

## Investigation of happiness attitudes of elderly care technician students\*

### Yaşlı bakımı teknikerliği öğrencilerinin karşılıklı mutluluk tutumlarının incelenmesi

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#### ABSTRACT

**Aim:** This research was carried out to examine the mutual happiness levels of the students of the elderly care program. **Materials-Methods:** The research is descriptive. The study was conducted with 218 students who were enrolled in the aged care program in the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year at the Health Services Vocational School (HSVS) at a state university and volunteered to participate in the research. Research data were collected with the "Mutual Happiness Scale" and "Student Information Form". SPSS 23.0 program was used in the analysis of the data. **Results:** The mean age of the participant students was  $20.88 \pm 1.6$  years, 74.3% were female and 25.7% were male. It was determined that the mutual happiness levels of the students were not statistically significant with age, gender and class. It was determined that as the education level of the parents increased, the score increased, but it was not significant. It was determined that those who had 1 or 2 siblings had higher levels of happiness. It was determined that the level of happiness was significant with the average monthly income of the family ( $p < 0.05$ ) and those with higher income levels got higher scores. The total mean score of Mutual Happiness of the students participating in the research was found to be  $27.50 \pm 6.50$ . **Conclusions:** According to the results of the research, the mutual happiness of the students of the elderly care program is above the medium level.

#### ÖZ

**Amaç:** Bu araştırma yaşlı bakımı programı öğrencilerinin karşılıklı mutluluk düzeylerinin incelenmesi amacıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. **Gereç-Yöntem:** Araştırma tanımlayıcı özelliktedir. Bir devlet üniversitesinde Sağlık Hizmetleri Meslek Yüksekokulu (SHMYO)'nda 2021-2022 eğitim öğretim yılı bahar döneminde öğrenim gören yaşlı bakımı programına kayıtlı ve araştırmaya katılmaya gönüllü olan 218 öğrenciyle yürütülmüştür. Araştırma verileri "Karşılıklı Mutluluk Ölçeği" ve "Öğrenci Bilgi Formu" ile toplanmıştır. Verilerin analizinde SPSS 23.0 programı kullanılmıştır. **Bulgular:** Katılımcı öğrencilerin yaş ortalaması  $20,88 \pm 1,6$  yıl, %74,3'ü kadın, %25,7'si erkektir. Öğrencilerin karşılıklı mutluluk düzeylerinin yaş, cinsiyet ve sınıf ile istatistiksel olarak anlamlı olmadığı belirlendi. Anne ve babanın eğitim düzeyi arttıkça sahip olunan puanın arttığı ancak anlamlı olmadığı belirlendi. 1 veya 2 kardeşe sahip olanların mutluluk düzeylerinin daha yüksek olduğu saptandı. Mutluluk düzeyinin ailenin aylık ortalama geliri ile anlamlı olduğu ( $p < 0,05$ ) ve gelir düzeyi yüksek olanların daha yüksek puanlar aldıkları belirlendi. Araştırmaya katılan öğrencilerin, Karşılıklı Mutluluk toplam puan ortalamaları  $27,50 \pm 6,50$  olarak bulunmuştur. **Sonuç:** Araştırma sonucuna göre yaşlı bakım programı öğrencilerinin karşılıklı mutlulukları orta düzeyin üzerindedir.

#### ARTICLE INFO/MAKALE BİLGİSİ

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#### INTRODUCTION

Happiness is one of the basic concepts in the field of mental health and among life values associated with healthy behaviors in people's lives (1). Happiness, which is a social and cultural concept, is also affected by the mental and subjective state of the individual (2). Perceived mental health and subjective well-being are an assessment of personal life. Life satisfaction and happiness also have a role in individual life assessment. Social and personal skills, healthy behaviors, good performance at work, and mental health are also

associated with happiness (3). Happiness develops a positive perspective in people and can prevent lingering on the problems experienced. It was confirmed that happiness is a better indicator of the quality of life than health and well-being (4). Happiness has been associated with high levels of emotional, physical, and social well-being (5). Happy individuals tend to have a strong immune system, a mindset with creative ideas, and good financial means (6). Happy individuals are more extroverted and have good empathy skills (7, 8). Therefore, happy individuals can establish friendships with confidence. It was stated that people who have

positive feelings about the past, present, and future, can cope with stressful events, and make an effort to reach their goals are happy (9).

One of the main factors affecting individuals' happiness is their attitudes towards their future career and work areas. An individual's positive attitude towards his/her own field is important in terms of having a job that provides benefits to other people (10). One's interest in his/her own field is necessary to continue education and work. A positive attitude toward a future career will bring work performance together with work motivation (11). It is of great importance to well train university students, who are a force for national welfare and social development. Most of the studies on happiness have focused on adults or young people (12-14). The psychological state of university students should be considered separately as they are on the border between adulthood and adolescence (15).

It is necessary to carry out regional and national studies in order to determine students' attitudes towards research fields and career prospects (16). Soda and Bondai (2015) carried out a study with university students in Zimbabwe and reported a significant relationship between low socioeconomic status and coping strategies and academic stress (13). In a study (2019) conducted with medical students, it was found that 98.6% of happy students were involved in different physical activities and that 85.7% had never used drugs (14). Happiness is an important concept in individuals' lives. Happy individuals have good feelings about themselves and others. These individuals accept their imperfections, focus on continuous learning, live in the moment, and can cope with difficulties (17). One of the goals of education systems is to protect students' mental health. Therefore, happiness has a special place in this regard. This study aimed to investigate the happiness levels of students of a state university and some potential variables that affect their happiness.

## MATERIAL-METHODS

### Research Type

This research was designed as a descriptive study to determine the mutual happiness levels of students enrolled in the Elderly Care Program of HSVS at Bingöl University.

### Research Population and Sample

The population of the research consisted of 1st and 2nd-grade students enrolled in the Elderly Care Program of HSVS at a state university in the spring semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. 290 students enrolled in

the department constituted the research population. No sample selection was made and it was tried to reach the entire population. The study was completed with 218 voluntary elderly care technician students. 75% of the population was reached.

### Data Collection Method

The research data were sent to the participants with an electronic form created on Google Form, so that students could fill in the form between April 15 and April 30, 2022. Verbal consent was taken from the students before the data collection process.

### Data Collection Tools

The research data were collected using the Mutual Happiness Scale and a Student Information Form, which includes statements about the demographic characteristics of the students.

### Student Information Form

The form was prepared by the researchers and consists of 7 items, including statements regarding age, gender, grade, average family income, education level of the mother and father, and presence of siblings.

### Mutual Happiness Scale

The Mutual Happiness Scale used in the study was developed by Hitokoto and Uchida in 2015. The Cronbach Alpha value of the scale is .93 (18). The scale was adapted into Turkish by Ekşi et al. (2017). It consists of 9 statements. There is no reverse statement among the scale items. Each statement consists of 5 response options between strongly agree and strongly disagree. The score obtainable from the scale is between 9 and 45 (19). In this study, the overall Cronbach Alpha value was found as .85.

### Statistical Analysis

SPSS 23.0 (IBM) statistical package program was used in data analysis. Shapiro-Wilk's normality test was performed to determine the test techniques to be used in the analyses. Mean, number, standard deviation, percentile distribution, and independent samples t-test and ANOVA, which are used in case of normal distribution, were used. Statistical significance was taken as  $p < 0.05$ .

### Ethical Considerations

For the research, written approval was taken from Bingöl University Health Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (Document dated and numbered: 04.04.2022-E.56556) and Bingöl

University the Directorate of HSVS (Document dated and numbered: 07.04.2022-E.56956).

### Research Limitations

The fact that the research was carried out only in the elderly care program of a state university can be considered as a limitation of the research.

### RESULTS

Of the students participating in the research, 74.3% were female and 25.7% were male. 68.8% of them

were 1<sup>st</sup>-graders and 31.2% were 2<sup>nd</sup>-graders. The rate of those whose fathers were primary school graduates was 55% and the rate of those whose mothers were primary school graduates was 82.1%. According to the average monthly family income of the students, 34.4% of them had an income of <1500 TL. The rate of those who had 5 or more siblings was 56.9%. According to Table 5, there was no significant difference between the total mutual happiness score and the educational status of the father and mother of the students. The total happiness score of the students whose fathers were primary school graduates was the lowest. The

**Table 1.** Comparison of Elderly Care Program Students' Descriptive Characteristics with Their Total Happiness Score (N:218)

Characteristics		Number (n)	Percentage (%)	Total Mutual Happiness
Age Groups	19-20	103	47.2	27.89±6.51
	21-24	115	52.8	27.16±6.50
			<b>Test Value</b>	t=.824
			<b>Significance</b>	P=.411
Gender	Female	162	74.3	27.5±6.8
	Male	56	25.7	27.4±7.6
			<b>Test Value</b>	t=.107
			<b>Significance</b>	P=.915
Grade	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	150	68.8	27.2±6.34
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	68	31.2	28.0±6.86
			<b>Test Value</b>	t=-.817
			<b>Significance</b>	P=.415
Education level of father	Primary school	120	55.0	26.8±6.3
	Secondary school	76	34.9	28.2±6.1
	Associate/Bachelor's	22	10.1	28.7±8.4
			<b>Test Value</b>	f=1.649
			<b>Significance</b>	P=.195
Education level of mother	Primary school	179	82.1	27.4±6.2
	Secondary school	34	15.6	27.5±6.9
	Associate/Bachelor's	5	2.3	30.0±11.3
			<b>Test Value</b>	f=.376
			<b>Significance</b>	P=.687
Average monthly family income	<1500 TL	75	34.4	25.68±6.6
	1501-2500 TL	48	22.0	27.83±5.4
	2501-3500 TL	34	15.6	27.79±6.5
	3501-4500 TL	61	28.0	29.34±6.6
			<b>Test Value</b>	f=3.800
			<b>Significance</b>	P=.011*
Number of siblings	1 or 2	28	12.8	28.2±5.2
	3 or 4	66	30.3	27.9±7.2
	5 and over	124	56.9	27.1±6.3
			<b>Test Value</b>	f=.543
			<b>Significance</b>	P=.582

Independent Samples Test (T-Test), ONEWAY (ANOVA) Test

total happiness score of the students whose mothers had an associate/bachelor's degree was higher. The number of siblings was not significant with total mutual happiness. The total mutual happiness score decreased as the number of siblings increased. In addition, there was no statistically significant difference between age and level of happiness (Table 1).

Table 2. Mutual Happiness Scale Scores (N:218)

Total Mutual Happiness	Mean $\pm$ standard deviation	Min-max
	27.50 $\pm$ 6.50	9-45

As seen in Table 2, the total scale score of the students was 27.50 $\pm$ 6.50 and the students' total happiness scores were above the moderate level (Table 2).

In Table 3, the statement "I can do what I want without causing trouble to others" reached the highest agreement. The statements "I feel that I am positively evaluated by those around me" and "I have a consistent life despite being quite average" reached the highest agreement in the second place. The statement "I have no major worries or concerns" had the lowest level of agreement (Table 3).

When the levels of agreement in the statements of the Mutual Happiness Scale were analyzed in Table 4, it was determined that more than half of the participants (54.6%) agreed with the statement "I make people I care about happy". The rate of those who strongly disagreed with the statements "I believe that I and those

around me are happy" and "I think I have similar living standards with the people around me" was 3.2%. In the regression analysis, it was determined that the total mutual happiness score and the average monthly family income were significant ( $p=005$ ). In addition, a negative relationship was determined between the number of siblings and the education level of the mother, and total mutual happiness (Table 4).

## DISCUSSION

Happiness is important for the development and future careers of university students. Persistent happiness can help create a highly productive, caring, harmonious, and sustainable society. In our study, it was determined that there was no significant difference between gender and happiness. Similarly, in studies, no difference was reported between gender and happiness (20-23). Men and women may have different levels of happiness at different periods of their lives. Therefore, no precise expressions can be used for the two genders regarding the level of happiness (24). Students receiving education in the 2nd grade had higher levels of happiness. However, no significant difference was found between the students' grades and their level of happiness. In a study conducted with students at a state university in Turkey, a significant difference was found between students' grade and their happiness. In the same study, it was determined that the students receiving education in the 1st grade had the lowest level of happiness (25).

Table 3. Mean, Standard Deviation, and Median Values of Statements (N=218)

STATEMENTS	MEAN	SD	MEDIAN
I believe that I and those around me are happy.	2.52	1.096	2.50
I feel that I am positively evaluated by those around me.	3.47	.970	4.00
I make the people I care about happy.	4.11	.924	4.00
*I have a consistent life despite being quite average.	3.47	1.055	3.00
*I do not have any major worries or concerns.	2.30	1.156	2.00
*I can do what I want without causing trouble to others.	3.59	.972	4.00
I believe I am as happy as the people around me.	2.86	1.160	3.00
*I think that I have similar living standards with the people around me.	2.82	1.156	3.00
I usually believe that things are going as well as in the lives of people around me.	2.67	1.157	3.00

The stress experienced by 1st-grade students who were in the process of adapting to the school and the environment might have affected their happiness levels.

In this study, it was determined that the happiness scores of those who had 1 or 2 siblings were higher and that there was no significant difference between the number of siblings and students' level of happiness. In the study of Aksoy et al. (2017), it was determined that there was no significant difference between the number of siblings and the level of happiness (25). The level of family income of the majority of the students participating in this study was low. Naturally, the per capita income decreases as the number of siblings increases. It is thought that these situations may affect the results. In the study, students' level of happiness was not significant in terms of age. In a study investigating the relationship between the medical students' level of happiness and their attitudes towards education and their future careers in Iran (2021), it was found that factors such as age, gender, education, and marriage did not have a significant relationship with happiness (26). In the study conducted by Mehrdadi et al. with 272 male and 228 female participants aged between 15-29, it was reported that there was no significant relationship between marital status, gender, education level, and happiness (27).

It was determined that the level of happiness of the students whose families had a higher income level was higher and that the income level and happiness were statistically significant. In a study examining the relationship between happiness and quality of life in 933 adult individuals in Spain (2021), it was found that the majority of individuals with the highest level of well-being or quality of life were happy (28). One of the important goals of societies is to protect the well-being and socioeconomic status of individuals, which ensures their happiness. From this point of view, it is important to investigate the factors that primarily affect the happiness of individuals. People must have a quality life to be happy. Most of the time, factors such as income level, residence, and permanent employment have a significant impact on people's quality of life and indirectly on their happiness. Karavdic and Baumann determined that socioeconomic status and job attitudes had a positive and significant effect on happiness (29).

## CONCLUSION

Students who are interested in their field of work and develop positive attitudes towards their future careers will experience more happiness. It is considered that the attitude towards the field of work and happiness are in mutual interaction. It is expected that the attitude towards the field of work will contribute to the job

satisfaction and happiness of the students in the future. It should be noted that students with a better level of happiness will have a good attitude towards their field of work and future jobs.

Subjective well-being is considered one of the indicators of social success. Psychological factors such as happiness are noticed individually and socially. Mutual happiness is influenced by social changes such as economic satisfaction and subjective life satisfaction. Larger studies are required to determine the level of mutual happiness of students or other groups. As the interest in happiness increases, the question of how happiness can be measured better can be a topic of discussion. Standardized measures can be used not only for comparison but also for the identification of factors associated with well-being in each society. It can also be used to determine the level of happiness of individuals or societies. It is accepted that concepts such as personal development, self-acceptance, and autonomy develop with social life. Since the concept of mutual happiness assesses not only individual happiness but also happiness in relationships, further studies should be carried out with different groups in societies.

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