

CAREER PLANNING TENDENCIES OF STUDENTS: AN IMPLEMENTATION ON STUDENTS OF KARABUK UNIVERSITY BUSINESS FACULTY

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Abstract

Almost 150 of the approximately 200 universities in Turkey have a faculty of management, which is also commonly named as faculty of administrative sciences and economics. Approximately 500 thousand students graduate from these departments each year and they step into the business life. The purpose of this study is to determine the career plans of sophomores studying in business or other relevant departments. In this perspective, the method of case study, which is accepted among qualitative research designs, was used. A document analysis was implemented for the case study. Moreover, the words and the themes which the students use to find out their career plans were classified. The results obtained from this study clearly indicate that students pay more importance to public sector exams or other standardized tests with the hope of finding a good job in the public sector, and therefore it is revealed that the university education focuses on institutional objectives which remain quite below the expectations of the sector. Furthermore, there is common belief that individual and patronage relationships play an important role in finding satisfactory jobs. In addition to the economic and political conjuncture, it may be stated that curriculum of education does not encourage students for entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Business Administration, Career Management, Career Planning, Entrepreneurship, Future Expectation

JEL Classification codes: A22

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most prevalent departments among undergraduate education subject in Turkey is Business Administration. Undergraduate education is also provided in other business-related fields structured as derivatives of Business Administration. The faculties of such departments are connected to at state and private (non-profit) universities are called Faculty of Administrative Sciences and Economics, Faculty of Management Sciences, Business Faculty, Faculty of Political Sciences, Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Business and Administrative Sciences, or Faculty of Commercial Sciences. While state universities have structures as formal education, evening education, or business departments in English and German, private universities provide education with full scholarship, no scholarship or partial scholarship to students. Another practice seen at state universities is the establishment of a faculty at the center of the city the university is based in, and another faculty in another large district.

While there are differences among business departments based on medium of education-training and formal-evening education, there is a general agreement of curricula. Courses that can be chosen from among the pool of electives in addition to compulsory courses provide the students with the opportunity to turn towards the field they are interested in. The general distribution of the courses may be categorized under five parts. These are: compulsory classes determined by the Board of Higher Education (YÖK) such as Turkish Language and Atatürk's Principles and Reforms; introductory courses such as Introduction to Business and Introduction to Economics, courses oriented towards capital markets, accounting and accounting applications, courses oriented towards marketing, advertisements and public relations, and courses that represent the technical side of business such as Statistics and Analysis.

In the light of this information, it is expected that students will find their way in a broad spectrum of knowledge. In addition to compulsory courses, the students should take courses that are oriented towards their areas of interest and courses that may contribute to the job they are planning to have in the future. This situation may be considered as a process where the students need to be organized.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Current Turkish Dictionary of the Turkish Language Association (TDK) defines the word 'career' as "the stage, success and expertise gained by time and experience at a profession" (tdk.gov.tr). In daily usage, career is also used interchangeably with profession, expertise, and field of work. Opportunities, benefits or values provided

to the individual or the institution by improving career, are shaped and preferred as a result of various points of view.

The definition of career in the literature covers the individual gaining experience and skills by advancing in work life, the jobs the individual has in work life, and improvements and developments in the profession (Bayraktaroğlu, 2006; Bingöl, 2004).

G.Harman (2003) conducted a survey on foreign and native PhD students studying in two major Australian Universities to evaluate their course experiences and career plans. According to results of the research, although language problems sometimes adversely affect progress of international students, International PhD students are optimistic about their career prospects and certainly more confident about their careers than Australian PhD students. And another important result of the survey is that most of international PhD students expect to follow research careers.

Career planning refers to the access to ways and tools that the individual will choose in order to reach the goals oriented towards their targets. In the categorization as individual and organizational career planning, the issue is not only the profession or professionalism chosen by the individuals themselves, but also the definition of career that organizations expect from their employees and lead them to. It would be suitable to determine how and in what direction individual requirements and performances should be improved and plan accordingly (Erdoğan, 2009). Career planning may be classified as individual career planning and organizational career planning. While the former focuses on the goals, aims and skills of the individual, the latter focuses on the establishment of business and career policies (Matris and Jakson, cited in: Tahtaloğlu, 2012).

While planning career, one should act by taking the stages of general outlook, determining the sector, marketing plan, determining strong and weak sides, action plan and financing plan into consideration, based on the target (Taşlıyan et al. 2011).

The purposes of career planning may be listed as achieving the individuals' success in their careers, using human resources efficiently and effectively, ensuring the development of personnel and achieving workplace safety (Bayraktaroğlu, 2006). While career planning is generally considered in terms of individuals' goals, the effects and expectations of organizations are also important in this issue. Utilization of an employee entering a new and different field, increasing job success based on education and career opportunities, employee satisfaction and loyalty, and determining personal education and improvement needs may be counted as other goals of career planning (Tahtaloğlu, 2012).

The importance of career planning arises from the individuals carrying different characteristics, job definition and approach to the job based on demographic variables (Tahtaloğlu, 2012). As the working population's level of education increases, so does the interest in career planning. This issue has strategic important not only for employees, but also organizations.

Five fundamental stages may be listed in individual career planning. These are: self evaluation, assessment of career possibilities, determining goals, preparing and implementing career plan, and feedback (Mavisu, 2010).

Determinants arising from the individual or the environment may be effective in individual career planning. While these may be individual determinants such as age, sex, personal traits or skills, they may also be external determinants such as family, school and friend network, legal and political factors, economic factors, and cultural and social change factors (Adıgüzel, 2008).

III. METHOD

The purpose of this study is to determine the tendencies of the career plans of second year undergraduate students studying business or business-related subjects. In this context, the method of case study, which is among qualitative research designs, was used. Document analysis was conducted for the case study and words and themes used by students for career planning were categorized. Case study is used to describe the situation in a given case.

It may be argued that in qualitative studies, information and interpretations that become qualitatively prominent are more important than the quantitative data. However, some numbers may be significant to point out the course followed in the study. The study featured a total of 446 second year students in the formal education and evening education divisions of two business departments in the Business Faculty and the Faculty of Administrative Sciences and Economics at Karabük University for two consecutive years.

In the various times the students were contacted, they were given an empty A4 sheet, provided a suitable environment, and asked to "write about their career plan considering the next 10 years." No time limitation was set for the completion of this task.

A total of 446 sheets that were obtained were investigated using the method of document analysis, and the subjects and words determined to be important by the students were categorized in a form of themes.

The method of document analysis was used in this study because of its better ability than surveys to reflect individuality and ingenuity, as well as provide more information regarding the qualities of documents (Yıldırım ve Şimşek, 2011).

IV. FINDINGS

Themes derived from the documents with the participation of 446 students were classified under six categories. These were: themes regarding education, themes regarding profession, specific professions that were indicated, themes regarding self, definitions regarding the future, and expectations in personal life.

Table 1: Themes regarding education

Graduation	Study / language study abroad	Erasmus exchange program
Foreign language	Second undergraduate education or distant education	Learning more than one foreign language
Personal development	Choosing the department unwillingly	Internship
Graduate study	Work and Travel program	Doctorate

Some of the subjects most frequently mentioned by students both in undergraduate education and after graduating with an undergraduate degree are learning a foreign language / foreign language study, and activities such as training / certificate programs towards personal development. The primary goals of all students were determined as finishing the school and having a good degree at the time of graduation. While students considering an academic career find master’s and PhD studies indispensable, students aiming to work in the public or private sectors see master’s degrees as a significant privilege.

Erasmus exchange program during the undergraduate degree is desired to be utilized with the aim to learn a language and meet new cultures or environments. Another practice mentioned by students and considered to be potentially advantageous is registering for another undergraduate degree under the Faculty of Distant Education or finishing an associate’s degree in a subject of interest. In addition to the Erasmus exchange program, there is also interest in the program known as Work and Travel.

The students who state that they are interested in learning more than one language see experience abroad as a way to achieve it. It was found that there was not an awareness of the extent of the feasibility of this idea, and the opportunities or values to be gained by learning a language other than English were not clearly defined. A limited argument that may explain this situation is the aim to fill the gaps brought by having chosen the department unwillingly.

Personal development

“I am planning to receive elocution, computer, language and effective communication training before I graduate.” “I am planning to attend classes for personal development, foreign language and improve myself in this field.”

Foreign language

“I think having better foreign language skills will lead me to reach better places.”
 “I am thinking of taking English classes during my degree and improve my English.”
 “I am thinking of improving myself in terms of language in our country where language is valued a lot. I want to speak English and French like a native, although I am not showing an effort right now...”

Importance and meaning of undergraduate education

“The thing I am curious about the most is whether I will encounter the subjects I saw in class during my undergraduate degree when I get a job.”
 “I have many dreams before taking the university entrance exam, but I chose business because I could not enter my first choice.”
 “Obviously we cannot know what the future will bring or take away. University is like an institution that prepares us for life in a way.”

Table 2: Themes regarding profession

Management	Working at the family company	Private sector	Public personnel selection examination (KPSS)
Entrepreneurship	Establishing own business	Public sector	

3 out of every 4 students are planning to enter the Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS) as that think working in the public sector will have very important benefits. It is stated that salaried employment in the private sector may be tried as an alternative, and the last choice is taking steps in entrepreneurship. Choices

regarding the thing understood as entrepreneurship or meant with the word entrepreneurship are based on particular patterns. These patterns are ideas such as: establishing own business even if its form is not decided yet, finding new ideas that may create difference in work life and opening a café, restaurant, day-care. The prominent idea is to evaluate the choice of being a civil servant through taking the KPSS first, then to work in an area of interest in the private sector if the first choice is not reached, and finally try entrepreneurship in some form as the last resort.

The reasons for the desire to work in the public sector

“I want to continue my life as a civil servant rather than a private sector employee. It is at least more permanent.” “My priority is taking the KPSS. My job will be ready if I become successful at it. I will take bank examinations if it does not happen. I am planning to work at an accounting office if I cannot get into a bank. However, before all these, I am planning to open a day-care center if I can get the support of my family.”

“I want to become a civil servant because I want to be a good mother and spouse for my family. I used to want to be a banker. However, I started to understand as I aged that the most difficult profession is to deal with both people and money.”

“I want the public sector because I think it is ideal for a woman. I think being in a long-term and high-status position would affect my family life, too. I think being a regular or high-level civil servant would be ideal for me.” “...I know it sounds too superficial, but I was brought up with the philosophy of ‘relying on the state’, so that is it for me for now.”

The desire to establish own business

“I want to establish a large place of business that has many employees.”

“Imagine being the owner of a company with hundreds of workers under your command. These workers can make a living and feed their houses and families because of you.”

“It is like a requirement for every student to take the KPSS after graduation. We will probably take this route, too. But I do not want to be a civil servant. I particularly want to improve myself on a specific subject and establish my own business later.”

Table 3: Specific professions that were stated

Banking	Day-care education / teaching	Aviation	Inspection-expertise	Media
Accounting	Human resources	Café-Restaurant-Patisserie	E-commerce	Logistics
Academic career	Finance	Soldier-police	Workplace health and safety	
Commerce	Public accounting	Tourism	Customs brokerage	
Management	Sales marketing	Insurance	Acting/conservatory	

It is very difficult to argue that the students have tangible, particular, clear goals towards the jobs and fields they are going to be working in. Generally and as they are thought to have higher circulation rates, fields related to business administration are prominent. These were stated as banking, accounting, finance, commerce, management, sales marketing and human resources. The fields that are not directly related to the field of business such as acting, conservatory, workplace health and safety were stated as preferable by the students as they represent popular culture in mass communication platforms.

Management

“My goal is to manage, rather than being managed. Because a person who is managed would be unable to improve himself. On the other hand, a person who manages others will always be innovative and improve himself.”

“Being a manager and working in an office while wearing a suit, as I mentioned, were my childhood dreams. Yet, it is impossible to know what the future will bring.”

Table 4: Themes regarding self

Respectability	Receiving/feeling acceptance	Social responsibility	Reputation/Prestige	Making the family proud
Happines	To be paid attention to	Change	Imagination	Being useful

The themes most frequently stated by students regarding self are respectability and feeling acceptance. It may be stated at this point that one of the expectations of students in career planning is the satisfaction of psychological needs. The theme of happiness is also one of the frequently mentioned concepts. Happiness is not a concept related only to the work life, but is significant in the entirety of life including the parts of life outside the workplace. Another theme, though emphasized in different forms, is the theme of being useful to the family, helping the family and making them proud by being worthy of their support.

Expectation of happiness

“I want a simple but happy work life and future and I know I will do it.”

“... no one can know what the next 3 or 10 years will bring. If I have a healthy life, I want to spend some effort to be a happy person.”

Making the family proud

“I would not study if I felt responsible for myself only. I am not here for myself. I am here for my family and I will not let them down.”

“I do not want to work only for myself. I want to help my family.”

“My biggest goal is to become a son/daughter worthy of my family.”

Expectation of respectability/reputation

“In this country, I actually have a plan to try living, instead of a career plan. It is not only about career, but about people in the workplace feeling respect, compassion and trust for me. Let us hope for the best.”

“I want everyone to look at me with envy.”

“I want to be always one step ahead during my university life, liked in my professional life and future family life, and listened to with discretion whenever I speak to my family and environment.”

Self-reliance

“...I want to be sufficient for myself.”

“... If I should state this using a proverb, I could say, better be the head of a dog than the tail of a lion.”

Table 5: Descriptions regarding the future

Fatalism	Imagination	Uncertain goals	Living/utilizing the moment
Anxiousness	Not being able to manage time	The need to be directed	
Self-reliance	Hopelessness	Going with the flow of life	

One of the frequently stated themes is fatalism. This situation that is supported by ideas such as going with the flow of life or that time cannot be planned are expressed with statements such as “let us hope for the best” or “let us see what time will bring.” Another noteworthy situation here is that the students feel the need to be directed. While there are no tangible and clear goals towards the future, it is observed that there is lack of knowledge regarding the possibilities and opportunities that may be brought by the education that is received. 3 out of every 4 students look at the future in a fatalist and hopeless perspective.

Uncertainty regarding the future

“In summary: we can plan our career but we cannot know where life will take us.”

“We are studying for a major that has one of the highest numbers of graduates in Turkey. Our future, of course, is not bright, but, if we can reach our goal to somehow finish the school... It is about fate and luck. Let us hope for the best.”

“Who can guarantee that my career plan in the next 10 year will not change while the world is changing this rapidly? I think, in this world where technology and necessities change and improve, we should be alert for immediately available opportunities and plan accordingly in the moment.”

“These are alternatives for me. So, there is no certain or clear thing for now. I am leaving it to time. Maybe I will take clearer decisions in my senior year, choose something and work towards it.”

“Who know who will live and who will die tomorrow.”

“Dear Professor, firstly, I do not have much hope of many plans for the future. The situation we are in in Turkey (borders, economy, unassigned teachers, newly graduated colleagues) is not looking good. We can find a job in any case; however, to be honest, we need to have a good CV and pull good strings.”

“Our thoughts on careers are not important as long as the faults in the system are not fixed, the mentality of the country is not changed, and discrimination is still present.”

“What I will become after I finish my education will be determined by the future.”

“...but, everything is about God’s will and fate. It is not like I gave up entirely, but I think 10 years is a long time.”

Uncertain goals

“... my first target will be banks, but if I do not change my mind before graduation, if I think I will be more useful in other fields under this subject, I will reevaluate my career plans accordingly.”

“I have no plan. I am just going with the flow of life. Whatever happens, happens. At least I have a profession and my home city is an industrial region. If I cannot become anything, I will go back there, start working, get married and live like everyone else.”

“Obviously, what we think of in life and realities of life do not always fit.”

“I am determined to reach my goals and take my country, my family and myself to places in the best way. Let us hope for the best.”

“But we cannot know what life will show us.”

“If the private sector turns out to be difficult to work in, I am planning to stay at the university as a faculty member.” It is difficult to talk about these when we have 10 long years ahead of us, but my priority is public accounting. I am thinking of the private sector if it does not happen, and planning is not really for me anyway.”

Table 6: Expectations regarding personal life

Marriage	Having a home	Working abroad	Being happy
Conscription	Expanding social circle	Supporting family	
Establishing a life abroad	Becoming rich	Buying a car	

Expectations regarding personal life in relation to career show differences. These expectations are limited in terms of being oriented towards work life or having improving effects on work life. A significant portion of students want to have experience abroad. In relation to this, there are goals such as establishing a life abroad, working abroad, and going abroad for education. Financial expectations regarding personal life are states as having a home, buying a car and becoming rich.

V. CONCLUSION

In this study which aims to determine the tendencies of students in career planning with a qualitative method, it was determined that students made plans towards more than one target and they did not have tangible, clear and purposeful career choices. Generally, it is seen that they have uncertain goals and 10 years is considered as a long time; accordingly, the the idea that it is logical to advance step by step for career goals is prevalent.

That the students have more than one plan and they state that there is an alternative in any condition, shows that goals are not clear. There are three prominent choices towards career plans. Being a civil servant in the public sector, working in a profession related to the field of business in the private sector, and becoming an entrepreneur. A significant portion of the students want to have an experience abroad with aims like language education, master’s degree and travelling. The most practical ways to achieve this are the Erasmus exchange program and the Work and Travel program.

Whatever their career goals may be, most of the students do not have clear information regarding the profession and position they are targeting. The argument supporting this is that they provide more than one goal and plan. It was observed that the levels of detailed information in students focusing on a single goal were high.

While banking/finance stands out among the specific professions that students want to plan their careers in after graduation, many students express the idea that working for public banks is a good choice. The public sector is an indispensable choice in the career planning of the students.

The most prominent department of these faculties is Business Administration. Additionally, business-based courses are also taught at other departments such as international Business Administration. Besides offering different options and opportunities in terms of study fields, students graduating from such departments highly increase the unemployment rate.

The expectations of graduate students from these departments are not appropriately satisfied as the number of permanent positions is quite low in the public sector. Similarly, they cannot find adequate job opportunities in the private sector since the number of graduates are quite high. In addition to this, such private companies entail enough

qualifications and experience. The other choice for these students is to set up their own business which is also described as entrepreneurship. However, it should not be forgotten that there are also other students who want to maintain their family businesses. Furthermore, some other individuals would like to go on their academic career at either national or international universities, and lastly there are few students who desire to go abroad in order to become a part of the business life there.

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