

Quest for Significance and Some Psychological Symptoms of Adult Individuals

Yetişkin Bireylerde Önem Arayışı ve Bazı Psikolojik Belirtiler

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ABSTRACT

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This paper aims to examine the quest for significance in adults according to demographic variables and to determine the correlational relationships between their quest for significance and psychological symptoms. A total of 605 adults, 383 females and 222 males, between the ages of 18 and 65 ($\bar{X}=34.41$) were included in the study in which correlational design, one of the quantitative research methods, was used. Significance Quest Scale, Symptom Checklist and Personal Information Form were used as data collection tools. In the analysis of data obtained from the measurement tools, T-test was used for the comparison of paired groups, while ANOVA was used for the comparison of multiple groups. Predictive correlations between quest for significance and psychological symptoms were analyzed with simple linear regression method. As a result of the research, a significant difference was found in significance quest of adults in terms of age and income levels. On the other hand, no significant difference was found in significance quest of adults in terms of gender. A low level of positive correlation was found between adults' quest for significance and the psychological symptoms of paranoid thoughts, anger/hostility, and interpersonal sensitivity. The results of the research were interpreted and discussed in line with the relevant literature.

Keywords: *quest for significance, loss of importance, psychological symptoms, adult individuals*

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ÖZ

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Bu araştırmacının amacı yetişkin bireylerin önem arayışını çeşitli demografik özelliklerine göre incelemek ve yetişkin bireylerin önem arayışı ile psikolojik belirtileri arasındaki yordayıcı ilişkileri tespit etmektir. Nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden ilişkisel tarama deseninin kullanıldığı bu araştırmaya; 18-65 yaş ($\bar{X}=34.41$) arasında, 383 kadın ve 222 erkek toplam 605 yetişkin birey dâhil edilmiştir. Veri toplama aracı olarak Önemlilik Arayışı Ölçeği, Semptom Değerlendirme Ölçeği ve Kişisel Bilgi Formu kullanılmıştır. Ölçme araçlarından elde edilen verilerin çözümlenmesinde ikili grupların karşılaştırılmasında t Testi ve çoklu grupların karşılaştırılmasında ise tek yönlü varyans analizi (ANOVA) uygulanmıştır. Önem arayışı ile psikolojik belirtiler arasındaki yordayıcı ilişkiler basit doğrusal regresyon analizi yöntemi ile incelenmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda yetişkin bireylerin önem arayışında yaş düzeyi ve gelir seviyesine göre anlamlı farklılık tespit edilmiştir. Diğer taraftan cinsiyet açısından yetişkin bireylerin önem arayışında anlamlı bir farklılık saptanmamıştır. Yetişkin bireylerin önem arayışı ile paranoid düşünceleri, öfke/düşmanlık ve kişiler arası duyarlılıkları arasında düşük düzeyde pozitif ilişki tespit edilmiştir. Araştırma sonuçları ilgili literatür doğrultusunda tartışılarak yorumlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *önem arayışı, önem kaybı, psikolojik belirtiler, yetişkin bireyler*

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INTRODUCTION

Quest for significance or personal salience is the desire to be notable and respected in one's own eyes and the eyes of other people important for the individual (Kruglanski & Bertelsen, 2020; Kruglanski et al., 2009). Different researchers in psychology state that this pursuit constitutes a universal human motivation that is variously labeled as needs for esteem, achievement, meaning, competence, control, and so on (Kruglanski & Bertelsen, 2020; Kruglanski & Orehek, 2011). What is important here is the social or cultural definition of influence, reputation, competence, success or control (Crocker & Wolfe, 2001; Sedikides et al., 2003). In other words, motivation for seeking significance is valuable for the individual, society and culture.

Quest for significance is a universal human need. It includes individuals' perception that their actions have a purpose, the desire to achieve socially valuable goals and to achieve a desired social status (Bélanger et al., 2022). Quest for significance represents precisely what the individual's culture pronounces as worth attaining, the kind of competence that culture values, or controls over the outcomes, which are worthy of appreciation (Kruglanski et al., 2013). For instance, seeking to be a member of a profession valued by the society, buying a brand-new car favored by other people –despite their limited economic conditions– or purchasing or renting a house in a luxury neighborhood where most people aspire to live can be given as examples for the process of seeking significance.

People can love themselves in the eyes of others through the sense of significance. This state of self-love is expressed by Rousseau (1762) as *Amour-propre* (as cited in Kruglanski et al., 2013). *Amour-propre* is concerned with the type and degree of attention that other people will show to the individual's "self". It includes a comparative aspect. Any priority given to individuals fosters their sense of significance, so, they seek significance and priority which could be manifested in the attitudes and activities of other people (Dent, 1998). When they fulfill these priorities, they may feel more accomplished.

According to Rousseau, once *amour-propre* develops, it continues to exist in child's games. And the child continuously observes others by comparing himself/herself with them (Chazan, 1993). From this point of view, it can be said that *amour-propre* emphasizes the social aspect of the individual and begins and takes shape with the socialization process. Depending on the *amour-propre*, the individuals create personas according to different groups and societies in which they establish their self-esteem, and can continue the quest for significance. This is laid out by the Significance Quest Theory (SQT).

The Significance Quest Theory (SQT) (Kruglanski et al., 2009; Kruglanski et al., 2013; Kruglanski et al., 2014; Kruglanski & Orehek, 2011) postulates that the desire to be significant and

feel salient is a basic human need. This theoretical framework suggests that when deprived of significance, people are strongly motivated to initiate actions that allow them to regain their sense of significance (Schumpe et al., 2018). According to the theory, there is a common core among the predefined causes of significance quest at the individual level. Among these reasons are honor, loyalty to the group leader, obtaining or maintaining social status, attractiveness of outcome, personal loss, group pressure, humiliation, revenge, religious rewards (e.g., the desire to go to heaven), monetary benefits, and even feminism (Webber et al., 2017). In summary, behaviors and outcomes the individual values vary from person to person.

Two types of motivation have been identified for significance. These are the pursuit of individual significance quest based on personal experiences and the pursuit of collective significance based on the perception that one's social group is humiliated and/or not respected (Jasko et al., 2019). The common motivational core of the SQT is the search for personal significance, which can be expressed as the desire to be esteemed according to the (sacred) values of one's group, to be someone, to be recognized, to be valuable in their eyes (Elliott et al., 2004; Webber et al., 2017). Some negative experiences may also trigger the pursuit of importance. The previous damage done to the individuals makes them helpless and reduces their sense of worth or dignity (Webber et al., 2017). Decreased sense of self-esteem can lead the individual to seek further significance.

According to the SQT, individuals do not always seek importance; for instance, they sometimes direct their energy to alternative pursuits related to comfort, survival, or health (Kruglanski et al., 2013). The theory puts forward three interlocking conditions for the emergence of the quest for significance (Elliott et al., 2004; Kruglanski et al., 2014). These are the loss of significance, the threat of loss, and the opportunity to gain significance (Webber et al., 2017; Kruglanski & Bertelsen, 2020).

Significance Loss

Significance loss can be experienced at the individual or societal level (Forgo, 2022). SQT argues that loss of significance leads individuals to seek and find "appropriate tools for significance" (Kruglanski et al., 2014). It is manifested as a loss of importance, humiliation, or some kind of dishonor. The condition of humiliation lowers the person's sense of significance below normal levels and encourages them to take actions to increase or correct it (Webber et al., 2017). Individual-based loss of significance can also occur as a result of living environments in unstable conditions. These environments can be in the social environment or personal life of individuals, as well as in the political, economic or other general conditions in which they live (Forgo, 2022). Loss of significance relates to the insults and feelings of injustice perpetrated against a group with which a person strongly identifies himself/herself and thus constitutes a

fundamental aspect of one's social identity. The alleged injustice committed against one's group can result in an effective sense of loss of prominence. All these circumstances make the person feel incapable and insignificant (Kruglanski et al., 2009; Kruglanski & Bertelsen, 2020). Loss of significance can also result from the idiosyncratic humiliation of a person unrelated to membership in the clan (for example, infertility, divorce, extramarital affair, HIV diagnosis), such as personal failure or defiance of a critical social norm (Webber et al., 2017). This situation is called "unrelated loss of significance" (Kruglanski et al., 2013). One aspect of loss of significance can be explained by the concept of relative deprivation. Relative deprivation refers to the experience of being deprived of something one feels deserving (Kruglanski et al., 2009). Relative deprivation creates the feeling that someone is belittled, not treated with the respect they deserve, and that others see them as unimportant. Relative deprivation can reveal feelings of anger and resentment and motivate behaviors aimed at correcting the imbalance (Webber et al., 2017).

Threat of Significance Loss

The threat of significance loss can stimulate actions to prevent it. Closely related to the real loss of significance, it is the potential loss to be experienced or incurred if individuals refuse a vital task for themselves and their society (for example, to be a suicide bomber). People who pride themselves on their allegiance to a group may face humiliation and accusations of hypocrisy/fraud if they avoid risking their lives to defend their group's cause (Kruglanski et al., 2015). For example, the Japanese Kamikaze pilots of the Second World War were not at all willing to die and did not expect rewards from the afterlife (Ohnuki-Tierney, 2006 cited by Kruglanski et al., 2014). Still, they volunteered because refusing the call of duty would have been a great dishonor for them and their families, apparently more unbearable than an honorable death (Webber et al., 2017).

Significance Gain

In the pursuit of significance, relief from humiliation and misery may not often be the primary motivator. Even significance-seeking individuals may not be ill-educated, harassed, or discriminated against. Instead, they may be in good standing with seemingly perfect future prospects. These individuals may not experience any personal feelings of humiliation or disrespect from others. Instead, they are often driven by the lure of being a famous hero or "really superior figure" (Webber et al., 2017). The goal here is not simply to get away from feelings of insignificance, as is the case with loss of significance. On the contrary, it could be moving towards superstardom, that is, the great position that normal living conditions rarely fulfill (Webber et al., 2017). If individuals encounter an emerging opportunity that will better their current situation, then they strive to take advantage of that chance.

It can also be noted that prospects to gain significance are not limited to the difficulties of one's own group, but may also result from obvious injustice towards other groups, or even from incidents completely unrelated to the group phenomenon (Webber et al., 2017). For example, although the matters do not involve their own group or social identity, many foreign citizens volunteered to fight on behalf of nationalists or republicans in the Spanish civil war (Othen, 2013; cited in Webber et al., 2017). These warriors may have fed their sense of significance by fighting for those in the battlefields they had never seen.

The quest for significance is recognized as a fundamental human motivation found in all humans and universal across cultures. To fend off the threat of personal insignificance, individuals are motivated to attach themselves to social groups, defend the group's worldview, and serve the group (Kruglanski & Orehek, 2011). The need for personal salience makes extreme behavior more likely to occur. People driven by such needs are more likely to engage fully in high-ranking goals and stifle other anxieties, first because they are particularly well-suited to reclaiming feelings of meaning and personal prominence (Jasko et al., 2017). From this point of view, it can be said that the quest for significance is a driving force underlying many behaviors of the individual. In addition, it may be related to the social and psychological health of the individual.

According to the World Health Organization [WHO] (2020), being healthy is not just the absence of disease or disability, that is, a person is in a state of complete physical, social and psychological well-being. Physiologically, pain is only one aspect of being sick. The individual must also be socially and mentally healthy. The mental health of the individual can be evaluated by whether the person has psychological symptoms or the amount of these symptoms. Any situation that reduces the quality of life with various mental and physical consequences is considered a psychological symptom (Yurdakul, 1999). Psychological symptoms are defined as depression, somatization, anxiety, negative self, anger/hostility, and obsessive-compulsive disorder are defined as the level of strain and negative reactions caused by stress (Dağ, 1991). As can be seen, psychological symptoms cover a wide-ranging area. Therefore, this paper focuses on the symptoms of paranoid thoughts, anger/hostility and interpersonal sensitivity, which are included in SCL-90R and discussed within the scope of the research.

Paranoid thinking

Paranoid thinking connotes skeptical ideas. It is the belief that an individual is harmed by the environment and that he or she is treated unfairly, even if it is not at the level of delusion (Alver, 2003). The fragrant characteristics of people with paranoid thoughts are the undue suspicion and distrust of other people (Batmaz, 2012). Paranoids derive hostile meanings from the speech and actions of those around them. One of the distinguishing qualities of these

individuals is that they constantly blame others. To them, they are the best and most flawless, while others are bad and ugly (Hançerlioğlu, 1988; Tas, 2015).

The content of paranoid thought is quite broad involving persecution, reference, jealousy, grandiose, erotomaniac and somatic paranoid thought types. Persecution occurs when an individual has thoughts that he or she will be harmed physically, socially or psychologically by others (Freeman, 2016). Grandiose, on the other hand, is seen as an exaggerated concern for oneself. The person with this idea sees himself/herself as a special person endowed with extraordinary abilities, extremely rich or the savior of humanity (Tas, 2015). In other words, these individuals perceive themselves as capable, valuable and important enough to save all humankind. Accordingly, it can be said that they are more inclined to seek significance.

Anger/ hostility

Anger/ hostility is felt in people's conscious awareness and transmitted through verbal expressions and bodily responses (Eckhardt et al., 2004). Hostility is also seen as a multifaceted construct that includes affective and expressive behaviors in addition to negative attitudes (Barefoot & Lipkus, 1994). The main qualities that distinguish the hostility structure are cynicism (believing that others are selfishly motivated), distrust (overgeneralizing that others will be hurtful and deliberately provoking), and defamation (dishonest, ugly, mean, and unsocial) (Miller et al., 1996). While an individual who maintains this set of attitudes is expected to experience frequent tantrums, the affective disorder seems to be the result of previous hostile cognitions (Eckhardt et al., 2004). In summary, it can be said that the hostile attitude is a structure that reveals and nourishes the feeling of anger.

Interpersonal sensitivity/ Negative self

Negative self-perception emerges as a situation that prevents the individual from achieving anything and even attempting for success. Negative self-perception is a structure that can accompany many other psychological symptoms (Tas, 2015). It is characterized by interpersonal sensitivity, a sense of personal inadequacy, and frequent misinterpretation of the interpersonal behavior of others. Discomfort in the presence of others results in interpersonal avoidance and unpretentious behavior (Davidson et al., 1989). Interpersonal sensitivity has also been defined as a general sensitivity to social feedback, alertness to the reactions of others, increased anxiety about their behavior and expressions, and fear of perceived or actual criticism by others (Boyce et al., 1993). Individuals who are sensitive in their interpersonal relationships are delicate people who take a blocking role in the progress of the relationship by exaggerating the small, ordinary and very simple problems –by beclouding things– that are trivial for others in their relationships (Boyce & Mason, 1996; Erozkán, 2004). It can be assumed that individuals with

high interpersonal sensitivity try to preserve the status they have in the social circle and are worried when they experience loss of significance or the threat of it.

In summary, it can be said that individuals with high interpersonal sensitivity try to preserve the significance they feel in the social environment they are in and are worried when they experience loss of significance or the threat of it. In this context, it can be thought that there is a relationship between quest for significance and interpersonal sensitivity. On the other hand, while paranoid individuals see themselves as the most perfect and best, others are bad and ugly for them (Hançerlioglu, 1988; Tas, 2015). In addition, people with paranoid thoughts see themselves as endowed with extraordinary abilities, extremely rich or the savior of humanity (Tas, 2015). In this respect, it can be said that people with paranoid thoughts are often in significance or preserve their perceived significance. In this context, it can be thought that there is a relationship between paranoid thinking and quest for significance. On the other hand, it is seen that research on quest for significance is carried out on suicide bombers (Kruglanski et al., 2009), terrorism (Kruglanski et al., 2013), social exclusion (Bäck et al., 2018) and violence (Kruglanski & Bertelsen, 2020). Depending on the results of these studies, it can be thought that there is a relationship between significance quest and anger/hostility. The aim of this research is to reveal the relationships between quest for significance and psychological symptoms such as paranoid thoughts, anger/hostility and interpersonal sensitivity. When the literature was examined, no available research was found on this subject. When the relationship between significance quest and psychological symptoms is revealed, it is thought that the present study will contribute to psychotherapy studies on psychological symptoms and to the literature on significance quest and psychological symptoms. In this study, participants' quest for significance was examined in terms of variables such as gender, age and income. In addition, this paper sought to find out whether there was a correlational relationship between the quest for significance and paranoid thoughts, anger/hostility, and interpersonal sensitivities of adults. As a result, the research seeks answers to the following questions:

1. Does significance quest of adults differ significantly in terms of gender, age level and income level?
2. Does significance quest significantly predict psychological symptoms of paranoid thoughts, anger/hostility, and interpersonal sensitivity?

METHOD

Research Model

This study was designed according to the survey method. The survey method provides quantitative and numeric descriptions of trends, attitudes and opinions in the universe through

studies on a sample from a universe (Creswell, 2014). In this study, with the relational screening model, the adults' quest for significance was examined according to their demographic characteristics and in addition to the relationships between the quest for significance and their psychological symptoms.

Study Group

In this study, convenience sampling method was utilized to reach out to participants. According to Şenol (2012), in cases where there are limitations in terms of time, money, and labor, choosing the sample from easily accessible and applicable units is called convenience sampling. Information on participants' demographic characteristics is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic data of the adult participants

Variable		n	%
Gender	Woman	383	63
	Man	222	37
Age Levels	25 & younger	183	30
	26- 35	145	24
	36- 45	156	26
	46 & older	121	20
Income	2000 ₺ & less	94	16
	2001- 3000	80	13
	3001- 4000	69	11
	4001- 5000	117	19
	5001- 6000	125	21
	6001 ₺ & more	120	20

As seen in Table 1, most of the participants in the study were women. In terms of age, the group with the highest number of participants is 25 years old and younger. According to the income level, the majority of the participants are those with an income between 5001-6000 Turkish Liras (₺).

Data Collection Tools

Significance Quest Scale (SQS), The Revised Version of the Symptom Check List (SCL-90R) and Personal Information Form (PIF) were used as data collection tools in the study. Information on these data collection tools is presented below.

Significance Quest Scale (SQS). This scale, which was developed by (Şahin & Derin, 2021) to determine the quest for significance levels of adults, was applied to a total of 406 adult individuals, 146 males and 260 females, with the convenience sampling method. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of the measurement tool was implemented by entering the research results into the SPSS 23.0 program. The four-factor and 26-item form obtained after the EFA was

administered to a total of 215 adult individuals, 83 men and 132 women, to collect data for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). Goodness-of-fit values in the CFA performed with the data obtained from this application are: $\chi^2/sd=1.89$, GFI= .86, CFI= .92, RMSEA= .065, IFI= .92, TLI= .91. As a result of CFA, it was determined that the scale had 26 items and four factors and had acceptable fit values. The reliability of the scale was examined within the scope of internal consistency and stability. Within the scope of internal consistency, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient is .95. The test-retest coefficient calculated within the scope of stability is .84. Based on these values, it can be said that the SQS scale is a valid and reliable measurement tool.

The Revised Version of the Symptom Check List (SCL-90R). The scale, which gives information about the psychiatric symptom levels of individuals and the areas they affect, was developed by Derogatis (1977). The adaptation of SCL-90R to Turkish culture was carried out by Dağ (1991). In the adaptation study, two groups with a mean age of 20.5 and 21 were studied. Its scale reliability and validity were carried out with MMPI and Beck's Depression Inventory. In the reliability study, the internal consistency of the scale was calculated with the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. It was found that this value varied between .63 - .84. The scale consists of ninety questions and nine subscales (Dağ, 1991). In this study, paranoid thinking, anger/hostility, and interpersonal sensitivity subscales of the scale were used. Personal Information Form (PIF). There are three questions in the form prepared by the researchers. These questions are aimed at determining gender, age and income level of the participants.

Data Collection Process

In the study, SQS, SCL-90R and PIF were administered to participants by the researchers. To enable the authenticity of the participants' responses to the data collection tools, necessary stimuli and motivation were provided on the subject and importance of the research.

Ethical Approval

The study was carried out in accordance with the 2022/07-07 numbered permission given at the meeting of the Ethics Committee of a university in Turkey, dated 25.10.2022.

Analysis of Data

The data obtained from the measurement tools in the research were analyzed by transferring them to the SPSS 25.0 program. In order to determine whether the research data met the normality assumption, the kurtosis and skewness coefficients of the data obtained from the Anger/Hostility, Paranoid Ideation, and Interpersonal Sensitivity Subscales of SCL and SCL 90-R were calculated. If the skewness and kurtosis values are between -1.5 and +1.5, the data is considered to have a normal distribution (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2013). It can be said that the

scores obtained from the scales are in a normal distribution. Parametric tests were used in the analyses accordingly.

In the analysis of the data, the t-test was utilized to test whether the difference between the two-dimensional unrelated sample means was significant. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied to test whether the difference between the sample mean of more than two groups was significant. In addition, the relationship between quest for significance, which is the independent variable of the research, and paranoid thought, anger/hostility, and interpersonal sensitivity as the dependent variable, was examined by simple linear regression. The relationship between the scores obtained from these scales was calculated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient. In the study, effect size statistics were calculated in order to determine to what extent the independent variable was effective on the dependent variable (Büyüköztürk, 2018). In this context, the Cohen's d value was calculated for the groups compared with the t-test. Cohen's d value is interpreted as large when it is .80; medium when it is .50; and small when it is .20 (Cohen, 1988). The eta-square (η^2) correlation coefficient was used to calculate the effect size in the groups compared with ANOVA. If the eta-square (η^2) correlation coefficient is at the level of .01, it is interpreted as small, if it is at the level of .06, it is interpreted as a medium, and if it is at the level of .14, it is interpreted as large (Büyüköztürk, 2018). The margin of error in the study was taken as .05.

RESULTS

In this part of the research, the findings related to quest for significance in adults are presented in terms of demographic variables. The findings regarding gender are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Quest for significance in adults by gender

Variable		n	\bar{X}	S	sd	t	p
Gender	Female	383	67.78	19.90	603	.03	.97
	Male	222	67.84	20.22			

As seen in Table 2, there is no significant difference in the quest for significance ($t=.03$; $p>.05$) in adults in terms of gender. Accordingly, it can be said that there is no statistically significant difference between men and women in their quest for significance. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA results regarding the mean scores of the quest for significance in terms of the age levels of adults are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Descriptive statistics and ANOVA results on quest for significance in adults by age levels

Age	n	\bar{X}	S	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Squares	F	p	η^2	Sig.Diff
25 and below (A)	183	76.22	22.53	Intragroup	22974.49	3	7658.16	21.04	.00	.09	A-B
26-35 (B)	145	64.26	16.40	Within groups	218733.10	601	363.49				A-C
36- 45 (C)	156	60.60	17.65	Total	241707.59	60					A-D
46 and over (D)	121	68.58	18.08								D-C

As can be seen in Table 3, a statistically significant difference ($F=21.04$; $p<.01$) was found between the mean scores of the quest for significance according to the age range of adults. Scheffé’s Test for Multiple Comparisons was conducted to determine which groups had a significant difference. Thus, a difference was found between the average of significance-seeking scores of adults aged 25 and below and the mean scores of adults at other age levels. In addition, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the average of the quest for significance scores of the participants aged 46 and above and the average of the quest for significance scores of those aged 36-45. When the mean scores of these groups are examined, it is seen that the mean score ($\bar{X}=76.22$) of quest for significance in participants aged 25 and below ($n=183$) is higher than the mean score ($\bar{X}=64.26$) of those ($n=145$) aged 26-35 and the mean score ($\bar{X}=60.60$) of those ($n=156$) aged 36-45 as well as the mean score ($\bar{X}=68.58$) of those aged 46 and over ($n=121$). In addition, as can be seen in the table, the average of quest for significance scores of older adults is higher than the average score of adults between the ages of 36-45. The eta-square (η^2) correlation coefficient calculated to determine the effect of the age level variable on the quest for significance of the participants was found to be .09. This eta-square (η^2) value indicates that the age level variable has a moderate effect on the quest for significance in adults. Therefore, it can be stated that adults aged 25 and below seek more significance than adults in other age groups. Furthermore, adults aged 46 and over seek more significance than those aged 36-45. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA results regarding the mean scores of the quest for significance according to their income level are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics and ANOVA results on quest for significance in adults by income level

Income Level	n	\bar{X}	S	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	sd	Mean Squares	F	p	η^2	Sig. Dif.
2000₺ & below (A)	94	77.08	21.62	Intragroup	11798.09	5	2359.61	6.15	.00	.05	A-C
2001- 3000 ₺ (B)	80	67.76	19.81	Within groups	229909.50	599	383.82				A-D
3001- 4000 ₺ (C)	69	66.57	19.96	Total	241707.59	604					A-F
4001- 5000 ₺ (D)	117	65.71	20.41								
5001- 6000 ₺ (E)	125	68.32	17.74								
6001₺ & over (F)	120	62.75	18.53								

As can be seen in Table 4, a statistically significant difference ($F=6.15$; $p<.01$) was found between the mean scores of the quest for significance according to adults' income levels. Scheffé's Test for Multiple Comparisons was conducted to determine which groups had a significant difference. Moreover, it was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of adults with an income of 2000 ₺ and below, and the mean scores of the participants from other income levels. When we analyze the mean scores of these groups, it is revealed that the mean score ($\bar{X}=77.08$) of quest for significance in participants ($n=94$) with an income of 2000 ₺ or less is higher than the mean score ($\bar{X}=67.76$) of those ($n=80$) with an income between 2001-3000 ₺, the mean score ($\bar{X}=66.57$) of those ($n=69$) with an income between 3001-4000 ₺, the mean score ($\bar{X}=65.71$) of those ($n=117$) with an income between 4001- 5000 ₺, the mean score ($\bar{X}=68.32$) of those ($n=125$) with an income between 5001- 6000 ₺ and the mean score ($\bar{X}=62.75$) of those ($n=120$) with an income between 6001 ₺ and above. The eta-square (η^2) correlation coefficient calculated to determine the effect of the income level variable on the quest for significance in the participants was found to be .05. This eta-square (η^2) value indicates that the income level variable has a moderate effect on the quest for significance. Consequently, it can be stated that adults with an income of 2000 ₺ and below pursue more significance than adults with other income levels. The correlation relationship between the quest for significance and paranoid thoughts, anger/hostility, interpersonal sensitivity is presented in Table 5.

Table 5
Correlation Results Between the Quest for Significance and Paranoid Thought, Anger/Hostility, Interpersonal Sensitivity in Adults

	Quest for significance	Paranoid thought	Anger/Hostility	Interpersonal sensitivity
Quest for significance	-	.318*	.306*	.261*

When Table 5 is examined, it has been determined that there is a significant and low level of positive correlation between the mean scores of adults from the SQS and the mean scores of the SCL 90-R's Paranoid thought Subscale ($r= .318$; $p<.01$); Anger/Hostility Subscale ($r=.306$; $p<.01$); Interpersonal Sensitivity subscale ($r=.261$; $p<.01$). The results of simple linear regression analysis related to the prediction of paranoid thoughts, anger/hostility, interpersonal sensitivity of the quest for significance are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Simple Linear Regression Analysis Results Concerning The Quest for Significance in Paranoid Thoughts, Anger/Hostility, Interpersonal Sensitivity

Predictor	Predicted	B	SE	β	t	p
Quest for Significance	Constant	3.608	.712		5.066	.000
	Paranoid thoughts	.083	.010	.318	8.243	.000
	Constant	1.468	.777		1.888	.059
	Anger/Hostility	.087	.011	.306	7.882	.000
	Constant	6.937	1.085		6.394	.000
	Interpersonal sensitivity	.102	.015	.261	6.637	.000
QfS- Pt: R= .318	R ² = .101	F= 67.93	p< .01			
QfS-A/H= R= .261	R ² = .06	F= 62.12	p< .01			
QfS-IS= R= .261	R ² = .06	F= 62.12	p< .01			

When Table 6 is examined, it is seen that adult individuals' quest for significance is an important predictor of paranoid thoughts ($R = .318$, $R^2 = .101$, $p < .01$). It can be said that 10% of the total variance regarding paranoid thoughts is explained by the quest for significance. When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that adult individuals' quest for significance is an important predictor of anger/hostility ($R = .306$, $R^2 = .093$, $p < .01$). It can be said that 9% of the total variance regarding anger/hostility is explained by the quest for significance. When Table 5 is examined, it is seen that the quest for significance in adults is a significant predictor of interpersonal sensitivity ($R = .261$, $R^2 = .068$, $p < .01$). It can be said that 7% of the total variance regarding interpersonal sensitivity is explained by the quest for significance.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper aims to examine the quest for significance in adults according to their demographic variables and determine the correlational relationships between their quest for significance and psychological symptoms. In the study, it was determined that there was no significant difference in terms of the quest for significance in adults by gender. Based on this finding, it can be said that there is no difference between men's and women's quest for significance. In a study conducted by Webber et al. (2017) to investigate the motivational backgrounds of 219 suicide attackers from various parts of the world, it was found that the specific nature of the motive for the quest for significance varied according to sex, age, and education of the attackers. The study did not yield a result regarding the low or high level of the quest for significance by gender. However, men were primarily concerned with the "probability of gaining significance" while women were motivated by the promise to "eliminate the loss of significance". In the research titled "The Role of Sensation Seeking in Political Violence: An Extension of the SQT" conducted by Schumpe et al. (2018), seven different samples were studied. In some samples of the study, a relationship was found between gender and sensation seeking, while in some samples, no correlational relationship was found between gender and sensation seeking.

According to Kruglanski and Orehek (2011), the quest for significance is a basic human motivation found in all humans and universal across cultures. It can be considered as a finding that is expected to have similar results in terms of this motivation in women or men. According to Kruglanski et al. (2013), Rousseau's amour-propre, the quest for significance, is a firm human passion. Rousseau (1762) emphasized that without it, humans are hardly distinguishable from animals. The quest for significance is what makes a person human. What makes people somehow special is that human behavior has a social basis. Humans are social beings. More importantly, humans are cognitively social. Accordingly, it is not about being a man or a woman in search of significance. It can be stated that it is indispensable to be human. A person can seek significance in social life, regardless of gender.

In the study, it was determined that adults aged 25 and below search for more significance than those in other age groups. In addition, adults aged 46 and above seek more significance than those between the ages of 36-45. In the study conducted by Webber et al. (2017), a relationship was found between the quest for significance and age, but this relationship is not related to the level of seeking importance according to age level. In the related research, it was found that young suicide bombers were primarily motivated by the possibility of gaining significance while older aggressors were chiefly driven by the perk of eliminating the loss of significance.

In this study, the group specified as “25 and below” refers to individuals between the ages of 18 and 25. According to Arnett (2000), individuals in this age group are in the emerging adulthood period. Emerging adulthood is the age with the highest propensity for many behaviors such as excessive alcohol consumption, illicit drug use, and risky sexual experiences (Arnett, 2000; 2005). Emerging adulthood is the stage of great hopes and dreams (Arnett, 2001). Almost all individuals in this period believe that their lives will eventually be good and that at least some of their dreams will come true (Arnett, 2004). They may seek a more intense prominence, thinking that they will become a decent individual when these dreams and hopes come true. In this context, the fact that the quest for significance in adults aged 25 and below is higher than the participants in the higher age groups can be attributed to the pursuits in emerging adulthood.

Emerging adulthood is the age with the highest propensity for many behaviors such as excessive alcohol consumption, illicit drug use, and risky sexual experiences (Arnet, 2000; 2005). It can be said that these extreme behaviors are a reflection of sensation seeking. Schumpe et al. (2018) consider sensation seeking as an extension of the quest for significance. It can be asserted that individuals in emerging adulthood try to fulfill their quest for significance by satisfying their excitement.

As stated above, another result obtained in the study in terms of age variable is that adults aged 46 and over seek more significance than those aged 36-45. The stage between the ages of 45-64 is defined as the middle age period by the WHO. Middle age is defined as the life process between youth and old age. In this stage, the individual realizes the fact that life has an end. The perception that time is decreasing leads dreams and long goals to more realistic experiences and objectives (Karaca, 2020). The perception that time is running out to achieve dreams and goals may lead middle-aged individuals to intense struggle. They can attain the feeling of “significance” by reaching their goals and making their dreams come true. Due to physiological changes in the person’s body, the inability to be as physiologically strong and active as in previous years (Karaca, 2020), and also the loss of fertility in women (Santrock, 2021) may cause the individual to experience a loss of significance and look for compensation for the loss. The fact that adults aged

46 and older have a higher significance quest than adults aged 36-45 in the study may stem from this experience.

In the study, it was found that adults with an income of 2000 ₺ or less seek more significance than adults with other income levels. Research on the quest for significance and extremist violence by Jasko et al. (2017) revealed that those who experience an economic loss of significance are more likely to engage in extremist violence. Here, extremist violent behavior is considered as a reflection of the quest for significance. Like the results obtained in the current study and the above-mentioned study, it can be deducted that individuals at low economic levels desire the quest for significance more than those at other economic levels. Significance quest can result from an economic loss (Kruglanski & Bertelsen, 2020). According to Significance Quest Theory, individual's loss of significance promotes the restoration of this loss (Kruglanski et al., 2014). Economic deprivation and losses can lower an individual's sense of significance. Accordingly, the participants of the study with an income of 2000 ₺ or less may have sought more significance than those in other income groups. Economic deprivations and losses can trigger the individual's search for significance by causing him/her to feel disrespected and insufficient. In this context, it can be affirmed that the participants of the research at the lowest level in terms of income tend to seek more significance than those at other income levels.

In the study, the correlational relationship between adults' quest for significance and their psychological symptoms –paranoid thought, anger/hostility, and interpersonal sensitivity– was also examined. A low level of positive correlation was found between the quest for significance in adults and their psychological symptoms of paranoid thoughts, anger/hostility, and interpersonal sensitivity. Seeking significance was found to be a major predictor of adults' paranoid thoughts, anger/hostility, and interpersonal sensitivities. It was found that 10% of the total variance regarding paranoid thoughts was explained by quest for significance. In addition, 9% of the total variance regarding anger/hostility, 7% of the total variance regarding interpersonal sensitivity were explained by the quest for significance.

Paranoia is a common experience in the non-clinical population (Green et al., 2011). Paranoid thoughts are associated with a lower quality of life (Watson et al., 2018), lower psychological well-being (Freeman et al., 2014), and negative affectivity (Bahlinger et al., 2021). The low level of life quality and psychological welfare of the individual may decrease the perception of self-esteem. The individual who has a decrease in the perception of significance may turn to the quest for significance. Therefore, the positive relationship between quest for significance and paranoid thinking can be understood more easily.

It was observed that individuals who were socially excluded and who received negative feedback had stronger increases in paranoid thoughts than those who were not excluded and did

not receive negative feedback (Kesting et al., 2013). It was also found that the perception of not being respected and disliked by prominent people was associated with paranoia (Lincoln et al., 2010). Exclusion of the individual in the social environment, being ignored, and receiving destructive feedback can negatively affect the perception of significance. The perception of significance may decrease when the people they care for do not respect them or are not liked by them. The individuals who have a decline in the perception of significance may turn to the search for significance. Here, the feelings of insignificance can trigger the individual's paranoid thoughts. The positive relationship between the quest for significance and paranoid thoughts obtained in the research and the results of 10% of paranoid thoughts expressed with the quest for significance can be more easily understood and interpreted in the aforementioned contexts.

A low level of positive correlation was found between the participants' quest for significance and their anger/hostility symptoms. When the literature is examined, the concept of the quest for significance is examined in relation to concepts containing elements of anger and hostility such as martyrdom and suicide attacks/attackers (Kruglanski et al., 2009; Webber et al., 2017), terrorism (Kruglanski et al., 2013; Kruglanski & Orehek, 2011), political violence (Schumpe et al., 2018), radicalization and violence (Kruglanski & Bertelsen, 2020; Kruglanski et al., 2014). Various difficulties experienced by the individuals and/or the society they are a member of can feed the feeling of anger and hostility by causing a loss of significance. This attitude and emotion can reveal aggressive and violent behaviors. In this context, it can be said that the positive relationship between the quest for significance and anger/hostility and the finding that 9% of the total variance regarding anger/hostility is explained by the quest for significance is not surprising.

Another result of the research on psychological symptoms and the quest for significance is the determination of a positive relationship between the quest for significance in adults and their interpersonal sensitivities. Interpersonal sensitivity is the inability of an individual to do things easily for fear of being seen as a stupid and weak person in public (Batmaz, 2012). Sensitivities experienced in interpersonal relationships can turn into rejection sensitivity after a certain stage and cause the loss of functionality of close relationships (Erozkan, 2004). When individuals think that others do not treat them well, they feel that they are not cared for by them, and they may begin to lose significance when they see themselves as inferior to others. Due to this loss of importance, they may turn to the search for significance. In this context, it can be said that the positive relationship found in this study between the quest for significance and interpersonal sensitivity, and the finding that 7% of the total variance in interpersonal sensitivity is explained by the quest for significance is compatible with the literature.

According to the results obtained from the research, the quest for significance of the participants in emerging adulthood and middle adulthood is higher than adults at other age levels.

According to the income level, it has been determined that those with an income of 2000₺ or less seek more significance than others with more than this amount.

The findings obtained from the research should be evaluated considering the limitations. Only three psychological symptoms were considered in the study. There may be other psychological symptoms associated with quest for significance. For this reason, the relationship between quest for significance and different psychological symptoms can be examined in future studies. It can be said that another limitation of the study is the sample size. It can be stated that the sample size of 605 participants in the study was sufficient. On the other hand, expanding the sample size in future studies may increase the findings. The large age range of the participants can be expressed as another limitation of the study. It can be said that the age of 18 is the age of emerging adulthood and, accordingly, the age of onset of adulthood. On the other hand, it can be said that the fact that the participants include individuals up to the age of 65 creates difficulties in terms of ensuring homogeneity among the participants in terms of age. For this reason, it can be suggested that the subject should be studied with more homogeneous groups in terms of age in future studies. In addition, the significance quest of individuals can be examined with studies designed in the qualitative model. Qualitative studies can also be planned in the future to obtain more in-depth information on the subject.

As stated in the previous sections, it can be seen that significance quest has been studied together with concepts such as violence, terrorism and extremism. On the other hand, considering that significance quest is a universal motivation, it can be suggested to work with subjects such as immigration, ganging, peer bullying, smartphone addiction, shopping addiction and excitement seeking in future research. Significance quest can lead the individual to risky behaviors such as unwanted relationships, high-speed driving, and making decisions without thinking enough. These behaviors can negatively affect an individual's life. Thus, training can be given to individuals in these groups so that they can continue their quest for significance more healthily, and this search can be directed to more positive and productive processes. Consequently, considering that the psychological symptoms of the individual may arise from the quest for significance, individuals can be offered opportunities to gain significance accordingly.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Giriş

Psiko-sosyal bir varlık olan insan, içinde bulunduğu toplumun bir üyesi olarak ve tek başına bir birey olarak kendine ilişkin çeşitli değerlendirmelerde bulunur. Bu değerlendirmelerde toplumunun ve kendisinin bakış açısı temel ölçütlerdir. Birey, gerçekleştirdiği değerlendirmeler sonucunda, kendisine ilişkin bir önem belirler. Bu önemin zamana, ortama, yaşanan durum ve olaya göre değiştiği söylenebilir. Birey kendi önemini, çeşitli ortamlarda farklı davranışlar ile göstermeye ve artırmaya çalışabilir. Birey, önemine ilişkin bir yetersizlik hissi yaşadığında veya önem kaybına ilişkin bir risk ile karşılaştığında ve önemini arttırmaya yönelik bir fırsat gördüğünde önem arayışına yönelebilir. Önem arayışı, ortaya konulan birçok davranışın tetikleyicisi ve yönlendiricisi olabilir.

Bireyin kendi gözünde ve diğer önemli kişilerin gözünde önemli olma, saygı duyulma arzusu önem arayışı veya kişisel önem arayışı olarak adlandırılır (Kruglanski & Bertelsen, 2020). Önem arayışı insanlığa özgü bir motivasyondur. Önem Arayışı Kuramı (ÖAK); önemden yoksun bırakıldığında, insanların önem hissini geri kazanmalarına izin veren eylemleri başlatmak için güçlü bir şekilde motive olduklarını öne sürer (Schumpe ve diğ., 2018). Kuram, önem arayışının ortaya çıkması için iç içe geçmiş üç koşul ortaya atmıştır (Elliott ve diğ., 2004; Kruglanski ve diğ., 2014). Bunlar; yaşanan önem kaybı, önem kaybı tehdidi ve önem kazanma fırsatıdır (Kruglanski & Bertelsen, 2020). *Önem kaybı*: ÖAK, önem kaybının bireyleri "önem için uygun araçları" aramaya ve bulmaya sevk ettiğini öne sürer (Kruglanski ve diğ., 2014). Önem kaybı kişisel başarısızlık veya önemli bir sosyal norma karşı gelme gibi kişinin kendine özgü nedenlerinden kaynaklanabilir (Webber ve diğ., 2017). Diğer yandan önem kaybı, kişinin güçlü bir şekilde özdeşleştiği ve dolayısıyla onun sosyal kimliğinin temel bir yönünü oluşturan bir gruba yönelik gerçekleştirilen hakaretler ve adaletsizlik duygusuyla da ilgili olabilir (Kruglanski ve diğ., 2009). Önem kaybına ilişkin tehdit de, onu önlemeye yönelik eylemleri motive edebilir (Kruglanski ve diğ., 2015). Bunların yanında ortaya çıkan ya da fark edilen önem kazanmaya ilişkin fırsat ya da fırsatlar da önem arayışını tetikler (Webber ve diğ., 2017).

Kişisel önem ihtiyacı, aşırı davranışların ortaya çıkmasını daha olası kılmaktadır. Bu tür ihtiyaçlar tarafından yönlendirilen insanların, önemli hedeflere tam olarak bağlılık göstermeleri ve diğer endişeleri bastırma olasılıkları daha yüksektir. Çünkü birincisi, anlam ve kişisel önem duygularını geri kazanmaya özellikle çok uygundur (Jasko ve diğ. 2017). Buradan hareketle önem arayışının bireyin birçok davranışının temelinde bulunan itici bir güç olduğu söylenebilir. Ayrıca önem arayışı bireyin sosyal ve psikolojik sağlığı ile de ilişkili olabilir. Bu düşünceden hareketle mevcut araştırmada yetişkin bireylerin önem arayışları ile psikolojik belirtileri

arasındaki ilişkileri ortaya çıkarmak ve ayrıca yetişkin bireylerin demografik özellikleri açısından önem arayışlarını incelemek amaçlanmıştır.

Yöntem

Bu çalışma, nicel araştırma yöntemlerinden ilişkisel tarama modeline göre tasarlanmıştır. Araştırmanın katılımcılarına elverişli örnekleme yöntemi ile ulaşılmıştır. Katılımcılar; 18-65 yaş ($\bar{X}=34.41$) arasında, 383 kadın ve 222 erkek toplam 605 yetişkin bireyden oluşmaktadır. Çalışmada veri toplama aracı olarak Önemlilik Arayışı Ölçeği, Semptom Değerlendirme Ölçeği ve Kişisel Bilgi Formu kullanılmıştır. Ölçme araçlarından elde edilen verilerin çözümlenmesinde ikili grupların karşılaştırılmasında t-Testi ve ikiden çok grupların karşılaştırılmasında ise Tek Yönlü Varyans Analizi (ANOVA) uygulanmıştır. Önem arayışı ile psikolojik belirtiler arasındaki yordayıcı ilişkiler Basit Doğrusal Regresyon Analizi Yöntemi ile incelenmiştir.

Bulgular

Araştırma sonucunda katılımcıların önem arayışında cinsiyet açısından istatistiki olarak anlamlı bir fark saptanmamıştır. Bir diğer ifade ile erkek ve kadın yetişkinlerin önem arayışında farklılık olmadığı söylenebilir. Diğer yandan yetişkin bireylerin önem arayışında yaş düzeyine göre istatistiki olarak anlamlı fark tespit edilmiştir. Buna göre 25 ve daha alt yaşlarda olan yetişkin bireylerin diğer yaş grubundaki yetişkinlerden daha fazla önem arayışında oldukları saptanmıştır. Çalışmada yetişkinlerin gelir seviyesine göre önem arayışlarında istatistiki olarak anlamlı fark tespit edilmiştir. Buna göre 2000 ₺ ve altı geliri olan yetişkinlerin daha üst düzeyde geliri olan yetişkinlerden daha fazla önem arayışında oldukları saptanmıştır. Ayrıca yetişkin bireylerin önem arayışı ile paranoid düşünceleri, öfke/düşmanlık ve kişiler arası duyarlılıkları arasında düşük düzeyde pozitif ilişkiler tespit edilmiştir. Paranoid düşüncelere ilişkin toplam varyansın %10'unun, öfke/düşmanlığa ilişkin toplam varyansın %9'unun ve kişilerarası duyarlılığa ilişkin toplam varyansın %7'sinin önem arayışı ile açıklandığı tespit edilmiştir.

Tartışma ve Sonuç

Kruglanski ve Orehek'e (2011) göre önem arayışı, tüm insanlarda bulunan ve kültürler arasında evrensel olan temel bir insan motivasyonudur. Kadın veya erkeklerde bu motivasyon açısından benzer sonuçlar ortaya çıkması beklenen bir bulgu olarak değerlendirilebilir. Buna bağlı olarak önem arayışında kadın veya erkek olmak değil; insan olmanın temel neden olduğu belirtilebilir. İnsan, toplumsal hayatta, cinsiyeti fark etmeksizin önem arayışı içine girebilir. Araştırmada 25 yaş ve daha altında olanların önem arayışının diğer yaş grubundaki yetişkinlerden daha yüksek olduğu bulunmuştur. Arnett'e (2000) göre bu yaş grubundaki bireyler, beliren yetişkinlik dönemindedirler. Bu dönemdeki bireylerin kimlik alanlarıyla ilgili deneme ve arayışları, aşk ve iş hayatında değişen seçimleri, beliren yetişkinlik evresini yaşamın

yoğun, özel, değişken ve ayrıcalıklı bir süreci haline getirir. Bu kapsamda 25 ve daha alt yaşlarda olan yetişkin bireylerin önem arayışının daha üst yaş gruplarındaki katılımcılardan yüksek çıkması beliren yetişkinlik evresindeki arayışlara bağlanabilir. Araştırmada 2000 ₺ ve altı geliri olan yetişkinlerin diğer gelir seviyelerindeki yetişkinlere göre daha fazla önem arayışında oldukları saptanmıştır. Önem Arayışı Kuramına göre bireysel önem kaybı, önemin restorasyonu hedefini teşvik eder (Kruglanski ve diğ., 2014). Ekonomik yoksunluk ve kayıplar bireyin önem hissini düşürebilir. Buna bağlı olarak araştırmanın 2000 ₺ ve altında gelire sahip olan katılımcıları diğer gelir grubundakilere göre daha fazla önem arayışı içine girmiş olabilirler. Önem arayışının yetişkin bireylerin paranoid düşünceleri, öfke/düşmanlıkları ve kişilerarası duyarlılıklarının anlamlı bir yordayıcısı olduğu saptanmıştır. Psikolojik belirtilerin önem arayışı ile çok güçlü olmasa da; göz ardı edilemeyecek derecede ilişkili olduğu belirtilebilir.