Psychological states of professional anxiety and job perceptions of university students

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Abstract

One of the areas that have an important place in the professional competence of students studying at universities is their psychological competence. Professional concerns are also included in the fields of psychological competence. It is important for students to be ready in every field to ensure their professional competence. For this purpose, in this study, it was aimed to determine the opinions of the students studying at the university on the level of professional skills. In this context, 85 students studying at the university in the 2020–2021 academic year were interviewed and their opinions on their sectoral expectations and professional uncertainties in their professional lives were taken. Before the research, official permission from the relevant institution and verbal participation approval from the students were obtained. In order to reach the research finding, four semi-structured interview questions were asked by the researcher by taking expert opinions. The results of the research were explained in detail with the content analysis method. As a result of the findings obtained from the research, it was revealed that their anxiety about the department was high, they were undecided about choosing the right department and the education they received was insufficient.

Keywords: Education, profession, psychological, psychological competence, student, anxiety, university;

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1. Introduction

We can understand the nature and existence of a person, i.e., his nature, and can see the potential of a person by knowing his place in the world and his relationship with this world. Human values are related to people's feelings, thoughts and behaviours (Bulut, & Dilmaç, 2018; Dilmaç, Bozgeyikli, & Çıkıllı, 2008). Values are beliefs which show that something is desirable or undesirable. From a psychological point of view, values form the basis of motivations that reveal the personality of the individual. Psychologists define values as preferences that manifest themselves in behaviours acquired at an early age in the development process (Sağnak, 2004). Man is a whole with his feelings, thoughts and behaviours. A person's mood affects their behaviour and thoughts. Therefore, the well-being of a happy person is expected to increase. Therefore, current psychological research leaves it to modern approaches and studies that examine the positive aspects, happiness, well-being and positive emotions of people instead of focusing on symptoms and pathology (Boyacı & Ersever, 2017). With the increasing interest in positive psychology in Turkey, there has been an increase in research in this field (Eryılmaz & Atak, 2011; Soylu, 2018). However, it has been observed that the variables associated with the concept of happiness, which is one of the main goals of psychology, change over time and new variables are added. According to Hampton (2004), there is an important link between self-efficacy, belief and happiness. Similarly, resilience is listed as a determinant of happiness by many researchers (Dilmaç, Bozgeyikli, & Çikili, 2008; Coleman, Coleman, & Hagell, (Eds.) 2007; Goldstein & Brooks, 2005; Rutter, 2006; Soylu, 2018).

We criticise many negative situations that arise in society today and refer to the lack of education. Whether these negativities are mistreating people, a professional error or a problem arising from understanding the ministry, the first problem that comes to mind is lack of education. While education ensures that the cultural values created by the society from its existence to the present, are transferred to the new generations, in addition to infrastructures such as tools and programmes, the quality of the teacher is also accepted as the most important factor (Sun, Tsai, Finger, Chen, & Yeh, 2008).

Teaching, on the other hand, is defined as a profession, a special profession that undertakes the responsibilities of the state regarding education and training (Saracaloğlu, 2009; Makas, & Düşünceli, 2021). In addition to industry courses, teachers also take up teacher training courses that teach them how to approach a student during their university years in specialist training. However, no guidance or direction is given to teacher candidates regarding their own emotional states.

Occupation is defined as a set of activities based on systematic knowledge and skills, the rules of which are determined by the society and determined by the society, in order to produce useful goods and services to people and to get money in return, gained through a certain education. It is the field of activity in which people engage in trade in order to continue their lives after receiving education for a certain period of time (Dursun, & Karagün, 2012). Some educators, teachers' thoughts on class behaviours, mental health and personality structure have stated that this is more important than teaching technique and teacher knowledge (Conradie, 2021). It is stated that teachers who will raise future generations have started their profession upright because they have largely got rid of their professional concerns about the profession.

The stage of choosing a profession is the most important thing that directs the life of the individual. This is one of the important steps in their career choice. This means choosing the way one works and one's lifestyle (Sarıkaya & Khorshid, 2009). In this context, individuals make an effort to make a

conscious and correct career choice. How to choose the right profession? Make your choice based on your abilities and interests. Those who choose this way are successful in their chosen field and happy in life.

When the literature is examined, although there is no clear definition of pre-service anxiety for teachers, it has been stated that pre-service teachers' anxiety is concentrated at certain points at certain times and consists of three sub-sections. According to Fuller (1969), these concerns about the teaching profession are explained in three groups: selfish, task-centred and student-centred concerns (Boz & Cetin-Dindar, 2021). Identifying the influencing factors on student academic performance is a challenge for teachers (Graesser, Sabatini, & Li, 2022). Because test scores are so important for academic and career advancement, students are naturally under great pressure to achieve high scores, making test anxiety a universal experience. They have difficulties in learning because their professional anxiety is actually trying to pass the course (Kolnes & Midthassel, 2022; Mikkelsen et al., 2021).

In this study, one of the areas that has an important place in the field of professional competence of students studying at universities is their psychological competence. It is important for students to be prepared in every field to ensure their professional competence. The number of students studying at the university is quite high. In this context, in this study, it is aimed to determine the opinions of university students about their professional skill levels.

1.1. Purpose of the research and research questions

In this study, one of the areas that has an important place in the field of professional competence of students studying at universities is their psychological competence. Identifying professional concerns in the field of psychology can prevent future professional problems. It can shape the education system they receive at university. It is important for students to be prepared in all areas to ensure their professional competence. The general purpose of this research is to determine the opinions of the students about their professional concerns. Within the scope of this purpose, answers were sought for the sub-objectives below.

Based on the purpose, the following research questions are posed:

Question 1: Are you satisfied with the chapter you read? Please explain.

Question 2: What do you think about the education you received at university?

Question 3: Will you work in a job related to the department you are studying in the future?

Question 4: Do you have problems with your profession? What are they?

2. Method

In this research, it was asked to determine the opinions of the students studying at the university about their professional concerns and their psychological competencies. In order to reach the detailed result of this research, the interview technique, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was applied. In the research, open-ended questions developed by the researcher were prepared. For the reliability of the questions, opinions were taken from four experts in the field and their final form was given. Since the research is based on collecting opinions with open-ended questions, it can be defined as an unstructured interview (Büyüköztürk Kılıç-Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2008; Buldu & Armagan, 2019). The qualitative data obtained by the interview technique were obtained by theming

and using frequencies. The importance of the research in the data collection process was explained and interview days were organised. A total of 102 student interviews were arranged. However, data were collected from 85 students who came to the interview day. The interviews were recorded and notes were taken. The findings obtained from the interview were reported and final approval was obtained from the students. The interview forms were read separately by the researchers and grouped according to the similarity of the statements.

3. Results

3.1. Satisfaction with the department

When the answers given by the students to the question are examined, 61 of the 85 students stated that they are satisfied with the department they are studying and 24 are not.

Table 1. Satisfaction with the department

	Theme	*F*
Glad (61)	Love the profession	32
	Good salary	18
	Love communication with children	11
Not glad (24)	Not suitable for me (12)	12
	Family request	12

University students were asked whether they were satisfied with the department they studied in. When we look at the findings of the satisfied students, there are 32 students who say they like the profession, 18 students who say they like this department because it has a good salary and 11 students who say that this department is suitable for them because they like communicating with children. When university students were asked about the reasons for their dissatisfaction with the department they are studying in, there are 12 students who stated that this department is not suitable for them and 12 students who stated that they chose this department because of family desire.

3.2. What do you think about the education you received at university?

The answers about whether the students are satisfied about the education they received at the university are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Education qualification status

Sufficient (31)	Not Enough (54)
Our teachers teach well (24)	Teacher is insufficient (32)
Lessons learned are enough. (7)	Unrelated lesson (21)

University students were asked whether the education they received at the university was sufficient. There are 31 students who stated that the education given at the university is sufficient and 54 students who stated that it is insufficient. Students were asked to explain the concept of sufficient. There are 24 students who stated that the teachers explained the lesson well and 7 students find the courses they have taken at the university are sufficient. 54 students found the education they received

at the university to be insufficient. 32 students stated that the teachers explained the lessons inadequately and 21 students stated that most of the courses they took at the university were not related to the department.

'Many of our lecturers at the university teach the lessons from slides. When I think of university, I don't think of education like in high school. I think that teachers should teach us lessons with different techniques. For this reason, I am not satisfied with the education I received'.

'The courses given at the university include courses that I do not think I will use in our future professional life. For example, we took physics lessons even though I wasn't going to teach physics. Courses must be given in line with the profession. I feel inadequate in my professional life'.

3.3. Whether or not to work in the field related to the department in the future

Table 3. Whether or not to work in the field related to the department in the future

Yes 31)	No (16)	Undecided (38)
Love the job	Going into business (8)	Inability to find a job (21)
There is no other job opportunity	Returning to the father's profession (6)	Don't like the job (17)
	Re-enter university (2)	

University students were asked whether they would work in a job related to their department in the future. There were 31 students who stated that they will work in this profession, 16 students stated that they would not do this profession and 38 students are undecided.

They stated that they were undecided because of their concerns about not being able to find a job (21) related to this department.

'I chose this department because of the pressure of my family. For this reason, I am undecided about whether or not to pursue this profession'.

'Job opportunities are difficult. I don't know if I will be appointed to the State House. If I am appointed, I will do this job. I have concerns'.

'I'm reading this chapter just because my family wanted it. I will do the father's job, which is not suitable for me'.

'I love this profession and I feel competent'.

3.4. Do you have problems with your job? What are they?

The students were asked whether they had any problems with their profession in the department they studied. 5 students did not answer this question, 31 students stated that the problems stemmed from the fact that this profession was not valued enough in the society, 18 students stated that they did not have sufficient knowledge about the profession due to the short duration of internship courses such as teaching practice, 14 students stated that the wages are low and that they are not paid enough for the work related to the profession and 10 students stated that they had concerns about the profession because they felt inadequate and they were not sure what to do when they started working. On the other hand, seven students stated that people who graduated from different branches received certificates and became trainers, which is the biggest problem of the profession.

4. Conclusion and discussion

Sub-goals were determined and questions were asked to university students in order to determine the findings related to professional anxiety, competence and perspectives. From the answers given by the students, it was concluded that they had concerns, they did not feel competent in the professional field yet and they found the education they received insufficient. The findings of the sub-dimensions within the scope of the research are explained below.

University students were asked whether they were satisfied with the department they studied in. Occupational concerns are associated with satisfaction. Students, who said they liked the profession, said that they liked the department because it had a good salary, the department was suitable for them and they liked the department because they liked to communicate with children. There are students who stated that they preferred the department. The result obtained from this finding is that families are effective in choosing the department. Being dissatisfied with the part they read brings along other emotional states.

University students were asked whether the education they received at the university was sufficient. It is very important whether they are satisfied with the education they receive or not. There are 31 students who stated that the education given at the university is sufficient and 54 students who stated that it is insufficient. Students were asked to explain the concept of sufficient. There are 24 students who stated that the teachers explained the lesson well, 7 students found the courses they have taken at the university to be sufficient and 54 students found the education they received at the university insufficient. It was concluded that 32 students explained the lessons inadequately and 21 students stated that most of the courses they took at the university were not related to the department. This result brings with it the finding that changes should be made in the education process. In their studies, they stated that in choosing a profession, individuals should be selected according to their characteristics. When individuals read in the departments according to their own wishes, the problems decrease, and the worries and concerns decrease. The problems experienced in the profession are directly proportional to the departments they choose at the universities and the education they receive (Daniels, Mandzuk, Perry, & Moore, 2011; Moore, Kern, Carlson, Vaccaro, Kimball, Abbott,.. Newman, 2020; Grobbelaar, 2009)

University students were asked whether they would like to work in a job related to their department in the future. Professional perceptions and expectations from the department are explained by this finding. There are 31 students who stated that they will work in this profession, 16 students stated that they would not do this profession and 38 students were undecided. They stated that they were undecided about this department (21) because of their concerns about not being able to find a job. Responses to whether or not they work in the department they study are quite surprising. It can be interpreted that the students who are undecided do not adopt the profession and therefore cannot make a decision. Discussions on the teacher training system continue. Questions about how teachers should be trained and what qualifications they should have still remain to date. It is known that the feelings and thoughts of teachers before starting the profession significantly affect their success in the profession. Whether they are satisfied with the education they receive or not changes their perception of the profession (İnceoğlu, 2010).

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