

## **STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH LIFE AND ITS RELATION TO SCHOOL BURNOUT**

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**Abstract.** The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between school burnout and satisfaction with life for students in grade of 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>. A quantitative method used in this study. 351 subjects were selected using stratified sampling. The two questionnaires employed here were The Satisfaction with Life Scale with five items of the Diener et al. (1985) and School-Burnout Inventory with nine items and three component - exhaustion at schoolwork (EXH), cynicism toward the meaning of school (CYN), and sense of inadequacy at School (INAD) - measures of school burnout of the Salmela-Aro et al. (2009). The findings of this study showed that the high school students described their satisfaction with life in relatively satisfactory and they have described their level of school burnout lower than average. The results also showed their school burnout in component of exhaustion at schoolwork was above average and in Components of cynicism toward the meaning of school, and sense of inadequacy at School were lower than average. The results showed that in overall there was no significant correlation between satisfaction with life and school burnout. However, there was relatively low positive correlation between students' satisfaction with life and exhaustion at schoolwork, relatively low negative correlation between students' satisfaction

with life and cynicism toward the meaning of school, and no any significance correlation between students' satisfaction with life and sense of inadequacy at school. The results of stepwise regression showed that sub-dimensions of high school burnout scale together explained a total of 14.5 % of the variance in the satisfaction with life for the students in this study.

*Keywords:* satisfaction with life, school burnout, high school student

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## **Introduction**

Consideration of research studies show the concept of satisfaction with life consists of several aspects such as positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction. According to Myers & Diener (1995) satisfaction with life reflects a preponderance of positive thoughts and feelings about one's life" and defined satisfaction with life as "the relative presence of positive affect, absence of negative affect, and satisfaction with life".

Satisfaction with life is interested in why individuals evaluate their lives in positive ways (Diener, 1984). Yetim (2001) believed that satisfaction with life is a field that comprises positive characteristics and measurements. Also, it concentrates on lengthwise affects more than temporary emotional states. The studies show the satisfaction with life has two general emotional and cognitive components. According to some researchers for example, Diener (1984) and Schimmack et al. (2002), the emotional component consists of positive and negative affects whereas the cognitive component is related with the individual's life satisfaction.

Empirical studies have confirmed the association between students' satisfaction with life and their academic competence, schooling experiences, and attitudes toward teachers and school (Suldo & Shaffer, 2007; Suldo et al., 2006; Huebner et al., 2000). A review of the literature on satisfaction with life, indicator is defined "as a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life" (Diener et al., 2005). They in the review of the literature on satisfaction with

life, has defined it “as a person’s cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life” (Diener et al 2005). Despite the differences in views on some aspects of well-being, there are two aspects of the agreement, a cognitive and an affective component. Despite the lack of agreement about the number of dimensions contained by satisfaction with life, two main components are generally recognized: a cognitive (satisfaction) and an affective (pleasant affect and low levels of unpleasant affect) component. Leonard (2002) defined the quality of school life as “a synthesis of positive experiences, negative experiences, and other feelings related to specific school life domains”. In addition, studies have also investigated the quality of school life among students (Karatzias et al., 2001; Majeed et al., 2002; Mok & Flynn, 2002; Sarı, & Cenkseven, 2008). Seligman et al. (2005) have distinguished between feelings of meaning, pleasure, engagement, and approached satisfaction with life in terms of happiness. They consider the following substructure of happiness, pleasure, engagement, and meaning.

Thus, it can be defined well-being, on the one hand, as school engagement, which refers to a positive, fulfilling, and study-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption. Vigor refers to a high level of energy and mental resilience while studying; dedication is a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge; and absorption is concentration and happiness in one’s studies (Schaufeli et al., 2002). In contrast, lack of well-being was defined as school burnout, which among students means feeling exhausted because of study demands, having a cynical and detached attitude toward one’s studies, and feeling incompetent as a student (Kiuru et al., 2008; Salmela-Aro et al., 2008).

It can say also well-being provide a basis for many positive outcomes in individuals’ lives (Feist et al., 1995; Seifert, 2004; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001; Tuominen-Soini et al., 2008). According to Nurmi and Salmela-Aro (2002) school engagement and absence of school

burnout may lay the foundation for successful educational decisions and trajectories, if it is assumed that a high degree of well-being leads to the construction of goals that focus on dealing with the demands of the individual's subsequent life situation. Suldo et al. (2006) believed that students' satisfaction with life is investigated in a variety of contexts and academic context is an important factor that effect students' satisfaction with life. However, there is a little or no study investigated the relationship between satisfaction with life and burnout.

The word burnout defined by Yang and Cheng (2005) as psychological processes emerged directly from the dual structure work-worker. They also believed that school burnout refers to the burnout syndrome that stem from schools and educations' excessive demands on students. Student burnout paves the way to absenteeism, low motivation to courses and high rate of drop-out. In learning process, stress resulted from lessons, high workload or other psychological pressure factors may lead to emotional burn-out, tendency to desensitization, and low feeling of success. Kokkinos (2006) according to Maslach and Jackson in 1978, 1981, and 1986 states "based on empirical work, they proposed a multidimensional definition of the construct comprising three conceptually distinct but empirically related components: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion is characterized by overwhelming feelings of being emotionally overextended and drained by others".

According to some researchers, there is overlap between school burnout with some earlier concepts. School burnout overlaps with some earlier concepts. Salmela-Aro et al. (2009) of the concepts named under titles such as exhaustion, measured in terms of feeling overwhelmed, having difficulty sleeping because of worrying and ruminating, resembles the concepts of stress, tiredness, and anxiety. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explain the situation of students in grades 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> in terms of life satisfaction and burn-

out, and also to investigate the relationship between school burnout and satisfaction with life for students in 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>. Next, the researcher further investigated how students' satisfaction with life and school burnout differs in terms of students' background, such as sex, age, and grade.

### **Method**

The methodology of this research was descriptive and correlation. The target population of this study was all 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade high school students at Zabol City in Iran. 351 subjects (boy 181 and girl 170) aged 13-15 with use of table sample size of Krejcie & Morgan (1970) was selected. The Satisfaction with Life Scale with five items of the Diener et al. (1985) and School-Burnout Inventory with nine items and three component - exhaustion at schoolwork (EXH), cynicism toward the meaning of school (CYN), and sense of inadequacy at School (INAD) - measures of school burnout of the Salmela-Aro et al. (2009) in the whole seven-item Likert (Strongly Disagree=1 to Strongly agree=7). Internal consistency reliability was estimated by Cronbach's alphas. For "The Satisfaction with Life Scale" an alpha of .74 and for "School-Burnout Inventory" an alpha of .68 was obtained. SPSS 21 was used to produce mean; standard deviations; multiple regression; and Pearson product moment correlation (r).

### **Findings**

(A) How are students in grades 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> status in terms of life satisfaction and school burnout?

The figures at Table 1 shows that the high school students described their satisfaction with life in relatively satisfactory (M=23.86, SD=7.53) and also in overall, they have described their level of school burnout lower than average (M=34.88, SD=5.51). However, their school burnout in component of exhaustion at schoolwork (EXH) was above average and in Components of

cynicism toward the meaning of school (CYN), and sense of inadequacy at school (INAD) were lower than average.

**Table 1.** Mean and Std. D. of students' satisfaction with life and school burn-out (N=351)

Variables	Mean	Std. D.	T. Value	t	df	Sig.
Satisfaction with life (SWL)	23.86	7.53	20	9.608	350	.001
School burnout (SB):	34.88	5.51	36	-3.819	350	.001
EXH	17.27	2.96	16	8.028	350	.001
CCYN	10.59	3.07	12	-8.616	350	.001
INDA	7.02	2.18	8	-8.431	350	.001

(B) Is there any correlation between students' satisfaction with life and school burnout?

**Table 2.** Correlation between students' satisfaction with life and school burn-out components (N=351)

		EXH	CYN	INAD	School burnout (Total)
Satisfaction with life (SWL)	r	.134*	-.294**	.046	-.074
	Sig.	.012	.000	.390	.168

The results showed that in overall there was no significant correlation between satisfaction with life and school burnout. However, there was relatively low positive correlation between students' satisfaction with life and exhaustion at schoolwork, relatively low negative correlation between students' satisfaction with life and cynicism toward the meaning of school, and no any significance correlation between students' satisfaction with life and sense of inadequacy at school (Table 2). The results of stepwise regression showed that sub-dimensions of high school burnout scale together explained a total of 14.5 % of the variance in the satisfaction with life for the students in this study.

(C) Is there a relationship between students' satisfaction with life and school burnout by sex, age, and grade?

**Table 3.** Correlation between students' subjective well-being and components of school burnout by gender (N=351)

	G.	n		EXH	CYN	INAD	School burnout (Total)
Satisfaction with life (SWL)	Boy	181	r	.173*	-	.019	-.101
			Sig.	.020	.358**	.799	.176
	Girl	170	r	.059	-	.060	-.060
			Sig.	.449	.207**	.438	.436

**Table 4.** Correlation between students' subjective well-being and components of school burnout by age (N=351)

	G.	n		EXH	CYN	INAD	School burnout (Total)
Satisfaction with life (SWL)	13	145	r	.231**	-.430**	.037	-.134
			Sig.	.005	.000	.661	.109
	14	112	r	.108	.032	.400**	.219*
			Sig.	.256	.739	.000	.021
	15	94	r	.035	-.320**	-.193	-.195
			Sig.	.741	.002	.063	.059

To explain the relationship between two variables based on students' background showed that like the entire population of the sample there was no significant correlation between satisfaction with life and school burnout sex, But observed a significant positive relationship between these two variables by age of 14 and grade of 8. On the other, there was relatively low positive correlation between students' satisfaction with life and exhaustion at school-work, relatively low negative correlation between students' satisfaction with life and cynicism toward the meaning of school, and no any significance correlation between students' satisfaction with life and sense of inadequacy at school by sex, age and grade (Table 3-5).

**Table 5.** Correlation between students' subjective well-being and components of school burnout by grade (N=351)

	G.	n		EXH	CYN	INAD	School burnout (Total)
Satisfaction with life (SWL)	7 <sup>th</sup>	146	r	.225**	-.430**	.038	-.135
			Sig.	.006	.000	.653	.103
	8 <sup>th</sup>	114	r	.050	.037	.488**	.227*
			Sig.	.601	.696	.000	.015
	9 <sup>th</sup>	91	r	.096	-.337**	-.302**	-.203
			Sig.	.367	.001	.004	.054

### Conclusion and discussion

The findings of this study showed that the high school students described their satisfaction with life in relatively satisfactory and they have described their level of school burnout lower than average. The results also showed their school burnout in component of exhaustion at schoolwork was above average and in Components of cynicism toward the meaning of school, and sense of inadequacy at school were lower than average. The results showed that in overall there was no significant correlation between satisfaction with life and school burnout. However, there was relatively low positive correlation between students' satisfaction with life and exhaustion at schoolwork, relatively low negative correlation between students' satisfaction with life and cynicism toward the meaning of school, and no any significance correlation between students' satisfaction with life and sense of inadequacy at school. The results of stepwise regression showed that sub-dimensions of high school burnout scale together explained a total of 14.5 % of the variance in the satisfaction with life for the students in this study. To explain the relationship between two variables based on students' background showed that like the entire population of the sample there was no significant correlation between satisfaction with life and school burnout sex, But observed a significant positive relationship between these two variables by age of 14 and grade of 8. These



results are consistent with the some findings of researchers (Suldo & Shaffer, 2007; Suldo et al., 2008; Huebner et al., 2000, Kiuru et al., 2008; Salmela-Aro et al., 2008; 2009; Feist et al., 1995; Seifert, 2004; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001; Tuominen-Soini et al., 2008).

One of the functions of management in any organization, provided that the conditions that would reduce the pressure on the people in the organization. Happiness is the basic needs of every human being, because as the human body needs food to survive. The human spirit needs the well-being, because if not be, it makes the person going to burnout. Happiness can be promoted human life and provide opportunities for dynamic. According to Argyle (2001) some people interpret information in a way that leads them to happiness; it makes people more social interaction with others and enhances the quality of communication and makes people better job performance, think right and better able to solve the problems.

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