

Analyzing the Reasons of Occupational Health and Safety Training Students' Profession Choice: A Research at Pamukkale University – Honaz Vocational School

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Abstract

If individuals choose the correct profession for them they will be motivated too much, they will get a better carrier and will obtain more qualified and efficient job. The chosen profession should provide salary and in addition to this the individuals can be satisfied with their profession, so it is important for the students to choose the correct profession. The purpose of this research is to analyze the reasons of occupational health and safety training students' profession choice at Pamukkale University-Honaz Vocational School. 5 Likert Scale is used in the research and the data are analyzed by SPSS. In this research in the first part, the profession definition and the factors that influence profession choice are given, in the second part the importance of choosing the correct profession, in the third part method, methodology and findings are given.

Keywords: Occupational health and safety, Training, University, Profession

Introduction

Today, organizations are in need of qualified staff and for this reason, it is important for every individual to make the choice of the correct profession from the beginning of their school life. Individuals are successful in their professional lives and become qualified workers only when they choose suitable professions matching their skills. Especially when the higher education institutions provide right guidance for young individuals towards their areas of interest, they become workers with higher qualifications and motivation. Choosing the correct profession makes individuals more motivated and they enjoy their jobs.

The Concept of Profession and Factors Affecting the Choice of Profession

The profession is a socially defined set of activities that an individual performs in order to gain their life, based on knowledge and skills acquired through a certain amount of education. Psycho-social factors are important for having a good profession and a job because the individual has endowments, potentials and potential powers. It is important for the individual to reveal, use and develop these. Professional fields are the channels that allow the use and development of such skills. Profession provides fulfillment for the individual through making use of their skills and powers. By having a profession, individuals attribute themselves some value and significance because of doing a job and being productive. Therefore, their self-esteem and self-confidence increase. Then working meets multi-dimensional psycho-social needs of the individual. The profession is the most significant tool for meeting the physiological, psychological and social needs of the individual and it should be chosen with the correct decision, fulfills such needs at a higher level (http://acipayameml.meb.k12.tr/tema/icerikler/mesleki-reheberlik_570621.html).

It is important for the individuals to choose the right profession because their profession affects their entire lives. There are numerous factors that are influential on the choice of profession. For example, as noted by Borchert (2002: 75), the choice of profession should begin with primary targets and continue with open targets. For students, pre-university education is a turning point for taking the big decisions for the future. Choosing a profession is a process that includes experience, decision-making and assessment.

Also, choice of profession can be influenced by gender, personality, area of interest, skills and qualifications, culture, social and economic conditions and future goals from childhood (<http://www.onlinecollege.org/2011/05/17/what-influences-your-career-choice/>).

According to the study by Mugonzibwa et.al. (2000:423), in the process for choosing professions, good experience sharing by professionals as well as attributing reputation to a specific profession are influential. Also, the characteristics of a profession have secondary importance affecting the choosers whereas the third-ranking influence is by the courses' features and geographical location. After these comes the influence of direct gains by a profession and the advice from important people.

In addition to this, as described by Khare (2015), in choosing a profession, contemporaries, graduates, role models, location, economic status and period of time are also influential (<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/factors-affecting-career-choices-among->

students-dr-anil).

According to the research by Dinc (2008:90), the anticipation for high income and taking responsibility, anticipation for a career, for professional knowledge and skills, for professional experience and social status are the 5 factors that influence the choice of profession.

According to the results of the research by Ozsoy et.al., (2010:910), undergraduate teachers have noted that they chose to become teachers because the profession of teaching is a blessing (54,6%), they have the adequate skills for becoming a teacher (53,4%), they consider it the most suitable job for themselves (47,3%), they love children (46,9%) and becoming a teacher is their ideal (46,9%). As can be inferred from the research, a variety factor may influence the choice of profession.

The Importance of Choosing the Correct Profession

According to Tezel and Arslan (2002), mostly, the choice of profession takes place in the changes and adaptation process during adolescence, during the individual's crisis of finding their identity. Young people are supposed to make, during high school years, decisions that will affect their future and may often undergo instability. Today, choice of profession can be random during university exams. Therefore, the individual may be exposed to the clash between the expectations of their families and their own wishes. It is important for the individual to take up the area which that individual believes to be the most fulfilling and the most achievable (Sirin et.al, 2008:70-71).

In order for the professional education to be successful, it is important to guide the students according to their personal skills, from pre-school education until the end of high school, as it is practiced in the developed world. As the students are guided towards the fields where they are most skilled, the school, the family and the student should cooperate. The most significant resource of Turkey, willing to become a developed country, is the human resource with a young and dynamic demography (Binici and Ari, 2004:384). Investing in human resource and directing people towards the right professions makes a great contribution to national economies. Thus, with the right choice of profession, individuals are able to make more effective use of their potential.

According to Sezgin (1989:1), the primary aim of the professional and technical education is to make the individual gain the basic knowledge, skills and attitude required for getting a job and advancing in that job. To this end, there are many institutions in lower and higher education and these institutions raise up professionals for various levels of the business world (Kazu and Ozdemir, 2004:1).

Method, Methodology and Findings

17 item occupational preference scale developed by Dinc (2008); Sarikaya and Khorshid (2009) was used in the research. All of the questions on the scale consist of the five-member Likert response component on the scale of "distinctly disagree" and "strongly agree".

Aim of the Research

The aim of the research is to examine the factors of work security specialists' profession choices who have education in Occupational Health and Safety Department of Honaz Vocational School of Pamukkale University. This research also examined the demographic factors related to profession choices of Occupational Health and Safety students. The results of the research may be valid for the students of OSH program in other Vocational High Schools and / or Vocational Schools.

Working Group

There are 203 students in OSH program at Honaz Vocational School. 157 of these people have been reached. 6 surveys were considered invalid and the remaining 151 surveys were conducted.

Analysis and Method of the Research

After the normality and reliability tests of the research, descriptive and predictive analyzes and hypothesis tests were performed. Descriptive tests used frequencies and mean methods, whereas Mann-Whitney U test was used for predictive analyzes. Mann-Whitney U test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference between the measurements.

Research Hypotheses

Hypotheses were developed to test whether the demographic components and OSH students' profession choices differed in the study. The hypotheses created in this context are as follows:

H₁: There is a significant difference between gender and reasons for choosing professions of OSH students.

H₂: There is a significant difference between the reasons for choosing the professions and the age of OSH students.

H₃: There is a significant difference between the class of education and the reasons for choosing professions of OSH students.

H₄: There is a significant difference between types of education (formal and evening education)¹ and the reasons for choosing the professions of OSH students.

Reliability and Normality Tests

The Cronbach's index coefficient is calculated by the answers to the questions that are outside the demographic components and which determine the profession choices of the students. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient used for reliability measurement was found to be 0,794. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is considered "reliable" in the range of 0,60-0,80 (Alpar, 2011). Since Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is within the given range, statistical analyzes can be applied to the data obtained from the questionnaire. While determining the statistical techniques which will be used in the research the basic criterion is making a decision whether parametric tests or nonparametric tests should be used in the analysis.

In order to be able to use parametric tests, some assumptions must be tested. One of these assumptions is the assumption of normality distribution. For the parametric tests to be applied, the H₀ hypothesis, which is established as "the data are normally dispersed", must be accepted. If the hypothesis is not accepted, non-parametric tests should be applied instead of parametric tests.

In this study, the single sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was applied to the responses obtained from the questionnaires and to the average to determine whether the data were normally distributed. The hypothesis H₀ was not accepted because the p values for the test statistic were 0,000 for 17 questions (item) and 0,016 for the mean because p values were lower than the significance level of 0,05. The H₀ hypothesis implies the application of nonparametric tests.

Descriptive Findings

The Reasons Why Students in the Study Group Prefer OSH Program

The reasons why students in the study group prefer OSH program are given in Table 1 below.

¹ Formal education is given during the daytime at the universities in Turkey. Evening education; the education which begins at (15:00, 17:00) and continues until the evening (22:00) at the universities in Turkey. There is no difference in academic terms, so the content is the same with the formal education. The same teaching elements are applied to the evening education as the formal education.

Table 1: Reasons for Preference for Occupational Profession of OSH Students

Q. N.	Preference Reason	Percentage
1	It's a profession that I think it will keep valid in the future.	% 80,8
2	I chose it because it was a profession that was always needed.	% 77,4
3	It's easy to find a job after graduation.	%75,4
4	I like the job.	%58,9
5	I chose it because it is a business that requires disciplined and regular work.	%58,2
6	I chose it because it is a business based on trust.	%57
7	I chose it because I can gain high salary.	%56,9
8	I chose this profession to realize my ideals.	%56,9
9	I chose it because it is a business that needs to take responsibility.	%53,6
10	I chose it because it is an appropriate profession for lifestyle.	%43,7
11	I chose it because it was a dynamic and dynamic business.	%43
12	I chose this job because I think that it would gain the knowledge and skill to make it easier to enter other professions.	%42,3
13	I chose it because it is a business that emphasizes my creativity.	% 39
14	I chose it because it was my talent.	%34,5
15	I chose it because of the environment/family/friend influence	%27,8
16	I chose the training because it was simple and easy.	%21,9
17	I chose to finish a university.	%21,8

Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

According to Table 1, students' preference for OSH specialization profession can be listed as future guarantee/job security, easy employment, interest in the profession, high profits, compatibility with their ideals and lifestyle, and environmental impact.

Hypothesis Testing

The test statistics and the results of the hypotheses formed within the research are explained below.

H₁: There is a significant difference between gender and reasons for choosing professions of OSH students.

The hypothesis test for the gender and OSH students' reasons for choosing the profession was done by Mann-Whitney U test. The results obtained with this test statistic are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Gender and Professional Preference Relation

	N	Rank Average	Total Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	p
Man	95	79,15	7519,5	2360,5	3956,5	-	0,248
Woman	56	70,65	3956,5				

Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

When the results of the table are examined, the average order of male students is lower than the average of female students. However, the difference between the averages was not statistically significant ($p=0,248>0,05$). The H₁ hypothesis proposed for this reason is rejected.

Accordingly, it can be said that both female and male students who prefer OSH programs prefer this program with similar thoughts and expectations. Because, in today's conditions, the participation of women workers in the labor market is also increasing.

H₂: There is a significant difference between the reasons for choosing the professions and the age of OSH students.

The hypothesis test for H₂ hypothesis was conducted by Mann-Whitney U. The results obtained with this test statistic are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Relationship Between Age and Profession Choice

	N	Rank Average	Total Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	p
20 and below	129	78,3	10101	1122	1375	-	0,117
21-30	22	62,5	1375			1,567	

Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

According to the table, the rank average about the profession choice of OSH students at below the age of 20 is higher than the average age of 21 and over. However, this difference between the averages is not statistically significant ($p=0,117 > 0,05$). Accordingly, the H₂ hypothesis was rejected. In this case, the age of the students may be close to each other.

H₃: There is a significant difference between the class of education and the reasons for choosing professions of OSH students.

The hypothesis test was conducted by Mann-Whitney U test to determine whether there is any difference between the class of education and the reasons of profession choice of OSH students. The results obtained with this test statistic are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Relationship Between The Learning Classroom and Profession Choice

	N	Rank Average	Total Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	p
First Class	96	69,40	6662,5	2006,5	6662,5	-	0,014
Second Class	55	87,52	4813,5			2,451	

Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

According to the results of the table, the rank order of the second-grade students is higher than the average rank order of the first-grade students. This difference was statistically significant ($p=0,014 < 0,05$). Accordingly, the H₃ hypothesis was accepted.

H₄: There is a significant difference between types of education (formal and evening education) and the reasons for choosing the professions of OSH students.

The hypothesis test was conducted with the Mann-Whitney U test to determine whether there was a difference between the type of education and the reasons for profession choice of OSH students. The results obtained with this test statistic are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Relationship Between Type of Education and Profession Choice

	N	Rank Average	Total Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	p
Formal education	69	72,88	5029	2614	5029	-	0,422
Evening education	82	78,62	6447				

Source: Based on data collected by the authors.

When the results of the table are examined, the order average of formal education students is lower than the average of evening education students. However, the difference between the averages was not statistically significant ($p=0,422>0,05$). For this reason, the H_4 hypothesis proposed is rejected. According to this, it can be said that formal and evening education students who prefer OSH programs preferred this program with similar thoughts and expectations.

Conclusion

Today, organizations need qualified staffs and because of that reason, it is important for every individual to make the choice of the right profession from the beginning of their school life. Individuals are successful in their professional lives and become qualified workers if they choose suitable professions matching their skills. Higher education individuals should provide correct guidance for young individuals towards their areas of interest. If the young individuals choose the correct profession for them, they can determine their goals and aims. Choosing the correct profession makes individuals more motivated and enjoy their jobs. Students will also be happy in the business environment if they are progressing towards their will in their profession.

According to the results; students generally prefer this department because it is a profession that will keep its validity in the future and it is a profession that will always be needed. It is also a big influence that it is easy to find a job after graduation. Because students are often concentrated on jobs where they can find work on the job market. The reason why they choose a promising career is their desire for stability in career maps. They are aware that when they are specializing in a particular field, they will make their future professional positions clear. One of the factors in this situation is the improvement of research and development abilities due to the rapid spread of information, as well as the effective use of communication technologies of today's students.

The students also want to ensure their future as they know that it is difficult to find jobs in today's job market. For this reason, they want to work in a more preferred profession. The desire not to suffer difficulties in the future also plays a role in this. On the other hand, the profession which is

suitable for their lifestyles and dynamism isn't very important for them. Also, they are also more concerned about the future.

It is the second plan to achieve the ideal. Because of this reason they prefer to act according to the labor market conditions in the country. It is not enough for them to have just graduated from a university. Also today the number of universities has increased, so the students are aware that if they want to go another department at a different university, they can go there easily.

However, it can be said that evening education students prefer this program with a higher consciousness and higher expectation than formal education students. Because they prefer to use OSH program while they will be able to settle in other programs without paying tuition with lower scores (for students who do not work anywhere). So students may have to force some conditions more.

Also according to the results, the rank order of the second-grade students is higher than the average rank order of the first-grade students. This difference was statistically significant. According to this; after the completion of the first year of tertiary education in the OSH department the reasons of the higher grade of the second-year students may be the program's career, wage, employment, self-actualization advantages and so on. It may be thought that the expectations of the students will be met more advanced than the expectations of the students.

Before choosing the OSH program, the perceptions that the students receive from the external environment and the individual studies are important for students' choice. When the student who chooses the OSH program with the information obtained reaches class 2, he or she may have reached a higher certainty of the validity of the choice. This indicates that the OSH program students internalize the program and also the program's employment opportunities, wage advantages and status can be successfully demonstrated to the students by the program instructors.

As a result, we can say that for students choosing the correct profession is very important for their career. Students must correctly identify their goals and choose their profession accordingly. If they choose the right profession they will be able to use their potential at the highest level. Young people who are particularly oriented towards the jobs can find jobs on the job market and are more conscious.

The purpose of education should be to direct individuals to areas where they can succeed starting from the early phases of life. If individuals are directed towards areas where they can succeed, they will become more qualified. If the individuals are guided towards areas where they can better express and improve themselves, they will be more productive, more creative

and have analyzing skills and strong communication skills and also they can solve problems effectively.

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