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İyi Oluşun Açıklanmasında Affetme ve Benlik Saygısının Rolü

The Role of Forgiveness and Self-Esteem in the Explanation of Well-Being

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Özet

Günümüzde insanların fiziksel ve duygusal iyilik hallerine odaklanma eğilimi, psikolojinin önemli bir çalışma alanını oluşturmaktadır. İyi oluş, bu alandaki temel kavramlardan biridir ve bireylerin yaşamlarını daha tatmin edici ve anlamlı hale getiren bir faktör olarak öne çıkmaktadır. İyi oluşun yanı sıra affetme eğilimleri ile yüksek benlik saygısı da olumlu durum ve yaşantılarla ilişkilidir. Böyle bir durum bu değişkenlerin kendi arasındaki ilişkinin de test edilmesini araştırma konusu haline getirmektedir. Bu çalışmanın temel amacı affetme ve benlik saygısının iyi oluşu nasıl açıkladığını incelemektir. Bu durumu test etmek amacıyla bir model oluşturulmuş, hipotezler geliştirilmiş ve verilerin analizi çoklu regresyon ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışma üniversitede öğrenim gören 505 (Kadın=317, Erkek=188) öğrenci üzerinde yapılmıştır. Araştırmadan elde edilen sonuçlara göre kendini affetme benlik saygısını anlamlı ve olumlu şekilde açıklamaktadır. Bununla birlikte kendini affetme ve benlik saygısı iyi oluşu anlamlı ve olumlu şekilde açıklamaktadır. Kendini affetme benlik saygısı aracılığıyla da iyi oluşu anlamlı şekilde açıklamaktadır. Araştırmada ortaya çıkan diğer sonuçlara göre diğerlerini affetme iyi oluşu olumlu yönde ve anlamlı şekilde açıklarken benlik saygısı aracılığıyla anlamlı şekilde açıklamamaktadır. Bundan sonraki araştırmalarda oluşturulan model üzerinde farklı psikolojik (narsizm, depresyon, empati, algılanan sosyal destek) ve demografik (yaş, ekonomik durum, medeni durum) değişkenlere yer verilerek geliştirilen hipotezler test edilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İyi oluş, Affetme, Benlik saygısı

Abstract

The tendency to focus on people's physical and emotional well-being is now an important area of study in psychology. Well-being is one of the most important concepts in this field and stands out as a factor that makes an individual's life more satisfying and meaningful. In addition to well-being, forgiveness, and high self-esteem are associated with positive situations and experiences. Thus, it would be reasonable to investigate the relationship between these variables. The main aim of this study is to examine how forgiveness and self-esteem explain well-being. To this aim, a model was created, hypotheses were developed, and data were analyzed using multiple regression. The study was conducted with 505 (female=317, male=188) university students. The results of the study show that self-forgiveness significantly and positively explains self-esteem. In addition, self-forgiveness and self-esteem significantly and positively explain well-being. Self-forgiveness also significantly explains well-being through self-esteem. According to the other results, forgiving others explains well-being positively, and significantly, but not significantly by self-esteem. Future studies can test the hypotheses developed by including various psychological (narcissism, depression, empathy, perceived social support) and demographic (age, economic status, marital status) variables in the model.

Keywords: Well-being, Forgiveness, Self-esteem

1. Introduction

The concept of well-being has been discussed in the psychology literature under the concept of well-being and has taken its place as a general concept of mental health (Diener et al., 2003). According to Vaillant (2003), mental health means maturity, emotional and social intelligence, adjustment, and subjective well-being. It has been argued that well-being is a positive aspect of mental health today (Diener & Seligman, 2002). To explain well-being, Ryan and Deci (2001) highlighted the concepts of subjective and psychological well-being.

Subjective well-being has been defined as a person's experience of more positive and fewer negative feelings and a high level of life satisfaction (Kahneman et al., 1999). According to Diener (1984), subjective well-being is a person's general assessment of positive and negative feelings and life satisfaction. Psychological well-being is not a simple combination of negative and positive affect and life satisfaction, but a multidimensional construct consisting of life attitudes (Ryff, 1989). Keyes et al. (2002) defined psychological well-being as coping with existential processes that occur in life, such as finding meaning in life, self-development, and building good relationships with others. As can be seen from the above definitions, well-being consists of two constructs: subjective well-being and psychological well-being. However, this study aims to explain well-being more clearly and understandably by limiting it to a single construct. Moreover, considering the other variables in the study, well-being is not examined in its sub-dimensions to avoid the emergence of a complicated construct due to the interrelationships between variables.

Forgiveness means that a person voluntarily replaces negative feelings such as anger, indignation, and revenge towards an offender and instead strives to develop positive responses such as benevolence, generosity, and help (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000). According to Macaskill (2005), forgiveness is a person's attempt to develop positive emotions by moving away from thoughts of harming the offender. Thompson et al. (2005) discussed forgiveness as a structure with three dimensions: Self-forgiveness, other-forgiveness, and situational forgiveness.

Self-forgiveness means that one tends to give up resentment towards oneself for one's faults, thus furthering one's efforts at self-directed love (Enright, 1996). Similarly, Hall and Fincham (2005) describe self-forgiveness as changes related to increasing positive behaviors by decreasing punitive and destructive behaviors, which include anger towards oneself. The second aspect of forgiveness, other-forgiveness, was explained by Enright (1996) as an individual's disposition refraining from reactions against an unjust offender, such as anger, negative evaluations, and disinterest, and replacing these reactions with promoting compassion, generosity, and love towards that person. In a more concrete sense, it refers to the victim forgiving the offender and thus helping to improve the relationship with that person (Baumeister et al., 1998). Forgiveness of situations, accepted in the literature as the third dimension of forgiveness, has been defined by Thompson et al. (2005) as the refraining from blaming and feeling angry towards illnesses, deaths, accidents, and natural disasters that are seen as reasons for a fault and not under the person's control, and accepting the experience and developing neutral or positive responses to these situations instead.

According to the model of the forgiveness process proposed by Enright (1996), forgiveness occurs in four phases. In the *origination* phase, the person accepts that the mistake that they or another person made is not that bad and that they are not perfect, and they realize that this perception lowers their self-esteem. They raise their awareness in the *decision-making* phase by asking meaningful questions such as "What is forgiveness?" and "Is it a valuable thing?" and making a promise to forgive. In the *forgiveness* phase, they evaluate what they have experienced with a new perspective, without blaming themselves, others, or the environment. In the final phase, the *discovery* phase, the

person first becomes clear about the mistake that was made and the pain that was felt. They get rid of the negative feelings caused by the mistake by remembering that they have been forgiven in the past and that they need to do the same now.

One of the variables associated with well-being is forgiveness. In the model of forgiveness developed by Worthington (1998), it is argued that forgiveness of other people's mistakes has an important function in overcoming negative feelings and thoughts and maintaining well-being. The author has also defended the idea that there is a positive relationship between forgiveness and mental health. In support of this idea, Camadan and Yazıcı, (2016), Halisdemir (2013) and Toussaint et al. (2016) concluded in their studies that there is a positive relationship between forgiveness and mental health. Similar to these findings, some studies have also found a positive relationship between forgiveness and happiness (Asıcı, 2019; García-Vázquez et al., 2020; Batik, et al., 2017; Shekhar, et al., 2016; Gürlek et al., 2019; Maltby et al., 2005; Öztürk & Serter, 2018; Rana et al., 2014; Uzunbacak & Karagöz, 2022; Yangın & Camadan, 2020; Zümbül, 2019). These studies showed that variables close to the concept of well-being, such as mental health and happiness, were directly related to forgiveness. Based on this information, it was expected that well-being and forgiveness might also have significant relationships.

The self is a complex system consisting of learned beliefs, attitudes, and views that the individual has developed about their existence (Kohut, 1971). The self, which has a multidimensional structure (Marshall, 1989), can be divided into a cognitive (Wall, 1986), social, active, psychological (Sallay, 2000), ideal, and real self (Waugh, 2001). Self-esteem, also known as self-respect (Kulaksızoğlu, 2001), is the emotional component of the self and refers to the value one places on one's physical and mental characteristics (Özbay, 2006). Self-esteem is considered an important determinant that enables acceptance by others, achieving self-acceptance and self-confidence (Cotton, 1985).

It was reported that a person's assessment of oneself and the comparison of the performances of oneself and others play an effective role in the formation of self-esteem (Hay et al., 2000). According to the social comparison theory that was developed by Michalos (1985), a person compares oneself to others based on several standards, including needs, goals, past experiences, conditions around oneself, and satisfaction obtained from life. According to Diener (1984), as a result of this comparison, if an individual thinks they are in a better position than others, they get more satisfaction from life and become happy.

In the light of the described above, it is understood that forgiveness emerges as a result of a form of awareness experienced by the individual and the individual's self-assessment. It is believed that the stages of forgiveness and those of self-esteem are similar in this aspect. Likewise, Coopersmith (1981) has argued that self-esteem is a person's assessment of acceptance of self, respect towards self, and observation of self as a capable and valuable person. In this context, as forgiveness is related to the self-assessment of the person of a mistake they have made, their belief that they are not guilty, and their acceptance of themselves, it may be argued that it is associated with self-esteem. Previous studies have supported this view. In support of this idea, Dillon (2001) and Eaton et al. (2006) have found a positive and significant relationship between forgiveness and self-esteem.

Freud (1957) argues that one can steer thoughts, emotions, and behavior that others cannot adopt. In this context, such an individual can blame others for their own mistakes and deficiencies and engage in destructive behavior. It is pointed out that the negative interpretations developed for them lie behind their destructive tendencies towards other people. Fromm (1969) states that if one cannot deal with the perception of their powerlessness, they may opt for destructiveness. Consistent with these explanations, Horney (1999) mentions that an individual's perception of inadequacy and

insecurity about themselves can harm them as a need for compensation. Since one's confrontation with traits they do not like about themselves can devastate the pride system, the individual may attribute these features to people and events other than themselves. Behind all these reactions of an individual, it is argued that the threats of a perceived unrealistic and idealized self lie in their inability to forgive. Thus, the source of these threats can be the individuals themselves or other people. On the other hand, it is reported that individuals who can develop positive self-esteem can be more forgiving rather than developing the motive of hostility, vindictiveness, and revenge towards themselves and other people around them (Horney, 1999). Fromm (1956) emphasizes that productive individuals are spiritually happier and healthier than others; they are the people who can love and tolerate themselves and other people as well as their ideas and cultures. It is also argued that these people are more successful in accepting themselves and others as they are (Feist & Feist, 2006).

Apart from this, one's realistic recognition of oneself, accepting oneself as they are, and showing respect for oneself are all considered to be significant predictors of well-being. Horney (1950) stated that high and prestigious objects and statuses, which an individual with low self-esteem can attain alone, can make them arrogant; but such characteristics cannot contribute positively to their internal contentment. It has also been acknowledged that these individuals may not be satisfied with themselves and they may even despise themselves. Fromm (1956), believes that in their negative evaluations of themselves, other people, and life, individuals can have destructive and hateful reactions towards them and that such reactions can be reflected in other people. With these reactions, it has also been accepted that the individuals are involved in an unsuccessful effort to conceal and eliminate their negative perceptions of themselves. As a result of this effort, one may feel idle, unhappy, and restless.

In light of the above explanations, this study aims to determine whether the expression of forgiveness and self-esteem explain well-being. Among the studies that have investigated the relationship between these variables, Neff (2011) found that self-esteem is a significant and positive predictor of well-being. Different studies are showing that there are positive relationships between self-esteem and well-being (Bektaş & Arslan, 2020; Demir & Duman, 2019; Doğan & Eryılmaz, 2013; Kong et al., 2013; Lin, 2015; Toker & Kalıpçı, 2021; Totan et al., 2019). In the related literature, it is possible to find studies that showed that forgiveness is related to self-esteem (Strelan & Zdaniuk, 2015; Xie et al., 2020; Yao et al., 2017; Yıldırım et al., 2022). Turnage et al. (2012) have investigated the relationship between forgiveness and self-esteem, reporting that self-esteem is an important predictor of self-forgiveness as well as other-forgiveness. In parallel with the aforementioned studies, Eaton et al. (2006) found a positive relationship between forgiveness and self-esteem. Furthermore, it was clarified that in some studies on the subject, forgiveness explained well-being directly (Temoshok & Chandra, 2000; Worthington et al., 2001). Another study concludes that forgiveness directly explains well-being and feelings of closeness significantly mediate between forgiveness and well-being (Bono et al., 2008). Therefore, forgiveness appears as a variable that explains well-being both directly and indirectly through various other variables. In light of these explanations, it was found important to determine whether forgiveness directly explained well-being or indirectly through the mediation of self-esteem. In addition to this, based on the explanations regarding self-esteem and forgiveness, it may be argued that these variables are related rather to the intrinsic processes of the person. This is why self-esteem is thought to be related to the self-forgiveness dimension of forgiveness. Moreover, forgiving someone else was expected to be significantly related to well-being without the mediation of self-esteem.

It is believed that well-being and self-esteem, which are variables of this study, are related more to the personal and interpersonal experiences under the person's control. It may be stated that forgiveness of situations is related to the events that take place outside the control of the individual in contrast to the ones above. On the other hand, Fromm (1956) states that one's evaluations of themselves and others are inseparable and linked to each other. In this context, the two aforementioned forgiveness dimensions have been considered more appropriate. To stay within the confines of the study and provide more specific results, the variable of forgiveness of situations is not included in the study.

In university life, students are expected to make personal decisions, take on various responsibilities, and adapt to their environment. It is thought that high self-esteem can facilitate the individual's ability to sustain their life independently and to adapt to this process. In addition, in university life, individuals are expected to be able to express themselves correctly, understand the other person, understand different thoughts and feelings, and establish healthy relationships. At this point, it is thought that the individual's developmental ability to forgive themselves and others when faced with undesirable situations may positively affect their interpersonal relationships. In light of these explanations, it is estimated that individuals' higher self-esteem and forgiveness tendencies in their university years will positively affect their mental well-being.

As a result of the literature review, we could find no study explaining well-being through forgiveness and self-esteem. In this regard, this study is expected to help fill this gap in the literature. A model has been created to determine whether the terms of forgiveness and self-esteem explain well-being. For this model, the following hypotheses have been developed:

- Hypothesis 1: Self-forgiveness explains well-being in a positive direction.
- Hypothesis 2: Other-forgiveness explains well-being in a positive direction.
- Hypothesis 3: Self-esteem explains well-being in a positive direction.
- Hypothesis 4: Self-forgiveness explains self-esteem in a positive direction.
- Hypothesis 5: Other-forgiveness explains self-esteem in a positive direction.
- Hypothesis 6: Self-forgiveness positively explains well-being through the mediation of self-esteem.
- Hypothesis 7: Other-forgiveness positively explains well-being through the mediation of self-esteem.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study, based on a quantitative research approach, was conducted within the framework of the correlational survey model. This study was carried out to find the relationships between well-being forgiveness and self-esteem.

2.2. Participants

The sample consisted of 505 students (female=317, male=188) attending a state university in Turkey. Participants were selected by a convenience sampling method which facilitates the researchers in terms of time, money, and labor (Büyükoztürk et al., 2016). The students were selected from various departments of the educational faculty (Computer Education and Instructional Technology (141), Guidance and Psychological Counselling (102), Elementary Mathematics Education (150), Elementary Science Education (46), Turkish Education (32), Basic Education (19), Social Sciences Education (15)).

In the study, students from different grade levels were included (1st year=127, 2nd year=133, 3rd year=125, 4th year=120). ($\text{Mean}_{\text{age}}=20.70$, $\text{SD}_{\text{age}}=2.09$).

2.3. Data Collection Tools

2.3.1. Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale

The scale was developed by Tennant et al. (2007) and adapted into Turkish by Keldal (2015). This 5-point Likert-type scale consists of 14 items. Higher scores indicate an increase in the level of well-being. The validity of the scale was determined by exploratory factor analysis, which revealed that the items explain 51% of the total variance. In the analysis of the validity of the scale, goodness of fit index values was found to be acceptable ($\chi^2/\text{df}=3.71$, $\text{NFI}=.94$, $\text{RFI}=.93$, $\text{IFI}=.96$, $\text{CFI}=.96$, $\text{NNFI}=.95$ and $\text{RMR}=.05$). For test reliability, Cronbach's α internal consistency was calculated, which was found to be 0.92 (Keldal, 2015). The validity and reliability of the scale were retested in the context of this study. According to the results of the confirmatory factor analysis which was carried out for testing validity, the goodness of fit index was found to be at an acceptable level ($\chi^2/\text{df}=4.37$, $\text{GFI}=.91$, $\text{CFI}=.91$, $\text{TLI}=.90$, $\text{RMSEA}=.07$, $\text{SRMR}=.05$) (Kline, 2015). The Cronbach's was calculated and found to be .91 for the total score of the scale.

2.3.2. Heartland Forgiveness Scale

The Heartland Forgiveness Scale was developed by Thompson et al. (2005). Bugay and Demir (2010) adapted this scale for Turkish users. The scale features three dimensions: self-forgiveness, others, and situations. This study applies two of these subscales; self-forgiveness and others. This 7-point Likert-type scale is made up of 18 items. Higher scores signify an increase in the level of forgiveness. In the analysis of the validity of the scale, goodness of fit index values were found to be acceptable ($\chi^2_{(124)}=289.49$, $p=.00$; $\chi^2/\text{df}=2.33$; $\text{GFI}=.92$, $\text{CFI}=.90$, $\text{RMSEA}=.06$). The Cronbach's α internal consistency coefficients calculated for the scale's reliability were found as forgiveness of self=.64 and forgiveness of others=.79. The validity and reliability of the scale were tested in the context of this research (Bugay & Demir, 2010). The validity and reliability of the scale were retested in the context of this study. According to the results of the confirmatory factor analysis that was conducted to test the scale's validity, the goodness of fit index was found to be at an acceptable level (Self-Forgiveness Subscale= $\chi^2/\text{df}=2.15$, $\text{GFI}=.99$, $\text{CFI}=.98$, $\text{TLI}=.95$, $\text{RMSEA}=.04$, $\text{SRMR}=.03$; Other-Forgiveness Subscale: $\chi^2/\text{df}=3.54$, $\text{GFI}=.98$, $\text{CFI}=.97$, $\text{TLI}=.93$, $\text{RMSEA}=.07$, $\text{SRMR}=.03$) (Kline, 2015). The scale, Cronbach's was calculated and found to be .78 (Self-Forgiveness Subscale) and .79 (Other-Forgiveness Subscale).

2.3.3. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

This is a self-report instrument developed by Rosenberg (1965) and adapted into Turkish by Çuhadaroglu (1986). It consists of 10 items rated based on the Guttman evaluation method. In the scoring process, scores of 0-1 are considered low, 2-4 points are considered medium, and 5-6 points are considered high in terms of self-esteem. Whilst the response items on the scale represent ordered categories, self-esteem has been found to increase when scale scores have increased in the original creation process for the scale. Therefore, the scale could be treated as continuous. This scale, which examines self-esteem globally, is used as a one-dimensional scale. During the Turkish adaptation studies of the scale, the test-retest method was used to test reliability. The correlation value between the first and the last application of the scale with a one-month interval was found to be .75. The relationship between the scores from the subscales of the Symptom Screening Inventory and the

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was examined to determine the validity of the scale. The scale scores yielded a correlation of -.66 with depression, -.70 with psychosomatic symptoms, and .45 with interpersonal relationships (Çuhadaroglu, 1986). The validity and reliability of the scale were retested in the context of this study. Based on the outcome of the confirmatory factor analysis conducted to assess the validity, the goodness of fit index is at an acceptable level ($\chi^2/df = 1.38$, GFI=.99, CFI=.98, TLI=.97, RMSEA=.03, SRMR=.03) (Kline, 2015). The Cronbach's has been calculated and determined to be .82 for the total of the scale.

2.4.4. Personal Information Form

This form has been developed by the researchers to collect information about the demographic characteristics of the participants. It includes questions regarding gender, age, grade, and department of participants.

2.5. Data Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to test for multicollinearity and singularity issues among the independent variables. Simple regression analysis was carried out to determine whether the independent variables in the study account for the dependent variables (Hypotheses 1-5). The Sobel test was administered to examine if the mediating variables play a significant role in explaining the dependent variables of the independent variables of the study (Hypothesis 6-7). Moreover, it has been determined whether the measurement tools used in the research are valid and reliable for this research have been determined by confirmatory factor analysis and by calculating the Cronbach internal consistency coefficient. The data analysis made use of software programs IBM SPSS AMOS version 23 and SPSS 22.00 have been used in the data analysis.

2.5.1. Testing the Assumptions of Multiple Regression Analysis

As a prerequisite for multiple regression analysis, certain assumptions ("sample size is sufficient," "missing values are treated," "extreme values are treated," "univariate and multivariate normality is found," "multicollinearity among the variables is low" and "the relationships between the independent and dependent variables are linear") must be satisfied (Çokluk et al., 2016). After it was understood that these assumptions were verified in the analyses, multiple regression analysis was started.

In the calculation of sample size for the study, Tabachnick and Fidell's (2013) formula was used for the calculation of the number of participants $N \geq 50 + 8m$ (m =number of independent variables). Considering the number of participants in the sample ($505 > 74$) in this study, it may be stated that the sample size condition was met. The data obtained in the research have been checked for any missing data. Consequently, it has been concluded that there has been no missing data in the dataset of the research. The existence of extreme values in the research variables has been checked for both univariate and multivariate non-normality. Z scores have been calculated to determine unidirectional extreme values. Data with z scores outside of the range of -3 to +3 are considered extreme values (Çokluk et al., 2016). Twelve participants have been identified as having such data. In terms of multivariate normality, the Mahalanobis distance value has been calculated. As seen in the χ^2 distribution table, the critical value associated with four degrees of freedom and a significance level of .01 is 13.27. Eight datasets with Mahalanobis values above this level were identified. Multiple regression analysis has been carried out separately for datasets from which the data of the 12 and 8

people mentioned above have been excluded and datasets have been left as they are. As a result of the analysis, the results related to the hypotheses of the study have not been affected. Regarding this issue, in general, excluding cases is not recommended (Enders, 2010). Therefore, the analysis has been carried out without excluding the aforementioned data. Univariate and multivariate normal distribution cases have been examined to assess whether the data of the variables have exhibited a normal distribution. As a result of the analysis, the skewness coefficients appeared to be smaller than $|3.0|$, and the kurtosis coefficients were smaller than $|10.0|$. Based on these values, it has been accepted that univariate normality is provided (Kline, 2015). For multivariate normality, the C.R. (Critical Rate) value is expected to be smaller than five (Karagöz, 2016). Again, it has been understood that multivariate normal distribution has also been provided. In this case, the relationship between the variables is expected to be lower than .90 (Pallant, 2005). The results of the Pearson's correlation analysis, which was performed to determine the relationships between the independent variables are shown in Table 1. Therefore, it is considered that there are no multicollinearity or singularity problems related to the independent variables in this study. The existence of a linear relationship between variables and the provision of multivariate normality is regarded as a criterion for linearity (Çokluk et al., 2016). Since the relevant assumptions have already been fulfilled, it can also be said that the assumption of linearity has been fulfilled.

Table 1. *Pearson's Correlations Between Variables*

<i>Variable</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
1. Self-Forgiveness	1			
2. Other-Forgiveness	.16**	1		
3. Self-Esteem	.48**	.04	1	
4. Well-Being	.55**	.10*	.59**	1
<i>M</i>	4.97	4.23	.83	3.78
<i>SD</i>	.99	1.25	.22	.65

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

2.6. Data Collection Procedure and Ethics

Before conducting the study, official permissions were obtained for the implementation of the scales within the scope of this study. In this context, in collecting the research data, approval was obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of Recep Tayyip Erdogan University up to the meeting date of 20/04/2022 and meeting number 2022/88, indicating that the practice was ethically appropriate. Students who agreed to complete the questionnaires took part in the implementation. The measurement instruments were administered directly by the researchers. It took each respondent about 30 minutes to complete the questionnaires.

3. Findings

3.1. Multiple Regression Analysis Results

In this part, the results of the multiple regression analysis are given to show whether self-forgiveness and self-esteem explain well-being. In this research, two different multiple regression analyses have been carried out to see the extent to which self-forgiveness and self-esteem account for well-being (Table 2) and other-forgiveness and self-esteem account for well-being (Table 3). The results of these analyses are presented below:

Table 2. *The Effect of Self-Forgiveness and Self-Esteem on Well-Being*

<i>Independent variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Zero-order r</i>	<i>Partial r</i>	<i>TV</i>	<i>VIF</i>	<i>Durbin Watson</i>
Constant	1.56	.11		13.32	.000					
Self-Forgiveness	.22	.02	.34	9.07	.000	.54	.37	.77	1.29	1.94
Self-Esteem	1.28	.11	.43	11.40	.000	.59	.45	.77	1.29	
R=.66 R ² =.44 F _(2,502) = 200.39 p<.001										

Table 2 reveals a significant relationship between self-forgiveness, self-esteem, and well-being and that these variables account for 44% of the change in well-being (R=.66, R²=.44, F_(2,502)=200.39; p<.001). The relative importance order of predictive variables on well-being according to standardized regression coefficients is: self-esteem (β =.43; p<.01) and self-forgiveness (β =.34; p<.01). In light of these results, it is understood that the independent variables explain the dependent variable significantly.

Table 3. *The Effect of Other-Forgiveness and Self-Esteem on Well-Being*

<i>Independent variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Zero-order r</i>	<i>Partial r</i>	<i>TV</i>	<i>VIF</i>	<i>Durbin Watson</i>
Constant	2.10	.12		17.54	.000					
Other-forgiveness	.04	.01	.08	2.32	.020	.10	.10	.99	1.00	1.90
Self-Esteem	1.76	.10	.59	16.53	.000	.59	.59	.99	1.00	
R=.60 R ² =.36 F _(2,502) = 140.97 p<.001										

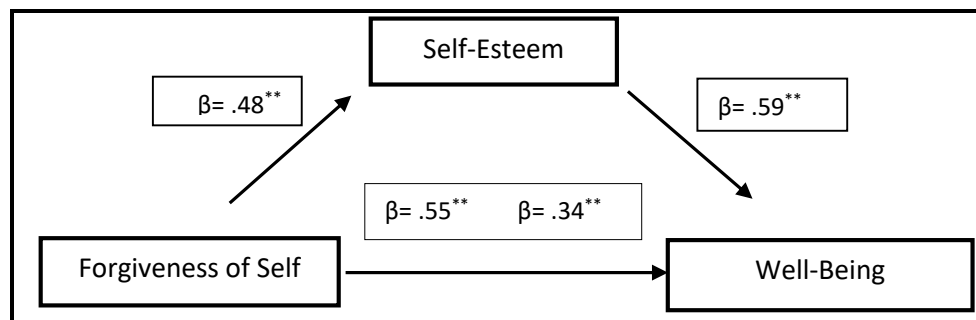
Table 3 reveals a significant relationship between other-forgiveness, self-esteem, and well-being, and that these variables together account for 36% of the change in well-being (R=.60, R²=.36, F_(2,502)=140.97; p<.001). The relative importance order of predictive variables on well-being according to standardized regression coefficients is: self-esteem (β =.59; p<.01) and other-forgiveness (β =.08;

$p < .05$). In light of these results, it is understood that the independent variables explain the dependent variable significantly.

3.2. Mediating Test Results

In this study, we have also investigated whether or not a mediating variable plays a significant role when the independent variable explains the dependent variable in the model that is developed. The testing of the mediation models is based on the following stages put forward by Baron and Kenny (1986). Firstly, the predictive role of each independent variable for the dependent and mediating variables was examined by simple regression analysis. After this stage, the Sobel test was conducted to investigate whether the intermediary variable has a significant role in the relationship between the variables. The Sobel test was conducted using a ready-made program developed by Preacher and Leonardelli (2014). The result of the analyses to determine the mediation of self-esteem, if any, in the relationship between self-forgiveness and well-being can be seen in Figure 1:

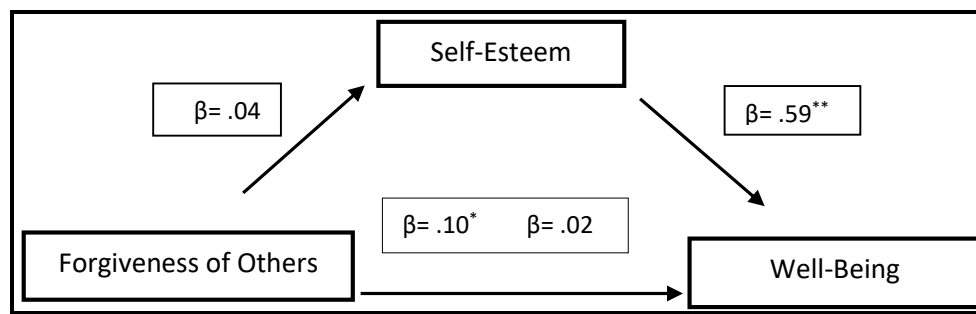
Figure 1. Beta Coefficients for the Mediation of Self-Esteem in the Relationship between Self-Forgiveness and Well-Being



** $p < .01$

According to the simple regression analysis result presented in Figure 1, the calculated beta (β) coefficient for self-forgiveness in well-being is .55; this value decreased to .34 when self-esteem was included in the model. Whether this decrease in beta (β) value is significant or not has been examined with the Sobel test. As a result of the test, this decline is significant. (Sobel test=9.54, Standard error=0.01, $p=0.000$). It is seen that self-forgiveness has had a direct effect on well-being. Nevertheless, self-forgiveness significantly explains self-esteem. Moreover, self-esteem significantly explains well-being. These results show that the stages required for self-forgiveness to explain well-being through the mediation of self-esteem have been accomplished. As a result of the test, it has been found that the indirect effect of self-forgiveness on well-being is significant, and self-esteem has a significant mediating effect. Therefore, it may be stated that the increase in self-esteem could also increase the positive effect of self-forgiveness on well-being. The result of the analyses to determine the mediation of self-esteem, if any, in the relationship between other-forgiveness and well-being can be seen in Figure 2:

Figure 2. Beta Coefficients for the Mediation of Self-Esteem in the Relationship between Other-Forgiveness and Well-Being



** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

According to the simple regression analysis result presented in Figure 2, other-forgiveness has a direct effect on well-being ($\beta = .10$). However, it has been understood that the calculated beta (β) coefficient for the self-esteem description of other-forgiveness is .04 and this value is not significant. Therefore, the second stage whereby "the independent variable significantly explains the mediating variable," has not been accomplished. Therefore, it is understood that other-forgiveness does not have a significant indirect effect on well-being, and thus, self-esteem does not play a significant mediating role.

4. Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendation

In the study, a significant positive correlation has been found between self-forgiveness and well-being. According to this result, *Hypothesis 1* was confirmed (*self-forgiveness explains well-being in a positive direction*). In a study by Halisdemir (2013) on university students, a significant positive correlation was discovered between self-forgiveness and well-being. In another study, Maltby et al. (2001) stated that individuals with low well-being levels display behaviors of self-forgiveness and other-forgiveness less frequently. Chan (2013) reported that the self-forgiveness was significantly and positively related to both life satisfaction and well-being levels. Similar to these findings, some studies have also found a positive relationship between forgiveness and happiness (Asıcı, 2019; García-Vázquez et al., 2020; Batik, et al., 2017; Shekhar, et al., 2016; Gürlek et al., 2019; Öztürk & Serter, 2018; Rana et al., 2014; Uzunbacak & Karagöz, 2022; Yangın & Camadan, 2020; Zümbül, 2019). The results of this study and those of the relevant studies may be interpreted as that, instead of constantly blaming oneself, the person may derive lessons from their mistakes and tolerate them, which will, in turn, lead to increased well-being. Likewise, Sells, and Hargrave (1998), defined self-forgiveness as a person's approach to their self with feelings of compassion, love, and generosity rather than dealing with negative emotions towards themselves such as anger and hate. Hence, when an individual turns their negativity into an opportunity to forgive themselves, it can turn into a situation that contributes to their well-being positively. At this point, one can think of forgiveness of themselves as a kind of maturation process. In this way, the person who forgives themselves can move away from the tensions caused by their negative emotions and thoughts; they can head towards the sensation of well-being.

As in self-forgiveness, there is also a significant positive relationship between other-forgiveness and well-being. According to this result, *Hypothesis 2* was confirmed (*other-forgiveness explains well-being in a positive direction*). Mansfield et al. (2015) have found a positive relationship between other-forgiveness and well-being. Moreover, Avery (2008) has concluded in her study that

individuals with a lower tendency towards other-forgiveness also have lower well-being levels. McCullough et al. (2001) have determined in a study that other-forgiveness is a positive predictor of well-being. The results of this study and those of the relevant study may be interpreted as follows: if a person, instead of developing a constant blaming attitude towards the person that they think harmed them, acts more tolerantly and embracing towards that person, this will contribute to their well-being. Similarly, McCullough (2000) and McCullough and Witvliet (2002) have also stated that the victim's forgiveness of the offender increases the well-being level of the victim. Since forgiveness helps eliminate the factors undermining affairs with others, it contributes to developing healthier relationships with other people or repairing broken relationships (Baumeister et al., 1998). In the "Process Model" developed by Enright and Fitzgibbons (2000), it is stated that during the deepening phase, which is the last stage of the other-forgiveness process, the negative thoughts and emotions developed by the individual against the person who harms them are reduced; moreover, positive thoughts and emotions arise accordingly. In this respect, it is understood that increasing the individual's reaction to forgive someone else reveals various positive thoughts and emotions. Therefore, it can be said that this situation will have positive consequences on the individual in particular, and their well-being will be affected positively.

We have found a positive relationship between self-esteem and well-being. According to this result, *Hypothesis 3* was confirmed (*self-esteem explains well-being in a positive direction*). A similar study by Ysseldyk et al. (2007) has found that self-esteem explains well-being. Moreover, Yıldız and Baytemir (2016) have revealed that self-esteem may predict well-being on a significant level. Ayyash-Abdo and Alamuddin (2007) conducted a study with university students and concluded that self-esteem is a predictor of subjective well-being. Different studies are showing that there are positive relationships between self-esteem and well-being (Bektaş & Arslan, 2020; Demir & Duman, 2019; Doğan & Eryılmaz, 2013; Kong et al., 2013; Lin, 2015; Toker & Kalıpçı, 2021; Totan et al., 2019). These results seem to be consistent with our results. Diener (1984) has stated that the self-esteem levels of individuals increase as the difference between the real selves they have and the ideal selves that want to decrease. According to the "target theory" that was developed by Wilson in the 1960s, an individual has a set of goals throughout their life, and they take pleasure from their life and increase their subjective well-being to the extent they reach these goals (Köker, 1991). In light of the explanations above and the results of this study, it is understood that high self-esteem levels contribute to the well-being of the individual. Likewise, Bajaj et al. (2016) have revealed positive relationships between self-esteem and well-being. DiGiuseppe et al. (2013) have stated that individuals make evaluations according to various thoughts while perceiving themselves, other people, and life. It is stressed that various irrational beliefs are effective in their perception of unreal and negative events. They have also argued that the "beliefs of worthlessness" developed by an individual towards themselves through these irrational beliefs have had negative impacts on their mental health. Based on these explanations, it is regarded that the well-being of individuals cannot be independent of negative evaluations of their feelings of self-esteem. In other words, it can be said that an individual's perception of themselves and their well-being may change in the same direction.

The results of this study suggest a significant positive relationship between self-forgiveness and self-esteem. According to this result, *Hypothesis 4* was confirmed (*Self-forgiveness explains self-esteem in a positive direction*). In the related literature, Alpay (2009) found that self-forgiveness was positively related to self-esteem. Eaton et al. (2006) have found a positive and significant relationship between forgiveness and self-esteem. Different studies have shown positive relationships between forgiveness and self-esteem (Strelan & Zdaniuk, 2015; Xie et al., 2020; Yao et al., 2017; Yıldırım et al.,

2022). Ellis (1998) states that individuals who develop unrealistic expectations of themselves develop a low tolerance for negative evaluations of themselves once these expectations are not realized properly. Burns (1980) points out that the failure to meet these expectations leads to criticism and punishment. In light of these explanations, it can be said that one's inability to forgive oneself will result in negative reactions to the self in particular. On the other hand, McCullough et al. (2000) have emphasized that forgiveness is an intrinsic process with its aspect as a change in the intrinsic emotions of the individual. Worthington et al. (2000) argued about forgiveness that, firstly a person should be aware of the harm inflicted on themselves and then provide positive reactions to the person who committed the crime to improve their relationship. About these explanations, it is believed that the person's self-forgiveness is related to their perception of themselves. Therefore, it may be suggested that whether or not one can forgive oneself would explain their self-perception more. In the context of the explanations made above and the results of this study, it is believed that a person who can forgive oneself has a higher respect for himself.

In our study, it has been seen that the correlation between other-forgiveness and self-esteem is not significant. According to this result, *Hypothesis 5* was not confirmed (*Other-forgiveness explains self-esteem in a positive direction*). Also, in a study conducted with adults by Fu et al. (2004), it was found that forgiveness of others is not related to self-esteem. On the other hand, research is available that indicates a positive and meaningful relationship between the forgiveness of others and self-esteem (Gündüz, 2014; Strelan, 2007). Apart from that, Wohl et al. (2008) reported a negative relationship between self-esteem and other-forgiveness, but not at a significant level. Considering that self-esteem and forgiveness are mostly connected with the inner processes of a person, it is likely to be more weakly related to interpersonal relationships. This affects the nature and strength of the relationship.

In our study, it has been seen that self-forgiveness explains well-being through self-esteem in a positive direction. According to this result, *Hypothesis 6* was confirmed (*self-forgiveness positively explains well-being through the mediation of self-esteem*). In the review of the relevant literature, to the authors' knowledge, no study examined and discussed self-forgiveness, self-esteem, and well-being together. About this topic, Waterman (1993) and Masterson (2013) have emphasized that well-being is an intrinsic process. In this process experienced by an individual, the individual's beliefs, assessment, and self-esteem may provide information about who that person is and what they will do (Burns, 1982). According to Ryff and Singer (2008), well-being is related to the belief of the person in their capacity to reach their goals of regulating their behavior with an intrinsic process which is important for their self-esteem. Mann et al. (2004) have stated that, in similarity to well-being, self-esteem also arises as a result of an intrinsic assessment by the individual. These authors also accepted the idea that self-esteem is a significant explanatory variable for well-being and acts as a buffer against negative life experiences. It is emphasized that self-forgiveness is accomplished as a result of an inner process, similar to well-being and self-esteem (Holmgren, 1998). According to Enright (1996), one may feel guilty and embarrassed or regretful for their reaction to a specific situation. Reflecting on the situation in a balanced way in their mind, the person realizes that these negative emotions may change and thus gets insight by understanding that they are not perfect. A negative relationship was found between forgiveness and maladaptive perfectionism (Camadan & Sari, 2021). It may be stated that this process helps the person make a more realistic evaluation of self, eventually increasing their self-esteem. An increase in self-esteem may lead one to feel better in the mental sense by overcoming negative emotions.

In the current study, it was found that other-forgiveness did not have a significant indirect effect on well-being, and self-esteem did not play a significant mediating role. Moreover, it has been observed in explaining well-being that self-esteem and self-forgiveness have similar significance levels, which are higher than other-forgiveness. According to this result, *Hypothesis 7* was not confirmed (*other-forgiveness positively explains well-being through the mediation of self-esteem*). According to Avery (2008), self-forgiveness involves a process that consists of the cognitive and behavioral reaction of the individual towards their self. The individual accepts themselves as a result of this process and feels mentally better. Other-forgiveness is explained as a situation that does not directly emphasize the intrinsic process of the individual but requires them to take responsibility (McCullough et al., 1997). Mansfield et al. (2015) have stated that, for individuals to be able to forgive a mistake against them, they need to empathize with the person who has made the mistake and take responsibility to forget the harm inflicted on them, which will allow them to feel better. They have also stated that the effects of self-forgiveness on well-being are more significant than other-forgiveness. The study by Avery (2008) also supports this result.

This study has some limitations. First, the research is limited to data collected from college students. At the same time, the research also has limitations arising from the quantitative research approach. The data are cross-sectional, which prohibits any causal interpretations. Therefore, it is not possible to make causal interpretations based on the results of this research. In light of the results and limitations of the study, several recommendations have been put forward. Future research may be expanded to cover students from different universities or students who are studying at different levels of education (middle school, high school). Apart from this, in future studies, different hypotheses may be tested on the model using different psychological (narcissism, depression, empathy, social support) and demographic (age, economic status, marital status) variables. Our results may be used as a reference for psychological training offered at university psychological counseling centers as well as individual or group counseling processes. From this point of view, it would be beneficial to include activities that consider the variables of forgiveness and self-esteem as a psychological counseling activity on well-being.

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Geniş Özet

Giriş

İyi oluş kavramı, psikoloji literatüründe genel bir ruh sağlığı kavramı olarak yerini almıştır (Diener ve ark., 2003). Vaillant'a (2003) göre ruh sağlığı olgunluk, duygusal ve sosyal zekâ, uyum ve öznel iyilik anlamına gelmektedir. Günümüzde iyi oluşun ruh sağlığının olumlu bir yönü olduğu ileri sürülmektedir (Diener ve Seligman, 2002). Ryan ve Deci (2001) iyi oluşu açıklamak için öznel ve psikolojik iyi oluş kavramlarını öne çıkarmıştır.

Bu araştırma affetme ve benlik saygısının iyi oluşu açıklayıp açıklamadığını belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiyi araştıran çalışmalar arasında Neff (2011) benlik saygısının iyi oluşun anlamlı ve pozitif bir yordayıcısı olduğunu bulmuştur. Farklı çalışmalar da benlik saygısı ile iyi oluş arasında pozitif bir ilişki olduğunu göstermektedir (Bektaş ve Arslan, 2020; Demir ve Duman, 2019; Doğan ve Eryılmaz, 2013; Kong vd., 2013; Lin, 2015; Toker ve Kalıpçı, 2021; Totan vd., 2019). İlgili literatürde affetmenin benlik saygısı ile ilişkili olduğunu gösteren çalışmalara rastlamak mümkündür (Strelan ve Zdaniuk, 2015; Xie vd., 2020; Yao vd., 2017; Yıldırım vd., 2022). Turnage ve arkadaşları (2012) affetme ve benlik saygısı arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmış ve benlik saygısının hem kendini hem de başkalarını affetmenin önemli bir yordayıcısı olduğunu bildirmiştir. Yukarıda bahsedilen çalışmalara paralel olarak, Eaton ve arkadaşları (2006) affetme ve benlik saygısı arasında pozitif bir ilişki bulmuştur. Ayrıca, bazı çalışmalarda affetmenin iyi oluşu doğrudan açıkladığı ortaya konmuştur (Temoshok ve Chandra, 2000; Worthington ve diğerleri, 2001). Bir başka çalışmada ise affetmenin iyi oluşu doğrudan açıkladığı ve yakınlık duygularının affetme ile iyi oluş arasında aracılık etmede önemli bir rolü olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır (Bono ve diğerleri, 2008). Dolayısıyla affetme, iyi oluşu hem doğrudan hem de çeşitli değişkenler aracılığıyla dolaylı olarak açıklayan bir değişken olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu açıklamalar ışığında, affetmenin iyi oluşu doğrudan mı yoksa benlik saygısı aracılığı ile dolaylı olarak mı açıkladığının belirlenmesi önemli bulunmuştur.

Üniversite yaşamında öğrencilerden kişisel kararlar almaları, çeşitli sorumluluklar üstlenmeleri ve bulundukları ortama uyum sağlamaları beklenmektedir. Yüksek benlik saygısının bireyin yaşamını bağımsız olarak sürdürebilmesini ve bu sürece uyum sağlayabilmesini kolaylaştırabileceği düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca üniversite yaşamında bireylerin kendilerini doğru ifade edebilmeleri, karşıdakini anlayabilmeleri, farklı düşünce ve duygulara anlayış gösterebilmeleri, sağlıklı ilişkiler kurabilmeleri beklenmektedir. Bu noktada bireyin istenmeyen durumlarla karşılaştığında hem kendisini hem de diğer insanları affedebilme konusundaki gelişimsel yeteneğinin kişilerarası ilişkilerini olumlu yönde etkileyebileceği düşünülmektedir. Bu açıklamalar ışığında bireylerin üniversite yıllarında daha yüksek benlik saygısı ve affetme eğilimlerinin ruh sağlıklarını olumlu yönde etkileyeceği tahmin edilmektedir.

Literatür taraması sonucunda iyi oluşu, affetme ve benlik saygısı aracılığıyla açıklayan herhangi bir araştırmaya rastlanmamıştır. Bu bağlamda bu araştırmanın literatürdeki bu boşluğu doldurmaya yardımcı olması beklenmektedir. Affetme ve benlik saygısının iyi oluşu açıklayıp açıklamadığını belirlemek için bir model oluşturulmuştur. Bu model kapsamında aşağıdaki hipotezler test edilmiştir.

- Hipotez 1: Kendini affetme, iyi oluşu olumlu yönde açıklamaktadır.
- Hipotez 2: Başkalarını affetme, iyi oluşu olumlu yönde açıklamaktadır.
- Hipotez 3: Benlik saygısı, iyi oluşu olumlu yönde açıklamaktadır.
- Hipotez 4: Kendini affetme, benlik saygısını olumlu yönde açıklamaktadır.
- Hipotez 5: Başkalarını affetme, benlik saygısını olumlu yönde açıklamaktadır.
- Hipotez 6: Kendini affetme, benlik saygısı aracılığıyla iyi oluşu olumlu yönde açıklamaktadır.
- Hipotez 7: Başkalarını affetme, benlik saygısı aracılığıyla iyi oluşu olumlu yönde açıklamaktadır.

Yöntem

Nicel araştırma yaklaşımına dayanan bu çalışma, ilişkisel tarama modeli çerçevesinde yürütülmüştür. Bu kapsamda araştırmada affetme ve benlik saygısının iyi oluşu nasıl açıkladığı incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklemini Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesine devam eden 505 öğrenciden (kız=317, erkek=188) oluşmaktadır. Katılımcılar, araştırmacılara zaman, para ve emek açısından kolaylık sağlayan kolayda örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilmiştir (Büyüköztürk vd., 2016). Araştırmaya katılan öğrenciler eğitim fakültesinin çeşitli programlarında (Bilgisayar ve Öğretim Teknolojileri Eğitimi (141), Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık (102), İlköğretim Matematik Eğitimi (150), İlköğretim Fen Bilgisi Eğitimi (46), Türkçe Eğitimi (32), Temel Eğitim (19), Sosyal Bilgiler Eğitimi (15)) öğrenim görmektedirler. Araştırmaya farklı sınıf düzeylerinden öğrenciler dâhil edilmiştir (1. sınıf=127, 2. sınıf=133, 3. sınıf=125, 4. sınıf=120). (Ort.yaş=20.70, SSyaş=2.09). Araştırmada veri toplama aracı olarak; Warwick-Edinburgh Mental İyi Oluş Ölçeği, Heartland Affetme Ölçeği, Rosenberg Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği ve Kişisel Bilgi Formu kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde öncelikle; bağımsız değişkenler arasında çoklu doğrusallık ve tekliklik sorunlarını test etmek için Pearson korelasyon analizi yapılmıştır. Çalışmadaki bağımsız değişkenlerin bağımlı değişkenleri açıklayıp açıklamadığını belirlemek için basit regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. Aracı değişkenlerin çalışmadaki bağımsız değişkenlerin bağımlı değişkenleri açıklamada önemli bir rol oynayıp oynamadığını incelemek için çoklu regresyon analizi ve Sobel testi uygulanmıştır. Araştırma kapsamında gerçekleştirilen çoklu regresyon analizi için ön koşul olarak bazı varsayımların ("örneklem büyüklüğü yeterlidir", "kayıp değerler giderilmiştir", "uç değerler giderilmiştir", "tek değişkenli ve çok değişkenli normallik bulunmuştur", "değişkenler arasında çoklu bağlantı düşüktür" ve "bağımsız ve bağımlı değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiler doğrusaldır") karşılanması gerekmektedir (Çokluk vd., 2016). Analizlerde bu varsayımların doğrulandığı anlaşıldıktan sonra çoklu regresyon analizine geçilmiştir. Ayrıca, araştırmada kullanılan ölçme araçlarının bu araştırma için geçerli ve güvenilir olup olmadığı doğrulayıcı faktör analizi ve Cronbach iç tutarlılık katsayısı hesaplanarak belirlenmiştir. Verilerin analizinde IBM SPSS AMOS 23 ve SPSS 22.00 yazılım programlarından yararlanılmıştır.

Bulgular

Araştırmada kendini affetmenin ve benlik saygısının iyi oluşu ne ölçüde açıkladığını ve diğerlerini affetmenin ve benlik saygısının iyi oluşu ne ölçüde açıkladığını ortaya koymak için iki farklı çoklu regresyon analizi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmada kendini affetme, benlik saygısı ve iyi oluş arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu ve bu değişkenlerin iyi oluştaki değişimin %44'ünü açıkladığı ortaya koyulmuştur ($R=.66$, $R^2=.44$, $F_{(2,502)}=200.39$; $p<.001$). Standardize edilmiş regresyon katsayılarına göre

yordayıcı değişkenlerin iyi oluş üzerindeki göreceli önem sırası şöyledir: Benlik saygısı ($\beta=.43$; $p<.01$) ve kendini affetme ($\beta=.34$; $p<.01$). Bu sonuçlar ışığında, bağımsız değişkenlerin bağımlı değişkeni anlamlı bir şekilde açıkladığı anlaşılmaktadır. Bununla birlikte araştırma sonucunda diğerlerini affetme, benlik saygısı ve iyi oluş arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu ve bu değişkenlerin birlikte iyi oluştaki değişimin %36'sını açıkladığı ortaya koyulmuştur ($R=.60$, $R^2=.36$, $F_{(2,502)}=140.97$; $p<.001$). Standardize edilmiş regresyon katsayılarına göre yordayıcı değişkenlerin iyi oluş üzerindeki göreceli önem sırası şöyledir: Benlik saygısı ($\beta=.59$; $p<.01$) ve diğerlerini affetme ($\beta=.08$; $p<.05$). Bu sonuçlar ışığında, bağımsız değişkenlerin bağımlı değişkeni anlamlı bir şekilde açıkladığı anlaşılmaktadır.

Araştırma kapsamında kendini affetme ile iyi oluş arasındaki ilişkide benlik saygısının aracı bir rolünün bulunup bulunmadığını belirlemek için yapılan analizlerin sonucunda; kendini affetmenin iyi oluş üzerindeki dolaylı etkisinin anlamlı olduğu ve benlik saygısının anlamlı bir aracılık etkisine sahip olduğu bulunmuştur. Dolayısıyla benlik saygısındaki artışın, kendini affetmenin iyi oluş üzerindeki olumlu etkisini artırabileceği söylenebilir. Ancak, diğerlerini affetmenin iyi oluş üzerinde anlamlı bir dolaylı etkisi olmadığı ve dolayısıyla benlik saygısının değişkenler arasında anlamlı bir aracılık rolü oynamadığı belirlenmiştir.

Tartışma, Sonuç ve Öneriler

Bu araştırmada, kendini affetmenin benlik saygısı aracılığıyla iyi oluşu pozitif yönde açıkladığı bulunmuştur. İlgili literatür taramasında, kendini affetme, benlik saygısı ve iyi oluşu birlikte inceleyen bir çalışmaya rastlanmamıştır. Bu konuda Waterman (1993) ve Masterson (2013) iyi oluşun içsel bir süreç olduğunu vurgulamışlardır. Ryff ve Singer'a (2008) göre iyi oluş, kişinin benlik saygısı için önemli olan içsel bir süreçle bireylerin davranışlarını düzenleme hedeflerine ulaşma kapasitesine olan inancı ile ilgilidir. Mann ve arkadaşları (2004), iyi oluşa benzer şekilde, benlik saygısının da bireyin içsel bir değerlendirmesi sonucunda ortaya çıktığını belirtmişlerdir. Bu araştırmacılar ayrıca, iyi olma için önemli bir açıklayıcı değişken olmasının yanı sıra, benlik saygısının olumsuz yaşam deneyimlerine karşı bir tampon görevi gördüğü fikrini kabul etmişlerdir. Kendini affetmenin de iyi oluş ve benlik saygısına benzer şekilde içsel bir süreç sonucunda gerçekleştiği vurgulanmıştır (Holmgren, 1998). Enright'a (1996) göre, kişi belirli bir duruma verdiği tepkiden dolayı suçluluk, utanç veya pişmanlık hissedebilir. Durumu zihninde dengeli bir şekilde yansıtan kişi, bu olumsuz duyguların değişebileceğini fark eder ve böylece mükemmel olmadığını anlayarak iç görüşü kazanır. Nitekim affetme ile uyumsuz mükemmeliyetçilik arasında negatif bir ilişki bulunmuştur (Camadan ve Sari, 2021). Bu sürecin kişinin kendisiyle ilgili daha gerçekçi bir değerlendirme yapmasına yardımcı olduğu ve nihayetinde öz saygısını artırdığı söylenebilir. Özsaygıdaki artış, kişinin olumsuz duygularının üstesinden gelerek zihinsel anlamda daha iyi hissetmesine yol açabilir.

Bu araştırmada diğerlerini affetmenin iyi oluş üzerinde dolaylı bir etkisinin olmadığı, dolayısıyla diğerlerini affetme ile iyi oluş arasında benlik saygısının anlamlı bir aracı rol oynamadığı anlaşılmıştır. Ayrıca iyi oluşun açıklanmasında benlik saygısı ve kendini affetmenin benzer anlamlılık düzeylerine sahip olduğu ve diğerlerini affetmeden daha yüksek etkisinin olduğu görülmüştür. Avery'ye (2008) göre kendini affetme, bireyin kendisine yönelik bilişsel ve davranışsal tepkisinden oluşan bir süreci içermektedir. Bu süreç sonucunda birey kendini kabul eder ve zihinsel olarak daha iyi hisseder. Diğerlerini affetme, bireyin içsel sürecini doğrudan vurgulamayan ancak sorumluluk almasını gerektiren bir durum olarak açıklanmaktadır (McCullough ve diğerleri, 1997). Mansfield ve diğerleri (2015), bireylerin kendisine yapılan bir hatayı affedebilmesi için, hatayı yapan kişiyle empati kurması ve kendisine verilen zararı unutmaya sorumluluğunu üstlenmesi gerektiğini ve bunun da kişinin kendisini

daha iyi hissetmesini sağlayacağını belirtmişlerdir. Bununla birlikte kendini affetmenin iyi oluş üzerindeki etkisinin diğerlerini affetmeye göre daha anlamlı olduğunu rotaya koymuşlardır.

Bu çalışmanın bazı sınırlılıkları bulunmaktadır. Öncelikle, araştırma üniversite öğrencilerinden toplanan verilerle sınırlıdır. Aynı zamanda araştırmanın nicel araştırma yaklaşımından kaynaklanan sınırlılıkları da bulunmaktadır. Veriler kesitseldir ve bu da herhangi bir nedensel yorum yapılmasını engellemektedir. Araştırmanın sonuçları ve sınırlılıkları ışığında çeşitli önerilerde bulunulmuştur. Gelecekte yapılacak araştırmalar farklı üniversitelerden öğrencileri ya da farklı eğitim seviyelerinde (lise, ortaokul) öğrenim gören öğrencileri kapsayacak şekilde genişletilebilir. Bunun dışında, gelecekte yapılabilecek çalışmalarda farklı psikolojik (narsisizm, depresyon, empati, sosyal destek) ve demografik (yaş, ekonomik durum, medeni durum) değişkenler kullanılarak araştırmadaki model üzerinde farklı hipotezler test edilebilir. Bununla birlikte araştırmanın sonuçları üniversitelerin psikolojik danışma merkezlerinde verilen psiko-eğitimlerde, bireysel ya da grupla psikolojik danışma çalışmalarında referans olarak kullanılabilir. Ayrıca iyi oluşa yönelik bir psikolojik danışma faaliyeti olarak affetme ve benlik saygısı değişkenlerini dikkate alan etkinliklere yer verilmesi faydalı olacaktır.

Yayın Etiği Beyanı

Bu araştırmanın, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimler Etik Kurulu tarafından 20/04/2022 tarihinde 2022/88 sayılı kararıyla verilen etik kurul izni bulunmaktadır. Bu araştırmanın planlanmasından, uygulanmasına, verilerin toplanmasından verilerin analizine kadar olan tüm süreçte “Yükseköğretim Kurumları Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiği Yönergesi” kapsamında uyulması belirtilen tüm kurallara uyulmuştur. Yönergenin ikinci bölümü olan “Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etiğine Aykırı Eylemler” başlığı altında belirtilen eylemlerden hiçbiri gerçekleştirilmemiştir. Bu araştırmanın yazım sürecinde bilimsel, etik ve alıntı kurallarına uyulmuş; toplanan veriler üzerinde herhangi bir tahrifat yapılmamıştır. Bu çalışma herhangi başka bir akademik yayın ortamına değerlendirme için gönderilmemiştir.

Araştırmacıların Katkı Oranı Beyanı

Birinci Yazar % 50, İkinci Yazar % 40, Üçüncü Yazar % 10 oranında katkı sağlamıştır.

Çatışma Beyanı

Araştırmanın yazarları olarak herhangi bir çıkar/çatışma beyanımız olmadığını ifade ederiz.