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The Predictor Role of the Search for Meaning in Life in the Determination of High School Students' Lifelong Learning Tendencies

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ABSTRACT

The current study aims to determine the extent to which high school students' lifelong learning tendencies are predicted by their search for meaning in life. The study was conducted on a total of 352 senior high school students (165 females, 187 males) attending high schools located in the Bodrum District of the city of Muğla. The data of the study was collected by using a personal information form developed by the researchers, The Lifelong Learning Tendencies Scale developed by Diker-Coşkun (2009) and the sub-dimension of the search for meaning in life in the Meaning in Life Scale High School Form adapted to Turkish by Demirbaş-Çelik and İşmen-Gazioğlu (2015). In the analysis of the collected data, Pearson correlation coefficient and simple linear regression analysis were used to determine the relationship between the variables and in relation to the differences, independent samples t-test and one-way variance analysis were employed. All the analyses were conducted in SPSS 20.0 program package. At the end of the study, it was found that the high school students' lifelong learning tendencies are positively and significantly predicted by their search for meaning in life. Moreover, the high school students' lifelong learning tendencies were found to be varying significantly depending on gender and the type of the school attended. The findings of the study are discussed in light of the literature.

1. Introduction

Learning is an indispensable part of our life. Learning is the natural outcome of the sense of curiosity in humans. This sense of curiosity leads people to the pursuit of new ways until the end of their lives. Changing living conditions motivate people to learn new things each day. Fear of being lost in the order of the Changing World, the war of survival against rapidly passing time and developing technology cause people to strictly adhere to lifelong learning activities (Wagner, 2015). This has increased the popularity of the concept of lifelong learning and has made it a term everyone, from 7 to 70, is familiar with (Asiloğulları, 2020).

The concept of lifelong learning can basically be defined as learning activities that the individual continues to be engaged in throughout his/her life including learning at school. Individuals' learning processes often emerge as a result of need and curiosity. In the learning processes that emerge as a result of need, the individual either escapes from the new situation or meets this need by bringing new learning to his/her life. Today, problems encountered by the individual in real life are too complex to be solved only with the knowledge and experience gained at school (Bağcı, 2011). At this point, the concept of lifelong learning reminds us once again its importance. When the literature is examined, it is seen that various definitions of the concept of lifelong learning, which is frequently used in our daily life, have been made. According to

Ersoy and Yılmaz (2009), lifelong learning is all purposeful and random learning activities carried out throughout life to develop knowledge and skills on an individual or social basis, whether formal or not. According to the Ministry of National Education, lifelong learning is all learning activities that the individual participates in throughout his/her life in order to develop his/her knowledge, skills, interests and abilities for individual, social and employment-related purposes (MNE, 2009).

The cumulative progress of knowledge and the individual's need for self-renewal and uninterrupted self-improvement are seen as the main reasons behind the technological developments and new structures and formations emerging in our age (Asiloğulları, 2020). The necessity of fulfilling the constantly updated requirements of human life in our age and of keeping up with newly emerging information and developments each day makes lifelong learning a priority. At this stage, it is very important for individuals to be aware and improve their lifelong learning skills in order to keep up with the world they live in (Topakkaya, 2013). However, in the present age, it is clear that the current formal education system cannot fully meet the needs of the individual for him/her to improve his/her skills.

When the budgets allocated to education in the world are analyzed, it is seen that the resources allocated in the 1990s tend to increase compared to the 1980s. In this trend, lifelong learning is thought to have a significant impact. In this period, it is seen that many countries have made legal arrangements in order to reconstruct their education systems within the framework of the conception of lifelong learning (Karakaya, 2010). In this context, it can be said that both the renewal of the current education policies of countries to keep up with the age and the individual's ability to stay in life by renewing himself/herself constitute the mission of the concept of lifelong learning.

Adult individuals continue their lives with a tendency to leave a permanent mark in life. In this regard, it is of great importance for individuals to have a meaning in their lives (Frankl, 2014). Humans are creatures who think differently from other living creatures, try to understand, question, and continue their lives by making decisions with their free will. In a sense, meaning is the fate of humanity; man is born into it and lives by making choices accordingly or unknowingly in search for it (Göka, 2014). For this reason, humans have tried to add meaning to their existence and to the existence of the world since the day they came into being. The fact that "existence" brings "why" question to the mind is of great importance in terms of showing that man's pursuit of meaning is as old as the history of humanity (Sezer, 2012).

Many psychologists, philosophers and theologians have put forward different views on the meaning of life (Adler, 2011; Frankl, 2014; May, 2019; Yalom, 2018). In his response to the meaning of life, Frankl (2014) defined the meaning of life as encountering questions, answering questions, taking responsibility for one's own now-here existence. According to him, the biggest conflict for someone who regards his/her life as meaningless arises either from the absence of a meaningful purpose or his/her not being aware of his/her achievable goal (A. Bahadır, 2018). In another definition, Yalom (2018) expresses the meaning of life with the concepts of sense or coherence. According to him, the search for meaning is the search for coherence.

Although the search for meaning in life seems more like an adult's effort, in fact, the first pains of this search mostly coincide with adolescence (Asiloğulları, 2020). In terms of personality development, adolescence is an important process affecting living style in the rest of one's life. This important process is considered one of the most basic life periods that permanently lay the groundwork for personality. At the end of this period, the choices, intentions and goals of the person regarding himself/herself and his/her environment have become largely evident (Işılak & Durmuş, 2004). Although adolescence is important in terms of personality development, personality development never ends; because the personality development of the individual is a lifelong process (A. Bahadır, 2018). With the expansion of the individual's sphere of influence during adolescence, individuals seeking value continue to shape their personalities based on the values they have acquired.

The adolescent, who seeks to mature his/her personality and finds answers to the concept of responsibility by constantly searching for new values around them, tries to build his/her changing and developing self. In their study investigating the relationship between the meaning of life and value tendencies in high school students, Tanrıverdi and Ulu (2018) emphasized that Turkey had experienced quite a number of profound social and cultural changes. They argued that this change created significant differences in the expectations of social roles, and this situation led to a spiritual tension and search among young people (Tanrıverdi &

Ulu, 2018). In this context, it can be said that changing social paradigms are a motivating or driving factor for adolescents to find new meanings. Thus, adolescence becomes a period of searching for meaning in life.

Evaluating the meaning of life on the basis of a single definition means ignoring the meaning of people who fall outside this definition, which is far from being the right approach. Instead, it would be better to say that the number of meanings is as much as the number of individuals in the world (Frankl, 2014). Individuals who think that their life should have a meaning have the freedom to choose whatever they want from the world of meanings provided to them. Different fields such as sports, art, religion or philosophy can be attractive for different people. Thus, it is not possible to talk about a standard meaning of life for everyone (Dursun, 2019). In addition, whether his/her life has a meaning also changes the individual's attitude towards life. Individuals who continue their lives by displaying actions that they consider meaningful are expected to be self-confident, persistent and to use creative coping strategies in face of challenging events of life. No matter how hard conditions a person lives in, he/she can find strength to live as long as he can add meaning to his/her life (Yüksel, 2013). In this context, the individual, who will continue his/her search for meaning throughout his/her life, is expected to need a dynamic concept in order to renew the meaning of his/her life according to the conditions of the age.

It is thought that the search for meaning in life by high school students who are in the adolescence period of their life is important in the formation of their lifelong learning motivation (Asiloğulları, 2020). When studies conducted on different age groups are examined in the literature, it is seen that the effects of many variables on individuals' lifelong learning tendencies are discussed. However, there are very few studies examining the effect of the search for meaning in life, which is one of the main sources of motivation in life (Z. Bahadır, 2019), on lifelong learning tendency. There is only one study in the literature in which these two concepts were studied together on adolescents (Asiloğulları, 2020). A meaningful relationship to be found between lifelong learning tendency and the search for meaning in life will contribute to the comprehension of the complex structure of lifelong learning tendency and to the existing body of knowledge and shed light for future research. If high school students' lifelong learning tendencies are found to be varying significantly depending on gender and the type of school attended, then some insights can be provided for future studies.

1.1. Research Problem

When national (Adabaş, 2019; Akyol, Başaran, & Yeşilbaş, 2018) and international research (Castleberry, Ward, & Stein, 2019; Sullivan, Fulcher-Rood, Kruger, Sipley, & van-Putten, 2019) on lifelong learning are reviewed, it is seen that these studies largely focus on the investigation of lifelong learning skills in adults. There are many national studies investigating lifelong learning tendencies of university students (Arslan, Bıçakçıgil-Özsoy, & Aslan, 2019; Denat, Dikmen, Filiz, & Başaran, 2016; Yıldız-Durak & Sarıtepeci, 2019), teachers (Aydoğan, 2019; Gökyer, 2019; Tanatar & Alpaydın, 2019), pre-service teachers (Bulaç & Kurt, 2019; İlic & Haseski, 2019; Yenice & Tunç, 2019) and trainees in different institutions (Adabaş, 2019; Akyol et al., 2018). However, the number of studies conducted to determine young individuals' lifelong learning tendencies is very small in both national literature (Asiloğulları, 2020; Güzel, 2017) and international literature (Brooks, 2006). Moreover, in the literature, there are some studies investigating the relationship of high school students' lifelong learning tendencies with a limited number of variables such as series in television (Kalçık, 2017; Semerci & Kalçık, 2017; Ünal & Kalçık, 2017), questioning the purpose and meaning of life (Asiloğulları, 2020) and different demographic variables (Asiloğulları, 2020; Güzel, 2017). In this context, it can be said that most of the variables that affect the lifelong learning tendencies of high school students have not been identified yet and thus the precise structure of lifelong learning tendencies in young individuals has not been elicited yet. Different from the previous studies, the current study also aims to investigate the effect of the search for meaning in life on high school students' lifelong learning tendencies. This study is important in terms of revealing the factors that should be taken into consideration in future research related to explaining and strengthening lifelong learning tendencies of high school students. In addition, a limited number of studies investigating the relationship between high school students' lifelong learning tendencies and gender (Asiloğulları, 2020; Güzel, 2017) and the type of school attended (Asiloğulları, 2020) have been reached in the literature. Investigation of whether high school students' lifelong learning tendencies vary significantly depending on these demographic variables can contribute to reaching an agreement on the subject in the literature, to better understanding of the concept of lifelong learning tendency and to the body of knowledge in the literature.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the current study is to determine whether high school students' lifelong learning tendencies are predicted by the search for meaning in life and whether high school students' lifelong learning tendencies vary significantly depending on gender and the type of school attended. To this end, answers to the following questions were sought.

1) Is there a significant relationship between high school students' lifelong learning tendencies and their search for meaning in life?

2) Is high school students' search for meaning in life a significant predictor of their lifelong learning tendencies?

3) Do high school students' lifelong learning tendency scores vary significantly depending on gender and the type of school attended?

2. Method

2.1. Research Model

The current study has employed the relational survey model to examine the lifelong learning tendencies of high school students attending high schools located in the Bodrum District of the city of Muğla in relation to their search for meaning in life. The relational survey model is a research model that aims to determine whether there is a covariance between two or more variables and the degree of this covariance (Karasar, 2012). In addition, the causal-comparative research model has been used to determine whether the high school students' lifelong learning tendency scores vary significantly depending on the demographic variables. Research has aimed at determining the causes and consequences of differences between groups of people without any intervention on conditions and participants is called causal-comparative research (Büyüköztürk, Kılıç-Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2016). Variety of methods have been used to strengthen the research design.

2.2. Study Group

The study group is comprised of 352 senior high school students attending high schools in the Bodrum District of the city of Muğla in the 2019-2020 school year. The mean age of the study group is 15.26. In the selection of the study group, the stratified sampling method, one of the random sampling methods, has been used. Stratified sampling is a sampling method that aims to identify subgroups in the population and to represent them in the sample in the same proportions as in the population (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016). The students participated in the study on a volunteer basis. Demographic information about the study group is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the study group

Factor	Variable	n	%
Gender	Female	165	46.90
	Male	187	53.10
School Type	Anatolian High School	147	41.76
	Vocational High School	93	26.42
	Religious High School	112	32.82
Total Number of Students		352	100.00

As seen in Table 1, 46.90% (n=165) of the participants are females and 53.10% (n=187) of them are males. Of the participating students, 41.76% (n=147) are from Anatolian High School, 26.42% (n=93) are from Vocational High School and 32.82% (n=112) are from Religious High School.

2.3. Data Collection Tools

In the study as the data collection tools, a personal information form to obtain the high school students' demographics and The Lifelong Learning Tendencies Scale and The Meaning in Life Scale High School Form were used. Copyright permissions have been obtained to use the scales in the current study by e-mail. All these permissions obtained before starting the study have been added to the application file when applying for the Ethics Committee Approval. Throughout the research process, which started from the receipt of the Ethics Committee Approval, there was absolutely no concession from the publication ethics.

2.3.1. Personal information form. The researchers have developed a personal information form to obtain information about the participating students' demographic features. In this form, there are items to obtain information about gender and the type of school attended.

2.3.2. Lifelong learning tendencies scale. The Lifelong Learning Tendencies Scale was developed by Diker-Coşkun (2009) to measure students' lifelong learning tendencies specifically in Turkish culture. In the scale, there are 27 items, 15 of which are reverse phrased. The scale is a six-point Likert scale. The lowest score to be taken from the scale is 27 while the highest score is 162. A high score taken from the scale indicates a high level of lifelong learning tendency while a low score indicates a low level of lifelong learning tendency. The scale consists of the following four sub-dimensions: motivation (6 items), persistence (6 items), deficiency in organizing learning (6 items) and lack of curiosity (9 items) and a total score can be taken from the scale. The general internal consistency calculated for the Lifelong Learning Tendencies Scale was found to be .89 (Diker-Coşkun, 2009). In the current study, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient has been found to be .91 for the whole scale.

2.3.3. Meaning in life scale high school form. The Meaning in Life Scale was developed by Steger, Frazier, Oishi and Kaler (2006) to measure the existence of meaning in students' life and their search for meaning in life. The reliability and validity studies of the scale for high school students were conducted by Demirbaş-Çelik and İşmen-Gazioğlu (2015). In the scale, there are a total of 10 items, 1 of which is reverse phrased. The scale is a seven-point Likert scale. The Meaning in Life Scale High School Form has two sub-dimensions independent of each other: existence of meaning in life (5 items) and the search for meaning in life (5 items). From each dimension of the scale, the lowest score to be taken is 5 while the highest score is 35. High scores taken from the sub-dimensions indicate that high levels of the features included in these sub-dimensions are possessed by participants. The scale explains 59.30% of the total variance. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient for the sub-dimension of existence of meaning in life was found to be .79 while it was found to be .84 for the sub-dimension of the search for meaning in life (Demirbaş-Çelik & İşmen-Gazioğlu, 2015). In the current study, only the sub-dimension of the search for meaning in life of the Meaning in Life Scale High School Form has been used. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient calculated for the sub-dimension of the search for meaning in life has been found to be .88.

2.4. Data Collection

First of all, in order to start the study, the researchers received approval from the Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee for the ethical suitability of the study. Later, necessary official permissions were obtained by submitting Ethics Committee Approval in order to carry out the study in secondary education institutions in Muğla/Bodrum. In order to collect the data, the researchers personally went to the schools in the sample. The researchers entered each class where the data would be collected and made the necessary explanations to the students about the content and scales of the research. After students were informed that the participation would be on a volunteer basis, consent forms signed by the students were taken. Then the scales were completed by the students. The application lasted for 15 minutes on average. Completed scales were examined and the scales that were found to be incomplete were not included in the study.

2.5. Data Analysis

First, the collected data were entered into SPSS 20.0 program package. Later, outliers were examined in the data set, but no value was found outside the specified possible value range.

Then, the distribution and ratios of missing values in the data set were examined. As a result of the examination, it was determined that the missing values are randomly distributed and the total missing data ratio is less than 5% (Little, 1988). After the satisfaction of the required assumptions, missing value assignment was made by the Expectation Maximization (EM) method (Tabachnick, Fidell, & Ullman, 2007).

For univariate outlier analysis in the data set, Z-score was examined and for multivariate outlier analysis, Mahalanobis distance coefficients were examined and as a result, it was found that the values in the data set on their own or together do not indicate an outlier (Tabachnick et al., 2007).

In order to check whether the data satisfy the normal distribution assumption, skewness and Kurtosis values were examined. The Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients of all the data were found to be varying between -1.00 and +1.00. Thus, it was concluded that the data are distributed normally and thus parametric techniques could be used in the analysis of the data (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu, & Büyüköztürk, 2014).

In order to determine whether there is a multicollinearity problem in the data set, simple (binary) correlation between the variables was checked. As a result of this analysis, the binary correlation between the variables was found to be lower than .90 (Çokluk et al., 2014). Thus, it can be argued that there is no multicollineariy problem between the variables.

As a result, it was determined that the data met the parametric properties required for the regression analysis. Then, in order to find answers to the research questions, Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was performed to determine the relationships between the variables; simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which the high school students' search for meaning in life predict their lifelong learning tendencies. Moreover, in relation to the differences, independent samples t-test and one way variance analysis (ANOVA) were conducted and in order to find the source of the difference, Tukey test was used (Büyüköztürk, 2014). In all these statistical analyses, SPSS 20.0 program package was used and .05 was taken as the level of significance.

2.6. Information about the Ethics Committee Approval

This study was reviewed by the Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Non-Invasive Clinical Research Ethics Committee at the meeting number 2020/4 on 15/04/2020 in terms of justification, purpose, approach and method and was found ethically appropriate (Decision Number: GO 2020/87).

3. Findings

Simple linear regression analysis was carried out to understand the extent to which high school students' search for meaning in life predict their lifelong learning tendencies. Before conducting the regression analysis, in order to determine whether there is multicollinearity between the dependent and independent variables, binary correlation coefficients between the dependent and independent variables were calculated and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients between variables

Variables	$\bar{\bar{X}}$	S	1	2
1. Lifelong Learning Tendency	104.07	8.66	-	
2. Search for Meaning in Life	23.86	8.14	.448**	-

**p<.01

As can be seen in Table 2, the participants' lifelong learning tendency mean score is 104.07 and its standard deviation is 8.66. In addition, there is a positive and significant correlation between the high school students' lifelong learning tendencies and search for meaning in life (r=.448, p<.01). It is also understood from the analyses conducted for the regression assumption given in the data analysis section that the level of this correlation (lower than .90) is not high enough to cause a multicollinearity problem in the created model (Çokluk et al., 2014).

Results of the simple linear regression analysis conducted to determine whether the high school students' search for meaning in life significantly predicts their lifelong learning tendencies are given in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of the simple linear regression analysis conducted to determine whether the high school students' search for meaning in life predicts their lifelong learning tendencies

Variables	R	R^2	R^2_{ch}	F	df	B	β	t	p
Constant						26.086	-	9.255**	.000
Search for Meaning in Life	.448	.213	.210	31.634	1/350	.430	.448	5.624**	.000

**p<.01

As can be seen in Table 3, the search for meaning in life significantly predicts the high school students' lifelong learning tendency scores and the model constructed for the regression is significant (R=.448, R^2=.213, $F_{(1,350)}$=31.634, p<.01). The search for meaning in life variable explains 21.30% of the high school students' lifelong tendencies. The search for meaning in life in the formulated regression model have a medium level effect on the high school students' lifelong learning tendency (.13<R^2<.26) (Cohen, 1988). When the result of the t-test regarding the significance of the regression coefficient is examined, it is seen that the search for meaning in life is a positive and significant predictor of the students' lifelong learning tendencies.

Independent samples t-test analysis was conducted to determine whether the high school students' lifelong learning tendency scores vary significantly depending on gender and the results are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of the independent sample t-test conducted to determine the relationship between the high school students' lifelong learning tendencies and gender

Variable	Gender	n	$\bar{\bar{X}}$	S	df	t	p
Lifelong Learning Tendency	Female	165	107.41	7.53	350	2.928**	.004
	Male	187	101.13	8.49			

**p<.01

As can be seen in Table 4, there is a significant difference between the male students' lifelong learning tendency mean score and that of the female students ($t_{(350)}$=2.928, p<.01).

One-way variance analysis was conducted to determine whether the high school students' lifelong learning tendency scores vary significantly depending on the type of school attended and the results are given in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of one-way variance analysis conducted to determine the relationship between the high school students' lifelong learning tendencies and the type of school attended

Variable	Type of School	n	$\bar{\bar{X}}$	S	F	p	Significant Difference
Lifelong Learning Tendency	Anatolian High School (A)	147	109.11	7.34	13.528**	.000	A-B
	Vocational High School (B)	93	91.54	8.60			B-C
	Religious High School (C)	112	105.34	7.84			

**p<.01

As can be seen in Table 5, the high school students' lifelong learning tendency scores vary significantly depending on the type of school attended ($F_{(2,349)}$=13.528, p<.01). In this regard, the Anatolian High School students can be said to have stronger lifelong learning tendency than the Vocational and Religious High School students.

4. Discussion and Results

In the current study aiming to investigate the extent to which the high school students' lifelong learning tendencies are predicted by their search for meaning in life, it was found that the search for meaning in life positively and significantly predicts lifelong learning tendency. The findings of the study show that the search for meaning in life is an important source of motivation for lifelong learning tendency. Moreover, it was understood that an increase in the scores taken from the search for meaning in life also increased the lifelong learning tendency scores; that is, positively affected them. In this regard, it can be said that the students are in the pursuit of meaning in their lives, that this pursuit of meaning in life renews itself depending on changing conditions and time and that students' efforts made in their search for meaning in life serve a motivational function of fostering their lifelong learning tendencies. This might be because in the period of adolescence when personality is strongly shaped, individuals want to make their lives meaningful and thus they feel more motivated to invest efforts to learn new things.

As there is no study examining the predictive role of the search for meaning in life in explaining the lifelong learning tendencies of high school students or adolescents was found in Turkey and abroad, the findings of the current study cannot be compared with those of a similar study. In this regard, the current study is original. Moreover, when the relevant literature is examined, it is seen that there is a very little research on high school students' or adolescents' lifelong learning tendencies (Asiloğulları, 2020; Brooks, 2006; Güzel, 2017; Kalçık, 2017; Semerci & Kalçık, 2017; Ünal & Kalçık, 2017). The studies conducted in the field of lifelong learning tendency were found to be largely focused on teachers (Gökyer, 2019; Tanatar & Alpaydın, 2019), pre-service teachers (İlic & Haseski, 2019; Yenice & Tunç, 2019), university students (Arslan et al., 2019; Denat et al., 2016) and trainees in different institutions (Adabaş, 2019; Akyol et al., 2018) while high school students or adolescents were not much preferred in these studies.

Parallel to the findings of the current study, the existence of a relationship between lifelong learning tendency and the search for meaning in life can also be seen in the career definition of Savickas (2002). According to Savickas, career is a result of people's search for meaning and efforts to direct their lives. This process of searching for meaning does not end when the individual starts a job rather continues with lifelong learning and development. In this definition, it is clearly emphasized that for whatever reason (career, religion, etc.), the search for meaning leads to lifelong learning and development. One of the most important sources of motivation for people is their being in a quest of meaning in their lives. In this respect, many philosophers and psychologists frequently mentioned people's desire to know and understand while explaining the concept of searching for meaning in life (Spilka, Shaver, & Kirpatrick, 2001). In this context, it can be said that the people's desire to know that arises from the search for meaning can motivate them throughout their lives. In addition, Asiloğulları (2020), in her study on high school students, found a moderately positive significant relationship between students' lifelong learning tendencies and their behaviors of questioning the meaning and purpose of life. In contrast to the findings of the current study, Z. Bahadır (2019) did not find a significant relationship between university students' lifelong learning tendencies and search for meaning in life. More research is needed to obtain more conclusive results on this issue.

Another finding of the current study is that the high school students' lifelong learning tendencies vary significantly depending on gender. The female students' lifelong learning tendency mean score was found to be higher than that of the male students. Jenkins (2004) also emphasized that the concept of lifelong learning is more needed by women because women may have to leave their job, change it or give a long break due to their roles and responsibilities in their social and family lives. He stated that even if women were as qualified as men, they would always remain disadvantaged in career advancement; thus, they needed to gain more qualifications than men. Thus, lifelong learning plays a key role for women. In addition, Jenkins stressed that in general, women cannot benefit from the education system as much as men and that they attach more importance to lifelong learning activities to cover basic education gaps. Parallel to the findings of the current study, Diker-Coşkun and Demirel (2012), İzci and Koç (2012), Evin-Gencel (2013), Diker-Coşkun (2009), Gür-Erdoğan (2014) found that lifelong learning tendency scores taken by different samples are significantly higher in favour of female participants. In addition, Asiloğulları (2020) found in his study on a sample of high school students that the scores of female students' lifelong learning tendency were significantly higher than that of male students. Contrary to the findings of the current study, Oral and Yazar

(2015) determined that male pre-service teachers have stronger lifelong learning tendencies than female pre-service teachers. Moreover, Güzel (2017) found that the high school students' lifelong learning tendency mean scores vary significantly by gender only in the sub-dimension of lack of curiosity. In the study, male students showed a less curious attitude than female students in terms of lifelong learning tendency. Although Güzel found gender-based differences in lifelong learning tendency and deficiency in organizing learning sub-dimension in favour of the male participants and in the motivation and perseverance sub-dimensions in favour of the female participants, these differences are not statistically significant. Oral and Yazar (2015), Şahin, Akbaşlı and Yanpar-Yelken (2010), Tunca, Alkın-Şahin and Aydın (2015), Yaman and Yazar (2015) found that gender did not have any effect on lifelong learning tendency. This controversy in the literature can be eliminated by future qualitative and quantitative research.

According to another finding obtained in the current study, lifelong learning tendencies of high school students vary significantly depending on the type of high school attended. In this regard, the Anatolian High School students were found to have a higher lifelong learning tendency mean score than the Vocational High School students and the Religious High School students were found to have a higher lifelong learning tendency mean score than the Vocational High School students. In this context, it can be said that the students attending school requiring higher school acceptance scores and having higher academic achievement levels have higher lifelong learning tendencies. This may indicate that students' having characteristics positively affecting academic achievement such as learning skill, study strategies can lead to more developed lifelong learning tendencies. Parallel to this finding of the current study, in the study of Asiloğulları (2020), it was found that Anatolian High School and Religious High School students have a significantly higher lifelong learning tendency than Vocational High School students. Diker-Coşkun (2009) reported that the university students viewing themselves successful have a higher lifelong learning tendency mean score than the university students viewing themselves unsuccessful. Furthermore, Evin-Gencel (2013) conducted a study on university students and found that the students attending departments requiring higher acceptance scores (e.g. English Language Teaching, German Language Teaching, Turkish) have higher lifelong learning self-efficacy perception scores than the students attending other departments. Contrary to this finding of the current study, in a study conducted by Tunca, Alkın-Şahin and Aydın (2015) on university students, the lifelong learning tendency of the students having a grade point average in the range between 2.00 and 2.99 was found to be higher than that of the students having a grade point average in the range between 3.00 and 4.00. This controversy seen in the literature shows the complex structure of the concept of lifelong learning affected by many variables.

5. Suggestions

In light of the findings of the current study, following suggestions can be made;

In the current study, the female students' lifelong learning tendency mean score was found to be higher than that of the male students and the lifelong learning tendency mean score of the students attending high schools with higher acceptance scores was found to be higher than that of the students attending high school with lower acceptance scores; thus, psycho educational programs can be developed for male students and for students attending high schools having relatively lower achievement scores. While developing the content of such programs, activities that will promote the search for meaning in life and increase the sources of motivation can be included.

Similar research can be designed by using qualitative approach. In this way, in-depth interviews and focus-group interviews can be conducted with students to enhance the findings obtained in relation to the relationship between lifelong learning tendency and the search for meaning in life.

When the literature is reviewed, it is seen that there is very little research investigating lifelong learning tendencies of high school students or adolescents. The current study focused on the search for meaning in life as a predictor of the high school students' lifelong learning tendencies. Future research may focus on different variables (academic self-efficacy, psychological mentality, etc.), which may contribute to better understanding of lifelong learning tendencies.

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