

# Turkish Adolescents' Subjective Well-Being with Respect to Age, Gender and SES of Parents<sup>\*</sup>

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**Abstract**—In this research it is aimed that the effect of some demographic factors on Turkish Adolescents' subjective well being is investigated. 432 adolescents who are 247 girls and 185 boys are participated in this study. They are ages 15-17, and also are high school students. The Positive and Negative Affect Scale and Life Satisfaction Scale are used for measuring adolescents' subjective well being. The ANOVA method is used in order to examine the effect of ages. For gender differences, independent t-test method is used, and finally the Pearson Correlation method is used so as to examine the effect of socio economic statues of adolescents' parents. According to results, there is no gender difference on adolescents' subjective well being. On the other hand, SES and age are effect significantly lower level on adolescents' subjective well being.

**Keywords**—Subjective Well Being, Adolescents, and Age, Gender, SES

## 1. INTRODUCTION

THE history of investigating happiness is based on very old age. So many years, it was investigated "how people can be happy". In this context, people looked for what kinds of things were caused happiness. Some of them thought that the criteria of a good life were wealth on the other hand some of them thought that the criteria of a good life were positive relationships with others. Whether or not the criteria for a good life are internal or external factors, people mean the notion of "subjective well-being".

Nowadays in psychology, scientific focus has changed from pathology to positive human experience. In the context of positive features, subjective well-being of children and adolescents can be thought. In psychology, happiness is expressed the term of "subjective well being". This term is a multidimensional construct. As adults' subjective well-being, subjective well-being of children and adolescents has also three important factors which are life satisfaction, positive emotions and negative emotions [1]. Subjective well-being refers to people's evaluations of their lives with respect to cognitive judgments, such as life satisfaction; and affective evaluations such as positive and negative emotional feelings. Emotions and mood reflects the perception and evaluation of an individual's affective state, on the other hand satisfaction

with one's life condition includes cognitive judgments that are based on some standards of life. To sum up, if people have much subjective well-being this means that they usually satisfy with their life-conditions and experience positive emotions, and also experience less negative emotions[2].

Nowadays, studies of adolescents and children's subjective well-being are found relate with demographic factors (age, gender and socio-economic level) and other intral-features (self concept, extraversion, etc.). For example, it was found that an adolescent who has much internal locus of control and self-esteem has high levels of subjective well-being [3]. In addition, in parallel with the adults' subjective well-being, it was found that demographic factors have little effect on the adolescents' subjective well-being [4].

There are many factors which effect people's subjective well-being. The effect of these factors can be different level. Some of them effect relatively stable on subjective well being for instance personality traits; on the other hand some of them effect short term on subjective well being such as life events. At this point, the effect of demographic factors on subjective well being is explained in detail below.

- *Gender*: The question which is "Becoming women or men has much influence on subjective well-being?" have been addressed in many studies. In Western societies, studies which are conducted on subjective well being show that the impact of gender on subjective well-being is not found significant. According to Fujita [5], we need deep information about effect of gender on subjective well being. In order to get clear information we need that studies should have done with respect to forms of socialization of women or men, the value of women in society.

- *Age*: The assumption that all individuals will be worse with aging with respect to subjective well being is not true nowadays. In recent studies, it is found that subjective well-being increases with age. In addition to this, it is concluded that it did not fall after a certain age. There are two important reasons for this result. The first one is that by getting old, people gain property many domains. The second one is that when we compare with young adults and older adults each others, the gap which is between ideal self and real self is closed [6].

<sup>\*</sup> This study is produced from the author's Ph.D. thesis.

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- *Education*: The studies which investigate the relationship between subjective well-being and education demonstrate that the impact of education on subjective well-being is weak. The effect of education can be meaningful when we compare with poor countries and rich countries each others. Because of the fact that education supplies people extra leisure activities, and also social statues, people who live in a rich country are much happier than people who live in poor countries [7].

- *Income*: The relationship between income and subjective well-being is very interesting. Even for very wealthy individuals in Western societies, income is not the cause of subjective well-being. The same effect can be seen on subjective well being with respect to income. The effect of income can be meaningful when we compare with poor countries and rich countries each others. Because of the fact that income supplies people to meet their basic needs, people who live in a poor country are much happier than people who live in a rich countries. More interesting finding is that the growth- rate of countries in the period of high income levels, subjective well being of individuals increases in parallel with increasing income. But this effect does not show continuity. Because of the fact that people can have greater adaptation to all conditions, the situation cannot be seen as a new stimulant [8].

When we look at the literature, especially which in Turkey, it seems that there are hardly any studies which investigate adolescents' subjective well-being [9], [10]. When we look at the information presented above, it is seen that demographic factors are related with adolescents' subjective well-being with some aspects. It is not clear whether these demographic factors are effective or not for Turkish adolescents. In addition to these, subjective well-being supplies for adolescents with greater adaptation to life. Another words, it prevents from psychopathology adults and adolescents. Therefore, it is important to find what factors are related with adolescents' subjective well-being. As a result, in this research, the effect of some demographic factors on adolescents' subjective well being is investigated. [8].

## II. METHOD

### A. Procedure and Participants

A total of 432 adolescents participated in this study, and the mean age was 15.99 years ( $SD = 3.76$ ). The sample was made up of 247 girls and 185 boys. All participants in the study were students from high school. Participation was voluntary and anonymous; only the ID number of each participant was recorded in order to be able to provide the participants with the results of their questionnaires. Questionnaires lacking a response or that having more than one response marked were eliminated. It can be seen descriptive statistics of participants at table one.

### B. Instruments

TABLE I  
THE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS WITH RESPECT TO GENDER AND AGE

Gender	Age			Total
	15	16	17	
Female	101	70	76	247
Male	39	84	62	185
Total	140	154	138	432

*Satisfaction With Life Scale [11]*: This scale, a 5-item version, developed in the USA, was subsequently revised by Pavot and Diener [12]. This scale was adapted to Turkish by [9]. It is a measure of the concept of satisfaction with one's personal life. An example from items is: "In most ways, my life is close to my ideal, and I am satisfied with my life". Responses are rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale that ranges from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). As noted, the SWLS has high internal consistency, with alpha Cronbach values ranging between .89 and .79. In this study, the internal consistency of the scale was .78 (Cronbach's alpha).

*Positive - Negative Affect Scale*: Positive and Negative Affect Scale developed in USA [13]. This scale was adapted to Turkish by Gençöz [14]. This scale includes ten positive emotions, and also ten negative emotions. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale that ranges from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). The internal consistency of the scale for positive emotions is .86, and also for negative emotions is .83 [14].

### C. Procedure and Statistical Analysis

The tests were administered collectively to groups of 432 participants. All the inventories that had items with no response or more than one response to the same item were rejected. This study examines how demographic factors influence the adolescent subjective well being. For this perspective, there are three important questions which will answer:

1. Does adolescents' subjective well being is differentiated with respect to gender?
2. Does adolescents' subjective well being is differentiated with respect to age?
3. Does adolescents' subjective well being is differentiated with respect to socio economic status of adolescents' parents?

The relationships between the socio economic status of adolescent's parents and the total point of subjective well-being computed with Pearson correlation coefficients. In addition to this, gender differences on subjective well being are compared with t-test method. Finally, the effect of age on adolescents' subjective well being is compared with one way ANOVA method.

When we look at the subjective well being literature, there are two methods in order to measure subjective well being [15]; [16]; [17]. The first one is that positive negative affect scale, life satisfaction scale are used differentially. The second one is that these scale are used together, and the total point is computed with using this equation presented below;

*Subjective well being = (positive affect + life satisfaction) - negative affect*

In this study, subjective well being is measured with two methods.

### III. RESULTS

#### A. Gender Differences on Adolescents' Subjective Well-Being

The independent t-test method is used in order to determine effect of gender on adolescents' subjective well-being. According to t-tests results, there is no gender difference on adolescents' subjective well-being.

#### B. Age Differences on Adolescents' Subjective Well-Being

One way ANOVA method is used in order to determine effect of age on adolescents' subjective well-being. According One way ANOVA results, there is age difference on adolescents' subjective well-being.

According to Tukey and Scheffe tests results, adolescents whose ages are 15 have higher subjective well being than adolescents whose ages 17, and this differences is statistically significant ( $p = 0.03$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ).

#### C. Pearson Correlation Results

In this study, the relationships between adolescents' subjective well being and their parents' socio economic status are investigated with Pearson Correlation method. According to Pearson Correlation results, the relationships between adolescents' subjective well being and their parents' socio economic status are low and positive. On the other hand these results are significant statistically

When we look at the results, there are lower significant relationships with SES and adolescents' subjective well being. There is a negative lower significant relationships with SES and negative affect. In addition to this, there are positive lower significant relationships with SES and life satisfaction and total point of adolescents' subjective well being.

### IV. DISCUSSION

When we look at the results of this research, gender is not important factor for adolescents' subjective well being. In addition to this, age and SES are important factor for

TABLE II  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS SUBJECTIVE WELL BEING AND SES

Variables	X, n, sd		
	n	X	Sd
SES	432	1806.7651*	1572.71
Total Point of SWB	432	35.15	14.78
Positive Affect	432	34.41	6.06
Negative Affect	432	22.75	7.07
Life Satisfaction	432	23.48	5.87

\*Family budget monthly with respect to Turkish Liras.

TABLE III  
THE RESULTS OF ANOVA WITH RESPECT TO AGE DIFFERENCES ON ADOLESCENTS' SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

Age	Age			
	n	X	Sd	Difference
15 (1)	140	36.77	1.25	1 > 3 *
16 (2)	154	32.88	1.12	-
17(3)	138	32.13	1.28	3 < 1*

\* $p < 0.05$

TABLE IV  
CORRELATION MATRIX OF ALL THE VARIABLES

	Variables				
	1	2	3	4	5
SES (1)	1	,016	-,105*	,103*	,116*
PA (2)		1	-,285**	,714**	,347**
NA (3)			1	-,790**	-,462**
TPSW B (4)				1	,771**
SWL (5)					1

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , SWL: Satisfaction With Life, SES: Socio Economic Status, PA: Positive Affect, NA: Negative Affect, TPSWB: Total Point of Subjective Well Being.,

adolescents' subjective well being. These findings can be explained several aspects. In this section, results are discussed with respect to literature and Turkish culture.

In this research, gender is not related with adolescents' subjective well being. This result is parallel with the subjective well being literature [5]. This can be explained the structure of subjective well being. Because of the fact that subjective well being is experienced subjectively, adolescent subjective well being is not belonging for gender groups. However, it has to be investigated the reasons of this findings.

In this research, age is related with adolescents' subjective well being. This result is not parallel with the subjective well being literature. In the literature, it was found that subjective well-being increases with age [6]. But in this research, adolescent subjective well being is not increase with age. The reason of this result should be investigated with respect to Turkish culture. In Turkey, adolescents who are ages between 14 and 15 are eighth grade students. They must study the examination to enter high school intensively. Adolescents who are in this research group are high school students. Especially, adolescents who are 15 ages left the intensive examination. So they are much relax position. The other adolescents who are 17 ages faced with the new examination situation which is named the examination of entrance of university. They have a new task. They have to study hard. In addition to this, not only their time but also social activities are limited. All of these are the most important source of stress. As a result of this reality, adolescents who are ages 15 are much happy than adolescents who are ages 17.

In this research, SES is related with adolescents' subjective well being. This result is not parallel with the subjective well being literature. In the literature, it was found that subjective well-being is not increases with SES especially developed countries [8]. Turkey is a developing country. So, SES can be important factor on adolescents' subjective well being. The reason is that when people have much economical capital they can arrange their life with social activities. When we look at the subjective well being literature, taking part in social activities is the most important source of happiness. The adolescents who are in this research may take part in social activities by means of their parents' SES. As a result of this, they are happy than the others who have limited SES.

To sum up, gender is not important for adolescents' subjective well being. On the other hand, SES and age are important means for adolescents' subjective well being. There can be possible explanation for these results. Some of them are discussed above. The others must be investigated.

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