

What is Happiness?: Career Development and Reducing Barriers¹

(Research Article)

Mutluluk Nedir?: Kariyer Gelişimi ve Engellerin Azaltılması

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ABSTRACT

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*White Collar Worker,
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It is important to have qualified employees for institutions that want to achieve success by keeping up with the environment of constant competition and change in the business world. Career development process and making employees feel happy are important in gaining qualified employees and ensuring their continuity in the organization. Employees prefer to stay in organizations that contribute to their own development and do not feel restricted. In this study, the mediating role of happiness levels in the relationship between career barrier perceived by white-collar employees and career development was examined. This study was carried out with 450 participants working in the finance, production and service sectors in Istanbul. The response rate to the surveys is 69% because the questionnaires were delivered to 650 participants. As a result of the analyzes made with IBM SPSS Process-Macro, it has been determined that the perceived career barrier has an effect on reducing the level of career development and happiness, and happiness has a mediating role in this relationship.

ÖZET

Anahtar Kelimeler:

*Beyaz Yakalı Çalışan,
Algılanan Kariyer
Engeli, Kariyer
Gelişimi, Mutluluk*

İş dünyasındaki sürekli rekabet ve değişim ortamına ayak uydurarak başarıya ulaşmak isteyen kurumlar için nitelikli çalışana sahip olmak önemlidir. Nitelikli çalışanların kazanılmasında ve organizasyonda sürekliliğin sağlanmasında kariyer gelişim süreci ve çalışanların mutlu edilmesi önemlidir. Çalışanlar kendi gelişimlerine katkı sağlayan ve kendilerini kısıtlanmış hissetmeyen organizasyonlarda kalmayı tercih ederler. Bu çalışmada beyaz yakalı çalışanların algıladıkları kariyer engeli ile kariyer gelişimi arasındaki ilişkide mutluluk düzeylerinin aracılık rolü incelenmiştir. Yapılan çalışma İstanbul'da finans, üretim ve hizmet sektörlerinde çalışan 450 katılımcı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Anketler 650 katılımcıya ulaştırılmıştır. Geri dönüş oranı %69'dur. IBM SPSS Process-Macro ile yapılan analizler sonucunda algılanan kariyer engelinin kariyer gelişimi ile mutluluk düzeyinin azaltılmasında etkisinin olduğu, mutluluğun bu ilişkide aracılık rolü oynadığı tespit edilmiştir.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Work life is linked to one's general identity, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-concept and plays an important role in facilitating and maintaining social relationships that provide psycho-social support that benefit from community integration (Strauser et al., 2021). The dizzying developments in the economic and technological fields in the business world push institutions to change. In order to adapt to this change, institutions go to various practices such as downsizing, merging, and renewal. Employees, who are the important resources of institutions, may have difficulty in adapting to this ongoing change process. For this reason, organizations focus on the human element in adapting to the new order and in their development processes (Kaya, 2018).

Among the issues that affect organizational development are the training of employees, transparency, justice, respect for beliefs and values (Yamazaki and Yoon, 2016). Institutions that give importance to the development of their employees can also realize their own organizational development. Businesses that realize their development can stand out in the competition in the business world by ensuring employee satisfaction and happiness. In order to achieve this goal, organizations should develop their intellectual capital because intellectual capital positively affects career development. The basic element of intellectual capital is employees. Institutions try to employ long-term employees by ensuring that their employees are happy and satisfied in their jobs. In this way, they aim to continuously increase the talents of their employees. For this reason, the tendency to human resources management (HRM) practices that will enable to reach the targets is increasing (Ruggeri et al., 2020). Buck and Watson (2002) stated that the services provided by HRM in institutions increase organizational happiness and career development. Individual and organizational career development opportunities ensure that this issue is addressed in organizations from the very beginning. Institutions are trying to recruit, train and develop qualified employees, to benefit from the experience of the employees and to achieve high efficiency for a long time. The personnel, who believe that they will gain material and moral gains from the organizations with career development opportunities for the employees, consider staying in their institutions for a long time and display higher performance. In this context, human resources experts stated that when career development opportunities are not provided or insufficient, it is an important factor for organizations to lose especially qualified employees (Ruggeri et al., 2020).

The nature of the career concept is changing. Moving away from the traditional career approach, which emphasizes promotion and increase in status by advancing in organizational levels, an understanding that focuses on psychological success has begun to dominate. However, employees face various barriers while shaping their careers. These barriers hinder the career goals of the employees (Akdoğanlı, 2019). To put it more clearly, career barriers make it difficult for the career development and psychological happiness of the employee (Demir, 2018). According to Social Cognitive Career Theory, career barrier is affected by both objective and environmental factors. Even if objective factors are not specifically expressed, it can appear as a career barrier. The career barrier perceived by employees affects employment and overall quality of life (Amil, 2015). In addition, the barriers that employees perceive in the workplace return to them as psychological distress and decreased quality of life. Despite the challenges, establishing an appropriate career path and following the professional development of the employee is considered important to increase happiness levels (Denizli and Dündar, 2020). It is necessary to increase the motivation and knowledge of the employees in order to eliminate the negatives and to achieve the career development of happiness. In this way, organizations also have positive reflections such as having a qualified workforce, adapting to

change more easily, and having devoted personnel. After all these explanations, the mediating effect of happiness in the relationship between the perceived career barrier and career development began to be a matter of curiosity. It is aimed to examine the mediating role of happiness in the relationship between the career barrier perceived by white-collar employees and their career development. It was thought that the perceived career barriers could decrease career development and happiness level, and the level of happiness would increase career development.

As a result, while investigating the effect of happiness on the relationship between the career barrier perceived by the employees and their career development, the importance that employees attach to their careers should also be taken into account. Thus, the problem statement developed for this article study is as follows; “What is the effect of happiness on the relationship between the career barrier perceived by the employees and their career development?”

The research questions developed to find the answer to this question and to examine the relationships between the concepts are as follows;

- Does the presence or absence of career barrier perceived by employees affect their career development?
- Does the presence or absence of career barrier perceived by employees affect their happiness levels?
- Does the presence or absence of happiness levels of employees affect their career development?
- What is the relationship between the career barrier perceived by the employees and their happiness levels?
- What is the relationship between the happiness levels of the employees and their career development?
- What is the relationship between the career barrier perceived by the employees and their career development?

This study aims to enrich the theoretical and empirical literature by answering the above questions. In examining the role of happiness in the career development and the perceived career barrier, this study offers theoretical discussions on how these variables are related. It is expected that the satisfaction of an individual with her career, which has an important place in her life, will have an impact on happiness, which, in a sense, expresses the internal evaluation of the general quality of life. According to current career approaches, career development of individuals is provided both by themselves and by institutions. It was thought that the relationship between the pleasure of being able to direct their careers in such an environment and their happiness might be interesting. Through the research, it is desired to shed light on this subject, which has a gap in the literature, empirically. It is thought that the results obtained from the analysis of the data collected through fieldwork will contribute to this field. In addition, examining career barriers is one of the contributions of this article. By examining the mediating role of happiness, we hypothesize that career development prospects will increase happiness, while perceived barriers will decrease happiness.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Perceived Career Barrier (PCB)

Before addressing the concept of perceived career barriers, it is useful to briefly explain career. In fact, the concept of career is quite old. For this reason, career is the development of the

abilities that individuals have throughout their working life. According to another definition, career is directly related to individual and organizational goals and is a process related to work experience and activities that individuals will live and partially control throughout their lives (Esterina et al., 2020). Therefore, people can continue their careers, which they started at a young age, until they can retire by making progress. Employees and businesses come together throughout the career. In other words, the concept of career has a two-dimensional importance as an individual and an organization. The first dimension will be formed in the personality of the individuals who are planning a career (Watts et al., 2015). Individuals must understand their position in professional life and businesses and determine where and how they want to see themselves in the future. In line with this situation, individuals will need to develop their careers. In the other dimension, the business should determine where, how and in good communication they will reach the people it wants to reach, taking into account its own purpose (Patton et al., 2003).

Career is very important for employees because it meets some expectations such as money, prestige, promotion, having better conditions. It improves the social aspects of individuals, adds meaning to their lives, and helps them determine their social status. Along with adding meaning to their lives, getting the necessary training to achieve these goals, getting a job, gaining experience in business life, and realizing themselves in personal and professional terms is also the result of the career process. Within the scope of this phenomenon, there are many concepts such as leisure activities, decision-making style, duties at work, and life roles. The sum of these concepts promotes career development. Lent et al. (1994) stated that these concepts trigger career development. However, people often cannot do it freely while developing their careers. At this point, they can face various career barriers.

According to Crites (1961), career barrier is all the factors that make career development of individuals difficult. Taylor (1982) emphasized that when the career decision is made internally and employees believe that they are under their control, those employees can take active roles and responsibilities in line with their career development. However, sometimes employees tend to view perceived barriers as permanent barriers to career advancement, rather than engaging in activities aimed at overcoming career barriers. The career barrier can be examined as an objective and perceived career barrier. Objective career barrier is expressed as factors that make career advancement difficult for individuals. Perceived career barriers arises as a result of perceiving a situation as an obstacle to career development. Perceived career barriers may vary depending on one's self-confidence. For example, while a self-confident woman can be a mother or a housewife; on the other hand, she can develop in her career. This situation can give pleasure to the person as stated by Super and Knasel (1981). Perceived barriers can be related to the employee's self-confidence, which skills and behaviors she/he wants to transform. The mind knows its own thought and behavior patterns; explains what it can and cannot handle. Confidence is one of the most basic ways to deal with perceived career barrier. With self-confidence, internal obstacles can be fought (Guan et al., 2015). The article will focus on the perceived career barrier. Perceived career barrier is examined in 5 groups as multi-role taking, gender discrimination, lack of family support, deficiencies in career planning, conflict between child and career (Li et. al., 2022).

As stated above, career barriers set a barrier in front of the development of talent, knowledge and motivation of employees and their advancement within the organization. This leads to a decrease in the level of happiness of the employees and the efficiency in their duties. Employees who are dedicated to their work, highly motivated, have goals and know what is expected of them may lose all their values in the face of barriers. Today, there is an important detail that

career is the responsibility of the individual. Organizations should also support their employees in this regard, and help them overcome the obstacles in front of them. If employees know where they are in business life and what they can do in the future, they will understand where to go and what to do to reach their goals. These opportunities will be provided to employees through the elimination of career barriers (Kara, 2019).

2.2. Career Development (CD)

Egan et al. (2006) states that career development is the process of meeting and increasing the current and future needs of an organization. Career development focuses on how employees affect changes in their careers (Lee and Lee, 2018). Career development includes employees' subjective feelings of achievement and objective progress in their careers. Career development aims to develop job-related skills. Career development can be achieved with the support provided by the institution. Thus, by matching the needs of the organization with the needs of the individual in career development, an efficient and satisfying career is provided for both parties. As a result of career development, employees are expected to have increased performance, high organizational commitment, and low willingness to leave (Gilley et al., 2002). Career development is actually a process. This process is examined in two groups as career planning and management. Career planning activity takes place at the beginning of the career development process in organizations. These plans are supported by career paths, enabling employees to reach their targeted career ladder. In the career planning process, employees evaluate themselves with their strengths and weaknesses, internal and external opportunities are identified, and short, medium and long-term goals are determined. In career management, which is the second stage of career development, the career paths and strategies of the employees are determined (Aytaç, 2005).

Career development can be done through programs. These programs are created to help employees progress in business life. Effectively implemented career development programs can be a stimulant that motivates and provides a high level of utilization of employee talents. These programs motivate employees towards success. Derven (2015) stated that managers should be given tasks on career development so that they can discover the strengths and weaknesses of the employees because by getting to know their employees more closely, managers can identify the aspects they need to improve more clearly. According to Hirsh et al. (1996), in this process “the knowledge, abilities and behaviors of the employees should be evaluated, information should be provided to the employees about suitable job options, and their career development should be planned.” In career development, managers should discover the talents of the employees and support them during their career development.

Providing management support of the units is of importance in career development. Ardoin (2014) emphasized that career development is the responsibility of the employee. Career development depends on the employee's responsibility as well as the perception imposed by the business, management and even society (Kaya, 2018). This perception can vary. Obstacles such as gender discrimination and lack of family support can be perceived in reaching career goals. These perceived barriers can have a direct impact on career development. As stated by Lent et al., (1996) perceived barriers affect career development. Employee career development has also been affected by a number of challenges in the workplace, such as long and irregular working hours, working weekends and holidays, lack of education and poor career development opportunities. Even if employees are confident about their career development, have career self-efficacy and high result expectations, they have the potential to give up if they perceive insurmountable obstacles to career development. Similarly, Lent et al., (1996: 355-356) stated

that “Even well-developed and diverse interests in a particular career path are unlikely to follow it if they perceive significant barriers to entering or advancing in that career.” Career development is based on the expectation of the availability of alternative forms of work and it is affected when obstacles are perceived to be insurmountable. It is important for career development to ensure that the existing career barriers in the current business are overcome. Savickas (1997) claimed that employees can overcome obstacles to complete career development. Relatively few reviews have been made to describe the specific role played by barriers in career development. For this reason, by examining these two theoretical approaches, the following hypothesis was created. It is aimed to fill the existing gap in the literature. In addition to examining the link between these two variables, the level of happiness was identified as a relevant factor.

H_1 : Perceived career barriers negatively affect career development.

2.3. Being Happy (H)

Happiness is defined as “the point that individuals seek and want to reach on the basis of their lives.” (Kangal, 2013). Since happiness is the pleasure to be achieved, it is a good motivator for people's actions and thoughts to be positive. According to Arsita (2015), happiness not only motivates struggling to overcome obstacles, but also increases positivity about individuals who can function best in their lives. People who feel happy choose to behave more satisfactorily. Sarangi and Srivastava (2012) stated that happy and satisfied employees tend to be more committed to work and manage tasks more easily in order to meet their organizational needs.

Zelenski et al. (2008) emphasized that happy people are more productive. Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) claimed that an individual will experience high levels of satisfaction by experiencing positive emotions frequently and less negative emotions. People with neutral emotions, on the other hand, do not set themselves higher goals than those who experience positive emotions, and do not persevere in challenging tasks (Nelson et al., 2015). People who experience positive emotions tend to evaluate other people more positively. The subjective idea of being happy stems from the fact that it empowers people to experience happiness for themselves.

Mankind has aimed to be happy throughout life. Health conditions, family, work environment, income level are accepted as important sources of happiness by individuals. According to Join et al. (2012), good feelings and a positive approach to everything lead to happiness. The level of happiness can be determined by many factors. Argyle (2001) claimed that especially business life and work make individuals happy. As the reason for this elements such as the pleasure of achieving goals and rewards, the inner satisfaction arising from working, and the satisfaction of social relations developed with colleagues are counted. As a positive psychology, happiness is an important element not only in business life. Sotudeh et al. (2015) found that employees with high happiness levels are more career-oriented.

Cropanzano and Wright (1999) stated that happiness affects performance and promotion. Bakker and Demerouti (2017) found that happy employees have a successful career path, good job satisfaction, motivation at work and a decrease in turnover rate. They also agree that businesses with happy employees face a lower retention rate. The organization achieves higher profitability, its costs can be reduced. In general, employers expect high levels of performance and productivity from their employees. Most businesses need productive and happy employees to achieve organizational goals. It is believed that maintaining happiness in the workplace will increase the productivity of the company as well as the employees. Happy employees outperform those who are not happy (Walsh et al., 2018). Cote (1999) also emphasized that

there is a bidirectional relationship between happiness and job performance and career. Cote (1999) discovered that positive influence leads to strong performance, and strong performance leads to positive affect.

The findings show that happiness is strongly associated with career success. Happy people are satisfied with their workplace, they are more likely to show superior job performance, commitment to the workplace, and pro-social behavior. They get better social support. All of these results create a wealth of resources that happy employees can turn to when needed and help them perform better in their daily professional duties.

Happiness is important for both employees and organizations. This leads to productivity and career development. It is also very important for employees who have extensive and direct interpersonal interactions. Happy people show more career development. This is explained by the fact that happy people overcome obstacles in their pursuit of goals. Rego et al. (2010) conducted a study with 216 employees in Portugal. According to the research, employees who are happy at work have more feelings of forgiveness, compassion, optimism, honesty, and trust. Pelled and Xin (1999) emphasized that happy people are less likely to give up on their career development than unhappy people. Staying happy at work can be related to psychological well-being, satisfaction, optimism, emotion, mood, morale, and commitment. Sattar et al. (2017) argued that the desire for career advancement in a business helps them respond better to perceived career barriers. For this reason, it was thought that happiness could be a mediator between these two variables. Edmunds and Jones (2008) claim that happiness can be effective in coping with the difficulties encountered. In this respect, it can be said that happiness is a moderator that serves to reduce the effect of perceived barriers. When the development of the employees is encouraged, the employees are happy, they feel valued by the business, and they try to reach the organizational/individual goals and objectives. Therefore, it can be said that happiness, career development and perceived career barrier are three intertwined variables. In this article, the variable "happiness" was chosen as the mediator variable. In particular, it has been tried to go with the perspective of global happiness. Conceptual meanings such as job satisfaction and career satisfaction were not preferred. Because these concepts are mostly used as mediating variables. As a result of the literature review, it was thought that this variable would contribute to the literature. In the light of these explanations, the following hypothesis was formed:

H_2 : Happiness mediates the relationship between perceived career barrier and career development.

3. METHODS

This article examines the effect of PCB on CD. In addition, the H variable was included and how it would affect CD and PCB was a matter of curiosity and wanted to be measured. The model was established for the variables and the test of the model was measured with the Process Macro. It is explained in detail below.

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

In total, 10 companies of one of the largest conglomerates in Turkey/Istanbul were selected for data collection. Due to the confidentiality agreement, company names will not be included in this study. The survey questionnaires were administered by managers and distributed to 650 employees. A total of 450 questionnaires were returned, giving us a final response rate of 69 percent. Of these 10 companies, 3 are in finance, 3 are in service, and 4 are in production. Of

the sample (N=450) of the article, 30% (135) work in finance, 30% (135) work in the service sector and the remaining 40% (180) work in the manufacturing sector.

The demographic variables included gender, age, education level and marital status. Most respondents were female (61.8 percent), in their 20s (28.7 percent), 30s (52.4 percent), 40s (9.6 percent). In terms of education level, 62 percent of the respondents graduated from a four-year college and 23.8 percent from master degree. 62 percent of the participants are single, 33 percent are married and 21 percent are separated.

3.2. Measure

All constructs used multi-item scales. Three scales were used for the present study. The survey questionnaire included a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The Perceived Career Barrier Scale (PCB). It was developed by Swanson et al., (1996). This scale was later used by Akdoğanlı (2019). The PCB used in this article is the same as in Akdoğanlı's (2019) study and consists of 20 statements. PCB consists of four sub-dimensions. There are five statements in the multi-role taking sub-dimension, five statements in the gender discrimination sub-dimension, four statements in the sub-dimension of lack of family/spouse support, and six statements in the career planning sub-dimension. The internal reliability was 0.87 in the current study.

Happiness Scale (H). In this study, the Oxford Happiness Level Scale-Short Form developed by Hills and Argyle (2005) was used to measure MD. This scale consists of a single sub-dimension and seven items. The overall reliability of the total scale is 0.68.

Career Development Scale (CD). The first six questions in CD were developed by Simpson (2014), and the last three questions were developed by Kaya (2018). In this article, survey questions for career development were determined based on these headings. The scale consists of nine items. The reliability coefficient was also measured as 0.96. In addition, descriptive statistics and correlation results regarding the variables are summarized in Table 1.

3.3. Descriptive statistics

Table 1. Inter correlations and descriptive statistics

Variables	PCB	H	CD
Std. Deviation	0.580	0.818	1.139
Mean	2.51	2.72	3.18
PCB	1	-.175**	-.110**
H		1	.472**
CD			1

Note: N=450; **p< .01 (two-tailed)

The descriptive statistics and correlations are reported in Table 1. The correlations show preliminary support for our hypotheses- that is, perceived career barrier was negatively correlated with H ($r=-0.175$, $p<0.01$) and negatively correlated with CD ($r=-0.110$, $p<0.01$). Happiness also showed positive correlation with career development ($r=0.472$, $p<0.01$).

3.4. Hypotheses Testing

A regression analysis based on the bootstrap method was conducted to test whether the level of happiness mediated the effect of career barriers perceived by white-collar employees on their

career development. Analyses were made using Process Macro developed by Hayes (2018). In the analysis, 5000 resampling options were preferred with the bootstrap technique. In the mediation effect analyzes made with the bootstrap technique, the values in the 95% confidence interval obtained as a result of the analysis should not include the 0 value in order to support the research hypotheses. The analyzes performed for this purpose are given in Tables 2 and 3. Mediation analysis are used to understand the linkage mechanism between the two variables. The mediating variable lies between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The mediating variable (M), which works as the linking mechanism between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y), helps to explain the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Therefore, the mediating variable helps to understand how and why the relationship between two variables occurs (Gürbüz, 2019). The mediation effect model of the study is as in Figure 1. In addition, model number 4 was used. There are approximately 93 models in Process Macro. The one used in this article is model 4. It is important to select the appropriate model numbers for each model in the Process Macro.

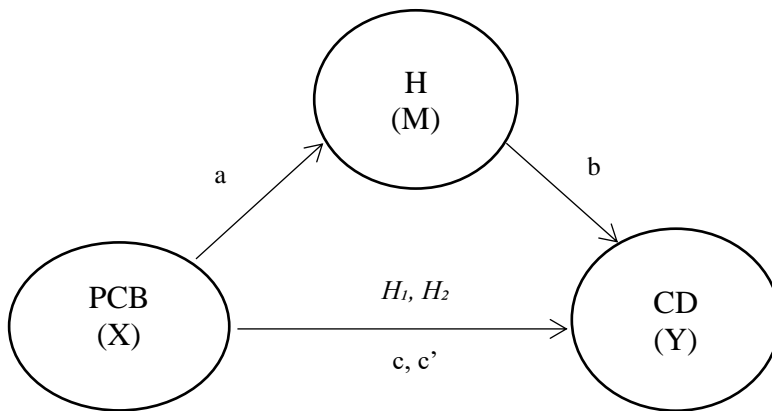


Figure 1. Model of the study

A change (increase or decrease) in the independent variable causes a change in the mediating variable, and this change in the mediating variable causes a change on the dependent variable.

Table 2. Effect of X on Y

Model Summary							
	R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
	.1103	.0122	1.28	5.52	1.00	448.00	0.0192
Model	coeff	Se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI	
constant	3.72	.237	15.69	.000	3.26	4.19	
PCB_mean	-.217	.092	-2.34	.0192	-.397	-.0355	

Table 2 shows the effect of perceived career barriers on career development in a model without a mediating variable. According to this, it is seen that the perceived career barrier has a negative and significant effect on career development in cases where there is no happiness level ($b = -.217$, 95% CI [-.3977, -.0355], $t = -2.3499$, $p < .01$). In line with these findings, H_1 is accepted.

Table 3. Total effects of X on Y

Total effect of X on Y					
Effect	se	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
-.216	.092	-2.34	.0192	-.3977	-.355
Direct effect of X on Y					
Effect	se	t	P	LLCI	ULCI
-.3900	.0811	-4.81	.000	-.5494	-.2307
Indirect effect of X on Y					
	effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
H	.1735	.0580	.0636	.291	
Partially standardized indirect effects of X on Y					
	effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI	
H	.1523	.0497	.0565	.2509	

Table 3 shows the indirect effect of the perceived career barrier on career development through the mediating variable. The indirect effect value, which shows whether the perceived career barrier has an indirect effect on career development in the table, is reported with the confidence intervals obtained by the bootstrap technique. Accordingly, it is seen that the indirect effect of the perceived career barrier on career development is significant, and therefore the level of happiness mediates the relationship between the perceived career barrier and career development ($b=.173$, 95% BCA CI [.0636, .2918]).

In the last part of the table, the completely and partially standardized effect sizes of X on Y are given. Thus, the confidence intervals in both effect sizes are significant since they do not include the value of 0. In line with these findings, H_2 is accepted. The completely standardized effect size is .088, and the partially standardized effect size is .152. When interpreting the effect size, if it is close to $K^2=.01$ it is interpreted as having a low effect, if it is close to $K^2=.09$ it is interpreted to having a medium effect and if it is close to $K^2=.25$ it is interpreted to having a high effect. Accordingly, it can be stated that the mediation effect in the tested model is close to the middle value. Figure 2 shows the reporting made on the model. Figure 2 shows that PCB affects H and PCB affects CD.

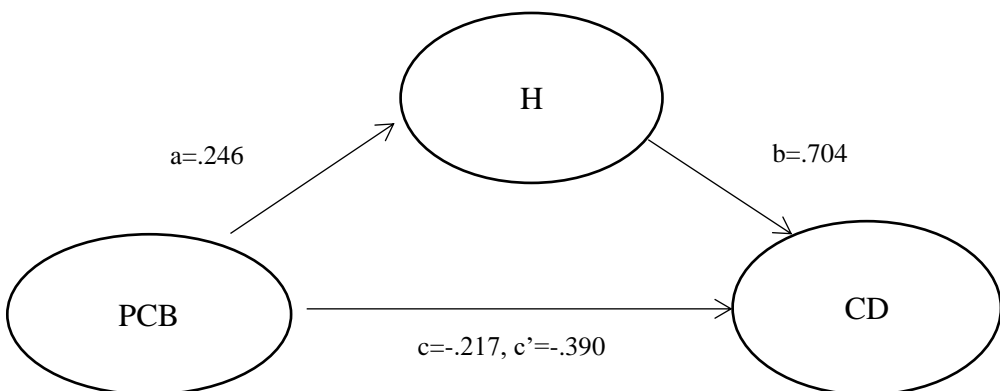


Figure 2. The Mediating Role of Happiness Level in the Relationship between Perceived Career Barrier and Career Development (N=450)

Note: Non-standardized beta coefficients have been reported. R^2 values represent the variance explained. Direct effect $c'=-.390$, $p<.01$; Indirect effect = .174, 95% CI [.064, .290]

4. CONCLUSION

In this study, the mediating role of happiness levels in the relationship between career barrier perceived by white-collar employees and career development has been examined. For this, analysis has been made with the IBM SPSS Process-Macro method. According to the results of the analysis, it has been determined that the indirect effect of the career barrier perceived by white-collar employees on career development is significant, and their happiness levels mediate the relationship between the perceived career barrier and career development. Furthermore, as a result of the study, it has been revealed that the perceived career barrier reduces career development and happiness level. Moreover, the happiness levels of the employees increase their career development. Happiness leads to career success. According to researches, happiness supports and affects everything related to career. Happiness is positively associated with performance, prosocial behavior, social support, and income. They are less likely to withdraw from work due to absenteeism or burnout. It has been argued that the existence of positive emotions such as joy, happiness, satisfaction may precede career success and even encourage career success (Haase et al., 2012). Happiness can be a precursor to success. People who experience positive emotions are more satisfied with their jobs and perform better on work-related tasks (Krause, 2013).

Happy people tend to be satisfied with their job, gain high status, perform well, be productive, receive social support, and engage in less withdrawal behavior. Happiness leads to success. It should be investigated whether happiness will increase success in the future (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

Perceived career barrier affects career development. It is important to understand the value of a career path and the barriers to career advancement from a white collar workers perspective (Hashish, 2019). Barriers should be removed through appropriate courses and training activities to enable employees to reach their career goals. Chope and Johnson (2008) also claimed that career barriers hinder career development. Jayarathna and Vithana (2018) found that perceived barriers have a negative impact on career development, with developmental task-taking difficulty being the most dominant perceived barriers. In addition, it has been determined that these obstacles hinder the career development of human resources specialists. These findings are similar to the findings of the study.

Managers and leaders are advised to try to create a positive corporate culture. Conditions and environments that allow employees to thrive should be created. Positive emotions should be well positioned to accelerate success in the workplace. For this reason, happiness should not be expected while following the path to success, it should be started with it. It is possible to list the mission of leaders and managers in organizations as improving the careers of employees, increasing their happiness levels, and reducing the barriers they perceive. In the current study, we found effects of happiness on the relationship between career development and perceived career barriers. Since happiness in the workplace also affects the private lives of employees, managers can increase the happiness of employees both at work and in their private lives by removing career barriers. In addition, when hiring new personnel, managers can choose employees who give importance to career development and they should prepare plans for their careers. Because career development is also related to the developmental nature of the self. Therefore, both human resources professionals and managers should adopt an integrated approach that includes training and development as well as staff recruitment to increase the level of self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism of employees. Managers should offer career-education opportunities to their employees. Innovative strategies related to career

development should be followed. Barriers to employee career development should be helped to overcome and effective interventions should be appropriately addressed. Employees who encounter career barriers can acquire new skills and improve their flexibility to overcome these barriers. When there are some problems, it is necessary to protect professionalism mentally.

A longitudinal research design helps future researchers validate the findings of current studies. Future researchers can work by relating the variables of perceived career barrier, level of happiness, career development with culture. Thus, the effect of organizational or social culture can be revealed. Human resources professionals should also explore the severity of the perceived bearer barriers that prevent a company from rising to the top. In addition, future researchers can focus on the number and types of career-related barriers perceived by individuals and relate them to personality traits. Evaluating differences in perceived barriers based on age, social class, education level, cultural worldview will help clarify the role that perceptions play in career research and planning.

This study has some limitations. Since this article is primarily based on self-reported responses from employees who volunteered to participate, common method bias is expected. But the constructs in this article can only be measured by individual perception. It is suggested that future research should be based on a longer period. Future researchers can explore not only causal relationships between predictors and expected criteria, but also causal relationships between key outcome variables, based on different time frames when collecting data. While this study focused only on highly educated knowledge workers, future researchers could do similar work with workers with different educational backgrounds. Only CD, H and PCB variables are covered in this article. However, in this study, the gender of the participants was not included in the analysis as a control variable. This is one of the limitations of the study. Future researchers can improve the model by including the gender variable in the analysis.

4.1. Theoretical Implications

Above all, this article provides a conceptual framework for career development, happiness, and perceived career barriers. As the available literature shows, there is a gap in this regard. It is therefore of value to extend theoretical development. In addition, it is recommended that more studies be conducted that emphasize the equality of male and female employees. In particular, a new study can be done by adding the gender control variable to the variables of career development, happiness and perceived career barrier. Thus, the effect of the gender factor is seen. Finally, future studies may further explore the individual factor, catching clues to increase the effectiveness of career advancement and happiness, and reduce the effectiveness of perceived career barrier.

4.2. Practical Implications

Practitioners are advised to emphasize the equality of the male and female work system. Department managers should be careful in the face of obstacles to female employees. Male and female employees should have equal rights in the workplace. Despite all kinds of positive developments in international working conditions and human rights, women still cannot take the positions they deserve in working life. Based on the limitations determined in the literature section of the article, there are various factors that cause women's career development. Despite many positive regulations, it can be said that the career development of women has not reached the desired level. Business managers can be advised to make positive discrimination against women. Furthermore, joint social projects can be carried out to eliminate the problems arising from prejudices against women.

The study can also suggest how leaders, talent management managers, line managers should support the career development of employees by understanding the individual and organizational factors that affect job performance through career development and the perceived career barrier. The results of this study can serve as a good guide for managers who want career development and overcoming obstacles. In addition, managers should offer extensive coaching and mentoring opportunities for employees. Managers are advised to pay more attention to the causes of happiness. Managers can also encourage them by observing employee behavior, asking them direct open-ended questions, or writing monthly reports about what they like, dislike, worry about, and recommend. It is extremely important that managers meet the needs of their employees. This will ultimately increase happiness.

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