

**DOI**

**INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LIFE  
SATISFACTION AND PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine whether psychological needs are predictors of life satisfaction in retirees. The sample of the study consists of a total of 404 pensioners residing in Istanbul, which was randomly selected in 2018. In the research, measurement tools of Life Satisfaction Scale and Psychological Needs Scale were used. Pearson Moments Product Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis techniques were used to calculate the data. Research results show that psychological needs explain 2% of the total variance related to life satisfaction in retirees, and the strongest predictive variable is the relationship dimension. It is thought that the findings will shed light on the studies to be made for retirees

Keywords: Life satisfaction, retirement, psychological needs

Human life includes biological, psychological, emotional and intellectual change processes. Various problems and needs arise spontaneously when the individual moves from one age period to another. The retirement process, which means the end of the active working life, brings with it the problem of the individual's distance from social life. Retired people lose their effective roles and functions in society. Retirement and the decrease in income that accompany it decreases the social status of the individual and causes various problems and psychological problems in the process of adaptation to society. Today; Many pensioners face psychological and social problems due to retirement, death of a spouse, separation of children from home, health problems (Ashman and Zastrow 1990).

One of the important variables that can affect the perception and perception of the individual's life is “psychological needs”. The individual feels happy or unhappy as long as his needs are met. That is, happiness or unhappiness is an important indicator to determine the extent to which a person's needs are met (Rapport, 2007). In the self-determination theory, it is emphasized that the individual can achieve the most efficient development and well-being under conditions where psychological needs are met (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The need is unique to people; motivation, motivation, desire, need, desire, hope and desire to succeed. The need is also expressed as a pressure and a sense of need or a need for pressure in the brain region that occurs either internally or externally. According to the self- determination theory, which is one of the theories that address psychological needs, people have three basic psychological needs, which are necessary for personal development, integrity and psychological health (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In theory, basic psychological needs are accepted to be universal (Coleman, 2000). According to the theory, the fulfillment of these needs is necessary for the integration, development, mental health and well-being of individuals (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Andersen, 2000). The theory of self-determination includes three basic psychological needs, called autonomy, competence and relatedness. These needs arise from the combination of one's own experiences and environmental factors.

Autonomy from psychological needs, dealing with voluntary and self-determined actions; competence refers to the desire to affect the environment well, the capacity to interact effectively with the environment, and the sense of competence to deal with the environment, and the sense of belonging, that is, truly commitment to others. People with low autonomy are not autonomous in their decisions because they cannot control their own behavior and can make their decisions with various threats and rewards. People who are prevented from developing and whose decisions are questioned are afraid to take responsibility and become stationary in their lives. This situation not

only changes the way they look at life, but also gives a sense of questioning in their decisions and leads them to look at life negatively (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Competence is defined as believing that the person has enough power, knowledge and skills to do a job. The need for competence is defined as the person's need to interact effectively with his environment, influence the environment, and feel sufficient. Persons whose needs of competence are met believe that they have knowledge and skills, can use this knowledge and skills, cope with the problems that may arise, they have sufficient experience and can take the necessary actions and behavior. In people who do the same job and whose knowledge and skills are close to each other, if their beliefs differ, there are differences in their performances (Deci and Ryan 1985).

People need to be in their environment and feel that they belong to that place. According to Andersen (2000), the need to be related requires respect, care and trust and includes sensitivity, warmth, and emotional acceptance. While the people fulfill the need for the relationship, they want to have the start and control of the relationship in their own hands. The more related and connected people are, the more satisfaction and well-being of their needs.

The important thing in retirement is never to think that the person is useless. The fact that retirees feel worthless, lost their functions, and weak seems to be an important obstacle to their satisfaction with life. Working and producing people; Shortly after retirement, he sees himself in a vacuum and dysfunctional. This situation naturally affects life satisfaction negatively (Deci, Ryan, Gagne, Leone, Usunov and Kornazheva, 2001).

Life satisfaction reflects the general concepts such as what one has and what he wants to achieve (Veenhoven, 1991), achieving one's goals and ideals (Bradley & Crownly, 2004), meeting basic needs (Leung & Leung, 1992) and achievable goals (Zullig, Pun, and Huebner, 2007). Life satisfaction generally affects one's entire life and various aspects of this life (Zullig, Pun, and Huebner, 2007). According to Martin, Huebner and Valois (2008), life

satisfaction is affected by instant emotional experiences, prejudice and social attraction. Dockery (2004) satisfaction of life; To live in a country with a democratic nature and economic prosperity in which freedoms are easily experienced, continuity of stability, being on the side of the majority, being included in the group's top-notch group in terms of welfare, being married, having good relations with its immediate environment, being able to open its ideas to the outside and an active personality. possesses auto-control mechanism and possesses money. According to Diener and Lucas (1999), life satisfaction areas are work, family, leisure time, health, money, self and close circle of the person, according to Cummins (2000), financial well-being, health, productivity, privacy, security, socialize and create emotional well.

There are many reasons for life satisfaction studies and life satisfaction assessment, and research in this area can be seen to be of great value. Individuals with reduced levels of life satisfaction are at higher risk for both psychological and social problems (such as depression, anxiety, and poor social interaction) (Seligson, Huebner & Valois, 2005). Studies show that the level of life satisfaction before depression decreases (Seligson Huebner & Valois, 2005). Low levels of life satisfaction have various negative consequences including mental and physical health problems (Frish, 2000; Huebner, Valois, Paxton, & Drane, 2003). Life satisfaction is associated with many interpersonal and interpersonal psychological problems, for example, despair, anxiety and depression (Huebner & Gilman, 2006), risk-taking behaviors such as diet and exercise, sexual risk taking, drug and alcohol use, suicide (Chaplin, 2009). Life satisfaction measurements gain meaning when evaluated in this respect.

Some studies have shown that there is an indirect relationship between life satisfaction, stressful life events and internal behaviors (McKnight, Huebner & Suldo., 2002), and moderately correlated between stressful life events and external behaviors (Gilman & Huebner, 2006). Especially high life

satisfaction, extroverted temperament, active coping, focus of internal control, positive self-concept and goals in life, meaningful participation, social activities, and less likely drug and alcohol interest and psychopathological (internal and external) behaviors (Huebner, 2004).

Some researchers stated that young people achieved more satisfaction with life, while others stated that life satisfaction increased with age. The ones who expressed their opinions about youth stated as the basis of this as youth energy and excess of life expectations (Khakoo, 2004; Dockery, 2004).

In recent years, there is an increase in research examining the relationship between life satisfaction and psychological variables. In these studies, self-esteem of life satisfaction, hope (Huebner & Gilman, 2006), social self-efficacy, extraversion (Fogle, Huebner & Laughlin, 2002), positive interpersonal relationships, personal harmony (Gilman & Huebner, 2006), peer loyalty (Nickerson & Nagle, 2004) positively correlated with variables such as; social stress, anxiety, depression (Gilman & Huebner, 2006), neuroticism (Fogle, Huebner & Laughlin, 2002), focus of external control, clinical maladjustment (Huebner & Gilman, 2006) and violent behaviors (Valois, Paxton, Zullig & Huebner, 2006) and it seems to be negatively related.

Some changes in satisfaction with life can lead to changes in individuals' coping methods. For example, due to decreases in individual life satisfaction, individuals may turn to behaviors that will put their health at risk to increase their satisfaction. On the other hand, attempting risky behaviors that threaten the health of the individual may change one's life satisfaction (Zullig, Pun & Huebner, 2007).

## **METHOD**

### **Model of the Research**

In this research, the life satisfaction and psychological needs of retirees were examined. Relational screening model was used in the research. Relational screening models are research models that aim to determine the presence and / or degree of co-variation between two or more variables (Karasar, 2007).

### **Universe and Sampling**

The universe of the research consists of retirees residing in Istanbul. The scale of the study was applied to 402 retirees who were determined by random sampling method.

### **Data Collection Tools**

#### **1- Life Satisfaction scale**

The life satisfaction scale was developed by Deiner, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) and adapted to Turkish by Yetim (1993). The scale consists of 5 items and the likert type is 7 degrees.

#### **Scoring of life satisfaction scale**

Life Satisfaction Scale-The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was developed by Deiner, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) and is a self-evaluation scale consisting of 5 items of Likert type ranging from “1 = not suitable to 7 = completely appropriate” (Orphan , 2003). Individuals are asked to answer each sentence in the life satisfaction scale by using a rating ranging from “not suitable at all” (1) to “totally appropriate” (7) (Dingiltepe, 2009). The lowest score that can be obtained from this scale is 5, and the highest score is 35. As the score obtained from the scale increases, satisfaction with life increases.

#### **Reliability and validity of life satisfaction scale**

In the study conducted by Dingiltepe (2009), the reliability of the scale was recalculated and the Cronbach Alpha value was found as .84. Life satisfaction

scale is a 7-grade Likert type scale. The reliability of the scale was found high by Yetim (1993) who applied the scale to the Turkish population (Alpha = .86) and the test-retest reliability was obtained as .73 (Yetim, 2003).

## **2- Psychological Needs Scale**

In the research, it was developed by Deci and Ryan (2000); "Basic Psychological Needs Scale (Annex 3)", which was adapted to Turkish by Cutter, Urea, Bozgeyikli and Sünbül (2003), was used. "Basic Psychological Needs Scale" is a five-grade Likert type scale consisting of 21 items and ranging from Very True (5), Not True (4), Somewhat True (3), True

(2) and Never True (1). The scale presents individuals' needs for various areas and individuals are asked to state how often they desire this situation on the scale. While the scale, originally rated as seven grading, was adapted to Turkish, the five grading type was preferred. In this study, five-grading type was preferred. The scale consists of three subscales: Need for Autonomy, Need for Competence, and Relationship.

The validity of the scale was provided by seeking expert opinions regarding the sub- dimensions and the whole scale. The external validity of the scale was analyzed by calculating the correlation coefficients between the "Success", "Autonomy" and "Proximity" subscales of the Edwards Personal Preference Inventory and the "Proficiency", "Autonomy" and "Relationship" subscales of the scale. It was also determined that the dimension was related to Edwards Personal Preference Inventory ( $p < 0.05$ ). Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient for the scale's reliability was found to be .76 for the entire scale (Bozgeyikli and Sünbül, 2003). The internal consistency coefficient of the "Basic Psychological Needs Scale" applied to the study group in this study was .81; the internal consistency coefficient of the autonomy sub-dimension of the scale is .61; internal consistency coefficient of

the competence sub-dimension .46; The internal consistency coefficient of the relationship sub-dimension was found to be .74.

The scores obtained from the psychological needs scale show the degree of the individual's desire for psychological need. It is accepted that as the scores of the individuals increase from the scale, they feel the psychological need less (Annaberdiyev, 2006).

### Data Analysis

The data obtained in the study were analyzed by using the Multiple Regression Analysis techniques in order to determine the Pearson Moments Product Correlation Coefficient and the variables predicting life satisfaction in order to see the relationships between the variables.

## RESULTS

**Table 1. Correlation analysis results regarding the psychological needs and life satisfaction levels of retirees**

		Life Satisfaction	Relation	Sufficiency
Relation	Pearson Correlation	,008**		
	Sig.(2-tailed)	,000		
	N	404		
Sufficiency	Pearson Correlation	,043*	,067*	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	,046	,036	
	N	404	404	
Autonomy	Pearson Correlation	,023*	,043*	,057*
	Sig.(2-tailed)	,031	,044	,010
	N	404	404	404



When Table 1 is examined, the relationship between retirement satisfaction and psychological needs is examined. Between life satisfaction and need for relationship (r .008 p

<.000), between the need for competence and life satisfaction (r -.043 p <.000), between life satisfaction and need for autonomy (r .023 p <.000), competence There was a positive and significant relationship between the need for relationships and the need for relationships (r .067 p <.000), between the need for competence and the need for autonomy (r .057 p <.000).Table 2. Multiple regression analysis for predicting life satisfaction in retirees

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Correlations		
	$\beta$	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part
(Constant)	29,414	3,168		9,285	,000			
Relation	,021	,085	,013	,252	,000	,008	,013	,013
Sufficiency	-,076	,090	-,042	-,846	,046	-,043	-,042	-,042
Autonomy	-,038	,086	-,022	-,443	,031	-,023	-,022	-,022

R=,049 R<sup>2</sup>=002 , p=,000

Table 2 shows the results of multiple regression analysis of life satisfaction and psychological needs. When the binary and partial

correlation values between the independent variables and the dependent variable were examined, there was a significant positive correlation between life satisfaction and relationship ( $r = .008$ ), while the other variables were taken under control, the correlation between life satisfaction and relationship was found to be  $r = 0.13$ . It is observed that there is a negative correlation with life satisfaction and competence ( $r = -.043$ ). When other variables were taken under control, the correlation between life satisfaction and competence was estimated as  $r = -.042$ .

It is observed that there is a negative correlation with life satisfaction and autonomy ( $r = -.023$ ). When other variables were taken under control, the correlation between life satisfaction and autonomy was estimated as  $r = -.022$ .

Briefly, when the results of multiple regression analysis related to predicting life satisfaction in retirees are examined, there is a significant relationship between psychological needs ( $R = .049$ ,  $R^2 = 0.2$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Together, the mentioned six variables explain about 2% of the total variance in retirement.

According to the standardized regression coefficient ( $\beta$ ), the relative importance order of predictive variables on life satisfaction; Relationship ( $\beta = 0.21$ ), autonomy ( $\beta = -.038$ ) and competence ( $\beta = -.076$ ).

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

According to the research findings, psychological needs were found to predict life satisfaction. Researches support the existence of relationships between psychological needs and life satisfaction. Tay and Diener (2011), a large-scale study conducted with the participation of subjects from 155 countries, reveals the relationships between basic needs and psychological needs and life satisfaction, which is the cognitive element of subjective well-being.

Psychological needs (relationship, autonomy, competence) have relationships with general life satisfaction. Because life satisfaction can be evaluated for a longer time without being limited to a certain time period (Eid & Diener, 2004). In addition, it is stated that perceived life satisfaction is high in relation to a compound index consisting of objective quality of life indicators (economic status, health, culture, entertainment, freedom, etc.) (Diener & Suh, 1997). Therefore, satisfaction with life includes important “continuous” assessments of the individual's life and can provide important clues regarding the overall quality of life.

The positive relationship between self-efficacy and life satisfaction can be understood from the fact that individuals with high self-efficacy have coping competencies to overcome stressful situations. They have the attitude of "I can do it." (Azar, Vasudeva and Abdollahi, 2006). Sahir (2007) found that self-efficacy has an indirect effect on life satisfaction in his study titled a flow model related to stress control, general self-efficacy, state anxiety and life satisfaction.

Satisfying individuals' basic psychological needs increases their well-being. Life satisfaction in the psychology literature within the scope of the decision of individuals whether they have a good life or not; It includes the presence of positive emotions and the low level of negative emotions (Diener, 2000; Diener, Suh & Oishi, 1997; Ryan & Deci, 2001).

He emphasizes that the satisfaction of the psychological needs determined in the self-determination theory as competence, autonomy and relevance supports motivation and well-being in all cultures (Deci et al., 2001). In a study of American and Korean students, autonomy was found equally important in both countries. Chirkov and Ryan (2001) found that autonomy support given to students in the USA and Russia brings positive mental health. In another study with similar results, he worked on data from China, Russia and the USA, and despite international differences, satisfaction of basic

psychological needs in all countries was associated with change in the concept of self, reliability and well-being, and therefore life satisfaction (Lynch , 2004).

Satisfaction of basic psychological needs is one of the main factors affecting life satisfaction in general. When these needs are adequately saturated, people feel happy and their well-being tends to increase (Ryan, 2000). In this study, it was found that supporting autonomy from basic psychological needs contributes to the well-being of individuals. Autonomous people determine their purpose first, make the choice required for this purpose autonomously, implement this choice autonomously, stand behind the decision or behavior they apply and bear the result.

According to Ryan and Lynch (1989), autonomy does not mean breaking social ties. Supportive social relationships, strong emotional bonds support autonomy. Therefore, the fact that the need for autonomy is supported may mean that the need to be related is also met, and the need to be related is thought to have an indirect effect on life satisfaction, though not directly.

Ryan, Lynch, Vansteenkiste and Deci (2011) stated that the need for autonomy is more important than the need for competence and relation. The need for autonomy must be met in order to meet the need for competence and relevance. Those who are not autonomous seem to find it more difficult to feel sufficient and establish satisfying relationships than those who are autonomous. In other words, when people's need for autonomy is satisfied, they feel sufficient and in a relationship. As a result of this research, the satisfaction of the need for autonomy contributes positively to the satisfaction of life and relationship satisfaction, and reveals the importance of the need for autonomy.

In his research conducted by Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe and Ryan (2000), it was revealed that the satisfaction of the need for autonomy, competence and relationship contributed positively to the person's well-being. In a study by

Chirkov et al. (2003), it was stated that there was a positive relationship between well-being and autonomy, individualism and collectivism and autonomy. They found that autonomy was perceived similarly in different cultures. Individuals can be collectivist or individualistic, but we can be autonomous as the determining factor of well-being. It is concluded that giving autonomy support is an important criterion in satisfying psychological needs.

In the literature, there are also studies that show the positive relationship of autonomy need with life satisfaction in individuals who obtain low levels of satisfaction from their life in different research results (Robak & Nagda, 2011). The same study shows that as the self- efficacy belief and personal development and social responsibility goals increase, general life satisfaction increases. Therefore, it can be said that people with high life satisfaction also have higher self-efficacy beliefs and more personal development and social responsibility goals. People who attach importance to personal development and social responsibilities, have a higher proficiency belief, and generally perceive their lives in general, can be expected to enter life where they can exhibit their own competencies and assume more dominant roles.

In addition to these trends brought in by individuals in shaping their behavior, the characteristics of the environment in which they live are also important. The fact that the environment they are in supports autonomy, enables them to experience the feeling of choice and satisfy their basic psychological needs (Deci, Ryan, Gagne, Lronr, Usunov and Kornazheva, 2001). Basic psychological needs are considered universal (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Coleman, 2000). Satisfying psychological needs is necessary for individuals to grow, integrate, develop, mental health and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Andersen, 2000). This shows that individuals' satisfying their basic psychological needs affects their self-esteem levels positively. There are

studies in the related literature where similar results are obtained (Buunk and Nauta, 2000; Deci et al., 2001; Ryan et al., 2005). According to the research conducted by Rask et al. (2002), it is claimed that the harmony or incompatibility between the person's goals and his ideas about the extent to which he achieved these goals played a decisive role in achieving happiness. According to Diener (2000), the needs and goals of individuals may differ, and events that make people happy may differ. Some people feel happy when a very simple event takes place, while others feel that they can be happy as a result of more challenging efforts and successes.

Sheldon, Ryan and Reis (1996) investigated how daily changes in the satisfaction of psychological needs affect subjective well-being within individuals and among individuals. Sheldon et al. (1996) found that as the level of meeting the needs of individuals with their competence, autonomy and relationality increased during the day, they experienced a high level of positive emotion and vitality and low negative emotions. In another study (Reis, Sheldon, Gable & Ryan, 2000), it was stated that as the level of meeting the psychological needs of

individuals increases, their positive emotions increase and their psychosomatic problems and negative emotions decrease. Similar findings were obtained in studies that investigate the relationship between psychological need and well-being in different settings such as academic and business life. Deci, Ryan, Gagne, Leone, Usunav and Kornazheva (2001) compared the relationship between the levels of meeting the psychological needs of workers in the USA and Bulgaria with various psychological health indicators. Deci et al. (2001) found that those working in the USA met the needs of autonomy, competence and relationality in the workplace more than those working in Bulgaria, therefore, they had more subjective well-being and work loyalty. In another study (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999), it was stated that the

increase in perceived psychological need satisfaction in the academic field contributed to subjective well-being.

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