



Research Article

# Well-Being and Spiritual Intelligence Predict Attitudes of Adolescents' Towards Violence

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## Abstract

In this study, it is aimed to examine the relationships between the well-being, spiritual intelligence and attitudes of adolescents living in Turkey towards violence. The sample of the study consists of 466 high school students (194 girls, 272 boys) aged between 14 and 19, selected using the convenience sampling method. In the study, "Scale for Spiritual Intelligence", "Five-Dimensional Well-being for Adolescents (EPOCH) Scale" and "Attitude towards Violence Scale for Adolescents" and demographic information form were used as measurement tools. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the predictiveness of adolescents' well-being and spiritual intelligence on their attitudes towards violence. According to the findings obtained from the research, there is a moderately negative and significant relationship between attitude towards violence and well-being. It is seen that there is a low negative and significant relationship between attitude towards violence and spiritual intelligence. It was identified that there is a moderate positive and significant relationship between well-being and spiritual intelligence scores. The well-being variable explaining 32% of the attitude scores towards violence was first included in the staged multiple regression analysis performed. And in the second stage, the spiritual intelligence variable, which contributes 2% to the explained variance, was also included. When the total variance explained is examined, it is seen that the variables of well-being and spiritual intelligence together explain 34% of the total variance in the attitude scores towards violence. This finding shows us that the change in well-being and spiritual intelligence scores predicts the change in the scores of the attitude towards violence.

## Keywords:

Turkish adolescents • Spiritual intelligence • Adolescence • Well-being • Violence

## İyi Oluş ve Manevi Zeka Ergenlerin Şiddete Yönelik Tutumlarını Yordar

### Öz

Bu çalışmada Türkiye'de yaşayan ergenlerin iyi oluş, manevi zekâ ve şiddete yönelik tutumları arasındaki ilişkilerin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmanın örneklemini elverişlilik örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak seçilen, yaşları 14 ile 19 arasında değişen 466 lise (194 kız, 272 erkek) öğrencisi oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada ölçme aracı olarak "Manevi Zekâ Ölçeği (SIS)", "Ergenler İçin Beş Boyutlu İyi Oluş (EPOCH) Ölçeği" ve "Ergenler için Şiddete Yönelik Tutum Ölçeği" ve Demografik Bilgi Formu kullanılmıştır. Ergenlerin iyi oluşlarının ve manevi zekalarının şiddete karşı tutumları üzerindeki yordayıcılığını test etmek için hiyerarşik regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgulara göre; şiddete yönelik tutum ile iyi oluş arasında orta düzeyde negatif ve anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmaktadır. Şiddete yönelik tutum ile manevi zekâ arasında düşük düzeyde negatif ve anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu görülmektedir. İyi oluş ile ve manevi zekâ puanları arasında orta düzeyde pozitif ve anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu belirlenmiştir. Yapılan aşamalı çoklu regresyon analizine ilk olarak şiddete yönelik tutum puanlarının %32'sini açıklayan iyi oluş değişkeni alınmıştır. İkinci aşamada ise açıklanan varyansa %2 katkı sağlayan manevi zekâ değişkeni de dahil edilmiştir. Açıklanan toplam varyansa bakıldığında ise, iyi oluş ve manevi zekâ değişkenlerinin birlikte şiddete yönelik tutum puanlarındaki toplam varyansın %34'ünü açıkladığı görülmektedir. Bu bulgu bize iyi oluş ve manevi zekâ puanlarındaki değişimin şiddete yönelik tutum puanlarındaki değişimi yordadığını göstermektedir.

### Anahtar Kelimeler:

Türk ergenler • Manevi zekâ • Ergenlik • İyi oluş • Şiddet

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Adolescence is a complex transition period in which identity formation begins, the meaning and values of life are questioned, and the sense of self is restructured (Kulaksızoğlu, 2004; Steinberg, 2007; Yavuzer, 2001). The development and changes experienced during adolescence are quite high compared to other developmental periods and this increases the tendency to violence and aggression in adolescents (Genç, 2016; Çuhadaroğlu Çetin, 2008; Gözütok, 2008). Violence is to behave in a way that will have negative consequences for the physical integrity, spiritual integrity, belongings or cultural values of another person or persons (Michaud, 1991; Krug et al., 2002; Prescott et al., 2018). Adolescents who try to be independent by distancing away from family and authority may exhibit behaviors that are not accepted by the society while searching for the meaning of life, and an increase in the violent and aggressive behaviors of adolescents may be seen (Dahlberg & Potter, 2001; Heinrich & Gullone, 2006; Williams & Myers, 2004).

Well-being refers to the high level of positive feelings and thoughts about one's life; the negative evaluations and behaviors of adolescents with low well-being increase (Myers & Diener, 1995). Well-being refers to being in positive relationships with the other and exhibiting positive behaviors, as well as maintaining an existential struggle in life (Fagbenro et al., 2018; Keyes et al., 2002). In this existential struggle, spirituality is also an important component of one's mental health and well-being, and it is an important element for one to evaluate oneself and life positively and to have the desired positive behaviors (Baezzat et al., 2019; Garssen et al., 2021; Nosrati et al., 2018; Sadeghifard et al., 2020).

In adolescents seeking meaning and questioning the meaning of life, spiritual intelligence enables the adolescent to experience deep emotions, connect with the transcendent, recognize his/her self and establish meaningful relationships with others, and also increases the problem-solving ability of the person (Chaar et al., 2018; Hosseini et al., 2010; Kumar & Mehta, 2011; Nasel, 2004; Raisi et al., 2018; Vaughan, 2002). Spiritual intelligence is defined as the type of intelligence that allows one to search for and find meaning in life and enables to live in a context suitable for values (Nair & Paul, 2017; Zohar & Marshall, 2000).

In this context, it is thought that finding meaning in life also by using spiritual intelligence will increase the well-being of the adolescent and will distance the person from negative behaviors (Charkhabi et al., 2014; Sanjaya, 2017; Seligman, 2002; Roman & Roman, 2018). According to the studies conducted, spiritual-oriented people are people with better mental and physical health functions and positive thinking tendencies; they generally do not engage in harmful and negative behaviors towards themselves and their environment and tend to be less violent as their spirituality increases (Behroozi et al., 2014; James et al., 2011; Larson & Larson, 2003; Salas-Wright et al., 2013; Singh et al., 2016; Thoresen, 2007; Yick, 2008).

This study, which is also designed to examine the relationships between attitudes of adolescents towards violence, their well-being and spiritual intelligence, is also planned based on Social Cognitive Theory. According to Bandura's Social Cognitive Learning Theory, one's learning is shaped according to environmental factors and personal values. This form of learning is the determinant of one's behavior in the social context. In this learning process, which is known as mutual determinism, personal factors and environmental factors are dynamic and are in constant interaction with each other (Bandura, 1978). Personal factors such as the spiritual values, emotional structure, moral behaviors and psychological well-being of the person are influenced by the environmental factors and also affect the environmental factors and become the determinants of their behaviors (Bandura, 1989; Holder et al., 2010). Based on this theoretical basis, it is thought that personal factors such as well-being and spiritual intelligence may be the determinants of attitudes towards violence.

According to Social Cognitive Learning Theory, people have the ability to self-regulate and can regulate their own feelings, thoughts and behaviors (Bandura, 1989; Glanz, 2002; Locke & Latham, 2006). In this context, it is thought that efforts to increase well-being and spirituality, which are among the personal factors, may reduce the display of violent behaviors. All this information suggests that well-being and spiritual intelligence may be effective in reducing attitudes towards violence in adolescents. As a result of the literature survey, it has been seen that, there are a limited number of studies in this field and it is thought that the study will contribute to the field by examining the relationships between the attitudes of the adolescents towards violence, their well-being and spiritual intelligence. In this context, the main objective of the study is to examine whether the attitudes towards violence in Turkish adolescents are predicted by well-being and spiritual intelligence. Within the framework of this main objective, the sub-objectives of the study are formed as follows:

- Is there a significant relationship between attitudes towards violence, psychological well-being and spiritual intelligence in adolescents?
- Do the psychological well-being and spiritual intelligence of the adolescents predict their attitudes towards violence?

## **Method**

### **Research Model**

The research is patterned according to the relational screening method, which is one of the quantitative research methods, and aims to investigate the relationship between two or more variables. These models aim to determine whether there is a co-change between the variables, and if there is, the degree of this change (Heppner et al., 2013).

## **Population And Sample of The Research**

The sample of the research consists of students who continue their education in different high schools in Istanbul during the fall semester of the 2019-2020 academic year. Of the students participating in the study, 194 are female (58.4%) and 272 (41.6%) are male. The age intervals ranged from 14 to 19 years; 74 (15.9%) are 14 years old, 118 (25.3%) are 15 years old, 115 (24.7%) are 16 years old, 105 (22.5%) are 17 years old, 42 (9.0%) are 18 years old and 12 (2.6%) are 19 years old. 112 (24.0%) of the students are studying at Anatolian High School and 354 (76.0%) are studying at Anatolian Imam Hatip High School. 135 (29.0%) of the students are 9th grade students, 158 (33.9%) are 10th grade students, 71 (15.2%) are 11th grade students, and 102 (21.9%) are 12th grade students. The sample is determined by the convenience sampling method. The convenience sampling method is selection of the sample from accessible and practicable units due to the limitations in terms of time, money and workforce. In this study, this method was preferred since it provides easier, faster and cheaper data collection compared to other sampling types (Büyüköztürk et al., 2017; Gürbüz & Şahin, 2014). An informed consent form was obtained from the parents of the adolescents who would participate in the study and attention was paid for the adolescents to be volunteering.

## **Data Collection Tools**

**Demographic Information Form.** The demographic information form prepared by the researcher was used to collect information about the demographic characteristics of the students participating in the research. This form includes questions about gender, age, grade level and school type variables.

**Scale for Spiritual Intelligence (SSI).** It was developed by Kumar and Mehta (2011). The scale was developed to create the concept of spiritual intelligence in collectivist cultures based on Eastern philosophy and to measure the spiritual intelligence of adolescents. There is no certain time limit on the scale, but it is preferred to give the first answer that comes to mind and not to leave the questions blank. It can be finished in an average of ten minutes. The scale items consist of a 5-point Likert scale type. The total score is obtained by summing the scores obtained from the sub-dimensions. It can be said that adolescents with high scores have high spiritual intelligence. The adaptation of the scale to Turkish was made by Erduran Tekin and Ekşi (2019), and as a result of the exploratory factor analysis. The Scale for Spiritual Intelligence, which consists of six factors (i.e., selfunderstanding, human values, compassion, conscience, commitment towards humanity, and purpose of life) according to the results from the completed exploratory factor analysis, consists of only four factors for the Turkish version. These four factors are self-understanding, human values, compassion, and conscience. The goodness of fit statistics obtained

as a result of confirmatory factor analysis are [ $X^2 = 335.17$ ,  $sd = 145$  ( $X^2/sd=2.33$ ), RMSEA 0.052, SRMR=0.049, GFI = 0.93, CFI=0.90, AGFI=0.91]. Internal consistency reliability Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated for both samples for the whole scale, and it is found as .86 and .85. The results of the research revealed that the Turkish form of the Scale for Spiritual Intelligence is a valid and reliable measurement tool and can be used in scientific studies to be conducted in Turkey (Erduran Tekin and Ekşi, 2019). For this study, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be .85.

**Five-Dimensional Well-Being Scale for Adolescents (EPOCH).** The EPOCH scale was developed by Kern et al. (2016) to determine the well-being of adolescents. It is the adolescent version of the well-being model developed by Seligman (2011). According to the EPOCH model, the dimensions of well-being are stated as engagement, perseverance, optimism, connectedness and happiness. The Turkish adaptation and validity reliability study of the scale was carried out by Demirci and Ekşi (2015) on 262 high school students. Confirmatory factor analysis fit indices of the scale, which consists of five sub-dimensions, were found to be at an acceptable level ( $X^2 = 381.29$ ,  $sd = 160$ , CFI = .98, IFI = .98, RFI = .96, NFI = .96, NNFI=.98, RMSEA = .074 and SRMR = .052). The factor loadings of the scale ranges from .37 to .84. The internal consistency coefficients of the sub-dimensions vary between .72 and .88. The total score internal consistency coefficient is calculated as .95. Corrected item total score correlation coefficient values ranges between .41 and .77. The internal consistency coefficients of the sub-dimensions of the scale were calculated as .88 for connectedness, .84 for engagement, .88 for happiness, .84 for optimism and .72 for perseverance. The sub-dimensions are scored by the 5-point Likert grading method. In the scale, individuals can get a score between 1 and 5 for each question. There are a total of 4 items in each dimension and there are a total of 20 items in the scale. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale for this study was found to be .89.

**Attitudes' Adolescents towards Violence Scale.** In this study, the Attitudes' Adolescents towards Violence Scale developed by Çetin (2004) was used to measure the attitudes of adolescents towards violence. In the scale developed as Likert type, the lowest score is 10 and the highest score is 50. The high scores obtained from the scale indicate a positive attitude towards violence. In other words, an adolescent who scores higher on the attitude towards violence scale approves violence and has a positive attitude towards violence. There are no items to be interpreted in reverse on the scale. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the scale for 10 items was found to be .85 (Çetin, 2011). For this study, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was found to be .81.

## Data Analysis

Before the data analysis, incomplete and incorrect coding was reviewed and the analysis was performed with SPSS 26 package program. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the predictiveness of well-being and spiritual intelligence of adolescents towards violence as well as descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficient.

## Findings

This section includes the findings of the data obtained from this article, which aims to examine the relationship between adolescents' spiritual intelligence, well-being and attitudes towards violence, which is designed according to the relational scanning model, which is one of the quantitative research methods. Descriptive statistics of data; Correlations between spiritual intelligence, well-being and attitude towards violence variables and the model results of the regression analysis are presented in tables, respectively.

**Table 1.**  
*Descriptive Statistics Regarding Variable Scores*

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	Ss	min.	max.
Attitudes towards Violence	466	27,67	9,152	14	50
Well Being	466	65,97	14,694	33	100
Spiritual Intelligence	466	62,72	8,366	32	80

As seen in Table 1, it was determined that the average score that the students participating in the research got from attitudes towards violence scale was ( $\bar{x}=27,67$ ,  $ss=9,152$ ). It was observed that the total score and standard deviation from the well-being scale was ( $\bar{x}=65,97$ ,  $ss=14,694$ ), while the total score and standard deviation from the spiritual intelligence scale were found to be ( $\bar{x}=62,72$ ,  $ss=8,366$ )

**Table 2.**  
*The Pearson's Moment Correlation Coefficient Results to Determine the Relationship between Attitudes towards Violence, Well-being, and Spiritual Intelligence*

		1	2	3
1. Attitudes towards Violence	r	1	-,563**	-,380**
2. Well Being	r	-,563**	1	,459**
3. Spiritual Intelligence	r	-,380**	,459**	1
	N	466	466	466

\*\* p < .001

When Table 2 is examined, there is a moderately negative and significant relationship between attitude towards violence and well-being ( $r = -.563$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It is observed that there is a low level negative and significant relationship between attitude towards violence and spiritual intelligence ( $r = -.380$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It was determined that there is a moderate, positive and significant relationship between well-being and spiritual intelligence scores ( $r = .459$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Accordingly, it can be said that as well-being and spiritual intelligence increase, attitudes towards violence decrease, and as spiritual intelligence increases, well-being also increases.

Before determining the predictive effect of well-being and spiritual intelligence on the students' attitudes towards violence, the multicollinearity problem was examined among the predictor variables and it was found that there was no multicollinearity problem ( $VIF < 10$ , Tolerance value  $> .10$ ). The stepwise multiple regression analysis findings are presented in Table 3 in order to determine the predictive effect of well-being and spiritual intelligence on the students' attitudes towards violence.

**Table 3.**  
*Hierarchical Regression Analysis about the Predictors (Well-Being and Spiritual Intelligence) of Attitude towards Violence*

Model	Predicting Variables	R	$\Delta R^2$	B	Standard Error	$\beta$	t	p
1.	Constant			50,798	1,615		31,451	.00
	Well Being	,563	,317	-,351	,024	-,563	-14,671	.00
2.	Constant			58,478	2,653		22,039	.00
	Well Being			-,306	0,27	-,492	-11,540	.00
	Spiritual Intelligence	,579	,336	-,169	0,47	-,154	-3,621	.00
$R = ,58$		$R^2 = ,34$	$F_{(2,465)} = 116,990$			$p < .001$		

As seen in Table 3, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to determine the variables that predict participant adolescents' attitudes towards violence. Well-being scores were included in the first block and spiritual intelligence scores were analyzed in the second block. According to the analysis results, it was seen that well-being explained 32% of the variance in attitudes towards violence ( $\beta = -.56$ ,  $p < .001$ ). When the effect of well-being was controlled, it was seen that spiritual intelligence in the second block additionally explained 2% of the variance ( $\beta = -.15$ ,  $p < .001$ ). It is seen that the analysis was completed in two stages and well-being was an important predictor in terms of contribution to the variance regarding the attitude scores of the students who participated in the study. Looking at the total variance explained, it shows that the variables of well-being and spiritual intelligence together explain 34% of the total variance in attitude scores towards violence. This finding shows us that the change in adolescents' well-being scores and spiritual intelligence scores explains and predicts the change in attitude scores towards violence, and that well-being is an important predictor in explaining adolescents' attitudes towards violence.

## Discussion

Adolescence is a period in which physical and emotional changes are intense, and violent and aggressive behaviors can be seen more in adolescents during this period (Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994; Steinberg, 2007). Violence is also defined as a form of aggression that causes physical harm (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Huesmann & Taylor, 2006). In order for adolescents to have a decrease in their violent behaviors, they need to have control over these behaviors (Bandura, 1994). Studies show that

high well-being and spiritual intelligence of adolescents have a positive effect on their ability to control their violent behaviors (Gündoğan & Sargın, 2018; Kaukiainen et al., 2001; Sadeghifard et al., 2020; Raisi et al., 2018). In this study, the relationships between the attitudes adolescents towards violence, their well-being and spiritual intelligence and how their attitudes towards violence are predicted by their well-being and spiritual intelligence are examined.

According to the results obtained from the study, it is seen that there is a negative relationship between adolescents' attitude towards violence scores and their well-being and spiritual intelligence scores. It was observed that there was a positive relationship between well-being scores and spiritual intelligence scores. Accordingly, it can be said that as well-being and spiritual intelligence increase, attitudes towards violence decrease, and as spiritual intelligence increases, well-being also increases. According to the results of a study examining the relationships between spiritual intelligence and aggression representing violent behaviors during adolescence, similar to the results obtained in this study, a significant negative relationship was observed between spiritual intelligence and aggression (Karimi & Mohammadi, 2017). According to the results of a study examining the relationships between aggression behaviors and various types of well-being, again similar to the results obtained from the study, it was observed that there were significant negative relationships between well-being and aggression (Kaukiainen et al., 2001). The results of the study conducted to examine the effect of spiritual intelligence on students' aggressive behaviors supported the results obtained from this study and showed that spiritual intelligence encourages students to show ideal behavior and directs them to find a peaceful solution to all problems (Sakti & Alim, 2019). And according to the results of another study conducted with university students, it was observed that as the spiritual intelligence of the students increased, their aggressive behaviors decreased (Baloochi et al., 2018).

According to the results of the progressive multiple regression analysis, it is seen that the well-being of the students participating in the study is an important predictor of their contribution to the variance in terms of their attitude scores towards violence. When the total variance explained is examined, it is seen that the change in well-being and spiritual intelligence scores predicts 34% of the variance in attitude towards violence scores. According to the results of another study conducted to examine the relationships between aggression and subjective well-being of students, similar to the results obtained from this study, subjective well-being was found to be a significant predictor of aggression. According to the results, as the subjective well-being of the students decreases, their aggression increases at the same rate (Gündoğan & Sargın, 2018). Also, as a result of a study conducted to examine whether spiritual intelligence is a predictor of psychological well-being, similar to the results obtained in this study, but to a greater extent, it was observed that spiritual intelligence is a predictor of psychological well-

being. As a result of the regression analysis, spiritual intelligence explained twenty-six percent of the change in psychological well-being (Sotoodeh et al., 2016). In another study conducted with university students, it was seen that spirituality was the mediator between aggression and psychological resilience, while no direct high correlation was found between aggression and spirituality (Sadeghifard et al., 2020). In another study, the relationships between anger level, which form the basis of violent behaviors, and spiritual intelligence were examined and it was observed that the increase in spiritual intelligence reduced the anger level of the participants (Tarazoj et al., 2018). The results of some studies examining the relationships between spiritual intelligence and aggressive violent behaviors supporting the results obtained from this study show that there are negative relationships between spiritual intelligence and aggressive behaviors representing violence (Esmaili et al., 2021; Karimi & Mohammadi, 2020; Sakti & Alim, 2019). The results of a study examining the relationships between students' well-being and spirituality, by supporting the results obtained from this study show that there is a positive significant relationship between spirituality and well-being (Supriatna & Septian, 2021). Based on all these, it is thought that the well-being and spiritual intelligence of adolescents are related to their attitudes towards violence. Considering that well-being and spiritual intelligence are values that can be increased, it is thought that adolescents' attitudes towards violence can be reduced by increasing their well-being and spiritual intelligence.

### **Conclusion and Limitations of the Study**

Well-being and the development of spiritual intelligence in a sensitive development period such as adolescence will reduce the aggression behaviors and attitudes towards violence of adolescents in this period where impulsivity is intense. At the same time, will contribute to their finding meaning in life by increasing their psychological well-being. In order to reduce the attitudes of adolescents towards violence, mental health professionals working in the field are recommended to engage in activities that will increase the well-being of adolescents, to care about spiritual intelligence as a type of intelligence, and to engage in educational and therapeutic activities that will support adolescents in terms of development of spiritual intelligence. Other personal factors and environmental factors that may affect the attitudes of adolescents towards violence are recommended to be examined in other studies. In addition, it is also suggested that the role of well-being and spiritual intelligence of adolescents in their attitudes towards violence should be examined in depth with qualitative research methods.

The results obtained in this study are limited to the quantitative data obtained from the students continuing their education in different high schools in Istanbul. The study is limited to the data obtained during the fall semester of the 2019-2020 academic year. The results obtained from the study are limited to the answers given

by the students to the questionnaires and the measurements made by the scale questions. In the study, the data were collected by the convenience sampling method, which is a limitation of the study. The study was planned according to Bandura's Social Cognitive Learning Theory, and only two of the personal factors affecting adolescents were addressed and environmental factors were neglected. The fact that environmental factors that may affect attitudes towards violence were not included in the analysis is a limitation of this study.

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### Compliance with Ethical Standards

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. In addition informed consent was obtained from the parents of the students who participated in the study to be able to complete the scales.

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