

Study of Professional, Social And Intellectual Orientations of Vocational College Students

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Extensive Summary

Introduction

The business world always needs both physical and intellectual competent and skillful human resources. These are also very crucial for the development and well-being of the country.

Vocational Colleges offer education and training at higher education level to answer this demand. On the other hand, it is not possible to say that the Vocational Colleges have fulfilled its function of bringing up qualified HR as planned.

Currently, there are 963 Vocational Colleges throughout Turkey with total 2.555.926 students.

This study aims to investigate the professional, social and intellectual orientations and efforts towards these orientations of the students of Vocational Colleges. It also aims to examine the possible correlations between demographic characteristics of these

students and the orientations mentioned above.

First, conceptual foundations are discussed. The concept of the Vocational College, the concept of a university is defined. Later on, the problems, objectives, functions, historical background and student profile of the Vocational Schools are explained.

The last part of the study includes details of the research. The questionnaire that will measure social, professional and intellectual orientations has been applied to Vocational College students. The social, intellectual and professional orientations of students were measured and analyzed comparatively in the context of demographic variables. The investigation of relationships and comparison among groups were made by using frequency tables, correlation table, independent sample t-test and ANOVA.

Research

A survey of 21 items (Table 4) along with demographic questions filled out by participants during the class hours.

Total 600 students participated but only responses of 537 participants (283 men, 254 women) were included in the study. Age breakdown of the participants as follow (number of participants shown in parenthesis: between 17 & 20 (306), between 21 & 24 (200), between 25 & 28 (18) and, 29 & over (13).

The universities that this study was conducted, number of participants shown in parenthesis: Istanbul (76), Arel (150), Beykent (107), Gelisim (19), Kultur (88) and Nisantasi (97) Universities.

The fields of study of participants: Technical Sciences (277), Social Sciences (177) and Health Sciences (83).

Total 174 of participants were the freshman and 363 of participants were sophomore.

Parent education level breakdown as follows: primary school (230), high school (165), university (131), graduate school (7) and other (4).

Family income level breakdown: below 3.000 TL (242), between 3.001 & 5.000 TL (203), between 5.001 & 10.000 TL (61), 10.001 TL & over (31).

Analysis

The KMO and Bartlett's Test results (KMO= 0,859 and $p=0,000$) were found sufficient enough to apply factor analysis.

The factor analysis showed that the survey is measuring total 5 dimensions as planned which measure total 56,343% of total variance. These dimensions are 1- social interaction, 2- social development, 3- professional orientation, 4- intellectual development orientation and 5- personal development (Table 5).

As for reliability test the Cronbach alpha value of this survey is 0,850.

Testing Hypotheses

After constructing correlation table (Table 7), total 13 hypotheses (out of 42) accepted (Table 8). These are:

H₃: The relationship between gender and social development tendency and

differentiation between genders (Table 9): statistically significant difference found in favor of the male.

H₄: The relationship between gender and personal development and differentiation between genders (Table 9): statistically significant difference found in favor of the male.

H₅: The relationship between gender and intellectual development orientation and differentiation between genders (Table 9): statistically significant difference found in favor of the female.

H₆: The relationship between gender and social orientation and differentiation between genders (Table 9): statistically significant difference found in favor of the male.

H₉: The relationship between age and social development tendency and differentiation of social development tendency between age groups (Table 10): because of the low number of participants in 25-28 and 29 & above age groups, those two were merged with age group of 21-25 and the group name changed to 21 & up, and all the analyzes related with age performed accordingly.

Statistically significant difference found in favor of age group 21 & up.

H₁₂: The relationship between age and social orientation and differentiation of social orientation between age groups: No statistically significant difference found between two groups.

H₁₅: The relationship between university attended and social development tendency, and differentiation of social development tendency between universities (Table 11 & 12): Statistically significant difference found only between students of Kultur, Arel, Istanbul and of Beykent universities in favor of Kultur University's students.

H₁₇: The relationship between university attended and intellectual development orientation and differentiation of intellectual development orientation between universities: no statistically significant difference found between student groups university wise.

H₂₉: The relationship between grade and intellectual development orientation, and differentiation of the later within grade groups (Table 13): Statistically significant difference found in favor of the freshmen.

H₃₁: The relationship between parent education level and professional orientation, and differentiation of professional orientation based on parent's education level (Table 14 & 15): The four answers marked "other" as "parent education level" merged with "primary school" group and the 7 answers marked as "graduate school" merged with "university" group in order to perform ANOVA in all parent education related analyses.

Statistically significant difference found between "primary school" and "university" groups in favor of "primary school" group. The professional orientation of students whose parents have a university degree is at the lowest level among the groups.

H₃₃: The relationship between parental education level and social development tendency, and differentiation of social development tendency based on parent's education level (Table 16 & 17):

Statistically significant difference found between “primary school” and “university” groups. But this time the difference was in favor of “university” group. And this time the social development tendency of students whose parents have only primary school education is at the lowest level among the groups.

H₃₉: The relationship between household income level and social development tendency (Table 18 & 19): The group of household income “10,000.00 TL & over” (total 31 participants) merged with group of “5,001 – 10,000 TL” and renamed as “5,001 TL & up” in order to perform reliable ANOVA test in all household related tests.

Statistically significant difference found between “5,001 TL & up” and “below 3,000 TL” groups in favor of “5,001 TL & up” group.

H₄₂: The relationship between household income level and social orientation (Table 20): No statistically significant difference at 5% level but 10% level. So we can say that there is no statistically significant difference between groups.

Discussion

Since such a comprehensive study on Vocational Colleges in the literature search was not found, the results could not be compared.

It is noteworthy that the intellectual development orientations of the students in the first grade are higher than those in the second grade, as examinations of results show. We could say that the sophomores are devoted to socializing with their schoolmates since they will fall apart within a couple of months if there was a statistically meaningful and significant relationship between the grade and the social orientation,. But since this is not the case, the cause of this situation needs to be investigated.

It is also significant that the professional orientation of participants whose parents have only primary school education is the highest. Is this because of the lack of financial resources that keeps them away from socializing? Or they just want to graduate as soon as possible and start contributing to household income? These two questions are rooted for the same reason: there is a very strong relationship ($F=20,962$ and $p=0,000$) between parental education level and household income level. And participants from these families also have a lower social orientation than other groups. The possibility of causing psychological and sociological problems of this situation must also be investigated.

This study also showed that 82.9% of the students attending Vocational Colleges (see Table 6) come from families who have a low household income or even below the poverty threshold. It is essential for the state to consider this situation and to increase student scholarship opportunities and amounts to help these students and their families. This will also contribute to the development of not only professional but also social aspects of these pupils, and surely will have positive effect society as well by contributing well-developed individuals to it.