



Well-Being and Career Anxiety as Predictors of Career Indecision *

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Abstract

This research aimed to examine the relationship between high school students' well-being levels and career anxiety levels and career indecision. Research data were collected from 663 students (398 girls, 265 boys) studying in Anatolian high schools and vocational high schools. Career Decision Inventory, Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale, and Career Anxiety Scale were used to collect data. The Hierarchical Regression Analysis was used in the data analysis. The research results show a significant negative relationship between career indecision and well-being and a significant positive relationship between career indecision and career anxiety. According to the hierarchical regression analysis results, well-being and career anxiety are significant predictors of career indecision. Variables of well-being, and career anxiety (anxiety on family effect, anxiety on vocation choice) explain 43% of total variance for career indecision. These results are discussed within the framework of the related literature.

Keywords: career indecision, well-being, career anxiety

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Introduction

Career indecision has been a subject that concerns experts in the field of career for long years. This problem area, which initially focused solely on students' career decision-making process, now covers a wider area of life as people feel the need to revise their career decisions throughout their lives (Osipow, 1999).

While Kelly and Lee (2002) define career indecision as the uncertainty that individuals experiences in the process of making an education or career decision; Chartrand, Rose, Elliott, Marmarosh, and Caldwell (1993) explain career indecision as the difficulty faced by the individual while making a career decision. The common aspect of the explanations about career indecision is related to the individual's problems making career decisions during the career development process.

Given the previous studies on career indecision, experimental studies in which training programs have been applied to eliminate career indecision (Çakır, 2003; Fouad, Cotter & Kantemneni, 2009; Gallo, 2017; Kırdök, 2010; Lam, 2016; Joslyn, 2015; Symes, 1998) have an important position in the literature. Furthermore, career decision-making self-efficacy (Creed, Patton & Prideaux, 2006; Krass & Hughey, 1999; Taylor & Popma, 1990), dysfunctional career thoughts (Osborn, 1998; Saunders, Peterson, Sampson & Reardon, 2000), social support (Arce, 1996; Guay, Ratelle, Senecal, Larose & Deschenes, 2006) and personality traits (Leong & Chervinko, 1996; Page, Bruch & Haase, 2008) with career indecision there are notable studies which have associated.

Career Indecision and Well-Being

The concept of well-being, which indicates the most appropriate psychological state and functioning for the individual, has been heavily addressed in psychology studies in recent years (Deci & Ryan, 2008). There are studies in the literature that define and examine well-being under different topics such as mental well-being (Beiser, 1974), subjective well-being (Diener, 1984), and psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

As one of the first studies associating the career decision-making process with well-being, Arnold's (1989) study with undergraduates concluded that psychological well-being was a significant predictor of career indecision. Similarly, Creed, Patton, and Bartrum (2002) found that high school students' high subjective well-being reduced their level of career decision-making difficulties. Uthayakumar, Schimmack, Hartung, and Rogers (2010)

reveal that there is a negative relationship between subjective well-being and career indecision; As a result of the research conducted by Creed, Prideaux, and Patton (2005), it was found that there is a significant relationship between persistent career indecision and low level of well-being in adolescents. Besides these findings; career indecision and life satisfaction (Lounsbury, Tatum, Chambers, Owens, & Gibson, 1999), career indecision and psychological well-being (Viola, Musso, Ingoglia, Coco, & Inguglia, 2017), and career decision making difficulties and subjective well-being (Happy, 2011), studies are revealing that there is a significant relationship between them.

Career Indecision and Career Anxiety

One of the variables intensively studied regarding the career decision-making process is anxiety. Many studies in the literature reveal that there is a significant relationship between anxiety level and career indecision (Campagna & Curtis, 2007; Corkin, Arbona, Coleman, & Ramirez, 2008; Öztemel, 2013; Santos & Ferreira, 2012; Santos, Ferreira & Gonçalves, 2014).

It is seen that there are a limited number of studies examining the career anxiety variable as a concept specific to the career process and using specific career anxiety scales (Nalbantoğlu-Yılmaz & Çetin-Gündüz, 2018a; Vignoli, Croity-Blez, Chapeland, de Fillipis & Garcia, 2005; Weinstein, Healy & Ender, 2002). Along with these studies, when the studies that associate career indecision and career anxiety are examined; In the study conducted by Vignoli (2015) in which the career anxiety scale was used in addition to the general anxiety scale, it was found that there was a significant positive relationship between general anxiety and career anxiety levels of adolescents and career indecision. In another study (Germeijs, Verschueren, & Soenens, 2006) examining the career decision making processes of adolescents, it is seen that the career choice anxiety scale was used. Nalbantoğlu-Yılmaz and Çetin-Gündüz (2018b) analyzed the relationship between career indecision and career anxiety in their study with high school students using the career anxiety scale they developed and found that as career indecision increased, the students' career anxiety increased.

Anxiety and general well-being levels of adolescents at high school age during the career decision-making process may adversely affect their indecision about vocation or career. In this sense, it is deemed essential to examine career anxiety and well-being

variables that are thought to be associated with high school students' career indecision. One of the limited studies in the literature that deals with the relationship between career indecision and well-being and career anxiety are the study conducted by Miller and Rottinghaus (2014) that reveals the mediating role of meaning in life between career indecision and anxiety. In this context, it was aimed at this research to examine the relationship between career indecision and well-being levels and career anxiety levels of high school students and determine to what extent well-being and career anxiety predict career indecision.

Method

Research Design

This research was designed in the correlational model as it examined the relationship between high school students' career indecision, well-being levels, and career anxiety levels. The correlational study investigates the correlation between two or more variables without any intervention (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012).

Study group

The study group of the research consisted of 663 students (398 girls, 265 boys) studying in the 9th to 12th grades of secondary education institutions in Niğde city center. 28% of the students were 9th-grade, 26% were 10th-grade, 25% were 11th-grade, and 21% were 12th-grade students. The research data were collected from volunteered students during the academic year of 2017-2018 by the permission of Niğde Provincial Directorate of National Education dated 03/03/2017.

Measures

Career Decision Inventory

The inventory was developed by Çakır (2004) to measure high school students' career indecision levels. Inventory items were written based on the career development tasks that high school students need to deliver and on social cognitive theoreticians' opinions. A total score can be obtained from the scale consisting of five sub-dimensions and 30 items, and the five-point Likert-type grading method is used to answer the items. The analysis performed to determine inventory's construct validity showed that the factors explain 40.53% of the total variance. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be .85. As a result of the test-retest reliability analysis, another method, the correlation coefficient between the mean scores of the two applications was calculated as .83. Within

the scope of this study, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the inventory was calculated and found to be .94. The reliability coefficients calculated according to the analysis results show that the inventory is a reliable measurement tool.

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale

Developed by Tennant et al. (2007) to measure individuals' mental well-being levels, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale was adapted to the Turkish culture by Keldal (2015). The scale consists of 14 items; It aims to obtain information about individuals' positive mental health by including psychological well-being and subjective well-being. The scale is a 5-point Likert type and scored as 1 = strongly disagree - 5 = totally agree. With 14 items all being positive, the possible highest score is 70 in the scale. The reliability coefficient calculated for the scale's internal consistency is .92, while its test-retest reliability coefficient is .89. For the current study, the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated and found to be .90.

Career Anxiety Scale

Developed by Çetin Gündüz and Nalbantoğlu Yılmaz (2016), the Career Anxiety Scale is composed of two factors and 14 items. The scoring of the responses to the scale items was prepared in a 5-point Likert type graded between "strongly disagree (1)" and "totally agree (5)". High scores obtained from each dimension of the scale reveal that career anxiety related to the relevant dimension is experienced at a higher level.

Exploratory (EFA) and Confirmatory (CFA) factor analyses were respectively performed for the scale's construct validity. According to the analysis results, the first factor of the scale, which was developed to measure the career anxiety of high school students, was named anxiety about the choice of vocation. The second factor was called anxiety towards family influence. The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient determined the reliability of the measurement tool. Accordingly, reliability coefficients were calculated to be .80 and .74 for the first and second factors, respectively. Within the scope of this study, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was calculated, and the reliability coefficient of the first factor was found .91, and the reliability coefficient of the second factor was found .89.

Data Analysis

The research data were analyzed in the SPSS 24.0 software. The Hierarchical Regression Analysis technique was used in the analysis. Before proceeding with the analysis, the dataset was checked for normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, outliers, independence of errors,

multicollinearity, and singularity assumptions. The Scatter plot of the residuals was examined for normality assumption and linearity and homoscedasticity, and all these assumptions were observed to be met. The Durbin-Watson values were calculated for examining the independence of errors, and a value of 2.09 was obtained. Such value around 2 indicates that errors are independent of each other. For the check multicollinearity and singularity, bivariate correlations, tolerance, and VIF values were computed. It was observed that the highest relationship was moderate, the tolerance values were not less than .10, and VIF values were not more than .10. Accordingly, it was concluded that there were no multicollinearity and singularity problems regarding the data set. The hierarchical regression analysis was performed in two steps. While the mental well-being variable, which is thought to be less theoretically predictive, was included in the analysis in the first step, the career anxiety variable was included in the analysis in the second step.

Findings

In this section, findings related to career indecision, well-being, career anxiety mean scores and standard deviations, and correlation coefficients are given.

Table 1. *Correlation and Standard Deviation Values and Mean Scores of Career Indecision, Well-Being, and Career Anxiety*

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1.Career Indecision | 1 | -.36* | .59* | .50* |
| 2.Well-Being | | 1 | -.39* | -.24* |
| 3.Anxiety on Choice of Vocation | | | 1 | .47* |
| 4.Anxiety on Family Effect | | | | 1 |
| \bar{X} | 78.02 | 49.51 | 27.39 | 10.71 |
| Sd | 25.57 | 11.48 | 9.61 | 5.37 |

*p<.01

According to Table 1, there was a negative correlation between career indecision and well-being ($r = -.36, p < .01$). Positive correlations were found between career indecision and anxiety on the choice of profession ($r = .59, p < .01$) and career indecision and anxiety on

family effect ($r = .50$, $p < .01$). The results of the regression analysis performed to examine the predictiveness of well-being and career anxiety on career indecision were examined in the second stage of the findings.

Table 2. Regression Analysis Results

| Predictors | Model I | | | Model II | | |
|-------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|----------|-------------|---------|
| | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β |
| Well-Being | -.82 | .08 | -.37* | -.31 | .07 | -.14* |
| Anxiety on Family Effect | - | - | - | 1.29 | .16 | .27* |
| Anxiety on Choice of Vocation | - | - | - | 1.11 | .09 | .42* |
| R ² | .13 | | | .43 | | |
| Adjusted R ² | .13 | | | .43 | | |

As a result of the hierarchical regression analysis, it is seen that both models are significant. It is seen that the well-being variable included in the model in the first step explains 13% of the variance of career indecision. In the second step, it is seen that 43% of the variance related to career indecision was explained with the inclusion of the sub-dimensions of career anxiety (anxiety on family influence and anxiety on the choice of vocation) to the model. Given the non-standardized regression coefficients, well-being ($B = -.31$, $t = -4.352$) seems to be a significant negative predictor of career indecision. Accordingly, an increase of one unit in the well-being level predicts a decreased .31 units in career indecision. It is seen that anxiety towards family influence ($B = 1.29$, $t = 8.020$) and anxiety towards a choice of vocation ($B = 1.11$, $t = 11.822$) sub-dimensions of career anxiety, are positively significant predictors of career indecision. Accordingly, a one-unit increase in anxiety about family influence and anxiety about vocation choice predicts an increase of 1.29 and 1.11 units, respectively, in career indecision. When the standardized regression coefficients (β) are examined; It is seen that anxiety about the choice of vocation ($\beta = .42$) and anxiety about family influence ($\beta = .27$) are more important predictors of career indecision of high school students than the well-being variable ($\beta = -.14$).

Discussion

This study aimed to examine well-being and career anxiety as predictors of career indecision among high school students. As a result of the hierarchical regression analysis made for this purpose; It was found that well-being and career anxiety are significant predictors of career indecision.

Research results showed that well-being was a significant negative predictor of career indecision. In other words, the career indecision of the high school students decreased as their well-being levels increased. In their longitudinal study with high school students, Creed, Patton and Prideaux (2005) found that the students who were indecisive about their careers had lower well-being levels. Although studies on high school samples are limited in the literature, the results of studies conducted by Creed, Patton and Bartrum (2002) and Mutlu (2011) on the relationship between career decision-making difficulties and subjective well-being levels coincide with this finding of the research. In both studies, subjective well-being was found to be a negative predictor of career decision-making difficulties.

Another finding of the research is that anxiety on family effect and anxiety on vocation choice, which are subscales of the career anxiety scale, were significant positive predictors of career indecision. One can accordingly argue that high school students' career indecision increased as their career anxiety levels increased. Studies are coinciding with this finding in the literature. The results of the study conducted by Nalbantoğlu-Yılmaz and Çetin-Gündüz (2018b) with high school students, and used the career anxiety scale, reveal similar findings with the results of this study. In parallel with this research's findings, results achieved in the studies performed with high school samples and using a general anxiety scale (Öztemel, 2013; Vignoli, 2015) indicate a significant correlation between career indecision and anxiety. Germeijs, Verschueren and Soenens (2006) concluded a significant relationship between career choice anxiety and indecision in adolescents' career decision-making processes.

This study, which examined the variables of well-being and career anxiety as predictors of high school students' career indecision, has some limitations. One of them is about the study group. The research is limited to the data collected from the participant students continuing their education at the high schools in Niğde province in the Central Anatolian Region of Turkey. Considering that there is a need to replicate these findings in future studies, work can be performed in more comprehensive samples in Turkey's different

regions. This research was designed with the quantitative method, which is another limitation of the study. Future studies may be recommended to conduct qualitative or mixed studies with smaller samples to make a detailed analysis of the variables.

Despite the stated limitations of this study, it is thought that it will make a significant contribution to the literature on adolescents' career decision process with its explanations about the prediction status of career indecision by well-being and career anxiety variables. The results obtained from the research are also crucial in providing findings for the career counseling practices of experts working in the field. The research findings reveal the importance of benefiting from career psycho-education programs based on increasing well-being and positive psychology-based studies in career counseling studies for high school students who are in the process of making career decisions. Besides, in line with the findings that anxiety is a significant predictor of career indecision; It can be said that it would be beneficial for school counselors and career counselors to prioritize individual and group counseling practices based on reducing career anxiety for both families and students in the career decision-making process of students.

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