sustain motivation, ensure persistence, and create positive behaviours and functioning (Ryan and Deci, 2017). Yet, it is also claimed that the satisfaction of these needs does not necessarily explain the motivation and positive functioning of the learners (Alamer and Lee, 2019; Oga-Baldwin et al., 2017). Instead, frustration of the BPNs also has an equally critical role in determining the motivation, persistence, and achievement of students (Alamer et al., 2023). To be more precise, evidence suggests that the frustration of autonomy, competence, and relatedness has been shown to undermine intrinsic motivation and L2 achievement (Alamer et al., 2023). Besides, frustration of these needs can lead to negative emotions such as anxiety, frustration, and hopelessness, which in turn negatively predict motivation and language learning outcomes (Fernández-Ortega et al., 2024). In the educational context, teacher practices that do not support autonomy, competence, and relatedness can lead to need frustration, resulting in disengagement and lower motivation (Zhou et al., 2023). Conversely, supportive environments that fulfil these needs can enhance positive emotions and intrinsic motivation (Printer, 2023). The critical impact of BPN frustration also brought about studies suggesting ways and actions to deal with the negative effects of this frustration on learning. For instance, it is articulated that strategies like gamification and game-based learning can effectively address the adverse impacts of need frustration by boosting students' confidence and motivation (Fernández-Ortega et al., 2024). Ross and Wasanasomsithi (2021) also argue that creating authentic experiences and opportunities for social interaction in language learning settings can help fulfil relatedness needs and reduce negative emotions. However, despite the growing number of studies delving into the frustration of basic psychological needs in the educational sphere in general, language learning and teaching literature remains considerably under-researched in this regard, with a paucity of empirical work comprehensively addressing this construct and its pedagogical implications. Given the centrality of the satisfaction and frustration of the basic psychological needs in learning a foreign language, a process that is inherently complex and demanding, the present study aims to answer the following research questions in pursuit of its overarching objectives:

- What are the levels of basic psychological needs frustration of the Turkish tertiary EFL learners?
- What is the effect of gender on the basic psychological needs frustration of the Turkish tertiary EFL learners?
- How does the English language proficiency affect the basic psychological needs frustration of the Turkish tertiary EFL learners?
- How does the previous failure experience affect the basic psychological needs frustration of the Turkish tertiary EFL learners?

Method

This study utilizes a quantitative research design with a cross-sectional descriptive approach to explore the frustration of basic psychological needs (BPN) among English as a Foreign Language



(EFL) learners in a state university setting. It further explores the BPN frustration in terms of gender, language proficiency level, and previous failure experiences as independent variables.

The required ethical approval for all the steps of the present research was obtained from the Social Sciences and Humanities Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of Manisa Celal Bayar University, dated and issued as 2024/08-11. Besides, all the universal ethical principles were adhered to in all the phases of the study.

Population and sample

As the universe of the present study is composed of undergraduate students who are actively engaged in the process of learning a foreign language, a representative sample of 330 individuals learning English as a foreign language at a state university was formed using the criterion sampling method. In the selection of the sample, the inclusion criteria were determined as learning English at the tertiary level and having received English language education for at least one term. In the study, care was taken to include students from different language levels in the sample to represent the profile of language learners. Correspondingly, specific exclusion criteria were implemented to maintain the integrity of the data. For example, non-Turks and bilingual participants were not included in the sample. In order to ensure the accuracy of the data, randomly filled and incomplete forms were also excluded. After implementing the exclusion procedures, a total of 317 participants provided valid data for the study. Demographic information regarding the study sample is provided in Table 1.

Table 1.
Sample

Variable	Group	n	%
Gender	Male	184	58.4
	Female	133	41.6
Language Level	Pre-Intermediate (A2)	41	12.9
	Intermediate (B1)	97	30.6
	Upper-Intermediate (B2)	179	56.5
Repeating the language level	Yes	181	57.9
	No	136	42.1
Total		317	100

Instruments and data collection

Within the scope of the study, the Basic Psychological Needs Frustration in Second Language Scale (BPNFS-L2), which was adapted to Turkish culture by Korkmaz and Kayır (2025) was used. The original version of the scale was developed by Alamer et al. (2023). In the study, the scale called the "Basic Psychological Needs Frustration in Second Language Scale (BPNFS-L2)" was introduced and the factor structure and criterion-related validity of the scale were evaluated by applying bifactor exploratory structural equation modelling (bifactor ESEM). The original form of the scale, which was prepared in 5-point Likert type (strongly disagree, disagree, partially agree, agree, and strongly agree), was used by Kayır, G. and Korkmaz, H. (2025). Basic psychological needs frustration in English language learning: Exploring the role of gender, proficiency, and failure experiences. *Western Anatolia Journal of Educational Sciences*, 16(Special issue 4), 29-44.



agree), consists of 12 items grouped under 3 factors. The scale factors were expressed as frustration of autonomy, frustration of competence and frustration of relatedness. The original factor analysis values of the scale were CFA: $\lambda = 0.63 - 0.92$, $M\lambda = 0.81$, $\omega = 0.82 - 0.92$; ESEM: $\lambda = 0.51 - 0.94$, $M\lambda = 0.77$, $\omega = 0.82 - 0.91$. In this study, the internal consistency coefficients of the scale showed that the data were reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$; McDonald's $\omega = .85$). In the confirmatory factor analysis conducted for the data set of this study, it was seen that the structural properties of the scale were preserved ($\chi^2/df = 2.70$; CFI = .95; TLI = .94; SRMR = .05; RMSEA = .07).

Data analysis

To seek answers for the research questions of the study, a set of quantitative data analyses were carried out using Jamovi package programs. To begin with, Shapiro-Wilk normality test, Levene's homogeneity test were conducted to test the normality distribution of the data collected and to determine which parametric or nonparametric tests to utilize. Descriptive statistics were then calculated to find out the existing levels of the frustration of the psychological needs among participants. Then, Independent Sample T-tests were used to conduct pairwise difference tests in order to determine the potential effects of the selected variables on the BPNF. To measure the effect of the proficiency level of EFL learners, One-way ANOVA accompanied by Tukey's post-hoc tests were run. Finally, Pearson correlation coefficients tests were used to identify the linear associations between the variables.

Findings

The results of the analysis conducted to see the descriptive characteristics of the data in the scale dataset are given in Table 2. When the average scores are examined, it is seen that the inhibition of autonomy has the highest average, while the inhibition of relatedness has the lowest average. The average for the overall scale was found to be 28.8. In this scale, where a minimum of 12 and a maximum of 60 points can be obtained, it was seen that the sample group had a mid-value score. Although the Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test results showed that the normal distribution assumption was violated, it was decided to apply parametric tests to the data because the kurtosis and skewness values were between -2 and 2 (Hair et al., 2022). Detailed information about these tests is given in Table 2. It is seen that the data are not normally distributed, but homogeneity of variances is preserved.



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Table 2.

Descriptive statistics and normality test scores regarding the frustration of basic psychological needs

	Autonomy Frustration	Competence Frustration	Relatedness Frustration	Total
Mean	12.1	10.3	6.38	28.8
Median	12	10	5	29
S. deviation	3.36	4.29	3.20	8.29
Minimum	4	4	4	14
Maximum	20	20	17	49
Skewness	-.05	.42	1.31	.27
Std. error Skewness	.13	.13	0.13	.13
Kurtosis	-.41	-.62	0.83	-.61
Std. error kurtosis	.27	.27	0.27	.27
Shapiro-Wilk W	.98	.95	0.76	.97
Shapiro-Wilk p	< .05	< .05	< .05	< .05

The responses of the participants to the scale of frustration of basic psychological needs in foreign language learning were examined with an independent sample t-test according to the gender variable. As seen in Table 3, the total score of the scale and the sub-factor scores do not change significantly according to the gender variable. However, it was observed that female participants had higher frustration scores than male participants in the overall scale and sub-scales.

Table 3.

Results by the gender of the participants

Subscale	Group	n	\bar{X}	SD	SE	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Autonomy Frustration	Female	184	12.17	3.46	.25	.40	315	.68	.04
	Male	133	12.02	3.22	.28				
Competence Frustration	Female	184	10.59	4.30	.31	1.38	315	.16	.15
	Male	133	9.91	4.25	.36				
Relatedness Frustration	Female	184	6.50	3.24	.23	.77	315	.44	.08
	Male	133	6.22	3.16	.27				
Total	Female	184	29.26	8.65	.63	1.17	315	.23	.13
	Male	133	28.14	7.76	.67				

Another variable of the study was whether the participants repeated the education at the current language level due to previous failure. The independent sample t-test results for this variable are given in Table 4.



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Table 4.
Results by repeating the same level of language course

Subscale	Group	n	\bar{X}	SD	SE	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Autonomy	Yes	181	12.53	3.43	.25	2.63	315	.00	.29
Frustration	No	136	11.54	3.18	.27				
Competence	Yes	181	10.69	4.26	.31	1.83	315	.06	.20
Frustration	No	136	9.79	4.28	.36				
Relatedness	Yes	181	6.23	3.03	.22	-.99	315	.32	-.11
Frustration	No	136	6.59	3.42	.29				
Total	Yes	181	29.44	8.19	.60	1.62	315	.10	.28
	No	136	27.92	8.38	.71				

The analysis results show that there is a significant difference in favour of female students only in the frustration of autonomy subscale ($t(317)=2.63, p < .05$). Accordingly, the mean scores of female participants ($\bar{x}= 12.53$) are higher than those of male participants ($\bar{x}= 11.54$). It is seen that female students experience frustration of autonomy at a higher rate. On the other hand, the mean scores of female participants are higher in all other scales except for the frustration of relatedness dimension. However, the difference was not found to be significant ($p > .05$).

The last variable of the study was the language level of the participants. Accordingly, a one-way variance analysis Fisher's ANOVA was conducted to determine whether the scores of students studying at pre-intermediate (A2), intermediate (B1) and upper-intermediate (B2) levels differed. The analysis results are given in Table 5.

Table 5.
Results by the current language proficiency level of the participants

Scale	Group	n	\bar{X}	SD	SE	F	Df1	Df2	P
Autonomy	Pre-int.	41	11.54	3.07	.47	1.45	2	314	.23
Frustration	Intermediate	97	11.85	3.43	.34				
	Upper-int.	179	12.37	3.38	.25				
Competence	Pre-Int.	41	10.17	4.39	.68	0.49	2	314	.60
Frustration	Intermediate	97	9.98	4.03	.40				
	Upper-int.	179	10.51	4.41	.33				
Relatedness	Pre-Int.	41	6.90	3.51	.54	.74	2	314	.47
Frustration	Intermediate	97	6.18	3.09	.31				
	Upper-int.	179	6.37	3.20	.23				
Total	Pre-Int.	41	28.61	8.42	1.31	.73	2	314	.48
	Intermediate	97	28.00	8.16	.82				
	Upper-int.	179	29.26	8.35	.62				

In the analysis made according to the language level that the students were studying, no significant difference was found between the scale scores ($p > .05$). Except for the frustration of relatedness, it was observed that the students studying at the upper-intermediate (B2) level had higher anxiety scores in other scale scores.

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Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

This study aimed to examine the frustration of autonomy, relatedness and competence as experienced by university students in the process of learning English as a second language in terms of various variables. In this context, among the variables examined, it was seen that repeating the language course due to failure in the past had a significant effect on the autonomy frustration dimension. Learner autonomy in the language learning process can be considered as the individual's capacity to control his/her own learning (Aryanti and Anggaira, 2020). Students with high autonomy skills are more motivated in the language learning process and can better accomplish learning tasks (Bayat, 2011; Ma and Ma, 2012). Likewise, increasing the level of learning motivation and achieving more effective learning outcomes are key conditions for success in language education (Ma and Ma, 2012; Ünlü and Er, 2016). However, due to reasons such as limited autonomous learning experience and unfamiliarity with linguistic concepts, language learners cannot easily become autonomous learners (Aryanti and Anggaira, 2020). A negative perspective towards learning activities in the classroom and finding these activities inadequate can also be an obstacle to the acquisition of learner autonomy (Inozu, 2011). Factors such as low language proficiency and lack of motivation, as well as excessive dependence on teachers in the language learning process, can hinder the development of student autonomy (Alrashidi, 2022; Jeong and Ahn, 2022). While it is recommended that various techniques such as self-directed learning, project-based learning, and integrating technology be included in the learning process to promote student autonomy (Grant, 2017; Schwienhorst, 2012), it is known that teachers can play an important role in promoting autonomy by providing students with opportunities to make decisions about their learning and supporting them with feedback in this process (Alrashidi, 2022; Jeung and Ahn, 2022; Kim, 2014). The classroom environment also plays an important role in supporting or hindering learner autonomy. A supportive environment that encourages autonomy can increase motivation and engagement, while a controlling or indifferent environment can lead to frustration (Cheon et al., 2019; Cheon et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2024). Learner autonomy appears to be affected by many factors inside and outside the classroom.

Failure experienced in the learning process reduces motivation. In this study, it was also seen that failure was effective in preventing autonomy. Failure leads to feelings of disappointment, sadness, and reduced self-efficacy, which in turn reduces motivation to participate in future learning activities (Chang, 2020). Students who perceive failure as a result of their incompetence may generalize this situation, which may cause them to participate reluctantly in learning activities (Jeong and Ahn, 2022; Cheon et al., 2019). Educators can help students see their understanding of failure as a step towards success by emphasizing the value of effort, perseverance, and learning from mistakes (Cheon et al., 2023); They can help students learn from their failures by providing them with specific, actionable feedback that focuses on improvement, not just results, in the language learning process (Lorante-Catalan, 2023). Supporting students in the process of setting achievable, gradual goals can help them continue even when faced with failure. Celebrating small successes can strengthen their motivation to continue learning (Pouzergues, 2022).

The concept of competence frustration can be explained as individuals' feeling inadequate to complete an activity (Alamer et al., 2023). Students frequently encounter language barriers that

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hinder the development of their communicative competence. These barriers can be linguistic, psychosocial or organizational (Dronova, 2024). Negative feelings such as anxiety and frustration in language learning can also arise from the perception that speaking proficiency is the only criterion of success. This perception can lead to negative attitudes towards language learning (Aski and Weintritt, 2020). Language learners often experience anxiety due to fear of inadequacy due to fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, and test anxiety; these may arise from their perceptions of others' evaluations of their language proficiency (Gregersen, 2023). Emotional anxiety and frustration negatively affect learning performance, especially in learning environments that require students to be active (Ren, 2021). Although students' perceptions of the competence frustration were seen at a moderate level in this study, no significant difference was encountered in terms of the research variables.

The last component of basic psychological needs, the concept of relatedness, refers to the psychological need to feel connected to others (Alamer et al., 2023). It is a basic psychological need that includes interpersonal acceptance and closeness (Kaefer and Chiviawosky, 2022). It is known that trust in teachers and peers in the language learning process can improve the learning experiences (Puozzo, 2018). Relatedness is a factor that increases intrinsic motivation, positive emotion, and self-efficacy, which are very important for effective learning (Kaefer and Chiviawosky, 2022). Among the three factors examined in the context of this study, the lowest frustration scores were found in the context of relatedness inhibition. No difference was observed in the context of relatedness inhibition in terms of the variables considered.

To conclude, this study aimed to examine the basic psychological needs frustration of tertiary students learning English as a second language in Türkiye in terms of gender, failure experience and proficiency level in English. The research findings indicate that students encounter the highest level of frustration in autonomy. Autonomy frustration creates a significant difference only in terms of the previously experienced failure variable. No significant difference was found among the learners in terms of gender and current proficiency level in English. As a result of the research, it was seen that English learners encounter low levels of relatedness frustration. The findings suggest that teacher, program and content competencies should be developed to support students' autonomy in the language learning process.

As a purely quantitative survey study with a cross-sectional approach, the present study does not aim to explore the frustration of EFL learners' basic psychological needs in depth by further delving into the underlying reasons for the feelings of frustration, and exploring the means to decrease the levels of such frustration. Therefore, further studies can focus on the causes of basic psychological needs frustration, and try to come up with effective means to cope with this feeling in order to pave the way to achievement in foreign language learning.



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