


Investigation of Teachers' Risk-taking and Life Satisfaction Levels during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: This study aims to determine the relationship between the life satisfaction and risk-taking levels of teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic, their views on some demographic variables, and whether there is a difference in these views. The research is a quantitative study carried out in a relational survey model. The sample consists of 293 participants. The data of the research were analyzed using the Jamovi 1.6.12 statistical software program. It was determined that the participants' mean score for the risk-taking dimension was high, and the mean score for the life satisfaction scale was found to be in the moderate level range. There was no significant difference in the branch variable in the scores of the participants regarding the risk-taking dimension while there was a significant difference in terms of gender and doing sport variables. According to the life satisfaction scale, there was no significant difference in terms of gender and branch variables, on the other hand; there was a significant difference in terms of doing sport variables. It was found that there was a significant relationship between the participants' risk-taking factor and their life satisfaction levels and that the risk-taking dimension was a significant predictor of the participants' life satisfaction. Conducting this research based on a current topic makes it significant. It is anticipated that the results of this research will contribute significantly to researchers in the field to pave the way for conducting new studies.

Keywords: COVID-19, teacher, risk-taking, life satisfaction.

Introduction

Today, the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus has shown its effect in all areas including particularly the issue of health problems. Education workers are among the groups affected personally and in terms of their work systems. The COVID-19 virus has caused educational institutions all over the world to shut down from time to time for days. Therefore, these long interruptions led countries to provide online teaching methods such as Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts, Zoom, and WhatsApp to fill the learning gap caused by disruptions in education. The Education and Information Network (EBA) online platform, established by the Ministry of Education and the General Directorate of Innovation and Educational Technology, has been launched for providing distance education services at all levels of education.

As reported by Akkoyunlu, Altun, and Soylu (2008), a modern education system is expected to keep up with the emerging innovations and to renew itself by determining the available requirements of the time (Akkoyunlu,

Altun & Soyulu, 2008). In this context, the success of distance learning, which is also an innovative practice, depends on a structure that has an innovative teacher staff as well as a communication technologies infrastructure (Atasoy, Özden & Kara, 2020). This may help teachers and students contribute to acquiring functional skills for life and develop higher-order skills such as creativity and critical thinking (Aydoğmuş & Tükel, 2019). Innovativeness is defined as the degree to which an individual is relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than other members of a system (Rogers, 1995) and as desirability for innovation and change (Hurt, Joseph & Cook, 1977). The individual innovativeness is a persistent trait or trend which is an important determinant of how an individual perceives and reacts to an innovation (Yi et al., 2006). Accordingly, the "innovation diffusion" theory, which explains how individuals perceive innovations, the differences in their adoption processes, and their reasons, groups individuals into five different categories in terms of innovation. These categories are innovators (innovative adopters) (2.5%), early adopters (13.5%), early majorities (34%), late majorities (34%), and laggards (16%), from the first of the group to adopt innovation to the slowest ones to adopt an innovation (Rogers, 1983).

Although innovation is a crucial indicator of life satisfaction, there is sparse research on this issue (Nimrod, 2008). It was also suggested that innovation's impact on wellbeing is not direct, and that the most significant role of innovation is in creating an opportunity for broadening and deepening the sense of meaning in life, a sense that leads to greater wellbeing and satisfaction with life. Huhtala and Parzefall (2007) proposed that innovativeness and well-being have a two-way relationship where they may mutually enhance each other (a 'virtuous cycle') or mutually inhibit each other (a 'vicious cycle'). Essentially, innovation is about changes that involve risk-taking and that may pose a threat to interested parties. Therefore, innovativeness can also lead to unwanted costs for innovators despite their intention to benefit (Janssen, Van De Vliert & West, 2004). Honkaniemi, Lehtonen, and Hasu (2015) suggest that high innovativeness connects to high well-being and vice versa.

This study examines the relationship between life satisfaction and risk-taking levels of teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic and their views on the variables of gender, the type of branch, and participation in sports and whether there is a difference among the relevant views.

Method

Research Model

The research was quantitatively conducted via the relational survey model. Relational survey models are aimed at determining whether there is a relationship between more than one variable, and if any, the level and degree of the relationship (Karasar, 2014). Approval was obtained from all teachers participating in this study with the 'Informed Consent Form'.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of the Physical Education and Sports Teachers and Class Teachers and teachers of other branches who work in the city center of Kahramanmaraş in Turkey. Teachers working in

schools randomly selected among the teachers from the schools located in the city center were included in the research sample. The scale forms were sent to the participants online with usable feedback provided from 293 participants. Table 1 reveals that surprisingly a majority of Physical Education and Sports teachers do not participate in sports regularly. This situation, suggests that it can be caused by the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Table 1. Information of Participants Included in the Research Sample

Demographic Variables		N	%
Gender	Female	90	30.7
	Male	203	69.3
Type of Branch	Physical Education	121	41.3
	Class Teacher	55	18.8
	Other Branches	117	39.9
Participation in sports	Not at all	49	16.7
	Sometimes	176	60.1
	Regularly	68	23.2

Data Collection Tools

Individual Innovativeness Scale

The scale was first developed by Hurt, Joseph, and Cook (1977) and adapted into Turkish by Kılıçer and Odabaşı (2010). The scale, which consists of 20 items, was arranged as a five-point Likert scale ranging between 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree to determine the individual innovativeness levels of the participants. The scale has 4 dimensions and within the scope of this study, the "risk-taking" dimension was used and evaluated in the analysis. Kılıçer and Odabaşı (2010) calculated the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient as .63 for the risk-taking dimension as a result of their reliability analysis. In this study, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the risk-taking dimension was found as .73.

Satisfaction with Life Scale

Developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985), the "Satisfaction with Life Scale" was adapted into Turkish by Dağlı and Baysal (2016). The original form of the scale consists of a factor, five items, and is rated in a 7-point Likert type. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was previously made by Köker (1991) and used by various researchers in Turkey in a 7-point Likert type. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was determined as .88. In this study, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found to be .86.

Data Analysis

The data of the research were analyzed using the Jamovi 1.6.12 statistical software program. Whether the scores obtained for the determination of the tests Show a normal distribution was examined by the skewness coefficient method (Büyüköztürk, 2018, p. 40). The skewness values obtained in the analysis were calculated as "-.550" for

the dimension of "Risk-taking" under the "Individual Innovativeness Scale" and as "-.600" for the "Satisfaction with Life Scale". Since the values ranged between +1 and -1, the distribution was accepted as normal. The t-test and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were used to determine the differentiation of participants' views in terms of demographic variables. Post-Hoc tests were used to determine the source of the difference in groups with significant differences. Also, whether there was a significant relationship between the dimension of "Risk-taking" under the "Individual Innovativeness Scale" and the "Satisfaction with Life Scale" was subjected to an analysis.

Results

This section includes the findings of this study, which was conducted to determine the relationship between life satisfaction and risk-taking levels of teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic process, and their views based on the variables of gender, type of branch and participation in sports. Table 2 reveals that the mean score for the risk-taking dimension is high while the mean score of the satisfaction with life scale is moderate.

Table 2. Arithmetic Average Scores and Standard Deviation Values of Participants in the Dimension of Risk-taking under the Individual Innovativeness Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale

Scales	N	Min-Max	\bar{X}	SS
Risk-taking	293	1-5	3.37	.79
Satisfaction with Life	293	1-7	4.42	1.30

Table 3 reveals that the t-test results demonstrate that there is no statistically significant difference based on the gender variable in the scores of the satisfaction with life scale $t(291)=-.296; p<0.05$. while there is a statistically significant difference in the scores of risk-taking $t(297)=-3.89; p<0.05$. The risk-taking levels of female participants were observed to have significantly lower ($\bar{X}_{\text{female}}=3.10, SS_{\text{female}}=.91$) than those of male participants ($\bar{X}_{\text{male}}=3.48, SS_{\text{male}}=.71$).

Table 3. Independent Group T-Test Results According to the Scores of the Gender Variable of the Participants

Scale/Dimensions	Gender	N	\bar{X}	SS	sd	t	p
Risk-taking	Female	90	3.10	.91			
	Male	203	3.48	.71	291	-3.89	.000*
Satisfaction with Life	Female	90	4.46	1.19			
	Male	203	4.41	1.35	291	.296	.767

*($p<0.05$)

Table 4 reveals that there are statistically significant differences between the scores in the dimension of risk-taking ($F=8.19; p=.000$) and the satisfaction with life ($F=4.41; p=.013$) based on participation in sports ($p<0.05$), indicating that those participating in sports sometimes and regularly had significantly higher scores than those who do not participate in sports at all.

Table 4. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results of Participants' Scores in the Dimension of Risk-taking and the Satisfaction with Life Based on Participation in Sports

Scales/Factors	Participation in Sports	N	\bar{X}	SS	F	p	Groups with difference (Post-Hoc Test)
Risk-taking	Not at all (a)	49	2.98	.87			
	Sometimes (b)	176	3.40	.75	8.19	.000*	b, c - a
	Regularly (c)	68	3.55	.77			
Satisfaction with Life	Not at all (a)	49	3.93	1.28			
	Sometimes (b)	176	4.53	1.24	4.41	.013*	b, c - a
	Regularly (c)	68	4.50	1.38			

*($p < 0.05$)

Table 5 reveals that there is no statistically significant difference between the scores in the dimension of risk-taking ($F=1.73$; $p=.178$) and the satisfaction with life ($F=2.90$; $p=.056$) based on the type of branch ($p < 0.05$).

Table 5. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results of Participants' Scores in the Dimension of Risk-taking and the Satisfaction with Life Based on the Type of Branch

Scales/Factors	Branch	N	\bar{X}	SS	F	p
Risk-taking	Physical Education (a)	121	3.45	.71		
	Class Teacher (b)	55	3.41	.78	1.73	.178
	Other Branches (c)	117	3.26	.87		
Satisfaction with Life	Physical Education (a)	121	4.56	1.41		
	Class Teacher (b)	55	4.61	1.12	2.90	.056
	Other Branches (c)	117	4.20	1.24		

*($p < 0.05$)

Table 6 reveals that there is a positive and significant relationship between the scores of risk-taking and the satisfaction with life scales ($r=.130$) (sig .026, $p < .05$). This indicates that as the perceived risk-taking grows, life satisfaction grows.

Table 6. Results of Correlation between the Risk-taking Factor and the Satisfaction with Life Scale

Variable	Satisfaction with Life
Risk-taking	.130
N= 293	
* $p < .05$	

Table 7 reveals that there is a low-level and significant relationship between the scores of the risk-taking factor and the satisfaction with life scale ($R= 0.130$, $R^2=0.17$, $p < 0.05$). The risk-taking factor explains 13% of the total variance of the satisfaction with life scale. The results related to the significance of the regression coefficients reveal that the dimension of “risk-taking” is a significant predictor of life satisfaction of the participants.

Table 7. Standard Regression Analysis Results Related to the Predictive Power of Risk-taking Factor on Life Satisfaction

Variable	B	Sh	B	T	p
Fixed	3.710	.329		11.275	.000*
Risk-taking	.212	.095	.130	2.230	.026*

R= 0.130 R²= 0.17
F(1. 291)=4. 975 p= .000

Results and Discussion

Designed to determine the relationship between life satisfaction and risk-taking levels of teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic process and their views based on some demographic variables and to determine whether there is a difference in terms of these views, this study revealed that the mean score of the participants in the dimension of risk-taking was high while the mean score of the satisfaction with life scale was moderate. This indicates that the majority of teachers are innovators and ready to take risks during the pandemic process.

Innovators and early adopters are earlier in adopting new ideas than other members of a system (Moore, 1999; Rogers, 1983, 2003). Agarwal and Prasad (1998) reported that some individuals have a higher risk-taking tendency than others. When the studies on the life satisfaction levels of individuals in the period before the pandemic (Akyol, Başaran & Yeşilbaş, 2018; Çivitçi, 2012; Dorahy et al., 2000; Gündoğar et al., 2007) were compared with the results of this study, the life satisfaction of the individuals was found to be at higher levels before the pandemic.

While there was no significant difference in satisfaction with life scale scores in terms of the gender variable, the risk-taking level of female participants was significantly lower than male participants in the risk-taking factor. It may be implied that male teachers are more willing to take risks. Agarwal and Prasad (1998) defined individual innovativeness as “the willingness of an individual to try out any new information technology” in the field of new information technologies. Gündüz (2020) found that male teachers' risk-taking levels were higher than female teachers.

It was determined that those who sometimes and regularly participate in sports had significantly higher scores than those who do not participate in sports at all in terms of the dimension of risk-taking and satisfaction with life scores. This indicates that the capacity of the participants to take risks increases with an increased life satisfaction following participation in sports regularly during the pandemic and an increased perceived individual innovation. Tükel (2020) found that participants actively engaged in sports during the COVID-19 process had high levels of leisure time satisfaction. Furthermore, Thompson (1992) focused on the benefits of taking on a new activity and reported that those who are engaged in new sports activities get special pleasure and happiness and that individuals who are innovative, that is, who make a difference in their daily activities, have higher life satisfaction scores. Consumer and Basic (2020) and Karaaslan et al. (2020) reported that voluntary recreation-based physical activity is closely related to life satisfaction and happiness. Those doing sports are more advantageous in self-confidence and social competence and generally have higher life

satisfaction due to their more positive attitude towards life, and sports play an important role in reducing mental fatigue (Atılğan, 2018; Bingöl & Alpkaya 2016; Dalkıran & Tuncel, 2007; Koca et al., 2018; Kuru 2003).

In terms of the branch variable, no significant difference was found in the scores of risk-taking and the satisfaction with life scale. This suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic correlatively affects all teachers. The findings of this study show similarity with the innovation studies in the literature (Gündüz, 2020; Adıgüzel et al., 2014; Örün et al., 2015). It is observed that life satisfaction is affected more by personal and psychological factors than by gender and income level (Myers & Diener, 1995). Demir et al. (2021) stated that the quality of life, life satisfaction, and psychological well-being levels of pre-service teachers do not differ significantly according to the frequency of technology use.

It is suggested that there is a positive and low-level significant relationship between the participants' risk-taking and satisfaction with life scores and as the perceived risk-taking increases, life satisfaction increases. It was also concluded that 'risk-taking' is a significant predictor of the life satisfaction of the participants. In this case, it should be noted that while individuals get opportunities, which is the most important role of innovation, their risk-taking levels increase, thus bringing forth a high sense of life satisfaction. Nimrod and Kleiber (2007) reported that individuals behave more dynamically and daringly when trying new things. Accordingly, it was confirmed by Nimrod's (2008) findings that innovative individuals are more likely to accept that they achieve what they expect from life and show significantly higher satisfaction with life than non-innovative individuals.

In conclusion, a significant relationship was found between the risk-taking factor and satisfaction with life scale scores in this study. Huhtala and Parzefall (2007) mentioned that innovativeness, initiatives, and activities are perceivable as resources that help individuals achieve their goals and increase their life satisfaction. One may notice that the pandemic has led to changes in the risk-taking and life satisfaction levels of individuals to a certain extent. This study was conducted during the pandemic process and thus is considered to be enlightening when it comes to the psychological effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on teachers. The results of this study are expected to be useful in the field of knowledge for current education management and future researchers to better understand how a global pandemic determines teachers' satisfaction with life and their ability to succeed in academic education.

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