

**THE ROLE OF GENDER, RELATIONSHIP STATUS,
ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION, AND
COMMITMENT TO CAREER CHOICES IN THE
COMPONENTS OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING
AMONG SENIOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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ABSTRACT

**THE ROLE OF GENDER, RELATIONSHIP STATUS, ROMANTIC
RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTON, AND COMMITMENT TO CAREER
CHOICES IN THE COMPONENTS OF SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AMONG
SENIOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of gender, relationship status, romantic relationship satisfaction, and career commitment in three components of subjective well-being, namely life satisfaction, negative affect, and positive affect among senior university students. The sample of the study was composed of 400 (172 females, 228 males) fourth grade students from five faculties of Middle East Technical University. The participants were administered four instruments, namely Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS), Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), and Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS). Three separate simultaneous multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to examine the predictive power of the independent

variables that are relationship status, romantic relationship satisfaction, the dimensions of career commitment that are vocational exploration and commitment and tendency to foreclose on the independent variables that are positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction. The results of the multiple regression analysis revealed that gender, relationship satisfaction, and vocational exploration and commitment significantly predicted life satisfaction of the students. In addition, results yielded that romantic relationship satisfaction, vocational exploration and commitment, and tendency to foreclose significantly predicted negative affect of the students. Finally, vocational exploration and commitment and relationship status were significant predictors of positive affect of students.

Keywords: Relationship satisfaction, career commitment, subjective well-being, university students.

ÖZ

CİNSİYET, İLİŞKİ DURUMU, ROMANTİK İLİŞKİ DOYUMU VE KARIYER SEÇİMLERİNE BAĞLILIĞIN SON SINIF ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNDE ÖZNEL İYİ OLUŞUN BOYUTLARI ÜZERİNDEKİ ROLÜ

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Bu çalışmanın amacı cinsiyet, ilişki durumu, romantik ilişki doyumu ve kariyer seçimlerine bağlılığın son sınıf üniversite öğrencilerinde öznel iyi oluşun üç boyutu olan yaşam doyumu, olumsuz duygu ve olumlu duygu üzerindeki rolünü incelemektir. Araştırmaya Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi'nin beş fakültesinden toplam 400 (172 kadın, 228 erkek) öğrenci katılmıştır. Katılımcılara İlişki Doyum Ölçeği, Kariyer Seçimlerine Bağlılık Ölçeği, Yaşam Doyumu Ölçeği ve Pozitif ve Negatif Duygu Ölçeği uygulanmıştır. İlişki durumu, romantik ilişki doyumu, mesleki araştırma ve bağlılık ve erken karar verme eğilimi olmak üzere kariyer seçimlerine bağlılığın iki alt boyutunun, katılımcıların yaşam doyumu, olumsuz duygu ve olumlu duygu puanları üzerindeki rolünü incelemek üzere üç ayrı çoklu lineer regresyon analizi yapılmıştır. Sonuçlar cinsiyet, romantik ilişki doyumu ve

mesleki araştırma ve bağlılığın öğrencilerin yaşam doyumunu yordadığını göstermiştir. Ayrıca, sonuçlar romantik ilişki doyumu, mesleki araştırma ve bağlılık ve erken karar verme eğiliminin öğrencilerin olumsuz duygu puanlarını; ilişki durumu ve mesleki araştırma ve bağlılığın ise öğrencilerin olumlu duygu puanlarını yordadığını göstermiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: İlişki doyumu, kariyer seçimlerine bağlılık, öznel iyi oluş, üniversite öğrencileri.

To my Mother and Father

Azime Çelen & Abdullah Çelen

&

To my Immortal Beloved

Sefa Demirtaş

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Throughout the history, philosophers and psychologists have tried to understand the nature of happiness and the things that make people happy. However, during the first century of psychology, the focus was mainly on negative emotions such as unhappiness, depression and anxiety. With the development of positive psychology, which proposes that enough importance is not given to what is good and going well, an emphasis on positive sides of life has grown (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Social and behavioral scientists turned their faces from weaknesses to strengths and emphasized the positive concepts such as happiness, hope, optimism, responsibility, self-determination and well-being (Diener, 1984; Haworth & Hart, 2007; Myers & Diener, 1995; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Among these concepts, well-being has received the attention of the researchers as one of the most comprehensive and broader concept which refers to optimal experience and functioning (Diener, 1984; Ryan & Deci, 2001).

In the literature, there are two basic approaches of well-being: Eudemonic and hedonic approaches. Each of these approaches differs in views about human nature and the reference point from which well-being is judged (for a review see Ryan & Deci, 2001). Eudemonic view constitutes the philosophical ground of *psychological*

well-being. Psychological well-being refers to a desirable state that is judged from an external framework rather than individual's subjective judgment. In other words, psychological well-being is defined by external criteria like virtue and dignity, and requires an expert's opinion about well-being of individuals (Diener, 1984; Ryff & Singer, 1998). According to this view, realization of human potential, the pursuit of goals and personal development are the core conditions for well-being (Ryff, 1989; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Ryff and Singer (1998) suggested a multidimensional model with six separate dimensions of psychological well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self acceptance. The second view of well-being is hedonism which refers to philosophical ground of *subjective* well-being. Hedonic psychology is defined as the study of what makes experiences and life pleasant and unpleasant. It emphasizes the experience of pleasure versus displeasure and views well-being as being consisted of pleasure and happiness (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999). In general, researchers who adopted philosophy of hedonism in the field of well-being have used the concept of subjective well-being as the scientific term of what people mean by happiness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

1.1.1. Subjective Well-Being

Subjective well-being depends on the standards of the individual to determine what the good life is for him/her and it is judged according to the subject's view point rather than an external framework (Diener, Sapyta, & Suh, 1998; Ryff & Singer, 1998). Diener, Suh, Lucas, and Smith (1999) claimed that people differ in their

reactions to circumstances and their evaluations are based on their unique experiences, expectations and values. Researchers (Diener et al., 1998) also suggested that the characteristics of individuals such as self-acceptance, mastery, or positive relationships can change across cultures and different circumstances. That is, although someone has these characteristics; s/he still can perceive himself as unhappy as described by Marcus Aereilius, “No man is happy who does not think so (Diener, 1984, p. 543)”. In conclusion, people’s own evaluations about their own well-being are the most important criterion in evaluation of subjective well-being of individuals.

In the assessment studies of subjective well-being, researchers attempt to estimate pleasure/pain continuum (Diener & Lucas, 1999). Subjective well-being is not defined as just the lack of negative feelings (Diener, 1984). The emphasis is not only on the aversive moods and the causes of these moods, but also on the factors that differentiate slightly happy people from moderately and extremely happy people. It was also emphasized that the study of subjective well-being focuses on longer-term states rather than focusing on the momentary moods (Diener, Suh, & Oishi, 1997). Thus, in the study of subjective well-being, Diener (1984) mentioned three specific attributes: (1) it is subjective and relies on experiences of individual, (2) it is not just the lack of negative measures but it includes positive measures, and (3) it has a global assessment of aspects of one’s life. Based on these attributes, subjective well-being has been operationally defined as a multidimensional concept that is consisted of three components; positive and negative affect (affective reactions), and life satisfaction (cognitive judgments) (Diener, 1984). Although these components are

related to each other, it was assumed that high frequency of positive affect, infrequency of negative affect and a higher global sense of life satisfaction lead to high level of subjective well-being (Diener, 1984; Myers & Diener, 1995).

In the literature, a bulk of research investigated the role of various factors in subjective well-being such as demographic variables (e.g. gender, age, marital status, income, education, social class, religion etc.), external factors (e.g. life events, work, leisure time activities etc.) (for a review see Argyle, 2003) and some psychological factors (e.g. social relationships, attachment styles, self-concept etc.) (for a review see Myers, 2003) with different age groups. In the present study, subjective well-being of senior university students was examined in relation to satisfaction experienced in romantic relationships and career commitment considering that love and work are the two major choices in the life of the individuals (Erikson, 1968; Sullivan, 1953), especially in the life of emerging adults (Arnett, 2000).

1.1.2. Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

Formation and maintenance of romantic relationships have long been considered as crucial developmental tasks for adolescence (Erikson, 1968; Sullivan, 1953). It has also been recognized that romantic relationships are significant in shaping the general course of development during adolescence; such as the transformation of family relationships, the development of identity, close relationships with peers, sexuality, and scholastic achievement and career planning (Furman & Shaffer, 2003).

Adolescents are expected to have attained the skills to establish enduring romantic

relationships that satisfy their primary social needs of affiliation, care giving, attachment, and sexual gratification by late adolescence (Furman & Wehner, 1994). Late adolescence and the period follows which is referred as emerging adulthood by Arnett (2000), have been denoted as exclusively significant for providing a basement for development through the life span due to the fact that individuals start to make choices and content with variety of activities that are important for the rest of their lives (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006). Romantic interests, the development of more intimate romantic relationships, increasing sexual interests and intense friendships are proclaimed as significant life tasks of adolescence and emerging adulthood (Brown, Feiring, & Furman, 1999).

In addition to developmental significance of romantic relationships in lives of adolescents and emerging adults, they also constitute a significant part of the everyday lives of university students (Gable, Impett, Reis, & Asher, 2004). Most of the university students are reported to regard their romantic relationships as the closest relationships they have (Berscheid, Snyder, & Omoto, 1989). In addition, involvement in romantic relationships and intimacy in romantic relationships increase during emerging adulthood period (Arnett, 2000; Nieder & Seiffge-Krenke, 2001). Finally, romantic relationships, especially during university life, play an important role in the development of later significant romantic relationships and constitute the foundation for later relationships (Brown et al., 1999; Troy, 2000).

Besides being an important life task of adolescence, romantic relationships are also seen as significant relational factors in individual development and well-being

(Collins, 2003; Furman & Shaffer, 2003). Romantic partners are reported as sources of support, companionship, and intimacy (Feiring, 1996; Hand & Furman, 2006). In a study, romantic relationships were found to be the most supportive relationships for males and among the most supportive relationships for females (Furman & Buhrmester, 1992). In addition, romantic partners are the most common source of strong positive affect for heterosexual adolescents (Wilson-Shockley, 1985 as cited in Larson, Clore, & Wood, 1999). In the literature, it is suggested that romantic relationships are associated with subjective well-being (Argyle, 2001; Myers, 2000) and involvement in a romantic relationship, the quality of the relationship, and satisfaction with this relationship are related to happiness across life-span (Dush & Amato, 2005; Hinde, 1997; Myers, 2000; Reis, Collins, & Berscheid, 2000). It is also underlined that not only the quality of or satisfaction in romantic relationships but also the involvement or presence or absence of romantic relationship was found to be related with subjective well-being of university students (Dush & Amato, 2005; La Greca & Harrison, 2005; Paul, Poole, & Jakubowyc, 1998). Considering these theoretical suggestions and research results, in the present study, besides the satisfaction experienced in current romantic relationship, the effect of presence and absence of romantic relationship on subjective well-being of senior university students was also examined.

Relationship satisfaction is one of the most important relational factors, since people have a tendency to evaluate their relationships. By being a complex term which has diverse definitions, in the present study, relationship satisfaction refers to feelings, thoughts, or behaviors within a relationship (Hendrick, 1988). Furthermore, the

assessment of relationship satisfaction is based on how well the relationship compares with others, how well expectations have been met, any problems in the relationship, and relationship regrets.

1.1.3. Commitment to Career Choices

Making career choices and commitment to these choices are other important tasks during university life. During university education, students get the education and training that will prepare them for their worker role in adult life (Arnett, 2000; Chisholm & Hurrelmann, 1995). Identifying vocational interests and vocational pathways are one of the significant steps for identity development during adolescence (Zimmer-Gembeck & Petherick, 2008). In addition, work gives people opportunity for sustenance and livelihood. It can be regarded as a source of principal elements of subjective well-being that include meaning of life, personal fulfillment, enrichment, happiness, and satisfaction (Diener, 1984; Myers & Diener, 1995). Furthermore, subjective well-being is related to the extent to which individuals experience happiness and satisfaction with the engagement in their worker role as well as other life roles throughout their lives (Diener, 1984).

Several career theories have been developed over the years to explain the career development and career choices of individuals. Following Parson's (1909) and Holland's (1973) theory that suggested the fit between personality and work environment, Super (1957) proposed a career development theory and defined the stages that require some developmental tasks. By focusing on the career development of university students, Perry (1953, as cited in Gordon, 1981) proposed a logical

order in career development of university students and defined nine stages. By simplifying these nine stages in four, he presented dualism, multiplicity, relativism, and finally commitment in which career choices become the concrete part of students' identity and try to integrate new experiences and knowledge.

Based on these theories, career development is considered as a developmental process which entails overcoming some stages beginning from early childhood and continuing throughout life. In this study, the targeted population is university students who are in the exploration stage that requires progressively making a commitment to a specific area of work and getting training for it (Super, 1957). Hence, being committed to career choices is one of the most important developmental tasks of late adolescence (Erikson, 1968; Super, 1957). In Turkey, many university students find opportunity to explore career options during university, although they have already chosen a major. Therefore, they are in a critical stage and their commitment to the choices they have made may be crucial for both their subjective well-being in the present and in the future.

There are several definitions of career commitment (e.g., Blau, 1985; Colarelli & Bishop, 1990); however, Blustein, Ellis and Devenis (1989) introduced an alternative term that is 'commitment to career choices' which refers to as being certain and self-confident about the individual's choices and feeling positively about vocational future and being aware of potential obstacles the individual can face. The researchers also identified two dimensions one of which is vocational exploration and commitment that means openness to explore different career options before committing to a choice, and the second dimension is tendency to foreclose which

refers to prematurely committing to a choice without true exploration of potential career options (Blustein et al., 1989).

Career commitment is an important factor for individuals because of its longitudinal nature. Furthermore, since individuals occupy in separate but related positions during their lives, commitment is crucial for career development and progression (Hall, 1976; Solomon, Bishop, & Blesser, 1986; as cited in Colarelli & Bishop, 1990). About the implications of career commitment, Cheng and Ho (2001) found that career commitment predicts learning motivation and learning transfer. Moreover, Colarelli and Bishop (1990) reported that people who committed to their career set higher goals for themselves and put higher effort to reach these goals even when they face some obstacles. Therefore, commitment to their career choices would make students more motivated for learning about their major and be more persuasive for reaching their goals in that major. Thus, career commitment can be expected to be an important correlate of subjective well-being among senior university students since reaching goals is inherited in subjective well-being.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

University students face with two important life challenges; developing intimate relationships and committing to a career. In developmental psychology, these two challenges are explained both in Erikson's (1968) intimacy versus isolation stage -a true intimacy that makes possible good marriage or a genuine and enduring friendship and Super's (1957) specification sub stage of exploration stage - progressively making a commitment to a specific area of work and getting training

for it. In both of these theories, it was proposed that any failure in overcoming these tasks lead to isolation, depression, and most importantly overall dissatisfaction in life. Since fourth grade students are in this stage of development, university life gives them many opportunities for making explorations and decisions in the areas of romantic relationships and career (for a review see Arnett, 2000). Thus, the role of these two aspects of life, i.e., experience (presence or absence of) and satisfaction in romantic relationships and commitment to career choices, in different components of subjective well-being need to be examined for increasing our understanding of what make them ready to a better and a happy future. Based on the literature regarding the gender differences in subjective well-being, gender is used as a control variable in the present study.

With regard to these arguments, the present study aims to examine the relationships of gender, relationship status, romantic relationship satisfaction and career commitment and the three components of subjective well-being of senior university students. More specifically, present study aimed to examine the role of gender, relationship status (presence and absence of romantic relationships), romantic relationship satisfaction and the two dimensions (vocational exploration and commitment, and tendency to foreclose) of career commitment in the three components (positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction) of subjective well-being of senior university students.

1.3. Research Questions

More specifically, the research questions of the study are formulated as follow:

1. To what extent life satisfaction (measured by Satisfaction with Life Scale) is predicted by gender, relationship status, romantic relationship satisfaction, and vocational exploration and commitment and tendency to foreclose dimensions of commitment to career choice?
2. To what extent positive affect (measured by Positive Affect and Negative Affect Schedule) is predicted by gender, relationship status, romantic relationship satisfaction, and vocational exploration and commitment and tendency to foreclose dimensions of commitment to career choice?
3. To what extent negative affect (measured by Positive Affect and Negative Affect Schedule) is predicted by gender, relationship status, romantic relationship satisfaction, and vocational exploration and commitment and tendency to foreclose dimensions of commitment to career choice?

1.4. Definition of the Terms

The definitions of the terms that were presented in this study are as follows:

Subjective Well-Being refers high frequency of positive affect, infrequency of negative affect and a higher global sense of life satisfaction (Myers & Diener, 1995). It is measured by Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS).

Positive Affect refers to experiencing enthusiasm, alertness and pleasurable engagement with the environment (Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). It is one of the two affective domains of subjective well-being and is measured by ten adjectives of PANAS.

Negative Affect refers to experiencing aversive mood states and subjective distress (Watson et al., 1988). It is one of the two affective domains of subjective well-being and is measured by remaining ten adjectives of PANAS.

Life Satisfaction refers to the degree to which individuals are satisfied with their lives in general (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). It is the cognitive domain of subjective well-being and is measured by SWLS.

Romantic Relationship Satisfaction refers to feelings, thoughts, or behaviors within a relationship associated with sexual attitudes, professed feelings of love, commitment issues, self-disclosure, and relationship investment (Hendrick, 1988).

Career Development refers to the lifelong process of developing beliefs, values, skills, aptitudes, interests, personality characteristics and knowledge of the world of work (Tolbert, 1974).

Career Commitment refers to the certainty and self-confidence about vocational choice and having a positive expectation regarding a future with this choice (Blustein et al., 1989). The two primary constructs of career commitment

process are vocational exploration and commitment and tendency to foreclose. It is measured by Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS).

Vocational Exploration and Commitment refers to openness to explore different career options before committing to a choice (Blustein et al., 1989).

Tendency to Foreclose refers to committing to a choice without a true exploration of potential career options (Blustein et al., 1989).

1.5. Significance of the Study

Beginning the university is a challenging period for individuals. University life provides to individuals many opportunities for developing social relationships, worldviews, and independence. University represents autonomy, moving away from family and friends, opportunities to create new friendships, and a time to develop a sense of self as an adult (Boyd, Hunt, Kandell, & Lucas, 2003; Gushue & Constantine, 2003). Besides these opportunities, it is also associated with some difficulties and challenges since it is a transition period for individuals. Individuals have to face with separation from families, entering a new social life, taking responsibility of their lives, and also the burden of academic life. Therefore, this period puts higher levels of stress on individuals (Tao, Dong, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Pancer, 2000).

As university students can be defined as emerging adults, being in the university has crucial effects on students' developing worldviews, life choices and life styles. Individuals enter the university around the age of 17-18 and they spend

approximately 5 years in the university. Between the ages of 18-29 individuals can be accepted neither as adolescence anymore nor as adults (Arnett, 2000). Besides, people generally make important life choices by the end of this period and they define the events occur in this period as the most important events in their lives (Martin & Smyer, 1990). This period of time is demographically, subjectively and psychologically different from other periods of life. It requires intense explorations in areas of love, friendship, and work. Identity explorations in these areas begin in adolescence; however, they become stronger and wider during transition to adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adults become increasingly independent, acquire and get along with greater responsibility, and become responsible for their own development (Zarrett & Eccles, 2006). Moreover, most of young people view themselves neither as adolescence nor as adult. However, in many studies of subjective well-being, students are viewed as typical adults (Arnett, 2000). In conclusion, the developmental properties of this stage should be taken into granted while assessing subjective well-being of university students.

University students are expected to make important decisions about their future career, current friendships, intimate relationships, health choices and connection to family. In addition, this period can be defined as ‘soul searching’ since students are obliged to develop a sense of who they are, who they want to be and what roles they will play in their lives (Stevic & Ward, 2008). Identity formation and development of capacity for intimacy are two of the most salient life tasks of adolescence and emerging adulthood years (Roisman, Masten, Coatsworth, & Tellegen, 2004).

Identity development is composed of identification of occupational interests and vocational pathways, and deliberating sex roles and interpersonal relationships (Zimmer-Gembeck & Petherick, 2008). Establishing social and romantic relationships is one of the significant developmental tasks during transition to adulthood (Arnett, 2000; Erikson, 1968). Romantic relationships are an important part of adult life, particularly during university life as individuals engage in different social environments with an increase in freedom and opportunity to develop relationships (Gable et al., 2004). In addition, while romantic relationships during adolescence are intended to only have fun and companionship, during emerging adulthood relationships (i.e. during university life) become more serious, intimate, and committed (Arnett, 2000).

Exploration in area of work is the other important developmental task of this period. Work is a crucial domain of development of human beings in all societies, cultures, and nations (Blustein, 2006). It provides opportunities for developing social relationships, contribute to identity development and meaning, and gives a way to contribute to society (Erikson, 1968). During university education, students obtain the education and training that will produce their income and occupational achievements for rest of their adult lives (Chisholm & Hurrelmann, 1995). Therefore, choosing a major and commitment to this major is a crucial issue for both students' university life and for their transition from school to work life as an adult.

Besides providing full and intense time of explorations in the areas of love and work, these experiences are not always enjoyable. Explorations in love may result in

rejection, disappointment, disillusionment and even in depression. Moreover, explorations in work may result in failure in achieving the most desired occupation, and dissatisfaction with the career choice (Arnett, 2000). Especially, throughout the end of the university years, students are expected to get prepared for their future lives as adults. Thus, this transition from school to work life can be assumed to represent a transition to adult life. During this period, senior students have to reconsider their career choices, interests, skills, life choices, etc. They have to search for occupations and find jobs and also they are expected to form enduring relationships with opposite sex for their adult life. Any failure in these choices may cause to psychological stress for individuals (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007). In a study by Crespi and Becker (1999), it was stated that the stress experienced by students is higher and they are more likely to get counseling during this period. Similarly, many studies indicated that students report lower level of life satisfaction than adults in the general population (Cummins, 2003; Vaez, Kristenson, & Laflamme, 2004). Thus, exploring the factors that affect the subjective well-being of students becomes an important issue to develop some strategies to provide support to students in overcoming some difficulties during their university life.

By way of addition, entering the university requires passing an entrance exam (ÖSS) in Turkey. When the educational system of Turkey is taken into account, entering a university is not a very easy task for individuals. In Turkey, getting a university degree is assumed to be a way for having a job and for reassurance of life. This leads students to register any academic major despite they do not really want, or they do not have any interest in, only to be able to enter a university (Gündoğar, Sallan Gül,

Uskun, Demirci & Keçeci, 2007). Taken these facts into consideration, it is important to examine the effects of commitment to career choice among university students is highly important. Furthermore, in Turkey, students cannot get required support from counseling services in high schools during their process of choice making. This is the result of the inadequate vocational guidance services in our country (Gazioğlu-İşmen, Bekçi, Güler-Yavuz, & Çayırdağ, 2007). Thus, the results of the study are thought to point out the importance of issues about career development, in particular career commitment for psychological health of students.

All in all, the results of the study are thought to contribute to the understanding of the significance of two developmental tasks (i.e., forming enduring and satisfactory relationships and being committed to a career choice) by providing evidence of their roles in subjective well-being of senior university students.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents the literature related with subjective well-being, romantic relationship satisfaction and commitment to career choices. The first section is devoted to the presentation of conceptualization of subjective well-being. The second section presents the conceptualization of romantic relationship satisfaction. The third section includes research on the relationship between romantic relationship satisfaction and subjective well-being. The fourth section presents the conceptualization of commitment to career choices. The fifth section reviews the research on the association between commitment to career choices and subjective well-being. Finally, in the sixth section, the research on the relationship of subjective well-being, romantic relationship satisfaction and commitment to career choices among Turkish university students are presented.

2.1. Conceptualization of Subjective Well-Being

Subjective well-being (SWB) is a broad term that comprises of individuals' emotional reactions, domain-specific satisfactions, and life satisfaction in general. Hence it refers to people's cognitive and affective evaluations of their lives (Diener, 1984; Diener et al. 1997; Diener et al., 1999; Myers & Diener, 1995). As the term "subjective" implies, the person is the most important actor in evaluating his/her well-being and how s/he thinks and perceives the world determines his/her SWB. In

other words, people spontaneously experience moods and emotions, they have the ability to evaluate what is happening to them as good or bad and so they have the ability to judge their lives (Diener et al., 1997).

Different measures have been developed to assess well-being. Bradburn (1969, as cited in Diener, 1984) assessed the emotional well-being by proposing that happiness is composed of two components that are positive affect and negative affect and defined happiness as the balance between them. In addition, Andrews and Withey (1976, as cited in Diener, 1984) identified another component which is life satisfaction that is a separate concept from the negative affect and positive affect (for a review see Diener, 1984). Based on all these measurement studies, two distinctive domains for subjective well-being have been identified: affective domain and cognitive domain. Cognitive domain (contentment) refers to evaluation of people's lives by judging the extent to which their life meets their expectations. In other words, it refers to evaluation of one's satisfaction with his/her life. On the other hand, affective domain refers to hedonic evaluation that is based on emotions, moods, and feelings of people and it consists of positive affect and negative affect (Diener, 1984). In conclusion, subjective well-being consists of three major components that are life satisfaction, presence of positive affect, and relative infrequency of negative affect (Myers & Diener, 1995).

Positive Affect (PA) reflects the degree to which a person experiences the feelings such as enthusiasm, active, and alert (Watson et al., 1988). Watson and colleagues (1988) suggested that high levels of PA is a state of high energy, full concentration,

and pleasurable engagement with the environment, while low levels of PA indicates sadness and low level of energy. On the other hand, negative affect (NA) refers to a general dimension of subjective distress and unpleasurable engagement and is characterized by aversive mood states and subjective distress (Watson et al., 1988). Watson and colleagues (1988) also mentioned that even though the terms positive affect and negative affect seem to be opposites, they are distinctive factors that can be represented as orthogonal dimensions rather than bipolar opposites. Furthermore, subjective well-being is not defined as the absence of negative affect because people can experience both positive and negative emotions in a given period of time (Bradburn, 1969, as cited in Diener, 1984; Myers and Diener, 1995).

Life satisfaction was defined as “a global assessment of a person’s quality of life according to his own chosen criteria (Shin & Johnson, 1978, p. 478, as cited in Diener, 1984)”. The evaluation of life satisfaction is based on the individuals’ own standards; the person herself evaluates how satisfying her life according to her own chosen criteria rather than externally imposed criteria (Diener, 1984). Diener and colleagues (1999) added some domain specific satisfaction such as satisfaction with family, work, social relationships, and self. Therefore, cognitive domain of subjective well-being consists of overall life satisfaction and domain-specific satisfactions (Diener, 1984).

To conclude, rather than being a simple concept, SWB is a composite concept that has three distinct components that are life satisfaction, positive affect, negative affect. It seizes quality of life, quality of relationships, meaning, achievements, and

individual values (Diener & Eunkook, 2000a). Furthermore, subjective well-being is an important concept because of the fact that it allows people to evaluate their own lives based on their own values and standards (Diener et al., 1998).

2.2. Definition of Romantic Relationship Satisfaction

Romantic relationships are one type of close relationships and they are specified with reciprocal dependency that creates a bond between partners and also includes expression of love (Heath, 1976). People always evaluate their relationships and this assessment influence each partner's immediate well-being, the course of the relationship, and as a response relationship satisfaction of partners is influenced (Hinde, 1997). Relationship satisfaction is a complex term; so that it has diverse definitions. In the literature, relationship satisfaction is used interchangeably with alternative terms, such as adjustment, quality or stability (Sabatelli, 1988).

Hawkins (1968) defined relationship satisfaction as subjective feelings of happiness, satisfaction and pleasure when thinking about all aspects of a relationship. Moreover, Rusbult (1983) defined relationship satisfaction as “an interpersonal evaluation of the positivity of feelings for one's partner and attraction to the relationship (p. 102).” In terms of communal relationships, satisfaction is derived from the perceived quality of communal behaviors and the feeling of comfort that your needs will be met in the future (Clark & Grote, 1998). Another view about the relationship satisfaction is that people are more satisfied when their outcomes come from the relationship are equal to what they think they deserve based on their inputs, the partners' inputs, and outcomes (Hatfield, Utne, & Trautmann, 1979). According to social exchange

model, the satisfaction that comes from a relationship is defined as “a product of an interaction between a partner’s expectations and his or her partner’s behavior (Sabatelli, 1988, p. 217).” Finally, Hendrick (1988) suggested that relationship satisfaction refers to feelings, thoughts, or behaviors within a relationship associated with sexual attitudes, professed feelings of love, commitment issues, self-disclosure, and relationship investment.

Although relationship satisfaction is a complex term and has various definitions, each definition is based on the evaluations of the partners about their relationships and it is an important factor that affects subjective well-being of individuals. Satisfying relationships are seen as a critical factor of happiness and general well-being of people according to national surveys (Campbell, 1976).

2.3. Research on Romantic Relationship Satisfaction and Subjective Well-Being

People form different social relationships with parents, siblings, friends etc. In the literature, social relationships were suggested to be strongly related to life satisfaction; in particular, close relationships are seen as the main source for happiness, relief from distress and health (Argyle & Martin, 1991). Moreover, there are many studies that examined the role of social relationships in well-being or happiness of individuals by focusing on a range of close relationships, namely romantic relationships, friendship, relationships with family and marriage. It is seen that all social relationships; but particularly romantic relationships have important influence on happiness or well-being of individuals (Argyle, 2001; Collins, 2003; Hinde, 1997; Myers, 2000; Reis et al., 2000).

Among close relationships, romantic relationships serve as a developmental task for adolescents and emerging adults and contribute to their well-being. Several studies have shown that romantic relationships, both engaging in and/or quality of romantic relationships are a significant source of happiness (Argyle, 2001; Berry & Willingham, 1997; Diener, Gohm, Suh, & Oishi, 2000; Khaleque & Rohner, 2004; for a review see Keyes & Waterman, 2003). Quality of relationships, amount of affection, intimacy, acting as confidant, and providing reassurance of self-worth are seen as the major sources of life satisfaction (for a review see Argyle, 2001). There is limited number of research that directly examines the relationship between romantic relationship satisfaction and subjective well-being among university students. Thus, in addition to the studies that examined directly the association between romantic relationship satisfaction and subjective well-being, related studies which investigated the effect of social relations, friendship, and friendship quality are also presented below.

Regarding life satisfaction of university students, Berkel and Constantine (2005) examined the associations among relationship harmony, perceived family conflicts, relational self-concept, and life satisfaction of 169 African American and Asian American college women. The results of the study showed that relational interdependent self-construal and relationship harmony were strong predictors of life satisfaction. In other words, the participants who defined themselves in terms of other individuals with whom they had a close relationship and who reported more harmony in their close relationships reported higher levels of life satisfaction.

Mangeloja and Hirvonen (2007) explored the factors that affect university students' happiness among 246 university students. The results indicated that majority of university students were happy and satisfied with their university life. In addition, the factor which effected students' satisfaction the most was the good social relations they formed with their school mates. Satisfaction with school environment, achieving personal standards and extracurricular activities were also found to effect life satisfaction, but to a lesser extent. Finally, it was found that gender and age did not have a significant effect on students' happiness and satisfaction.

Moreover, Demir and Weitekamp (2006) examined the relationship between personality, number of friends, best friendship quality and happiness of 423 young adults. By controlling personality, the effect of friendship on happiness of individuals was investigated. They found that friendship variables accounted for 58% of variance in happiness. They also found that quality of friendship contributes to young adults' happiness beyond and above the influence of gender and personality. Finally, quality of friendship was found to be a stronger predictor than number of friends among university students.

In a similar study conducted by Demir, Özdemir and Weitekamp (2006), the role of multiple friendships, namely best and first and second close relationships, in happiness of 280 university students was examined. The main aim of the study was to investigate the role of friendship quality and conflict in happiness. Results showed that gender was not a significant predictor of happiness. Quality of best friendship was the only significant predictor of happiness and accounted for the 8% of the

variance in happiness. Finally, results of the study also revealed that young adults experienced greater happiness when the quality of both best and first close relationships was higher.

La Greca and Harrison (2005) investigated the relationship between adolescents' interpersonal functioning and symptoms of depression. Adolescents' interpersonal functioning includes general peer relations (peer crowd affiliations, peer victimization), and qualities of best friendship and romantic relationships. The sample of the study was composed of 421 adolescent, of which 57% were females and 43% were males. The age of the participants ranged from 14 to 19. Two hierarchical regression analyses were conducted for social anxiety and depressive symptoms in the order of gender, general peer relations, the positive and negative qualities of best friendship, presence or absence of a romantic relationship, and positive and negative qualities of romantic relationships. According to the results of the study, gender was not found to contribute to social anxiety and depressive symptoms; however, after the other variables were entered females was found to show more social anxiety and depressive symptoms than males. High status peer affiliation and low status peer affiliation were protective factors for social anxiety; higher levels of relational victimization, lower levels of best friendship qualities, and higher levels of negative best friendship qualities each predict social anxiety and resulted in higher levels of social anxiety. In addition, adolescents who reported higher levels negative qualities of best friendship were found to show more depressive symptoms. Higher status of peer crowd was found to result in fewer depressive symptoms, but higher levels of peer victimization resulted in higher levels

of depressive symptoms. However, when the negative qualities of best friendship were considered, the predictive value of peer victimization was found to be insignificant. Finally, adolescents who did not have a romantic relationship were found to be more socially anxious than who were dating or had a romantic relationship. The negative qualities of these romantic relationships predicted the depressive symptoms even when the other peer relations and best friendship qualities were taken into account. Moreover, while dating was not found to predict depressive symptoms, quality of this relationship predicted depressive symptoms; higher levels of negative qualities resulted in higher levels of depressive symptoms.

Dush and Amato (2005) proposed that although romantic relationships range from casual dating to marriage, research heavily focused on marriage and there are few studies which examine the indicators of well-being in other romantic relationships such as casual dating, steady dating or cohabitation. In their research, they examined subjective well-being among not only married people but also cohabitators, casual daters, and steady daters. The sample of the study was consisted of 691 individual of whom 217 were married, 52 were cohabiting, 204 were dating with one person steadily, 144 dated someone during the previous month before the interview, and 74 had not dated anyone. The mean age of the participants was 23. In the study, relationship status, relationship happiness and subjective well-being of the participants were measured. According to the results, married people had higher level of subjective well-being, followed by cohabitators, steady daters, casual daters and people not dating. This result shows that being in a romantic relationship is important for subjective well-being of individuals. Besides, people who were happy

in their relationships have higher levels of subjective well-being than people who were unhappy in their relationships, suggesting that happiness (i.e. satisfaction with) in romantic relationship is influential for people. They also found that quality of romantic relationships has stronger influence on emerging adults' happiness than personality traits.

Paul and colleagues (1998) investigated the associations between romantic relationship status and intimacy development during transition to college and psychological adjustment during first semester of college among 325 students. Of the sample 61% were females and 37% were males. The relationship status was labeled as uninvolved, newly involved (after coming to college), maintainers (involved in a relationship before coming to college), and dissolvers (involved in a relationship before college, but broke up while at college). According to the results of the study, new college students who were trying to maintain a relationship that was formed before coming to the college and who had not progressed very far in the intimacy versus isolation stage suffered from significantly greater psychological distress toward the end of the first semester than other new college students. Moreover, new students who was uninvolved romantically and who did not progress in intimacy development was also found to be more psychologically distressed in their first semester in the college than most of the students.

In a recent study, Demir (2008) examined the predictive ability of romantic relationship quality in happiness of emerging adults by comparing it with personality traits. Two studies were conducted in order to replicate and extend the results of the

study. The sample was consisted of 221 participants in the first study and 187 participants in the second study. In the first study, for relationship quality, Global Perceived Romantic Relationship Quality (PRQC); for happiness, The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS); and for personality traits, The Big Five Inventory (BFI) was applied. A multiple hierarchical regression analysis was conducted in the order of gender, personality variables, and relationship quality. The results of the first study indicated that gender was not a significant predictor, personality variables were significant predictors, and extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism were significant predictors of happiness. Relationship quality was found to contribute to happiness above and beyond the effect of personality. In the second study, Friendship Questionnaire-Friend's Functions (MFQ-FF) to assess relationship quality, SWLS and PANAS to measure happiness, and BFI were used. The same regression analysis was conducted and the results showed that gender was not significant predictor, personality traits were significant predictors and the strongest personality traits were extraversion and neuroticism. Relationship quality was found to be a significant predictor of happiness. In addition, another regression analysis was conducted in the same sequence in order to investigate the strongest features of relationship quality. The results for gender and personality were the same with the previous analysis. Emotional security and companionship were found to be the strongest relationship quality features in predicting happiness. Therefore, relationship quality was found to contribute to happiness of emerging adults above and beyond the effect of gender and personality traits. Finally, emerging adults who were

successful in identity development found to benefit more from the quality of their relationships.

2.4. Definition of Commitment to Career Choices

People have different career development pathways, make different career related choices and participate in different occupations. In order to explain the reasons behind this phenomenon, many theories have been developed (Crites, 1969). Stone (2005) grouped career development theories in three: decision making theories, change process theories, and learning and behavior theories. The first type group of theories, which is defined as decision making theories by Stone (2005), based on matching some traits of people with the suitable occupation. The first career theory was trait and factor model that was developed by Frank Parson. Parson (1909) proposed that if the personality traits of a person and the factors that form the jobs are known, and then the suitable jobs can be decided for people through 'true reasoning' and this provided the foundation of career counseling field. John Holland (1973) also developed a model for best match between a job and a person. According to his theory, people express their personality traits in their job preferences. Moreover, he proposed that people tend toward jobs that matched their personality types (Zunker, 2006).

Stone (2005) defined the second group of theories as developmental change theories. Donald Super is the most known theorist whose theory is based on a developmental approach. According to Super (1957), not only our personalities but our biological characteristics, the significant people in our lives, and our environment through our

life span have important impacts in the development of our career self-concept. He also introduced five age-related life-stages that continue throughout life. The first stage, growth which starts from birth and continue through mid-teens is the time based on forming a self-concept and understanding the world of work. Exploration, which constitutes the late adolescence and mid-twenties, is the time for making tentative career choices and trying them with course work, hobbies, and paid employment. In the establishment stage, that continues through mid-forties, people settle down into a career and try to develop skills that are required for establishing the career. The maintenance stage, which starts from mid-forties through age of 65, is the time for refining skills and improving the position. The last stage, decline, which starts at the age of 65, is a period of decline in productivity and preparation for retirement. Besides, Super identified life-space theory that emphasizes the effects of various life roles (e.g., student, leisurate, citizen, worker, partner etc.) each individual play throughout their lives. People develop self-concept that is shaped by contextual factors based on the priority of these roles in their lives (Sharf, 2002).

In addition to these pioneering theories, some theories were developed based on career development of university students. One of the most known theories is Perry's (1953, as cited in Gordon, 1981) theory which he developed by focusing on the experiences of university students. By focusing on the career development of university students, he proposed a logical order in career development of university students and defined nine stages. By simplifying these nine stages, he presented four stages for the career development of university students: (1) dualism in which students locus of control is external and they make decisions according to authority

figures' opinions; (2) multiplicity in which students start to take more responsibility but is still under the control of external forces such as parents, teachers, friends etc.; (3) relativism in which students use their reasoning and by making decisions they take the charge of their lives; (4) commitment in which career choices become the concrete part of students' identity and try to integrate new experiences and knowledge. Tiedemann (1963, as cited in Gordon, 1981) also developed a career decision making theory that covers four stages of career development that represents the experiences of university students. In the first stage that is exploration, individuals cannot identify a plan of action and have no negative choices. In the second stage which defined as crystallization individuals start to recognize alternatives and make a progress toward a choice. At the stage of choice, individuals commit to a specific major and start to develop a plan of action for their career goals. Finally, at the clarification stage, they internalize their choices and make a definite commitment.

Marcia (1989) also focused on the vocational identity development of university students and developed his theory by expanding on the Erickson's stage of "identity vs. role confusion". According to him, individuals resolve this crisis in different ways. He proposed four stages that are not absolutely developmental. Individuals who have not thought on what really matters to them in the work and have not made any commitment are said to be diffused. Foreclosed individuals have strictly clung to one choice and refuse to entertain any options. They have committed to a career choice without experiencing any identity crisis. Individuals in moratorium suspend decision-making and they experience anxiety due to experiencing an identity crisis.

Lastly, identity achieved individuals have experienced identity crisis; have made a commitment to a set of beliefs and to a tentative career choice.

All career theories, both mentioned and not mentioned here, help us to understand the career development of individuals and why they make a particular career choice. As it is obvious, the similar point of these of the career development theories (e.g. Marcia, 1989; Perry, 1953; Super, 1957; Tiedemann, 1963) is the term of ‘commitment’ which is an important part of individuals’ career development.

Kroll and colleagues (1970) defined commitment as “a strong and pervasive sense of attachment to a set of beliefs, ideas, and future directions” in general (as cited in Blustein et al., 1989, p. 343). In particular, career commitment has several definitions: Blau (1985) defined career commitment as attitudes toward one’s profession or vocation. Goulet and Singh (2002) conceptualized career commitment as “the extent to which someone identifies with and values his/her profession or vocation and the amount of time and effort spent acquiring relevant knowledge (p. 75).” Furthermore, Rusbult and Farrell (1983) defined career commitment as feeling connected to a path of study and willingness to study in that specific area. They conceptualized career commitment in educational settings as one’s feelings of connection to a route of study and one’s willingness to continue in that particular area.

By developing an alternative term which is “commitment to career choices,” Blustein and colleagues (1989) defined career commitment (i.e., commitment to career choices) as “certainty and self-confidence about individual’s choices, a positive

sense of individual's vocational future and an awareness of potential obstacles (p. 344)". About committing to career choices, Blustein and colleagues assumed that individuals move from an uncommitted phase to a phase of a confident and firm level of commitment to career while moving from late adolescence to early adulthood. Furthermore, based on the individual and developmental differences, they proposed that individuals may show differences in approaching the tasks of committing to the career choices. They suggested that commitment to career choices has two dimensions that are vocational exploration and commitment and tendency to foreclose.

Blustein and colleagues (1989) conceptualized 'vocational exploration and commitment (VEC)' as openness to explore different career options before committing to a single choice. It is defined as a dimension of commitment to career choices which assesses the movement from "the initial uncommitted or exploratory phase of the commitment process to the later highly committed, confident phase (Blustein et al., 1989, p. 345)" and measured by VEC subscale of Commitment to Career choices Scale (CCCS). This dimension assesses perceived self-knowledge, occupational knowledge, confidence about and overall commitment to a specific occupational preference, and also perceived need to participate in career exploration, uncertainty about career choices, and awareness of possible obstacles and willingness to overcome these obstacles.

On the other hand, the 'Tendency to Foreclose (TTF)' dimension refers to prematurely committing to a choice without true exploration of potential career

options. It is a construct that reflects “a relative intolerance for ambiguity, a lack of autonomy, and a need for cognitive structure (Blustein et al., 1989, p. 364).” TTF is measured on a continuum by the TTF subscale of CCCS. One end of the continuum reflects a strong tendency to foreclose, “a desire to commit to important educational and career decisions as soon as possible and an . . . attempt to adhere to these choices even in the face of disconfirming evidence (p. 347)”. The other end of the continuum reflects a weak tendency to foreclose and individuals at the weak end of the continuum are assumed to be “comfortable in tolerating the ambiguity and openness of the commitment process” and “express little need for cognitive structure in various situations and an openness to such experiences as self appraisal and diverse exploratory activities (p. 347)”. This dimension assesses willingness to think about not only a single occupational choice but more than once at a time, belief about presence of more than one particular occupation suitable for each individual and overall tolerance for uncertainty and cognitive incompatibility in the process of commitment to career choices.

2.5. Research on Commitment to Career Choices and Subjective Well-Being

In the literature, there is a lack of research which examines the relationship between university students’ commitment to their career choices and subjective well-being. Nevertheless, there are studies that investigated the correlates of subjective well-being and happiness among university students. Some studies explained the importance of work and career construction in people’s lives, and for their psychological health. They suggest that work provide opportunities for forming

social relationships, enhance a sense of identity, meaning and making contributions. Furthermore, work was suggested to contribute to main elements of subjective well-being that are meaning, personal fulfillment, enrichment, happiness, and satisfaction (Blustein, 2008; Hartung & Taber, 2008). Due to the lack of relevant literature on the association between commitment to career choices and subjective well-being, studies which are indirectly related to the aim of the present study are presented.

Lounsbury, Park, Sundstrom, Williamson, and Pemberton (2004) assessed the relationships of personality traits to career satisfaction and life satisfaction; and relationship of career satisfaction to life satisfaction. The sample of the study was composed of 1.352 information science professionals. The results indicated that there was a positive relationship between career satisfaction and life satisfaction and path analysis pointed out a link from career satisfaction to life satisfaction.

Life goals and goal-directed behavior were also discussed in the field of subjective well-being. Goals refer to consciously developed and personally relevant objectives and they give a sense of purpose and direction to behavior of people (Elliot, Sheldon, & Church, 1997). Ryan and Deci (2001) argued that just having goals or having valued goals and committing to those goals are all related to well-being. Furthermore, perceiving that one is progressively approach toward personal goals was appreciated as a precursor of well-being (Brunstein, 1993; Eliot et al., 1997; for a review see Lent & Brown, 2008). Committing to a career choice refers to development of personal career goals and identification with and involvement in

these career goals (Collarelli & Bishop, 1990). In this manner, life goals can be viewed as related to commitment to career choices.

In a longitudinal study over one semester, Brunstein (1993) investigated the role of three dimensions of personal goals that are commitment, attainability, and progress in predicting subjective well-being of university students. Ninety-seven university students enrolled in different faculties participated in this longitudinal study. At the beginning of the semester, due to missing data, drop out, substantial change in some subject's goals, 86 students reported their personal goals and their goal attributes and their subjective well-being levels were measured at 4 testing periods over 14-weeks. Personal goal variables and subjective well-being levels of participants were measured. The goal variables used in this study were assumed to show an individual's commitment to pursue personal goals (determination, urgency, and willingness) and his/her evaluation of the attainability of personal goals (opportunity, control, and support). Subjective well-being of the participants was measured in affective and cognitive domains. The results indicated that the interaction between goal commitment and goal attainability was a significant predictor of future levels of subjective well-being in four measurements and students reporting a high level of goal commitment in addition to favorable conditions to attain personal goals were found to show a moderate increase in subjective well-being in time. Moreover, students who showed progress in goal achievement reported higher levels of subjective well-being.

Henderson (2000) examined the career commitment of eight individuals who identified themselves as happy to understand the characteristics of happiness at work. The data was collected by interviews. According to the results of the study, these individuals were found to be committed to follow their interests, what they succeeded in, what they enjoyed, and what makes them happy. Moreover, they told that their work was suitable for their personality and this lead satisfaction with their lives. In consequence, individuals who perceived themselves as happy was also committed to their career.

Finally, Borrello (2005) investigated the relationship between subjective well-being and academic achievement of 109 college students. Subjective well-being of the participants was measured by Satisfaction with Life Scale and Subjective Happiness Scale while their academic achievement was measured by the final grades of participants in an “Introduction to Psychology” course. Results of the study revealed that the subjective well-being of the participants was positively correlated to final grades of them. Moreover, a positive correlation between life satisfaction and final grades was reported and life satisfaction was found to be a significant predictor of academic achievement. As well as life satisfaction, subjective happiness was found to be positively correlated to and a significant predictor of academic achievement.

2.6. Turkish Related Studies on subjective Well-Being, Romantic Relationship Satisfaction, and Commitment to Career Choices

In Turkey, although there are several numbers of studies that examine the relationships between subjective well-being and different variables among university

students (e.g., Cenkseven, 2004; Deniz, 2006; Şimşek, 2005; Selçukoğlu, 2001; Tuzgöl-Dost, 2006), a few study investigated the correlation between role of relationship (Kankotan, 2008) and career-related (Gündoğar et al., 2007) variables in subjective well-being. Nevertheless, several studies which were considered as more relevant ones and several studies that were indirectly related to the variables used in the present study were also reported.

Cenkseven (2004) examined the predictors of subjective and psychological well-being of 500 university students. The aim of the study was to examine the predictive rate of level of extraversion, neuroticism, locus of control, learned resourcefulness, socio-economic status, gender, health situations and satisfaction of social interactions, recreation activities and academic conditions. According to the results of the study, all variables were found to significantly predict subjective well-being of university students and they accounted for 63.6% of the total variance. Nevertheless, it was found that satisfaction with the interaction with friends was not a significant predictor of subjective well-being of the participants. Furthermore, these variables were found to significantly predict psychological well-being of the participants by explaining 59% of total variance. Finally, results showed that perceived healthiness, socio-economic status and academic achievements did not significantly predict psychological well-being.

Tuzgöl-Dost (2006) examined the relationship of subjective well-being to gender, economic status, parental attitudes, and satisfaction with physical appearance, religious belief, and locus of control among 700 university students. The results

indicated that there was no significant gender difference in subjective well-being of the students. Furthermore, it was found that subjective well-being of students with higher or middle economic status was higher than students with lower economic status. Subjective well-being level of students who perceived their parents' attitudes as democratic were higher than students who perceived their parents' attitudes as protective or avoidant. In addition, students who were satisfied with their physical appearance reported higher level of subjective well-being than those who were not satisfied with their physical appearance. Finally, subjective well-being level of students with internal locus of control was higher than those with external locus of control.

In a recent study, Terzi and Cihangir-Çankaya (2009) examined how well attachment styles predict coping with stress and subjective well-being of university students. The study was conducted with 341 (159 female, 155 male) university students. Data was collected by Relationship Questionnaire, Self Esteem Scale, Life Fulfillment Scale, and Coping with Stress Scale. The results of the study revealed that secure attachment style was a significant predictor of self esteem; preoccupied attachment style was a significant predictor of life satisfaction; secure attachment style was a significant predictor of active planning, seeking external help, turning to religion, acceptance/cognitive restructuring. Moreover, fearful attachment style was found to be a significant predictor of avoidance and preoccupied attachment style was found to be a significant predictor of active planning.

In a similar study, Kankotan (2008) investigated the role of attachment dimensions, relationship status, and gender in subjective well-being of 389 university students. Results of three separate multiple regression analysis revealed that that avoidance dimension of attachment, gender, and anxiety dimension of attachment predicted the life satisfaction of the participants. In addition, avoidance dimension of attachment was reported as the only significant predictor of the positive affect scores and anxiety dimension of attachment was reported as the only significant predictor of the negative affect scores of the participants. Gender was found to be a significant predictor of life satisfaction scores of the participants. Finally, relationship status was found to make no contribution to the life satisfaction scores of the participants.

Sarı (2003) examined the relationship among wellness, relationship status, gender, place of residence, and GPA among 506 university prep-school students. The participants filled out demographic information sheet and the Wellness Inventory which consists of relational self, social interest and empathy, self consistency, mastery orientation, physical wellness, humor, love, and environmental sensitivity. The results of the study indicated significant differences in self consistency, love, and environmental sensitivity sub-scale scores in favor of male students. However, significant mean differences were found in social interest and empathy sub-scales in favor of female students. In addition, according to the results, the wellness scores of the students who were in a committed relationship were significantly higher in love sub-scale while students who were not in a committed relationship scored significantly higher in physical wellness sub-scale. No significant differences were found in terms of the place of residence. Finally, the results indicated that the

wellness scores of students, whose GPA changed between 90 and 100, were significantly higher on mastery orientation sub-scale than students, whose GPA level changed between 50 and 70.

Regarding commitment to career choices, Gündoğar et al. (2007) examined the influence of the students' opinions about their department, self-reported reason for continuing their education in that particular department, and satisfaction with diverse aspects of university experience on 373 university students' life satisfaction. Results of the study showed that satisfaction with education, desire for being in the department, job expectancies and the reason for choosing that specific department predicted life satisfaction. Moreover, life satisfaction and satisfaction with education of students who entered that specific department only to have a graduate degree were significantly lower than those of the students who entered that specific department based on their own wishes. Finally, the hopelessness, depression and anxiety levels of students who enrolled to that specific department only to have a graduate degree were significantly higher than students who enrolled to that specific department on their own wishes.

Finally, Özen (2005) investigated well-being levels of adolescents and she found that well-being of students varies depending on their academic success. It was found that well-being of students who perceive their success as very high was higher than students who perceive their success as low. Furthermore, well-being levels of the students who perceived their success as high was higher than well-being levels of the students who perceived their success as medium and low.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

In this chapter methodological details of the study are introduced. The first section presents the overall design of the study. The second section introduces the characteristics of the participants. The third section includes data collection instruments. The procedure followed in the study is explained in the fourth section. In the fifth section, data analyses employed to the data are presented. Finally, the sixth section deals with the limitations of the study.

3.1. Overall Design of the Study

The overall design of the present study is correlational. Parallel to the aim of the present study correlational research aims to investigate the relationships among two or more variables and to make predictions about a variable (i.e., criterion variable or dependent variable) by considering its relationships with other variables (i.e., predictor variable or independent variable) (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2005).

The present study aimed to examine how well gender, relationship status (presence and absence of romantic relationships), romantic relationship satisfaction and the two dimensions (vocational exploration and commitment and tendency to foreclose) of commitment to career choices predict the three components (positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction) of subjective well-being of senior university students. For this purpose, 400 senior students (172 females, 228 males) were administered

three instruments which aimed at measuring romantic relationship satisfaction, commitment to career choices and subjective well-being. After coding the dummy variables for gender and relationship status and computing the means and standard deviations of independent variables (i.e., romantic relationship satisfaction, vocational exploration and commitment, and tendency to foreclose) and dependent variables (i.e., positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction), one-way multiple analysis of variance for gender to investigate its effect on dependent variables, and three separate multiple linear regression analyses were conducted for three measures of subjective well-being to investigate the predictors of them.

3.2. Participants

Convenient sampling procedure was used in the present study. Participants were 400 (172 females, 228 males) volunteered students from fourth grades of five faculties at Middle East Technical University (METU). The fourth year students were selected because they are thought to be at the appropriate level of age and grade in terms of the interested variables (i.e., relationship satisfaction and commitment to career choices) of the present study. Due to the exclusion of 7 subjects as multivariate outliers in the preliminary analysis, the results were derived from a sample of 393 students of which 43% is females (169 females) and 57% is males (224 males). As seen in Table 3.1, among 169 females, 100 reported that they have a romantic relationship and 69 reported that they did not have a romantic relationship while 102 of 224 males reported that they have a romantic relationship and 122 reported that they have no romantic relationship. Age of the students ranged from 19 to 35 with

the mean age of 22.5 ($SD = 1.58$). The distributions of students by faculties were 30 (11 females, 19 males) in Architecture, 85 (46 females, 39 males) in Arts and Sciences, 66 (37 females, 29 males) in Economics and Administrative Sciences, 85 (45 females, 40 males) in Education, and 127 (30 females, 97 males) in Engineering.

Table 3.1

Descriptives for Gender and Relationship Status

		Relationship Status		
		Have a Romantic Relationship	Have no Romantic Relationship	Total
Gender	Females	100	69	169
	Males	102	122	224
Total		202	191	393

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

Instruments used in the collection of data included a demographic information form (Appendix A), Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) (Appendix B) to measure affective component of subjective well-being, Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Appendix C) to measure cognitive component of subjective well-being, Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) (Appendix D) to assess satisfaction with romantic relationships, and Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS) (see Appendix E for sample items) to assess commitment to career choices of the participants.

3.3.1. Demographic Information Form

A demographic information form was developed for the present study. In the questionnaire, information was gathered concerning participants' gender, age, department, and grade level. The questionnaire also included closed questions concerning whether or not the participants have a boy/girl friend at the present which constituted the relationship status measure together with gender (used as control variable) in the present study.

3.3.2. Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)

The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) was originally developed by Watson and colleagues (1998). The items of the PANAS are grouped into two scales that are positive affect (PA) scale and negative affect (NA) scale. Each scale is consisted of 10 mood-related adjectives. The adjectives for positive affect mood are active, alert, attentive, determined, enthusiastic, excited, inspired, interested, proud, and strong. The negative affect mood adjectives include afraid, ashamed, distressed, guilty, hostile, irritable, jittery, nervous, scared, and upset. Participants are asked to rate how frequently they experience the emotions in a general time frame on a 5-points Likert-type scale ranging from "1 = *Never*" to "5 = *Always*". Higher scores in both of the subscales mean higher frequency of positive affect and negative affect. It was reported that PA and NA together accounted for the 68.7 % of the total variance in general ratings (Watson et al., 1988). With general time frame, internal consistency reliabilities were found to be .88 and .87 for PA and NA, respectively.

The adaptation of the scale to Turkish was made by Gençöz (2000). Consistent with the original one, the scale was found to be consisted of two subscales. It was found that 44% of the total variance was accounted for by these two factors. Internal consistencies for PA and NA were found to be as .83 and .86, respectively. In a study by Şimsek (2005), the reliability and validity of the scale were re-evaluated and satisfactory psychometric properties for the 7-point Likert-type version of the scale were reported. In another study with university students (Kankotan, 2008), the 7-point Likert-type version of the scale was used. Kankotan reported that a total of 39.3% of the variance was accounted for two dimensions of PANAS and internal consistencies of PA and NA scales were found as .77 and .81, respectively. In the present study, Cronbach's alphas coefficients for PA and NA scales were found as .77 and .78, respectively.

3.3.3. Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was originally developed by Diener et al. (1985). SWLS aims to measure the extent to which individuals are satisfied with life in general. It consists of 5 items such as "In most ways my life is close to my ideal" and "I am satisfied with my life". It is a Likert-type scale ranging from "1 = *Strongly disagree*" to "5 = *Strongly agree*." Higher scores in the scale refer to higher life satisfaction. The results of factor analysis yielded a single factor explaining 66% of the total variance. The internal consistency of the scale was reported as .87 and test-retest reliability with two-month intervals was found to be as .82 (Diener et al., 1985).

The adaptation study of SWLS to Turkish was conducted by Köker (1991). Item-total correlations were reported to change between .71 and .80. Internal consistency coefficient of the scale was reported as .89 and test-retest reliability coefficient was found as .85. Kankotan (2008) reported that the SWLS was found to explain a total of 57.8% of the variance and internal consistency of the scale was reported as .74. In the present study, the internal consistency of SWLS was calculated by Cronbach alpha coefficient formula. The results indicated that the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .86 for SWLS. The result is consistent with the original study as well as the other Turkish studies.

3.3.4. Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)

Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) was developed by Hendrick (1988) to measure the relationship satisfaction of individuals experienced in romantic relationships. RAS consists of 7 items with a 7 point Likert-type scale. Items 4 (How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?) and 7 (How many problems are there in your relationship?) are reversed items. The higher scores in the scale indicate higher level of relationship satisfaction. In the instruction of the scale, a special note was provided for the individuals who have no current romantic relationships or who have not experienced such relationship at all. Those individuals who have not experienced such relationship at all were asked to answer the items by assuming that they have such relationships.

The results of the principal-component factor analysis conducted by Hendrick (1988) yielded only one factor which explained 46% of the total variance. Intercorrelations

among the items were moderate. The item-total correlation varied from .57 to .76. The correlation between RAS and Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) was found as .80 in the sample of dating couples. Moreover, Vaughn and Baier (1999) found that total correlation between RAS and DAS was .84 ($p < .01$) and alpha coefficient was .91 with item total correlations ranging from .35 to .80 in a clinical sample consists of 55 men and 63 women.

Turkish adaptation study of RAS was conducted by Curun (2001) with 140 university students who were in romantic relationship. The results of factor analysis yielded one factor accounted for 52% of the variance. The alpha coefficient was found as .86. In the present study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was found as .90 which was consistent with the original scale and with the Turkish study.

3.3.5. Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS)

The Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS) is developed by Blustein and colleagues (1989). It consists of 28 items with a seven point Likert-type scale ranging from “1 = *Never true about me*” to “7 = *Always true about me.*” The CCCS has two subscales: Vocational Exploration and Commitment (VEC) and Tendency to Foreclose (TTF). VEC consists of 19 items and measures individual’s progress from an uncommitted phase to highly committed phase. It consists of items such as “I feel uneasy about committing myself to a specific occupation because I am not aware of alternative options in related fields.” TTF consists of 9 items and measures the extent to which individuals limit their career options by the items such as “I believe that only one single occupation is right for me.” Low scores on VEC mean greater

certainty and commitment to career choice; on the other hand high scores show an uncommitted attitude. High scores on TTF refer stronger predisposition to foreclose on career choices and low scores refer weak predisposition to foreclose and mean being comfortable with vagueness and being open to both commitment process and exploration.

The adaptation study of the scale was conducted by Balın (2008). After taking the permission from the scale developers, Balın translated the CCCS into Turkish. The internal consistency of the scale was found as .77 for TTF and .89 for VEC subscales. In the present study, Cronbach alpha coefficient was .86 for VEC and .69 for TTF subscales.

3.4. Procedure

Before administering the instruments, necessary permissions were obtained from the Ethic Committee of METU. Following this procedure, the researcher made personal visits to the selected departments and arranged the appointments with professors and instructors. Before administration, the purpose of the study was explained to the participants and their informed consents were received. Participants were also guaranteed concerning the anonymity of their responses and confidentiality of the data. The instruments were then administered to the volunteered students in classrooms settings. Completing the entire packet of instruments took approximately 15-20 minutes.

3.5. Analysis of Data

In the present study, in order to examine the effect of gender on the three components of subjective well-being and control for its possible effects, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. In the main analyses, in order to assess how well gender, relationship status, relationship satisfaction, career commitment predict three measures of subjective well-being (positive affect, negative affect, life satisfaction) of university students, three separate simultaneous multiple regression analysis were conducted. Independent variables of the study were gender (a nominated dichotomous variable with dummy coded categories of 0 = female and 1 = male), relationship status which refers to presence or absence of romantic relationship (a nominated dichotomous variable with dummy coded categories of 0 = have a romantic relationship and 1 = have no romantic relationship), romantic relationship satisfaction scores obtained from Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), two subscale scores of Commitment to Career Choices Scale (CCCS) (vocational exploration and commitment score and the level of tendency to foreclose score). Prior to conducting multiple regression analyses, normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and multicollinearity assumptions were tested. Univariate and multivariate outlier testing were performed to detect extreme values on the data. SPSS 15.0 (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for Windows was utilized to perform all the analyses.

3.6. Limitations of the Study

The present study has some limitations. First, this study aimed to investigate the predictive role of gender, relationship status, relationship satisfaction, and commitment to career in subjective well-being of university students. Nevertheless, as mentioned in the literature there may be many other variables that are related to subjective well being. For instance, some other variables such as age, income, social status, personality traits, culture, friendship, academic achievement, parental attitudes, life events etc. all correlate with subjective well being to a certain degree (for a review see Argyle, 2003). These variables may be the other important factors related to subjective well-being of this group of university students.

Second, convenient sampling procedure was used in the present study and the data were collected from the Middle East Technical University (METU). Therefore, the generalizability of the results is limited and they cannot be generalized to the students in other universities.

Third, all measurements used in the present study were self-report measures and prone to validity problems. No additional data was collected from other possible sources such as family members and peers. For that reason, the data may reflect only the perceptions of the participants regarding their subjective well-being.

In addition, the design of the study was correlational which does not permit causal inferences, meaning that direct causal inferences were not possible in the present study.

Finally, there were some threats such as subject characteristics, location, and attitude of subjects which decrease the internal validity of the study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter consists of six main sections. In the first section preliminary analyses of the data are presented. In the second section, descriptive statistics of major variables including means and standard deviations of the criterion and predictor variables are given. In the third section, the results of one-way multivariate analysis of variance are presented. The fourth section includes assumption check of the study variables is explained. The fifth section presents correlation matrix of the study variables. Sixth section includes the results of simultaneous multiple linear regression analyses.

4.1. Preliminary Analysis

Prior to main statistical analyses, the data was checked in terms of possible mistakes made when entering the data. Therefore, the minimum and maximum values and frequencies of each major variable were examined for scores that were not within the range of possible values. The scores that are out-of-range were corrected by checking the questionnaires. A missing value analysis was performed with 400 cases. The missing values were replaced by a series of mean values since the percentage of missing values was not greater than 5%. The crucial assumptions of stepwise multiple linear regression analysis were also checked. Firstly, dummy coding for categorical variables (gender: female = 0, male = 1; relationship status: have a romantic relationship = 0, have no romantic relationship = 1) was done. In order to

identify possible multivariate outliers, diagnostic techniques of regression were performed. As a rule of thumb, the Mahalanobis distance should not exceed the critical chi-squared value with degrees of freedom equal to number of predictor variables at Alpha level = .001, otherwise outliers may have large effects on the statistical analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). In the present study, Mahalanobis distance should be less than $X^2(5) = 20.52$, $p < .001$. When Mahalanobis distances were checked, 7 cases were found to exceed the critical value and they were excluded from the data. Thus, the main analysis were carried out with 393 (169 females, 224 males) cases.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics for the Major Study Variables

Descriptive statistics were conducted to describe predictor variables namely gender, relationship status, relationship satisfaction, tendency to foreclose, and vocational exploration and commitment and the criterion variables (positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction). Since descriptive statistics for gender and relationship status were presented in Table 3.1; means and standard deviations other predictor variables and criterion variables by gender and relationship status are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Means and Standard Deviations of the Major Variables by Gender and Relationship Status

Variables	Relationship Status	Gender					
		Female		Male		Total	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
LS	Have a relationship	16.06	4.09	15.04	4.44	15.55	4.29
	Have no relationship	15.12	4.51	13.22	4.03	13.91	4.29
	Total	15.68	4.28	14.05	4.31	14.75	4.37
PA	Have a relationship	49.57	7.36	51.44	7.37	50.51	7.41
	Have no relationship	48.33	7.45	47.39	7.04	47.73	7.19
	Total	49.06	7.40	49.23	7.45	49.16	7.42
NA	Have a relationship	31.18	7.06	31.17	8.21	31.18	7.64
	Have no relationship	31.23	7.71	31.96	8.37	31.69	8.13
	Total	31.19	7.31	31.59	8.29	31.43	7.88
RS	Have a relationship	42.04	5.32	38.66	8.04	40.33	7.02
	Have no relationship	32.01	8.12	30.66	8.14	31.15	8.14
	Total	37.95	8.27	34.30	9.01	35.87	8.86
TTF	Have a relationship	31.28	7.99	29.98	7.94	30.62	7.97
	Have no relationship	31.23	6.97	31.41	7.93	31.35	7.58
	Total	31.26	7.57	30.76	7.95	30.98	7.78
VEC	Have a relationship	68.10	17.16	66.52	16.69	67.30	16.89
	Have no relationship	68.48	16.07	69.99	14.41	69.45	15.01
	Total	68.25	16.68	68.41	15.55	68.35	16.02

Note. LS: Life Satisfaction; PA: Positive Affect; NA: Negative Affect, RS: Relationship Satisfaction; TTF: Tendency to Foreclose; VEC: Vocational Exploration and Commitment

As seen in Table 4.1, the means for the dependent variables of LS, PA, and NA were 15.5, 49.2, and 35.9 with standard deviations of 4.37, 7.42, and 7.57, respectively. The means and standard deviations were 35.9 and 8.86 for relationship satisfaction, 30.9 and 7.78 for TTF, and 68.3 and 16.0 for VEC.

4.3. Results of One-Way Multivariate Analysis of Variance

In order to determine if it is necessary to control for possible effects of gender on the variables of interest (life satisfaction, negative affect, and positive affect), a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The results indicated that there was a significant gender difference, Wilks' Lambda = .96, $F(3, 388) = 5.86$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$. Follow-up analyses yielded a significant difference in life satisfaction scores, $F(1, 394) = 14.07$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .04$. Based on these results, gender was used as a control variable.

4.4. Bivariate Correlation Matrices of the Major Study Variables

Pearson Correlation Coefficient was computed in order to examine the relationships among the variables used in the study. The correlations among the scores of predictor and criterion variables for the total sample are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Correlation Matrix of the Study Variables for the Total Sample

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender	1							
2. Relationship Status	.14**	1						
3. RS	-.20**	-.52**	1					
4. TTF	-.03	.05	-.00	1				
5. VEC	.01	.07	-.17**	-.26**	1			
6. LS	-.19**	-.19**	.32**	.12*	-.41**	1		
7. PA	.01	-.19**	.16**	.01	-.32**	.39**	1	
8. NA	.03	.04	-.18**	.07	.29**	-.32**	-.29**	1

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, two-tailed. LS: Life Satisfaction; PA: Positive Affect; NA: Negative Affect, RS: Relationship Satisfaction; TTF: Tendency to Foreclose; VEC: Vocational Exploration and Commitment

As it can be seen from the Table 4.2, Pearson-Product-Moment correlation coefficients among independent variables and the dependent variables yielded a significant correlation between life satisfaction scores and each predictor variable. To begin with, life satisfaction was significantly and negatively correlated with gender ($r = -.19, p < .01$), relationship status ($r = -.19, p < .01$), and VEC ($r = -.41, p < .01$) and positively with romantic relationship satisfaction ($r = .32, p < .01$) and TTF ($r = .12, p < .05$) scores. These findings indicate that participants, who have a relationship, score higher on romantic relationship satisfaction and TTF scores have higher scores on life satisfaction scores. Moreover, according to the results being female was found to be associated with higher levels of life satisfaction in general.

Secondly, positive affect was significantly and negatively correlated with relationship status ($r = -.19, p < .01$), VEC ($r = -.32, p < .01$), and positively with romantic relationship satisfaction ($r = .16, p < .01$). Thus, participants who have a relationship and score higher on VEC have higher positive affect scores. As seen from the table, gender was not associated with positive affect scores. Finally, negative affect was negatively correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction ($r = -.18, p < .01$) and positively with VEC ($r = .30, p < .01$) scores. This indicates that participants who have lower negative affect scores have higher romantic relationship satisfaction and VEC scores. Additionally, gender, relationship status, and TTF scores were not correlated with negative affect.

As seen in Table 4.2, there was correlation between some independent variables. However, the intercorrelations among the independent variables ranged from .52 (between relationship status and romantic relationship satisfaction) to .14 (between gender and relationship status). These results indicated no multicollinearity among the variables.

The intercorrelations of independent and dependent variables used in the present study are presented for females (lower triangles) and for males (upper triangle) in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Correlation Matrix of the Study Variables for Female (Lower Triangle) and Males (Upper Triangle)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Relationship Status		-.44**	.09	.11	-.21**	-.27**	.05
2. RS	-.60**		-.04	-.17*	.32**	.19**	-.21**
3. TTF	-.00	.04		-.18**	.06	-.01	.08
4. VEC	.01	-.19*	-.35**		-.41**	-.32**	.29**
5. LS	.11	.26**	.19*	-.42**		.39**	-.35**
6. PA	-.08	.12	.04	-.31**	.42**		-.29**
7. NA	.00	-.11	.06	.32**	-.29**	-.30**	

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, two-tailed, $n = 169$ for females, $n = 224$ for males. LS: Life Satisfaction; PA: Positive Affect; NA: Negative Affect; RS: Relationship Satisfaction; TTF: Tendency to Foreclose; VEC: Vocational Exploration and Commitment

As seen in Table 4.3, in males, life satisfaction was significantly and negatively correlated with relationship status ($r = -.21, p < .01$), and VEC ($r = -.41, p < .01$) and positively correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction ($r = .32, p < .01$). These findings indicate that males, who have a romantic relationship, higher scores on romantic relationship satisfaction and lower scores on VEC have higher life satisfaction scores. This means that males who have a satisfactory romantic relationship and who are more committed to their career choices are more satisfied with their lives. Secondly, in males, positive affect was significantly and negatively correlated with relationship status ($r = -.27, p < .01$), VEC ($r = -.32, p < .01$), and positively with romantic relationship satisfaction ($r = .19, p < .01$). Thus, males who

have a satisfactory romantic relationship and score high on VEC have higher positive affect scores. Finally, in males, negative affect was negatively correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction ($r = -.21, p < .01$) and positively with VEC ($r = .29, p < .01$) scores. This indicates that males who are not satisfied with their romantic relationship and not committed to their career choices experience more negative affect.

On the other hand, in females, life satisfaction was positively correlated with romantic relationship satisfaction ($r = .26, p < .01$) and TTF ($r = .19, p < .05$) and negatively correlated with VEC ($r = -.42, p < .01$). Therefore, females who have higher scores on romantic relationship satisfaction and TTF and lower scores on VEC have higher life satisfaction scores. In females, positive affect was negatively correlated with VEC ($r = -.31, p < .01$) which means females who are more committed to their career choices have more positive affect. Finally, in females, negative affect was positively correlated with VEC ($r = .32, p < .01$), so females who are less committed to their career choices show more negative affect.

4.5. Testing Assumptions for Multiple Regression

Before conducting the main analyses, the main assumptions underlying multiple regression analysis were checked. The main assumptions are: (1) variable types (variables should be quantitative or categorical with two levels); (2) nonzero variance of all variables; (3) no perfect multicollinearity; (4) homoscedasticity; (5) normally distributed errors; (6) linearity; (7) independence of errors; and (8) independent observations (Field, 2005).

Firstly, three of the predictor variables (relationship satisfaction, tendency to foreclose, and vocational exploration and commitment) and all of the criterion variables (life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect) were quantitative variables. Gender (females = 0, males = 1) and relationship status (have a relationship = 0, have no relationship = 1) were dummy coded and then were entered as predictor variables. All predictors and the criterion variables all of which should have non-zero variance seemed to have sufficient variances. All of these are evidence of no violation with regard to the assumptions of variable types and non-zero variance of variables (Field, 2005).

Multicollinearity means high levels of intercorrelation among predictor variables and may increase the error terms. In order to check no perfect multicollinearity assumption, correlation matrices of the variables were inspected to detect predictors that have high correlations ($r > .90$) which is the sign of substantial collinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The correlation matrix analysis revealed no multicollinearity among predictor variables (see Table 4.2). Moreover, collinearity diagnostics of Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and tolerance statistics were checked. The criteria to detect the multicollinearity are VIF should not be greater than 4.0, and tolerance statistic should not be smaller than .20 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The value of VIF ranged between 1.05 and 1.14 and the tolerance statistics ranged between .90 and .95, indicating no multicollinearity for the current data.

The assumption of homoscedasticity means that standard deviations of errors of prediction are equal for all predicted DV scores (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

To check the assumption of homoscedasticity, the scatter plot of regression standardized residuals against regression standardized predicted values and partial regression plots of each criterion variable against each predictor variable were inspected (Field, 2005). The scatterplots indicated that the residuals appeared to be randomly scattered around zero that provides the evidence of homoscedasticity.

In multiple regression analysis, the distributions of residuals should be normal although predictors do not need to be normally distributed in multiple regressions (Field, 2005). To test the normality of residuals, descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, visual inspection of P-P plots and histograms were conducted (Field, 2005). The histograms revealed approximately a normal distribution. Similarly, the normal P-P plot with approximately all points lying on the reasonably straight line showed that the distribution of the residuals was normal. The results of the skewness and kurtosis statistics also showed the distributions were normal. Therefore, the assumption of normally distributed errors was met for the current data.

In order to check linearity assumption, which means that there should be a linear relationship between each predictor variable and each criterion variable (Field, 2005), scatter plots were performed and inspected. There was no evidence of the violation of the assumption of linearity, so the assumption of linearity was met. The correlation between each predictor and criterion variable supported this conclusion (see Table 4.2).

The Durbin- Watson test was observed to test the assumption of independent errors which means that errors of predictions are not correlated and independent of each other. The Durbin-Watson value ranges from 0 to 4 and it should not be greater than 2.5 and less than 1.5 in order not to violate the assumption (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In the present study, the Durbin-Watson values were 2.03 for LS, 1.68 for PA, and 2.09 for NA. Therefore, the assumption of independent errors was not violated.

Since the researcher observed the participants while responding the questions independently of one another during the data collection process, independent observations assumption was assumed for the present study. Overall, these findings indicate no violation of the main assumptions of multiple regression analysis. Nevertheless, since the sampling method of the study was not random sampling, cautions should be taken when making generalizations from the current sample to entire population.

4.6. Results of Simultaneous Multiple Regression Analyses

In order to examine the predictive power of gender, relationship status (i.e., presence or absence of a romantic relationship), romantic relationship satisfaction, vocational exploration and commitment, and tendency to foreclose on subjective well-being (life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect) of senior university students, three separate simultaneous multiple regression analyses were conducted. All of the five variables entered the regression analysis at one step. As mentioned above, the main assumptions underlying multiple regression analysis were checked as an initial step and results indicated no violation of the assumptions.

4.6.1. Results Concerning the Predictors of Life Satisfaction

In the first regression analysis, life satisfaction was treated as dependent variable. The results indicated that multiple regression model was significant ($R = .50, p < .001$). In other words, linear combination of predictor variables was significantly related to the total life satisfaction of the students, $F(5, 387) = 25.99, p < .001$.

Table 4.4

Gender, Relationship Status, Relationship Satisfaction, Vocational Exploration and Commitment, and Tendency to Foreclose as Predictors of Life Satisfaction

Predictor Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>
(Constant)	18.14	1.83		9.93
Gender (Male = 1)	-1.18	.39	-.13	-2.98**
Relationship Status	-.31	.45	-.04	-.69
RS	.11	.03	.21	4.04***
TTF	.01	.03	.02	.53
VEC	-.09	.01	-.36	-7.83***

Note. $R = .50, R^2 = .25, \Delta R^2 = .24, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001$

As seen in Table 4.4, a combination of five variables accounted for 25% of the total variance in life satisfaction scores ($R^2 = .25; \Delta R^2 = .24$). Furthermore, the results of standardized coefficients indicated that gender ($\beta = -.13, t = -2.98, p < .01$) and VEC ($\beta = -.36, t = -7.83, p < .001$) negatively predicted life satisfaction. On the other hand, romantic relationship satisfaction positively predicted life satisfaction ($\beta = .21,$

$t = .404, p < .001$). Nevertheless, relationship status and TTF were not found to be statistically significant in predicting life satisfaction of the students.

4.6.2. Results Concerning the Predictors of Negative Affect

In the second regression analysis, negative affect was treated as dependent variable. The results indicated that multiple regression model was significant ($R = .36, p < .001$) for the model. In other words, the linear combination of predictor variables was significantly related to the negative affect of the students, $F(5, 387) = 11.82, p < .001$.

Table 4.5

Gender, Relationship Status, Relationship Satisfaction, Vocational Exploration and Commitment, and Tendency to Foreclose as Predictors of Negative Affect

Predictor Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>
(Constant)	21.57	3.55		6.08**
Gender	.10	.77	.01	.13
Relationship Status	-1.27	.87	-.08	-1.45
RS	-.14	.05	-.16	-2.85**
TTF	.16	.05	.16	3.22***
VEC	.16	.02	.32	6.35***

Note. $R = .36, R^2 = .13, \Delta R^2 = .12, *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001$

As seen in Table 4.5, a combination of five variables accounted for 13% of the total variance in NA scores ($R^2 = .13; \Delta R^2 = .12$). Additionally, the results of standardized coefficients showed that, VEC ($\beta = .32, t = 6.35, p < .001$) and TTF ($\beta = .16, t =$

3.22, $p < .01$) positively predicted negative affect while romantic relationship satisfaction negatively predicted negative affect ($\beta = -.16$, $t = -2.85$, $p < .01$). However, gender and relationship status were not found to be statistically significant in predicting negative affect experienced by the students.

4.6.3. Results Concerning the Predictors of Positive Affect

In the third regression analysis, positive affect was treated as dependent variable. The results indicated that multiple regression model was significant ($R = .37$, $p < .001$) for the model. In other words, linear combination of predictor variables was significantly related to the positive affect of the students, $F(5, 387) = 11.99$, $p < .001$.

Table 4.6

Gender, Relationship Status, Relationship Satisfaction, Vocational Exploration and Commitment, and Tendency to Foreclose as Predictors of Positive Affect

Predictor Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>t</i>
(Constant)	60.97	3.34		18.26
Gender	.58	.73	.04	.78
Relationship Status (Have no relationship = 1)	-2.25	.82	-.15	-2.74**
RS	.03	.05	.03	.57
TTF	-.06	.05	-.07	-1.34
VEC	-.15	.02	-.32	-6.38***

Note. $R = .37$, $R^2 = .13$, $\Delta R^2 = .12$, $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$, $***p < .001$

As can be seen from Table 4.6, a combination of five variables accounted for 13% of the total variance in PA scores ($R^2 = .13$; $\Delta R^2 = .12$). Moreover, according to the results of standardized coefficients, VEC ($\beta = -.32$, $t = -6.38$, $p < .001$) and relationship status ($\beta = -.15$, $t = -2.74$, $p < .01$) negatively predicted positive affect. However, gender, relationship satisfaction, and TTF were not found to be statistically significant in predicting positive affect experienced by the students.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, discussion regarding the results of the present study that were reported in the previous chapter, implications drawn from the findings of the present study and recommendations for future research are presented. In the first section, discussion about the predictors of life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect is presented. Second section is devoted to implications of the results and third section includes recommendations for further research.

5.1. Discussion of the Results

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the predictive power of gender, relationship status (defined as having a romantic relationship or having no romantic relationship at the present), romantic relationship satisfaction, and two dimensions of commitment to career choices that are vocational exploration and commitment (VEC) and tendency to foreclose (TTF) in the three components of subjective well-being, namely life satisfaction, negative affect, and positive affect. In order to examine the relationships three separate Simultaneous Multiple Linear Regression analyses were carried out. In the analyses, the predictor variables were entered into the model simultaneously in order to define the linear combination of the predictor variables and identify the variables that explains the variance in each of the subjective well-being scores of the participants. Thus, the discussion of the results is

presented separately for life satisfaction, negative affect, and positive affect in the following sections.

5.1.1. Discussion Regarding the Predictors of Life Satisfaction

The results of the first simultaneous multiple linear regression analysis revealed that gender, relationship status, romantic relationship satisfaction, vocational exploration and commitment (VEC), and tendency to foreclose (TTF) accounted for approximately 25% of the total variance of life satisfaction scores of the participants. The analysis of Beta values indicated that gender and VEC were significantly and negatively predicted the life satisfaction scores ($\beta = -.13, p < .01$; $\beta = -.36, p < .001$), while romantic relationship satisfaction significantly and positively predicted the life satisfaction scores of the participants ($\beta = .21, p < .001$). Nevertheless, the results pointed out that relationship status and TTF were not significant predictors of life satisfaction scores of the participants.

More specifically, the results pointed out that VEC (Vocational Exploration and Commitment) was the most significant predictor of life satisfaction; participants who scored lower in VEC subscale were seen to have higher scores on life satisfaction. In other words, participants who showed greater certainty and commitment to their career choices had higher levels of life satisfaction. It can be argued that the characteristics of the sample become vital for these results. On the one hand, the sample was consisted of students in a highly competitive and qualified university. On the other hand, they are senior students who become more concerned about their academic major since the job searches and concerns about finding a job begin. Thus,

being successful in the chosen major and the concerns about their career choices may be the most important issue for the students in this specific university and in the last year of the university. Besides, these students are in the developmental stage which requires more exploration in career and becoming committed to a career choice (Super, 1957). Therefore, career choice and commitment to these specific careers choices become an important part of these students' lives. Consequently, being committed to the career choice was expected to be a significant factor for life satisfaction among this group. Literature provides little support for the relationship between career commitment and subjective well-being. Considering that commitment predicts learning motivation and learning transfer (Cheng & Ho, 2001) and lead people set higher goals and show effort to reach these goals (Colarelli & Bishop, 1990) academic achievement may be related to commitment to career choices. Some studies showed that there was a positive relationship between academic achievement and life satisfaction among university students (Borrello, 2005; Özen, 2005) and career satisfaction was found to be related to life satisfaction (Lounsbury et al., 2004). In Turkey, results of a recent study conducted by Gündoğar and colleagues (2007) showed that satisfaction with university education, desire for being in the department, job expectancies, and the reason for choosing that specific department predicted life satisfaction of university students. These studies shed light on the significance of career commitment in subjective well-being and life satisfaction of individuals and supported the results regarding the contribution of VEC to life satisfaction scores of the individuals. Finally, commitment provides individuals a life free from uncertainty and internal conflict; so the individuals who

are at the commitment phase of VEC continuum are free from stress (Blustein et al., 1989). To conclude, the results reflect the significance of commitment to career choices in subjective well-being of senior university students.

Romantic relationship satisfaction was the second most powerful predictor of life satisfaction scores of the students in the present study. As discussed in Introduction chapter, romantic relationships play a crucial role in development (e.g., Erikson, 1968; Sullivan, 1953; Zarrett & Eccles, 2006; Troy, 2000) and well-being of adolescents and emerging adults (e.g., Collins, 2003; Dush & Amato, 2005; Feiring, 1996; Furman & Shaffer, 2003; Hand & Furman, 2006; Troy, 2000). In a study (Headey, Veenhoven, & Wearing, 1991), among six life domains satisfaction (marriage, work, leisure, friendship, health, standard of living) only marital satisfaction was found to have significant causal effect on global life satisfaction. Similarly, several studies indicated that good social relationships (Mangeloja & Hirvonen, 2007), quality of friendship (Demir et al., 2006; Demir & Weitekamp, 2006), harmony in close relationships (Berkel & Constantine, 2005), satisfaction with love life (Emmons et al., 1983; as cited in Diener, 1984), happiness in romantic relationship (Dush & Amato, 2005), and quality of romantic relationship (Demir, 2008; Dush & Amato, 2005) were all related to happiness and life satisfaction. Thus, the results of these studies provide strong support to the results of present study reflecting the predictive power of romantic relationship satisfaction on life satisfaction of this particular group participated in this study.

In the present study, gender was found to be a significant predictor of life satisfaction

of the participants, indicating that females reported higher levels of life satisfaction than males. Research regarding gender differences in subjective well-being and life satisfaction yielded contradictory findings. Several studies indicated that gender was not a significant predictor of happiness and life satisfaction (Demir, 2008; Demir et al., 2006; Mangeloja & Hirvonen; 2007). On the other hand, several studies conducted in Turkey and abroad showed that females reported higher levels of life satisfaction than males (Ayyash-Abdo & Alamuddin, 2007; Cenkseven, 2004; Kankotan, 2008; Köker, 1991). The significance of gender difference found in these studies might be attributed to the differences regarding the sources of life satisfaction for males and females. In the literature, there is a common discussion that females are more relationship-oriented than males. When the cultural characteristics of Turkey are taken into account, it can also be argued that males' role of being the bread-winner of the family might be more emphasized as compared to Western cultures. However, since the literature on gender differences in life satisfaction is quite inconsistent, the discussion of the finding of the present study would not go beyond speculations.

Finally, relationship status and TTF was not found to be related to life satisfaction of the participants. The research regarding to relationship status revealed inconsistent results. In many studies, involving in and/or quality of the romantic relationship was suggested to be related to well-being of individuals (Berry & Willingham, 1997; Khaleque & Rohner, 2004; for a review see Keyes & Waterman, 2003). In a their study, Dush and Amato (2005) categorized the different relationship status and found that married people had higher levels of subjective well-being, followed by

cohabitators, steady daters, causal daters and people not dating. In a study conducted by Lucas and Dyrenforth (2006, as cited in Perlman, 2007), having a romantic relationship was found to be associated with subjective well-being. On the contrary, in a more recent study that was conducted among Turkish university students in METU, relationship status was not found to contribute to life satisfaction of the participants (Kankotan, 2008). Perlman (2007) suggested that the importance of having a relationship versus the importance of the quality of those relationships is an issue that should be debated. When the characteristics of the sample are considered; emerging adults tend to give importance to the quality of the relationship and the satisfaction derived from that relationship since they try to find a relationship that will last life-long. Thus, the results of this study are consistent with this argument and confirm the importance of romantic relationship satisfaction in predicting life satisfaction of individuals. However, this finding needs further investigation. Similarly, as for the tendency to foreclose (i.e., refers to committing to a choice without a true exploration of potential career options), there is a lack of research investigating its role in life satisfaction which requires additional evidence in understanding its role in life satisfaction.

5.1.2. Discussion Regarding the Predictors of Negative Affect

The results of the second simultaneous multiple linear regression analysis indicated that combination of the predictor variables accounted for 13% of the total variance of the total negative affect scores. In the analysis of Beta values, it was found that romantic relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -.16, p < .01$) negatively and significantly

predicted the negative affect scores, while VEC ($\beta = .32, p < .001$) and TTF ($\beta = .16, p < .01$) positively and significantly predicted negative affect scores of the participants. However, gender and relationship status did not predict the negative affect scores of the participants.

The higher scores on VEC (Vocational Exploration and Commitment) refer to an uncommitted attitude and being in exploratory phase of VEC continuum (Blustein et al., 1989) and VEC scores were the most significant predictor of negative affect scores. More specifically, results showed that the VEC scores were positively predicted negative affect scores, which means as the students become more uncommitted, the frequency of negative affect increases. This finding seemed to provide support for the study indicating the relationship between vocational exploration and decisional stress (Blustein et al., 1989); that is, individuals who are at uncommitted exploratory phase of VEC continuum reported relatively higher levels of decisional stress. This finding is also supported by previous research and theory about the role of stress in the career decision-making process (e.g., Blustein & Phillips, 1988; Harren, 1979, as cited in Blustein et al., 1989) and several studies indicated the relationship between career indecision and anxiety (Hartman et al., 1985; Jones & Chenery, 1980; Kimes & Troth, 1974, as cited in Fuqua, Newman, & Seaworth, 1988). The participants of the present study are supposed to go through the exploration stage and become committed to a career choice. However, as it was mentioned in the Introduction chapter, in Turkey, generally students find the opportunity to explore the career opportunities during university education and they are close to establishment stage identified by Super (1957). As a result, being at the

exploratory phase in the last year of university and being exposed to the pressure of making a choice may lead to negative emotions and experiences.

The scores on TTF (Tendency to Foreclose) subscale are also found to be positively correlated to negative affect scores of the participants. Higher scores on TTF subscale means stronger predisposition to foreclose on career choices without true exploration of potential career options. As mentioned in Introduction and Literature Review chapters, there is a lack of study which directly examines the relationship between commitment to career choices and the components of subjective well-being. Nevertheless, according to Blustein and colleagues (1989) individuals who show strong levels of the TTF at the early phase of the commitment process are the individuals who may not be comfortable in openly considering all of the choices of occupations that are appropriate for their own individual characteristics. They are not able to develop alternative options and so they limit their flexibility in the selected major they have chosen. Contrary to the findings of the present study, in the development study of CCCS, tendency to foreclose was not found to be associated with decisional stress (Blustein et al., 1989). However, higher scores on TTF subscale refer not to being comfortable with vagueness and openness to exploration and commitment. The students in the sample of the present study are about to graduate and have to make career choices and find a job. The obligation to considering their career choices once more may result in negative feelings for the students who are not comfortable with openly considering career choices they made. These findings are also indirectly supported by a study conducted among Turkish university students by Gündoğar and colleagues (2007). Researchers found that

hopelessness, depression and anxiety levels of students who enrolled to that specific department in which they are not interested in and which they did not desire were significantly higher than students who enrolled to that specific department on their own wishes.

The importance of sufficient exploration of career choices and commitment level to the career choice evidenced in the present study may be related to the educational system and economical status of Turkey. In Turkey, being a university graduate is viewed as a guarantee of having a job and saving your entire life. Students generally concerned with entering to the university or to a qualified major which provides opportunities in world of work. Moreover, the educational system also supports this fact and there is lack of adequate vocational counseling in high schools. Counseling services generally act as a service that matches the University Entrance Exam (ÖSS) scores of the student with the preferences of higher education programs. As a consequence, instead of making sufficient career exploration, students enter to the universities and choose major which they get the require scores in the ÖSS. The lack of sufficient exploration, being about to graduate from a major in which the students are not committed may be the reasons for the association between the scores on VEC and TTF subscales and negative affect.

The findings of the present study indicated that not relationship status but romantic relationship satisfaction was a significant predictor of negative affect. This finding pointed out that in this sample, while absence of romantic relationship does not result in negative emotions, the level of satisfaction with the present relationship

contributes to negative emotions. According to the findings, students who have lower levels of romantic relationship satisfaction tended to have higher levels of negative affect. Previous research supported this finding; although dating was not a significant predictor of depressive symptoms among adolescents, quality of these relationships was found to be a predictor of depressive symptoms (La Greca & Harrison, 2005). In other words, authors found that adolescents who were engaged in relationships that have negative qualities reported higher levels of depressive symptoms. Contrary to the findings of the current study regarding relationship status, adolescents (aged between 14-19 years old) who were not dating reported more social anxiety than those who were dating (La Greca & Harrison, 2005) and in another study, students (newly entered to the college) who was uninvolved romantically was also found to be more psychologically distressed in their first semester in the college than most of the students (Paul et al., 1998). The inconsistency between the findings of the current study and the findings of the previous studies may be the result of the characteristics of the samples. In the sample of the current study, students were older than the students in the studies mentioned above. Adolescents generally do not care about finding an intimate partner with whom they will spend their lives. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, through the end of university years, emerging adults generally tend to try to find a relationship which they will continue throughout their lives. Thus, rather than involving in a relationship, forming a satisfactory and high quality relationship becomes much more significant.

5.1.3. Discussion Regarding the Predictors of Positive Affect

The results of the third simultaneous multiple linear regression analysis yielded that the linear combination of the independent variables was significant predictor of positive affect scores of the participants. Combination of the five independent variables explained the 11% of total variance in the positive affect scores. Taken individually, relationship status ($\beta = -.15, p < .01$) and VEC ($\beta = -.32, p < .001$) negatively and significantly predicted the positive affect scores of the participants. On the other hand, gender, romantic relationship satisfaction, and TTF were not significant predictors of positive affect scores.

As for the findings of the present study, students who had lower scores on VEC subscale which refer to greater certainty and commitment to career choice reported higher frequency of positive affect. In addition, the VEC scores were the most significant predictor of positive affect scores of the participants likewise in life satisfaction and negative affect scores of the participants. As mentioned above, this result was expected due to the fact that career becomes the most important issue for the students who are about to graduate and who are obliged to find a job and settle down in an occupation. In this stressful process, being committed to the career choice and being comfortable about the choice may yield positive consequences for students. For instance, as mentioned before, being committed to the career choice help students to be free from decisional stress, since the commitment phase of VEC was associated with lower levels of decisional stress (Blustein et al., 1989).

According to the results of the study, although relationship status was not a significant predictor of life satisfaction and negative affect scores of the participants, it was found to be a significant predictor of positive affect. This finding indicates that presence of romantic relationship resulted in positive affect among participants. There are contradictory findings about relationship status in the literature. In a study by Wilson-Shockley (1985; as cited in Larson et al., 1999) romantic partners were found to be the most common source of strong positive affect among heterosexual adolescents, which is consistent with the findings of the present study. Nevertheless, Kankotan (2008) found that relationship status was not a significant predictor of the components of subjective well-being among university students in METU. This inconsistency between results may be derived from difference in characteristics of the samples of these two study conducted among METU students; the sample of the study of Kankotan was consisted of sophomore, junior, and senior students whereas in the present study the sample was consisted of only senior students. When the age differences are taken into account, having a romantic relationship may become more important through the end of university years since students are preparing for adult life.

5.2. Implications of the Findings

Considering the findings of the present study, several implications for practice in counseling and educational fields can be drawn. These implications are discussed below.

To begin with, in this study, the role of two developmental challenges, namely developing an intimate relationship (Erikson, 1968) and being committed to a specific area of work (Super, 1957) in the three components of subjective well-being was investigated. According to the findings, vocational exploration and commitment was found to be significant predictor of all of the three components of subjective wellbeing; romantic relationship satisfaction was found to be a significant predictor of life satisfaction and negative affect; relationship status was found to be significant predictor of positive affect; and tendency to foreclose was found to be significant predictor of negative affect. Thus, the findings of the present study contributed to the empirical evidence regarding the significant role of both romantic relationships and commitment to career choices in subjective well-being of senior university students.

Since the university students are defined as emerging adults and adults of future, subjective well-being becomes an important issue among this population for becoming happier and healthier individuals, partners, parents, workers and citizens of a healthy society. Therefore, the results of the study can contribute to both developmental and preventive approaches in counseling area. The findings may create interest in the developmental challenges and their importance in subjective well-being of this population. It can attract the attention of individuals, parents, teachers in high school, and counselors in both high school and university counseling centers.

The findings pointed out the importance of romantic relationships among senior university students. Relationship status was found to contribute to positive affect and

romantic relationship satisfaction was found to be a predictor of life satisfaction and negative affect of students. Besides the importance of romantic relationships during university in shaping the future, long-term adult romantic relationships, this finding emphasizes the significance of romantic relationship satisfaction in happy and satisfied life during university education. Regarding romantic relationship satisfaction, some preventive and developmental counseling strategies can be developed to facilitate relational needs of the university students. For example, various counseling programs and workshops can be organized to help students to become aware of the role of their romantic relationships in their lives and their mental health. Students can be enriched by skills and attitudes which would help them in forming and maintaining healthy and satisfactory romantic relationships.

When the results of the study were considered as a whole, it can be argued that the most meaningful and important results of the study were the significant contribution of vocational exploration and commitment as the most significant predictor of all of the three components of subjective well-being of senior university students. This result shed light on the importance of being committed to the career choices in individuals' lives. Furthermore, this result emphasized the fact that career choices and tasks required for career development may cause to confusion, anxiety, and stress and so that need for professional support in mental health (Bluestein et al., 1989). In addition, higher tendency to foreclose was found to be related to frequent negative affect. This finding emphasizes the importance of career related stress throughout the last year of university and increased need for vocational counseling during the last year of the university.

By exploring the significance of career commitment in subjective well-being of the students, the importance of the issue may gain some attention. During high school, before choosing a major, some counseling strategies can be utilized to improve students' decision making skills to increase knowledge about their careers and world of work, etc. Students who are not committed to their career choices may be in a previous stage of career development. Some preventive and developmental steps can be taken such as career counseling implications in higher education. With the help of career theories and developmental practices, support can be provided to students to help them move further in their career development path. These preventive and developmental steps can be provided in a way that supports students' career development by giving them a chance to explore their strengths, characteristics, interests, and career area before choosing a major in the university. Moreover, some practices can be developed which support students in identifying their interests, skills, strengths, setting goals, making an action plan for their career development, and monitoring their progress. Through this, career commitment of individuals can be effected in a positive way. Lastly, since the findings of the present study are drawn from the senior students who are at the last year of university, counseling implications can be developed which are aimed at this group of students. For instance, to decrease the stress, anxiety, and confusion that is resulted from the transition from school to work, some workshops such as information giving about the career positions of majors, some skills that may be helpful in searching vocations, being prepared to job interviews, writing CV, etc. may be helpful to minimize the negative aspects of this transition period.

5.3. Recommendations for Future Research

In the subjective well-being literature, besides the main components of subjective well-being, which are positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction, there are studies on domain-specific satisfactions (i.e., satisfaction with family, work, social relationships, and self) (Diener et al., 1999). Nevertheless, in the present study only global subjective well-being was measured since the aim was to assess overall subjective well-being. Further research could examine the domain specific life satisfaction to have richer understanding about the predictors of subjective well-being among senior university students.

The sample of the study was limited to the senior students in METU who may be more concerned with the career related issues as they are among the most successful students in Turkey. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the contribution of vocational exploration and commitment and tendency to foreclose in subjective well-being of students in other universities. Furthermore, to increase the generalizability of the findings, rather than convenient sampling random sampling may be used in future studies. Moreover, performing longitudinal studies starting from the first year through the last year of the university may be important to understand the effects of romantic relationship satisfaction and commitment to career choices on subjective well-being of senior university students more thoroughly. Finally, administrating various assessment methods might eliminate the limitations of the investigations compared to present study.

In the present study, the majors of the students were not taken into account in terms of the relationship between commitment to career choices and subjective well-being of the students. Considering the economic structure of Turkey as well as the perception of the society; the possibility of finding a job in some of the majors is much lower than others. This may be an important factor which can adversely affect the commitment and subjective well-being levels of the students. Thus, this factor may be taken into consideration in future research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET

Sevgili Öğrenci,

Üniversite öğrencilerinin yaşamlarına ilişkin duygu ve düşüncelerini etkileyen bazı değişkenlerin araştırıldığı bu çalışmada, kişisel bilgi formu ve üç adet ölçek yer almaktadır.

Sizden istenilen bu ölçekleri dikkatli ve içten olarak yanıtlamanızdır. Tüm yanıtlarınız gizli tutulacak ve çalışmada sizin kimliğinizi belirten herhangi bir bilgi kesinlikle yer almayacaktır. Araştırmanın amacına ulaşabilmesi açısından, soruları eksiksiz ve içtenlikle yanıtlamanız önemlidir. Katkılarınızdan dolayı teşekkür ederim.

Selda Çelen Demirtaş

Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi

ODTÜ, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü

Açıklama: Aşağıdaki soruları okuyup sizin için uygun olan cevapları işaretleyiniz.

1. Yaşınız:
2. Cinsiyetiniz: () Kadın () Erkek
3. Bölümünüz:
4. Sınıfınız:
5. Şu anda beraber olduğunuz bir kız / erkek arkadaşınız var mı?
() Var () Yok

APPENDIX B

THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE AFFECT SCHEDULE (in Turkish)

Aşağıda bir takım duygu ifadeleri bulunmaktadır. Lütfen her bir duyguyu genelde yaşama sıklığınızı, yan taraftaki dereceleme ölçeğinde belirleyiniz.

	Asla	Çok Nadiren	Nadiren	Bazen	Sıkça	Çogunlukla	Daima
1. İlgili	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Sıkıntılı	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Heyecanlı	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Mutsuz	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Güçlü	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Suçlu	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Ürkmüş	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Düşmanca	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Hevesli	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Gururlu	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Asabi	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Uyanık	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Utanmış	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. İhamlı	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Sınırlı	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Kararlı	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Dikkatli	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Tedirgin	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Aktif	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Korkmuş	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX C

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE SCALE (in Turkish)

Aşağıda genel olarak yaşamınız ve yaşamınızın bazı alanlarındaki doyumunuz ile ilgili ifadeler verilmiştir. Lütfen söz konusu ifadeleri size uygunluğu açısından çarpı (X) işareti koyarak değerlendiriniz.

	Hiç uygun değil	Kısmen uygun	Uygun	Oldukça uygun	Tamamen uygun
1. Yaşamım idealime büyük ölçüde yaklaşıyor.					
2. Yaşam koşullarım mükemmel.					
3. Yaşamımdan memnunum.					
4. Yaşamda şu ana kadar istediğim önemli şeylere sahip oldum.					
5. Yaşamımı bir daha yaşasaydım hiçbir şeyi değiştirmek istemezdim.					

APPENDIX D

RELATIONSHIP ASSESSMENT SCALE (in Turkish)

Aşağıda romantik ilişkilerden sağlanan doyuma ilişkin ifadeler bulunmaktadır. Eğer halihazırda bir romantik ilişki içerisinde değilseniz, aşağıdaki maddeleri bir ilişki içerisinde olduğunuzu varsayarak cevaplandırınız. Her bir maddenin ilişkilerinizdeki duygu ve düşüncelerinizi ne oranda yansıttığını karşılardaki 7 aralıklı ölçek üzerinde, ilgili rakam üzerine çarpı (X) koyarak belirtiniz.

	Hiç karşılıyor						Çok iyi karşılıyor
1. Sevgiliniz ihtiyaçlarınızı ne kadar iyi karşılıyor?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Hiç memnun değilim						Çok memnunum
2. Genel olarak ilişkinizden ne kadar memnunsunuz?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Çok daha iyi						Çok daha kötü
3. Diğerleri ile karşılaştırıldığında ilişkiniz ne kadar iyi?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Hiç bir zaman						Her zaman
4. Ne sıklıkla ilişkinize hiç başlamamış olmayı istiyorsunuz?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Hiç karşılıyor						Tamamen karşılıyor
5. İlişkiniz ne dereceye kadar sizin başlangıçtaki beklentilerinizi karşılıyor?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Hiç sevmiyorum						Çok seviyorum
6. Sevgilinizi ne kadar seviyorsunuz?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Hiç yok						Çok var
7. İlişkinizde ne kadar problem var?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX E

COMMITMENT TO CAREER CHOICES SCALE (in Turkish)

(Sample Items)

Aşağıda verilen maddelerdeki ifadelere ne derecede katılıp katılmadığınızı en uygun ve doğru şekilde yansıtan sayıyı, altta verilen derecelendirmeyi kullanarak belirtiniz. Şu anda belirgin bir kariyer hedefiniz yoksa, aşağıdaki maddeleri mesleki bir tercih yapmış olduğunuzu varsayarak, böyle bir durumdaki davranışlarınızı ve tutumlarınızı yansıtacak şekilde yanıtlayınız.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Hiç doğru değil	Neredeyse hiç doğru değil	Genellikle doğru değil	Bir fikrim yok/ Emin değilim	Genellikle doğru	Neredeyse her zaman doğru	Her zaman doğru

1.	Tek bir kariyer hedefine karar vermenin ve ona sıkı sıkı tutunmanın bir uygunluk göstergesi olduğuna inanıyorum.
5.	Benim için bir kariyer hedefi üzerinde karar vermek çok zor çünkü çok fazla seçenek var gibi görünüyor.
8.	Bana göre eğitim ve kariyer seçimleriyle ilgili tereddütlü veya kararsız bir yaklaşım, zayıflık işaretidir; bir kişi seçimini yapmalı ve ne olursa olsun onu izlemelidir.
11.	Eğitim ve kariyer seçeneklerimin farkında olmakla birlikte, kendimi belirli bir mesleğe bağlanma konusunda rahat hissetmiyorum.
13.	Belirli bir kariyer hedefine odaklanamadığım için bölüm değiştirmeyi çok sık düşünüyorum.
16.	İş dünyasıyla ilgili bildiklerime dayanarak (örneğin, çeşitli mesleklerin özellikleri gibi), aynı anda birden fazla kariyer hedefini ciddi olarak gözden geçirmem gerektiğine inanmıyorum
26.	Ne tür bir iş yapmak istediğimden tam emin değilim.