

Research Article

Occupational burnout and life satisfaction in teachers: Mediating role of psychological mindedness

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Teachers' satisfaction with their work is a significant factor influencing both their life satisfaction and productivity. Therefore, identifying the factors that positively or negatively impact teachers' life satisfaction is essential for designing effective interventions that enhance well-being and reduce burnout. However, the literature provides limited evidence regarding the variables that may buffer the detrimental effects of occupational burnout on teachers' life satisfaction. From this perspective, the current study aims to examine whether psychological mindedness plays a mediating role in the relationship between occupational burnout and teachers' life satisfaction. The study group consisted of 423 teachers working in public and private schools across Türkiye. Data were collected through a demographic information form and three self-report scales. Descriptive statistics, Pearson Correlation Coefficient, and Bootstrap Analysis were employed to examine the relationships among the variables. The results revealed that occupational burnout negatively affects teachers' life satisfaction. Furthermore, psychological mindedness was found to mediate this relationship. These findings suggest that enhancing psychological mindedness may help mitigate the adverse impact of burnout and serve as a protective factor in supporting teachers' life satisfaction.

Keywords: Life satisfaction; Occupational burnout; Psychological mindedness; Teacher

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1. Introduction

In addition to having occupational knowledge and expertise, teaching is a profession that demands personal qualities such as dedication, patience, tolerance, and a genuine passion for the role (Uzun & Tortumlu, 2024). Teachers are expected to continuously update their professional competencies and fulfill the multifaceted responsibilities associated with their occupation (Zhang & Tian, 2024). They play a vital role in ensuring the quality, measurability, and effectiveness of educational outcomes within schools. Today, teachers are expected to prepare students for a rapidly changing world and social landscape (Özmen, 2001). In shaping the minds of future generations, teachers serve as exemplary figures, bearing substantial responsibility for the quality of education provided (Miller et al., 2010). They are the individuals with whom students spend the most time after their families, making them essential actors within society (Uzun & Uzun, 2022).

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Teachers who are enthusiastic about their work, feel energized, and report high levels of personal well-being are expected to contribute to the development of a healthy and thriving generation (Karaaslan et al., 2020). However, the scope of teachers' responsibilities has expanded significantly in recent years. Their roles now extend beyond instruction to include responsibilities related to student welfare, curriculum implementation, engagement with school communities, and communication with parents (Pillay et al., 2005). As these responsibilities have multiplied, so have the challenges. Teachers frequently report feelings of inadequacy, dissatisfaction, and fatigue, often triggered by constant changes in education policy, economic pressures, excessive workloads, and lack of support from parents, students, and administrators (Telef, 2011).

Given these stressors, teachers are considered one of the occupational groups most vulnerable to burnout (Lovewell, 2012; Soba et al., 2017). The consequences of teacher burnout are far-reaching. It can lead to negative attitudes toward work, increased absenteeism, and even psychological and mental health issues (Aldrup et al., 2017; Haydon et al., 2018; Richards et al., 2018). These issues not only affect teachers themselves but can also compromise the quality of education, disrupt student learning, and negatively impact the school climate (Falecki & Mann, 2020; McCallum & Price, 2010). Therefore, it is essential to implement systemic measures to support teachers' well-being and create an environment where they can work effectively and with satisfaction.

When the findings of studies conducted in Türkiye are examined, they are largely consistent with international data on teacher burnout and job dissatisfaction (Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021). According to a report by the Turkish Education Association (TEA, 2014), many teachers in Türkiye express doubt about remaining in the profession throughout their careers. More than half of the participants in the report indicated that they would not choose the teaching profession if given the opportunity to select another career. This sense of dissatisfaction is particularly concerning given the significant barriers to entry into the profession in Türkiye. Aspiring teachers must surpass thousands of peers through a series of rigorous exams and interviews (e.g., Public Personnel Selection Exam), which makes it difficult for those who enter the field to exit or change careers (Uzun & Uzun, 2022).

This structural rigidity contributes to a sense of entrapment and emotional strain among Turkish teachers. The sociocultural and systemic pressures they face may uniquely exacerbate the psychological burden associated with teaching. Consequently, efforts to improve the quality of education must begin with initiatives to promote teachers' life and job satisfaction. As Filiz (2014) emphasizes, the production of qualified manpower in any society is directly tied to the well-being and professional contentment of the teachers who prepare that workforce.

1.1. Life Satisfaction

Neugarten first introduced the concept of life satisfaction in 1961 (Neugarten et al., 1961). Life satisfaction refers to individuals' internal evaluation of the quality of their lives from a holistic perspective (McDowell, 2010; Uzun & Arslan, 2025). Rather than being limited to specific domains or temporary emotional states, life satisfaction encompasses a general sense of contentment with one's entire life (Arslan, 2024a, 2024b; Arslan et al., 2024; Uzun, 2024). According to another definition, it is a subjective state based on one's expectations about life and the extent to which these expectations are fulfilled (Satılmış et al., 2018). Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) noted that higher levels of life satisfaction lead individuals to be happier, more productive, and better adjusted socially.

Various factors influence life satisfaction, particularly among professionals such as teachers. Occupational status, economic conditions, and the working environment's quality and expectations are considered key determinants of teachers' life satisfaction (Telef, 2011). Since teachers typically devote a large portion of their daily lives to school-related tasks (Çelik & Üstüner, 2018), their experiences of job satisfaction and burnout are closely tied to their overall sense of life satisfaction (Avşaroğlu et al., 2005). Although work may not always lead directly to

the fulfillment of personal goals, it plays a central role in shaping individuals' well-being and can positively contribute to life satisfaction.

Dissatisfaction with working life is frequently cited as a contributing factor to several organizational and individual problems, including absenteeism, low motivation, and diminished job performance (Richards et al., 2018). Within modern organizational structures, job satisfaction has increasingly been regarded as an independent and critical variable, prompting the development of human resources policies that prioritize employee well-being (Tortumlu & Uzun, 2025). In this regard, enhancing both life and job satisfaction by improving general quality of life and working conditions has gained growing importance (Keser, 2005). This is particularly relevant for teachers, whose levels of life satisfaction and burnout are closely linked to their professional effectiveness and productivity.

The quality of the relationship between the individual and their job, along with any difficulties arising in that relationship, underscores one of the most pressing challenges of the contemporary workforce. The term "burnout," commonly associated with such challenges, was first introduced in the United States during the 1970s to describe the psychological wear and tear experienced by individuals working in people-oriented professions (Soba et al., 2017).

1.2. Occupational Burnout

The concept of burnout was first introduced by psychologist Freudenberger (1974) to describe the psychological deterioration experienced by individuals working in service-oriented professions, such as nurses and teachers. Among the most widely accepted definitions of burnout is the three-dimensional model proposed by Maslach and Jackson (1981), which conceptualizes burnout as emotional exhaustion (a sense of fatigue and loss of energy), depersonalization (developing a detached or indifferent attitude toward oneself and others), and reduced personal accomplishment (a perceived decline in success and productivity). This model gained prominence with the development of the Maslach Burnout Inventory [MBI], which has since been widely used in empirical studies.

Research has shown that burnout is especially prevalent among occupational groups that involve direct, one-on-one interactions with others (Çapri, 2006; Karahan & Uyanık-Balat, 2011; Uzun & Tortumlu, 2022; Ünal et al., 2001). It has also been revealed that individuals in professions involving human service roles are more susceptible to burnout than those working with objects or systems, due to the emotional responsibility and relational expectations inherent in their work (Agyapong et al., 2023; Ardiç & Polatçı, 2009; Bodenheimer & Shuster, 2020).

The education sector is among the fields with the most intense interpersonal interaction (Dericioğulları et al., 2007). Teaching, in particular, is a face-to-face profession that must meet high expectations from various stakeholders. Therefore, teachers are considered to be at high risk of experiencing burnout (Çelik & Üstüner, 2018). Burnout in the teaching profession has been recognized globally as a significant problem, with numerous studies conducted across different countries (Uzun & Uzun, 2022). Teachers are expected not only to deliver academic content but also to support students in adapting to a rapidly evolving social environment, while simultaneously addressing their emotional, behavioral, and developmental needs (Agyapong et al., 2022; Cemaloğlu & Şahin, 2007; Zhao et al., 2022).

Work-related stressors such as excessive workload, role conflicts, involuntary relocations, large class sizes, lack of student motivation, disciplinary issues, and frequent criticism can all contribute to teacher burnout (Farber, 1984). Moreover, a growing body of literature argues that the societal status of the teaching profession has declined in recent years, further compounding feelings of professional inadequacy and frustration (Ulutaş, 2017). When both the structural characteristics of teaching and these unfavorable trends are considered together, it becomes evident that teaching is among the high-risk professions for burnout (Lim & Eo, 2014; Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021).

As burnout levels increase, teachers tend to adopt more cynical, detached, and harsh attitudes toward their students and even their own family members (Uzun & Uzun, 2022). These negative

behavioral shifts undermine classroom dynamics and reduce the overall quality of education (Çokluk, 2001; Maraşlı, 2005; Marzano et al., 2003). The Job Demands-Resources [JD-R] Model proposed by Demerouti et al. (2001) provides a relevant theoretical framework for understanding this phenomenon. According to the model, burnout arises when job demands surpass the personal and organizational resources available, resulting in energy depletion, motivational decline, and disengagement. Teaching, being a profession with high emotional and relational demands, is especially susceptible to this imbalance (Aldrup et al., 2017).

In this context, burnout emerges as a crucial factor that adversely impacts not only teachers' professional effectiveness but also their overall life satisfaction (Eroğul-Çeçen & Örkün, 2012). Just as a lack of life satisfaction can contribute to burnout, burnout itself can significantly undermine life satisfaction (Soba et al., 2017). Therefore, teachers' perceptions of their burnout levels are vital indicators of their general well-being and life satisfaction (Avşaroğlu et al., 2005). Recognizing this, it becomes imperative to explore potential psychological mechanisms that might buffer the negative effects of burnout. Within this framework, the concept of psychological mindedness has emerged as a promising mediating factor, prompting further investigation in the present study.

1.3. Mediating Role of Psychological Mindedness

The notion of psychological mindedness, recently identified as an individual trait, has become a focal point of growing interest in both national (Denizli et al., 2016, 2022; Kılınç & Uzun, 2022; Uzun et al., 2020; Uzun & Karataş, 2023) and international research (Conte et al., 1996; McCallum et al., 2003; Nyklíček et al., 2010). Early studies in the literature often discussed psychological mindedness in conjunction with related constructs such as self-focus, self-consciousness, introspection, self-observation, insight, and self-awareness (McCallum & Piper, 1996). However, recent research has shifted away from the psychoanalytic framework and redefined psychological mindedness as a distinct and cognitively oriented psychological construct (Beitel et al., 2004). According to Conte et al. (1996), psychological mindedness refers to an individual's interest in and ability to understand both their own and others' behaviors and motivations. In this sense, it extends beyond mere self-observation and encompasses the capacity to comprehend the actions and emotions of others.

From a cognitive perspective, Grant (2001) conceptualized psychological mindedness as a form of metacognition—representing a cognitive and emotional inclination to question and understand the underlying mechanisms behind one's own and others' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Similarly, Boylan (2006) described it as the ability to recognize and understand one's emotions, embrace new ideas, exhibit openness to others' perspectives, and display curiosity about behavioral causes. Beitel et al. (2004) also found that individuals with high psychological mindedness tend to be goal-oriented, adaptable, and pragmatic in their thinking. Within this framework, elevated psychological mindedness is regarded as a trait that contributes positively to mental well-being.

A growing body of research supports the beneficial role of psychological mindedness in relation to emotional functioning and well-being. For instance, it has been found to be positively associated with emotional adjustment (Bagby et al., 1994) and psychological well-being (Trudeau & Reich, 1995), and negatively associated with emotional burnout (Chabinska, 2017). Moreover, psychological mindedness has been proposed as a protective factor, particularly for professionals in human-centered occupations such as teaching and nursing, who are at high risk for emotional burnout (Hartley et al., 2016). In this regard, it is believed that psychological mindedness may help individuals manage occupational stress and mitigate the effects of burnout.

In addition to its buffering role against burnout, empirical studies have also documented a positive relationship between psychological mindedness and life satisfaction. For example, intervention studies conducted by Piper et al. (1994, 1996) with adolescents demonstrated that increases in psychological mindedness were associated with reductions in psychiatric symptoms and pathological dependency, along with improvements in social adjustment and life satisfaction.

These findings suggest that adolescents with higher levels of psychological mindedness also experience greater positive affect and life satisfaction. Roxas (2011) and Roxas and Glenwick (2014) further emphasized that psychological mindedness offers a unique contribution to understanding the predictors of life satisfaction.

Research conducted with adults has produced similar results. In a study by Piper et al. (2001), psychological mindedness emerged as a significant predictor of decreased grief symptoms and improved life satisfaction among adults undergoing short-term group therapy. Likewise, McCallum et al. (2003) compared short-term group therapy with brief individual therapy in the context of grief, and found that higher levels of psychological mindedness were associated with better therapeutic outcomes and greater life satisfaction. These findings collectively indicate that cultivating psychological mindedness can be a valuable resource for enhancing individuals' overall well-being and resilience. Despite this substantial body of evidence suggesting a potential protective function of psychological mindedness, its mediating role in the relationship between occupational burnout and life satisfaction has yet to be thoroughly examined—highlighting the importance and originality of the current study.

1.4. The Present Study

Teachers' satisfaction with their jobs is an important factor influencing both their life satisfaction and professional productivity (Uzun & Tortumlu, 2024). Identifying the variables that positively or negatively affect teachers' life satisfaction can help guide the planning of interventions aimed at enhancing their well-being and reducing burnout (Ünal et al., 2001). Teacher burnout carries a high cost for national economies due to its association with decreased efficiency, increased absenteeism, and turnover (Collie et al., 2012; Rahm & Heise, 2019). It is widely acknowledged that institutions in which burnout is minimized and job satisfaction is high tend to deliver higher-quality services (Soba et al., 2017). Therefore, designing and implementing preventive practices within education systems is crucial to mitigate the adverse effects of burnout. Such proactive strategies can offer practical solutions to issues encountered in the field and promote a healthier work environment for educators.

In this context, raising awareness among both in-service and pre-service teachers regarding the risks of burnout is of great importance. Institutions responsible for teacher education can play a key role by equipping future educators with protective psychological competencies—such as psychological mindedness—to better prepare them for potential occupational stress (Aydemir et al., 2015). The present study gains significance by drawing attention to this important issue. Specifically, the research investigates the mediating role of psychological mindedness in the relationship between occupational burnout and life satisfaction among teachers. Based on the theoretical background and prior empirical findings, and following Baron and Kenny's (1986) guidelines for evaluating mediation in structural models, the following hypotheses were developed:

H₁: Teachers' occupational burnout and life satisfaction are significantly negatively related.

H₂: Teachers' occupational burnout and psychological mindedness are significantly negatively related.

H₃: Teachers' psychological mindedness and life satisfaction are significantly positively related.

H₄: Psychological mindedness has a mediating role in the relationship between teachers' occupational burnout and life satisfaction.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The study group consisted of 423 teachers working in public and private schools in Türkiye. Schumacker and Lomax (2016) have noted that a sample size ranging from 250 to 500 observations is adequate for quantitative research involving model testing. In line with this, the current study employed a non-random sampling strategy known as convenience sampling. This method

involves selecting participants who are easily accessible to the researchers until the desired sample size is reached. Within this context, 53.20% ($n = 225$) of the participants were female and 46.80% ($n = 198$) were male. The age of the participants ranged from 22 to 67, with a mean age of 41.11 years ($SD = 10.51$). In terms of institutional affiliation, 67.15% ($n = 284$) of the teachers were employed in public schools, while the remaining 32.85% ($n = 139$) worked in private educational institutions such as study centers or preparatory courses.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Demographic information form

To obtain detailed information regarding the personal characteristics of the participants, a demographic information form was developed by the researchers. This form included items designed to collect data on participants' gender, age, and the type of educational institution in which they were employed (e.g., public school or private educational organization).

2.2.2. Satisfaction with life scale [SWLS]

The SWLS was developed by Diener et al. (1985) to assess individuals' cognitive evaluations of their overall quality of life. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was carried out by Dağlı and Baysal (2016). The scale consists of 5 items and employs a 5-point Likert-type response format ranging from "[1] Strongly Disagree" to "[5] Strongly Agree." Total scores on the scale range from 5 to 25, with higher scores indicating greater life satisfaction. The scale is unidimensional and explains 68.38% of the total variance. The internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) reported by Dağlı and Baysal (2016) was .88, suggesting high reliability. In the present study, the applicability of the SWLS was examined through Confirmatory Factor Analysis [CFA] for construct validity and Cronbach's Alpha analysis for internal consistency reliability. The results demonstrated acceptable fit indices for construct validity ($\chi^2_{[n = 423]} = 12.827$, $df = 5$, $p = .025$; $\chi^2/df = 2.565$; RMSEA = .061; SRMR = .017; CFI = .993), and the internal consistency coefficient was calculated as .87. These findings indicate that the scale falls within the accepted reference ranges for both validity and reliability, as suggested in the literature (Kline, 2015), and is therefore suitable for use in this study. Sample items from the scale include: [Item 3] "I am satisfied with my life," and [Item 5] "If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing."

2.2.3. The burnout measure - short Version [BMS]

The Burnout Scale, originally developed by Malach-Pines and Aronson (1988) and consisting of 21 items, was later shortened to a 10-item version by Malach-Pines (2005) to enhance usability. The Turkish adaptation of the BMS was conducted by Çapri (2013) across various occupational groups, and it is widely used to measure individuals' levels of occupational burnout. The instrument contains 10 items, each rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from "[1] Never" to "[7] Always." The total score that can be obtained from the scale ranges from 7 to 70, with higher scores indicating greater levels of burnout. During the administration of the BMS, participants are asked to indicate how frequently they experience certain situations related to their work environment and occupational responsibilities. The scale is unidimensional and accounts for 55.17% of the total variance. The internal consistency coefficient was reported as .91 by Çapri (2013), indicating high reliability. In the context of the present study, CFA was conducted to assess the construct validity of the BMS, while reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha. The analysis results demonstrated acceptable values in terms of validity ($\chi^2_{[n = 423]} = 101.200$, $df = 30$, $p = .000$; $\chi^2/df = 3.373$; RMSEA = .075; SRMR = .047; CFI = .960) and reliability ($\alpha = .86$), falling within the recommended reference ranges cited in the literature (Kline, 2015). Sample items from the scale include: [Item 2] "Disappointed with people," and [Item 10] "I can't take it anymore."

2.2.4. *Balanced index of psychological mindedness [BIPM]*

The BIPM was developed by Nyklíček and Denollet (2009) to assess individuals' levels of psychological mindedness. The cultural adaptation of the scale into Turkish was conducted by Denizli et al. (2022). The instrument comprises 14 items and utilizes a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "[0] Not True" to "[4] Very Much True." The scale includes two sub-dimensions: insight (7 items) and interest (7 items). In addition to the subscale scores, a total psychological mindedness score is obtained, ranging from 0 to 54. Higher scores on the scale indicate a greater degree of psychological mindedness. The internal consistency of the BIPM, as assessed by McDonald's Omega (ω), was reported to be .85 (Denizli et al., 2022). In the current study, the construct validity of the BIPM was evaluated using CFA, while Cronbach's Alpha was employed to assess internal consistency reliability. The results yielded satisfactory psychometric properties for use in this context, with validity indicators as follows: $\chi^2_{[n=423]} = 253.598$, $df = 74$, $p = .000$; $\chi^2/df = 3.427$; RMSEA = .063; SRMR = .060; CFI = .921. The internal consistency coefficient for the total scale was calculated as .94, indicating excellent reliability. These values fall within the acceptable ranges specified in the literature (Kline, 2015), supporting the use of the BIPM in this study. Sample items from the scale include: [Item 2] "My attitude and feelings about things fascinate me," and [Item 8] "My feelings show me what I need."

2.3. Data Collection

To gather the required data, the application form—comprising a demographic information section and three standardized measurement scales—was converted into an online format using the Google Forms platform. This form was then distributed via commonly used social media platforms in Türkiye, such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, where teachers are known to be active. The introductory section of the form included comprehensive information about the purpose of the research and the content of the scales. Only participants who voluntarily consented to participate—by affirming the statement "I have carefully reviewed the explanation, comprehended the study's purpose, and willingly agree to participate"—were allowed to proceed with the survey. Data collection continued in this manner until the desired sample size was reached.

The data were gathered through self-report measures and followed a cross-sectional design. This design, although common in psychological and educational research, carries a potential risk of Common Method Bias [CMB], especially when all variables are perceptual and collected from the same source at a single point in time. To minimize this risk, Harman's (1960) single-factor test was applied to determine whether a single dominant factor accounted for the majority of the covariance among variables. Results from exploratory principal components analysis revealed that the first factor explained only 32.61% of the total variance, which is well below the commonly accepted threshold of 50.00% (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Therefore, it can be concluded that common method bias is unlikely to pose a significant threat to the validity of the findings in this study.

2.4. Data Analyses

Preliminary analyses were conducted to assess the normality of the data, compute descriptive statistics, and examine the correlation coefficients among the study variables prior to testing the proposed mediation model (see Table 1). Normality was evaluated using skewness and kurtosis values, which were found to fall within acceptable thresholds as suggested by Kline (2015). Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was performed to examine the associations between occupational burnout, psychological mindedness, and life satisfaction (see Table 1). To test the hypothesized mediation model, which investigated the mediating role of psychological mindedness in the relationship between occupational burnout and life satisfaction, the PROCESS macro (Model 4) for SPSS version 3.4 was employed (Hayes, 2018). Model results were interpreted using standardized path coefficients (β) and squared multiple correlations (R^2). According to Cohen (1988), R^2 values are classified as small (.01–.059), medium (.06–.139), and large ($\geq .14$). In

addition, the indirect effects were evaluated using the bootstrapping method with 5,000 resamples, and 95% confidence intervals (CI) were calculated (Hayes, 2018). Another important metric used in assessing mediation is the completely standardized effect size (K^2 [Kappa]). As per Preacher and Kelley (2011), values of K^2 around .01 represent a small effect, .09 a medium effect, and .25 a large effect. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS version 25.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Results

Before proceeding with the analyses related to the study's hypotheses, descriptive statistics were calculated for all study variables. Additionally, the relationships among these variables were examined using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The results of these preliminary analyses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients for the variables

Scales	Descriptive Statistics					Correlation Coefficients (r)		
	α	M	SD	g_1	g_2	1.	2.	3.
1. SWLS	.875	16.652	3.653	-.298	.145	-	-.113*	.506**
2. BMS	.861	31.624	6.930	.265	.018		-	-.166**
3. BIPM	.937	48.229	6.313	-.700	.705			-

Note. g_1 , skewness; g_2 , kurtosis; SWLS, satisfaction with life scale; BMS, burnout measure - short version; BIPM, balanced index of psychological mindedness. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Upon reviewing Table 1, it becomes evident that the independent variable of the study – occupational burnout – is negatively correlated with life satisfaction ($r = -.11$, $p < .05$), which serves as the dependent variable. Additionally, occupational burnout also demonstrates a significant negative correlation with psychological mindedness, the mediating variable in the study ($r = -.17$, $p < .01$). In contrast, a significant positive correlation is observed between psychological mindedness and life satisfaction ($r = .51$, $p < .01$). These findings collectively indicate that the precondition of significant associations among the independent, dependent, and mediating variables – as outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986) for mediation analysis – is met. Therefore, it is appropriate to proceed with testing the proposed mediation model.

3.2. Testing the Proposed Model

Within the scope of the proposed mediation model, the study examined the mediating role of psychological mindedness in the relationship between occupational burnout and life satisfaction. The unstandardized coefficients for this mediation model are presented in Table 2. Table 2 shows that there is a significant negative relationship between teachers' occupational burnout levels and their psychological mindedness levels ($b = -.151$, 95% CI [-.237 to -.065]). Based on this result, hypothesis H_2 is supported. In addition, the same table indicates a significant positive relationship between teachers' psychological mindedness levels and their life satisfaction ($b = .289$, 95% BCA CI [.241 to .338]). Accordingly, hypothesis H_3 is also supported. Moreover, the analysis presented in Table 2 reveals that occupational burnout and psychological mindedness, when considered together, explain 25.70% of the variance in teachers' life satisfaction ($R^2 = .257$). This finding highlights the meaningful contribution of both variables in predicting life satisfaction within the proposed mediation model.

Table 3 presents the unstandardized coefficients for the total, direct, and indirect effects in predicting life satisfaction, along with the corresponding 95% bias-corrected confidence intervals.

Table 2
Unstandardized coefficients for the mediation model

		Consequent					
Antecedent		Coeff.	SE	t	p	BootLLCI	BootULCI
M (Psychological Mindedness)							
X (Occupational Burnout)	<i>a</i>	-.151	.043	-3.448	.000	-.237	-.065
Constant	<i>I_M</i>	53.003	1.417	37.395	.000	50.217	55.789
<i>R</i> ² = .027							
<i>F</i> ₍₁₋₄₂₁₎ = 11.888; <i>p</i> < .01							
Y (Life Satisfaction)							
X (Occupational Burnout)	<i>c'</i>	-.016	.022	-.696	.487	-.059	-.029
M (Psychological Mindedness)	<i>b</i>	.289	.025	11.742	.000	.241	.338
Constant	<i>I_Y</i>	3.166	1.493	2.121	.034	.231	6.099
<i>R</i> ² = .257							
<i>F</i> ₍₂₋₄₂₀₎ = 72.526; <i>p</i> < .01							

Note. SE = standard error; Coeff = unstandardized coefficient; X = independent variable; M = mediator variable; Y = outcome or dependent variable.

Table 3
Unstandardized total, direct, and indirect effects for the model

Path	Effect	SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Total effect	-.059	.025	-.110	-.009
Direct effect	-.015	.022	-.059	.028
Indirect effect	-.044	.015	-.075	-.014

Note. Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals: 5,000.

When Table 3 is examined, it is observed that the total effect of occupational burnout on teachers' life satisfaction is both negative and statistically significant ($b = -.059$, 95% CI [-.110 to -.009]). This finding provides support for hypothesis H_1 . However, after incorporating the mediating variable into the model, the direct effect of occupational burnout on life satisfaction becomes negative but statistically non-significant ($b = -.015$, 95% BCA CI [-.059 to .028]). In contrast, the indirect effect of psychological mindedness on the relationship between occupational burnout and life satisfaction is found to be significant ($b = -.044$, 95% BCA CI [-.075 to -.014]). This result indicates that psychological mindedness significantly mediates the relationship between occupational burnout and life satisfaction among teachers, thereby supporting hypothesis H_4 .

As illustrated by the standardized coefficient values in Figure 1, the inclusion of the mediating variable into the model resulted in a decrease in the path coefficient from occupational burnout to life satisfaction, shifting from -.113 to -.029. This path became statistically non-significant following the addition of the mediator.

When evaluating a mediation model, it is essential to consider the fully standardized effect size (K^2), which provides insight into the strength of the indirect effect. The K^2 value for the significant mediation effect of the mediating variable between occupational burnout and life satisfaction is presented in Table 4.

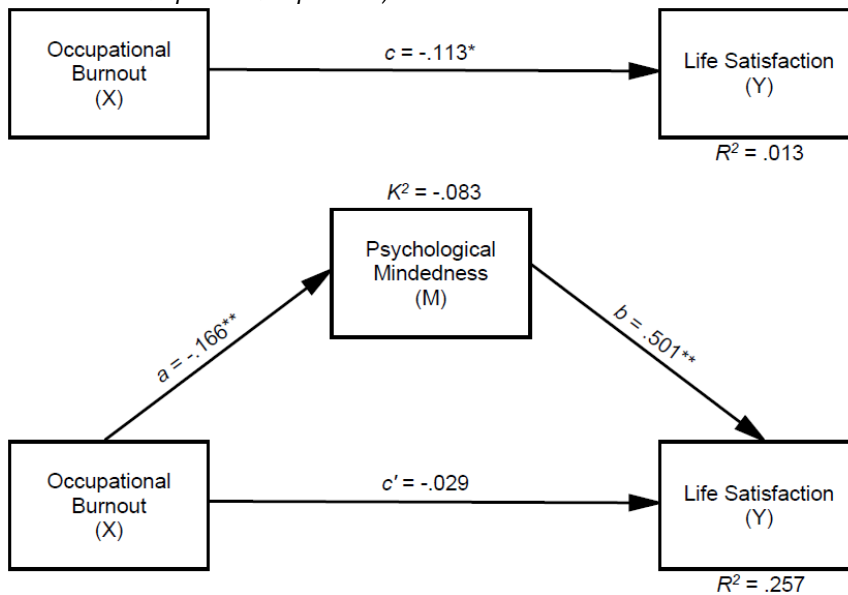
Table 4
Completely standardized indirect effect(s) size for the model

Variable	Effect	SE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Psychological Mindedness	-.083	.028	-.139	-.028

Note. Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals: 5,000.

Figure 1

Proposed model indicating the standardized associations between variables (b = shows standardized coefficients, $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$)



Upon reviewing Table 4, it is evident that the effect size (K^2) of psychological mindedness in the proposed life satisfaction model is $K^2 = -.08$. This value indicates that the mediating effect of psychological mindedness in the relationship between occupational burnout and life satisfaction falls within the moderate range.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Regardless of the perspective, it is evident that burnout in the education sector can have serious consequences for teachers, schools, and students (Çelik & Üstüner, 2018; Rentzou, 2012). As teaching is a high-stress profession involving face-to-face and direct interaction with individuals, it becomes essential to define burnout specifically within this occupational context and to design preventive strategies accordingly (Soba et al., 2017). In this regard, identifying protective factors that can mitigate the negative effects of occupational burnout on teachers' life satisfaction is of critical importance. Researchers have long recognized this issue, leading to a substantial body of empirical work focusing on teacher burnout (Fernandes et al., 2020; García-Álvarez et al., 2021). Distinct from earlier studies, however, the present research investigates the mediating role of psychological mindedness in the relationship between occupational burnout and life satisfaction among teachers.

The first notable finding of this study is that occupational burnout significantly impairs life satisfaction. In other words, teachers experiencing higher levels of burnout tend to report lower levels of life satisfaction. This suggests that occupational burnout functions as a key determinant of overall well-being in educators (Uzun & Uzun, 2022). Although one's profession can contribute positively to life satisfaction, it also serves as a significant source of stress (Hargreaves, 2000). Therefore, the burdens associated with teaching may inevitably reduce teachers' capacity to derive satisfaction from both work and life (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018). Teachers who are dissatisfied with their profession and suffer from burnout often find it difficult to carry out their responsibilities effectively and with the desired level of quality (Çelik & Üstüner, 2018).

In the literature, burnout is characterized as a condition marked by exhaustion and chronic fatigue, and it is noted that external stressors may influence both professional and personal domains (Tümekaya, 2001). Çokluk (2001) highlights that baseless assumptions—such as blaming teachers for students' failure to learn—can generate feelings of inadequacy, guilt, and frustration among educators. Burnout can also manifest in behavioral symptoms, including decreased tolerance for classroom disruptions, inadequate lesson preparation, diminished performance,

negative attitudes toward work, increased absenteeism, and even intentions to leave the profession (Uzun & Uzun, 2022). Furthermore, burnout-induced deterioration in teachers' psychological and physical health directly impairs their quality of life (Hattie & Yates, 2013). Individuals who feel physically and emotionally drained often struggle to concentrate and disengage from their sense of responsibility toward others (Ardıç & Polatçı, 2009). In this study, psychological mindedness is considered a protective factor that may buffer the harmful impact of burnout on life satisfaction, offering a valuable insight into teacher well-being.

An additional noteworthy finding derived from the investigation reveals a substantial inverse relationship between occupational burnout and psychological mindedness among teachers. This significant correlation aligns with prior research, which has demonstrated that higher levels of psychological mindedness are associated with improved emotional adjustment (Bagby et al., 1994). Beitel et al. (2004) and Conte et al. (1995) suggest that psychological mindedness is a key component of a robust cognitive profile, supporting adaptive functioning and contributing to increased positive affect and life satisfaction. Within Grant's (2001) theoretical framework, psychological mindedness is conceptualized as a self-reflective cognitive and behavioral strategy encompassing mindfulness and self-monitoring. These cognitive mechanisms are believed to foster psychological well-being and successful adaptation in both clinical and non-clinical contexts.

Another salient outcome of the study underscores the positive influence of psychological mindedness on teachers' life satisfaction. In essence, higher levels of psychological mindedness are associated with increased life satisfaction. This result is consistent with findings from studies focusing on adult populations, where psychological mindedness has been linked to adaptive personality traits such as openness to experience, extroversion, and the ability to form meaningful social connections (Beitel & Cecero, 2003). The implication is clear: enhancing psychological mindedness may be a viable pathway for supporting teacher well-being in educational settings.

The final key result of this study reveals that psychological mindedness mediates the relationship between occupational burnout and life satisfaction. The challenges teachers face—such as increasing workload, student misbehavior, and demanding parental expectations—can intensify work-related stress and lead to burnout (Çelik & Üstüner, 2018; Kapar, 2016; Lovewell, 2012; Ünal et al., 2001). In addition, the diminishing societal value of the teaching profession (Ulutaş, 2017), combined with feelings of failure and ineffectiveness (Pines & Keinon, 2005; Naktiyok & Kaygın, 2012), further erodes teachers' well-being. This risk is particularly pronounced in professions that involve intensive interpersonal service, such as teaching. In Türkiye, structural and cultural constraints may exacerbate burnout. According to the TEA's (2014) report, many Turkish teachers would not choose teaching again if given the chance. However, due to the competitive and inflexible nature of the public employment system—especially the requirement to pass centralized exams such as the Public Personnel Selection Exam—occupational mobility is limited (Uzun & Uzun, 2022). This lack of flexibility may contribute to emotional fatigue and a sense of entrapment. In such contexts, the presence of psychological mindedness as a protective trait becomes even more critical, providing essential psychological resources to buffer against burnout and support life satisfaction.

Burnout is a common phenomenon that emerges in response to stressful work environments and emotionally demanding interpersonal relationships (Filiz, 2014). Employees who encounter persistent challenges tend to exhibit emotional exhaustion in various ways (Uzun & Tortumlu, 2022). To cope, they may withdraw from individuals who place emotional demands on them. Those who invest less energy and time in communication with others often perceive a decline in their work performance and evaluate themselves as less effective and less successful in interpersonal interactions (Cordes et al., 1997). In the context of education, teachers experiencing burnout can negatively affect the quality of teaching and learning by engaging in behaviors such as frequent absenteeism, extending leaves with medical reports, or exiting the profession altogether due to diminished job satisfaction (Aldrup et al., 2017; Richards et al., 2018). Over time, dissatisfaction and a sense of inadequacy can erode teachers' life satisfaction.

Life satisfaction refers to the integrated state of psychological and behavioral processes that reflect an individual's overall evaluation of life conditions and personal standards (Pavot & Diener, 2008). Key determinants of teachers' life satisfaction include expectation levels, occupational status, economic conditions, and workplace environment (Avşaroğlu et al., 2005). At this point, psychological mindedness emerges as a critical cognitive ability that may buffer the negative impact of occupational burnout. The findings of the present study support Grant's (2001) conceptualization of psychological mindedness as a metacognitive process involving awareness and understanding of the causes and mechanisms underlying one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Such awareness facilitates adaptive behavioral change. Similarly, Conte and Ratto (1997) emphasized the role of psychological mindedness in enabling individuals to gain insight into their own and others' emotional states and to initiate meaningful personal transformation. The current study's results—which link psychological mindedness to psychological distress, affect balance, burnout, and life satisfaction—align with these theoretical foundations and suggest that psychological mindedness can promote behavioral adjustment conducive to well-being.

In the existing literature, numerous studies indicate that occupational burnout negatively affects teachers' life satisfaction (Çelik & Üstüner, 2018; Karaaslan et al., 2020; Marcionetti & Castelli, 2023; Soba et al., 2017; Telef, 2011; Wilczek-Rużyczka & Wyszynska-Michalec, 2023; Yavuz, 2019). However, there is a clear gap in the literature regarding the mediating variables that might explain or mitigate this relationship, both in Türkiye and globally. Against this background, the present study contributes significantly by demonstrating that psychological mindedness serves as a mediating mechanism that may prevent teachers' lives from being adversely affected by burnout. Additionally, given the conceptual ambiguity and limited empirical exploration of psychological mindedness in educational settings, this study highlights the strategic importance of the construct and its potential to inform future intervention and prevention efforts.

5. Implications and Limitations

Despite the important findings of this study, several methodological limitations should be acknowledged. First, the proposed model employed a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to draw causal conclusions regarding the relationships among the study variables. Future research would benefit from using longitudinal designs, which can provide deeper insight into causal directions over time. Additionally, to increase the external validity of the results, the mediation model should be replicated in broader and more diverse occupational groups. It is also recommended that future research validate the findings among teachers from various subject areas and disciplines before generalizing the results. Another notable limitation is the reliance on self-report measures, which assumes that participants responded honestly and accurately. Although self-reporting is a common practice, it is subject to response biases and may not always capture participants' true experiences. Incorporating alternative or mixed-method approaches, including qualitative interviews, could provide a richer and more reliable understanding of the variables studied.

Furthermore, the sample was limited to teachers residing in Türkiye, which restricts the generalizability of the findings across different cultural and geographical contexts. Given that cultural norms significantly influence individuals' perceptions, emotions, and behaviors, future studies should systematically explore whether the observed relationships hold across both collectivist and individualist cultures. Examining the impact of cultural diversity could offer valuable insights into the universal and culture-specific aspects of occupational burnout and life satisfaction.

The results of this study highlight the importance of supporting teachers' psychological mindedness as a protective factor to help them cope with occupational burnout and enhance their life satisfaction. Intervention programs designed to strengthen psychological mindedness may serve as an effective strategy to indirectly promote teachers' well-being. Future studies should also explore other potential mediating variables, such as mindfulness and emotion regulation, that may

buffer the negative effects of burnout. Research could be extended by examining differences among teachers with varied demographic characteristics (e.g., public vs. private sector, urban vs. rural settings) and career stages (e.g., novice, experienced, expert, or head teacher). Such subgroup analyses may yield important findings regarding how the relationships between burnout, psychological mindedness, and life satisfaction differ across contexts.

In terms of practice, psychologists and counselors working with teachers who report low life satisfaction may integrate psychological mindedness training into their counseling interventions. Structured assignments aimed at enhancing psychological mindedness could help clients develop a deeper understanding of their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, ultimately contributing to greater life satisfaction. For clients hesitant to engage directly with discussions about life satisfaction, psychological mindedness can serve as a preparatory step. In educational settings, group-based interventions focused on psychological mindedness may offer opportunities for collaborative learning, skill-building, and peer support. Additionally, awareness-raising seminars can be conducted to reach a broader teacher audience, providing brief but impactful insights into life satisfaction and well-being. Future researchers and practitioners are encouraged to build on these findings and explore the broader implications of psychological mindedness in supporting teachers' mental health and quality of life.

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Data availability: The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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