

# The Mediating Role of Shyness on the Relationship Between Academic Satisfaction and Flourishing among Pre-Service Music Teachers

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## Abstract

This study examined shyness as a potential mediator in the relationship between academic satisfaction and flourishing among Turkish music teacher education students. Using a questionnaire-based survey design, data were collected from 162 (100 female and 62 male) pre-service music teachers. The Shyness Scale, the Academic Life Satisfaction Scale and the Flourishing Scale were used for data collection. The bootstrap re-sampling method was employed using Hayes's SPSS PROCESS macro. Results of bivariate correlations showed that, higher academic satisfaction was associated with increased flourishing as expected, whereas higher shyness was associated with decreased flourishing. The mediation model was significant for the contribution of shyness. These findings offer useful implications for the instructors of pre-service music teachers and counseling professionals in higher education.

**Keywords:** flourishing, academic satisfaction, shyness, pre-service music teachers

## 1. Introduction

Supporting students' psychological well-being has received a great deal of attention in institutions of higher education, since it seems imperative for these institutions to prepare their students not just academically but also holistically for the demands of the complex contemporary world. In this regard, numerous studies have been carried out on students' well-being with the aim of promoting psychological functioning among students on university campuses, since psychological well-being, in turn, is found to be related with several positive academical (Datu, 2018), physical (Singh & Junnarkar, 2015), psychological (Singh et al., 2015), and social (Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005) outcomes. Accordingly, psychological well-being has been reported to positively affect success and productivity; contribute to body health and mental health; and increase quantity and quality in social relations.

Promoting psychological well-being across pre-service music teachers seems to have a special importance, since performing music has been considered as a disruptor of well-being (Philippe et al., 2013), because of many challenges, such as anxiety and distress (Antonini & Güsewell, 2016; Kenny, Driscoll, & Ackermann, 2014), physical pain (Kenny & Ackerman, 2015), and musculoskeletal disorders (Cruder et al., 2018), musicians face in their practice. Additionally, it has been reported in previous empirical studies that, although depression, anxiety and stress have been reported to be prevalent among students in higher education (Nerdrum, Rustøen, & Rønnestad, 2006; Wong, Cheung, Chan, Ma, & Tang, 2006), music education students are in a more disadvantaged position with regards to depression, anxiety, and stress compared to other college student populations (Demirbatır, 2015; Spahn, Strukely, & Lehmann, 2004). Higher rates of fatigue (Hildebrandt, Nubling, & Candia, 2012), burnout and stress (Bernhard, 2005; Sternbach, 2008) have also been reported for music education students.

In recent literature, the concept of "flourishing" was used by Diener et al. (2010), in a comprehensive well-being theory, to describe psychological and social human functioning. In this theory, flourishing is used to define human functioning in terms of success in important life areas like universal human needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryff & Singer, 1998), flow, interest and engagement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990); purpose and meaning (Ryff & Singer, 1998; Seligman, 2002); social support and optimism (Brown, Nesse, Vinokur, & Smith, 2003, 2003). Besides, the theory of flourishing emphasizes the value of social capital for the well-being of a society (Helliwell,

Barrington-Leigh, Harris, & Huang, 2009; Putnam, 2000).

### *1.1 The Relationship Between Flourishing and Academic Satisfaction*

Results of studies devoted to understanding the academic correlates of flourishing showed that flourishing was related with mastery-approach goal orientation, high self-control, high grades, and low procrastination in undergraduate students (Howell, 2009); more goal orientation in adults (Keyes, 2005); and less truancy, more self-determination, and more involvement in and satisfaction with school in adolescents (Keyes, 2010).

Academic or educational satisfaction has been defined as “enjoyment of one’s role or experience as a student” (Lent, Singley, Sheu, Schmidt, & Schmidt, 2007, p.87), and found to be negatively correlated with procrastination, whereas positively correlated with academic achievement, person-environment fit (Balkis & Duru, 2016), and sense of belonging (Duru & Balkis, 2015), has not been examined in relation with flourishing in undergraduate students, yet. However, considering the academic correlates of flourishing, and reported correlates of academic satisfaction, high academic satisfaction could be expected to contribute flourishing among undergraduate music education students.

### *1.2 Shyness: In Relationship with Flourishing and Academic Satisfaction*

In ordinary language, shyness generally used “to label feelings of anxiety and inhibition in social situations” (Cheek & Melchior, 1990, p. 47). The positive relationship between shyness and anxiety was also supported by results of empirical studies (Traub, 1983). Moreover, it has been reported that shy people tend to have lower self-esteem and higher guilt and anxiety than unshy people (Fehr & Stamps, 1979). They have higher loneliness scores (Cheek & Bush, 1981; Maroldo, 1981; Zimbardo, 1977) which in turn decreases life satisfaction (Salimi, 2011). Additionally, shyness, has been found negatively associated with academic engagement (Hughes & Coplan, 2010), self-reported creativity and creative process engagement (Tan, Shan, & Khai-Lee, 2017); and creative performance (Kemple, David, & Wang, 1996). Therefore, based on all these empirical findings shyness would seem to be an undesirable characteristic for music performers and pre-service music teachers. It could be expected to be negatively correlated with both academic satisfaction and flourishing among pre-service music teachers.

### *1.3 The Present Study*

Although the existent literature indicate that academic satisfaction and shyness have relations with flourishing, no study to date has investigated the mediating role of shyness on the relationship between academic satisfaction and flourishing in pre-service music teachers. The present study aimed to examine shyness as a potential mediator in the relationship between academic satisfaction and flourishing among Turkish pre-service music teachers. The following research questions were proposed to examine predictive and mediational associations among the study variables: (1) How do academic satisfaction relate to flourishing? (2) How do shyness relate to flourishing? and (3) Do shyness mediate the relationship between academic satisfaction and flourishing?

## **2. Method**

### *2.1 Study Group*

The study was carried out on Music Teacher Education undergraduate program students recruited from the Faculty of Education of a state-funded Turkish university. The department of Music Teacher Education offers four-year undergraduate education to bring up music teachers for state and private elementary, secondary and high schools. Graduates also have the opportunities to work in choirs or orchestras within the body of municipalities or the ministry of culture, open their own music schools, or make a career as a professional musician.

A convenience sampling method was used in the study. The participants collaborated voluntarily and received no compensation. A sample of 162 students participated in the mediation model testing. The participants ranged in age between 18 and 33 ( $M = 20.60$  and  $SD = 2.21$ ). Females composed of 61.7% of the sample, whereas males composed of 38.3%. As for their class standing, 25.9% were senior students. Proportions of the participants were similar (24.7%) for freshman, sophomores and juniors.

### *2.2 Participant (Subject) Characteristics Measurement Instruments*

Three self-reported measurement instruments were used in the study to collect data.

1) Flourishing Scale (FS; Diener et al., 2010). The Flourishing Scale is an 8-item unidimensional scale, which measures social-psychological well-being. The items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Higher scores obtained from the FS refer higher well-being. Turkish version of the FS revealed satisfactory evidence of reliability and validity (Telef, 2010). In this study, Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was calculated as .83 for the FH.

2) Academic Life Satisfaction Scale (ALSS; Schmidt, Oswald, Friede, Imus, & Merritt, 2008). The ALSS is a 5-item unidimensional scale, which measures the degree of academic satisfaction on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores obtained from the ALSS refer higher academic satisfaction. Turkish version of the ALSS revealed satisfactory evidence of reliability and validity (Balkis, 2013). In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .90 for the ALSS.

3) Shyness Scale (SS; Güngör, 2001). The SS is a 20-item unidimensional scale, which measures the degree of self-perceived shyness. The items of the SS are rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores obtained from the SS refer to the people who perceive themselves as shy. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .95 for the SS.

### 2.3 Procedure

Data were collected in December 2019, in a classroom setting before class hours. Participants were informed about the research and were asked to answer the measurement tools. They gave their informed consent to be involved in the study. Anonymity was assured.

### 2.4 Data Analyses

To check up for missing data and outliers, first, preliminary analyses were conducted. There were no response sets having missing values more than 10%. No univariate and multivariate outliers were detected. Therefore, no cases were removed from the data set, and all cases were evaluated for the assumptions of linearity, normality, multi-collinearity or singularity, which were found to be satisfactory.

Descriptive statistics for all variables were calculated. Bivariate correlations were conducted among all study variables. The Andrew Hayes PROCESS Macro 2.6 (Hayes, 2012) which was an add-on program for SPSS was used for mediation analysis. Among the various models that The PROCESS Macro provides, Model 4 that evaluates the direct and indirect effects of an independent variable, through only one mediator, on a dependent variable was used for the present study. Academic satisfaction was the independent variable, shyness was the possible mediator, and flourishing was the dependent variable.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Descriptive Statistics

Means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis values for the variables of the study, and bivariate correlations of the variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for the FS, ALSS, and SS scores

Variable	<i>M (SD)</i>	1.	2.	3.	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. FS	44.27 (7.03)	-	.31	-.41	-.561	.052
2. ALSS	18.93 (4.20)		-	-.25	-.758	.697
3. SS	45.48(17.29)			-	.839	.499

As seen in Table 1, all variables were within acceptable ranges for skewness and kurtosis. Besides, as expected, significant bivariate correlations were found between academic achievement, shyness and flourishing. A positive significant relationship was found between academic satisfaction and flourishing ( $r=.31$ ,  $p<.01$ ), whereas shyness was significantly and negatively associated with academic satisfaction ( $r=-.25$ ,  $p<.01$ ) and flourishing ( $r=-.41$ ,  $p<.01$ ).

### 3.2 Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis was employed to test the hypothesis that shyness mediates the effect of academic satisfaction on flourishing. Results are presented at Figure 1.

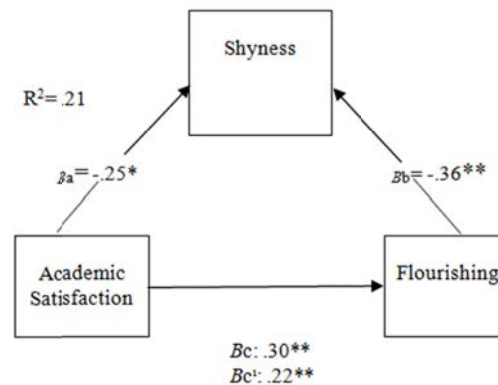


Figure 1. Shyness as the mediator between academic satisfaction and flourishing with standardized Beta coefficients \* $p < .01$ , \*\* $p < .001$

As seen in Figure 1, results showed that academic satisfaction is a significant predictor of shyness ( $B = -.25$ ,  $SE = .32$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that music education students with higher levels of academic satisfaction are less shy. Second, shyness found as a significant predictor of flourishing ( $B = -.36$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that unshy students had higher levels of flourishing. Third, academic satisfaction found to be a significant predictor of flourishing ( $B = .30$ ,  $SE = .13$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicating that academically satisfied music education students had higher levels of flourishing. Fourth, the total effect of academic satisfaction on flourishing decreased when shyness was controlled for ( $B = -.22$ ,  $SE = .03$ ,  $p < .01$ ), consistent with the mediation model. Approximately 21% of the variance in flourishing was accounted for by the predictors. A 95% bias-corrected bootstrap confidence interval for the indirect effect of academic satisfaction on flourishing via shyness based on 5,000 bootstrap samples, did not include zero (.04 to .27), indicating that the mediation effect was significant.

#### 4. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between academic satisfaction and flourishing with shyness as a potential mediator in the relationship, on a sample of Turkish pre-service music teachers. The direct and indirect effects of shyness on flourishing were tested. As expected, results show that shyness mediates the relationship between academic satisfaction and flourishing. In other words, academically dissatisfied pre-service music teachers tend to have a high level of shyness. The high shyness, in turn, decreases flourishing. These findings support the existing literature on the relationship between flourishing and its academic correlates (Balkis & Duru, 2016; Duru & Balkis, 2015; Howell, 2009; Keyes, 2005, 2006), as well as the relationship between shyness and flourishing (Cheek & Bush, 1981; Fehr & Stamps, 1979; Maroldo, 1981; Traub, 1983; Zimbardo, 1977), academic engagement (Hughes & Coplan, 2010), creative engagement (Tan, Shan, & Khai-Lee, 2017) and creative performance (Kemple, David, & Wang, 1996). Moreover, findings of this study provide the first empirical support for the mediating role of shyness in the relationship between academic satisfaction and flourishing across pre-service music teachers.

Based on these findings that underline the detrimental role of shyness for flourishing among pre-service music teachers, it can be concluded that providing pre-service teachers educational environments in which they could feel academically satisfied seems not to be sufficient for their flourishing. Since academically satisfied pre-service music teachers tend to experience more flourishing when they feel less shy, this study offers suggestions for flourishing enhancement, combined with shyness reduction studies, in educational context for music teacher education students. During their undergraduate education years, students of the music teacher education department take part in a variety of musical activities or may be in a position of organizing them. Playing in an orchestra, a chamber music group, or in a band; singing in chorus or mastering a chorus, or performing solo with their instruments etc. are activities in which, to be successful requires them to harmoniously play with other people or perform confidently and without shame in front of them. After graduation, these individuals are expected to act as role models for their students' performances, while teaching music. University counseling centers could support music education students with services to overcome their shyness and shyness related problems. In addition, instructors of the departments of music education could support their students to be more self-confident and less shy in their performances. This kind of personal development seems to be important for the pre-service music teachers both in their studentship years and for their future career development.

Despite the contributions of this study to the existent literature, it has some limitations to consider in future studies. First, this study holds the limitation of having a convenience sample of pre-service music teachers. Therefore, the study could be replicated on a more representative sample of Turkish pre-service music teachers in future studies for the generalizability of the findings. As another limitation, this study utilized self-report measures, which may have affected by social desirability. More objective ways of measurement, as observations or other-report techniques could be used in future studies to confirm the relationship among academic satisfaction, flourishing and shyness.

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