

# ULUSLARARASI SOSYAL ARAŞTIRMALAR DERGİSİ THE JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL RESEARCH

*Cilt: 13 Sayı: 69 Mart 2020 & Volume: 13 Issue: 69 March 2020*  
*www.sosyalarastirmalar.com Issn: 1307-9581*  
*Doi Number: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17719/jisr.2020.4000>*

## A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF RELIGION ON THE MEANING OF LIFE IN ADOLESCENTS

**Yasin KURUÇAY\***

### **Abstract**

Adolescence is the period in which efforts to give meaning to life peak. The principles and values of religion that make life a meaningful contribute to the more meaningful and peaceful life of adolescents because meaning is the most basic element of life and religion is the most important element of meaning as well.

Our research focuses on the contributions of religion on the search for meaning and leading a meaningful life in adolescents. In this study, it was seen that the opinions of the adolescents participating in the interview about meaning and meaninglessness were compatible with previous research studies and other research results in the literature.

The research is based on the theory-building approach which is one of the qualitative research methods. In this context, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 28 people aged between 18 and 24 who were reached by a convenience sampling method. Content analysis and descriptive analysis were performed. The data were analyzed using NVivo 12 software.

**Keywords:** Adolescence, Meaning, Search for Meaning, Religion, Religiosity.

### **Introduction**

This study aims to reveal the characteristics of adolescence, the problems faced by adolescents in our age and the consequences of these problems and the extent to which religion/religiosity contributes to overcoming these problems.

The fact that today's civilization causes moral, philosophical and psychological hunger for adolescents is a shocking situation for psychologists. Young people in a welfare society live without meaning and value (Maslow, 1996, 31).

Meaning and religion are the two fundamental elements of life. Religion both adds meaning to life and prevent problems arising from meaninglessness. By explaining life with the balance of world-hereafter, Islamic religion makes sense of all kinds of questions and problems according to a divine plan. It addresses adolescents with a meaningful life by addressing these problems and challenges in a context that may be

---

\* Dr. Bursa Atatürk Anatolian High School, Psychological Counselor, yasinrehber@hotmail.com.

(During conducting this research study, the doctoral thesis which was conducted at Religious Psychology Department at Uludag University by Dr. Yasin KURUÇAY and which was named as 'A Research Study on the Multi-Directional Relationship Between Religiosity and the Meaning of Life in Adolescents' was utilized.)



beneficial to the religious-personal development of people. It also offers solutions to adolescents' problems by providing cognitive explanations, emotional and behavioral suggestions, and practical suggestions.

In the field of psychology, the lack of studies in Turkey that are investigating the relationship among sense, adolescents and religion, shows the importance of our work. The main question of the study is '*What is the contribution of religion and religiosity to a meaningful life in adolescents?*'.

### **1.RELIGIOUS LIFE AND THE SEARCH FOR MEANING IN ADOLESCENT**

The word "adolescence" has the same meaning as the word "adolescence" in Latin, which means "growing, maturing. Adolescence is defined as a rapid and continuous stage of development observed in the individual" (Steinberg, 2007, 21). It is accepted as the adolescence period between the ages of 12-21 (Köknel, 1981, 34). Unesco stated that adolescence is between the ages of 15-25 (Act. Yavuzer, 1999). TSI researches the population between the ages of 16-24 while conducting youth research (TSI Youth with Statistics, Research 2016). For this reason, in this study, adolescents aged 16-24 were mainly studied.

In adolescence, religious consciousness begins to develop parallel to mental development (Hökelecli, 2013; Vergote, 1978). Adolescence is a period in which the quest for religion, orientation, and interest have increased significantly on the one hand and the questioning point of view towards religious principles and rules intensified on the other. In accordance with the creation of adolescents, one instinctively leads to Allah, religious emotions, and sources of the meaning of religion (Hökelecli, 2013, 269). At the end of this period, young people either continue the beliefs they receive from the family, reconstruct these beliefs individually or rarely tend to reject religion (Hökelecli, 2013, 271-272).

The process of acquiring identity during adolescence is also important for coping with meaninglessness, searching and protecting lost meaning. Adolescence is the period in which the search for meaning and the desire to be happy is at the highest level (Prager, 1998, 125). It is seen that religion contributed positively to the identity development of adolescents. Religion is an element that acts as psychological protection and support in people, facilitates the harmony of the individual with the self and the society, and supports the person in creating a positive and optimistic personality (Hökelecli, 2013).

The conceptual frameworks put forward by religion against the doubts in adolescence, and the principles put forward for the meaning of life and other areas of life have always influenced young people (Hökelecli, 2006, 15). Religion offers young people a set of values, allowing them to participate and participate in an integrated community around the same values and practices. Thus, it helps the young person to comprehend that he has a place, meaning (value) in the society he is in and to determine his status in society (Kula, 2001). While religion is taking power from the capacities of personality; personality determines the form of religion in the human soul and is effective in the formation of personal behavior styles (Gürses, 2010, 32). Both science and religion seek to understand the complex existence of man (Strženeć, 2010, 274).

Experimental research on religion and religiosity has become widespread over the years. When religiosity and piety about the concept of religiosity are written to the Jstor site, which is one of the academic research engines, a total of 180 thousand research results, and when the concept of religion is written, there are approximately 1.3 million results. The Google academic site is at least twice as high. According to many scientists, psychology and science should also examine issues that are ignored by positivist science. Maslow says that science should be reshaped by including religion and values (Maslow, 1996, 18).

People who consider the rules of religion in a way can be evaluated within the concept of religiosity, even if their degree of consideration is different. Religious, in his private life and in the social sphere is called the person who accepts religious rules and tries to obey them (Bilgin, 2003, 195). Religiosity is a complex psycho-socio-theological phenomenon that is integrated with self and personality as a result of subjective religious beliefs and practical perceptions of the individual (Koç, 2009, 476). According to Vergote, piety is to see God as the source of existence and to accept Him as a benevolent power (Vergote, 1999, 88).

### **2. THE EFFECT OF RELIGION ON THE MEANING OF LIFE**

Modern Western civilization, which promises people paradise on the earth, has not been able to solve the identity crisis and social crises and has been the triggering reason for many problems (Guenon, 2005, 37-53). Continuous consumption, luxury and entertainment insanity did not leave free time to return to the self of adolescents, made them forget the meaning of life and the freedom of the material world undermined them. (Serdar, 2001, 40-42). The Western perception of "satisfactoriness", which ignores the group, social and divine support in achieving the purpose, imposes the responsibility of the individuals on the whole planning, implementation and changing the results. This leads to the problem of "meaning(less)"



(Snyder, Feldman, et al. 2002). Nowadays, adolescents who have unlimited freedom have the means but they do not have permanent meanings and aims (Frankl, 1999, 129).

The concept of meaning was first used by Herakleitos (BC.540-475) through the concept of logos. Logos; meaning, word, measure, and proportion. (Kranz, 1994, 57). The thinker who uses the concept of meaning directly in relation to life is Socrates. Socrates finds the meaning of life is a wise life, recognizing himself and knowing himself (Socrates, 2004, 13-14). Meaning is about whether life is worth living, living humanely, living for supreme purposes (Bahadır, 1999, II). People need a general meaning system that will enable them to understand every problem they face (Hökelekli, 2013). According to Baumeister, meaning is the main subject of psychology. As he puts it, "it is the best tool that can be used for everything in the world" (Baumeister, 1991, 357-358). Because meaning includes many psychological structures such as targets, beliefs, well-being, satisfaction, the essence of existence and the purpose of life (Paloutzian, 2013, 29).

The most distinctive feature of man is that he is constantly in search of meaning (Frankl, 1999, 25). All human efforts from the first human to the present day are the reflection of the search for meaning (Bahadır, 1999, I). The search for meaning is one of the key concepts of the school of logotherapy. According to the logotherapy approach, human beings have a desire for meaning beyond existence. This ultimate meaning also refers to religious belief. Because human is a religious nature entity who has a tendency to a transcendental existence (Bahadır, 2000, 194). Human is directed to a supra-meaning or trans-semantic being. Trans-meaning expresses the last, most concise and most complete meaning of human life. One cannot fully comprehend this meaning. The solution to this tension is possible by faith (Bahadır, 1999, 20).

Adolescents add meaning to their lives, they seek a purpose that will make their life valuable (Özakınar, 1999, 41). When we look at the inner worlds and life experiences of adolescents, we see that there is almost no behavior and existence in which the search for meaning and the efforts to make meaning do not exist.

The Meaning of Life is not just an abstract and theoretical principle but in our daily lives. The Meaning of Life is the degree, in which a person has a mission, purpose or an inclusive life goal that enables him to make sense of his life (Steger, 2012). When the meaning of life is found, the key to developing personality is obtained (Adler, 1998, 23-26). The meaning of life or the meaning of meaning in life is now considered more in Positive Psychology (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Meaning of life has been associated with psychologists such concepts as happiness (Chamberlain and Zika, 1988), well-being (Bilge, 2013) and hope (Feldman and Snyder, 2002; Hicks and King, 2007). The meaning of life shows a positive relationship with positive emotions and a negative relationship with negative emotions (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). People who have a sense of meaning, live a purpose or a function to be fulfilled, people live as having a goal or goals to give oneself (Yalom, 1999, 658-660).

Religion can be a light for people by revealing the meanings of the basic subjects of life (Küng & Kuschel, 1995). Religion provides an eternal meaning by revealing the principles of how one should live and by interpreting life events (Mckenzie, 1986), explaining areas that cannot be reached by reason, showing the values and principles that will not end with this life and illuminating the world behind death (Tolstoy, 1997).

According to Fowler, who is known for his important work in the field of psychology of religion, "faith is the way a person sees himself in relation to others against the shared meaning and purpose background ((Fowler, 1981, 4). According to Fowler, faith is directly related to meaning and human being is the only entity that seeks meaning (Sezen, 2009, 195). Faith is a process of meaning that encompasses the cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects of life. Religion is the most comprehensive of all philosophies of life (Allport, 2004, 94-97). Pargament defines religion as 'a search for meaning that manifests in a sacred way. "(Pargament, 1999; Pargament & Koenig et al., 2000). According to Pargament, people are in search of meaning as long as they live and people have access to meaning sources outside of religion. However, none of these sources of meaning has the effectiveness of religion (Pargamanet, 1980, 204-205). There is a close relationship between religious beliefs and a sense of high meaning (Kirac, 2007, 98; Soderstrom and Wrigh, 1977). In this world full of problems and tensions, without a source of transnational meaning, people cannot find a healthy basis for their spiritual and moral autonomy. Almost everyone interested in human psychology must take into account that religion is not only historical and social but also a personal phenomenon (Jung, 2013, 57-67).

Adolescents need an internal and spiritual experience that protects them from the challenges of this world. Religion constitutes an intellectual basis that makes it possible to see the world as more natural and normal against difficult events to be explained (Prager 1998, 24). In a study conducted with a group of



Muslim, Jewish and Christian students, a positive relationship was found between high religiosity and the meaning of life (Yıldız, 1994, 35).

The principles of faith in Islam are the cornerstones of human personality. These principles affect human emotions, thoughts, beliefs and behaviors and form the philosophy of life and the world view. In a world where Allah exists, life has meaning and purpose. In a world where Allah exists, nothing has been created empty and without purpose (Doomsday, 75/36). In a world where Allah exists, pain, grief, joy and happiness also have a meaning and meaning (Ali İmran, 3/191). The existence of monotheism and the idea that Allah created a life for a purpose gives people a sense of integrity and saves him from meaninglessness (Selçuk, 1998, 187). The existence of the life of the world (Bakara, 2/155, Ali İmran, 3/186, Enam, 6/165), the existence of the Hereafter (Bakara, 2/28) and Allah's infinite might and justice (Enbiya, 21/47) that allows one to have an integrated world of mind and meaning map.

Research has shown that people's devotion to religion, God and the holy is related to their purpose of life, their meaningful life and social relations (Pargament, 1999, 4). When more than 2000 people in the USA were asked why they were religious, the most common answer was "religion gives meaning to our lives (Güven, 2008, 58). Pargament and the study group 586 people in a study they have done, understanding of some events and religious beliefs have stated that these processes affect the process (Küçükcan and Köse, 2000, 71).

Religion makes appropriate recommendations for the treatment of cognitive control and anger (Özkan, 2016). The advice to think of death and the Hereafter in anger in the Islamic faith is extremely important for cognitive control in terms of behavioral skills such as silence, not responding immediately, being patient, taking refuge in Allah, taking ablutions (Yeğin, 2010, 253). Asylum to a transcendent power, demanding compassion and justice from it makes an important contribution to the reduction and elimination of the troubles and anger (Eryücel, 2013, 260-265).

### **3. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH**

Scientists state that there has been a shift towards qualitative research methods since the mid-20th century (Seggie, Bayyurt, 2015). It has been concluded that people's views, observations and analyzes should be included in the research due to the fact that quantitative research methods ignore the unmeasurable aspects of events and problems, the effects of cultural experiences on individual and community life, and fail to explain certain events accurately and completely (Seggie, Bayyurt, 2015) Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2013, 14). This process has led to the emergence of qualitative research methods (Bird, 2003, 105). In order to understand the human being, people's interpretation of the events and the inner world of people, the need to use methods in which the human factor comes to the forefront paved the way for the emergence of qualitative research (Seggie, Bayyurt, 2015, 12).

Adolescents continue their search for meaning in many areas due to their developmental characteristics. Their cultural and religious life affects their lives. This research is based on the "theory formation" model used in qualitative studies. In the study, the semi-structured interview technique used in qualitative research methods was used.

In qualitative research, a more in-depth study with fewer data provides a more detailed understanding of the subject (Seggie, Bayyurt, 2015, 2). This study was conducted with a group of 28 adolescents. TSI reference in his research in Turkey is between 16-24 years of age as adolescence (TSI, 2018). Therefore, in our study, we preferred to work with adolescents in this period. Adolescents in the study group have different lifestyles, worldviews and religious experiences although they consider themselves religious.

When interviewing adolescents, the purposeful sampling method was used. The purposeful sampling method refers to the selection of the individuals or objects chosen for sampling which can give the most appropriate response to the researcher's purpose (Aziz, 2014, 55). The purposeful sampling method is a method suitable for collecting and explaining in-depth information and data in the field studied (Seggie, Bayyurt, 2015, 28). What is important in qualitative methods is that the sample is appropriate to the subject. In qualitative methods, the sample group does not have a certain number limit. It is essential that the sample group be taken in the smallest number to represent the whole (Aziz, 2014, 56).

In qualitative research, the fact that the study group has different demographic characteristics and having different characteristics enriches the research (Seggie, Bayyurt, 2015, 16). For this reason, in our study, it was paid attention to interview adolescents with different sexes, different religions, different social



groups and different socio-cultural characteristics. The findings regarding the demographic characteristics of the research sample are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Interview Group**

Variable		N
Gender	Female	14
	Male	14
Education	High School	12(6 girls, 6 boys)
	University	16(8 girls, 8 boys)
NGO Membership	Yes	18
	No	10
Total		28

As in many other studies, the gender variable was identified as the main variable and care was taken to ensure that the number of boys and girls was equal. In the educational status variable, more university students were interviewed in accordance with the characteristics of the subject. While identifying both high school and university students, attention was paid to the equal number of boys and girls. During the interview process, it was determined whether adolescents were members of an NGO or community. Since it was determined that the presence of NGOs / community members had an effect on some issues, it was considered as a separate variable.

In this study, the Theory-Forming Approach was used due to the very low number of studies revealing the effect of religiosity and religion on meaning-seeking and meaningless problems in adolescents. One of the aims of this approach is to reach new conceptual frameworks and develop theories (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013, 85). In this way, it will be possible to make an original and important contribution to the literature.

The data were subjected to content analysis. Content analysis refers to understanding and making sense of words, concepts, expressions of emotions and thoughts in a text group (Seggie, Bayyurt, 2015, 4254).

In this research, the NVivo 12 program produced by QSR International, one of the qualitative data analysis programs, was used. This program has made significant contributions to the researcher in storing, organizing and accessing the coding data.

#### **4. RESULTS AND EVALUATION**

##### **4.1. Religious Adolescents' Thoughts on the Meaning of Life**

###### **4.1.1. What the meaning of life is**

Adolescents were asked "What does the meaning of life or meaningful life mean to you? What are the factors that make life meaningful? Can you explain by giving an example?" and "Does your religious belief have an impact on the meaning of your life? Can you explain 1-2 examples in the light of your own experiences?" Religious values were found to be very effective in adding meaning to life. According to the frequency of the answers given by the adolescents participating in the interview, the following themes were revealed:

**Table 2: What is the Meaning of Life?**

Themes	(n)	(f)
Religious life (Individual Piety)	17	20
Struggling for religious values (Social Piety)	6	6

###### **4.1.1.1. Religion-appropriate life (Individual piety)**

Meaning is the most important source that provides a holistic perspective on the world and life and provides the integrity of existence (McKenzie, 1986). Adolescents who participated in our study stated that religion contributed meaning to their lives both in terms of worshiping individually and trying to be a good Muslim and in realizing and spreading the ideals of religion.



A female high school student KL\_1 stated "What man calls the meaning of my life is in the center of man. One should not go out of human nature mmh..(pauses) I could not put together. People get stressed, seeing this question. Allah must be in our center. So, being in the world, being here is a great thing... Having a profession and being a doctor is not the meaning of life. Because we need to think about how we can serve better in the path of Allah, not because we want to be a doctor ourselves. If I can serve Allah as a doctor, I become a doctor. If my painting is good, I can serve Allah by drawing. Or by studying theology or studying psychology and taking care of people. Whatever the people's occupation is, one has to live for it. If one puts Allah in the center of human life, it is like putting the person called the meaning of life in the center of his life. Some say "meaning of my life" to his wife, some to his mother, some to his father. So I think Allah should be at the center of one's life." Another male participant, EÜ\_6, stated that religious values add meaning to his life and that he established his professional and family goals in order to live in accordance with religious values by saying "My view of life is generally within an Islamic framework. For example, Islam adds meaning to my life. For example, if I am not a Muslim, I do not pray, I do not care about religion, I will live very empty without the existence of Allah. I'm aware of that."

#### 4.1.1.2. Struggling for religious values (Social religiosity)

Some participants do not see religion as individual worship and conscientious responsibility but emphasize the importance of the spread of religious values in human and social life. The participants stated that a better world would not be possible unless the evils in the world were fought by taking religious references as the center, that young people were dealing with vacancies or worldly goals and that people should communicate religious principles to other people. These statements are dealt with under the theme of "fighting for religious values". Insights that see religion in this way exist in different societies and in different religious communities. Here are some answers to questions:

Female university student KL\_2 stated that the meaning of life is to tell people about religious values as follows: "Meaningful life is primarily a life that depends on something. Like the belief in Allah at the center of my life. Of course, there are people who are Muslims, but not everyone is trying to fully reflect on their lives. If we make a distinction here, it is meaningful for me to live according to the values I believe in and to strive to keep these values alive. Because when you're a good person you know what's going to happen then, but it's an endless process of trying to get others to be good. I'm going to a school internship right now. The students have entered into many mistakes. They're lying, they're having a girlfriend. When I tell these children the truth, I think. There are things in this world that I do well. I can be useful to people. Perhaps I feel that I am more valuable to Allah." A female university student KÜ\_3 emphasized that a meaningful life can only be achieved through the spread of belief in Allah and the goals set by Allah: "The meaning of life is my belief in the existence of Allah, to be doing things that Allah wants us to be doing or to be troubled. Being able to struggle, running, caring about people. It's not just sitting quietly somewhere while somebody's dying."

#### 4.1.2. Characteristics of Persons Living Meaningful Life

In order to understand what kind of practices the participants perceive their thoughts about a meaningful life, questions of "Is there a person (doesn't matter the age) living a meaningful life around you? If so, how / where do you think that person lives a meaningful life? What features does this person have? Can you explain?" and "Is there a person in your life that you model? What features does this person have? Can you explain?" were asked. The answers of the adolescents who participated in the interview about the samples living a meaningful life are given in Table 10:

Table 3: Examples of Meaningful Life

Categories and Themes	(n)	(f)
<b>Living examples</b>		
- Examples in religious groups	21	32
- Examples in the family	10	12
- Examples from the social environment	8	9
<b>Historical Characters</b>		
- Prophet Muhammad	8	8
- Combining different examples (prophets, scholars, martyrs, etc.)	20	22
<b>No ideal living model</b>	6	6



As can be seen from the table, 21 students gave examples of living a meaningful life from religious groups. At the same time, 28 students stated that religious people such as prophets, scholars, and martyrs lived meaningfully. The answers are significant in terms of showing the positive effect of religion on living a meaningful life in practice.

Some of the participants' responses to people living meaningful are directly related to religious values. These answers are themed as "Religious feminine characteristics." Other answers are related to the individual and social characteristics of the people. These answers were also themed as "Individual personality traits." Participant adolescents expressed religious personality traits 40 times and individual personality traits 5 times regarding the people they believed to have meaningful lives. The findings obtained from the responses are presented in Table 11.

**Table 4: Characteristics of Persons Living Meaningful Life**

Themes	(n) person	(f) number
<b>Religious personality traits</b>		
Struggle to spread religious values	16	23
Living a religious, virtuous life	11	12
Having a universal consciousness and awareness	5	5
<b>Individual personality traits</b>		
	4	5

Religiosity is not limited to a certain area in individual and community life but is experienced in every area of life. Therefore, religiosity is one of the key concepts that concern the meaning of life for man. According to Frankl, religious people have a deeper sense of responsibility and a deeper experience of Allah and have a stronger meaning (Bahadır, 2000, 216).

The most common point that the participants emphasized as religious personality traits is that people who make meaningful sacrifices and make efforts to spread religious values. Male university student EÜ\_1 participated in the activities of young people in the NGO to reach other people. He expresses these activities and the fighting side of Muhammad as follows: "These people are interested in the problems of people outside of themselves, they are interested in the problems of people who pursue worldly interests, they strive, struggle, investigate and question them. They make programs, publish magazines, manage websites. Here they are sacrificing their time, if necessary sacrificing their money, start with the soul they strive in the path of Allah. Thank Allah there are many people I have seen such meaningful. In addition, When I read Prophet Muhammad's life, I am always very impressed by his struggle and effort. Not only his compassionate and loving soul but also his warrior and fighting spirit impresses me. Because the prophet Muhammad is shown incomplete. The Prophet of tolerance is not only that, but one of the aspects that impresses me the most is that he is not someone who succumbs to oppression, struggles against cruelty and tries to live for the sake of Allah." The female university student stated that her friends and teachers around the community lived for the sake of Allah and that other people struggled for a meaningful life. "I see that these people are aware of the good and the bad in life, they realize that life is a struggle, that there is a test, and that they are working for it. And in this sense, I see that they are trying to live according to Allah's approval and put something forward. This shows that they are dealing with people, trying to touch people's hearts, working for others to live a meaningful life, having problems, having sleepless nights, writing books and writing. There are people I'm really impressed with. Some of them do not need to say anything, even in that environment is enough for me." (KU\_3). Another theme that stands out in the theme of religious personality traits is that people who live meaningful lives lead a virtuous life that is appropriate to religion". In this theme, the participants expressed the importance of having religious feelings, sacrifice on religious issues, being able to carry out both the hereafter and the individual future together, and the importance of hoping for the results of the efforts as meaningful elements of life. Here are some participant statements:

*"But I think there are such people around me, and that's why I think about why these people live a meaningful life. Let me tell you more about their sacrifice. In other words, some of them have their own school, they have work but they go to high school and do activities with students. For example, this is a great sacrifice for me. Or, for instance, I see a lot of people in bazaars, I see people who make sacrifices, I see women. K (KU\_8)*

*"He does both his profession and his religion. Nobody says anything bad about him. I think he is a religious person. He has both his profession and his faith. Everyone knows him as a very good person. I think such a life is a very meaningful life. We never saw him rebel. KL (KL\_3)*



Another theme highlighted by the participants was to emphasize the importance of the intellectual framework of religion for life and the world. Adolescents emphasized the depth and supremacy of religious thought in this theme called “having a universal consciousness and awareness”. EÜ\_1, a university male participant who stated that he is a member of a community / NGO, stated that the main feature of the community is to approach life and events with a questioning and critical approach: *“In my community, anything can be questioned, there is a tendency to think more critically, and what we need most today is critical thinking. There may also be a lack of community, but I think young people live a more meaningful life because they try to be consistent and question life. Of course, it should not be concluded that I despise other congregations. I have been in conversations with different congregations before, but I have never witnessed such a perspective, such a critical thought. I have never seen anything like a political mind or reading the whole world. When a structure loses its universality, it does nothing. So it closes its own village.”*

#### 4.1.3. The Opinions of Young People in Society on the Significance Level of Life

In order to understand the thoughts of adolescents about society and youth in which they live and build their selves, the questions of *“Does your circle of friends live? Can you explain why?”* and *“Are there people living an empty life around you? How do you reach the conclusion that they live empty life?..”* were asked. Themes obtained from the responses of the adolescents who participated in the interview were formed as follows according to their frequency:

**Table 5: The Opinions of Young People in Society on the Significance Level of Life**

Themes		(n)	(f)
2.2.1. Their lives are meaningless			
2.2.1. Reasons	Leading an individual life	22	23
	Focusing on career and profession	10	11
	Ignoring religion and values	10	10
2.2.2. Living a meaningful life		1	1

##### 4.1.3.1. That their lives are meaningless

The most common theme of the participants, who stated that the lives of young people in society were meaningless, was “leading an individual life”. In this theme, it is often mentioned that young people are interested in useless, temporary and vacant jobs, live for entertainment only, care about their lessons and money and are addicted to social media and social environment. It is seen that the sense of meaning is low in people who value hedonism, conformism and adventure which are the basic dynamics of modern life (Crandall and Rasmussen, 1975). Economic development, having comfort and opportunities did not provide a more meaningful life for adolescents, as well as the sense of meaning has decreased (Kıraç, 2007, 131). A high school male participant (¬EL\_1) said *“In other words, my teacher, there is a life that is indifferent and totally unbuttoned in current youth. They are hanging out too much, I mean, as a teenager, I criticize more young people than older people. They hang out with the girls, the conversations are low, they have no worldly lives, never have Islamic concerns. Personally, unlike them, when I sit down with someone, no matter who is a girl or a boy, if I'm sitting, we need to talk about Islamic issues, we need to talk about valuable issues, I shouldn't speak for anything. I don't think I have time to waste. Young people are wasting time, wasting their time with empty conversations. If we are living in the world right now, we should talk about what we need to do for the problems of the oppressed people who are on the other side of the world, we need to talk about the people's troubles and our own troubles, but the reason I don't deal with a lot of young people is this idle attitude.”*. The male participant, EÜ\_1, expressed the emptiness and awareness of adolescents as *“When it comes to whether young people live a meaningful life or not, I have serious doubts about whether they are aware of whether they live a meaningful life or not.”*

Being profession and career-oriented is the second important indicator of the meaningless life of young people according to the participants. In this theme, adolescents stated that caring about money very much, seeing a career as the center of life and not having higher goals are indicators of a meaningless life. A female student studying in university KÜ\_3 has stated *“When I look at young people, I think they live a meaningless life. For example, being a doctor or making money can be enough for them. Or they go back and forth between work, not reading a single page of books, not entering any mental process, not thinking and caring about the*





people around them. For example, being a doctor may seem like an exemplary profile, but they may not even claim their patients.”.

Another theme that adolescents lead a meaningless life is that “adolescents do not care about religion and values”. The participants stated that because they see religion as a value that adds meaning to their lives, they see that young people in the society as a sign of living meaningless live away from these values and religious beliefs. University student EÜ\_2 “But otherwise you live in a Muslim society and there is something that Muslims bring to human beings. Despite this, you are living a life that contradicts these values. Such a life becomes a meaningless life.” An 11th grader male participant stated that his circle of friends lived a meaningful life. This student did not make sentences about the meaningful lives of young people in society.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to reveal the effects of religion on adolescents seeking meaning and living meaningful lives. Without studies examining the effect of religion on adolescents, it will not be possible to understand adolescent behaviors in integrity and in a healthy way. In this respect, the search for meaning is one of the main fields of study of Positive Psychology.

Adolescents need a viable system of meaning and values to enable them to look at life in a holistic way and to make sense of their existence. As Tillich puts it, young people have lost the meaning that gives meaning to all meanings. Religious values may be a good alternative for adolescents. The search for meaning is an inherent process. Therefore, it is possible to say that the way to reach meaning will be possible by leading a life in accordance with human nature and creation.

The Quran “They are believers and they are individuals who find peace in their hearts by remembering Allah. Know that “the hearts will find peace only by remembrance of Allah” (Râ’d, 28). With this verse, he told the youth that living a crisis, depression, anxiety and meaninglessness, a happy and meaningful life is possible with divine principles. Psychology deals with the health of the soul while religion deals with the salvation of the soul. Salvation with an unhealthy spirit cannot be achieved, and health that does not lead to salvation is meaningless as well. Religion and psychology, then, can bring humanity to peace in this world and divine salvation in the afterlife.

## REFERENCES

- Adler, Alfred (1998). *Yaşamın Anlam ve Amacı*. Çev. Kamuran Şipal, İstanbul: Say Yayınları.
- Allport, Gordon W. (2004). *Birey ve Dini*. Çev. Bilal Sambur, Ankara: Elis Yayınları.
- Aziz, Aysel (2014). *Sosyal Bilimlerde Araştırma Yöntem ve Teknikleri*. 8. Bsk., İstanbul: Nobel Yayınları.
- Bahadır, Abdülkerim (1999). *Hayatın Anlam Kazanmasında Psiko-sosyal Faktörler ve Din*. Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, Uludağ Üniversitesi SBE, Bursa.
- Bahadır, Abdülkerim (2000). *Hayatın Anlam Kazanmasında Psiko-sosyal Faktörler ve Din*. *Selçuk Üniversitesi SBE Dergisi*, sy. 6, Konya, s. 85-126.
- Baier, Kurt (1971). *The Meaning of Life*. ed. E. D. Klemke and Steven Cahn, Oxford University Press.
- Baumeister, Roy F., Michael J. MacKenzie (2014). *Meaning in Life: Nature, Needs, and Myths*. *Meaning in Positive and Existential Psychology*, p. 25-37.
- Bilge, Emine Zehra (2013). *Liseli Gençlerde İç ve Dış Gündümlü Dindarlık ve İyilik Algıları*. Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Osmangazi Üniversitesi, Eskişehir.
- Bilgin, Vecdi (2003). *Popüler Kültür ve Din: Dindarlığın Değişen Yüzü*. *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, C.12, S.1, s. 193-214.
- Chamberlain, Kerry and Sheryl Zika, Religiosity (1988). *Life Meaning and Wellbeing: Some Relationships in a Sample of Women*. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 27, No. 3, p. 411-420.
- Crandall, James, E. & Rasmussen, Roger, D. (1975). *Purpose in life as related to specific values*. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 31, p. 483-485.
- Eryücel, Sema (2013). *Yaşam Olayları ve Olumlu Dini Başa Çıkma*. Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi, Ankara Üniversitesi SBE, Ankara.
- Fowler, James, W. (1981). *Stages of Faith, The Psychology of Human Development and Quest for Meaning*. Harper and Row. San Francisco.
- Frankl, Viktor E (1972). *The Feeling Of Meeninglessness: A Challenge to Psychotherapy*. *Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 32, p. 85-89.
- Frankl, Viktor E (1999). *Duyulmayan Anlam Çıtlığı*. Çev. Selçuk Budak. Ankara: Öteki Yayınları.
- Frankl, Viktor E (2016). *İnsanın Anlam Arayışı*. İstanbul: Okuyan Us Yayınları.
- Frankl, Victor (1966). *What is meant by meaning*. *Journal of Existentialism*, 7, n. 25, p. 21-28.
- Guenon, Rene (2005). *Modern Dünyanın Bunalımı*. Çev. Mahmut Kanık. İstanbul: Hece Yayınları.
- Gürses, İbrahim (2010). *Dindarlık ve Kişilik*. Bursa: Emin Yayınları.
- Güven, Hülya (2008). *Depresyon ve Dindarlık İlişkisi*. Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Marmara Üniversitesi SBE, İstanbul.
- Hicks, Joshua A, Laura A King (2007). *Meaning in life and seeing the big picture: Positive affect and global focus*. *Cognition and Emotion*, Volume 21, p. 1577-1584.
- Hökelekli, Hayati (1986). *Ergenlik Çağı Davranışlarına Din Eğitiminin Etkisi*. *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, s.1 c.1, s. 35-51.
- Hökelekli, Hayati (2006). *Gençlik, Din ve Değerler Psikolojisi*. İstanbul: Dem Yayınları.
- Hökelekli, Hayati (2012). *Din Psikolojisine Giriş*. İstanbul: Dem Yayınları.
- Hökelekli, Hayati (2013). *Din Psikolojisi*. Ankara: TDV Yayınları.
- Jung, Carl G (2013). *Kesfedilmemiş Benlik*. İstanbul: Barış İlhan Yayınları.



- Kıraç, Ferdi (2007). *Dindarlık Eğilimi, Varoluşsal Kaygı ve Psikolojik Sağlık*. Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara Üniversitesi SBE, Ankara.
- Koç, Mustafa (2009). Dindarlık İle Benlik Saygısı Arasındaki İlişki: Yetişkinler Üzerine Ampirik Bir Araştırma. *Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, C.18, S.1, s. 473-493.
- Köknel, Özcan (1981). *Cumhuriyet Gençliği ve Sorunları*. İstanbul: Cem Yayınları.
- Kranz, Walter (1994). *Antik Felsefe*. Çev. Suad Y. Baydur, İstanbul: Sosyal Yayınları.
- Kula, M. Naci (2001). *Gençlik Döneminde Kimlik ve Din*. İstanbul: Ayışığı Yayıncılık.
- Kuruçay, Yasin (2001). *Varoluşçu Felsefede Angst Kavramı*. Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Uludağ Üniversitesi SBE, Bursa.
- Kuş, Elif (2003). *Nitel- Nitel Araştırma Teknikleri*. Ankara: Anı Yayınları.
- Küçükcan, Talip, Ali KÖSE (2000). Akt.Güven, 2008. *Doğal Afetler ve Din (Marmara Depremi Üzerine Psiko-Sosyolojik Bir İnceleme)*. İstanbul: TDV Yayınları.
- Küng, Hans., K. J. KUSCHEL (1995). *Evrensel Bir Ahlak Doğru*. Çev. Nevzat Aşıkoglu, Ankara: Gün Yayıncılık.
- Maslow, Abraham (1996). *Dinler, Değerler, Doruk Deneyimler*. Çev. H. Koray Sönmez, İstanbul: Kuraldışı Yayınları.
- Mckenzie, Leon (1986). The purposes and scope of adult religious education. In N. T. Foltz (Ed.), *Handbook of adult religious education, Birmingham: AL. Religious Education Press*. p. 7-23.
- Özakpınar, Yılmaz (1999). *İnsan, İnanan Bir Varlık*. İstanbul: Ötüken Neşriyat.
- Özkan, Osman (2016). *Öfke Kontrolü ve Dindarlık İlişkisi*. Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi SBE, Isparta.
- Pargament, Kenneth, I (1980). God Help Me: Toward a Theoretical Framework of Coping fort he Psychology of Religion, *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion*, s. 2, p. 204-205.
- Pargament, Kenneth, I., C. L. PARK (1997). In Times of Stress: The Religion- Coping Connection. Edt. B.Spilk and D. N. McIntosh, *The Psychology of Religion içinde*, USA, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Pargament, Kenneth, I (1999). The Psychology of Religion and Spirituality? Yes Or No. *The International Journal for The Psychology of Religion*, 9, 1, p. 3-16.
- Pargament, Kenneth, I, H. G. Koenig, L. Perez (2000). The Many Methods of Religious Coping: Development and Initial Validation of The RCOPE, *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, Vol. 56(4), p. 519-543.
- Park Crystal L. (2013). Din ve Anlam. Çev. İlker Yenen. *Din ve Maneviyat Psikolojisi Yeni Yaklaşımlar ve Uygulama Alanları içinde* (ed. R. F. Paloutzan, C. L. Park; Çeviri ed., Çapcıoğlu İ., Ayten A.), Ankara: Phoenix Yayınları.
- Prager, Dennis (1998). *Mutluluk Ciddi Bir Sorundur*. Çev. Orhan Tuncay. İstanbul: Alkım Yayınları.
- Seggie Fatma Nevra, Yasemin BAYYURT (2015). *Nitel Araştırma Yöntem, Teknik, Analiz ve Yaklaşımları*. Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık.
- Seligman, Martin, E. P., M. Csikszentmihalyi (2000). Positive Psychology: An Introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, p. 5-14.
- Serdar, Ziyauddin (2001). *Postmodernizm ve Öteki*. İstanbul: Söylem Yayıncılık.
- Sezen, Abdulvahid (2009). Günümüz İnsanın Anlamsızlık Sorunu Bağlamında Frankl ve Fowler'da Bireyin Anlam Arayışı. *Sosyal Bilimler Araştırma Dergisi*,7(14), Sayı 14, Eylül, s. 189-201.
- Snyder, Charles Richard, D. B. Feldman vd. (2002). Hopeful Choices: A School Counselor's Guide To Hope Theory. *Professional School Counseling*, 5 (5), p. 298-307.
- Soderstrom, D. ve Wright, E. (1997). Religion Orientation and Meaning in Life. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 33, p. 65-68.
- Sokrates (2004). *Sokrates'in Savunması*. Çev. Teoman Aktürel, İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi.
- Steger, Michael F. (2012). Making Meaning in Life. *Psychological Inquiry*, 23(4), p. 381-385.
- Steinberg, Laurence (2007). *Ergenlik*. Çev. Figen Çok, İstanbul: İmge Kitabevi.
- Strizeneč, Michal (2010). Dindarlık ve Bilişsel Süreçler. Çev. Abdulvahid Sezen, *Dinbilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, C.10, S.3, s. 273-286.
- Tolstoy, Lev. N. (1997). *İtirafımlarım*. Çev. K. Aytaç, İstanbul: Furkan Yayınları.
- TÜİK, İstatistiklerle Gençlik 2016, [http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=24648\(04.01.2018\)](http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=24648(04.01.2018))
- TÜİK, 2018, Bkz. [http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt\\_id=1059#](http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1059#) ( 05.02.2018).
- Vergote, Antoine (1978). Çocuk ve Din. Çev. Erdoğan Fırat. *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, C: XXII, s. 315-329.
- Vergote, Antoine (1999). *Din, İnanç ve İnançsızlık*. Çev. Veysel Uysal, İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Vakfı Yayınları.
- Yalom, Irvin (1999). *Varoluşçu Psikoterapi*. Çev. Z. İ. Babayigit, İstanbul: Kabalıcı Yayınevi.
- Yavuzer, Haluk (1999). *Çocuk Psikolojisi*. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi.
- Yeğin Hüseyin (2010). Öfke Duygusu ve Dini Açından Baş Edebilme Yolları. *Din Bilimleri Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, Cilt 10, Sayı 2, s. 235-258.
- Yıldırım, Ali, Şimşek, Hasan (2013). *Sosyal Bilimlerde Nitel Araştırma Yöntemleri*. Ankara: Seçkin Yayınları.
- Yıldız, Murat (1994). *İnsanların Ölüm Karsısındaki Tutumları Hakkında Yapılan Araştırmaların Değerlendirilmesi*. Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 9 Eylül Üniversitesi SBE, İzmir.