

# Analysis of psychological well-being and happiness levels of university students who do swimming and fitness

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## ABSTRACT

There are a number of difficulties that an individual face during all stages of his life. In order to adapt to these difficulties and maintain a healthy self-perception, he needs some defense mechanisms. Research on psychological theory and existence focuses on negative factors. In the last 20 years, studies to further develop the positive characteristics of the individual in the field of psychology have come to the fore. The aim of this study is to examine the psychological well-being and happiness level of university students who do swimming and fitness. In this study, 113 university students were swimming in the Indoor Swimming Pool of Pamukkale University Sports Center in Denizli and exercising in the fitness center. Slimming will be made according to the gender and marital status of the individuals. To determine the psychological well-being and happiness levels of the participants (Keldali 2015), the "Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale", whose validity and reliability study was conducted, and the "Oxford Happiness Scale", the validity and reliability study of which was conducted by Dogan and Sapmaz (2012) used. Inventories were applied one-to-one to the participants and an inventory was made by explaining the questions. A significant difference was found between the psychological well-being levels of swimming and fitness men ( $p < 0.05$ ). No significant difference was found between the happiness and well-being scores of the individuals who do swimming and fitness according to their marital status ( $p > 0.05$ ). There was no significant difference between the happiness and well-being levels of individuals who do swimming and fitness ( $p < 0.05$ ). Conclusions and recommendations, when we look at the literature on this subject, we see that different results emerge. Studies with more subjects are needed.

**Keywords:** University students, swimming, fitness, psychological well-being, happiness level.

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## INTRODUCTION

An active life is involved in the structure of an individual's life. Body functions of individuals who do not have a moving life and do not exercise are reduced to a minimum. With the technological inventions brought by the 21st century, people have become less mobile and have taken them towards a world consisting of people who walk less, climb and descend less stairs, and never run. Therefore, sports have become indispensable for a healthy and balanced life today. It has become known that time should be devoted to sports for a healthy life (Çelebi, 2008).

Swimming is a popular sport in all age groups. It creates a good cardiovascular condition without the need for weight exercises that cause stress in the skeletal-muscular system. Therefore, swimming is an ideal exercise for children with obesity. It is also a good choice for people with asthma, due to the high temperature and humidity. In addition, as a negative quality, swimming at the level required to improve fitness and burn calories requires a certain ability (Çelebi 2008).

It has also been revealed that regular exercise has an impact on cognitive functions (Van Dijk et al., 2013),

depression (Mammen and Faulkner, 2013), and quality of life (Bullo et al., 2015).

In addition to being a set of physical activities, exercise refers to a concept that helps individuals to socialize by giving people a sense of personal and social identity and group membership (Küçük and Koç, 2004). It is of great importance for the physical development of the individual, as well as mental and social health (Guclu, 2000). It reflects a person's positive self-perception, self-satisfaction even when aware of his limitations, developing safe and warm relationships with others, shaping the environment to meet his personal needs and desires, acting autonomously and independently, being aware of his life purpose and meaning, and trying to develop this capacity (Özen, 2010).

Key concepts related to psychological well-being, developmental theories that reveal the tasks and difficulties in human development; self-actualization, maturation, full functionality or individualization, clinical explanations and determinants of positive mental health criteria (Telef, 2013). Psychology has dealt with the concept of "well-being" with two main approaches, namely "hedonic" which is based on the individual's happiness by balancing positive and negative emotions, and "eudaimonic", which is based on the individual's understanding of how to be well. Hedonic approach is also known as subjective well-being and it is defined as having positive emotions frequently, experiencing less negative emotions and getting high satisfaction from life. Eudaimonic approach is based on the principle of accepting oneself, communicating effectively with other people, being autonomous, finding meaning and purpose in life, and providing personal development by using environmental possibilities. In short, it focuses on "living life in a full and deeply satisfying way" (Diener, 1984; Ryan and Deci, 2001). Mental (psychological) well-being includes the individual's life goals, whether he is aware of his potential, and the quality of his relationships with other people (Ryff and Keyes, 1995).

It reflects the individual's positive self-perception, self-satisfaction even when aware of his limitations, developing safe and warm relationships with others, shaping the environment to meet individual needs and desires, acting autonomously and independently, having a life purpose and meaning, being aware of his capacity and trying to develop this capacity (Keyes et al., 2002). The individual with a high level of mental (psychological) well-being is curious about himself and what is happening around him and tends to learn. Expressing themselves creatively and being satisfied with their life, the individual develops a sense of happiness (well-being) in line with their needs (Diener, 2000). Ryan and Deci (2001) emphasized that psychological well-being that comes with the order of daily life can be explained with the concept of 'happiness' (hedonic) alone (Nedim Bal and Gülcan, 2014). Happiness: It is also defined as the state of being good, happy and contented. Happiness is most intense in the mouth and eye areas. The most important

indicator is smiling (Balcı Akpınar, 2006: 4).

According to the psychology dictionary, happiness; It is an emotion that is usually expressed in a smile or laughing, and it is short-lived pleasure, fun, an important meeting, etc. It may be caused by situations such as (Masaroğulları and Koçakgöl, 2011). In the Turkish dictionary, happiness is referred to as "happiness, happiness, happiness, happiness, bliss" (TDK, 2011). Since happiness is the greatest goal it wants to achieve, it has been thoroughly researched by philosophers, sociologists, religious scientists, psychologists and many scientists (Tuncer, 2006). Almost every movement of moral philosophy agrees that happiness is the ultimate goal that all people want to achieve; however, it differs in terms of what the nature of happiness is, in which areas it is gained and to what extent it is realized or will be realized, and determining the place of happiness in human life (Ocak, 2012). Happiness is what individuals want to achieve in human life and all individuals are basically seeking happiness (Kangal, 2013). In order to reduce the negative effects created by the external environment, to regain the reduced mental energy in business and social life, and to feel happy, well and healthy, individuals, such as sports, arts, etc. They can take part in many activities (Tekin et al., 2009). Physical activity has an important place in these activities. When the literature is examined in general, it is seen that physical activities have many positive contributions to individuals. For example, there are many studies showing that it reduces tension, takes part in treatment processes as a healing factor in depression (Arslan et al., 2011; Tekin et al., 2009) and thus contributes to a person's feeling good and happy (Ugurlu et al., 2015; Huang and Humphreys, 2012). Seeking happiness, determining the ways to reach it, dealing with it is not only a task for philosophers or thinkers.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Research pattern and sampling**

In this section, the participants, their sampling and design, the data collection tools and method are expressed from the analysis of the data. The research is a quantitative research, the universe of the research; it consists of 1184 university students Pamukkale University Sports Center in Denizli. This research is a quantitative research and a descriptive survey model. The group of the study was reached by 113 university students who were swimming and fitness. University students who swim and fitness 3 days a week regularly participated.

### **Data collection tools**

The "General Information Form" created by the

researcher and the "Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being" scale developed by Tennant et al. (2007) and the "Oxford Happiness Scale" developed by Hills and Argyle (2002) were used as data collection tools in the study.

In the general information form prepared by the researcher, there are questions about the socio-demographic characteristics of the athletes participating in the study, such as age, gender, marital status, exercise duration, with whom they exercise, educational status, and income levels.

Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) was developed by Tennant et al. (2007) to measure the mental well-being levels of individuals living in England. The Warwick Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale consists of 14 items and deals with individuals' positive mental health by including psychological well-being and subjective well-being. The scale is a 5-point Likert type and the minimum 14 and maximum 70 points are obtained from the scale. The scoring of the scale is (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly agree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree). All items of the scale are positive. Reliability studies of the scale were conducted with individuals aged 16 and over. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale, which was adapted to Turkish by Keldali (2015) and whose validity and reliability were made, was found to be 0.92 (Keldali, 2015). Oxford Happiness Scale (OHQ), Career was developed by Hills and Argyle (2002). Dogan and Sapmaz (2012) analyzed the validity and reliability of the Oxford Happiness Scale (OHQ) in a sample of Turkish university students. It revealed that the Turkish form of OHQ has similar psychometric properties with its original form. It was tested whether the scale consisting of a single factor could be verified in a sample of Turkish university students, and it was concluded that its single factor structure was preserved. Happiness score is obtained by adding the scores given to 29 items in the happiness scale. The score that can be obtained from the scale varies between 29 and 145. Happiness increases as the score obtained from the scale increases (Gulcan, 2014).

**Data collection method**

In this study, the General Information Form, Warwick

Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale, Oxford Happiness Scale will be applied to the participants.

**Data analysis**

The answers given to the scale questions in the study were analyzed at the 0.05 significance level. Whether the data showed normal distribution was tested by Shapiro-Wilk analysis. If the parametric conditions were met, the t-test in independent groups was tested otherwise by Mann Whitney U analysis.

**FINDINGS**

Table 1 shows the simple frequency of the university students participating in the study.

According to Table 2, significant difference was found between the psychological well-being levels of men who do swimming and fitness ( $p < 0.05$ ).

According to Table 3, there was no significant difference in happiness and well-being scores of university students who do swimming and fitness according to marital status ( $p > 0.05$ ).

According to Table 4, there is no significant difference between the well-being and happiness levels of the people who exercise according to marital status ( $p > 0.05$ ).

According to Table 5, there was no significant difference between the happiness and well-being levels of the university students who do fitness and swimming ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 1.** Simple frequency of the university students participating in the study.

	f	%
Man	57	50.44248
Women	56	49.55752
Single	82	72.56637
Married	31	27.43363
Swimming	52	46.0177
Fitness	61	53.9823

**Table 2.** T-test analysis table of happiness and well-being scores of swimming and fitness university students in independent groups by gender.

		X	Sd	t	p	
University students man	Happiness level	Swimming (n = 25)	57.08	8.86	0.55	0.59
		Fitness (n = 32)	55.78	8.94		
	Psychological well-being	Swimming (n = 25)	95.92	12.72	-	0.02*
		Fitness (n = 32)	103.56	12.12	2.31	

**Table 2.** Continues.

University students women	Happiness level	Swimming (n = 27)	59.15	8.76	1.48	0.15
		Fitness (n = 29)	55.31	10.52		
	Psychological well-being	Swimming (n = 27)	101.70	14.58	0.63	0.53
		Fitness (n = 29)	99.17	15.51		

**Table 3.** T-test analysis table of the happiness and well-being scores of swimming and fitness university students in independent groups according to marital status.

			<i>X</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Married	Happiness level	Swimming (n = 14)	57.64	7.44	-0.14	0.89
		Fitness (n = 17)	58.00	7.19		
	Psychological well-being	Swimming (n = 14)	95.71	12.58	-1.28	0.21
		Fitness (n = 17)	102.18	15.00		
Single	Happiness level	Swimming (n = 38)	58.34	9.32	1.70	0.09
		Fitness (n = 44)	54.61	10.36		
	Psychological well-being	Swimming (n = 38)	100.11	14.32	-0.36	0.73
		Fitness (n = 44)	101.20	13.61		

**Table 4.** Well-being and happiness levels by marital status Mann Whitney U analysis table.

		Marital status	<i>X</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>
Psychological well-being total score	Single (n = 82)		56.34	10.00	1205	0.67
	Married (n = 31)		57.84	7.18		
Happiness level total score	Single (n = 82)		105.21	14.26	1177.5	0.55
	Married (n = 31)		103.74	14.88		

**Table 5.** T-test analysis table in independent groups among the happiness and well-being levels of fitness and swimming university students.

		$\bar{X}$	<i>Sd</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Happiness level	Swimming (n = 52)	58.15	8.78	1.49	0.14
	Fitness (n = 61)	55.56	9.64		
Psychological well-being	Swimming (n = 52)	98.92	13.89	-0.97	0.33
	Fitness (n = 61)	101.48	13.89		

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There is a significant difference between the psychological well-being levels of university students men who do swimming and fitness. Eroglu et al. (2019) did not detect a significant difference in the Rosenberg self-esteem scale in features such as gender, marital status,

educational status, and employment status. Aslan et al. (2017) found a significant difference according to the gender variable in their study. Eraslan (2015), in a study examining the psychological well-being levels of physical education and sports college students according to age, gender and the variables of doing sports, found that the psychological well-being levels of female participants

were significantly higher than men. When the predictive relationships between the values of university students and psychological well-being are examined, it is seen that there is a positive linear relationship. In other words, the findings show that as the values of university students' increase, their psychological well-being levels will also increase. When similar studies were examined, it was concluded that there are positive and significant relationships between success, hedonism, self-orientation, universalism, benevolence, compliance and security among the psychological well-being of the teacher candidates of Telef (2013). According to a study conducted by Hayta (2000) on a group of students of the Faculty of Theology, it was found that prayer, which is one of the dimensions of religious practice, and the dimensions of psycho-social adaptation, have a significant and positive level of self-expression, self-acceptance, anxiety, activity, sociability and responsibility. a relationship has been identified. When these studies are considered together, it can be said that as the frequency of praying among university students' increases, their psychological well-being levels also increase. Regular physical activity reduces tension and is effective in reducing depression (Aylaz et al., 2011; Yildirim et al., 2015), contributing to a person feeling good and happy (Khazae-Pool et al. 2015; Ugurlu et al., 2015) and increases psychological well-being (Delextrat et al., 2016). The findings of this study also reveal that regular swimming and fitness contributes positively to individuals psychologically. There was no significant difference in happiness and well-being scores of university students who do swimming and fitness according to marital status.

There was no significant difference in happiness and well-being scores of university students who do swimming and fitness according to marital status. It was found that swimming and fitness did not reveal a significant difference in psychological well-being and happiness levels according to being single or married. Also, there is no significant difference between the well-being and happiness levels of the people who exercise according to marital status. The effect of marriage as a social institution on the well-being of the individual continues to be an important field of study, especially for family researchers. Studies in the relevant literature show that being married, divorced or single has an important effect on the psychological well-being of men, especially (Kim and McKenry, 2002; Tutuncu, 2012; Williams and Dunne-Bryant, 2006). Similarly, as a result of this study, although the psychological well-being scores of the individuals who were married or living as a couple were higher than the individuals who were single or separated from their spouses, this difference was not found to be statistically significant. In many studies, there is a relationship between marriage and psychological well-being, and the fact that married individuals provide social and economic support to each other, support each other emotionally when necessary, and strengthen social

relations due to the fact that marriage is an official institution accepted by the society, levels of well-being may be higher. Since marriage is seen as a phenomenon that strengthens the individual's economic, social and psychological resources, it can positively affect the psychological well-being of the individual (Waite, 1995; Williams and Umberson, 2004).

There was no significant difference between the happiness and well-being levels of the university students who do fitness and swimming. As a result, in this study, a significant difference was found between the psychological well-being levels of men who do swimming and fitness. When we look at the literature on this subject, we see that different results emerge. Studies with more subjects are needed.

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