

**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

**EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE LEVELS OF UNDERGRADUATE AND ASSOCIATE DEGREE STUDENTS STUDYING IN HEALTH DEPARTMENTS**

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**Abstract**

Quality of life is at the forefront of the goals that all societies aim to achieve today. This is the main reason why measuring quality of life is a routine procedure in many studies. This study was carried out by undergraduate and associate degree students of health sciences; the aim of this study was to evaluate and compare the quality of life. The research was carried out on a total of 200 undergraduate and associate degree students studying in the health sciences departments of the same university in a one-year period. In order to obtain the demographic information of the students; the personal data collection form created by the researchers and the World Health Organization Quality of Life Scale-Short Form (WHOQOL-Bref) were applied by one to one interview technique.

The voluntariness of the participants was taken as a basis in filling out the questionnaires. SPSS-22 program was used to evaluate the data in our study. By making descriptive statistics, two independent groups were compared between the groups. The mean age of the associate degree students participating in our study was  $20.6 \pm 1.26$ , and the undergraduate students were  $20.8 \pm 3.07$ . When the last question, the 27th environmental question, is included in the WHOQOL-Bref scale, which consists of four sub-parameters, the name of the scale is named WHOQOL-Bref-TR. In our study, which we evaluated with WHOQOL-Bref-TR, the scores of undergraduate students in the "psychological field" sub-category were found to be significantly higher ( $p < 0.05$ ) than associate degree students in comparisons made based on education level. In the comparison made according to genders, the difference in general health, psychological, and environmental dimensions was not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ). In conclusion; in all comparisons, the level of quality of life and problem solving abilities do not differ depending on gender. As the education level increases; the psychological state, which has an effect on the quality of life, increases positively. With the data obtained, suggestions were made to curriculum arrangements and university administrations in order to increase the quality of life of young adults. ASEAN Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 22(8), September 2021: 1-7.

**Keywords:** Quality of Life, Health Sciences, Undergraduate Student, Associate Student WHOQOL-BREF.

**Introduction**

The common attitude adopted in health services recently; rather than the treatment of diseases, it

is the protection and continuation of the current health and well-being. With this attitude, the treatment-oriented role of health circles; it has evolved into the idea of increasing the level of

self-care and increasing the quality of life of the individual. It is important for public health to protect and maintain the health of every individual who makes up the society. As the values that increase the quality of life of the individual increase, we can talk about the increase in public health. In order to meet the basic life needs, the person must have the necessary self-care power. In other words, the self-care of the individual is directly related to the quality of life and therefore to human health [1].

There are many definitions in the literature on quality of life as a term. In general, quality of life is associated with positive terms such as health, happiness, wealth, and success. However, life satisfaction is a complex term that differs from person to person, such as being positive in terms of psychology and mood [2,3].

The World Health Organization (WHO) defined the quality of life in 1946; It is defined as “not only the absence of disease and infirmity, but also a state of complete mental, physical and social well-being [4]. Although there are many studies on quality of life in the field of health after this date, the concept of "quality of life" was first mentioned in the medical literature in 1960 in Long's article [5].

The WHOQOL-BREF-TR quality of life scale is a 26-question questionnaire developed by the World Health Organization. The validity of the scale in Turkey was provided by Eser et al. [6]. The scale has two forms, long and short. The long scale consists of 100 questions. The short scale, consisting of 26 questions, consists of four independent parts to measure the individual's psychological, environmental, social and physical well-being. Each section is scored separately, with the lowest 4 being the highest 20. High score is directly proportional to quality of life. The Turkish version of the short scale consists of 27 questions, and the last question measures environmental well-being. When the last question, the environment score, is included, the scale is called environment-TR [6,7,8]

Youth period is also one of the sensitive periods in terms of self-care competence. Because the individual in the youth period, by the society; It

is not accepted as a child or an adult. During this period, social and spiritual differentiations occur in the individual. Individuals in the youth period try to adapt to the changes that occur both in their body and in their social environment [9,10].

In addition, the youth period coincides with university education. Young people who start their university education enter the process of getting used to a new environment. The changing social environment, staying away from the family, learning new and different information, and the effort to keep school success high are some of the situations that the individual in the youth period has to deal with. The effort to cope with all these different situations has a significant impact on the quality of life of the individual. In this context, these situations that affect the student's quality of life appear as an important issue that affects the young person's school success rate, the way they look at life and their level of enjoying life.

For this reason, our research was carried out in order to reveal the factors that affect the self-care levels and healthy lifestyle behaviors that affect the quality of life of the students studying at vocational and higher schools in the field of health, and to put forward suggestions that will contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of the students.

## **Material and Methods**

Our study was carried out cross-sectional on the students of the associate degree program with a 2-year education period and the undergraduate program students with a 4-year education period. A total of 200 students, 100 from each, were selected by simple random sampling method from the students studying at the aforementioned universities. Data collection was carried out through a questionnaire study conducted by face-to-face interviews with the students included in the study.

Consisting of 27 questions as a data collection tool, its validity and reliability in our country was determined by Eser et al. WHO Quality of Life Questionnaire Abbreviated Version, WHOQOL-BREF [6,7] was used.

WHOQOL-Bref; It is a scale consisting of 4 sub-parameters. Each sub-section of this scale (spiritual/physical/social relations and environment) out of a total of 26 questions is evaluated over a maximum of 20 or 100 points [6]. WHO scoring recommendation was used for scoring the data obtained from the scale [11].

SPSS-22 program was used for statistical analysis. After the descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, standard deviation) of the socio-demographic data obtained and the scale scores and sub-dimension scores were made, two independent groups were compared by looking at their normal distribution conformity.

## Results

A total of 200 students, 100 of whom were associate degree and 100 undergraduate students, were included in our study. The students in our research; the sociodemographic data obtained from gender, university of education and age distribution are shown in Table 1. Accordingly, 87% of the associate degree students with an average age of 20.6 are female and 13% are male. All undergraduate students with an average age of 20.8 are female students.

**Table1: Sociodemographic data**

Sociodemographic data		
Educational Status	Sex	Age-Standard deviation (SD)
Associate Degree	87 female/13 male	20.6 ± 1.26
Undergraduate	100 female/0 male	20.8 ± 3.07

The WHOQOL-Bref-TR scale was applied to the participants in our study. WHOQOL-Bref, which consists of four sub-parameters, consists of 26 questions, when the 27th question for environmental assessment is added; it is called WHOQOL-Bref-TR. From the data obtained from the scale, the quality of life of the participants; the data we compared according to education level are given in Table 2.

In order to determine whether the mean scores of the students' quality of life levels differ

according to education, t-test analysis was used between independent groups. When the data in Table.2 are examined, the difference between undergraduate and associate degree students was found to be significant in the psychological state sub-category, which is one of the sub-parameters of quality of life according to the educational status of the students. Accordingly, for the psychological sub-dimension, the scores of undergraduate students were found to be significantly higher than those of associate degree students.

**Table 2: WHOQOL-BREF-TR (Comparison of sub-dimensions by Educational Status)**

<b>WHOQOL-BREF-TR (Comparison of sub-dimensions by Educational Status)</b>
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	Associate Degree	Undergraduate	P
<b>GHS</b>	65.12 ± 17.07	61.63 ± 16.31	0.229
<b>PHS</b>	71.96 ± 13.99	69.79 ± 14.52	0.306
<b>PS</b>	61.50 ± 13.99	65.71 ± 15.41	0.014
<b>SR</b>	60.92 ± 18.45	61.58 ± 17.28	0.821
<b>E</b>	63.28 ± 14.35	64.16 ± 13.74	0.964

**GHS:** General Health Status, **PHS:** Physical Health Status, **PS:** Psychological Status, **SR:** Social Relationships, **E:** Environment.

Comparison of WHOQOL-Bref-TR scale values by gender is shown in Table 3. Accordingly, in the comparison of the sub-dimension parameters of the WHOQOL-BREF-TR scale according to

the gender of the students, it was found that there was no significant difference between the genders in terms of quality of life levels.

**Table 3: WHOQOL-BREF-TR (Comparison of sub-dimensions by gender)**

<b>WHOQOL-BREF-TR (Comparison of sub-dimensions by gender)</b>			
	Male	Female	p
<b>GHS</b>	67.31 ± 16.57	63.10 ± 16.76	0.469
<b>PHS</b>	75.27 ± 15.39	70.57 ± 14.18	0.450
<b>PS</b>	67.95 ± 13.22	63.30 ± 14.92	0.386
<b>SR</b>	59.62 ± 29.43	61.36 ± 16.86	0.986
<b>E</b>	65.63 ± 17.95	63.59 ± 13.75	0.811

**GHS:** General Health Status, **PHS:** Physical Health Status, **PS:** Psychological Status, **SR:** Social Relationships, **E:** Environment

### **Discussion**

The findings of our study, which compared the parameters affecting the quality of life, especially the general and physical health status and psychological resilience of students studying in health departments, were evaluated. Considering the socio-demographic

characteristics of the students included in our study, the majority of the students who prefer health departments are female students. The mean age in both groups is similar.

Although there was no statistically significant difference in the comparison of the quality of life of the students included in our study by gender,





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***ASEAN Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 22(7), August 2021: 1-7.***

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Received: August 19, 2021

Accepted: September 3, 2021