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Examining life satisfaction level depending on physical activity in Turkish and German societies

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Abstract

Physical activity is also known to make a positive change on organic systems such as respiration, circulation, skeleton and psychological situation. This study aims to examine the life satisfaction level depending on physical activity in Turkish and German societies. The research sample includes 200 people doing exercise and not doing exercise in Konya and 200 people doing exercise and not doing exercise in Munich city of Germany in 2009. Life Satisfaction With Life Scale developed by Diener, Emmons & Larsen (1985) was used to determine the level of life satisfaction of the subjects included in the sample. To conclude, Life Satisfaction level in Turkish and German societies was examined considering with demographic information and a significant difference has been found. A significant difference has been found between life satisfaction levels of the individuals participating and not participating in physical activity.

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Keywords: Physical activity; Turkish and German societies; life satisfaction level.

1. Introduction

Life satisfaction was firstly suggested by Neugarten in 1961. This notion guided the researchers in the years ahead. Satisfaction is described as meeting expectations, needs and desires (Neurten and friends 1961) or reforming the balance situation as a result of meeting basic biological needs such as hunger, thirstiness, sex and spiritual needs such as curiosity, love, affection, success. Life satisfaction is described as the individual's evaluating his own life positively in the light of criteria determined by himself (Diener, Emmons, Larsen ve Griffin, 1985). Life satisfaction may be described as an emotional reaction of individual to the life consisting of work-time, spare time and time after work as well as expressing individual's satisfaction about his life. (Sung-Mook & Effy, 1994)

The factors affecting individuals' life satisfaction are listed as in: taking pleasure in life, finding life meaningful, consistency at the matter of reaching goals, positive individual identity, feeling well physically, economical security and social relationships (Schmitter, 2003). Life satisfaction includes individuals' lives and all dimensions of their lives. Life satisfaction doesn't refer to individuals' satisfaction about a specific situation and a specific period but

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satisfaction about all experiences in general meaning. (Avşaroğlu, Deniz& Kahraman, 2005)It has pointed out that individuals ; motivating themselves,going on despite misfortunes, not letting negative things and troubles prevent to think, putting themselves in others' places and never letting hopes fade away ; have high life satisfaction level. (Palmer ve ark., 2002).

2. Method

This study aims to examine the life satisfaction level depending on physical activity in Turkish and German societies. The research sample includes 200 people doing exercise and not doing exercise in Komek (vocational course in Konya) centre consisted in Konya metropolitan municipality and 200 people doing exercise and not doing exercise at Fürstenfeldbruck Hauptschule West School Gym in Munich city of Germany in 2009.As data collecting medium in the research, Life Satisfaction With Life Scale developed by Deiner, Emmons & Larsen'in (1985) was used.At the end of reliability studies of scale , reliability of test-retest was found $r=85$ and item-test correlations were between 71 and 80.In evaluating of research data, average and Standard deviation values were found by applying descriptive statistics and t test was used in groups free from parametric tests. The error level was taken 0.05 in this research.

3. Results (Findings)

Table 1: Demographic information regarding Turkish and German individuals participating in research.

| variables | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------|----------------|
| Gender | male | 191 | 21,84 |
| | female | 210 | 22,17 |
| Country | Turkey | 200 | 22,23 |
| | Germany | 201 | 21,80 |
| Exercise situation | doing exercise | 202 | 25,21 |
| | not doing exercise | 199 | 18,77 |
| Age | 30-35 ages | 88 | 23,76 |
| | 36-40 ages | 64 | 23,00 |
| | 41-45 ages | 100 | 20,41 |
| | 46-50 ages | 52 | 21,17 |
| | 51-55 ages | 23 | 21,70 |
| | 56-60 ages | 31 | 21,13 |
| Maritalstatus | 61-65 ages | 43 | 22,53 |
| | married | 336 | 21,82 |
| | unmarried | 65 | 23,05 |
| Income level | 500 | 22 | 20,36 |
| | 750 | 70 | 19,54 |
| | 1000-1500 | 148 | 20,81 |
| Health problem | over 1500 | 161 | 24,42 |
| | having health problem | 161 | 20,10 |
| not having health problem | 240 | 23,30 | 4,761 |

Table 2: Comparing life satisfaction level in Turkish and German individuals according to doing exercise variable.

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Mean Difference | t | P |
|---------------------------|-----|-------|----------------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| German | 201 | 21,80 | 5,293 | | | |
| Turk | 200 | 22,23 | 5,690 | 0,429 | 0,782 | 0,435 |
| German doing exercise | 100 | 25,15 | 2,815 | | | |
| German not doing exercise | 101 | 18,49 | 5,086 | 6,665 | 11,477 | 0,000* |
| Turk doing exercise | 102 | 25,27 | 4,689 | | | |
| Turk not doing exercise | 98 | 19,06 | 4,863 | 6,213 | 9,200 | 0,000* |

When Table 2 was examined ,it has been found that life satisfaction level doesn't differ in a meaningful way according to Turkish and German individuals.($p>0.05$)A significant difference has been found between life satisfaction level and doing exercise variable.($p<0.05$)Life satisfaction level of Turkish and German individuals doing exercise has been found to be high.

4. Discussion

In this study carried out with the aim of examining life satisfaction level depending on physical activity in Turkish and German societies; females' life satisfaction has been found to be higher than males' according to gender variable when demographic information of the subjects participated in research was examined. The reason, why males' life satisfaction is high, is thought to result from males' having more responsibilities in daily life and being affected by factors such as work-stress. In OECD (2005) reports, it is pointed out that Women's life satisfaction in Turkey is higher than men's. According to Diener, the view that women have low expectation level and are stronger against unexpected stress sources supports that finding (Diener 1984).

When satisfaction level and age variable were examined, Life satisfaction level of 30-35 year old individuals has been found to be higher than other age groups. In a study about life satisfaction level and carried out over 1549 subjects having 48-58 age average, Life satisfaction of this group has been found to be lower than young group's. (Brotner, 1970). Also, it is emphasized that life satisfaction and being happy decreases with age. (Campbell and friends., 1976). In a study about life satisfaction, it has been reported that individual has little effect on life satisfaction and being happy and interpersonal relations and cultures have more effects over life satisfaction. (Myers & Diener, 1995). When life satisfaction level was examined according to income level variable, it has been found that individuals having high income level have high life satisfaction level. Income level's being high is thought to be a factor making individuals happy and helping them to reach their wishes. It is suggested that happiness depends on the rate between individual's wishes and his satisfied wishes and life satisfaction is related to welfare level. (Cutler, 1979; Michalos, 1980).

Life satisfaction level of subjects participated in research was examined according to health variable, life satisfaction level of individuals having health problem has been found to be low. It is thought that factors important for human life such as life conditions, economical situation, health situation affect individual's happiness. It is pointed out that there is a strong relation between health and life satisfaction. (Diener, 1984). Colleagues also measured the way obese persons answered several types of happiness questions versus non-obese participants. The researchers calculated each participant's body mass index (BMI) and then used several types of questions to assess each variable measured (depression, life satisfaction, happiness, mental illness, and optimism). In regards to depression, ratios were found to be significant for poor perceived mental health, high negative affect, and low optimism in the obese participants. In addition, the participants that were obese in 1994 were projected to have an increased risk for five of the mental health indicators in 1999: unhappiness, pessimism, low positive affect, life dissatisfaction, and depression. The researchers also found that even when excluding those participants with mental health problems at baseline, obesity still was able to predict a higher risk of depression as well as a decreased probability for happiness (Roberts, Strawbridge, Deleger & Kaplan, 2002). In a study examining the relation between life satisfaction and health and comparing 200 old females and males in nursing home according to their life satisfaction levels, it has been found that there is no difference between genders and health situation is the most determinant factor of life satisfaction (Vallerand, 1989).

Life satisfaction level has been found to show no significant difference between Turkish and German individuals. Significant difference has been found between life satisfaction and doing exercise variable. It has been determined that Turkish and German individuals doing exercise have high life satisfaction level. It is thought that participating in exercises regularly affects physical and psychological health positively, exercise has positive effects on person and for this reason life satisfaction levels of individuals doing exercise are high. (Table 2)

In researches carried out, it has been reported that the current culture, self-respect (Cheng & Furhham, 2003), management of current situation, having significance feeling, which are among the factors affecting life satisfaction positively, make a positive contribution to life satisfaction. (Compton, 2000). Diener (1984), suggests that physical exercises, sleep, seasonal changes affect life satisfaction and has found in his study consisting of 141 male and female subjects having 60 age average that the most important determiner of life satisfaction in old people is health, effectiveness and activity level (Kyriakos, 1979). It has suggested that educated individuals coming up with problems and producing effective solutions have high life satisfaction level, as well as individuals adapting easily to the situations and showing flexible behaviours also have positive reactions to the life. (Stein ve Book 2003).

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

It has been found that there is a significant relation between life satisfaction levels of Turkish and German individuals and doing exercise variable and the life satisfaction level of individuals doing exercise is high in both of

the societies. It is thought that doing exercise affects physical and psychological health positively and is effective over individual's being happy and providing life satisfaction.

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