Job Satisfaction and Workplace Happiness as Predictors of Workplace Friendship across Psychological Counselors

Psikolojik Danışmanların İşyeri Arkadaşlığının Yordayıcısı Olarak İş Doyumu ve İşyeri Mutluluğu

Nilgün ÖZTÜRK[*] iD   Ezgi SUMBAS[**] iD

ABSTRACT: Workplace friendship is a unique type of relationship across all organizational levels between employees in the same or different departments and is an important factor in professional life. It has been suggested that school counselors need workplace friends, who are an important source of social support, to overcome the stress associated with the corporate environment and job conditions. Furthermore, workplace friendship fulfills several positive functions for both employees and institutions. Thus, the current study's first aim is to investigate psychological counselors' perceptions about workplace friendship based on various variables. The second aim is to determine the predictive role of job satisfaction and workplace well-being perceptions of psychological counselors in workplace friendship. The study sample included 339 school counselors, 232 female (68.4%) and 107 (31.6%) male and were in different provinces in Turkey. The study data were collected with the Workplace Friendship Scale, the Job Satisfaction Scale, the Workplace Well-Being Scale, and a Personal Demographics Form. T-test, ANOVA, and multiple regression analysis were employed to analyze the study data. The findings revealed significant correlations between workplace well-being, job satisfaction, and workplace friendship. Workplace well-being and job satisfaction explained 27% of the variation in workplace friendship. The study findings contributed to determining the factors that affect workplace relations of psychological counselors.

Keywords: Workplace friendship, job satisfaction, workplace well-being, psychological counselor.

ÖZ: İşyeri arkadaşlığı, benzer ya da farklı birimlerde çalışanlar arasında, kurumun her düzeyinde meydana gelen benzersiz bir ilişki türüdür ve iş yaşamında önemli bir konudur. Okul psikolojik danışmanlarının kurumsal ve işle ilgili yaşamış oldukları stresin üstesinden gelmelerinde önemli bir sosyal destek kaynağı olan işyeri arkadaşlarına ihtiyaç duydukları düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca hem çalışanlar hem de kurumlar için işyeri arkadaşlığının birçok olumlu işlevi bulunmaktadır. Bu bilgiler ışığında bu araştırmanın ilk amacı, psikolojik danışmanlarının işyeri arkadaşlık algılarının çeşitli değişkenlere göre incelenmesidir. İkinci amacı ise psikolojik danışmanların iş doyumu ve işyeri mutluluk algılarının, işyeri arkadaşlığını yordayıcı rolünü incelemektir. Araştırmanın örneklemini Türkiye'nin farklı illerinde çalışan, 232'si kadın (%68.4), 107'si erkek (%31.6) olmak üzere toplam 339 okul psikolojik danışmanı oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın verileri, İşyeri Arkadaşlığı Ölçeği, İş Doyum Ölçeği, İşyeri Mutluluğu Ölçeği ve Kişisel Bilgi Formu aracılığı ile toplanmıştır. Verilerin analizinde t testi, ANOVA ve çoklu regresyon analizi kullanılmıştır. Elde edilen bulgulara göre işyeri mutluluğu ile iş doyumu değişkenleri, işyeri arkadaşlığı ile anlamlı bir ilişki sergilemiştir. İşyeri mutluluğu ile iş doyumu işyeri arkadaşlığı puanlarındaki değişimin %27'sini açıklamaktadır. Bu çalışmadan elde edilen bulgular psikolojik danışmanların işyeri ilişkilerini etkileyen faktörlerin anlaşılmasına katkı sunmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: İşyeri arkadaşlığı, iş doyumu, işyeri mutluluğu, psikolojik danışman.

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[*] *Corresponding Author*: Asst. Prof. Dr., Inonu University, Malatya, Turkey, nilgun.ozturk@inonu.edu.tr, https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2593-9076

[**] Asst. Prof. Dr., Inonu University, Malatya, Turkey, ezgi.sumbas@inonu.edu.tr, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5450-6400

Friendship was defined as sharing common experiences and interests in a particular context (a workplace, a group of mothers, or a grief group) or an activity (volunteering sports group, a community) (Pedersen & Lewis, 2012). One of these contexts, workplaces that are considered social spaces (Sias et al., 2012), provide an effective premise for establishing workplace friendship. Employees spend about one third of their lives at work (Khaleel et al., 2016; Nielsen et al., 2000; Xiao et al., 2020), and since they need to establish close relations with others (Khaleel et al., 2016), it is natural for them to build up friendships at work (Berman et al., 2002; Choi & Ko, 2020). For various reasons, such as the relationship between workplace friendship and the job, the contribution of workplace friendship to informal institutional structure, and the increase in the demand for teamwork in institutions (the individual team members and how these individuals get along with each other), workplace friendships are important (Nielsen et al., 2000). In the last decade, academic interest in this topic has increased, and several studies have been conducted (Ferreira, 2019).

Workplace friendship is different from workplace relations (Potgieter, 2019). Employee relations in the workplace could take various forms, such as those between subordinates and superiors, colleagues, and friends. Workplace relations develop over time and turn into close relations known as friendships (Sias et al., 2003; 2004). Workplace friendship is considered a unique workplace relationship that occurs at every organizational level between employees in the same or different units (Mao, 2006; Omuris, 2019). Workplace friendship is a non-coercive interpersonal and voluntary relationship. In other words, workplace friendship is not imposed but voluntary (Wright, 1984). Although employees cannot usually choose their colleagues, they choose their friends in the workplace (Omuris, 2019; Sias et al., 2003).

Berman et al. (2002) described workplace friendship as a voluntary relationship between colleagues based on a formal business theme, which includes mutual commitment, trust, common values, and interests instead of familiarity. Pederson and Lewis (2012) concluded that workplace friendship indicates informal bonds between employees who support each other through various methods. Goldsmith (2007) argued that support could be instrumental (knowledge sharing and practical assistance) or emotional (care and empathy). Thus, workplace friendship is more than acquaintances (Potgieter, 2019). According to Jehn and Shah (1997), who described workplace friendship as a positive, warm/amiable close and relationship that includes intimacy and interpersonal connections between colleagues, workplace friendship includes open communication between two individuals who relax with and trust one another, laugh and joke with each other, contributing to the professional life of both individuals (Sias et al., 2004).

In addition to social functions, workplace friendship contributes to employee well-being (Sias & Cahill, 1998; Yüksel-Şahin & Şerbetcioğlu, 2020), reduction of workplace stress (Bader et al., 2013; Berman et al., 2002), career development (Bader et al., 2013; Markiewicz et al., 2000), organizational commitment (Durusu & Cemaloğlu, 2019; Nielsen et al., 2000), effective communication, fulfillment of the duties of employees and managers, and acceptance of institutional changes (Berman et al., 2002). On the other hand, when an employee does not have friends in the workplace, or these friendships deteriorate, it affects the employee's job efficacy, career, and stress level (Sias et al., 2004). Studies demonstrated that both institutional and personal

requirements are fulfilled with workplace friendships (Durusu & Cemaloğlu, 2019). Thus, workplace friendship both affects and is affected by institutional functions (Cemaloğlu & Duykuluoğlu, 2019). In this connection, various factors could affect workplace friendships. These could be classified as personal or contextual factors. Personal factors include gender, personality, and similarities (Mao et al., 2012, p. 256). It could be suggested that job satisfaction (Angi, 2002) and the employees' workplace well-being could be consideredcontextual factors that affect workplace friendship (Bader et al., 2013; Jones, 2010). When compared to personal factors, contextual factors play a key role in developing workplace friendships (Chen et al., 2013).

Job satisfaction is the emotional reactions of individuals to their jobs (Coetzee et al., 2010). According to Herzberg's two-factor theory, internal and external factors affect job satisfaction. Internal factors include motivational elements such as success, recognition, the job itself, responsibility, advancement, and development, while external factors include elements associated with the work environment such as corporate policy and management, supervision, work conditions, salary, relations with colleagues, personal life, relations with subordinates, status, and security (Smerek & Peterson, 2007). While job satisfaction is an attitude that includes a cognitive analysis of the job (job dimensions), happiness is more comprehensive. In other words, while happiness entails personal emotions, job satisfaction reflects the analysis of the job. Thus, individuals could be happy with their jobs but could develop negative attitudes towards their jobs, or on the contrary, could love their jobs but feel unhappy at work (Wright & Doherty, 1998). Diener (2000) defined happiness as a frequent experience of positive emotions, a rare experience of negative emotions, and high satisfaction with life.

According to Heller et al. (2002), happiness is an emotional response to the entirety of one's life. Since individuals cannot separate their professional lives, emotions, and thoughts and their thoughts and emotions about their lives, they could reflect professional problems into their domestic lives and their domestic problems into their professional lives (Yüksel-Şahin & Sarıdemir, 2017). Thus, happiness in the workplace plays a key role in individuals' lives (Karayaman, 2021). The concept of happiness in workplace is not only about good and positive emotional experiences (Saenghiran, 2013, p. 22); in other words, it is more than job satisfaction since it includes a meaningful professional life (Bataineh, 2019; Saenghiran, 2013). Workplace happiness is associated with optimal employment of personal resources to overcome difficulties (Coetzee et al., 2010). Since job plays a central role in people's lives (Coetzee et al., 2010) and workplace happiness affects the life of an individual outside of work, in other words, happiness at the workplace also affects happiness in life (Keser, 2018), happiness at the workplace is increasingly important (Yozgat & Bilginoğlu, 2020).

Due to the significance of workplace friendship, several studies have been conducted with occupational groups in various industries. Although there are a few studies on teachers, no study was conducted on the workplace friendships of psychological counselors. However, several studies focused on workplace friendship (Ferreira, 2019; Tse & Dasborough, 2008), and it was reported that the factors that affected workplace friendship should be investigated (Nielsen et al., 2000). Furthermore, it was emphasized that the significance of workplace friendship is more evident in certain professions or professional groups that require emotional labor or

those with high-stress levels (Choi & Ko, 2020, p. 5). School counselors have to provide crisis intervention services for a high number of students who experience stressful and complex problems such as substance abuse (Pau et al., 2020), suicide (Capuzzi, 2002; Hopson & Kim, 2004; Pau et al., 2020; Poland, 1994), child abuse and neglect (Wanlass et al., 2006), conflicts with parents (Hopson & Kim, 2004), bullying or exposure to violence (Elledge et al., 2016; Poland, 1994), crises associated with a new school (school phobia, psychosomatic symptoms associated with schooling, sleep problems), crises associated with academic failure (failing a grade, failing exams), crises associated with sex (unexpected pregnancies in adolescents, gay and lesbian adolescents), and future anxiety (Tanacıoğlu, 2018, p.75). Furthermore, the school itself is a stressful environment (Young & Lambie, 2007, p. 107). Also, the job descriptions vary based on the grade of the students for whom the counseling services are provided (Sisson & Bullis, 1992, p. 109). Job descriptions of psychological counselors are detailed in the Guidance and Psychological Counseling Services Regulation published by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE, 2020). Psychological counselors should collaborate with school administrators and teachers and participate in the school board as team members to fulfill the duties specified in regulations, in other words, to meet the needs of all students effectively and adequately (ASCA, 2012; DeMato & Curcio, 2004, p. 243). This requirement for collaboration emphasizes the relationship-oriented aspects of teamwork, such as closeness, personal communication, adoption of similar values, and friendship (Tse & Dasborough, 2008, p. 204).

In educational institutions, school counselors perform tasks related to developmental and preventive services, remedial services, and support services. Some of these services include implementation of counseling activities, application and evaluation of individual recognition techniques, individual counseling and group counseling, psychosocial support services, referral and counseling services, and school guidance and counseling program (MoNE, 2020). School counselors experience institutional and work-related stress when implementing the comprehensive school guidance and counseling program (DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Young & Lambie, 2007). The work-related stress experienced by counselors is induced by their interaction with clients/students (Young & Lambie, 2007), the ambiguity of the roles (Culbreth et al., 2005; DeMato & Curcio, 2004), rigid hierarchical structures, and lack of adequate institutional supervision and support (Young & Lambie, 2007). These stressors could include workplace stress associated with professional relations, long work hours, paperwork, and meaningless tasks that take away the employee's sense of control (role stress) (Young & Lambie, 2007). Professional stress associated with relations could be induced by an unhappy social environment, lack of collaboration, and lack of colleague support (Young & Lambie, 2007). Another factor that leads to stress in psychological counselors is role stress (Young & Lambie, 2007, p.104). There are still problems with the roles and responsibilities of psychological counselors. It was suggested that several factors are associated with role stress, such as work hours of psychological counselors (6 hours per day), work style differences between counselors and teachers (they do not instruct classes, give exams, or supervise), limitations of their activities to the guidance room, high expectations of certain administrators and teachers from guidance services (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Zalaquett & Chatters, 2012) or expectations that do not match the counselors' roles (Shoffner & Williamson, 2000), administrative tasks that are

not included in the job description of psychological counselors (Owen & Owen, 2008), and the assignment of disciplinary tasks (Evans et al., 2011). As stated in detail above, school counselors face many stressful situations while working in the school environment and need social support in this context. Providing emotional and instrumental support (Goldsmith, 2007), workplace friendship is very important for employees. In addition, considering the services of psychological counselors in the school, the study of the concept of workplace friendship, which also affects job satisfaction, will also allow the school's guidance services to improve. Thus, it is important to determine the factors that predict psychological counselors' workplace friendship, as Choi and Ko (2020) mentioned.

It was reported that counselors, who experience higher stress levels, received lower levels of social support (Sowa et al., 1994). Thus, the development of social relations in the workplace and the significant contribution of workplace friendships to overall social interaction and social support are important (Young & Lambie, 2007). It could be suggested that school counselors need workplace friends who could provide social support, to cope with corporate and job stress. Also, since workplace friendship has several contributions to both employees and institutions, further research is required to determine the variables that affect workplace friendship. The current study's findings would fill the literature gap and contribute to determining the factors that affect the workplace relations of school counselors. Thus, the first aim of the present study was to investigate the perceptions of psychological counselors about workplace friendship based on various variables. In this context, it was tried to determine the variables (gender, meeting outside of school, level of intimacy) that affect the workplace friendship of school counselors. Gender is thought to have special importance in friendship relations. According to Bank and Hansford (2000), women are more supportive and closer to friendships than men. In the study of Roy et al. (2000), women compared to men state that they want to spend more time with their close friends in difficult times and celebrate positive events in their lives with their close friends. It is also seen in the literature that it is emphasized that workplace friendship in public institutions differs according to gender (Song, 2006). In Keleş's (2018) study, it was found that female teachers' perceptions of friendship were significantly different from male teachers' perceptions of friendship. Based on the literature, it is thought that gender may affect the workplace friendship of psychological counselors. Another variable that is thought to affect workplace friendship is meeting outside of school. It is stated that interacting outside the institution in friendship relations will support the development of friendships (Sias, 2009; Sias & Cahill, 1998). Therefore, in the workplace, people try to establish social relations with their friends and carry these relations outside the institution (Baron & Pfeffer, 1994). Therefore, moving relationships out of the organization may affect workplace friendship.

Another important point about friendship relations is that the degree of closeness of individuals with their friends may differ. Sullivan (1953) describes intimacy as showing mutual interest and sensitivity, mutual sharing, and revealing feelings and thoughts. Intimacy in intimate relationships involves frequent meetings and self-disclosure. Such relationships require strong trust, the components of which are being sure of acceptance and love, loyalty, honesty, care, and unselfish expectation of intimacy (Govier & Verwoerd, 2002). Considering that providing all these elements in a

relationship requires a serious effort, it is understandable that the degree of intimacy of individuals in friendship relationships may differ. Therefore, the level of intimacy in relationships can also affect workplace friendships. The second aim was to investigate the predictive role of job satisfaction and workplace happiness perceptions of psychological counselors in workplace friendship. Accordingly, the research problems were determined as follows:

1. Is there a significant difference between the perceptions of psychological counselors about workplace friendship based on gender?

2. Is there a significant difference between the perceptions of psychological counselors about workplace friendship based on their friendship with colleagues outside of the school?

3. Is there a significant difference between the perceptions of psychological counselors about workplace friendship based on their intimacy with workplace friends?

4. Are job satisfaction and workplace happiness of psychological counselors significant predictors of workplace friendship?

Method

Research Model

The current study was conducted with the relational survey model. Relational survey aims to determine correlations and causalities between two or more variables. In relational survey model, it is also possible to test one of the variables as the dependent variable and the other variables as independent variables besides determining the correlations between the variables. In studies conducted to determine the correlations between variables, the presence, and direction of causality are not clear. Studies conducted to determine the predictor could reveal the effect size of the independent variable on dependent variables (Büyüköztürk et al., 2013).

The Study Sample

Convenience sampling was employed in the study. In this method, the researcher chooses a situation that is close and easy to access. This sampling method is often used when the researcher is not able to use the other sampling method (Kılıç, 2013). The study sample included school counselors employed in 55 provinces in 7 regions of Turkey during the 2021-2022 academic year. 121 (35.7%) participants were employed in high schools, 101 (29.8%) were employed in junior high schools, 93 (27.4%) were employed in primary schools, and 24 (7.1%) were employed in preschool education institutions. Among the participants, 232 (68.4%) were female, and 107 (31.6%) were male. The mean participant age was $\overline{X}=33.37$, and 5 participants had PhDs (1.5%), 64 (18.9%) had graduate degrees, and 270 had undergraduate degrees (79.6%). 243 (71.7%) participants were intimate with their colleagues outside the school, while 96 (26.3%) did not meet with their colleagues outside the school. Finally, 155 participants (45.7%) stated that they were very intimate with their colleagues at work, 121 (35.7%) stated that they have a relation only at school, and 63 (18.6%) stated that they kept their distance.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Variable		*f*	%
1.Gender	Female	232	68.4
	Male	107	31.6
2.Education	Undergraduate	270	79.6
	Graduate	64	18.9
	PhD	5	1.5
3.Institution of employment	High school	121	35.7
	Junior high school	101	29.8
	Primary school	93	27.4
	Preschool	24	7.1
4.Intimacy outside of the school	Yes	243	71.7
	Not	96	26.3
5.Intimacy with workplace friends	Very close, friends	155	45.7
	Only in the workplace	121	35.7
	We preserve a distance	63	18.6
TOTAL		339	100

Data Collection Instruments

Personal Information Form

Participant demographics such as gender, age, school of employment, education level, and workplace relations were collected with a personal information form developed by the authors.

Workplace Friendship Scale

The Workplace Friendship scale, developed by Neilsen et al. (2000), and adapted to the Turkish language by Kıral (2016), includes 12 items and two sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions are "Friendship Opportunity" (sample item: I have the opportunity to get to know the people I work with at my school) and "Dominant Friendship" (sample item: I make good friends at my school). The highest scale score is 60, and the lowest scale score is 12. The scale includes 5-point Likert-type positive items. Higher scores indicate higher workplace friendship level. The total score was calculated by summing the scores given to all items in the scale. Cronbach alpha coefficients of the sub-dimensions were determined as 76 and .78, respectively in the Turkish version of the scale and .84 for the entire scale (Kıral, 2016). The Cronbach alpha coefficient was .70 for the entire scale in the current study.

Job Satisfaction Scale

The Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, the short form, was employed in the study. The scale was developed by Weiss et al. (1967). The scale was adapted to the

Turkish language by Baycan (1985). The scale has two sub-dimensions: Internal Satisfaction (sample item: always keeps me occupied) and External Satisfaction (sample item: my managers' decision-making skills).

The scale consists of 20 items. The overall satisfaction score is calculated by taking the average of the sub-dimension scores. The highest scale score is 5, and the lowest scale score is 1. All scale items are positive and rated with a 5-point Likert-type grading. A high score indicates high job satisfaction. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale was reported as .78. The Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated as .93 in this study.

Workplace Happiness Scale

The one-dimensional and 5-item scale was developed by the WHO Collaborating Center for Mental Health and Frederiksberg General Hospital Psychiatric Research Unit to measure employees' happiness in the workplace. The scale was adapted to Turkish language by Alparslan (2016) as a 6-point Likert-type scale. The reliability coefficient of the original scale was .83 and the scale was highly reliable. A high scale score indicates high workplace happiness. The last scale item is scored in reverse, while the rest are positive items. The total score was calculated by summing the scores given to all items in the scale. The items include judgements such as "I feel cheerful and pleasant at work " "When I arrive at work in the morning, I feel vigorous." In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated as .88.

Data Collection and Analysis

After the approvals of the relevant institutions were obtained for the study, the study data were collected on Google Forms. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were employed to analyze the study data. The analyses were conducted with software, and the significance level was accepted as .05.

Before the analysis of the study data, a normal distribution of the data was determined with kurtosis and skewness coefficients. A kurtosis and skewness value between -3 and +3 (Tabachnick et al., 2007) is accepted as an indication of normal distribution. In the current study, kurtosis and skewness varied between -0.700 and +0.800; thus, the data exhibited normal distribution. The presence of autocorrelation across the variables was tested with the Durbin-Watson coefficient. Durbin-Watson coefficient was calculated as 2.138 in the study. A Durbin-Watson coefficient ($0 < d < 4$) close to zero indicates an extremely positive correlation, while a coefficient close to 4 indicates an extremely negative correlation. Durbin-Watson coefficient could be interpreted as an indicator of no autocorrelation across the variables (Kalaycı, 2008). A status index of higher than 30 indicates multicollinearity between the predictive variables. In the study, these values were calculated as 11.350 and 17.190. Thus, there was no multicollinearity. Also, multicollinearity across the independent variables of the study was tested with the variance inflation factor. A variance inflation factor of less than 10 indicates no multicollinearity across the independent variables. The variance inflation factor (VIF) for the independent variables was 2.18 in the study; thus, there was no multicollinearity, and regression analysis could be applied (Büyüköztürk, 2009).

The total score was calculated by summing the scores given to all items in the scales. In other words, the evaluation was made based on the total score calculation.

Ethical Procedures

This study ethics committee's approval was received with the session date and number 09.12.2021/2021/24-02 from University Research and Publication Ethics Committees, Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee. Scientific, ethical, and citation rules were followed during the writing process of this study. No falsification was made on the collected data.

Findings

In this section, significant differences between workplace friendship scores based on gender and significant difference between workplace friendship scores based on intimacy outside of the school variable were determined and presented. Then the results of the multiple linear regression analysis conducted on the study variables are presented.

Descriptive Statistics

Workplace friendship was the dependent variable in the study, and the independent study variables were job satisfaction and workplace happiness. The arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and minimum-maximum scores for the dependent and independent variables are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

Variable	$\bar{x}$	SD	Min	Max
Workplace friendship	35.34	5.523	14	46
Job satisfaction	3.35	.676	1	5
Workplace happiness	20.93	4.461	5	30

As seen in Table 2, the lowest workplace friendship score of the school counselors was 14, and the highest score was 46. Furthermore, the arithmetic mean of the workplace friendship scores of the school counselors was 35.34.

It was observed that the lowest job satisfaction score of the school counselors was 1, and the highest score was 5. Also, the arithmetic mean of the job satisfaction scores of school counselors was 3.35.

It was determined that the lowest workplace happiness score of school psychological counselors was 5, and the highest score was 30. Also, the arithmetic mean of the workplace happiness scores of school counselors was 20.93.

Workplace Friendship, Job Satisfaction and Workplace Happiness

As seen in Table 3, there were no significant differences between workplace friendship scores based on gender ($p>0.05$). The differences between the female and male participants' workplace friendship scores were insignificant.

Table 3

The Results of the t-test Conducted to Determine the Variations in Workplace Friendship, Job Satisfaction, and Workplace Happiness Scores of Counselors Based on Gender Variable

	Gender	*n*	$\bar{x}$	*ss*	*Sd*	*t*	*p*
Workplace friendship	Female	232	35.05	.490	5.078	-.647	.518
	Male	107	35.47	.375	5.722		

p<0.05*

Table 4 shows significant differences between the workplace friendship scores based on intimacy outside of the school variable (*p<0.05*). The workplace friendship score of school counselors who were intimate with their colleagues outside of the school ($\bar{x}$=37.08) was significantly higher than those the school counselors ($\bar{x}$=30.93) who were not intimate with their colleagues outside the school. Those who were intimate with their colleagues outside of the school had higher workplace friendship perceptions.

Table 4

The Results of the t-test Conducted to Determine the Variations in Workplace Friendship of Counselors Based on Intimacy outside of the School Variable

	Intimacy	*n*	$\bar{x}$	*ss*	*Sd*	*t*	*p*
Workplace friendship	Yes	243	37.08	.298	4.646	10.656	.000*
	No	96	30.93	.522	5.117		

As seen in Table 5, there was a significant difference between the mean workplace friendship scores based on the level of intimacy. The mean workplace friendship score of the school counselors who were very close and friendly with their colleagues ($\bar{x}$=38.58) was significantly higher than the mean workplace friendship score of the school counselors who only communicated with their colleagues at work ($\bar{x}$=32.23) and those who kept their distance ($\bar{x}$=33.34). Colleagues who were close friends had better workplace friendship perceptions.

Table 5

The Results of the ANOVA Conducted to Determine the Variations in Workplace Friendship of Counselors Based on Intimacy outside of the School Variable

	Intimacy level	*n*	$\bar{x}$	*ss*	*Sd*	*F*	*p*	Significance
Workplace Friendship	We are very close	155	38.58	.341	4.247	70.468	.000*	1-2
	We communicate only in the workplace	121	32.23	.419	4.616			1-3
	We keep our distance	63	33.34	.702	5.576			

p<0.05*

Table 6

The Results of Multiple Regression Conducted to Determine the Prediction of Workplace Friendship of Psychological Counselors by Job Satisfaction and Workplace Happiness

Variable	B	Standard Error	β	t	p	Paired r	Partial r
Constant	20.535	1.341	-	15.314	0.000	-	-
Job satisfaction	1.835	0.593	0.225	3.094	0.002	0.482	0.143
Workplace Happiness	0.413	0.090	0.334	4.594	0.000	0.507	0.213
R=0.527	R^2=0.278						
$F_{(2-336)}$=64.622	p=0.000						

The multiple linear regression analysis conducted to determine the predictive power of job satisfaction and workplace happiness variables on workplace friendship revealed that there was a significant correlation between job satisfaction, workplace happiness, and workplace friendship (R=0.527, R^2=0.278) ($F_{(2-336)}$= =64.622, $p<0.01$). Together, these two variables explained 27% of the variation in workplace friendship. The standardized regression coefficients revealed that the relative significance of the predictor variables on workplace friendship was as follows: job satisfaction β=0.334, and job satisfaction β=0.225. It was determined that both predictive variables ($p<0.05$) were significant predictors of workplace friendship. The analysis of the correlation between the predictor variables and workplace friendship demonstrated the following correlations: job satisfaction r=0.482, [when the effect of the other predictor variable is controlled (r=0.143)] and workplace happiness r=0.507 [when the effect of the other predictor variable is controlled (r =0.213)].

Discussion and Conclusion

The current study investigated whether workplace happiness and job satisfaction predicted workplace friendship in school counselors. The study findings demonstrated that workplace happiness and job satisfaction were significant predictors of workplace friendship. Thus, it could be suggested that when school counselors' workplace happiness and job satisfaction levels are high, their workplace friendship levels will also be high. It was determined that the significance ranking of the significant predictors of workplace friendship was workplace happiness followed by job satisfaction. The study findings also demonstrated no significant difference between workplace friendship levels of school counselors based on the gender variable, while there was a significant difference based on the intimacy of their friendship outside of the school.

It was revealed that there were no differences between the perceptions of school psychological counselors about workplace friendship based on the gender variable. Similar to this finding, certain studies in the literature reported no differences between workplace friendship scores based on gender (Berman et al., 2002; Bozanoğlu, 2020; Karaköy, 2019; Sias et al., 2003; Şahinbaş & Erigüç, 2019), while others reported differences between workplace friendship scores based on gender (Bader et al., 2013;

Song, 2006). Song (2006) reported that workplace friendship levels of public servants differed based on gender and indicated that the perceptions of males were more positive when compared to females. It could be suggested that there was no difference between the workplace friendships scores of school counselors based on gender since the friendship of men and women are similar (Sias et al., 2003). Men and women establish friendships with colleagues for similar reasons. Previous studies reported these reasons as individual factors (i.e., personality and similarities), workplace factors (i.e., affinity and shared tasks), and other organizational factors (i.e., socialization and life events) in both men and women (Sias et al., 2003).

The study determined that workplace friendship scores differed based on the intimacy of psychological counselors with their colleagues outside of the school. Individuals could interact socially both inside and outside of the workplace. This provides opportunities for individuals to get to know other traits of their colleagues (Zarankin & Kunkel, 2019). The interactions among individuals in more than a single environment allow them to learn more about one another compared to a certain environment, improving their friendship (Sias & Cahill, 1998). Based on the theoretical perspective, there are three types of social relations in the workplace: "professional acquaintances," "colleagues," and "social friends". "Professional acquaintances" are colleagues who establish formal relations at work. Interactions between professional acquaintances are task-oriented, and do not entail like or dislike. On the other hand, "colleagues" have social interaction at work. Colleagues can go out for lunch; however, their socialization is limited to the workplace. They do not participate in leisure activities outside of the work environment. Colleague relations can turn into social friendships. "Social friends" are colleagues who meet outside of work (Ohtake & Chadsey, 1999). Thus, friendship between colleagues is only temporary when it is based on professional tasks (project or common location, etc.) (Berman et al., 2002). Once these factors change, workplace friendships could end unless individuals develop new common ground. However, it could be assumed that individuals do not initiate and sustain workplace friendships to achieve organizational goals or assist in professional activities (Morrison, 2009). Most people aim to establish social relations with their friends, both in and outside of the workplace, for the intrinsic rewards of friendship (Baron & Pfeffer, 1994), and they prefer to take these relations outside of work. It was also observed that individuals are motivated to make friends in return for the rewards of that friendship (Morrison & Nolan, 2007). These rewards could include social and emotional support (Sias et al., 2003), self-disclosure, and common interests and activities (Morrison, 2009). It could be suggested that internal rewards of friendship could affect the extension of workplace relations outside workplace. This could explain the more positive perceptions of psychological counselors who meet with their colleagues outside the school workplace about workplace friendship.

It was identified in the study that psychological counselors' perceptions of workplace friendship differ according to the level of intimacy. It was observed that psychological counselors who stated that they were very close and friendly had higher workplace friendship perceptions. In the literature, it was reported that close friendships often include relations with colleagues (Morrison, 2009). In a study on the transformation of workplace friendship from acquaintance to colleague, from friendship to close friendship, and from close friendship to best friends, Sias and Cahill (1998)

determined that each transformation was associated with a different type of communication. With each transformation, communication between individuals becomes more intimate, less cautious, and less superficial. As relations deepen, intimacy, trust, and self-disclosure become more common. Thus, the improvement of relations with friends in the workplace affects the level of intimacy. The workplace friendship perceptions of psychological counselors who stated that they were friends differed from those of the other groups. It could be suggested that the intimacy of the friendship was effective in that finding.

The analysis conducted to determine the presence of significant correlations between workplace friendship, workplace happiness, and job satisfaction of school psychological counselors revealed that there were moderate, positive, and significant correlations between workplace friendship and workplace happiness and job satisfaction, and workplace happiness and job satisfaction predicted workplace friendship. This could be an indicator that the workplace happiness and job satisfaction levels of school psychological counselors could have a positive effect on workplace friendship. Similar to these findings, certain studies conducted on different occupational groups reported a correlation between workplace friendship and workplace happiness (Alparslan, 2016; Erer, 2021; Sias & Cahill, 1998; Suojanen, 2017; Wesarat et al., 2014; Yap & Badri, 2020). Deal and Levenson (2016) emphasized the significance of workplace friendships and reported that employees enjoyed their time at work more when they had workplace friendships. Bader et al. (2013) mentioned a correlation between employee happiness and workplace friendship. Since interpersonal relations play a key role in our happiness (Fisher, 2010), the emphasis on workplace friendships (Mao et al., 2012) explained the correlation between workplace happiness and workplace friendship of psychological counselors.

It was also found in the study that there was a positive correlation between workplace friendship and job satisfaction. Consistent with the present study findings, certain studies conducted on different occupational groups reported a correlation between workplace friendship and job satisfaction (Amjad et al., 2015; Huang, 2016; Markiewicz et al., 2000; Morrison, 2004; Nielsen et al., 2000; Richer et al., 2002; Yavuzkurt & Kıral, 2020). It was emphasized that workplace friendship is important for improving the employees' professional attitude and performance (Song, 2006), and supportive workplace friends positively affect job satisfaction (Tabancalı, 2016). A limited number of studies focused on the job satisfaction of school counselors. DeMato and Curcio (2004) indicated that participating psychological counselors were satisfied with their jobs; however, their overall job satisfaction had decreased during the last decade. Mao et al. (2012) reported that workplace friendship motivated employees. Furthermore, emotional support, which referred to "caring, concern, empathy, and value assurance" expressions of workplace friends, informational support, and instrumental support that recognizes "not only knowledge but also advice or new perspectives on a problem" or "resources" provided by a coworker have positive functions such as support for "goods and services" (Goldsmith, 2004, p. 13). The support provided by colleagues is different from the support offered by other friends and family members since workplace friendship allows the employees to understand workplace problems and experiences in a way that outside friends and family could not (Ray, 1987). The fact that workplace friendship could improve job satisfaction (Huang, 2016, p. 579) by providing

further resources and assistance and facilitating the job could explain the positive correlation between workplace friendship and job satisfaction of psychological counselors.

As in any research, the current study has limitations. The first limitation was the fact that the school counselors were contacted via Google Forms. Due to this limitation, 339 school counselors were contacted. Another limitation of the study was that most school counselors were female. The number of female counselors was higher than the number of male counselors. Also, data on the gender of the friends of school counselors were not collected. The gender of the colleagues could also have an impact on the individual's professional life (Morrison, 2009). Another limitation of the current study was that a separate measurement tool was not employed to determine the intimacy level of workplace friendships. The intimacy level reflects the personal perceptions of psychological counselors. Furthermore, although culture affects interpersonal relations (Hung, 2004), the study sample included only psychological counselors employed in Turkey. The lack of cultural diversity in the sample limited the generalizability of the findings.

The present study demonstrated that psychological counselors' workplace happiness and job satisfaction were significant predictors of workplace friendship. This could be useful for both school psychological counselors and administrators. Administrators could support the development of positive workplace friendships by determining the factors that affect psychological counselors' workplace happiness (e.g., communications with administrators, positive work conditions, rewards, and appreciation, etc.) and implementing these factors to improve their workplace happiness in the institution. Also, it could be recommended that administrators should spend conscious efforts to organize events both inside and outside the organization to support social interaction among their employees and allow effective communication. Especially extracurricular events are important since they could provide opportunities for individuals to get to know each other better. Considering the significance of workplace friendship and the lack of studies on workplace friendships among psychological counselors, further studies that would investigate different variables (personality traits, organizational commitment, perceptions of justice, etc.) that could impact workplace friendship among school counselors could be recommended. Due to the effect of culture on interpersonal relations, it could be recommended to conduct comparative studies on the workplace friendship of counselors in different cultures. Also, future qualitative studies would allow in-depth exploration of workplace friendships among school counselors and determine the nature of these relationships and the impact of the colleague's gender on professional life.

Statement of Responsibility

Nilgün Öztürk; data collection, writing abstract introduction, conclusion sections and review. Ezgi Sumbas; methodology, analysis, and writing results section and review.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Author Bios

Nilgün Öztürk, PhD is an assistant professor in Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling at Inonu University, Turkey. Dr. Öztürk has been working at Department of Educational Sciences, Division of Guidance and Psychological Counseling, Inonu University since 2018. Her research interests lie in the friendship, quality of friendship, friendship skill, risky behavior, bullying.

Ezgi Sumbas, PhD is an assistant professor in Department of Guidance and Psychological Counseling at Inonu University, Turkey. Dr. Sumbas has been working at Department of Educational Sciences, Inonu University since 2015. Her research interests lie in the sibling relationships, quality of sibling relationships, child and adolescence development and psychodrama.

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