

## Determining the Factors Affecting Youths' Family Satisfaction

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**Abstract:** The concept of family satisfaction is one of the important topics studied in the literature because of its strong effects on individuals' experiences within the family, lifestyles, relationships in daily life, and job satisfaction. The research done on life satisfaction has addressed the factors that have positive or negative effects on life satisfaction. In the literature, topics such as life satisfaction, marriage satisfaction, and job satisfaction have been studied over their relationship with family satisfaction. This study attempts to determine the factors that identify youths' family satisfaction. The elements that determine youths' life satisfaction have been analyzed using ordered logistic regression through the survey data the Turkish Youth Civil Society Organizations Platform applied to 7,949 people across Turkey in 2018. According to the findings obtained from the study, the variables of income level, the youths' parents' education levels, number of people in the household, happiness levels, and level of satisfaction with economic status have emerged as the variables affecting youths' satisfaction with family life.

**Keywords:** family life • ordered logistic regression • family satisfaction

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Researching family satisfaction is very important in terms of understanding youths' emotions and attitudes about family members and family life. Satisfaction with family life reveals how happy family members are with each other and how satisfied they are with living together. While individuals having a positive perception on the topic of family satisfaction expresses a high level of satisfaction, having a negative perception expresses a low level of satisfaction (Coşkuner, 2003, pp. 35–36). Studies on family satisfaction have addressed many factors, both personal and familial, such as the family's religiousness and family members' mental health status. Greeff (2000; as cited in Jones et al., 2018, p. 29) expressed the positive results he obtained on issues like harmony, adaption, division of labor in the family, and family functionality in his study as families possessing high family satisfaction. Meanwhile, School et al. (2003; as cited in Jones et al., 2018, p. 29) addressed family satisfaction in the context of the time individuals spend with family in their free time and while doing daily routines. In studies that have been done, individuals' attitudes and activities on topics such as worshipping with family members (e.g., going to church), free time activities at home (e.g., watching TV), and eating food together have been evaluated through family satisfaction.

Satisfaction with family life has been addressed in connection with many issues in the literature. One of the most effective factors in the individual's satisfaction with family life, primarily in the context of economic prosperity, is the satisfaction of material needs. Maslow (2001) determined in the theory of need that meeting food, clothing, and housing needs has a direct impact on individuals' satisfaction levels. In this context, the provision of material needs for individuals whose basic needs are met by the family directly affects individuals' life satisfaction (as cited in Göcen, 2015, p. 91). In addition, the work-family clash has been one of the topics most encountered from past to present within social life as well as most studied; it is also an important factor on the point of satisfaction with family life.

Alongside these, the relationship styles individuals establish with family members is another important factors affecting life satisfaction. The problems youths experience within the family have a negative impact on both their family and life satisfaction. According to the Turkey Family Structure Research, at the top of the problems youths experience with family members come spending and consumption habits (32%), choice of friends (31%), outward appearance styles (28%), eating and house arrangement styles (24%), Internet use/computer games (20%), and entertainment styles (20%). The status of negative or positive relationships within the family affects individuals' family and life satisfaction as well as their academic and work lives. While the good relationships individuals establish with family members from childhood positively impact their life satisfaction levels, at the same time these good relationships also contribute to their adapting to their social environment and also being happy and productive individuals.

Studies on children's satisfaction with family life generally have been done in the context of life satisfaction studies. In life satisfaction studies, a positive, subjective, or general evaluation is done on some special areas of life, such as a person's entire life, their family life, or school experience (Diener et al., 1999, p. 277).

### Method

This study attempts to determine within its scope the factors affecting youths' levels of satisfaction with family. Analyses have been carried out on the research Turkey's Youth Civil Society Organizations Platform did for this purpose using data collected through surveys from 7,949 participants between the ages of 18 and 25. The dependent variable being subject to research has been chosen as the participants' levels of satisfaction with family life, and ordered qualitative preference models have been chosen as the method for explaining the participants' levels of happiness with their family structure in connection with the answers received as a Likert-type scale ranging from "I am not satisfied at all" to "I am completely satisfied."

The elements that, by using the data obtained from the surveys, determine youths' family satisfaction have been analyzed through ordered logistic regression. This determines the elements that impact youths' levels of satisfaction with family life. The model is predicted to generally follow the lines where level of satisfaction with family life is a function of education, income level, mother's education level, father's education level, family size, happiness level, level of satisfaction with economic status, and religiousness.

Youths' levels of being satisfied with family life are explained through their education levels, their mother and fathers' education levels, the number of people living in the household, happiness levels, levels of satisfaction with their own economic status, and levels of religiosity. Of these variables, happiness levels are formed from the answers participants gave to questions obtained with a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "I am not at all happy" to "I am very happy;" satisfaction with economic status is formed from the categorical variable that takes values again with a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "I am not at all satisfied" to "I am very satisfied;" and level of religiousness is formed from participants' answers to the question "To what extent do you see yourself as a religious person?", whose answers were obtained with a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "I am not at all religious" to "I am quite religious."

Because the values the variables described in this model have are ordered and categorical, the ordered logit model has been addressed from the qualitative ordered choice models as the estimation method.  $Y$  is an ordered response taking on the values  $\{1, 2, \dots, M\}$  for some known integer  $M$  and  $c_i$  ( $i=1, 2, \dots, M$ ) is the unknown cut points or threshold parameters.  $y$  is the latent variable determined by  $y=x\beta+e$ , ( $e \sim N(0,1)$ ). The model has been estimated using the maximum likelihood method where  $Y$  for category

$$Y = \begin{cases} 1, & \text{if } y < c_1 \\ 2, & \text{if } c_1 < y \leq c_2 \\ 3, & \text{if } c_2 < y \leq c_3 \\ \dots & \dots \\ M, & \text{if } y > c_M \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

and the following is the similarity function ( $l_i(\cdot)$ ) belonging to each category:

$$l_i(c, \alpha_1) = 1[y_i = 1] \log [\phi(c_1 - \alpha_1 X_1)] + 1[y_i = 2] \log [\phi(c_2 - \alpha_1 X_1) - \phi(c_1 - \alpha_1 X_1)] + L + 1[y_i = m] \log [1 - \phi(c_M - \alpha_1 X_1)] \quad (2)$$

In the ordered logit model,  $\alpha_1$ , being the slope coefficient, remains constant for each category. This case, which is known as the parallel slopes assumption, shows the slope coefficient to be constant in the different categories in terms of the different values the dependent variable takes. However, in cases where this assumption is not provided, the coefficients that are estimated through the qualitative ordered preference model will be offset. Whether or not the assumption of parallel slopes is provided should be checked with the Similarity Ratio, and whether or not it has been provided should be checked with tests such as Wald  $\chi^2$  and Brant tests (Agresti, 2002; Arı & Yıldız, 2014, p. 10; Long, 1997; Williams, 2016, p. 19). Agresti (1984), Brant (1990), Clogg and Shihadeh (1994), McCullagh and Nelder (1989), Maddala (1983), and Fu (1988) recommended to use generalized ordered response model to predict (2) in the absence of the assumption of parallel curves.

The generalized ordered logit model for variable  $Y$  with  $M$  number of categories is:

$$p(Y_i > j) = g(X\alpha_j) = \frac{e^{(c_j + X_i\alpha_j)}}{1 + e^{(c_j + X_i\alpha_j)}}, \quad j = 1, 2, \dots, M - 1 \quad (3)$$

The probability of  $Y$  being in each category with respect to the number of categories ( $M$ ) is:

$$\begin{aligned} p(Y = 1) &= 1 - g(X_i\alpha_1), \\ p(Y = j) &= g(X_i\alpha_{j-1}) - g(X_i\alpha_j), \quad j = 2, 3, \dots, M - 1 \\ p(Y = M) &= g(X_i\alpha_{M-1}) \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

In the generalized logit model, the slope coefficient in each equation,  $\alpha$ , varies with respect to  $Y$ 's categories. As a result, the number of parameters estimated in the generalized logit model will be greater compared to the ordered logit model (Williams,

2016, p. 11). Even if this situation gives rise to reduced degrees of freedom, it will allow one to avoid limiting proportional probability and will provide the opportunity to obtain the explanatory variables' different effects in each category.

### **Findings and Results**

The vast majority of the participants is formed of primary, middle, and high school students (76%). Of these, 44% are in high school. The research has determined those who are illiterate as the base class for education level. Another important factor in the research is income level. Among income groups, the largest one consisting of 37.5% is the group who receive monthly income between 2001-3000 TL. In terms of income level, those with less than a 2000 TL monthly income have been chosen as the base class.

The mother and father have a great role in youths' family life. Therefore, the mother's and father's education level have a significant place in youths' satisfaction with family. In this research, 40% of the mothers and 32.2% of the fathers have primary school education as the highest level. When looked at generally, the youths who participated in the research are seen to have parents with primary-, middle-, and high-school education levels. The base class for parents' education levels has been determined as the group who are illiterate.

In this study performed with youths, 34.9% of households have four people, 21.1% have five people, and 15.5% have three people. The percentage of individuals who live alone, which has been determined as the base class in the research, is 3.2%. Apart from these variables, the range of answers to the question asked to the participants in the research for the degrees of being satisfied with the variable of happiness have a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "I am not happy at all" to "I am very happy." Analyses have been performed for the variable of being religious with data gathered using the 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "I am not religious at all" to "I am quite religious" and whose base class is "I am not religious at all."

First the parallel slopes assumption in the ordered logit model was tested using the similarity ratio; the test statistic was 354.22, and the result was reached that the assumption of parallel slopes and the 0.000 probability value belonging to this statistic were not valid. Therefore, the model was estimated again using the generalized ordered logit model, and the variables that were statistically significant as well as significant on youths' levels of being satisfied with family life in all categories come to the fore as income rate, mother's education level, and happiness level. Aside from these variables, the result has been reached that having fathers with a high-school education level, having five people living at home, and not working but looking for work also have an impact on being satisfied with family life.

This study has attempted to determine the factors affecting the elements of youths' satisfaction with family life by using ordered logistic regression to analyze the results of the survey the Turkish Youth Civil Society Organizations Platform had performed with youths in Turkey. When looking generally at the research results, a few important issues come to the fore. Youths' income level is at the top of the factors impacting family satisfaction. Accordingly, as income levels increase compared to those whose income is less than 2,000 TL a month, the level of dissatisfaction with family life is seen to decrease. Alongside this, the level of being completely satisfied with family life also increases with higher income levels. When examining the results in terms of being satisfied with family life, the satisfaction levels of those in the 2,000-3,000 TL/month group is seen to be greater than those in the higher and lower income groups. Another factor that draws attention as a result of the research in connection with income level is the relationship between the level of satisfaction with economic status and satisfaction with family life. Youths' levels of satisfaction with their economic status increases their level of satisfaction with family life and also decreases their level of not being satisfied at all. In the literature, individuals' economic welfare has been addressed as one of the most impactful factors on the issue of satisfaction with family life. Individuals' basic needs being met, such as clothing, food, and shelter, especially in the context of youths whose basic needs are met by their family, has been stated to have a direct relationship with family-life satisfaction.

Another important factor that drew attention in the research and impacts family satisfaction is the mother's education level. Mothers with higher education levels results in youths having lower levels of satisfaction with family life. In addition, this situation is seen to increase the probability of not being satisfied at all with family life when compared to those whose mothers are illiterate. More than one reason may exist for this result. Primarily, significant changes in today's society have been experienced in women's roles both at home and in social life. In parallel with the changes experienced recently in social life, women's education levels have increased as well as their participation in the workforce. However, the fact that women's role within the family has not changed and has not reduced what is expected of women in family life. This case has led to differentiations in the family and can impact the likelihood of being satisfied with family life. Meanwhile, changes these days are also experienced in terms of children and views on childhood. In this new understanding of childhood, children are handled as social actors and active beings who can build their own private life with interests and advantages unique to themselves. Mothers' increased education levels can be a factor with an increased area of impact on the child's life. This case is able to negatively affect the likelihood of being satisfied with family life for youths trying to construct their personal private life.

Another factor affecting youths' satisfaction with family life is the father's education status. Fathers with increased education levels are seen in the research to also increase the likelihood of being satisfied. In fact, this situation can be addressed in connection with youths' income level and level of satisfaction with their economic status, because the father's most important position in the family institution is that of providing for the family. However, the changing childhood paradigms have also affected the understanding of fatherhood. Increases in the father's education level allows him to be able to develop a more understanding approach toward the family's economic welfare as well as youths' behaviors, and this case increases the likelihood of youths being satisfied with family life.

When looking at the relationship between level of satisfaction with family life and number of people in the household, those with three or more people living at home are seen to have greater satisfaction with family compared to those living alone. In the literature, individuals who have had good relations with family members since childhood are stated to have increased satisfaction from family life as well as from work and life in general. In addition to this, performed studies have stated leisure activities done with family members to contribute to enabling individuals to adapt to their social environment and to being happy and productive individuals; this situation is said to have a very important effect on increasing family satisfaction.

The individual's level of happiness comes at the head of the factors that directly impact the level of satisfaction with family life. Many factors have been found to basically affect youths' happiness levels, such as age, school status, work status, income level, parents' education levels, and level of satisfaction with economic status. The conditions youths are in, their social circles, and the relationship they establish in daily life are able to affect their happiness levels. Increased happiness levels increases the likelihood of youths being completely satisfied with family life and decreases the likelihood of being not at all satisfied.

As a result, a serious and quick change is seen to have been experienced in today's social structure. Many a topic, such as the family's structure (being the smallest social unit in society), its functions, and families' relationship dynamics, have been impacted by this change and transformation. According to the analysis results, increases in income level, in mother's and father's education levels, in the number of household members, in happiness levels, and in satisfaction with work and economic statuses, which are factors impacting youths' satisfaction with family life, stand out as elements that impact one's life satisfaction. Many of the performed studies in the literature have addressed family satisfaction, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction together. Researching the positive or negative perceptions youths have on the topic of satisfaction with family life will not just provide understanding of their feelings and

attitudes about family members and family life; at the same time, it will also allow their thoughts on the issues of marriage, work life, the future, and life in general to be revealed. In addition, determining the factors that impact youths' satisfaction with family life has great importance in terms of preparing the groundwork for establishing healthy relationships.

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