

# Investigation of Relationship between High School Students' Career Adaptability, Subjective Well-Being and Perceived Social Support

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between high school students' social support, career adaptability and subjective well-being that are perceived from their family, teachers and friends. The study group consisted of 325 students (193 girls, 132 males) in three secondary schools located in Cukurova and Yüreğir districts of Adana city. The data were collected through Career Adaptability Scale, Life Satisfaction Scale, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule and Perceived Social Support Scale and Personal Information Form developed by the researchers to reach the demographic information of the participants. A path analysis was conducted within the framework of structural equation modeling to investigate the relationship between social support, career adaptability and subjective well-being that the students perceived. Data analysis was done through SPSS and AMOS package programs. Correlation coefficients of arithmetic mean, standard deviation, pearson moment analysis were calculated, and path analysis was performed based on the observed variables. The research findings show that there is a significant relationship between subjective well-being, career adaptability and perceived social support. The perceived social support from family, teachers and friends are variables that predict the career adaptability of high school students. Career adaptability has also been found to be a significant predictor of subjective well-being.

**Keywords:** career adaptability, subjective well-being, perceived social support, high school students

## 1. Introduction

In today's world, individuals are confronted with immediate or long-term changes in almost every aspect of their lives. Adaptability can be defined as adaptation and change to new or changing situations without challenging difficulties (Savickas, 1997). In accordance with the changes in individuals' lives, international paradigms, widespread restructuring and the rapid development and change of the global labour market also render the career of the individuals more important than it was before (Restubog, Bordia, & Bordia, 2011). Being able to cope with the obstacles that the person experiences in the career process can also be interpreted as adaptability. Career adaptability is defined as the skill to be prepared for foreseeable tasks for participation in the business world, and being prepared to cope with unpredictable situations arising from changes in work and working conditions (Savickas, 1997). It is clear that career adaptability has been a noteworthy concept in recent years. Within the framework of career adaptability; career decision making and relational support (Cheung & Jin, 2016), academic achievement (Negru-Subtirica & Pop, 2016), future orientation (Ginevra, Pallini, Vecchio, Nota, & Soresi, 2016), social comparison (Wong & Fu, 2015), social support and career satisfaction (Han & Rojewski, 2015), family support, career decision making and self-efficacy (Guan, Capezio, Restubog, Read, Lajom, & Li, 2016) are among the concepts that are studied with different groups of samples.

Career processes, including career adaptability, are related to subjective well-being (happiness) in the context of the individual's internal processes (Konstam, Celen-Demirtas, Tomek, & Sweeney, 2015). Myers and Diener (1995) defined subjective well-being as positive emotions as well as low levels of satisfaction from life as well as low levels of negative emotions. Research has shown that subjective well-being consists of two dimensions (Diener, 2001; Myers, 2000). The cognitive dimension of subjective well-being is described as life satisfaction, and affective dimension refers to positive and negative affect (Doğan, 2013).

The concept of life satisfaction is expressed as a multidimensional evaluation of a person's quality of life (Shin & Johnson, 1978). Some studies show that life satisfaction is affected by events in life, personal characteristics and

psychosocial variables (Headey & Wearing, 1989; Diener, 1996; Lu, 1999; Dost, 2007). Işık (2014) also found that there is a significant relationship between individual's career development characteristics and life satisfaction.

Emotions can be defined as the affective response of individuals to a certain emotional tendency towards other individuals and situations in the face of life events (Oral & Köse, 2011). There are two types of affect, positive and negative. Positive affect refers to positive views towards life; negative affect denotes negative views towards life (Grandey, Tam, & Brauburger, 2002). Once individuals are born, they need support from external environment that may provide happiness when they try to manage adaptation and adaptability processes. This support is primarily family and, in time, the social circle that the individual creates. In this context, it can be said that social support, which is related to career adaptability and subjective well-being, means getting all kinds of support and assistance from the sources that affect them such as family, friends or an important person (Cohen & Hoberman, 1983). Factors such as the core family of individuals, the extended family environment, friends, partners, teachers/trainers, co-workers, intellectuals, religious or ethnic groups and societies in which individuals live constitute social support resources of individuals (Yıldırım, 1997). Individuals have a social interaction with each of these resources and receive social support from each of these resources. The studies show that there is a relationship between subjective well-being and career adaptability (Celen-Demirtas, Konstam, & Tomek, 2015, Konstam et al., 2015), career adaptability and social support (Guan et al., 2016, Han & Rojewski, 2015) and subjective well-being and social support (Saygın & Arslan, 2009; Şahin, 2011). Considering the human development, adolescence is one of the periods of many changes and developments that take place including career adaptability (Ginevra, Magnano, Lodi, Annovazzi, Camussi, Patrizi, & Nota, 2018; Hirschi, 2009), subjective well-being (Canbay, 2010; Eryılmaz & Hasan, 2011; Eryılmaz, 2010) and social support (Yıldırım, 1998; Yıldırım & Ergene, 2003) which are important in an individual's life.

In line with this view, differ from other research conducted in the field this research aims to reveal the relationship between career adaptability and subjective well-being of perceived social support from the family, teachers and friends from high school.

## 2. Methodology

This research is a descriptive study aiming to examine the relationship between high school students' perceived social support from family, teachers and friends, career adaptability and subjective well-being. In parallel with the purpose of the study, path analysis was preferred in the study because it reveals the causal relationship between multiple variables at the same time. Path analysis is a method that reveals direct and indirect causality between dependent and independent variables through structural equations (Özdamar, 2016, p.217). A path analysis was conducted within the framework of structural equation modelling to investigate the relationship between students' perceived social support, career adaptability and subjective well-being. In line with this goal, the theoretical model in Figure 1 was created based on the previous studies in the related literature.

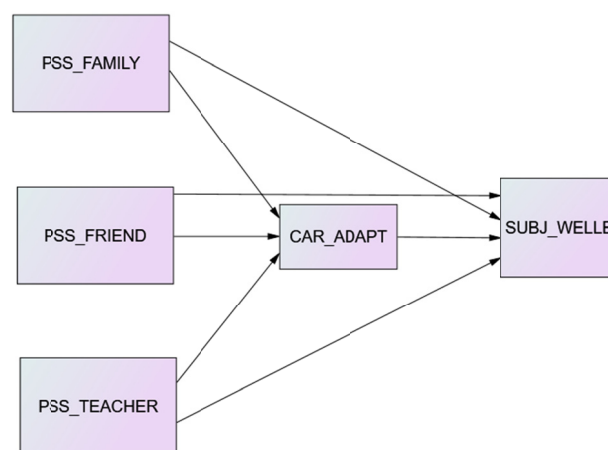


Figure 1. Theoretical model to investigate relationships between perceived social support from family, teachers and friends, career adaptability and subjective well-being

PSS\_FAMILY= Perceived Social Support from Family, PSS\_FRIEND= Perceived Social Support from Friends, PSS\_TEACHER= Perceived Social Support from Teachers, CAR\_ADAPT=Career adaptability, SUBJ\_WELLB= Subjective Well- being

### 2.1 Participants

The study group was comprised of 9 (n = 99), 10 (n = 97), 11 (n = 83) and 12 (n = 46) classes of three secondary education institutions located in the districts of Çukurova and Yüreğir in the city of Adana. (59%), male (49%) and the total of 325 students were involved in the study. The ages of the participants ranged from 14 to 19 and the average age was 15.96 (sd = 1.15).

### 2.2 Data Collection Tools

Career Adaptability Scale, Life Satisfaction Scale, Positive and Negative Affect Schedule, and Perceived Social Support Scale were used to collect data. In addition, the Personal Information Form was used to reach the demographic information of the participants.

**Career Adapt-Abilities Scale:** This scale consists of 24 items and 4 components (concern, control, curiosity and confidence) in 5-point Likert-type Scale developed by Porfeli and Savickas (2012) and adapted to Turkish by Büyükgöze-Kavas (2014). For each subscale of Büyükgöze-Kavas (2014), Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficients were .77 for concern, .74 for control, .87 for curiosity and .93 for confidence. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the career adaptability scale was found to be .75.

**Life Satisfaction Scale:** The scale developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin (1985) and adapted to Turkish by Köker (1991) consists of 5 items and one dimension in 7-point Likert-type scale. In the study conducted by Yetim (1993), the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was .86, while the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was .80 in this study.

**Positive and Negative Affect Schedule:** The scale, developed by Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988) and adapted to Turkish by Gençöz (2000), consists of 20 items from 10 positives and 10 negative emotional expressions with a Likert type of 5. Gençöz (2000) found that Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient was .83 for the positive emotional dimension and .86 for the negative emotional dimension. In this study, Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency number was found to be .74 for the positive emotional dimension and .74 for the negative emotional dimension.

**Perceived Social Support Scale:** The scale developed in Turkish culture by Yıldırım (1997) consists of 50 items and 3 components (family, friend and teacher) in the form of 3-point Likert types. Yıldırım (1997) found the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale to be .93. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient for each subscale of perceived social support was found to be .76 in the family dimension, .76 in the friend dimension and .75 in the teacher dimension.

**Personal Information Form:** Participants in the personal information form prepared by the researchers in order to obtain the demographic information of the participants such as gender, age, and class levels.

**Procedure:** This study was carried out in three different secondary education institutions located in the provinces of Adana province Çukurova and Yüreğir after the necessary permissions were granted from Adana Provincial National Education Directorate in the spring semester of the 2016-2017 academic year. The data were collected by the researchers through the schools, by entering the classrooms, by distributing the scale forms to the students, and by collecting them after the application period of 15-20 minutes.

**Data Analysis:** The analysis of the data was done through SPSS and AMOS package programs. Correlation coefficients of arithmetic mean, standard deviation, Pearson moment product were calculated and path analysis was performed with the observed variables. A significance level of .05 was considered in the data analysis process.

## 3. Results

The Pearson correlation coefficients showing the relationship between perceived social support, career adaptability, arithmetic average, standard deviation values and variables are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of perceived social support from family, teachers and friends, career adaptability and subjective well-being

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. PSS_FAMILY	1				
2. PSS_FRIEND.	.25**	1			
3. PSS_TEACHER.	.29**	.18**	1		
4. Career Adaptability	.31**	.21**	.24**	1	
5. Subjective Well-being	.52**	.23**	.37**	.58**	1
X	50.15	33.86	37.71	84.46	.00
Ss	8.80	5.13	10.35	15.13	2.16

n=325 \*\*p<.001

(PSS\_FAMILY= Perceived Social Support from Family, PSS\_FRIEND= Perceived Social Support from Friends, PSS\_TEACHER= Perceived Social Support from Teachers)

As it is seen in Table 1, it can be said that all the variables examined within the scope of the research are meaningful relations between each other. The highest correlation value was found between subjective well-being and career adaptability ( $r = .58, p < .001$ ) and perceived social support from family ( $r = .52, p < .001$ ). The lowest correlation value between variables was the perceived social support from teacher ( $r = .18, p < .001$ ), career adaptability ( $r = .21, p < .001$ ) and subjective well-being ( $r = .23, p < .001$ ).

As a result of the correlation analysis, path analysis was conducted within the framework of the structural equation model based on the relations between the variables discussed in the study. In addition, the effects of the variables and the fit index of the theoretical model were examined.

The structural model created to realize the purpose of the study (Figure 1) was tested by path analysis with AMOS. The variables in the model analysis were taken as the observed variables. The maximum likelihood method is used in the analysis of the variables.

As a result of the analysis, it was found that the theoretical model relations formed within the scope of the research, as seen in Figure 2, are significant. The relationship between social support perceived only from a friend and subjective well-being was found not to be significant. The findings show that social support perceived by the family ( $\beta = .24, p < .001$ ), teacher ( $\beta = .15, p < .001$ ) and friends ( $\beta = .12, p < .001$ ) were significant predictors of career adaptability, and three variables account for 14% of the variance.

While it was found that the perceived social support was significant predictors of subjective well-being ( $\beta = .43, p < .001$ ), family ( $\beta = .32, p < .001$ ) and teacher ( $\beta = .17, p < .001$ ), social support perceived from a friend ( $\beta = .04, p > .05$ ) was found not to be a significant predictor of subjective well-being. The subjective well-being of these variables accounts for .49% of the variance.

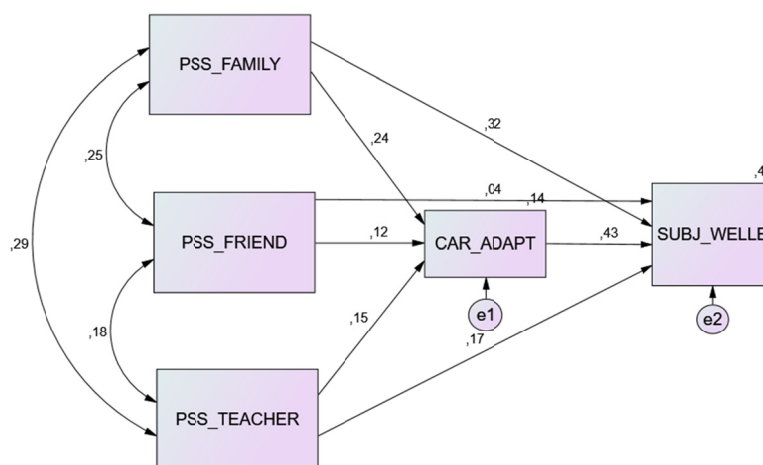


Figure 2. Path analysis results to investigate relationships between perceived social support from family, teachers and friends, career adaptability and subjective well-being

When the indices of the model are examined, it can be seen that  $\chi^2 = 0$  was found. The fact that the value of the chi-square is zero indicates that there is no significant difference between the expected and observed covariance matrices and that it perfectly represents the observed cross-table (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu, & Büyüköztürk, 2014). The fact that the chi-square is zero indicates that the theoretical model formed is a saturated model by representing all possible ways in the model (Bayram, 2013). Therefore, all the adaptability measures analyzed show excellent adaptability values. ( $\chi^2/Sd = 0$ , RMSEA = 0, GFI = 1, CFI = 1, SRMR = 0). In this case, it can be said that the model perfectly matches.

#### 4. Discussion

In this study, the relationship between social support, career adaptability and subjective well-being of family members, teachers and friends of 325 high school students aged between 14 and 19 was examined. The findings of the study revealed that all the variables (social support, perceived social support from the family, friends and teachers, subjective well-being, and career adaptability) refer to significant relations between each other.

When research findings are examined, the relationship between subjective well-being and career adaptability and perceived social support from family is highest; the relationship between subjective well-being and career adaptability and the perceived support from the teacher was lower. In addition to this, the relationship between perceived social support from friends and career adaptability and subjective well-being is relatively low. Research into social support and career adaptability (Wang & Fu, 2015; Han & Rojewski, 2015), perceived school support and family support (Han & Rojewski), perceived parental support and career adaptability (Guan et al., 2016) emphasizes the relationship between career adaptability and subjective well-being (Konstam et al., 2015).

Individuals are not independent of the social circle; accordingly, the ability to cope with possible occupational concerns depends on situational variables such as social support (Weisenberg & Aghakhani, 2007). In a meta-analysis of their work, Viswesvaran, Sanchez and Fisher (1999) concluded that social support has a direct and protective effect on career stress. Social support is an important resource for occupational knowledge and advice as well as for coping with changes (Creed, Fallon & Hood, 2008). It has been observed that the social support provided to the students in the career field consists of the educational institution, family and friends (Weisenberg & Aghakhani, 2007). Research has shown that social support perceived by adolescents is important for related processes, including career development and career adaptability (Kracke, 2002; Rogers, Creed, & Glendon, 2008; Hirschi, 2009). According to the findings, perceived social support from the family by adolescents seems to be the highest predictor of career adaptability. This is because the perceived support from the family always remains primary for individuals, which can be explained by the parental support of adolescents at verbal, emotional and financial levels. Parents are seen as the first role model sources during adolescence (Turner & Lapan, 2002). This perceived support received from the parent supports the development of concern, control, curiosity and confidence, which helps adolescents fulfill their duties related to work dedicated to career development and discovery, thus creating career adaptability processes, as well as how individuals will formulate their career goals and educational and vocational choices (Guan et al., 2016).

Adolescents' second important predictor of career adaptability is perceived social support from teachers. It has been found that adolescents' awareness of self, career adaptability and vocational skills are related to career adaptability due to instrumental and educational interventions provided by their teachers (Han & Rojewski, 2009). According to the findings, adolescents' social support perceived by their friends was the lowest predictor of career adaptability. Cheung and Jin (2016) explain that adolescents have a high likelihood of getting help from teachers and parents who are more experienced than their peers in career-related processes because they and their peers have relatively less experience with the business world. Therefore, it can be said that in the process of adolescence, the roles of family, teacher, and friends are different in the process of career development of the adolescents based on the findings of this research that investigated the relationship between adolescents' perceived social support and career adaptability. As a result, career adaptability and social support variables as a predictor of subjective well-being of high school students account for 49% of the variance. Career adaptability was found as the most important predictor of subjective well-being. Savickas' career construction theory (2002), which consistently incorporates career adaptability with how personal goals are linked to subjective well-being (Hartung & Taber, 2008), aims to understand how an individual can facilitate his or her overall life satisfaction and happiness. Research in this context supports the relationship between adolescents' career adaptability and subjective well-being in accordance with research findings (Hirschi, 2009; Creed, Prideaux & Patton, 2005; Konstam et al., 2015).

Another predictor of subjective well-being is social support, which is perceived from the family and the teacher. Adolescence, which is the transition from childhood to adulthood, is characterized as a unique period in which

multiple physical and psychological changes occur and individuals' social demands increase (Vondra & Garbarino, 1988). In this period, social support of individuals often referred to as the existence or quality of social relations or, in particular, family, friendship, or academic/work life relations, affect the subjective well-being of the adolescents considerably (Huure, 2000). According to du Bois-Reymond and Ravesloot (1994), family and friends are important social support resources for individuals. In addition to this, siblings, relatives and teachers are also important resources of social support that individuals have in adolescence (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985). In line with these findings, perceived social support from parents have played an important role in the subjective well-being of adolescents and perceived social support from friends also play an important role in their subjective well-being (Wang, Kouvonon, Satka, & Julkunen, 2018; Huure, 2000; Shaber et al., 1997; Robinson, 1995).

### 5. Conclusion, Limitation, and Recommendations

Subjective well-being, career adaptability and perceived social support are found to be significant at different levels. The perceived social support from family, teachers and friends are variables that predict the career adaptability of high school students. The most important predictor is the social support perceived from the family as expected. Based on these findings, social support has an important effect on career adaptability, which is the ability to cope with the difficulties encountered in the career process and experiences. Efforts to improve the career adaptability of students, family and support of teachers, as well as friends, are needed.

In this study, career adaptability was found to be a significant predictor of subjective well-being. Based on this result, efforts to develop students' career adaptability may also enhance their subjective well-being. This situation emphasizes the importance of studies for career adaptability in schools. In this context, the study group is limited to high school students. Since career adaptability is a variable that is also examined in employees, a broader perspective regarding both social support and subjective well-being can be obtained if studies include different business sectors.

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