



## PROFESSIONAL SATISFACTION AND PROFESSIONAL BURNOUT AS PREDICTORS OF TEACHERS' SCHOOL HAPPINESS

M. Engin DENİZ

Yildiz Technical University, Faculty of Education, Department of Psychology Counseling, Türkiye

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7930-3121>

[edeniz@yildiz.edu.tr](mailto:edeniz@yildiz.edu.tr)

Abdullah Ensar UZUN

Ministry of National Education, Türkiye

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7809-4789>

[aensaruzun@msn.com](mailto:aensaruzun@msn.com)

Yağmur KAYA

Yildiz Technical University, Faculty of Education, Department of Psychology Counseling, Türkiye

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4077-3182>

[ykaya@yildiz.edu.tr](mailto:ykaya@yildiz.edu.tr)

Gülgün UZUN

Erciyes University, Faculty of Education Department of Psychological Counseling, Türkiye

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2421-7725>

[gulgun@erciyes.edu.tr](mailto:gulgun@erciyes.edu.tr)

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### Abstract

Education has a very important place in the development of a society. Teachers are one of the indispensable building blocks of education. Considering their place in the education system, it is important to investigate the characteristics of teachers. The aim of this study was to investigate the predictive levels of teachers' professional satisfaction and professional burnout on school happiness. Accordingly, a total of 219 teachers working in various public secondary schools participated in the study. The ages of the teachers ranged between 25 and 55; 126 of them were female and 93 of them were male. Teachers' School Happiness Scale, Professional Satisfaction Scale, and Burnout Scale were used as data collection tools. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. According to the results of the analysis, it was concluded that professional satisfaction and professional burnout were effective on teachers' school happiness.

**Keywords:** School happiness, professional satisfaction, professional burnout, education.

### INTRODUCTION

Schools build the future of a society (Döş, 2013). Teachers are at the center of these schools (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2006). In order for the education provided in schools to be effective, the training that teachers receive is important. However, in addition to this training, there are some characteristics that teachers should have (Evans, 2002; Harris & Sass, 2011; Ritter, 2007). School happiness is among these characteristics. Education and happiness are interrelated concepts. The concept of happiness is an important cornerstone for schools, one of the most basic units of education (Fidan, 2020). An individual's happiness at work is reflected in his or her general life (Kuzgun et al., 1999). It has also been determined that happy organizations with happy individuals are more productive (Nokelainen, 2016). In a study conducted by Argon (2015), it was observed that the happiness of teachers has a positive contribution to school success.



In its most general definition, school well-being is the state of emotional well-being that results from the harmony between the expectations of the school and the personal needs of teachers, students, parents, school administrators, and other employees, depending on certain environmental factors (Engels et al., 2004). Yıldırım (2014) argues that factors such as collaboration, fair evaluation and helpful feedback, a positive school climate, and personal development affect teachers' well-being at school. Aelterman et al. (2007) suggest that teachers' well-being is related to concepts such as relationships with parents, colleague support, self-efficacy, workload, and principal support. On the other hand, as the definition of the concept of happiness may vary from individual to individual, the definition of the concept of school happiness may also vary from teacher to teacher (Arslan, 2018). For example, a study revealed that some of the sources of teachers' happiness in the school environment are their students and colleagues. On the other hand, while teachers working in public schools do not see salary as a fundamental component affecting their happiness, private school teachers do (Fidan, 2020). It is thought that school happiness can be affected by many variables mentioned above, as well as professional satisfaction.

Satisfaction with the job or profession can be in question to the extent that the job or profession can meet the needs of the individual (Kuzgun et al., 1999). In other words, it is the satisfaction of working individuals with being a member of their profession (Kuzgun & Bacanlı, 2012). Occupational satisfaction is one of the most important conditions for individuals to be happy and productive (Aktay, 2010). It can be said that teachers with high professional satisfaction contribute to education, and their performance in education is also high (Karakuzu, 2013). Some of the sources of teachers' professional satisfaction are: relationships with students, colleagues, and administrators; salary; vacation; school environment; working conditions; teaching hours; and opportunities for promotion (Vural, 2004).

One of the variables affecting school happiness is thought to be occupational burnout. Freudenberger (1974) defined burnout as a state of exhaustion resulting from failure, wear and tear, loss of energy and power, or unmet demands on an individual's internal resources. Maslach and Jackson (1981) defined burnout as physical exhaustion, prolonged fatigue, helplessness, and hopelessness, as well as negative attitudes towards work, life, and other people. The causes of burnout can be caused by the individual (age, marital status, gender, etc.) or by the organization (working time, work intensity, work tension, etc.) (Avşaroğlu et al., 2005; Izgar, 2001).

Based on the explanations above, the importance of investigating the concepts of school happiness, professional satisfaction, and professional burnout is understood. When the researchs in the literature were examined, no study was found in which these three concepts were examined together. Therefore, this study aims to examine these three concepts.

## METHOD

### Research Model

This research is a quantitative study that examines the relationships between professional satisfaction and professional burnout as predictors of teachers' school happiness. The dependent variable of the study is teachers' school happiness. The independent variables of the study are professional satisfaction and professional burnout. The study was conducted on teachers. The participants' inclusion criteria for the study were not having any psychiatric diagnosis, being between the ages of 25 and 55, and working in an institution as a teacher. The data were collected voluntarily. Ethics committee approval was obtained for the study.

### Participants

This study was conducted with teachers working in various public secondary schools. A total of 219 teachers in six branches took part in the study. 126 of the teachers were female and 93 were male. The number of teachers with bachelor's degree was 131, master's degree was 80, and doctorate degree was 7.



### Data Collection Tools

#### Teachers' School Happiness Scale

It was developed to measure the extent to which teachers feel happy in school in general. There are 26 items in total in the measurement tool. The scale measures five different sub-dimensions. Teachers' school happiness scale is graded on a 5-point Likert scale. These were determined as never, rarely, sometimes, mostly, and always. Item-total correlations ranged between .54 and .86. Five factors explain 65.09% of the total variance. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as .95 (Sezer & Can, 2019).

#### Professional Satisfaction Scale

The Professional Satisfaction Scale was used to reveal the level of professional satisfaction of active teachers, which includes criteria such as the sense of trust they show towards their colleagues and coworkers, their managers, and being happy at work. The internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be Cronbach's alpha = .90. The values of F1 = .91 and F2 = .75 were calculated for the two factors identified and named by factor analysis. In the final analysis, the item-total correlations of the 20 items on the scale were above .30. These values were considered sufficient for the reliability level (Kuzgun et al., 1999).

#### Burnout Scale - Short Form

The Burnout Scale Short Form was applied to determine the professional burnout status of the teachers. The original form of the measurement tool consists of 21 items (Pines & Aronos, 1988). The measurement tool was transformed into a 10-item short form in order to provide easier application and evaluation (Pines, 2005). The burnout scale consists of 10 items and is graded on a 7-point Likert scale. These were determined as "never: 1 and always: 7". The internal consistency coefficient of the scale varies between .85 and .92. Getting a high score from the measurement tool indicates high burnout (Çapri, 2013).

#### Data Analysis

The scope of the research, the relationships between the variables were analyzed with descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis techniques. Before starting the regression analysis, the data were examined according to the regression prerequisites. In the study, skewness and kurtosis values were analyzed first. As seen in Table 1, skewness and kurtosis values are close to normal.

**Table 1.** Skewness and kurtosis values.

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
School happiness	-.196	-.445
Professional satisfaction	-.183	-.904
Professional burnout	-.036	-.345

## RESULTS

Data on the ages of the participants was collected through a personal information form. The results of the study is presented and interpreted in the tables below.

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics.

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	n
School happiness	62.83	7.95	219
Professional satisfaction	53.71	8.65	219
Professional burnout	71.29	3.80	219

Table 2 includes the mean and standard deviation values of the participants' views on school happiness, professional satisfaction, and professional burnout.



**Table 3.** Correlation analysis results of the relationship between school happiness, professional satisfaction, and professional burnout.

Variables	1	2	3
1. School happiness	-	.185	-.163
2. Professional satisfaction		-	-.196
3. Professional burnout			-

As can be seen from Table 3, there is a positive relationship between school happiness and professional satisfaction scores of the participants. According to the results, there is a negative relationship between school happiness and professional burnout.

**Table 4.** Results of regression analysis.

Variables	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	t
1. Constant	38.293	6.223		4.666**
2. Professional satisfaction	.185	.064	.175	3.058*
3. Professional burnout	1.096	.149	-.414	7.114**

\* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .001$

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that there is a significant difference between school happiness, professional satisfaction, and professional burnout scale total scores. When the relationship between the variables and school happiness was analyzed individually, it was found to be significant with the sub-dimensions of professional satisfaction ( $\beta = .175$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and professional burnout ( $\beta = -.414$ ;  $p < .01$ ).

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the study, it was concluded that the school happiness scores of teachers, which is the dependent variable, are affected by the scores of professional satisfaction, which is the independent variable. According to this result, it was concluded that when professional satisfaction scores increase, school happiness scores increase. In addition, as the scores of professional burnout, the other independent variable of the study, decreased, the scores of school happiness, the dependent variable of the study, increased. In this section of the study, direct and indirect comparisons of the research results with other studies in the literature will be made.

As a result of the research, as the scores of professional satisfaction, which is the independent variable, increased, the scores of school happiness, which is the dependent variable, increased. When the findings obtained from studies with similar results to this result are examined, there are studies that reveal that there are significant relationships between school happiness, happiness concepts, and job satisfaction (Akgündüz, 2013; Ardiç & Baş, 2001; Avent, 1975; Avşaroğlu et al., 2005; Benevene et al., 2018; Demir & Murat, 2017; Dorsan, 2007; Gül et al., 2019; Işıkhan, 1996; Ndlovu & Ferreira, 2019; O'Conner & Vallerand, 1998; Rizkie & Suriansyah, 2022; Sargent & Hannum, 2005; Shi et al., 2022; Şeker & Zırhloğlu, 2009; Yiğit et al., 2011). The related studies and the results of this study support each other. A study expressing contrary results was not found in the literature.

Another result of the research is that as the teachers' scores of the independent variable Occupational Burnout decreased, their scores of the dependent variable school happiness increased. When evaluated with different studies in the literature in which the same concepts were studied, it was seen that similar results were reached with this research. In the results of the studies conducted by Dolunay (2002) and Baysal (1995), it was found that being satisfied with the working environment decreased teachers' burnout. In the studies, burnout in the teaching profession is associated with job dissatisfaction (Benevene et al., 2018; Bullough, 2011; Capone & Petrillo, 2020; Cunningham, 1983; De Stasio, 2017; Hamama et al., 2013; Kyte, 2016; Yong & Yue, 2007; Zhang et al., 2023) and negatively affects not only teachers' professional outcomes related to themselves (depression, professional dysfunctions, etc.) but also their fulfillment of their duties related to their families, students, and schools (Mearns & Cain, 2003). Avşaroğlu et al. (2005) reached similar results in their study and found a significant negative



relationship between teachers' job satisfaction levels and emotional exhaustion sub-dimension. In a study conducted in Greece in which teachers' professional burnout was examined, it was determined that job satisfaction and burnout were negatively related (Koustelios & Tsigilis, 2005).

Another result of the study is that occupational exhaustion negatively predicts occupational satisfaction. When the related literature was examined, various studies were found that directly and indirectly overlapped with this result of the research. The concept of resilience is more reactive than other dimensions of positive organizational behavior. Resilience is related to the concept of flexibility (Masten & Reed, 2002). Jackson et al. (2007) concluded that resilience will be strengthened by strengthening professional relationships and networks in the work environment. Sezgin (2012) concluded that increasing the psychological resilience of teachers would have a positive effect on productivity. According to Synder, hope is the capacity to draw paths to desired goals, to motivate oneself to use these paths, and to perceive this capacity (Cheavens et al., 2000). The expression of hope in psychological capital includes producing many alternatives, being able to overcome many tasks, and being versatile. In the hope dimension of the research, the fact that teachers gave low scores to the statement "I can overcome many tasks while practicing my profession" compared to other statements negatively affects their level of hope. It was concluded that effective teachers and administrators in schools should constantly seek new approaches, form broad views, not get hung up on details, have high determination, and plan and organize their work well. Considering the result of the research that professional burnout negatively affects professional satisfaction, Sezgin (2012) overlaps with the results of Cheavens et al. (2000).

When the results of the research are taken into consideration, the recommendations deemed appropriate by the researchers are as follows: Starting from the preschool period until the period when the choice of profession is expected, necessary vocational guidance studies should be carried out for students to choose the profession that best suits their personality traits. If we consider this issue in the specific case of the teaching profession, the fact that individuals who are suitable for the teaching profession will have a positive effect on the subjective well-being of teachers and will enable them to perform their profession more efficiently.

Considering the results of the research, in-service training programs, psychoeducation programs, group guidance training programs, and workshops that can improve individuals' school happiness should be planned and implemented. While organizing such training programs, it is important to include activities related to increasing professional satisfaction and school happiness in these programs. When the literature studies conducted as a result of the research are evaluated, it is observed that there are few studies in terms of quantity. New research results can be brought to the literature by investigating concepts such as "school happiness, professional burnout, and professional satisfaction", which are very important, especially for the teaching profession, with different variables. Especially according to the results determined as a result of the research, it will contribute to the experimental studies to be carried out according to the needs of society and school structure. As a result of experimental studies, training programs can be created that are applicable to the results of experimental studies and serve to make functional teachers more qualified to perform their profession.

### **Ethics and Conflict of Interest**

We declare and confirm that we have acted in accordance with ethical rules throughout the entire research and that there is no conflict of interest between authors.

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