

Predicting Work Volition From Proactive Personality Trait Among University Students Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Proaktif Kişiliklerinin Çalışma İradesi Algısındaki Yordayıcı Rolü

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Özet

Abstract

Bu araştırmada, üniversite öğrencilerinin çalışma iradesi düzeylerinin proaktif kişilik özellikleri ile ilişkisi ve proaktif kişiliğin çalışma iradesindeki açıklama gücü belirlenmeye çalışılmıştır. Katılımcılar, 242'si kadın ve 110'u erkek olmak üzere 352 üniversite öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. Bulgular; erkek katılımcıların kadınlara göre daha yüksek çalışma iradesine sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Katılımcıların çalışma iradesi ve proaktif kişilik özelliği ile orta düzeyde ve aynı yönlü bir ilişki olduğu belirlenirken, kariyer engeli algısı ile proaktif kişilik arasında düşük düzeyde ancak manidar bir ilişki olduğu belirlenmiştir. Regresyon analizi, proaktif kişiliğin katılımcıların çalışma iradesindeki değişimin % 25'ini ve kariyer engeli algısının ise % 9'unu açıkladığı göstermiştir. Sonuçlar ilgili alanyazın çerçevesinde tartışılmış ve ileri çalışmalara dönük öneriler sunulmuştur.

The current study aimed to elaborate on how work volition of university students associated with proactive personality trait, and to what extent proactive personality predicted work volition. Participants consisted of 352 university students including 242 females and 110 males. Findings demonstrated that male university students had stronger work volition perceptions than female students. Further, a positive, moderate level relationship between work volition and proactive personality was explored, whereas a negative yet significant relationship was detected between participants' constraints perceptions and proactive personality traits. Regression analysis provided evidence regarding the predictive role of the proactive personality on volition dimension as of 25 % positively, and on constraints dimension as of 9 % negatively. Discussions on results are provided regarding literature, and future research directions are presented.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çalışma iradesi, proaktif kişilik, kariyer engelleri, kariyer seçimi, üniversite öğrencisi

Keywords: Work volition, proactive personality, career constraints, career choice, university student

1. Introduction

There are several theories to make a better sense of and explain the career preferences of the individuals. The first common ground of such theories is the willingness of individual to achieve satisfaction in their intrinsic aims, needs, and career decisions (Duffy & Dik, 2009). This points out that individuals show their volition while giving a career decision and make their career decisions by taking their potential life and job satisfaction into account.

Volition, basically, indicates the ability of an individual's being free in making life decisions (Lazarick, Fishbein, & Lioello, 1988). Corno (1993) stated that when the situations are demanding, to be able to present voluntary movement to protective action is considered as 'volition' in our world now. Regarding this statement, Corno and Kanfer (1993) suggested a 3-construct-process to examine the concept of volition. These processes involve individual differences in action control processes, operation of goal-related cognitions and flexible strategy use, and individual differences in dispositionally based volitional styles. Kuhl (1985) mentioned about three issues concerning volition, accordingly. These issues are action initiation (i), perseveration (ii), and inner obstacles (iii). Action initiation refers to the intentions that will be chosen and implemented among many intentions one can have. Perseveration refers to the degree one persevere in activities regarding his/her goals, and inner obstacles indicate the obstacles that inherently exist in the goal, in the individual, or in the actions experienced in pursuit of goal attainment. These three issues demonstrate that motivation is not enough to explain and better understand the volition concept.

Focusing on the vocational aspect of the volition in psychology (Garcia, McCann, Turner, & Roska, 1998), work volition is described as *an individual's ability to freely make career choices, including the initial job choice when first entering the work world and any subsequent career decisions* (Duffy & Dik, 2009, p. 30). It is clear that work volition is a perception (Duffy, Blustein, Diemer, & Autin, 2016). In measure development and adaptation studies, work volition was found to consist of two distinct dimensions among university students, namely, volition and constraints (e.g., Buyukgoze-Kavas, Duffy, & Douglass, 2015) While volition dimension refers to the general 'perceived capacity to make future occupational choices', constraints signal the 'capacity to make future choices despite constraints' (Duffy, Diemer, & Jadidian, 2012, p. 300).

Till present date, several studies have explored relationships between work volition and diverse psychological constructs. Studies, for example, adduced empirical evidence for the positive correlation of work volition and person-environment fit, work meaning, job satisfaction, positive affect, internal locus of control, self-efficacy, and perceived organizational support among diverse employed adult samples (Connelly, & Gallagher, 2004; Duffy, Autin, & Bott, 2015; Duffy, Autin, & Douglass, 2016; Duffy, Bott, Torrey, & Webster, 2013; Duffy, Jadidian, Douglass, & Allan, 2015). In an unemployed adults sample, it was reported that individuals with higher levels of work volition perceived less career barriers, less lack of confidence, and less racial discrimination (Duffy, Diemer, Perry, Laurenzi, & Torrey, 2012). This study also illustrated that work volition is a significant predictor of work satisfaction, and general well-being. In a Japanese unemployed sample consisting of 400 participants, it was found that work volition and job

search self-efficacy were negative predictors of stigma for unemployment and mental health indices (Omori, Aizawa, & Yamazaki, 2015). Correspondingly, studies conducted among university students revealed the correlations of work volition and career adaptability, well-being, academic satisfaction, self-regulated learning, career decision self-efficacy, core self-evaluations, career locus of control, and career barriers (Buyukgoze-Kavas, Duffy, & Douglass, 2015; Duffy, Douglass, & Autin, 2015; Garcia, McCann, Turner, & Roska, 1998; Jadidian, & Duffy, 2011; Duffy, Bott, Allan, & Autin, 2013; Duffy, Diemer, & Jadidian, 2012).

There is a limited number of scientific evidence for how personality traits influence work volition of the individuals. Therefore, the individuals with proactive personality traits who tend to take initiative and take action for a change around them are addressed in more detail in this study. Seibert, Kraimer ve Crant (2001, p. 850) describes proactive personality as a person who *creates positive change in his or her environment, regardless or even in spite of situational constraints*. The research focuses on characteristics of the individuals with proactive personality traits who can take initiative (Koe, Nga, & Shamuganathan, 2010; Wang & Wong, 2004), have entrepreneurship characteristics (Bhandari, 2006; Prabhu, McGuire, Drost, & Kwong, 2012; Prieto, 2010) and realize the opportunities beforehand and take action accordingly (Franco, Haase, & Lautenschlager, 2010).

It has been observed that individuals with lower levels of proactive personality trait react to the changes around them after everything was over (Allen, Weeks, & Moffitt, 2005), however individuals with higher levels of proactive personality lead their actions in line with their objectives in a resolute manner (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Demirkaya & Aydın, 2010; Gupta & Bhawe, 2007). Similarly, it has been reported that proactive people try to solve the problems they encounter with determination, are sensitive to what happens around them, and take responsibility to be powerful by influencing people in their private and business life (Crant, 2000; Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001).

When we examine the outcomes of the proactivity within the organization life, it has been stated that proactive employees are more open to the organizational innovations (Kickul & Gundry, 2002; Nilforooshan & Salimi, 2016), have higher levels of creativity and entrepreneurship potentials (Crant, 2000; İsmail *et al.*, 2009; Konaklıoğlu & Kızanlıklı, 2011), and have higher levels of job performance (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Cai *et al.*, 2015). Additionally, it has been specified that proactive individuals can establish high-quality leader-member exchange, present more organizational citizenship and extra role behaviors, and experience higher levels of job satisfaction (Bateman & Organ, 1983; Li, Liang, & Crant, 2010). Erdogan and Bauer (2005), paralelly, explored that proactive employees with stronger person-organization fit had higher levels of career and job satisfaction.

Another characteristic of proactive people is that they tend to be internal locus of control oriented (Allen, Weeks, & Moffitt, 2005; Gurel, Altınay, & Daniele, 2010). Individuals with internal locus of control orientation, as it is known, are more successful in resilience based on motivation (Sarıçam, 2015), and in coping with stress (Kader, 2014; Khan, Saleem, & Shadid, 2012). This may be due to their advanced social self-efficacy (İskender & Akın, 2010). All of these enable them present higher levels of performance (Büyükgöze & Gelbal, 2016; Hasan & Khalid, 2014; Park & Kim, 1998). Therefore, it has been observed that proactive people are advantageous in finding jobs, and in career adaptability (Brown, Cober, Kane, Levy, & Shalpoop, 2006; Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999; Tolentino *et al.*, 2014).

It is clear that individuals with dominant proactive personality trait are more resilient and dauntless on succeeding in every aspect of life. Regarding this, the aim of the current research was to examine the relationship between work volition and proactive personality trait of juniors and senior year students who are soon-to-be active members of business life within a short period of time. No study, examining work volition and proactive personality trait among Turkish sample, was found during literature review process. Therefore, it is obvious that present study will contribute work volition field, which has caught attention of researchers increasingly, with scientific evidence. Accordingly, within the current study it was intended to elaborate on certain research questions as follows:

- Do university students' work volition perceptions and proactive personality traits differ in relation to their gender?
- Is there any significant relationship between university students' work volition perceptions and proactive personality traits?
- Is proactive personality trait of university students a statistically significant predictor of their work volition perceptions?

2. Method

Research Design

Focusing on the relationship between work volition and proactive personality traits of university students, this study was designed in a *correlational* model (Heppner, Wampold, & Kivlighan, 2008). Quantitative research techniques were utilized within the research.

Participants

The participants consisted of 352 university students including 242 females (68,8 %) and 110 males (31,2 %) studying in state universities located in İstanbul, Ankara and Samsun. Participants' age ranged from 20 to 29 (range= 9, $M_{age} = 21,94$, $SD = 1,605$). The programs of the participants included primary education ($n = 82$), primary science education ($n = 41$), English linguistics ($n = 72$), medicine ($n = 41$), agricultural biotechnology ($n = 30$), psychology ($n = 52$) ve physical education ($n = 34$). Research was conducted on 177 juniors (50,3 %) and 175 senior year students (49,7 %). Most of the participants spent majority of their lives in big cities and city centers ($n = 252$, 71,6 %), 52 (14,8 %) in towns or rural areas, and the rest 48 (13,6 %) in villages. Of the participants, 122 (34,7

%) perceived their academic performance high, whereas 197 (56 %) perceived themselves moderately successful, and 33 (9,4 %) claimed to present low academic performance.

Research Instruments

Work volition scale- student version. Participant university students' work volition perception was measured by 'Work Volition Scale-Student Version (WVS-SV)' developed by Duffy, Diemer and Jadidan (2012), and of which Turkish adaptation, validity and reliability studies were performed by Buyukgoze-Kavas, Duffy ve Douglass (2015). WVS-SV is a two-factor and has 7-point Likert-type scale, rated between *strongly disagree*(1) and *strongly agree*(7). Constraints dimension of the scale is consisted of 9 reserve coded items. A sample item is *What I want has little impact on my future job choice*. The original Cronbach alpha value of the constraints dimension was reported as .87. Cronbach alpha internal consistency value was found to be .88 for this dimension in the current study. Other dimension of the scale, *volition* consists of 7 items. A sample item is *I feel total control over my future job choices*. Cronbach alpha value of this dimension's English version was reported to be .70. It was calculated to be .82 within this study. To test the construct validity of the WVS-SV, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted. Fit indices of goodness are as follows: [$\chi^2=357,86$; $df=103$; $\chi^2/df=3,47$; sRMR = .05; AGFI = .84; NFI = .93; CFI = .95; IFI = .95; GFI = .88]. A sRMR value between .05 and .10 indicates an acceptable fit, and a value less than .05 points out a perfect fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). Kline (2005) expressed that the ratio of chi-square and degree of freedom less than 5.0 shows a good fit between the data collected and the data tool utilized, whereas a ratio less than 3.0 can be accepted as an evidence for a very good fit. Within this study, the sRMR value was found to be .05, and the χ^2/df ratio was calculated to be 3,47. It can be stated that fit indices of goodness obtained from CFA demonstrated a good fit between the data collection instrument and the two-factor solution of the scale. Therefore, it is evident that WVS-SV had sufficient psychometric properties to measure work volition perceptions of university students.

Proactive personality scale. University students' proactive personality trait was measured by 'Proactive Personality Scale- Short Form (PPS-SF)' which was developed by Bateman and Crant (1993) and adapted into Turkish by Akın, Abacı, Kaya and Arıcı (2011). The scale consists of 10 items in a single factor. PPS-SF is a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from *strongly disagree*(1) and *strongly agree*(7). No reverse coded item is found. Sample items are *I excel at identifying opportunities* and *No matter what the odds, if I believe in something I will make it happen*. Original internal consistency value of the PPS-SF was reported to be .86, and as .90 in this study. To test the single factor construct of the scale, a CFA was conducted, and following fit indices of goodness were calculated: [$\chi^2=128,22$, $df=33$; $\chi^2/df=3,88$; sRMR = .04; AGFI = .89; NFI = .97; CFI = .98; IFI = .98; GFI = .93]. The validity and reliability studies indicated that PPS-SF was a suitable instrument to determine proactive personality traits of the participant students.

Procedure and Data Analysis

The instruments were distributed in paper-pencil format. University students participated in the research voluntarily during their class time. Participants were provided informed consent forms in relation to the aim of the study and their right to withdraw from the research whenever they do want to. Within this study, 417 forms were distributed and 361 forms were filled by the participants voluntarily. Return rate was 86,57 %. 352 forms were acceptable for further analysis. To test normality assumption, kurtosis and skewness values of each data set were calculated. The kurtosis value of WVS-SV data set was found to be .893, and .222 for skewness ($SD=.743$). PPS-SF data set kurtosis value was calculated to be .434, and -.568 for skewness ($SD=.963$). As kurtosis and skewness values of the data sets were ranged from -1 and +1, it can be deduced that data demonstrated a normal distribution within the study.

Arithmetic mean, standard deviation, range, frequency, and percentage were utilized as descriptive statistics in data analysis process. The relationship between work volition perceptions and proactive personality traits of participants was investigated by Pearson Product-Moment Correlation coefficient. Linear regression analysis was utilized in determining to what extent proactive personality trait predicted work volition perception of participants. The internal consistency of scales were analyzed by Cronbach's alphas, and construct validity of them by confirmatory factor analysis conducted on LISREL (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996).

3. Findings

First, participants' work volition perceptions and proactive personality traits were investigated in relation to their gender by independent groups *t* test. Participants' proactive personality traits did not differ regarding their gender ($t_{(350)}=.986$, $p>.05$). Work volition perceptions of university students were found to vary in relation to gender ($t_{(350)}=-2.048$, $p<.05$). Male university students were found to have stronger work volition perceptions than female students. Results indicated that participants' volition perceptions did not vary by gender significantly ($t_{(350)}=.891$, $p>.05$), however their constraints perceptions differed statistically significantly ($t_{(350)}=-2.587$, $p<.05$). Further, male students' constraints perception was found to be greater ($=3,50$) than female university students ($=3,10$).

The relationship of participants' work volition and proactive personality traits was examined by Pearson Product-Moment Correlation coefficient. The correlation matrix is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Correlation Matrix

| Variable | Sd | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|-----------------------|------|-------|---------|---------|
| Proactive personality | 5.24 | .963 | - | - |
| Volition | 4.73 | 1.075 | .504** | - |
| Constraints | 3.23 | 1.340 | -.298** | -.335** |

* $p < .01$

As can be followed in Table 1 above, participants presented a relatively proactive personality profile (= 5,24/7,00). Results indicated that university students perceived moderate level of volition (= 4,73/7,00), and lower level of constraints = 3,23/7,00). Besides, a positive and moderate relationship between work volition and proactive personality was explored by correlation analysis ($r_{\text{proactivepersonality} \times \text{volition}} = .504; p < .01$). A negative, yet statistically significant relationship was detected between participants' constraints perceptions and proactive personality traits ($r_{\text{proactivepersonality} \times \text{constraints}} = -.298; p < .01$). Similarly, a negative moderate correlation was found between university students' volition and constraints perceptions ($r_{\text{volition} \times \text{constraints}} = -.335; p < .01$).

A linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether volition and constraints perceptions of the participants were significant predictors of their proactive personalities. Regression results are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Linear Regression Analysis Results

| Variable | B | SH _B | β | t | p |
|-------------|-------|-----------------|---------|--------|------|
| Constant | 3,647 | ,269 | - | 13,560 | ,000 |
| Volition | ,408 | ,043 | ,455 | 9,403 | ,000 |
| Constraints | -,105 | ,035 | -,146 | -3,016 | ,003 |

* $p < .01$ $R = ,523$ $R^2 = ,273$ $F_{(1-350)} = 65,584$ $p = .000$

As shown in Table 2 above, proactive personality traits of participants were found to be associated with both dimensions of work volition significantly, and regression coefficients were calculated to be statistically significant ($R = ,523; R^2 = ,273; p < .01$). Regression results indicated that both volition and constraints dimensions explained 27% of the variance in participant university students' proactive personality traits. Further, standardized regression coefficients demonstrated that volition dimension generated greater power on explaining proactivity. The t test result, which was conducted to determine the significance of regression coefficients, showed that volition perception of the participants was a positive predictor, whereas constraints perception was a negative predictor of university students' proactive personality.

4. Discussion and Results

Within this study, the relationship of work volition and proactive personality trait was examined based on self-reports of university students studying in state universities located in İstanbul, Ankara and Samsun. Accordingly, 352 university students were surveyed studying in seven different programs, and analyses were conducted to examine the work volition perceptions and proactive personality traits of them.

Primary finding of the research showed that participants' proactive personality traits did not differ in relation their gender. Both female and male university students were found to have similar personality traits regarding proactivity. However, it was determined that male students got significantly higher scores than females both on general work volition perception and on constraints dimension of WVS-SF. This finding is parallel to Duffy, Diemer, Perry, Laurenzi, and Torrey (2012).

Duffy *et al.* (2012) indicated that this difference might be resulted from the weaker perception of work volition among women from minority and disadvantaged groups, and from lower socio-economic groups. Indeed, research presented that overall work volition perception correlates with one's self-efficacy belief (Duffy, Bott, Torrey, & Webster, 2013), which might explain male students' greater volition perception as they have been reported to have higher levels of self-efficacy than females (e.g: Elkatmış, Demirbaş, & Ertuğrul, 2013).

Present study also revealed that proactive personality trait correlated moderately with volition dimension positively, and with constraints dimension in the expected direction, namely, negatively. Proactive individuals are well known for their ability to create change in the positive direction in themselves and in their environments, despite constraints (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). This unique merit provides them with enough self-confidence to take initiative to change things that they do not favor both in their lives and environments (Bateman, & Crant, 1993; Wang, & Wong, 2004). In this respect, proactive people are expected to show resilience in diverse aspects of their life, and at work as well. As proactive personality oriented individuals can recognize potential opportunities or threats in pursuit of their goal attainment (Franco, Haase, & Lautenschlager, 2010, Author, 2016), they can easily cope with and take action toward negative and also highly positive incidents in this process. From a volitional point of view, university students who are highly proactive personality oriented seem to have greater levels of concern for their future career and have the control urge to warranty higher levels of work and life satisfaction in the future (Author, 2015).

Further, regression analysis provided evidence regarding the predictive role of proactive personality trait on volition dimension

of work volition as of 25% positively, and on constraints dimension as of 9 % negatively. Results suggested that those who are more proactive personality oriented perceived more work volition, and believe in their strenght to deal with expected and unexpected barriers regarding their future career plans (Duffy, Diemer, & Jadidian, 2012). Proactivity urges individuals to act in a way that creates positive and meaningful change in their private, social and work life. Accordingly, the predictive role of proactivity on university students' work volition perception demonstrated that personality traits of undergraduate students have effects on their future decision making and career planning. After all, proactive individuals' peculiar characteristics, trying to solve the problems they encounter with determination, being sensitive to what happens around them, and taking responsibility to be powerful by influencing people in their private and business life, were verified within the study (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001).

In line with the results of the current research, some suggestions may be presented regarding practice and research. Results demonstrated that individuals with proactive personality trait orientation had greater career adaptability, career decision making and work volition perception. Correspondingly, it can be recommended that opportunities, activities and events to present proactive personality traits of university students are required commonly. Future studies may examine attitudes in different samples such as state-foundation university and newly established-old university. In addition, the current study might be enriched based on related literature regarding its model by adding some possible moderator or predictor variables (e.g.: life satisfaction, psychological well-being, career success).

There are some limitations that should be taken into consideration in assessing and generalizing the findings of the study. Data sets obtained within this study by self-report forms reflected the attitudes of university students studying in three universities. Collecting data by self-report forms have its peculiar deficiencies (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Further, data set did not cover the university students studying in foundation universities in Turkey. Besides, 1/3 of the participants was comprised of females. Therefore, to increase the generalizability of the findings, the study may be repeated in a sample including similar number of female and male university students. Findings should be interpreted bearing in mind that present study was designed in a cross-sectional model which indicates that attitudes of the participants were not examined in a longitudinal way.

5. References

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