

Impact of Choosing a Profession on Hopelessness Level of First Year University Students

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ÖZET

Meslek seçiminin üniversite birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin umutsuzluk düzeylerine etkisi

Amaç: Yetişkin bireyler yaşamlarının büyük bir bölümü mesleklerini yaparak geçirmektedirler. Türkiye’de gençler mesleklerini kendi istek ve iradeleriyle seçemeyebilmektedirler. Araştırma üniversite birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin umutsuzluk düzeylerinin ve etkileyen faktörlerin belirlenmesi amacıyla planlanmıştır.

Yöntem: Araştırma tanımlayıcı olarak planlanmıştır. Örneklemi çalışmaya katılmaya istekli olan ve çalışma süresinde ulaşılabilen toplam 271 öğrenci oluşturmuştur. Veri toplama aracı olarak, araştırmacılar tarafından literatüre dayanarak geliştirilen Katılımcı Tanıtıcı Bilgi Formu ile Beck Umutsuzluk Ölçeği kullanılmıştır.

Bulgular: Katılımcıların yaş ortalamaları 19,58±1,40 (17-29) olup, %81,2 (n=220)’si kız; %18,8 (n=51)’i erkektir. Çalışma popülasyonuna göre elde edilen Beck Umutsuzluk ölçeği Cronbach alfa katsayısı 0,83’tür. Çalışmadan elde edilen Beck Umutsuzluk Ölçeği toplam puan ortalaması 3,50±3,55 (0-20)’dir. Erkek öğrencilerin umutsuzluk puanları, kız öğrencilere göre anlamlı düzeyde yüksek bulunmuştur (p<0,05). Beck Umutsuzluk Ölçeği toplam puanı, bölümünü kendi isteğiyle seçmeyen olgular ile bölümler arasında ileri düzeyde anlamlı farklılık göstermektedir (p<0,001). Ölçek toplam puanı ile ailenin gelir düzeyi arasında anlamlı farklılık bulunmamasına (p>0,05) karşın puan ortalamalarına bakıldığında asgari ücret ve altındaki gelir düzeyine sahip öğrencilerin umutsuzluk puanlarının daha yüksek olduğu görülmektedir.

Sonuç: Öğrencilerin ilgi ve yeteneklerine göre daha etkin rehberlik sistemlerinin oluşturulmasının ve düşük gelir düzeyli öğrenciler için burs imkanlarının geliştirilmesinin yararlı olacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Umutsuzluk, üniversite öğrencileri, meslek, okullarda rehberlik

ABSTRACT

Impact of choosing a profession on hopelessness level of first year university students

Objective: Adults spend most of their lives practising their profession. Youngsters may not be able to choose their professions by their desire and willpower. The study was planned to identify freshmen’s hopelessness levels and the affecting factors in Turkey.

Method: This descriptive study was conducted on 271 students, who were willing to participate in the study and were accessible during the research. Participant Information Form and Beck Hopelessness Scale were administered for data collection.

Results: Mean age of participants were 19,58±1,40 (17-29);81,2% (n=220) was female and 18,8% (n=51) was male. Cronbach’s Alpha of Beck Hopelessness Scale was 0,83 for the study population. The mean total score provided from Beck Hopelessness Scale was 3,50±3,55 (0-20). Hopelessness score of the male participants was higher than that of the female participants (p<0,05). Total mean score of Beck Hopelessness Scale was significantly different between divisions and students who didn’t choose divisions voluntarily (p<0,001). Mean scores were higher in low income even though no significantly difference between family income and total hopelessness score (p>0,05).

Conclusion: It’s thought that to be helpful to establishing much more effective counselling systems according to based on students’ interests and skills and, to improving scholarship opportunities for students of low income families would be helpful.

Key words: Hopelessness, university students, profession, counselling in schools

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period of transition from childhood to adult including biological, psychological, intellectual, and socially development and maturation (1). Adolescence

period includes the ages 15-25 according to UNESCO (1,2). This period stands out in improving identification, orientation to physical changes, achieving independence, planning future, choosing profession, adaptation to community roles and rules (3,4). Emotional-social problems

and hopelessness may be encountered in young ones who try to orient lots of changes in adolescent period (4,5).

Hope is the positive expectations for accomplishing a future goal. Its most significant quality is the belief of a way out and for change in the individual's existence by help (6). Hopelessness is the stage of looking to future pessimistically, thinking of there is no way out, believing that bad things will find himself in the future as well or everything will be worse (7,8). Both hope and hopelessness are contingent reflections of one's possibility of achieving actual future goals. Hope implies the anticipation of accomplishing plans implemented for achieving the goal, whereas hopelessness involves the provision of failure (6,7,9).

American Psychological Association listed the causes for hopelessness as follows:

- Long-term restriction of an individual's activities due to various factors resulting in loneliness, distortion of physical health and long-term stress.

- Letting go,
- Losing belief in abstract values and/or God (9,10).

Youth endeavouring to adapt may come to the point of losing self-esteem and confidence and drift towards hopelessness in case of failure (7,11). Youths having an education that is unable to satisfy their expectations of the future would change their work field after graduation. Youths who do not change their field would not perform as their education requires or as they are expected success (7,12).

Profession is defined as 'the occupation requiring a high level of education and having specific legal rights and ethical rules, which one does for living' (13). Adults spend most of their life practising their profession. The profession most suitable for an individual is the one which is compatible with the individual's skills and interests, satisfying the individual's needs as well as possible. Some individuals live in peace and joy since they practice their profession fondly and willingly whereas some others take their profession negatively and cannot be satisfied of because they have accidentally chosen professions which they do not have any interest in (7). After the decision of choosing a profession, the decision of choosing the institute that prepares the individual for the profession chosen will come. Socio-economic status of the family may affect the choice of institute (7,12). The endeavours for adapting to a new school, an unfamiliar environment based on the thought of

steering the future may arise adaptation issues for many youths and thus causing the youths to experience hopelessness (4).

In this respect, the study was planned to identify hopelessness level of freshmen and the factors affecting the hopelessness level.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Procedure and Subjects

The study was descriptive and conducted in April to May 2009 by participation of 416 freshmen from Faculty of Health Sciences, Departments of Nursing (107), Midwifery (65), Health Management (51), and Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation (26), Faculty of Education, Departments of Preschool Teaching (124) and Special Education (43) of a state university. The sample consisted of a total of 271 students who were willing to participate and available during the period of the study. Freshmen were included in research by the thought that after beginning the education process they could be disappointed or hopeless as youths may not be able to choose their professions by their own desire and willpower in Turkey. Data collection tools were applied to students by researches personally. Data collection procedure took approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

Data Collection Tools

A Participant Questionnaire Form and Beck Hopelessness Scale were used for the study.

Socio-demographic information form: This questionnaire, based on the literature by the scientists, consisted of 16 questions regarding socio-demographic qualities of participants.

Beck hopelessness scale: The scale was developed by Beck and et al. in 1974 and adapted into Turkish by Seber in 1991 (14). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was 0,86. The scale which is applicable to literate children, adolescents and adults has no time limit. It is an oral, written scale applicable in groups. Individuals are asked to choose "yes" for statements suitable and to choose "no" for statements unsuitable. 1 point is given for a "no" answer to

questions 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 19 and for a “yes” to questions 2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20. The minimum score is 0 and the maximum score is 20. Higher scores indicate higher levels of hopelessness in an individual. The total score achieved is considered as the hopelessness score. The scale also has three sub-dimensions as “future related feelings”, “loss of motivation”, and “expectations about the future” (7).

Data Analysis

SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for Windows 11.5 was used as software for statistical analysis to evaluate findings achieved through the study. Calculated Beck Hopelessness score was tested for normality by normal distribution test (One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov) and histogram and considered to have not a normal distribution. Thus, non-parametric tests were used as statistical significance tests. Kruskal Wallis test was used for comparing parameters among groups which does not give normal distribution in comparison of quantitative data and Mann

Whitney U test with Bonferroni correction and Mann Whitney U test was used for determining the group causing the differentiation besides definitive statistical methods (Mean, Standard Deviation) while evaluating date of the study. The result were evaluated for 95% confidence interval with a significance of $p < 0.05$.

Ethical Consideration

Written consents from relevant deanships whereof the study to be conducted were taken. Also written informed consents were provided from participants.

RESULTS

Ages of 271 freshmen participating in the study varied from 17 to 29, having a mean of 19.58 ± 1.40 . Eighty one percent ($n=220$) of the students were female and 19% ($n=51$) were male. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0,83 in the research population.

Of the students, 32.8% ($n=89$) were from Nursing, 29.9%

Table 1: Comparison of Beck Hopelessness Scale mean scores on the basis of departments

<i>Beck Hopelessness Scale</i>	<i>Departments</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Median (25%-75% values)</i>	χ^2	<i>p</i>
Total Score	Nursing	89	3 (2-6)	25,52	<0.001
	Midwifery	50	2 (1-3)		
	Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation	15	1 (1-3)		
	Health Management	21	3 (1-8.50)		
	Preschool Education	81	2 (1-3.50)		
	Special Education Department	15	3 (1-6)		
Future Related Feelings	Nursing	89	0 (0-1)	7.11	>0.05
	Midwifery	50	0 (0-0.25)		
	Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation	15	0 (0-0)		
	Health Management	21	0 (0-2.50)		
	Preschool Education	81	0 (0-0)		
	Special Education Department	15	0 (0-19)		
Loss of Motivation	Nursing	89	1 (1-2)	12.95	<0.05
	Midwifery	50	1 (0-1)		
	Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation	15	1 (0-1)		
	Health Management	21	1 (0-2)		
	Preschool Education	81	1 (0-2)		
	Special Education Department	15	1 (1-3)		
Expectations About the Future	Nursing	89	1 (1-2)	24.01	<0.001
	Midwifery	50	1 (0-1)		
	Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation	15	0 (0-1)		
	Health Management	21	2 (0-3.50)		
	Preschool Education	81	1 (0-2)		
	Special Education Department	15	2 (0-3)		

χ^2 = Kruskal Wallis test

Table 2: Differentiation of Beck Hopelessness Scale mean scores on the basis of departments

<i>Beck Hopelessness Scale</i>	<i>Departments</i>		<i>Mean rank</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>
Total Score	Nursing	Midwifery	78.87-54.22	1436.00	<0.001*
	Nursing	Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation	56.43-29.17	317.50	<0.01*
	Nursing	Preschool Education	98.29-71.45	2466.50	<0.001*
Sub-dimensions of Beck Hopelessness Level					
Loss of Motivation	Nursing	Midwifery	73.31-64.10	1521.50	<0.01*
Expectations About the Future	Nursing	Midwifery	78.63-54.63	1456.50	<0.001*
	Nursing	Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation	56.65-27.87	298.00	<0.001*

*p<0.003 (corrected Bonferroni), U= Mann Whitney U test

Table 3: Comparison of Beck Hopelessness Scale mean scores on the basis of department choice status (willingly or not)

<i>Beck Hopelessness Scale</i>	<i>Department demand</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Median (25%-75% values)</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>
Total Score	Yes	207	2 (1-4)	4644.50	<0.01
	No	62			
Sub-dimensions of Beck Hopelessness Level					
Future Related Feelings	Yes	207	0 (0-1)	5422.00	<0.05
	No	62			
Loss of Motivation	Yes	207	1 (0-2)	4636.00	<0.001
	No	62			
Expectations About the Future	Yes	207	1 (0-2)	5000.50	<0.01
	No	62			

U: Mann Whitney U test

(n=81) were from Preschool Teaching, 18.5% (n=50) were from Midwifery, 7.7% (n=21) were from Health Management, 5.5% (n=5) were from Physiotherapy and 5.5% (n=15) were from Special Education Department.

Of the cases participated in the study 76.4% (n=207) have chosen the department they attend willingly.

Beck Hopelessness Scale mean total score was 3.50 ± 3.55 (0-20); mean total score of future related feelings sub-dimension was 0.59 ± 1.16 (0-5), mean total score of motivation loss sub-dimension was 1.27 ± 1.43 (0-8) and mean total score of expectations about the future sub-dimension was 1.26 ± 1.28 (0-5).

The total score of Beck Hopelessness Scale showed a statistically significant difference depending on the gender ($p < 0.05$). Hopelessness scores of male students were found to be significantly higher than the female students'. The total score of motivation loss sub-dimension of Beck Hopelessness Scale showed a statistically significant

difference depending on the gender ($p < 0.05$). Motivation loss scores of male students were found to be significantly higher than the female students'.

Beck Hopelessness total score as well as total scores of expectations about the future and motivation loss sub-dimensions differed significantly depending on the department whereas there was no significant difference for future related feelings sub-dimension (Table 1). It was found that there was no significant difference department-gender mutual effect on students' Beck Hopelessness total score according to the findings of ANCOVA which was conducted in order to test the effect of sex on the significant difference of comparison of departments ($F_{(4-260)} = 1.06$, $p > 0.05$). Therefore, it was seen that the slope of regression line was equal according to the calculated Beck Hopelessness total scores' of the students in different departments. There was a significant difference between the students in different departments

and corrected Beck Hopelessness total scores according to the sex ($F_{(5-264)} = 3.88, p < 0.01$). Therefore, according to the Bonferroni test results which performed between corrected Beck Hopelessness total scores of departments, Beck Hopelessness total scores of Health Management students (mean 5.03) were higher than Nursing (mean 4.17), Special Education Department (mean 4.08), Preschool Education (mean 3.30), Midwifery (mean 2.52) and Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation (mean 1.13) students. Beck Hopelessness total scores, Loss of Motivation and Expectation about the Future sub-dimension total scores were significantly different among departments (Table 2).

Beck Hopelessness Scale total score and sub-dimensions significantly differed according to the status of choosing the division (willingly or not) (Table 3).

Beck Hopelessness Scale total score and sub-dimensions did not significantly differed according to the family income level ($p > 0.05$). However, students with an income of subsistence wage (4.38 ± 4.59) or less (4.35 ± 3.10) were found to have higher hopelessness scores when mean scores were considered.

DISCUSSION

Hopelessness and Motivation loss scores of male students were found to be significantly higher than the female student's in the study. Similar results had been achieved in a study conducted to determine hopelessness levels of university students (4,15,16). In Bolland's (2003) study conducted on 2468 youths with high poverty living in suburbs, it has been found that approximately 50% of males and 25% of females had medium or high levels of hopelessness which brought along violence, substance abuse and similar risky behaviours (17). On the basis of these data, it may be concluded that males have more future anxiety and this may be related with the role burdened on the male in Turkish society. Men are given the responsibility of providing the subsistence of the family according to the traditional structure of Turkish society (15). This finding was an expected result.

In the study, Beck Hopelessness Scale total score and total scores of expectations about the future and motivation loss sub-dimensions significantly differed depending on the department as shown in Table 1. In the

study conducted by Dereli and Kabataş (2009) to determine employment anxiety and hopelessness levels of Muğla Health Academy senior students, it was determined that there was a significant association between employment anxiety together with the period students expect to find a job after graduation and hopelessness scores (18). Yenilmez (2010) indicated that hopelessness level increased as the students graduated from university do not have employment guarantee in Turkey (19). It was seen that Health Management Department had the highest Beck Hopelessness total score when mean scores of the departments were evaluated. It may be thought that reasons for high hopelessness scores of Health Management Department students may be due to the fact that professional health management is an emerging concept in Turkey and health management department has a foundation of just 10 years and medical doctors are usually employed as the management staff, especially in government institutions. In the study, it was seen that Nursing Department has the second highest Beck Hopelessness total score. Significant differences were seen between the Beck Hopelessness total scores of Nursing students and the students of other departments (Table 2). In Turkey, nursing education is not only of undergraduate degree but also of a high school degree; and the students graduating from high schools also have nursing title. Therefore, undergraduate degree students and high school degree students are employed in the same status. In addition, it is thought that nursing profession doesn't receive the reputation and value it deserves. All of these conditions preoccupy that nursing students' expectations after graduation are affected negatively and they might live hopelessness.

In the study it was found that student who did not choose their department willingly were more hopeless (Table 3). As mentioned in the literature, youths in Turkey have to choose the field relevant to the profession they want in the 1st year of high school and they have to choose an academic program or a profession in the last (11). In case a young individual makes this choice through guidance of his family and/or teachers against his will, it is thought that the probability of not choosing a profession suitable for his skills and talents would increase; he would not sufficiently satisfy with his profession and therefore his hopelessness

level would increase.

Çam Çelikel and Erkorkmaz (2003) suggested that students struggling to afford education costs had higher hopelessness levels in their study (16) and similarly Özmen, Erbay, Çetinkaya, Taşkın and Özmen (2008) suggested that children of families with lower socio-economic level were more hopeless (20). The results are similar with the results of Tümkaya's study (21). Our result which is thought to be due to the linear relationship between income levels and guarantee of future is confirmed with results of other studies.

It's thought that establishing more effective counselling systems based on students' interests and skills and improving scholarship opportunities for students of low income families would be helpful. Further research would determine problems in divisions which high hopelessness levels are seen.

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CONCLUSION

In conclusion, male students are more hopeless than female students and, choosing the department that they will get education and income status affect the hopelessness level.

This article can be a useful source of information for guidance and psychological counselling services which have a role in choosing profession in high schools.

Limitations of the Research

The study was conducted at some faculties of a certain university due to time constraints. Therefore, the results cannot be generalised for all university students.

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