

Investigation of Life Satisfaction Levels in Adults in Terms of Some Variables: North Cyprus Example

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ABSTRACT

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Life satisfaction, which reflects an individual's level of satisfaction with life, their psychological well-being, and their sense of happiness, represents the cognitive dimension of subjective well-being. Life satisfaction entails a cognitive process that involves subjective evaluations of one's own life. Well-being, a concept that guides the policies of nations, has been the subject of extensive research as a holistic concept encompassing life satisfaction. Understanding and examining the life satisfaction of Turkish Cypriots are important for enhancing individuals' quality of life, providing psychological support, and advancing societies toward a healthier and happier future. This study aims to investigate the levels of life satisfaction among Turkish Cypriot adults in relation to select variables and metaphorical perceptions. The data were collected from 191 volunteers through a simple random sampling method. Content analysis was performed on the responses to open-ended questions about life satisfaction. The results indicated that participants' life satisfaction levels were moderate ($M=4.77$, $SD=.81$). The participants generated 62 metaphors to describe life satisfaction, with the most commonly used metaphor being "happiness." Additional findings from the study are presented in the results section. The results of this study are discussed within the context of relevant literature in the discussion section.

Yetişkinlerde Yaşam Doyum Düzeylerinin Bazı Değişkenler Açısından İncelenmesi: Kuzey Kıbrıs Örneği

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Bireylerin yaşadığı hayata dair tatmin düzeyini, psikolojik refahlarını ve mutluluk hissini yansıtan yaşam doyumu kavramı öznel iyi oluş kavramının bilişsel boyutunu ifade etmektedir. Yaşam doyumu kavramı, bireyin kendi yaşamı ile ilgili öznel değerlendirmelerini içeren bilişsel bir süreci ifade etmektedir. Ülkelerin politikalarına yön veren iyi oluş yaşam doyumunu içeren bütüncül bir kavram olarak araştırmalara konu olmaktadır. Bu kavramın Kuzey Kıbrıs örnekleme bağlamında anlaşılması ve incelenmesi, bireylerin yaşam kalitesini artırma, psikolojik destek sağlama ve toplumun daha sağlıklı ve mutlu bir geleceğe ilerlemeleri için önem taşımaktadır. Bu çalışma Kuzey Kıbrıs'ta yaşayan yetişkinlerin yaşam doyumunu bazı değişkenler açısından incelemektedir. Çalışmanın verileri 191 gönüllü katılımcı üzerinden toplanmıştır. Yaşam doyumu ile ilgili açık uçlu sorulara verilen yanıtlar üzerinde içerik analizi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma sonuçlarına göre katılımcıların yaşam doyumu düzeyleri orta düzeydedir ($M=4.77$, $SD=.81$). Açık uçlu sorulara verilen yanıtların analizi neticesinde 62 metafor ortaya çıkmıştır. Katılımcılardan yaşam doyumu ile ilgili elde edilen metaforların çoğunluğunun mutluluk ile ilgili olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Çalışmanın diğer sonuçları bulgular bölümünde sunulmuş, tüm bulgular ilgili literatür ışığında tartışılmıştır.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of life satisfaction, which emerged during the Age of Enlightenment in the 18th century, served as a source of inspiration for individuals seeking a fulfilling life throughout the 19th century. Towards the latter part of the 20th century, intellectuals made concerted efforts to refine the concept of life satisfaction by delineating its components and devising appropriate measurement methods (Prasoon & Chaturvedi, 2016). During this period, which was characterized by the evolution of the concept, some researchers (Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; Andrews & Withey, 1976; Estes, 1984; Glatzer, Zapf, & Berger, 1984) identified the determinants of life satisfaction as social relationships, health, work-related circumstances, personal well-being, freedom, along with elements linked to moral values and personality traits.

In the present day, happiness is increasingly recognized as a fundamental goal in human life. In light of the extensive research conducted in this field, nations are actively working towards enhancing well-being through life satisfaction, which represents a multidimensional construct (Ruggeri et al., 2020). Life satisfaction, often used interchangeably with the concept of happiness, is categorized as the cognitive component of subjective well-being (Diener et al., 1985). Kushlev et al. (2021), along with Diener (1984), have defined life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect as integral components of subjective well-being. In a separate study, life satisfaction was described as the critical process and evaluation of an individual's life (Dağlı & Baysal, 2016). Life satisfaction essentially encompasses an individual's cognitive assessment, and this judgment is highly personalized. It involves the individual's decision to find contentment in various aspects of their life, such as marriage, education, and work (Alıcı & Seçim, 2020).

Well-being, which significantly influences the policies of nations, has been the subject of research as a comprehensive concept, encompassing life satisfaction. The primary objective of this study is to assess the levels of life satisfaction in adults, taking into account specific variables and metaphorical perceptions. It is anticipated that determining the levels of life satisfaction and individuals' perceptions regarding it will contribute to increasing the overall life satisfaction of the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus (TRNC), which is a developing nation. Khodabakhsh (2022) underscored the paucity of studies on life satisfaction in developing countries, with the majority of such research being conducted in Western nations.

Numerous factors have been demonstrated to have a relationship with life satisfaction. Gender is a variable that has been extensively examined in many studies on life satisfaction. For instance, a study investigating the impact of gender on life satisfaction by Luhmann et al. (2012) found that women tend to report lower life satisfaction compared to men. Another closely linked factor is relationship status, with research by Proulx et al. (2007) revealing that individuals in relationships generally experience higher life satisfaction. Factors such as the availability of parents, employment status, social support, age, education level, and personal income may also influence life satisfaction (Umberson et al., 2010; Scheier et al., 1989; Sarason et al., 1987; Mroczek & Spiro, 2015; Diener & Oishi, 2000; Pavot & Diener, 2008). However, focusing solely on these variables may not provide a comprehensive understanding of life satisfaction. The role of metaphorical perceptions may be significant in comprehending life satisfaction. Metaphors are integral to language and thought, aiding individuals in understanding their experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Exploring metaphorical perceptions regarding life satisfaction can offer individuals improved insights into and explanations of their life satisfaction experiences. For example, the impact of the metaphor "life is a journey" on an individual's life satisfaction, where life's challenges and experiences are likened to a journey, can provide profound insight into life satisfaction (Landau & Meier, 2011).

This study aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of the factors influencing life satisfaction

by delving into the relationships between life satisfaction and variables such as gender, relationship status, age, education level, personal income, and overall life satisfaction. Additionally, the study will investigate the role of metaphorical perceptions, shedding light on how these factors impact life satisfaction. The objective is to offer a current and in-depth understanding of the intricate dynamics associated with life satisfaction in North Cyprus.

This study aims to address the following research questions:

- 1- What is the level of life satisfaction perceived by the participants?
- 2- Do the perceived life satisfaction levels of the participants differ significantly according to socio-demographic variables?
- 3- What are the metaphors of the participants about life satisfaction?
- 4- What categories can the metaphors created by the participants regarding life satisfaction be classified in terms of their similarities?

METHOD

In this section, the research model, participants, data collection tool, and the data analysis process following data collection are outlined.

Research Design

The mixed-methods model was employed in this research, using the convergent parallel design. This study aimed to enhance the depth and reliability of its results by incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data. This approach entails the combination of quantitative and qualitative data, with simultaneous data collection being a fundamental feature of the convergent parallel mixed-method design. In this method, the data collected during the quantitative research phase from the sample served as the secondary sample necessary for gathering qualitative research data (Creswell, 2015). During the analysis process, data are separately analyzed according to the principles of qualitative and quantitative research within the convergent parallel mixed-methods design. The verification of the findings obtained is illustrated in Figure 1 (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). It is crucial to note that, within this framework, qualitative and quantitative data convey distinct types of information.

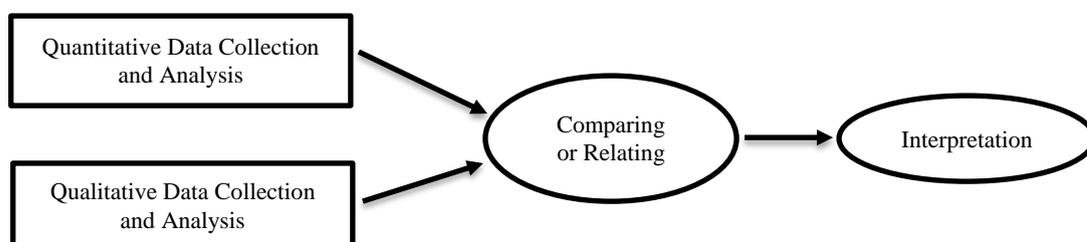


Figure 1. Convergent Parallel Mixed Method Pattern (Creswell, 2015, 78)

This study aimed to enhance the depth and reliability of its results by incorporating both quantitative and open ended data. Both quantitative and open-ended data were collected to amplify the reliability of the present study, establishing a robust basis for the data analysis process. Accordingly, participants answered the questionnaire in one face-to-face session. The quantitative data and the responses to open-ended questions about life satisfaction were analyzed in this study.

Divergent approaches were employed to enrich the findings of the study. One of them was the survey model, which is considered a research approach aimed at describing past or present situations. It seeks to provide an explanation of the event, object, or individuals under study within their current circumstances (Karasar, 2012). Also, a phenomenological approach was employed with open-ended

questions in this study. Phenomenology involves researching events that are not fully understood or familiar to us (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). At the same time, this study explored adults' perceptions of life satisfaction through metaphors. The concept of metaphor can be described as a method of elucidating a concept, phenomenon, or event under investigation by drawing an analogy with an entirely different concept, phenomenon, or event (Saban, 2008).

Participants

The quantitative data were gathered from 191 volunteers (individuals residing in North Cyprus between 2021 and 2022) who provided feedback for the data. Simple random sampling was employed. Sample size recommendations vary, with Bryman and Cramer (2001) suggesting at least five times, Nunnally (1978) proposing ten times, and Gorusch (1983) suggesting fifteen times the number of items in the scale for conducting the necessary analysis. Kline (2016) indicates that participants should be at least 20 times larger than the number of items in the scale to yield reliable results. The study ensured that the number of participants exceeded 20 times the number of items on the scale. Accordingly, the data were collected from 191 participants, with 60.7% being female and 39.3% male, using the simple random sampling method. In a simple random sample, each participant's probability of being selected from the population is equal, and the choice of one participant does not influence the selection of others (Altunışık et al., 2005). 49.2% of the participants were in the 20-39 age group, 37.7% were in the 40-59 age group, and 13.1% were in the 60 and above age group. 68.6% of the participants were in a relationship. While 91.1% of the group had living mothers, 83.2% of them had living fathers. 70.2% were employed, and 75.4% reported having social support. Educational backgrounds varied, with 29.8% having associate degrees or less, 37.7% having bachelor's degrees, and 32.5% holding postgraduate degrees. Income levels were distributed as follows: 31.4% low-income, 55.5% moderate-income, and 13.1% high-income. Half of the participants (50.3%) expressed satisfaction with their lives. Qualitative data were collected from 83 volunteers out of 191 participants who provided feedback for the quantitative data. A total of 83 participants were included in the qualitative data analysis, with 57.8% being female and 42.2% male. Age distribution was as follows: 47% in the 20-39 age group, 38.6% in the 40-59 age group, and 14.4% in the 60 and above age group. In terms of relationships, 69.9% of participants were in a relationship, 30.1% had living mothers, 95.2% had living fathers, 92.8% were employed, and 77.1% had social support. Regarding education, 28.9% had associate degrees or less, 42.2% had bachelor's degrees, and 28.9% held postgraduate degrees. Income levels were distributed as follows: 24.1% low income, 62.6% moderate income, and 13.3% high income. A significant portion (46.9%) of the participants reported being satisfied with their lives.

Research Instruments and Processes

To collect quantitative data during the data collection phase of the research; The Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale (RLSS) and open-ended question form were used.

The Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale (RLSS)

The Riverside Life Satisfaction Scale, initially developed by Margolis et al. (2019) and for which a Turkish validity and reliability study was conducted by Alici and Seçim (2020), was employed. The scale is structured as a seven-point Likert type, with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 7 representing "strongly agree." RLSS consists of six items, three of which are reverse-coded (items 2, 4, and 6), and they load onto a single factor. For example, items include statements like "I like the way my life is going" and "I want to change the course of my life.". Higher scores on the scale indicate a higher level of overall life satisfaction. The original study by Margolis et al. (2019) reported that RLSS demonstrated high validity and reliability values. In the study conducted by Alici and Seçim (2020), the Cronbach's Alpha value was found to be .78.

Open-Ended Question Form

To gather data from the participants, the data collection process was divided into three parts. In the first part, an open-ended question was used to collect demographic information. The second part involved the administration of the 'Life Satisfaction Scale' to acquire quantitative data. In the third part, participants were asked to share their metaphorical perceptions of life satisfaction, which aimed to provide qualitative insights. This approach allowed for a comprehensive data collection process, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative aspects, ensuring a well-rounded analysis. This open-ended question is 'Satisfaction with life ... like/similar; because...!' formed in the form. Participants who filled in the demographic information and life satisfaction scale in this section were asked to explain the metaphor of life satisfaction in the third section. In the qualitative research part, the answers of those who gave feedback to the metaphor section were analyzed.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by employing the SPSS program. Initial steps included addressing missing data and the exclusion of inappropriate (empty spaces, double answers, meaningless answers, etc.) entries. Additionally, any reverse-scored items were adjusted accordingly. Subsequently, the distribution of the data was assessed for normality. Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) suggest that if kurtosis and skewness values fall within the range of -1.5 to +1.5, the data can be considered normally distributed. In this study, the data exhibited a kurtosis value of -.331 and a skewness value of -.229, indicating a normal distribution. Consequently, parametric analyses were deemed appropriate for yielding more accurate results. Frequency and percentage values were calculated and presented in a table. For the first sub-problem of the research, the scale's mean and standard deviation were computed. Following this, t-tests were conducted to examine participants' attitudes toward life satisfaction based on factors such as gender, relationship status, parental status, employment status, receipt of social support, as well as variables like age, education level, personal income, and overall life satisfaction. In instances where significant differences were identified, the Scheffe test was employed to determine which specific groups exhibited these differences.

Data obtained in the open-ended question part of the research was analyzed using a method known as content analysis. This approach was considered suitable for a metaphor study as it enables data to be conceptualized and the extracted concepts to be organized within thematic frameworks (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Out of 191 collected responses, 83 were selected for metaphor analysis based on the judgments of researchers and experts working in two independent qualitative research fields. The data analysis process followed the steps proposed by Saban et al. (2006), which include: 1) Naming/labelling stage, 2) Sorting (explanation and elimination) stage, 3) Reorganizing and compiling stage, 4) Providing validity and reliability stage. Similar steps were employed in the data analysis procedures of numerous prior studies (Akçay, 2016; Kılıç, 2022; Saban, 2008). The analysis process involved several stages:

Naming/Labeling Stage: At this stage, the data were entered into the Microsoft Excel program, and the metaphors provided by the participants were organized in alphabetical order. Responses where participants left the reasons for creating the metaphors blank were excluded. Additionally, metaphors that were incomprehensible or illogical were removed from the dataset. In total, 22 responses were excluded, leaving 83 with suitable metaphors and justifications for further evaluation.

Sorting (Explanation and Elimination) Stage: During this stage, the raw data were carefully examined to identify similarities or common features among the metaphors. Metaphors that lacked logical and explanatory reasons were eliminated from the dataset. As a result, 22 responses were excluded.

Reorganizing and Compiling Stage: In this phase, the metaphors were further reviewed, and those that best represented the intended metaphor were selected. These metaphors were then grouped based on the reasons behind their creation. The study identified four main groups: "Life Satisfaction as a

Necessity-Positive Situation," "Life Satisfaction as Uncertainty," "Life Satisfaction as Balance," and "Life Satisfaction as a Negative Concept."

Providing Validity and Reliability Stage: The metaphors created by the participants, along with their justifications, were included in the study as they were. Expert opinions were sought to create the categories, and the categories were established based on these inputs. To ensure the reliability of the analysis, the intercoder reliability calculation formula developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was employed (Reliability = Consensus / (Consensus + Disagreement) x 100). The research achieved a reliability score of 97%. A reliability result of 90% or more is considered reliable, as per Miles and Huberman (1994). Therefore, the study can be considered reliable.

Ethic

Cyprus Science University Ethics Committee approval was obtained (06.04.2022, 2022/04.009) for this study.

RESULTS

In this section of the research, the findings pertaining to each of the questions created in alignment with the overarching objective are presented. The data analysis for the quantitative phase of the research was conducted initially, followed by the analysis of the qualitative component of the study.

Findings Regarding the Quantitative Part of the Study

This section provides the means and standard deviations of participants' perceptions of life satisfaction. Additionally, it examines whether participant characteristics such as age, gender, education level, relationship status, parental status, employment status, personal income, availability of social support resources, and overall life satisfaction differ with respect to age groups.

Participants' perceptions of life satisfaction were compared based on gender, relationship status, parental status, employment status, and social support status. The data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. T-Test for Participants' Perceptions of Life Satisfaction

Variable	Groups	N	M	SD	DF	t	p
Gender	Female	116	5.03	.87	189	1.18	.23
	Male	75	4.87	.95			
Relationship Status	Yes	131	5.03	.88	189	1.43	.15
	No	60	4.83	.93			
Is Mother Alive?	Yes	174	4.97	.06	189	.22	.82
	No	14	4.92	.24			
Is Dad Alive?	Yes	159	4.92	.06	189	-1.35	.17
	No	32	5.16	.18			
Employment Status	Yes	134	5.01	.06	189	2.85	.00*
	No	57	4.64	.14			
Social Support	Yes	144	5.06	.07	189	2.61	.01*
	No	47	4.67	.14			

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

The mean life satisfaction score for participants was determined to be M=4.97 (SD=.90), indicating a moderate level of life satisfaction. Participants' perceptions of life satisfaction were examined with regard to their gender, relationship status, the status of their parents being alive, employment status, and social support. The t-test results revealed that participants' perceptions of life satisfaction did not significantly differ based on gender, relationship status, and whether their parents were alive or not (t=.1.18, t=1.43, t=.22, t=-1.35, p>.05). However, there were significant differences in participants' perceptions of life satisfaction concerning employment status, with working participants having higher scores (M=5.01, t=2.85, p<.05), as well as social support, where those with social support reported higher life satisfaction scores (M=5.06, t=2.61, p<.05). The participants' perceptions of life satisfaction were compared according to age, education level, personal income,

and overall life satisfaction. The data obtained are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. ANOVA Test of Participants' Perceptions of Life Satisfaction

Variable	Groups	N	M	SD	F	p	Difference
Age	20-39	94	4.92	.90	.23	.79	-
	40-59	72	5.01	.92			
	60 and above	25	5.01	.85			
Education Level	Associate Degree and Before	57	4.69	1.01	4.38	.01*	1-3
	Undergraduate	72	5.01	.63			
	Graduate	62	5.16	1.01			
Personal Income	Low	60	4.71	.98	4.04	.01*	1-3
	Middle	106	5.04	.82			
	High	25	5.26	.91			
Life Satisfaction in General	Dissatisfied	22	4.21	1.05	17.85	.00*	1-2
	Moderately Satisfied	73	4.77	.81			
	Satisfied	96	5.28	.79			

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

As presented in Table 2, an ANOVA test was conducted to compare participants' perceptions of life satisfaction with respect to their age, education level, personal income, and overall life satisfaction. The ANOVA results revealed that participants' perceptions of life satisfaction did not significantly differ concerning the age variable ($F=.23$, $p>.05$). However, significant differences were observed in participants' perceptions of life satisfaction in relation to their education level ($F=4.38$, $p<.05$), personal income ($F=4.04$, $p<.05$), and overall life satisfaction ($F=17.85$, $p<.05$).

Further examination of Table 2 revealed that the difference in the "education level" variable primarily stemmed from variations between the groups of participants with associate degrees and below, undergraduates, and graduate degrees. Participants with a graduate education level ($M=5.16$) were found to have significantly higher perceptions of life satisfaction compared to participants with an associate degree or lower education ($M=4.69$).

In the case of the "personal income" variable, the difference was primarily between the low and high-income groups. Participants with higher personal income ($M=5.26$) were found to have significantly higher perceptions of life satisfaction compared to those with low personal income ($M=4.71$).

Regarding the "life satisfaction in general" variable, significant differences were found among the dissatisfied, moderately satisfied, and satisfied groups. Participants who reported being moderately satisfied with life ($M=4.77$) exhibited significantly higher perceptions of life satisfaction compared to those who were dissatisfied ($M=4.21$). Additionally, participants who reported being satisfied with life ($M=5.28$) had significantly higher perceptions of life satisfaction compared to dissatisfied participants ($M=4.21$). Lastly, participants who reported being generally satisfied with life ($M=5.28$) also had significantly higher perceptions of life satisfaction compared to those who were moderately satisfied with life ($M=4.77$).

Findings Regarding the Open-Ended Question Part of the Study

In this section of the study, the metaphors created by the participants in relation to life satisfaction were analyzed. These metaphors were initially organized in a table based on the participants' names, and their frequencies were documented. Subsequently, the metaphors were categorized, and each category was substantiated with direct quotations from the participants' responses. The metaphors proposed by the participants based on their life satisfaction are displayed in Table 3.

Upon reviewing Table 3, it was evident that the participants generated a total of 62 metaphors. The most frequently used metaphor to describe life satisfaction was the term "happiness" ($n=6$). In addition, metaphors

such as "spending time with friends" (n=3), "peace" (n=3), and "water" (n=4) were also commonly employed. Subsequently, the metaphors developed by the participants were categorized based on their shared themes. The categories derived from the metaphors created by the participants are presented in Table 4.

Table 3. Metaphors Developed by Participants Regarding Life Satisfaction

Metaphor No.	Metaphor	N	Metaphor No.	Metaphor	N
1	Happiness	6	32	Breakfast	1
2	Water	4	33	Good things	1
3	Tree	2	34	Mixed juice	1
4	Spend time with friends	3	35	Butterfly	1
5	Peace	3	36	Stand on one's own legs	1
6	Eat Something	2	37	Taking time for oneself	1
7	Human	2	38	Personal development steps	1
8	Achieving goal	2	39	Mental health	1
9	Enjoying life	2	40	Unblown roses	1
10	Life	2	41	Breathing	1
11	Flower	2	42	Following the flow of the river	1
12	Chess	2	43	What & how much do you want	1
13	Drinking water	2	44	Obese human	1
14	Child's game	1	45	Ocean	1
15	Deep Breathing	1	46	Money	1
16	Drinking sea water	1	47	Making money and having power	1
17	Bottom hole container	1	48	Health	1
18	Steering wheel	1	49	Chocolate	1
19	Tomato	1	50	People I love	1
20	Insatiability	1	51	Love	1
21	Marriage	1	52	Social environment	1
22	Mortal	1	53	Gold	1
23	Physiological necessity	1	54	Surprise	1
24	Rainbow	1	55	Balance in the scale	1
25	Environment	1	56	Satiety	1
26	Habit of the country we are in	1	57	Soil	1
27	Retiring from a job	1	58	Utopia	1
28	Hobbies	1	59	Half empty glass	1
29	Friend and family	1	60	Phoenix	1
30	Set of uncertainties	1	61	Rebirth	1
31	Doing business	1	62	Climb to the top	1
			Total		83

Table 4. Categories Created for Life Satisfaction

Category	Metaphor	N	%
Life Satisfaction as Necessity-Positive Situation	Life (1), Flower (1), Chess (1), Tree (2), Gold (1), Phoenix (1), Friends and Family (1), Spend Time with Friends (3), Retiring from a Job (1), Breakfast (1), Butterfly (1), Stand on one's own legs (1), Taking Time for Oneself (1), Personal Development Steps (1), Mental Health (1), Happiness (6), Breathing (1), Environment (1), What & how much do you want (1), Chocolate (1), Child's Game (1), Deep Breathing (1), Ocean (1), Money (1), Making Money and Having Power (1), Health (1), Tomato (1), People I love (1), Love (1), Social Environment (1), Water (4), Drinking Water (2), Marriage (1), Physiological Necessity (1), Enjoying Life (2), Achieving Goal (2), Hobbies (1), Peace (3), Human (2), Doing Business (1), Good Things (1), Satiety (1), Rebirth (1), Climbing to the Top (1)	61	73.5
Life Satisfaction as Uncertainty	Rainbow (1), Half Empty Glass (1), Steering wheel (1), Set of Uncertainties (1), Mortal (1), Surprise (1), Life (1),	7	8.4
Life Satisfaction as Balance	Mixed Juice (1), Insatiability (1), Eating Something (2), Balance on the Scale (1), Flower (1),	6	7.2
Life Satisfaction as Negative Concept	Soil (1), Following the Flow of the River (1), Unblown Roses (1), Chess (1), Habit of the country we are in (1), Bottom hole container (1), Obese Human (1), Drinking Sea Water (1), Utopia (1)	9	10.9

Upon reviewing Table 4, it becomes evident that the category “life satisfaction as a necessity-positive situation” includes 6 instances of the metaphor “happiness” 4 instances of “water” and 3 instances each of “peace” and “spending time with friends”. Additionally, there are metaphors expressed twice or once. An analysis of the metaphors within the category of “life satisfaction as a necessity-positive situation” suggests that the participants perceive life satisfaction as a crucial and positive concept. Below are some of the participants' explanations related to the metaphors in the “satisfaction with life as a necessity-positive situation” category: “Life satisfaction is like happiness because if you enjoy life and colour it, you will find happiness.”

The category "Life satisfaction as uncertainty" is represented by the metaphor “rainbow” which was expressed once. Other metaphors in this category include “half-empty glass”, “steering wheel”, “set of uncertainties”, “mortal”, “surprise”, and “life”. These metaphors collectively suggest that the participants view life satisfaction as an ambiguous concept. Below are some of the participants' explanations related to the metaphors in the “satisfaction with life as uncertainty” category: “Life satisfaction is like a set of uncertainties; as we live with uncertainty where, when, with whom, in what environment, the direction of our lives, and all the events we will experience”.

Within the category of “life satisfaction as balance”, two metaphors were associated with “eat something”, and one was related to “mixed juice”. Additional metaphors within this category include “insatiability”, “balance on the scale”, and “flower”. The metaphors in this category collectively suggest that participants perceive life satisfaction as a concept that requires balance. Below are some of the participants' explanations related to the metaphors in the “satisfaction with life as balance” category: “Life satisfaction is like eating something because if you eat in balance, you will be healthy, and you will understand that you are full. You will neither starve nor swell. It is important to be in balance”.

The category “Life satisfaction as a negative concept” comprises metaphors expressed once. These metaphors include “earth”, “following the flow of the river”, “unblown roses”, “chess”, “the mindset of the country we are in”, “a pot with a hole in the bottom”, “obese person”, “drinking seawater”, and “utopia”. The presence of these metaphors in this category suggests that the participants view life satisfaction as a negative concept. Below are some of the participants' explanations related to the metaphors in the

“satisfaction with life as a negative concept” category: “Life satisfaction is like an obese person because he always wants more”.

DISCUSSION

The study delved into life satisfaction through quantitative research, considering various factors such as age, gender, relationship status, the status of participants' parents, employment status, social support, education level, personal income, and overall life satisfaction. In terms of general life satisfaction, participants who reported being moderately satisfied exhibited higher levels of life satisfaction compared to those who were dissatisfied with life. To provide a more profound and comprehensive analysis, a mixed method design was employed in this study, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to gain a more detailed understanding of the phenomenon (Alkan et al., 2019).

The study also explored the employment status variable and revealed that participants who were employed reported higher levels of life satisfaction compared to those who were not working. This finding aligns with existing literature. Hatipoğlu and Tuncay (2021) found a positive correlation between income levels and life satisfaction among non-working individuals. Employees and those content with their jobs tend to express higher levels of life satisfaction (Amati et al., 2018). Additionally, it has been observed that the life satisfaction of unemployed men is lower than that of unemployed women (Joshano & Jovanović, 2018). Erdiç (2018) discovered that married individuals who were employed exhibited higher life satisfaction levels than those who were not employed. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that being gainfully employed, particularly when coupled with job satisfaction, has a positive impact on life satisfaction.

In this study, it was observed that the participants' perceptions of life satisfaction did not exhibit significant differences based on their relationship status. However, it is worth noting that this finding contrasts with the results reported in existing literature, which suggest that relationship status plays a significant role in determining life satisfaction scores. Research has shown that individuals in a romantic relationship tend to have higher levels of life satisfaction compared to those who report having no romantic ties (Amati et al., 2018). Conversely, being divorced or widowed is associated with lower life satisfaction (Joshano & Jovanović, 2018). Furthermore, Erdinç (2018) pointed out that married men reported significantly higher life satisfaction compared to married women, and a positive relationship between marital adjustment and life satisfaction was observed. Dağlı and Baysal (2017) also noted significant differences in life satisfaction based on marital status. Establishing romantic relationships, which can serve as sources of social support, is one of the variables that influence life satisfaction.

Upon examining the variable of social support, it was noted that participants who reported having social support demonstrated higher levels of life satisfaction compared to those without social support. No significant differences were identified in relation to the variables of mother and father's status (alive or not) and life satisfaction. Notably, a significant result emerged when analyzing the metaphor "spend time with friends," which featured prominently in the qualitative findings, in connection with the social support variable at the quantitative level. Given the outcome that individuals with social support tend to have higher perceptions of life satisfaction, it can be inferred that metaphors like "spend time with friends," "friends and family," "environment," "social environment," and "people I love" support the quantitative findings. Social support plays a crucial role in influencing individuals' life satisfaction, and those with social support appear to have chosen metaphors that convey their life satisfaction, falling within the category of life satisfaction as a necessity-positive situation. In this regard, the qualitative and quantitative data analyzed in the present study mutually reinforced each other.

Uludağ and Çınar (2021) discovered a significant and positive correlation between social support and life satisfaction, supporting the notion that social support plays a vital role in individuals' satisfaction with life. Additionally, research has consistently revealed a positive connection between friendship and life satisfaction. The strength and quality of friendships have been identified as critical factors in this relationship (Amati et al., 2018). Friendships, characterized by their voluntary, mutual, sincere, and enduring nature,

serve as a protective shield for dealing with stress, promoting healthy behaviors, safeguarding against risks, enhancing well-being, and shielding individuals from the adverse consequences of negative life events. However, it is worth noting that friendship relations can also have adverse effects, including criticism, discrimination, and negative habits. Nevertheless, positive aspects of friendships such as support, trust, and intimacy, as well as factors like the frequency of contact and satisfaction derived from these relationships, are associated with higher levels of life satisfaction (Amati et al., 2018). Consequently, social support stands out as a crucial factor for individuals in dealing with life's challenges and, as a result, experiencing greater life satisfaction, especially given that humans are inherently social beings.

The research results indicated that participants with a postgraduate education level reported higher levels of life satisfaction than those with an associate degree or lower. The significant findings related to the education level variable in the quantitative results aligned with metaphors derived from the qualitative research, specifically those in the category of life satisfaction as a necessity-positive situation. Metaphors such as 'personal development steps,' 'retiring from a job, taking time for oneself,' and 'achieving goals' support the quantitative findings. Likewise, the quantitative findings concerning the personal income variable are corroborated by metaphors within the life satisfaction as a necessity-positive situation category, including 'standing on one's own legs,' 'money,' 'making money and having power,' 'doing business,' and 'climbing to the top.' A study conducted by Ünal et al. (2001) with physicians found that job satisfaction is the most influential factor in life satisfaction. This observation is in line with research, emphasizing high life satisfaction in professions requiring undergraduate and graduate education. Additionally, in a study by Dağlı and Baysal (2017) involving teachers with a high level of education, it was found that their satisfaction levels were high. These findings further support the positive relationship between education level and life satisfaction, which is consistent with the results of the research.

When the personal income variable was examined, it was found that the participants with a high personal income had higher levels of life satisfaction than those with a low personal income. Dağlı and Baysal (2017) found that life satisfaction differs significantly according to monthly income.

Research findings suggested that there was no significant difference between age and life satisfaction among the participants. These results are in contrast to some previous studies, such as Dağlı and Baysal (2017), which found differences in life satisfaction based on age. The literature on age and life satisfaction indeed presents mixed findings, with some studies indicating differences across age groups while others show no such variations. The relationship between age and life satisfaction is complex and may depend on various factors, including life conditions and individual differences. It is clear that more research is needed to fully understand the relationship between age and life satisfaction.

There was no significant difference between the variables of gender and life satisfaction in this study. In the literature, there are studies stating that life satisfaction differs significantly according to gender (Giusta et al., 2011; Al-Attayah & Nasser, 2013; Yaremtchuk, 2014; Chang et al., 2017) and studies stating that life satisfaction does not differ significantly according to gender (Kirişoğlu, 2016). There may be some mediated variables that affect the relationship between gender and life satisfaction.

Findings were obtained based on metaphors within qualitative research on life satisfaction. Among the 62 different metaphors obtained, the metaphor of 'happiness' was used the most. When these metaphors were examined, four categories were received. The categories were accepted under life satisfaction as a necessity-positive situation, uncertainty, balance, and life satisfaction as a negative concept. During the categorization, the explanations of the metaphors were also taken into account. In this context, the quantitative finding, which emerged at a high level in the quantitative results of the participants and obtained in the variable of life satisfaction in general, is supported by prominent metaphors such as 'happiness', 'enjoying life', 'peace', which the participants explained. Since these metaphors were gathered under the title of life satisfaction as a necessity-positive situation, it was concluded that the qualitative and quantitative findings supported each other, the participants who were satisfied with their lives had positive metaphors and anecdotes, and their life satisfaction was high in this context.

Apart from these results, no metaphors were associated with the variables of age, gender, and mother and father's vital status. Regarding the relationship status variable, the metaphor of 'marriage' belonging to the category of life satisfaction as a necessity-positive situation was obtained. In these respects, there are differences in the results of the two studies. Considering the history of the research, it was desired to emphasize the differences in findings between it and current research since it was conducted at least twenty years ago. Likewise, Mellor et al. (2008) concluded in their study that individuals' belonging to emotional relationships increases their life satisfaction. In the study conducted by Kaplan and Erdem (2022), the fact that there was no significant difference between university students' life satisfaction and relationship status supports the findings of the relationship status variable obtained in the research.

Sixty-one of the metaphors obtained from the qualitative findings belong to life satisfaction as a necessity-positive situation. The quantitative results are directly related to the metaphors in this category, 7 metaphors belonging to the category of life satisfaction as uncertainty, 6 metaphors belonging to the category of life satisfaction as balance, life satisfaction as a negative concept 9 metaphors belonging to the satisfaction category were obtained, and these metaphors are not directly related to quantitative findings. When the unrelated metaphors are examined, the most striking metaphor is the metaphor of 'eat something' stated by two different participants. This metaphor has brought a different perspective to life satisfaction by being associated with balance and being healthy. Negatively, it was concluded that there are metaphors that are different from each other and incompatible with their characteristics in the category of life satisfaction.

The results obtained revealed that the research findings are in parallel with current studies in the literature. In addition, the studies are similar to each other because the studies were prepared using quantitative research methods. Concluding the quantitative findings of this study by supporting it with qualitative research data has created an important perspective.

In this study the mixed-methods research was employed, embodying both quantitative and qualitative designs. In this sense, the study results could be examined in more depth. The data was collected in 2021-2022 through face-to-face sessions conducted with the participants. The sample group and the variables covered in the study constitute the limitations of this study. Professionals working in the field can organize their studies to increase life satisfaction by using the results of this and similar studies. In future studies, some aspects of the regarding issue should be addressed. Relatedly, different variables (e.g. motivation, work performance, life purpose) should enter into the question, mediation analysis studies require close attention. It should be noted that the results of this study were gathered by deploying a case study design, and interactional results can further be obtained with focus group work.

For participants with moderate levels of life satisfaction, accessing to psychological support and counseling services are important. Using these results, some efforts should be made to emphasize the need for such services and facilitate access to them. The finding that receiving social support has a positive impact on life satisfaction indicated that individuals need to expand or strengthen their social support networks. In this context, it is important to increase awareness of social support resources in the community and enhance social support systems. Understanding the relationship between employment status and life satisfaction can lead to improvements in working conditions by employers and policymakers. Enhancing the emotional and physical well-being of employees in the workplace can increase their life satisfaction. Considering the positive impact of receiving social support on life satisfaction, creating and promoting social support programs are important. Such programs may include various approaches, such as psychological counseling, group therapy, or community activities. Conducting further research on the relationship between personal income and life satisfaction is important to evaluate the effectiveness of economic policies and social assistance programs. The effectiveness of support programs for individuals with low-income can be examined. In general, a better understanding of the variables related to life satisfaction and how these variables affect individuals' life satisfaction can provide guidance for the development of policies and programs aimed at increasing life satisfaction. Such programs can help individuals with life skills, psychological support, and emotional well-being. Understanding the relationship between education level

and life satisfaction emphasizes the importance of access to education opportunities. Therefore, policies and programs can be developed to increase access to educational opportunities, especially for individuals living in low-income or disadvantaged areas. To strengthen the positive relationship between education level and life satisfaction, it is important to improve the quality of the education system. Qualified teachers, up-to-date curricula, and educational materials are essential for ensuring equal opportunities in education.

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