



## Comparison of Hope and Life Satisfaction Levels of Turkish and American Middle School Students\*

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** In the literature, it has been stated that hope and life satisfaction in childhood and adolescence are associated with cultural and social factors. This study aimed to discover whether Turkish and American adolescents differ in their life satisfaction and hope levels, by examining hope and life satisfaction in Turkish and American adolescents according to variables such as gender, socioeconomic status (SES), and parental attitudes.

**Research Methods:** In the study, a descriptive research design was employed during the data collection and analysis phases.

**Findings:** According to the first findings of the research, there was a significant difference between the life satisfaction of Turkish students and that of American students in favor of the Turkish students, whereas their hope levels did not vary significantly. In addition, the life satisfaction and hope levels of students from both countries did not differ according to gender. Another finding of the study was that the hope level of Turkish students with high socioeconomic status (SES) was higher than that of those with medium and low SES. The results indicated that parental attitudes did not differ significantly regarding the hope and life satisfaction levels of Turkish students, whereas there were significant differences both in the hope and life satisfaction levels of American students regarding parental attitudes.

**Implications for Research and Practice:** The study did not find any difference between the hope levels of Turkish and American students, whereas it observed that the life satisfaction of Turkish students was higher than that of the American students. This finding can be explained, as adolescence problems are universal and are given high importance in every culture.

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## Introduction

Humans' efforts to survive and to hold on to life have always prevailed, despite wars, diseases, and natural disasters throughout history. Certainly, many personal characteristics and traits of human beings contribute to making them so strong. The most crucial power that gives an individual strength to overcome the challenges of life and that makes this struggle meaningful is hope.

According to the father of the Theory of Hope, Charles R. Snyder (2002), hope is not merely a sentiment, but an interactive and complex process, with motivational and cognitive dimensions. Snyder et al. (1991) originally defined hope in two dimensions: desiring to achieve the goal and feeling the power in himself to achieve the goal (agency), and the ability to find ways to achieve the goal (pathways). However, according to the new hope theory, hopeful thinking has three interrelated components: a goal, pathway thinking, and agency (Snyder & Lopez, 2007). The *goals* must be worthwhile and open enough to motivate individuals to follow them. However, targets that are 100% reachable do not create hope for the individual. *Pathway thinking* refers to the feeling of producing successful plans to meet objectives. It is a kind of mental plan or map that allows one to reach established goals. Beyond the primary road, a highly hopeful individual can produce alternative routes to reach the targeted destinations. The *agency* is the motivational component of the theory of hope, or the capacity to use one's paths to achieve the desired goals. Despite the fact that hope is a feeling that one experiences when all practical ways to achieve a goal are exhausted, it is not a passive feeling that is experienced only in dark times; hope is also a goal-oriented cognitive process (Snyder et al., 1991). Hope is an impulse for individuals to define meaningful goals, discovering the ways required to achieve these goals, and to consequently realize these goals. In conclusion, hope is a significant psychological power that protects individuals against negative life events. This power helps individuals define their goals and objectives vis-à-vis any challenge in their lives, and to take further steps in their lives in a fully determined manner, believing that a bright future is ahead of them. Frank (1968) described hope in a similar fashion, as a meaningful blend of feeling and thought. He highlighted that hope had two dimensions, cognitive and sentimental, and he defined hope as a characteristic that gives the feeling of well-being and motivates individuals to take action (cited by Akman & Korkut, 1993).

A traumatic experience in childhood decreases the level of hope in the years to come (Carr, 2011). Physically neglected children did not have anybody who taught them to think of hope. It is often considered that physical neglect mostly takes place in poorer families; however, sometimes wealthier families fail to deliver sufficient care to their children. Neglect passively destroys hopeful thinking, while physical abuse is an active factor in decreasing hope. Children who are raised in an environment without borders, consistency, and support cannot learn to think hopefully (Snyder, 2002). If positive experiences, such as secure attachment and warm parenthood, outnumber negative experiences during childhood, people may have high hope levels and more friendship, happiness, and trust towards self and life (Dursun, 2012). Hope helps

individuals to set a goal and act according to a plan to achieve that goal, and is associated with life satisfaction.

Life satisfaction is defined as positive objective evaluations of an individual regarding the whole of his/her life, or some specific areas such as family or school life (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Suldo & Huebner, 2006). In the literature, it has been hypothesized that hope and life satisfaction in childhood and adolescence are associated with cultural factors; however, the number of studies in this field is limited. Nevertheless, experiencing positive characteristics at early ages is a necessity for basic prevention of problems such as depression, stress, behavioral disorders. A study supporting this argument was conducted by Gilman and Huebner (2006), which suggested that adolescents with higher life-satisfaction rates had lower anxiety and depression levels and higher self-esteem and hope levels. Life satisfaction in adolescence varies according to many factors (Leung & Leung, 1992), which can include personal factors – such as body image and a positive sense of self – as well as environmental factors (Dew & Huebner, 1994). Peer relations at school age, and the level of recognition by peers in these relationships and in relationships with family and their environment, are decisive for the emotional experiences, prejudices, and social attractions of adolescents, and thus have an impact on the life satisfaction of individuals (Kaya & Siyez, 2008).

The majority of studies on life satisfaction have recruited participants from Western and English-speaking countries (Abdel-Khalek & El Nayal, 2015). While Huebner (2004) stated that life satisfaction in adolescents is associated with cultural factors, the number of studies in this field is limited. According to Huebner, Laughlin, Valois and Gilman (2004), intercultural studies are needed to investigate the cultural impact on positive attributes, such as subjective well-being in children. According to Huebner (2004), multidimensional life-satisfaction studies also support intercultural comparability. Based on the findings of this study, culturally-independent primary and secondary prevention studies can be planned in order to increase hope levels of adolescents.

Park and Huebner (2005) examined correlations between perceived differences in culture and life satisfaction using Korean and US adolescents. Korean adolescents reported less satisfaction with family, friends, school, self, and living environment, as well as a lower life satisfaction than adolescents living in the United States. The level of self-satisfaction has a stronger correlation with global life satisfaction than it does for Korean adolescents or US adolescents. The researchers discussed these findings in the context of individualist and collectivist cultural frameworks as the moderator of well-being. In another study, life satisfaction did not differ significantly between the Australian sample and Hong Kong sample (Pan, Wong, Joubert, & Chan, 2010).

One group of researchers compared self-compassion, life satisfaction, and positive- and negative-affect characteristics of university students from Turkey with other countries (England, France, Poland, Romania, Italy, Brazil, Spain, and Ukraine) (Deniz, Arslan, Ozyesil, & Izmirli, 2012). They had found that the Turkish students significantly differed from the students from the other countries regarding their life-

satisfaction levels. Studies revealed that life satisfaction had an impact on extraversion or neuroticism and was also an important indicator for psychological attributes, such as self-esteem, focus of control, anxiety, depression, and social stress in the early adolescence period (Civitçi, 2009). In studies on children and adolescents, the relationships between life satisfaction and family support (Bradley & Corwyn, 2004; Nansook, 2004; Nansook, 2005; Petito & Cummins, 2000), parental and friend relationships (Levin & Currie, 2010; Nickerson & Nagle, 2004), self-esteem, physical appearance (Huebner, Gilman, & Laughlin, 1999), gender (Dew & Huebner, 1994; Neto, 1993; Verkuyton, 1996), academic achievement (Salmela-Aro & Tynkkynen, 2009; Crede, Wirthwein, McElvany, & Steinmayr, 2015), social emotional learning skills (Sahin-Baltaci, 2013), and socioeconomic status (Sirin, 2005) have been investigated.

Gender, the attitude of parents, socioeconomic status, and income are significant variables that are widely studied alongside life satisfaction and hope levels in adolescents. According to the studies on life satisfaction of primary school students, many findings suggest no difference in overall life satisfaction regarding gender (Casas et al., 2007; Civitçi, 2009; Ikiz & Gormez, 2010; Fogle et al., 2002; Gilman & Huebner 2006; Goldbeck et al., 2007; Gun & Bayraktar, 2008; Huebner, 1994; Huebner, Valois, Paxton, & Drane, 2005; Nickerson & Nagle, 2004; Seligson et al., 2003; Sahin-Baltaci, 2013). On the other hand, Goldbeck et al. (2007) suggested that life satisfaction of males was higher than that of females, while Koker (1991) found that life satisfaction was higher in females. According to Diener and Diener (1995), economical status of any given nation was related to its people's life satisfaction. Abdel-Khalek and El Nayal (2015) found a positive association between gross domestic product and satisfaction with life. Ash and Huebner (2001) reported that disadvantaged students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds reported lower life satisfaction than students with higher socioeconomic status. Similarly, Raboteg-Šarić, Brajša-Žganec and Šakić (2009) reported that adolescents' perceptions of their family's economic status had a modest positive correlation with their life satisfaction. Another significant variable studied along with life satisfaction in adolescents is the attitude of parents. Studies suggest that adolescents who perceived their parents' attitudes positively had a higher life satisfaction than those who perceived it negatively (Civitçi, 2009; Demo & Acock, 1996; Gilman & Huebner, 2006; Milevsky, Schlechter, Netter, & Keehn, 2007; Petito & Cummins, 2000; Suldo & Huebner, 2004; Sahin-Baltaci, 2013). Acun-Kapikiran, Korukcu and Kapikiran (2014) reported that young adolescents whose decisions were respected, supported, and given autonomy by their parents have higher life satisfaction. They also found a negative correlation between an authoritarian parental attitude and life satisfaction.

Hope has been examined along with other variables, such as gender, life satisfaction, optimism, subjective wellbeing, meaning in life, and coping with stress. One study's findings suggest that the hope levels of adolescents did not differ significantly across genders (Atik & Kemer, 2009; Carvajal, Evans, Nash, & Getz, 2002; Snyder et al., 1991; Snyder et al., 1997). In order to better understand the origins of hope, the relationship between parental commitment, stressful life events, personality variables, and hope was examined in a sample of 647 middle school students in a

southeastern US state (Otis, Huebner, & Hill, 2016). They reported statistically-significant correlations between hope and four determinant variables, and student's grade levels and socioeconomic status (SES) levels. Dursun (2012) found that motivation towards goals as a sub-dimension of hope increased life satisfaction in a study of university students. Studies suggested that individuals with higher hope levels had a better academic success rate (Curry et al., 1997) and better physical and psychological well-being (Stanton et al., 2002). It is thought that a cross-cultural construct correlates positively with self-esteem, perceived problem-solving abilities, control perceptions, optimism, positive efficacy, and positive outcome expectancies (Synder et al., 1991).

Adolescence is a period in which many problems are experienced. Adolescents who are pleased and happy about their lives and who look at their life with hope meet vital criteria in terms of both their emotional and social development and in having a "positive power" that is available to facilitate their lives in the years to come (Civitçi, 2009). Understanding hope provides a functional perspective in focusing on the strong points and needs of a child (Atik & Kemer, 2009). The years of adolescence that are of critical importance for developing personality are also the years in which many personal, social, and family problems are experienced. Therefore, teaching hopeful thinking caters to primary and secondary prevention against social and physical problems. Individuals with higher hope levels can naturally devise more strategies (planning ways to achieve goals) to cope with stress when they face any stressor, and they trust in their skills to use these strategies (motivation towards goals). High hoppers do not experience anger or other similar negative feelings when they encounter an obstacle on their way to the goal, because they also have other goals to achieve that would also make them happy (Snyder, Feldman, Taylor, Schroeder, & Adams, 2000).

Furthermore, as suggested by Snyder (2002) and Carr (2011), hope is affected by familial and cultural characteristics. Therefore, families and psychological counselors in schools have a great responsibility to give such positive traits at early ages, to support efforts to cope with difficulties in life, to hold on to life, and to survive. Similarly, Snyder et al. (2002) highlighted the importance of understanding the impact of hope on a child's life by using psychological counselors. The differences between hope and life satisfaction were greatly influenced by culture, as expected, at different stages of life (Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib, & Finch, 2009). Huebner (2004) and Myers and Diener (1995) argue that life satisfaction and hope are associated with cultural characteristics, and further studies are needed to examine these relationships. Parents in every culture reflect their attitudes related to raising children in their functioning and in their daily activities, for the purpose of passing on their own value systems and main attitudes to their children (Kagıtcıbası, 2007). Collectivistic Eastern societies, in which the self is a more interdependent concept, emphasize the importance of harmony with members of important groups, such as family and school; in such cultures, individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are significantly influenced by other people's perspectives (Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 1994). In contrast, in individualist cultures such as North America, where the self is perceived as an independent entity, internal attributes such as personal interests, inner feelings, and

personal beliefs tend to be more valued (Kashima, Siegal, Tanaka, & Kashima, 1992, in cited Park, 2000). In today's world, living side-by-side with different cultures is inevitable and multiculturalism has become popular; it is therefore crucial to increase the number of studies that examine cultural differences, as well as cultural similarities. In the concept of multiculturalism, where individuals become competent in more than one culture without losing their cultural identities, intercultural interaction is obligatory (Ozyurek, Cetin, Yildirim, Evirgen, & Ergun, 2016). Prioritizing similarities can ensure that people of different cultures who must live together can accept and recognize each other. In addition, comparisons can be made between and among different countries that represent individualist and collectivist cultures, to support the interpretation of intercultural comparisons by examining the characteristics of individuals and societies. This study can contribute to the cultural perspective on life satisfaction and hope studies in adolescents.

According to Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib and Finch (2009), adults need to set a goal to achieve a satisfaction feeling. For this reason, the ideal time to actively deal with individuals may be late childhood or early puberty. Supports that are designed to help young people discover their lifestyle goals and determine how they will work for them should be presented during adolescence and adulthood. For these reasons mentioned above, this study was aimed at discovering whether a difference exists between Turkish (representing collectivistic culture) and American (representing individualistic culture) adolescents in their life satisfaction and hope levels, by examining hope and life satisfaction in Turkish and American adolescents with other variables, such as gender, socioeconomic status (SES), and parental attitudes.

## Method

### *Research Design*

This study aimed to find out whether Turkish and American adolescents differ in their life satisfaction and hope levels, by examining hope and life satisfaction in Turkish and American adolescents according to variables such as gender, socioeconomic status (SES), and parental attitudes. To achieve this goal, the study used a descriptive research design during the data collection and the analysis phases.

### *Research Sample*

Participants consisted of 336 Turkish and 354 American secondary school students. The Turkish participants included 185 (55.1 %) female and 151 (44.9 %) male students. Their ages ranged from 12 to 14 years old ( $M = 12.76$ ,  $SD = 0.87$ ) and were studying at seven different secondary schools in a city in the south of Turkey. The American participants included 185 (52.3 %) female and 169 (47.7 %) male students. Their ages ranged from 12 to 14 years old ( $M = 13.29$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ) and were attending summer school at University of California Berkeley.

### *Research Instruments and Procedures*

To determine levels of hope, this study used the English form of the "Children's Hope Scale", a six-items measure developed by Snyder et al. (1997), and the same scale adapted into Turkish by Atik and Kemer (2009). For life satisfaction, the English form of "Multidimensional Student's Life Satisfaction Scale - Short Form", a five-item measure developed by Huebner et al. (2004), was used, and the same scale was adapted into Turkish by Siyez and Kaya (2008). In addition, student personal information forms were used to determine demographic information and perceived parental attitudes. In the students' personal information forms, brief explanations were made about the attitudes of parents, so that students had a general understanding about parental attitudes. Individuals' socioeconomic status (SES) data were not collected; however, when the types of schools (public and private) and school districts are taken into consideration, it is estimated that students come from middle and upper SES families.

Official permission to collect data for Turkish participants was obtained primarily from the Ministry of National Education and from local authorities. For the American participants, permission was obtained from the summer school director and their family. Students participated voluntarily. Prior to the survey, the students were informed about the study, and that their responses were kept confidential and only used for research. The duration of the scales was approximately 20 minutes.

*Children's Hope Scale English Form:* The Children's Hope Scale (Snyder, Hoza et al., 1997) (CHS) is made up of six items equally split between the pathways and the structures of the agency; it was created to measure hopeful thinking towards targets in children and adolescents between 8 and 16 years of age. Participants were expected to rate the extent to which they assessed themselves on a 6-point scale. CHS has been proven to have acceptable internal consistency and test-retest reliability. Valle, Huebner and Suldo (2004) stated alpha coefficients of 0.83 and 0.84 for children aged 10-14 and 15-19 years. Test-retest reliability of CHS was shown in a 2-week interval ( $r = 0.73$ ) and a 1-month interval ( $r = 0.71$ ). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the Children's Hope Scale was calculated in this study and found to be 0.80.

*Children's Hope Scale Turkish Form:* To evaluate the Turkish students' hope level in this study, we used the Children's Hope Scale, a six-item measure which was adapted into Turkish by Atik and Kemer (2009). Findings about the structural validity of the scale were supported by the two-factor structure in the original study. The factor analysis yielded two factors in compliance with the original factor structure (motivation towards the goal and ways to achieve the goal). Similar to the original study, items 1, 3, and 5 were loaded into the sub-dimension of "motivation towards the goal," while items 2, 4, and 6 were loaded into "ways to achieve the goal". Factor loads in the first factor ranged between 0.33 and 0.72, while those in the second factor ranged between -0.81 and -0.41. The dimension of motivation towards the goal explained about 44% of the variance, while the dimension of ways to achieve the goal explained 14% of the variance. The two-factor structure explained about 58% of the total variance. For the convergent validity of the scale, the correlation between self-

esteem and academic success was examined by means of the Children's Hope Scale (CHS). The results point to the fact that the hope level was correlated with self-esteem and academic success. A positive significant correlation was found between CHS scores and the scores of the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale [ $r = 0.48$ ,  $n = 758$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ]. In the study where the academic means of the children were used, a positive significant correlation was achieved between hope scores and academic success [ $r = 0.23$ ,  $n = 758$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ]. The Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient of CHS for the whole scale was found to be 0.74, while the test-retest correlation coefficient was 0.57. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the Children's Hope Scale was calculated in this study as 0.78.

*The Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) English Form:* The BMSLSS (Huebner et al., 2004) is a five-item measure which measures family, school, friends, self, and living environment. Some of the items in the measure give the total life satisfaction score. Items are rated on a seven-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from "Terrible" (1) to "Delighted" (7). Cronbach alpha coefficients for the total score have been reported as 0.75 for middle school students. After removal of any single substance in BMSLSS, alpha coefficients ranging from 0.80 to 0.85 were consistently obtained. The construct validity of BMSLSS is supported in two ways. The significance of the first total life satisfaction score was assessed. Only one factor showed a larger eigenvalue than 1, and the results of the screen test showed that only one factor was significant. This single factor accounted for 50% of the total variance. When a factor loading cut off value of .40 was used, it was found that all five items were acceptably loaded at the first factor. Coefficients ranged from 0.65 to 0.73 (Huebner, Suldo, & Valois, 2003). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the BMSLSS was calculated in this study as 0.82.

*The Brief Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS) Turkish Form:* In this study, Life Satisfaction Scale of Short Multidimensional Students (BMSLSS), adapted into Turkish by Siyez and Kaya (2008), was used to evaluate the life satisfaction of Turkish students. The scores on the BMSLSS Turkish version had acceptable test-retest reliability ( $r = 0.82$ ) and internal consistency ( $r = 0.89$ ). Item-total correlations varied from 0.64 to 0.78. To assess the validity of the BMSLSS structure, a discovery factor analysis was conducted. The factor structure of BMSLSS was analyzed for class levels and general example (see Table 4). It was found that all five materials satisfactorily loaded in a single factor. For the entire sample, factor loadings were .49 to .82 and eigenvalue was equal to 2.89, while the single factor constituted 48% of the total variance. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale calculated in this study was 0.81.

#### *Data Analysis*

The data were scanned for parametric statistical assumptions. The normality, homogeneity of variances, and linearity assumptions for each cell were tested at multivariate levels. In this study, *t*-test and two-way MANOVA tests were used. The significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ . Before the analysis, the researchers checked whether the data showed a univariate normal distribution for both groups. The data were



controlled whether they were coherent to univariate and multivariate analyses. Twenty-one data exceeding 3.29 in the Turkish groups, and 6 data exceeding 3.29 in the American groups, were excluded from the data set (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Box's M test was conducted on the remaining 690 pieces of data, in order to examine the homogeneity of the variance/covariance matrices as a premise of MANOVA analysis. The findings suggest that variance and co-variance factors between dependent variables were the same for all levels, and there was no significant difference among them [Turkish data; Box's M: 127.615,  $F(105/6251) = 1.002$   $p > .05$ ; American data, Box's M: 131.672,  $F(99/5017) = 1.096$   $p > .05$ ]. Furthermore, the linear correlation between dependent variables, as another premise, was tested by Pearson's correlation coefficient, and a moderately-positive significant correlation ( $r = 0.53$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) was calculated. For the MANOVA analysis method to yield accurate results, dependent variables should not give too high correlations among themselves. The fact that the correlation value among dependent variables was equal to or lower than 0.90 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) shows that there was no multicollinearity problem.

## Results

Descriptive statistics, skewness, and kurtosis values are presented in Table 1. As can be seen in the table, skewness and kurtosis values in all data were between -1.0 and +1.0 (Muthén & Kaplan 1985), which is within acceptable limits for a normal distribution.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics about Variables*

		n	M	df	Skewness	Kurtosis
Hope	Turkish Students	336	29.44	4.61	-.653	-.333
	American Students	354	29.41	4.04	-.628	.133
Life Satisfaction	Turkish Students	336	35.95	4.49	-.518	-.328
	American Students	354	35.23	4.39	-.484	-.295

In the study, the *t*-test was conducted first in order to determine whether life satisfaction and hope levels varied according to the country variable; the results are presented below in Table 2.

**Table 2***Results of the t-Test Related to Hope and Life Satisfaction Based On Country*

		n	M	df	t	p
Hope	Turkish Students	336	29.44			
	American Students	354	29.41	688	.067	.946
Life Satisfaction	Turkish Students	336	35.95			.034*
	American Students	354	35.23	688	2.121	

\* $p < .05$ 

As can be seen in Table 2, there is a significant difference between Turkish and American students' life-satisfaction levels ( $t(688) = 2.121, p < .05$ ), but no significant difference in hope levels ( $t(688) = .067, p > .05$ ). Accordingly, it was observed that the level of life satisfaction of Turkish students was higher than that of American students, whereas there was no significant difference between Turkish and American students in their hope levels.

After the *t*-test, a two-factor MANOVA analysis was conducted in order to determine the impact of gender, SES, and parental attitudes on hope and life-satisfaction levels of Turkish and American students. Table 3 shows the mean hope and life-satisfaction level scores of Turkish and American students according to gender, socioeconomic status, and parental attitudes, while Table 4 shows the MANOVA results.

**Table 3.***Descriptive Statistics of Turkish and American Students*

Dependent Variables			n	Hope		Life satisfaction	
				M	S	M	S
Gender	Turkish	Girls	185	29.74	4.66	36.03	4.56
		Boys	151	29.06	4.54	35.84	4.40
	American	Girls	185	29.14	4.16	35.08	4.45
		Boys	169	29.71	3.88	35.39	4.33
SES	Turkish	Lower	189	28.76	4.78	35.61	4.46
		Middle	75	29.98	4.45	36.33	4.52
		Upper	72	30.62	4.01	36.41	4.50
	American	Lower	19	28.73	4.25	33.84	4.86
		Middle	163	28.96	4.26	35.17	4.54
		Upper	162	29.95	3.79	35.50	4.06

Table 3 Continue

			Hope			Life satisfaction	
Parental Attitudes	Turkish	democratic	108	30.14	4.22	36.10	4.24
		authoritarian	105	28.85	4.60	36.27	3.98
		overprotective	91	28.91	5.04	35.61	4.95
	American	democratic	197	30.38	3.62	36.63	4.86
		authoritarian	66	27.92	4.36	32.63	4.54
		overprotective	87	28.29	4.11	34.03	4.06

As shown in Table 4, a significant difference was observed among Turkish students in their hope levels according to socioeconomic status ( $F(2-333) = 5.031, p < 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.029$ ). According to the Bonferroni test conducted to find the source of difference, the hope level scores of students with a higher socioeconomic status were significantly higher than that of those with lower socioeconomic status ( $p < 0.01$ ). In American students, parental attitudes led to significant differences in both hope scores ( $F(2-347) = 14.514, p < 0.01, \eta^2 = 0.007$ ) and life satisfaction scores ( $F(2-347) = 28.573, p < 0.01, \eta^2 = 0.14$ ). Similarly, the combination of parental attitude and socioeconomic status gave way to significant differences in both hope ( $F(8-576) = 2.880, p < 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.038$ ) and life-satisfaction scores ( $F(8-576) = 2.879, p < 0.05, \eta^2 = 0.038$ ). According to the Bonferroni test results, the hope and life-satisfaction scores of students with democratic parenting attitudes were significantly higher than those of students with authoritarian or overprotective parents ( $p < 0.01$ ).

Table 4

*Two-Factor MANOVA Results*

	Turkish				American			
	<i>df</i>	<b>F</b>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$	<b>F</b>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$	
<b>Hope</b>								
Gender	1	1.781	.183	.005	.018	.895	.000	
SES	2	5.031	.007*	.029	.835	.435	.006	
Parental Attitudes	2	2.626	.074	.017	14.514	.000**	.007	
Parental Attitudes * Gender	2	.020	.980	.000	.089	.915	.001	
Parental Attitudes * SES	4	.394	.813	.006	2.880	.023*	.038	
Parental Attitudes * SES * Gender	4	.253	.907	.004	.236	.871	.002	
<b>Life Satisfaction</b>								
Gender	1	.141	.708	.000	1.513	.220	.005	
SES	2	1,178	.309	.007	1.157	.316	.008	

Table 4 Continue

Hope	Turkish				American			
	<i>df</i>	<b>F</b>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$	<b>F</b>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$	
Parental Attitudes	2	.585	.557	.004	28.573	.000*	.141	
Parental Attitudes * Gender	2	.134	.874	.001	.096	.909	.001	
Parental Attitudes * SES	4	.561	.692	.009	2.879	.023*	.038	
Parental Attitudes * SES * Gender	4	.626	.644	.010	.130	.942	.001	

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .001$

### Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study did not find any difference between the hope levels of Turkish students and those of American students. One possible explanation for this finding can be demonstrated by the fact that adolescent problems are universal; academic performance is given high importance in every culture, and these students were in a very busy period of their academic lives. Hope level is positively related to physical well-being (Barnum et al., 1998; Stanton et al., 2002). It is a developmental duty to show adaptation to quick physical changes and developments in every culture. Turkish and American students in this study were in the early adolescence period, and students in both groups faced similar physical, psychological, and academic problems during this period. Some studies suggest a correlation between hope and academic performance/anxiety (Curry et al., 1997; Snyder et al., 2002). Thus, the hope levels of Turkish and American students display similarities.

The second finding was that life satisfaction of Turkish students was higher than that of the American students. Some studies support this finding (Deniz, Arslan, Ozyeşil, & Izmirli, 2012). The higher life-satisfaction level of the Turkish students can be explained by cultural and environmental factors. Life satisfaction in adolescence is affected by personal factors, such as body image and a positive sense of self, as well as environmental factors (Dew & Huebner, 1994). These environmental factors vary from culture to culture. Myers and Diener (1995) suggest that close relationships and culture have a greater impact on life satisfaction. American society is more individualistic, while Turkish society is rather collectivistic (Kagitçibasi, 2006). Therefore, strong relationships with family and the environment may lead to greater life satisfaction of Turkish individuals (Kaya & Siyez, 2008). In communitarian societies, interpersonal relations are much closer and more supportive. This may explain why the life-satisfaction levels of Turkish students were found to be higher than that of the American students.

Other findings regarding gender variables are in accordance with the literature, as the present study also observed that the life satisfaction (Casas et al., 2007; Ikiz &

Gormez, 2010; Fogle et al., 2002; Gilman & Huebner, 2006; Goldbeck et al., 2007; Gun & Bayraktar, 2008; Huebner, 1994; Huebner et al., 2005; Nickerson & Nagle, 2004; Ozcan & Kiraz, 2017, Seligson et al., 2003; Sahin-Baltaci, 2013) and hope level (Atik & Kemer, 2009; Carvajal, Evans, Nash, & Getz, 2002; Snyder et al., 1991; Snyder et al., 1997) of Turkish and American students did not differ according to gender. As Huebner (2004) stated, studies on children and adolescents have reported no gender differences in life satisfaction between children and adolescents consistently in grades 3 to 12.

Another finding of the present study was that the hope levels of the Turkish students with high SES were higher than that of students with medium and low SES. Higher SES could create a sense of confidence in accommodating goals and needs, especially for the future, which is a finding similar to those of Civitci (2009) and Unal (2006). SES did not lead to any significant difference in life satisfaction levels of Turkish students. Interesting, both hope and life-satisfaction levels of American students did not display any difference according to SES, which is a finding that is not in line with the previous research, which suggests that life satisfaction increases as socioeconomic status increases (Huebner et al., 2005; Otis, Huebner, & Hill, 2016; Seligson et al., 2003,). This finding could be due to the fact that students may not have high economic expectations from their families at this developmental stage. The levels of hope and expectations for a bright future displayed by Turkish students change according to their socioeconomic status. This may be explained by considering that families within Turkish culture are expected to meet all sorts of needs of their children. However, in American culture, individualism is prioritized, and families expect their children to become independent and self-sufficient at an early age (Ozyürek, Cetin, Yildirim, Evirgen, & Ergün, 2016). In other words, children in Turkish society may believe it is their right to have opportunities provided by their families, and the socioeconomic status of the family determines these opportunities. On the other hand, American children may have hopeful expectations because of their individual characteristics, rather than their families' socioeconomic status. This is because American families attribute more importance to self-development (self-confidence, self-sufficiency, etc.) and raising individualistic children (Yagmurlu, Citlak, Dost, & Leyendecker, 2009).

The results showed that parental attitudes did not cause any significant differences in hope and life-satisfaction levels of the Turkish students, whereas they caused significant differences in both hope and life-satisfaction levels of the American students. The difference observed in American students is in line with the literature: having a positive parental attitude will have an impact on students by helping them look at their future with hope (Unal, 2006). Several studies suggest that adolescents who perceive their parents' attitudes positively (democratic-receptive) have higher life satisfaction than those who perceive their parents negatively ("irrelevant", "authoritarian", "overprotective") (Demo & Acock 1996; Gilman & Huebner, 2006; Petite & Cummins, 2000; Shorey et al., 2003; Suldo & Huebner, 2004). In a recent study, authoritative parenting was found to relate to higher levels of self-esteem and life-satisfaction and to lower levels of depression (Milevsky, Schlechter, Netter, & Keehn, 2007). According to the literature, adolescents who have better relationships with their

parents have higher life-satisfaction levels (Bradley & Corwyn, 2004; Levin & Currie, 2010; Nansook, 2004; Nansook, 2005; Nickerson & Nagle, 2004; Petito & Cummins, 2000). Individuals displaying a democratic parenting attitude showed respect to their children, made decisions together, and had positive relationships with their children. Therefore, it is expected that those students who perceive their parents as democratic have higher life satisfaction than those who perceive their parents to be authoritarian or overprotective.

The results obtained from Turkish students differ from the literature (Acun-Kapikiran, Korukcu, & Kapikiran, 2014; Cenkseven-Onder, 2012; Civitci, 2009; Unal, 2006; Sahin-Baltaci, 2013). Acun-Kapikiran, Korukcu and Kapikiran (2014) stated that parents who pressure early adolescents into doing things hinder their freedom; those whose parents make decisions for them had lower levels of life satisfaction. Similarly, Yalnizca-Yildirim and Cenkseven-Onder (2018) stated that parents' acceptance and supportive behaviors towards adolescents' autonomy were the predictors of almost all dimensions of life satisfaction. The reason why this expected result was not observed in Turkish students may be that the meaning ascribed to 'authoritarian' and/or 'overprotective' is perceived in a positive manner in the Turkish family structure. This finding is in accordance with the idea that authoritarian parenting in American culture is related to a lack of compassion and refusal to help, while it is related to compassion and providing help in the Turkish culture (Kagitçibasi, 1970).

The similarity between hope levels of Turkish and American adolescents can be attributed to the fact that the characteristics of the period of adolescence are more dominant than cultural factors. Moreover, adolescents in this specific age group particularly use information technology with very high levels of skill and knowledge. Interaction and communication increase the intercultural dimension, owing to the fact that information technologies have lifted any kind of border among cultures, leading to a decrease in the impact of cultural differences. Based on the findings of this study, primary and secondary prevention studies independent from cultures can be planned in order to increase the hope levels of adolescents.

As with all studies, this study includes certain limitations. The most important limitation of this research is that parental attitude is determined not on a scale but on the perceptions of adolescents. For this reason, it is recommended that parental attitudes be determined on a parental-attitude scale in similar studies. Second, this study utilized self-report measures. Considering that adolescence is marked by rapid changes in many directions, it may be advisable to use mixed-methods research in future studies. Despite shortcomings, this study's outcomes may have provided useful guidance to researchers and school counselors.

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### Türk ve Amerikalı Ortaokul Öğrencilerinin Umut ve Yaşam Doyum Düzeylerinin Karşılaştırılması

#### Atıf:

Sahin-Baltaci, H. (2018). Comparison of hope and life satisfaction levels of turkish and american middle school students. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 74, 99-122, DOI: 10.14689/ejer.2018.74.6

#### Özet

*Problem Durumu:* İnsanlık tarihi boyunca pek çok savaş, hastalık ve doğal afetlere rağmen, insanlığın yaşama tutunma ve hayatta kalma çabası galip gelmiştir. Elbette insanı bu kadar güçlü yapan pek çok kişilik özelliği vardır. Yaşam güçlükleri karşısında, bireye mücadele gücü veren, mücadeleyi anlamlı kılan en önemli güç umuttur. Umut, hedefi elde etmeyi isteme ve hedefi elde edebilmek için kendisinde güç hissetme (agency) ve hedefi elde edebilmek için yollar bulabilme becerisi (Pathways) olmak üzere iki boyutlu tanımlanmıştır. Umut hedefe ulaşmada bütün pratik yollar tükendiğinde yaşanan bir duygu olmakla birlikte sadece karanlık zamanlarda hissedilen pasif bir duygu değildir. Umut, bireyleri olumsuz yaşam olaylarına karşı koruyan önemli bir psikolojik güçtür. Bu güç bireylerin, her tür yaşam

zorluğuna karşın amaçlar belirleyerek, parlak bir geleceğin onları beklediği inancıyla yaşamda kararlılıkla ilerlemelerini sağlamaktadır. Bireylerin bir hedef belirleyip, bu hedefe ulaşmak için planlı biçimde davranmasını sağlayan umut, yaşam doyumunu ile ilişkilidir. Yaşam doyumunu, kişinin yaşamının bütününe ya da özel alanlarına (aile hayatı, okul deneyimleri vb.) dair sahip olduğu olumlu, öznel değerlendirmeler olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Çocuk ve ergenlerdeki yaşam doyumunun kültürel ve sosyal faktörlerle ilişkili olduğu, ancak bu konuda yapılan çalışmaların sayıca az olduğunu belirtilmektedir. Ergenlerin duygusal yaşantıları, önyargıları ve sosyal cazibeleri üzerinde, okul çağındaki akran ilişkileri ve bu ilişkilerde akranlar tarafından kabul edilme, aile ve çevreyle ilişkiler yaşam doyumunu üzerinde önemli bir belirleyici olmaktadır. Umut ve Yaşam doyumunu kültürel öğelerden etkilenmektedir. Bununla birlikte kültürel farklılıkları ortaya koymaya yönelik araştırmalar oldukça sınırlıdır.

*Araştırmanın Amacı:* Bu araştırmanın temel amacı, Türk ve Amerikalı ortaokul öğrencilerinin yaşam doyumunu ve umut düzeylerinin farklılık gösterip göstermediğini ortaya koymaktır. Ayrıca, cinsiyet, sosyo-ekonomik düzey ve ana-baba tutumlarına göre Türk ve Amerikalı öğrencilerde umut ve yaşam doyumunu incelemek amaçlanmıştır.

*Araştırmanın Yöntemi:* Bu çalışmada Türk ve Amerikalı ortaokul öğrencilerinin yaşam doyumunu ve umut düzeylerinin farklılık gösterip göstermediğini ortaya koymak amacıyla betimsel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmaya 336 Türk ve 354 Amerikalı Ortaokul öğrencisi katılmıştır. Türk öğrencilerin 185'i (% 55.1) kız, 151'i (% 44.9) erkektir ve yaşları 12 ile 14 ( $M = 12.76$ ,  $SD = .87$ ) arasında değişmektedir. Amerikalı öğrencilerin 185'i (% 52,3) kız, 169'u (% 47,7) erkektir ve yaşları 12 ve 14 ( $M = 13,29$ ,  $SD = .78$ ) arasında değişmektedir. Türk öğrenciler; Türkiye'nin güneyinde yer alan bir ilin merkezindeki yedi farklı ortaokulda öğrenim gören gönüllü öğrencilerden oluşmaktadır. Amerikalı öğrencilerden oluşan diğer çalışma grubu, Kaliforniya Berkeley Üniversitesinin öğrencilere yönelik düzenlediği yaz okuluna devam eden gönüllü öğrencilerden oluşmaktadır. Araştırmada 8-16 yaş aralığındaki çocuk ve ergenler için geliştirilen Çocuklar İçin Umut Ölçeği ve Çocuk Ergenler için Kısaltılmış-Çok Boyutlu Yaşam Doyumu ölçeğinin İngilizce ve Türkçe formları kullanılmıştır.

*Çocuklar için Umut Ölçeği İngilizce Formu;* Toplam altı maddeden oluşan ölçeğin yapı geçerliği doğrulayıcı faktör analizi ile test edilmiş ve 2 faktörlü (amaca güdülenme ve amaca ulaşma yolları) yapı doğrulanmıştır. Ölçeğin test tekrar test güvenilirlik katsayısı .73 olarak bulunmuştur. Cronbach Alpha katsayısı ise .83 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Madde toplam korelasyon katsayıları ise .51 ve .69 arasında değişmektedir. Bu araştırma için hesaplanan Cronbach Alpha katsayısı .80'dir.

*Çocuklar İçin Umut Ölçeği Türkçe Formu (ÇUÖ);* Ölçeğin yapı geçerliğine ilişkin bulgular, orijinal çalışmadaki iki faktörlü yapıyı destekler niteliktedir. Faktör analizi sonucunda orijinal faktör yapısıyla uyumlu 2 faktör (amaca güdülenme ve amaca ulaşma yolları) elde edilmiştir. Amaca güdülenme boyutu varyansın yaklaşık olarak %44'ünü açıklarken, amaca ulaşma yolları boyutu varyansın %14'ünü açıklamıştır. İki faktörlü yapı toplam varyansın yaklaşık %58'ini açıklamıştır. ÇUÖ puanları ile Rosenberg Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği puanları arasında pozitif ve anlamlı bir ilişki

bulunmuştur. ÇUÖ'nün tüm ölçek için Cronbach alfa iç-tutarlık katsayısı .74 olarak bulunurken, test-tekrar test korelasyon katsayısı .57'dir. Bu araştırma için hesaplanan Cronbach Alpha katsayısı ise .78'dir.

*Kısaltılmış-Çok Boyutlu Yaşam Doyumu İngilizce Formu (BMSLSS)*; ölçek her bir madde yaşam doyumunun (aile, okul, arkadaş, kendi ve çevre) beş farklı boyutunu ölçen beş maddeden oluşmaktadır. Ölçeğin Cronbach alfa iç-tutarlık katsayısı .85'dir. Açıklayıcı faktör analizine göre, tüm maddeler varyansın % 50'sini açıklamaktadır ve madde yükleri .65 ile .73 arasında değişmektedir. Bu çalışmada hesaplanan Cronbach Alpha katsayısı .82'dir.

*Kısaltılmış-Çok Boyutlu Yaşam Doyumu Türkçe Formu*; Ölçeğin test-tekrar test güvenilirlik katsayısı .83, Cronbach Alpha katsayısı ise .89'dur. Madde toplam korelasyon katsayıları .64 - .78 arasında değişmektedir. Açıklayıcı faktör analizine göre, tüm maddeler varyansın % 48'ini açıklamaktadır ve madde yükleri .49 ile .82 arasında değişmektedir. Bu çalışmada hesaplanan Cronbach Alpha katsayısı .81'dir.

*Araştırmanın Bulguları*: Araştırmada, Türk ve Amerikalı ortaokul öğrencilerinin yaşam doyum düzeyleri arasında Türk öğrenciler lehine anlamlı bir fark bulunmuşken, umut düzeyleri arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmamıştır. Bir diğer bulguya göre, Türk öğrencilerin sosyo-ekonomik düzeylerine göre umut düzeyleri arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmuştur. Farkın kaynağını bulmak için yapılan Bonferroni testine göre üst sosyo-ekonomik düzeydeki öğrencilerin umut düzeyleri puanları alt sosyoekonomik düzeydeki öğrencilerin puanlarından anlamlı olarak daha yüksektir. Amerikalı öğrencilerde; anne-baba tutumu hem umut hem de yaşam doyumu puanlarında anlamlı farklılığa yol açmıştır. Aynı şekilde ana-baba tutumu\* SED etkileşimi hem umut hem de yaşam doyumu puanlarında anlamlı farklılığa yol açmıştır. Bonferroni testi sonuçlarına göre, demokratik anne-baba tutumuna sahip öğrencilerin umut ve yaşam doyumu puanları otoriter ve koruyucu ana-baba tutumuna sahip öğrencilerin puanlarından anlamlı olarak daha yüksektir.

*Araştırmanın Sonuçları ve Öneriler*: Araştırmada, Türk ve Amerikalı öğrencilerin umut düzeyleri arasında fark bulunmazken, Türk öğrencilerin yaşam doyumlarının Amerikalı öğrencilerden daha yüksek olduğu bulunmuştur. Umut düzeyleri arasında fark çıkmaması ergenlik sorunlarının evrensel olması ve hangi kültürde olursa olsun, akademik başarının önemsendiği, akademik yaşamın yoğun olduğu bir dönemde olmaları ile açıklanabilir. Umut düzeyi ile fiziksel iyilik hali arasında pozitif ilişki vardır. Ergenlik döneminde hangi kültürde olursa olsun hızlı bedensel değişim, gelişim ve değişime uyum sağlamak gelişim görevidir. Türk ve Amerikalı öğrenciler, ön-ergenlik dönemindedirler. Her iki gruptaki öğrenciler de bu dönemdeki bedensel, psikolojik ve akademik sorunları yaşamaktadırlar. Umut ile akademik başarı/kayıgı arasındaki ilişkiyi ortaya koyan araştırmalar elde edilen sonucu destekler niteliktedir. Bu nedenlerle, Türk ve Amerikalı öğrencilerin umut düzeyleri benzerlik göstermiş olabilir. Türk öğrencilerin yaşam doyumu düzeylerinin Amerikalı öğrencilerden yüksek çıkması kültürel ve çevresel faktörlerle açıklanabilir. Ergenlik içinde yaşam doyumu; beden imgesi ve pozitif benlik algısı değerlendirmeleri gibi kişisel olduğu kadar çevresel faktörlerden de etkilenir. Bu çevresel faktörler kültürden kültüre

değişir. Literatürde, yakın ilişkilerin ve kültürün yaşam doyumunu açıklamada daha fazla etkiye sahip olduğunu belirtilmektedir. Aile ve çevreyle ilişkiler bireyin yaşam doyumunu etkileyebilmektedir. Toplulukçu toplumlarda kişilerarası ilişkiler daha yakın ve destekleyicidir. Bu nedenle Türk öğrencilerin yaşam doyumları Amerikalı öğrencilerin yaşam doyumlarından daha yüksek çıkmış olabilir. Umut düzeyinin Türk ve Amerikalı ergenlerde farklılaşmaması, ergenlik dönemi özelliklerinin kültürel etkilerden daha baskın olduğu şeklinde yorumlanabilir. Son olarak, araştırma bulgularından yola çıkarak, ergenlerin umut düzeylerini artırmaya yönelik kültürden bağımsız temel ve ikincil önleme çalışmaları planlanabilir. Ayrıca, anne-babalık davranışlarının çocuk/ergenlerin üzerindeki önemini ve olası sonuçlarını vurgulamak amacıyla ebeveynlere yönelik seminer ve eğitimlerin verilmesi önerilmektedir. Her çalışmada olduğu gibi bu araştırmanın da sınırlılıkları vardır. En önemli sınırlılık, araştırmada ele alınan ana-baba tutumunun ergenlerin algılarına dayalı olarak belirlenmiş olmasıdır. Benzer çalışmalarda ana-baba tutumunun bir ölçekle belirlenmesi önerilmektedir.

*Anahtar sözcükler:* Ergenler, sosyo-ekonomik düzey, kültür, cinsiyet, ana-baba tutumu