

Relationship between Irrational Beliefs and Life Satisfaction in Early Adolescents

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Abstract

Problem Statement: Early adolescence is a rather challenging period with regard to experiencing positive feelings and making positive evaluations of life. It is important to reveal the relationship between life satisfaction, (which shapes the cognitive component of subjective well-being) and irrational beliefs (which lead to psychological disturbances as a cognitive structure during early adolescence). Relationships between irrational beliefs and life satisfaction in adults may be better understood when they are examined from the perspective that irrational beliefs rooted in childhood and adolescence may have a negative role on an individual's life in his or her advanced years.

Purpose of Study: This study investigated the relationship between life satisfaction domains and irrational beliefs among Turkish early adolescents. Life satisfaction in different domains was examined with respect to irrational beliefs (the demands for success, respect, and comfort) in the total sample and in girl and boy groups.

Methods: The Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale and the Irrational Belief Scale for Adolescents were administered to 304 adolescents attending three junior high schools in Denizli, Turkey. Hierarchical regression analysis and Pearson correlation coefficients were used for data analysis.

Findings and Results: Research findings indicate that total irrational beliefs and the demand for comfort generally have a negative relationship with life satisfaction domains and that the demands for respect and success have an unexpected positive relationship with some life satisfaction domains (e.g., self satisfaction). Among girls, only a negative demand for comfort

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was found to predict life satisfaction domains; however, among boys, besides the demand for comfort, a demand for success and a demand for respect were found to predict life satisfaction positively in several domains. Demand for comfort generally emerged as the strongest predictor of life satisfaction in the total sample and the girl and boy groups.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The present study indicated a generally negative relationship between (1) life satisfaction domains and total irrational beliefs and (2) the demand for comfort. However, there is an unexpected positive relationship between the demands for respect and for success and some life satisfaction domains. Since the findings of this study are based on correlation and regression values, it is difficult to establish a causal relationship. For this reason, further studies are necessary to investigate the relationships between irrational beliefs and life satisfaction, together with familial and cultural factors and demographic variables. Furthermore, a longitudinal research study may likewise be conducted to study the changes in the relationship between irrational beliefs and life satisfaction from early adolescence to late adolescence.

Keywords: Irrational beliefs, life satisfaction, Turkish early adolescents, gender

One of the main concepts investigated in the field of positive psychology is subjective well-being. Subjective well-being, which is also popularly known as "happiness" encompasses both affective and cognitive evaluations of an individual's life (Diener, 2000). Subjective well-being consists of a cognitive component, known as life satisfaction, and an affective component, which covers pleasant and unpleasant emotions (Diener & Suh, 1997). Individuals with high subjective well-being possess more positive feelings and thoughts about their lives. Individuals with high subjective well-being at the affective level have less frequent experiences of such unpleasant emotions as anxiety, depression, and anger. However, individuals with high subjective well-being at the cognitive level evaluate their own lives more positively in the areas of their occupation, marriage, etc. (Myers & Diener, 1995). Life satisfaction, also known as perceived quality of life (Huebner, Suldo, Smith, & McKnight, 2004), is defined as the self-cognitive evaluation of an individual's own quality of life (Myers & Diener, 1995).

Unpleasant emotions are regarded as part of the affective component of subjective well-being and are considered an indicator of low subjective well-being. Unpleasant emotions are explained within the concept of "irrational beliefs" from the perspective of the Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT). According to the REBT (one of the cognitive behavioral therapies), the causes of such psychological disturbances as anxiety, anger, depression, guilt, and inefficiency are not rooted in the experienced events of an individual, but they are rather the irrational beliefs that an individual holds related to events (Ellis, 1973). Ellis (1979), the pioneer of the REBT, categorizes irrational beliefs leading to self-defeating unpleasant emotions into

three groups: (1) "I absolutely must be competent and successful and must earn others' respect and approval," (2) "People must always treat me with kindness, respect, and honesty," and (3) "The circumstances that I am in should be comfortable, non-problematic, and easy." This classification reflects one's irrational beliefs about oneself, others, and surrounding conditions. These irrational beliefs are usually expressed in terms of absolute musts, commands, or demands, and if people hold rigid beliefs, they are likely to experience emotional disturbances (Ellis, 1979). Beliefs that are not expressed as demands but as preferences are accepted to be rational and lead to more adaptive levels of emotionality and appropriate behavior (Bernard, Ellis, & Terjesen, 2006).

In literature, numerous studies investigated the relationship between irrational beliefs and unpleasant emotions such as anxiety, depression, and anger, which form the affective component of subjective well-being; however, few studies addressed the relationship between life satisfaction in the cognitive component of subjective well-being and irrational beliefs. In addition, a limited number of existing research studies (e.g., Bernard, 1998; Ciarrochi, 2004; Froh et al., 2007; Matel, 1992; Snell & Hawkins, 1985; Wicker, Richardson, & Lambert, 1985) focused on adults. The same is true for research on life satisfaction. Studies on life satisfaction tend to focus on aspects associated with adult life such as marriage, jobs, and senility (Greenspoon & Saklofske, 1998), but studies on the life satisfaction of children and adolescents are limited (Gilman, Huebner, & Laughlin, 2000). However, irrational beliefs that negatively affect an individual's evaluation of his own life are mostly established during childhood and adolescence. The majority of irrational beliefs arise during childhood when rational and logical thinking capacity is very limited (Bernard, 1984). Due to lack of knowledge and experience, school-age children are more likely to draw wrong conclusions and make erroneous estimations of real situations than adults are (Bernard & Joyce, 1991). In addition, adolescence is a period during which the irrational thoughts that developed in childhood are perpetuated, and new beliefs accompanied by adolescent egocentrism are established (Bernard, 1984).

The early adolescence period covers the initial years of transition to adolescence from childhood (approximately ages 11-14), and it is a period during which undesirable feelings such as anxiety, shyness, guilt, depression, and anger are felt and are accompanied by the physical and hormonal changes experienced during puberty (Vernon, 1999). In this period, adolescents may feel anxiety and stress due to such issues as their physical appearance, popularity, rejection in peer groups, peer pressure, or growing independence from adults (Stone & Bradley, 1994). Some studies indicate that life satisfaction decreases (Chang, Chang, Stewart, & Au, 2003) and trait anxiety increases (Byrne, 2000) in the early years of adolescence. Toward the end of early adolescence, anger increases (Roeser & Eccles, 1998), and school and family satisfaction decreases (Huebner, Valois, Paxton, & Drane, 2005). Similarly, irrational beliefs have been found to be higher in early adolescence than in late adolescence (Marcotte, 1996). Given these results, early adolescents may face challenges to experiencing positive feelings and evaluating their lives in a more positive way.

Early adolescence is a period when puberty changes occur and gender differences emerge (Glenn, 1999). Some research findings indicate that girls in the early ages of adolescence experience more depression (Marcotte, 1996), anxiety (Byrne, 2000), and stress-causing events than boys and need more peer support than boys do (Liu, 2002). The self-esteem and anger levels of boys are higher than for girls (Roeser & Eccles, 1998). On the other hand, in some of the studies on early adolescents' life satisfaction, significant differences have been found in favor of girls regarding school satisfaction (Huebner et al., 2005; Nickerson & Nagle, 2004) and friend satisfaction (Huebner et al., 2005). However, according to some research, there are no gender differences between satisfaction with family, school, friends, living environment, and self (Huebner et al., 1998) and overall life satisfaction (Fogle, Huebner, & Laughlin, 2002; Huebner, Laughlin, Ash, & Gilman, 1998; Seligson, Huebner, & Valois, 2003). These results indicate that the effect of gender on such variables as anxiety, depression, stress, and anger (that constitute the affective component of subjective well-being in early adolescents) is more prominent than on life satisfaction, which forms the cognitive component of subjective well-being. On the other hand, some findings show that irrational beliefs do not vary by gender during early adolescence (Çivitci, 2006; Hooper & Layne 1983; Lee, Hallberg, & Haase, 1979; Liu, 2002; Marcotte, 1996). As aforementioned, according to the REBT, irrational beliefs lead to unhealthy feelings such as anxiety, anger, and depression, which form the affective component of subjective well-being. Therefore, investigating the relationships between life satisfaction and irrational beliefs based on gender may contribute to understanding the role of gender on the affective and cognitive components of subjective well-being in early adolescents.

In the present study, the relationships between total irrational beliefs; the demand for success, the demand for respect, and the demand for comfort; and overall life satisfaction and life satisfaction in the domains of friend, school, living environment, family, and self were studied among Turkish early adolescents. In addition, the power of irrational beliefs in predicting life satisfaction of male and female students in the various domains was investigated.

Method

Participants

The participants included 304 students (156 boys and 148 girls) from one private and two public junior high schools in Denizli, a mid-sized city in western Turkey. Participants ranged in age from 11 to 15 years ($M= 12.78$, $SD= 0.93$), and the majority of the participants' ages (94%) ranged from 12 to 14 years old. The data of individuals' socio-economic statuses (SES) were not collected; however, considering the schools' type (public and private) and the school districts, the students were estimated to come from predominantly middle and upper SES families.

Measures

Multidimensional life satisfaction. Adolescents' life satisfaction was measured through the Turkish version of the Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS), which measures both overall life satisfaction and satisfaction with specific

life domains (friends, school, living environment, family, and self). The original version of the MSLSS was developed by Huebner (1994) and consisted of 40 items. The psychometric properties of the MSLSS were reported to be valid and reliable for children and adolescents in previous research studies (Gilman et al., 2000; Huebner, 1994; Huebner et al., 1998). The MSLSS was adapted to Turkish by Çivitci (2007). The MSLSS-Turkish version contains 36 items with a loading of .34 or higher. Each item is rated on a four-point Likert scale (never; sometimes; often; and almost always), and a high score shows a high degree of life satisfaction. Life satisfaction in all domains correlates significantly with depression (r range = .30 to .59, $p < .01$) for concurrent validity. Test-retest coefficients for the MSLSS subscales and total scale ranged from .70 to .86. The alpha coefficients for the subscales ranged from .70 to .85 (total score = .87) (Çivitci, 2007). The obtained internal consistency reliability for friends, school, living environment, family, self, and total scores were .81, .78, .74, .74, .67, and .88, respectively, in this study.

Irrational beliefs. Adolescents' irrational beliefs were measured using the Irrational Beliefs Scale for Adolescents (IBSA). The IBSA, developed by Çivitci (2006), is a self-report scale for early adolescents designed to assess irrational beliefs. The instrument was designed to assess Ellis's three, core, irrational beliefs. The IBSA consists of 21 items in Turkish, and each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5); in which, high scores indicate higher irrationality. The IBSA includes three subscales that reflect Ellis's conceptualization of irrationality (especially the three, core, irrational beliefs): (a) a demand for success, which focuses on the belief that one should be successful and thoroughly competent, (b) a demand for comfort, which involves the idea that life must be comfortable, easy, and positive, and (c) a demand for respect, which consists of the belief that others must be kind and considerate. The IBSA's factor items had loadings of at least .40 for construct validity. The IBSA total and subscales significantly correlated with the Children's Depression Inventory (CDI) and the Test Anxiety Inventory (TAI). The three-week test-retest reliability for the total score was .82, and the reliability scores for the subscales ranged from .67 to .84. The alpha coefficient for the total score was .71, and coefficients for the subscales ranged from .57 to .62 (Çivitci, 2006). Internal consistency reliabilities estimated in the present sample for demand for success, demand for comfort, demand for respect, and total score were .71, .72, .59, and .71, respectively.

Procedures

Permission to collect data was obtained from the local education authorities. Scales were applied (in one-course hour) on the students from one class randomly selected from each grade. Scales were applied by the final-year students attending the psychological counseling and guidance department. Students were informed about anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality. Demographic information was obtained through selected demographic questions (i.e., gender, age, and grade), which were completed as part of the instruments. The instruments took approximately 40 minutes to complete. All students who volunteered to participate in the study gave their consent.

Results

As Table 1 illustrates, bivariate correlations indicate a negative relationship between Total Irrational Beliefs and all life satisfaction domains, except for Self Satisfaction for the total sample. The Demand for Comfort negatively correlates with all life satisfaction domains for the total sample. The correlations indicate that the Demand for Success correlates significantly with only Family Satisfaction for the total sample. The Demand for Respect was also related significantly with only Self Satisfaction for the total sample.

Table 1

Intercorrelations of All Variables for Total Sample

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Overall life satisfaction	-								
2. Friends satisfaction	.83**	-							
3. School satisfaction	.71**	.47**	-						
4. Environment satisfaction	.85**	.66**	.48**	-					
5. Family satisfaction	.80**	.53**	.54**	.59**	-				
6. Self satisfaction	.74**	.54**	.36**	.59**	.45**	-			
7. Total irrational beliefs	-.20**	-.22**	-.24**	-.15**	-.17**	.01	-		
8. Demand for success	.06	-.03	.06	.03	.12*	.06	.71**	-	
9. Demand for respect	.08	.01	.03	.06	.03	.19**	.50**	.08	-
10. Demand for comfort	-.47**	-.36**	-.51**	-.34**	-.47**	-.17**	.69**	.11	.21**

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

To explore more specific effects of the IBSA dimensions (the demand for success, the demand for respect, and the demand for comfort) on life satisfaction, hierarchical regressions were conducted, using each of the subscales of the MSLSS as predictor variables. Gender and age were statistically controlled for their possible influence on the hierarchical regression analysis. As shown in Table 2, when gender and age were controlled, all regression models were significant. The subscales of the IBSA significantly explained 26% of the variance in Overall Life Satisfaction for the total sample. The Demand for Success and the Demand for Respect contributed significantly to the variance in adolescents' total life satisfaction as did the Demand for Comfort in a negative direction. The subscales of IBSA predicted 14% of the variance in Friends Satisfaction, and an examination of the beta weights indicates that only the Demand for Comfort made a significant contribution. Thirty percent of

the variance in School Satisfaction was predicted by the regression model with the Demand for Success, the Demand for Respect, and the Demand for Comfort making significant contributions. The subscales of the IBSA explained 13% of the variance in Living Environment Satisfaction, and an examination of the beta weights indicates that the Demand for Respect and the Demand for Comfort made a significant contribution. Twenty-seven percent of the variance in Family Satisfaction was explained by the model, and all subscales of the IBSA contributed significantly. The regression model predicted only 9% of the variance in Self Satisfaction, and beta weights indicate that the Demand for Respect and the Demand for Comfort significantly contributed to the variance.

Table 2

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Effects of Irrational Beliefs on Satisfaction Domains

Variables	Total Sample			
	β	<i>t</i>	R^2	<i>F</i>
Overall life satisfaction				
Block 1				
Gender	-.10	-1.65		
Age	-.08	-1.38	.01	2.16
Block 2				
Demand for success	.10	2.05*		
Demand for respect	.17	3.36**	.26	21.31***
Demand for comfort	-.51	-9.87***		
Friends satisfaction				
Block 1				
Gender	-.11	-1.93	.01	1.88
Age	.00	.01		
Block 2				
Demand for success	.01	.27	.14	9.92***
Demand for respect	.09	1.60		
Demand for comfort	-.37	-6.72***		
School satisfaction				
Block 1				
Gender	-.11	-1.97*	.03	4.82**
Age	-.14	-2.53*		
Block 2				
Demand for success	.10	2.10*		
Demand for respect	.12	2.43*	.30	25.46***
Demand for comfort	-.53	-10.62***		

Table 2
(Continued)

	β	t	R^2	F
Environment satisfaction				
Block 1				
Gender	-.07	-1.16	.01	.76
Age	-.03	-.51		
Block 2				
Demand for success	.06	1.09		
Demand for respect	.13	2.38*	.13	9.20***
Demand for comfort	-.36	-6.54***		
Family satisfaction				
Block 1				
Gender	-.05	-.90	.02	2.81
Age	-.13	-2.25*		
Block 2				
Demand for success	.16	3.18**		
Demand for respect	.12	2.27*	.27	21.49***
Demand for comfort	-.50	-9.73***		
Self satisfaction				
Block 1				
Gender	-.03	-.50	.01	.15
Age	-.01	-.25		
Block 2				
Demand for success	.07	1.25		
Demand for respect	.23	4.11***	.09	5.62***
Demand for comfort	-.22	-3.89***		

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

In this study, gender differences were examined through separate hierarchical regressions for girls and boys. As shown in Table 3, when age was controlled, all regression models were significant for both girls and boys. The subscales of the IBSA significantly contributed to the variance in total score and subscales of the MSLSS for girls. The beta weights indicate that only the Demand for Comfort significantly contributed to the variance in all domains of life satisfaction for girls. The subscales of the IBSA significantly contributed to the variance in the total score and subscales of the MSLSS for boys. The beta weights indicate that the Demand for Respect was significantly predicted by all domains of life satisfaction for boys. The Demand for Success significantly contributed to the variance in Overall Life Satisfaction, Family Satisfaction, and Self Satisfaction for boys. The Demand for Comfort was a significant predictor of Overall Life Satisfaction, Friends Satisfaction, School Satisfaction, Living Environment Satisfaction, and Family Satisfaction in a negative direction for boys.

Table 3

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Effects of IBSA Subscales on Life Satisfaction Domains by Gender

Variables	Girl				Boy			
	β	t	R^2	F	β	t	R^2	F
Overall life satisfaction								
Block 1								
Age	-.13	-1.62	.02	2.63	-.02	-.28	.01	.08
Block 2								
Demand for success	.04	.60			.16	2.20*		
Demand for respect	.08	1.17	.40	23.71***	.30	3.98*	.21	9.86***
Demand for comfort	-.64	-9.42***			-.38	-5.13***		
Friends satisfaction								
Block 1								
Age	-.10	-1.15	.01	1.32	.086	1.07	.01	1.14
Block 2								
Demand for success	.03	.46			-.01	-.01		
Demand for respect	-.02	-.21	.26	12.75***	.20	2.49*	.10	3.99***
Demand for comfort	-.50	-6.70***			-.26	-3.23**		
School satisfaction								
Block 1								
Age	-.17	-2.09*	.03	4.35*	-.12	-1.44	.01	2.06
Block 2								
Demand for success	.09	1.29			.12	1.60		
Demand for respect	.08	1.13	.37	21.18***	.19	2.56*	.23	11.38***
Demand for comfort	-.60	-8.70***			-.46	-6.31***		
Environment satisfac.								
Block 1								
Age	-.15	-1.84	.02	3.39	.09	1.10	.01	1.20
Block 2								
Demand for success	.00	-.01			.12	1.55		
Demand for respect	.07	.94	.22	10.05***	.21	2.70**	.12	5.01**
Demand for comfort	-.46	-5.96***			-.28	-3.57***		
Family satisfaction								
Block 1								
Age	-.09	-1.14	.01	1.29	-.17	-2.13*	.03	4.51*
Block 2								
Demand for success	.13	1.94			.18	2.37*		
Demand for respect	.07	.97	.36	20.44***	.19	2.53*	.20	9.66***
Demand for comfort	-.60	-8.68***			-.39	-5.24***		

Table 3
(Continued)

	<i>Girl</i>				<i>Boy</i>			
	β	<i>t</i>	R^2	<i>F</i>	β	<i>t</i>	R^2	<i>F</i>
Self satisfaction								
Block 1								
Age	-.03	-.30	.01	.09	-.01	-.05	.00	.01
Block 2								
Demand for success	-.12	-1.55			.25	3.33**		
Demand for respect	.13	1.54	.14	5.78***	.37	5.00***	.20	9.15***
Demand for comfort	-.36	-4.49***			-.11	-1.40		

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Discussion

In this study, significant negative relationships were obtained, though at a low level, between total irrational beliefs and life satisfaction domains (except for self-satisfaction) in the total sample. These findings are consistent with other studies reporting a negative relationship between overall life satisfaction and irrational beliefs in adults (Bernard, 1998; Ciarrochi, 2004; Froh et al., 2007; Matel, 1992). Ciarrochi (2004) found in his study on university students that the relationships between irrational beliefs and such unpleasant emotions as depression, anxiety, stress, and hopelessness, which form the affective element of subjective well-being, were relatively higher compared to the relationships with life satisfaction that constitutes the cognitive element of subjective well-being. Similar findings were reported in a study carried out by Bernard (1998). In this research, correlations between irrational beliefs and overall life satisfaction were relatively lower than those found between irrational beliefs and anxiety, anger (Bernard & Cronan, 1999), and depression (Burnett, 1995; Liu, 2002; Marcotte, Marcotte, & Bouffard, 2002) in children and adolescents. It can be inferred from these results that, just as in adults, irrational beliefs in children and adolescents are more strongly related to such affective variables as anxiety, anger, and depression than life satisfaction. Therefore, it can be stated that these findings are consistent with previous studies (Bernard, 1998; Ciarrochi, 2004) and conceptual views of the REBT, which proposes that irrational beliefs lead to such unhealthy feelings as anxiety, anger, and depression.

In the total sample, significant negative relationships at a moderate level were observed between the demand for comfort and all domains of life satisfaction. Similarly, both in the total sample and in girls and boys, the strongest predictor of life satisfaction domains (except for self-satisfaction in boys) was the demand for comfort. These results are consistent with a study (Bernard, 1998) that showed the relationship between the need for comfort as one of the domains of irrational beliefs and life satisfaction. Early adolescence is considered to be a rather challenging period with regard to irrational beliefs (Marcotte, 1996), life satisfaction (Chang et al., 2003), and trait anxiety (Byrne, 2000). A study conducted on Turkish early adolescents

(Sayıl, Uçanok, & Güre, 2002) revealed that adolescents tend to expect understanding and tolerance at a very high degree from all adults, especially from their parents and teachers. In the early adolescence period, the developmental difficulties encountered by early adolescents who may experience anxiety and stress pertaining to such issues as their physical appearance, relationships with peers, peer pressure, and independence from adults (Stone & Bradley, 1994) may have exacerbated their demand for comfort, pertaining to the thought that "I must always have an easy life free of problems." In adolescence, student expectations for tolerance and understanding from adults are high. Adolescents, who continue to experience developmental difficulties unique to early adolescence, may be more negative in this period when evaluating their lives as they think that their expectations for independence are not sufficiently met.

In this study, the demand for success positively correlated with only family satisfaction in the total sample. The regression coefficients obtained from the total sample indicate that the demand for success positively predicts both overall life satisfaction and school and family domains. Studies that show significant negative relationships between life satisfaction and the need for success in university students (Bernard, 1998) and those that indicate a significant relationship between depression and the demand for success among Turkish early adolescents (Çivitci, 2006) are not consistent with the findings of the present study. An interpretation of this result may be that in the early adolescence period when efforts to gain independence and identity begin, the demand for success may not have started to play a negative role on adolescents' evaluation of their lives. Some studies (Blasi & Milton, 1991; Roeser & Eccles, 1998) show that self-esteem in the early years of adolescence is lower compared to the following years. The demand for success may act as a motivating power among early adolescents in displaying their self-sufficiency. Based on research studies showing the importance of parental social support (Suldo & Huebner, 2004), parental warmth (Chang et al., 2003), relationships with parents (Huebner, Gilman, & Laughlin, 1999; Leung & Zhang, 2000), and attachment to parents (Huebner et al., 1999; Leung & Zhang, 2000) in early adolescents' life satisfaction, early adolescents use the demand for success in their relationships with their parents to gain more acceptance of and satisfaction from them by "proving" their sufficiency. In the present study, the demand for success positively predicted school satisfaction. In a study on adolescents by Stoeber and Rambow (2006), it was seen that as efforts for perfectionism increased, hope of success, motivation in school, and grades also increased. In light of these two studies, the demand for success may play a positive role in increasing academic success at school and motivation, and therefore, it may facilitate school satisfaction.

Regression results showed that the demand for success did not significantly predict any dimension of life satisfaction in girls; however, surprisingly, it positively predicted overall life satisfaction, family satisfaction, and self satisfaction in boys. The findings of this study can be explained by the value that males are ascribed in the Turkish culture. In a study by Kağıtçıbaşı and Ataca (2005), the utilitarian/economic value attributed to children by the family has decreased, and the

psychological value has increased in the last 30 years in Turkey. However, traditionally, utilitarian/economic expectations from boys continue to exist. In some studies carried out on Turkish youth, it was found that the roles related to success, status, and self-confidence are mostly ascribed to boys (Kısaç, 1999) and that boys had a more positive perception of themselves with respect to athletic, academic, and employment sufficiency (Şahin & Güvenç, 1996). Because the utilitarian/economic expectations of boys are higher than those of girls in the Turkish culture, this expectation can be a factor in the higher tendency of boys to be sufficient and successful. The demand for success in boys may also help boys gain more acceptance or approval in their cultural environment and, thus, make it easier for boys to perceive their lives more positively.

In this study, a significant correlation was not found between the demand for respect and life satisfaction domains (except for self-satisfaction) in the total sample. Nevertheless, a positive relationship was found between the demand for respect and self satisfaction. Regression results also showed that the demand for respect positively predicted overall life satisfaction and the four other domains except for friend satisfaction. According to REBT, a person who believes that he or she must be treated with kindness, honesty, and thoughtfulness and who thinks that the situation is dreadful and unbearable when they are not treated as such experiences feelings of rage, hate, hostility, etc. (Ellis, 1979). Therefore, as the demand for respect (which may lead to such unhealthy feelings as hatred and hostility) increases, life satisfaction in adolescents would be expected to decrease. The result obtained in the present study is not consistent with the conceptual view of the REBT. While a study carried out on university students (Bernard, 1998) has shown that the demand for fairness (which has a similar conceptual content to the demand for respect) has a relationship with trait anger and anger expression at a moderate level, a study conducted on adolescents (Bernard & Cronan, 1999) has shown that the relationship between the demand for fairness and trait anger is relatively low. The lower level for the relationship between the demand for honesty and trait anger in adolescents seems to indicate, from the perspective of the REBT, that the demand for respect in this period does not lead to anger that causes a decrease in life satisfaction. This situation may be explained by the importance that early adolescents place on the relationships with persons from whom they demand respect (parents, peers, teachers, etc.). Numerous studies (Chang et al., 2003; Huebner et al., 1998; Huebner et al., 1999; Leung & Zhang, 2000; Nickerson & Nagle, 2004; Suldo & Huebner, 2004) indicate that the life satisfaction of early adolescents increases as their positive relationships increase with their parents and peers. Because of the importance of positive relationships with their parents and peers on life satisfaction in early adolescents, the demand for respect may not yet have a negative impact on their relationships and, therefore, on their life satisfaction. However, more studies examining the demand for respect, anger, and life satisfaction are needed to conduct a more in-depth evaluation of the way in which the demand for respect positively predicts life satisfaction in early adolescents.

According to the regression values, the demand for respect positively predicts total life satisfaction and overall life satisfaction domains in boys, whereas it does not significantly predict any domain of life satisfaction in girls. This could in part be due

to the gender roles of the mainstream Turkish culture. The dominant, assertive, independent, and strong personality roles are more often attributed to males in Turkish culture (Özkan & Lajunen, 2005). Thus, males' expectations from other individuals to treat them kindly, thoughtfully, and respectfully may be accepted as culturally "normal." A study conducted on Turkish early adolescents (Sayil et al., 2002) showed that boys have lower expectations of understanding, attention, and tolerance from adults than do girls. Therefore, that boys' demand for respect is met in the cultural environment may be a factor in the increase of their life satisfaction.

In conclusion, this study shows that total irrational beliefs and the demand for comfort have a negative relationship with life satisfaction domains in Turkish early adolescents and that the demand for respect and the demand for success surprisingly have a positive relationship with some life satisfaction domains. Since the findings of this study are based on correlation and regression values, it is difficult to establish a causal relationship. For this reason, further studies should investigate relationships between irrational beliefs and life satisfaction together with familial and cultural factors and demographic variables. In this way, the reasons for the increase in life satisfaction (in domains such as school and family) as the demand for respect and the demand for success increase can be understood better. Furthermore, longitudinal research may be conducted to examine the changes in the relationship between irrational beliefs and life satisfaction from early adolescence to late adolescence.

In the literature, the number of studies investigating the relationship between irrational beliefs and life satisfaction is limited, which constrained the interpretation of the findings related to certain variables (e.g., the demand for success and the demand for respect). In new studies on the relationship between irrational beliefs and life satisfaction, unhealthy emotions such as anxiety, anger, and depression, which are rooted in irrational beliefs (according to the REBT), should be included as mediator variables. In this way, the relationship between the REBT's theoretical views and life satisfaction of adolescents may be examined more closely.

The present study is of importance since it shows that irrational beliefs generally play a negative role on early adolescents' perceptions of their lives. Therefore, school counselors should implement activities (such as rational emotive education) at school to help students to recognize their irrational beliefs and to replace them with rational beliefs. In this way, they can enable students to perceive their lives more positively.

A number of limitations of this study should be noted. First, the study was based on adolescents in three schools in Turkey. The present results cannot be generalized beyond the homogeneous sample included in the study. Further studies on adolescents from different national and cultural backgrounds are necessary to determine the generalizability of the findings. The data collected in this study were obtained through self-report measures, which may be influenced by social desirability.

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İlk Ergenlikte Mantıkdışı İnançlar ve Yaşam Doyumu Arasındaki İlişkiler

(Özet)

Problem Durumu: Konuşma dilinde “mutluluk” olarak adlandırılan öznel iyi oluş, bireyin kendi yaşamına ilişkin hem duyuşsal hem de bilişsel değerlendirmelerini içermektedir. Öznel iyi oluş, olumlu ve olumsuz duyguları içeren duyuşsal unsur ile yaşam doyumu olarak bilinen bilişsel unsurdan oluşmaktadır. Algılanan yaşam kalitesi olarak da adlandırılan yaşam doyumu bireyin kendi yaşam kalitesini bilişsel değerlendirmesi olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Öznel iyi oluşun duyuşsal unsurunda yer alan ve öznel iyi oluşun düşük olduğunun göstergesi sayılan olumsuz duygular, Akılcı Duygusal Davranış Terapisi (ADDT) perspektifinden mantıkdışı inançlar kavramı ile açıklanmaktadır. Bilişsel davranışçı yaklaşımlardan birisi olan ADDT’ye göre bireydeki kaygı, öfke, depresyon, suçluluk, yetersizlik vb. duyguların ve psikolojik rahatsızlıkların nedeni yaşadığı olaylar değil, olaylara ilişkin sahip olduğu mantıkdışı inançlardır. Literatürde öznel iyi oluşun duyuşsal unsurunda yer alan kaygı, depresyon, öfke gibi olumsuz duygular ile mantıkdışı inançlar arasındaki ilişki pek çok araştırmada incelenmesine rağmen, öznel iyi oluşun bilişsel unsurunu oluşturan yaşam doyumu ile mantıkdışı inançlar arasındaki ilişkiyi ele alan araştırmaların oldukça az olduğu görülmektedir. Varolan sınırlı sayıda araştırmaların da yetişkinler üzerinde yapıldığı gözlenmektedir. Pubertal değişimlerin yaşandığı ilk ergenlik dönemi, ergenlerin olumlu duygular yaşamaları ve kendi yaşamlarını olumlu değerlendirmeleri açısından genellikle daha dezavantajlı bir evre olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Literatürde son yıllarda ilk ergenlikte yaşam doyumu ile psikolojik sağlığın olumlu ve olumsuz göstergelerini yansıtan değişkenler (örneğin, benlik saygısı, kaygı, depresyon vb.) arasındaki ilişkileri inceleyen araştırmalarda göreceli bir artış olduğu gözlenirken, bu dönemde yaşam doyumu ile mantıkdışı inançları inceleyen bir çalışmaya

rastlanmamıştır. İlk ergenlikte öznel iyi oluşun bilişsel yönünü oluşturan yaşam doyumu ile bilişsel bir yapı olarak psikolojik sorunlara yol açabilen mantıkdışı inançlar arasındaki ilişkilerin ortaya konulması önemlidir. Çünkü, yetişkinlerde mantıkdışı inançlar ile yaşam doyumu arasında bulunan ilişkiler, çocukluk ve ergenlikte oluşan mantıkdışı inançların ileri ki yıllarda da bireyin yaşamında olumsuz bir rol oynadığı biçiminde değerlendirilebilir. Ayrıca, ergenliğin ilk yıllarında okul, aile, arkadaş gibi alanlarda “mutsuzluğa” yol açabilen mantıkdışı ya da işlevsel olmayan inançların belirlenmesi, bilişsel-davranışçı yaklaşıma dayalı daha etkili müdahale ya da eğitim programlarının hazırlanmasına da katkı sağlayabilecektir.

Araştırmanın Amacı: Bu çalışmanın amacı, ilk ergenlik dönemindeki öğrencilerin mantıkdışı inançları (başarı talebi, saygı talebi, rahatlık talebi) ile yaşam doyumu boyutları (genel, arkadaş, okul, yaşanılan çevre, aile ve benlik) arasındaki ilişkileri incelemektir. Ayrıca, mantıkdışı inançların kız ve erkek ergenlerin farklı alanlardaki yaşam doyumlarını yordama gücü de araştırılmıştır.

Araştırmanın Yöntemi: Araştırma grubunu Denizli İl merkezinde bulunan üç ilköğretim okulunun 6., 7. ve 8. sınıflarında öğrenim gören 304 öğrenci (148 kız ve 156 erkek) oluşturmuştur. Öğrenciler 11-15 yaşları arasındadır ve %94’ü 12-14 yaş grubundadır. Veriler, Çokboyutlu Öğrenci Yaşam Doyumu Ölçeği ve Ergenler İçin Mantıkdışı İnançlar Ölçeği kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde hiyerarşik çoklu regresyon analizi ve Pearson korelasyon katsayısı ve kullanılmıştır. Ölçme araçları, resmi izinlerin alınmasından sonra okullarda yaklaşık bir ders saatinde uygulanmıştır.

Araştırmanın Bulguları: Bu çalışmada, tüm grupta toplam mantıkdışı inançlar ile yaşam doyumu boyutları arasında (benlik doyumu hariç), düşük düzeyde olmakla birlikte anlamlı negatif ilişkiler elde edilmiştir. Tüm grupta rahatlık talebi ile yaşam doyumunun tüm boyutları arasında genellikle orta düzeyde anlamlı negatif ilişkiler gözlenmiştir. Yine, gerek tüm grupta gerekse kızlarda ve erkeklerde yaşam doyumu boyutlarının (erkeklerde benlik doyumu hariç) en güçlü yordayıcısı rahatlık talebidir. Tüm grupta başarı talebi ile aile doyumu dışındaki yaşam doyumu boyutları arasında anlamlı bir ilişki gözlenmemiş; başarı talebi ve aile doyumu arasındaki anlamlı ilişki pozitif yönde bulunmuştur. Tüm gruptan elde edilen regresyon katsayıları ise, başarı talebinin hem genel yaşam doyumunu, hem de okul ve aile boyutlarını pozitif yönde yordadığını göstermektedir. Başarı talebi kızlarda yaşam doyumunun hiçbir boyutunu anlamlı olarak yordamamış; erkeklerde ise beklentilerin aksine, genel yaşam doyumu, aile doyumu ve benlik doyumunu pozitif yönde yordamıştır. Araştırmanın bir diğer bulgusuna göre, tüm grupta saygı talebi ile yaşam doyumu boyutları arasında (benlik doyumu hariç) anlamlı korelasyon elde edilmemiş; saygı talebi ve benlik doyumu arasında ise pozitif ilişki bulunmuştur. Regresyon sonuçları da, saygı talebinin genel

yaşam doyumunu ve arkadaş doyumunu dışındaki diğer dört boyutu pozitif yönde yordadığını göstermiştir. Saygı talebi erkeklerde genel yaşam doyumunu ve tüm yaşam doyumunu boyutlarını anlamlı olarak pozitif yönde yordarken; kızlarda yaşam doyumunun hiçbir boyutunu anlamlı olarak yordamamıştır.

Sonuçlar ve Öneriler: Bu araştırma, ilk ergenlikte toplam mantıkdışı inançlar ve rahatlık talebini yansıtan mantıkdışı inançların genellikle yaşam doyumunu boyutları ile negatif yönde ilişkili olduğunu; saygı talebi ve başarı talebini yansıtan mantıkdışı inançların ise beklentilerin aksine bazı yaşam doyumunu boyutları ile pozitif yönde ilişkili olduğunu göstermektedir. Literatürde ergenlerdeki mantıkdışı inançlar ile yaşam doyumunu arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen araştırmaların oldukça az olması, bu çalışmada bazı değişkenlerle (başarı talebi, saygı talebi gibi) ilgili bulguların yorumlanmasında bir sınırlılık oluşturmuştur. Mantıkdışı inançlar ve yaşam doyumunu ilişkisini ele alacak yeni araştırmalarda, ADDT'ye göre mantıkdışı inançlardan kaynaklanan kaygı, öfke, depresyon gibi sağlıklı olmayan olumsuz duygular da değişken olarak yer almalıdır. Böylece, ADDT'nin kuramsal görüşleri ile ergenlerin yaşam doyumları arasındaki bağlantı daha iyi anlaşılabilir. Bu araştırma Türk öğrenciler üzerinde gerçekleştirildiği için, özellikle cinsiyete ilişkin bulguları kültürel etmenler ışığında yorumlanmıştır. Ergenlerdeki yaşam doyumunu ve mantıkdışı inanç ilişkisinde cinsiyet ve diğer demografik değişkenlerin etkisinin farklı kültürlerde nasıl işlediğini daha iyi anlayabilmek için, benzer araştırmalar kültürler arasında karşılaştırmalı olarak yapılabilir. Ayrıca, mantıkdışı inançlar ve yaşam doyumunu ilişkisinin çocukluktan ilk ergenliğe ve ilk ergenlikten son ergenliğe geçişte nasıl bir değişim gösterdiğini incelemek için boylamsal araştırmalar da gerçekleştirilebilir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Mantıkdışı inançlar, yaşam doyumunu, ilk ergenlik, cinsiyet