

Analysis of Relationships among the Subjective Well-Being, Life Satisfaction and Job Anxiety for the Undergraduate Psychology Students

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Abstract. *Objective:* This study was designed to explore job anxiety, life satisfaction, and subjective levels of well-being for the undergraduate students enrolled in the department of psychology at a university. *Materials and Methods:* Four data collection tools were implemented in addition to the sociodemographic data form when collecting data. The data collection instruments included Job Anxiety Questionnaire (JAQ), Subjective Well-Being Scale (SWS), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), respectively. *Study Group:* A total of 153 undergraduate students enrolled in the department of psychology at a private university in Kayseri, Turkey. 50 of them were freshman and 103 were senior students. Most participants (62%) consisting of the female. *Findings and Discussion:* The findings revealed that senior students had a moderate negative correlation between life satisfaction and job anxiety as well as anxiety levels. Furthermore, the subjective well-being of the participants was observed to positively affect their job anxiety levels through the last grade, on the other hand, a significant decrease appeared in the anxiety levels. *Results and Suggestions:* The rapid rise of subjective well-being levels for the senior year psychology students might be due to the training offered in their major. Besides, it was not surprising that seniors had higher levels of job anxiety near the graduation and anxiety levels decreased because of their training, education, and experiences accomplished in this context.

Keywords: Job anxiety, life satisfaction, well-being, undergraduate psychology students.

Introduction

Well-being, life satisfaction, and job anxiety are accepted three significant concepts that psychologically disturb university students and distress their lives, especially during their college days. Previous related studies proved that university students' anxiety levels significantly influence their levels of life satisfaction and job anxiety (1-6).

As a result of a study examining the effects of the well-being of university students throughout university life, the freshmen students' newcomers to a university generally experience more stress than their previous lifetime (2). It was also seen that the anxiety levels of

the students were found at the highest level in the first year of college and gradually decreased at the end of the third year. On the other hand, stress and anxiety levels never dropped to pre-university levels.

Recent studies (7-10) conducted with undergraduate students showed that distinctive factors affect and are related to life satisfaction. For instance, such factors that influence life satisfaction include the meaning of life, self-evaluation, academic satisfaction, anxiety, stress level, and emotional intelligence.

In another related study (10), the researchers examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction in terms of social support and self-esteem among a group of senior adolescence.

489 Chinese college students aged 17-23 were selected as the participants in that study. Data were collected by using emotional intelligence scale, multidimensional social support scale, Rosenberg Self-Scale, and Life Satisfaction Scale. The findings revealed that social support and self-esteem mediate the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction. Also, it was concluded that men with high social support showed higher life satisfaction than women.

Other researchers (11) conducted a relevant study to determine the relationship between flexibility, stress, and self-efficacy and life satisfaction for 120 university students with low and high academic success. The research sample was randomly selected from students with high and low academic success. Data were collected with the endurance scale, perceived stress scale, self-efficacy scale, and life satisfaction scale. The MANOVA data analysis showed that students with higher educational success possess higher stress, higher self-efficacy, and higher life satisfaction, however, low stress than students with low educational success. Findings also showed that higher challenges and stress are the best indicators for life satisfaction in high achiever students.

Choe, Yun, & Son (6) examined the relationship between university students' ever-increasing job anxiety and dysfunctional attitudes. The study was carried out with 600 university students in a metropolitan area. Their findings showed that the dysfunctional attitudes of the students presented significant correlations between job search anxieties and factors including physical status (27%), evoked state (18%) and parental expectation (10%). Furthermore, perfectionism situations had a positive influence on job anxiety. A higher level of correlations was discovered between the study variables. As a result, they stated that the programs, which are employed as a driving force for the students to pursue perfectionism and to minimize job search abilities as they wish, should be further studied and investigated.

Recent studies (12-16) additionally examined the level of well-being of university students with different effective factors at different levels from various perspectives. In one of these studies (12), the relationship between the well-being of undergraduate students and their Facebook practices were examined.

How students' practices and attitudes towards Facebook were related to their self-esteem and school adaptation were investigated. There existed a positive correlation between Facebook and social cohesion, but a negative correlation between self-esteem and emotional cohesion. Relationships among the freshmen and senior students were also studied. As a result of the data analysis, they reported that the first-year students had fewer friends, but a stronger emotional connection with Facebook at which they spent too many times. The findings revealed that the number of social media friends negatively affected emotional and school compliance. The students increased by continuing to communicate with their friends on the social network. However, with this growth, the time spent on Facebook decreased.

This study was conducted since few studies what been done on the same investigations. Besides, it intended to especially be explored life satisfaction, well-being, and job anxiety of the students due to its importance for psychology education. Besides, it is expected to have a significant impact on students' counseling and education services.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships among the well-being, life satisfaction, and job anxiety of a group of undergraduate psychology students studying at a university. The effects of the psychology curriculum and pieces of training on the students were also analyzed in a longitudinal study by comparing their situations between their freshmen and senior years.

Materials and Methods

Turkey's Central Anatolia Region Kayseri study psychology training in the field of a private university established in the provinces was made with 153 undergraduate students. At the time of data collection, 50 (32%) students were in the first grade and 103 (68%) were in the final grade. The University Ethics Committee approval was received on April 29, 2019, from Nuh Naci Yazgan University where data were collected for the permission for conducting this study. All participants read and signed an informed consent form before the data collection.

The data were collected voluntarily from all students studying in the first and last year. Data collection was carried out in 2019 and was collected with a total of four scales along with the sociodemographic form. The relational approach was used as a working method. Relationships between the well-being, life satisfaction and job anxiety of students' academic education and personal development during psychology education were investigated. Thus, variables and other factors related to the developmental stages of university students were examined, primarily the psychology undergraduate education curriculum.

The Study Group

153 freshmen and Senior-level psychology students enrolled in the department of psychology at a small private university in Central Anatolia were purposefully selected as the study group. None of them indicated any previous physical illness. 103 were freshman year and 50 were senior level students.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

The university was a non-profit private higher institution hosting five faculties and had approximately 3500 students. The psychology department where data was collected was located at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. As of the end of 2018, there were about 272 (216 females and 56 males) undergraduate students enrolled in the program. The courses offered at the program consist of various information regarding stress management, social psychology, clinical and developmental psychology, job anxiety, well-being, and life satisfaction.

Data collection process took for approximately 45 minutes and conducted outside the lecture periods after or between the classes. Four separate data collection scales were utilized; 'Job Anxiety Questionnaire (JAQ), Subjective Well-Being Scale (SWS), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)'.

JAS was created by the researchers and included only one item regarding the participants' work anxiety. The item was examined and analyzed with two different response criteria, whether the participant had job anxiety after graduation or not.

SWS was developed by Tuzgöl-Dost (17) to assess the well-being levels of the individuals with a total of 46 items with a 5-point Likert scale and 12 sub-factors. The total possible score from SWS varies between 46 and 230. The reliability and validity coefficients of the inventory were calculated as an average of 0.90 (17).

Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) was proposed by Beck and colleagues in 1962 to measure adults' anxiety levels (18). It was specifically structured for the individuals 13 and older and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. It consists of 21 items responded on a 4-point Likert type scale with the options between (0=Not at all, 3=Severely). The total score can vary between 0 and 63. Based on the total score, the anxiety severity of an individual could be determined at the levels of 'minimal (0-9), mild (10-16), moderate (17-29), severe (30-63)'. The validity and reliability of the scale were calculated as 0.79 (18).

SWLS was a data collection tool consisting of five single-factor items, aimed to determine any existing condition of the individual regarding the life satisfaction. The questionnaire items were structured as 7-point Likert and the total score ranges between 0 and 35 points. SWLS was developed by Diener and friends (19). The validity and reliability levels of the scale were found to be 0.90 and 0.92, respectively (19).

The study data were statistically analyzed by using descriptive and inferential analysis software, SPSS v.22. For the descriptive analysis part, major statistical variables, the independent t-test, and the Pearson correlation coefficient were determined. The mean scores and standard deviations were also calculated for the inferential analysis based on the students' responses. Afterwards, the statistical values obtained were interpreted and discussed for the research purposes.

Results

Of the 153 undergraduate students involved in the study, 50 (32.7%) were first-grade students (freshmen) and 103 (67.3%) were last year (senior) undergraduate psychology students. The lowest and highest ages of who group were calculated as 18 and 25, respectively with a range of seven. The average age was

calculated as 20.2 for the freshmen and 22.7 for the senior students.

Specifically, the age distribution with the number of students, during the data collection, were as follows: '14 (N = 3), 19 (N = 26), 20 (N = 11), 21 (N = 19), 22 (N = 31), 23 (N = 44), 24 (N = 15), 25 (N = 4)'. 96 (62%) students were female and 57 (38%) were male. Demographic information about the participants is presented in Table 1.

Sociodemographic Features

The findings were initially analyzed jointly with the results, obtained from the sociodemographic form. The grade, gender and age distributions of the participants are illustrated in the forms of the numerical and percentages below (Table 1).

Table 1 illustrated the sociodemographic characteristics of the student included in the study. 50 (32.7%) of them consisted of freshmen university students, 103 (67.3%) of whom were senior year students. Regarding the gender distribution, 96 (62.0%) were female and 57 (38%) were male. Of the participants between the ages of 18 and 25, 59 (38.6%) were calculated between the ages of 18 and 21, and 94 (61.4%) were between the ages of 22 and 25 years old.

Table 1 Sociodemographic Features of the Participants

Sociodemographic Factor		N	%
Grade	1	50	32.7
	4	103	67.3
Gender	Female	96	62.0
	Male	57	38.0
Age Interval	18-21	59	38.6
	22-25	94	61.4

Subjective Well-Being, Life Satisfaction, and Job Anxiety Levels

In Table 2, the answers obtained from the students' responses were presented for four different scales. In conclusion, the psychology students' well-being, life satisfaction, and job anxiety levels increased by 7.6%, 11%, and 7.7%, respectively. However, according to BAI scores, it was observed that the anxiety level of senior psychology students decreased from an average of 14.1 to 8.6, compared to freshmen students, by 39%.

Furthermore, the range between the highest to the lowest scores at well-being levels decreased from 85 to 69. The findings obtained from the Life Satisfaction Scale showed that the range for the freshmen students changed from the average of 23 to 24 through the last semester of their study in psychology training. On the other hand, the job anxiety and associated ranges did not differ for the senior student compared with the freshmen. Senior students' anxiety level range (60) was determined by an increase of 22% compared to the anxiety level (49) of the first-year students.

The bar graph illustrated in Figure 1 presents the average scores for the students in the freshmen and senior-level participating students. As can be seen in figure 1, senior students exhibited higher levels of subjective well-being and life satisfaction than freshmen students. However, contrary to expectations, psychological anxiety problems were calculated lower than the period towards the graduation year.

Table 3 showed the mean scores obtained from all students according to the data collection tools. According to the data given in the table, the weighted average between the classes of the participant students and their class sizes was found to be approximately 3.02. The mean scores of SWS, SWLS, JAQ, and BAI of all participants were computed as 142.07, 25.37,

Table 2 Survey Results on Subjective Well-Being, Life Satisfaction, and Job Anxiety

Statistics	SWS1	SWS4	SWLS1	SWLS4	JAQ1	JAQ4	BAI1	BAI4
Mean	134,6	145,7	23,4	26,3	1,2	1,3	14,1	8,6
Range	85	69	23	24	1	1	49	60

SWS1 (SWS4): Subjective Well-Being Scale scores; SWLS1 (SWLS4): Satisfaction with Life Scale;

JAQ1 (JAQ4): Job Anxiety Questionnaire scores; BAI1 (BAI4): Beck Anxiety Inventory scores.

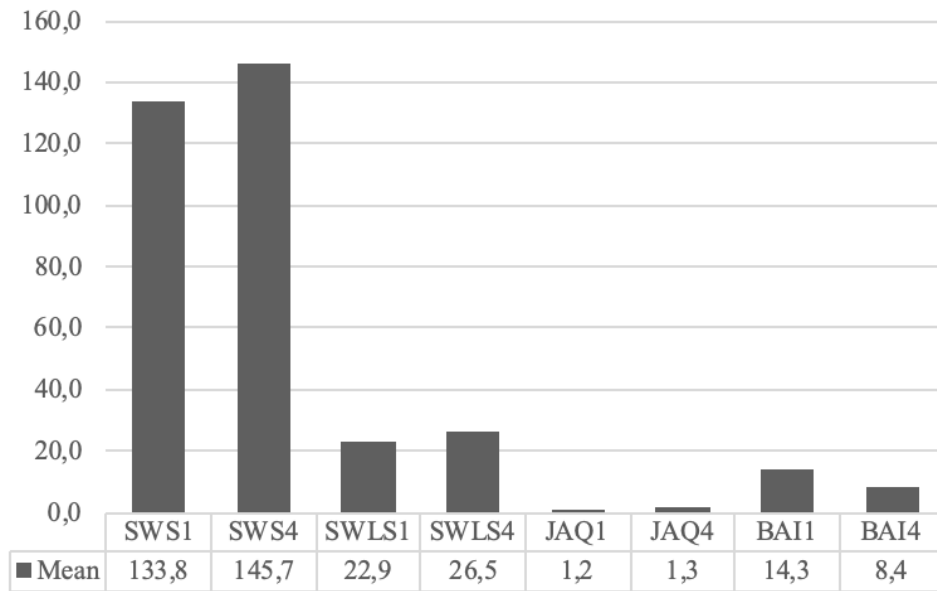


Figure 1 Average Score Differences Between Freshmen and Senior Students

Table 3 Participants’ mean scores and standard deviations for the questionnaires

	Mean	S. Deviation	N
Subjective Well-Being Scale	142,07	17,56	153
Satisfaction with Life Scale	25,37	5,98	153
Job Anxiety Questionnaire	1,26	0,43	153
Beck Anxiety Inventory	10,43	11,65	153

1.26 and 10.34, respectively. The findings related to the descriptive analysis are presented in Table 3.

In the final stage, data were analyzed parametrically and examined in terms of correlation and statistical significances (p-value) among the groups. Table 4 was structured by comparing the relative scores between the groups according to the four data collection tools. P-values between the data groups were determined according to the significance level of 0.05 and written with an italic font containing “*”. Correlations and p-values between the variables according to the study questionnaires (e.g. BAI1 vs. SWLS4) for the groups were illustrated in table 4. If the variables are not related, they are coloured with a grey cell. The

relationships between the same questionnaires for the same group are marked ‘1’.

Nevertheless, when the data results obtained from the life satisfaction scale were analyzed, there existed a statistically significant difference (p-value <0.05) between the life satisfaction levels (SWLS4) and anxiety (BAI4) levels of the senior year students. Also, a moderate negative correlation (−0.44) was calculated between them. Accordingly, it can be said that as the satisfaction of the senior students’ increases, their anxiety levels decrease.

Furthermore, it was observed that there existed a statistically significant difference (p-value < 0.05) between the job anxiety (JAQ4) and anxiety levels (BAI4) for senior year students. It was determined that there was a low negative correlation (− 0.21) between the job anxiety and anxiety levels of the senior students. In other words, a student with high job anxiety is expected to have a relatively low score on the anxiety questionnaire.

According to the findings presented in Table 4, no statistically significant difference existed between the scores on the use of four questionnaires obtained from the freshmen students. Although there existed no statistically significant differences between other groups,

Table 4 Pearson correlation coefficients between the groups according to the scores obtained from the scales used, and Sig. (p-value) values

		SWS1	SWS4	SWLS1	SWLS4	JAQ1	JAQ4	BAI1	BAI4
SWS1	PCC	1							
	P-Value								
SWS4	PCC	-0.01	1						
	P-Value	0.95							
SWLS1	PCC	0,12		1					
	P-Value	0.40							
SWLS4	PCC		0.02	-0.05	1				
	P-Value		0.74	0.74					
JAQ1	PCC	-0.01		0.05		1			
	P-Value	0.94		0.71					
JAQ4	PCC		-0.11		0.11		1		
	P-Value		0.27		0.27				
BAI1	PCC	-0.23		-0.16		-0.18		1	
	P-Value	0.11		0.28		0.21			
BAI4	PCC		0.15		-0.44*		-0.21*	-0.15	1
	P-Value		0.13		0.00		0.03	0.29	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

there were low correlations among some groups. For example, a low negative (-0.23) correlation was found between subjective well-being and anxiety levels for the freshmen students. Also, based on the results acquired from the freshmen students, a very low level of negative correlation existed between anxiety compared with life satisfaction and job anxiety. Similarly, there existed a low correlation between overall BAI and SWS levels among the senior students.

Conclusion and Discussion

This study was designed to examine how well-being, life satisfaction, and anxiety levels of the undergraduate psychology students, enrolled in freshman and senior year evolved as a result of their four-year education. Most of the undergraduate psychology students in the first and last year at the department were found women, similar to previous studies (20, 21).

The first significant finding was such that subjective well-being and life satisfaction positively improved in their final year compared to the first year.

It can be deduced that the students felt much better with the training and education of their majors. Also, environmental factors and their positive feelings and perspectives towards life could be considered other reasons for such a positive boost on well-being and life satisfaction. Such results were compatible with the previous research findings (22, 23).

On the other hand, the primary reason why anxiety levels found lower in the senior year was since how much they had applied their psychology training into their own lives. In this context, it can be said that the curriculum proposed for the psychology majors at the university where the study is conducted was effective and useful. Besides, the findings showed low negative correlations among the subjective well-being, anxiety and neurotic disorders aligned with the results in the previous studies (24, 25). The results also confirmed and produced similar findings compared to the related previous studies, conducted with undergraduate pre-service teachers (26, 27).

In the second part of our study, whether there existed any statistically significant difference among the following pairs were investigated; the freshman vs. senior years, freshman vs. freshman, senior vs. senior.

Consequently, a statistically significant difference and moderate correlation coefficients were obtained among the senior year students (senior vs. senior) life satisfaction scores and job anxiety and Beck anxiety scores. Among the most important reasons for such results lie within the increase in their life satisfaction and job anxiety levels could be because their undergraduate education had a negatively great impact on the anxiety status.

Our findings aligned with the previous studies (28, 29, 30) carried out with the students studying in different majors, but the psychological problems uncovered may result from distinctive bases. The most important reasons could include; the idea of failure in lessons, environmental factors (living conditions), adaptation problems, insecurity issues, loneliness, stress.

In light of the findings of this study, we could suggest that the studies related to different socio-demographic information, which can be designed more or qualitatively and where the reasons can be investigated in-depth, are required to acquire more in-depth information and outcomes. In conclusion, assessments of the university students based on age, gender, parental occupation, and education status could help us to recognize their psychological problems including job anxiety, psychological problems, and life satisfaction levels.

Limitations

The results of this study were based on 153 university students enrolled in an undergraduate psychology major at a university located at a Central Anatolian city in Turkey, therefore the results are valid only for similar groups. This study is also limited to the responses by the particular participants in the questionnaires. The results of this study are also limited to the methodology of the data collection process including location, date, and time. Finally, the study findings could only be generalized for participants with similar sociodemographic characteristics.

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