




## The Relationship between Positivity and Fear of Happiness in People Applying to Graduate Programs in Physical Education and Sports Department

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### Abstract

Positivity is a positive concept for both students and teachers and academics. This people's perspectives are influencing many factors. For this reason, a positive point of view is also an important factor. This perspective affects many negative situations. One of these situations is fear of happiness. The aim of the study with this thought is to examine the relationship between positivity and fear of happiness in people applying to the graduate programs of Physical Education and Sports Department. Study sample consists of 38 women and 83 men who applied to the graduate programs of the Department of Physical Education and Sports of Marmara University in the spring semester of 2016-2017 academic year. Data were collected using the 'Positivity Scale' developed by Caprara *et al.* (2012) and adapted to the Turkish language by Çıkrıkçı *et al.* (2015). Data were descriptively analyzed using t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Pearson Correlation test for independent groups. Participants' positivity and fear of happiness levels do not significantly differ by gender and age. However, there is a moderate negative correlation between their positivity and fear of happiness levels.

**Keywords:** Fear of happiness, Positivity, Physical education and Sports, Graduate program.

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## 1. Introduction

Happiness is an important concept in human life and has attracted the attention of researchers for many years. Everyone is supposed to seek and achieve happiness (Eid and Diener, 2001). Everyone regardless of nationality and age wants to be happy and strives to achieve happiness (Braun, 2000). However, Joshanloo argues that the perception of happiness varies widely across cultures (Joshanloo, 2013). Having examined various theoretical findings, Joshanloo *et al.* (2014) suggest that some people may have a negative attitude towards happiness and develop a fear of happiness. Fear of happiness mainly refers to the belief that happiness is a harbinger of bad things to come. Some argue that fear of happiness is more prevalent especially in eastern cultures (Bryant and Veroff, 2007; Joshanloo, 2013). Since the 1980s, research has addressed happiness (Güllü, 2018; Myers and Diener, 1995; Lyubomirsky and Lepper, 1999; Abdel-Khalek, 2006; Uğurlu and Şakar, 2015) and related concepts such as job satisfaction (Çınar, 2008; Eğinli, 2009; Başer and Özel, 2013) quality of life (Yıldırım and Bayrak, 2017; Ekinci, 2006; Uğurlu and Şakar, 2015) positivity (Çıkrıkçı *et al.*, 2015) and burn-out Gümüldağ *et al.* (2018).

The concept of positivity, in general, focuses on the development of strengths and assumes the role of inhibition in people. Positive psychological interventions, including components such as gratitude, awareness and use of potentials, improve the mood of patients with depression (Grossman *et al.*, 2007). Positivity can be thought of as a tendency for people to evaluate their own lives in all aspects and in a good way. The current study is thought to be important for higher education and academics, teachers and students. Because it is the source for similar studies. In particular, it is important to determine the positivity of students and to determine the fear of happiness.

Having been an integral part of life since the dawn of mankind, sports play an important role in developing positive attitudes and overcoming the fear of happiness. Sports have not only physical, spiritual and mental benefits but also communal and social benefits. People who are capable of instilling these benefits in society are those who are engaged in sports. In this context, the aim of the study is to examine the relationship between positivity and fear of happiness in people who apply to the graduate programs of Physical Education and Sports Department. The questions to which this study sought answers are as follows: 1) What is the level of positivity and fear of happiness among students? 2) Do positivity and fear of happiness differ by gender? 3) Do positivity and fear of happiness differ by graduate status? 4) Do positivity and fear of happiness differ by age? 5) Do positivity and fear of happiness differ by material and emotional support received after graduation? 6) Is there a correlation between positivity and fear of happiness?

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

The study sample consisted of 38 women and 83 men who applied to graduate programs of the Department of Physical Education and Sports of Marmara University in the spring semester of 2016-2017 academic year.

### 2.2. Data Collection and Data Collection Tools

Data were collected using the 'Positivity Scale' developed by Caprara *et al.* (2012) and adapted to the Turkish language by Çıkrıkçı *et al.* (2015) the "Fear of Happiness Scale" developed by Joshanloo (2013) and adapted to the Turkish language by Demirci *et al.* (2016) and a personal information form developed by the researchers.

The Positivity Scale consists of 8 items (one of which is reverse scored) rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale (ranging from "strongly disagree = 1" to "strongly agree = 5").

The Fear of Happiness Scale (FHS) consists of 5 items rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (ranging from "strongly disagree = 1" to "strongly agree = 7"). The higher the score the higher the fear of happiness. The personal information form consists of items pertaining to participants' demographic characteristics such as gender, age, graduate status, material and emotional support from family.

Study population consisted of those who applied to graduate programs of the Department of Physical Education and Sports of Marmara University, and visited the department on the day of professional orientation and interview for admission to the graduate programs. They were informed of the data collection procedure, and informed consent was obtained from them prior to participating in the study. Data were collected from those who agreed to participate in the study. The survey forms (130) were checked after data collection, and those that were not filled out properly (9) were excluded from the study.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

All parametric assumptions were met (Skewness, Kurtosis/ Table 1). T test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used for independent groups. Tukey multiple comparison test and Pearson Correlation test were used to determine between which groups the statistical difference existed.

## 3. Findings

Table-1. Distribution of Scale Scores

Scale	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min.	Max.
Positivity	121	2.38	0.929	.758	.109	8.00	40.00
Fear of Happiness	121	2.31	1.357	1.066	.576	5.00	35.00

Skewness and Kurtosis +/- (3)(10) (Kline, 2005).

The data were normally distributed (positivity skewness = .758; positivity kurtosis = .109; fear of happiness skewness = 1.066; fear of happiness kurtosis = .576). Participants have a moderate level of positivity (mean: 2.38) and low level of fear of happiness (mean: 2.31).

**Table-2. Distribution of Scale Scores by Gender**

Scale	Women (n=38) Mean ± SD	Men (n=83) Mean ± SD	t	p
Positivity	2.26 ± 0.87	2.43 ± 0.95	-0.939	.350
Fear of Happiness	2.10 ± 1.28	2.42 ± 1.38	-1.190	.236

p &lt; 0.05

There was no statistically significant difference in positivity ( $p = .350 > 0.05$ ) and fear of happiness ( $p = .236 > 0.05$ ) scores between male and female participants.

**Table-3. Distribution of Scale Scores by Graduate Status**

Scale	Within Area (n=75) Mean ± SD	Non-Area (n=46) Mean ± SD	t	p
Positivity	2.36 ± 0.96	2.40 ± 0.87	-0.228	.820
Fear of Happiness	2.22 ± 1.25	2.44 ± 1.51	-0.858	.392

p &lt; 0.05

There was no statistically significant difference in positivity ( $p = .820 > 0.05$ ) and fear of happiness ( $p = .392 > 0.05$ ) scores between participants who had a bachelor's degree in physical education and sports and those who had a bachelor's degree in other areas.

**Table-4. Distribution of Scale Scores by Age**

Scale	20 to 23 years of age (n=25) Mean ± SD	24 to 27 years of age (n=59) Mean ± SD	≥ 28 years of age (n=37) Mean ± SD	F	p
Positivity	2.29 ± 0.85	2.45 ± 0.99	2.31 ± 0.88	.420	.658
Fear of Happiness	2.20 ± 1.33	2.41 ± 1.37	2.21 ± 1.36	.338	.714

p &lt; 0.05

Participants' positivity ( $p = .658 > 0.05$ ) and fear of happiness ( $p = .714 > 0.05$ ) scores did not significantly differ by age.

**Table-5. Distribution of Scale Scores by Material and Emotional Support from Family**

Scale	Support (n=41) Mean ± SD	No Support (n=44) Mean ± SD	Partial Support (n=36) Mean ± SD	F	p
Positivity	2.24 ± 0.88	2.43 ± 0.92	2.46 ± 0.98	.704	.496
Fear of Happiness	2.29 ± 1.45	2.35 ± 1.39	2.27 ± 1.23	.044	.957

p &lt; 0.05

Participants were divided into three groups; 1) those receiving support from their families 2) those receiving no support from their families and 3) those receiving partial support from their families. However, there was no statistically significant difference in positivity ( $p = .496 > 0.05$ ) and fear of happiness ( $p = .957 > 0.05$ ) scores among the three groups.

**Table-6. Result of Correlation Analysis between Positivity and Fear of Happiness**

	Positivity		
	N	r	p
Fear of Happiness	121	-.341	.000

p &lt; 0.05

The results showed that there was a moderate negative correlation between participants' positivity and fear of happiness scores ( $r = -.341, p < 0.05$ ) (Table 6).

## 4. Conclusion

The data were analyzed and found to be normally distributed. The results showed that participants had a moderate level of positivity and low level of fear of happiness. There was no statistically significant difference in positivity and fear of happiness levels between male and female participants, indicating that they have a similar tendency in terms of both positivity and fear of happiness.

There was no statistically significant difference in positivity and fear of happiness levels between participants who had a bachelor's degree in physical education and sports and those who had a bachelor's degree in other areas. Participants' positivity and fear of happiness levels did not significantly differ by age either, indicating that age has no effect on positivity and fear of happiness.

Participants' positivity and fear of happiness levels did not significantly differ by material and emotional support that they receive from their families. The correlation results showed that there was a moderate negative correlation between participants' positivity and fear of happiness levels, indicating that the higher the positivity the lower the fear of happiness, and vice versa.

## 5. Discussion and Recommendations

There was no statistically significant difference in positivity and fear of happiness levels between male and female participants. Telef (2016) reported a statistically significant difference in positivity and fear of happiness levels between male and female participants. Participants' positivity and fear of happiness levels did not

significantly differ by age either. Ünüvar *et al.* (2015) compared the positivity and fear of happiness levels of students from different universities.

The correlation results showed that there was a moderate negative correlation between participants' positivity and fear of happiness levels. Yellow and Cakir (2016) found a significant relationship between the subjectivity of fear of happiness and psychological well-being. According to Akyüz *et al.* (2017) fear of negative evaluation has an effect on neither impulse buying nor horizontal individuality, however, fear of negative evaluation has a positive effect on normative compatibility, which also has a positive effect on impulse buying. Demirci *et al.* (2016) found that fear of happiness is negatively correlated with life satisfaction and subjective happiness. Türk *et al.* (2017) reported a significant correlation between fear of happiness and life satisfaction.

The sample of this study consisted of only people who applied to graduate programs in physical education and sports department of Marmara University in Istanbul. Further studies should, therefore, include participants who apply to graduate programs of different departments of universities in other cities.

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