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Research Article

Life Satisfaction and Loneliness as Predictive Variables in Psychological Resilience Levels of Emerging Adults*

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to reveal the predictive power of the individuals in emerging adulthood in terms of personal strength, structural style, social competence, family cohesion and social resources which are sub dimensions of psychological resilience. The study group consisted of 659 university students in total, 543 of whom were women (82%) and 116 were men (18%). The randomized cluster sampling method was used to create the study group. Pearson Moments Multiplication Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to analyze the data. In the study, it was found that life satisfaction and loneliness levels of university students who were in emerging adulthood period were related to structural style, future perception, family cohesion, self-perception, social competence and social resources which was sub- subscales of psychological resilience. The results of the study revealed that psychological resilience is significantly predicted by life satisfaction and loneliness.

Key Words

Psychological resilience • Life satisfaction • Loneliness • Emerging adulthood

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The period, considered as emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2000; 2004) which is between 18 and 25 years of age and in which different characteristics are demonstrated, is a developmental period in the form of a transition period in which socio-cultural, economic and demographic changes are observed (Arnett, 2006). The characteristics of this period are: attachment and responsibilities in adulthood are delayed and it is seen relatively in middle and upper socio-economic levels and in cultures where the limitations and pressures of social roles are less seen (Morsünbül, 2013). According to Arnett (2000), this period is a period in which the discovery of demographic, subjective and identity is experienced, and the positive point of view is effective.

Nowadays, there is tendency towards studies on topics such as forgiveness, well-being, subjective well-being have increased in positive psychology field (Gable & Haidt, 2005). One of the important issues of positive psychology is psychological resilience. Garnezy (1993), considers the concept of psychological resilience as the power of being able to return to its original state after being faced with any stress situation.

Friborg, Barlaug, and Martinussen (2005), states that psychological resilience consists of self-perception, perception of future, structural style, social competence, family cohesion and social resources. According to Friborg, Hjemdal, Rosenvinge, and Martinussen (2003), self-perception is the way people try to understand their own attitudes and beliefs. The perception of the future is how the individual looks at the future. The structural style is the individual's characteristics such as the ability to maintain the daily work of the individual, the ability to plan, and the self-confidence, discipline and strengths. Social competence is related to the social support that the individual has. Finally, social resources refer to the support of individual's acquaintances such as friends and relatives.

Life satisfaction is a process of reasoning that an individual evaluates cognitively how satisfied he / she is in his/her life (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Life satisfaction is significantly affected by factors such as income, family, and employment of individuals (Lucas, Clark, Georgellis, & Diener, 2004; Oishi, Diener, Lucas, & Suh, 1999; Suldo & Huebner, 2006). Moreover, social support, self-esteem and optimism also have effects on life satisfaction (Barrett, 1999; Benyamini & Leventhal, 2004; Diener & Diener, 1995). Furthermore, it has been reported that individuals with high life satisfaction are compatible with their friends and family, and their academic achievement is high (Gilman & Huebner, 2006).

Loneliness, perceived stress and depression may affect life satisfaction (Extremera, Duran, & Rey, 2009). Loneliness is defined as the lack of social relations of individuals (Peplau & Perlman, 1984), insufficient attachment to relatives, feeling of lack of friends to share interests activities (Weiss, 1973). Loneliness is a negative feeling that can be felt in every period of life such as adolescents, emerging adulthood and senility (Huebner, 2004; Neto, 2001; Joshanloo & Afshari, 2011). While loneliness is expected to be seen in older ages, it is more common among adolescents and young adults (Çeçen, 2007). It is observed that the last periods of adolescence and the beginning of adulthood are dangerous periods especially in terms of feeling loneliness (Bıyık, 2004).

Adult can feel loneliness when they are away from their parents or away from home (Nelson & Chen, 2007). Some of them feel weak and face psychological and physical disturbances. However, some of them continue their lives and produce the necessary power by themselves (Terzi, 2008). In the light of the information above, it is aimed in this study to reveal the predictive relations among loneliness, life satisfaction and psychological resilience in emerging adulthood -period.

Method

Research Model

This research is a relational screening model which is a type of general screening model. General screening models refer to screening studies carried out on a whole sample of the universe or a sample taken to reach a judgment about the universe consisting of a large number of elements (Karasar, 2011). Relational screening is a research model to determine the relationship between two or more variables and to obtain clues about cause and effect (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Özcan, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2013).

Study Group

The study group consists of a total number of 659 university students, 543 (82%) of whom are women and 116 (18%) are men, who are currently studying at undergraduate and pedagogical formation education programmes at a university in Central Anatolia. The age of the participants range between 18 and 28 and the average age is 24.08 ($Ss = 4.47$).

Measurement Tools

Psychological Resilience Scale for Adults. The Psychological Resilience Scale for Adults was developed by Friborg et al. (2003) and was adapted to Turkish by Basım and Çetin (2011). PRSA has a total number of 33 items in 6 sub-dimensions and it is a 5-point Likert-type scale to determine whether the psychological resilience level is low or high. The internal consistency coefficients of the sub-dimensions of the scale were between 0.66 and 0.81 and test-retest reliability was found to range between 0.68 and 0.81 by Basım and Çetin (2011). The Cronbach's alpha in the current study was .54 for structural style, .78 for future perception, .75 for family cohesion, .77 for perception of self, .63 for social competence, and .71 for social resources.

Life Satisfaction Scale. The Life Satisfaction Scale was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) in order to determine the satisfaction of individuals with their lives and it was adapted to Turkish by Köker (1991). The scale consisting of 5 items is a one-dimensional structure and it is a Likert-type scale (1 = Not suitable, 7 = Very suitable). Diener et al. (1985) which determined the test-retest correlation coefficient obtained by the two-month interval as 0.82 and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient as 0.87 for the reliability studies of the Life Satisfaction Scale. Yetim (1991) determined the adjusted split-half value as 0.75 and Kuder Richardson -20 value as 0.78. Within the scope of this study, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0.80.

UCLA Loneliness Scale. UCLA Loneliness Scale was developed by Russel, Peplau, and Ferguson (1978) in order to measure the general loneliness of individuals. However, it was revised and finalized by Russell, Paplau, and Cutrona (1980) and the adaptation studies to Turkish were done by Demir (1989). The scale consisting of 20 items was presented as a one-dimensional structure and it is a 4- Likert-type scale (1 = I have never experienced this, 4 = I often experience this situation). High scores indicate that individuals experience more loneliness. The cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0.96 (Demir, 1989). The Cronbach's alpha in the current study was .88.

Data Analysis

In the analysis of the data, first of all it was examined whether there is any missing data and it was determined that there is no missing data in the variable set. In the unidirectional and bidirectional extreme value analysis, 2 observations were excluded from the data set because of their outlier value property. For this reason, data were analyzed over 659 people. Data were analyzed using SPSS 18.00 package program. In order to determine the relationship between psychological resilience, loneliness and life satisfaction of the participants, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Technique was applied. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to determine whether loneliness and life satisfaction variables significantly predicts the level of psychological resilience. Multiple regression analysis is an analysis to estimate the dependent variable based on two or more independent variables associated with the dependent variable. The significance level of .05 was taken into consideration in the interpretation of the statistical results.

Findings

Whether psychological resilience, loneliness or life satisfaction scores has any relations were analyzed with pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

Correlation Results for Psychological Resilience, Loneliness and Life Satisfaction

	Skewnes Kurtosis										
PRSA total	-.42	-.15	1								
1.Structural style	-.30	-.26	.53**	1							
2.Future percept.	-.58	-.16	.69**	.36**	1						
3.Family cohesion	-.71	.08	.68**	.24**	.35**	1					
4.Percept. of self	-.44	-.09	.70**	.30**	.48**	.28**	1				
5.Social compet.	-.48	.09	.66**	.16**	.34**	.23**	.41**	1			
6.Social resources	-.93	.73	.78**	.27**	.40**	.56**	.38**	.46**	1		
LSS	-.59	.06	.45**	.21**	.47**	.37**	.27**	.23**	.31**	1	
LS	.74	.11	-.56**	-.15**	-.40**	-.30**	-.40**	-.52**	-.46**	-.38**	1

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$ PRSA: Psychological Resilience Scale for Adults, LSS: Life Satisfaction Scale, LS:Loneliness Scale

As can be seen in Table 1, structural style which is the subscales of Life Satisfaction Scale and Psychological Resilience Scale ($r = .21$, $p < .01$) has a low, moderate positive and significant correlation with perception of future ($r = .47$, $p < .01$), family cohesion ($r = .37$, $p < .01$), perception of self ($r = .27$, $p < .01$) and social competence ($r = .23$, $p < .01$). As a subscale of Loneliness Scale and Psychological Resilience ($r = -.15$, $p < .01$) has a low and moderate negative and significant correlation with perception of future ($r = -.40$, $p < .01$), family cohesion ($r = -.30$, $p < .01$), self-perception ($r = -.40$, $p < .01$), social competence ($r = -.52$, $p < .01$) and social resources dimensions ($r = -.46$, $p < .01$).

Table 2

Results of Regression Analysis Regarding The Scores of Life Satisfaction and Loneliness Predicting Psychological Resilience Levels (N=659)

Variables	B	SH	β	t	p
Constant	135.222	3.802	-	35.565	.000*
Life Satisfaction	.88	.10	.28	8.56	.000*
Loneliness	-.88	.07	-.45	-13.66	.000*
R=.62, R ² =.38, F(2.656)=202.650, *p<.001, Durbin-Watson=1.983					

In Table 2, life satisfaction and loneliness levels were evaluated with multiple regression analysis in terms of psychological resilience. When Table 2 is examined, life satisfaction and loneliness significantly predict psychological resilience ($R=.62$, $R^2=.38$, $F(2.656) = 202.650$, $p<.05$). The mentioned variables explain 38% of the total variance of psychological resilience. When the results regarding the explanation of psychological resilience variables are examined, it is found that life satisfaction ($\beta=.28$, $t=8.56$, $p<.001$) is a positive predictor and loneliness ($\beta=-.45$, $t=-13.66$, $p<.001$) is a negative predictor.

Discussion

The present study aimed to reveal whether there is a relationship between life satisfaction, loneliness and psychological resilience levels of university students in emerging adulthood period or not. As the first finding of the study, there is a significant relationship between psychological resilience, life satisfaction and loneliness.

According to the research findings, there is a positive correlation between life satisfaction, total psychological resilience and psychological resilience sub-dimensions. In other words, as life satisfaction increases, psychological resistance increases. From this point of view, people with high life satisfaction level can be said to be psychologically resilient people, too. In the literature, there are studies supporting this phenomenon (Eryılmaz, 2012; Flaherty, 1992; Goldstein & Brooks, 2005; Gümüşbaş, 2008; Luther & Zigler, 1992; Masten & Reed, 2002; Ülker-Tümlü & Reçepoğlu, 2013). When these studies are examined, it is observed that life satisfaction and psychological resilience are related in almost every age group and social group.

According to the research findings, there is a negative correlation between loneliness and total psychological resilience and psychological resilience sub-dimensions. In other words, as loneliness increases, psychological resistance decreases. Lack of variables such as peer support, family support, empathy, perseverance of struggle which are the internal and external protective factors that increase psychological resilience among individuals with a high level of loneliness can reveal a negative relationship between psychological resilience and loneliness.

There are studies in the literature that support the existence of the relationship between psychological resilience and loneliness. For example, Kılıç (2014) revealed the relationship between psychological resilience and loneliness in his thesis study with university students. Furthermore, significant negative correlations have been found between loneliness and psychological resilience total scores and psychological resilience sub-dimensions. The findings of another study conducted with elderly people show that living with their children and family reduce their loneliness while increasing their self-esteem, life satisfaction, psychological well-being and physical health.

This study shows some limitations in terms of sample since it is limited to individuals in emerging adulthood period and university students. In addition, research does not reveal a causal relationship in terms of method. This research will provide an authentic contribution to the literature in terms of revealing the predictive relations between psychological resilience, life satisfaction and loneliness. It is because most of the research studies about life satisfaction and psychological resilience are focused on adulthood and those related to loneliness focus on adolescence. Most of the studies on emerging adulthood focus on identity development and close relationships. However, like close relations of individuals, life satisfaction and loneliness are also among the factors affecting their psychological resilience. For further studies, , different samples and variables can be focused on to contribute to a more clear understanding of the concept of psychological resilience. In this sense, there is a need for studies that reveal causal relationships. Some activities aiming to increase the life satisfaction of the individuals in the emerging adulthood period can be organized. Voluntary social studies can be encouraged to address the loneliness of individuals.

Considering emerging adults is in a transition period from adolescent to adult identity, which includes some specific risks; therefore, it would be appropriate to carry out programs to increase the psychological resilience specific to this period. The findings of the study have important results for the field of psychological counseling and guidance. Identifying variables associated with psychological resilience will ensure recognition of risk groups and protective factors as well as taking appropriate measures.

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