PSİKOLOJİ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN GENİŞ PERSPEKTİFTE BÖLÜM SEÇME SÜRECİ

Department Choice Process of Psychology Students in Wide Perspective

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ÖZ	ABSTRACT
Kariyer seçimi insan ömrünün çok önemli bir parçasıdır. Literatürde değişik meslek gruplarıyla birçok kariyer seçimi çalışması yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmada, araştırmacılar psikoloji bölümü seçimini etkileyen etkenleri geniş bir perspektifte incelemiştir. Önce, onların ortak noktalarını, motivasyonlarını, bilişsel ve bağlamsal etkenlerini derinden anlamaya çalışmış; sonra, bölüm (kariyer) seçme sürecini çocukluktan başlayıp hayat boyu süren bir süreç olarak ele almışlardır. Yarı-yapılandırılmış mülakatlar ve çizim görevleri, 9 psikoloji birinci sınıf öğrencisine uygulanmıştır. Tematik analizden sonra 5 ana tema ortaya çıkmıştır. Araştırmacılar muhtemel etkenleri şöyle gruplamışlardır; dört tanesi (amaca yönelik, bağlamsal, karakteristik sebepler ve alternatif seçenekler) karar vermeyi doğrudan etkilerken bir tanesinin (süreçle ilgili deneyimler) karar vermeyi dolaylı olarak etkilediği vurgulanmıştır. Psikoloji öğrencilerinin genel kişilik özellikleri çoğunlukla başarı arayan, çalışkan, yardımsever ve sorun çözücüdür. Çoğu içe dönüktür ve sessiz bir çocukluk yaşamıştır. Ayrıca, psikolojiyi bilen insanların ve okul danışmanlarının psikolojiyi önerdiği bulunmuştur.	Career decision is very important in human life. So many career decision making studies were conducted in various occupational groups. However most of these studies include limited perspectives from different occupational groups and none of them includes psychology department specifically. In this study, researchers investigate underlying factors related to decision of the psychology department in a wide perspective. Firstly, researchers try to understand deeply their common points, motivations, cognitive, and contextual factors. Secondly, researchers consider department (career) choice as a process, which begins in their childhood; persist through their life-span. Semi-structured interviews and drawing tasks were used in this study with nine psychology juniors. After the thematic analysis, 5 main themes were found. Researchers modeled probable factors as, four of the main themes (goal-directed, contextual and, characteristic reasons, and alternative choices) directly affect decision making but one of them, which is process related experiences affects indirectly the decision itself. Psychology students' general personality features are mostly achievement seeker, hardworking, helpful and problem solver, most of them are introverted and had a somewhat quiet childhood. Also, people who know about psychology, counselors of schools, suggest psychology whereas people who do not know about psychology, school teachers, and relatives, suggest law and even contempt psychology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Career is one of the most important parts of human life. It affects like two out of third part of their life-span. Because of the fact that career choice is crucially important decision in life and people generally do it in their youth without any experiences. Ginzberg et al. (1951:75) divided career choice process into three stages, initially fantasy stage of early childhood to middle childhood; secondly tentative stages at early adolescent years when teenagers think about their interests, values and capacities. Finally, realistic stage at late adolescence when adolescent consider about their subjective needs and

interest of which job they really can hold. This turning point is shaped after mandatory high school education in Turkey. People enter universities with their university entry exam scores. There are many factors that may affect their crucial decisions.

In literature review there are similar career choices studies but none of them investigates psychology department decision. For instance, functional and dysfunctional beliefs, family and culture can be counted as factors that affect decision (Savickas, 1991:316). Family originated relations take small but significant and stable roles in career goals (Hargrove, Maureen and Brain, 2002:185). In generally the most important factors of department decision is family in literature (Clutter, 2010:11). In addition, socioeconomic status and parental education levels are very effective on department decisions (Bahar, 2002:140). According to Korkut-Owen, Kepir, Özdemir, Ulaş and Yılmaz (2012:143) basic factors of students' department decisions are their interest in occupation and secondly suitable exam scores for chosen department.

If we look at the literature deeply, factors that affect career choice can be titled as psychological, social (Kuzgun, 2004 as cited in Korkut-Owen, Kepir, Özdemir, Ulaş and Yılmaz, 2012:135) and political, economical and luck (Korkut-Owen, 2008 as cited in Korkut-Owen, Kepir, Özdemir, Ulaş and Yılmaz, 2012:135). In the study that investigates career choices styles based on gender is expected to find that, woman make intuitional decisions while men make goal-directed decisions but no gender differences found according to those expectations (Lunneborg, 1978:303). According to Elwood (1927:200), as a personality factor, nursery students were found more extroverted than other university students. In knowledge of business world and career locus of control, one study finds that external locus of control was associated with career decision difficulties (Lease, 2004:252). Also there is a theoretical framework that examines career decision difficulties; the model includes both prior and during the process. First one consists of lack of motivation and dysfunctional myths which is prior to beginning of process and second one consists of lack of information about occupation and inconsistency of information on internal and external conflicts (Gati, Krausz and Osipow, 1996:512).

1.1. Importance of the Study

There are career choices studies but not enough investigation conducted about psychology department decision. Many talk about psychology of choice but no one talks about choice of psychology. Also, some common themes of choice of psychology could be used as beginning point of more comprehensive quantitative studies. Common reasons of psychology decision can enlighten the difference between students' expectancies and occupation's requirements. This study may contribute to improvement of psychology departments by understanding the motivations of students.

1.2. Purpose

In our study we planned to investigate underlying factors related to decision of the psychology department holistically. Firstly, we try to understand deeply participants' common points, motivations, cognitive and contextual factors. Secondly, we consider this phenomenon as a process, which begins in their childhood; persist through their life-span. For instance the persons' aim to choose this field is could be their wonder of human behavior or emotions, so we try to understand background of that information by the help of qualitative inquiry. But nature of qualitative study could change our perspective about the subject.

2. METHOD

Ethical approval of this study was provided from Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University Ethical Review Board. Participants have given written and verbally informed consent after their consent, we also ask for permission to record interview. All of participants are volunteered to participate and they have right to terminate study, also they might not answer or selectively answer the interview questions.

2.1. Participants

Researchers collected their participants with the method of purposeful sampling which consists of psychology juniors. Snowball and convenience sampling strategies were used. Participants were asked to recommend a friend of them to participate and also researchers offered psychology juniors to participate when they see one of them. All of the participants chosen from Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University (AYBU) Psychology juniors (first-year students) because of researchers think that the freshness of participants' experiences and have less distortion of memories due to possible time delay. When data gives repetitive statements, data collection ceased because of data saturation principle. At

the end of the data collection, the study has nine participants, five of them are women; the other four of them are men.

2.2. Data Collection

Researchers used semi-structured interview, drawing task and letter from participants. Due to supply rapport between researchers and participants we used semi-structured interviews which consist of nine main and twelve alternative questions. We generally used main questions to ask every participant while alternatives questions only used to enhance rapport relationship. Some of the main questions are ''Why did you choose psychology department?'' and ''How did you feel during the selection process of department?'' and as an alternatives question '' When you start the university, in what ways did you disappointed about university life and department?'' used. Drawing task was used to probe implicit feelings of participants about department selection and its process. Drawings are interpreted coherently by researchers. Also, we ask for anonymous letters for participants who cannot express themselves comfortably. Drawing task and letters were optional data collection tools which ensured triangulation.

Researchers conducted interviews at isolated and quiet environment which include only researchers and participant. In interview sessions, we used two researchers, one of them responsible for asking questions face to face while other one taking notes in right behind of participants due to avoid making feel discomfort to participants. Drawing task received later with code numbers of participants. No participants bring letter and state that they expressed themselves clearly. Interviews lasted about 20 to 30 minutes. Data collection procedures lasted about a week because of scheduling of interviews. Also for ensuring anonymity, researchers did not take any name and demographic information. They gave code numbers to participants to protect their anonymity.

2.3. Data Analysis

Researchers modify Moustakas's (1994: 180-182) phenomenological inquiry method and used in this study. Firstly, voice records were transcribed into writings and some of the marginal notes derived from that writings which later construct significant statements. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data and for avoiding bias and ensuring triangulation two coders, who are researchers of study, used. 133 significant statements emerged from codes. These statements constructed 20 meaning units which composed 5 themes (See, Figure .1). Two coders have consensus over themes so, inter-rater validity is ensured.

Figure1. Probable Factors That Affect Psychology Department Decision
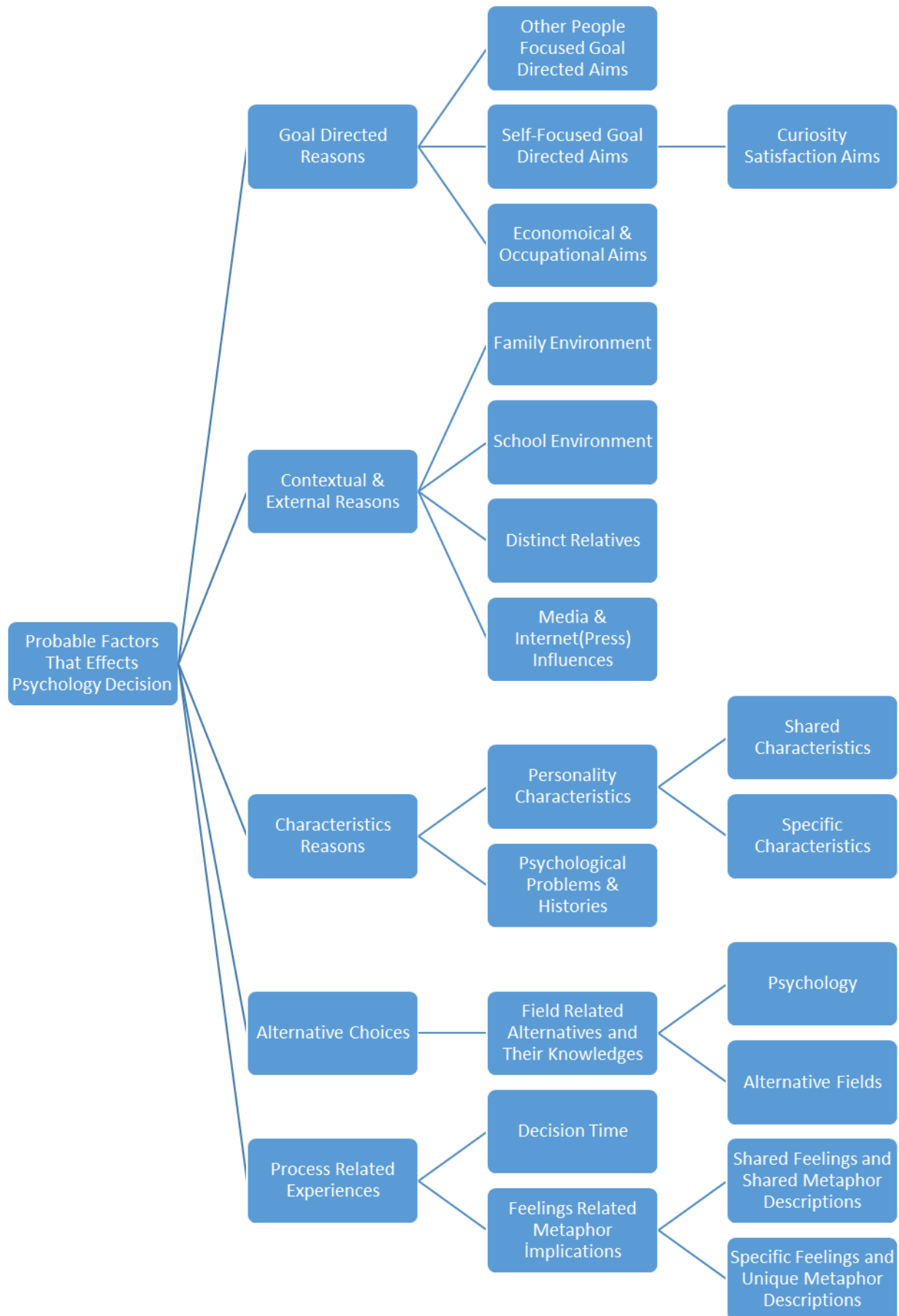
3. RESULTS

After data analysis, researchers concluded 5 main themes and 12 subthemes (See, Figure 1.). Researchers modeled probable factors that affect psychology decision-making. In this broad model, four of the main themes directly affect decision making process but one of the main themes, which is process related experiences affects indirectly the decision itself.

3.1. Goal-Directed Reasons

3.1.1. Economical and Occupational Aims

Some of the participants looked for their decision according to economical sources like salary and occupational expectancies but most of them did not search these contents and only considered career satisfaction. For example, Mr.7 stated, ''*I didn't search for material gains because I will do this job for the rest of my life, so I must be happy*.''

Ms.2 interestingly stated that they would be happier if they study literature or history but because of occupational apprehensions they chose psychology department.

''*I would be happier, if I study literature but due to occupational concerns I chose psychology*.''

3.1.2. Self-focused Goal-Directed Aims

Most of the participants choose psychology, due to bring advantages to themselves also some of them say that make changes in their lives, happiness for themselves. For example, Ms.2 noted, ''*I choose Psychology, for the purpose of changing my life*.''

3.1.2.1. Curiosity Satisfaction Aims

All of the participants wonder the content of human behaviors and specifically some of them say curiosity of cognition, emotions among humans. For instance, Mr.1 reported, ''*I wonder deeper level of human behaviors*.''

3.1.3. Other People Focused Goal-Directed Aims

Most of the participants say their psychology decisions based on desire of being beneficial and solution maker for other peoples. One example is Ms.8, she noted, ''*I like being helpful toward other people through listening to them*.''

3.2. Contextual and External Reasons

3.2.1. Family Environment

Nearly all of the participants' families support students' own decisions, but some of them suggest solely law as an alternative of psychology but again none of them insist decision of law. For example, Ms.8 stated, ''*My family support my decisions in all conditions*.''

3.2.2. School Environment

Most of the participants face interventions to their decisions related to decision of choosing psychology. In generally, school environment try to convert their decisions from psychology to law most of them are consists of high school teachers. But interestingly some of participants reported school consultants support their psychology decisions while other teachers don't. Such as Ms.2 noted, ''*My history teacher insisted on decision of law instead of psychology department*.''

Some of the participants report that they took psychology lessons in high school and some of them informed by one of the old high graduate who studies psychology in university. But these participants remain minority among all participants. Ms.9 reported, ''*I was thinking the decision of law till one of the old high school graduates who study psychology, visited the school and gave information about psychology after that experience I converted my decision to psychology*.''

3.2.3. Distinct Relatives

People who know about psychology, suggest this field but people who don't know about psychology generally contempt value of psychology and exaggerate the value of law. Few of them suggest law due to rich economical sources of law related occupations. For example, Ms.8 stated, ''*My distinct relatives said 'Are you going to be a doctor of crazy people' (and laughs), but when my uncle who is consultant, supported me in psychology decision, I became sure about psychology decision*.''

3.2.4. (Media and internet) Press Influences

All of the participants search information from internet. Most of them state they were affected indirectly by media stereotypes of psychology. Most of these stereotypes consist of Hannibal TV-Series, psychologist character (in ''Çocuklar Duymasın'') and these construct the image of a psychologist in their mind. One example is Ms.9 stated, *''The psychologist in the ''Çocuklar Duymasın'', has an elite status and intellectual clients need his help.''* While Mr.5 noted, *''I would like to be like Hannibal because of his genius coldblooded reactions.''*

Some of them consist of the images of Smurfs, Çalıkuşu (Feride Character), Winter Soldier due to their humanitarian perspectives. This shows that participants are in desire of being benevolent. For instance, Ms.9 reported, *''I would like to be Feride character in Çalıkuşu novel because of her stance about injustice and her conscience to a little orphan girl who adopted later.''*

Also, most of the participants admire being quick wit, wise, flexibly intellectual and humorous by the characters of Hannibal, Watson (in Sherlock Holmes) and Bugs Bunny. Such as Ms.4 noted, *''Watson's analytic intelligence and solution maker characteristics' encouraged me to study psychology and also in my childhood, I like Bugs Bunny because of his quick wit and his humors.''*

3.3. Characteristics Reasons

3.3.1. Personality Characteristics

3.3.1.1. Shared Characteristics

Most of the participants reported their characteristics as achievement seeker, hardworking, helpful, problem solver, conscience for the academic characteristics they share the common interest in math and literature. One example is Ms.3 stated, *''At my high school I attended psychological researchers and I took the pleasure of doing research after that I develop achievement desire.''* Another example is Mr.1 noted, *''I am in love with math.''*

Also more than half of the participants reported their childhood as introverted, quiet and observant and they experienced isolated childhood and dependent personality characteristics. Such as Mr.1 noted, *''My friends called me robot because of my stagnancy but I would like to observe others.''* Also, Ms.9 reported, *''I put my friends, into the center of my life, after the abandonment, I feel depressed.''*

3.3.1.2. Specific Characteristics

Ms.9 states that she did not choose law because of her apolitical and conscientious characteristics.

''I did not choose law because of injustice and political corruptions in Turkey, which are inconsistent with my value judgments.''

The psychology students generally state being introverted but interestingly one of the male participants reported very extroverted and popular among their peers. Mr.7 stated, *''I am always extroverted and optimist person, in my past I was clown around in a classroom.''*

3.3.2. Psychological Problems' Histories

Two of the participants stated as a cornerstone of their life is moving to bigger cities. Also interestingly two of them states that before moving to bigger cities at the age of 6, they were generally more active but after the moving of the bigger cities, they reported being more stagnant. For example, Mr.1 reported, *''In my childhood, I was very perky, for once I knocked downed, huge stewpot in a ceremony after moving to a bigger city I became stagnant.''*

Three of the participants have specific psychological problems reported, one of them is ADHD and the other has OCD diagnosis. The last one has subclinical level agoraphobia. One example is Mr.5 noted, *''I have depression originated ADHD diagnosis also I am using medication.''* Another example is Mr.6 reported, *''I have an OCD diagnosis and I am using medications, I took my diagnosis in 10th Grade… (Before that knowledge he states) I decided to choose psychology department in 10th Grade.''*

3.4. Alternatives Choices

3.4.1. Field Related Alternatives and Their Knowledge

3.4.1.1. Psychology

Almost all of the participants have little knowledge about psychology department, some of them specifically state, just the knowledge of Clinical and Forensic psychology subfields. Most of them don't have the person who knows psychology properly. Some of them do not know the academic processes. As an example Ms.2 stated, ''*I just know about the subfields of Clinical and Forensic Psychology and I learned other fields after coming to the department and after coming the department I decided to specialize in Social Psychology*''(Ms.2)

3.4.1.2. Alternative Fields

Some of them confused about whether law or psychology until last month of their decisions while others never consider law as an option. Also, some of them feel unattractively towards law. Such as Mr.6 noted, ''*Among Turkish-Math (equal-weight) field there are no valuable options other than psychology or law.*''

Some of the main alternatives other than law are Sociology, Literature, Counseling emerged from participants. For example Ms.4 stated, ''*If I couldn't study Psychology the other field would be Sociology.*''

3.5. Process Related Experiences

3.5.1. Decision Time

Most of the participants decided to study Psychology in 10th or 12th Grade while only one participant decided it at 13 years old. Ms.4 reported, ''*My cuisine was studying Sociology and I would like to study Sociology too but then she advised me to search psychology because it is better, so I decided to study psychology when I was 13 years old.*''

3.5.2. Feelings and Related Metaphor Implications

3.5.2.1. Shared Feelings and Similar Metaphor Descriptions

Nearly all of participants reported the feelings of stress, before the declaration of university exam scores after that again most of the participants shared the feelings of impatience, excitement. The last phase of declaration of placement of university most of them felt happy due to English educational language but some of them reported they are unhappy of university for the reasons of transportation difficulties of university. For instance, Ms.3 reported, ''*I feel distressed while preparing of university exam but after the declaration of exam scores I relaxed but feelings of uncertainty and impatience remain after a while the declaration of placement firstly I feel disappointed but the English education language could compensate that feeling and I feel happy about that.*''

Common points of metaphors know the past but don't know the future. Such as Ms.2 stated, ''*Even though the knowledge of ingredients of a meal we know but we don't know after the cooking how it will taste.*''

3.5.2.2. Specific Feelings and Unique Metaphor Descriptions

Few of the participants reported no stress during these processes. Interestingly one of the participants saw the process as exciting and funny. Ms.4 noted, ''*It's like being in a going downhill while riding a bicycle or in amusement park getting in dodgem car.*''

One of the participants feels hopelessness, this person is in generally pessimist psychological state but he sees this university as a storm anchor implicitly because his metaphors include little hope even though he did not believe in hope or emotion. Mr.5 stated, ''*There is a little fly in a glass bottle with a cork stopper but that stopper has little hole on it that fly try to escape through that in narrow hole.*''

One of the participants sees that experience as a transition from darkness to brightness (See, Figure 2).

Figure 2. Transition from Darkness to Brightness
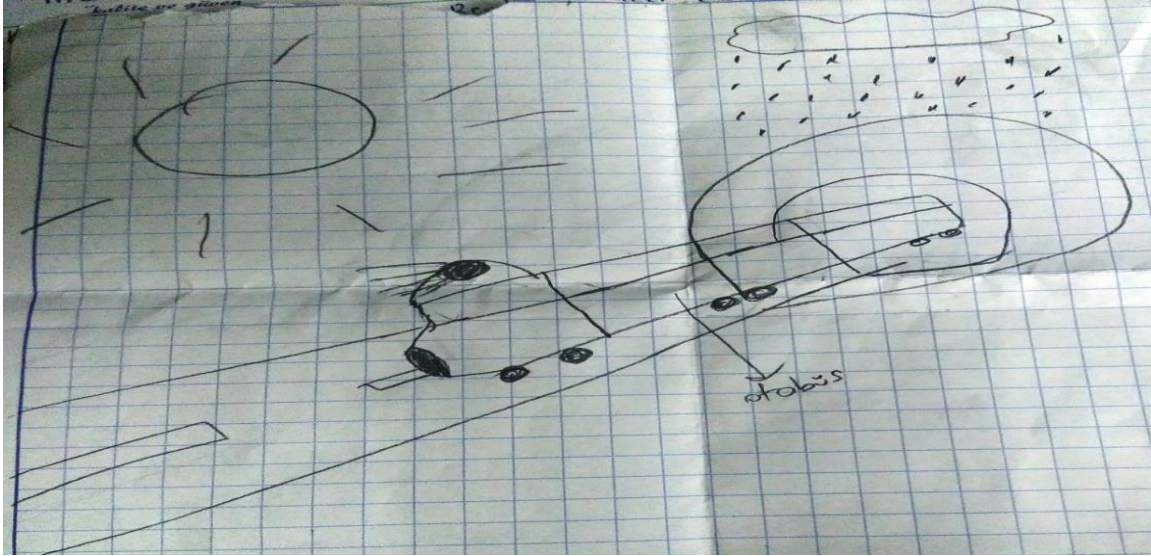
One extroverted participant sees this experience as a bigger worldview, after strict line the world and moon perspective expanding to universe so his view expanding his horizon after the placement of psychology department (See, Figure 3.).

Figure 3. Strict Line between Earth-Moon and Universe.
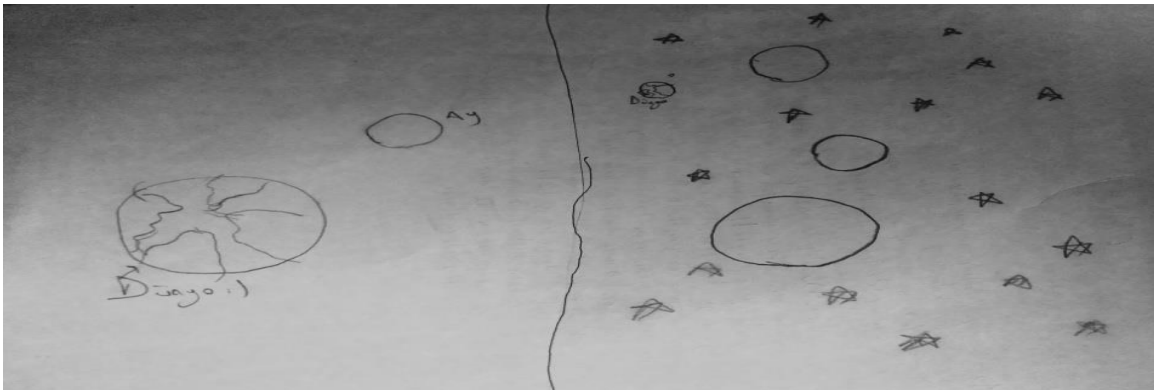
4. DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS

As aforementioned, only one participant decided her career at 13 years of age, but others decided at 10th grade or 12th grade. This shows us some of the participants made decision in tentative stage, according to their interests, values and capacities; whereas other participants made their decision in realistic stage by thinking about their needs and options such as law or psychology. These different stages from the study of Ginzberg et al. (1951:75) can explain that why there are also different motivations for same career as well as common motivations.

None of the participants choose psychology department for primarily economic reasons. It is surprising and controversial to the literature because Korkut-Owen (2008) and Lent et al. (2002:69) stated economic reasons as effective factor for career choice and also, 32% of university students in Turkey chose their departments due to good financial gain expectancies (Korkut-Owen, Kepir, Özdemir, Ulaş and Yılmaz, 2012:138). Some of the participants considered salary and job opportunities, due to ensuring it is worth to study. A few of them chose psychology over their favorite field such as literature because of economic concerns. Ideal way of career decision is to make decision in accordance with the individual's interest and ability, but current education policies making it hard

for youth because they have to consider systemic facts like entry points and job opportunities (Korkut-Owen, Kepir, Özdemir, Ulaş and Yılmaz, 2012:147).

When we look psychology students' general personality features, we found that they are mostly achievement seeker, hardworking, helpful and problem solver. They mostly like mathematics and literature. Almost all of them are introverted and had a somewhat quiet childhood. The third leading reason of department choice in Turkey is thinking that job fits person's characteristic (Korkut-Owen, Kepir, Özdemir, Ulaş and Yılmaz, 2012:138) and also in this study, participants are interested and conducted in researchers in their past lives and like to help people. One of the most valuable aspect of an occupation is to serve to humanity and psychology has especially respectful value as serving to humanity so, it is not surprising that our sample thinks they are helpful and problem solver. Participants' characteristics as they stated fit the occupations requirements.

One of the most intriguing findings is that three male participants in this study, report psychological problems, two of them have diagnosis from mental health professionals also another one report has subclinical psychological disorder. It is so tempting to hypothesize male psychology students generally have psychological disorders and they may, therefore, choose to study psychology. Some of the findings could support that hypothesis, such as deciding in the 10th grade both specializing psychology department and taking diagnosis of OCD in that time. If so it is, much of the psychological studies' usage of men psychology students could bias their studies' results, however this study has the nature of qualitative method and its theoretical assumptions and methods could not permit us, to generalize such conclusions. Therefore this finding should be investigated for further researches in a more quantitative way to make generalizations.

Results show that in Turkey there are huge confusions which arise from university exam scores' results. As some specific point types determine which field you choose like, Turkish/Math, Social/Turkish, and Math/Natural Sciences point types. Also, nowadays psychology has one of the highest entry points in Turkish/Math point type, which competing with law. So, therefore, it is not so easy to make decisions among them for high school students. Their distinct environment and school environment usually exaggerate law and contempt psychology department. This picture could change when they have appropriate sources like the person who knows about psychology, suggest psychology. Researchers concluded that people who know about psychology, counselors of schools, suggest psychology whereas people who don't know about psychology, school teachers, and relatives, suggest law and even contempt psychology.

Study's findings also related to other findings which are lack of knowledge about psychology department. It is so unpredictable of that little level of knowledge for person who wants to specialize this area. Probably it sensitizes suggestions of other people's thoughts especially who knows about psychology which gives the impressions of reliable source. So we suggest to enhancing the ability to classify reliable information to possible psychology department candidates. This could prevent some superficial knowledge about psychology department. In addition, some of the superficial knowledge comes from stereotypical psychology and psychologist image, which may not match the real world examples. If this happens possible psychology department candidates could frustrate their decision about psychology and may withdraw also some warnings before decisions of psychology could inhibit such frustration from possible psychology students.

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