

Research Article

The Source of Individual Happiness And Life Satisfaction: Evidence From Turkey

Bireysel Mutluluğun ve Yaşam Memnuniyetinin Kaynağı: Türkiye'den Bulgular

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to estimate the most effective sources of contextual and individual on happiness and satisfaction in Turkey. The data used in this study are obtained from three different waves of World Values Survey (WVS) which are 2005-2009, 2010-2014, 2017-2020. By summing all data from these three waves, total sample size has reached 8,766 individuals. Individual happiness was used as dependent variable and measured by a question that defined as the rank of individual happiness (1 =unhappy, 2 =happy, 3 = very happy). In addition, in order to make comparisons, a life satisfaction model was developed with the same explanatory variables used in happiness equation, in which the variable of individuals' life satisfaction (1=not satisfied; 2= dissatisfied; 3=neither satisfied nor satisfied; 4=satisfied; 5=most satisfied) was dependent variable. Because the dependent variables in the study are ordered variables, the main model of this study is the ordered probit model. The findings of this study show that the variables affecting happiness and life satisfaction in Turkey are similar. The most important determinants of happiness and life satisfaction in Turkey are individual and contextual variables such as education, age, marital status, gender, caring for family and friends, being healthy, caring about religion, being satisfied with the financial situation, feeling free, trusting institutions and trusting people. Married individuals are very happy and very satisfied with life compared to unmarried individuals, individuals who care about religion are very happy and very satisfied with life compared to those who do not care about religion. Men and single women have higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction. It was determined that there was a U-shaped relationship between age and happiness, age and life satisfaction. Being satisfied with the financial situation, trusting institutions and people, feeling free affect individual happiness and life satisfaction positively. However, interest in politics in Turkey negatively affects the happiness and life satisfaction levels of individuals.

Keywords: happiness, life satisfaction, subjective-well-being, ordered probit

Öz

The most important determinants of happiness and life satisfaction in Turkey are individual and contextual variables such as education, age, marital status, gender, caring for family and friends, being healthy, caring about religion, being satisfied with the financial situation, feeling free, trusting institutions and trusting people.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'de mutluluk ve memnuniyet üzerinde bağlamsal ve bireysel olarak en etkili kaynakların neler olduğunu tahmin etmektir. Bu çalışmada kullanılan veriler, Dünya Değerler Araştırması'nın (WVS) 2005-2009, 2010-2014, 2017-2020 yıllarının oluşturduğu üç farklı dalgasından elde edilmiştir. Bu üç dalgadan elde edilen tüm veriler toplandığında toplam örneklem büyüklüğü 8.766 bireye ulaşmıştır. Bireysel

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mutluluk, bağımlı değişken olarak kullanılmış ve bireysel mutluluğun sıralaması olarak tanımlanan (1=mutlusuz, 2=mutlu, 3=çok mutlu) bir soru ile ölçülmüştür. Ayrıca, karşılaştırma yapabilmek için bireylerin yaşam memnuniyeti (1=hiç memnun değil; 2= memnun değil; 3=ne memnun ne de memnun değil; 4=memnun; 5=en memnun) değişkeninin bağımlı değişken olduğu, mutluluk eşitliğinde kullanılan aynı açıklayıcı değişkenlere sahip bir yaşam memnuniyeti modeli geliştirildi. Çalışmadaki bağımlı değişkenler sıralı değişkenler olduğundan, bu çalışmanın temel modeli sıralı probit modelidir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, Türkiye’de mutluluğu ve yaşam memnuniyetini etkileyen değişkenlerin benzer olduğunu göstermektedir. Türkiye’de mutluluğun ve yaşam memnuniyetinin en önemli belirleyicileri eğitim, yaş, medeni durum, cinsiyet, aileye ve arkadaşlara önem vermek, sağlıklı olmak, dine önem vermek, finansal durumdan memnun olmak, özgür olduğunu hissetmek, kurumlara güven ve insanlara güven gibi bireysel ve bağlamsal değişkenlerdir. Türkiye’de evli bireyler bekâr bireylere göre, aileye önem veren bireyler aileye önem vermeyen bireylere göre, sağlıklı bireyler sağlıklı iyi olmayan bireylere göre, arkadaşlığa önem veren bireyler arkadaşlığa önem vermeyen bireylere göre, dine önem veren bireyler dine önem vermeyen bireylere göre daha mutlu ve yaşamdan memnun olma düzeyleri daha yüksektir. Erkeklerin, bekar kadınların mutluluk ve yaşam memnuniyet düzeyleri daha yüksektir. Yaş ve mutluluk arasında, yaş ile yaşam memnuniyeti arasında U şeklinde ilişki olduğu belirlenmiştir. Finansal durumdan memnun olmak, kurumlara güvenmek ve insanlara güvenmek, özgür hissetmek bireysel mutluluğu ve yaşam memnuniyetini pozitif yönde etkilemektedir. Ancak, Türkiye’de politikaya ilgi duymak bireylerin mutluluk ve yaşam memnuniyet düzeylerini negatif etkilemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: mutluluk, yaşam memnuniyeti, öznel iyi oluş, sıralı probit

1. Introduction

Individual happiness and life satisfaction is considered an indicator of development and its importance in the literature has increased worldwide. However, studies examining individual happiness and life satisfaction in Turkey are very lacking. Happiness and life satisfaction can be examined in two broad categories: contextual and individual. Contextual sources relate to factors at the community and state level, such as democracy, social capital, better environment, good government and GDP per capita. Individual sources of happiness and life satisfaction include gender, age, marital status, friendship, social bonds, religiosity, health, employment status, education and personal or household income (Sujarwoto, 2015, p. 4).

The main objective of this paper is to underly sources which affect happiness and life satisfaction of individuals in Turkey. Since both happiness and life satisfaction are similar notions and measure subjective well-being together. Subjective well-being is defined as combination of feeling good; experience of the positive emotions such as happiness and contentment, and functioning effectively; development of one’s potential, having some control over one’s life, having sense of purpose, and experiencing positive relationships (Huppert, 2009, p. 2). In order to capture subjective well-being, self-reported questions about happiness or life satisfaction are commonly used as indicators of subjective well-being (Royo and Velezco, 2006, p. 7). Happiness is a main goal of life as a whole. Individuals consider their state of emotion and state of mental health as happiness condition and are capable to evaluate their quality of life according to this term. In the World Values Survey (Inglehart et al. 2000), happiness evaluation of individuals is asked as: “Taking all things together, would you say you are 1=very happy, 2=quite happy, 3=not very happy, and 4=not at all happy”, whereas life satisfaction is assessed on a scale from one (dissatisfied) to ten (most satisfied) with the question: “All things considered, how satisfied are with your life as a whole these days?”. The term life satisfaction is mostly used for ‘overall happiness’, but refers in some cases particularly to its cognitive component and is than synonymous with ‘contentment’, i.e. the degree to which an individual perceives his/her aspirations are met. In such context, the term happiness is typically used for the affective appraisal of life and then synonymous with ‘hedonic level of affect’, i.e. the degree to which various affects that someone experiences are pleasant in character (Veenhoven, 2012, p. 5).

This paper is organized as follows: in Section 2, literature review on happiness and its determinants is offered. Then, based on the data from World Values Survey, the evidences obtained from the estimation of ordered probit analysis and marginal effects of happiness and life satisfaction with 8,766 individuals in Turkey. Finally, it’s concluded that the results which shows that health status, marital status, having freedom are the most important determinants of happiness in Turkey. Satisfaction with financial situation, confidence and trust are also positively related with happiness. Similar results are obtained for satisfaction condition of individuals.

2. Literature Review

There are several studies which investigate how demographic and socio-economic control variables are related to happiness. For example, Bilgin and Şengül (2010) investigate how individual socio-economic conditions affects individuals' happiness.

Happiness and life satisfaction become important in economics literature, since they are considered as a component of subjective well-being and as an indicator of development and their importance in the literature has increased worldwide. Individual well-being (or happiness) depends on many things, including income, labour market status, job characteristics, health, leisure, family, social relationships, security, liberty, moral values and many others (Ahn et al. 2004, p. 4). Evrensel (2004) made initial empirical attempt to include cultural characteristics in the SWB– economic freedom relationship. Sociocultural and demographic variables are used as explanatory variables for SWB. The result of ordered logistic regression, the interaction terms between economic freedom and religious affiliations shows that higher economic freedom increases SWB in majority Christian countries. However, this effect is negative for majority Muslim and Buddhist/Hindu countries. The relationship between age and happiness was found to be U-shaped (Akin and Şentürk, 2012; Caner 2014; Blanchflower and Oswald 2008; Jabeen and Khan 2016; Asadullah et al. 2018; Neira et al., 2019; Mulet, 2020; Blanchflower, 2021; Ucal and Günay, 2022). However, Growiec and Growiec (2010) suggested that age had inverse U-shape whereas Stanca (2010) found age to have negative impact on happiness. In terms of gender, some researches found that women to be happier and more satisfied with life than men (Bilgin and Şengül, 2010; Growiec and Growiec, 2014; Caner, 2015; Cordero et al. 2016; Asadullah et al. 2018; Mulet, 2020; Olivos, 2020). Conversely, in the papers of Özcan et al. (2008) and Akin and Şentürk (2012), it was found that men are happier than women. Some evidences showing no gender differences (Neira et al. 2019). Most of evidences agree on the effects of marital status has positive effect on happiness, indicating that married people happier compared to other status (Blanchflower and Oswald 2004; Özcan et al. 2008; Humpert, 2010; Stanca 2010; Landiyanto et al. 2011; Selim 2012; Vinson and Ericson 2014; Caner 2015; Asadullah et al. 2018; Ngamaba and Soni, 2018; Neira et al. 2019; Muresan et al. 2020; Lim et al., 2020; Gattig and Minkus, 2021).

Most studies focus on importance of income on happiness. Akin and Şentürk (2012) found out that an increase in the level of income, increases happiness. McBride (2001) researched the effects of relative-income on SWB in the cross-section. The results were obtained from ordered probit techniques and based on general social survey. This evidence indicates that relative-income effects may be smaller at low income levels. Headey et al. (2004) have studied the effect of income on well-being by using data drawn from the 2001 and 2002 waves of the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey, which is a household panel survey. It's concluded that happiness is more affected by economic circumstances than previously believed. Selim (2012) analyzed life satisfaction and happiness in Turkey by using ordered logit model and found income has positive impact on happiness. On the other hand, according to the paper of Asadullah et al. (2018), richer individuals more concerned with relative income than poorer individuals. The influence of absolute income is larger among women compared to men. Therefore, despite being in the worse economic condition, women are happier in China. Moreover, rural residents are poorer than urban residents so that conditional on having the same income, there is no rural-urban happiness gap. Henn and Murphy (2015) have studied to determine of the importance of absolute, reference and relative income on individual well-being in Ireland. The findings demonstrated that having higher household income related to higher subjective well-being. Similarly, there is a positive relative income aspect. In addition, an increase in reference group income, which is defined as the average income of all individuals in the same reference group, resulted in a reduction in individual well-being. These results which is supported by Reyes-Garcia et al. (2016) indicate the positive and statistically significant relationship between absolute income and subjective wellbeing, and by Novak and Pahor (2017) found a positive impact of relative income on the life satisfaction of individuals. Further, Muresan et al. (2020) found evidence for European countries that indicates there is a certain income threshold at which happiness no longer increases with more money.

Lam and Liu (2014) have studied the determinants of happiness in China and U.S. The survey data on happiness collected by World Values Survey in two waves, 1995 and 2007. Probit and ordinary least square (OLS) methods were used to estimate effects of various factors on happiness. The evidence have demonstrated that socio-economic inequalities increase inequalities in happiness in China. Individuals with below high school education attainment are less happy than those with more education. Agricultural workers are the most unhappy and are becoming even more unhappy over time. In both countries health is a major factor determining happiness. Among the explanatory variables used in the study, the distribution of health status is the most important determinant of the distribution of happiness among the population in both countries. The poorest people are the most unhappy and are becoming even more unhappy over time despite the rapid growth of the economy.

Income inequality also has been focused on recent literature. Oishi et al. (2011) have studied the income inequality and happiness for Americans by using General Social Survey data from 1952 to 2008. The three-point happiness item (1=not too happy, 2=pretty happy, 3=very happy) is used for dependent variable. The other variables are trust, perceived fairness and household income. According to their evidences from multilevel mediation analysis, there were negative relation between income inequality and happiness among people with lower incomes rather than people with higher incomes. Furthermore, in the years with greater income inequality, source of being less happiness was their perceived fairness and trust but having lower income. Ifcher and Zarghamee (2012) reported that per capita income is inversely related to SWB inequality in cross-sectional analysis. It was also evident that greater economic growth is associated with a greater decrease in SWB inequality. The relationship between income, economic growth, and SWB inequality was not explained by income inequality.

Most of evidences found out the the effect of employment on life satisfaction and happiness to be positive. Ahn et al. (2004) investigated the effect of unemployment on life satisfaction on individual well-being by using the data taken from the European Community Household Panel, which was conducted annually from 1994 until 2001 across many Western European countries. Their evidence showed that unemployment reduced an individual's satisfaction levels with individual's main vocational activity and finance, while it increased individuals' satisfaction levels with leisure time. Furthermore, health had a small negative effect. Stanca (2010) analyzed the relationship between economic conditions and well-being using a large sample of individuals from 94 countries worldwide from World Values Survey. To investigate the relationship, two step methodology was used. In first step, the impact of economic condition on life satisfaction at the individual level was estimated for each country. Secondly, in macro level analysis, country-specific relation between well-being and macroeconomic indicators (i.e, income and unemployment) was estimated. Well-being measured by either life satisfaction and happiness. The ordered probit results show that the income matters for individuals in countries with lower GDP per capita. In addition, the negative effect of being unemployed on happiness of individuals is larger in low unemployment countries. Jabeen and Khan (2016) analyzed the determinants of individual's happiness in Pakistan using the data from World Values Survey for three different waves, which are 1994-1998, 1999-2004, and 2010-2014 with total sample consists of 3933. According to ordered probit analysis, happiness is higher for females, healthy, religious, not married, and employed individuals.

Asadullah et al. (2018) have studied on determinants of subjective well-being in China for the period 2005-2010. Ordered probit regression analysis of well-being revealed that large influence of gender, rural residency and household income. It was found that being women, urban residents and people with higher income are happier in China. Higher level of education, better health and being employed are positively and significantly correlated with well-being. Zengrui et al. (2018) have researched on the determinants of subjective wellbeing (SWB). The panel data obtained for Latin America and East Asia & Pacific countries. The dependent variable in this study which is life satisfaction downloaded from the World Happiness Report by Helliwell. The data for GDP per capita, level of inflation, life expectancy and unemployment rates are from World Bank and the democracy index from Freedom House. The fixed effect regression results suggested that the effect of economic growth is stronger on life satisfaction in Latin America than in the rest of the world.

Shakhizadayev (2018) have analyzed the influence of absolute and relative income growth on happiness level of an individual. Data are drawn from World Values Survey for the waves three, four, five and

six. The empirical methods used are OLS, Logit and OLS IV regressions found the positive correlation of relative and absolute income with happiness level. Relative income in terms of social status is economically more significant than absolute income in terms of the influence of GDP per capita and previous year's GDP per capita growth rate. Günay and Ucal (2018) have explored the impact of perceived income on individual (perceived) happiness in Eastern and Western Germany whether they were associated to perceived trust and four socio-economic variables, namely gender, age, marital status and employment status. A generalized ordered logit model was applied using the third and fifth waves of the World Values Survey (WVS 2017) data. Bootstrapping and marginal effects were used to obtain a more robust model. The findings showed that perceived income had a positive effect on all happiness categories in both regions. Perceived trust had a stronger positive impact on individual happiness, although its significance varied across individual (perceived) happiness categories. For both regions, it turned out that a positive impact of perceived income levels, marriage, being female, and having a full-time job; whereas a negative impact of age on happiness.

Several numbers of researches in the literature indicates importance of social relations and social capital on happiness and life satisfaction. Among them, Diener and Seligman (2002) addressed the factors influence high happiness as social relationships, personality and psychopathology, and variables (e.g. religiosity and exercise). Happier people have strong social relationships and they spend most time socializing, and see themselves good at relationships.

Growiec and Growiec (2010) have studied the relationship between two distinct dimensions of social capital (bridging and bonding social capital) and individuals' reported subjective well-being (SWB) and earnings. The notions of bonding and bridging social capital upon which have been first introduced to social sciences by Putnam (2000) refer to forming social ties with people in a similar (bonding social capital) or different (bridging social capital) socio-economic position. The data from the 2005 wave of the 'Social Diagnosis' survey program in Poland is used. The 2SLS model estimated an inverse U-shaped relationship between any type of social capital and SWB, an inverse U-shaped relationship between bridging social capital and earnings, and a negative impact of bonding social capital on earnings. Leung et al. (2011) have analyzed importance of social capital for happiness by using bootstrap hierarchical regression on data from the Canadian General Social Survey for the year 2003. According to the results, there are significant relationships between happiness and each of three types of social capital suggested by Coleman (1988), namely trust and obligations, information channels, and norms and sanctions. In terms of social and personal trust, the analysis showed that trust has an important relationship with happiness, but only trust in people within one's family was significant. Kroll (2011) examined the relationship between social capital and subjective well-being by gender and parental status. The evidences demonstrate that civic engagement is not at all associated with higher life satisfaction for mothers, while the relationship is positive for men and strongest for childless women. Moreover, informal socialising is positively and more strongly associated with life satisfaction among women. Voeten (2017) have studied the relation between social capital and happiness across two main regions: Latin America and western countries. Social capital has been measured based on questions relating to the three categories: social relations, social trust and social norms. By taking the average of the three categories, an overall score for social capital was constructed. Results showed that the influence of social relations and social trust on happiness for Latin American countries is significantly lower than for western countries.

Allen and Jayachandran (2016) have studied on major determinants of life satisfaction by utilizing the data from the General Social Survey, with a sample size of 19,597 consist of Canadians. Several multiple regression models were run sequentially to estimate standardized path coefficients for the causal model. Respondents who were female, younger, married, from high socioeconomic status background, born in Canada, very religious, and demonstrated high level of neighborhood interaction had greater satisfaction with life. Individuals who have better health, social contact, leisure activities, more time with family and friends, more enjoyment with volunteer activities, and a greater sense of belonging to the community, have greater life satisfaction.

Gattig and Minkus (2021) analyzed relationship between marital status and life satisfaction with panel data from the German Family Panel (pairfam) and extended previous analyses by adding individual trajectories (slopes) to standard fixed-effects regressions (FEIS). Also, these different social

mechanisms are translated into different analytical strategies and find that OLS regression – due to its confounding effects between and within persons – overestimates the effect of marriage on life satisfaction. A fixed-effects estimator reveals a much lower effect of marriage on life satisfaction for couples who marry compared to those who continue to live apart together or cohabitate.

In terms of education, in Selim (2012) paper, contrary to expectations, middle education has a negative direct effect on life satisfaction among females and upper education level is insignificant in life satisfaction model. Education has insignificant effect on happiness in all level. In addition, as the level of education increased, after a certain level, the individual's increasing expected level of prosperity led to an increase the level of unhappiness of individuals (Akın and Şentürk, 2012, p. 6). However, Lamu and Olsen (2016) reported more education is associated with increased SWB. FitzRoy and Nolan (2020) studied the relationship between education, income, and happiness using British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) and found that individuals with lower levels of education have less satisfaction in life, as their income levels increase, which was consistent with the “Easterlin Paradox.”

Kollamparambil (2020) examined the trends and determinants in happiness and happiness inequality in South Africa at the individual and aggregate district municipality level using the four waves of National Income Dynamics data. The paper finds that income determines happiness level and happiness inequality at both individual and aggregate level. The similar results at the individual and aggregate levels indicate that the happiness–income paradox mentioned in literature does not exist within the South African context. At the aggregate level, income inequality has significant negative on happiness levels while it impacts happiness inequality positively. These findings indicate that absolute effect rather than relative effect of income dominates happiness and happiness inequality at the country level in South Africa. Furthermore, employed individuals and individuals with higher education are seen to be significantly happier.

Lim et al. (2020), using the World Values Survey (waves 6, 2010–2014) data, revealed that the cross-national differences in the effect of income-happiness could be explained by the societal values. In their ordered logit analysis societal values seems to be the main drivers of differential income effects and the moderating effect of societal values explain the differential income effects in the Asian societies. Among the eight societal value variables, the four secular value variables and one emancipative value variable (equality) are found to have significant effects on happiness. People with low values of defiance, disbelief, relativism and skepticism, are significantly happier; whereas people with low values of gender equality are significantly less happy. Thus, societal values matter in moderating the effects of income on happiness among the East-Asian countries. The empirical evidence also showed that the incidence of unemployment is found to have negative impacts on the happiness. On the other hand, being married increases the happiness. The diminishing marginal utility of income is found to be the highest in South Korea and Taiwan, and almost none, in Thailand and Philippines. In the high income Asian societies, the effect of increase in income on happiness is higher than in low income Asian societies.

Lopez et al. (2021) presented a study regarding different dimensions of quality of life for achieving happiness, and also assess differences by gender for Spanish citizens. Using a survey of this population and a representative sample, the significant relationships with the different dimensions, primarily relating to work and the place of residence are determined. The regression analysis provides positive effects of factors such as one's family situation, trust in neighbours, the safety of the place where one lives, culture, sport, sustainability, an unpolluted environment, and the one's financial and labour situation on happiness. However, the model reveals a gender divergence. The gender gap in the Spanish labour market plays a decisive role in the factors relating to quality of life assessment in the happiness model. Both the income variable and satisfaction with one's job and workplace relations are favourable for the male gender whereas they are not significant for women. In the latter case, the assessment of their job and status at work clearly bring men happiness. On the other hand, the female gender is more influenced by the family situation and the safety of their place of residence, such, individual factors not explicitly incorporated in the model, such as physical, mental and personal development issues, are more important for women's happiness.

As we have seen from previous studies above, socioeconomic and demographic factors influence happiness and life satisfaction in various way. We aim to examine these variables as source of happiness at individual and contextual level.

3. Data

The data used in this study are obtained from three different waves of World Values Survey (WVS) for the years of 2007, 2011, and 2018. By summing all datas from these three waves, total sample size has reached 8,766 individuals. Individual happiness was used as dependent variable and measured by a question that defined as the rank of individual happiness individual happiness (1=very happy, 2=quite happy, 3=not very happy, and 4=not at all happy). On the other hand, life satisfaction is measured as a scale from one (dissatisfied) to ten (most satisfied).

We reorganized the codes of happiness in three category: 1=not at all happy, 2=happy, and 3=very happy. Similarly, life satisfaction is recoded as one (dissatisfied) to five (most satisfied) in our study. The percentage of very happy or quite happy is not stable, it differs from wave to wave. The data is pooled data and is based on World Values Survey.

4. Method

In this paper, we examine happiness and life satisfaction in Turkey. The dependent variables in the study are the ordinal variable, therefore, the basic model of this analysis is ordered probit model.

The model can be derived from a measurement model in which a latent or unobserved variable y^* ranging from $-\infty$ to $+\infty$ is mapped to an observed variable y . The variable y is thought of as providing incomplete information about an underlying y^* according to the measurement equation:

$$y_i = m \text{ if } \tau_{m-1} \leq y_i^* < \tau_m \text{ for } m = 1 \text{ to } J$$

The τ 's are called thresholds or cut points. The extreme categories 1 and J are defined by open-ended intervals with $\tau_0 = -\infty$ and $\tau_J = \infty$ (Long 1997). To illustrate the measurement equation, consider the dependent variable is used as happiness. The variable happiness is an answer to the question: Taking all things together, would you say you are 3 (very happy), 2 (happy), 1 (unhappy). A higher value indicates higher degree of happiness. The observed y is related to y^* according to the measurement model:

$$y_i = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } \tau_0 = -\infty \leq y_i^* < \tau_1 \\ 2, & \text{if } \tau_1 \leq y_i^* < \tau_2 \\ 3, & \text{if } \tau_2 \leq y_i^* < \tau_3 = \infty \end{cases}$$

On the other hand, life satisfaction is assessed on a scale from one (dissatisfied) to ten (most satisfied) with the question: "All things considered, how satisfied are with your life as a whole these days?" We recoded the life satisfaction scale as one (dissatisfied) to five (most satisfied) in our study. The observed y is related to y^* according to the measurement model:

$$y_i = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } \tau_0 = -\infty \leq y_i^* < \tau_1 \\ 2, & \text{if } \tau_1 \leq y_i^* < \tau_2 \\ 3, & \text{if } \tau_2 \leq y_i^* < \tau_3 \\ 4, & \text{if } \tau_3 \leq y_i^* < \tau_4 \\ 5, & \text{if } \tau_4 \leq y_i^* < \tau_5 = \infty \end{cases}$$

The structural model is

$$y_i^* = x_i \beta + \varepsilon_i$$

where, x_i is a row vector with a 1 in the first column for the intercept and the i th observation for x_k in column $k + 1$. β is a column vector of structural coefficients with the first element being the intercept

β_0 . Since the model is nonlinear we use discrete change for interpretation. Discrete change is the change in the predicted probability for a change in x_k , from the start value x_S to the end value x_E :

$$\frac{\Delta \Pr(y = m|x)}{\Delta x_k} = \Pr(y = m|x, x_k = x_E) - \Pr(y = m|x, x_k = x_S)$$

where the notation $\Pr(y = m|x, x_k)$ indicates the probability that $y = m$ given x , noting a specific value x_k . When x_k changes from x_S to x_E , the predicted value of outcome m changes by $\Delta \Pr(y = m|x)/\Delta x_k$, holding all other variables at x .

5. Empirical Analysis

The estimation method is ordered probit since the dependent variables of the model are ordinal. First table gives definition of the variables included in the model with their mean and standard deviations.

Table 1: Descriptions of the Variables

Dependent Variables		Mean	Std. Dev.
Happiness	1= unhappy;2= happy; 3=very happy	2.13	0.69
Life Satisfaction	1= not satisfied at all ;2= dissatisfied;3=neither dissatisfied nor satisfied; 4=satisfied ;5=most satisfied	3.88	1.15
Independent Variables			
Educprim	Equals 1 if education level: primary school; zero otherwise (reference)	0.60	0.49
Eduhigh	Equals 1 if education level: highschool; 0=otherwise	0.26	0.44
Educuni	Equals 1 if education level: University; 0=otherwise	0.14	0.35
Age	Age of individuals	3.77	1.36
Agesq	Square of age of individuals	1.60	1.17
Family2	Equals 1 if family is important, zero otherwise	0.99	0.08
Friendimp2	Equals 1 if friends are important, zero otherwise	0.96	0.18
Religion2	Equals 1 if religion is important, zero otherwise	0.69	0.46
Health2	Equals 1 if individual has good health, zero otherwise	0.17	0.38
Interestinpol	Equals 1 if individual has interest in politics, zero otherwise	2.28	0.94
Married	Equals 1 if individual is married, zero otherwise	0.67	0.47
Singlewom	Single women (interaction term)	0.17	0.37
Child	Number of child	1.81	1.95
Gender	Equals 1 if gender of individuals is men, 2 women.	1.50	0.50
Agemarried	Age of married people (interaction term)	2.77	2.19
Marrinc3	Interaction term of married and highest income	0.05	0.21
Singelinc3	Interaction term of single and highest income	0.03	0.18
Womchild	Interaction term of women and number of child	0.83	164.81
Marchild	Interaction term of married and number of child	166.51	1.92
Job1	Equals 1 if individuals working in a full-time job, zero otherwise	0.29	0.45
Gel1	Equals 1 lowest income level, between 500 TL and 1500 TL, zero otherwise (reference)	0.59	0.49
Gel2	Equals 1 middle income level, between 1500 TL and 4000 TL, zero otherwise	0.33	0.47

Gel3	Equals 1 highest income level, higher than 4000 TL zero otherwise	0.08	0.28
Finsatisfact	0=no answer; 1=dissatisfied with financial stitution: 10=most satisfied with financial stitution	5.32	2.33
Freedom	Having freedom of choice and control over life: 1=Not having freedom: 10=A great deal	6.40	2.84
Trustpeop	0=no answer; 1=very careful; 2= trust in people	1.12	0.38
Confidence	Sum of confidence in institutions; Justice System/Courts, Universities, Elections, The European Union (EU), International Monetary Found (IMF), International Criminal Court (ICC),North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO),The World Bank (WB), The World Health Organization (WHO),The World Trade Organization (WTO)	4.43	1.73
Year07	Equals1 if the year is 2007, zero otherwise	0.15	0.36
Year11	Equals1 if the year is 2011, zero otherwise	0.18	0.39
Year18	Equals1 if the year is 2018, zero otherwise	0.27	0.44

Source: WVS 2007, 2011, 2018

In the descriptive statistics table, number of observations is 8766, and the value of mean and standard deviation of other variables are demonstrated. When the table is examined, it seems that the average of happiness is 2 and the average of life satisfaction is 3.88. This shows that happiness of individuals who joined the investigation is “moderate”. Besides, individuals are almost “satisfied”.

Table 2: Frequencies of Happiness and Life Satisfaction in Turkey

Happiness	Freq.	Percent	Cum.	Satisfaction	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
1	1,606	18.32	18.32	1	479	5.46	5.46
2	4,378	49.94	68.26	2	556	6.34	11.81
3	2,782	31.74	100.00	3	1,845	21.05	32.85
				4	2,499	28.51	61.36
				5	3,387	38.64	100.00
Total	8,766	100.00		Total	8,766	100.00	

When we examine descriptive statistics, Table 2 shows that 31% of individuals are very happy whereas 50% of people are happy. Beside this, 38% of individuals are very satisfied with their life.

Table 3: Parameter Estimation Results of the Ordered Probit Models

Happiness	Coef.	Z	Satisf	Coef.	Z
Educhigh	-0.109	-3.45	Educhigh	-0.076	-2.47
Educuni	-0.054	-1.33	Educuni	-0.012	-0.31
Age	-0.025	-4.33	Age	-0.024	-4.24
Agesq	0.0003	5.09	Agesq	0.00029	4.62
Family2	0.469	2.81	Family2	0.621	4.02
Friendimp2	0.181	2.70	Friendimp2	0.349	5.43
Religion2	0.194	6.95	Religion2	0.122	4.46
Health2	0.768	22.00	Health2	0.467	13.62
Interestinpol	-0.040	-2.92	Interestinpol	-0.035	-2.59
Married	0.607	6.18	Married	0.410	4.28
Singlewom	0.089	1.37	Singlewom	0.201	3.18
Child	-0.003	-0.16	Child	0.026	1.24
Gender	0.132	2.69	Gender	0.213	4.42
Agemarried	-0.007	-2.66	Agemarried	-0.002	-1.11
Job1	0.088	2.91	Job1	0.0599	2.03
Gel2	-0.006	-0.21	Gel2	-0.0387	-1.25
Gel3	-0.269	-1.08	Gel3	-0.194	-0.79
Finsatisfact	0.113	18.49	Finsatisfact	0.219	35.39
Freedom	0.008	1.68	Freedom	0.035	7.98
Trustpeop	0.094	2.90	Trustpeop	0.084	2.66
Confidence	0.007	7.32	Confidence	0.0079	7.61
Year07	-0.013	-0.33	Year07	0.419	10.33
Year11	-0.094	-2.19	Year11	0.264	6.30
Year18	-0.386	-7.93	Year18	-0.152	-3.24
/cut1	0.797		/cut1	1.107	
/cut2	2.322		/cut2	1.612	
			/cut3	2.529	
			/cut4	3.431	

Most of the estimated parameters are statistically significant in the equations of happiness and satisfaction. The effect of age has U-shaped for both equations. The effect of being married and being older on happiness and life satisfaction of individuals small and negative. The estimated parameters of the income levels in both equations are not statistically significant, income does not affect satisfaction and happiness condition. Furthermore, if individuals are highschool graduate, the likelihood of being happy and being satisfied decreases. Health status has positive effects in both equations. Individuals who have good health status are likely to be happier and more satisfied. Importance of family, friends, and religion in life has positive role on

satisfaction and happiness. Financial satisfaction also affects positively. Similarly, individuals who work in full-time job seem to be happier. Likewise, trust in people and confidence in institutions increases probability of happiness and satisfaction of individuals.

Table 4: Singificance of Overall Model

Happiness		Satisfaction	
Ordered probit regression	Number of obs=8,766	Ordered probit regression	Number of obs=8,766
	LR chi2(28) =1460.35		LR chi2(28) =2978.96
	Prob > chi2=0.0000		Prob > chi2=0.0000
Log likelihood = -8227.9469	Pseudo R ² =0.0815	Log likelihood= -10668.608	Pseudo R ² =0.1225

According to Table 4, log likelihood test statistics show that models are overall significant as shown above.

Table 5: Marginal Effects: Happiness

Variables	Unhappy		Happy		Very Happy	
	ME	Z	ME	Z	ME	Z
Eduhigh	0.026	3.45	0.012	3.40	-0.038	-3.45
Educuni	0.013	1.33	0.006	1.32	-0.0187	-1.33
Age	0.0059	4.33	0.003	4.22	-0.0086	-4.33
Agesq	-0.00008	-5.08	-0.000036	-4.92	0.0001	5.09
Family2	-0.0113	-2.81	-0.051	-2.78	0.163	2.81
Friendimp2	-0.044	-2.70	-0.019	-2.67	0.063	2.70
Religion2	-0.047	-6.93	-0.0209	-6.53	0.068	6.95
Health2	-0.185	-21.54	-0.0828	-14.31	0.267	21.77
Interestinpol	0.009	2.92	0.0044	2.89	-0.014	-2.92
Married	-0.146	-6.17	-0.065	-5.88	0.211	6.18
Singlewom	-0.021	-1.37	-0.009	-1.37	0.031	1.37
Child	0.00083	0.16	0.0003	0.16	-0.001	-0.16
Gender	-0.032	-2.69	-0.014	-2.66	0.046	2.69
Agemarried	0.0017	2.66	0.0007	2.63	-0.0024	-2.66
Job1	-0.021	-2.91	-0.0094	-2.88	0.031	2.91
Gel2	0.002	0.21	0.00071	0.21	-0.0023	-0.21
Gel3	0.065	1.08	0.0290	1.08	-0.094	-1.08
Finsatisfact	-0.027	-18.16	-0.012	-13.36	0.0396	18.45
Freedom	-0.0018	-1.68	-0.0008	-1.67	0.0027	1.68
Trustpeop	-0.023	-2.90	-0.010	-2.87	0.033	2.90
Confidence	-0.0019	-7.30	-0.0008	-6.85	0.0027	7.32
Year07	0.003	0.33	0.0014	0.33	-0.0047	-0.33

Year11	0.022	2.19	0.010	2.18	-0.0326	-2.19
Year18	0.093	7.91	0.042	7.34	-0.134	-7.93

If individual is high school graduate, probability of being unhappy increases by 2.6% and being of happy by 1.2% whereas it decreases being very happy by 3.8%. Moreover, holding other variables constant, when individuals getting older by one year, the probability of being in unhappy category increases by 0.59% and being in happy category by 0.3% while being in very happy decreases by 0.86%. Probability of being unhappy is 0.32% less and being happy is 0.14% less for women compared to men. Probability of being very happy is higher by the amount of 4.6%. In terms of family, friends and religion; their importance in life decreases the probability of being in unhappy and happy categories whereas the effects increase being very happy by 16.3%, 0.63% and 0.68% respectively. According to the emrical results, good health makes people happier. If individuals have good health status, probability of being in very happy category increases by 26.7%. Similarly, having full-time job increases probability of being in very happy category increases by 3.1%. Likewise, being married increases probability of being unhappy by 14.6% whereas it decreases probability of very happy category by 1.4%. Satisfaction with financial situation significantly increases being in very happy category is 3.96%. Additionally, trust in people and confidence in institutions increases probability of being very happy 3.3% and 0.27% respectively.

Table 6: Marginal Effects: Life Satisfaction

Variables	Not Satisfied at all		Dissatisfied		Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied		Satisfied		Most Satisfied	
	ME	Z	ME	Z	ME	Z	ME	Z	ME	Z
Educhigh	0.004	2.46	0.006	2.46	0.015	2.47	0.0023	2.34	-0.029	-2.47
Educuni	0.0007	0.31	0.0009	0.31	0.002	0.31	0.0004	0.31	-0.0046	-0.31
Age	0.0014	4.17	0.0018	4.19	0.0049	4.23	0.00072	3.66	-0.0088	-4.24
Agesq	-0.000017	-4.52	-0.00002	-4.55	-0.00006	-4.60	-9.04e-06	-3.89	0.00011	4.62
Family2	-0.0358	-3.96	-0.049	-3.97	-0.128	-4.00	-0.0189	-3.54	0.2324	4.02
Friendimp2	-0.020	-5.28	-0.027	-5.30	-0.072	-5.38	-0.0105	-4.38	0.130	5.43
Religion2	-0.007	-4.37	-0.009	-4.41	-0.025	-4.45	-0.0037	-3.79	0.0457	4.46
Health2	-0.027	-11.54	-0.037	-12.26	-0.0967	-13.14	-0.0142	-6.32	0.175	13.57
Interestinp ol	0.0020	2.58	0.0027	2.58	0.0072	2.59	0.0010	2.44	-0.013	-2.59
Married	-0.023	-4.20	-0.032	-4.23	-0.085	-4.26	-0.0124	-3.68	0.1536	4.28
Singlewom	-0.011	-3.15	-0.015	-3.15	-0.041	-3.17	-0.0061	-2.91	0.075	3.18

Child	-0.001	-1.24	-0.0021	-1.24	-0.005	-1.24	-0.0008	-1.23	0.0099	1.24
Gender	-0.012	-4.34	-0.017	-4.36	-0.044	-4.40	-0.0065	-3.78	0.0799	4.42
Agemarried	0.00016	1.11	0.0002	1.11	0.0006	1.11	0.00008	1.09	-0.0010	-1.11
Job1	-0.0034	-2.02	-0.005	-2.02	-0.0124	-2.03	-0.002	-1.95	0.022	2.03
Gel2	0.002	1.25	0.0031	1.25	0.0080	1.25	0.001	1.23	-0.014	-1.25
Gel3	0.011	0.79	0.015	0.79	0.0402	0.79	0.006	0.79	-0.0727	-0.79
Finsatisfact	-0.012	-19.07	-0.017	-21.23	-0.0453	-27.93	-0.0066	-7.15	0.0820	35.11
Freedom	-0.002	-7.50	-0.0028	-7.67	-0.00743	-7.87	-0.0011	-5.35	0.0134	7.97
Trustpeop	-0.0048	-2.64	-0.0067	-2.65	-0.01749	-2.66	-0.0025	-2.50	0.0316	2.66
Confidence	-0.00045	-7.21	-0.00063	-7.33	-0.00164	-7.51	-0.00024	-5.27	0.00298	7.61
Year07	-0.024	-9.35	-0.0333	-9.68	-0.08687	-10.09	-0.0127	-5.93	0.1571	10.33
Year11	-0.015	-6.06	-0.0209	-6.14	-0.0546	-6.25	-0.0080	-4.76	0.0988	6.30
Year18	0.00875	3.20	0.0121	3.22	0.03144	3.24	0.0046	2.95	-0.0569	-3.24

Marginal effects on satisfaction level shows that results are similar to marginal effects on happiness. If individual is high school graduate, probability of being dissatisfied increases by 0.4% and being of satisfied by 0.23 % whereas it decreases being most satisfied by 2.9%. On the other hand, when individuals getting older by one year, the probability of being in dissatisfied category increases by 0.14% and being in satisfied category by 0.072% while being in most satisfied decreases by 0.88%. Probability of being unhappy is 0.32% less and being happy is 0.14% less for women compared to men. Probability of being very happy is higher by the amount of 4.6%. Importance of family, friends and religion in life decreases the probability of being in dissatisfied and satisfied categories whereas the effects increase being most satisfied by 23.24%, 13% and 4.57 % respectively. If individuals have good health status, probability of being in most satisfied category increases by 17.5%. Similarly, having full-time job increases probability of being in very happy category increases by 2.2%. Satisfaction with financial situation significantly increases being in most satisfied category is 8.2%. Having freedom over life increases probability of being most satisfied by 1.34%. Besides, trust in people and confidence in institutions increases probability of being most satisfied 3.16% and 0.29% respectively.

6. Conclusions

Happiness and life satisfaction become important in economics literature, since they are both considered as a component of subjective well-being and used as an indicator of development. As well as economic growth, it's important to consider happiness and satisfaction of all

individuals in the society. The main objective of this study is to investigate sources of happiness and life satisfaction of individuals in Turkey. The data used are from World Values Survey for the waves of 5, 6, and 7. We pooled the data and applied ordered probit model. The results of the two equations support each other since the same variables increases (decreases) unhappiness and unsatisfaction, while increases (decreases) happiness and satisfaction.

The empirical results in this paper advocate most of the previous studies on happiness and life satisfaction.

On the other hand, demographic variables such as marriage, age, and gender affect the happiness and life satisfaction as individual sources. The effect of age has U-shaped for both equations which is consistent with the evidences in the paper of Akın and Şentürk (2012), Caner (2014), Blanchflower and Oswald (2008), Jabeen and Khan (2016), Asadullah et al. (2018), Neira et al., (2019); Mulet (2020); Blanchflower (2021) and Ucal and Günay (2022). However, according to our empirical analysis, education level (except high school) and income do not have significant influence on happiness of individuals. Financial satisfaction, choosing freedom, trusting people and confidence in institution as contextual sources affect positively happiness and life satisfaction levels of individuals in Turkey. But interesting politics as a contextual source affects negatively happiness and life satisfaction in Turkey.

A married individual is very happy compared to singles. In addition, the life satisfaction level of the married individual is higher than the life satisfaction level of the single individual. However, as the married individual gets older, she/he becomes unhappy and his satisfaction level decreases. Although men are very happy compared to women and have the highest life satisfaction, single women are very happy and have the highest life satisfaction compared to other individuals. Full-time employees are both very happy and have the highest level of life satisfaction compared to those who do not work full-time. Both the happiness level and life satisfaction level of the healthy individual are highest compared to the unhealthy individual in Turkey.

Satisfaction with financial situation, confidence and trust are also positively related with happiness and life satisfaction. Regarding the effect of trust and confidence, i.e. the important component of social capital, our findings confirmed that the social quality of society has a substantial role on happiness and life satisfaction. In the society, if individuals are trustworthy, this prepare a ground for the positive attitudes towards other people, so that they live in a safe, pleasant, and comfortable place.

In a society, if individuals and institutions are reliable, this prepares a basis for positive attitudes towards other people, so that they live in a safe, pleasant and comfortable place. Trust in institutions at the country level affects the expectations of individuals for future life satisfaction and happiness. Democratic elections, the justice system, educational success and economic stability should be taken into account by policymakers, because investing in well-functioning institutions will be a source of confidence for the current and future life satisfaction and happiness of individuals in society. Policymakers should implement policies that will allow all individuals in society to develop and evaluate their happiness and life saturation levels, regardless of their socio-economic and demographic characteristics.

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Araştırma Makalesi

The Source of Individual Happiness And Life Satisfaction: Evidence From Turkey

Bireysel Mutluluğun ve Yaşam Memnuniyetinin Kaynağı: Türkiye'den Bulgular

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Genişletilmiş Özet

1.Giriş

Bireysel mutluluk ve yaşam doyumu bir kalkınma göstergesi olarak kabul edilmektedir ve literatürdeki önemi dünya çapında artmıştır. Ancak Türkiye'de bireysel mutluluk ve yaşam memnuniyetini inceleyen çalışmalar oldukça yetersizdir. Mutluluk ve yaşam memnuniyeti bağlamsal ve bireysel olmak üzere iki geniş kategoride incelenebilir. Bağlamsal kaynaklar, demokrasi, sosyal sermaye, daha iyi çevre, özgürlük, iyi hükümet ve kişi başına düşen GSYİH gibi toplum ve devlet düzeyindeki faktörlerle ilgilidir. Bireysel mutluluk ve yaşam memnuniyet kaynakları ise cinsiyet, yaş, medeni durum, arkadaşlık, sosyal bağlar, dindarlık, sağlık, istihdam durumu, eğitim ve kişisel veya hane gelirini içermektedir (Sujarwoto, 2015, p. 4).

Öznel iyi oluş, iyi hissetmenin; mutluluk ve yaşam memnuniyeti gibi olumlu duyguların yaşanmasının ve etkin bir şekilde işlev görmesinin; kişinin potansiyelinin gelişimi, yaşamı üzerinde bir miktar kontrol sahibi olmasının, amaç duygusuna sahip olmasının ve olumlu ilişkiler yaşamasının bileşimi olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Huppert, 2009, p. 2). Öznel iyi oluşu ifade etmek için, mutluluk veya yaşam memnuniyeti ile ilgili bireyin bildirdiği sorular, öznel iyi oluşun göstergeleri olarak yaygın olarak kullanılmaktadır (Royo ve Velezco, 2006, p. 7). Mutluluk, bir bütün olarak yaşamın ana hedefidir. Bireyler duygu durumlarını ve ruh sağlığı durumlarını mutluluk durumu olarak görmekte ve yaşam kalitelerini bu terime göre değerlendirebilmektedirler. Dünya Değerler Araştırması'nda (Inglehart ve ark., 2000) bireylerin mutluluk değerlendirmesi şu şekilde sorulmaktadır: “Bugünlerde genel olarak ne derecede mutlu olup olmadığınızı söyler misiniz?” (1=çok mutlu, 2=oldukça mutlu, 3=çok mutlu değil ve 4 =hiç mutlu değil). Öte yandan yaşam memnuniyeti 1 (memnun değil) ile 10 (en memnun) arasında bir ölçekte “Genel olarak bu günlerde hayatınızdan tam olarak ne kadar memnunsunuz?” sorusuyla değerlendirilmektedir. Yaşam memnuniyeti terimi çoğunlukla 'genel mutluluk' için kullanılır, ancak bazı durumlarda özellikle bilişsel bileşenine atıfta bulunmaktadır ve 'memnuniyet' ile eş anlamlıdır, yani bir bireyin isteklerinin karşılandığını algılama derecesi olarak ifade edilir. Bu bağlamda, mutluluk terimi tipik olarak yaşamın duygusal değerlendirmesi için kullanılır ve daha sonra 'hedonik duygulanım düzeyi' ile eş anlamlıdır, yani bir kişinin deneyimlediği çeşitli duyguların karakter olarak hoş olma derecesidir (Veenhoven, 2012, p. 5).

2. Sonuç ve Yorumlar

Bu makalenin temel amacı, Türkiye'deki bireylerin mutluluk ve yaşam memnuniyetini hangi kaynakların etkilediğinin altını çizmektir. Hem mutluluk hem de yaşam memnuniyeti benzer kavramlar olduğundan, öznel iyi oluş birlikte ölçülmüştür. Kullanılan veriler 5, 6 ve 7 dalgaları için Dünya Değerler Anketinden alınmıştır. Verileri havuzlayarak sıralı probit modeli uygulandı.

Ampirik analize göre eğitim ve gelirin bireylerin mutluluğu üzerinde anlamlı bir etkisi yoktur. Öte yandan evlilik, yaş, medeni durum, sağlık durumu, cinsiyet gibi demografik değişkenler de bireysel kaynaklar olarak mutluluğu etkilemektedir. Bağlamsal kaynaklar olarak maldellere eklenen bireyin özgürlük tercihi, finansal durumun yeterliliği, kurumlara güven, insanlara güven, politikayla ilgilinmek, arkadaşlara, aileye önem vermek, di gibi değişkenlerde Aynı değişkenler mutsuzluğu ve yaşamdan memnun olmamayı artırır (azaltır), mutluluğu ve yaşam memnuniyetini arttırır(azaltır) olduğundan, iki denklemin sonuçları birbirini desteklemektedir.

Bu çalışmanın bulguları, Türkiye'de cinsiyet, medeni durum, yaş, sağlık durumu, finansal durumun iyi olması mutluluk düzeyini ve yaşam memnuniyetini pozitif yönde etkileyen değişkenlerdir. Benzer şekilde, ailenin, arkadaşların ve dinin önemli olduğu bireyler daha mutlu ve yaşam memnuniyet düzeyleri daha yüksektir. Politikaya ilgi duyanların hem mutluluk hem de yaşam memnuniyet düzeyleri daha düşüktür. Sosyal sermayenin önemli bir bileşeni olan yargı, Dünya Sağlık Örgütü, Avrupa Birliği, Dünya Bankası vb kurumlara ve insanlara güven duyan bireylerin hem mutluluk hem de yaşam memnuniyet düzeyi daha yüksektir. Sosyo-ekonomik, demografik değişkenler ve contextual değişkenler mutluluk ve yaşam doyumu için önemli görünmektedir. Bir toplumda, eğer bireyler ve kurumlar güvenilir ise, bu, diğer insanlara karşı olumlu tutumlar için bir zemin hazırlar, böylece bireyler güvenli ve rahat bir yerde yaşarlar. Ülke düzeyinde kurumlara duyulan güven, bireylerin gelecek yaşam memnuniyeti ve mutluluk beklentilerini etkilemektedir. Demokratik seçimler, adalet sistemi, eğitim başarısı ve ekonomik istikrar politika yapıcılar tarafından dikkate alınmalıdır, çünkü iyi işleyen kurumlara yatırım yapmak, toplumdaki bireylerin mevcut ve gelecekteki yaşam memnuniyetleri ve mutlulukları için güven kaynağı olacaktır. Politika yapıcılar, bireylerin sosyo-ekonomik ve demografik özelliklerine bakmaksızın toplumdaki tüm bireylerin mutluluk ve yaşam memnuniyet düzeylerini geliştirebilmelerini ve değerlendirebilmelerine olanak sağlayacak politikaları hayata geçirmeliler.