

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect

Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 116 (2014) 3869 – 3873

Procedia
Social and Behavioral Sciences

5th World Conference on Educational Sciences - WCES 2013

The relationship between high school students' attitudes toward future and subjective well-being

Hülya Kaya^a, Gönül Bodur^{a*}, Nazik Yalnız^c^a*Istanbul University Florence Nightingale Nursing Faculty, Istanbul, Turkey*^b*Yedikule Chest Diseases and Thoracic Surgery Training and Research Hospital, Istanbul Turkey*

Abstract

Aim of this descriptive-correlational research is to determine the relationship between high school students' attitudes toward future and subjective well-being. Universe of research is included final year students who attended high school at Istanbul in Turkey. Research was performed with 696 students. Data were collected with "Information Form", "Attitudes toward Future Scale", "Adolescents' Subjective Well Being Scale". Data were analyzed with SPSS. Results of the research showed that high school students have positive attitude toward future and high subjective well-being. There is poor positive significant correlation between high school students' attitudes toward future and subjective well-being. This research is important in terms of lighting future and life feelings of teens who are future of nation.

© 2013 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of Academic World Education and Research Center.

Keywords: High school students, future attitudes, subjective well-being, education program;

1. Introduction

The global changes taking place today on an individual, societal, regional and global level have an impact on the goals people have for the future, resulting in increased expectations as well as anxieties about the future that are now being passed on to much younger age groups than in the past. Globalization, rapidly changing technologies, wars, terror, environmental issues and the dynamics of society affect the future of individuals in terms of finishing school, working successfully at a job, attaining a professional title, and getting married, but at the same time, act on expectations individuals have about the future of the world and the country. These circumstances cause young people to feel uncertain among about their goals for the future and inevitably lead to changes in their attitudes and future orientation. In this context, in today's world of increasing complexities, attitudes of young people toward future and their subjective well-being constitute an important matter that must be explored. In particular, subjective well-being of students in their senior year of high school, as well as their attitudes toward future, is of importance on a national and international level.

Attitudes regarding the future are part of a multifaceted concept that involves individuals' expectations, anxieties and future orientation (Gjesme, 1983; Güler, 2004; Neblett and Cortina, 2006; Imamoğlu and Edwards, 2007; Avcı and Erden, 2009). The attitudes of individuals toward the future are closely related to their subjective feelings of well-being. Subjective well-being involves individuals assessing themselves in terms of their positive and negative

* Corresponding Author: Gönül Bodur Tel.: +090-212-440-0000/27150

E-mail address: gnlbodur@istanbul.edu.tr

emotions and life satisfaction (Diener and Lucas, 1999; Diener, 2001; Eryılmaz, 2009; Eryılmaz, 2011; Oladipo and Balagun, 2012). Positive sensations include the emotions of trust, interest, hope, excitement, pride and happiness while negative emotions encompass subjective feelings of stress and dissatisfaction such as anger, hatred, guilt and sadness. The dimension of satisfaction with life is the cognitive component of subjective well-being. It reflects the individual's own assessment of his/her satisfaction in the various aspects of life. Individuals with a high sense of subjective well-being frequently harbor positive emotions, experience negative emotions to a lesser degree, and take a high level of pleasure from their lives (Köker, 1991; Diener and Lucas, 1999; Eryılmaz and Ögülmüş, 2010).

One of the important goals of education is to teach young people how to develop a positive attitude toward the future and increase their satisfaction with life in their journey on the way to becoming qualified individuals and professionals. It is important for this reason that the perceptions of young people about the future of their environments, near and far, are determined so that educational programs may be structured accordingly (Yalçın, 1998; Summak, 2003). The literature stresses that educational programs that focus on the past and the needs of the present should be replaced by curricula that are structured so as to be in conformity with and meet the expectations of the future. Such programs, it is asserted, are essential for creating a happy, peaceful, safe and secure world (Summak, 2003; Tuncer, 2011). Studies on the topic state that optimism affects students' future orientation (Güler, 2004; Neblett and Cortina, 2006; Imamoğlu and Edwards, 2007; Seginer, 2008). Eryılmaz and Atak (2011) studied the relationship between an adolescent's subjective well-being and feelings of optimism and self-respect, and found that to be happy, adolescents need to feel respect, show affection, look for gratification, obtain a positive academic experience, have a romantic relationship, safeguard happiness, and keep negative emotions under control. Although the literature reports that subjective well-being affects individuals' attitudes toward the future, studies that explore the relationship between these factors are very few in Turkey as well as in other countries. It is important therefore to determine what the relationship is between the attitudes of high school seniors regarding the future and their subjective well-being. This research sought answers to the following questions:

- What are the attitudes of high school students toward the future?
- How do high school students perceive their subjective well-being?
- Is there any relationship between the attitudes of high school students toward the future and their subjective well-being?

2. Methods

2.1. Design: This research is as a descriptive and correlational design.

2.2. Population and Sample: The students in the 12th grade (n:2263) of the middle schools under the direction of the Ministry of National Education in a district of Istanbul, Turkey comprised the study population. The number of students to be taken from the schools was selected with the stratified sampling method using the criterion of school, and the students to be taken into the study were determined by random sampling; the study was carried out with 696 students.

2.3. Instruments: "Information Form," "Attitude toward the Future Scale" and "Adolescent Subjective Well-being Scale" were used in the data collection.

2.3.1. Information Form was used to determine the descriptive characteristics of the students.

2.3.2. Attitude toward Future Scale was used to determine the students' attitudes toward their future. The scale was developed by Güler Edwards in 2004; the Cronbach alpha value was determined to be .84. In the present study, the Cronbach alpha value was found to be .78. The scale is a five-item likert type with responses to be chosen from (1) "I strongly disagree," to (5) "I strongly agree." The 15 statements consist of 3 sub-dimensions: planned, anxious and positive attitudes toward the future. Scores on the scale ranged between 15-75. Six items on the scale (2,3,4,8,9,15) are scored in reverse. As scores grow higher on the scale, the student displayed an increasingly positive attitude toward the future (Güler, 2004; Imamoğlu and Edwards, 2007).

2.3.3. Adolescent Subjective Well-being Scale was used to determine the students' satisfaction in various aspects of life and to pinpoint what their positive emotions were. This scale was developed by Eryılmaz in 2009; the Cronbach alpha value was determined to be .86. In the present study, the Cronbach alpha value was found to be .84. The scale was of a four-item likert type with responses to be chosen from (1) "I strongly disagree," to (4) "I strongly agree." The 15 statements consisted of 4 sub-dimensions: satisfaction with relations with the family, satisfaction with

relations with important people in the student's life, life satisfaction, and positive feelings. Scores on the scale ranged between 15-60. As scores grow higher on the scale, the students displayed increased levels of subjective well-being (Eryılmaz, 2009; Eryılmaz, 2011).

Data was collected in the spring semester of the 2011-2012 academic year after the required permissions from the relative organizations were obtained. Care was taken to recruit willing and volunteer students into the research and, after the students were given a short briefing on the study, their verbal consent was obtained and they were requested to fill out the forms.

2.4. *Data Analysis:* Data was analyzed with the SPSS (Drive: 17.0) package program using frequencies-percentages, means, standard deviation and correlation analysis to determine the correlation between variables; significance level was taken to be .05 (Ural and Kılıç, 2011).

2.5. *Limitations:* The results of the research are limited to the final-year students in high schools in a particular district of Istanbul, Turkey and therefore cannot be generalized to all high school students.

3. Results

Of the study group, 61.8% were girls, 50.4% were in the regular high schools, 26.6% in the technical and occupational high schools, and 23.0% were attending vocational religious high schools. The average mean age of the students was 17.92±0.66, and the average number of siblings the students had was 2.97±1.69. Of the students, 87.5% lived with their parents, 91% had spent most of their lives in the big cities, and 93.7% had no health problems.

It was determined that the high school students' mean scores for their attitudes toward future was 55.69±8.29, and their mean scores on the adolescent subjective well-being scale was 50.36±7.87 (Table 1). The students' mean scores on the sub-dimensions of the attitude toward future scale were 19.34±3.20 in the planned future dimension, 16.29±4.47 in the anxious future dimension, and 20.06±3.57 in the positive future dimension. The mean scores in the sub-dimensions of adolescent well-being scale were 14.13±2.71 in the satisfaction with family relations sub-dimension, 13.89±2.32 in the satisfaction with relations with important people sub-dimension, 8.96±2.93 in satisfaction with life dimension, and 13.36±2.44 in the positive emotions sub-dimension (Table 1). Among the students' attitudes toward future, the highest mean score, 4.39±0.73, was in the item "I make plans for the future," and the lowest mean score, at 2.72±1.35, was in the item "I'm uncomfortable not knowing what life has in store for me." The highest mean score on the students' subjective well-being scale was 3.64±0.57 for the item, "My family loves me," and the lowest mean score was 2.91±0.90 for the item, "I live life the way I want to."

Table 1: The Mean and Standard Deviation of High School Students' Attitudes toward Future and Subjective Well-being (N: 696)

		Item number	Minimum value	Maximum value	\bar{X}	SD
Attitude toward future	Planned Future	5	3,22	4,39	19,34	3,20
	Anxious Future	5	2,72	3,63	16,29	4,47
	Positive Future	5	3,86	4,16	20,06	3,57
	Total	15	2,72	4,39	55,69	8,29
Subjective well-being	Satisfaction with relations with family	4	3,43	3,64	14,13	2,71
	Satisfaction with relations with important people	4	3,38	3,50	13,89	2,32
	Life satisfaction	3	2,92	3,05	8,96	2,93
	Positive emotions	4	3,11	3,47	13,36	2,44
	Total	15	2,92	3,64	50,36	7,87

A simple regression analysis performed between the students' attitudes toward future and their perceptions of subjective well-being showed a significant weak positive correlation ($r: -0,203 p \leq 0.01$) (Table-2).

Table 2: The relationship between high school students' attitudes toward future and subjective well-being

Attitude toward future	Subjective well-being
------------------------	-----------------------

Attitude toward future	r	1,000	0,389*
	p	-	0,000
Subjective well-being	r	0,389*	1,000
	p	0,000	-

4. Discussion

This study explored the relationship between high school students' attitudes toward future and their perceptions of subjective well-being. Most of the study group was composed of girls, most attended regular high schools; a large majority lived with their parents and had spent most of their lives in the big cities. The results obtained from the research showed that students' attitudes toward future were positive (55.69 ± 8.29), that they looked ahead positively and made plans for the future, and had low levels of anxiety about what lay ahead (Table 1). After the in-depth interviews conducted by Artar (2003) with a group of students, it was asserted in the resulting qualitative study that many students had many expectations concerning the future and plans for the period ahead. A study with African-American students by McCabe and Barnett (2000) determined that the students had planned for and harbored positive attitudes toward the future. Hejazi et al. (2011) worked with a group of Iranian high school students and found that the students' future orientation was positive. In their study with American high school students, Neblett and Cortina (2006) determined that the students looked toward the future with hope and that their attitudes were positive. These results show that high school students are able to look at the future without anxiety and with positive orientation and emotions. The results of the study run parallel with the literature (Yağcı, 1998; Summak, 2003; Şahin and Yıldız, 2006, Imamoğlu and Edwards, 2007; Tuncer, 2011). This outcome can be interpreted as having positive implications in terms of Turkey's future.

The research showed that students had high levels of subjective well-being (50.36 ± 7.87), and that their relationships with persons who were important to them were satisfying (Table 1). Joronen and Kurki (2005) stress that a safe and secure home environment, an atmosphere of love in the family, and positive and satisfying familial relations are important factors in adolescent well-being. In their study with high school students, Aypay and Eryılmaz (2011) found the students to have high levels of subjective well-being. The results of the present study are consistent with the literature. In the high school period, at a time when students are preparing themselves for the future of the world and of the country and also for their own personal future, it is heartening to know that they identify themselves as happy and content (Park, 2004; Suldo et al., 2006; Eryılmaz, 2009; Öngen, 2009; Eryılmaz and Ögülmüş, 2010; Eryılmaz, 2011).

The research found a positive but weak significant relationship between the attitudes of students toward future and the level of their subjective well-being (Table-2), and determined that the students were planning for the future and looking positively upon it, had low anxiety and high subjective well-being levels. In a study carried out by Neblett and Cortina (2006) with American high school students, it was found that the satisfaction and support received from the family had an impact on the students' orientation toward the future and that student who felt satisfied in their family relations looked upon the future with much more hope and positivity. One of the dimensions that lead to subjective well-being is family satisfaction. Eryılmaz (2011) determined in a study with high school students that those with positive expectations for the future also demonstrated high levels of subjective well-being. These results are consistent with the present study. The findings also shed some light on the benefit of evaluating the attitudes toward future of high school students, a nuclear group that will be playing a role in the country's future, together with an assessment of their subjective well-being.

5. Conclusion

The results of the research showed that the students' attitudes toward the future and their subjective well-being levels were positive and a positive correlation was found between the two factors. It was also pointed out that when attitudes toward the future are evaluated, these should be assessed together with the status of subjective well-being.

The study has significance in that it sheds light on how educational programs can be set up so that young people are stimulated to have a positive outlook on the future, and also provides insight on how young people, the generation of the future, feel about their lives and their future.

References

- Artar, M. (2003). Depremi yaşayan ergenlerin gelecek beklentilerinin içeriği (Contents of future orientations of adolescents who lived an earthquake) (Journal of Crisis). *Kriz Dergisi*, 11(3):21-27.
- Avcı, S. & Erden, M. (2009). Gelecek zaman algısı ölçeğinin Türkçe Formunun geçerlik ve güvenilirlik çalışması (The Turkish validity and reliability of future time perspective scale) (Cukurova University Faculty of Education Journal). *Çukurova Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 3(37):1-12.
- Aypay, A. & Eryılmaz, A. (2011). Relationships of high school student' subjective well-being and school burnout, *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 3(1), 181-199.
- Diener, E. & Lucas, R.E. (1999). Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress, *Psychological Bulletin*, 125(2):276-303.
- Diener, E. (2001). Subjective well-being: the science of happiness and a proposal for a national index. *Am Psychol*; 55:34-43.
- Eryılmaz A. (2009). Ergen öznel iyi oluş ölçeğinin geliştirilmesi (Developing an adolescent subjective well being scale) (Journal of Turkish Educational Sciences). *Gazi Üniversitesi Türk Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi*; 7:975-989.
- Eryılmaz A. (2011). Ergen öznel iyi oluşu ile olumlu gelecek beklentisi arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi (The relationship between adolescents' subjective well-being and positive expectations towards future) (The Journal of Psychiatry and Neurological Sciences). *Psikiyatri ve Nörolojik Bilimler Dergisi*; 24:209-215.
- Eryılmaz, A. & Ögülmüş, S. (2010). Ergenlikte öznel iyi oluş ve beş faktörlü kişilik modeli (Subjective well-being and big five personality model at adolescence) (Ahi Evran University Journal of Education Faculty). *Ahi Evran Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 11(3): 189-203.
- Eryılmaz, A. & Atak, H. (2011). The relationships between adolescent subjective wellbeing, self-esteem and optimism, *Electronic Journal of Social Sciences*, 10(37): 170-181.
- Güler, A. (2004). Relationship between self-construals and future time orientations (Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi yüksek lisans tezi). *Middle East Technical University Master Thesis*, Ankara, Turkey.
- Gjesme, T. (1983). On the concept of future time orientation: considerations of some functions' and measurements' implications. *International Journal of Psychology*, 18, 443-461.
- Hejazi, E., Moghadam, A., Naghsh, Z. & Tarkhan, R.A. (2011). The future orientation of Iranian adolescents' girl students and their academic achievement, *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 15: 2441-2444.
- Imamoğlu, E.O. & Edwards, A.G. (2007). Geleceğe İlişkin Yönelimlerde Benlik Tipine Göre Farklılıklar (Self-related differences in future time orientations) (Turkish Journal of Psychology). *Türk Psikoloji Dergisi*; 22(60): 115-132.
- Joronen, K. & Kurki, A. (2005). Familial contribution to adolescent subjective well being. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 11(3), 125-133.
- Köker, S. (1991). Normal ve sorunlu ergenlerin yaşam doyumu düzeyinin karşılaştırılması (Comparison of life satisfaction level of normal and troubled adolescents) (Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü yüksek lisans tezi). *Ankara University Institution of Social Sciences Master Thesis*, Ankara, Turkey.
- McCabe, K. & Barnett, D. (2000). First comes work, then comes marriage: Future orientation among African American young adolescents, *Family Relations*, 49(1): 63-70.
- Neblett, N.G. & Cortina, K.S. (2006). Adolescents' thoughts about parents' jobs and their importance for adolescents' future orientation, *Journal of Adolescence*, 29:795-811.
- Oladipo, S.E. & Balogun, S.K. (2012). How suitable is the satisfaction with Life Scale for use on adolescents in Nigeria?, *Science Journal of Psychology*, 2: 1-3.
- Öngen, D.E. (2009). The relationship between perfectionism and multidimensional life satisfaction among high school adolescents in Turkey, *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*, 37: 52-64.
- Park, N. (2004). The role of subjective well-being in positive youth development. *The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591(1):25-39.
- Seginer, R. (2008). Future orientation in times of threat and challenge: How resilient adolescents construct their future, *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 32(4): 272-282.
- Suldo, S. M., Riley, K., & Shaffer, E. S. (2006). Academic correlates of children and adolescents' life satisfaction. *School Psychology International*, 27 (5), 567 – 582.
- Summak, E. G. (2003). Youngsters' multi-dimensional future perceptions by the year 2020, *Foresight*, 5(3): 43-47.
- Şahin, M. & Yıldız, R. (2006). Liseli gençliğin üniversite algılaması ve gelecek tasarımı (Future design and university perceptions of the high school adolescence) (Dumlupınar University Journal of Social Sciences). *Dumlupınar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* (14): 85-106.
- Tuncer, M. (2011). A research regarding future expectations of University youth, *Turkish Studies, International Periodical for the languages, literature and history of Turkish or Turkic*, 6(2): 935-948.
- Yalçın, S.B. (1998). Genel lise öğrencileri ile meslek lisesi öğrencilerinin gelecek kaygılarının karşılaştırılması (Comparison of general and vocational high school students' future anxieties). *Selçuk Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi VII. Ulusal Eğitim Bilimleri Kongresi 9-11 Eylül 1998-Konya, Turkey*, Retrieved from http://www.pegem.net/akademi/kongrebildiri_detay.aspx?id=36495, at:10.11.2012
- Ural, A. & Kılıç, İ. (2011). Academic Research Process and Data Analysis with SPSS, Detay Publication, Istanbul.