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ROLE OF NATIONAL CULTURE IN HAPPINESS: CULTURAL DIMENSIONS-HAPPINESS SCORE RELATIONSHIP MODELS

MUTLULUKTA ULUSAL KÜLTÜRÜN ROLÜ: KÜLTÜREL BOYUTLAR-MUTLULUK PUANI İLİŞKİ MODELLERİ

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the relationships between the cultural characteristics and happiness levels of countries. In the context of the literature, the cultural dimensions of Hofstede (power distance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, long-short term orientation, uncertainty avoidance, tolerance) that have been most frequently discussed constitutes the independent variables of this study. The happiness scores of countries that have been published regularly for 8 years by the United Nations constitutes the dependent variables in the context of the measured dimensions (GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to life choices, generosity, perception of corruption). The models established based on structural equation modeling have been revised with the methods proposed as a result of data. According to the findings, the two dimensions that have a direct effect on the total happiness scores of countries are power distance and individualism. Additionally, it can be stated that the uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation variables also have significant effects on different dimensions of happiness. The explanatory variance values of culture on the happiness scores and happiness dimensions have shown how high the determining effect of culture on happiness could be.

Keywords: *Culture, Hofstede Cultural Dimensions, Happiness, World Happiness Report*

Öz

Bu çalışma ülkelerin kültürel özellikleri ile mutluluk düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkileri çözümlemeyi konu almıştır. Literatür bağlamında; kültür-mutluluk ilişkisinde, en fazla ele alınmış Hofstede'nin kültür boyutları (güç mesafesi, bireycilik-toplulukçuluk, erillik-dişilik, uzun-kısa vade yönelimi, belirsizlikten kaçınma, tolerans) bu araştırmanın bağımsız değişkenlerini oluşturmuştur. Birleşmiş Milletlerin düzenli olarak 8 yıldır yayınladığı ülkelerin mutluluk skorları da ölçümlenen boyutlar (kişi başına GSYİH, sosyal destek, sağlıklı yaşam beklentisi, yaşam seçimi özgürlüğü, cömertlik, yolsuzluk algısı) bağlamında bağımlı değişkenleri oluşturmuştur. Yapısal eşitlik modellemesine göre kurulan modeller, veriler sonucu önerilen modellerle revize edilmiştir. Bulgulara göre ülkelerin toplam mutluluk skoru üzerinde doğrudan etkisi olan iki boyut güç mesafesi ve bireyciliktir. Ayrıca farklı mutluluk boyutları üzerinde; belirsizlikten kaçınma ve uzun dönem yönelimli olma kültür değişkenlerinin de önemli etkiler oluşturduğu söylenebilir. Kültürün toplam mutluluk skorları ve mutluluk boyutları üzerindeki açıklayıcı varyans değerleri, kültürün mutluluğu belirleyici etkisinin ne denli yüksek olabileceğini göstermiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Kültür, Hofstede Kültür Boyutları, Mutluluk, Dünya Mutluluk Raporu*

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Çalışmanın Amacı: Bu çalışmanın amacı Hofstede kültür boyutları ve Dünya Mutluluk Raporu incelenerek, ülkelerin sahip olduğu ulusal kültürlerin mutluluk düzeyleri üzerindeki etkisini tespit etmektir.

Literatür Taraması: Araştırmalar iyi olma halinin yalnızca maddi kaynaklarla açıklanamayacak kadar karmaşık ve çok yönlü olduğunu göstermektedir (Oishi ve Schimmack, 2010, s. 467; Güler ve Dönmez, 2011, s. 39; Steel vd., 2018, s. 145). Toplumların mutluluk düzeylerini etkileyen önemli bir faktörün de toplum özellikleri/kültür olduğu ileri sürülmektedir (Rice ve Steele, 2004, s. 634). Kültürün mutluluk üzerinde doğrudan, dolaylı, aracı ve düzenleyici bir etkisinin olabileceği (Steel vd., 2018, s. 2; Diener vd., 2003, s. 417), hatta ekonomik refahtan daha fazla açıklayıcılığa sahip olabileceği görüşü bulunmaktadır (Diener ve Suh, 2003, s. 444). Her toplumun kültürel sistemi diğerlerinden farklıdır. O nedenle her toplumu kendi şartlarına, değerlerine, zenginliğine, coğrafyasına göre ele almak gerekmektedir (Ahuvia, 2002, s. 31-32). Dolayısıyla dünya çapında yapılan araştırmaları değerlendirirken daha sağlıklı sonuçların alınabilmesi için toplumların sahip oldukları yaygın kültürel özelliklerinin bilinmesi önem arz etmektedir (Markus ve Kitayama, 1991, s. 225). Zamanla değişe de bilen kültürel özellikler, dünyanın dijitalleşme ve mobilite bağlamında küçülmesi ile farklı toplumlar nazarında daha benzer hale gelebilmektedir (Senik, 2014, s. 581). Kurallar, normlar ve önem verilen değerlerin sıralaması kuşaktan kuşağa farklılık göstermektedir. Bu benzerlik ve farklılıkların toplumsal mutluluğu değiştirebileceği tartışılmaktadır (Ouweneel ve Veenhoven, 1991, s. 3). Bu görüşlerden hareketle bu çalışmada Hofstede kültür boyutları ve Dünya Mutluluk Raporu incelenerek, ülkelerin sahip olduğu ulusal kültürlerin mutluluk düzeyleri üzerindeki etkisi araştırılmıştır

Yöntem: Ülkelerin sahip oldukları kültür ile mutluluk düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkinin gücünü ve anlamlı olup olmadığını test etmek amacıyla ikincil veri kaynağı olan Ulusal Kültürün 6 Boyutu Verileri ve Dünya Mutluluk Raporu Verileri kullanılmıştır. Analizin yapılabilmesi raporların endekslerinde birlikte yer alan 98 ülkeye ait veriler konsolide edilmiş, ülke skorları tek bir satırda toplanmıştır. Ülkelerin sahip olduğu kültür düzeyleri için Hofstede Ulusal Kültür Modelinden ve bu model ışığında Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov ve araştırma ekipleri tarafından yapılan kapsamlı bir araştırma sonucu elde edilen, ülkelerin ulusal kültür endekslerinden yararlanılmıştır. Mutluluğun ölçülmesinde literatürde en sık kullanılan yöntemlerden biri Birleşmiş Milletler tarafından hazırlanan Dünya Mutluluk Raporunda yer alan Dünya Mutluluk Endeksi kullanılmıştır.

Sonuç ve Değerlendirme: Çalışmanın bulgularına göre, ülkelerin toplam mutluluk skorları üzerinde doğrudan etkili iki kültürel boyut sırası ile güç mesafesi ve bireyciliktir. Ülkelerin mutluluğu üzerinde en etkili boyut olan güç mesafesi arttıkça mutluluk skoru düşmekte, bireycilik arttıkça da mutluluk skoru artış göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte, bireycilik kültür boyutu üzerinde uzun vade yönelimi ve toleransın pozitif yönde anlamlı bir etkisinin olduğu görülmektedir. Dolayısıyla mutluluğu arttıran bireyci kültürün hâkim olabilmesi için; öncelikle, o toplumdaki bireylerin geçmiş ve şimdiye odaklanmak yerine kendilerine gelecekle ilgili, 'kendi/bireysel' çıkarlarını koruyacak şekilde hedefler koyması; özgürlük değerinin "değerli" görülmesi ve bireylere karşı hoşgörülü davranılması gerekmektedir. Ancak buradaki mutluğun "öznel mutluluğu" nitelendirdiğini belirtmenin önemli olduğu düşünülmektedir. Kültür ve mutluluk alt boyutları bağlamında bulgular incelendiğinde, yolsuzluk algısı bireyci toplumlarda daha fazlayken, belirsizlikten kaçınma ve güç mesafesi yüksek toplumlarda yolsuzluk algısı daha düşüktür. Ayrıca, daha fazla sağlıklı yaşam beklentisine sahip toplumlarda güç mesafesinin düşük olduğu ve uzun vade yöneliminin yüksek olduğu görülmektedir. Yaşam seçimi özgürlüğünün yüksek olduğu toplumlar ise daha düşük güç mesafesine ve belirsizlikten kaçınma düzeyine sahiptir. Özellikle öznel iyi oluşu arttırdığı bilinen ve bir boyutu olan kişi başına düşen gayri safi milli hâsıla ise bireyci ve uzun vade yönelimli toplumlarda daha yüksektir.

1. INTRODUCTION

While the effort of humankind to discover the state of wellbeing and how to be happier is increasing day by day, there are also some studies on what lies in the foundation of the happiness of a society (Steel et al., 2018, p. 1; Ryan and Deci, 2001, p. 158). Studies have shown that the state of wellbeing is too complicated and multidimensional to be explained only by financial resources (Oishi and Schimmack, 2010, p. 467; Güler and Dönmez, 2011, p. 39; Steel et al., 2018, p. 145). It is argued that an important factor that affects the happiness levels of societies is social characteristics / culture (Rice and Steele, 2004, p. 634). There is the idea that culture may have a direct, indirect, mediating and moderating effect on happiness (Steel et al., 2018, p. 2; Diener et al., 2003, p. 417), and it may even have a more explanatory nature than economic prosperity (Diener and Suh, 2003, p. 444).

The cultural system of every society is different from those of others. Thus, it is needed to discuss every society based on its own conditions, values, richness and geography (Ahuvia, 2002, pp. 31-32). Therefore, while assessing studies that are carried out worldwide, it is important to know about the common cultural characteristics that societies have in order to be able to obtain healthier results (Markus and Kitayama, 1991, p. 225). Cultural characteristics which may change in time may also become more similar among different societies by the shrinkage of the world in the context of digitalization and mobility (Senik, 2014, p. 581). Ranking of rules, norms and the values that are paid importance show differences from generation to generation. It is argued that these similarities and differences may change social happiness (Ouweneel and Veenhoven, 1991, p. 3).

In this study, the effects of the national cultures of countries on happiness levels have been investigated by examining Hofstede's cultural dimensions and the World Happiness Report. It is stated that national culture dimensions are significant variables that affect happiness (Ye et al., 2015, p. 519). It has been proposed that the most suitable tools to explain differences in happiness in the context of societies are Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Delle Fave et al., 2016, p. 2). Thus, relational analyses were carried out by structural equation modelling between the 2018 World Happiness Report published in 2019 by the United Nations and the cultural dimensions of Hofstede explained on the website[1] for the purpose of determining the culture dimensions that affect the happiness levels of societies today.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURE AND HAPPINESS

Studies carried out by Hofstede in the period of 1967-1973 constitute the most frequently used modelling for assessing and analyzing intercultural differences. According to Hofstede's model, social culture was discussed under six dimensions, the definitions of these dimensions were made as follows (Özkul, 2007, p. 21; Hofstede, 2010, pp. 1-6; Erkenekli, 2014, p. 576; Robbins and Judge, 2015, p. 153; Ye et al., 2015, pp. 524-527; McShane and Von Glinow, 2016, pp. 41; Ünal, 2017, p. 134; Steel et al., 2018, pp. 1-5).

The *Individualism/Collectivism dimension* refers to the social connection in a society. While the self-image is defined as "I" in an individualist society, in collectivist societies, the individual gets their strength from the society, loyalty is important, and "we" is a more dominant phenomenon than "I". The *Power Distance dimension* reveals the unequal distribution of power in institutions or organizations within a society and the degree to which individuals and organizations accept that they do not have equal power. The *Uncertainty Avoidance dimension* shows the degree of the members of the society to prefer planned situations and conditions over unstructured situations and conditions. The *Masculinity/Femininity dimension* shows whether the emphasis in a society is on success and practicality (masculinity) or solidarity, compassion and humility (femininity). The *indulgence/restraint dimension* is related to how much the behaviors of the members of a society are restricted. In societies with high tolerance, in addition to their basic human needs, individuals can freely express their behaviors especially focused on taking pleasure from life and entertainment. In societies with low tolerance, individuals suppress their needs and behaviors based on social norms. The *Long-Term/Short-Term Orientation dimension* questions the time horizon. Societies that pay importance to long-term orientation also pay value to saving, patients and insistent efforts. In societies that pay importance to short-term orientation, individuals pay value to receiving faster outcomes and making the moment successful.

[1] https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country

The "concept of happiness for countries" with which the study aims to find a relationship to culture is mainly assessed/used synonymously with "life satisfaction" or "subjective wellbeing". The subjective wellbeing of individuals in the society is associated with their happiness, life satisfaction and positive affectivity levels (Lundwall et al., 2019). There are different indexes that measure the well-being levels of countries: Happy Planet Index, OECD Better Life Index, World Happiness Report (Happy Planet Index, 2016; OECD, 2017; World Happiness Report, 2019). The World Happiness Report's index has been used in this study. World Happiness Report has been created based on the Subjective Wellbeing Questionnaire and research by the Gallup World Pool. In the report, the happiness of countries consists of a 6-factor construct (Veenhoven and Dumludağ, 2015; Helliwell, Huang and Wang, 2019): The *GDP per capita* factor that provides an idea about the living standards of countries and shows the national income per person (1) is an important and determining first factor. *(2) Healthy Life Expectancy* refers to a long and healthy life measured as life expectancy. *(3) Social Support* expresses the support that the person will receive from their surroundings in difficult times, and it is directly proportional to the numbers of the person's friends and relatives whom they can trust who will be able to help them during a time of a problem/distress whether or not they need it. The person's satisfaction with the freedom to choose in the decisions they make about their life and the steps they put forward are expressed by the factor of *(4) Freedom to Make Life Choices*. *(5) Generosity* is measured by a person's donations to a charity (the question "Have you donated money to a charity in the past month?" is asked to measure the generosity dimension). Finally, *(6) Perception of Corruption* refers to the perceptions of individuals on whether or not corruption is prevalent in the government and business world.

For societies, sources of happiness show diversity. While individual satisfaction is an important source of happiness for some societies, social prosperity is seen as a significant source of happiness for others. For this reason, being able to find the factors that will positively affect the happiness of societies is a fundamental field of research (Lee and Peterson, 2000, pp. 410-413; Oishi and Diener, 2009, p. 1680; Khan, 2009, pp. 12-13). In individualistic societies, it is important to be recognized by others and perceived as a free individual (Ohbuchi and Takahashi 1994, p. 1363). In these societies, individuals are motivated to be successful in business and social life in line with their own preferences and protect this success. Individuals feel happy by the extent to which they feel that the goals they have selected themselves are their driving force (Oishi and Diener, 2009, p. 1680). Additionally, it is known that success and happiness are highly related in individualistic societies **(**Lee and Peterson, 2000, p. 411). Success in individual and independent tasks increases general wellbeing and life satisfaction (Kitayama et al., 2000, p. 115). In collectivist societies, it is seen that a humble life, the general prosperity of the society and social relationships significantly affect happiness. In these cultures, the happiness of the individual changes based on their surroundings. In such societies, social and emotional resources explain happiness more (Jin, 2010, pp. 122-123; Oishi and Diener, 2009, p. 1680).

Tolerance of uncertainty, which is one of the main dimensions of culture, triggers anxiety and stress. These factors directly and negatively affect happiness. In collectivist societies, this situation leads the individual to embrace rules. This is because, in these societies, uncertainty brings about anxiety, haste and distress. Uncertainty avoidance is assessed in two polar directions. These are avoidance anxiety and rule orientation. Avoidance anxiety is stated to be negatively related to happiness and positively related to rule orientation (Steel et al., 2018, p. 3). Therefore, people want to avoid uncertainty. In connection to this, it is argued that collectivist societies become happier due to their need for order (DeNeve and Cooper, 1998, p. 217).

Another dimension of culture, power distance, gives rise to social pressure (Ekehammar et al., 2004, p. 465). Being governed by external control -as it lowers the perception of autonomy- affects happiness negatively in especially individualistic societies (Haslam et al., 2009, p. 40). In collectivist societies, showing harmony with the group is more important/correct rather than disturbing peace by entering chaos and complexity. This is why it is argued that happiness will be possible by showing harmony with the societal culture (Warr, 2011; Alparslan et al., 2019, pp. 16-17). However, it is seen that societies with lower power distance are happier as they have auto-control mechanisms (Steel et al., 2018, pp. 3-5).

Masculine societies may be unhappier due to their anxiety and concern about success and competition. This is because masculinity is linked with materialism. In materialism, money and tangible factors explain happiness. However, this happiness is temporary in the form of a hedonic mill. A negative relationship has been found between materialism and happiness (Steel et al., 2018, pp. 3-5; Dittmar et al., 2014, pp. 879). Nevertheless, it should also be known that economic prosperity plays a mediating role

between masculinity and happiness (Steel et al., 2018, p. 4). If economic prosperity is high, masculinity may induce an effect that increases happiness. Perhaps, masculinity has created economic prosperity, and it has been positioned as valuable because of this.

In addition to these, it is stated that societies where tolerance is stronger will be happier. Societies whose cultural characteristics bring more restrictions in terms of taking pleasure from life have a lower percentage of happy people regarding orientation towards entertainment and spending (Minkov, 2009, p. 175). It has been determined that societies with low tolerance levels have a tendency towards cynicism and pessimism (Kešeljević, 2016, p. 686). High tolerance allows free expression of needs, focusing on stopping and smelling the roses and emphasizing personal freedom and happiness. In societies where it is low, it is negatively associated with happiness as it creates a lack of self-control (Żemojtel-Piotrowska, 2015, p. 3).

Due to the uncertainty of the future, people tend to guarantee their happiness from now on. It is stated that a person can be happy if they can control their life even partially, be sure of their future and think they can form and manage its limits (Ye et al., 2015, p. 526). Individuals of societies that want to achieve mastery at their job in the long run may be happy in their life in the future. However, it is seen that societies with a short-term orientation pay more importance to short-term successes and hedonic happiness. Short-term happiness brings about unhappiness in the long term (Bartels and Salo, 2018, p. 8).

3. METHOD

Ethics committee approval, numbered GO 2020/39 and dated 03.06.2020, was received by Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Girişimsel Olmayan Klinik Araştırmalar Etik Kurulu (Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Non-Invasive Clinical Research Ethics Committee) for this research.

For the purpose of testing the level of statistical relationship between countries' culture and happiness scores and the possible significant relationship, the secondary data sources of the 6 Dimensions of National Culture data and World Happiness Report data (The report was published in 2019 and contains the World Happiness Index data for 2018: World Happiness Report, 2019) have been used. For the analysis, the data on the 98 countries included together in the indices of the reports have been consolidated, and gathered in one row.

The Culture Indices of Countries Based on Hofstede's Dimensions: The study has used the National Culture Model of Hofstede to measure the culture levels of the countries, and in the light of this model, the national culture indices of countries have been obtained as a result of comprehensive research by Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, Michael Minkov and research teams. The indices for all countries have been accessed from the website[2]. In the indices on national scores, while 1 represents the lowest possible score, 120 represents the highest. The National Culture Model of Hofstede consists of a 6-dimensional construct: *Individualism/collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity, tolerance* and *long-term/short-term orientation.* In this study, each dimension has been included in the analysis as a separate variable.

World Happiness Index: One of the most frequently used methods in measuring happiness in the literature is the *World Happiness Index* included in the World Happiness Report published by the United Nations, and this index is used to measure the happiness levels of the countries. The happiness / subjective wellbeing index created by using the Gallup World Pool is accepted as the most frequently used index in the international comparisons. According to this index, the life satisfaction of the societies is explained under six dimensions: *GDP per capita, healthy life expectancy / average lifespan, social support, freedom to make life choices, generosity* and *corruption.* In the happiness index, the happiness of countries is scored between 0 (not happy at all) and 10 (very happy) (Helliwell, Huang and Wang, 2019). This study has used the total happiness scores and the scores of the 6 dimensions for countries for the year 2018 data published in 2019.

4. FINDINGS

Before conducting the path analysis of the hypothesized model, correlation analysis was carried out to examine the significant relationships between the variables. Determining the direction and magnitude of the relationships among the variables in question provides a source for analysis to be carried out at later

[2] https://www.hofstede-insights.com (Date accessed: 28.01.2019)

stages and indicate the results of analyses. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics on the variables and the findings obtained as a result of the correlation analysis.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations Among Model Variables

Variable	**M (SD)**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**
1. Power Distance	63.83 (21.0)	-.660**	.111	.170	-.202*	-.300**	-.423**	-.444**	-.449**	-.268**	-.246*	-.530**	-.551**
2. Individualism	39.45 (22.0)	1	.044	-.154	.364**	.298**	.552**	.468**	.444**	.201*	.221*	.525**	.526**
3. Femininity	47.90 (18.6)		1	.018	.061	.059	.057	-.015	.051	-.116	-.117	-.097	-.001
4.Uncertainty Avoidance	64.29 (21.4)			1	.095	-.010	.152	.097	.150	-.280**	-.457**	-.396**	.096
5. Long-Term Orientation	36.85 (25.9)				1	.098	.475**	.310**	.439**	-.062	-.101	.172	.242*
6. Indulgence	37.81 (28.0)					1	.277**	.240*	.182	.175	.047	.308**	.284**
7. GDP per Capita	1.03 (0.35)						1	.755**	.842**	.345**	.051	.450**	.791**
8. Social Support	1.28 (0.28)							1	.745**	.473**	.025	.322**	.838**
9. Healthy Life Expectancy	0.80 (0.22)								1	.401**	.044	.429**	.787**
10. Freedom Life Choices	0.42 (0.13)									1	.352**	.491**	.591**
11. Generosity	0.18 (0.10)										1	.435**	.183
12. Perception of Corruption	0.12 (0.10)											1	.509**
13. Happiness Total Score	5.72 (1.21)												1
*N= 98; M=Mean; SD= Standard Deviation; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.001*													

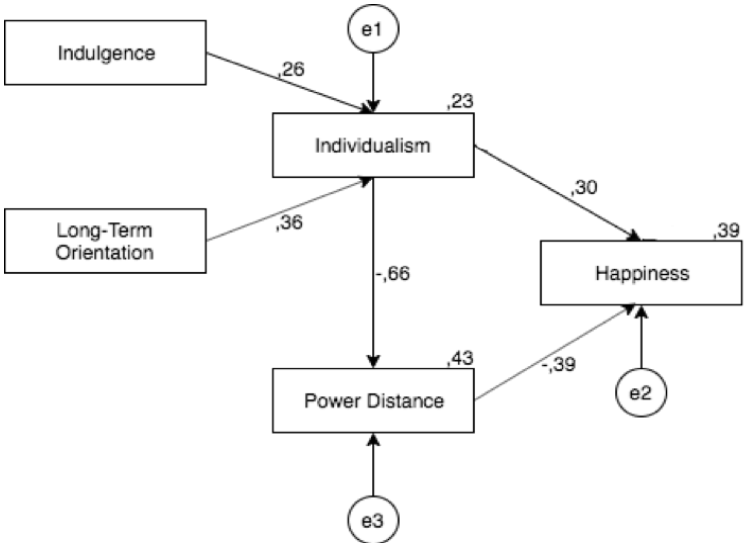
Looking at the relationship between the total happiness levels of countries and the culture dimensions as a result of the correlation analysis, the highest level of relationship with the total happiness score is negative with power distance (r=-.55; p<0.001) and positive with individualism (r=.526; p<0.001). Considering the relationship between culture and the happiness dimensions – GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, freedom to life choices, generosity, perception of corruption, – power distance has been seen to be significantly and negatively related to all dimensions of happiness. The uncertainty avoidance dimension also has significant negative relationships with the generosity, perception of corruption and freedom to make life choices dimensions. Moreover, the culture dimension of long-term orientation has significant positive relationship with the GDP per capita, healthy life expectancy, social support and total happiness score. While the culture dimension of femininity does not have a significant relationship with any happiness dimension, it has been seen that the individualism dimension has significant positive relationships with all happiness dimensions. Finally, the culture dimension of indulgence has significant positive relationships with the happiness dimension of perception of corruption, GDP per capita and social support.

After questioning the existence of significant relationships among the variables, models have been established to see whether or not the culture dimensions that have been found to be related to happiness and its dimensions have an effect on happiness, and path analysis has been carried out. In the path analysis conducted with the observed variables by using the IBM AMOS (v.24) software, the Maximum Likelihood calculation method has been utilized.

AMOS has been used to estimate the model shown in Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. We have used multiple measures to assess model fit. In addition to the overall chi-squared, we have used the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), the Comparative Fix Index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and the Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA) to assess model fit, using values greater than .90 (indicate adequate fit) and .95 (indicate a good fit) as the cutoffs for AGFI, GFI, CFI

and TLI. For RMSEA, values less than .08 indicate adequate fit, whereas values less than .05 indicate a good fit of the model to the data (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Byrne, 2010).

Figure 1. Model 1: Path Analysis of National Culture Dimensions That Predict Happiness



Path analysis has been conducted to reveal which culture variables have increased or reduced the happiness levels of countries, and Model 1 has been obtained. However, the path analysis findings of the model that has been established to see whether or not the 4 culture dimensions found to be related to happiness affect happiness levels has not provided acceptable fit statistics in the context of the constructed paths. In this study, the findings have also proposed new paths between some variables that will reduce the chi-squared value and increase the fit index values. These propositions have been considered, the paths in question (between culture dimensions) have been added to the model, and the model given in Figure 1 has been obtained. At the final stage, all paths in Model 1 have been found to be statistically significant. The fit indices of the model have been determined to be on acceptable levels, and the relevant statistics are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Standardized and Unstandardized Estimates for Path Analysis Model

				Model 1			
Relationship				B	SE	CR	p
Indulgence »»» Individualism				.26	.070	2.940	**
Long-Term Orientation »»» Individualism				.36	.076	4.008	***
Individualism »»» Power Distance				-.66	.073	-8.629	***
Power Distance »»» Happiness				-.39	.006	-3.665	***
Individualism »»» Happiness				.30	.006	2.836	**
*Note: Happiness (r^2= .393). ***p<0.001, **p<0.01*							
Fit indices	**X^2**	**df**	**RMSEA**	**GFI**	**CFI**	**TLI**	**AGFI**
Model 1	6.39	8	.000	.98	1.00	1.00	.94
Recommended goodness-of-fit measure: 3≤ X^2/df ≤5; RMSEA ≤5; GFI ≥0.95; CFI ≥0.95; TLI ≥0.95; AGFI ≥0.95							

The fit test critical values of the model have shown that the model is in a good fit with the data. Based on Model 1, the culture dimension of power distance has predicted happiness negatively and significantly (β= -0.39; p<0.001). Besides, the power distance has the highest negative effect on happiness. The culture dimension of individualism has predicted the happiness levels of countries positively and significantly (β= 0.30; p=0.01). It has been found that the culture dimensions of individualism and power distance that are predictive variables are included in the part analysis together which explain approximately 39% (r^2=.39) of the variance in the happiness levels of countries. The variables have affected the happiness levels of countries directly, the culture dimensions of long-term orientation and tolerance have not directly affected the happiness levels of countries. Nevertheless, the culture dimensions of long-term orientation and

tolerance have affected the culture dimension of individualism positively (r^2=.23; β=0.36, p<0.01; β= 0.26, p<0.01). In this context, the long-term orientation and tolerance dimensions have an indirect effect on happiness.

Path analysis has been conducted to reveal which culture variables affect the happiness levels of countries in addition to the model presented in Figure 1, and Models 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 have been obtained. While performing the modelling processes in question, the significant relationships between variables have been examined, and the models have been revised based on the paths proposed by the AMOS software in the context of these relationships and finalized. All these models have produced acceptable fit statistics. The fit test critical values of the models that are presented in Table 3 show that the models have a good fit with the data.

Figure 2. Model 2 Culture – GDP per Capita

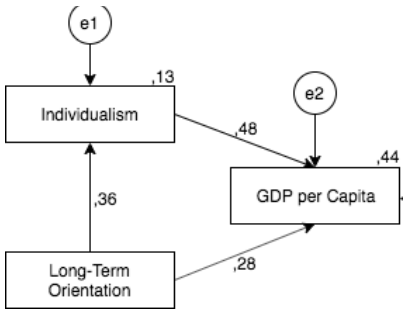


Figure 3. Model 3 Culture – Healthy Life Expectancy

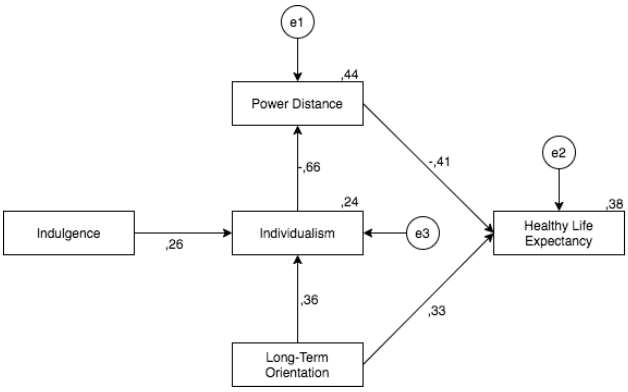


Figure 4. Model 4 Culture – Freedom to Life Choices

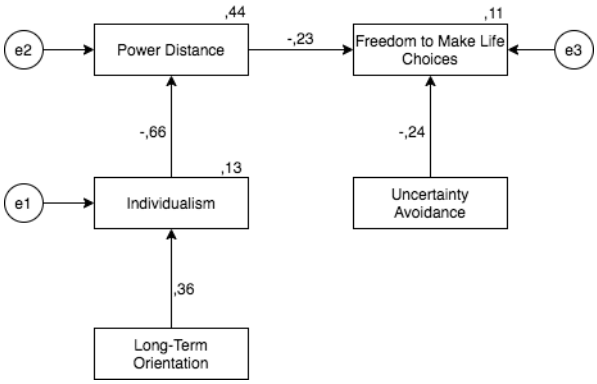


Figure 5. Model 5 Culture – Perceptions of Corruption

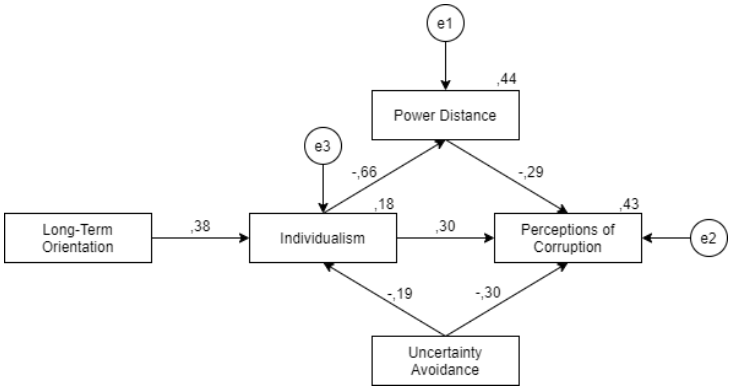


Figure 6. Model 6 Culture – Social Support

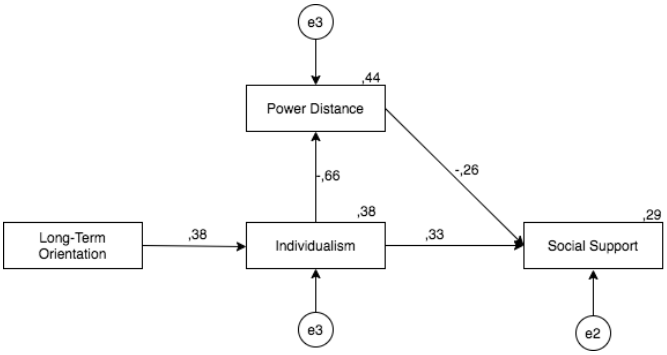


Figure 7. Model 7 Culture - Generosity

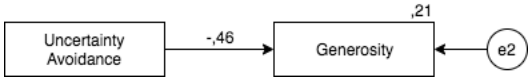


Table 3. Fit indices for measurement models

	Relationship	B	SE	CR	p
Model 2	Long-Term Orientation »»» Individualism	.36	.081	3.846	***
	Individualism »»» GDP per Capita	.48	.001	5.830	***
	Long-Term Orientation »»» GDP per Capita	.28	.001	3.410	***
Model 3	Long-Term Orientation »»» Individualism	.36	.076	4.008	***
	Indulgence »»» Individualism	.26	.070	2.940	**
	Individualism »»» Power Distance	-.66	.073	-8.629	***
	Power Distance »»» Healthy Life Expectancy	-.41	.001	-4.905	***
	Long-Term Orientation »»» Healthy Life Expectancy	.33	.001	4.050	***
Model 4	Long-Term Orientation »»» Individualism	.36	.081	3.846	***
	Individualism »»» Power Distance	-.66	.073	-8.658	***
	Uncertainty Avoidance »»» Freedom to Life Choices	-.24	.001	-2.546	*
	Power Distance »»» Freedom to Life Choices	-.23	.001	-2.397	*
Model 5	Long-Term Orientation »»» Individualism	.38	.079	4.124	***
	Uncertainty Avoidance »»» Individualism	-.19	.095	-2.057	*
	Individualism »»» Power Distance	-.67	.072	-8.717	***
	Individualism »»» Perceptions of Corruption	.30	.000	2.799	**
	Uncertainty Avoidance »»» Perceptions of Corruption	-.30	.000	-3.862	***
	Power Distance »»» Perceptions of Corruption	-.29	.001	-2.799	**
Model 6	Long-Term Orientation »»» Individualism	.38	.079	4.124	***
	Individualism »»» Power Distance	-.67	.072	-8.717	***
	Power Distance »»» Social Support	-.27	.001	-2.303	*
	Individualism »»» Social Support	.33	.001	2.826	**
Model 7	Uncertainty Avoidance »»» Generosity	-.46	.000	-5.065	***

Note: GDP per Capita (r^2=.439), Healthy Life Expectancy (r^2=.382), Freedom to Life Choices (r^2=.112), Perceptions of Corruption (r^2=.425), Social Support (r^2=.290), Generosity (r^2=.209).
***p<0.001** p<0.01, *p<0.05

Fit index	X^2	df	RMSEA	GFI	CFI	TLI	AGFI
Model 2	4.99	2	.124	.98	.96	.87	.88
Model 3	4.97	5	.000	.98	1.00	1.00	.93
Model 4	7.09	6	.043	.97	.99	.98	.93
Model 5	2.15	4	.000	.99	1.00	1.00	.97
Model 6	4.26	4	.026	.98	.99	.99	.94
Model 7	.00	0	.474	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

Looking at Model 2 which has been established in the context of the relationship between culture dimensions and GDP, only individualism and long-term orientation among the six dimensions of culture has affected GDP positively (r^2=.43; β=0.48, p<0.001; β= 0.28, p<0.001). Long-term orientation also has an indirect effect on GDP via the culture dimension of individualism. When Model 3 has been examined in the context of the relationship between culture dimensions and healthy life expectancy, while power distance has affected healthy life expectancy negatively (β= -0.41, p<0.001), long-term orientation has affected it positively (β= 0.33, p<0.001). Power distance and long-term orientation together have explained approximately 38% (r^2=.382) of the variance in healthy life expectancy. In the model where the happiness dimension of freedom to make life choices is the dependent variable (Model 4), the uncertainty avoidance and power distance have affected freedom to make life choices negatively (r^2=.112; β= -0.24, p<0.05; β= -0.24, p<0.05). In the model established with corruption perception (Model 5), individualism has a positive effect on perception of corruption (β= 0.30, p<0.01), while uncertainty avoidance and power distance has a negative effect on it (β= -0.30, p<0.001, β=- 0.29, p<0.05, r^2=.425). According to the findings obtained from Model 6, individualism has affected social support more than the power distance, and individualism and power distance together have explained 29% (r^2=.290) of the variance in social support. Finally, according to Model 7, among the dimensions of culture, only uncertainty avoidance has affected generosity. Generosity has decreased in societies where uncertainty avoidance is high (β= -0.46, p<0.001), and uncertainty avoidance has explained 21% (r^2=.209) of the variance in generosity.

When the relationship between the culture dimensions and happiness dimensions is assessed as a whole, it is seen that the culture dimension that affects happiness dimensions most is power distance, and power distance directly affects four out of five dimensions of happiness. Accordingly, as the power distance in a society increases, the members of the society has less healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, corruption perceptions and social support perceptions. The culture dimensions that have affected happiness dimensions most after power distance are individualism and uncertainty avoidance. As an individualistic culture becomes dominant in a society, the per capita gross domestic product, corruption perceptions and social support increase. In societies with high levels of uncertainty avoidance, the freedom to make life choices, corruption perception and generosity levels have decreased. Among the culture dimensions, long-term orientation has a direct positive effect only on the per capita gross domestic product and healthy life expectancy. In societies with long-term orientation, the per capita gross domestic product and healthy life expectancy have increased. Finally, as the femininity dimension among the culture dimensions has no significant relationship to the happiness dimensions, it is not included in the models. Although there are happiness dimensions to which the tolerance dimension is related, as tolerance does not have a significant effect on the happiness dimensions in the models, it has been removed from the models.

5. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Cultural values of countries affect the attitudes and behaviors of individuals in their social and business lives (Hofstede, 1980). Therefore, it is also projected that they have a high probability of differentiating the satisfaction people have from life. This is because culture represents elements regarding meanings that people pay value to and commonly share. As the perception of happiness will vary based on the elements people pay value to, the existence of the effects of cultural values on happiness is logically clear. However, which culture dimensions explain happiness and different dimensions that form happiness more is an issue that this study aims to clarify. Studies that investigate the relationship between happiness and culture usually discuss culture characteristics based on the modelling by Hofstede (Oyserman et al., 2002; Hofstede et al., 2010). In this study, happiness scores that are measured in the World Happiness Report and have a content closer to subjective wellbeing and country-based scores of the six culture dimensions of Hofstede have been subjected to relational analysis.

According to the findings of the study, the two culture dimensions that are directly effective on the total happiness scores of countries are power distance and individualism in this order. As power distance, which is the most effective dimension on the happiness of countries, has increased, the happiness score has decreased, while as individualism, another effective dimension, has increased, the happiness score has also increased. These findings are similar to those in the literature. In general, in happy societies, power is distributed equally among individuals, or at least it is considered to be so (Pflug, 2009, p. 561; Dulababu, 2017, p. 6). Additionally, according to the results of this study, as the dominance of an individualistic culture has increased in a society, power distance has decreased. Therefore, for the power distance to be low and the power among individuals to be distributed equally, which increases happiness, it is required that there be no damage to autonomy and individual freedoms while governing the members of the society and allow the functioning of the auto-control mechanism of the society.

Another finding of this study is that the culture dimension of individualism has a direct, significant and positive effect on the happiness of countries. In addition to this, long-term orientation and tolerance has a positive and significant effect on the culture dimension of individualism. Therefore, for an individualistic culture that increases happiness to be dominant, firstly the individuals in that society need to set goals for themselves regarding the future in a way to protect their “own/personal” interests rather than focusing on the past or the present, it is needed for the value of freedom to be seen “valuable” and to be tolerant for individuals. In parallel with the findings of this study, Deiner (2003, p. 410), Dulababu (2017, p. 6) and Steel et al. (2018, p. 2) stated that societies with an individualistic culture have higher happiness levels than those with a collectivist culture. However, it must be pointed out that happiness here refers to “subjective happiness”. That is, it should be known that a more hedonic happiness is expressed. While individualistic societies focus on a highly goal-oriented and hedonic version of happiness, collectivist societies prefer to associate happiness with close social relationships and a stable social environment / society where everyone is better off (Pflug, 2009, p. 561).

In this study, additionally, the effects of culture dimensions on happiness dimensions have been aimed to be revealed. Looking at the findings, while perception of corruption is higher in individualistic

societies, it is lower in societies with high levels of uncertainty avoidance and power distance. In a way to support these findings, according to Husted (1998), as hierarchy gains more acceptance in especially societies with high power distance, it is less likely for the society to question authority and the acts of authority that are not transparent but contain favoritism and corruption. Similarly, in a society with high levels of uncertainty avoidance, as people trust in norms, rules and procedures more, the corruption perception of the society may be lower (Getz and Volkema, 2001). Considering other findings, it is seen that power distance is lower, and long-term orientation is higher in societies with higher healthy life expectancy. Societies that have high levels of freedom to make life choices have lower power distance and uncertainty avoidance levels. Similar to these findings, Haslam et al. (2009) stated that power distance creates social pressure and harms the autonomy of individuals, while Hofstede and Bond (1984) expressed that even the will to eliminate uncertainties in daily life brings about a joyful and comfortable life. Therefore, people -as evidenced by this study- may show tendency towards more generous values.

Based on the other findings of the study, considering the cultural characteristics of societies where social support is important, it is seen that power distance is low, and individualism is high. Per capita gross domestic product, which is known to especially increase subjective wellbeing and is a dimension of happiness, was higher in individualistic societies with long-term orientation. Therefore, success in individual and independent tasks and high competitiveness in individualistic societies, as well as ambition, effort, savings and correct usage of resources in long-term oriented societies, bring about a high living standard. Uncertainty avoidance also has a positive and significant effect on the happiness levels of countries. This is because uncertainty brings anxiety and concerns. Steel et al. (2018, p. 2), in a way to support this result, found that the uncertainty avoidance levels are low in societies that are generally happy. This is because it is more likely for adventurous individuals to try what is new and different and experience new pleasures that have not entered the hedonic mill before. However, this is more likely for societies/individuals that have met their safety needs to a large extent and can look at the future with trust. In these individuals, development of courage, self-confidence and risk-taking personality traits is more likely. Moreover, if these elements are deemed valuable in the society, that is, if difference, an adventurous attitude and a positive approach towards risk taking become valuable, individuals will be able to feel freer for guiding themselves towards different pleasures and find tolerance for this.

When happiness is defined as satisfaction gained from life with a hedonic approach in its essence, it is needed for the power distance between individuals to weaken, to form a cultural structure where individual goals are prominent (increase individualistic culture), to plan the future clearly based on goals and to become long-term oriented. However, the idea that real happiness is hedonic/subjective is a highly debated issue. Nevertheless, the state of psychological wellbeing that is defined to be healthier contains social elements, questions the meaning of life and involves acceptance of yourself, resources, conditions and social environment by the person. For this reason, making happiness measurements in a “subjective” context is incomplete, and wrong according to many philosophers. The effects of the same culture dimensions in the context of also psychological wellbeing should be examined.

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Makale ile ilgili notlar

Makale araştırma ve yayın etiğine uygun olarak hazırlanmıştır. Yazarlar arasında herhangi bir çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

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