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Life Satisfaction Levels of Gifted Students and Their Views on Life Satisfaction

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The distinctive characteristics of gifted individuals give rise to a set of expectations that differ from those of the general population. Both these characteristics and whether their expectations of life are met can affect their perspectives on life and their life satisfaction. While it is crucial for all individuals to lead fulfilling lives and to experience personal satisfaction, it is also essential to understand the levels of satisfaction experienced by gifted students in their contributions to society. This study aimed to determine the life satisfaction levels of gifted students and their views on life satisfaction. In the study, exploratory sequential design, which is one of the mixed methods of research, was employed. Satisfaction with Life Scale Children (SWLS-C) was administered to 94 gifted secondary school students, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight of these students. The scale data were analyzed by independent samples t-test, and interview data were analyzed by content analysis. The results of the study show that the life satisfaction of those gifted students is above average and does not differ by gender. In addition, the gifted students reported that life satisfaction is living with pleasure and that their life satisfaction is most influenced by external factors. Further research examining different variables that may affect the life satisfaction of gifted students as mediating variables may help better determine the effect of these external factors.

Introduction

The future of a society is inextricably linked to the qualifications of its individuals. It is anticipated that a country's education system will facilitate the personal growth of individuals and equip them with qualifications that align with the needs of society. Given the inherent diversity of individual characteristics, including interests, abilities, and learning speeds, it can be argued that the future of society is shaped by the manner in which

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individuals receive education that aligns with their unique attributes within the educational system. It is therefore crucial to identify and provide appropriate education for individuals who demonstrate extraordinary abilities in areas such as intelligence, creativity, art or other specialized academic domains and are classified as “gifted.” The term “gifted” is defined as “an individual who learns at a faster rate than their peers, demonstrates advanced creativity, artistic abilities, and leadership potential, exhibits exceptional academic aptitude, demonstrates an ability to comprehend complex ideas, displays a proclivity for independent work in their areas of interest, and performs at a high level” (MoNE, 2018; 2024). The provision of an education process that is appropriate to the characteristics of gifted individuals will result in increased levels of happiness, productivity, and overall life satisfaction. Furthermore, this approach will contribute to the advancement of societal and national development.

An inconsistency between an individual's social and emotional development and that of their peers may influence their self-evaluations, life satisfaction, and overall perception of their life. Life satisfaction can be defined as the individual's capacity to engage in a cognitive evaluation of their own happiness and subjective well-being (Çakıcı, 2015). Furthermore, the individual's cognitive evaluation of various domains in their life, including their family, friends, and environment, as well as their own self-perception (Suldo et al., 2006), can also be conceptualized as a component of life satisfaction. The evaluations of gifted individuals regarding themselves and their environment may be influenced by various developmental characteristics. In this context, life satisfaction represents a variable that directly affects the potential and productivity of gifted students (Sanlı Görgöz & Aktan, 2023).

Gifted Individuals and Life Satisfaction

Studies on the life satisfaction of gifted individuals are generally within the framework of topics such as social emotional characteristics of these individuals, psychological well-being, psychological disorders. The current studies on the life satisfaction and experiences of gifted and talented students are originally based on a study conducted by Terman (1925). In this study, Terman demonstrated a positive correlation between life satisfaction and intelligence (Sears et al., 1979; Terman, 1925). The findings showed that the majority of individuals examined in the study had successful and satisfying lives. Consequently, there was a shift in perspective regarding the concept of “giftedness,” which was previously perceived as a more negative diagnosis. A survey of the pertinent literature indicates that research on gifted individual's life satisfaction falls under the general heading of psychological well-being. The concept of psychological well-being is typically defined by a number of characteristics, including life satisfaction, locus of control, and happiness (Kaya, 2021). Terman and Oden (1947) reached the conclusion in their study that gifted and talented individuals are less prone to mental health issues and thus demonstrate greater resilience in adapting to challenging circumstances. Additionally, Riaz and Shahzad (2010) and Boazman and Sayler (2011) discovered that gifted individuals exhibited elevated levels of well-being in comparison to their peers with typical development. According to the findings of Sun-Mi and Mi-Hyun (2013), gifted students have higher life satisfaction compared to their peers with normal development. In a study conducted with gifted adolescents in Turkey (Ogurlu et al., 2016), it was observed that the life satisfaction levels of these individuals were not inferior to those of their peers with typical development.

Additionally, some studies have yielded findings that are contrary to the prevailing view on the life satisfaction of gifted and talented individuals. For example, Fouladchang et. al. (2010) concluded that gifted secondary school students exhibit lower levels of life satisfaction than

their peers with typical development. An alternative perspective posits that gifted individuals exhibit a comparable level of life satisfaction to their peers with typical development. For example, the life satisfaction levels of gifted and talented individuals were not statistically different from those of their peers with ordinary development, according to research by Bergold et al. (2021) and Guignard et al. (2021). A review of the literature reveals a diversity of perspectives on the life satisfaction of gifted individuals. One perspective posits that gifted individuals exhibit robust social and emotional strength, and that their intelligence levels and abilities may positively influence their life satisfaction levels (Baker, 1995). In contrast, the opposing perspective suggests that gifted individuals may be socially and emotionally sensitive, which could potentially lead to a negative impact on their life satisfaction levels (Neihart, 1999).

A limited number of studies have been done on factors that might influence gifted individual satisfaction in addition to the previously stated studies. For example, the study conducted by Koçak and İçmenoğlu (2012) determined that the creativity levels of gifted students attending high school predicted their life satisfaction levels inversely and significantly. In their study, Oğurlu et al. (2016) demonstrated a negative correlation between life satisfaction and loneliness among gifted adolescents. The study revealed that 14.7% of gifted students experienced loneliness, with the life satisfaction of these individuals negatively affected by factors such as rejection in the social environment and a lack of social connections. According to Bostan et al. (2021), gifted primary school students have high life satisfaction and medium level of self-sensitivity. According to Fındık and Afat's (2023) findings, life satisfaction increased in gifted middle school students with higher positive perfectionism levels and decreased with lower positive perfectionism levels. Examining studies on gifted individual's life satisfaction shows that the predominant strategy is quantitative research methods that concentrate on finding and analyzing the variables that are likely to affect life satisfaction. This study aims to ascertain the levels of life satisfaction experienced by gifted students, thereby facilitating the acquisition of comprehensive insights into this phenomenon. This study aims to provide comprehensive understanding of gifted students' life satisfaction levels. The study is thought to be important for promoting these students' wellbeing and enabling their social contribution.

It may be misleading to think that all gifted individuals are always very strong socially and emotionally or that they all have social and emotional problems. It is important to determine their perspective on life satisfaction, to discover the areas they need in this regard, to use their strengths and even to be a model for each other. In addition, intrapersonal characteristics of gifted individuals are very effective in the process of transforming their potential into performance (Gagne, 2013). Even when the individual is in an environment that supports the development of high potential talent, if he/she does not value his/her goal and does not interact with the stimuli in the environment, performance may not occur. For this reason, determining the perspectives of gifted individuals on the concept of life satisfaction and the variables affecting their life satisfaction may contribute to the transformation of their potential into performance.

A number of variables, including high intelligence and developed talent potential, diverse developmental characteristics, and the fulfilment of their needs, can influence the life satisfaction of gifted individuals. It is of the utmost importance for gifted individuals to actualize their potential and attain a state of happiness and satisfaction in their lives, just as it is for any other individual. Those who are gifted and have achieved this contribute to the society in which they live. Those who are highly satisfied with their lives are typically



characterized by positive emotional states, including happiness, tranquility, and self-acceptance. Accordingly, individuals who exhibit high levels of life satisfaction are regarded as contributors to their surrounding environment, demonstrating productivity and social harmony (Eryılmaz & Deveci 2022). Those who are gifted and evaluate their lives positively may also be more productive and may even make inventions that prioritize the betterment of society. Additionally, circumstances like ambition, high expectations, a competitive atmosphere, and pressure to perform academically can have a negative effect on gifted and talented students' life satisfaction. In the existing literature, it has been established that demographic variables, personality traits, and living conditions can all influence an individual's life satisfaction (Lopez-Gomez et al., 2020). This study can help to inform future research on these topics by examining gifted students' life satisfaction and their perspectives on the factors that influence it.

Aim of the Study

The primary goal of this study is to determine gifted students' life satisfaction levels and perspectives on life satisfaction. The answers to the following questions are sought for this purpose:

- What is the life satisfaction level of gifted students?
- Do gifted students' life satisfaction levels vary according to gender?
- What are the perspectives of gifted students on life satisfaction?

Method

The research design, participants details, data collecting tools, data analysis, ethics, and trustworthiness are all covered in this section.

Research design

The mixed research method was used in the design of this study, which was carried out to determine the life satisfaction levels and perspectives of gifted students. An explanatory sequential design was employed since the results of the study's qualitative phase were utilized to explain the findings of its quantitative phase (Creswell, 2017). In the quantitative component of the research, data on the life satisfaction levels of gifted students were gathered using the "Life Satisfaction Scale for Children" (Altay & Ekşi, 2018). In the qualitative component, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight students from the group who completed the scale.

Study group

In the quantitative phase of the study, participants were selected using the convenience sampling method. The reason for using this sampling method was that one of the researchers was working at the Education Programs for Talented Students (EPTS) where the research was conducted. The participants are the students identified by the centre. In the center's identification process, talent and scientific creativity tests are administered in alignment with the program's content. All students attending this program, which was reached by convenience sampling method, constituted the study group in the quantitative phase of the research. Information about the students in the study group is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of the study group

Grade Level	Boy	Girl	Total
5	16	11	27
6	21	6	27
7	15	8	23
8	12	5	17
Total	64	30	94

As seen in Table 1, a total of 94 gifted middle school students, including 27 fifth graders, 27 sixth graders, 23 seventh graders, and 17 eighth graders, took part in the study. Thirty of the participants were girls, and 64 were boys.

Since the participants who participated in the quantitative part of the study were included in the qualitative part of the study, the criterion sampling method was used. The criterion here is that the participants are volunteers. Accordingly, interviews were conducted with eight volunteer-scale participants, two from each grade level. Four of the students who participated in the interviews were male and four were female.

Data Collection Tools

The researchers' semi-structured interview form and the SWLS-C were the instruments used to collect data for the study. While the scale items aimed to reveal the level of life satisfaction, the interview questions aimed to determine the meaning attributed to the concept of life satisfaction and the factors affecting it. Thus, it is thought that the data collection tools in the study complement each other.

Satisfaction with Life Scale Children (SWLS-C)

The scale developed by Diener et al. (1985) for adults was developed for children by Gadermann, et. al. (2010) and then adapted into Turkish by Altay and Ekşi (2018) as SWLS-C consists of one dimension and five items. There are five possible responses on the five-point Likert-type scale: "Strongly disagree," "Strongly disagree," "Neutral," "Somewhat agree," and "Strongly agree." The scale has the lowest possible score of 5 and a maximum score of 25. The scale contains no negative items. During the development of the original scale form, the one-factor structure of the scale yielded good fit values. The scale's ordinal alpha coefficient was determined to be .90, and its Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient to be .86. Confirmatory factor analysis revealed that the fit indices were within a reasonable range. Thus, the construct validity of SWLS-C was ensured. The scale's items have factor loadings ranging from .68 to .78. The scale's internal consistency coefficient, measured by Cronbach's alpha, is .79. In this study, the SWLS-C was given to 94 gifted secondary school students in this study, and the scale's internal consistency coefficient, measured by Cronbach's alpha, was found to be .83. These students were 27 fifth-grade, 27 sixth-grade, 23 seventh-grade, and 17 eighth-grade students, all of whom were diagnosed as gifted.

Interview form

The researchers' semi-structured interview form was one of the instruments utilized to collect data. Two field experts from the fields of gifted education and psychological counseling and guidance were consulted about the interview form. The interview form was finalized with the arrangements made according to the expert opinions. Accordingly, the semi-structured interview form consists of a single section and six questions to determine



students' views on life satisfaction. The question 'What are the factors affecting your life satisfaction?' can be given as an example of the questions used in the interview.

Data Collection

One of the authors played an active role in the data collection process. Since EPTS is an after-school program, classes are held on weekends. Families and students are informed about the program in the first week of the program in the spring term of the 2022-2023 academic year. The first author, who carried out the information phase, obtained permission from the families in this process, then went to the students' classrooms and applied the scale face-to-face. This part was completed in two days, every Saturday and Sunday, for approximately twenty minutes in each class. In the meantime, he identified the students who wanted to participate in the interviews about the topics in the scale items. The families of these students were contacted and permission was obtained from both the children and their families. The time and method of the interviews with the students were determined according to their needs. The students preferred remote video-recording interviews in the evenings due to their full-day school schedule and their busy schedules in the weekend EPTS courses. The interviews were completed within 1 month through the Zoom platform.

Data Analysis

The first step in analyzing the data from the scale was first examined whether the data set showed a normal distribution. The values of skewness (-.448) and kurtosis (.222) fall between -1 and +1. The data thus show a normal distribution (Şen & Yıldırım, 2019). After examining the descriptive values of the data, the difference between the variables was examined with the independent sample t test, one of the parametric analyses. While evaluating the mean scores in descriptive values, the formula for calculating cut-off scores was used. The formula $(n-m)/r=x$ was used to calculate cut-off scores. Here, n is the highest value to be taken from a scale item, m is the lowest value, and r is the level at which the cut-off is desired. Then, the intervals are determined by adding the x value to the smallest possible value (Uru & Dirimeşe, 2024; Zieky et al., 2006). On the basis of this calculation, the range of 5 to 11.67 points in the scale scores was calculated as low, the range of 11.68 to 18.34 points as medium, and above 18.35 points as high. Independent sample t test was used to examine the life satisfaction levels of the students in terms of gender.

Content analysis was used to analyze the data obtained from semi-structured interviews. The data were read independently by two researchers, and then they came together. In the analysis, the data were coded, marked, themes were created, similarities and differences between them were studied, and themes were obtained by consensus.

Ethics and Trustworthiness

Before starting the study, the necessary permissions were obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee of a state university. Before the data collection phase, gifted students and their parents were informed about the purpose of the study. Consent was obtained from the gifted students who participated in the study with a voluntary participation form and from their parents with a parental consent form. Only voluntary participants were included in the study.

To increase trustworthiness of the study, the data obtained were coded independently by the researchers. All the data obtained were confirmed by the participants. In the results section,

the views of the participants are supported with direct quotations. Real identities of the participants were kept anonymous by using pseudonyms.

Results

The study's findings about gifted students' life satisfaction levels and perspectives on life satisfaction are explained in this section.

Results on Gifted Students' Life Satisfaction Levels

Table 2 shows the analysis of the descriptive values related to the life satisfaction of gifted students.

Table 2. Descriptive values related to life satisfaction levels of gifted students

Item	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Sd	Mean
Item 1	1.00	5.00	1.07	3.79
Item 2	1.00	5.00	1.20	3.02
Item 3	2.00	5.00	.80	4.36
Item 4	2.00	5.00	.843	3.90
Item 5	1.00	5.00	1.35	3.30
All items				18.39

As seen in Table 2, the participants gave a minimum score of 1 for items 1, 2, and 5, and a minimum score of 2 for items 3 and 4. While filling out this scale, the participants did not mark the “Strongly disagree” option, which corresponds to 1 point for items 3 and 4. The “Strongly agree” option, which corresponds to the highest score of 5 points, was used in each scale item. The participants' maximum possible score on the scale is 25, while the lowest possible score is 5. Here, 94 participants scored an average of 18.39 points on the scale. A cut-off score calculation was used to interpret this value, and it was determined that this score corresponded to a high level of life satisfaction. In other words, these gifted students have high levels of life satisfaction.

In the study, the life satisfaction levels of 94 students studying in the EPTS were analyzed according to gender. An independent sample t test was applied in this case. Table 3 shows the analysis's findings.

Table 3. Life satisfaction levels of gifted students by gender

	Group	n	\bar{x}	Sd	Df	t	p
Life Satisfaction Scale Scores	Girl	30	18.71	3.78	92	-.272	.094
	Boy	64	18.10	0.56			

According to Table 3, the mean score of 30 gifted female students on the SWLS-C was 18.71, with a standard deviation of 3.78. 64 gifted male students had a mean score of 18.10 and a standard deviation of 0.56 on the SWLS-C. On the other hand, the degrees of freedom of the scores of the gifted male and female students who participated in the study from the SWLS-C were calculated as 92, with a with a t value of -.272 and a p value of .094. These values show that there is no statistically significant difference between the scores of gifted girls and boys on the SWLS-C at the .05 level of significance ($t_{(92)} = -.272$; $p > 0.05$). In other words, it can

be claimed that gifted boys and girls have similar life satisfaction levels and that gender has no impact on these levels.

Results Regarding the Opinions of Gifted Students on Life Satisfaction

When the data obtained from the research were analyzed, it was seen that the views of gifted students on life satisfaction were grouped under four themes: “definition of life satisfaction,” “level of life satisfaction,” “factors affecting life satisfaction,” and “desired changes in their lives.”

The gifted students who participated in the study defined life satisfaction under the sub-themes of ongoing kinesthetic situations and completed past situations. According to the students who participated in the study, kinesthetic situations were defined as “living with pleasure,” “living to the fullest,” “living with the joy of living,” and “accumulating good memories.” The students defined life satisfaction as “being content” and “achieving aspirations” under the sub-theme of completed situations. Figure 1 shows the findings about the definitions of life satisfaction for gifted students.

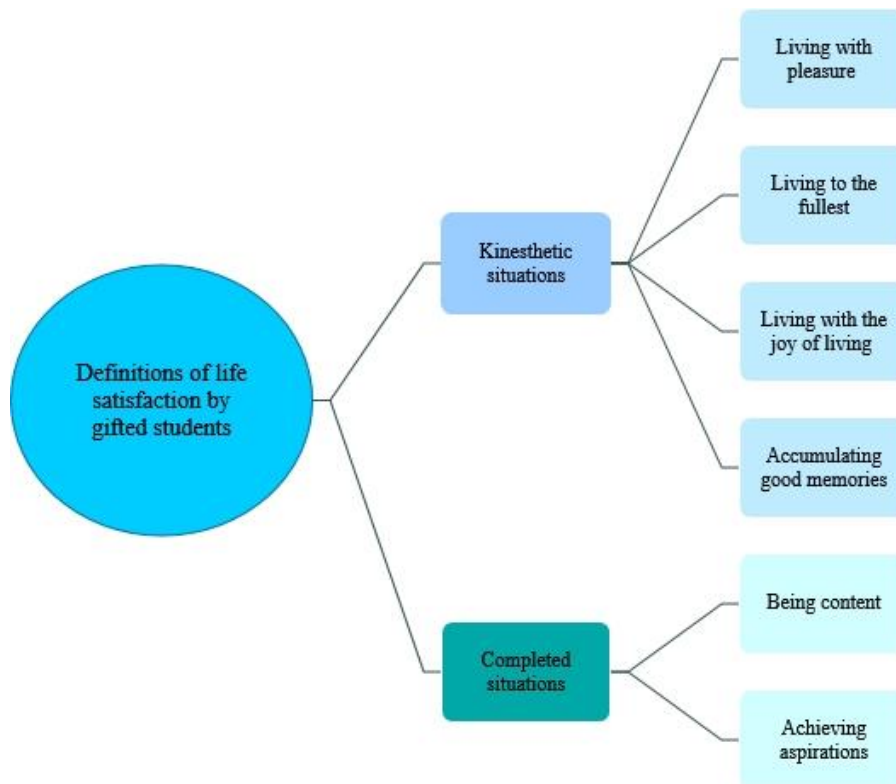


Figure 1. Definitions of life satisfaction by gifted students

As seen in Figure 1, most of the participants defined life satisfaction in terms of kinesthetic situations (11). Among these situations, students defined life satisfaction as living with pleasure (5) the most. Following this, their definitions included living to the fullest (3), living with the joy of living (2), and accumulating good memories (1). Students’ definitions of completed situations were stated as being content and achieving aspirations.

P7, one of the research participants, said, “When I think of life satisfaction, I think of doing

things that you have fun and enjoy. Whatever you do, I think of things that you enjoy while washing dishes or doing your own work,” and defined life satisfaction as living with pleasure. P1, while defining life satisfaction, mentioned living life to the fullest with the words “Life satisfaction made me think of living life to the fullest.” P7, who defined life satisfaction as the joy of living, expressed his views as “the joy of living... You know, if you don't have the joy of living, you don't want to do anything.” P4, in her definition of life satisfaction, focused on accumulating good memories with the words “It can be living life to the fullest and spending pleasant times by accumulating good memories.”

Explaining life satisfaction as completed situations, P2 described life satisfaction as contentment and explained her view with the expression “*being able to be content with everything as she wants.*” P2 explained life satisfaction as achieving what one wants and emphasized that achieving what one wants means life satisfaction with the words “*to be able to achieve what one wants, to be able to live without losing the joy of living.*” Figure 2 shows the findings about the life satisfaction levels of gifted students.

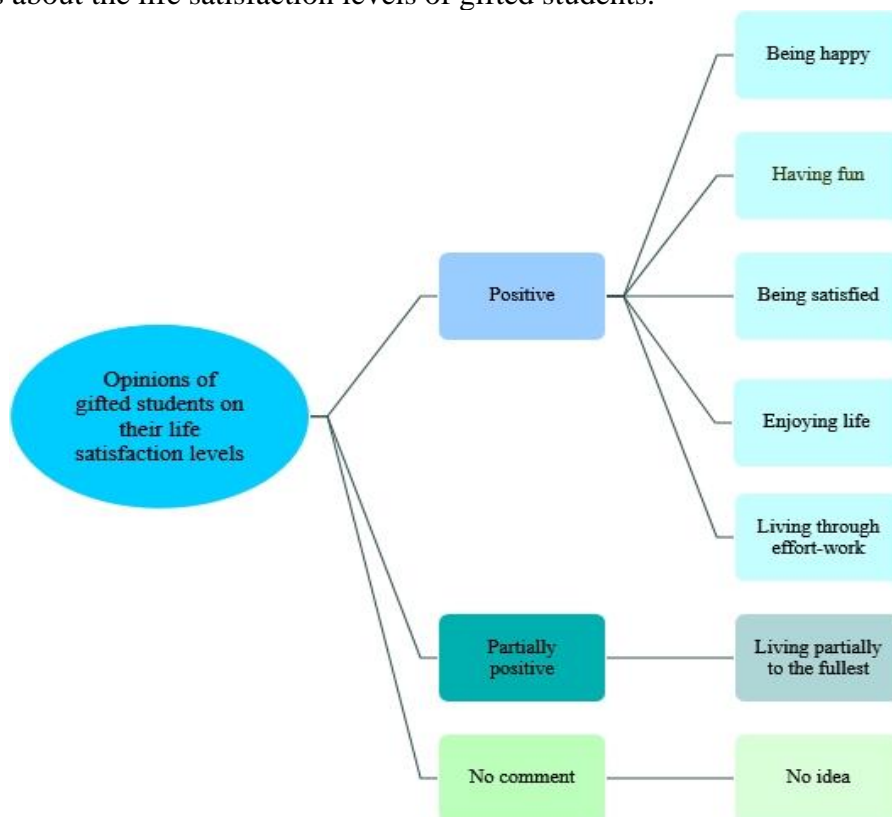


Figure 2. Opinions of gifted students on their life satisfaction levels

Figure 2 shows that gifted students' views on life satisfaction are positive (6) and partially positive (1). P3, one of the participants in the study, expressed his view on life satisfaction in the form of being happy and having fun and explained his view by saying, “I am very happy in my life” and “I think I know how to live by having fun.” P8 expressed her life satisfaction as being satisfied and said, “I am very satisfied with the life I live. I mean, my satisfaction is high; it is good. I have everything I need.” P7 stated that she had a positive opinion about her life satisfaction level by saying that she enjoyed life. P7 expressed her opinion on this as follows: “In general, I try to do everything I do now in a way that I enjoy. For example, even when I am ironing, I see it as a pleasure for myself. I try to talk about things that we would normally enjoy the least. Even while doing that, I turn on a movie or music. My life

satisfaction is high.” P2 explained her positive view of life satisfaction level as living with effort and work and explained her view as follows: “I have a very high level of life satisfaction. I mean, I live as best as I can. I try to achieve what I want. I try to achieve success. I try to work for my success.”

Some of the gifted students who participated in the study expressed their life satisfaction levels as partially positive. For example, P3 expressed that he had a partially positive opinion about his life satisfaction level as follows: “I mean, I don't think I have been able to live a full life as a child because I have spent most of my time at school and stuff like that.” P1 stated that she did not evaluate her life satisfaction level with the words “I have never thought about it; I have no idea about it.”

The gifted students who participated in the study explained the factors affecting their life satisfaction as “intrinsic factors” and “extrinsic factors.” Figure 3 shows their opinions regarding factors affecting their level of life satisfaction.

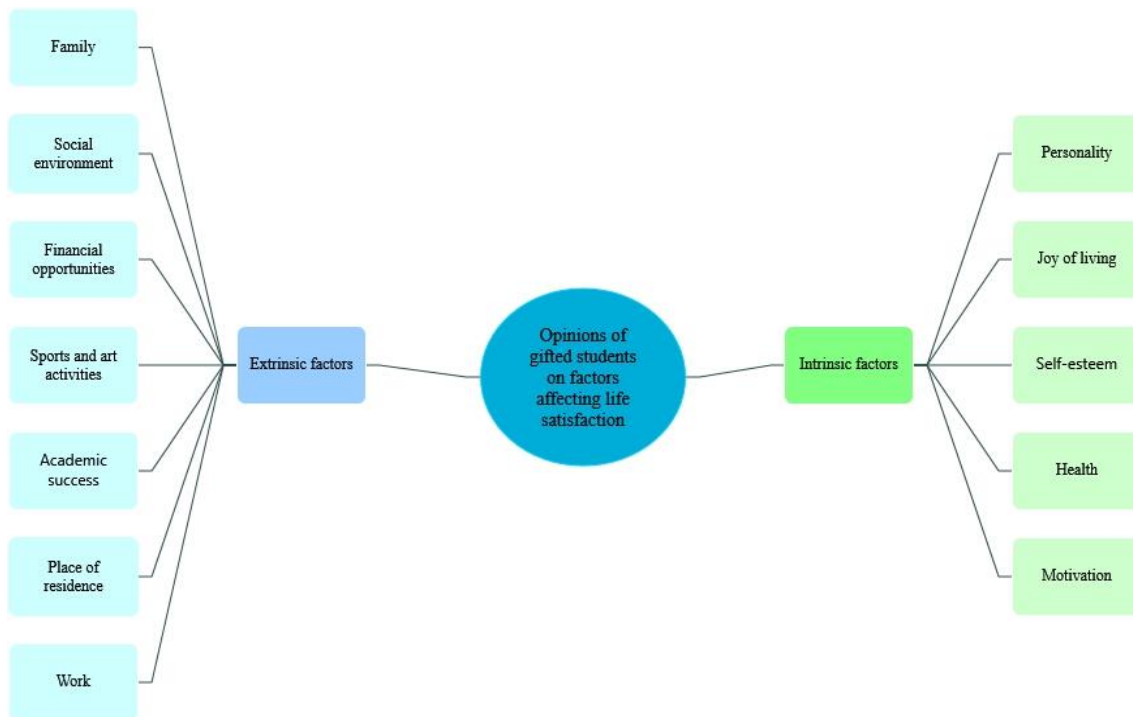


Figure 3. Opinions of gifted students on factors affecting life satisfaction

The quantitative data obtained in the study showed that students had high levels of life satisfaction. As seen in Figure 3, this level in gifted students is mostly affected by extrinsic factors (17), while in some of them intrinsic factors (7) also have an effect.

According to the gifted students who participated in the study, extrinsic factors such as “family (4),” “social environment (4),” “financial opportunities (3),” “sports and art activities (2),” “academic success (2),” “place of residence (1),” and “work (1)” affect their life satisfaction levels. Explaining the factor affecting the level of life satisfaction as family, P5 focused on family as one of the factors affecting life satisfaction by saying, “My family, my family's situation, and my well-being affect me.” P3, one of the students participating in the study, stated the factor affecting the level of life satisfaction as social environment and expressed her opinion as “I think the most important thing is the environment, that is, family,

friends. Apart from that, school...”. P8, on the other hand, explained the factor affecting the level of life satisfaction as material opportunities and expressed her opinion with the words, “I think the quality of my life, what kind of living standards I live in, material things—those kinds of things affect it.” P4 emphasized the importance of success in life satisfaction and mentioned the success factor with the words “My grades affect my life satisfaction.” P6 explained that external factors such as the place of residence affect life satisfaction with the statement, “Our environment, the country we live in, the place we are in... these kinds of things.” P7 emphasized that our profession is a factor affecting life satisfaction by saying, “The work we do, work... if we do not have a job we love, of course we cannot enjoy life.”

According to the findings obtained from the research, intrinsic factors such as “personality (2),” “joy of living (2),” “self-esteem (1),” “health (1),” and “motivation (1)” also affect the life satisfaction levels of gifted students. P3 stated that the factor affecting the level of life satisfaction is personality and said, “Even one’s personality affects it. For example, someone who is angry enjoys life less, but someone who is more optimistic enjoys it more.” P3 stated that the level of life satisfaction is affected by an intrinsic factor such as personality. Similarly, P7 stated that personality can affect life satisfaction by saying, “If you have a perfectionist personality, for example, I don’t think you will have much life satisfaction.” P2 explained the factors affecting life satisfaction as joy of living and self-confidence. She expressed her opinion as “joy of living affects, self-confidence affects.” P5 stated that the level of life satisfaction is affected by an internal factor such as health, with the words “My health affects my happiness at that moment.” P2 stated that the motivation to succeed can affect life satisfaction with the words “I think it affects the desire to succeed.”

What they want to change in their lives?

The gifted students’ views on what they would like to change in their lives are given in Figure 4. While most of the students expressed opinions about the things they would like to change in their lives (8), very few of them stated that they did not want any change (3).

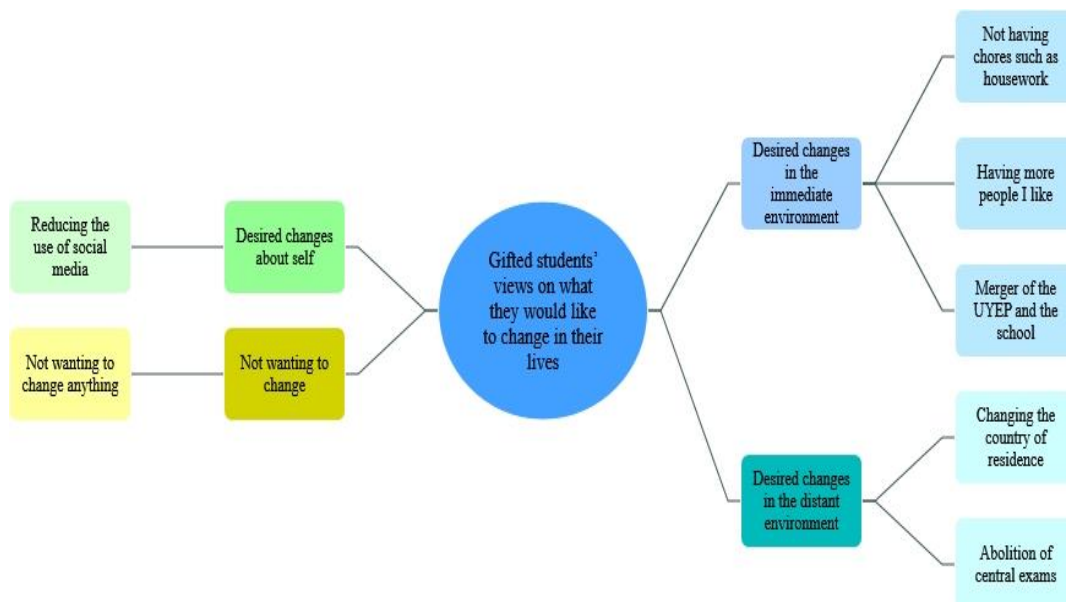


Figure 4. Gifted students’ views on what they would like to change in their lives

As can be seen in Figure 4, the students who wanted change mentioned factors related to

themselves (1), their immediate environment (5), and their distant environment (2). The frequency of the things to be changed about the immediate environment is 6, including “*not having chores such as housework,*” “*having more people I like,*” and “*merger of the EPTS and the school.*” The frequency of the things to be changed in the distant environment is 2. These are “*changing the country of residence*” and “*abolition of centralized exams.*” The frequency of the things that students want to change about themselves is 1, and it is about “*reducing the use of social media.*” The frequency of not wanting any change is 3.

P8 said that she would like to change things about her immediate environment in her life: “I would like to be with the people I love more, because it is more enjoyable that way. For example, I would like my friends in the EPTS to be at school too. The school is also nice, but it would be nice if the things I like at the school and the EPTS were combined.” P6 stated that she would like to change the things related to the distant environment in her life: “Of course I would like to abolish the exams. When you move to eighth grade this year, such an exam is stressful. So maybe I would like to abolish exams.” Similarly, P7 expressed his views on his wish to change things related to the more distant environment in his life as follows: “I mean, maybe (I’d like to change) the country we are in, because the economic situation is not very good.” P3 stated that he wanted to make changes about himself in his life with the words, “I think I would like to reduce the use of social media and YouTube a little bit because I feel like I have been using it too much lately.” P2, one of the participants who stated that he did not need to change in his life, explained his thoughts as follows: “If I wanted to change... I wouldn’t want to change anything, actually... I mean, there is nothing I would object to so much that this should not be like this.”

It was found that gifted students had above-average life satisfaction levels that were gender-neutral. In addition, gifted students were found to have positive views on life satisfaction, and they defined life satisfaction as living with joy. According to the views of gifted students, life satisfaction is mostly affected by external factors. Finally, the things that gifted students want to change in their lives are related to themselves, their immediate environment, and their distant environment.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the life satisfaction levels and perspectives of gifted students. The findings suggest that gifted students tend to report high levels of life satisfaction. The study’s other significant finding is that gifted students appear to have predominantly positive views on life satisfaction. The results of this study appear to be consistent with those of Sun-Mi and Mi-Hyun (2013) and Bostan et al. (2021), who found that gifted students had high levels of life satisfaction. In a study with middle school students, Tatlı (2017) found that gifted students appeared to have higher subjective well-being levels than other students. Bergold et al. (2015) found no significant difference in the life satisfaction levels of gifted students and other students. Increasing social awareness of gifted students and diversification of educational opportunities over time contribute to an increase in the life satisfaction of gifted students, as proposed by Fındık and Afat (2023). Vötter and Schnell (2019) posit that gifted students may derive greater life satisfaction from curricula designed to align with their interests. In this study, the fact that gifted students had high life satisfaction and had a positive view of life satisfaction may be related to the fact that they took part in a programme suitable for their interests and abilities.

The study yielded findings that suggest gifted students may not experience differences in life

satisfaction levels based on gender. On examination of the related literature, a number of studies were found to support the results of our research (Çivitçi, 2009; Bostan et al., 2021; Fındık & Afat, 2023; Kantanani, 2020; Oğurlu et al., 2016). Additionally, Bergold et al. (2015) suggested that male students may have slightly higher life satisfaction than female students in their study of gifted students. Similarly, Worrel et al. (2019) observed that gifted males tended to report higher levels of life satisfaction than their female counterparts. Langevelt (2016) suggests that women may experience lower life satisfaction than men due to the additional stressors associated with family and work responsibilities. Çam and Artar (2014) observed that among secondary school students, girls appeared to have higher life satisfaction levels than boys. According to the study, a gifted student's level of life satisfaction may be influenced by a variety of external factors, including their family, social environment, financial opportunities, participation in sports and the arts, academic success, place of living, and job. The participants in the study were gifted students who were part-time, homogeneous after-school students. These students attend their own schools during the week and receive education at the weekend in an elite group that they are entitled to join after passing a diagnostic process. It is therefore beneficial for them to come together with friends of similar ability levels. It is worth noting that homogeneous groupings can have a range of effects on variables such as academic self-perception, academic achievement, and talent development. While these groups undoubtedly offer many opportunities for talent development, they may also inadvertently foster a competitive atmosphere (Marsh & Parker, 1984; Demirel Dengeç & Sak, 2023). It is therefore possible that the students in question may have attributed greater importance to extrinsic factors in relation to their life satisfaction as a result of their membership of an elite, homogeneous group. Some chestudents also suggested that factors such as place of residence and country might have an impact on life satisfaction. It is possible that this is related to homogeneous groupings, elite environments, school environments, and the country in which gifted students live. It might be worthwhile to investigate if the middle school study participants' life satisfaction levels were impacted by their performance on the entrance exam for Turkey's elite high schools. It appears that the school experiences of gifted students may also have an effect on their life satisfaction, as has been stated in the literature (Ash & Huebner, 1998). Furthermore, the participants indicated that their families and close social circles also play a role in their life satisfaction. In his study, Çivitçi (2009) suggested that maternal attitudes may play a role in influencing the life satisfaction levels of secondary school students. Albona (2011) suggests that parental criticism may have an impact on a child's life satisfaction. Bostan et al. (2021) found that the life satisfaction of gifted students was affected by parents' education level and income level. Regarding the social environment, Amati et al. (2018) found that the frequency of seeing friends and satisfaction with friendships were effective factors in life satisfaction. Some of the students in this study also stated that they would like to see their favorite EPTS friends at school as well. Students may like their school environment and may be aware of the necessity of going to school. However, they may be deprived of friends with similar ability levels who have common interests in the school environment. Spending more time with these friends may positively affect their life satisfaction levels. In addition, the newly published national education curriculum shows that gifted students can be differentiated within the school (MoNE, 2024). The academic support of students through differentiations at school can also partially support them socially. For example, through small group work in the context of differentiations, students can get to know each other and similar interests closely.

In the study, a small number of participants indicated that variables related to oneself, such as personality, desire to succeed, and self-confidence, could potentially influence life satisfaction. Indeed, personality traits are often considered as a key component in many



giftedness theories. It is important to note that high intelligence potential alone is not necessarily sufficient to be classified as gifted (Gagne, 2013; Renzulli, 1978). For example, Gagne (2013) discussed variables such as perseverance and willingness in his Differentiating Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT). He considered these to be components that should be present in the transformation of potential into performance. In Renzulli's (1978) Triple Ring Theory, he proposed that motivation, or the ability to focus on a task, should be considered alongside supernormal ability and creativity as components of giftedness. It may be the case, then, that the variables related to oneself that a few participants in the study stated may affect their life satisfaction are, in fact, the strengths that are implicit in their nature and that they use to increase their life satisfaction.

In the study, gifted students articulated the aspects of their lives they would like to modify, classifying them into three categories: themselves, their immediate environment, and their wider environment. The students' desire to reduce their use of social media about themselves may indicate that they are capable of self-reflection and aspire to dedicate more time to self-enhancement. According to Kara and Güzel (2017), gifted students view new media tools and environments as essential parts of their training and educational processes and utilizing them in an effective manner. It is also noteworthy that the participants wanted to maintain their friendships in their immediate environment at school. Ogurlu et al. (2016) reported a negative relationship between loneliness and life satisfaction. The participants in this study may also share more with their friends of similar ability levels in the EPTS, so they may think that they will not experience loneliness at school and have more fun. It is also noteworthy that the participants expressed views on the removal of centralized examinations in their wider environment and the reduction of examination pressure, particularly in the eighth grade. In a study conducted by Kaytez (2018) on the perceptions of gifted students regarding the Turkish education system, the students employed the term "exam-oriented education that stresses students" to describe the system. It is also possible that the students in this study may have desired the abolition of examinations, with the aim of reducing the stress associated with them. Özavcı et al. (2023) observed that perceived stress has a negative impact on life satisfaction. The pressure of central examinations in Turkey may be felt more by students who are already gifted and have a high potential for success. Gifted students, who are the participants of this study, can be considered in the group of students who feel this pressure more. It may be useful to guide gifted students in their career processes and teach them coping strategies in competitive environments.

In this study, some participants indicated that they had no intention of implementing any changes in their lives. Chen et al. (2018) concluded that parents' trust and happy emotional states are linked to gifted students' subjective well-being. In the present study, one potential source of life satisfaction for students who do not perceive a need for change may be a positive relationship with their parents.

Conclusion

In conclusion, according to the findings obtained from the quantitative data of the study, the life satisfaction levels of gifted students are high and this result is supported by the findings obtained from the qualitative data of the study. In the study, the life satisfaction levels of gifted students and their views on life satisfaction coincide with the results of other studies in the literature. Accordingly, gifted students conceptualized life satisfaction as a positive, enduring state characterized by the ability to enjoy life, live it to the fullest, embrace

the joy of living, and live with good memories. It was also found that gifted students' life satisfaction can be influenced by many factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic.

Limitations

This study is limited to the data obtained with the SWLS-C scale and interview questions and the group of gifted students at the secondary school level. Future studies can continue with different age groups and with age-appropriate instruments. The participants of this study were homogeneous grouping students. Instead of a homogeneous group, studies to be conducted only with gifted students who receive support education services in their school can also contribute to the literature.

In the study, life satisfaction levels of gifted students and their views on life satisfaction were determined. The results of the study showed that intrinsic and extrinsic factors affect the life satisfaction of gifted students.

Suggestions

Further research could be conducted to identify and reinforce the subjective factors that may influence the life satisfaction of gifted students. Additionally, the students associated life satisfaction with personality. Further applied studies could be conducted to assist students in recognizing, strengthening, and utilizing their personal characteristics and resources in a manner that enhances their life satisfaction. Notably, the participants identified academic variables, including achievement, examinations, and the EPTS environment, as factors that both influence their life satisfaction and are targets for change. In future research, the effects of elite groupings, competitive class-school and even country atmospheres, exam pressure, and high expectations on life satisfaction can be examined with interval measurements and mediation analyses. Moreover, students can collaborate with themselves, their families, and their teachers to manage the potential impact of these factors on their life satisfaction.

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