



| Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi |

An Investigation of the Psychological Need Satisfaction Levels of Foster Families

Koruyucu Ailelerin Psikolojik İhtiyaç Doyum Düzeylerinin İncelenmesi

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Keywords

1. Foster care
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Abstract

Purpose: This study aimed to investigate the psychological need satisfaction levels of foster families.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The present study is descriptive and cross-sectional. Data were collected between July 1 and 30, 2020, from 138 volunteer foster parents living in Turkey.

Findings: The Need Satisfaction Scale was a significant difference was found by age group in the subscale and overall scale scores of the individuals participating in the study. Significant differences by families' educational status were only present in the Competence subscale. Significant differences by age at which they became foster families were found in the Autonomy subscale and overall scores, and significant differences by age of fostered child were found in the Competence and overall scores ($p < .05$). Foster families were determined to have higher need satisfaction totals and subscale scores.

Highlights: A healthy upbringing that enables children to become socially adapted and productive individuals is only possible if they grow up in a loving and caring family environment. Foster family care is the best protection method that can ensure this. The present study concludes that the foster families studied here had high levels of psychological need satisfaction, had established desirable human relations, and were autonomous and competent.

Öz

Çalışmanın amacı: Koruyucu ailelerin psikolojik ihtiyaç doyumlarının belirlenmesi çalışmanın amacıdır.

Materyal ve Yöntem: Bu çalışma tanımlayıcı ve kesitseldir. Veriler 1-30 Temmuz 2020 tarihleri arasında Türkiye'de yaşayan 138 gönüllü koruyucu aileden toplanmıştır.

Bulgular: Araştırmaya katılan bireylerin yaş gruplarına göre İhtiyaç Doyum Ölçeği alt boyut ve toplam ölçek puanlarında anlamlı bir farklılık saptanmıştır. Ailelerin eğitim durumlarına göre sadece Yeterlik alt boyutunda anlamlılık olduğu saptanmıştır. Ailelerin koruyucu aile olduğu zamanki yaşına göre Özerklik alt boyut ve genel toplam puanlarında; bakımını üstlendiği çocuğun yaşına göre Yeterlik ve toplam puanlarında anlamlılık olduğu tespit edilmiştir ($p < .05$). Koruyucu ebeveynlerin ihtiyaç doyum toplam ve alt boyut puanlarının yüksek olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Önemli Vurgular: Çocukların sosyal olarak uyumlu ve üretken bireyler olmaları, ancak sağlıklı, sevgi dolu ve şefkatli bir aile ortamında büyümeleri ile mümkündür. Koruyucu aile bakımı, bunu sağlayabilecek en iyi koruma yöntemidir. Bu çalışmada koruyucu ailelerin yüksek düzeyde psikolojik ihtiyaç doyumuna sahip oldukları, arzu edilen şekilde insan ilişkileri kurdukları, özerk ve yetkin oldukları sonucuna varılmıştır.

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INTRODUCTION

The foster care model has been implemented in Turkey and in developed countries as a solution for children who would otherwise grow up in an orphanage, to offer them an opportunity to live in a warm family environment (Erol, 2011; Stone, Jackson, Nose and Huffhines, 2020). It is essential that this service provided for children under the state's protection is rights-based and that the state offers these rights through professionals (Reçber, 2019). According to Child Protection Law No. 5395, measures are taken in relation to the pillars of consultancy, education, care, health, and accommodation to protect and provide care for children, principally in a family environment.

If the individual responsible for the care of a child fails to fulfill their duty for any reason, it is determined that the child will benefit from official or private care or foster-family services or will be placed in one of these institutions (Child Protection Law No. 5395, 2005). The state provides care for children in need of protection through various protection measures, including institutional care, adoption, and foster care. A healthy upbringing that enables children to become socially adapted and productive individuals is only possible if they grow up in a loving and caring family environment (Pannilage, 2017). Foster family care is the best protection method that can ensure this (Akbulut Kurtuluş, 2011).

Children who are separated from their biological families may have had unpleasant experiences related to secure attachment in their lives or traumas arising from oppression and abuse; thus, this change is incredibly stressful for the child. Ultimately, not only do they leave people they are familiar with, but their whole surroundings change suddenly (Ebel, 2009). The foster family care environment aims to help children compensate for their lack of healthy biological family and cope with developmental deficiencies (Jespersen, 2011).

Foster families must provide the conditions needed for the child's healthy development in all respects, follow child monitoring protocols as determined at intervals by the Ministry of Health, fulfill obligations regarding any assigned treatment plan, and act in cooperation with the foster family unit in implementing care (Foster Family Regulations, Article 15-1-a). Children demonstrate significantly positive development in psychosocial terms after being placed in foster families because they can engage with foster parents and have stable family relationships (Linderkamp, Schramm & Michau, 2009; Diouani-Streek & Salgo, 2016).

To minimize problems, it is important to evaluate all aspects of the child and the family before determining eligibility (Erol, 2011). Characteristics of foster families that should be evaluated are whether they are autonomous, adequate, and have positive relationships with their environment-i.e., the level of their psychological need satisfaction. A high level of psychological need satisfaction is one of the most important factors for dealing with problems faced by foster families. Psychological needs are those that must be met at certain times and at certain levels for the individual to survive; if unmet, they lead to tension in the individual (Eysenck, Arnold & Meili, 1972; as cited in Hamurcu, 2011). Psychological need satisfaction is emphasized in studies based on subjective well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to the self-determination theory, which provides comprehensive explanations about psychological needs, psychological needs are crucially important in the development, integration, and health of a living being (Ilhan & Özbay, 2010).

Autonomy, competence, and relatedness are cited as the three basic psychological needs; these needs are essential for human development, health, and personal integrity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Autonomy refers to self-regulation and self-management (Morsünbül, 2012); it is the ability to make choices with the feeling that one has the freedom to express one's feelings and thoughts, to make the decisions in one's life, and to reveal one's true self. The autonomous person determines their own actions. Competence is the belief that one has the power and ability to perform a task and that one will be successful in that task. Relatedness means that the individual has close and sincere relationships with the people around them and thus has a sense of belonging. Satisfying these psychological needs contributes to an individual's success and the development of positive behaviors (Cihangir Çankaya, 2005).

Social work, which is defined as both a branch of art and a scientific discipline, is one of the humanitarian professions deemed by society as appropriate for helping improve the quality of life of all people (Duyan, 2003). Studies conducted on the foster parenting system within the field of social work aim to see how children can grow up with love in a happy family. For this reason, the present study examines the psychological need satisfaction levels of foster families who take care of children, which is considered important. According to the self-determination theory, all people have the same basic psychological needs; however, as needs can be interpreted differently in different cultures, they can be satisfied in different ways and to different degrees (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In this context, examining the psychological need satisfaction levels of foster families can be important in determining any possible cultural differences. At the same time, research findings suggest that this is an important topic of study, as it allows us to understand the needs of foster families.

During childhood, when the foundations of personality are laid, it is possible to develop a happy and peaceful child who can achieve satisfaction in relationships, with the help of identification models offered to them. For children to satisfy their psychological needs in a healthy way, foster parents should establish good relationships with their children. First of all, to satisfy children's psychological needs, foster parents—who are role models—should have high levels of psychological need satisfaction.

Various studies on the foster family model are available (Goemans, van Geel, & Vedder, 2018; Steenbakkens, Ellingsen, van der Steen, & Grietens, 2018; Stone, Jackson, Noser, & Huffhines, 2020). A review of the research studies on this subject in Turkey reveals such topics as: individuals' motives to become foster families (Bilican Gökkaya 2014; Tezel Demirel & Sahin Kaya, 2018); the impact of foster family services on biological children and foster families (Daşbaşı, 2015); experiences and assessments of

custodial parents/members of foster family associations regarding the model (Erdugan, 2019, Gökdoğan Şahin, 2019); relevant experts' evaluations of the foster family program in Turkey (Şahin Kaya, 2019); treatment of childhood trauma within foster families (Abukan, 2020); and the problems of foster parents (Yıldırım alp & Hız, 2020).

A review of the studies on this subject in Turkey reveals such topics as individuals' motives for becoming foster families. No study is directly related to the psychological need satisfaction of foster parents. We predict that this study will contribute to the social service policies and practices that could be carried out in the field, both in terms of raising social awareness and of the welfare of the children placed in foster families.

The present study aimed to determine the psychological need satisfaction levels of foster families.

Research questions

This study has two research questions:

1. How is the psychological need satisfaction of foster parents defined within a framework of autonomy, competence, and relatedness?
2. How is the psychological need satisfaction of foster parents in terms of sociodemographic and certain other characteristics defined within a framework of autonomy, competence, and relatedness?

METHOD/MATERIALS

Design

This research was designed as a descriptive and cross-sectional study.

Participants

Participants in different provinces were recruited through snowball sampling. This method is used when it is difficult to access the individuals that make up the population of the research study or when information about the population is imperfect (Patton, 2005). Through foster family associations, we reached out to foster families in the provinces of Denizli (n=39), Uşak (n=4), İzmir (n=16), Samsun (n=5), Aydın (n=8), Afyonkarahisar (n=8), Manisa (n=8), Kütahya (n=4), İstanbul (n=17), Gaziantep (n=12), Çanakkale (n=3), Malatya (n=8), Muğla (n=4), and Mersin (n=2), with the numbers indicating how many agreed to be interviewed. The data were collected from 138 volunteer foster parents living in Turkey, using face-to-face interviews through an online medium between July 1 and July 30, 2020.

Participants and inclusion/exclusion criteria: Inclusion criteria were set at being at least 25 years old and having been a foster parent for at least six months.

Measures

The data were collected through a questionnaire and the Need Satisfaction Scale.

Questionnaire Form

A form prepared by the researchers consisted of eight closed-ended questions on sociodemographic characteristics (gender, age, education, marital status, and employment status) and five further questions on the foster parents' characteristics (biological child presence, age at the time of becoming a foster parent, gender of the child fostered, age of the child fostered, foster parent duration). In addition, eight closed-ended questions (factors in decision, difficulties experienced before the process, positive experiences after becoming a foster parent, negative experiences after becoming a foster parent, point of realization that the child had a psychological problem, the solution, situations that upset/disturbed them during the process, and situations in which one felt incompetent as a foster parent) investigated the parents' experiences in becoming/being a foster family. These questions were established through a review of the relevant literature (Bilican Gökçaya, 2014; Daşbaşı, 2015; Goemans, van Geel, & Vedder, 2018; Tezel, Demirel & Şahin Kaya, 2018; Erdugan, 2019, Gökdoğan Şahin, 2019; Yıldırım alp & Hız, 2020).

Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction Scale (BPNSS)

The BPNSS was developed by Deci and Ryan (1991) and translated/adapted to Turkish by Bacanlı and Cihangir Çankaya (2003). The 7-point Likert-type scale consists of 21 items and measures the individual's three basic psychological needs: autonomy (items 1, 4, 8, 11, 17, and 20), competence (items 3, 5, 10, 13, 15, and 19), and relatedness (items 2, 6, 7, 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, and 21). Autonomy is the ability to choose one's behavior and freely make a decision; competence is the ability to cope with phenomena; relatedness is the sense of belonging to the environment in which a person lives and with the people with whom one has established close relationships (Cihangir Çankaya, 2005). The range of possible scores is 21–147 for the entire scale, 7–49 for the Autonomy subscale, 6–42 for the Competence subscale, and 8–56 for the Relatedness subscale, with higher scores indicating that the individual's basic psychological needs are being satisfied (and lower scores indicating that they are not). The internal consistency coefficients of the scale are .71, .60, and .74 for the subscales and .83 in total. In the present study, the Cronbach Alpha values were .64 for Autonomy, .51 for Competence, .67 for Relatedness, and .81 overall.

Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 22.0 (Statistical Package of Social Sciences Inc.; Chicago, IL, USA) software program was used for the statistical analysis of the study. Mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage values were used in the study. Parametric test assumptions established that the data were suitable for normal distribution and that the group variances were equal; therefore, the Shapiro-Wilk test was applied and nonparametric tests were used, since $p < .05$. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare the means of two groups, and the Kruskal Wallis H test to compare the means of more than two groups. Since the group variances were not equal (homogeneity of variance: Levene test $p < .05$), Tamhane's T2 and LSD tests were applied to post hoc multiple comparisons tests. To examine the relationship between foster parents' experiences of being a foster family and their psychological need satisfaction scores, Spearman Correlation Analysis was conducted, since the data did not fit the normal distribution (Özdamar, 2015).

FINDINGS

The BPNSS overall and subscale mean scores of the foster families included in the study are provided in Table 1. The overall mean score of the BPNSS for foster families was 118.38 ± 15.83 ; skewness was $-.726 \pm .029$, and kurtosis was $-.252 \pm .058$. The mean scores of the Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness subscales were 33.57 ± 5.90 , 32.22 ± 5.44 , and 52.58 ± 7.10 , respectively. A review of frequency distribution revealed that the skewness value was flattened because it was below alpha 3, and kurtosis was negatively skewed-left-slanted because its value was below zero. For this reason, we concluded that the scale and its subdimensions were not in agreement with the normal distribution (Özdamar, 2015).

Table 1. Participants' Need Satisfaction Scale Points (n = 138)

Need Satisfaction Scale	Min	Max	Mean	Skewness	Kurtosis
Autonomy subscale	19	42	33.57 ± 5.90	$-.552 \pm .029$	$-.589 \pm .058$
Competence subscale	17	42	32.22 ± 5.44	$-.493 \pm .029$	$-.034 \pm .058$
Relatedness subscale	27	63	52.58 ± 7.10	$-.719 \pm .029$	$-.020 \pm .058$
Total Scale	67	144	118.38 ± 15.83	$-.726 \pm .029$	$-.252 \pm .058$

The foster parent sample was composed of 84 women (60.9%) and 54 men (39.1%) with a mean age of 48.65 ± 9.69 years. Most foster parents (90.6%) were married, indicating that married individuals were more involved in the foster family system than single people. In terms of education, 27.5% were high school graduates and all university graduates were 39.1% among the foster parents. This showed that as the education level of an individual increased, the probability of becoming a foster parent also increased. In terms of the educational status of the families and BPNSS scores, only the Sufficiency subscale score was significant ($p < .05$). The high competence level of foster parents with postgraduate education positively affected self-awareness (Table 2).

Table 2. Need Satisfaction Scale scores by sociodemographic characteristics of participants (n=138)

Sociodemographic characteristics	Need Satisfaction Subscale				Scale Total
	n(%)	Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness	Mean±SD
Sex					
Women	84(60.9)	33.52 ± 6.11	31.86 ± 5.15	52.20 ± 6.86	117.59 ± 15.45
Men	54(39.1)	32.14 ± 6.13	31.35 ± 6.28	50.37 ± 8.49	113.87 ± 18.56
		$U=1947.50, p=.161$	$U=2141.50, p=.579$	$U=2027.50, p=.292$	$U=2091.00, p=.440$
Age in years (Mean 48.65 ± 9.69)					
25–34	12(8.7)	28.41 ± 6.24	28.00 ± 4.00	47.75 ± 7.33	104.16 ± 14.91
35–44	34(24.6)	33.85 ± 8.89	34.32 ± 5.76	54.76 ± 7.45	122.94 ± 16.95
45 or older	92(66.7)	33.26 ± 6.02	31.16 ± 5.34	50.76 ± 7.28	115.18 ± 15.97
		$\chi^2=6.645, p=.036^*$	$\chi^2=14.485, p=.001^*$	$\chi^2=12.607, p=.002^*$	$\chi^2=12.605, p=.002^*$
Marital Status					
Married	125(90.6)	32.75 ± 6.28	31.56 ± 5.76	51.45 ± 7.78	115.76 ± 17.38
Single	13(9.4)	35.23 ± 3.98	32.69 ± 3.79	51.76 ± 5.26	119.69 ± 8.61
		$U=662.50, p=.273$	$U=710.50, p=.456$	$U=771.50, p=.765$	$U=761.00, p=.707$
Highest education attained					
Primary school	26(18.8)	33.38 ± 6.90	30.30 ± 6.39	50.34 ± 9.08	114.03 ± 20.10
Secondary school	20(14.5)	35.05 ± 5.56	32.05 ± 3.67	53.25 ± 6.39	120.35 ± 12.69
High school	38(27.5)	33.47 ± 4.96	32.34 ± 6.07	51.63 ± 7.59	117.44 ± 15.69
University	38(27.5)	30.81 ± 7.26	30.34 ± 5.66	49.92 ± 8.01	111.07 ± 18.81
Master's degree	16(11.6)	33.75 ± 3.89	34.93 ± 3.31	54.50 ± 3.22	123.18 ± 7.58
		$\chi^2=6.059, p=.195$	$\chi^2=9.935, p=.042^*$	$\chi^2=4.494, p=.343$	$\chi^2=4.269, p=.371$
Employment status					
Employed	65(47.1)	32.32 ± 6.44	31.98 ± 6.10	51.23 ± 8.34	115.53 ± 18.98
Housewife	29(21.0)	34.75 ± 5.24	31.68 ± 5.24	52.68 ± 6.76	119.13 ± 14.03
Retired	44(31.9)	32.79 ± 6.12	31.18 ± 5.12	51.06 ± 6.90	115.04 ± 14.96
		$\chi^2=2.808, p=.246$	$\chi^2=.460, p=.794$	$\chi^2=1.195, p=.550$	$\chi^2=1.030, p=.598$

It was found that the BPNSS scores of foster parents were well above the average; moreover, psychological need satisfaction increased with age. The autonomy, competence, and relatedness scores of foster parents—especially those within the 35–44

years age range—were relatively high. A significant difference was determined by age group in the subscale and overall scale scores of the individuals participating in the study ($p < .05$). In an advanced analysis, the differences between age groups and the Autonomy (Tamhane's T2 $p = .001$), Competence (Tamhane's T2 $p = .001$), Relatedness (Tamhane's T2 $p = .001$), and overall scores (Tamhane's T2 $p = .001$) were significant.

The relationships between the Autonomy subscale score and the overall score with the age at which the families became foster families were significant, as were the relationships between the Competence subscale and the overall score with the age of the fostered child. It was found that as the age of foster parents increased, their Autonomy scores also increased. This situation showed that age affected the decision to become a foster parent. It was also found that the majority (78.3%) of the children placed with a foster family were girls; 42.0% of them were 3 years old and younger, and 31.9% of them were 3–6 years old. This shows that the majority of foster parents took in girls at younger ages. The difference between the duration of being a foster parent and the BPNSS overall score was significant ($p < .05$), with one value (LSD, $p = .028$) for foster parent durations of 2–5 years and 6–10 years and another value (LSD, $p = .035$) for foster parent durations of 6–10 and 11–20 years (Table 3).

Table 3. Need Satisfaction Scale scores of participants by certain characteristics of foster family (n=138)

Characteristics of foster families	n(%)	Need Satisfaction Subscale			Scale Total Mean±SD
		Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness	
Biological child presence					
Yes	107(77.5)	33.26±6.17	31.88±5.93	51.72±7.72	116.87±17.46
No	31(22.5)	32.03±6.01	30.90±4.26	50.64±7.05	113.58±14.07
		U=1450.00, $p = .286$	U=1427.00, $p = .237$	U=1450.00, $p = .288$	U=1401.00, $p = .190$
Age at time of becoming a foster parent					
25–34 years	14(10.1)	28.64±5.73	29.85±4.60	48.57±7.18	107.07±15.20
35–44 years	65(47.1)	32.98±6.22	32.61±5.46	52.44±7.77	118.04±17.31
45 years or older	59(42.8)	34.01±5.75	31.05±5.85	51.11±7.33	116.18±16.07
		$\chi^2 = 7.839$, $p = .020^*$	$\chi^2 = 3.159$, $p = .182$	$\chi^2 = 4.159$, $p = .125$	$\chi^2 = 6.202$, $p = .045^*$
Gender of foster child in home					
Girls	108(78.3)	33.29±5.82	31.98±5.63	51.95±7.35	117.23±16.04
Boys	30(21.7)	31.86±7.14	30.53±5.41	49.80±8.20	112.20±18.94
		U=1465.50, $p = .424$	U=1391.50, $p = .237$	U=1375.50, $p = .206$	U=1359.00, $p = .178$
Age of foster child in home					
2 years or younger	58(42.0)	33.46±5.90	31.22±4.42	51.10±7.04	115.79±14.58
3–6 years	44(31.9)	30.95±6.70	30.43±6.86	50.54±8.01	111.93±11.41
7 years old or older	36(26.1)	34.69±5.17	33.88±5.08	53.25±7.72	121.83±15.35
		$\chi^2 = 8.032$, $p = .018$	$\chi^2 = 6.759$, $p = .034^*$	$\chi^2 = 3.623$, $p = .163$	$\chi^2 = 7.618$, $p = .022^*$
Foster parent duration					
Less than 1 year	54(39.1)	33.98±5.89	31.64±6.67	52.55±8.16	118.18±18.15
2–5 years	34(24.6)	33.17±6.02	32.23±5.15	52.08±7.10	117.50±15.87
6–10 years	23(16.7)	29.78±6.84	28.78±4.11	49.04±8.18	107.60±15.84
11–20 years	27(19.6)	33.48±5.53	33.44±3.95	50.66±6.00	117.59±14.19
		$\chi^2 = 7.032$, $p = .071$	$\chi^2 = 10.953$, $p = .012$	$\chi^2 = 5.533$, $p = .137$	$\chi^2 = 8.105$, $p = .044^*$

Abbreviation: SD, Standard deviation; U, Mann-Whitney U test; χ^2 , Kruskal Wallis H test.

* $p < .05$

Table 4 shows the relationships between various situations experienced as a foster parent and the BPNSS scores. For deciding to become a foster parent, there was a statistically significant positive relationship between the existence of foster parent acquaintances and Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness subscale scores and between promotional seminars and Competence subscale score. A review of the preliminary difficulties of being a foster parent showed that there was a significant positive relationship between facing bureaucratic obstacles and Competence subscale score, as well as a significant negative relationship between not facing any bureaucratic obstacles at all and Competence subscale score. As for situations where families thought that they were incompetent as foster parents, there was a significant negative significance relationship between the consideration that they were physically and socially incompetent and Autonomy subscale score ($p < .05$).

Table 4. The relationship between some situations in participants' foster family process and Need Satisfaction Scale scores (n = 138)

Some situations as experienced in participants' foster family process	n(%) [#]	Need Satisfaction Subscale					
		Autonomy		Competence		Relatedness	
		r	p	r	P	r	p
Factors in making decision							
Orphanage/dorm visits	77(55.8)	-.055	.525	.041	.635	.001	.995
Foster parent acquaintance	56(40.6)	183.3*	.032	264**	.002	.273**	.001
Promotional seminars	43(31.2)	.144	.091	.235**	.006	.293**	.001

Failure to meet the adoption conditions	28(20.3)	-.146	.087	-.031	.718	.036	.677
Difficulties experienced before the process							
Difficulty in persuading the spouse	12(8.7)	.060	.488	.047	.582	.064	.454
Encountering bureaucratic obstacles	43(31.2)	.017	.846	.204*	.016	.041	.637
None	93(67.4)	.008	.922	-.167	.050	-.011	.894
Positive experiences after becoming a foster parent							
Maturation	86(62.3)	-.064	.455	-.021	.803	-.006	.941
Being a good role model	107(77.5)	-.054	.533	.077	.370	.016	.849
Increased social status	49(35.5)	.074	.391	.059	.489	.150	.080
Negative experiences after becoming a foster parent							
Physical overtiredness	14(10.1)	.004	.966	.004	.966	.024	.781
Psychological exhaustion	20(14.5)	-.040	.638	-.042	.632	-.076	.377
Occasional regrets	5(3.6)	-.161	.060	-.047	.586	-.071	.410
Solution taken when realized that child had a psychological problem							
Getting support from a psychologist/psychiatrist	115(83.3)	-.104	.224	.027	.752	.092	.282
Getting support from social care specialists	60(43.5)	-.023	.789	-.158	.064	-.144	.092
Getting support from foster families	37(26.8)	.093	.280	.006	.948	.023	.785
Situations that upset/disturbed them during the process							
The idea of returning the child to the biological parent	77(55.8)	.023	.789	-.090	.295	.053	.536
Longer adjustment process	40(29.0)	.040	.645	.128	.136	.099	.249
Having a psychological or physical condition that cannot be resolved	64(46.6)	.084	.329	.117	.173	.064	.456
The thought of an inability to provide a good education	60(43.5)	-.006	.949	-.081	.343	-.032	.707
Situations in which one felt incompetent as a foster parent							
Physical incompetence	15(10.9)	-.194*	.023	-.018	.833	-.077	.368
Emotional incompetence	32(23.2)	.047	.587	.006	.944	-.075	.383
Social incompetence	24(17.4)	-.211*	.013	-.144	.091	-.144	.092
Economic incompetence	21(15.2)	-.129	.130	-.041	.630	-.115	.178

DISCUSSION

Like all living things, every human has their own unique needs. Individual needs may be of a biological, social, or psychological origin. For a person to live healthily, not only biological but also psychological needs must be met (Nigar, 2014). We argue that the three basic psychological needs are autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Satisfying these needs is necessary for individuals to grow, integrate, and develop as well as to improve their mental health and well-being (Andersen, 2000); while meeting these needs creates satisfaction and happiness in an individual, not meeting them leads to pain and misery. The individual who cannot meet their needs is not only unhappy but also unable to contribute to their environment and society (Yasul, 2016).

Relevant studies (Reis et al., 2000; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999) have suggested that as the level of daily satisfaction of an individual's psychological needs increases, their positive emotions increase and their psychosomatic problems and negative emotions decrease. In their research on university students, İlhan and Özbay (2010) found that individuals who satisfied their psychological needs had higher levels of subjective well-being. Kulamber Demirci (2019) observed that an increase in psychological need satisfaction in married individuals led to a great increase in subjective well-being.

In the present study, which aimed to determine the psychological need satisfaction levels of foster families, it was found that the overall and subscale need satisfaction scores of the families were high. This finding suggests that individuals who choose to become foster parents enjoy higher levels of autonomous and competent satisfaction of psychological needs and are good at human relationships; thus, they tend toward becoming foster parents. This can be particularly important in terms of raising healthy future generations. Certain characteristics of those who gravitate toward the foster family system may cause them to become foster parents. In previous studies, it has been determined that foster parents' empathy skills and altruistic behaviors are advanced and good-tempered, compromising characteristics are dominant as their personality traits (Yeşilkayalı, 2015; Vural et al., 2016; Taşdemir Yiğitoğlu, Kiray Vural & Körükçü, 2020). It is suggested that foster parents' higher psychological need satisfaction, empathy skills, altruistic behavior, and agreeable personality are very important features in communication and in helping the child.

Satisfying individuals' basic psychological needs increases their subjective well-being levels (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Eryılmaz and Ercan's (2011) study determined that the subjective well-being of individuals increased as their age increased. In an examination

of the relationship between psychological need satisfaction and quality of life and mental well-being in adults, Bilir (2017) suggested that age influenced the satisfaction of psychological needs. Consistent with these findings in the extant literature, the present study concluded that age was significant in overall and subscale scores: as individuals get older, they can be more autonomous, more successful, and more positive in communicating with those around them. Thus, these people can become individuals who can independently make a free choice, who are more skilled in decision-making, who are well-adjusted, who have developed the ability to understand others, and who believe that they will be successful in their work. It is estimated that as the age of foster parents increases, their BPNSS overall and subscale scores become more significant.

In this study, significance was observed between the Autonomy subscale and overall scores and the age of the foster parents, and these scores increased as the foster parent age increased. Autonomy means that one makes and maintains one's own choices and experiences (Çikrikçi, 2015) and manages and maintain one's attitudes and behaviors through inner motivation. The need for an individual to be autonomous involves experiencing a sense of independence and responsibility while acting in line with one's goals. In this sense, autonomy includes all aspects of the person. It can be seen that individuals who are more autonomous experience less negativity and stress. People with a high sense of autonomy are more determined in their starting and ending behaviors because of their motivation and internality. Such people tend to be independent, work individually, choose jobs where they can express themselves, resist social pressures, and dislike situations that lead to such pressures (Özen, 2016).

It has been determined that the average age for foster parenting coincides with the middle age period (Ciarrochi, Randle, Miller and Dolnicar, 2012; Yeşilkayalı, 2015; Koc, 2016; Baysal, 2017; Yıldırım and Hız, 2020). As individuals age, they are more aware and conscious of what they want and act autonomously in this direction, which suggests that this correlation is expected.

In the present study, significance was found between the level of education and the Competence subscale score, although with the Autonomy and Relatedness subscale scores. The mean Competence score was found to be higher in those with a post-graduate level of education. Competence is the awareness of one's abilities and strengths, found by combining cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral elements. The individual's attitudes and behaviors are a result of being aware of their competence to achieve their goals. Competence is an important factor for individuals to cope with difficulties in their lives and to reach their goals. The need for competence, together with individuals' desire to influence their environment, qualifies as a guide for situations in which individuals can have positive relationships with their environment, use their capacities at the highest level, and overcome issues (Çikrikçi, 2015). The individual experiences a process of development and learning throughout their life. Often, a situation stops being enough after a while, so the individual starts the process of learning something new. Individuals with a high sense of competence reach their goals more quickly and experience more satisfaction (Özer, 2009).

In this study, the high Competency subscale of foster families with post-graduate education suggests that education affects an individual's level of awareness of their abilities and strength.

This study determined that gender did not influence individual satisfaction of psychological needs. The literature includes studies with different findings on the relationship between the satisfaction of psychological needs and the variable of gender. While some research concludes that the satisfaction of needs does not differ by gender (Eratay, Sarı & Kermen, 2010; Gündoğdu & Yavuzer, 2012; Sarı, Yenigün, Altıncı & Öztürk, 2011; Eryılmaz and Ercan 2011; Nigar, 2014; Bilir, 2017), other studies suggest the opposite (Hamurcu, 2011; Toprak, 2014; Küçü, 2018). Cihangir Çankaya (2009) suggested that while there was no significant difference between the genders in terms of autonomy and competence need satisfaction, there was a significant difference in favor of women in terms of relatedness. Moreover, a significant relationship was found between gender and empathy, altruistic behavior, and personality traits of foster parents (Yeşilkayalı, 2015; Vural et al., 2016; Taşdemir Yiğitoğlu, Kıray Vural & Körükçü, 2020). Based on the knowledge that physiological, social, and psychological needs are universal for each individual (Nigar, 2014), we can say that gender is not expected to affect the level of psychological need satisfaction.

Previous studies have found different results regarding marital status and employment status. Some studies found that marital status had no influence on need satisfaction (Eryılmaz & Ercan, 2011; Nigar, 2014; Bilir, 2017), while others found the opposite (Carr et al. 2014; Washworth, 2016). This study found that marital status and employment status did not influence the levels of need satisfaction.

One of the factors in deciding to be a foster parent is the presence of acquaintances who are foster families. A positive relationship was found between the presence of acquaintances who are foster families and Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness subscale scores. In other words, it indicates that individuals discussing this subject with acquaintances is influential on people making autonomous decisions by allowing them to prepare themselves and feel competent. Another factor in making decisions on foster parenting is promotional seminars: a relationship between 'promotional seminars' and Competence subscale score means that relevant education makes the individual feel competent about this subject. A list of the reasons that motivated families to decide to become foster parents included having a child, helping someone, having an acquaintance foster parent, and attending seminars on foster family. These findings are consistent with our study (Bilican Gökaya 2014; Tezel et al., 2018, Erdugan, 2019; Certel, 2019).

In this study, we observed a negative relationship between families' physical and social incompetence as foster parents and Autonomy subscale score, as well as a relationship between encountering/not encountering preliminary bureaucratic obstacles and Competence subscale score. In addition to the basic-, first-, and second-level training of foster families, preparatory training

for the foster family of the children who will be placed and supportive training during the process help increase the competence of the parents (Certel, 2019).

It has been suggested in previous research that families who have had difficulties in coping with emerging problems should receive therapeutic support to increase their competence (Buehler, Rhodes, Orme and Cuddeback, 2006). Family therapy sessions, parenting attitudes, and family-based approaches that address the family and the child together are used to reduce stress and to solve the problems encountered in being a foster family (Abukan, 2020). Therapeutic interventions aimed at foster families should be coordinated by experienced professionals with a lower case workload. The interventions needed for the wider social environment (behavioral problems, communication, anxiety, stress, anger, etc.) should also be planned by professionals (Baker et al., 2007; Certel, 2019). Furthermore, foster family associations play an important role in strengthening parents' autonomy in matters such as connecting with others, sharing problems, and being informed (Certel, 2019).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study concludes that the foster parents studied here had high levels of psychological need satisfaction, had established desirable human relations, and were autonomous and competent. Also the presence of a biological child, the gender of the child being fostered, and the duration of being a foster parent did not influence need satisfaction levels.

It is important to develop training programs for foster families that reflect the characteristics found in this research study. We suggest that it may be important for accredited members of the profession to determine individuals' psychological need satisfaction levels before they become a foster family and to select families according to the above criterion.

Limitations of the study

Some difficulties and limitations were encountered in this study. The first limitation of our study is the use of non-probability sampling method in sample determination method. The fact that the sample group is predominantly in Denizli province constitutes another limitation. Therefore, the study cannot be generalised to the universe.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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Statements of publication ethics

We hereby declare that the study has not unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed carefully.

Researchers' contribution rate

All authors were involved in study planning and design.

Conception and design: B.K.V.

Collected the data: B.K.V., Ö.K, G.T.Y.

Analysis and interpretation of data: B.K.V.

Drafting the article: B.K.V., Ö.K, G.T.Y.

Final approval of the version to be published: B.K.V., Ö.K, G.T.Y.

All authors approved the final version for submission.

Ethics Committee Approval Information

The study was carried out according to the principles of the Helsinki Declaration. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their informed consent was obtained before data collection. Ethical approval for the study was given by the Pamukkale University Ethics Committee (approval date and ref number June 25, 2020 / 60116787-020/37913).

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