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ARAŞTIRMA

Açık Erişim

An Investigation of Psychological Well-Being, Emotional Intelligence and Social Well-being Levels of University Students

Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Psikolojik İyi Olma, Duygusal Zekâ ve Sosyal İyi Olma Düzeyleri Arasındaki İlişkilerin İncelenmesi

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between psychological well-being, emotional intelligence, and social well-being levels of university students. The predictive role of emotional intelligence and social well-being on psychological well-being was also examined. The study group was comprised of 305 students from various faculties and undergraduate schools of Sakarya University. "Scales of Psychological Well-being", "Emotional Intelligence Scale", "Social Well-Being Scale" and "Personal Information Form" were used to collect the data. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test, one way ANOVA, correlation and linear regression. Findings of the study revealed that psychological well-being was positively related to emotional intelligence and social well-being. Additionally, psychological well-being was positively predicted by emotional intelligence and social well-being. Emotional intelligence and social well-being levels of female students were found to be significantly higher than those of male students. It was also found that psychological well-being of university students did not differ significantly in gender. Furthermore, psychological well-being, emotional intelligence and social well-being levels of students did not differ significantly in perceived income. It was also found that emotional intelligence and social well-being of students in terms of field of study differed significantly whereas psychological well-being of students did not show any significant difference. Finally, the results indicated that psychological well-being, emotional intelligence and social well-being levels of students did not differ significantly in terms of parental attitude, parental education and academic achievements of students.

Article Information**Keywords**

Emotional Intelligence
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Anahtar Kelimeler

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ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, üniversite öğrencilerinin psikolojik iyi oluş, duygusal zekâ ve sosyal iyi oluş düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkileri ve duygusal zekâ ve sosyal iyi oluşun psikolojik iyi oluş üzerindeki yordayıcı rolünü incelemektir. Araştırmanın çalışma grubunu Sakarya Üniversitesi'nin çeşitli fakülte ve bölümlerinde öğrenim gören 305 katılımcı oluşturmuştur. Verilerin toplanmasında "Psikolojik İyi Olma Ölçekleri", "Duygusal Zekâ Ölçeği", "Sosyal İyi Olma Ölçeği" ve "Kişisel Bilgi Formu" kullanılmıştır. Veriler, betimleyici istatistikler, bağımsız örneklem t testi, tek yönlü ANOVA, korelasyon katsayısı ve doğrusal regresyon kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Araştırmanın bulguları, psikolojik iyi oluşun duygusal zekâ ve sosyal iyi oluş ile pozitif yönde ilişkili olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bununla birlikte, psikolojik iyi oluş, duygusal zekâ ve sosyal iyi oluş tarafından pozitif olarak yordanmıştır. Kız öğrencilerin duygusal zekâ ve sosyal iyi oluş düzeyleri erkek öğrencilere göre anlamlı düzeyde yüksek bulunmuştur. Ayrıca üniversite öğrencilerinin psikolojik iyi oluşlarının cinsiyete göre anlamlı bir farklılık göstermediği bulunmuştur. Öğrencilerin psikolojik iyi oluş, duygusal zekâ ve sosyal iyi oluş düzeyleri algılanan gelir düzeyleri açısından anlamlı bir farklılık göstermemiştir. Öğrencilerin duygusal zekâ ve sosyal iyi oluşlarının öğrenim gördükleri fakülterlere göre anlamlı bir şekilde farklılaştığı, psikolojik iyi oluşlarının ise anlamlı bir farklılık göstermediği tespit edilmiştir. Son olarak, öğrencilerin psikolojik iyi oluş, duygusal zekâ ve sosyal iyi oluş düzeylerinin anne baba tutumu, anne baba eğitim düzeyi ve öğrencilerin akademik başarıları açısından anlamlı bir farklılık göstermediği görülmüştür.

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Ethical Statement: This research was completed in line with the Helsinki Declaration. In line with this, the study was investigated and permitted by European university of Lefke Scientific Research and Ethical Review Board.

INTRODUCTION

The origins of positive psychology, go back as far as the debates and thoughts of philosophers and clergymen on being virtuous, happy and a good society. In the last century, we can also see the input of behavioral experts who have been doing scientific research in the field of positive psychology. Additionally, the shift in interest from mental health disorders to positive mental health and preventative programs has had a significant impact on clinical research in the field of psychology. An outcome of this is that it has led researchers to put their efforts into finding new ways to understand individuals' positive nature and characteristics.

In psychology, well-being is addressed comprehensively from two dimensions. One of them is the hedonic; the other is the eudaimonic approach (Keyes, Shmotkin & Ryff, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2001). From the hedonic perspective, happiness and well-being have been held as equal, and it has usually been approached as the balance between negative and positive emotions (Ryan ve Deci, 2001). The eudaimonic approach however evaluates how well an individual manages to live with their true authentic self (Waterman, 1993). Whilst the hedonic perspective projects personal well-being, the eudiamonic perspective projects psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is a multi-dimensional structure that incorporates both emotional and cognitive components. Ryff (1989) has determined well-being as a psychological functioning and experience at the optimal level. Deci & Ryan (2008) defined psychological well-being as living life to the full with deep satisfaction. Well-being is not the manifestation of something or the end of a process; rather it is about living well and the individuals realizing their true potential. According to the assertions of Ryff & Singer (1998), good relations with others is specified as an important factor for the state of well-being.

More recently, emotional intelligence has been accepted as one of the important predictors of positive human functionality (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). It is thought that since individuals who have a high level of intelligence are in a positive state of well-being more frequently and for longer periods of times, their high level of emotional intelligence is related to a positive state of psychological well-being (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Guerra et al., 2019). In contrast, social well-being has varying definitions as put forward by researchers. While Blum (1976) has defined social well-being as positive social behavior. Sintonen (1981) has held social well-being to be equivalent to social participation.

Researchers have labelled emotions as the "building blocks" of well-being (Kahneman, Diener & Schwarz, 1999). That is why it is of utmost importance that the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological well-being be examined. Emotional intelligence is the ability to accurately express emotions, accurately evaluate the emotions of others' and being able to direct one's emotions towards one's goals (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

The Present Study

Many studies have shown that emotional competence is of much importance for social and emotional harmony (Salovey, Mayer & Caruso, 2002). Emotional competence is known to contribute to social competence which in turn increases the quality of relationships and social support (Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler & Mayer, 2000). It is possible to come across numerous academic studies that support this finding. For instance; those with a high level of emotional competence are seen to be in more successful relationships (Lopes et al., 2004), and in more satisfactory relationships (Schröder-Abe & Schütz, 2011). Based on this knowledge, it is possible to conclude that those with a high level of emotional intelligence

have a higher level of psychological and social well-being, as opposed to those with a lower level of emotional intelligence. Since social life and its challenges can be used to assess the quality of one's life, it is also possible to conclude that socially healthier individuals would feel safer, more satisfied and coherent in their social lives which may lead to more coherent and healthier private lives. It is for this reason that this study has aimed to investigate the relationships between psychological, emotional intelligence and social well-being.

METHOD

Research Model

The study was carried out using a correlational survey model (a descriptive research method). A correlational survey model is defined as a research model wherein the existence of change in the total of the variations between two or more factors is determined (Karasar, 2003).

Study Group

The study group of this study was comprised of 305 students from the various faculties and undergraduate schools of Sakarya University. Of the 104 students who took part in this study, 34% were male and 66% were female. The ages of the students ranged between 18 and 29. The average age was (20.76). The standard deviation for their age was (1.91). Of all the students in the study group, 81 (27%) reported low income, 204 (867%) average income, and 20 (6%) high income. When the study group was evaluated in terms of perceived academic achievement; 55 (18%) reported high, 224 (73%) reported average, and 26 (9%) reported lower levels of perceived academic achievement.

Ethical Statement

The study was carried out in line with the Helsinki Declaration and data tools in the study were only distributed to volunteer participants. All participants provided informed consent. Required permits were obtained to use the scales in this study. Additionally, the participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time during data collection and that their identities would be kept confidential.

Data Collection Tools

Psychological Well-Being Scales. The 42-item form of the Psychological Well-Being Scales (PWBS), as developed by Ryff (1989) to determine the psychological well-being of participants, and as adapted into Turkish by Akın, Demirci, Yıldız, Gediksiz & Eroğlu (2012) was utilized. The PWBS is a 6-point Likert scale. Confirmatory factor analysis showed it had a good fit with the six dimensions of the original form of the scale ($\chi^2=2689.13$, $sd=791$, $p=0.00000$, $RMSEA=.048$, $NFI=.92$, $NNFI=.94$, $CFI=.95$, $IFI=.95$, $RFI=.92$, $GFI=.90$ ve $SRMR=.048$).

Emotional Intelligence Scale. The 33-item Emotional Intelligence Scale developed by Schutte et al (1998) is used frequently for research on emotional intelligence. It is hypothetically based on the 3 dimensional emotional intelligence model (Mayer& Salovey, 1990). The Emotional Intelligence Scale was revised by Austin et al (2004) to consist of 41 items in total, with 20 negative and 21 positive items. It is a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) which has 3 factors: Optimism/Mood Regulation, Utilization of Emotions and Appraisal of Emotions.. The scale measures these factors and general emotional intelligence as a whole. In the Revised Shutte Emotional Intelligence Scale that was adapted to Turkish culture by Göçet (2006); the Cronbach alpha consistency coefficients

for the entire scale was found (.81), for the optimism factor was (.77), for the utilization of emotions was (.73) and for the appraisal of emotions factor was (.54). In the split-half reliability, the coefficient of the optimism was found to be 0.71, the coefficient of the expression of emotions was found to be 0.72, and the coefficient of utilizing emotions was found to be 0.52. For the scale as a whole it was found to be 0.78. The test-retest reliability coefficient of the study was found to be 0.63.

Social Well-Being Scale. In order to measure the levels of participants' social well-being; The Social Well-Being Scale which was developed by Keyes (1998) and adapted to Turkish by Akın, Demirci, Çitemel, Sarıçam & Ocakçı (2013) was used. The scale consisted of 15 items and provided a general social well-being score. It is a 7 point Likert self-report scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. Confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the unidimensional model had a good fit ($\chi^2 = 155.46$, $df = 86$, $\chi^2/df = 1.80$, $RMSEA = 0.054$, $GFI = 0.93$, $AGFI = 0.90$, and $SRMR = 0.065$). The Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient was 0.64.

Statistical Analysis

The relationships between the psychological well-being, emotional intelligence and social well-being of the university students were examined by applying the Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient. Linear regression analysis was used to reveal whether emotional intelligence and social well-being were important predictors of psychological well-being.

RESULTS

The findings from the correlation made in order to determine the relationships between the levels of emotional intelligence, psychological well-being and social well-being are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The correlation table regarding the relationships between the levels of psychological well-being, emotional intelligence and social well-being

Factor	Emotional well-being	Psychological well-being	Social well-being
Emotional Intelligence	—		
Psychological well-being	.54**	—	
Social well-being	.13*	.41**	—
Mean	132,75	199,84	56,07
Standard diversion	15,78	27,74	10,90

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

According to the results of correlation analysis, summarized in Table-1, there were significant positive correlations between the level of emotional intelligence and psychological well-being ($r = .54$, $p < .01$) and social well-being ($r = .13$, $p < .05$) in university students.

The relationships between the levels of psychological well-being, emotional intelligence and social well-being of university students were examined using Linear Regression Analysis. According to the regression analysis carried out in this research, the multi-correlation coefficient between psychological well-being, emotional intelligence and social well-being was determined as (.64). The regression analysis revealed that emotional intelligence and social well-being accounted for 40% of psychological well-being.

Table 2. The variance analysis for the predictive roles of emotional intelligence and social well-being on psychological well-being of university students

Source of Variance	Square Total	Sd	Mean Square	F	p
Regression	94288,852	2	47144,426	101,982	.000
Residual	139609,594	302	462,283		
Total	233898,446	304			

The findings of the variance analysis performed for the purpose of establishing the significance of the regression equation was presented in Table 2. The findings indicated that the emotional intelligence and social well-being are significant predictors of psychological well-being ($F= 101.982, p=.000$).

Table 3. Summary of regression analysis for the predictive roles of emotional intelligence and social well-being on the psychological well-being of the university students

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. error	Beta	t	p
(Fixed)	133,634	13,019		10,264	.000
Social well-being	,868	,114	.34	7,614	.000
Emotional Intelligence	,866	,079	.49	10,980	.000

Dependent Variable: Psychological well-being

The t-test was performed with respect to the significance of the regression equation and its coefficients following the findings obtained from regression analysis. When Table-3 is examined, all of the coefficients for emotional intelligence and social well-being are found to be significant. When examining the standardized coefficients, it was found that emotional intelligence (.49) and social well-being (.34) positively predicted psychological well-being.

DISCUSSION

In this study, the relationships between psychological well-being, emotional intelligence and social well-being of university students were examined. Whether the levels of students' emotional and social well-being are predictors of the level of their psychological well-being was also part of the scope of the study. The findings of the study showed that emotional intelligence and social well-being are positive predictors of psychological well-being. Moreover, psychological well-being has a significantly positive relationship with emotional intelligence and social well-being. Hence, it can be put forward that the availability of various kinds of social support when needed enables students to cope with sources of stress in a more effective manner which in turn enhance psychological well-being.

Previous research showed that high levels of emotional intelligence is related to high levels of life satisfaction and positive affect (Schutte, Manes, & Malouff, 2009; Schutte et al, 2002). Furthermore, Austin, Saklofske & Egan (2005) suggested that individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence were more likely to have a wider social circle and exhibit less psychopathological symptoms and antisocial behavior. Likewise, in another study where the relationship between personal functioning components such as emotional intelligence, goal orientations, satisfaction with life and depression were examined; emotional intelligence was found to have positive relations with goal orientations and satisfaction with life and negative relations with depression (Martinez-Pons, 1997).

Emotional competence nurtures feelings of success and positive self-confidence, thereby naturally increases psychological well-being (Shulman & Hemenover, 2006). Likewise, individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence are more prone to using positive coping strategies, such as searching for social support and expressing feelings when trying to cope with problems instead of using maladaptive strategies; they experience lower levels of negative affect and higher levels of psychological well-being (Matthews et al, 2006). Furthermore, the fact that individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence have more control over their negative feelings is also associated with higher levels of psychological well-being (Shulman & Hemenover, 2006).

Individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence experience less emotional problems when confronted with stressful situations since they are able to control their emotions, and this leads to increased positive affect (Gohm, Corser, & Dalsky, 2005).

It is known that individuals who have high levels of emotional intelligence experience more satisfying relationships during periods of time that are of importance to their personal growth. Moreover, studies have shown that social status is one of the predictors of internalised disorders (Gohm, Corser, & Dalsky, 2005). In adolescence, peer rejection, unpopularity, and social withdrawal are among the typical causes of depression and loneliness (Asher & Wheeler, 1985). It is believed that possessing higher levels of emotional intelligence and wide social circles ensures that individuals exhibit less psychopathological symptoms and anti-social behavior (Austin, Saklofske & Egan, 2005).

Since positive emotions enable the development of an individual's physical, intellectual and social resources, it can be assumed that effective use of those resources by the individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence may result in increasing levels of both psychological and social well-being.

In sum, we may conclude that emotional intelligence by facilitating emotional regulation and providing the opportunity to create good relationships enables a higher level of psychological well-being among students.

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Ethical Statement

The study was carried out in line with the Helsinki Declaration and data tools in the study were only distributed to volunteer participants. All participants provided informed consent. Required permits were obtained to use the scales in this study. Additionally, the participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time during data collection and that their identities would be kept confidential.