



THE PREDICTIVE POWER OF LIFE SATISFACTION AND SELF-ESTEEM IN EXISTENTIAL ANXIETIES

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Abstract:

This study investigates the predictive power of existential anxieties (death, meaninglessness, isolation, and freedom) on life satisfaction and self-esteem. The study was designed within the framework of a relational screening model. The study group of the research was comprised of a total of 418 sophomore and junior students studying in various undergraduate programs of Ankara University, Faculty of Educational Sciences in the 2015-2016 spring term. The Existential Anxiety Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and Satisfaction with Life Scale were utilized for the study in order to assess undergraduate students' existential anxieties. The t-test for the independent samples and multiple regression analysis were used in the analyses of data collected within the scope of the study. Stepwise multiple linear regression analysis technique was utilized to ascertain the best predictors for the self-esteem and life satisfaction variables in the study. The results of the study revealed no statistically significant differences between female and male students pertaining to the meaninglessness, isolation, death anxiety, and freedom sub-dimensions of the existential anxiety scale and the total score obtained from the scale. It was observed that the meaninglessness, isolation, and freedom variables were significant predictors with regards to their contribution to the self-esteem variance. It was also seen that the isolation and meaninglessness variables were significant predictors regarding their contribution to the life satisfaction variance. The data collected were discussed within the framework of related literature.

Keywords: existential anxiety, self-esteem, life satisfaction, undergraduate students

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1. Introduction

Existential psychotherapists attach significance to phenomenological perspective and investigate such subjects as fear of death, freedom, choice, decision, loneliness, and meaninglessness within this context (Geçtan, 1990). All existentialists have a unique way of thinking. Therefore, it is commonly stated that the more existentialists there are the more existentialist thought would be. Generally speaking, human beings occupy the heart of existentialist thought. They act on Socrates' maxim "Know thyself." Phenomenology led by Edmund Husserl has been a method upon which investigation of the individual in existentialism was based. A phenomenon is defined as the events internally experienced by the individual or the manifestation of an event in the individual. It is a method that proposes the transformation of gazes from the environment and from the self in the events to the self that experiences, feels, and interprets (Husserl, 2010).

When fundamental existential anxieties are taken into consideration, death is regarded to be the most dramatic and final anxiety that causes anxiety in the easiest manner. The existential conflict in the Self is the tension between an awareness of the inevitability of death and the desire to continue to exist. Freedom is the conjoined twin of fear. *Freedom in the existentialist sense* refers to the idea that there is no ground under us and everyone is fully responsible for their life styles, choices, and acts. *Existential isolation*, on the other hand, signifies that there is always a final vacuum which cannot be filled in no matter how close we get to one another, that we all begin our existence alone, and we all depart from existence on our own. *Existential meaninglessness* refers to the tension/conflict brought about by such questions as "Why do we live?", "How are we supposed to live?", and "What is the meaning of life?" if we have to die (Yalom, 1999).

When the literature on existentialism is investigated, it is observed that the studies on the subject focus on quest for meaning. Frankl pioneered the studies on this subject with Purpose in Life Test devised in 1959. According to Frankl (1997), the main cause of existential stress and anxiety in modern times is the absence of meaning. For Frankl, the meaning of life changes from one person to another, from day to day, hour to hour. What is significant is not the meaning of life in general but rather the special meaning of human life within a specific period of time. An individual has to embark on an abstract quest for meaning according to Frankl (1997). All individuals need to have a special profession, special friends, special hobbies, and ideals s/he will fight for.

Many researchers (Ang and Jiaqing, 2012; Frankl, 1985; Halama and Dědová, 2007; Ho, Cheung and Cheung, 2010; Kim, 2001; Sappington, Bryant and Olden, 1990; Yıkılmaz, 2015; Zika and Chamberlain, 1992) have ascertained significant relationships

among the meaning of life, psychological well-being, and life satisfaction. The results of studies reveal that people who find meaning in their lives experience less psychological stress than those who do not and they have higher levels of self-esteem and happiness. Moreover, it is observed that individuals who think that they lead meaningful lives also have a purpose in their lives, lead their lives with more useful activities, and are more resistant to stress and problems (Phillips, 1980; Sappington, Bryant and Olden, 1990). In a study conducted with an elderly population, the authors reported that as life satisfaction increases death anxiety reduces (Given and Range, 1990) and the results of another study point out that life satisfaction varies according to the level of loneliness and as the level of loneliness goes down life satisfaction increases (Tuzgöl Dost, 2007). Other recent studies have also shown that finding meaning in life was related to the feeling of the inevitability of death (Taubman-Ben Ari, 2011), depression and meaning of life significantly contributed to explaining life satisfaction (Cömert, Özyeşil and Özgülük, 2016; Yıkılmaz, 2015), and the meaning of life predicted life satisfaction (Steger, 2012).

When the theoretical studies and research on existential anxieties and self-esteem are taken into consideration, it is seen that most of these were discussed within the framework of Terror Management Theory (TMT) which was firstly put forward by Greenberg, Pysszczyński, and Solomon in 1986. Terror Management Theory, which suggests that awareness of death is a critical incentive for human behavior, states that this subconscious feeling of terror/fear of death is controlled by the construction and maintenance of cultural world views. Briefly, the theory argues that individuals enhance their self-esteem by holding on to their cultural world views and thus reduce the severity of awareness of death/feeling of terror (Doğulu and Uğurlu, 2015). Moreover, TMT propounds that finding meaning in life is central to overcoming the scary realities of life and individuals construct the meaning of their lives over their cultural world views. According to the theory, this situation also proves to be a defense against the feeling of loneliness (Taubman-Ben Ari, 2011). Many studies have supported the hypotheses of TMT (Baldwin and Wesley, 1996; Burke, Martens and Faucher, 2010; Pysszczyński, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt and Schimel, 2004). A study by Mikulicer, Florian, and Hirschberger (2003) demonstrated that the participants' motivations to maintain their relationships and attempts to form relationships increased when faced with existential anxieties and remind mortality, and when their perceptions of threat against their maintenance of relationships increased so did their awareness of death. Taubman-Ben-Ari also showed that the contact experience functioned as protection against existential anxieties especially in individuals with low self-esteem.

This study investigates the predictive power of existential anxieties (death, meaninglessness, isolation, and freedom) on life satisfaction and self-esteem. Although

there are studies in literature that have drawn attention to the relationships especially between death anxiety and meaning in life, self-esteem and life satisfaction among these variables, no studies that have assessed all these variables together could be seen. The subject has not yet been investigated in Turkey other than the relationship between meaning in life and life satisfaction (Cömert, Özyeşil and Özgülük, 2016; Yıkılmaz, 2015). The first and most recent scale which has assessed all the existential anxieties is the "Existential Anxieties Scale" (EAS) recently developed by Yıkılmaz (2016) in spite of the fact that there are scales and studies on death anxiety and search for meaning in Turkey (Karaca and Yıldız, 2001; Sezer, 2012; Tarhan, 2013; Terzi, Tekinalp and Leuwerke, 2011; Yıkılmaz, 2015). The goal of this study is to have a word on the significance of existential anxieties in explaining self-esteem and life satisfaction and thus to support and develop the related theoretical framework, to encourage the utilization of the scale in different studies, to draw attention to the shortcomings in literature, and to encourage further studies.

This study regards the concepts of meaninglessness, death, isolation, freedom, and life satisfaction as variables. It investigates the predictive value of existential anxieties on self-esteem and life satisfaction. The questions that the study asks are the following:

1. Is there any difference between male and female university students' level of existential anxiety regarding total score and sub-scale scores?
2. Do university students' existential anxiety scores predict their self-esteem scores?
3. Do university students' existential anxiety scores predict their life satisfaction scores?

2. Method

2.1 Research Model

This study was conducted within the framework of a relational screening model aiming to ascertain the predictive power of existential anxiety over self-esteem and life satisfaction. Relational screening models are those which aim at determining the existence and/or level of covariance between two or among more than two variables (Karasar, 2010).

2.2 Study group

The study group of the research was comprised of a total of 418 sophomore and junior undergraduates studying at Ankara University, Faculty of Educational Sciences' departments of Guidance and Psychological Counseling, Special Education, Primary School Education, Social Sciences Education, Pre-school Education, and Computer

Education and Instructional Technologies during the 2015-2016 academic year spring term. While 299 (71.5%) participants of the group were female, 119 (28.5%) were male.

2.3 Data collection

A. Existential Anxieties Scale (EAS)

The Existential Anxieties Scale which aims at assessing existential anxieties of university students was developed by Yılmaz (2016). The scale is five-point Likert-type scale formed of 25 items and four factors. These factors are called as Meaninglessness Anxiety (10 items), Death Anxiety (5 items), Isolation Anxiety (5 items), and Freedom Anxiety (5 items). The lowest score that can be obtained from TMT is 25, while the highest score is 125. The high level of total scores obtained from TMT may be interpreted as signifying high levels of existential anxiety. The results of the analyses conducted in order to test the reliability of the scale revealed that the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient regarding the whole TMT was $\alpha=.85$. The internal consistency coefficient of the meaninglessness sub-scale was found to be $\alpha=.87$, while the internal consistency coefficients of the death sub-scale, isolation sub-scale, and the freedom sub-scale were found to be $\alpha=.79$, $\alpha=.70$, and $\alpha=.71$ respectively. The two measurements conducted at a 15-day interval for the test-retest reliability of the scale offered values ranging from .64 and .76 at the sub-scales and total scores level. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient for the total score obtained from TMT was calculated to be .89 within the scope of this study.

B. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a sub-scale of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965, which is one of the assessment tools frequently utilized on adolescent and adult groups. The RSES used in the study is a 4-point Likert-type scale covering a total of 10 items 5 of which are positive while 5 of which are negative. If the total score obtained from the scale is 0-1, it signifies high self-esteem; if it is 2-4, it signifies medium self-esteem; and if it is 5-6, it signifies low self-esteem. The validity and reliability studies regarding the Turkish version of RSES were conducted by Çuhadaroğlu (1986). The scale was applied twice to high-school students in the 15-18 age group with a 1-month interval for test-retest reliability and the invariance coefficient for RSES was found to be .75. Psychiatric interviews were conducted with a total of 25 high-school students -5 each from 5 different classes of the same high-school- and the relationship between RSES scores and psychiatric interviews was found to be .71. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the total of 10 items forming the scale was calculated to be .81 (Çuhadaroğlu, 1986; Öner, 1997). The difference between the mean self-esteem scores of the normal and psychiatric patient groups was

taken into consideration for the construct validity of the scale and a statistically significant difference in favor of the normal group was found between the scores of both groups (Doğan and Totan, 2010). The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient for the total score obtained from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was found to be .86 in this study.

C. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

SWLS, which was developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin (1985) in order to assess individuals' general life satisfaction, is a one-dimensional and five-item Likert-type scale measurement instrument. While the lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 5, the highest score is 25. The test-retest reliability of the scale was found to be .82 (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985). The first Turkish version of SWLS was conducted by Köker (1991) with adolescents. Moreover, the psychometric characteristics of SWLS were investigated by Durak, Şenol-Durak and Gençöz (2010) on three different groups like university students, correctional officers, and the elderly. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient of SWLS applied to 547 university students was found to be .81. The single factorial structure of the scale was confirmed by confirmatory factor analysis (Durak, Şenol-Durak and Gençöz, 2010). The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient of the total score obtained from the Satisfaction with Life Scale was found to be .85 in this study.

2.4 Data analysis

The t-test for independent samples and multiple regression analysis were utilized within the scope of the analysis of data collected from the study. The stepwise multiple linear regression analysis technique was utilized to ascertain the best predictors for the self-esteem and life satisfaction variables in the study. The multiple linear regression analysis is a technique used to determine the relationship between a dependent variable and more than one independent variables. The data were analyzed by SPSS 20 software program. Initially the scores obtained from the scales by the individuals comprising the study group were transformed into standard z-scores and whether there were, scores falling outside the -3 and +3 standard deviation values was investigated in order to meet the linearity and normality hypotheses within the framework of the regression analysis. The Mahallanobis distance values of the extreme values were calculated and analyzed. The skewness and kurtosis coefficients of score distributions were investigated and it was concluded that the scores did not show a significant deviation as these values were within the -1 and +1 limits. The binary correlation values among the variables, tolerance, variance inflation factor (VIF), and the condition index (CI) values were calculated in order to determine whether there was a multicollinearity

problem among the independent variables. According to Büyüköztürk (2011), the fact that the binary correlation values are higher than .80 points out to the possibility that multicollinearity might be present. It can be argued that there was no multicollinearity problem in this study as the highest relationship among the independent variables was between Isolation and Freedom ($r= 0.54$). Furthermore, it was concluded that there was no multicollinearity problem as the tolerance values of independent variables were higher than 0.20, VIF values were lower than 10, and CI values were lower than 30.

3. Results

The t-test for the independent samples was used in order to determine whether there was a significant gender difference in the existential anxiety levels of university students. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The T-test Results of Existential Anxiety Levels According to Gender

| Sub-dimensions | Gender | N | X | S | T |
|-----------------|--------|-----|-------|-------|-------|
| Meaninglessness | Female | 299 | 21.47 | 6.95 | 1.113 |
| | Male | 119 | 22.30 | 6.66 | |
| Isolation | Female | 299 | 11.12 | 4.26 | 3.988 |
| | Male | 119 | 12.93 | 4.01 | |
| Death Anxiety | Female | 299 | 9.17 | 3.93 | 0.300 |
| | Male | 119 | 9.04 | 4.25 | |
| Freedom | Female | 299 | 10.75 | 3.40 | 2.147 |
| | Male | 119 | 11.58 | 3.97 | |
| Total | Female | 299 | 52.51 | 13.35 | 2.277 |
| | Male | 119 | 55.84 | 13.99 | |

As Table 1 demonstrates, the highest scores of the existential anxiety scale were obtained respectively from the meaninglessness, isolation, freedom, and death anxiety sub-scales. The mean score of the students obtained from the existential anxiety scale was 54.175. Moreover, there was no statistically significant difference between female and male students with regards to the meaninglessness, isolation, death anxiety, and freedom sub-dimensions of the existential anxiety scale and the total score obtained from the scale.

Table 2 presents the results of the step-wise multiple linear regression analysis conducted in order to determine the variables predicting the dependent variable of the study, self-esteem.

Table 2: The Results of the Step-wise Multiple Linear Regression Analysis to Predict Self-Esteem

| Variable | B | SH _B | B |
|------------------------|----------|-----------------|------|
| Fixed | 43.75 | 0.64 | |
| Meaninglessness | -0.27 | 0.03 | -.40 |
| Isolation | -0.33 | 0.05 | -.30 |
| Freedom | 0.32 | 0.06 | -.24 |
| R² | | 0.53 | |
| F (3.414) | 158.002* | | |

*p<.001

Self-esteem= 43.75 - 0.27 Meaninglessness - 0.33 Isolation + 0.32 Freedom

When Table 2 is evaluated, it is observed that the regression analysis was completed in three steps and the meaninglessness, isolation, and freedom variables were significant predictors with regards to their contributions to the self-esteem variance. The three variables together explained 53% of the total variance in self-esteem. As is seen in Table 2, the most important variant predicting self-esteem was meaninglessness ($\beta = -.40$, $p < .001$). While the second most important variable predicting self-esteem was isolation ($\beta = -.30$, $p < .001$), the third variable proved to be freedom ($\beta = -.24$, $p < .001$).

Table 3 presents the results of the step-wise multiple linear regression analysis conducted in order to determine the variables predicting life satisfaction which was another dependent variable of the study.

Table 3: The Results of the Stepwise Multiple Linear Regression Analysis to Predict Life Satisfaction

| Variable | B | SH _B | B |
|------------------------|--------|-----------------|------|
| Fixed | 19.90 | 0.64 | |
| Meaninglessness | 0.25 | -0.04 | -.27 |
| Isolation | -0.13 | 0.03 | -.23 |
| Freedom | | 0.18 | |
| R² | | | |
| F (2.415) | 45.55* | | |

*p<.001

Life Satisfaction= 19.90 - 0.25 Isolation - 0.13 Meaninglessness

When Table 3 is evaluated, it is observed that the regression analysis was completed in two steps and the isolation and meaninglessness variables were significant predictors with regards to their contribution to the life satisfaction variance. The two variables together explain 18% of the total variance in life satisfaction. As is seen in Table 3, the

most important variable predicting life satisfaction was isolation ($\beta = -.27, p < .001$), while the second important variable was meaninglessness ($\beta = -.23, p < .001$).

4. Discussion

This study investigated the predictive power of existential anxieties on life satisfaction and self-esteem and the university students' existential anxiety levels. The results of the study revealed that university students had a medium level of existential anxiety (54.175) in parallel with Yıkılmaz's (2016) study which had used the same scale and the highest existential anxiety score was obtained from meaninglessness anxiety followed by isolation, freedom, and death anxieties. The second question of the study was about whether existential anxiety scores were significantly different between women and men. No statistically significant difference was found between women and men again in parallel with Yıkılmaz's study. The results of the study pertaining to self-esteem and life satisfaction were evaluated under two headings.

4.1 Self-esteem

The results of the study are generally in line with those of other studies which have demonstrated that self-esteem was related to existential anxieties –like meaning in life and death anxiety (Bjerkset, Nordahl, Romundstad and Gunnell, 2004; Baldwin and Wesley, 1996; Burke, Martens and Faucher, 2010; Pysszczyński, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt and Schimel, 2004). This result, however, is not observed in the four sub-dimensions of the Existential Anxiety Scale. The results of the study reveal that isolation, meaninglessness, and freedom anxieties among existential anxieties explain 53% of self-esteem but death anxiety does not predict self-esteem. One of the significant hypotheses of TMT refers to the fact that individuals increase their feeling of meaning in life by holding on to their cultural world views and thus maintain a balance in their self-esteem. In a nutshell, it is stated that individuals' having a meaning and a purpose in life enables their preservation of self-esteem. Taubman-Ben Ari's (2011) study supports this idea. Some studies (Bjerkset, Nordahl, Romundstad and Gunnell, 2004) have demonstrated that low feeling of meaning in life and self-esteem were among the factors increasing the risk of suicide and have drawn attention to the relationship between meaning in life and self-esteem as well.

The fact that death anxiety does not predict self-esteem contradicts the results of studies which support the arguments of TMS (Baldwin and Wesley, 1996; Burke, Martens and Faucher, 2010; Pysszczyński, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt and Schimel, 2004) and which show that there was a negative relationship between death anxiety and self-esteem (Davis, Bremer, Anderson and Tramill, 1983). This contradiction might have

been brought about by many reasons. One possible reason might be the difference between TMT's specific study design and the method utilized in this study to ascertain the level of death anxiety. Within the framework of TMT, participants are initially given a mortality salience induction which is generally asking them to think of their own deaths and to write what they feel about this subject. A certain period of time needs to pass in order to conduct assessments about self-esteem. In this study, however, death anxiety and self-esteem were simultaneously assessed by a measurement instrument and no any mortality salience induction was involved other than the items in the scale.

It is also significant to take into consideration the age group and the developmental phase of the study group when the results of this study are evaluated. One should even note that the primary or apparent anxieties of young people in Turkey might specifically be different based on existing social, cultural, and economic reasons. Freedom, isolation, and meaning in life anxieties seem like rather meaningful anxieties for university students who are at a threshold between the ends of puberty and the beginning of young adulthood yet. Having a purpose and the necessary freedom and web of social relations to achieve this purpose seem more primary and significant than death anxiety which appears to be very distant as yet. Elkind (1967) underlined that adolescents' self-centeredness during puberty also affected their views on death. According to the author, the adolescent's faith in her/his own personal uniqueness could turn into a faith that s/he would not meet death. When seen from this perspective, death might work as a more covert anxiety.

Taubman-Ben-Ari (2011) investigated whether the meaning of life was at the same time the meaning of death and observed that while the participants with high self-esteem regarded their lives to be more meaningful after a mortality reminder, those individuals with low self-esteem perceived less meaning in life in the same situation. Consequently, it was seen that meaning in life was a fundamental existential anxiety closely related to the inevitability of death. Within the framework of this information one can argue that the fact that death anxiety does not predict self-esteem in this study does not signify that death anxiety and self-esteem are unrelated all together but meaninglessness anxiety, isolation anxiety, and freedom anxiety can also be listed among death-related fundamental existential anxieties as well. This interpretation will gain a stronger signification when considered from the perspective of existentialist theory which propounds that death anxiety is the most fundamental anxiety underlying all anxieties and is experienced in a more covert manner (Yalom, 1999).

The prominent theorists of the self-determination theory, Ryan and Deci (2004), are critical of TMT's argument that self-esteem is a protection against death anxiety and of sociometer theory's views propounding that self-esteem is a warning against social isolation regarding them as limited. Ryan and Deci (2004) discuss self-esteem within the

context of studies which support that self-esteem is related to the feeling of inadequacy in the fields of competence, autonomy, and relatedness, which have been defined as the fundamental fields of need by self-determination theory. When the results of this study are assessed from the perspective of self-determination theory, it can be suggested that such needs as autonomy and relatedness are more closely related to freedom anxiety and isolation anxiety. Indeed the results of this study reveal that self-esteem is related to meaninglessness anxiety, isolation anxiety, and freedom anxiety. Therefore, it is significant for further studies to evaluate existential anxieties and self-esteem together with the needs stated by self-determination theory. A study by Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe and Ryan (2000) support these ideas and it was seen that individuals who were satisfied with their needs of relatedness, autonomy, and competence expressed high levels of self-esteem and fluctuations in such needs also explained the fluctuations in feelings regarding the whole self. Mikulicer, Florren and Hirschberger's (2003) study which has demonstrated that individuals with low self-esteem had a higher opinion of interpersonal contact than those with high self-esteem and Koole, Sin and Schneider's (2014) findings referring to the fact that concrete contact experiences were meaningful especially for those with low self-esteem and were significant in dealing with existential anxieties are concordant with the results of this study which reveal that the strongest predictor variable of self-esteem is isolation anxiety. Nevertheless, the results of this study need to be evaluated through novel research findings and theoretical perspectives.

4.2 Life Satisfaction

Isolation and meaninglessness anxieties are respectively found to be the two variables that significantly predict life satisfaction within the scope of this study. These two variables together explain 18% of the total variance in life satisfaction. Isolation anxiety variable is the best predictor of life satisfaction. Existential isolation refers to the idea that we are essentially alone in life, we were born alone, and we will die alone, and it may cause anxiety (Yalom, 1999). Individuals with a high life satisfaction are expected to have less isolation anxiety and the data collected within the framework of this study are concordant with this expectation. The results of the study are also concordant with those of Gustavson, Roysamb, Borren, Torvik and Karevold's (2015) study which has demonstrated that one partner's life satisfaction increased the quality of the relationship of that couple and the other partner's life satisfaction. Tuzgöl-Dost (2007) has shown that life satisfaction significantly varied according to the level of loneliness. Although loneliness and isolation are not the same concepts per se, they both refer to a situation signifying being with others or not.

The results of this study also revealed that meaning in life is another significant predictor of life satisfaction. This result is in parallel with that of related studies and theoretical perspectives (Cömert, Özyeşil, Özgülük, 2016; Yıkılmaz, 2015; Ang and Jiaqing, 2012; Halama and Dedova; 2007; Zika and Chamberlin, 1992). According to Steger, Kashdan, Sullivan and Loretz (2008) the search for meaning in life is a sign of positive health. Seligman has defined three paths to happiness: positive feelings and pleasure (with life), loyalty to the life, meaning (a meaningful life). Petersen, Park and Seligman (2005) have shown that individuals might prefer different paths but the most satisfied individuals were the ones who put all three together at the heart of their lives and underlined loyalty to the life and meaning.

It was observed that death anxiety predicts neither self-esteem nor life satisfaction. The results of the studies conducted with the elderly age groups have demonstrated the opposite, in other words, death anxiety was found to be a significant predictor of life satisfaction (Given and Range, 1990). The views on the developmental assessment of death anxiety within the context of self-esteem may prove to be valid for life satisfaction as well. Having a meaning and purpose in life, and not feeling isolated from others appear to be the fundamental variables contributing to life satisfaction for this age group going through the last years of adolescence and beginning young adulthood.

Meaninglessness anxiety and isolation anxiety are found to be significant predictors of both self-esteem and life satisfaction in this study. This result also demonstrates how much life satisfaction is related to self-esteem. Moreover, these results show the significance of giving meaning to life/having a purpose in life and overcoming isolation, or in other words, of developing a healthy loneliness for clients' development in psychological counseling and guidance services. The efficient handling of these issues during the counseling process will increase the client's self-esteem and will gradually bring about an increase in her/his life satisfaction according to the results of this study and similar studies.

An important limitation of this study refers to the fact that it was conducted with Ankara University's Faculty of Educational Sciences students. If the study is conducted again with students from different faculties and universities, and with different age groups and different cultures, it will contribute to discussions on the validity of such results. Furthermore, this study is limited to quantitative data. To support quantitative data by qualitative data will enable healthier discussions in assessments based on an individual's phenomenological perception, which is individually very dynamic, like meaning in life, life satisfaction or existential anxieties generally. Finally, this study was conducted with adolescent university students.

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