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TESTING A MODEL OF CAREER DECISION-MAKING DIFFICULTIES AMONG ADOLESCENTS[1]

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the structural relationships among career decision-making self-efficacy, subjective well-being, socio-economic level, and the career decision-making difficulties of adolescents by testing a structural model. In the current study, the sample consisted of 680 adolescents drawn from the target population 9th grade studying in high schools. The Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale, Socio-Economic Level Scale and Demographic Information Form were used as data collection instruments. The results indicated that the fit index values of the structural equation model (SEM) are within the limits of a good fit. This analysis revealed a p value of $\chi 2$ ($\chi 2$ =456.26), which is one of the fit index of the structural equation model, is significant ($p<.01$). The results of the SEM analysis indicated that career decision-making self-efficacy, subjective well-being, and socio-economic level negatively and significantly predicted career decision-making difficulties of adolescents. The hypothesized model accounted for 29% of the variance in career decision-making difficulties of adolescents. Findings were interpreted by taking into consideration of the relevant literature. Implications for practice and suggestions for counselors and further studies were given in the current study.

Keywords: Career Decision-Making Difficulties, Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy, Subjective Well-Being, Socio-Economic Level.

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ERGENLERİN KARİYER KARAR VERME GÜÇLÜKLERİNE YÖNELİK MODELİN TEST EDİLMESİ

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı, ergenlerin kariyer karar verme güçlük düzeyleri ile kariyer karar verme yetkinlik beklentileri, öznel iyi oluş ve sosyo-ekonomik düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkileri yapısal eşitlik modeli kullanarak incelemektir. Araştırmanın evrenini 9. sınıf öğrencileri oluştururken; örneklemini ise 680 9. sınıf öğrencileri oluşturmuştur. Araştırmada Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Kariyer Karar Verme Güçlükleri Ölçeği, Meslek Kararı Verme Yetkinlik Ölçeği, Ergen Öznel İyi Oluş Ölçeği ve Sosyo-Ekonomik Düzey Ölçeği veri toplama aracı kullanılmıştır. Yapısal eşitlik modeline ilişkin uyum indeks değerlerinin iyi uyum sınırları içerisinde olduğu bulunmuştur. Yapılan analizler sonucunda yapısal eşitlik modeli uyum indekslerinden $\chi 2$ değerine ($\chi 2$ =456.26) ilişkin p değerinin manidar olduğu ($p<.01$) görülmüştür. Yapısal eşitlik modellemesi analizi sonuçları, kariyer karar verme yetkinlik beklentisinin ve sosyo-ekonomik düzeyin anlamlı ve negatif olarak kariyer karar verme güçlük düzeyini yordadığını göstermektedir. Kariyer kararı verme yetkinlik beklentisi, öznel iyi oluş ve sosyo-ekonomik düzeyinin kariyer karar vermede güçlük düzeyini açıklama oranı r^2=.29 olarak bulunmuştur. Bulgular ilgili alan yazın doğrultusunda tartışılarak yorumlanmıştır. Araştırma sonuçlarının uygulama açısından sunduğu katkılar belirtilmiş ve psikolojik danışmanlara verebilecekleri hizmetlere ve ileride yapılacak araştırmalara yönelik öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kariyer Karar Verme Güçlükleri, Kariyer Karar Verme Yetkinlik Beklentisi, Öznel İyi Oluş, Sosyo-Ekonomik Düzey

INTRODUCTION

Individuals experience difficulties throughout their whole life as the result of changes associated with developmental areas including physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. Adolescents endeavor to overcome these difficulties by improving various skills including problem-solving, decision-making, communication, and developing a healthy relationship with their peers and parents. One of the most important skills for adapting to such changes that occur during adolescence is decision making. Among the decisions made during adolescence, career decision is seen as one of the most important people make throughout their lives (Gati & Tal, 2018). Adolescents all over the world deal with deciding on the field to study at the high school, high school to attend, career alternatives after graduating from high school, and elective courses to be taken at the high school (Gati & Saka, 2001). Deciding on the field to study and elective courses to be taken during high school may often have a significant impact on university selection and placement. Thus, the high school years are seen as a critical period in which the most important decisions that can be taken during adolescence are made.

In Turkey, high school students who would like to study at university must pass two exams prepared by the Centre for Assessment, Selection, and Payment. To pass successfully both exams, high school students should increase their grade point average (GPA) through high school education by choosing compulsory and elective courses. Compulsory and elective courses are determined starting from 9th grade in Turkey.

The course selection process, which starts from the first year of high school, continues throughout high school (Ministry of National Education, 2019). Thus, career alternatives of adolescents begin to become evident from the first year of high school. In this respect, 9th grade can be considered as one of the starting points of the career journey of adolescents. Adolescents enter these exams following courses after a career decision at 9th grade in high school. Additionally, Bacanlı (2016) emphasized that adolescents' career future and educational possibilities are affected by decisions related to these elective and required courses taken during high school. For this reason, high school students should consider systematically and comprehensively to determine their compulsory and elective courses during their high school education to achieve the desired career goals. In summary, it can be said that deciding on the courses at the high school plays a key role in adolescents' career.

This selection of courses gives the students some responsibilities such as investigating the content of compulsory and elective courses, both courses' contribution to students' target program at university, and their effects on students' career plans. Apart from these responsibilities, high school students try to increase their GPA. Moreover, taking the importance of the university entrance exam on possible career future into consideration is an unavoidable fact for them. Akkoç (2012) has added the jobless rate for a graduate student in Turkey to these circumstances. According to Akkoç (2012), adolescents prefer undergraduate programs and universities in which they are likely to find a job after graduation. This anxiety about finding a job also causes difficulties for adolescents in making career decisions. Making a career decision by focusing on finding a job after graduation causes adolescents to feel anxiety about their career future and have more difficulties in their career decision making process.

Like future anxiety, parents' expectations also play a role in the career decision making process of adolescents in Turkey. İşgör and Sezer (2008) indicated that 9th grade students make career decisions related to the vocational field at high school following parents' aspirations. Like students studying in Turkey (Bacanlı, 2016; Öztemel, 2013), adolescents studying abroad also experience difficulties when making career decisions for a variety of reasons and adolescents' level of career indecision is high because of the career decision-making difficulties. Some reasons like having an external locus of control (Kırdök & Harman, 2018), perceiving a low level of parental support (Lim & You, 2017), and having a low level of self-esteem (Choi et al., 2012) are found as causative factors of difficulties in career decision-making through adolescence in a great many countries all over the world.

The studies mentioned above have shown that the adolescents' career decision-making process consists of many factors that can be changeable or common among countries and their culture. The present current study was carried out to understand adolescents' career decision-making process by testing a model including career decision-making self-efficacy, subjective well-being, and socio-economic level. Examining common and changeable factors that have the probability of being an influencer on difficulties in the career decision-making process can contribute to the literature by understanding adolescents' career decision-making process in Turkish culture. As it underlined in Bacanlı's (2012) research study, defining factors that inhibit someone from making an effective career decision is important because these difficulties in career decision-making progress are influenced by culture.

Moreover, recent research studies have been carried out to understand the role of intrapersonal and contextual factors on the career decision making process in Western contexts. However, which factors are efficient in career decision making the process of individuals in collectivist society is not well known (Brown, 2002; Leong & Hardin, 2002; Zhou & Xu, 2013).

Career decision-making difficulties are defined as difficulties that can be seen as a deviation from an ideal decision making for a career (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996). Gati, Krausz, and Osipow (1996) classified career decision-making difficulties under three main categories: lack of readiness (LR), lack of information (LI), and inconsistent information (II). The class, LR, deals with the difficulties which arise at the preparation phase of decision making whereas the other two categories, LI and II, deal with the difficulties during the decision-making process. Sub-categories of LR are; (a) Lack of motivation, (b) General indecisiveness, and (c) Dysfunctional beliefs. LI category consists of sub-categories (a) LI about steps of the career decision-making process, (b) LI about self, (c) LI about various career options, (d) LI about obtaining additional information. II category consists of sub-categories (a) Unreliable information, (b) Internal conflicts, (c) External conflicts.

As found in research studies (Bacanlı, 2012; Didehvar & Wada, 2020; Di Fabio, Palazzeschi, & Bar-On, 2012; Gati et al., 2011; Hirschi, & Herrmann, 2013; Jemini-Gashi, Duraku & Kelmendi, 2019; Leung, Hou, Gati, & Li, 2011; Marcionetti & Rossier, 2017), variant factors are influential on high school students' career decision-making process and cause difficulties in the career decision-making process. The studies conducted on a sample of adolescents found that career decision-making difficulties present consistent relationships with personality traits (Hirschi & Herrmann, 2013; Marcionetti & Rossier, 2017; Park, Gui & Hai, 2020); external locus of control (Bacanlı, 2012; Kırdök & Harman, 2018), irrational beliefs (Bacanlı, 2012), identity styles (Didehvar & Wada, 2020), career decision making self-efficacy (Jemini-Gashi, Duraku & Kelmendi, 2019; Park, Gui & Hai, 2020), emotional intelligence (Di Fabio, Palazzeschi, & Bar-On, 2012); cultural-value conflict and high parental expectations (Leung et al., 2011); socio-economic level (Gore et al., 2015), future time perspective (Park, Gui & Hai, 2020) were found as factors associated with career decision-making difficulties.

Result of career decision-making difficulties, high school students cannot make career decisions related to their careers (Gati, Krausz, & Osipow, 1996; Gati & Tal, 2018; Öztemel, 2012).

After an in-depth investigation of these research findings, there is plenty of findings that career decision-making self-efficacy contribute positively career decision-making process (Di Fabio, Palazzeschi, & Bar-On, 2012; Gati, Ryzhik, & Vertsberger, 2013; Hirschi, & Herrmann, 2013; Jemini-Gashi, Duraku, & Kelmendi, 2019; Park, Gui, & Hai, 2020). Career decision-making self-efficacy is identified as the individual's belief that one can complete the tasks necessary for making career decisions (Taylor & Betz, 1983). Adolescents with a high level of career decision-making self-efficacy make an effort to achieve career developmental tasks, to obtain additional information about career opportunities and working-occupational-professional life (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1996).

Starting from this point, gathering more information about self and various career options, the career decision-making process is associated with a low level of career decision-making difficulties because of a high level of career decision-making self-efficacy. Gati, Ryzhik, and Vertsberger's (2013) research findings supported this inference and it was found that participants' career decision-making self-efficacy was moderately associated with lack of information that is a category of career decision-making difficulties. Selecting goals, making a career plan for career future and career problem solving are signs of a high level of career decision-making difficulties (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1996). Di Fabio, Palazzeschi, and Bar-On (2012) have found that students with a high level of career decision-making self-efficacy can easily select their career goals more than the low level. Moreover, to endeavor to achieve career developmental tasks can help decrease a lack of readiness (Jemini-Gashi, Duraku, & Kelmendi, 2019). In the research study carried out by Walker and Tracey (2012), career decision-making self-efficacy was found as the primary predicting variable for less lack of readiness. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is proposed.

As research findings (Di Fabio, Palazzeschi, & Bar-On, 2012; Jemini-Gashi, Duraku & Kelmendi, 2019; Walker and Tracey, 2012) showed that career decision-making self-efficacy is an intra-personal factor that is related to career indecision and career decision-making difficulties. Although current research studies examined intra-personal factors that cause decision-making difficulties, limited studies (e.g., Hartung, and Rogers, 2010; Şeker, 2021; Uthayakumar, Schimmack,) are carried out to clarify how subjective well-being affects the career decision-making process. However, theoretical explanations in the related literature indicate that the feelings of adolescents and their perceptions about life also affect the career decision-making process (Creed, Prideaux, & Patton, 2005; Hartung, & Taber, 2008; Lounsbury, Tatum, Chambers, Owens, & Gibson, 1999; Skorikov, 2005). According to Rottinghaus, Jenkins, and Jantzer (2009), personal-emotional factors (e.g., depression, shyness, and dysfunctional thinking) likely influence career decision making. Negative feelings like sadness and anger cause the individual to postpone career decision-making behavior. Additionally, the results of the experimental study (Saunders, Peterson, Sampson, & Reardon, 2000) and descriptive research studies (Şeker, 2021, Uthayakumar et al., 2010; Viola, Musso, Ingoglia, Coco & Inguglia, 2017) supported these theoretical explanations. This effect of the negative feelings over career decision making reminds the role of subjective well-being on the process of career decision-making difficulties. Subjective well-being means that the life satisfaction perception of the individual is high, s/he mostly feels pleased, has agreeable feelings, rarely experiences negative feelings like sadness, depression, tediousness, or anger (Diener, Suh, & Oishi, 1997). Subjective well-being formed by three dimensions, positive feelings, negative feelings, and life satisfaction (Diener, 1984), affects the motivation level of individuals during the career decision-making process and has a triggering role in revealing career decision making behavior (Hartung & Taber, 2008). Current relevant literature highlights that individuals with a high level of subjective well-being have also a high motivation level (Deci & Ryan, 1991). Lounsbury and et al. (1999) focus on life satisfaction that is another dimension of subjective well-being and they have found that career decidedness was significantly positively correlated with life satisfaction.

So, it is logical to think that adolescents with high subjective well-being will make more effort to reveal career decision-making behavior, use existing resources to continue this behavior, thus they may have less difficulty in making a career decision. This inference from research findings is supported by previous studies (e.g., Saunders, Peterson, Sampson, & Reardon, 2000; Şeker, 2021; Uthayakumar, Schimmack, Hartung, & Rogers, 2010; Viola et al., 2017). They remarked that individuals with intense negative feelings have difficulties to fulfill the tasks to be performed during the career decision making process, such as eliminate options, getting information about alternative decisions, comparing alternatives. From this point of view, to comprehend integrally how positive and negative feelings and life satisfaction play a role in career decision-making difficulties in Turkish culture, the present study is carried out. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is proposed.

As subjective well-being, the socio-economic level is found as relative to the career decision-making process in current literature (Das, Dangi, & Naik, 2020; Kurniawan, Daharnis, & Karneli; 2020). The socio-economic level is defined as the social and economic level that is determined by one's parents' education level, monthly income, parents' profession, and some factors related to one's life (Han et al., 2014). According to Bacanlı (1997), if one's parents have a high monthly income, master's degree, and profession that is included in the scope of economic and social high profession classification, s/he is determined as an individual from a high socio-economic level. Examining literature in this context, parents' education level (Abdinoor, 2020), parents' profession (Bozgeyikli, Eroğlu, & Hamurcu, 2009; Das, Dangi, & Naik, 2020); monthly income (Bozgeyikli, Eroğlu, & Hamurcu, 2009) are also found as important factors for making an appropriate career decision. According to Han et al. (2014), monthly income, education level, and profession of the parents are also effective on the career decision-making difficulty level of the adolescent. Adolescents decide their career, based on the educational levels of parents, occupational situations of parents, and monthly income (Abdinoor, 2020). Bozgeyikli, Eroğlu, and Hamurcu (2009) have researched to clarify how socio-economic level affects adolescents' career maturity and career decision-making self-efficacy. In this research study, adolescents' levels of career maturity and career decision-making difficulties change according to their socio-economic level. The role of socioeconomic level on career decision is explained similarly by previous studies (Das, Dangi & Naik, 2020; Kurniawan, Daharnis, & Karneli,2020). According to them, an adolescent from a lower socio-economic level do not have role models related to work-life and take emotional or financial support. Because of these deficiencies, adolescents cannot believe themselves to study at higher education and achieve their career goals. Research studies showed that socio-economic level is effective on the individual and vocational knowledge level, motivation level, and preparation required to reach the career goal of the students who are at the career decision-making process (Abdinoor, 2020; Das, Dangi, & Naik, 2020; Kurniawan, Daharnis, & Karneli, 2020). Briefly, it can be said that there is a relationship between the socio-economic level of the individuals and career decision-making difficulty level. Thus, Hypothesis 3 is proposed.

In line with previous research findings in relevant literature in career counseling, the current study hypothesized that career decision-making self-efficacy, socioeconomic level, and subjective well- being is negatively related to adolescents' career decision-making difficulties. The proposed model is illustrated in Figure 1.

In the context of the proposed model, adolescents' career decision-making self-efficacy, socioeconomic level, and subjective well- being are negatively related to career decision-making difficulties.

1. HYPOTHESES

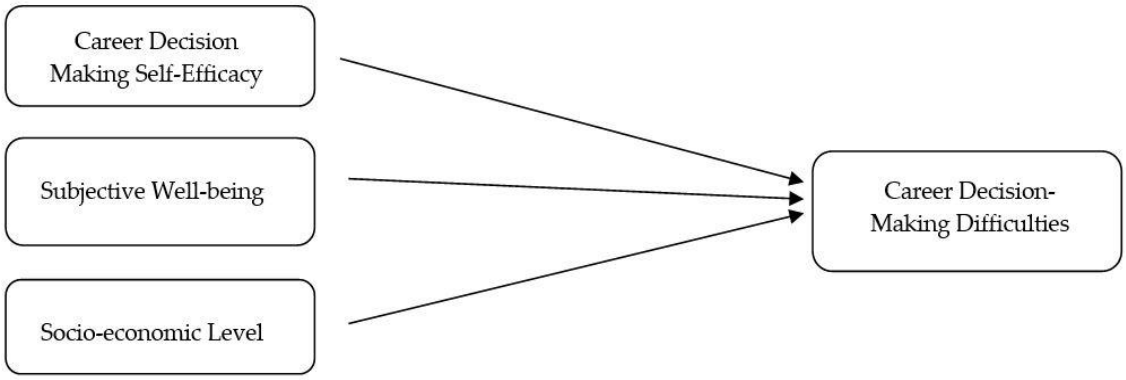
The proposed model shown in Figure 1 represents the following hypothesized relationships:

H1. Adolescents' level of career decision-making self-efficacy is negatively related to career decision-making difficulties.

H2. Adolescents' level of subjective well-being is negatively related to career decision-making difficulties.

H3. Adolescents' level of socio-economic is negatively related to career decision-making difficulties.

Figure 1: Proposed Model



2. METHOD

Information about the research design used, sampling procedure and participants, data collection instruments, and data analyses were presented in this part.

2.1. Research Design

In the current study, the correlational research was conducted, since the correlational design has been defined as a research design that aims to examine the associations between two or more variables with no attempt to manipulate them (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Huyn, 2012). In other words, the correlational research was conducted to investigate the structural relationships among career decision-making self-efficacy, subjective well-being, socio-economic level, and the career decision-making difficulties of adolescents in the present study.

2.2. Sampling Procedure and Participants

In this study, the participants were adolescents in Eskisehir one of the largest cities in the west part of Turkey. The current study including stratified cluster sampling of participants was conducted out.

Because the socio-economic level is included in the scope of the conceptual model, the total population of the adolescent is divided into three groups from three socio-economic levels (high, middle, low) and a simple random sample of the groups is selected. The participants were drawn from both academic high schools and vocational high schools. While there are 18 vocational high schools, there are 26 academic high schools. There were 206 female and 150 male students at academic high school; 198 female and 126 male students at vocational high school, a total of 680 students participated in the current study. The approval from the Eskisehir Provincial Directorate of National Education was received before the data collection.

2.3. Data Collection Instruments

The Career Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ): Adolescents' career decision-making difficulties were assessed using the 34-item CDDQ developed by (Gati & Saka, 2001). CDDQ was adapted to Turkish culture by Bacanlı (2008). The CDDQ consists of 34 items, 10 subscales including 3 items, and rated on a five–point Likert scale. Gati and Saka (2001) reported that the reliability coefficient of the CDDQ total is .92. Bacanlı (2008) reported that the reliability coefficients of the CDDQ total is .89. For the current study, it was found that an internal reliability coefficient for the CDDQ total is .91.

The Career Decision-Making Self-Efficacy Scale (CDMSES): The career decision-making self-efficacy of adolescents was assessed using the 25-item CDMSES developed by Bozgeyikli's (2004). The CDMSES has three subscales. The items are rated on five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the CDMSES was .92 (Bozgeyikli, 2004). For the current study, Cronbach's alpha value for the CDMSES was found to be .92.

The Adolescent Subjective Well-Being Scale (ASWBS): The level of adolescents' subjective well-being was assessed using the 15-item scale developed by Eryılmaz (2009). Items were answered on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4. Eryılmaz (2009) reported the internal consistency of α =.86. In the current study, Cronbach's alpha was .88 for ASWBS.

The Socio-Economic Level Scale (SES): The adolescents' socio-economic level was assessed using the 11-item SES developed by Bacanlı (1997) in the current study. Bacanlı (1997) has reported that SES's internal consistency was. 82. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient with the current sample was .72.

2.4. Data Analyses

The data from booklets including CDDQ, CDMSES, ASWBS, and SES were statistically analyzed by using Lisrel 8.7 and SPSS 22. The conceptual model illustrated in Figure 1 was tested and analyzed using structural equation modeling procedures. The assumptions of SEM were examined before running SEM. The assumptions underlying SEM analysis include data without missing and outliers, independence of observations, multicollinearity, linearity, and homoscedasticity, univariate and multivariate normality, and reasonable sample size (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). In the current study, all assumptions of SEM were met.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analyses including bivariate correlation analysis were performed to investigate how the relationships among the variables in the current study. The means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for the study variables for the sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations for The Study Variables

	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4
Career Decision-making Self-efficacy	106.73	14.06	1.00			
Subjective Well-being	50.22	6.23	.64	1.00		
Socio-economic Level	30.95	5.03	.16	.21	1.00	
Career Decision- making Difficulties	82.80	19.46	-.52	-.42	-.21	1.00

The mean of career decision-making self-efficacy score for the total sample was 106.73 (SD = 50.22) while the mean of career decision-making difficulties score was 82.80 (SD = 19.46). The mean score of 50.22 was found for subjective well-being (SD = 6.23). In the current study, it was found that the mean score of the socio-economic level was 30.95 (SD = 5.03). As shown in Table 1, career decision-making difficulties was negatively associated with career decision-making self-efficacy (r= -.52, p<.01), subjective well-being (r= -42, p<.01) and socio-economic level (r= -.21, p<.01).

3.2. Model Testing

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to examine relationships among the career decision-making difficulties, career decision-making self-efficacy, subjective well-being, and socio-economic level of adolescents. The SEM technique was used to test the proposed model. While interpreting the results of SEM, overall fit, parameter estimates, and squared multiple correlation coefficients (R^2) were used as a criterion. $\chi 2$, $\chi 2$/df, root mean error of approximation (RMSEA), the normed fit index (NFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), the goodness of fit index (GFI) and the non-normed fit index (NNFI) fit indexes were used to examine the model-fit in the present study.

The assumption of underlying bivariate normality was tested by Jöreskog's (2001) RMSEA measure of population discrepancy for structural equation models. All RMSEA values (range .00 – .05) were lower than the critical value .1, indicating no serious effects of non-normality. Hoyle (1995) and Hu and Bentler (1999) recommend that the goodness-of-fit of these models was assessed using chi-squared and several other indices of fit such as the RMSEA, NFI, CFI, GFI, and NNFI.

As presented in Table 2, the proposed model obtained the good fit [χ^2 (164) = 455.92, p =.00; χ^2/df- ratio = 2.8; CFI= .96, NFI= .94, GFI= .94, AGFI= .92, NNFI = .95, RMSEA = .05]. According to Kline (2005), in bigger sample sizes, if $\chi 2$/df value is ≤3, the model shows a good fit. As a result of the analysis, p values of $\chi 2$ ($\chi 2$ =455.92) which is a structural equation fit index are significant (p<.01). When evaluated according to the degree of freedom rate ($\chi 2$/df =455.92/164= 2.8) and $\chi 2$, the fit can be said to be good.

Among the fit indexes, the fact that values of GFI, AGFI, NNFI, NFI, and CFI are bigger than .90 shows that the model fits (Hair et al., 2010). In addition to these fit indexes, modification indices and standardized residuals did not suggest any path additions. Consequently, the initial proposed model was accepted as the final structural model. The fit indices showed that the hypothesized model had an acceptable fit to the data as can be seen in Table 2.

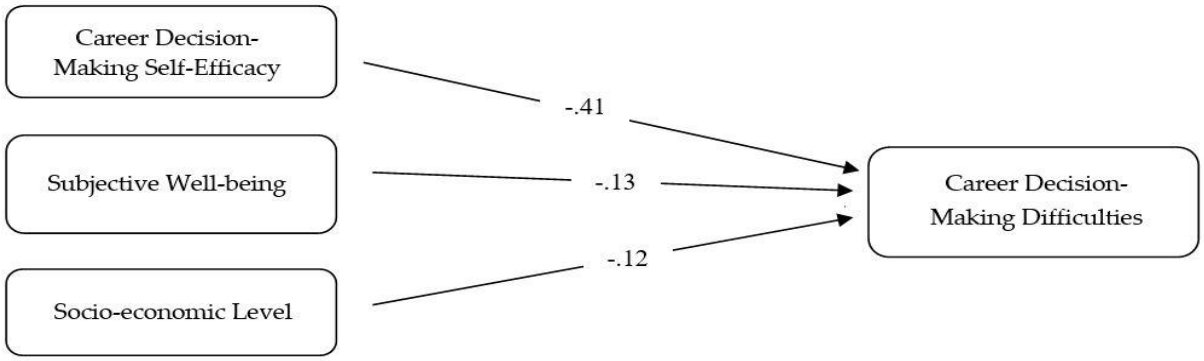
Table 2: Structural Equation Fit Index Values

	χ2	sd	χ2/sd	RMSEA	NFI	NNFI	CFI	GFI	AGFI
Conceptual Model	455. 92	164	2.8	0.05	.94	.95	. 96	.94	.92

3.3. Hypothesized Relationships

The maximum likelihood standardized parameter estimates for the model are shown in Figure 2. Lines represent significant paths. All paths were statistically significant at the .05 level. All 3 hypotheses were supported. Firstly, adolescents' level of career decision-making self-efficacy was found as a factor that was significantly negatively related to career decision-making difficulties. So, Hypothesis 1 was supported by research findings. Secondly, the hypothesis 2 approved as there was a negative and significant relationship between adolescents' level of subjective well- being and career decision-making difficulties. Thirdly, adolescents' socio-economic level was found as an important factor for explaining their career decision-making difficulties. This finding meant that Hypothesis 3 was validated. The level of career decision-making difficulties is best explained by career decision-making self-efficacy (.41) and least by socioeconomic level (.12). In explaining the career decision-making difficulties level, career decision-making self-efficacy is medium-level and negative (-.41), subjective well-being is weak-level and negative (-.13) and socioeconomic level is weak level and negative (-.12). Subjective well-being, career decision-making self-efficacy, and socio-economic level all have a rate of R^2=.30 in explaining the career decision-making difficulty level.

Figure 2: The Hypothesized Model with Standardized Estimates and Significant Paths



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In the current study, structural equation modeling was utilized to test the proposed model related to career decision-making difficulties of adolescents. Particularly, the relationships among career decision-making difficulties, career decision-making self-efficacy, subjective well-being, and socio-economic level of adolescents were investigated to gain an understanding of antecedents of career decision-making difficulties among adolescents. Consistent with previous studies in related literature, results indicated that all three hypotheses were confirmed, and all significant relationship was negative.

The significant and negative relationship between career decision-making difficulties and career decision making self-efficacy showed that adolescents with higher level competence in career decision making reported that they had less career decision-making difficulties. This finding was supported by earlier studies (Di Fabio, Palazzeschi, & Bar-On, 2012; Gati, Ryzhik, & Vertsberger, 2013; Jemini-Gashi, Duraku & Kelmendi, 2019; Park, Gui & Hai, 2020). This finding is consistent with the research study aiming to examine adolescents' career decision-making process in Turkey (Öztemel, 2012). This finding in the current study also supports Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory and Lent, Brown, and Hackett's (1996) Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT). According to SCCT, the individuals who have self-efficacy beliefs to complete successful career development tasks aim for achieving career goals. Considering this finding in the context of these theories, adolescents who participated in the current study may have understood the link between their features and work-life and the importance of appropriate career decisions in their life since adolescents with a high level of career decision-making self-efficacy have believed that they can complete career development tasks necessary making appropriate career decisions. Moreover, they may have compared their career alternatives, make plans for the career future, and set career goals because of career decision-making self-efficacy beliefs. Due to these efforts to make a significant career decision, adolescents with higher career decision-making self-efficacy may gather more information about the career decision-making process, themselves, career alternatives, and ways of information more than lower. Obtaining more information might have helped them increase the levels of their motivation and afterward decrease their career decision-making difficulty levels. Adolescents may have set new career goals in terms of information that they have acquired in the career decision making process and find the opportunity to test the effectiveness of these goals. In sum, gathering more information, comparing career alternatives, making plans for the career future, and setting new career goals may decrease participants of current study career decision-making difficulties.

It was hypothesized that there would be a significant relationship between subjective well-being and career decision-making difficulties of adolescents. The hypothesis was approved because subjective well-being was significantly and negatively related to career decision-making difficulties. The notion of the importance of subjective well-being in the career decision-making process has supported this finding (Şeker, 2021; Uthayakumar et al., 2010; Viola et al., 2017). According to Gati, Krausz, and Osipow (1996), an individual's beliefs and expectations about their career and personal characteristics have determined whether individuals have difficulty in making career decisions.

When their beliefs are positively related to career and personal characteristics, they endeavor to obtain career goals. As career decision-making difficulties, cognitive process plays a role in subjective well-being level. To have a high level of one's subjective well-being, an individual's cognitive judgment related to their life must be positive (Tuzgöl Dost, 2006). When individuals' judgment is positive, individuals try to achieve the goals that are determined by them, and this judgment makes willing them to live in a meaningful way (Eryılmaz, 2009). In other words, individuals' beliefs and judgments influence their quality of life, lifestyle, behaviors, and decisions. Findings related to Hypothesis 2 can be interpreted as adolescents' beliefs and judgments related to their future work life and career decision-making process are positive because subjective well-being of adolescents is significantly negatively related to career decision-making difficulties. According to Peterson, Sampson, and Reardon (2000) and Rottinghaus, Jenkins, and Jantzer (2009), an individual may show depression symptoms because of feeling anxiety and negative career thoughts in the career decision-making process. Due to these negative feelings, individuals are career indecisive (Lounsbury et al., 1999; Rottinghaus, Jenkins, & Jantzer, 2009). Therefore, it can be said that feelings (positive or negative) of adolescents determine whether they will hover between the career alternatives in the career decision-making process and change their decision frequently. Individuals' subjective well-being level affects their willingness in decision-making and expectations from a career in the career decision-making process (Creed, Patton, & Bartrum, 2002; Hartung, & Taber, 2008). Evaluating Gati et al. (1996) classification of career decision-making difficulties in the light of this information, when the subjective well-being level of the adolescents is low, it is clear that they do not see it necessary to spend time and effort while making career decisions. Since adolescent students with lower subjective well-being have any expectations from their career and do not attempt to set career goals, they may have career decision-making difficulties.

The last finding indicated that adolescents' socio-economic level was significantly negatively related to their career decision-making difficulties. This finding was in line with previous studies (Abdinoor, 2020; Gore et al., 2015; Kurniawan, Daharnis, & Karneli; 2020; Patel, Salahuddin, & O'Brien, 2008) as results indicated that the statistically significant relationship between socio-economic level and career decision-making difficulties in a sample of adolescents. Individuals with a high level of socio-economic are more willing to gather information, try to set career goals, and compare career alternatives according to their characteristics and environmental conditions (Das, Dangi, & Naik, 2020; Kurniawan, Daharnis, & Karneli; 2020; Thompson & Subich, 2006). For this reason, adolescents who are grown up at a low socioeconomic level might not have the opportunity to gather information about their personal characteristics and compare these characteristics with environmental conditions. Since the individuals, who do not have adequate information about them, cannot know the area of which is capable, whether they have the required qualifications for the career alternatives and where to find information about careers, they might have difficulties in the career decision-making process. Gore et al. (2015) and Abdinoor (2020) take into consideration this point and emphasized that knowledge about themselves and the career decision-making process change according to socio-economic level.

The findings of the current study showed that adolescents with a low level of career decision-making self-efficacy, subjective well-being, and socio-economic had difficulties in making a career decision and planning their career path. Since school counselors working in high schools have an important role in the career planning of adolescents, they may assist their clients in gathering information, increasing their confidence to achieve career development tasks, expanding awareness of the socio-economic status on career decision making, increasing their life satisfaction, reducing negative thoughts, and clarifying career goals by conducting career counselling sessions. School counselors may design and develop career development programs, conduct career counseling sessions, and administer qualitative/quantitative career assessment instruments by considering the results of the current study. The present study highlights the negative role of low socio-economic status on the career decision-making process of adolescents. When school counselors provide adolescents with low socio-economic status career interventions to assist them develop an appropriate career plan, they may keep adolescents informed about application conditions of scholarship and institutions that provide scholarship to adolescents. The information provided by the school counselors about the scholarship opportunities available may make these career interventions more inclusive.

The present study aimed to examine the relationship among socio-economic level, subjective well-being, career decision-making self-efficacy, and career decision-making difficulties. Investigating the relationships among these variables through structural equation modeling has contributed to the literature related to career decision-making difficulties of adolescents. Although the authors have attempted to contribute to the literature by testing the model, however, the current study has a few limitations. In this study, 9^{th} grade students are included in the sampling because of the importance of field selection. For future research, 9^{th}, 10^{th}, 11^{th}, and 12^{th} grade students' career development process may be studied by using a longitudinal design. As with longitudinal design, through cross-sectional design, a contribution can be made to the literature by comparing the career decision-making difficulties of students from different age groups. Another limitation of the present study is related to the sampling procedure utilized. Participants were drawn from 9^{th} grade adolescents studying in one Turkey geographic region. The predictors or level of career decision-making difficulties may vary from adolescents studying in one city to in other cities. So, to generalize the findings of the current study to adolescents studying at schools in other regions of Turkey might be difficult.

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