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Relationship between Locus of Control and Life Satisfaction: A Study with Public Education Center Teachers

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Keywords

Internal-external locus of control, life satisfaction, adult education, ethical sensitiveness.

Abstract

The individuals being the locus of internal control accept that reinforcers rely on their efforts. In this study, it was aimed to examine if the public education center teachers' perception of internal-external locus of control differs depending on their life satisfaction levels. Negative, strong and significant relationship was determined between life satisfaction of 44 teachers, who participated in this study, and their perception of internal-external locus of control. Life satisfaction of teachers having high level of internal locus of control was found to be high. In our study, a significant relationship was determined between the internal locus of control and life satisfaction levels of people describing their health status and familial relationships positively. According to Hume, when we are proud of any action, we only consider the motives resulting in these actions. Teachers having virtuous characteristics are capable of freely develop their own characters and to train students having high level of life satisfaction and internal locus of control. To be able to raise individuals having healthy personal characteristics, this ethical sensitiveness should also be established in adult education.

Kontrol Odağı ve Yaşam Doymu Arasındaki İlişki: Halk Eğitim Merkezi Öğretmenleri ile Yapılan Bir Araştırma

Anahtar

Kelimeler
İç-dış denetim odağı, yaşam doymu, yetişkin eğitimi, etik duyarlılık.

Özet

İç denetim odağı olan bireyler güçlendiricilerin kendi çabalarına dayandığını kabul etmektedirler. Bu çalışmada, halk eğitim merkezinde görev yapan öğretmenlerin yaşam doymu düzeylerine göre iç-dış kontrol odağı algılarının farklılaşıp farklılaşmadığının incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmaya katılan 44 öğretmenin yaşam doymuları ile dış kontrol odağı algıları arasında olumsuz yönde, güçlü ve anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. İç kontrol odağı yüksek olan öğretmenlerin yaşam doymuları da yüksek çıkmıştır. Bizim çalışmamızda sağlık durumlarını ve aile içi ilişkilerini iyi olarak nitelendirenlerin yaşam doymuları ve iç kontrol odağı algıları arasında anlamlı bir ilişki çıkmıştır Hume'a göre bir eylemden övünç duyduğumuzda sadece onu üreten güdülerini göz önünde bulundururuz. Erdemli kişilik özelliğine sahip öğretmenler kişiliklerini özgürce geliştirebilecek, iç denetim odağı ve yaşam doymuları yüksek nitelikte öğrenciler yetiştirebileceklerdir. Sağlıklı kişilik özelliklerine sahip bireyler yetiştirebilmek için de yetişkin eğitiminde bu etik duyarlılığın geliştirilmesi önemlidir.

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1. Introduction

The positive meaning that the teachers, who are constructing the future, ascribe to the life and their positive approach to the life are of significant importance for their better relationship with students and providing the students with positive energy. It allows us to have projections regarding how the meaning ascribed to the life will reflect to the teachers and then the students, so the life. Life satisfaction means the satisfaction from all the experiences throughout the life, rather than the satisfaction from any certain situation. In this study, the concept of locus of control is considered as a personality characteristic of teachers working at public education center. Teacher is a factor that directly affects the qualification of the product within the scope of education system. A teacher significantly affects the development of individuals' attitudes, standards, and behavioral ideals (Hamacek, 1972). Besides the professional and content knowledge of teacher, the importance of having healthy and positive personal characteristics from the physical, psychological, and social aspects is also known. It is important since it draws attention to the fact that the teachers should be the responsible individuals being capable of coping with life events known to be related with internal locus of control, enjoying the life, having developed sense of sufficiency, ethical sensitivity and democratic attitude values, and allowing the students to educate themselves.

How a teacher conceives himself would reflect on the people, whom he is in communication with. Of course, the students would be those, who will be affected from this at highest level. The approach of teachers, who have negative sense of self, to the students will be different from that of teachers, who have positive sense of self. The concept of self-control and life satisfaction are among the important topics, which are widely underestimated in adult education. In our study, depending on their life satisfaction levels, it was examined if the internal-external locus of control perception of the teachers working at public education center vary depending on their life satisfaction levels.

2. Literature review

Life satisfaction, which has been a subject that the peoples have interested in for centuries, has been examined by the philosophers and the domain of ethics, which is a branch of philosophy, and they have focused on the concept of happiness as the highest and unique motivation source for human activities. The concept of life satisfaction is firstly considered within the scope of the concept of "good" in ethics and in virtue ethics. Moreover, as well as it has been described based on an external criterion such as holiness, it has also been examined focusing on the factors influencing the people's judgments regarding their own lives. As a second perspective, the concept of life satisfaction has also been defined as the domination of positive emotions to the negative feelings (Özer 2003). The life satisfaction of individuals can be influenced from the happiness in daily life, meaning ascribed to the life, positive individual identity, adaptation to reaching the objectives, feeling physically better, economic status, and social relationships (Ülker Tümlü and Receptoğlu, 2013).

The teachers, who have life satisfaction, are expected to have more positive relationships with the students and to give them more positive energy. In such

cases, higher level of outcome can be obtained from the lessons and the communication with students. The concept of locus of control, which is another concept that is as important as the life satisfaction is, is a situation, which has reflections on the student, rather than a situation that is only the personal problem of teacher. The concept of locus of control is divided into internal locus of control and external locus of control. Whether the teachers are with internal locus of control or external locus of control is very important for both of their academic and behavioral aspects.

In “Reinforcement” concept of Operant Conditioning Model, the locus of control that has been put forwards as a result of “expectation” concept is believed to construct an important aspect of personality (Dağ, 1991). Individuals may adopt a general expectation that the reinforcers are under the control of their own power or under the control of others’ power. It has been hypothesized that the person has internal locus of control in first case and external locus of control in second case (Küçükkaragöz et al., 2013). Those believing in internal locus of control can better benefit from their experiences, need longer times for difficult decisions, better tolerate the delays of satisfaction (Dağ, 1991), behave more willingly to alter the environmental conditions, pay more importance to success and failures (Basım and Şeşen, 2007; Akbolat et al., 2011), are successful, influent, entrepreneur, and self-confident persons having high self-respect, who are active in social events and spending more time in intellectual and academic activities. The persons with external locus of control, on the other hand, believe that they cannot change the events occurring around them, have expectation that their personal effort wouldn’t work in achieving the prizes and avoiding from punishes; they may feel themselves insufficient, passive, sceptic, and dogmatic (Akbolat et al., 2011) and, consequently they may experience low level of self-respect, depression, headaches, and other psychophysiological symptoms and psychopathologies (Küçükkaragöz et al., 2013), as well as they may exhibit aggressive behaviors by experiencing disappointments (Karataş 2012).

There is a relationship between the locus of control and individuals’ way of perceiving the events occurring around them and of developing behavior (Akbolat et al., 2011). It is also believed that the teachers’ locus of control beliefs influence their life satisfaction, as well as their perceptions and behaviors. Moreover, the locus of control is also an expectation, which is also defined as persons’ belief about if they can control their lives or not. It affects how individuals behave in many domains. From this aspect, it has significant importance for persons’ behaviors about their lives (Yeşilyaprak, 1988).

3. Methodology

The universe of our study consists of teachers working at Kütahya Public Education Center and Evening Art School. The sample size was not calculated, and it was aimed to reach at the entire universe. The written consents of teachers willing to participate were obtained, a briefing meeting was organized before the study, and 44 teachers were involved in this study.

Data Collection Tools: The questionnaire consisting of 16 items, where the sociodemographic characteristics of the teachers were questioned, and the Rotter’s

Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (1966) investigating the position of individuals generalized expectations on the internality-externality dimension and determining if the individuals' expectations or beliefs are in the way that the reinforcers are under control of them or other powers were utilized. Moreover, in order to determine the life satisfaction level of individuals, the Life Satisfaction Scale (Diener et al., 1985) was utilized.

Internal-External Locus of Control Scale: Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (1966) investigating the position of individuals generalized expectations on the internality-externality dimension and determining if the individuals' expectations or beliefs are in the way that the reinforcers are under control of them or other powers consists of 29 items, and the scores vary between 0 and 23; higher scores indicate increase in belief of external locus of control. Of the scale, Turkish adaptation of which has been made by Dağ (1991), the test-retest reliability coefficient has been calculated to be $r=.83$, the reliability calculated via KR-20 method has been found to be .68, and Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient has been found to be .71. Structural reliability of locus of control scale has been examined using factor analysis. As a result of the analyses, the load values of items varied between .33 and .61. It can be stated that the items have the ability of distinguishing.

Life Satisfaction Scale: The scale has been developed by Diener et al. (1985) in order to measure the general life satisfaction. The scale is a Likert type one consisting of 5 items. The lowest score to be taken is 5, while the highest one is 35. Higher scores indicate higher level of life satisfaction. Original form of the scale has a single-factor structure, and the studies have revealed that the internal consistency was at acceptable level (Pavot et al., 1991). In this study, the form adapted by Yetim (1991) was utilized. Yetim (1991) has carried out the face validity study of the scale. In other studies, where the scale has been used, also the structural validity has been examined, and it has been determined that the scale has single-factor structure. Within the scope of reliability studies, the test-retest reliability of the scale was found to be .71, and internal consistency coefficient to be .78. In this study, the internal reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated to be .83.

Statistical Analyses: The data were entered to IBM SPSS Statistics 21.0 package software, and then analyzed. In analyzing the normality of data distribution, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk analyses were utilized. Since no normal distribution was observed ($p<.05$), the nonparametric tests were preferred (See Table 1). While comparing 2 independent groups, the Mann-Whitney U test was utilized, while Kruskal-Wallis test was used in comparing multiple independent groups. In order to analyze the relationship between life satisfaction and locus of control, the Spearman correlation analysis was performed, and the results were discussed from statistical aspect. The differences and correlations were considered statistically significant since the p value was lower than .05.

Table 1: Scale's Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test Results

Scales	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	d.f.	P	Statistic	d.f.	P
Life Satisfaction	,180	44	,001	,854	44	,000
Locus of Control	,141	44	,028	,904	44	,001

4. Results and Discussion

90.9% of 44 teachers having mean age of 37.13 ± 5.1 years and aged between 29 and 49 were female. Only 9.1% of the teachers have master's degree. Participants' mean score from Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control was 10.56 ± 3.35 , while the mean score from Life Satisfaction Scale was found to be 2459 ± 7.94 .

Negative, strong, and significant relationship was found between life satisfaction levels and external locus of control perceptions of 44 teachers, who participated into this study. As the external locus of control perceptions of teachers increased, decreases were observed in their life satisfactions. In other words, teachers having high level of internal locus of control perception have higher level of life satisfaction ($r = -.501$; $p = .001$).

Table 2: The Relationship between Teachers' Locus of Control Perception and Life Satisfaction Levels

<i>Spearman</i>		Locus of Control	Life Satisfaction
Locus of Control	r	1,000	-,501
	P		.001
	N	44	44

In our study, the life satisfaction levels of those defining their general health situation, socioeconomic level, and intra-family relationships to be good and regularly doing exercises were found to have high level of life satisfaction and low level of external locus of control perception.

Table 3: Some Factors Influencing the Teachers' Life Satisfaction and External Locus of Control Perception

Scales		N	MeanRank	U	P
<i>Do you usually have good relations within the family?</i>					
Life Satisfaction	Yes	36	26,14	13,0	.000
	No	8	6,13		
Locus of Control	Yes	36	19,76	45,5	.002
	No	8	34,81		
<i>Are you a healthy (physical, mental, social) person in general?</i>					
Life Satisfaction	Yes	30	25,42	122,5	.025
	No	14	16,25		
Locus of Control	Yes	30	18,42	87,5	.002
	No	14	31,25		
<i>Do you do physical exercise regularly?</i>					
Life Satisfaction	Yes	18	28,36	128,5	.001
	No	26	18,44		
Locus of Control	Yes	18	17,81	149,5	.041
	No	26	25,75		
<i>Is your socio-economic status above-average?</i>					
Life Satisfaction	Yes	38	25,33	6,5	.000
	No	6	4,58		
Locus of Control	Yes	38	20,42	35,0	.005
	No	6	35,67		

The life satisfaction levels of those having no disease, being interested in any branch of art, and have achieved their target position in life were found to be higher.

Table 4: Some Factors Influencing the Life Satisfaction Levels of Teachers

Life Satisfaction	N	MeanRank	U	P
<i>Do you have any health problems?</i>				
Yes	11	14,00	88,0	.010
No	33	25,33		
<i>Are you interested in any branch of art?</i>				
Yes	28	27,29	90,0	.001
No	16	14,13		
<i>Are you where you wish to be now in your life?</i>				
Yes	22	27,91	123,0	.005
No	22	17,09		

The teachers, who are the individuals determining how persons the students, who are the future of society, will be in future, are expected to have positive personality characteristics. Moreover, it is believed that the teachers enjoying doing their job, finding creative solutions for the problems, and being happy in their family and professional lives, being happy in other words, would educate healthier and happier individuals. In our study, mean score of teachers in life satisfaction scale was calculated to be 24.59 ± 7.94 . This score is slightly higher than the average, and shows similarities with some studies in literature (Dorahy et al., 2000; Gündoğar et al, 2007; Joshonloo and Afshari, 2009; Uz-Baş, 2011; Kabasakal and Uz Baş, 2013).

Burger (1984) have stated that the persons, who express that the health is related with the luck and faith and the things they have experienced have not been under their control but the control of others, are most likely with external locus of control. In general, the results of studies indicate that internal locus of control has more positive reflections on general life satisfaction and physical and psychological health of individual than external locus of control has (Schultz and Schultz, 2007). In our study, in parallel with the literature, both of the life satisfactions and internal locus of control perceptions of teachers defining their general health status to be good were found to be high. Özgür et al. (2010) have reported that the life satisfaction of students reporting their physical and mental health to be "poor" was lower. In our study, the life satisfaction levels of ones regularly doing exercises and interested in any branch of art were found to be high. Doğan (2006) has reported the wellbeing of students doing physical exercise to be high. Kabasakal and Uz Baş (2013) have reported that the life satisfaction of teacher candidates varied with participating into activities, while Kapıkıran and Yağcı (2010) have determined that, among the adolescents, there was a relationship between playing a musical instrument and doing sports and life satisfaction. Cenkseven and Akbaş (2007) have reported that, among the university students, there was a positive relationship between subjective and psychological wellbeing and perceived satisfaction from spare time activities. These results seem similar to ours.

One of the factors affecting the life satisfaction is the socioeconomic status. Paolini et al (2006), in their study, have found a significant relationship between the

financial concerns and life satisfaction. In our study, those having higher socioeconomic status were found to have higher life satisfaction and lower external locus of control. Özgür et al. (2010) have determined that the life satisfaction of students defining their economic status to be “bad” had lower levels of life satisfaction. Moller (1996) has reported that the life satisfaction of university students was significantly related with the level of income. In literature, it has been reported in parallel with our study that the life satisfaction of those having higher economic status have higher life satisfaction levels (Cenkseven, 2004; Chow, 2005; Tuzgöl-dost,2007; Dilmaç and Ekşi,2008; Gün and Bayraktar, 2008; Kabasakal and Uz Baş 2013).

Çeçen (2007) has reported that students having higher level of emotional loneliness had lower level of life satisfaction, while Young et al. (1995) have reported that they have found positive relationship between attitudes of parents and life satisfaction among the adolescents. In our study, the life satisfaction of those defining their intra-family relationships to be good was found to be high, while their perception of external locus of control was determined to be low. Cenkseven and Akbaş (2007) have reported that, among university students, there was a positive relationship between subjective and psychological wellbeing and extraversion, learned strength, and the perceived satisfaction from the relationship with parent. Miller et al. (1986) have found that those with internal locus of control were more effective in establishing connection and achieving their goals. Doğan (2006) have reported that the wellbeing level of students supported by their families was higher. Tuzgöl Dost (2006) has determined that there was a significant relationship between subjective wellbeing of university students and their parent’s attitudes and locus of control. The results of these studies are in parallel with our findings.

Spector (1988) has determined that the persons with internal locus of control could achieve their goals more easily. In his study on teachers, Taş (2011) has examined the relationship between meaning of life, life satisfaction, social comparison, and internal-external locus of control. According to the results of that study, it has been found that there was positive relationship between actual meaning sub-dimension of life and life satisfaction and social comparison and negative relationship between internal and external locus of control. Furthermore, also in our study, the life satisfaction of teachers with high internal locus of control was found to be higher. In literature, it has been reported that individuals with internal locus of control have more positive inclinations (Anderson, 1977; Spector, 1988; Strickland, 1989; Bernardi, 2001). Basım and Şeşen (2007) has reported that individuals with internal locus of control exhibit more innovative attitudes and turn onto opportunities by taking more risk. Periasamy and Ashby (2002) have determined that perfectionism, which is defined as high personal expectations, is related with external locus of control. Yeşilyaprak (1990) has reported that individuals with internal locus of control were those conceiving themselves to be more effective, self-confident, and independent, who have positive sense of self, while Breet et al. (2010) have determined that individuals with external locus of control, when compared to those with internal locus of control, may be more

depressive, and may exhibit nervous and aggressive behaviors by experiencing disappointments. These results show similarities with our findings.

Tuzgöl Dost (2007) has reported that there was a positive relationship between the university students' life satisfaction levels and their expectations from the future. Doğan (2006) has reported that the wellbeing level of students having positive thoughts about themselves were higher. The satisfaction of teachers in their professional lives also influences their general life satisfaction level. In his study, Keser (2005) has determined a significant and positive relationship between job satisfaction and life satisfaction. As a result of his study, Şahin (2008) has determined that the physical education teachers, who have voluntarily chosen this branch, experienced less emotional exhaustion, and their life satisfaction level was higher. In our study, in parallel with the literature, the life satisfaction level of teachers, who think that they achieved their target position, was found to have higher life satisfaction.

One of the most important factors allowing teachers being satisfied from their lives may be to work at their favorite job. Working at their favorite job may make teachers happier and allow them to be satisfied from their jobs. Moreover, working at a job, which is socially respected and appreciated, may enable teachers to be satisfied from their jobs.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, according to Hume, when we feel honored with an action, we consider only the senses creating it. External efficiency has no value. All of the virtuous actions are only originated from the virtuous motivations (Frankena, 2007). Modern education approach assign teachers with the responsibility of facilitate individuals' personal intellectual development, as well as improving the responsibility of developing a virtuous personal. The teachers with virtuous personality characteristics would freely improve their personality and educate students with internal locus of control and having higher level of life satisfaction. In order to educate individuals with healthy personality characteristics, establishing this ethical sensitivity in adult education is very important. For this reason, the teachers and teacher candidates may be provided with educations improving the positive characteristics such as purposefulness, positive sense of self, idealism, and internal locus of control.

Moreover, it can be recommended to establish counseling centers that may help teachers with improving their life satisfaction and internal locus of control. Besides that, by carrying out the study on larger sample sizes examining their life satisfactions and internal locus of control may be utilized in further studies.

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