

The Relationship between Life Satisfaction and Self-Realization in the Elderly

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Research Article

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Introduction

Aging can be defined as a period of loss with its specific problems such as a decline in cognitive and physical areas, abandonment of the productive role, change in social position, weakening of interpersonal support, and loss of health (Li et al., 2018). Combining the losses experienced reduces one's self-esteem and cannot provide enough satisfaction from life (Ghimire et al., 2018 & Kiarsipour et al., 2017). Meeting the needs of the elderly in all their dimensions means an increase in their quality of life, an increase in life satisfaction due to the fact that they enjoy life and are productive and happy. Life satisfaction is accepted as one of the most important factors affecting the mental health of the individual and determining the adaptation to old age at every stage of life (Flores et al., 2019). Life satisfaction is the result obtained by comparing what a person wants from life with what gets (Salmabadi et al., 2018). Health status, economic conditions, and activity levels of elderly individuals are important determinants of life satisfaction. The increase in social interaction between the elderly and people has a positive effect on the level of well-being and life satisfaction. Therefore, it is necessary to know the factors affecting the life satisfaction of the elderly in order to maintain their mental health and to have a good life satisfaction (Han et al., 2020). Because old age is generally a decline in the physical and cognitive functions of the individual, decrease and loss of health, youth and beauty, productivity, sexual life, income level, prestige, role and status, independence, friends, spouse and close relationship, social life and social supports. It is a period of losses in which many problems specific to the period are experienced. Bu For this reason, the life satisfaction of the elderly is closely related to how well she felt in her past life and to what extent was able to reach her goals (Bijaeyeh et al., 2021). The concept of self-actualization is defined as the ability of a person to fully realize her innate potential. Age, gender, socioeconomic status and education affect the level of self-actualization. Life satisfaction scale scores are expected to be high in self-actualized elderly people (Mostafaei & Ghaderi, 2019). It is a matter of curiosity how the elderly individuals who think that they are both satisfied with life and self-realized can have an impact on society. Knowing the factors affecting the relationship between life satisfaction and self-actualization of the elderly is important for the elderly to exhibit health-

protective and improving behaviors, to integrate them into society and to be happy.

Purpose of the research

The aim of this study was to evaluate the relationship between self-actualization and life satisfaction of individuals aged 65 and over who are registered in a Family Health Center (FHC) in Selçuklu district of Konya. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of socio-demographic characteristics of the elderly on life satisfaction?
2. What are the mean scores of life satisfaction and self-actualization in the elderly?
3. What are the determinants of life satisfaction in the elderly?

Material and Method

Type of Research

This research is a descriptive relationship-seeking type of study.

Location and Characteristics of the Research

The Family Health Center, where the research will be conducted, is located in Akşemsettin District. When viewed on the map, Akşemsettin District is one of the neighborhoods far from the center of Selçuklu district. The neighborhood has a variety of both detached and flat housing types. There is only one retirement club for the elderly in the neighborhood. The mental and cognitive activities of the elderly are very limited. While some of the people living in the neighborhood are in the extended family structure, some of them live as nuclear families. It is thought that this diversity in family structure affects self-actualization and life satisfaction. The registered population of Akşemsettin District of Selçuklu District is 25,930. The ratio of the elderly population to the total population in this neighborhood is 8.5%. It was chosen because of the large elderly population of the Family Health Center (FHC).

Population and Sample of the Research

The population of the research consisted of a total of 1568 people, 822 men and 746 women, aged 65 and over, determined according to the 2019 records of ASM No. 11 in Konya central Selçuklu district. G*Power program for sample calculation, version 3.1.9.2. used. The sample size of the study was calculated as 202, with an effect size of 0.22 at the 90% power and 95% confidence interval, taking into account the total life satisfaction score average (11.30±3.49) in (Yılmaz, 2020)'s study. The sample of the study consisted of 228 elderly individuals who did not have verbal communication problems, did not have hearing or visual impairment and cognitive impairment, and agreed to participate in the research.

Independent variables: age, gender, education level, marital status, social security, perceived economic status, cohabitants, presence of chronic disease, type of disease, having children, meeting with children or close relatives, people with whom he met other than his relatives, having visitors on special days, having a hobby, activities outside the home and self-actualization were determined as the average score.

If the dependent variable is: life satisfaction was determined as the mean score.

Data Collection Technique and Tools

The data of the research were collected by face-to-face interview technique in May and July. In the collection of data; the information form prepared by the researchers who questioned the socio-demographic and health characteristics of the individuals and the "Satisfaction with Life Scale" and the "Self-Realization Short Index" were used. Before starting to collect the data, a preliminary application was made to 10 elderly people registered in the center in order to evaluate the intelligibility and usability of the questions, and the elderly who were included in the preliminary application were excluded from the sample.

Life Satisfaction Scale

Scale, (Diener et al., (16) (1985)) and adapted into Turkish by (Köker, 1991). The scale consists of five items related to life satisfaction. The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale was determined as 0.88. The scale, which is 7-point likert type, was adapted to the 5-point likert type by (Dağlı & Baysal, 2016), and its validity and reliability study was conducted. Each item is in a five-point Likert type and the way of answering is '1 = not at all appropriate', '5 = very appropriate'. The lowest score that can be obtained from the current scale is 5, and the highest score is 25. A low score indicates low life satisfaction. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha value was found to be 0.86.

Short self-actualization Inventory (SAI)

The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale, which was developed by (Jones & Crandall, 1986), was carried out by (Oğlu, 2014). There are 15 items in the scale. It is assumed that as the scores increase in the inventory, which is a 6-point Likert type scale, the level of self-actualization increases. The lowest score to be taken from the scale is 15 and the highest score is 60. SAI is a 15-item self-report scale. It is a four-point

Likert type scale and the first 8 items are coded backwards. ("I am not ashamed of my feelings" 1 = I disagree, 4 = I agree). A 6-point Likert type was also suggested and used. It is assumed to measure the dimension related to self-actualization. In our study, the Cronbach alpha value was found to be 0.78.

Ethical and Legal Aspects of Research

Before starting the research, ethical approval (Decision number: 2021/163) from the ethics committee of a university hospital and institutional permission were obtained from the center where the data would be collected. The purpose and method of the study were explained to individuals over the age of 65, and both verbal and written consents were obtained from the individuals, informing that participation in the study was based on voluntariness. It will be announced that the interview will be conducted face to face, but no names will be taken, no voice recording will be made, the information given will be used only for scientific purposes, and data has been collected from elderly individuals who gave verbal consent. Since the use of the human phenomenon in the research requires the protection of individual rights, the relevant ethical principles "Informed Consent Principle", "Volunteering Principle" and "Principle of Protection of Confidentiality" were fulfilled.

Analysis of Data

IBM SPSS 22 package program was used in the analysis of the research data. The data of the study were computerized, and numbers, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used for descriptive statistics. The conformity of the data to the normal distribution was evaluated using the Kolmogorov Smirnov test and Q-Q plots. In the analysis of the mean scores of the scale, the t-test and One Way ANOVA test (for more than two groups) were used in independent groups for those whose data was normally distributed (in paired groups), and the Mann Whitney U test (for paired groups) was used for those who did not. In the study, multiple regression analysis was used by choosing the backward method to evaluate demographic and self-actualization total score variables that may affect life satisfaction. In the analysis, categorical variables were determined as 1 for groups with risk factors. Risk group coding was decided according to the literature, t test, ANOVA and Mann Whitney U test significance values.

Limitations of the Research

This research is limited to elderly individuals who came to the Family Health Center at the time of its conduct and met the inclusion criteria.

Results

When the sociodemographic characteristics of the elderly are examined; 68% of them are in the 65-74 age group, 57% are women, 67.5% are married, 56.6% are primary school graduates, 97.4% have social security and 54.8% have economic It was determined that he perceived his condition as moderate. 55.3% live with their spouse, 56.6% have any chronic disease, 18.4% have hypertension, 92.1% have children, 84.2% 40.8% of them are retired, 40.8% have children or close relatives they see every day, 75% have people they meet other than their

relatives, 88.2% have visitors on special days, 57.9% have any hobbies. It has been determined that 31.6% of them have any activity outside the home and 11.8% are interested in gardening outside the home (Table 1).

Variables	Number (n)	Percent (%)
Age		
65-74 age	155	68,0
75-84 age	45	19,7
85 years and older	28	12,3
Gender		
Male	98	43,0
Female	130	57,0
Medeni Durum		
Married	154	67,5
Single	74	32,5
Educational Status		
Illiterate	60	26,3
Primary education	129	56,6
High school	22	9,6
University	17	7,5
Social Security Status		
Yes	222	97,4
No	6	2,6
Economic Situation Detection		
Good	23	10,1
Middle	125	54,8
Bad	80	35,1
People Living With		
Alone	52	22,8
With spouse	126	55,3
With children	20	8,8
With spouse and children	30	13,2
Status of Being a Chronic Disease		
Yes	129	56,6
No	99	43,4
Disease Type		
Diabetes	39	17,1
Hypertension	42	18,4
Heart failure	20	8,8
Rheumatism	1	0,4
Kidney failure	4	1,8
Hypothyroidism	1	0,4

Cataract	1	0,4
COPD	16	7,0
Cholesterol	4	1,8
Migraine	1	0,4
Having Children		
Yes	210	92,1
No	18	7,9
Working status		
Retired	192	84,2
Working	36	15,8
Interviewing Children or Close Relatives		
Not seeing	17	7,5
Seeing each day	93	40,8
Meets 2 days a week	66	28,9
1 day or less per month	52	22,8
People He Meets Except His Relatives		
Yes	171	75,0
No	57	25,0
Status of having visitors on special days		
Yes	201	88,2
No	27	11,8
The state of being a hobby		
Yes	132	57,9
No	96	42,1
The state of being involved in activities outside the home		
Yes	72	31,6
No	156	68,4
Activities outside the home		
Go to the coffee shop	11	4,8
Gardening	27	11,8
Friend meetings	14	6,1
Online trainings	3	1,3
Sewing course	6	2,6
Trip	5	2,2
Wood painting	2	0,9
Sport	3	1,3
Carpentry	1	0,4

Table 1: Distribution of Sociodemographic and Social Characteristics of the Elderly

The mean life satisfaction score of the elderly was 16.02 ± 5.95 and the mean self-actualization score was 44.68 ± 3.91 (Table 2).

Variable	Min-Max	Mean \pm SD
Life Satisfaction Scale	5-25	16,02 \pm 5,95
Self-Actualization Inventory	32-59	44,68 \pm 3,91

Table 2: The Distribution of the Average Scores of the Elderly from the Life Satisfaction and Self-Actualization Scales

When the average life satisfaction score and sociodemographic characteristics of the elderly were examined; There was a statistically significant difference between the age variable and life satisfaction, and it was determined that the difference was caused by the 85 age group ($p < 0.05$). Men's life satisfaction mean score was higher than women's mean score, and the difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). It was seen that the mean score of life satisfaction of the married people was higher than the mean score of the divorced and widowed people, and the difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). A statistically significant difference was observed between the perceived economic status and life satisfaction, and it was determined that the difference was due to those who perceived their economic status well ($p < 0.05$). It was observed that the mean score of life satisfaction of those who had contact with other than their relatives was higher than the mean score of those who did not, and the difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). It was observed that the average score of life satisfaction of those who had visitors on special days was higher than the average score of those who did not, and the difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). No statistically significant difference was found between life satisfaction and education status, social security, cohabitants, having a chronic disease, having children, employment status, frequency of meeting with children and close relatives, having a hobby, and participating in activities outside the home ($p > 0,05$) (Table 3).

Variable	Life Satisfaction Mean \pm SD	Test value p
Age		
65-74 age	16,57 \pm 5,99	F:5,478 p:0,03*
75-84 age	15,00 \pm 6,26	
Gender		
Male	16,84 \pm 5,60	U:7,50 p:0,01*
Female	15,40 \pm 6,15	
Medeni Durum		
Married	15,33 \pm 5,58	F:2,056 p:0,46
Single	16,36 \pm 5,96	
Educational Status	15,31 \pm 6,74	
Illiterate	16,76 \pm 6,24	
Primary education		
High school	16,37 \pm 5,97	t:1,074 p:0,02*
University	15,29 \pm 5,89	

Social Security Status		
Yes	15,06 \pm 5,84	t:0,056 p:0,34
No	14,83 \pm 9,80	
Economic Situation Detection		
Good	20,86 \pm 558	F:1,986 p:0,01*
Middle	16,61 \pm 5,84	
Bad	13,70 \pm 5,58	
People Living With		
Alone	15,21 \pm 5,80	F:1,653 p:0,93
With spouse	16,62 \pm 5,91	
With children	15,85 \pm 6,49	
With spouse and children	15,00 \pm 5,99	
Status of Being a Chronic Disease		
Yes	15,43 \pm 5,46	U:12,50 p:0,23
No	16,78 \pm 6,48	
Having Children		
Yes	16,08 \pm 5,88	t:1,024 p:0,48
No	15,33 \pm 6,85	
Working status		
Retired	16,05 \pm 5,75	t:3,657 p:0,08
Working	16,21 \pm 6,80	
Interviewing Children or Close Relatives		
Not seeing	15,00 \pm 7,39	F:4,761 p:0,09
Seeing each day	16,41 \pm 6,28	
Meets 2 days a week	16,27 \pm 5,13	
1 day or less per month	15,32 \pm 5,89	
People He Meets Except His Relatives		
Yes	16,47 \pm 5,76	t:0,925 p:0,04*
No	14,64 \pm 6,34	
Status of having visitors on special days		
Yes	16,21 \pm 5,89	t:3,042 p:0,02*
No	14,59 \pm 6,32	
The state of being a hobby		
Yes	15,97 \pm 6,14	t:4,961 p:0,57
No	16,08 \pm 5,71	
The state of being involved in activities outside the home		
Yes	16,51 \pm 6,20	t:0,608 p:0,567
No	15,79 \pm 5,84	

F: ANOVA testi, U: Mann Whitney U testi, t: Independent t testi, * $p < 0,05$,

Table 3: Distribution of Average Life Satisfaction Scores of the Elderly by Sociodemographic Characteristics

Multiple regression analysis was carried out by choosing the backward method in order to investigate the effect of age, marital status, gender, economic situation perception, having people with whom they met other than their relatives, having visitors on special days and self-actualization level average

score on life satisfaction. Age ($\beta = 0.346$), marital status ($\beta = 0.467$), gender ($\beta = 0.569$), perception of economic status ($\beta = 0.468$), contact people other than relatives ($\beta = 0.602$), visitors on special days ($\beta = 0.493$) and the level of self-actualization ($\beta=0.504$) were found to be effective on life satisfaction ($p<0.001$). It was determined that the effective determining factors explained 64.8% (Adjusted R²= 0.648) of the change in life satisfaction (Table 4).

Determiners	β	t	p	Collinearity	
				Tolerance	VIF
Age (1=above 85 years old)	0,346	2,089	0,000*	0,453	2,092
Marital status (1=single)	0,467	4,823	0,000*	0,392	1,932
Gender (1=female)	0,569	4,297	0,000*	0,370	1,053
Economic situation detection (1=bad)	0,468	5,032	0,000*	0,465	2,048
Persons he met other than his relatives (1=none)	0,602	3,384	0,000*	0,774	1,327
Don't have visitors on special days (1=no)	0,493	5,092	0,000*	0,587	2,835
Self-actualization Level Total (continuous)	0,504	4,734	0,000*	0,462	2,640
R=0,467 R ² =0,543 Adjusted R ² = 0,648 F=3421,5431 p<0,000*					

*p<0,001

Table 4: Determining Factors Affecting Life Satisfaction in the Elderly

Discussion

This research was conducted to examine the relationship between life satisfaction and self-actualization levels of the elderly. In our study, it was found that life satisfaction had an effect on age, gender, marital status, perception of economic status, the presence of people with whom he met other than his relatives and having visitors on special days, while education status, social security, people with whom he lived, having a chronic illness, having a child, working status, etc. It was found that meeting with children and close or close relatives, having a hobby and activities outside the home had no effect on life satisfaction (Table 4).

In our study, it was found that the life satisfaction of the elderly was above average and good (Table 2). Li et al. (2018); Ghimire et al. (2018); Xie, (2018); Salmabadi et al. (2018), in their study evaluating life satisfaction in the elderly, found that the elderly had a high level of life satisfaction. The good age satisfaction of the elderly in our study can be attributed to factors such as the location of the study in a rural area, the fact that the houses are generally detached and kinship relations are positive. When the average life satisfaction score and sociodemographic characteristics of the elderly were examined; it was found that the older people, whose age was younger than the group, had higher life satisfaction (Table 3). Age has also been found to be a determinant of life satisfaction (Table 4). Among the factors affecting life satisfaction, it is important that the productivity of the elderly continues. In our study, the fact that the youngest group according to age groups had a better life satisfaction may be effective in the fact that productivity continues. Salmabadi et al. (2018); Taghiabadi et al. (2017); Curi et al. (2018); Xie, (2018); Ghimire et al. (2018), similar to our current study finding, it has been reported that the elderly in the young-aged group have higher life satisfaction.

In our study, it was found that men's life satisfaction was higher than women's (Table 3). Gender was also found to be a determinant of life satisfaction (Table 4). It may be effective that men have more social life and women's living space is

more limited. Salmabadi et al. (2018); Curi et al. (2018); Han et al. (2020), in which they examined the life satisfaction of the elderly, revealed similar results to our current study finding. In our study, it was found that the life satisfaction of married people was higher than that of single people (Table 3). It has also been determined that marital status is a determinant of life satisfaction (Table 4). Withdrawal from social life and retirement with age can cause a decrease in the social environment for the elderly. The fact that the elderly person is married and lives with someone during this period and having children can be an important factor in his life satisfaction. Chan et al. (2021); Tran and Van Vu, (2018); Bijaeyeh et al. (2021); Andrew and Meeks (2018) in their studies examining life satisfaction in the elderly showed similar results to our current study finding.

In our study, it was observed that the life satisfaction of elderly individuals who perceived their economic situation well was higher (Table 3). It has also been determined that economic status is a determinant of life satisfaction (Table 4). Those with good economic status can reach a life where they can feel good, and their welfare level can be higher. Thus, their life satisfaction can be higher. Curi et al. (2018); Salmabadi et al. (2018); Mostafaei and Ghaderi, (2019); Jafari and Hesampour, (2017) found similar results to our current study in their studies examining life satisfaction in the elderly. In our study, it was observed that the elderly who had contact with people other than their relatives were more satisfied with life than those who did not (Table 3). It has also been determined that having contacts other than his relatives is a determinant of it (Table 4). The life satisfaction of the people with whom they meet outside of their close circle means that the social environment of the individuals is active. Social environment can also be an important factor of life satisfaction. Flores et al. (2019); Şahin et al. (2019); Tran and Van Vu, (2018) found similar results to our current study finding in their study in which they examined life satisfaction in the elderly.

In our study, it was observed that the elderly individuals who had visitors on special days were more satisfied with life than those who did not (Table 3). It has also been determined that having visitors on special days is a determinant of life satisfaction (Table 4). Having visitors on special days can make the elderly person feel valuable. Sahin et al. (2019); Kiarsipour et al. (2017); Yin et al. (2019), in which they examined life satisfaction in the elderly, showed similar results to our current study finding. In our study, it was found that the self-actualization level of the elderly was above average and good (Table 2). Gholamnejad et al. (2019); Najafi and Baseri, (2018); da Silva and Carbonneau, (2021); Paramita et al. (2018) stated in their study that the level of self-actualization of the elderly was good, similar to our study. It has also been determined that the level of self-actualization is a determinant of life satisfaction (Table 4). The commitment to life of elderly individuals who have reached life satisfaction has been found to be related to the individual's self-realization of their plans for the future. Tu et al. (2019) found a positive and significant relationship between life satisfaction and self-actualization of the elderly. Similar to our study, (Nam, 2020)'s study finding also found a significant relationship between life satisfaction and self-actualization of the elderly. Age, marital status, gender, perception of economic status, having contacts other than their relatives, having special visitors, and self-actualization levels of the elderly were found to be effective on life satisfaction and explained 64.8% of the change in determining factors (Table 4). In the study of (Nam, 2020), in which they examined the determinants of life satisfaction in the elderly, they stated that age, gender and marital status were associated with life satisfaction.

Conclusion

In our study, it was observed that the elderly were highly satisfied with life. Self-actualized elderly people have more life satisfaction. In terms of life satisfaction in the elderly, those aged 85 and over, women, single people, those who perceive their economic situation poorly, those who do not meet with anyone other than their relatives, and those who do not have visitors on special days are in the risk group. Age, marital status, gender, perception of economic status, having contacts other than their relatives, having special visitors and self-actualization levels of the elderly were found to be effective on life satisfaction and explained 64.8% of the change in determining factors.

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