

THE RELATION BETWEEN RESILIENCE AND LIFE SATISFACTION IN PRE-SERVICE PRESCHOOL TEACHERS IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

At present, it is important that individuals have wellness and abilities to cope with problems and to create solutions to problems. These abilities influence individuals' life satisfaction and resilience levels. Life satisfaction refers to well-being and predominance of positive feelings over negative feelings. It is agreed that the less the discrepancy between desires and achievements is, the higher the life satisfaction is. Resilience and life satisfaction are two concepts which have gained importance recently. The objective of this study was to examine factors influencing resilience and life satisfaction and the relation between resilience and life satisfaction in pre-service preschool teachers at Dokuz Eylül University and Ege University. The study was based on the relational screening model. Data were collected with the Resilience Scale and the Satisfaction with Life Scale in the spring term of the 2015/2016 academic year. Two hundred students were included into the study through random sampling. Of 200 students, 181 (90.5%) were female and 19 (9.5%) were male. Data were analyzed with independent samples t test, one-way variance analysis, and Pearson correlation analysis. Resilience and its several subscales are associated with life satisfaction. As resilience increases so does life satisfaction. Social support is effective in improvement of resilience. Young people living in metropolises are lucky in terms of gaining leadership features and being full of life. In addition, young people feeling happy with their study field can be more powerful and full of life and have more initiative and goals. The students luckiest in terms of being optimistic and full of life can be the ones having middle socio-economic status. The positive relation between resilience and life satisfaction reveals the significance of resilience. Therefore, children should be provided with appropriate environments which will develop resilience. Besides, families and teachers should be informed about the issue. Awareness of the society about social support, which helps develop resilience, could also be increased and importance of support from peers, families and relatives in lives of individuals could be emphasized. In addition, suitable environments could be provided for social activities at and outside school.

Keywords: Life Satisfaction, Resilience, Pre-Service Preschool Teachers, University Students.

INTRODUCTION

Positive psychology focuses on mental health, well-being, and quality of life for people that enable them to develop their abilities and competencies. Research conducted in the field of positive organizational behavior suggests that psychological capacities, such as hope, resilience, optimism, satisfaction, and self-efficacy, together make an issue called psychological capital (Mojdegan, Moghidi, & Ahghar, 2013).

Life satisfaction means individuals' well-being and predominance of their positive feelings over negative feelings. There is an agreement that as the discrepancy between desires and achievements of individuals decreases, their life satisfaction increases (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). It has been shown in the literature that gender, race and income do not play an important role in life satisfaction and happiness, but that psychological variables, close relationships and culture are more effective in satisfaction with life and happiness (Myers &

Diener, 1995). The concept life satisfaction is classified into two: subjective life satisfaction and overall life satisfaction. Subjective life satisfaction refers to individuals' cognitive evaluations of their lives. Overall life satisfaction is individuals' satisfaction with work life and life outside work (Huebner, Drane, & Valois, 2000). The evidence that life satisfaction strengthens positive aspects of life, including success, health and happiness, and positive outcomes of methods and strategies used to improve life satisfaction has shown that life satisfaction is worth a scrutiny (Naftali & Vella-Brodrick, 2008; Norrish & Vella-Brodrick, 2008).

Life satisfaction is not only related to a single field or a theory. It is a multidisciplinary concept. Some theories explain it in terms of individual aspects; i.e. bottom up and top down theories, sensorial, cognitive and combined theories, outcome and process theories, and needs theories. Bottom up and top down theories evaluate external and internal origins of life satisfaction and happiness (Diener et al., 1985). Sensorial, cognitive and combined theories question whether emotions, cognitive decision-making processes or both are effective in life satisfaction (Frisch, 2006). Outcome and process theories discuss whether happiness is an endpoint of activities or is achieved through a process (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005). According to needs theories, happiness depends on fulfilment of some needs (Sirgy, & Wu, 2007).

Resilience is defined as individuals' awareness about their characteristics to cope with problems, ability to face difficulties by using their own resources and ability to turn difficulties into contributions to their own personal development (Greenberg, 2011). In fact, it is one of the elements which allow individuals to consider difficulties as opportunities and which encourage them to overcome difficulties and to achieve their goals (LeFalle, 2010). Resilience has been reported to have two features. One feature is that an individual quickly gets rid of frustration and returns to well-being when facing a stressful situation. Therefore, people with high resilience levels can easily recover physiologically and psychologically and sustain their relationships when they face problems. The other feature is the ability to sustain subjective well-being and

functions (Masten, 2001; Bonanno, 2004). It has been noted in the literature that young people with resilience have independence, empathy and curiosity and problem-solving skills and can establish good relationships with their peers (Werner & Smith, 1992). Researchers have classified factors which contribute to resilience into internal and external protective factors (Borman & Rachuba, 2001; Milstein & Henry, 2008). Internal protective factors involve personal characteristics (Internal locus of control, self-respect, self-efficacy, independence, and problem-solving skills) and external factors involve school, family, and society (Green, Oswald, & Spears, 2007). Resilience is not only a reaction to events which cause difficulties but also a characteristic which allows individuals to arrange their environments and to return to their prior healthy state. Individuals with this feature feel satisfied with their life.

Kobasa (1979) reported that resilience allows making sense of difficulties, considering them as opportunities and using active coping strategies. It enables individuals to solve problems and seek support. As a result, a situation likely to have a negative outcome turns into a positive experience. Making sense of difficulties and using active learning strategies become effective in wellness of individuals and enable them to become resilient. Resilience refers to being physically and psychologically strong. A resilient person believes that events can be kept under control, feel that they are part of life activities and consider changes as a way of development.

Brown and Rhodes (1991) uses a model to explain how and why resilience is supported by various factors in young people at risk. According to their model, resilience means an adaptation arising after a dysfunction rather than escaping from that dysfunction.

In order to develop the resilience skill, it is significant for a person to get problem solving skills, to comply with situations and to protect his/her mood during problems and events under various conditions and at different times. Teachers being patient and indestructible during a problem and solving it need to have a healthy mood. They can educate generations rightly in such a condition. They play an important role in educating determined,

tolerant, qualified and multidirectional generations. Because human relations require endeavor, tolerance and resilience and because problems occurring during education need to be solved cleverly, teachers have to follow daily changes and develop his/her strategies (Özbey, Büyüktanır, & Türkoğlu, 2014).

In the present study, relations between life satisfaction and resilience levels in pre-service preschool teachers and effects of some factors were discussed. The objective of the study was to investigate factors influencing resilience and life satisfaction and the relation between resilience and life satisfaction in pre-service preschool teachers.

1. Method

In the study, the relation between resilience and life satisfaction and factors affecting this relation in pre-service teachers were investigated. In this section, the study design and data collection tools are described.

1.1 Model of Survey

Since the study was directed towards examination of resilience and life satisfaction in pre-service preschool teachers, a descriptive study design, relational screening, was used. Relational screening is used to determine presence of a simultaneous change between two or more variables (Karasar, 1999). The significance level was set at .05.

1.2 Sample

The study population comprised of 1228 students in the departments of preschool teaching at Ege University and Dokuz Eylül University. Data were collected during the spring term of the 2015/2016 academic year. Random sampling was used. In descriptive studies, minimum 10% of the study population is included into the sample and in small populations, 20% of the population needs to be included. In correlation studies, each group should include 30 subjects and in causal correlations, each group should include minimum 30 subjects (Arlı & Nazik, 2001). In view of the forgoing principles and the study population, the sample was set at 200 subjects. Table 1 shows general characteristics of the participants.

Of all the participants, 12% were 18-20 years old, 88%

were 21-23 years old, 90.5% were female, and 9.5% were male. Thirty-one-point five percent of the participants were living in a dormitory, 28% were living with their family, 30% were living in a flat with their friends, 7% were living alone in a flat, and 3.5% were living in another place. Eleven percent of the participants spent most of their life in a village, 9.5% in a small town, 51.5% in a city, and 28% in a metropolis. Seven percent of the participants were the only child in their family, 53% had one sibling, 26% had two siblings, 7.5% had three siblings, and 6.5% had four or more siblings.

Seven percent of the participants classified themselves into low socio-economic status, 91.5% into middle socio-economic status and 1.5% into high socio-economic status. Forty-five percent of the participants reported that they had financial difficulties, but 55% reported that they did not have any financial problems. Ninety-five percent of the participants said they had social support, but 5% said they did not have social support (Table 2).

| | N | % |
|---|-----|--------|
| Age Groups | | |
| 18-20 yrs | 24 | 12.00 |
| 21-23 yrs | 176 | 88.00 |
| Gender | | |
| Female | 181 | 90.50 |
| Male | 19 | 9.50 |
| Place of living | | |
| Dormitory | 63 | 31.50 |
| Family | 56 | 28.00 |
| Flat mate | 60 | 30.00 |
| Alone in a flat | 14 | 7.00 |
| Other | 7 | 3.50 |
| Place where one lives with their family | | |
| Village | 22 | 11.00 |
| Town | 19 | 9.50 |
| City | 103 | 51.50 |
| Metropolis | 56 | 28.00 |
| Number of siblings | | |
| Only child | 14 | 7.00 |
| 2 | 106 | 53.00 |
| 3 | 52 | 26.00 |
| 4 | 15 | 7.50 |
| 5 and more | 13 | 6.50 |
| Total | 200 | 100.00 |

Table 1. Socio-demographic Features of the Sample

| | N | % |
|--------------------------------|-----|--------|
| Financial status | | |
| Low | 14 | 7.00 |
| Middle | 183 | 91.50 |
| High | 3 | 1.50 |
| Presence of financial problems | | |
| Yes | 90 | 45.00 |
| No | 110 | 55.00 |
| Social support | | |
| Yes | 190 | 95.00 |
| No | 10 | 5.00 |
| Total | 200 | 100.00 |

Table 2. Distribution of the Participants by Perceived Socio-economic Status, Financial Problems and Social Support

1.3 Data Collection Tools

Data were collected with the Resilience Scale, developed by Grgan (2006), the Satisfaction with Life Scale, created by Diener et al. (1985) and adapted into Turkish by Yetim (1991), and the Socio-demographic Questionnaire, developed by the researchers.

1.3.1 The Resilience Scale

It was developed by Grgan (2006) and was composed of eight subscales personal power, having initiative, being optimistic/full of life, communication skills, foreseeing, having goals, leadership and being inquisitive - and 50 items. Construct validity analyses showed that 50 items, accounting for 57.56% of the total variance, were found to load on eight factors. Item analyses, Pearson Correlation analysis and Factor analysis revealed that all indicators for validity and reliability of the Resilience Scale were high. Test-re-test reliability analysis showed that Cronbach's Alpha for the scale was .89. The internal consistency coefficients of the scale were found to be .78 and .87. The lowest and the highest scores to be obtained for the scale were 50 and 250, respectively. Higher scores indicate higher levels of resilience (Grgan, 2006). The subscales are to be powerful, to have initiative, to be optimistic/full of life, to be a leader and inquisitive, to communicate/establish relationships, to fore see, and to reach a goal.

1.3.2 The Satisfaction with Life Scale

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was developed by Diener et al. in 1985 to determine to what extent

individuals are satisfied with their life and adapted into Turkish by Yetim (1991). It is a seven-point Likert scale (1: completely disagree – 7: completely agree) and was composed of five items. Diener et al., reported that the alpha value for the reliability of the scale was .87 and that the alpha value for criterion dependent validity was .82. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Yetim (1991). The alpha value for the reliability of the scale was .86 and the test-retest reliability was .73 in Yetim's study. The highest and the lowest scores to be obtained are 35 and 5, respectively. Lower scores are considered as lower satisfaction with life.

1.3.3 The Socio-demographic Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed by the researchers. It is composed of 11 questions about socio-demographic features.

2. Data Analyses

Obtained data were analyzed with SPSS 18. Frequencies and percentages were used to determine distributions of the participants. Since the normality test showed that the data had a normal distribution, parametric tests were used for data analyses. Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the relation between life satisfaction and resilience. Independent samples t test and one-way ANOVA were used to compare scores for resilience and life satisfaction in terms of demographic variables. Bonferroni correction test was utilized to determine which groups significantly differed from each other.

3. Results

The present study, which focused on the relation between

| | Mean | SD | Min. | Max. |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| Personal power | 67.94 | 10.05 | 37.00 | 89.00 |
| Having initiative | 35.64 | 5.66 | 18.00 | 45.00 |
| Being full of life | 20.87 | 3.35 | 9.00 | 25.00 |
| Communication skills | 16.57 | 2.90 | 8.00 | 20.00 |
| Foreseeing | 11.29 | 2.08 | 5.00 | 15.00 |
| Having goals | 15.92 | 2.63 | 8.00 | 20.00 |
| Leadership | 19.32 | 3.26 | 11.00 | 25.00 |
| Being inquisitive | 8.23 | 1.38 | 4.00 | 10.00 |
| Resilience in general | 195.80 | 25.57 | 117.00 | 246.00 |
| Life satisfaction | 19.93 | 5.74 | 5.00 | 33.00 |

Table 3. Mean Scores for Resilience Subscales and Life Satisfaction

resilience and life satisfaction in university students, revealed the following results. After obtained results were presented in Tables, only significant ones were dealt with since a large amount of data was collected.

Table 3 shows scores for the Resilience scale and its subscales and the satisfaction with life scale. Table 4 presents mean scores for the scales obtained by the participants. Variance analyses showed a significant difference in being optimistic/full of life and leadership in terms of the places families lived in (f (2,838) p: .039 for being optimistic/full of life; f (3,368) p: .020 for leadership). Bonferroni correction test revealed that scores for being optimistic/full of life differed between the participants living in a village and those living in a city (village: 19,13 ±3,42; city: 21,23±3,09 p .046) and that scores for leadership differed between the participants living in a village and those living in a metropolis (Village: 17.45±3.53; metropolis: 19,67±3.42 p .039). The participants living in a city were better in terms of being optimistic/full of life and leadership than those living in a village.

There was a significant difference in scores for being optimistic in terms of perceived socio-economic status as

| | | N | Mean | df | F | p |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-------|
| Being optimistic/ full of life | Village | 22 | 19.13 | 3 | 2.838 | .039* |
| | Smalltown | 19 | 20.15 | 196 | | |
| | City | 103 | 21.23 | 199 | | |
| | Metropolis | 56 | 21.14 | | | |
| Leadership | Village | 22 | 17.45 | 3 | 3.368 | .020* |
| | Smalltown | 19 | 18.63 | 196 | | |
| | City | 103 | 19.65 | 199 | | |
| | Metropolis | 56 | 19.67 | | | |

*p<.05

Table 4. Comparison of Mean Scores for being Optimistic and Leadership in terms of the Place where the Participants spent most of their life

| | | N | Mean | SD | df | t |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-------|
| Being optimistic/ full of life | Low | 14 | 20.00 | 2 | 3.462 | .033* |
| | Middle | 183 | 21.01 | 197 | | |
| | High | 3 | 16.33 | 199 | | |

*p<.05

Table 5. Comparison of Mean Scores for being Optimistic/Full of Life in terms of Perceived Socio-economic Status

| | Being happy in the Department | N | Mean | SD | df | T | P |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-------|-------|
| Personal power | Happy | 170 | 68.69 | 9.59 | 198 | 2.560 | .011* |
| | Unhappy | 30 | 63.66 | 11.58 | | | |
| Having Initiative | Happy | 170 | 36.03 | 5.55 | 198 | 2.345 | .020* |
| | Unhappy | 30 | 33.43 | 5.87 | | | |
| Bing full of life | Happy | 170 | 21.17 | 3.28 | 198 | 3.022 | .003* |
| | Unhappy | 30 | 19.20 | 3.33 | | | |
| Having goals | Happy | 170 | 16.15 | 2.46 | 198 | 2.969 | .003* |
| | Unhappy | 30 | 14.63 | 3.21 | | | |

*p<.05

Table 6. Comparison of Mean Scores for Several Resilience Subscales in terms of being Happy in the Department

presents in Table 5 (f 3.462, p .033). Bonferroni correction test revealed that being optimistic significantly differed between the participants with middle socio-economic status and those with high socio-economic status (middle socio-economic status: 21.01±3.30; high socio-economic status: 16.33±.57 p .049). The participants with medium socio-economic status were luckier in terms of being optimistic/full of life.

There were significant differences in resilience subscales in terms of being happy or unhappy (Table 6). Independent samples t test showed a significant difference in personal power, having initiative, being optimistic/full of life and having goals between the participants happy in their department and those unhappy in their department. The participants feeling happy in their department had higher scores for the above mentioned resilience subscales.

Independent samples t test revealed a significant difference in scores for having personal power, being

| | Social Support | N | Mean | SD | Df | t | p |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-----|-------|-------|-----|-------|-------|
| Personal power | Yes | 190 | 68.26 | 9.85 | 198 | 2.030 | .044* |
| | No | 10 | 61.70 | 12.21 | | | |
| Being full of life | Yes | 190 | 21.07 | 3.23 | 198 | 3.872 | .000* |
| | No | 10 | 17.00 | 3.59 | | | |
| Communication skills | Yes | 190 | 16.68 | 2.82 | 198 | 2.342 | .020* |
| | No | 10 | 14.50 | 3.71 | | | |
| Foreseeing | Yes | 190 | 11.37 | 2.03 | 198 | 2.507 | .013* |
| | No | 10 | 9.70 | 2.49 | | | |

*p<.05

Table 7. Comparison of Scores for Several Resilience Subscales in terms of Social Support

| | | Life satisfaction | Overall resilience | Having personal power | Having initiative | Being full of life | Communication skills | Foreseeing | Having goals | Leadership | Being inquisitive |
|-----------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------|--------------|------------|-------------------|
| Life satisfaction | R | 1 | .248* | .274* | .151* | .291* | .168* | .103 | .185* | .121 | .129 |
| | P | | .000 | .000 | .033 | .000 | .018 | .145 | .009 | .087 | .069 |
| Overall resilience | R | | 1 | .911* | .840* | .726* | .776* | .705* | .786* | .776* | .639* |
| | P | | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Having personal power | R | | | 1 | .650* | .538* | .564* | .648* | .747* | .617* | .564* |
| | P | | | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Having initiative | R | | | | 1 | .641* | .658* | .548* | .572* | .606* | .417* |
| | P | | | | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Being full of life | R | | | | | 1 | .621* | .430* | .483* | .509* | .383* |
| | P | | | | | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Communication skills | R | | | | | | 1 | .496* | .512* | .729* | .495* |
| | P | | | | | | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Foresee. | R | | | | | | | 1 | .510* | .467* | .418* |
| | P | | | | | | | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| Having goals | R | | | | | | | | 1 | .526* | .591* |
| | P | | | | | | | | | .000 | .000 |
| Leader. | R | | | | | | | | | 1 | .538* |
| | P | | | | | | | | | | .000 |
| Being inquisitive | R | | | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | P | | | | | | | | | | |

*p<.05, n:200

Table 8. The Relation between Resilience and Life Satisfaction

optimistic/full of life, communication skills and foreseeing in terms of presence of social support. The participants with social support got higher scores for the above subscales. As presented in Table 7, social support encourages development of resilience.

There was a positive correlation between life satisfaction and all subscales of resilience as presented in Table 8. As levels of resilience increased so did life satisfaction. In addition, there were significant relations between subscales of resilience. Based on this finding, which allows explanation of the main research problem of this study, significant relations between resilience and all subscales of life satisfaction were detected.

4. Discussion

This study was directed towards examination of the relation between resilience levels and life satisfaction and factors influencing them in university students. There have been some studies recently in Turkey carried out with Resilience Scale. The results of the present study will be

discussed together with their results.

In the present study, there were positive strong correlations between life satisfaction and resilience and its subscales (being powerful, having initiative, being optimistic/full of life, communicating/establishing a relationship, foreseeing, reaching a goal, being a leader and inquisitive), which is consistent with the literature. There have been studies indicating positive correlations between resilience and satisfaction with life (Fredrickson et al., 2008; Cohn et al., 2009). Utsey, Hook, Fischer, & Belvet (2008) and Youngblom et al. (2014) found a positive correlation between resilience and satisfaction with life in university students. It can be suggested that as resilience enhances, so does life satisfaction.

In the current study, there was a significant difference in mean scores for resilience between the participants in terms of the place they spent most of their life in. The participants living in a village significantly differed from those living in a city in terms of being optimistic/full of life.

The students spending most of their time in a village got lower scores. Presence of more social and cultural facilities and more job opportunities in a city might have increased optimism towards life in the participants living most of their life in a city.

Özbey, Büyüktanır, and Türkoğlu (2014) found that being powerful significantly differed in favor of females. They also reported that the participants who had better socio-economic status, perceived their parents as more democratic, were hopeful for the future, selected their department willingly; expressed themselves easily; felt lonely and lived in the city-center had significantly higher personal power. They added that there was a significant, positive relation between their resilience skill and life satisfaction. On the other hand, Yildirm, Kırmoğlu, and Temiz (2010) stated that there was not a significant difference in the resilience skill between genders. Consistent with the literature, in the present study, the students spending most of their life in a village received the lowest scores for leadership. The luckiest students in terms of leadership features were those spending most of their life in a metropolis. It can be attributed to presence of more opportunities to have leadership experiences and presence of more familial support in a metropolis.

An interesting finding was that the students with perceived low socio-economic status had higher scores for being optimistic / full of life than those with perceived high socio-economic status. It may be that the former group of the students always had goals to achieve and struggled for them.

The students unhappy with their field of study got lower scores for having personal power, initiative and goals and being full of life. As expected, the students happy with their field of study thought that they were more powerful and full of life and had initiative. In addition, since they were content with their study field, they received higher scores for having goals. Likewise, Özbey, Büyüktanır, and Türkoğlu (2014) stated that students who were unwilling to study in their department had worse resilience skills.

Social support involves support from family, relatives and friends who are thought to be important by an individual. Many studies have shown effects of social support on

satisfaction with life and resilience (Mahanta & Aggarwal, 2013, Abolghasemi & Varaniyab, 2010, Fredrickson et al., 2008; Cohn et al., 2009). Liu, Wang, and Lü (2013) in their study on undergraduate students obtained similar results to the current study. Achour and Nor (2014) in their study on 200 students in Kuala Lumpur noted that social support and resilience were predictive of satisfaction with life. In the present study, social support was found to influence scores for the resilience subscales having personal power and being full of life, communication skills and foreseeing. In other words, increased social support has a positive influence on the above mentioned aspects of resilience. Güloğlu and Karairmak (2010) found that there was a negative relation between student's loneliness degree and psychological well-being.

Conclusion

In the light of the findings of this study, conducted to reveal the relation between resilience and life satisfaction and the factors influencing them, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Resilience and its several subscales are associated with life satisfaction. As resilience increases to does life satisfaction.
- Social support is effective in improvement of resilience.
- Young people living in metropolises are lucky in terms of gaining leadership features and being full of life.
- Young people feeling happy with their study field can be more powerful and full of life and have more initiative and goals.
- The students luckiest in terms of being optimistic and full of life can be the ones having middle socio-economic status.

Recommendations

- Presence of a positive relation between resilience and life satisfaction underlines importance of resilience. Therefore, appropriate environments which will develop resilience should be created for children. In addition, families and teachers should be offered information about the issue.
- Awareness about social support, a factor developing

resilience, should be raised in the society and importance of support from peers, families, and relatives in lives of individuals should be underlined. Also, suitable environments for social activities at and outside school should be prepared.

- It could be useful to replicate this study in samples including people from different age groups and with different education levels, professions, and regions.

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