



# A STUDY ON THE VIEWS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS TOWARD PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

# **Okan SARIGÖZ<sup>\*</sup>**

#### Abstract

Vocational high schools are schools that provide practical training in various branches depending on the Ministry of Education, and train qualified students especially for schools to work transition. The main objective of vocational high schools that is got accepted in to them by taking various exams after secondary school is to train students for higher education and try to satisfy the need for personnel in public and private sector by training qualified personnel's. The aim of this study is to try to determine secondary education students' views and opinions about Professional practice by taking variables of gender, class level and type of school demographic in to consideration. Research sample consists of 311 students that study in secondary public schools in city center of Adana in 2014-2015 school year. In the study, 'General Scanning Model' which is one of the descriptive survey models was applied. Validity and reliability of 'Survey of Professional Practice' which is used in the study and consist of 20 points were tested and Cronbach's Alpha internal reliability coefficient was calculated as 0.75. According to the results of the study, while there is no significant relationship between the students in vocational high schools concerning Professional practice, gender and class level, significant relationship between the study, it was concluded that professional practice helps renew the students' information and obtain new information, but professional practice doesn't influence much about communication.

Keywords: Professional Practice, Apprenticeship, Experience, Secondary Education, Student

# ORTAÖĞRETİM ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN MESLEKİ UYGULAMA HAKKINDAKİ GÖRÜŞLERİNE YÖNELİK BİR ÇALIŞMA

#### Öz

Meslek liseleri Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına bağlı olarak çeşitli branşlarda uygulamalı eğitim hizmeti veren ve özellikle meslek yüksekokullarına kalifiye öğrenci yetiştiren okullardır. Ortaokuldan sonra çeşitli sınavlara girilerek kazanılan meslek liselerinin temel amacı hem yükseköğretime öğrenci hazırlamak hem de kalifiye eleman yetiştirerek kamu ve özel sektörde duyulan eleman ihtiyacını karşılamaya çalışmaktır. Bu araştırmanın amacı; ortaöğretimde okuyan öğrencilerin mesleki uygulamaya yönelik görüş ve düşüncelerini cinsiyet, sınıf düzeyi ve okul türü demografik değişkenlerini de göz önünde bulundurarak belirlemeye çalışılmıştır. Araştırmanın örneklemini, 2014-2015 öğretim yılında Adana il merkezindeki devlete bağlı ortaöğretim okullarında okuyan 331 öğrenci oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmada, betimsel tarama yöntemlerinden biri olan 'Genel Tarama Modeli' kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada kullanılan ve 20 maddeden oluşan Mesleki Uygulama Anketi'nin geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışması yapılmış ve Cronbach's Alpha iç güvenirlik katsayısı 0,75 olarak hesaplanmıştır. Araştırmada elde edilen sonuçlara göre meslek liselerinde okuyan öğrenciler arasında anlamlı bir ilişki bulunamazken, okunulan bölüm bazında farklı bölümlerde okuyan öğrenciler arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca araştırmada mesleki uygulamanın öğrencilerin bilgilerini tazelemelerine ve yeni bilgi edinmelerine yardımcı olduğu fakat iletişim kurma konusunda öğrencileri pek fazla etkilemediği gibi sonuçlara ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mesleki uygulama, Staj, Deneyim, Ortaöğretim, Öğrenci

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>\*</sup> Öğr. Gör. Dr. Near East University Division of Curriculum and Instruction, <u>okan.sarigoz@gmail.com</u>





### Introduction

Secondary education schools are vocational high schools that offer education service under Ministry of National Education. Before entering university, in the schools giving basic vocational education an attempt is made to provide the students with occupation and to prepare the qualified students for the vocational schools at the higher education level and faculties. In these schools' departments' related to vocational education, it is provided the students with theoretical knowledge in the courses and also given practical training in the workplaces. Through vocational training in the schools it is attempted to combine knowledge, skill, experience, practice, experimentation and acquisition required for a profession with cognitive, affective, and psychomotor behaviours (Herrara, 2014; Donnelly, 2008; Sezgin, 2006).

According to the first article of regulation about basis and procedures related to training, practice and internship in the workplaces of the students studying at the secondary schools' departments related to vocational education and at higher vocational schools, the purposes are to reinforce theoretical knowledge and experiences in the period of study gained by the students studying at the vocational schools within vocational and technical education zones, to broaden skills and experiences gained through practices of laboratory and workplace, and to enable them to recognize responsibilities, relations, organization and production process, and new technologies in the workplaces (Official Gazette, 2002).

The amendments were made to Law No. 3308on the Vocational Education Law in 1988 about doing internship in the workplace and that it is thought this law regulates internship in schools, establishments and companies extensively (Kepenekci, 2008: 271). The regulation about that the students do internship in the workplace made in 2002 based on this law, was enforced in the vocational schools by Ministry of National Education (Kuzgun, 2013). It is stated to be aimed that the students improve their vocational knowledge and skills and that they do a career in the real production and workplace in the fifth article of the regulation thanks to this amendment (Regulation, 2007: 1). Also, the internship for the students receiving education is arranged according to this regulation (Kuzgun, 2013).

The one of basis features of professional practice is to prevent unemployment partially. According to the reports of (OECD, 1995), vocational education was adopted as a solution for youth unemployment among active employment measures for young people in order to cope with unemployment of young people.

The students studying at the secondary schools and at higher vocational schools are sent to various establishments for the internship related to their fields at certain periods of school time, its purpose is to provide graduated students with experience at work (Gökdoğan and Sarıgöz, 2012). A variety of internships are offered for easy adaptation of students to the work after the education life and for gaining professional experience during university education in Turkey (Karacan and Karacan, 2004: 168).

The aim is not just gaining experience related to their fields in trainings for professional practice. In addition to that, the aim is to train a mass of people to be thinking, searcher, self-confident, and enterprising, and to have artistic sensibility (Binici and Arı, 2004: 384).





The periods of professional practice is so important in vocational schools of health services, vocational nursing schools, health technician schools, and etc. established for providing qualified employee to healthcare field especially, because of practical courses and trainings given at these schools, it is like a thin line between saving one's life and not in future (Gökdoğan and Sarıgöz, 2012). In vocational nursing schools, nursing students need all kinds of professional experience in order to gain experience of real cases, and to apply new knowledge and technologies, and to find various ways for development of nursing practices (Gümral and Coşar, 2006: 21).

Not only do students gain experience from education for professional practice, but also teachers, educators and instructors participating in internships broaden their experiences. Advisors joining professional practice obtain new information during practice and have an idea of various subjects through observation. They gain experience by observing problems the students encounter in professional practice, and also become more productive for the students on the basis of observations and experiences during giving theoretical lesson about the problems the students can encounter (Gökdoğan and Sarıgöz, 2012).

### The Objective of the Research

This research's objective is to determine the views of the students studying at the secondary education schools and join professional practice about professional practice by considering gender, class level, and type of school. In the research, by detecting the students' problems about professional practice an attempt was made to offer a solution to them.

# The Importance of the Research

According to the findings obtained from this research it is thought that teachers and educators who provide guidance to professional practices will become aware of the problems the students joining professional practices in private or public agencies and institutions encounter, and in this way they will show a tendency to the problems that can be encountered. Therefore, it is thought that this research will be guidance for all students, teachers, and educators about professional practice and internship.

# **METHOD**

#### The Population and the Sample

The population of the research constitutes the students studying at all state-funded secondary schools in Adana city centre, and the sample of this research constitutes 331 students studying at the state-funded secondary schools in Adana city centre such as Fatih Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (FVTAHS), Kurttepe Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (KVTAHS), Seyhan Anatolian Vocational High School for Health (SAVHSH), Atatürk Anatolian Vocational High School for Health (AAVHSH), Tepebağ Anatolian Religious Vocational High School (TARVHS), and Adana Anatolian Religious Vocational High School (AARVHS).





### The Research Model

This research was done to determine the views and thoughts of the students studying at the secondary education schools about professional practice by considering the gender, class level, and type of school. For this purpose, earlier researches, and surveys and scales used in the researches on the subject were scanned by the researcher and that a new 'Survey of Professional Practice' was developed by the researcher and used in this research. For the survey that would be used in the research, field research was conducted at first, and then it was asked the students in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade at the secondary education school, open ended questions relevant to the subject, and an outline of the survey made up of 27 items was constituted considering the answers given to these questions. After necessary analytical studies 7 items were taken away from the survey, a survey made up of 20 items was constituted, and that after opinions of four academicians expert in the field of educational sciences about the survey were received, necessary adjustments were made and related survey was put into final form.

Validity and reliability studies of the Survey of Critical Pedagogy Principles used in the research were re-conducted and Cronbach's alpha internal reliability coefficient of 20item scale was calculated as 0,75. The answers of the students who participated in the study to the survey depending on the demographic variables were calculated by using Anova test which is an F test, t-test and one-way variance analysis with the help of SPSS 20 statistical software package. The survey used in the research consists of five point likert type 20 items including (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Undecided, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. Overall assessment of the survey used in the research is as below (Sarıgöz, *et. al.,* 2015a-2015b-2015c; Sarıgöz, Sağ and Cam, 2015; Cengiz, Sarıgöz and Dönger, 2015):

$$RO = \frac{HV - LV}{NO} = \frac{5 - 1}{5} = 0.8$$
  
RO: Range of Options  
HV: The Highest Value  
LV: The Lowest Value  
NO: Number of Options  
1.00 - 1.80: Strongly Disagree  
1.81 - 2.60: Disagree  
2.61 - 3.40: Undecided  
3.41 - 4.20: Agree  
4.21 - 5.00: Strongly Agree

The survey was applied to 331 of the students studying at Fatih Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (FVTAHS), Kurttepe Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (KVTAHS), Seyhan Anatolian Vocational High School for Health (SAVHSH), Atatürk Anatolian Vocational High School for Health (AAVHSH), Tepebağ Anatolian Religious Vocational High School (TARVHS), and Adana Anatolian Religious Vocational High School (AARVHS) that the state-funded secondary schools in Adana city centre, and the views and thoughts of students about professional practice have tried to be determined considering demographic variables of gender, class level, and type of school. In the research, "General Screening Model" which is the one of the descriptive methods was used. General screening model is the screening arrangements carried out on a group, sample group or a paradigm or the entire universe in order to draw conclusion about the universe composed of numerous elements (Karasar, 2005: 79). General screening model is a research model used to





determine the types of information like attitudes of, beliefs of, values of, habits of, and ideas of people (Mcmillan and Schumacher, 2001).

# FINDINGS

In this part of the research, demographic data about the students who participated in the research, the data obtained about the scale used in the research and the statistical findings and observations about this data are presented.

School	The Number of Student		Gende	er	Class Level		
	Ν	%	Ν	%	N	%	
FVTAHS	53	16,00	Male =37	69,81	11th Grade =28	52,83	
			Female =16	30,19	12th Grade =25	47,17	
KVTAHS	51	15,41	Male =36	70,59	11th Grade =27	52,94	
			Female =15	29,41	12th Grade =24	47,06	
SAVHSH	60	18,13	Male =18	30,00	11th Grade =30	50,00	
			Female =42	70,00	12th Grade =30	50,00	
AAVHSH	60	18,13	Male =18	30,00	11th Grade =30	50,00	
			Female =42	70,00	12th Grade =30	50,00	
TARVHS	52	15,71	Male =30	57,69	11th Grade =25	48,08	
			Female =22	42,31	12th Grade =27	51,92	
AARVHS	55	16,62	Male =38	69,09	11th Grade =28	50,91	
			Female =17	30,91	12th Grade =27	49,09	

 Table. 1 Demographic Data about the Students Participating in the Research

From the data in Table 1, it was determined that from among 331 of the students participating in the research, 53 of the students (% 16,00) are studying in Fatih Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (FVTAHS), from among them studying in this school, 37 of them (% 69,81) are male, and 16 of them (% 30,19) are female, and that 28 of the students (% 52,83) are in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and 25 of them (% 47,17) are in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. It was determined that from among 331 of the students participating in the research, 51 of the students (% 15,41) are studying in Kurttepe Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (KVTAHS), from among them studying in this school, 36 of them (% 70,59) are male, and 15 of them (% 47,06) are in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. It was determined that from among 331 of the students (% 52,94) are in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and 24 of them (% 47,06) are in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. It was determined that from among 331 of the students (% 18,13) are studying in Seyhan Anatolian Vocational High School for Health (SAVHSH), from among them studying in this





school, 18 of them (% 30,00) are male, and 42 of them (% 70,00) are female, and that 30 of them (% 50,00) are in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and 30 of the students (% 50,00) are in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. It was determined that from among 331 of the students participating in the research, 60 of the students (% 18,13) are studying in Atatürk Anatolian Vocational High School for Health (AAVHSH), from among them studying in this school, 18 of them (% 30,00) are male, and 42 of them (% 70,00) are female, and that 30 of the students (% 50,00) are in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and 30 of them (% 50,00) are in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. It was determined that from among 331 of the students participating in the research, 52 of the students (% 15,71) are studying in Tepebağ Anatolian Religious Vocational High School (TARVHS), from among them studying in this school, 30 of them (% 57,69) are male, and 22 of them (% 42,31) are female, and that 25 of the students (% 48,08) are in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and 27 of them (% 51,92) are in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. It was determined that from among 331 of the students participating in the research, 55 of the students (% 16,62) are studying in Adana Anatolian Religious Vocational High School (AARVHS), from among them studying at this department, 38 of them (% 69,09) are male, and 17 of them (% 30,91) are female, and that 28 of them (% 50,91) are in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 27 of them (% 49.09) are in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Table. 2The t-test analysis results of the answers of the students studying at the secondary education schools to the Survey of Professional Practice according to gender variable

Gender	Ν	x	Ss	Sd	t	р
Female	153	76.41	8.73	329	.772	.441
Male	178	77.13	8.29			
p>0.05						

When the data in Table 2 was examined, from the answers of the students participating in the research to Survey of Professional Practice, it was determined that there is no significant difference between female and male students studying at the secondary education schools in terms of the views of them about professional practice according to gender variable (p > .05). Because of the students' views, it can be said that female and male students have similar thoughts regarding professional practice.

Table. 3 The t-test analysis results of the answers of the students studying at the secondary education schools to the Survey of Professional Practice according to class level variable

Class Level	Ν	x	Ss	Sd	t	р
11th Grade	168	76.53	8.54	329	.578	.564
12th Grade	163	77.07	8.46			

#### p>0.05

When the data in Table 3 was examined, from the answers of the students participating in the research to Survey of Professional Practice, it was determined that there is no significant difference between the students in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade and the12<sup>th</sup> grade studying at the





secondary education schools in terms of the views of them about professional practice according to class level variable (p>,05). Because of the students' views, it can be said that the students in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade and the 12<sup>th</sup> grade have similar thoughts regarding professional practice.

Table. 4 The Anova test analysis results of the answers of the students studying at the secondary education schools to the Survey of Professional Practice according to the type of school variable

The Type of School	N	x	Ss	Variance Source	Sum of Squares	Sd	Mean Square	F	р	Significant Difference (Turkey)
1)FVTAHS	53	77.25	7.53	Btw. Gr.	875.51	5	175.10	2.482	.032	
2)KVTAHS	51	78.33	6.97	With Gr.	22929.33	325	70.55			
3)SAVHSH	60	78.08	9.89	Total	23804.84	330				2-4
4)AAVHSH	60	73.62	8.21							3-4
5)TARVHS	52	77.52	6.63							
6)AARVHS	55	76.35	10.15							
Total	331	76.80	8.49							

p<0.05

When the data in Table 4 was examined, from the answers the students participating in the research and studying at the secondary education schools to the Survey of Professional Practice according to the type of school variable, it was determined that there is a significant difference between the students studying in Kurttepe Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (KVTAHS), Seyhan Anatolian Vocational High School for Health (SAVHSH), and Atatürk Anatolian Vocational High School for Health (AAVHSH), in favour of the students studying in Kurttepe Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (KVTAHS), and Seyhan Anatolian Vocational High School for Health (SAVHSH), in favour of the students studying in Kurttepe Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (KVTAHS), and Seyhan Anatolian Vocational High School for Health (SAVHSH)[F(2,482), p(,032); p<,05].

# Table. 5 The arithmetic averages of the answers of the students participating in the research to the Survey of Professional Practice and skill levels of them

THE ITEMS OF THE SURVEY OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE	x	Skill Level
8. My self-confidence has increased after professional practice.	4.27	Strongly
		Agree
6. I have gained information which would be useful at work from	4.12	Agree
professional practice.		
4. I have easily comprehended the subjects related to my field in	4.09	Agree





professional practice.		
3. I could easily reach my advisors whenever I confronted problems.	4.08	Agree
16. Professional practice has aroused my desire for or interest in my	4.05	Agree
future profession.		
7. Professional practice has enabled me to form an opinion about my	4.03	Agree
profession.		
18. I have had lots of fun during professional practice.	4.02	Agree
1. Going to the professional practice makes me happy.	3.98	Agree
11. Professional practice has enabled me to gain the sense of	3.95	Agree
responsibility and mission.		
15. Professional practice has provided me to be aware of imperfect	3.88	Agree
knowledge I had.		
17. Professional practice has provided me with the experience of	3.86	Agree
cooperation.		
13. Professional practice has provided the experience of working in a	3.84	Agree
serious establishment.		
9. I became happy because I discharged my responsibilities in	3.81	Agree
professional practice.		
2. All advisors dealt with all the students in professional practice.	3.78	Agree
10. Every student should join professional practice.	3.69	Agree
5. I applied the knowledge that I had acquired at school, in	3.61	Agree
professional practice.		
14. Professional practice has brought the experience of using my time	3.60	Agree
productively.		
19. I felt like a personnel working at establishment during	3.53	Agree
professional practice.		
20. I have learnt what to do from professional practice when I	3.32	Undecided
confront a problem.		
12. Professional practice has improved my communication skill.	3.30	Undecided

General Arithmetic Average: 3.84 (Agree)

From the arithmetic averages of the answers of the students to the Survey of Professional Practice in Table 5, it was determined that the articles with the highest arithmetic averages in the survey are the 8<sup>th</sup> article stating "My self-confidence has increased after professional practice." ( $\overline{X} = 4.27$ ), and the 6<sup>th</sup> article stating "I have gained information which would be useful at work from professional practice." ( $\overline{X} = 4.12$ ), and the 4<sup>th</sup> article stating "I have easily comprehended the subjects related to my field in professional practice." ( $\overline{X} = 4.09$ ), and the 3<sup>rd</sup> article stating "I could easily reach my advisors whenever I confronted problems." ( $\overline{X} = 4.08$ ). From the answers given to the survey items, it can be said that the self-confidence of the students has increased in professional practice, and that skill levels of them have improved, and that they have obtained new information, and could easily get help when they

improved, and that they have obtained new information, and could easily get help when they confronted problems, and have reinforced their knowledge well enough, and because of that, they feel good.





From the arithmetic averages of the answers of the students to the Survey of Professional Practice in Table 5, it was determined that the articles with the lowest arithmetic averages in the survey are the 12<sup>th</sup> article stating "Professional practice has improved my communication skill." ( $\overline{X} = 3.30$ ), and the 20<sup>th</sup> article stating "I have learnt what to do from professional practice when I confront a problem." ( $\overline{X} = 3.32$ ), and the 19<sup>th</sup> article stating "I felt like a personnel working at establishment during professional practice." ( $\overline{X} = 3.53$ ). From the answers given to the survey items and the conversations with the students, it can be said that professional practice has not affected communication skills of the students very much, and that they are in a quandary without help when they confront a problem, and the students felt out of things when they began professional practice, but afterwards they got oriented to establishment.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### Results

According to the result of the research done, from the answers of the students participating in the research to the Survey of Professional Practice, it was determined that there is no a significant difference between female and male students studying at the vocational secondary schools in terms of the views of them about professional practice according to *gender* variable. From the views of the students, it can be said that female and male students have similar views and thoughts about professional practice.

According to the research done, from the answers of the students participating in the research to the Survey of Professional Practice, it was determined that there is no a significant difference between the students in the  $11^{\text{th}}$  grade and in the  $12^{\text{th}}$  grade studying at the vocational secondary schools in terms of the views of them about professional practice according to *class level* variable. From the views of the students, it can be said that the students in the  $11^{\text{th}}$  grade and in the  $12^{\text{th}}$  grade have similar views and thoughts about professional practice.

According to the research done, from the answers of the students participating in the research to the Survey of Professional Practice, it was determined that there is a significant difference between the students studyingin Kurttepe Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (KVTAHS), Seyhan Anatolian Vocational High School for Health (SAVHSH), and Atatürk Anatolian Vocational High School for Health (AAVHSH) that are the vocational secondary schools, in favour of the students studying in Kurttepe Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (KVTAHS), and Seyhan Anatolian Vocational High School for Health (SAVHSH) that are the vocational secondary schools, in favour of the students studying in Kurttepe Vocational and Technical Anatolian High School (KVTAHS), and Seyhan Anatolian Vocational High School for Health (SAVHSH) in terms of the views of them about professional practice according to *type of school* variable. From the conversations made in order to learn the reason of this difference, it was determined that it stems from the factors such as school facilities, socio-cultural activities in school, physical structure of school.

According to the result of the research, from the answers of the students to the survey items, it was determined that the self-confidence of the students has increased in professional practice, and that skill levels of them have improved, and that they have obtained new





information, and could easily get help when they confronted problems, and have reinforced their knowledge well enough, and because of that, they feel good.

According to the result of the research, from the answers of the students to the survey items and the conversations with the students, it was determined that professional practice has not affected communication skills of the students very much, and that they are in a quandary without help when they confront a problem, and the students felt out of things when they began professional practice, but afterwards they got oriented to establishment.

The arithmetic average of the answers of the students participating in the research to the Survey of Professional Practice are lower (3.84; agree) than expected skill level (4.21-5.00; strongly agree). This indicates that the students have information about professional practice, and like professional practice, and improve themselves in their fields, and that professional practice increases students' success and self-confidence and makes them happy, and makes their imperfect knowledge complete, and enables them to gain responsibility, and that they fulfil their duties assigned confidently when they begin working.

### Recommendations

The students participating in the research look at professional practices in different fields with different eyes. Especially the students studying at the departments offering economic benefits or job guarantee in future are highly interested in professional practice. For this reason, it should be paved the way for both secondary education schools and vocational schools and that employment opportunities should be offered them regarding their fields.

Most of the students participating in the survey complain about shortness of professional practice time, because the students supposing to know everything become aware of that they do not know some subjects when they join professional practice. This causes that they desire to join professional practice more frequently and for a longer time. Thus, professional practice time should be longer in order to improve themselves.

In professional practices, the students want to work in sections easy for themselves in general. Because of that, they are in practice partially and that they do not improve themselves in some fields, and so, students should be worked in all units and different sections during professional practice in order to improve themselves in each field.

Students' experiences and knowledge they gain from professional practice arouse their desire to learn and success. In the end of professional practice they come back to school with happiness and motivation because of entering upon a career, since they achieve something in work life and theoretical knowledge they gain from lessons become useful, they become highly motivated to courses in school and study efficiently.

Students go into professional practice in company with a teacher in dispensable. It is not provided basic training for the teachers who go into professional practice in our country. In-service training should be provided teachers by various agencies and institutions because the teachers joining professional practice can provide more benefit to students and feel themselves more effective.





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