



Examining the Factors Affecting the Life Satisfaction of University Students

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Abstract. The objective of this study was to explore whether there are variations in university students' life satisfaction levels depending on their gender, academic year, and field of study. Independent samples t-tests were utilized to compare average life satisfaction scores between genders (two distinct groups), while one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to compare scores across various academic years and fields of study (more than two groups). Based on the study's findings, it was determined that there were no significant differences in university students' life satisfaction levels based on gender. Furthermore, the research indicated that there were no significant differences in life satisfaction levels across different academic years or fields of study. The findings of the research were discussed within the framework of the literature.

Keywords: Life Satisfaction, University Students, University.

1 Introduction

1.1 Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a comprehensive concept that reflects how individuals evaluate their overall lives and subjective well-being [1]. Individuals measure their quality of life against self-determined standards to assess their life satisfaction, which serves as a key indicator of mental health and personal well-being [2]. Park et al. suggests that having a sense of purpose and life goals contributes to higher life satisfaction. Moreover, multiple studies involving university students have demonstrated a positive correlation between life satisfaction and the sense of meaning in life [3].

Burger and Samuel [4] have highlighted the significant role of self-efficacy in determining life satisfaction among young adults, indicating that individuals with higher self-efficacy tend to report greater life satisfaction.

Life events encompass various experiences throughout life that are pivotal determinants of mental health among students [5,6]. University students who effectively manage stress through positive life events are more likely to exhibit higher life satisfaction [7]. However, studies have shown that stressful life events can have both short-term and long-term impacts on subjective well-being [8]. The individual coping strategies employed in response to positive and stressful life events significantly influence students' life satisfaction outcomes [9].

Factors influencing life satisfaction include age, personality traits, worldview, life experiences, career aspirations, and family dynamics [10]. Ding et al. [11] discovered

in their research that first-year university students typically report higher life satisfaction compared to students in subsequent years. This difference may be attributed to increased academic pressures and concerns about future employment among students in higher grades, which could impact their overall life satisfaction. The objective of this study was to explore whether there are variations in university students' life satisfaction levels depending on their gender, academic year, and field of study.

Method

The purpose of this study was to examine whether there are differences in university students' life satisfaction based on specific demographic factors. A descriptive survey model was used for this investigation, which aims to reveal relationships among multiple variables and is also known as a correlational survey model. The study sample includes 343 university students, with 256 females (75%) and 87 males (25%). The average age of the students is 20.64 years (Standard Deviation=2.1).

Measures

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), developed by Diener et al. in 1985, is a widely used tool for assessing individuals' overall life satisfaction. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Durak, Şenol-Durak, and Gençöz in 2010. It comprises five items (e.g., I am satisfied with my life), each rated on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Findings from confirmatory factor analysis indicated a good fit of the model to the data ($\chi^2/df = 2.026$, IFI = .994, TLI = .987, CFI = .994, SRMR = .020, and RMSEA = .043).

Findings

In this part of the study, the results derived from data analysis are systematically discussed based on research sub-problems. Specifically, the findings regarding whether there are variations in university students' levels of life satisfaction based on gender are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 *T Test* Life satisfaction level according to gender

Gender	N	M	Std. Deviation	Std. ErrorMean
1	256	14.5	3.3	.21
2	87	14.6	3.5	.38

As shown in the table, there is no disparity in life satisfaction levels based on gender. The difference in life satisfaction levels between female and male students is not statistically significant ($p = .785$). The results concerning whether students' life satisfaction levels vary across academic years are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Multiple Comparisons: Students' life satisfaction levels vary across academic years

Dependent Variable: Life satisfaction

Tukey HSD						
(I)	(J)	Mean Differ-			95% Confidence Interval	
Grade	Grade	ence (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	,02213	,51851	1,000	-1,3166	1,3608
	3	-,15480	,52127	,991	-1,5006	1,1910
	4	-,66694	,62738	,712	-2,2867	,9528
2	1	-,02213	,51851	1,000	-1,3608	1,3166
	3	-,17693	,45988	,981	-1,3642	1,0104
	4	-,68908	,57739	,631	-2,1798	,8016
3	1	,15480	,52127	,991	-1,1910	1,5006
	2	,17693	,45988	,981	-1,0104	1,3642
	4	-,51214	,57987	,814	-2,0093	,9850
4	1	,66694	,62738	,712	-,9528	2,2867
	2	,68908	,57739	,631	-,8016	2,1798
	3	,51214	,57987	,814	-,9850	2,0093

As shown in the table, there is no variation in life satisfaction levels based on academic year. There is no statistically significant difference in life satisfaction levels among university students across various academic years ($p = .663$). The results concerning whether students' life satisfaction levels differ by field of study are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3. Multiple Comparisons: Students' life satisfaction levels differ by field of study(FoS)

Dependent Variable: Life satisfaction

Tukey HSD

(I) FoS	(J) FoS	Mean Differ-			95% Confidence Interval	
		ence (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	,88444	,60720	,591	-,7809	2,5497
	3	,26292	,52432	,987	-1,1751	1,7009
	4	,54784	,56971	,872	-1,0146	2,1103
	5	1,32667	,62117	,207	-,3769	3,0303
2	1	-,88444	,60720	,591	-2,5497	,7809
	3	-,62153	,57874	,820	-2,2087	,9657
	4	-,33660	,62015	,983	-2,0374	1,3642
	5	,44222	,66773	,964	-1,3891	2,2735
3	1	-,26292	,52432	,987	-1,7009	1,1751
	2	,62153	,57874	,820	-,9657	2,2087
	4	,28493	,53926	,984	-1,1940	1,7639
	5	1,06375	,59337	,379	-,5636	2,6911
4	1	-,54784	,56971	,872	-2,1103	1,0146
	2	,33660	,62015	,983	-1,3642	2,0374
	3	-,28493	,53926	,984	-1,7639	1,1940
	5	,77882	,63382	,735	-,9595	2,5171
5	1	-1,32667	,62117	,207	-3,0303	,3769
	2	-,44222	,66773	,964	-2,2735	1,3891
	3	-1,06375	,59337	,379	-2,6911	,5636
	4	-,77882	,63382	,735	-2,5171	,9595

FoS 1= Bachelor's degree student in Mathematics, 2= Bachelor's degree student in Pre-school, 3= Bachelor's degree student in Psychological counseling and guidance, 4= Bachelor's degree student in Primary school, 5= Bachelor's degree student Turkish education

As noted in the table, there is no variation in life satisfaction levels based on the field of study. The study found no significant difference in life satisfaction levels among university students across different fields of study ($p = .222$).

Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

The objective of this study was to explore whether there are variations in university students' life satisfaction levels depending on their gender, academic year, and field of study. Based on the study's findings, it was determined that there were no significant differences in university students' life satisfaction levels based on gender. Furthermore, the research indicated that there were no significant differences in life satisfaction levels across different academic years or fields of study.

In the study conducted by Capri, Özkendir, Berdan Özkurt, and Karakuş [12], it was determined that there were statistically significant relationships between university students' general self-efficacy beliefs, life satisfaction, and burnout at the 0.01 and 0.05 levels.

Furthermore, research by Kong, Zhao, and Xuqun revealed that in late adolescence, the relationship between trait emotional intelligence and life satisfaction is fully mediated by social support and self-esteem. Additionally, a multi-group analysis suggested that males who receive high levels of social support are more likely to experience higher life satisfaction compared to females [13]. Richa Ojha and Varun Kumar conducted research to explore how life satisfaction relates to emotional well-being among university students. They utilized correlation analysis to assess the linear connection between predictor and outcome variables, finding a correlation of (.276**). Overall, this study underscores the impact of emotional well-being on life satisfaction within the university student population. In summary, emotional well-being notably influences life satisfaction [14]. In the research conducted by Betül Ayhan and Bilge Özel [15], findings from the t-test indicated no significant differences between Leisure Attitude sub-dimensions and Satisfaction with Life Scale ($p > 0.05$). Regarding age, correlation analysis revealed no significant associations with Leisure Attitude sub-dimensions, but a positive and modest relationship with Satisfaction with Life Scale was observed ($p < 0.05$). As a result, university students engage in diverse leisure activities influenced by factors such as gender, age, income level, and daily free time. Additionally, participating in both city and campus activities contributes positively to their leisure attitudes. Therefore, increasing involvement in activities and expanding leisure options can boost attitude levels and enhance life satisfaction among university students [16,17,18,19,20]. One of the study's limitations is its exclusive focus on university students. Furthermore, the research utilized scales for data collection. This study follows a self-reporting and descriptive framework. In future research, exploring different methodologies like experimental and qualitative approaches, or conducting longitudinal studies, could overcome the limitations inherent in its descriptive nature. Addressing the constraints stemming from its descriptive approach could involve utilizing experimental and qualitative research settings. Despite using a relatively large sample, the limitation of cross-sectional data collection persists. Therefore, adopting a longitudinal research design would yield more reliable findings to examine the relationships discussed in this study.

Disclosure of Interests The author has no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

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