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## The Mediating Effect of Work-Life Balance in the Relationship Between Job Stress and Career Satisfaction

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**Abstract:** This study is aimed to find out the mediating role of work-life balance in the relationship between job stress and career satisfaction. The responses of high school teachers to career satisfaction, work life balance and work stress scales were utilized in the study. The data was analyzed using SPSS 26, Lisrel 8.80 and Jamovi 2.3. According to the results, one of the important determinants of teachers' career satisfaction is the work-life balance; there is a negative relationship between job stress and career satisfaction, and as the job stress increases, the work-life balance decreases. Finally, in the model, it was found that teachers' job stress has a direct effect on career satisfaction, but also has an indirect effect through work-life balance. Based on all these results, educational organizations need to reorganize the work environment and conditions that will provide career satisfaction and work-life balance to their employees. However, while making these arrangements, it is of great importance to eliminate or even remove the factors that create job stress.

**Keywords:** *Career satisfaction, job stress, teacher, work-life balance.*

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### Introduction

One of the primary problems of policy makers is how to establish a stable education that can respond to students' increased needs and the demands of the economy. The effects of this problem are also seen in teacher employment and in the quality of work life of teachers. Fortunately, there are many internal and external motivation for teachers' career choice (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; McLean et al., 2019; Yüce et al., 2013). External motivations involve aspects (salary, status, working conditions, etc.) that are not in nature, while internal motives include natural aspects of teaching such as teaching passion, knowledge, and expertise. Self-sacrifice drives create the perception that teaching is an important profession and inspired them to help the development of students and society. Intrinsic and altruistic motives faced to "be more frequent in what are termed 'developed countries' than in developing countries, where extrinsic reasons are more prominent" (Bergmark et al., 2018, p. 266). Despite all these motivators, teaching is a hard occupation, especially for teacher at the beginning of his/her career because teachers have the attempt to realize the expectations of job and they need to be approved by the school community. Unfortunately, both the lack of preference of the teaching profession as before and the attrition of the teachers cause recurrent shortages of teachers (Podolsky et al., 2016).

Podolsky et al. (2016, p. 5) summarized why the teachers leave the profession voluntarily by some reasons as "personal life reasons, to pursue a position other than that of a K-12 teacher, dissatisfaction with school assessment and accountability measures on their teaching or curriculum, as well as dissatisfaction with support preparing students for assessments, dissatisfaction with the school's administration and teaching as a career, the need for a higher salary, lack of influence over school policies and practices, and a lack of autonomy over the classroom". Considering these reasons, the basic motivating factor may be that teachers do not have a positive attitude towards their careers and professions. As a matter of fact, in many studies (e.g., Australian Government Productivity Commission, 2012; Dos Santos, 2021; Ingersoll, 2012), this is conceptualized as career dissatisfaction and job dissatisfaction and resulted in leaving the profession not only in the education sector but also in other sectors (e.g., Nauman et al., 2021; Salleh et al., 2020; Shaver & Lacey, 2003). Teachers' career satisfaction may be related to their intention to leave; teachers with lower career satisfaction were more likely to resign; and improving teacher career satisfaction can effectively increase work

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enthusiasm and reduce turnover intentions. In addition, teachers' career satisfaction is related to their well-being and job enthusiasm and is closely related to the quality of education (Sun et al., 2022). Based on the importance of teacher career satisfaction, it is indispensable to investigate factors that can increase teachers' career satisfaction to achieve the goal of improving teaching quality.

### Literature Review

#### *Teacher Career Satisfaction*

A talented and dedicated employee is a very important element for the education systems loaded with the mission of shaping the future of the states. However, emotions of educators are more important for the effectiveness of the educational organization. As mentioned by Ashforth and Humphrey (1995, p. 98), emotions are "an integral and inseparable part of everyday organizational life. From moments of frustration or joy, grief, or fear, to enduring sense of dissatisfaction or commitment, the experience of work is saturated with feeling".

In management literature, these emotional responses that determine the quality of work are called job satisfaction (JS) and explained as "the extent to which people like their jobs" and the "emotional response of an employee to his/her job within an organization" (Lambert et al., 2004, p. 5). But Shaver and Lacey's (2003, p. 166) study distinguishes between two types of JS; first, JS defined by the current "work environment" and "their employers" (e.g., "I am happy with my current work environment"), (2) career satisfaction (CS) of an employee's career option and how work experiences justify this option? (Such as "overall I am satisfied with my career choice"). Similarly, Judge et al. (1995) noted that an empirical difference was found between JS and CS, as well.

Judge et al. (1995) defined the career as a series of work-related positions, occupied by a person along his/her lifetime. CS is derived from one's career development and advancement in one's job (Greenhaus et al., 1990) and based on professional achievement and goal, income target, professional progress, and acquisition of new skills. As in all professions, offering a career opportunity and a career development plan based on competencies in the teaching profession will affect the motivation and job performance positively depending on the individual goals, so that education and training will become more qualified. But Chapman and Lowther (1982) state that the teaching career differs from many other careers due to its three characteristics.

"The first prominent feature of teaching is that teachers have significant autonomy in the classroom they teach. However, this is not usually the case, and it seems that autonomy, which initially seemed to be autonomy, is felt by many teachers as isolation. Secondly, because teachers teach the same lessons over and over again, the challenge is limited. Although teaching new students every year creates some difficulties, even after a few years, this difficulty can even lead to routine. Finally, the financial situation of teachers tends to be strictly dependent on seniority. Teachers know what they will earn and long service brings limited salary increase. Special performance or merit is rarely associated with a financial reward (p. 242)"

These differences specific to the teaching profession determined by the authors may also negatively affect the perception of CS. CS was found to be related with possible organizational results such as ideas to leave (Armstrong-Stassen & Ursel, 2009; Gerçek et al., 2015; Kang et al., 2015; Latan et al., 2022), professional identity (Sun et al., 2022), professional development engagement (Easterly & Myers, 2019), professional and organizational identification (Pham, 2020), work engagement and perceived organizational support (Oubibi et al., 2022), organizational commitment (Igbaria, 1991; Igbaria & Greenhaus, 1992), organizational citizenship (Lv & Yu, 2020), organizational culture, performance-goal orientation (Joo & Park, 2010), burnout (Keeton et al., 2007), job stress (Frank et al., 1999; Lepnurm et al., 2006; Parayitam et al., 2010), occupational stress and job performance (Nisar & Rasheed, 2020) and work-family conflict (Aba et al., 2022; Gopalan & Pattusamy, 2020). Defining the factors that affect CS is essential for organizations aiming to create motivated and dedicated human resources (Judge et al., 1995; Martins et al., 2002). However, identifying factors affecting CS can enable manager to make rational decisions regarding plans aimed at improving emotional responses. Surprisingly, given the intensity of these discussions on career satisfaction, little is known about the degree of CS among teachers and their impact on future teachers.

#### *Career Satisfaction and Job Stress*

Today's teachers face with the rapid development of information and technology. Reasons such as the development of other sources of information outside the school (e.g., internet), the imperative of considering young people's changing relationships with culture and knowledge, the increase of knowledge in many areas and the importance of learning skills to address advanced knowledge rather than memorizing facts makes their job more difficult.

Although teachers perceive their jobs as satisfactory in general terms, teaching is considered as a stressful profession compared to other occupational groups (Agyapong et al., 2022; Carroll et al., 2022; Chaplain, 2008; Fitchett et al., 2021; Hablemitoğlu & Özmete, 2012; Herman et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2020; Kyriacou, 2001; McCarthy, 2019; Solanki & Mandaviya, 2021). In the highly cited definition, Kyriacou (2001, p. 28) defines teachers' job stress as "a negative emotional experience being triggered by the teacher's perception that their work situation constituted a threat to their self-esteem or well-being". This definition was accepted by most psychology researchers and based on the balance theory

proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984, cited in McCarthy, 2019), which is originally due to an imbalance between stress, demands and resources.

Work-based stress can be defined as “the emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physiological reaction to adverse and noxious aspects of work, work environments and work organizations. It is a state characterized by high levels of arousal and distress and often by feelings of not coping” (European Commission, 2000, p. 3). In general, the sources of job stress faced by employees under the organization are diverse like the individual's role in the organization, their relationship with others, the job itself, the organization's field of activity, career development and the external environment. For educational organization, frequently mentioned sources of stress are teacher characteristics, children's disruptive behavior, workload, and lack of social and/or organizational support, performance evaluation systems, lack of adequate funding and effective leadership, national testing and data collection (e.g., Abdullah & Ismail, 2019; Boyle et al., 1995; Carroll et al., 2021; Klassen & Chiu, 2010; McCarthy, 2019).

Job stress increases the pressure on the individual in work life and causes the employee to not to enjoy his/her work and decrease performance (Gümüştekin & Gültekin, 2009). Many researchers (Collie et al., 2012; Frank et al., 1999; Jones et al., 1995; Karsili et al., 2021; Lepnurm, et al., 2006; Parayitam et al., 2010) point out that job stress is one of the most crucial factors affecting career satisfaction. Because career satisfaction is an important argument that shows how a person feels throughout his career. Teachers' career satisfaction refers to teachers' internal evaluations that reflect their overall satisfaction with their career experience and descriptions of career outcomes (Sun et al., 2022, p. 1). The emotional reactions of teachers, who feel very intense job stress, will be negative and their career satisfaction will decrease. Similarly, when the roles expected from the teacher are getting increasingly difficult, the stress level of the teacher, who has negative feelings about his job, will increase.

*Hypothesis 1: CS is inversely related to JS.*

#### *Work-Life Balance*

Teacher performance is one of the most complicated human cases and teacher effectiveness is not a simple matter at all (Sünbül, 1996) and work life balance (WLB) for teachers is one of the biggest problems. Fulfilling the roles and responsibilities expected from teachers depends on this balance, and it is not easy. "Lifelong learning" is required for teaching requires and teachers have much more workload than they make in schools. They spend extra time at home for the next day's lecture preparation, students' portfolios, and commission assignments. Teaching is an extremely stressful profession due to academic workload and career issues (Helvacı & Eker, 2019). So, much scientific studies are being conducted on teachers' WLBs. For instance, studies showing that WLB impact on teachers' job performance significantly (Johari et al., 2018), job satisfaction (Sari & Seniati, 2020; Singla, 2018) and organizational commitment (Sari & Seniati, 2020).

WLB expresses to the conformity between family, individual and work life, or the equilibrium between different sections of lifetime (Korkmaz & Erdoğan, 2014); to maintain control of a person's over his/her responsibilities in his/her private life (Thulasimani et al., 2010), or an equilibrium between work and private life. WLB is a composition with three words that explains the lifetime of an individual working in an organisation that “being at work when they are at work and being at home when they are at home” (Sharma & Nayak, 2016, p. 115). It is also mentioned as getting satisfaction from “work life” and “non-work life” with the least role conflict (Sturges & Guest, 2004, p. 6). Hildebrandt (2006, p. 255) stated that balance is “coordination through temporal action” and its aim in these definitions is “to maintain or enhance the quality of life in subjective dimensions (satisfaction) and in objective dimensions (health, career, successful private life)”.

Ensuring the WLB of the employees has positive contributions both for the organization and for the individual. In fact, employees experiencing low WLB have less organizational commitment in terms of working conditions (Ahmed, 2019), less commitment toward their career (Poulose & Dhal, 2020; Stroh et al., 1996), less career satisfaction and life satisfaction (Günes & Özan, 2022) and more burnout and turnover intention (Boamah et al., 2022). In terms of the individual, it provides advantages such as greater value and balance in private life, better at work, increased productivity, and improved internal and external relationships. On the other hand, continual efforts to balance work and private life areas can cause to stress. This imbalance causes some common problems such as heart disease, sleep disorder, depression, irritability, fatigue, insecurity, weak concentration, and even nervous disorders (Thulasimani et al., 2010).

Hirsch (2004) says about WLB in carrier development:

It's easy to abdicate responsibility for personal life choices. But it almost never turns out right. Instead of living on automatic pilot, ask yourself where your work fits within the context of a whole life. Is it simply a way to keep bill collectors from your door? A vehicle for a lavish lifestyle? Or, perhaps, something more spiritual? Do you want your work to be the centerpiece of your existence? Or part of a more integrated lifestyle? (p.99)

WLB is considered to increase well-being. Kofodimos (1993, as cited in Greenhaus et al., 2003) refers that imbalance causes stress, diverges from life standards, and after all minimizes individuals' effectiveness at work. Indeed, Aruldoss et

al. (2021) and Rashid et al. (2022) reported that JS was negatively related to work-life quality and WLB and JS has a significant predictive effect on work-family conflict (Zhao et al., 2022).

The negative consequences of conflicts between work and family are not limited to the family sphere. Supporting or conflict of individuals in the context of family and work relationship can considerably make a difference to CS. In fact, "work-family conflict" is related negatively to CS (Martins et al., 2002) and WLB is related significantly to CS (Keeton et al., 2007; Saraih et al., 2019). "Work family conflict" negatively impacts individuals' well-being, family relations and standard of living, as well as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and stress (Firat, 2018). Consistent with these findings, WLB is expected to positively correlate with CS, negatively correlate JS and has a mediating effect in the relationship between JS and CS.

Hypothesis 2: *WLB is directly proportional to CS.*

Hypothesis 3: *WLB is inversely related to JS.*

Hypothesis 4: *WLB mediates the relationship between CS and JS.*

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study is a "correctional study" that aimed to reveal the relationships between job stress, career satisfaction and work-life balance.

### Participants

The participants (n: 558) were part of 1940 teachers from thirty-four high school in western Turkey. Teachers reported their gender as female 52% and male (48%), marriage 88%, working in general high school 54 % and Vocational high school 46%. Teachers also reported their professional seniority as less than 15 years 44% and more than 15 years 56%.

### Measures

The survey included (1) information sheet and a demographics section, and (2) three scale: a career satisfaction scale (5 items), work-family balance scale (8 items), and job stress scale (7 items). Since the scales were administered to the participants at the same period, some random and systematic errors may have been occurred to the research. This may have resulted in common method variance. To minimize the common method variance, procedural solutions were tried to be used before data collection (Kock et al., 2021; Malhotra et al., 2017; Podsakoff et al., 2012). While arranging the questionnaire and scales, the aim of each section was clearly written, and attention was paid to its design. The expressions in the scales have been revised to be clear and understandable. Care was taken to ensure that the participants responded to the scales voluntarily and were familiar with the researched concepts. Additional information about the scales used in the study is given below.

The CS Scale was developed by Greenhaus et al. (1990). In this study, the Turkish version (Avcı & Turunç, 2012) was used with five items (such as "I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career," "I am satisfied with the progress I have made towards meeting my goals for income"). In the study of Greenhaus et al., the reliability score of the scale (Cronbach's Alfa) was calculated as .88, while Avcı and Turunç was calculated as .91.

WLB Scale developed by Taşdelen-Karçkay and Bakalım (2017) was used to determine teachers' perceptions of WLB with 8 items (such as "I can meet my needs and the needs of important people in my life" and "I can deal with situations that arise from the conflict of my roles specific to my work and family life"). The reliability score of the scale (Cronbach's alfa) was .92 in Taşdelen-Karçkay and Bakalım's study.

JS Scale was developed by House and Rizzo (1972) and Turkish version (Efeoğlu, 2006) was used to measure teachers' job stress in current study. This scale consists of seven items that measure job stress (e.g., "My work tends to directly affect my health", "I work under a great tension" and "I feel irritable due to my work"). The reliability score of the scale (Cronbach's alfa) was .83 in Efeoğlu's study.

### Data analyzing

The mediational model is created. It was a set of statistical procedures used to investigate whether a particular data set exhibits a mediation structure. Its theoretical premise posits that an intervening variable is an indicative measure of the process through which an independent variable is thought to affect a dependent variable (Iacobucci, 2008).

Before the structural model, data was cleared of outliers. Analyzes were carried out on 519 teachers. A widely accepted rule is 10 cases/observations per indicator variable in setting a lower bound of adequate sample size (Nunnally, 1967). Although determination of appropriate sample size is a critical issue in SEM. As an assumption multicollinearity was tested with correlational analysis. Correlations greater than 0.8 was not found. It was also tested, the multivariate normality assumption of the data was evaluated by calculating Mardia's skewness and kurtosis coefficients. It was seen

that the data did not meet the multivariate normality assumption ( $\chi^2 = 1303.182$ ;  $p < .01$ ). For this reason, asymptotic covariance matrix was created (see Table 1), and Robust maximum likelihood test was used in the estimates. Table 1 showed that while there is a positive relationship between Cr and WLB, there is a negative relationship with JS. There is also a negative relationship between WLB and JS. When the values are examined, it can be said that the variation of WLB on CS is higher than JS

The responses of high school teachers to CS, WLB and work JS were utilized in the study. In the established model, it was tested whether teachers' CS is affected directly by JS or indirectly through WLB. The mediational model is given in Figure 1.

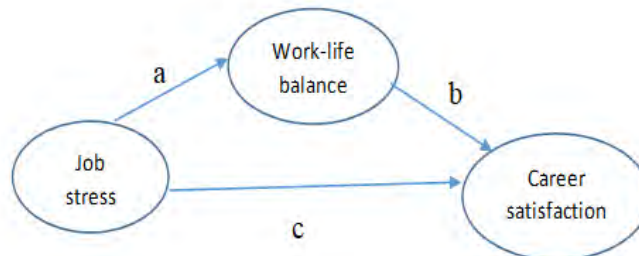


Figure 1. Work-Life Balance Mediation Model

In the diagram shown above, the effect of teachers' JS on CS was tested both directly through  $c$  and indirectly through  $a$  and  $b$  ways by the mediation role of WLB. The analyzes were carried out through the structural equation model, and the relationships between the latent variables were examined using the observed variables. In the model, CS (dependent variable) is endogenous variable, work stress (independent variable) is exogenous variable and WLB (mediator) is mediator variable. The mediator variable serves to clarify of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Path "a" represents the effect of JS on WLB; path "b" represents the effect of WLB on CS by keeping the constant of JS, and path "c" represents the effect of JS on CS by keeping the constant of WLB. The indirect effect is the product of path coefficients "a" and "b" IE (indirect effect) =  $a \cdot b$ , the direct effect is the coefficient "c", DE (direct effect) =  $c$ . The total effect is equal to sum of direct and indirect effect (TE =  $ab + c$ ). For testing of the significance level of the mediation effect, the significance of paths  $a$  and  $b$  was examined (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007). It is emphasized that this method gives more accurate results than the SOBEL test, which is widely used in mediation testing (MacKinnon et al., 2002). The importance of the mediating effect of WLB has been tested with the effect size calculated using the ratio of indirect and total effects (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Before the structural model was tested, the multivariate normality assumption of the data was evaluated by calculating Mardia's skewness and kurtosis coefficients. It was seen that the data did not meet the multivariate normality assumption ( $\chi^2 = 1303.182$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Asymptotic covariance matrix was created, and Robust maximum likelihood test was used in the estimates. SPSS 26, Lisrel 8.80 and Jamovi 2.3 were used in the analysis.

Table1. Covariance Matrix between Variables

	crs1	crs2	crs3	crs4	crs5	jlb1	jlb2	jlb3	jlb4	jlb5	jlb6	jlb7	jlb8	s1	s2	s3	s4	s5	s6	s7
<b>crst1</b>	1.55																			
<b>crst2</b>	1.17	1.29																		
<b>crst3</b>	0.64	0.63	1.36																	
<b>crst4</b>	0.79	0.74	0.84	1.38																
<b>crst5</b>	0.75	0.77	0.64	0.68	1.35															
<b>jlb1</b>	0.66	0.61	0.86	0.70	0.64	2.72														
<b>jlb2</b>	0.58	0.53	0.38	0.51	0.43	1.35	1.86													
<b>jlb3</b>	0.57	0.49	0.57	0.58	0.48	1.29	1.36	2.87												
<b>jlb4</b>	0.56	0.55	0.40	0.49	0.49	1.06	1.28	1.42	2.31											
<b>jlb5</b>	0.53	0.49	0.28	0.42	0.37	0.99	1.31	1.37	1.55	1.85										
<b>jlb6</b>	0.49	0.44	0.28	0.43	0.44	0.93	1.22	1.42	1.47	1.50	1.92									
<b>jlb7</b>	0.52	0.47	0.29	0.45	0.39	1.06	1.24	1.31	1.31	1.35	1.45	1.81								
<b>jlb8</b>	0.68	0.64	0.61	0.66	0.63	1.12	1.09	1.47	1.34	1.20	1.28	1.23	2.48							
<b>s1</b>	-0.15	-0.08	-0.22	-0.20	-0.11	-0.23	-0.15	-0.43	-0.09	-0.09	-0.16	-0.17	-0.23	1.38						
<b>s2</b>	-0.15	-0.15	-0.24	-0.24	-0.21	-0.39	-0.36	-0.52	-0.33	-0.36	-0.34	-0.39	-0.52	0.52	1.26					
<b>s3</b>	-0.32	-0.26	-0.27	-0.29	-0.29	-0.43	-0.43	-0.50	-0.38	-0.41	-0.41	-0.41	-0.53	0.47	0.87	1.27				
<b>s4</b>	-0.22	-0.17	-0.24	-0.20	-0.23	-0.39	-0.40	-0.43	-0.32	-0.34	-0.33	-0.35	-0.50	0.50	0.78	0.77	1.23			
<b>s5</b>	-0.22	-0.17	-0.18	-0.18	-0.19	-0.42	-0.46	-0.54	-0.38	-0.43	-0.42	-0.49	-0.48	0.42	0.69	0.74	0.67	1.28		
<b>s6</b>	-0.30	-0.21	-0.20	-0.22	-0.25	-0.34	-0.37	-0.28	-0.36	-0.32	-0.31	-0.31	-0.38	0.27	0.56	0.59	0.59	0.61	1.24	
<b>s7</b>	-0.08	-0.09	-0.12	-0.15	-0.08	-0.31	-0.29	-0.42	-0.24	-0.18	-0.31	-0.27	-0.21	0.38	0.38	0.40	0.33	0.48	0.39	1.35

### Findings

The first step of the structural model is testing the measurement model. The validity and reliability of the Path model have been increased by testing the measurement model (Bryne, 2001). The measurement model is shown in Figure 2 and model fit indices are given in Table 2.

Table 2. The Goodness of Fit Indicates of Measurement Model

Measure	Values	Recommended Value	Model Evaluation	References
X <sup>2</sup>	580.99	-		
sd	167	-		
X <sup>2</sup> /sd	3.47	≤ 0.50	Good fit	Sümer (2000)
RMSEA	0.069	≤0.08	Good fit	Jöreskog and Sörbom (1993)
SRMR	0.061	≤0.08	Good fit	Brown (2006)
NFI	0.95	≥0.95	Good fit	Sümer (2000)
NNFI	0.96	≥0.95	Good fit	Sümer (2000)
CFI	0.97	≥0.95	Good fit	Sümer (2000)
GFI	0.88	≥0.90	Acceptable	Hooper et al. (2008)
AGFI	0.85	≥0.90	Acceptable	Hooper et al. (2008)
CN	228.39	≥200	Sufficient sample	Bollen (1998)

When the model fit values were examined, it was determined that the fit values were at the desired level. By examining Figure 2, the relationships between latent variables to be included in the structural model and standardized coefficients for each parameter can be determined. In the structural model, the work-life balance variable is expected to be related with both career satisfaction and job stress. A significant correlation between work-life balance and career satisfaction (rwlb-cs= 0.44) and between WBL and JS (rwlb-js = -0.39) was observed in the model ( $p<.01$ ). However, there is a significant correlation between CS and JS (rcs-js = -0.26  $p<.01$ ).

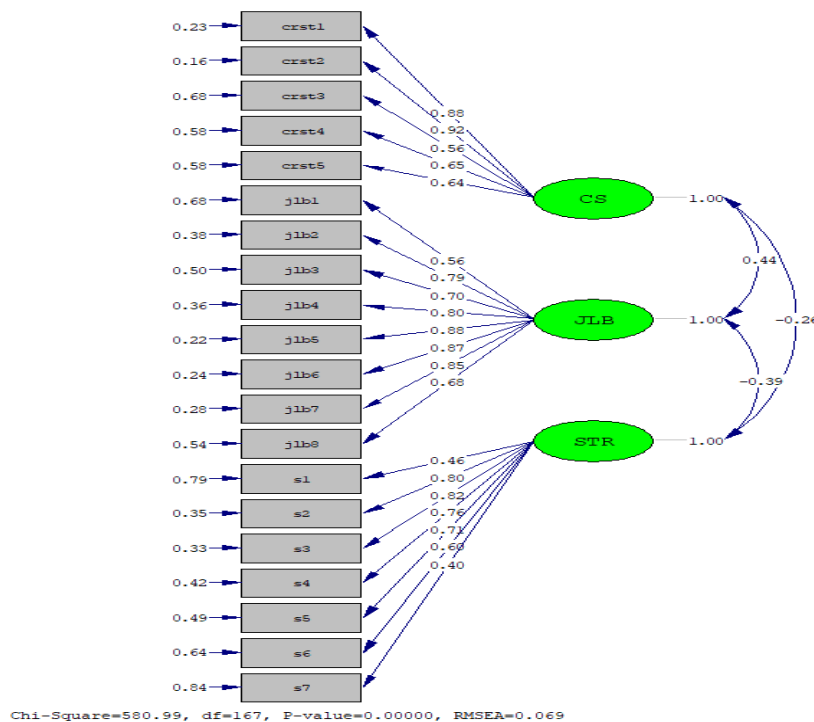


Figure 2. Measurement Model

In the second step, it was examined whether the relationship (-0.26) between CS and JS was mediated by WLB. the model was tested, in which the variables of WLB and JS were the predictors, and the variable of CS was the predicted variable. Goodness-of-fit values are given in Table 3 and the final version of the model is given in Figure3.

Table 3 When the model goodness of fit results is compared with the critical values, the structural model has the desired values. Structural model goodness of fit values.

Table 3. Structural Model Goodness of Fit Values

Measure	Values	Recommended Value	Model Evaluation	References
X <sup>2</sup>	580.99	-		
sd	167	-		
X <sup>2</sup> /sd	3.47	≤ 0.50	Modarete	Sümer (2000)
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CFI	0.97	≥ 0.95	Good fit	Sümer (2000)
GFI	0.88	≥ 0.90	Acceptable	Hooper et al. (2008)
AGFI	0.85	≥ 0.90	Acceptable	Hooper et al. (2008)
CN	190.41	≥ 200	Acceptable	Çelik and Yılmaz (2016)

Figure 3 shows the standardized coefficients based on each parameter. The significant relationship between CS on and JS in the measurement model was at the level of -0.26, but the coefficient decreased to -0.10 in the structural model ( $p < .01$ ).

Although the relationship between them is significant, it is quite low. If the standardized coefficients of the structural model are interpreted, the indirect effect of JS on CS is calculated as  $(0.40 * 0.39) = 0.16$ . One standard deviation decrease in teachers' job stress increases their career satisfaction by 0.16 standard deviations through WLB.

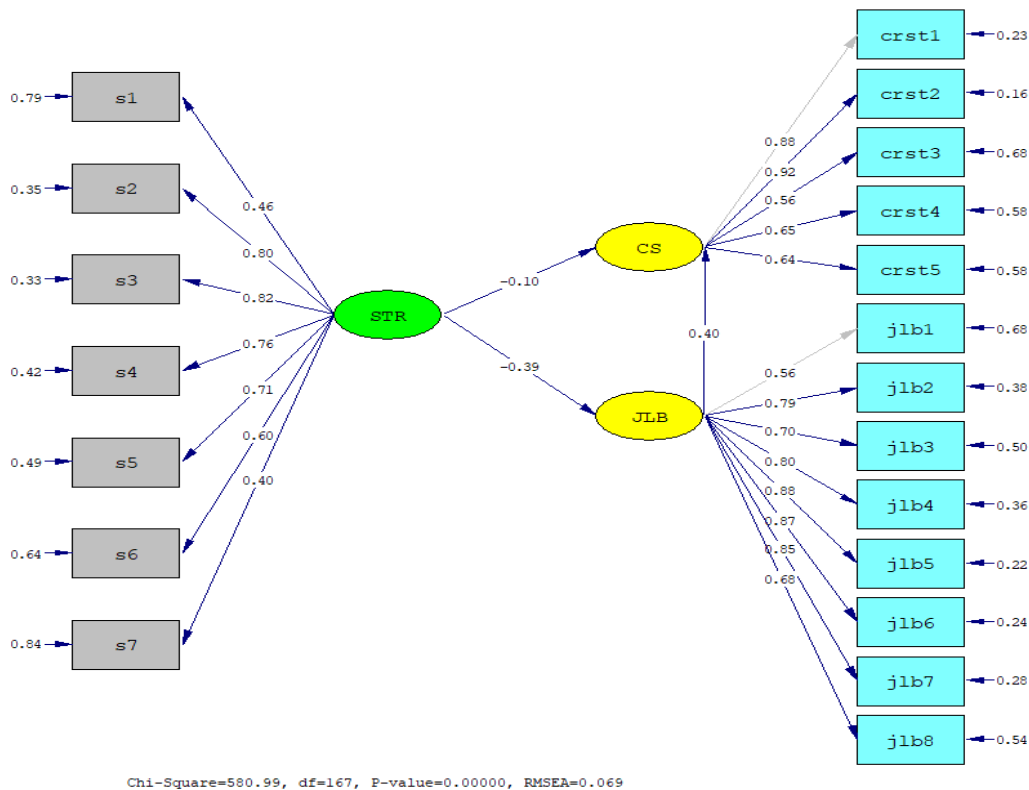


Figure 3. WLB as a Mediator in the Model

The relationship between JS and CS was extremely low (-0.10), but it was found significant. In the measurement model, it was also seen significant but low (-0.26) the relationship between CS and JS. This indicates the partial mediation effect of work-life balance. A one standard deviation decrease in JS leads to a 0.10 standard deviation increase in teacher CS. The sum of the direct and indirect effects is calculated as 0.26. The effect size of the mediator variable was determined as  $P(WBL) = 0.16 / 0.26 = 0.62$ . As a result, 62% of the effect of JS on CS is mediated by WLB.

**Discussion**

Teachers often emphasize that they prefer to teach and work with children instead of increasing their status in their profession (Blackburn et al., 2017; Timms & Brough, 2013). Teaching can provide personal satisfaction, but also leads to stress with the endless expectations of administrators, colleagues, students, and parents, increased workload, discipline



problems, and lack of recognition of their success (Greenglass & Burke, 2003). In addition, the rapid changes in the teaching and learning environment that cause differentiation in the roles of teachers also create pressure and cause them to experience an imbalance between their work and private lives (Polat, 2018). Our study's results revealed that WLB mediates the effect of JS on career satisfaction. That means having a healthy work-life balance of teachers contributes to the satisfaction of their careers by reducing their stress levels and thus to the realization of both individual and organizational goals.

In the study, one of the essential predictors of teachers' CS is WLB consistently with some studies (Al-Junaid et al., 2017; Boamah et al., 2022; Gerçek et al., 2015; Heslin, 2005; Powell & Mainiero, 1992; Saraih et al., 2019; Schneer & Reitman, 1993; Stroh & Reilly, 1999). Martins et al. (2002) also states that one of the principal factors affecting career satisfaction is the intervention of work life into family life. They emphasize that although the career satisfaction of the employees is high, their experience of "work-family conflict" can negatively affect their CS levels. CS and WLB are important aspects of the teaching profession, as in every profession. Despite the increasing responsibilities and workload at school, teachers who can balance their work and private life can provide satisfaction despite limited career opportunities specific to their profession. In addition, many positive organizational behaviors that most likely enables teachers to be more satisfied with their careers can be gained such as organizational commitment, job engagement and perceived organizational support (Abdulaziz et al., 2022), job satisfaction (Maeran et al., 2013; Mercado, 2019; Ordu, 2021), work commitment (Güteryüz, 2016) and job performance (Polat, 2018; Rashid et al., 2022). High levels of CS and good WLB have been correlated with increased income, motivation, performance, psychological and physical well-being, self-confidence, and commitment (Al-Junaid et al., 2017).

Other expected result is the existence of a negative relationship between JS and CS. CS defined as the satisfaction that a teacher experiences in meeting their career goals and expectations (Podolsky et al., 2016) can be increased by reducing the job stress they experience in the school environment. The studies suggest that stress is related to various negative results for teachers such as increased burnout (Herman et al., 2020; Jeon et al., 2022; McCarthy, 2019; Zhao et al., 2022), decreased job satisfaction (Collie et al., 2012; Klassen & Chiu, 2010), commitment (Klassen & Chiu, 2011), self-efficacy (Herman et al., 2020) and teaching effectiveness (Collie et al., 2012; Fahmi et al., 2022; Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Moreover, the outputs that an individual wants to achieve from the status he/she has reached within the organization, such as income, reaching the targeted career ladder, developing his/her abilities, promotion, and a peaceful working environment, are the determinants of CS (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Lepnurm et al., 2006). As a result, not only stress and these results that may lead to stress negatively affect career satisfaction (Büyükyılmaz et al., 2020; Karsili et al., 2021; Nisar & Rasheed, 2020) but also can reduce job satisfaction and the desire to reach the targeted career steps if possible (e.g., Cerit & Özdemir, 2015).

The prominent result of the research is that JS increases as the WLB decreases. The model showed that teachers with low WLB experience more JS, consistently some studies (Aruldoss et al., 2021; Firat, 2018; Rashid et al., 2022; Tekingündüz et al., 2015; Zhao et al., 2022). Teachers who cannot balance their work and private life, and who in some cases must make concessions in these areas, are likely to experience stress in their professional life. JS, which is caused by individual differences and psychological processes, affects the relationship of the individual with the environment (Eren-Gümüştekin & Öztemiz, 2004; Guest, 2002). Otherwise, the job satisfaction of the employees who cannot balance their work and life will decrease and this situation will increase their job stress levels (Froese-Germain, 2014; Saeed & Farooqi, 2014). Therefore, the most important need of teachers and employees in all other sectors today is to provide WLB and to maintain this balance.

Finally, WLB has a partial mediating role between CS and JS. In the model, teachers' JS has a direct effect on CS, but also has an indirect effect through WLB. Shaver and Lacey (2003) state that "career satisfaction covers a sense of psychological need fulfilment". Therefore, the satisfaction of teachers from their professional careers depends on their well-being both in the work environment and in their private lives. In individuals who cannot maintain a work-life balance, both the family dimension and the employee's attitudes and behaviors towards work are affected negatively due to the negativities arising from "work-family conflict" and "family-work conflict" (Yüksel, 2005). In these individuals, their job and career satisfaction may decrease and negative behaviors such as coming to work late and leaving work early may also occur (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). In this context, Sudibjo and Suwarli (2020) emphasized the importance of work-life balance on attitude and behavior towards work by emphasizing that high work-life balance is a force that ensures the commitment of employees in the organization and that this prevents leaving the organization. In fact, Yumuk Günay and Demiralay (2016) emphasized that job stress and work-life balance play a full mediator role in the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization of employees and stated that the importance given to private life increases job stress by neglecting work life, which causes depersonalization and burnout. At the same time, Ademola et al. (2021) emphasized that the higher the work-family stress experienced by teachers, the lower their work productivity. They stated that the work-life conflict is because the life of the individual and the goals of the organization do not fully overlap with each other.

The higher employees' career satisfaction, the more likely they are to take on new challenges and positions of greater responsibility within the organisation (Latan et al., 2022). Besides that, career satisfaction is positively related to the

professional development engagement expected of teachers today and it can promote a high level of participation in professional development, especially workshops (Easterly & Myers, 2019). Therefore, the current study expands the role of the WLB as a mediator in school settings, and its findings may be important to practitioners seeking to improve the performance of educational organizations by increasing teachers' career satisfaction.

### Conclusion

The results are summarized as follows: (1) It was determined that one of the important predictors of teachers' CS is WLB (2) Other expected result is the existence of a negative relationship between teachers' JS and CS. (3) Similarly, this research has revealed a negative and significant relationship between teachers' JS and WLB. (4) Finally, WLB has a partial mediating role between CS and JS. In the model, teachers' JS has a direct effect on CS, but also has an indirect effect through WLB. Therefore, the satisfaction of teachers from their professional careers depends on their well-being both in the work environment and in their private lives.

### Recommendations

According to Latan et al. (2022), who theorize career satisfaction in the context of sustainable Human Resource Management (HRM) as a part of organizations' internal social responsibility there is a relationship between intention to leave and career satisfaction and "a culture of constructive feedback and good work-life balance need to be prioritized in public/federal agencies in order to avoid high turnover, and thus move towards more sustainable HR" (p. 845).

HRM in education is an area where the concepts of career and career management are gaining increasing importance. It is a prerequisite for organizations to be able to respond to the needs of their human resources for their effectiveness. In this sense, it is much more essential to meet the physiological and psychological needs of educators as well as their social needs and self-actualization needs. For this, educational organizations need to reorganize the work environment and conditions that will provide career satisfaction to their employees. However, while making these arrangements, it is of great importance to eliminate or even remove the obstacles to career satisfaction.

In its decisions taken in 2020, the Council of the European Union emphasized that the fact that teachers and trainers have different and varied career paths will play an encouraging role both in increasing commitment to the teaching profession and in providing high quality education to students. Unfortunately, the fact that administrators and teachers have limited career development opportunities reduces the interest of individuals in this profession. In this context, it would be beneficial for top policy managers to implement objective and functional practices for career steps.

It should not be forgotten that schools are environments that produce stress. Raising awareness about stress and its sources in educational organizations is a crucial step in stress management. In their study, Blumenthal and Blumenthal (2021) stated that great number of teachers are unaware of and do not use available coping strategies. McCarthy (2019) revealed that recognizing that stress is "a psychological process that results from how teachers appraise their own classroom context may provide avenues for intervention for those 20-25% of teachers most vulnerable to stress (p.13)". Creating this awareness will provide the habit and advantage of understanding and controlling the signs created by the current situations so that early intervention can be made. In addition, developing policies for prevention and management, providing necessary information, and providing training will also contribute to the individual coping of teachers and administrators (Çobanoğlu, 2021). Ismail et al. (2019) suggest that school leaders can adopt "authentic leadership" in their implementations to manage teachers' JS and so, they will develop school effectiveness. In this sense, a team spirit should be created among teachers by the administration and unity within the organization should be ensured through social activities such as staff nights, nature walks, picnics, sports tournaments, etc. to reduce job stress. Finally, the management of the organization should support the teachers, especially female teachers with multiple roles, in fulfilling their family responsibilities.

### Limitations

The current research has limitations especially related to the sample. In this study, the mediation effect of WLB on the relationship between JS and CS was examined only on the work lives of high school teachers. The reason why this group of teachers is preferred is that teachers in high schools should prepare their students for a difficult and stressful process such as university entrance exam or a profession. Therefore, in future research, it will be useful to examine the attitudes and perceptions of teachers at other education levels except for the high schools where this research is carried out.

### Authorship Contribution Statement

Çobanoğlu: Conceptualization, design, drafting manuscript, critical revision of manuscript, writing, supervision, final approval. Yıldırım: Data analysis/interpretation, statistical analysis. Seven Şarkaya: Data acquisition/ interpretation, drafting manuscript, technical or material support, writing. Sertel: Data acquisition/ interpretation, technical or material support, writing.

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