

## The Mediating Role of Psychological Well-Being in the Relationship Between Motivation to Teach and Life Satisfaction

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### Abstract

Education is one of the fundamental elements shaping the future of societies, and teachers are key figures in undertaking this important task. However, the impact of psychological factors such as motivation to teach and life satisfaction of preservice teachers on the quality of education is often overlooked. In this context, this research aims to investigate the relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction among teacher candidates, as well as to test whether psychological well-being mediates these relationships. Participants were 618 volunteer teacher candidates (336 female, 54.4%). Data collection instruments included the Motivation to Teach Scale, the Satisfaction with Life Scale and the Psychological Well-Being Scale. The mediating relationship was tested using structural equation modeling and bootstrapping procedures. Results indicated significant positive correlations between motivation to teach, psychological well-being, and life satisfaction. Motivation to teach and psychological well-being were identified as significant predictors of life satisfaction. Furthermore, psychological well-being emerged as a partial mediating variable between motivation to teach and life satisfaction. Notably, motivation to teach and psychological well-being accounted for approximately 60% of the variance in life satisfaction. In conclusion, enhancing the psychological well-being of teacher candidates could strengthen the impact of motivation to teach on life satisfaction, supported by the findings.

**Keywords:** Motivation to teach, life satisfaction, psychological well-being, structural equation modeling, preservice teachers.

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## Introduction

The teaching profession is regarded as one of the key elements of the education system (Demir et al., 2021; Güven, 2010). Even if the content and objectives of teaching activities are determined very well, the absence of a qualified teacher to carry these out makes it difficult to obtain the desired results in educational activities. Teachers' ability to conduct a successful education process depends on their developing positive attitudes towards educational activities, the school and the students (Çapri & Çelikkaleli, 2008). Therefore, while training preservice teachers, teacher training institutions should also contribute to the development of positive attitudes towards the profession (Gökçe & Sezer, 2012). Creating a positive attitude towards the teaching profession also depends on keeping the candidate teacher's life satisfaction at a high level during the preparation process for the profession (Recepoğlu, 2013). Another means of developing a positive attitude towards the teaching profession is to maintain teachers' motivation to teach.

## Literature Review

Motivation to teach refers to a complex structure that affects an individual's participation in the processes of learning and teaching (Dikmen, 2021), while life satisfaction indicates the overall level of satisfaction from an individual's life (Bergold & Steinmayr, 2023). The relationship between these two concepts represents an important area for understanding an individual's psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is defined as an individual's emotional, social, and psychological state of well-being (Holman et al., 2018). This includes the individual enjoying life, feeling positive about themselves, and being able to establish healthy relationships with others. On the other hand, motivation to teach is a factor that shapes an individual's engagement in the learning process (Irnidayanti et al., 2020). Motivation to teach determines how willing and directive an individual is in their learning activities. Therefore, the relationship between these two concepts represents an important area for understanding the connection between an individual's learning and teaching experiences and life satisfaction.

In this context, research in the literature suggests a positive relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction. For example, there are findings indicating that as teachers' teaching motivation increases, their job satisfaction and overall life satisfaction also increase (Sari & Yetkiner, 2020). Similarly, it is stated that individuals who actively participate in the learning process have higher levels of life satisfaction (Bergold & Steinmayr, 2023). However, deeper research is needed on the mediating effects of this relationship. In this context, the aim of this study is to examine the mediating role of psychological well-being in the relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction. In this scope, firstly, a general overview of life satisfaction and motivation to teach concepts is provided, and then the mediating role of psychological well-being and factors influencing this relationship are emphasized.

## Life Satisfaction

From past to present, scientists and philosophers have tried to understand what the meaning of life is. To that end, concepts such as happiness (Diener, 2000; Lu, 2000; Ryff, 1989), satisfaction (Demir Gündül et al., 2019; Diener et al., 1985; Karaman & Watson, 2017), pleasure and well-being (Bradburn, 1969; Damasio, 2013; Kaya & Çenesiz, 2020; Keyes, 2002) began to be researched and various ideas were put forward on the subject. According to Aristotle and Epicurus, who laid the foundations of hedonistic thought, the ultimate purpose of life is the individual's own pleasure. Plato, on the other hand, opposed the hedonistic view and described all pleasures related to bodily desires as bad. According to Plato, the main purpose of life is to achieve the highest level of knowledge. Aristotle, however, expressed the ultimate purpose of life as being well (Çankaya, 2017; Tulunay Ateş, 2021). The science of psychology, which separated from philosophy and became a distinct science, also investigated the meaning of life. In this way, more importance began to be given to concepts such as life satisfaction, subjective well-being, optimism and happiness (Aliekberoğlu et al., 2018; Keyes et al., 2002).

Life satisfaction refers to the result obtained by comparing an individual's living conditions and expectations (Neugarten et al., 1961). In other words, life satisfaction is determined by the individual's expectations compared to reality (Özer & Karabulut, 2003). As Neugarten (1974) pointed out, enjoying daily life, having specific goals in life, believing in one's ability to achieve those goals, and having a positive outlook on life are determinants of life satisfaction. According to Kaba et al. (2018), life

satisfaction can increase or decrease over time because an individual's expectations and experiences can change during this process.

When the literature is examined, it can be seen that life satisfaction is associated with concepts such as happiness and subjective well-being (Alibekirođlu et al., 2018; Lu, 2000), and that it positively affects the mental health of the individual (Gündođar et al., 2007). It has been observed that numerous factors, such as enjoying life, achieving goals, feeling good physically (Othman, 2022), positive self-esteem (Yıldız & Baytemir, 2016) and social relationships (Bozođlan, 2014; Kapıkıran, 2016) are related to life satisfaction. Although some studies (Kaçan et al., 2015; Myers & Diener, 1995) show that factors such as gender, race, and financial status do not have an effect on life satisfaction, it has been determined that life satisfaction is related to the welfare level, educational opportunities and health services in society, and that individuals who are satisfied with their life are happier and more productive within society (Diener, 2000). Based on these findings, it can be said that individuals' life satisfaction may vary depending on their skills, how they interpret events, and their expectations. It is expected that individuals who encourage others, have high motivation, are open to new ideas, and are sensitive will be more successful and have higher life satisfaction (Altun Dilek & Yılmaz, 2016).

### **Motivation to Teach and Life Satisfaction**

It can be seen that the concept of motivation, which is one of the variables associated with life satisfaction (Tulunay Ateş, 2021; Çelenliođlu, 2020; Demir GÜdül et al., 2019; Karaman & Watson, 2017; Koç, 2018) is frequently examined, especially in the field of social sciences and educational psychology (Ayık et al., 2015). Although there is no general view on the definition of motivation, it can be defined as the effort made for any purpose (Robbins & Judge, 2012), the process of influence and incentive that activates an organism (Güney, 2020), and the force that urges the individual to act (Dikmen, 2021). Moreover, motivation can also be defined as both behavioral and emotional energy that moves the individual to achieve a goal (Irnidayanti et al., 2020). According to Argon and Ciciođlu (2017), motivation is a process that drives the individual towards a goal and motivates him/her to continue, in other words, that ensures continuity, rather than an instantaneous situation. The response given by an organism to internal impulses is called intrinsic motivation, while the response given to external impulses is known as extrinsic motivation (Akbaba, 2006). Factors such as curiosity, interest, understanding, knowledge, development and a sense of competence can be listed as sources of intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation is based on punishment and reward (Ayık et al., 2015; Wu, 2003). An individual may be extrinsically motivated in order to gain appreciation, receive encouragement, or avoid criticism. The main difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is that in intrinsic motivation, control is in the hands of the individual, whereas in extrinsic motivation, control is dependent on environmental factors (Gün & Turabik, 2019).

The concept of motivation to teach can be defined as the wish and desire existing in the individual to be able to teach effectively (Dikmen, 2021). Examining the literature, it can be seen that motivation to teach is classified as intrinsic, extrinsic and altruistic motivation (Watt & Richardson, 2007). Altruistic motivation is the individual's belief that teaching is a noble and sacred profession and based on this belief, the desire to teach something to students (Thomson & Palermo, 2014). Being happy with teaching, spirituality, self-sacrifice and satisfaction are associated with intrinsic motivation, while factors such as salary, career and vacations are examples of sources of extrinsic motivation for teachers (Roness, 2011). Although it is known that extrinsic motivation is generally effective in choosing a profession, there are a number of opinions that intrinsic motivation plays a more decisive role in choosing the teaching profession (Ayık & Ataş, 2014; Richardson et al., 2014). Even if there is no reward as a result of their teaching activities, teachers with intrinsic motivation continue to perform their educational activities willingly and gladly (Kaufman et al., 2011). Teachers' motivation to teach is considered to be an important factor that affects the learning process at least as much as their teaching ability does (Neves de Jesus & Lens, 2005). In this respect, the continuity of teachers' professional success and performance is related to their level of motivation towards the profession (Butler, 2007). Therefore, motivation to teach also affects the effort teachers make towards professional development.

It is well known that the difficulties and obstacles encountered in life have a negative impact on an individual's life satisfaction (Aydođdu, 2021). Teachers often encounter many obstacles while delivering instructional activities and must cope with these challenges in order to effectively teach

students. However, these obstacles can lead to a decrease in life satisfaction and adversely affect their motivation to teach. Discovering their own potentials and finding ways to overcome these challenges can provide teachers with a significant advantage in educational activities. Having a high level of motivation to teach can increase the effectiveness of educational activities and have a more positive impact on students (Robbins & Judge, 2012). Within the scope of these studies, in order to determine the relationship between teaching motivation and life satisfaction, the first hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) of the research was determined as " $H_1$ : Teaching motivation has a positive and significant effect on life satisfaction".

### **Motivation to Teach and Psychological Well Being**

Psychological well-being, another crucial factor in individuals' satisfaction with life (Damasio et al., 2013; Demir et al., 2021; Kaya ve Çenesiz, 2020; Kermen et al., 2016), is closely intertwined with motivation to teach. Rooted in the predominance of positive emotions and the fulfillment of personal goals (Bradburn, 1969; Holman et al., 2018), psychological well-being encompasses various dimensions such as self-acceptance, autonomy, and personal growth (Deci & Ryan, 2004; Ryff, 1989).

According to Ryff (1989), who made the first important studies on the psychological well-being model, this model consists of the combination of six universal needs. These needs are identified as self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth (Deci & Ryan, 2004; Ryff, 1989). These needs are accepted as the basic characteristics of mental health and functionality (Kaya & Yağan, 2021; Klapp et al., 2013). According to Seligman (2012), another researcher who has made important studies on psychological well-being, if the individual is connected to life and experiences more positive emotions, enjoys the things he/she does, derives satisfaction from the relationships he/she establishes, believes that his/her life is meaningful, and sees him/herself as a successful person, this means that his/her level of psychological well-being is also high.

High levels of psychological well-being not only contribute to life satisfaction but also play a pivotal role in professional settings, including the teaching environment (Gustems-Carnicer & Calderon, 2013). Teachers' psychological well-being fosters a positive teaching atmosphere, enhances interpersonal relationships, and indirectly influences student achievement (Jeon et al., 2018). Therefore, understanding the relationship between motivation to teach and psychological well-being is essential for promoting educators' overall well-being and creating conducive learning environments. Based on this point, the second hypothesis of the study ( $H_2$ ) was determined as " $H_2$ : Teaching motivation has a positive and significant effect on psychological well-being".

### **Psychological Well-Being and Life Satisfaction**

Psychological well-being is intricately linked with life satisfaction, as evidenced by numerous studies (Demirci & Şar, 2017; Holman et al., 2018). Individuals with high psychological well-being tend to experience greater life satisfaction, derive meaning from their endeavors, and maintain positive relationships (Seligman, 2012). Moreover, psychological well-being positively impacts job satisfaction and engagement, further influencing overall life satisfaction (Holman et al., 2018). Conditions such as a healthy lifestyle, positive social relationships (Çelenlioğlu, 2020), increased success in working life, increased income (Kermen et al., 2016), and life goals (Doğan; 2018; İkiz et al., 2018) can be listed among the contributions of psychological well-being to human life. Therefore, understanding the relationship between psychological well-being and life satisfaction is crucial for promoting individuals' holistic well-being. In this context, to determine the relationship between psychological well-being and life satisfaction, the third hypothesis ( $H_3$ ) of the research was determined as " $H_3$ : Psychological well-being has a positive and significant effect on life satisfaction".

### **The Mediating Role of Psychological Well-Being**

According to Berridge and Kringelbach (2011), if the individual works for self-realization and leads a life in harmony with his/her true self, he/she also has high psychological well-being. Therefore, it can be said that psychological well-being plays an important guiding role in working life. Considering the studies conducted in school environments, it can be seen that high psychological well-being in teachers contributes to the teaching environment (Gustems-Carnicer & Calderon, 2013), regulates the

relationships between teachers (Özen & Gülaçtı, 2012), and indirectly contributes to students' achievement (Jeon et al., 2018).

It has been stated that the teaching profession, which is one of the important building blocks of the education system (Demir et al., 2021; Güven, 2010), is entered for psychosocial development and life satisfaction rather than for financial gain (Yazıcı, 2009). In order to obtain job satisfaction, certain factors must exist that will motivate the individual. One of these factors is seen to be motivation to teach. For this reason, it is important for preservice teachers to be motivated in order to maintain their life satisfaction and provide quality education in the future. Since teachers with life satisfaction will perform their profession willingly and gladly, this will ultimately contribute to education and student achievement. Considering psychological well-being as another factor that will affect life satisfaction can be seen as a way to support the development of professional qualifications in preservice teachers. A high level of psychological well-being in preservice teachers, who form the basis of the sample and who are expected to make significant contributions to raising new generations, will not only increase the quality of the education they provide, but is also important in terms of their being a significant role model both for students and in society. From this point of view, it is important to examine the variables that affect the life satisfaction of candidates who are to begin the teaching profession and to consider the importance of these variables in teacher education.

Looking at the literature, it can be seen that life satisfaction, motivation and psychological well-being are interrelated variables. There are studies that separately examine the relationships of life satisfaction with academic motivation (Demir Gündül et al., 2019; Özcan & Karaca, 2018), life satisfaction with psychological well-being (Martyr et al., 2018), and psychological well-being with motivation (Çelenlioğlu, 2020). However, the fact that no study can be found that examines the mediating role of psychological well-being in the relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction constitutes the main problem of this study. In this regard, it is thought that investigating life satisfaction in preservice teachers and revealing its relationship with the concepts of motivation to teach and psychological well-being will contribute to the literature. In addition, it is envisaged that the research results will help to find alternatives that will keep teachers' life satisfaction high, and thus help them to teach more effectively in educational activities. Based on the above mentioned objectives, the fourth hypothesis (H<sub>4</sub>) of this research was determined as "H<sub>4</sub>: Psychological well-being is a significant mediating variable in the relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction".

### **Theoretical Model**

Within the scope of this study, it is hypothesized that motivation to teach may have a direct and indirect effect on life satisfaction and that psychological well-being may play a role as a mediating variable in this relationship. A correlational survey model was used to reveal the direct predictive power of the independent variable (motivation to teach) and mediating variable (psychological well-being) on the dependent variable (life satisfaction). The correlational survey model is defined as a model that aims to determine the existence or degree of change between two or more variables (Karasar, 2015). In structural models, predictive relationships between internal and external variables and implicit structures in factor analyses are tested together (Çokluk et al., 2021). In line with this purpose, first of all, the relationships between the aforementioned variables were examined, and then the hypothetical model for the indirect relationships between motivation to teach and life satisfaction through psychological well-being was tested. The model for the indirect relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction through psychological well-being is given in Figure 1.

Using the model shown in Figure 1, the following hypotheses were tested:

H<sub>1</sub>: Motivation to teach positively predicts life satisfaction.

H<sub>2</sub>: Psychological well-being positively predicts life satisfaction.

H<sub>3</sub>: Motivation to teach positively predicts psychological well-being.

H<sub>4</sub>: Psychological well-being plays a mediating role in the relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction.

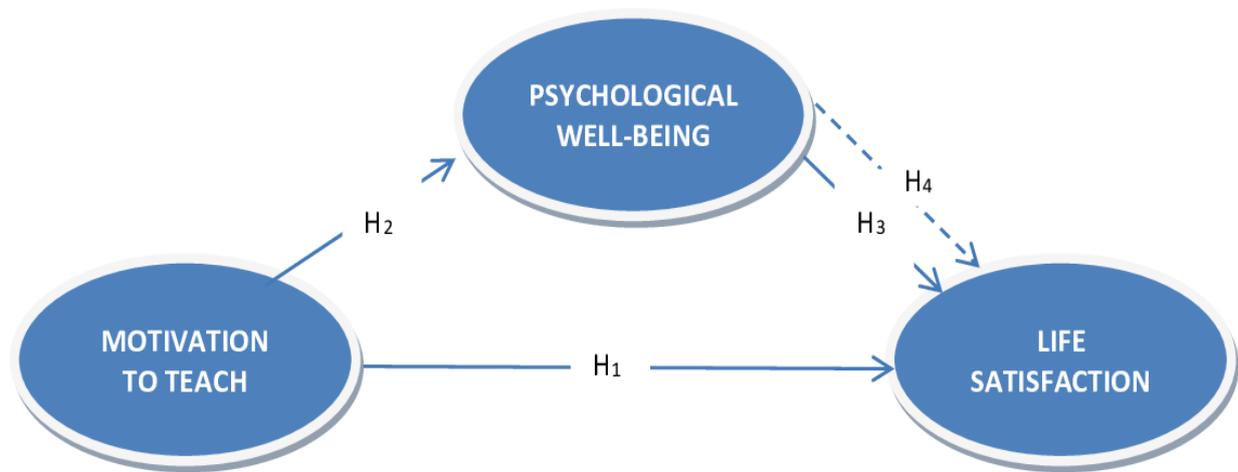


Figure 1. Theoretical Research Model

## Method

### Participants

The participants in the study consisted of 629 preservice teachers who were recruited according to the convenience sampling method. As 4 participants did not fill in the questionnaires completely, 5 participants were univariate outliers and 2 participants were multivariate outliers, they were excluded from the data set. Consequently, the findings were evaluated on the remaining 618 participants. Considering the distribution of the participants based on demographic variables, 54.4% (N=336) were female and 45.6% (N=282) were male. The mean age of the participants was 21.64 (SD=2.30). In terms of socio-economic level, 80.7% of the participants defined their economic status as medium, 15% as low and 3.1% as high. Seven people did not respond to this item.

### Data Collection Tools

#### Motivation to Teach Scale (MTS)

This was developed by Kauffman et al. (2011) to measure the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of teachers and prospective teachers for teaching, and was adapted to Turkish by Ayık et al. (2015). The scale has two sub-dimensions and a total of 12 items. Items are evaluated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= “completely disagree” to 5= “completely agree”. High scores obtained from the scale indicate high motivation. When the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficients ( $\alpha$ ) were evaluated, they were found to be .70 for intrinsic motivation, .65 for extrinsic motivation and .79 for the whole scale, respectively. As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis performed to determine the construct validity of the MTS in the current study, the two-factor structure of the scale was confirmed, and it was seen that the model fit values demonstrated a good level of fit ( $\chi^2/df=4.22$ , RMSEA=.076, SRMR=.059, GFI=.94, AGFI=.91, CFI=.94, IFI=.95). In addition, as a result of the reliability analysis performed for the whole scale, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated as .83.

#### Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

Developed by Diener et al. (1985), the Satisfaction with Life Scale was adapted to Turkish by Köker (1991). The scale consists of 5 items and is evaluated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= “strongly disagree” to 7= “strongly agree”. Köker (1991) determined that the test-retest consistency coefficient of the scale administered at a three-week interval was  $r=.85$ , and that the item-test correlations ranged from  $r=.71$  to  $r=.80$ . The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) of the scale was found to be .76. Scores obtained from the scale range from 5 to 35. High scores obtained from the scale mean that a person’s life satisfaction is high. As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis carried out to determine the construct validity of the SWLS for the current study, the single-factor structure of the scale was confirmed and the model fit indices were found to be at a good level

( $\chi^2/df=3.29$ ,  $RMSEA=.064$ ,  $SRMR=.023$ ,  $GFI=.99$ ,  $AGFI=.97$ ,  $CFI=.99$ ,  $IFI=.99$ ). Moreover, as a result of the reliability analysis performed for the whole scale, it was determined that the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .76 and that the item-total correlations ranged from .34 to .58.

### **Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS)**

The Turkish adaptation study of this scale, which was developed by Diener et al. (2010) to complement existing measures of well-being and to measure psychological well-being, was carried out by Telef (2013). As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, it was seen that the total explained variance was 42%. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient obtained in the reliability study of the scale was calculated as .80. The items of the Psychological Well-Being Scale are arranged as a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1= "strongly disagree" to 7= "strongly agree". All items in the scale are positively worded and the scale scores range from 8 to 56. A high score indicates that the individual possesses high psychological resources and strength (Telef, 2013). As a result of the confirmatory factor analysis performed to determine the construct validity of the PWBS for the current study, the single-factor structure of the scale was confirmed, and it was seen that the model fit values showed a good level of fit ( $\chi^2/df=3.90$ ,  $RMSEA=.073$ ,  $SRMR=.039$ ,  $GFI=.97$ ,  $AGFI=.94$ ,  $CFI=.97$ ,  $IFI=.97$ ). In addition, following the reliability analysis performed for the whole scale, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated as .82 and the item-total correlation was found to range from .28 to .56.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using the SPSS 23.0 and LISREL 8.80 software packages. As the first step of the data analysis, the frequency values of the data set were checked. Then, the skewness and kurtosis values of all the scales were examined. As a result of the examination of normality values with additional variables, it was determined that the kurtosis and skewness coefficients met the normality assumption by taking values between -1 and +1 (Hair et al., 2014). After this, the descriptive statistics (minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation values) were examined. The research examined whether there was multicollinearity issue in the data by analyzing correlation values between variables, as well as VIF and tolerance values. It was found that the correlation values ranged from .19 to .88. Tolerance values were between .21 and .90, and VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) values ranged from 1.10 to 4.68. Multicollinearity occurs when the correlation between variables is greater than 0.90, VIF values are greater than 10, and tolerance values are less than .10 (Büyüköztürk, 2019). The reliability, collinearity and covariance values of all measurement instruments used in the study were examined. The correlations between the variables required to establish the model were examined with Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. After the measurement models of the measurement instruments were confirmed with confirmatory factor analysis, the hypothetical model was tested with the measurement model, and it was seen that the measurement values were within the acceptable limits.

In the last part of the study, the proposed model was tested with structural equation modeling and bootstrapping. The mediating effect of psychological well-being in the relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction was examined through structural equation modeling (SEM). To support the results of regression analysis, bootstrapping was performed with 5000 resampling iterations (Preacher & Hayes, 2018).

### **Findings**

Before testing the structural equation modeling, the assumption of normal distribution of single variables, which is one of the model assumptions in multivariate data analysis, should be met (Kline, 2015). The two most important elements of normality are skewness and kurtosis. In normal distributions, skewness and kurtosis coefficients are expected to be in the range of  $\pm 1.5$  (Büyüköztürk, 2019). Furthermore, it is stated that in order to use structural models, there should be significant relationships between dependent, independent and mediating variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Kline, 2015). For this reason, before examining the mediation relationships in the study, the normality values and correlation relationships of the data were examined. The correlation results for the participants' life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and motivation to teach and its sub-dimensions, as well as the scale means, skewness and kurtosis values are given in Table 1.

Table 1.  
Correlations between the Variables of the Theoretical Model

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Life Satisfaction	1				
2. Psychological Well-Being	.60**	1			
3. Motivation to Teach	.30**	.28**	1		
4. Intrinsic Motivation	.28**	.29**	.88**	1	
5. Extrinsic Motivation	.25**	.19**	.86**	.56**	1
$\bar{X}$	19.46	41.84	33.65	18.05	15.40
SD	6.98	8.45	8.85	5.12	4.74
Skewness	-.18	-.87	-.36	-.38	.10
Kurtosis	-.75	.62	-.18	-.38	-.45

N=618, \*\*p<.01 \*p<.05

As can be seen in Table 1, since the skewness and kurtosis values of all three scales and the sub-dimensions are within the range of  $\pm 1.5$ , it is accepted that the data are normally distributed (Büyükoztürk, 2019). Moreover, the findings in Table 1 show that there are positive and significant relationships between all variables. Accordingly, life satisfaction has positive and significant relationships with psychological well-being ( $r=.60$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and with motivation to teach ( $r=.30$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Moreover, there is a significant and positive correlation between psychological well-being and motivation to teach ( $r=.28$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

### Measurement Model

Before moving on to the structural model, a measurement model was established with 3 latent variables and 15 observed variables. In the established measurement model, it was observed that the model fitted well. Accordingly, the ratio of Chi Square to Degrees of Freedom is ( $\chi^2/df=3.20$ ) (Kline, 2015); Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA=.062), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR=.048) (Meydan & Şeşen, 2015); Goodness of Fit Index (GFI=.96), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI = .94); Comparative Fit Index (CFI=.93); Incremental Fit Index (IFI=.94) (Seçer, 2017) were measured as.

### Structural Model

To test the hypotheses, first of all, the direct model between motivation to teach and life satisfaction was examined (Table 2, Model 1). The standardized regression coefficients and t-values of the model were examined and no discrepancy was found. The results revealed that motivation to teach had a positive and significant effect on life satisfaction ( $\beta=.43$ ,  $p<.01$ ;  $t=7.90$ ). Then, psychological well-being was added as a variable that may have a mediating relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction (Table 2, Model 2). With the inclusion of psychological well-being in the model, there was a significant decrease in the correlation between motivation to teach and life satisfaction ( $\beta=.14$ ,  $p<.01$ ;  $t=3.38$ ). Figure 2 shows the mediating effect of psychological well-being between motivation to teach and life satisfaction.

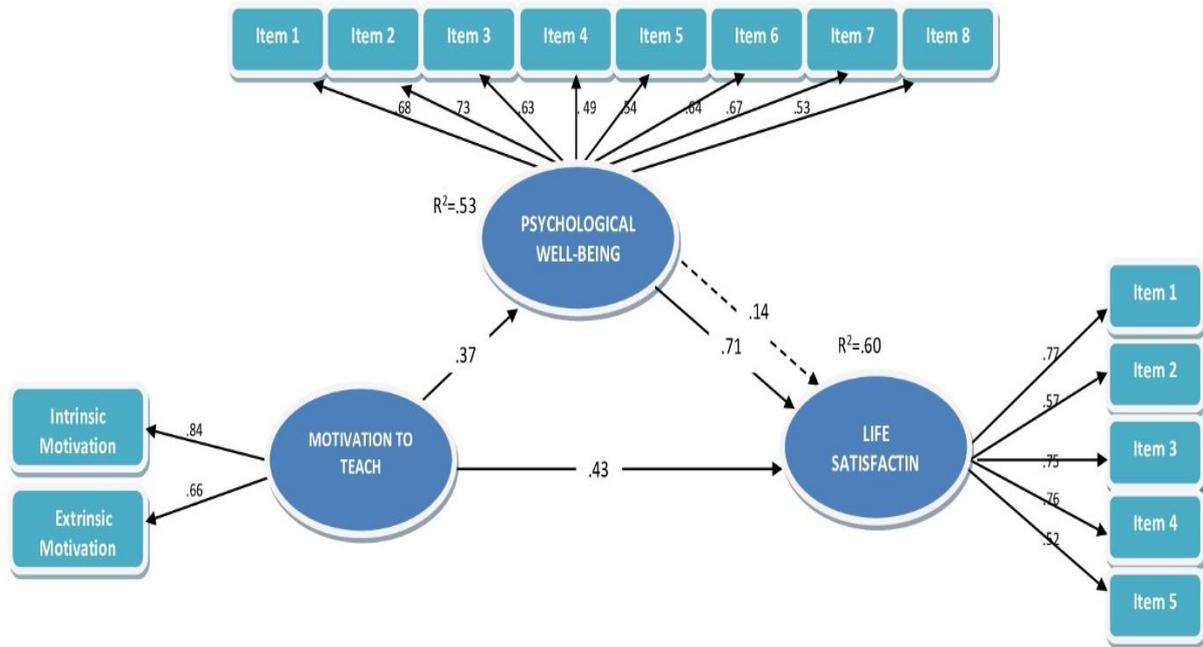


Figure 2. Analysis Model for the Mediating Role of Psychological Well-Being in the Relationship between Motivation to Teach and Life Satisfaction.

\*\*p<.01, \*p<.05, N:618

Table 2. Model Fit Values of Measurement Model and Structural Model

	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	SRMR	GFI	AGFI	CFI	IFI
Acceptable Fit	$\chi^2/df \leq 5$	RMSEA $\leq .08$	0 < SRMR $\leq .05$	.90 $\leq$ GFI	.90 $\leq$ AGFI	.90 $\leq$ CFI	.95 $\leq$ IFI
Model 1	3.49	.066	.034	.98	.95	.97	.97
Model 2	3.35	.062	.048	.94	.91	.93	.96

The fit indices for the model fit values were evaluated based on the studies by Meydan and Şeşen (2015) and Seçer (2017). When the model fit values were examined, it was concluded that the measures of model fit were within the acceptable limits and that therefore, psychological well-being had a mediating role in the relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction. In other words, it can be stated that the results of the established hypothetical model are compatible. In addition, considering the R<sup>2</sup> values in the model, motivation to teach and psychological well-being together explain 60% of life satisfaction.

### Bootstrapping Procedure

The bootstrapping procedure was used to test whether the mediating role of psychological well-being was significant in the relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction. To determine the direct and indirect effects in the structural model, the bootstrapping process was performed with 5.000 resamples. The results of the coefficients and confidence intervals for the direct and indirect effects are given in Table 3.

Table 3.  
Bootstrapping Results for the Mediating Role of Psychological Well-Being in the Relationship between Motivation to Teach and Life Satisfaction

Direct Effects	Bootstrap	At 95% Confidence Interval	
	Coefficient	Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Motivation to Teach→Life Satisfaction	.43	.071	.177
Motivation to Teach→Psychological Well-Being	.37	.205	.351
Psychological Well-Being→Life Satisfaction	.71	.405	.517
Indirect Effects			
Motivation to Teach→Psychological Well-Being→Life Satisfaction	.14	.086	.169

### Discussion and Conclusion

This study examined the mediating role of psychological well-being in the relationship between preservice teachers' motivation to teach and their life satisfaction. Before testing the conceptual model established for this purpose, the correlations between the observed variables were examined with Pearson product-moment correlation. The proposed model was then tested with the measurement model and it was observed that the model fit values were within the acceptable limits. In the final stage of the research, by means of the mediation test and bootstrapping processes, the mediating role of psychological well-being between motivation to teach and life satisfaction was examined.

The results obtained in the study revealed positive and significant relationships between the variables of motivation to teach, life satisfaction and psychological well-being. Furthermore, it was concluded that psychological well-being had a partial mediating effect in the relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction. In other words, it was seen that motivation to teach explained life satisfaction both directly, and indirectly via psychological well-being. When the results of the study are evaluated as a whole, it was observed that the hypothetical model established to explain life satisfaction in preservice teachers fitted well and was confirmed. In this part of the study, the results of the developed and tested hypotheses are discussed within the framework of the literature. In the final part, the limitations of the study are mentioned and some inferences are made based on the findings.

#### Effect of Motivation to Teach on Life Satisfaction

Within the scope of the first ( $H_1$ ) hypothesis of the study, a positive relationship was found between preservice teachers' motivation to teach and life satisfaction, and it was seen that motivation to teach positively significantly predicted life satisfaction. Therefore, it can be said that an increase in preservice teachers' motivation to teach increases their life satisfaction positively. In other words, it can be stated that preservice teachers with high motivation to teach enjoy life, have a positive outlook, and have a high level of life satisfaction. The fact that preservice teachers have motivation to teach can be an indicator that they will enjoy their careers and be successful in the profession. Throughout the studies in the literature that examine the relationship between life satisfaction and motivation (Demir Gdl et al., 2019; Tulunay Ate, 2021) or academic motivation (elenliolu, 2020; Karaman & Watson, 2017; Ko, 2018), it is stated that these relationships are significant. Many studies have revealed that motivation is an important psychological force enabling effective teaching (Ayık & Ata, 2014; Dikmen, 2021; Ivanec & Defar, 2023; l Diner, 2020). It is known that certain psychological variables such as hope and optimism affect intrinsic motivation (Tulunay Ate, 2021). It has been determined that hope and optimism also affect life satisfaction, that individuals with high levels of hope are good in their academic field and problem-solving skills, and that this in turn has a positive effect on their life satisfaction (Chang, 1998).

In recent years, the self-determination theory, which has garnered significant attention, offers a crucial framework for understanding and explaining individuals' intrinsic motivations (Tulunay Ate, 2021). This theory evaluates individuals' motivations based fundamentally on the satisfaction of two primary psychological needs: competence and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2004). In other words, as individuals

feel competent and autonomous, they tend to enhance their intrinsic motivations. This phenomenon is closely associated with life satisfaction because fulfilling one's own feelings of competence and autonomy often contributes to finding meaning and satisfaction in life. Moreover, it is essential to consider the perspective of activity theorists, who view life satisfaction as satisfaction experienced during the process of an action (Bruni & Porta, 2007). This perspective suggests that when individuals feel satisfied while performing an action, it tends to enhance their life satisfaction. In other words, it perceives life satisfaction not only as an outcome but also as a reflection of the experiences individuals undergo during activities. In this context, when evaluating the relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction, it is crucial to consider the perspectives offered by self-determination theory and activity theory. As motivation to teach increases, individuals' probabilities of satisfying their intrinsic needs and consequently enhancing their life satisfaction also increase. This can contribute to individuals leading more fulfilling lives by strengthening their commitment to their professions.

### **Effect of Motivation to Teach on Life Satisfaction through Psychological Well-Being**

In the context of the second (H<sub>2</sub>) hypothesis of the study, it has been determined that motivation to teach positively significantly predicts psychological well-being. Studies conducted in this context demonstrate strong relationships between psychological well-being and motivation (Ozer & Schwartz, 2020; Özcan & Karaca, 2018). Additionally, in a study conducted by Yıldız (2019), a significant relationship between intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being was identified. It is argued that intrinsic motivation, as a positive emotion, influences an individual's positive thoughts about themselves and contributes to their progress towards life goals (Yıldız, 2019).

The third (H<sub>3</sub>) hypothesis of the research demonstrates that psychological well-being positively significantly predicts life satisfaction, a finding supported by the literature. In numerous studies examining the relationship between psychological well-being and life satisfaction, strong and statistically significant relationships have been observed between these two concepts (Çelenlioğlu, 2020; Demir et al., 2021; Kaya & Çenesiz, 2020; Ozer & Schwartz, 2020; Ryff, 1989). The concept of psychological well-being indicates that positive emotions and thoughts prevail over negative ones in an individual's life (Myers & Diener, 1995). Emotion-based well-being is often associated with more frequent positive emotions, while thought-based well-being is more closely linked to overall life satisfaction (Demir et al., 2021). Therefore, high levels of psychological well-being are generally associated with positive life evaluations; conversely, low levels of psychological well-being are often associated with negative life evaluations.

The results obtained from the mediation test, which is the fourth (H<sub>4</sub>) hypothesis of the research, show that psychological well-being has a partial mediating role in the relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction. In other words, it can be said that part of the relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction stems from psychological well-being. In the literature, no study has been found that examines the mediation relationship of these three variables. However, in the literature review, findings that support this network of relationships, albeit indirectly, were obtained (Aliekberoğlu et al., 2018; Damasio et al., 2013; Demir et al., 2021; Doğu, 2016; Pavin Ivanec & Defar, 2023).

It can be seen that there is a common conclusion: preservice teachers with high life satisfaction also have high motivation to teach. The emergence of the partial mediating effect of psychological well-being reveals that it is an important factor that increases preservice teachers' motivation to teach. From this point of view, it can be said that in cases where direct intervention in preservice teachers' life satisfaction is difficult or not possible in order to contribute to their motivation to teach, contributing to their psychological well-being would be an alternative way. Teachers with high motivation to teach who embrace their jobs and fulfill them with sufficient effort and willingness (Argon & Cicioğlu, 2017) will indirectly positively influence the success of their students by enhancing the quality of education. Furthermore, it is believed that the life satisfaction and quality of life of teachers will have a positive impact on students, parents, and indirectly on society as well (Demir & Türk, 2020; Uğur et al., 2020).

Considering the results of the study as a whole, it will be important to take into account other factors that may affect life satisfaction. Baron and Kenny (1986) stated that instead of completely eliminating the relationship between dependent and independent variables, it would be more realistic to find mediating variables that significantly affect this relationship. Therefore, in order to increase life

satisfaction in preservice teachers, instead of focusing only on motivation to teach, emphasis can be placed on increasing psychological well-being, which has been found to significantly affect this relationship.

### **Limitations and and Suggestions**

One of the first limitations to be discussed within the scope of this study is the limitation arising from the measurement instruments (satisfaction with life, psychological well-being and motivation to teach scales) used in the research. Since the participants in the research responded based on their own assessments of their behavior and goals in a certain area, this may have led the participants to be insufficiently objective. Another limitation of the study is that the study was conducted only with preservice teachers studying at one university. This limits the generalizability of the study. Therefore, in order to make more general inferences about the factors affecting life satisfaction, more generalizable findings can be obtained by conducting similar studies with data obtained from participants in different provinces.

Despite all these limitations, it is thought that the results of the current study will contribute significantly to the literature. The research results show that preservice teachers' motivation to teach and psychological well-being are each significant variables predicting life satisfaction. These results are regarded as an important finding especially for the Turkish education system, which is constantly being changed, but in which the desired results somehow cannot be achieved. In fact, the research results confirm that teachers' motivation to teach and psychological well-being should be kept high in order to keep their life satisfaction high and thus to contribute more to students' learning and achievement. Moreover, according to the research results, it was concluded that motivation to teach and psychological well-being together explained 60% of life satisfaction. Therefore, it can be thought that in future studies aimed at improving life satisfaction in preservice teachers, activities that will increase motivation to teach and psychological well-being should be discussed together.

Since motivation to teach and psychological well-being are important factors in increasing preservice teachers' life satisfaction, these predictive variables can be taken into account in increasing life satisfaction. A large part of preservice teachers' professional identities is shaped by their undergraduate education (Hong & Green, 2011). Therefore, in these periods when the formation of professional identity is important, emphasis can be placed on increasing preservice teachers' psychological well-being and improving their life satisfaction by conducting motivational activities.

It is thought that the research results will be of benefit to teachers, administrators and researchers who wish to work on this subject. It can be recommended to researchers wishing to conduct research on the subject that they carry out studies on other factors that may also have a mediating effect in the relationship between motivation to teach and life satisfaction. Moreover, to increase life satisfaction, group guidance or group counseling studies aimed at the development of psychological well-being can be recommended. Finally, in this study, in which a cross-sectional method was used, the average age of the participants was  $21.64 \pm 2.3$ . It may be recommended to researchers who wish to conduct research on the subject that the variables be tested with longitudinal or experimental methods with different age and sample groups.

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**Ethics statement:** In this study, we declare that the rules stated in the "Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive" are complied with and that we do not take any of the actions based on "Actions Against Scientific Research and Publication Ethics". At the same time, we declare that there is no conflict of interest between the authors, which all authors contribute to the study, and that all the responsibility belongs to the article authors in case of all ethical violations.

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