



International

Journal of Human Sciences

ISSN:2458-9489

Volume 14 Issue 3 Year: 2017

## Evaluating the vocational thoughts of university students about the departments they are studying<sup>1</sup>

Özlem Karakuş<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

The aim of this study is to reveal the vocational thoughts of university students about departments they are studying. The sample of the study consists of 1040 students; 608 (60,6%) of them are female, and 396 (39,4%) of them are male students who are studying in the different faculties of the Selçuk University (Health Sciences, Law, Veterinary, Collage of Science, Faculty of Letters, Communication, Agriculture, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Engineering), and they selected by random sampling method. The average of age of the students is varying between 19 and 39. The average of age is 22. During the data collection phrase "Demographic Information Form"; during the evaluation of the data frequency polygon is used.

At the end of the study it is detected that 743 (74%) of the students are willingly, and 261 (26%) of the students are unwillingly came to the department they are studying. Also; the uneasiest situation for the students' future is to not find a job for 492 (49,0%) of them, financial difficulties for 282 (28,1%) of them, mate selection for 230 (22,9%) of them. At the same time, it is confirmed that 679 (67,6%) of the students want to work in public sector, and 325 (32,4%) of them want to work in private sector after graduation. It is seen that 198 (19,7%) of the students define unemployment as not to find a job in public sector, and 806 (80,3%) of them define unemployment as not to earn income. 458 (45,6%) of the students who participated to study are pleased with the employment opportunities, but 546 (54,4%) of them are not. It is detected that students of the departments of Social Work, English Language and Literature, Civil and Mechanical Engineering are pleased with employment opportunities after graduation, but the students of the departments of Statistic, Biology, Chemistry, History of Art, Sociology are not. Also, 395 (39,3%) of the students stated that they think they will be unemployed when they graduated, 609 (60,7%) of them do not think they are going to be an unemployed; departments of Social Work, English Language and Literature, Civil and Mechanical Engineering students stated that they are not going to become unemployed when they graduated, but the students of the departments of Statistic, Biology, Chemistry, History of Art, Sociology stated that they are going to become unemployed.

Most of the university students choose their departments willingly. What makes university students anxious most is being unemployed. Students want to work in public sector when they graduate. For the unemployment anxiety that students are experiencing, state has to develop new policies related with employment. In order to make students believe that they would find job easily, apart from the departments they enroll in, alternative ways for career development can be provided.

**Keywords:** University students; unemployment; occupation.

<sup>1</sup>This article was presented orally at VIII. European Conference on Social and Behavioral Sciences September 3-6, 2015, Belgrade, Serbia.

<sup>2</sup>Associate Prof. Dr. University of Selçuk, Faculty of Health Science, Department of Social Work, [ozikarakus@gmail.com](mailto:ozikarakus@gmail.com)

## 1. Introduction

Vocation is an important factor for an individual to develop and realize him/herself. Happiness of an individual is, in a way, related with choosing the suitable and satisfactory vocation (Doğramacı, 2008). In the literature, there are different vocation definitions. According to Kuzgun (1982) vocation is a complement of regular and orderly activities, those rules are decided by the society and acquired through education, done in order to earn one's life. According to another definition, vocation is the title that one performs in order to lead his/her life and this title is acquired generally as a result of an intense education, working, knowledge accumulation and increasing job-related skills (Vocation Guidance, 2008). Or, vocation is a law-regulated profession that is gained through a education and based on systematic knowledge and skills and this profession is done to earn money through producing useful goods for humans and providing them with services (Kuzgun, 2003; Vocational Guidance Instruction, 2010).

To have a Professional vocation requires obtaining job-related education (San, 1988). Vocational training provided in formal and informal education institutions enable an individual to have vocational competence documents like certificate and diploma. Individuals decide their vocations based on psychological (interest, value, skill) and social (socio-economic level- family relations) factors (Kuzgun, 2004). Even the social system related features (regime of the country, economic structures, and laws etc.) have an influence on vocation preferences (Korkut-Owen, 2008). It is known that not only one single criterion but several factors are relevant in choosing a vocation such as material benefits (Kars et al, 2004), career opportunity and job security etc. An individual when s/he is in training as a candidate for a vocation not only learns about the area of application of the production or service, but also learns about job related role patterns (Soyer, 1996). Also, preferred vocation, determines the social status, level of income and private life of an individual (Korkut-Owen, 1998).

Most people have started to think about their future and make some plans before their school days. This initially completely emotional and imaginary attitude becomes more realistic with increasing age. Although vocation preference is an important matter for both individuals and society, one thing is certain that vocation preferences in Turkey mostly are coincidences (Yılmaz et al., 1996). It cannot be said for most of the individuals that they have enough knowledge about vocations, their job definitions and their opportunities (Anılan et al., 2008). In addition to that, it is no clear why and based on which criteria those people choose suitable vocations for themselves.

Every high school student in Turkey wants to enroll in a university. Based on the scores that they take from University Entrance Exam, they are placed into universities. While some students can enroll in their desired departments, lots of students enroll in not the ones they want but the ones whose scores are sufficient. While there has been an increasing demand for departments with better employment facilities (Kıyak, 2006), demand for the departments that could not provide easiness for employment has been decreasing. Regardless of employment prospects, lots of student in different departments continue their education. In Turkey, enrolling in a university might mean to acquire a profession and then find employment. Not being able to find a job can be evaluated as a significant problem. Even if they are happy with their departments, they have concerns about finding a job (Yılmaz, 2014). Not being able to know what will happen in the future is one of the major sources of anxiety (Cüceloğlu, 1996). Graduation, unemployment, job selection, and different responsibilities are some of the factors that increase senior university students' anxiety (Doğan & Baş, 2003).

The reasons of the unemployment that is one of the most important problems societies experience have changed in time. Previously, uneducated population was affected by unemployment, but nowadays educated population as well is affected. Previously obtaining education equaled to be employed but in today's world it is not the case anymore. In Turkey,

unemployment is not a novel problem. Rapid population increase, having a young population, unrecorded labor and not having enough area of employment are the reasons of unemployment (Harmancı, 2014). Considering our country's population, which is predominantly young and workable, unemployment directly affects young population and young unemployment confronts us. It can be seen natural for young people not being able to find a job when they look for jobs for the first time. However, long-term unemployment had negative impacts on youngs. Basically, unemployment is the result of having more labor supply than demand or having less labor demand than labor supply (Ekin 2003; Korkmaz & Mahiroğulları, 2007). It is revealed in 2014 that (5 million 949 thousand) university graduates are unemployed. In 2014, unemployment rate among university graduates is 12.9%. It is known that one among ten unemployed is university graduate (GNAT, 2015). Universities prepare students to business life by up skilling their fundamental abilities. Increase in the number of universities bring with it increase in university graduates. This means that there will be more competition to get a job. This competition and unemployment problem leads to experiencing intenser unemployment anxiety (Aytaç & Dursun, 2009). Faculty of Education and Faculty of Science and Letters graduate too many students and lots of teachers are waiting for appointment. Unemployment, beyond being an economic problem, is a multifaceted phenomenon with societal and individual aspects (Yüksel, 2003). In societies that experience unemployment densely, pessimism and future anxiety show up (Aytaç & Keser, 2002). Senior students want to get a job from which they earn revenue. Students who perceive the process not being positive experience unemployment anxiety and in relation to that unhappiness (Aytaç & Bayram, 2001). Developing the quality of workforce by graduating from a university is not enough for a good job and this increases young people's future uncertainty. Given their desire for secure and better paid jobs, university graduated young's unemployment lasts longer than unqualified labor's unemployment. When it comes to university students who maintain their education, it is inevitable for them not to experience anxiety of being unemployed (Dursun & Aytaç, 2009; Kıcı, 2010).

Assessment of their departments by university students in terms of finding job will reveal, to a certain extent, the situations of those departments in terms of employment. Also, it presents that higher education policies concerning those departments have to be revisited. It is because, being a university-graduated unemployment has started to be a big source of hopelessness among young.

### *1.1. The aims*

Based on the explanation above, the aim of the study is to evaluate departments that university students enrolled in based on certain criteria: whether they enrolled in the departments willingly, what makes them anxious about their future, whether they would find job easily or not, whether they appreciate the facilities provided by the departments or not.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1. Working group*

Study is carried out in line with general model of research. Population of the study consists of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students of various departments (Health Sciences, Faculty of Architecture, Faculty of Veterinary, Faculty of Science and Letter, Faculty of Law and Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences) of Selcuk University in 2014- 2015 academic year. Working group that is chosen with random sampling consists of 608 (60,6%) female and 396 (39,4) male students. Students' age range varies between 19 and 39 and average is 22 (sd. 1,74).

### *2.2. Data Collection method*

As a data collection method, the researcher designed questionnaire form. When questions are prepared, theoretical framework is taken into account. Based on this, questionnaire form is

prepared. Questions of the form are examined by three experts and certain annexation and extraction is before finalizing the form. Although the questions are straightforward and multiple choice, in order to offer an alternative to respondents, by including “other” option, a broad range of responses are ensured.

### 2.3. Analyzing data

All the scores of the students who participated are included in research data. Research data is evaluated with SPSS 20.0 program. Descriptive statistical methods (frequency-percentage, chi square) were used in the data obtained about the children.

## 3. Results

Table 1. *Students' Perceptions on the departments they enroll in*

	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
<b>Did you enroll in the department willingly?</b>		
Yes	743	74
No	261	26
<b>What makes you anxious about the future most?</b>	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Could not find job	492	49
Economic difficulties	282	28
Mate choice	230	23
<b>In which sector you would like to work when you graduate?</b>	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Public	679	68
Private	325	32
<b>What is unemployment according to you?</b>	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Could not find a job in public sector	198	20
Could not earn income	806	80
<b>Are you satisfied with the employment opportunities of the department you enroll in?</b>	Sayı (n)	Yüzde (%)
Yes	458	46
No	546	54
<b>Do you think you can find job easily when you graduate?</b>	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	554	55
No	450	45
<b>Do you think you will be unemployed when you graduate?</b>	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Yes	395	39
No	609	61
Total	1004	100,0

As it is seen in the chart, the question “did you enroll in the department willingly” is answered as yes by 743 (74%) and 261 (26%) as no. The most anxious situation for 492 (49%) of participants is could not find job, for 282 (28%) is economic difficulties and for 230 (23%) is mate choice. In addition, it is seen that 679 (68%) of students want to work in public sector; and 325 (32%) of them want to work in private sector. Again, 198 (20%) of students define unemployment as could not find a job in public sector and 806 (80%) of them define as could not earn income.

458 (46%) of participants are satisfied with job opportunities of their departments whereas 546 (54%) of them are not satisfied with job opportunities. When the chart is examined, it is seen that 554 (55%) of participants think they would find job easily; and 450 (45%) of them do not think they would find job easily. 395 (39%) of students think they would be unemployed and 609 (61%) of them do not think that they would be employed.

Table 2. *Crosstab on whether finding job is easy based on the departments*

Departments	Do you think you can find job easily when you graduate?				Total
	Yes		No		
	Number (n)	Percentage (%)	Number (n)	Percentage (%)	
Mathematic	23	51	22	49	45
Statistics	10	25	30	75	40
Biyology	3	7	43	93	46
Chemistry	24	56	19	44	43
Turkish Lit.	15	37	26	63	41
English Lit.	40	87	6	13	46
Sosyology	6	21	22	79	28
Art History	5	13	32	87	37
Public Administration	23	56	18	44	41
Economics	13	33	27	67	40
Business Administration	18	42	25	58	43
Law	34	81	8	19	42
Civil Engineering	36	86	6	14	42
Chemistry Engineering	21	51	20	49	41
Mechanical Engineering	31	78	9	22	40
Industrial Engineering	26	68	12	32	38
Electrical and Electronic Engineering	25	63	15	37	40
Radio, Television and Cinema	18	46	21	54	39
Public Relations	11	28	29	72	40
Agricultural engineering	18	45	22	55	40
Veterinary	37	88	5	12	42
Social Work	38	95	2	5	40
Healthcare Management	15	37	25	63	40
Midwifery	64	91	6	9	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>554</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1004</b>

When the chart is examined, responses in various departments are as follows: in Mathematic 23 (51,1%) of students say yes, 22 (49%) say no; in Statistics 10 (25%) say yes, 30 (75%) say no; in Biology, 3 (7%) say yes, 43 (93%) say no; in Chemistry 24 (56%) say yes, 19 (44%) say no; in Turkish Literature 15 (37%) say yes, 26 (63%) say no; in English Literature 40 (87%) say yes, 6 (13%) say no; in Sociology 6 (21%) say yes, 22 (79%) say no; in Art History 5 (13%) say yes, 32 (87%) say no; in Public Administration 23 (56%) say yes, 18 (44%) say no; in Economics 13 (33%) say yes, 27 (67%) say no; in Business Administration 18 (42%) say yes, 25 (58%) say no; in Law 34 (81%) say yes, 8 (19%) say no; in Civil Engineering 36 (86%) say yes, 6 (14%) say no; in Chemistry Engineering 21 (51%) say yes, 20 (49%) say no; in Mechanical Engineering 31 (78%) say yes, 9 (22%) say no; in Industrial Engineering 26 (68%) say yes, 12 (37%) say no; in Electrical and Electronic Engineering 25 (63%) say yes, 15 (37%) say no; in Radio Television and Cinema 18

(46%) say yes, 21 (54%) say no; in Public Relations 11(28%) say yes, 29 (72%) say no; in Agricultural Engineering 18 (45%) say yes, 22 (55%) say no; in Veterinary 37 (87%) say yes, 5 (12%) say no; in Social Work 38 (95%) say yes, 2 (5%) say no; in Healthcare Management 15 (33%) say yes, 25 (63%) say no; and in Midwifery 64 (91%) say yes, 6 (9%) say no.

Table 3. *Crosstab of Whether Students Appreciate the Job Opportunities of Their Departments*

Departments	Do you think you can find job easily when you graduate?				
	Yes		No		Total
	Number (n)	Percentage (%)	Number (n)	Percentage (%)	
Mathematic	24	53	21	47	
Statistics	8	20	32	80	40
Biyology	3	7	43	93	46
Chemistry	16	37	27	62	43
Turkish Lit.	4	10	37	90	41
English Lit.	37	80	9	20	46
Sosyology	4	14	24	86	28
Art History	1	3	36	97	37
Public Administration	14	34	27	66	41
Economics	13	33	27	67	40
Business Administration	21	49	22	51	43
Law	27	64	15	36	42
Civil Engineering	34	81	8	19	42
Chemistry Engineering	19	46	22	54	41
Mechanical Engineering	31	78	9	22	40
Industrial Engineering	24	63	14	37	38
Electrical and Electronic Engineering	21	53	19	47	40
Radio,Television and Cinema	15	39	24	61	39
Public Relations	9	23	31	77	40
Agricultural engineering	12	30	28	70	40
Veterinary	36	86	6	14	42
Social Work	35	88	5	12	40
Healthcare Management	4	10	36	90	40
Midwifery	46	66	24	34	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>1004</b>

When the chart is examined, responses of the departments as follow: in Mathematic 24 (53%) of students say yes, 21 (47%) say no; in Statistics 8 (20%) say yes, 32 (80%) say no; in Biology, 3 (7%) say yes, 43 (93%) say no; in Chemistry 16 (37%) say yes, 27 (63%) say no; in

Turkish Literature 4 (10%) say yes, 37 (90%) say no; in English Literature 37 (80%) say yes, 9 (20%) say no; in Sociology 4 (14%) say yes, 24 (86%) say no; in Art History 1 (3%) say yes, 36 (97%) say no; in Public Administration 14 (34%) say yes, 27 (66%) say no; in Economics 13 (33%) say yes, 27 (67%) say no; in Business Administration 21 (49%) say yes, 22 (52%) say no; in Law 27 (64%) say yes, 15 (36%) say no; in Civil Engineering 34 (81%) say yes, 8 (19%) say no; in Chemistry Engineering 19 (46%) say yes, 22 (54%) say no; in Mechanical Engineering 31 (78%) say yes, 9 (22%) say no; in Industrial Engineering 24 (63%) say yes, 14 (37%) say no; in Electrical and Electronic Engineering 21 (53%) say yes, 19 (47%) say no; in Radio Television and Cinema 15 (39%) say yes, 24 (61%) say no; in Public Relations 9 (23%) say yes, 31 (77%) say no; in Agricultural Engineering 12 (30%) say yes, 28 (70%) say no; in Veterinary 36 (86%) say yes, 6 (14%) say no; in Social Work 35 (88%) say yes, 5 (12%) say no; in Healthcare Management 4 (10%) say yes, 36 (90%) say no; and in Midwifery 46 (66%) say yes, 24 (34%) say no.

#### 4. Discussion

“Did you enroll in the department willingly?” is answered as yes by 743 (74%) of participants and as no by 261 (26%). The situation that makes participants anxious most is could not find a job for 492 (49%) of them; economic difficulties for 282 (28%) of them and mate choice for 230 (23%) of them. Also, it is seen that 679 (68%) of students are willing to work in public sector and 325 (32%) of students are willing to work in private sector. Again 198 (20%) of students define could not find job in public sector as unemployment and 806 (80%) of students define not earning income as unemployment. It is seen that 458 (46%) of participants appreciate job opportunities of their departments whereas 546 (54%) of the participants are not happy with the job opportunities of their departments. As it is seen, 554 (55%) of participants think that they would find job easily when they graduate; 450 (45%) of them do not think that they can find job easily. 395 (39%) of students think they will be unemployed when they graduate, 609 (61%) of them do not think that they will be unemployed when they graduate. Also, it is noted students of Social Work, English Language and Literature, Civil and Machinery Engineering departments are happy with job opportunities after graduation; students of Statistics, Biology, Chemistry, Art History, Sociology departments are not happy with job opportunities. Also, students of Social Work, English Language and Literature, Civil and Machinery Engineering departments think that they would find job easily after graduation; students of Statistics, Biology, Chemistry, Art History, Sociology departments do not think that they can find job easily. It is a reality that the departments with appreciated job opportunities and enabling their graduates to find job easily are the ones that are employed in public sector quickly and numerously. It is seen that in certain periods, certain vocations are employed in public sector. English Language and Literature, Civil and Machinery Engineering are the ones that have been employed easily from past to present. Social Work vocation has just joined to this group. Certain social conditions of the today’s world have started to prioritize this vocation.

Most of the students who continue higher education in Turkey prefer the departments with high employment rates or make their choices in accordance with their scores rather than their own desires. When they graduate, they want to find job in public sector and indicate their need for state protection from unemployment risk (Mütevellioglu et al., 2010) and they prefer the departments that provide these facilities. It is because unemployment anxiety is one of the the most common anxieties among university young (Dökmen, 1989, Akt Akaran Koç and Polat, 2006; Kıran and Taşkıran, 2015; Gizir, 2005). Although in this research most of the students are happy with job opportunities of their departments and think that they would find job easily after graduation, based on some studies, they state that despite their willingness to find job that is suitable to their department, they don’t believe that they would find job in accordance with their expectations without any difficulties so because of this situation they experience high level of anxiety (Mütevellioglu et al., 2010).

Students of Midwifery, Veterinary, English Language and Literature, Social Work, Civil and Machinery Engineering departments are happy with their job opportunities after graduation; but students of Statistics, Biology, Chemistry, Art History, Sociology departments are not happy with their job opportunities after graduation. Based on a study focusing on department of Sociology students, students state that they like the learning environment but they think they cannot find job when they graduate (Yılmaz, 2014). Again Students of Midwifery, Veterinary, Social Work, English Language and Literature, Civil and Machinery Engineering departments state that they would not be unemployed; students of Statistics, Biology, Chemistry, Art History, and Sociology departments state that they will be unemployed. The similarity between these two conclusions makes us think about the fact that Social Work, English Language and Literature, Civil and Machinery Engineering departments' ability to find job in public and private sectors.

According to Çaylar's study (2010), despite the differences in terms of the ratios, students of the three faculties (Faculty of Science and Letters, Education and Economic and Administrative Sciences) make some plans regarding their life and career after graduation. When the expectations in terms of finding job and working conditions, difference between Faculty of Science and Letter and Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences draws attention. Level of expectations of Faculty of Education students in term of finding a job and working conditions is good; whereas level of expectation of Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences students' is medium level and it is founded that level of expectations of Faculty of Science and Letters students' concentrate on good and medium level. There are some differences discovered in terms of the level of expectation from finding job after graduation. While the ratio of the idea that they can find job in line with their level of education is high for Faculty of Education; the ratio is getting lower for Faculty of Science and Letters; and the ratio is even lower in Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences. Üstün et al. (2014) finds out that hopelessness scores of students enrolled in Faculty of Education are significantly higher than students enrolled in Health College. Şanlı-Kula & Saraç (2016) in their study figure out that while Faculty of Science and Letters has the highest continual anxiety averages; Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation College has the lowest average. These studies make us think that departments with better job opportunities experience less anxiety and hopelessness compared to the departments with fewer opportunities. In Özpancar et al. (2008) study with nursing students, the first reason of why students prefer this department is finding job easily. According to Alper & Özdemir (2004) study, the reason of Medicine students to prefer that department is again finding job easily. Again according to a foreign study, the reason for choosing pharmacy is indicated as finding job easily (Wilson et al. 2006).

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Most of the university students choose their departments willingly. What makes university students anxious most is being unemployed. Students want to work in public sector when they graduate. Students see unemployment as not earning income. Most of the students are not happy with the job opportunities of departments they enroll in. Departments that indicate their unhappiness with the job opportunities after graduation are Statistics, Biology, Chemistry, Art History and Sociology. Again the ones who indicate that they will be unemployed are the same departments. By taking into account that those departments are under the Faculty of Science and letters, policies have to be developed. For the unemployment anxiety that students are experiencing, state has to develop new policies related with employment. In order to make students believe that they would find job easily, apart from the departments they enroll in, alternative ways for career development can be provided.



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