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**EVALUATION OF LIFE SATISFACTION AMONG GUIDANCE
TEACHERS WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN VARIABLES****Abstract:**

The aim of this study was to evaluate with respect to certain variables the life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers working at educational institutions. In this context, the study attempted to determine whether life satisfaction levels among guidance teachers varied according to gender, the type of school/institution they worked at, and their length of service. The study was conducted according to a screening model. The study population consisted of guidance teachers working at educational institutions in Turkey. The study sample group consisted of 251 randomly-selected guidance teachers working at public and private schools, and in counseling and research centers. During the study; a personal information form, the Turkish translation by Simsek (2011) of the "Satisfaction with Life as a Whole" and the PWI-A Scale were used as data collection tools. The study data were gathered in an internet environment, and analyzed with the SPSS 16.0 package program. Data analysis demonstrated that guidance teachers generally had a high level of life satisfaction. The study results also showed that guidance teachers' level of life satisfaction did not differ significantly with respect to gender, the type of school/institution they worked at (e.g. public school vs. private school), and their length of service.

Keywords:

Life satisfaction, guidance teacher, Turkey.

Introduction

Scientific studies based on philosophical discussions concerning happiness, life satisfaction and well-being began to be conducted only in the second half of the twentieth century. The contribution of biological, psychological and social factors to life satisfaction was investigated using new measurement methods and concepts connected with life satisfaction were further clarified (Diener, Horwitz, & Emmons, 1985; Diener & Suh, 1997; as cited in Simsek, 2011).

Life satisfaction is regarded as individuals' overall evaluation of the quality of their lives according to the criteria set by the individuals themselves. According to Diener and Lucas (1999), life satisfaction covers satisfaction with current life, satisfaction with future life and the views of individuals' relatives about the lives of those individuals. Fields of satisfaction, on the other hand, can be job, family, free time, health, ego and individuals' environment (as cited in Tuzgöl Dost, 2007).

Life satisfaction is defined, in accordance with the cognitive theory, as "individual's cognitive judgment about comparisons based on the compatibility of their own living conditions with the standards" (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffen, 1985). It is assumed that the less the incompatibility between the individual's desires and achievements, the more life satisfaction he/she has (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). According to the affective theory, on the other hand, life satisfaction is individual's conscious experience as to the supremacy of their positive emotions over their negative emotions. In other words, life satisfaction is the degree of the positive emotions experienced (Frish, 2006; as cited in Simsek, 2011).

Life satisfaction provides many psychological, social, and economic benefits. These benefits at the same time demonstrate the importance of life satisfaction. Some of the positive benefits of life satisfaction are that happy people have stronger social and romantic relationships; respond to phenomena more appropriately; socialize more; are healthier; get married more easily and get more satisfaction from their marriages; exhibit higher performance at work; earn more money and better adjust to the organization (Diener & Seligman, 2002; Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005; Prieto, Diener, Tamir, Scollon, & Diener, 2005; Sirgy et al., 2006; as cited in Simsek, 2011). Therefore, increasing individuals' life satisfaction will prevent many individual and social problems from arising in individuals' lives and facilitate their solution.

Frish (2006) thinks that just as success begets success, so a consistent happiness and life satisfaction improve self-confidence, optimism, self-efficacy, appeal, sociability, effectiveness, energy, pro-social behavior, physical well-being, effective management of challenges and stress, flexibility, uniqueness and goal-oriented behavior. In studies conducted on ageing, gerontologists who began their studies in the 1960s stated that the most important result of healthy and successful ageing was life satisfaction (as cited in Simsek, 2011).

The correlation between demographic situation and life satisfaction is not usually very strong. Marriage and perceived social status are more effective on satisfaction than gender, age and income. Results of studies indicate that income, age and gender affect life satisfaction due to differences in meeting fundamental and developmental needs (Simsek, 2011).

Plagnol and Easterline (2008) questioned the role of gender differences and age in satisfaction in living quarters. According to this, women derive financial satisfaction and satisfaction from family life in the early period of their adulthood and are happier. In women, financial satisfaction matches men's at age 41, family satisfaction at age

64 and overall level of happiness at age 48. This process continues with men getting more satisfaction from these fields. The increase in men's life satisfaction is explained by the fact that they have more unsatisfied desires in their youth than women and their financial status gets better in later ages. In women, on the other hand, low satisfaction is explained by the fact that the rate of desires' being satisfied decreases with decreasing family support (as cited in Simsek, 2011).

In order to increase life satisfaction, people are usually encouraged to develop skills that will make their interpersonal relationships more productive (Cockrum & White, 1985; as cited in Simsek, 2011). Especially, social relationships and social support such as family, friends, job etc. are among the leading causes of high life satisfaction.

According to the Legatum Prosperity Index (2010), the mean life satisfaction in Turkey was measured to be 5.1 out of 10 and the country ranked 78th among 110 countries. According to studies conducted in Turkey, it is seen that life satisfaction of Turks is at an intermediate level when compared with other countries, and there are considerable differences among the life satisfaction levels of people living in the country (Veenhoven, 2005b; as cited in Simsek, 2011).

This study will try to determine the socio-demographic variables that play a role in life satisfactions of guidance teachers employed in educational institutions. It is expected that the study will contribute to measures that will be taken to raise guidance teachers' life satisfactions. In this way, guidance teachers will be happier, perform better and adapt more easily to the organization. It is believed that the results of the study will be beneficial to the authorities of T.R. Ministry of National Education, directors at educational institutions and researchers.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers employed at educational institutions in terms of certain variables. The study investigated whether the life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers varied with gender, the type of school/institution where they work, the school/institution' being private or public, professional seniority and their duration of employment at the school/institution where they work.

Method

This study, which aims to investigate the life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers by some variables, is in the survey model.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of guidance teachers working at educational institutions in Turkey. The sample of the study, on the other hand, includes 251 randomly selected guidance teachers, 140 female and 111 male, working at public and private schools and guidance and research centers. The distributions of the teachers in the sample group by their gender, type of school/institution, the school/institution they work at being private or public, professional seniority, and duration of work at their school/institution in Tables 1,2,3,4 and 5.

Distribution of the guidance teachers in the sample group by their gender is given in Table 1.

Table1. Distribution of the guidance teachers in the sample group by their gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	140	55,8

Male	111	44,2
Total	251	100,0

It is seen that 55.8 % of the guidance teachers in the sample group are female while 44.1 % are male.

Distribution of the guidance teachers in the sample group by the type of school/institution is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of the guidance teachers in the sample group by the type of school/institution

Type of school/institution	Frequency	Percent
Primary schools	79	31,5
Secondary schools	71	28,3
Academic high schools (anatolian, science etc.)	49	19,5
vocational high school	24	9,6
Guidance and research centers	28	11,2
Total	251	100,0

31.5 % of the guidance teachers in the sample group work at primary schools, 28.3 % at secondary schools, 19.5 % at academic high schools (anatolian, science etc.), 9.6 % at vocational high school and 11.2 % at guidance and research centers.

Distribution of the guidance teachers in the sample group by the school/institution they work at being private or public is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of the guidance teachers in the sample group by the school/institution they work at being private or public

School/institution	Frequency	Percent
Public school	238	94,8
Private school	13	5,2
Total	251	100,0

It is seen that 94.8 % of the guidance teachers in the sample group work at public schools/institutions while 5.2 % work at private schools/institutions. This distribution has emerged because most of the educational institutions in Turkey are public.

Distribution of the guidance teachers in the sample group by their professional seniority is given in Table 4.

Table 4. Distribution of the guidance teachers in the sample group by their professional seniority

Professional seniority (year)	Frequency	Percent
1-3	97	38,6
4-7	70	27,9
8 or longer	84	33,5
Total	251	100,0

It is seen that 38.6 % of the guidance teachers in the sample group have a professional seniority of 1-3 years, 27.9 % 4-7 years, and 33.5 % 8 years or longer.

Distribution of the guidance teachers in the sample group by the duration of their work at their schools/institutions is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Distribution of the guidance teachers in the sample group by the duration of their work at their schools/institutions

Duration of work in schools/institution (year)	Frequency	Percent
0-1	98	39,0
2-3	96	38,2
4 or more	57	22,7
Total	251	100,0

It is seen that 39.0 % of the guidance teachers in the sample group have been working at the same school/institution for 0-1 year, 38,2 % for 2-3 years, and 22,7 % 4 or more years.

Data Collection Tool

Personal information form and Turkish Translation by Simsek (2011) of the Satisfaction with Life as a Whole and The PWI-A Scale were used as a data collection tool in order to investigate the life satisfactions of guidance teachers in the study.

Personal Information form: In this form, there is information about the guidance teachers' gender, type of school/institution, the school/institution they work at being private or public, professional seniority and their duration of work at their schools/institutions.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (Personal Wellbeing Index-A): It was developed by the International Wellbeing Group, 2006 on the basis of Cummins's (1995) Comprehensive Quality of Life Scale. Satisfaction Scale in Life Domains measures satisfaction in 8 basic life domains and ranges from 0 to 10. 0:Total Dissatisfaction; 10:Total Satisfaction. Moreover, there is a question measuring the overall life satisfaction. The 8 factors in the scale explain 30 to 60 % of the total variance about life satisfaction. The item "how satisfied are you with your spirituality or your religion", which is one of these factors and which was added to the scale later, was included in this study.

In applications in Australia, Cronbach's alpha coefficient about the reliability of the scale was reported to be between 70 and 85, and test-re-test reliability was reported to be ,84 in a period of 1-2 weeks. It has a parallel validity of ,78 with Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin's (1985) Life Satisfaction Scale (International Wellbeing Group, 2006). The scale's translation into and adaptation to Turkish was made by Simsek (2011). The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the Turkish translation of the Satisfaction Scale in Life Domains, which was used in this study, was ,87 and the parallel validity with life satisfaction scale was ,75.

Analysis of Data

The data were collected by sending the data collection tools to guidance teachers in different schools/guidance research centers and cities in print material form and via electronic media. 18 scales were not included for evaluation as they were not completed in full and data about 251 teachers were analyzed using the SPSS 16 program.

The data were analyzed using t-test, variance analysis and ANOVA. $p < ,05$ was adopted as the significance level in the interpretation of data.

Findings

The findings obtained in this study, which was conducted to investigate the life satisfactions of guidance teachers in terms of different variables, are shown in Tables according to gender, type of school/institution, the school/institution they work at being private or public, professional seniority and duration of work (term of employment) at the school/institution.

1. Statistical results of the life satisfaction level scores of the guidance teachers are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Statistical results of the life satisfaction level scores of the guidance teachers

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Life Satisfaction	251	70,972	11,769

According to Table 6, it is seen that life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers seem to be high ($\bar{x}=70,972$). Guidance teachers are satisfied with their lives.

2. T-test results of the guidance teachers' life satisfaction level scores by gender are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. T-test results of the guidance teachers' life satisfaction level scores by gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	T	Sig.
Female	140	72,18	10,74	249	1,84	,066
Male	111	69,44	12,8			

It is seen in Table 7 that guidance teachers' life satisfaction level scores do not difference by gender. Female guidance teachers' life satisfaction levels ($\bar{x}=72,18$) were found to be higher than those of male teachers ($\bar{x}=69,44$).

3. Anova results of the scores of life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers based on the type of school/institution that they work for are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Anova results of the scores of life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers based on the type of school/institution that they work for

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1094,685	4	4	2,007	,094
Within Groups	33536,120	246	136,326		
Total	34630,805	250			

The analysis results in Table 8 show that the scores of life satisfaction scale of guidance teachers do not create a significant difference based on the type of school/institution that they work for. In other words, the life satisfaction levels of the guidance teachers do not significant difference the type of school/institution that they work.

4. T-test results the scores of life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers based on whether that they work for a public or private school are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. T-test results the scores of life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers based on whether that they work for a public or private school

School/institution	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	T	Sig.

Public school	238	71,05	11,80	249	,45	,653
Private school	13	69,53	11,45			

In Table 9, it is seen that the scores of life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers do not significant difference whether that they work for a public or private school. Life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers who work for public school/institution are (\bar{x} =71,05) higher when compared to the life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers who work for private school/institution (\bar{x} =69,53).

5. Anova results of the scores of life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers based on their professional seniority are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Anova results of the scores of life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers based on their professional seniority

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	300,425	2	150,212	1,085	,339
Within Groups	34330,380	248	138,429		
Total	34630,805	250			

The analysis results in Table 10 show that the scores of life satisfaction scale of guidance teachers do not create a significant difference based on their professional seniority. In other words, the life satisfaction levels of the guidance teachers do not significant difference their professional seniority.

6. Anova results of the scores of life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers based on their duration of work for the school/institution they work for are shown in Table 11.

Table 11. Anova results of the scores of life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers based on their duration of work for the school/institution they work for

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	398,305	2	199,152	1,443	,238
Within Groups	34232,500	248	138,034		
Toplam	34630,805	250			

The analysis results in Table 11 show that the scores of life satisfaction scale of guidance teachers do not create a significant difference based on their duration of work for the school/institution they work for. In other words, the life satisfaction levels of the guidance teachers do not significant difference their duration of work for the school/institution they work for.

Discussion and Results

The findings which are obtained in this research which was made to examine the life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers based on different variables were discussed in items and the following results were found.

1. As a result of the data which was obtained in the research, life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers were found high (\bar{x} =70,972). Guidance teachers are satisfied about their lives. In a study by Simsek (2011), the satisfaction average in the lives of the instructors at Anadolu University was at the range of 0-10 points M=7.06 and 70.6

out of 100. This result is supportive of the research result. In western societies, it is found that norms difference between 70 and 80, and they are 73.4-76.4 in Australia (International Wellbeing Group, 2006). And this result is not surprising because life satisfaction levels of the individuals are usually above average across the globe (Oishi, Diener, & Lucas, 2007). Contrary to popular belief, people are usually happy (Biswas-Diener, Diener, & Tamir, 2004; as cited in Simsek, 2011). All these show that the guidance teachers are happy. This makes us think that guidance teachers' having been educated in human relations and communication skills and their maintenance of their relationship within the framework of this information can be effective. Good social atmosphere perceived in working environment, positive relations between the individuals, individuals' good treatments, assistance to each other, making necessary information exchange properly, in short the whole organizational communication being implemented as the individual desires positively affect the whole life of the individual (Sümer & Ven, 2007; as cited in Simsek, 2011). According to Carmel (1997), professional self-respect is positively associated with work and life satisfaction. (as cited in Ünal, Karlıdağ and Yoloğlu, 2001). Moreover, in a research by Fugl-Meyer, Melin and Fugl-Meyer (2003), it was determined that the vocationally active subjects had a higher level of satisfaction with life. It is supposed that life satisfaction levels of guidance teachers are higher because they have an active profession always in relationship with people.

It is supposed that guidance teachers are satisfied about their job. According to Ünal, Karlıdağ and Yoloğlu (2001), being satisfied about one's job has an important place in the life satisfaction and productivity of the individual.

2. In the analyses made, it was observed that the scores of life satisfaction scale of guidance teachers did not difference. It is observed that most of the researches which were made on different age groups point out that there is no significant relationship between life satisfaction and sex (Hampton and Marshall, 2000; Hintikka, 2001; Katja, Paivi, Marja-Terttu and Pekka, 2002; as cited in Tuzgöl Dost, 2007; Fugl-Meyer, Melin and Fugl-Meyer, 2003).

The life satisfaction levels of the female guidance teachers are higher ($\bar{x}=72,18$) when compared to male ones ($\bar{x}=69,44$). In a study by Simsek (2011), in the context of sex, the satisfaction in total living areas is slightly higher in women ($M=7.15$, $SS=1.61$) when compared to men ($M=6.94$, $SS=1.67$) and the difference between them was not statistically significant [$F(1,231)=.948$, $p=.331$]. Sex did not emerge as a variable which affects the satisfaction in their living areas.

In a study by Ünal, Karlıdağ and Yoloğlu (2001), the life satisfaction scores of the physicians were found higher in women when compared to men. However, some of the researches made by taking sex and age into account show that there were no significant differences in the life satisfaction levels of women and men (Lavallee, Hatch, Michalos, & McKinley, 2007). There is an interaction between sex and socioeconomic status. Poor women have higher satisfaction when compared to poor men. (Czikszenmihayli & Hunter, 2003; Proctor, Linley, & Maltby, 2008; Seligman, 2007; as cited in Simsek,2011).

3. The analysis results of the data obtained show that the life satisfaction scale scores of the guidance teachers did not have significant difference based on the type of school/institution they work for. In other words the life satisfaction levels of the guidance teachers do not significant difference the type of school/institution they work for. Although there are differences such as student characteristics, management and conditions etc. among the school types, it is understood that the life satisfaction levels

of the guidance teachers do not differ and their life satisfactions are higher. Unavailability of researches in this regard makes it difficult to make comments. However, it can be said that guidance teachers successfully apply their human relations and communication skills in all schools/institutions; they comprehend the meaning of life and enjoy living.

4. It is seen that the life satisfaction scale scores of the guidance teachers do not show a significant difference whether it is a public or private school/institution they work for. However, the satisfaction scale scores of the guidance teachers who work for public schools/institutions were higher ($\bar{x}=71,05$), when compared to those who work for private schools/institutions ($\bar{x}=69,53$). It is supposed that the life satisfaction levels of the guidance teachers who work for public schools/institutions are higher because they have more comfortable working conditions. That the teachers would like to work for state schools instead of private schools due to reasons such as the requirement for more work and performance in private schools/institutions is explanatory of the reason why the life satisfaction levels of the guidance teachers who work for public schools/institutions are higher when compared to those who work for private schools/institutions.

5. It is shown that the life satisfaction scale scores of the guidance teachers do not have a significant difference based on their professional seniority. In other words, the life satisfaction levels of the guidance teachers do not show a significant difference their professional seniority. It is supposed that the guidance teachers who participated in the research had rather less professional seniority, i.e. they were young, which could have been effective in such a result. Professional seniority also expresses progress by age. It is a common prejudice that being young provides more satisfaction. However, a little reduction is observed in the life satisfaction of the individuals during adolescence while their life satisfactions slightly increase as they get older (Czikszenmihayli & Hunter, 2003; Proctor, Linley, & Maltby, 2008; Seligman, 2007; as cited in Simsek, 2011).

In a study by Ünal, Karlıdağ and Yoloğlu (2001), it was found that the life satisfaction scores of those who work for more than 6 years among those older than forty years old were higher when compared to the other groups. In a study by Fugl-Meyer, Melin and Fugl-Meyer (2003), although an association was found between life satisfaction and age, the study by Simsek (2011) determined that age did not have much effect on life satisfaction, which supports the result of this research.

6. It is shown that the life satisfaction scale scores of the guidance teachers do not have a significant difference based on their duration of work at the school/institution that they work for. In other words, the life satisfaction levels of the guidance teachers do not show a significant difference their duration of work at the school/institution that they work for. However, contrary to this result, in a study by Simsek (2011), the satisfaction in total living areas significantly varied in statistical terms based on the years of work at Anadolu University. Those who have worked for 21-25 years and those who have worked for 26-40 years constitute that group with the highest satisfaction in total living areas. While the satisfaction of those who have worked for 1-5 years were slightly higher, the satisfaction averages in total living areas tend to increase linearly as the number of years of work increase. It is supposed that the fact that the research group mostly consisted of those who have worked for 5 years and less at their school/institution is effective in obtaining a significant difference based on the guidance teachers' duration of work at the school/institution.

Suggestions

It will be useful for the guidance teachers to maintain their life satisfaction levels and to perform activities to increase the life satisfaction of those with lower life satisfaction levels.

Making comparative researches about the human relations and communication skills and life satisfaction levels of the guidance teachers will be useful to explain the reasons of high life satisfaction levels.

It is supposed that determining the reasons of the high life satisfaction levels of the guidance teachers by qualitative and quantitative researches will make contribution to performing studies to increase the life satisfaction of the occupational groups with lower life satisfaction levels.

Comparative studies can be done among the life satisfaction levels of the guidance teachers and the life satisfaction levels of the teachers in different branches.

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