



The Relationship Between School Satisfaction and Psychological Well-Being of Secondary School Students: The Mediating Role of Happiness at School

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ABSTRACT

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This study aimed to examine the mediating role of happiness at school in the relationship between secondary school students' school satisfaction and psychological well-being. A total of 367 secondary school students, including 204 girls (55.6%) and 163 boys (44.4%), participated in the study. While collecting the data for the study, Personal Information Form, Overall School Satisfaction Scale for Children, Stirling Children's Well-Being Scale, and School Children's Happiness Inventory were used. First, descriptive statistics of the collected data were calculated and the relationships between the variables were determined by the correlation coefficient. Mediation analysis in the research was made using structural equation modeling. As a result of the analysis, it was seen that the school satisfaction of secondary school students positively predicted both their psychological well-being and their happiness at school. Similarly, secondary school students' happiness at school positively predicted their psychological well-being. In addition, as a result of the structural equation analysis, it was seen that happiness at school has a partial mediator role in the relationship between school satisfaction and the psychological well-being of secondary school students. Bootstrap confidence intervals (%95) were calculated to see if the mediation effect was significant, and it was determined that the results did not include zero and therefore the mediation result was significant. This result can be interpreted as secondary school students' school satisfaction increases their happiness levels at school, and their psychological well-being increases with the increase in their happiness at school. All these results reached in the research draw attention to how important school-based experiences are for the mental health of school-age children.

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INTRODUCTION

School-age children spend most of their time in school. This period covers almost two-thirds of children's lives (OCED, 2020). Although schools are considered institutions that are expected to support the healthy development of children in personal-social, educational, and professional areas, the success of students does not increase in parallel with the time spent in schools (Gökçe, 2012). This situation makes it necessary to discuss different concepts related to school psychology (Baker, Dilly, Aupperlee, & Patil, 2003). In addition to the quality of the educational practices offered, children's level of adaptation to school, their happiness at school, their school satisfaction, and their positive attitude towards school also affect students' school success (Tian & Liu, 2007). Many factors such as teacher-student relations, friendship relations, whether they have positive feelings towards school, and the satisfaction they get from school life affect children's positive attitudes towards school (Baker, 1998; King, Huebner, Suldo, & Valois, 2006). For this reason, it is seen that it is necessary to conduct various research on many concepts related to school psychology that are effective on children's mental health.

School Satisfaction

School satisfaction is one of the most important factors affecting students' educational life. School satisfaction is explained as the cognitive evaluations that students make about the quality of their school life (Huebner, 1994). In other words, school satisfaction is also defined as the level of satisfaction with school life, liking these experiences, and feeling good during the time spent at school (Tian et al., 2014). As it can be understood from the definitions, it is seen that school satisfaction is a factor that can impact the academic and mental health of school-age children. Although school satisfaction is considered to be an important factor affecting the mental health of school-age children (Kalaycı & Özdemir, 2013), when studies on school psychology are examined, it is seen that there is not much research on children's school satisfaction (Jovanović & Jerković, 2011). It is striking that the studies and regulations aimed at increasing the quality of education are mostly academic, and the issues related to children's mental health development are neglected (Randolph et al., 2010). In the studies in the literature and the educational arrangements, it is stated that although the studies on the school satisfaction of the students are insufficient, the school satisfaction of the students is an important factor affecting their subjective well-being and general life satisfaction (Casas et al., 2013; Diener et al., 1999). Because school satisfaction is an important component of school-age children's life satisfaction (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). The results of the studies in the literature support this theoretical information on the subject. For example, in some studies, it has been observed that children with high school satisfaction have high academic achievement (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002) and less absenteeism from school (King et al., 2006). Similarly, other studies have found that students with high school satisfaction have high self-esteem (Tian et al., 2013), life satisfaction (Gilman & Huebner, 2006), and psychological well-being (Kalaycı & Özdemir, 2013), and have less frequency of undesirable behaviors in school (Önder & Yılmaz, 2012; Zullig, et al., 2011). On the other hand, it is stated that school satisfaction has an effect on students' adaptation to school, developing commitment to school, and making maximum use of the education offered (Whitley et al., 2012). Likewise, it is stated that students with high school satisfaction levels establish healthier and stronger relationships with their peers and teachers, and are more willing to participate in school-related activities (Fredricks et al., 2003). In addition, it is said that school satisfaction is also effective on students' happiness levels regarding their school life (Huebner et al., 2009). When the above theoretical explanations and research results are examined, it is seen that school satisfaction is a factor that is highly effective on the mental health of school-age children. For this reason, it is noteworthy that knowing the school satisfaction levels of children is an important factor for determining their satisfaction level for their school-based learning experiences, and for developing and arranging educational environments.

Happiness at School

The concept of happiness has started to be more and more the subject of research with the emergence of the positive psychology current (Seligman, 2011). This concept is conceptualized as subjective well-being in the positive psychology approach (Diener et al., 2009). Subjective well-being is defined as the individual's experience of more positive emotions and less negative emotions in daily life, and being satisfied with his/her life (Deiner et al., 2009). In other words, subjective well-being is a concept consisting of cognitive and affective judgments of the individual about her/his own life (Diener, 2000). Subjective well-being consists of the affective component, which includes all the emotions that the individual has experienced, and the life satisfaction component, which includes the cognitive evaluations of the life in which the individual lives (Diener et al., 2009). Considering the definitions and explanations above, it is seen that the emotional and cognitive quality perceptions of individuals' daily lives are effective on their subjective well-being. The fact that school-age children spend a lot of time in schools and what they think and feel about school-based experiences during this period brings to mind the concept of happiness at school. Happiness at school is defined as the positive feelings of students about school as a result of the consistency between students' expectations from the school, their personal needs, and the opportunities offered by the school and its environment (Engels et al., 2004; Tian, 2008). In other words, happiness at school is expressed as a situation where positive emotions of the student about school climate, teacher-student relations, peer relations, and other in-school activities are patched more frequently and negative emotions are patched less (Løhre et al., 2010; Uusitalo- Malmivaara, 2011). As it can be understood from the definitions, it is seen that the satisfaction with their school-based life will also be effective on the subjective well-being of school-age children. It is stated that it is important to organize these environments as places that offer meaningful experiences for children and where positive and positive emotions are experienced since schools are institutions that make significant contributions to children's subjective well-being (Tekinalp & Terzi, 2015). Likewise, Seligman et al. (2009) stated that it is necessary to support school-based subjective well-being levels to increase students' academic achievement and to actively participate in their learning lives. It is even stated that the happiness achieved at school facilitates children's participation in school activities and contributes to the development of positive feelings about their future education life (Stiglbauer et al., 2013). Considering all these explanations, it is seen that happiness related to school-based experiences is an important research topic in terms of the mental health development of school-age children and more research is needed on this subject.

Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being is an important concept for the mental health of school-age children. Psychological well-being emerged with the criticism that the concept of subjective well-being put forward by Diener (1984) is a hedonic approach. In the future, some researchers working in the field of positive psychology did not try to define the concept of psychological well-being. It has been said that subjective well-being is insufficient in explaining mental well-being because it mostly focuses on factors such as people experiencing more positive and less negative emotions. For this reason, some researchers working in the field of positive psychology have tried to define the concept of psychological well-being. For example, Seligman (2011) stated that happiness can be a "thing", but well-being is a "construct" and things related to happiness (positive emotions) can be a part of this structure. For this reason, Seligman (2011) re-examined the concept of well-being and revealed a structure consisting of positive emotions, success, meaning, positive relationships, and engagement sub-dimensions. Similarly, Ryff (1989) redesigned the concept of well-being, said that this concept could not be explained only by individuals' happiness or not, and defined the concept of psychological well-being on which psychological functionality was based. Ryff (1989) designed well-being as a structure consisting of six dimensions: self-acceptance, positive social relations, being autonomous, being able to control one's environment, the meaning of life, and motivation for self-development. When we look at the above theoretical explanations

about psychological well-being, it is noteworthy that many components in the lives of individuals are effective on this concept and that it is an indicator of one's mental health.

When the literature is examined, there are various studies on the psychological well-being of children. In these studies, it has been seen that there is a positive correlation between the psychological well-being of children and self-acceptance (Godin, 2011), social adaptation (Kitayama et al., 2010), mental health (Ellison & Fan, 2008), and perceived positive parental attitudes (Raja, McGee, Stanton, 1992). In other studies, it has been concluded that there is a negative relationship between children's psychological well-being and stressful life events (McMahon et al., 2020), bullying experiences (Liu et al., 2020), social anxiety (Kermen et al., 2016), negative self-concepts (Özdemir, 2016) and family conflicts (Sweeting & West, 1995). In addition to the factors mentioned above, school-based experiences can have an impact on the psychological well-being of school-age children. Schools cover a significant part of children's lives and the experiences they spend at school (peer and teacher relations, happiness at school, success, attitudes towards school) are critical for the mental health of school-age children (Paternite, 2005). Because during the time spent at school, children can experience many experiences that can affect them positively or negatively (Huebner & Gilman, 2006). Seligman et al. (2009) emphasize that school-based experiences are a very important factor in terms of the psychological well-being of school-age children. It is known that children's experiences at school, peer relations and experiences, and evaluations of these experiences are effective on students' well-being (Huebner & Gilman, 2006). However, there are very few studies in the literature on this subject. Studies have shown that factors such as a supportive school climate (Suldo et al., 2013), positive teacher attitudes (Seligman et al., 2009), school kindness (Kaya-Memiş & Oğuz-Duran, 2019) contribute positively to students' psychological well-being. When the theoretical explanations of psychological well-being are evaluated together with the limited research results in the literature, it is seen that school-based experiences (school satisfaction, happiness at school, school engagement, etc.) may have critical importance for the psychological well-being of school-age children. And this indicates that you need more research on this subject.

The Present Study

It is stated that the current age, school-related burnout of children is increasing gradually (Aypay, Durmuş, & Aybek, 2016). The Good Childhood Report (2021), in its latest report, announced that since 2010, when this survey study started, the happiness levels of children at school have been gradually decreasing. In the same report, it was also stated that the decrease in the level of happiness related to school-based experiences hurt the psychological well-being of children (The Good Childhood Report, 2021). On the other hand, OECD (2020) stated in its latest education report (Education at a Glance) that although children spend too much time in schools, schools have problems in reaching their desired educational goals. The results of these published reports bring to mind the concepts of school satisfaction and happiness at school, which are effective on children's school life and also on their psychological well-being. Because many researchers emphasize that school-based experiences are important for the mental health of school-age children (Huebner, 1994; Huebner & Gilman, 2006; Seligman et al., 2009; Tian, 2008; Tekinalp & Terzi, 2015). It is even considered that students' satisfaction with school-based experiences may have significant effects on their general well-being (Casas et al., 2013; Kalaycı & Özdemir, 2013). However, it is stated in the literature that there are very few studies on students' affective areas such as school satisfaction, school happiness, and psychological well-being levels, and there is a need for new research on this subject (Jovanović & Jerković, 2011; López-Pérez & Fernández-Castilla, 2018; Randolph et al., 2010). Based on all these explanations, this study, it is aimed to examine whether happiness at school has a mediating role in the relationship between secondary school students' school satisfaction and their psychological well-being. For this purpose, the following hypotheses were examined:

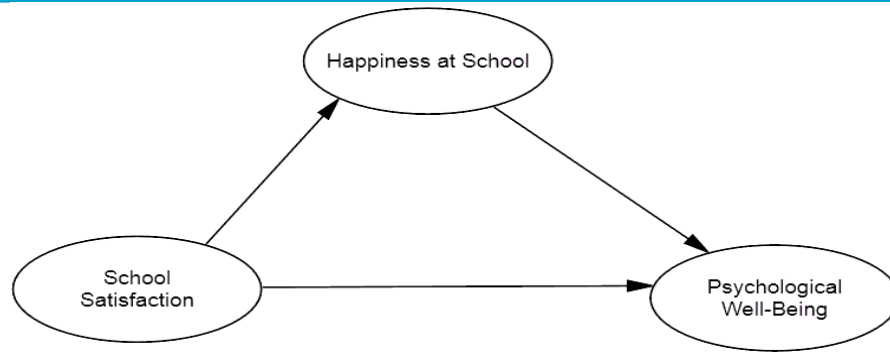


Figure 1. *Research model*

H₁: School satisfaction will predict psychological well-being positively.

H₂: School satisfaction will positively predict happiness at school.

H₃: Happiness at school will positively predict psychological well-being.

H₄: Happiness at school will have a mediating role between school satisfaction and psychological well-being.

METHOD

Participants

The study group of the research consists of a total of 367 secondary school students, of whom 204 (55.6%) are girls and 163 (44.4%) are boys. The ages of the students vary between 10-14 ($x = 12.53$; $Sd = 1.53$). Of the participants, 88 (24%) were in the 5th grade, 91 were in the 6th grade (24.8%), 88 were in the 7th grade (24%), and 100 were in the 8th grade (27.2%).

Data Collection and Ethical Process

First, the ethics committee permission was obtained from the “Ondokuz Mayıs University Social and Humanities Sciences Ethics Committee (05.02.2020 Date and Decision no: 2020/53)”. After the approval of the ethics committee, the school administrators who planned to conduct the study were informed and necessary permissions were obtained. Then, the children and their parents were informed about the research by the school psychological counselor at the institutions where the study was planned, and the process was carried out by taking into account the voluntary basis. After all these stages, the institutions to be studied were visited and the measurement tools were applied face-to-face to the students in the classroom environment. Data collection tools were applied to 387 students in total, but the measurement tools of 20 students who were found to have filled in the measurement tools incorrectly or incompletely were removed from the data set, and the study was continued with 367 students.

Data Collection Tools

Personal Information Form

It is a data collection tool created to collect students’ gender, age, and grade level information.

Overall School Satisfaction Scale for Children (OSSS-C)

The scale, which was developed by Randolph, Kangas, and Ruokamo (2009) to evaluate the school satisfaction of primary school students, was adapted into Turkish by Telef (2014). The scale consists of six items and one dimension. Participants answered the measurement tool using the five-point Likert type (1-totally disagree, 5-totally agree). The scores that can be obtained from the OSS-C range from 5 to 30. The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) of the OSS-C calculated in this study was .87.

Stirling Children's Well-Being Scale (SCWBS)

Developed by Liddle and Carter (2015) to measure the psychological well-being of children aged 9-16, the measurement tool consisting of 12 items and one dimension was adapted into Turkish by Akin, Yilmaz, Özen Raba, and Özhan (2016). Participants answered the measurement tool using the five-point Likert type (1-never, 5-always). The scores that can be obtained from the SCWBS range from 5 to 60. High scores obtained from the scale indicate that children have high psychological well-being. The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) of the OSS-C calculated in this study was .88.

School Children's Happiness Inventory (SCHH)

It was developed by Ivens (2007) to evaluate the emotions and thoughts experienced by children between the ages of 8-15 during their time at school. The SCHH was adapted to Turkish by Telef (2014a). The measurement tool consists of a total of 30 items, fifteen positive (positive subjective well-being) and fifteen negatives (negative subjective well-being) items in a four-Likert type (1-I never agree, 4-I totally agree). Negative items are scored in reverse. The scores that can be obtained from the SCHH range from 30 to 120. The internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach Alpha) of The SCHH calculated in this study were .91 for all, .88 for positive subjective well-being (positive items), and .87 for negative subjective well-being (negative items).

Analysis of Data

Standard deviation, mean, kurtosis, and skewness values were calculated to analyze the descriptive statistics of the data collected from the study. In addition, correlation (r) analysis was used to examine the relationship between school satisfaction, happiness at school, and psychological well-being variables. In this study, the parcellation method was used for the variables of happiness in the school with a large number of items and psychological well-being, which is one-dimensional. The parcellation method is a recommended method to reduce the errors of one-dimensional measurement and measurement tools with a large number of items and to increase the validity and reliability of the measurements (Little et al., 2002; Nasser-Abu Alhija & Wisenbaker, 2006). In addition, it is stated that the use of the parcellation method in the measurement of characteristics such as attitude or personality evaluated by the self-report method reduces possible errors caused by individuals and supports model-data fit (Bandalos, 2002; Yang et al., 2010). Different methods are suggested for parceling. For parceling, a balanced distribution can be achieved by considering item-total correlations, random assignment, and factor loads (Bandalos, 2002). Considering the item factor loads of this research, the psychological well-being scale was divided into two parcels. School Children's Happiness Inventory has two dimensions, each dimension was determined as a parcel and assigned as an implicit variable. On the other hand, structural equation analysis was used to test the hypotheses constructed in the research. While evaluating the results of the structural equation model, χ^2/df , RMSEA, TLI, IFI, AGFI, RFI, CFI, GFI, and NFI model fit indices were used. When evaluating model fit indices, TLI, CFI, and NFI $\geq .90$ (Hu & Bentler, 1999), GFI $\geq .85$ (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1988), and AGFI $\geq .85$ indicates that the model has an acceptable fit. Similarly, if the RMSEA is below .080, it is interpreted as a good model fit, and if it is less than .010, the results of the model are acceptable (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). On the other hand, χ^2/df value of two or less indicates a good fit, and an acceptable fit when it is up to five (Meydan & Şeşen, 2015; Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). In this study, while evaluating the model fit indices, the criteria described above were taken into account. In addition, the bootstrapping method was used to determine whether the mediating effect was significant in this study. The bootstrapping method was applied using a 5000 bootstrap resampling technique at a 95% confidence interval. In the literature, it is stated that the calculated values should not include zero to determine that the mediation effect is significant as a result of the Bootstrapping process (Hayes, 2018). Within the scope of this research, the following structural equation model was analyzed.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics of the scores obtained from the data collection tools are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Findings

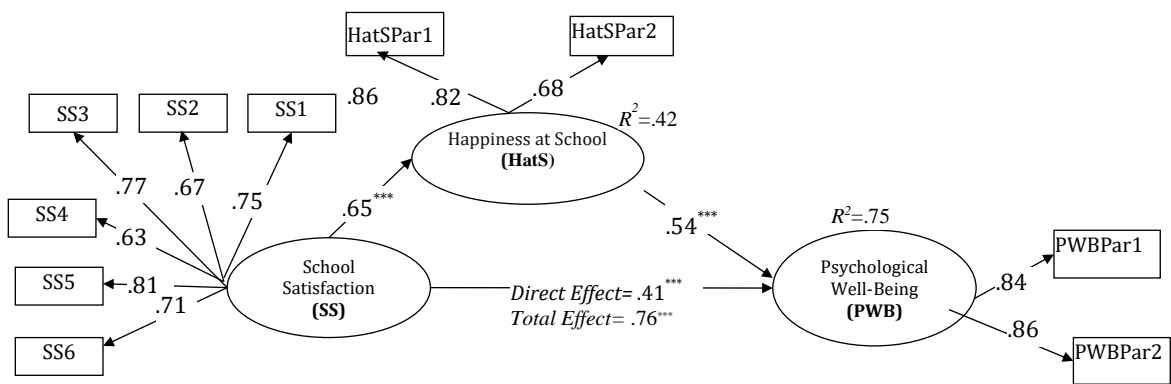
Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	School Satisfaction	Happiness at School	Skewness	Kurtosis
School Satisfaction	367	25.74	4.40			-.794	-.041
Happiness at School	367	47.87	7.70	.49**		-.665	-.040
Psychological Well-Being	367	89.62	15.06	.64**	.63**	-.610	.134

**p < .01

Only the first letter of the table number and table name must be capitalized. The table number should be bold and the table text should normally be written above the table and left aligned. No text should be written to the left or right of the tables. As seen in Table 1, there are differences between school satisfaction and happiness at school ($r = .49, p < .01$), between school satisfaction and psychological well-being ($r = .64, p < .01$), and between happiness and psychological well-being at school. ($r = .63, p < .01$) was found to be positively significant. In addition, the values of kurtosis and skewness between +1.5 and -1.5 indicate that the data have a normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

The Mediator Role of Happiness at School in the Relationship Between School Satisfaction and Psychological Well-Being

In the study, the mediating role of school happiness levels in the relationship between school satisfaction and the psychological well-being of children was examined. The path diagram of the structural equation analysis performed is presented in Figure 2. The model fit indices obtained as a result of the analysis show that the tested model has good fit values [$\chi^2 = 53.216, df = 31, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 1.78; AGFI = .95; GFI = .97; IFI = .99; TLI = .98; NFI = .97; RFI = .96; CFI = .99; RMSEA = .044$ (90% CI = .023 - .064)].



***p < .001

Figure 2. Path Diagram Regarding the Mediator Role of Happiness at School in the Relationship Between School Satisfaction and Psychological Well-Being

As a result of the structural equation analysis performed, it was seen that the school satisfaction of secondary school students positively predicted their level of happiness at school ($\beta = .65, p < .001$). Similarly, it was found that secondary school students' school satisfaction positively predicted their psychological well-being ($\beta = .41, p < .001$). In addition, secondary school students' happiness at school positively predicted their psychological well-being ($\beta = .54, p < .001$). On the other hand, it has been revealed that happiness at school has a significant mediator role in the relationship between school satisfaction and the psychological well-being of secondary school students. Bootstrap confidence

intervals were calculated to evaluate whether the mediation effect was significant. It was observed that the confidence intervals obtained did not include zero [$\beta = .35$, BC-Bias%95 lower-bound = .242, upper-bound = .509]. This result shows that the mediating role of the variable of happiness at school is significant. In addition, it was concluded that all variables in the model explained approximately 75% of the variance of psychological well-being ($R^2 = .75$). This result indicates that the model has a high power to explain the variance of psychological well-being. When the results regarding the total effect of school satisfaction on psychological well-being are examined, it is seen that it explains 55% of the assumption regarding psychological well-being ($R^2 = .55$). However, with the addition of the variable of happiness at school, which is the mediator variable, to the model, it is seen that the model's explanatory power of the hypothesis of psychological well-being increases. All the results obtained in the structural equation analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the mediation model

Pathway	Confidence Interval (CI) (Bias%95)			R^2
	Coefficient	Lower-bound	Upper-bound	
<i>Total effect</i>				
SS→PWB	.76***	.679	.876	.55
<i>Direct effect</i>				
SS → PWB	.41***	.229	.560	.42
SS → HatS	.65***	.546	.753	
HatS → PWB	.54***	.375	.704	
<i>Indirect effect</i>				
SS → HatS → PWB	.35	.242	.509	.75

*** $p < .001$; N = 367. Note1: SS: School Satisfaction; PWB: Psychological Well-Being; HatS: Happiness at School

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the mediating role of happiness at school in the relationship between secondary school students' school satisfaction and psychological well-being. According to a finding of the structural equation analysis carried out in the research, school satisfaction of secondary school students positively predicted their psychological well-being. According to this result, it can be said that the increase in secondary school students' school satisfaction contributes positively to their psychological well-being. This result shows that the H_1 hypothesis of the study was confirmed. In the literature, there is a limited number of studies examining the relationship between secondary school students' school satisfaction and psychological well-being. For example, King, Huebner, and Suldo (2006) reported that there is a positive and significant relationship between school satisfaction and psychological well-being in a study they conducted with secondary school students. In another study, they concluded that their satisfaction with school significantly predicted their subjective well-being (Asıcı & İkiz, 2018). Similarly, in another study, it was seen that students with positive climate perception had a high level of subject well-being (Borkar, 2016). Similar results were obtained in some other studies in the literature (Telef, 2014; Suldo et al., 2012; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). It is seen that the current research finding is in parallel with the research results in the literature. When the research findings in the literature and the current research results are evaluated together, it can be stated that the school experiences of secondary school students and the level of satisfaction they get from these experiences are effective on their psychological well-being. In support of this interpretation, it is stated in the theoretical literature that school-age children's experiences at school are important psychological dynamics that affect their psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and happiness (Deiner, 2000; Huebner & Alderman, 1993; Seligman, 2004). In other words, in addition to the knowledge and skills students acquire at school, their level of satisfaction with their friendship relations at school, the school climate, and the relationship they establish with their teachers determine their school satisfaction levels. Many components (school, work, marriage, academic success, interpersonal communication, etc.) from the lives of individuals are effective on their psychological well-being. Therefore, considering that school-age children's time at school covers a

significant part of their time, it can be thought that it is an expected result that students' school satisfaction levels affect their psychological well-being.

According to another finding of the study, school satisfaction of secondary school students significantly predicted their happiness levels at school. This finding can be interpreted as the higher the school satisfaction of secondary school students, the higher their level of happiness at school. With this result, the H₂ hypothesis of the research was supported. When the literature was examined, a study was found that examined the relationship between secondary school students' school satisfaction and their happiness at school. However, in a similar study, it was concluded that secondary school students with a positive school climate perception were happier (Asıcı & İkiz, 2018). In another study, it was stated that secondary school students with high school satisfaction achieved more happiness in their school life (Whitley et al., 2012). In addition, another study examined how children's experiences of happiness at school were conceptualized and as a result, it was seen that friendship relations, academic success, and positive support sources were school-based sources of happiness (López-Pérez & Fernández-Castilla, 2018). Again, in the same study, it was concluded that the academic achievement of the students who had a high level of happiness at school was also high. It can be stated that these research results support the current research findings. In addition to these studies, in a qualitative study examining children's perceptions of the concept of happiness, it was seen that school experiences are among the sources of happiness for children (Yam, 2020). On the other hand, when the literature is examined, it is seen that the concepts of happiness and subjective well-being are used interchangeably (Deiner et al. 2009; Seligman, 2011). Subjective well-being is defined as a psychological structure that includes the positive and negative emotions of the individual and the evaluations made about his/her life (Deiner, 1984). In other words, subjective well-being consists of positive and negative emotions felt by individuals and cognitive judgments about their life (Lyubomirsky & Dickerhoof, 2006). As can be understood from the definitions above, it is seen that life satisfaction, which consists of cognitive evaluations of individuals' lives, also affects their happiness. School satisfaction is known to be an important determinant of school-age children's life satisfaction (Tian et al., 2014). Similarly, Seligman et al. (2009) stated that the satisfaction that students get from their school life supports their level of happiness at school and that this situation will contribute to students' psychological well-being. It is also stated that the cognitive judgments of school-age children about their school life are more effective in their life satisfaction than adults (Huebner et al., 1998; Valera et al., 2017). Considering these explanations, it can be thought that school satisfaction has an effect on the life satisfaction of school-age children, and therefore school satisfaction affects the happiness levels of secondary school students at school. In short, it can be said that the current research findings on the relationship between secondary school students' school satisfaction and their level of happiness at school are also supported by the theoretical literature.

In the study, it was seen that the happiness at school of secondary school students positively predicted their psychological well-being. Looking at this result, it can be stated that as the happiness levels of secondary school students increase at school, their psychological well-being levels will also increase. According to this result, the H₃ hypothesis of the research was confirmed. When the literature is examined, no research has been found that examines the relationship between secondary school students' happiness levels at school and their psychological well-being. However, in some studies, it has been determined that the subjective well-being of secondary school students who have positive feelings about the school climate is higher (Borkar, 2016; Suldo et al., 2012). On the other hand, it is stated in the theoretical literature that school-age children's feelings about their school experiences are effective on their psychological well-being and life satisfaction. (Deiner, 2000; Huebner & Alderman, 1993; Seligman, 2004). However, it can be said that the current research examining the theoretical structure between happiness and psychological well-being is an expected result. Because within the concept of psychological well-being defined by Seligman (2011) there is a component of positive emotions. It is seen that the concept of happiness at school is defined as the positive emotions about the school that occurs in the student as a result of the consistency between the expectations of the student from the school,

his personal needs, and the factors presented by the school and its environment (Engels et al., 2004; Tian, 2008). When these explanations are evaluated together, it can be thought that the happiness levels of students who have positive emotions about their school life increase, and this situation contributes positively to their psychological well-being. Finally, it can be stated that the current research findings on the relationship between secondary school students' happiness at school and their psychological well-being are supported by the results of related studies and theoretical literature explanations.

According to the last finding of the study, it was seen that happiness at school has a partial mediator role in the relationship between secondary school students' school satisfaction and psychological well-being. This result can be interpreted as secondary school students' school satisfaction increases their happiness levels at school, and their psychological well-being increases with the increase in their happiness at school. In addition, when the findings related to the total effect of school satisfaction were examined, it was seen that it explained 55% of the total assumption of psychological well-being. However, it has been observed that school satisfaction has the power to explain 75% of the total variance of psychological well-being through the variable of happiness at school. According to this result, it can be said that secondary school students' school satisfaction affects their psychological well-being positively, but positive feelings about school life contribute to the higher psychological well-being of students. This result shows that the H₄ hypothesis of the research is confirmed. School satisfaction is expressed as the cognitive evaluations made by the student regarding the quality of their school life (Huebner, 1994). On the other hand, school satisfaction is also defined as the level of satisfaction with school life, liking these experiences, and feeling good during the time spent at school (Tian, Chen, & Huanber, 2014). Similarly, the concept of happiness at school is used to express positive feelings about the school formed in the student as a result of the consistency between the student's expectations from the school, his personal needs, and the factors presented by the school and its environment (Tian, 2008). In other words, happiness at school is expressed as the situation in which the student experiences positive emotions more frequently and negative emotions less towards school climate, teacher-student relations, peer relations, and other in-school activities (Løhre et al., 2010; Uusitalo-Malmivaara, 2011). Psychological well-being, on the other hand, is expressed as an existential challenge to all situations that individuals have encountered in their life (Ryff, 1989). In addition, psychological well-being consists of six components: self-acceptance, positive social relations, being autonomous, being able to control one's environment, the meaning of life, and motivation for self-development (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002). On the other hand, psychological well-being is accepted as an indicator of the physical, emotional, cognitive, and mental health of individuals (Diener et al., 2009). Considering the explanations above, it is noteworthy that the concepts of school satisfaction, happiness at school, and psychological well-being are effective on each other. Based on all these explanations, it can be thought that secondary school students with increased school satisfaction have positive feelings towards school, and this situation makes them feel happy due to their school experiences, and their psychological well-being increases thanks to the increased school satisfaction and happiness. In support of this interpretation, Seligman et al. (2009) stated that the satisfaction that students get from their school life supports their level of happiness at school and that this situation will contribute to the psychological well-being of the students. In a similar study, it was concluded that hope has a mediating role in the relationship between school satisfaction and the life satisfaction of secondary school students (Yam & Kumcağız, 2020). It is seen that the current research findings on the mediation relationship of happiness at school overlap with the related literature and theoretical explanations of positive psychology. On the other hand, the mediating role of happiness at school in the relationship between school satisfaction and psychological well-being is also supported by the Cognitive Therapy Theory developed by Aron Beck (1997). Beck (1997) stated that in this therapy approach that she put forward, dysfunctional negative cognitive judgments are the basis of the psychological problems of his/her individuals. In other words, the cognitive model claims that negative thoughts of individuals cause negative emotions and behaviors in them (Beck & Haigh, 2014). School satisfaction represents students' cognitive evaluations of their school life, and the concept of happiness

at school represents their positive feelings toward school. Based on this explanation, it can be interpreted that secondary school students with high school satisfaction have functional and positive cognitive judgments about the school, and accordingly they feel happy to be in school, and as a result, their psychological well-being increases.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has some limitations as in every research. The first limitation of this study is related to the sample group. The sample group of the study consists of students selected by convenience sampling method among the students in three secondary schools in a city in Turkey. Therefore, care should be taken when generalizing the results obtained in this study to students in other regions of Turkey as well as students from other cultures. In a future study, more generalizable results can be obtained by repeating the current research on a sample group consisting of students from different cultures. Secondly, it should be noted that this study is a cross-sectional study and therefore the results obtained do not contain a cause-effect relationship. For this reason, studies using different research methods can be conducted to better determine the relationships between the variables discussed in the current study. Thirdly, since the data is collected by self-report method, it can contain all kinds of prejudices. This limitation on research results can be controlled by using different data collection methods in future studies. Finally, in this study, the mediating role of happiness at school in the relationship between school satisfaction and the psychological well-being of only secondary school students was examined. In future studies, modeling studies can be conducted using different variables related to school-based experiences that affect the mental health of school-age children.

CONCLUSION

In this study, secondary school students' school satisfaction positively predicted their happiness at school and their psychological well-being. Similarly, it was seen that the happiness of secondary school students at school positively predicted their psychological well-being. These results reveal that children's evaluations of their school-based experiences have an impact on their mental health. In other words, it indicates that school environments only support the academic aspect of children, which will negatively affect their mental health development. In addition, school satisfaction is a component of life satisfaction. Therefore, considering the amount of time school-age children spend at school, it is striking that school satisfaction will have an impact on their psychological well-being, which is an important indicator of mental health. In addition, in this study, it was concluded that secondary school students with high school satisfaction had higher levels of happiness at school. This result reveals that students who have positive thoughts about school and high school satisfaction have higher happiness in their school life. The most striking result of the research is related to the mediating role of happiness at school. Because in this study, it was concluded that there is a partial mediator role of happiness at school between school satisfaction and psychological well-being. This result reveals that school satisfaction contributes positively to the psychological well-being of secondary school students, but students with higher levels of happiness at school have higher psychological well-being levels. All these results reached in the research draw attention to how important school-based experiences are for the mental health of school-age children. In other words, it is concluded that schools are not only places where academic practices are carried out but are very effective institutions for the mental health of children. As seen in the current study, it is seen that children who are satisfied with school-based experiences are psychologically healthier. For this reason, including activities and studies that will positively support children's school-based lives will contribute positively to the psychological health of children. In short, it is seen that it is important not only to take measures to increase academic success in schools but also to include positive psychology practices that will support children's psychological health. In this way, an important step will be taken to transform schools into institutions that support children's mental health.

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