




## Young People's Career Roadmap: Demographic Factors Determining Emotional and Psychological Well-being in Secondary School<sup>1</sup>

### Gençlerin Kariyer Yol Haritası: Ortaokulda Duygusal ve Psikolojik İyi Oluşu Belirleyen Demografik Faktörler

Sayfa | 911

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**Abstract.** Determining secondary school students' emotional and psychological well-being and understanding the factors affecting these constructs is important due to the increasing interest in educational psychology. The study group consisted of 254 secondary school students aged 10-14. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to determine the level of prediction of emotional and psychological well-being of secondary school students by age and career development. In the first block of the analysis, age, and average academic achievement were taken, and it was determined that they explained 10% of the variance in emotional and psychological well-being. In the second block, career development sub-dimensions were taken, and it was seen that these sub-dimensions contributed 24% to emotional and psychological well-being. The findings obtained from the study were discussed in comparison with the studies in the literature, and suggestions were made for field workers.

**Keywords:** *Emotional well-being, psychological well-being, career development, career*

**Öz.** Ortaokul öğrencilerinin duygusal ve psikolojik iyi oluşlarının belirlenmesi ve bu yapılarla etki eden faktörlerin anlaşılması, eğitim psikolojisine olan ilginin artması nedeniyle önem arz etmektedir. Çalışma grubu 10-14 yaş arası 254 ortaokul öğrencisinden oluşmuştur. Ortaokul öğrencilerinin duygusal ve psikolojik iyi oluşlarının yaş ve kariyer gelişimlerine göre yordanma düzeyini belirlemek amacıyla hiyerarşik regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Analizin ilk bloğunda yaş ve ortalama akademik başarı alınmış olup bunların duygusal ve psikolojik iyi oluştaki varyansın %10'unu açıkladığı belirlenmiştir. İkinci blokta ise kariyer gelişimi alt boyutları alınmış ve bu alt boyutların duygusal ve psikolojik iyi oluşa %24 oranında katkıda bulunduğu görülmüştür. Araştırmadan elde edilen bulgular literatürdeki çalışmalarla karşılaştırmalı olarak tartışılmış ve saha çalışanlarına önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Duygusal iyi oluş, psikolojik iyi oluş, kariyer gelişimi, kariyer*



## Genişletilmiş Özet

**Giriş:** Ortaokul çağı, pek çok öğrencinin hayatında önemli bir dönüm noktası olan ergenliğe geçiş evresidir. Bu dönem, genellikle erinlikle başlar ve yetişkinliğe kadar uzanan bir süreç olmasının yanı sıra aynı zamanda çocukluk ile yetişkinlik arasındaki bir geçiş dönemidir. Ergenler bu süreçte, fiziksel yapılarını kabullenme, anne babadan duygusal olarak bağımsızlaşma gibi önemli değişikliklerle karşılaşır. Ayrıca, toplumsal bir cinsiyet rolü edinme ve bir mesleğe hazırlanma gibi kritik gelişim süreçlerini de içinde barındırır (İnanç et al., 2010). Ergenlik dönemi soyut düşüncelerin başladığı, toplumdaki diğer bireylerin kendilerini nasıl gördüğünü düşünmeye başladığı, çocukluk yaşantılarına göre ahlaki kavramların daha fazla düşünölmeye başlandığı dönemdir (Gül ve Güneş, 2009). Abalı (2014) ise, ergenlik dönemini daha farklı bir açıdan ele alarak bu dönemi, giden ve bir daha geri gelmeyecek olan hüznle, aynı zamanda anne ve babayla oluşturulan güçlü bağlarla tanımlar. Bu tanım, ergenliğin duygusal boyutuna dikkat çeker ve gençlerin aileleriyle olan ilişkilerindeki değişimleri vurgular. Bu süreçte, gençlerin duygusal gelişimleri ve aile içi dinamiklerdeki değişimler, onların yetişkinliğe geçiş yolculuklarında önemli bir rol oynar. Bu bağlamda, ortaokul öğrencilerinin duygusal ve psikolojik iyi oluşları, demografik değişkenlerle birlikte incelendiğinde, kariyer gelişimlerini daha iyi anlamak mümkün olabilir. Öğrencilerin aile yapıları, sosyoekonomik durumları ve kültürel arka planları gibi faktörler, bu süreçte önemli rol oynar. Sonuç olarak, ortaokul öğrencilerinin ergenlik dönemindeki deneyimleri, onların gelecekteki kariyer yollarını belirleyici unsurlardan biri olabilir ve bu nedenle kapsamlı bir şekilde ele alınması gerekmektedir.

**Method:** Bu çalışma, İstanbul, Arnavutköy bölgesindeki 10 ila 14 yaş aralığındaki ortaokul öğrencilerinin duygusal ve psikolojik iyi oluş düzeylerini, akademik başarılarını ve kariyer gelişimlerine ilişkin çeşitli boyutları incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmaya Arnavutköy'deki çeşitli ortaokullardan toplam 254 öğrenci (100'ü erkek, 154'ü kız) katılmıştır. Araştırma verileri, araştırmacı tarafından oluşturulan "Kişisel Bilgi Formu", "Stirling Çocuklar için Duygusal ve Psikolojik İyi Oluş Ölçeği" ve "Çocuklar için Kariyer Gelişim Ölçeği" aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Öğrencilerin duygusal ve psikolojik iyi oluşlarının yaşları, akademik başarı seviyeleri ve kariyer gelişimiyle ilişkili faktörler (merak, bilgi edinme, rol modeller, ilgiler, kontrol odağı, zaman algısı ve planlama yetenekleri) arasındaki ilişkiyi ortaya koymak için hiyerarşik regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Bu analizle, söz konusu değişkenlerin öğrencilerin duygusal ve psikolojik iyi oluş seviyelerini ne ölçüde açıklayabildiği değerlendirilmiştir.

**Results.** Öğrencilerin akademik başarıları ve kariyer gelişimi faktörlerinin artmasıyla duygusal ve psikolojik iyi oluşlarının da arttığını; yaşlarının artmasıyla ise bu iyi oluş düzeylerinin azaldığını göstermektedir. Ayrıca, yaş ve akademik başarının öğrencilerin iyi oluşlarını %10 oranında açıkladığı; bilgi, merak/araştırma, ilgiler, denetim odağı, anahtar figürler, zaman perspektifi, planlama ve benlik gibi kariyer gelişimi alt boyutlarının eklenmesiyle açıklanan toplam varyansın %34'e çıktığı saptanmıştır. Bu sonuçlar, ortaokul öğrencilerinin duygusal ve psikolojik iyi oluşlarının, belirli demografik ve gelişimsel faktörler tarafından anlamlı bir şekilde yordandığını ortaya koymaktadır.

**Discussion and Conclusion.** Araştırma sonuçları, önceki çalışmaların bulgularını destekler nitelikte olup, öğrencilerin duygusal ve psikolojik iyi oluşlarının geliştirilmesinde akademik başarı ve kariyer gelişiminin önemli roller oynadığını ortaya koymuştur. Bununla birlikte, çalışmanın coğrafi olarak sınırlı örnekleme, öz bildirimlere dayalı veri toplama yöntemleri ve kesitsel doğası gibi sınırlılıkları

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bulunmaktadır. Bu bulgular, eğitimcilere ve araştırmacılara öğrencilerin iyi oluşunu desteklemek için kapsamlı stratejiler geliştirmede rehberlik edebilir.



## Introduction

Secondary school is the transition to adolescence, a significant turning point in the lives of many students. This period generally begins with adolescence and is a process that extends into adulthood and a transition period between childhood and adulthood. During this process, adolescents encounter critical changes, such as accepting their physical structure and becoming emotionally independent from their parents. It also includes vital developmental processes such as acquiring a gender role and preparing for a profession (İnanç et al., 2010). Adolescence is when abstract thoughts arise, other individuals in society begin to think about how they see themselves and moral concepts start to be considered more compared to childhood experiences (Gül & Güneş, 2009). Abalı (2014), on the other hand, approaches adolescence from a different perspective and defines this period with the sadness that is gone and will never come back, as well as the strong bonds formed between the mother and father. This definition draws attention to the emotional dimension of adolescence and emphasizes the changes in young people's relationships with their families. During this process, young people's emotional development and changes in family dynamics are vital in their journey to adulthood. In this context, when secondary school students' emotional and psychological well-being is examined with demographic variables, it may be possible to understand their career development better. Factors such as students' family structures, socioeconomic status, and cultural background play an important role in this process. As a result, secondary school students' experiences during adolescence may be one of the shaping factors in their future career paths and, therefore, need to be addressed comprehensively.

### Emotional and psychological well-being

Well-being is a complex and multifactorial structure. Well-being is considered an objective measure that refers to the standard of living and cognitive and emotional judgments individuals make about their lives, capturing psychological, social, and spiritual aspects (Schulte et al., 2015). When these structures are related to psychological factors, they are often called psychological well-being. According to Keyes (2002), well-being is divided into psychological, emotional, and social well-being. Emotional well-being is defined as one's perceived life satisfaction and being in a positive mood without falling into a hopeless mood (Özbey, 2019). The first studies on positive emotions were developed with positive psychology in the early 21st century (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive emotions affect emotional well-being and improve awareness capacity (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). High positive affect includes feelings of enthusiasm and alertness, whereas low positive affect includes feelings of sadness and lethargy; high negative affect includes aversive emotions such as anger and fear, while low negative affect includes feelings of calmness and serenity (Watson et al., 1988). Psychological well-being, on the other hand, is a critical component that covers emotional and mental states, job satisfaction level, and general life satisfaction (Obrenovic et al., 2020); it positively affects the lives of individuals and is of great importance in the individual, environmental, and social levels (Söner & Yılmaz, 2020). This refers to a well-being condition where a person experiences a sense of well-being stemming from constructive connections with people, having a meaningful life goal, embracing oneself, evolving personally, being independent, and having control over one's surroundings (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). It is defined as living life fully and satisfactorily, the development and self-realization of the individual (Linley, 2013; Ryff, 1989). An individual's overall



effectiveness in terms of psychological functioning is primarily defined by psychological well-being, which measures levels of pleasure and satisfaction (Cartwright & Pappas, 2008). Ecclestone (2012) explained the concepts of emotional and psychological well-being as an umbrella that includes a series of structures open to development. In this series of structures, concepts such as endurance, fortitude, optimism, the ability to be in the moment, feelings of satisfaction, being supported, loved, respected, emotional regulation skills, emotional intelligence, empathy, coolness, compassion, and not comparing oneself with others are included. These situations enable people to realize their potential, manage stress, be productive, and contribute to the broader community (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Generally, well-being is a multidimensional structure based on objective and subjective measurements, including cognitive and emotional evaluations that individuals make about their lives. Secondary school students' psychological and emotional well-being plays a decisive role in their academic performance, social relationships and overall life satisfaction. Studies in the literature have revealed that students with high levels of psychological well-being show higher motivation, have better social skills, and have higher academic achievement. For example, a study by Sarkova et al. (2014) showed that students with high levels of well-being experienced less bullying at school and reported higher self-esteem. On the other hand, low levels of psychological well-being have been associated with negative outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and school absenteeism. Sánchez-García et al. (2018) found that students with low emotional well-being were more isolated among their peers and their academic performance was negatively affected. In light of these findings, supporting students' emotional and psychological well-being is critical for their academic and social success

### **Career development**

The concept of career is defined in the literature as the sequence and combination of work-related roles that people engage in throughout their lives (Arthur et al., 1989; Super, 1980). However, in studies on careers that have developed over time, different definitions have been made about the positions that individuals have in business life, their attitudes and behaviors related to these positions and the work they do (Aytaç, 1997) or the individual's business life. It is the progression, gaining experience and skills in any field of work throughout working life (Erdoğan, 2003). Researchers define the concept of career differently. Kuzgun (2003) defines the concept of career as the general picture of a person's work throughout his/her life, the series of important events that constitute the line of success in his/her life and the roles they play in life, while Yeşilyaprak (2012) defines it as the combination of the roles that an individual undertakes as an employee and the lifelong activities required by all roles in a person's life.

Career development takes place within the patterns formed by various social institutions such as family, peers, school and society (Bacanlı & Driver, 2011). Career development is a distinct concept that refers to the process by which both individuals and employers manage various tasks, behaviors and experiences within and across jobs and organizations over time and has implications for employees' work-related identities (Brown, 2002; Greenhaus et al., 2000). Therefore, the concepts of career and career development are related but emphasize different aspects. Compared to career research, career development research focuses on how individual and contextual factors influence changes in people's careers over time (Zacher et al., 2019). Super (1990) approaches the concept of career from a developmental perspective and defines career as the sum of all career-related events



that an individual encounters throughout his/her life. Maintaining a similar perspective, Herr et al. (2004) call it the career roles of all individuals. The roles of the individual also include the "employee" role of the individual (Yeşilyaprak, 2011). Individual well-being is directly related to career development. In particular, individual health and happiness are tightly linked to career achievements. In this context, Super's (1990) developmental career theory provides a useful framework for explaining the relationship between career development and well-being. According to this theory, an individual's career experiences during the transition from childhood to adulthood are among the determinants of his/her overall life satisfaction and well-being.

Career definitions emphasize the evolution of individuals' work and professional roles throughout their lives and the impact of these roles on their personal development. When these definitions are taken into consideration, career development can be seen as a continuous learning and development process through the opportunities, challenges and experiences that individuals encounter in their working life. This process includes the experiences and skills that individuals acquire throughout their working lives, the development of their personal and professional identities, job satisfaction and career development. Thus, the concepts of career and career development are critical tools for understanding the continuous development and transformation of individuals throughout their working lives, and these processes provide a holistic life experience that is intertwined with other aspects of their lives. Super (1990) argued that career development in childhood has been neglected and developed a nine-dimensional model of career development (curiosity, exploration, self-concept, locus of control, interests, planning, time perspective and knowledge about career and key figures). It examines career development in childhood. According to Super (1990), these nine dimensions show that the career development of children who are able to acquire the behaviors they have identified in their current period can be at the expected level. Among these dimensions, (1) curiosity is the primary behavior in the development of children's awareness of career development (Schultheiss, 2008); (2) research is an activity that produces more research behavior that enables successful career planning in the future (Schultheiss, 2008); (3) knowledge is the basis of learning behavior for the child's development (Sharf, 2017); (4) role models refers to role models or exciting and valuable people who have an important role in one's life (Can & Taylı, 2014); (5) internal control versus external control is the degree to which one feels control over one's present or future (Schulthesis, 2008); (6) development of interests is the realization of one's likes and dislikes (Can & Taylı, 2014); (7) time perspective refers to being aware of how the past and present are and planning for future events (Can & Taylı, 2014); and (8) self-concept and planning is a combination of biological characteristics, social roles played by the individual, and the evaluation of interactions with other people (Super, 1953).

### **Academic achievement and emotional-psychological well-being**

Academic success is determined by various indicators such as test scores, averages, teacher evaluations and standardized test results (Hattie, 2009). Academic achievement is considered a fundamental element of education, as an indicator of the knowledge gained and attained in growth rates (Linnenbrink-Garcia & Patall, 2016). Emotional-psychological well-being is related to emotional balance, life satisfaction and general psychological health. They can use this concept to change emotional reactions, their self-confidence, and to get rid of coping with living (Ryff, 1989). While emotional well-being includes emotional reactions to positive and negative events in daily life,



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psychological well-being includes elements such as self-actualization, attachment and purposeful living (Keyes, 2002). The relationship between these two concepts has been supported by various studies. Positive emotional states can increase academic motivation and outcomes, which can help increase academic performance (Pekrun et al., 2002). On the other hand, low levels of psychological well-being may prevent them from using their full academic potential and lead to negativities such as stress, anxiety and impairment (Suldo, Thalji, & Ferron, 2011). In general, it shows that emotional-psychological well-being, measured and measured by various indicators of academic success, will show positive or negative resilience in general academic motivation and performance.

At this point, Pekrun et al. (2002) continued their studies on academic success and showed that one of the positive developments was that the information was significantly increased in the exam. Similarly, Suldo and colleagues (2006) noted that odds ratios with high levels of psychological well-being, compared to those with low well-being, generally indicate higher academic achievement. Another study by Roeser, Eccles, and Sameroff (2000) reveals that their general approach to behavior positively affects their emotional well-being and overall academic success. Additionally, a meta-analysis by Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011) showed that social and emotional learning programs increased participants' academic achievement by 11%. The scientific performance of these studies in the literature on emotional and psychological well-being continues positively. In particular, positive emotions and general disposition behaviors increase exam and academic success, and social and emotional learning programs predict academically meaningfully.

### **Academic achievement and career development**

Academic success is an indicator that reflects the knowledge and experience children have acquired during their education. Displayed are recorded test scores, averages, teacher evaluations, and other standardized test results (Hattie, 2009). It includes the career development processes, the advancement of individuals' work behavior, the emergence of competency competencies, and job satisfaction (Super, 1957). The relationship between academic success and career development is based on the idea that the successes achieved by the individual during the education process form an important basis in his career journey. Individuals with high academic achievement often have access to better career opportunities and job offers (Becker, 1964). In this case, it can be seen as a signal indicating the potential for high performance (Spence, 1973).

Academic success at a university predicts career determination by 21.6% (İrge et al., 2020). Another success is that there is no significant difference in career interests according to the success ranking in high school (Eslek and Şahin, 2021). Therefore, it was determined that their success or failure in high school did not make any significant difference on their career interests. He has soared in his career development, rising in academic achievement rankings to the top with a year in eighth grade. (Yayla and Bacanlı, 2011). It was determined by Kırıktaş and Şahin (2019) that the career interests of those with high levels of success in STEM courses were lower than the decline rates in STEM courses. Finally, their academic achievements appear to be positively and statistically significantly comprehensive with their commercial careers in the field of science (Alpaslan et al., 2019). Finally, those with low academic achievements are more successful in their careers than those with high academic achievements (Karataş and Gizir 2013).

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## Age and career development

The relationship between age and career development shows that career goals and motivations of employees change according to their life stages. Younger employees often seek skill development and promotion, while older employees may focus on job satisfaction and balance (Super, 1980). Research indicates that individuals' career adaptations decrease with age, but their work experience increases (Ng & Feldman, 2012). Additionally, older workers have been observed to make fewer career changes than younger workers (Wang & Shultz, 2010; Zacher, 2015). These dynamics highlight the impact of age on career planning.

In another study, it was determined that 9th and 10th grade students had higher career determination and lack of preparation scores than 11th and 12th grade students (Bacanlı et al., 2013). This result shows that younger high school students are less prepared to make decisions than older students. In a study conducted with hotel employees, young managers have a higher desire to acquire new skills in the aspect of career satisfaction (Demirdelen and Ulama, 2013). In a study conducted with eighth grade students, as students' ages increased, their career development levels also increased. (Yayla and Bacanlı, 2011). The age factor is an important factor that affects career life, both in terms of personal development and in the early periods of business life after the university years when the individual improves himself (Eren Gümüştekin and Gültekin 2015).

## Emotional-psychological well-being and career development

Emotional-psychological well-being can directly affect individuals' general life satisfaction, work performance and occupational satisfaction. High emotional well-being contributes to career success by increasing the ability to cope with work stress and strengthening commitment to work (Wright & Cropanzano, 2004). Studies on the effect of emotional well-being on career performance have stated that positive emotional experiences can increase creativity and problem-solving skills, which enable individuals to be more innovative and effective in their jobs (Amabile et al., 2005). In this context, supporting employees' psychological well-being can positively impact overall productivity and career development in the workplace. In addition, low levels of emotional-psychological well-being may affect job dissatisfaction, low performance and high turnover (Judge & Bono, 2001). This situation reveals the importance of monitoring and supporting the emotional and psychological well-being of employees, especially for managers and human resources professionals.

It is important to consider these effects of emotional and psychological well-being on career satisfaction and success, especially in career development processes. According to Diener (2003), emotional support systems and positive work environments at work help individuals make more successful and satisfying progress in their career paths. These cases demonstrate that creating healthy psychological and emotional environments in the workplace is critical to the broader success of both individuals and organizations. At this point, a deep understanding of the relationship between emotional-psychological well-being and career development and applying this knowledge in the workplace can support the long-term success of organizations and individuals.



## The present study

A career is defined as the combination of an individual's progress in business life and gaining experience and roles, and it is a lifelong process. Various social factors, such as family and society, play an essential role in an individual's career development. Career development is how individuals and employers manage tasks, behaviors, and experiences within jobs and organizations. Super (1990) has examined childhood career development with a nine-dimensional model, including curiosity, exploration, knowledge, role models, internal control, interest development, time perspective, and self-concept. These dimensions are seen as the essential elements affecting children's career development, and children's interactions with their environment have an important place in this process. When the studies in the literature were examined, no studies were found that directly examined emotional and psychological well-being and career development. In addition, exploring the relationship between children's career development and their emotional and psychological well-being in the information age, where career processes begin to change very rapidly, and individuals' emotional and psychological well-being is considered an essential personal situation in an increasingly complex world, will close this gap in the literature. In addition, it may contribute to asking new research questions in the literature regarding children's career development and emotional and psychological well-being. This study aimed to fill a gap in the literature. Based on this view, the hypotheses of the research were determined as follows;

1. Secondary school students' emotional and psychological well-being and career development are significantly related to secondary school students' emotional and psychological well-being.
2. Secondary school students' age, average academic achievement, and career development significantly predict their emotional and psychological well-being.

## Methods

### *Research design*

In this research, a predictive correlational approach was utilized to assess how the factors of age, academic performance, and various aspects of career development such as curiosity, acquired knowledge, influential people, interests, control over outcomes, future orientation, planning abilities, and self-perception among Secondary school students contribute to their emotional and psychological well-being. This model explores the interconnections between different variables, aiming to forecast one variable based on the information from another. Within this framework, the term 'predictor variable' refers to the known variable used to make predictions, whereas the 'criterion variable' denotes the variable whose outcome is being predicted (Büyüköztürk et al., 2014; Fraenkel et al., 2011). The predictive variables in this study are age, academic achievement average, and career development sub-dimensions, including curiosity, knowledge, key figures, interest, locus of control, time perspective, planning, and self. The predicted variable in this study is emotional and psychological well-being.



### Working group

The population of this study consisted of secondary school students between the ages of 10 and 14 studying in the Arnavutkoy district of Istanbul, Türkiye. The study group consisted of volunteer students studying in secondary schools in the Arnavutkoy district. The sample size of this study was determined to be at least five times the items included in the forms used in the research (Bryman & Cramer, 2001). The sample size for the study was calculated as 237 students with an error of 0.05, a slope of .80 and a confidence interval of .95 by power analysis, and it was tried to collect data above this number. Demographic information of the students participating in the research is presented in Table 1.

Table 1.  
Demographic characteristics of secondary school students

	N	%
Gender		
Boys	100	39.4
Girls	154	60.6
Grade Level		
5th grade	52	20.5
6th grade	37	14.6
7th grade	126	49.6
8th grade	39	15.4
Mother's Education Level		
Illiterate	5	2
Literate	21	8.3
Primary school	74	29.1
Secondary school	38	15
High school	67	26.4
University	49	19.3
Father's Education Level		
Illiterate	2	0.8
Literate	20	7.9
Primary school	61	24
Secondary school	35	13.8
High school	77	30.3
University	59	23.2

### Process

Research data were collected face to face and legally required permissions were obtained. Informed consent was given to participants to participate in the study voluntarily. This process was carried out in accordance with the researchers' ethical standards, protecting the privacy and rights of the participants. The research process was explained in a clear and understandable way to make participants feel comfortable. During the data collection phase, researchers obtained participants' consent and took appropriate measures to ensure the confidentiality of any personal data. In this way,



the integrity and reliability of the research was ensured, while the rights of the participants were protected.

### **Data collection tools**

In this study, the 'Personal Information Form,' 'Stirling Emotional and Psychological Well-being Scale for Children,' and 'Career Development Scale for Children' developed by the researcher were used as data collection tools.

**Personal information form:** This form, created by the researchers, contains questions about students' demographic information, including gender, grade level, age, academic achievement average, mother's education level, and father's education level.

**Stirling emotional and psychological well-being scale for children:** This scale was developed by Liddle and Carter (2015) to determine children's emotional and psychological well-being levels. Adaptation of the scale to Turkish was made by Akin et al. (2016). The scale consists of 12 items and is a five-point Likert scale (1=Never, 2= Very little, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always). There are no reverse items in the scale, and as the score obtained from the scale increases, emotional and psychological well-being also increases (Sample item: I feel peaceful). In the confirmatory factor analysis performed to adapt the scale to Turkish, it was seen that the unidimensional model gave a good fit ( $\chi^2= 96.87$ ,  $df= 54$ ,  $RMSEA= .073$ ,  $SRMR= .051$ ,  $CFI= .93$ ,  $IFI= .93$ ,  $GFI= .90$ ). The item-total correlation coefficients of the scale were found to be between .57 and .73. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as .90. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was examined again for this study and was found to be .83.

**Career development scale for children:** It was developed by Schultheiss and Stead (2004) to determine children's career development levels. Bacanlı et al. (2007) adapted the scale into Turkish. The scale was designed according to Super's (1990) career development model for children. Following the theory, the scale consists of eight sub-dimensions: curiosity, interest, knowledge, locus of control, key figures, time perspective, planning, and self-concept, and it has a total of 52 items. The scale is a three-point Likert scale (1= Not suitable for me, 2= I am undecided, 3= Suitable for me). As the score obtained from the scale increases, the level of career development also increases (Sample item: I wonder what I will learn at school). In the analyses performed to adapt the scale to Turkish, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the overall scale was found to be .78. For the reliability of the scale, the scale was applied to the students twice, with an interval of 21 days, to see the stability coefficient using the test-retest method. The determined stability coefficients included knowledge sub-dimension ( $r=.51$ ), curiosity/research sub-dimension ( $r=.54$ ), interests sub-dimension ( $r=.57$ ), locus of control sub-dimension ( $r=.53$ ), key figures sub-dimension ( $r= .49$ ), in the time perspective sub-dimension ( $r=.51$ ), in the planning sub-dimension ( $r=.55$ ), in the self-concept sub-dimension ( $r=.57$ ), and the total scale ( $r=.71$ ). The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was examined again for this study and was found to be .86.



### **Ethical procedures and process**

In this study, the principles of research ethics were observed, and permissions were obtained from the necessary ethics committee. Within the scope of ethics committee permission, the document numbered 16/02/2024-2024/01 was obtained from Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee on 16.02.2024.

### **Analysis of data**

A hierarchical regression analysis was executed to evaluate how well the emotional and psychological well-being of secondary school students can be predicted by factors such as age, level of academic achievement, and various dimensions of career development, including curiosity, acquired knowledge, influential figures, interests, control orientation, outlook on time, planning capabilities, and sense of self. Prior to undertaking the data analysis through multiple regression, it's essential to ensure compliance with certain prerequisites: the variables must be measured on at least an interval scale and exhibit a normal distribution, there should be no presence of autocorrelation, the variables intended for prediction must be mutually independent to avoid significant correlations amongst them, and a linear and meaningful relationship must exist between the predictor and outcome variables (Can, 2018). Kurtosis and skewness values were examined to ensure the assumption of normality, and as seen in Table 2, it was determined that they exhibited a normal distribution between +1.5 and -1.5 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Table 2.

Descriptive analysis of secondary school students' emotional and psychological well-being and career development

	Number	Average	Standard deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. Emotional and Psychological Well-being	254	44.58	6.74	-.046	-.271
2. Information	254	16.24	1.96	-1.226	1,030
3. Curiosity	254	16.88	2.65	-.555	-.090
4. Interests	254	23.79	4.02	-.831	.456
5. Locus of Control	254	18.72	2.33	-1.127	.709
6. Key Figures	254	11.20	2.30	-.400	-.167
7. Time Perspective	254	10.78	1.42	-1.271	1,256
8. Planning	254	28.43	4.28	-1.187	1,168
9. Self	254	16.37	1.79	-1.236	1,008

In the second step of the analysis, the Durbin Watson-d value was examined as an autocorrelation condition, and it was determined that this value was within the acceptable range of 2.165 (Field, 2005). In the third step, variance magnification and tolerance values were examined. Variance magnification factors were found to be less than 10 in the range of 1.001-1.712. Again, tolerance values were within the acceptable range of .999-.584 (Field, 2005). The correlational relationship between the predictor and predicted variables was examined in the fourth step of the



regression analysis assumptions. As seen in Table 2, correlational relationships were found between the predictor and predicted variables.

## Results

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Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between emotional and psychological well-being, age, academic achievement average, knowledge, curiosity/research, interests, locus of control, key figures, time perspective, planning, and self of secondary school students.

Table 3.

Correlational relationship between emotional and psychological well-being, age, academic achievement average, and career development sub-dimensions of secondary school students

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Emotional and Psychological Well-being	1										
2. Academic Achievement Average	.218 **	1									
3. Age	-.231 **	-.024	1								
4. Information	.089	.107	0.025	1							
5. Curiosity/Research	.376 **	.132 *	-.175 **	.411 **	1						
6. Interests	.429 **	.172 **	-.159 *	.344 **	.429 **	1					
7. Locus of Control	.155 *	.199 **	.175 **	.205 **	.223 **	.167 **	1				
8. Key Figures	.249 **	-0.057	-.255 **	.203 **	.268 **	.248 **	-0.058	1			
9. Time Perspective	.118	-0.014	.013	.241 **	.203 **	.235 **	.240 **	.229 **	1		
10. Planning	.388 **	0.050	-.203 **	.303 **	.429 **	.497 **	.187 **	.373 **	.360 **	1	
11. Self	.331 **	.167 **	-.163 **	.198 **	.239 **	.225 **	.201 **	.358 **	.206 **	.353 **	1

\*\*p<.01

\*p<.05

By examining the information in Table 3, it was determined that there is a medium-level positive significant relationship between secondary school students' emotional and psychological well-being and academic success average ( $r = .218, p < .01$ ), locus of control ( $r = .155, p < .05$ ), and key figures ( $r = .249, p < .01$ );. At the same time, there was a weakly positive significant relationship between curiosity/research ( $r = .376, p < .01$ ), interests ( $r = .429, p < .01$ ), planning ( $r = .388, p < .01$ ), and self ( $r = .331, p < .01$ ). In other words, as secondary school students' curiosity/research, interests, locus of control, key figures, planning, and self-levels regarding their academic success and career development increase, their emotional and psychological well-being levels also increase. Again, it was determined that there was a significant negative relationship between the emotional and psychological well-being of secondary school students and age ( $r = -.231, p < .01$ ). As the age level of secondary school students increases, their emotional and psychological well-being decreases.

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It was determined that there was a positive significant relationship between the average academic success of secondary school students with curiosity ( $r = .132, p < .05$ ), interests ( $r = .172, p < .05$ ), locus of control ( $r = .199, p < .05$ ) and self ( $r = .167, p < .05$ ). This shows that as students' curiosity, interest, locus of control and self-confidence increase, their academic success average also increases. Finally, it was determined that there was a significant negative relationship between the age levels of secondary school students with curiosity/research ( $r = -.175, p < .01$ ), interests ( $r = -.159, p < .01$ ), and key figures ( $r = -.255, p < .01$ ), planning ( $r = -.203, p < .01$ ) and self ( $r = -.163, p < .01$ ). In other words, as the age of secondary school students increases, their curiosity/research, interests, key figures, planning, and self-levels decrease.

A hierarchical regression analysis was utilized to assess the impact of variables such as age, academic performance, knowledge, curiosity/research, interests, control over one's environment, influential figures, outlook on time, planning, and self-perception on secondary school students' emotional and psychological health. According to the data presented in Table 4, the initial phase of the analysis incorporated age and academic performance as primary factors, accounting for 10% of the variance in the students' emotional and psychological well-being. Both age and academic performance were identified as significant determinants. In the subsequent phase of the analysis, dimensions related to career development, including knowledge, curiosity/research, interests, control over one's environment, influential figures, outlook on time, planning, and self-perception, were examined. Controlling for age and academic performance, these factors contributed an additional 24% to the variance in students' well-being, bringing the total explained variance to 34%. This indicates that the aforementioned variables, including personal and academic attributes, play a crucial role in predicting secondary school students' emotional and psychological well-being.

Table 4.

Hierarchical regression analysis findings regarding the prediction of emotional and psychological well-being of secondary school students

Model	predictor	B.	SH <sub>B</sub>	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Age	-1.436	.381	-.226	.10*
	Academic Achievement Average	.227	.064	.212	
	(Constant)	40,953	7,536		
2	Age	-.576	.362	-.091	.34*
	Academic Achievement Average	.133	.059	.125	
	Information	-.594	.207	-.172	
	Curiosity/Research	.487	.163	.191	
	Interests	.426	.108	.254	
	Locus of Control	.155	.170	.054	
	Key Figures	.176	.180	.060	
	Time Perspective	-.209	.278	-.044	
	Planning	.215	.108	.136	



Self-Concept	.584	.226	.155
(Constant)	12,286	7,937	

## Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations

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### Academic achievement and emotional-psychological well-being

It was determined that there was a weak, positive, and significant relationship between secondary school students' emotional and psychological well-being and their average academic achievement. When the studies in the literature were reviewed, no studies were found that directly examined the relationship between emotional and psychological well-being and academic success. However, in general, it was observed that there are studies that show a positive and significant relationship between subjective well-being, emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and academic success (Ateş, 2016; Aygün & Topkaya, 2022; Bücker, 2018; Halisdemir, 2013; Özdemir & Dilekmen, 2017; Özden, 2014; Paras et al., 2021; Steinmayr et al., 2016; Tuzgöl Dost, 2010). These findings support the results of this study. In addition, in the study conducted by Cenkseven and Akbaş (2007), they found no relationship between academic success and psychological well-being, which does not coincide with the findings of this study. The reason for this difference may be that the studies that overlap with the findings of this study were conducted in the last ten years, while the study that does not overlap was conducted 16 years ago. The fact that academic success has gained more importance in recent years with high school entrance exams may be one of the main reasons for the relationship between academic success and emotional and psychological well-being. More successful students may gain academic self-confidence and reach a better level emotionally and psychologically.

### Age and emotional-psychological well-being

It was determined that there was a weak, negative, and significant relationship between the emotional and psychological well-being of secondary school students and their age. In other words, as the age level of secondary school students increases, their emotional and psychological well-being decreases. When the studies in the literature are examined, the findings of negative relationships between age and well-being (Harkes, 2001; Tosun, 2021; Valkenburg & Peter, 2007) support the results of this study. In addition, in the study of Martinez and Dukes (1997) on adolescents, the finding that age did not affect well-being does not support this finding. Again, in the study conducted by Söner and Yılmaz (2018) on adolescents, the finding that psychological well-being did not differ significantly according to age does not coincide with this finding. One of the most critical factors that makes this study different from other studies is the changes in the examination system. The entrance exam system for high schools has changed in the last three years, and reducing the quotas of schools admitting students through exams may be practical here. In addition, the emergence of pubertal problems as students in this age group get older may be an explanation for the negative relationship between age and emotional and psychological well-being.





## Emotional-psychological well-being and career development

A positive, significant, and medium-level relationship was found between curiosity/research, one of the career development sub-dimensions of secondary school students, and emotional and psychological well-being. In other words, as secondary school students' sense of curiosity/research increases, their emotional and psychological well-being also increases. When the studies in the literature were examined, it was seen that there were studies that found positive significant relationships between well-being and curiosity (Gallagher, 2007; Reio & Sanders-Reio, 2020; Sağlam & Topsumer, 2019; Wang & Li, 2019). It can be said that these findings support the findings of this study. In addition, no study was found in the literature that did not coincide with the results of this study. If students' innate curiosity can be supported by research skills that students can acquire, primary school students' emotional and psychological well-being can also be supported. In this context, teachers' designing and carrying out projects that will enable their students to acquire research skills will not only help students' curiosity and gain research skills but will also indirectly support the development of student's emotional and psychological well-being.

A positive, significant, and moderate relationship was found between interests, one of the career development sub-dimensions, and secondary school students' emotional and psychological well-being. In other words, as secondary school students' interest increases, their emotional and psychological well-being increases as well. No study in the literature has examined the relationship between interest and emotional and psychological well-being. This study, considered among the limited studies in the literature in terms of revealing the relationship between interests and emotional and psychological well-being, has shown a finding that will shed light on future studies. It is necessary to determine which aspects of students' interests are related to emotional and psychological well-being, to conduct research with similar and different study groups, and to obtain more profound information about this relationship.

A weak, positive, and significant relationship was found between secondary school students' locus of control, one of the career development sub-dimensions, and emotional and psychological well-being. When the studies in the literature were examined, it was seen that there were studies that found positive significant relationships between locus of control and well-being (Daniels & Guppy, 1997; Griffin, 2014; Huebner, 1991; Klonowicz, 2001; Quevedo & Abella, 2014). These findings support the results of this study. In addition, it has been seen in the literature that there are studies on negative relationships between locus of control and well-being (Gezer, 2020; İklim Cengiz, 2018; Kurt, 2018; Ryff, 1989; Cooper et al., 1995). These findings do not support the results of this study. The finding of a weak positive relationship between locus of control and emotional and psychological well-being in this study is a finding that will guide teachers. However, the fact that there are similar results in the literature and contradictory findings to the results of this study can be considered an indicator of the need for qualitative and mixed-method research that will produce more detailed information on this subject.

A weak, positive, and significant relationship was found between the key figures of the career development sub-dimensions of secondary school students and their emotional and psychological well-being. Key figures include children's role models and who they look up to. As the key figure's level



of secondary school students increases, their emotional and psychological well-being also improves. No study in the literature has examined the relationship between key figures and emotional and psychological well-being. Working on the role models of primary school students and ensuring that the country's role models meet with students through different activities can support students' emotional and psychological well-being. In addition, the importance of teachers and school administrators being role models as adults is also supported by this finding. Role models can be provided by adult school stakeholders and peers who are prominent among students in academic, social, sports, and artistic fields, thus contributing to the emotional and psychological well-being of primary school students.

A positive, significant, and moderate relationship was found between planning, one of the career development sub-dimensions of secondary school students, and emotional and psychological well-being. When the studies in the literature were examined, no studies conducted directly with adolescents were found. However, the finding that planning positively predicts well-being in studies conducted on different groups (MacLeod & Coates, 2008; MacLeod & Conway, 2005; Noone et al., 2009; Yeung & Zhou, 2017) indirectly supports the findings of this study. The overlap of the results of this study with other studies in the literature confirms how effective planning can be in improving emotional and psychological well-being. Therefore, when a skill that can be learned and taught is handled primarily by teachers and other school stakeholders in planned primary schools, primary school students' emotional and psychological well-being will be supported. According to these results, adding planning skills for all subject areas to primary education programs will guide teachers in providing planning skills to primary school students.

A positive, significant, and moderate relationship was found between self, one of the career development sub-dimensions of secondary school students, and emotional and psychological well-being. When the studies in the literature are examined, studies showing positive significant relationships between self and well-being (Pandey et al., 2019; Paradise & Kernis, 2005; Lin, 2015; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Oishi & Diener, 2001; Schimmack & Diener, 2003; Yamaguchi & Kim, 2015) support the findings of this study. These results show the importance of self-development in terms of emotional and psychological well-being. Teachers, parents, and school counselors' focusing on students' self-development will also contribute to primary school students' emotional and psychological well-being.

### **Age, academic achievement, emotional-psychological well-being and career development**

In this analysis, the initial block comprised age and average academic performance as primary factors, which accounted for 10% of the variation in the emotional and psychological health of secondary schoolers. These factors emerged as crucial predictors. Following this, career development aspects such as knowledge, curiosity/research, interests, ability to control outcomes, influential individuals, outlook towards time, planning, and self-awareness formed the second block. After adjusting for age and academic performance, these career development components were found to enhance the prediction of students' well-being by 24%, elevating the total explained variance to 34%. This highlights the significance of age, academic performance, along with the stated career development factors, in accurately forecasting the emotional and psychological well-being among secondary school students.



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## Recommendations

In this section, suggestions are made for researchers, psychological counselors and teachers based on the research findings.

### Sayfa | 929 **Recommendations for researchers**

Future research might explore each determinant's (age and academic achievement) specific impact on well-being through qualitative methods. Additionally, while age remains a factor beyond control, enlightening teachers about the influence of their pedagogical strategies and the utilization of suitable teaching techniques can enhance academic achievements. Elevating academic performance is pivotal in fostering improved emotional and psychological well-being among secondary school students.

### **Recommendations for psychological counselors and teachers**

Emphasizing the importance of these determinants, age and academic performance, which together elucidate a significant portion of the variance, is critical for all educational stakeholders aiming to bolster secondary school students' emotional and psychological health. Additionally, while age remains a factor beyond control, enlightening teachers about the influence of their pedagogical strategies and the utilization of suitable teaching techniques can enhance academic achievements. Elevating academic performance is pivotal in fostering improved emotional and psychological well-being among secondary school students. Therefore, Psychological Counselors can be aware of the academic achievement for the well-being of students'. By supporting students to reach expected academic achievement levels, their emotional and psychological well-being will be better.

## Limitations

Like every research, this study has some limitations. The study's sample is limited to secondary school students in a particular geographical region. This limits the generalization of the results and may reduce their validity for students in the different areas. Additionally, demographic diversity, such as gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity, may be underrepresented in the sample. These shortcomings limit the extent to which the study results can be applied to different demographic groups. Secondly, this study's data collection methods and tools also need to be revised. Since surveys are based on self-reports, they depend on the honesty and self-awareness of participants. It may cause some responses not to reflect emotional and psychological states fully. Third is the cross-sectional nature of the study. Cross-sectional studies collect data at a point in time, so it is impossible to observe how students' emotional and psychological well-being and career development change over time. It does not provide information about long-term trends and changes. Finally, selecting variables during the study may also affect the results. The demographic variables and well-being measures on which the research focuses determine the scope of the study, but other potential influencing factors may need to be noticed. This should be considered when interpreting the findings.



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