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## THE COMPARISON OF VALUE TRENDS WITH LIFE SATISFACTION LEVEL OF TEACHER CANDIDATES\*

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### ABSTRACT

As is known, a satisfied and successful teacher is a good model for students and plays an effective role on their success. According to experts, life satisfaction is one of the basic elements that people need to have in order to be happy in their lives and to make sense of their lives. It is argued that the individual is reached life satisfaction, when their criteria, their values and expectations are matched with their life. It can be said that the value orientations influence the satisfaction of life, happiness and therefore success. From this viewpoint this study is "aimed to compare teacher candidates' value trends with the levels of their life satisfaction." This study is conducted by the screening model and the "Value Scale" developed by Dilmaç, Arıca and Cesur (2014), and the "Life Satisfaction Scale" Developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) adapted to Turkish by Dağlı & Baysal (2016) was used in the data collection process. Arithmetic mean, frequency and percentage values, Pearson Correlation and simple regression analysis were used in the analysis of the data. As a result; there is a relationship between the value orientations of teacher candidates and their life satisfaction at a low level both in the positive and the negative direction. However, in general, value orientations have been found to affect life satisfaction positively (the rate of 2%) and significantly.

**Keywords:** Value orientations, life satisfaction, happiness, success.

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the most important aspects of an educational system is teachers. It is a known fact that success of an educational system basically depends on the success of teachers who will implement and run the system. Happy and successful teachers both become a good role model for their students and play an efficient role upon their success. However, there are several factors affecting the success of teachers. One of these is happiness and satisfaction. According to the experts, life satisfaction is the leading of the basic factors necessary for individuals to be happy in their life and have meaning of their life. Life satisfaction is obtained as a result of the coherence between belief, criteria, values and expectations of the individuals. As known, values consciously or unconsciously affect any areas of life according to several experts, and lead our ideas and thoughts. They help us determining the good and evil, ideal thoughts and creating the ways of behaviors. They represent our desires and targets, the reasons and purposes we look for. In this sense, value tendencies were possible to be mentioned as one of the most important factors affecting the life satisfaction. In our study, it was aimed to compare value tendencies and life satisfaction levels of the pre-service teachers in reference to the idea that value tendencies affected life satisfaction, happiness, and success, accordingly. Because the educator is a model for the learner, and his/her behavior has a profound effect on the students. However, if the teacher applies what he/she says at the same time, the child will tend to follow his/her path. If there is inconsistency between the teacher's behavior and what teacher thinks and says, this will inevitably be reflected on the students. Therefore, what the teacher says and thinks must be consistent with his behavior. This requires the teacher's value orientations to be compatible with his/her life. For this reason, it is important to determine the value orientations during the training process of primary school teachers and to highlight whether they are compatible with their lives.

According to the work done by some psychologists (Demir, 2014; Geyimci, 2017) "It is clear that success does not bring happiness exactly, but happiness has led to success. According to the findings of these studies, happy people are turning to bigger goals to strengthen their positive feelings, and this shows that happiness leads to greater success in life. In addition, in the results of the studies reported that unhappy people experienced negative emotions due to their difficult life experiences and they could not focus on success." In this context; a happy teacher can be a good model for both students and play an active role on their success.

The term "subjective well-being" is often used as a term for happiness in positive psychology. Subjective well-being involves three interrelated elements: Positive affectivity, negative affectivity and life satisfaction. While the positive and negative affectivity is composed of pleasant and uneventful feelings, life satisfaction includes cognitive evaluations of the individual's life. When the positive affectivity and perceived life satisfaction are elevated, it indicates that subjective well-being is also high (Diener & Suh, 1997, Cited in Çivitçi, 2012: 322). As seen in this approach, life satisfaction is one of the basic elements that people have to have in order to be happy in their lives.

According to Diener (1984) and Pavot & Diener (1993), life satisfaction represents the cognitive direction of subjective well-being from concepts related to happiness of the person. Subjective well-being is defined as cognitive and emotional evaluation of a person's life. This assessment includes the emotional responses to the events and the cognitive assessment of satisfaction. In this process, the individual can set his/her own criteria for a good life, and it can also consist of important widespread general judgments. It may also be the case that an individual adopts different standards in order to be successful in their own different living spaces. For this reason, rather than the satisfaction of the individual in certain living spaces, it is emphasized that it is more important to evaluate the general judgments of life (Cited in Tuzgöl Dost, 2007 and Çivitçi, 2012). In this context, life satisfaction can be defined as the level of the positive development of all qualities of life as a whole. In other words, it can be defined as a positive assessment of the entire life rather than a specific area (Dağlı & Baysal, 2016).

Definition of life satisfaction varies according to the theory it is based. In many studies, life satisfaction is defined as "the cognitive judgment of person that based on comparisons of the individual's own living conditions to their suitability for standards", depending on cognitive theory. According to affective theory, life satisfaction is individual's conscious experience of the dominance of positive emotions of the negative emotions. Life satisfaction is the assessment of the individual's expectations of his/her life, according to his/her own criteria, and as a result of this, getting satisfaction from his/her life, living more positive affectivity, and less negative affectivity. In other words, life satisfaction can also be defined as a positive evaluation of whole life in accordance with the criteria that an individual determines. Positive evaluation is the positive reaction, attitude and satisfaction that a person shows cognitively and emotionally to work, leisure and in other living spaces. This shows the cognitive and affective consequences of the expectation of someone compared with the real situation. Generally speaking, life satisfaction involves the whole life of a person and the various dimensions of his/her life, both cognitive and affective. So, when life satisfaction is told, satisfaction with all life in general is understood, not satisfaction with a certain situation. This satisfaction; happiness, morale, etc. as a result of well-being of the various angles can be expressed as the satisfaction of one's own life. In this manner, life satisfaction can be explained as evaluations of the extent to which the individual satisfies his or her life in general terms as a result of comparisons between the standards he/she sets for himself and the conditions he/she has (Köker, 1991; Vara, 1999; Telman & Ünsal, 2004; Çeçen, 2008; Şahin, 2008; Şener, 2009; Baştuğ, 2009; Gürdil, 2009; Şimşek, 2011; Demir Güdül, 2015).

As it is understood from these statements, life satisfaction is one of the basic elements that people have to have in order to be happy in their lives and to make sense of their lives. It is argued that the satisfaction of the life is reached, when the criteria determined by the individual are matched with the conditions that he/she has in the present. According to Özer & Karabulut (2003), it is stated that individuals who have reached life satisfaction enjoy their activities in daily life, see themselves as valuable and generally approach an optimistic attitude towards life. According to Şimşek (2011), "People are happy to reach life satisfaction. Happiness is that people to be more social and stronger, have romantic or social relations, have higher satisfaction in

interpersonal relations, more appropriate reactions to events, more participation in society, better health, higher performances and higher achievements in workplaces, etc., it reflects the positive impact on the entire life of the individual (pp. 24-25)." As it is seen, life satisfaction has many positive effects on people. However, it is also emphasized in the literature that there are many factors affecting life satisfaction in positive or negative direction.

Factors affecting life satisfaction: Freedom, democracy, ideas, politics, stability, control of one's own life, physical and mental health, family, friendship, sports, social environment, social relations, culture, personality, love, work, emotion, life, social life, education, level of self-confidence, economy (income status), economic confidence, power, goals and objectives, age, gender, feelings, pleasure, honor, pride, shame, guilt, sadness, anger, stress, anxiety, motivation, psychology, violence, etc. (Myers & Diener, 1995; Lawlis, Dorahy & Schumaker, 1999; Yetim, 2001; Diener & Seligman, 2004; Tuzgöl Dost, 2007; Sahranç, 2008; Baştuğ, 2009; Altay & Aydın Avcı, 2009; Eryılmaz & Öğülmüş, 2010; Kabasakal & Girli, 2012; Sarıcaoğlu & Arslan, 2013; Demir Güdül, 2015; Yıkılmaz & Demir Güdül, 2015; Dağlı & Baysal, 2016). Apart from these, it is conceivable that the beliefs, the criteria, expectations, interests, desires, attitudes, norms, factors of the individual affect his/her life satisfaction. For example, a person that is interested in the adventure and his chance of encounter an adventure or the inability to live it will affect the life satisfaction of that person. According to Rath, Harmin & Simon (1978), "Goals, desires, emotions, thoughts, beliefs, opinions, behaviors, activities and anxieties are considered as value indicators (pp.31-58)." It can be assumed that values are one of the factors affecting life satisfaction.

According to experts, values lead our ideas and our minds by influencing every aspect of our lives, consciously or unconsciously. It builds what is desirable or not, what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad, and it creates the way of thinking and our acts. They represent our demands and goals, our needs of objects, the separation of what it should be and what it is now, they represent the reasons and purposes we seek. This creates a driving force behind individual and group behavior. Especially in youth, values have an important role in the formation of identity and personality, shaping the way of seeing the world and analyzing the problems.

They even identify the steps we take, the decisions we make, and the nature of the reactions we give to something we oppose. So values guide our life and organize our decisions and plans (Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1992; Cevizci, 1999; Güngör, 2000; Budak, 2000; Özensel, 2003; Aydın, 2003; UNESCO, 2005; Oktay, 2007; Bolay, 2007; Dilmaç, 2007). When the explanations about the functions of these values analyzed it can be said that one's values orientation is one of factors affecting their life satisfaction.

When the literature is examined, it is seen that the relation of life satisfaction to many different variables is already researched. However, there were no studies on the relationship between the values and life satisfaction. On the other hand, it can be said that one's values orientation is one of the important factors affecting the life satisfaction based on the explanations about the functions of the values. Starting from this

idea -assuming that the values influence life satisfaction, happiness and indirectly success - this study is focused to investigate the relationship between teacher candidates' value orientations and life satisfaction.

### **Purpose**

This study is aimed to investigate the relationship between the value orientations of teacher candidates and their life satisfaction levels.

## **METHOD**

### **Model of This Research**

In this study, the relational survey model; one of the general survey models, was used to describe a situation that existed in the past or present and to determine the existence and degree of the relationship between two variables. General screening model (Karasar, 2012); is a screening model which is made on the whole universe or sample in a universe with many elements and it allows researcher to make a general judgment is made about the universe. In this case, the researcher tries to define the event, the object, the individuals as they are without changing and intervening with them. The relational screening model (Tekbıyık, 2014); is used to determine the relationships between the variables and to estimate the possible results; rather than affecting or controlling variables, statistical comparisons are made for the scores of each sample.

### **Study Group**

The research is took place in the 2017-2018 academic year, the study group consisted 178 girls and 54 boys a total of 232 teacher candidates. The group consisted teacher candidates from Primary School Teaching, Social Studies Teaching, English Language Teaching, Preschool Teaching, Science Education Teaching and Turkish Teaching.

### **Data Collection Tool**

As a data collection tool "Value Scale" developed by Dilmaç, Arıcak & Cesur (2014) was used to determine the value orientations of the students in the study. A Likert - type scale prepared consisting of 39 items and grading from 0 to 9 was used. Each item was made with decimal grading from negligible importance to "no matter what" answer to "very important" answer; each option was scored from 0 to 9 towards the most negative to the most positive. The scale consists of 9 factors as "Social Values", "Career Values", "Intellectual Values", "Spirituality", "Material Values", "Human Honor", "Romantic Values", "Freedom" and "Generosity".

In order to determine the life satisfaction levels of the students, the "Life Satisfaction Scale" was used. It was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin (1985); adapted to Turkish by Dagle & Baysal (2016). As a result of the adaptation to Turkish, the scale consists of 5 items under a one-factor structure as it was originally. Internal consistency coefficient was determined 0.88 and test-retest reliability was 0.97. As a result of these

validity and reliability analyzes it is thought to be a valid and reliable tool that can be used to determine the perceptions of candidates for their life satisfaction.

### Data Analysis

In the analysis of the collected data, the arithmetic average, frequency and percentage values of the answers that given by the teacher candidates were examined to the scale totals in order to determine their general value orientations and life satisfactions. Then, Pearson Correlation coefficient is used to determine whether the value orientations are related to life satisfaction. In addition, a simple regression analysis was used to determine how well the values predicted their life satisfaction.

### FINDINGS (RESULTS)

As a result of the analysis that is made to determine the value orientations, the arithmetic mean of the answers given by the participants in the scale total of 0-9 was 7.50. This can be interpreted to mean that the participants have a high degree of general interest (tendency) in the values of the humanitarian values.

As a result of the analysis for determining the satisfaction of life, given in the scale of 5 (strictly agree), 4 (agree), 3 (slightly agree), 2 (disagree) and 1 (absolutely disagree) the participants' arithmetic average of the answers were 3.18. This can be interpreted as the fact that the participants have reached a certain level of life satisfaction and are not sufficiently satisfied with their lives.

According to findings; it has been seen that students did not reach the sufficient level of life satisfaction despite the importance that they give to the values. Considering this situation, the results of simple correlation and regression analysis are shown below to determine how and in what degree relation between teacher candidates' value orientations and life satisfaction.

A correlation analysis was done to determine how the relationship between values and life satisfaction is (positive / negative); The result of the correlation analysis is  $r = 0.140^*$ ,  $p < 0.05$  (.032). According to this result, it is seen that there is a positive and meaningful relationship between teacher candidates' value levels and their life satisfaction (the correlation coefficient "r" of 1.000 indicates a perfect positive relationship, -1,000 indicates a perfect negative relationship, 0.300 - 0.000 indicates a low positive relationship, and "-" indicates a negative relationship). After these analyzes a simple correlations made to determine the relationship between life satisfaction and the values and how it affects (positive / negative); according to the results , a positive correlation is seen ( $p = 0.05$  level) between the life satisfaction and the values of knowledge, courage, work, external discipline, religion / faith, education, worship, courtesy and helpfulness.

A significant negative correlation was found between pleasure and enjoyment value with life satisfaction. And also a meaningless negative correlation was found between life satisfaction and justice, love, physical health, property and money values. Although there is a positive relationship between life satisfaction and other value

expressions in the scale, no significant relationship was found. Therefore, values that are related to life satisfaction in the positive and those in the negative direction are included Table 1.

**Table 1.** Results of Pearson Correlation (Simple Correlation)

Value phrase	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p
Information	.137*	.038
Courage	.134*	.042
Work	.130*	.047
External Dicipline	.134*	.042
Religion / faith	.271**	.000
Education	.172**	.009
Worship	.221**	.001
Courtesy	.142*	.031
Helpfulness	.153*	.020
Justice	-.037	.571
Love	-.090	.170
Physical health	-.043	.515
Joy/Pleasure	-.129*	.050
Goods / property	-.087	.187
Money	-.106	.109

A simple regression analysis was done to determine the level (by percentage) of the effect of this relationship on life satisfaction ant the result is;  $R = 0.140$ ,  $R^2 = 0.020$ ,  $F(1, 230) = 4.631$ ,  $p < 0.05$  (.032). This result shows that the teacher candidates' value orientations predicted their life satisfaction in the positive direction by 2%. This suggests that, value orientations are influential on life satisfaction. Another 98% of the life satisfaction is affected by other factors.

Results of simple regression analysis (R square and ANOVA<sup>b</sup> "p" values) to determine the level of influence (what percentage?) the relations (positive / negative) indicated in Table 1. are given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Results of Simple Linear Regression Test (R square and ANOVA<sup>b</sup> "p" values)

Value phrase	R <sup>2</sup>	p
Information	.019	.038
Courage	.018	.042
Work	.017	.047
External Dicipline	.018	.042
Religion / faith	.074	.000
Education	.030	.009
Worship	.049	.001
Courtesy	.020	.031
Helpfulness	.023	.020
Justice	.001	.571
Love	.008	.170
Physical health	.002	.515
Joy/Pleasure	.017	.050
Goods / property	.008	.187
Money	.011	.109

When looking at the table (for simple correlation and regression results); the highest positive correlation is between life satisfaction and religion / belief ( $r = .271$ ), which predicts 7.4% of life satisfaction significantly. It also shows a positive correlation between life satisfaction and values such as information, courage, work, external discipline, education, worship, courtesy and helpfulness in between 1.7% and 4.9%. However, there is a significant relationship between Joy/Pleasure and life satisfaction in the negative direction and it predicts about 2% of life satisfaction. In other words, the Joy/Pleasure value orientation affects life satisfaction approximately 2% in the negative direction. It is also seen that values such as justice, love, physical health, Goods / property, and money are negatively affecting the life satisfaction.

### CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

In the research findings, the values of the teacher candidates in the humanitarian values scale are generally high (at the level of 0-9, 7.50); but they reached a little bit of life satisfaction (at 3.18 in range 1 - 5). This situation can be interpreted as the fact that the teacher candidates do not reach enough satisfaction in their lives although they attach importance to the values at a high level. As a result of the correlation analysis that performed to determine the relationship between values and life satisfaction (positive / negative) of the teacher candidates, it was found that there was a positive and meaningful relationship between teacher candidates' value orientations and life satisfaction. A simple regression analysis was conducted to determine the degree to how this relationship affected and it was found  $R^2 = .020$ . This result shows that the teacher candidates' value orientations predicted their life satisfaction in the positive direction by 2%. This suggests that though at a low level, value orientations are influential on life satisfaction.

This finding is consistent with the findings of Özgüngör's (2009) study to find the relationship between post materialist values and identity statuses with life satisfaction. As a result of the study concerned, it has been determined that the identity status is valid for the individual to explain the development of individuals with both modern and postmodern cultural values and it has been revealed that the identity status and the life satisfaction has a positive correlation, even though at a low level identity status is influential on life satisfaction. According to these results, it is possible to say that life satisfaction is affected by factors other than the values. Indeed, studies of the literature show that there are many factors affecting life satisfaction. Çivitci (2008) stated that there is a significant relationship between success and life satisfaction in a study that he did; Tuzgöl Dost (2007) revealed that gender, success, economic condition, expectancy, religious belief and loneliness have an impact on life satisfaction. Ertekin Pınar, Bilgiç, Demirel, Akyüz, Karatepe & Sevim (2015) revealed that there is a negative correlation between exhaustion levels and life satisfaction of the students and that life satisfaction decreases as the exhaustion increases. Erol, Sezer, Şişman & Öztürk (2016) stated that the people who are healthy and not alone have high life satisfaction. Demir Güdül (2015) stated that motivation has a meaningful correlation with life satisfaction. In the literature, self-awareness (Tel & Sarı, 2016), confidence (Gürdil, 2009), psychological status (Ülker Tümlü & Reçepoğlu, 2013), self-efficacy, stress control, momentary



anxiety (Sahrañç, 2008), communication, life standards, health, success, personal relationships, feeling secure, being a member of the community, future security (Şimsek, 2011), leisure time activities (Şener, 2009), etc. many studies has been found that show that such factors have meaningful correlation with life satisfaction.

In addition to the above mentioned factors, values were also found to be a factor affecting life satisfaction. But it is difficult to explain how the values relate to life satisfaction according to the findings of this study. However, according to Yıkılmaz & Demir GÜdül (2015), the findings of many researches, reveals that there is an important relationship between finding meaning in life and being well and life satisfaction. For example, in a study by Frankl (1998), most students who wanted to put an end to their lives said that the desire to put an end to their lives is closely related to their finding that their lives are meaningless. From this point of view, it seems that the meaninglessness of life seems to be a deadly problem (Yıkılmaz & Demir GÜdül, 2015). In this case, it is possible that an individual who sees his life meaningless is far from life satisfaction. In other words, there is a very important relationship between meaning of life and life satisfaction. Therefore, it is important to examine the relationship between values and meaning of life.

When the relationship between values and meaning of life is examined in literature, things that are meaningful to life are based entirely on the changing values between people and cultures. Once the meaning of life has evolved, it gives birth to values and this situation strengthens that person's sense of meaning. Therefore, the meaning of life depends on maintaining the existence of values and creating them in various dimensions. Values also give us the answer to our questions about how we live. It means that there is a close relationship between the meaning of life and values, the meaning of life is raised by values. As a result, meaning of life is more concerned about whether it is more valuable than it is short or long (Baş & Hamarta, 2015). Moreover, when the finding of the research conducted by Baş & Hamarta (2015) is examined, it is understood that there is an important relation between values and meaning of life. In this context, the relationship between the meaning of life and life satisfaction and the influence of values on the meaning of life are considered, it can be seen that values may have a direct relationship with factors that affect life satisfaction, the study findings are also verify this relationship.

According to the results of analyzes conducted to determine the values influence on life satisfaction, a meaningful positive correlation was found between the life satisfaction and religion / faith, knowledge, courage, Education, external discipline, education, worship, courtesy and Helpfulness values. However, there was a significant negative correlation between joy / pleasure and life satisfaction. This relationship also affects life satisfaction approximately 2% in the negative direction. Also; justice, love, bodily health, goods / property and money have negative effects on life satisfaction, even if they are meaningless; it can be interpreted that the students (in the range of 0-9) do not have enough in their lives although they value at a considerable level (mean: 7.5). On the other hand, the high value of one person does not mean that he will reach life satisfaction. Even in some cases the high value of the relevant value can even have a negative effect on life satisfaction. For example; those who have a "joy / pleasure" feelings at a significantly high level can affect their life satisfaction

negatively because of their inability to reach it at their level. Or, if a person with a high financial value has low economy and not enough to reach their desires sufficiently, it is highly probable that this person's life satisfaction is affected negatively.

These findings and interpretations are consistent with some research findings and interpretations in the literature. For example, Diener & Seligman (2004) point out that factors such as national well-being (economic well-being), basic health status, productivity, positive emotions (optimism and confidence), job satisfaction have a positive effect on life, while inflation, divorce, psychological disturbances, unemployment have a negative effect. In a research conducted by Tuzlugöl-Dost (2007), life satisfaction levels differ according to perceived academic achievement, perceived economic status, religious beliefs. According to Baş & Hamarta (2015), when the meanings and values of life are evaluated together, it has been seen that the internal values such as spirituality and generosity have an important place in the value of the present meaning which expresses the discovery of the individual in the search for meaning.

When the findings are examined; it is seen that the teacher candidates attach importance to the values in the humanitarian value scale at the high level in general average (at the level of 0-9 range 7.5). However, the fact that some of these values (joy / pleasure, justice, love, physical health, goods / property, money) affect life satisfaction negatively, even if it is at a low level "in some cases a higher value may have a negative effect on life satisfaction" is proved.

As a result; there is a relationship between the value orientations of teacher candidates and life satisfaction at a low level both in the positive and the negative direction. However, it can be said that, in general, value orientations have a significant effect on life satisfaction in the positive direction, even if they are at low level (2%). This shows that values affect life satisfaction.

## SUGGESTIONS

- In this study, it is revealed that there is a meaningful relationship between values and life satisfaction. However, it is not directly revealed how the values are related to life satisfaction. It is therefore suggested that more comprehensive studies could be carried out to show how a relationship between these two values is to reach a certain judgment on the effects of value orientations on life satisfaction.
- In this study, it was seen that the values of teacher candidates had little effect on life satisfaction. It is therefore recommended that prospective teachers investigate which factors are effective on their life satisfaction. Such research can help to work to raise happy and successful teachers.

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