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# An Investigation To Determine The Work Values Of Tourism Students

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## Abstract

In this study, it is aimed to determine the work values of tourism students. In addition it has been tried to determine whether there is a significant differences between students' demographic characteristics and work values. The research has been carried out by using data collected with survey method from 397 tourism students. At the end of the research it has been found that the factors of safety, success, work environment and relations with colleague are more important for the tourism students. In addition there are significant age, gender, department and class-based differences regarding some dimensions of the tourism students' work value.

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## 1. Introduction

As a tourist destination, Turkey has demonstrated spectacular growth in recent decades, and it entertains a larger number of vacationers each year. In 2011, Turkey moved up one position to sixth place (with 29 million tourists) overtaking the United Kingdom in the top 10 rankings for international tourist arrivals. It also took twelfth place for receipts (US\$ 23.020 million) (UNWTO, 2012). Visitor expenditure on accommodation, food and drink, local transport, entertainment and shopping is an important contributor to the economy of Turkey, creating much needed

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employment and opportunities for development (Avcikurt and et. al., 2009). The overwhelming success of international and domestic tourism has given rise to a pressing demand for quality professional human resources. Requirements for skilled and efficient human capital pose a serious threat to the future competitiveness of this service industry (Singh, 1997). As tourism plays an important role in the socio-cultural and economic life of many developing countries, tourism education plays a key role at all levels in securing and maintaining sustainable tourism development (Okumus and Yagci, 2005). Consequently, the demand for hospitality and tourism professionals has augmented rapidly. In response to this escalating demand, many Turkish universities are striving to strengthen and expand their hospitality and tourism curricula. Indeed, for developing a practical curriculum, a good understanding of why students desire a career in the hospitality industry becomes critical. Ginzberg et al. (1951) proclaimed that individuals' vocational choice development is influenced by their work value (Chen et. al. 2000: 360). Based on the above tenet, this study attempts to measure the work values of tourism students.

## **2. The Concept of Work Value**

Chen and Choi (2008) defined the values as beliefs and personal standards that guide individuals to function in a society and thus, values have both the cognitive and affective dimensions. The notion of value is a special characteristic of human behavior. Most value theorists agree that individuals act or behave according to their values. Hence, a person's values act as criteria for choosing goals or guiding actions. In the theory of occupational psychology, work values are important components that drive individuals to seek certain kinds of jobs or working environments. The influence of work values on an individual's occupational development has been well documented since the 1950s (Chen et. al. 2000: 360). Chen and Choi (2008) stated that work values are viewed as additional and necessary constructs for vocational theory.

Work may have a variety of meanings for individuals in an industrial society. Work has no inherent meaning but, rather, individuals impute such meanings to their work activity (Kalleberg, 1977: 127). Values are intrinsic, enduring perspectives of what is fundamentally right or wrong. Work values represent these perspectives as applied to work settings. England (1967) suggested that individual value orientations affect how people behave in their jobs by demonstrating that employees with strong value orientations tended to act in accordance with what they thought was "right", whereas employees with more pragmatic orientations tended to behave in ways that they thought were "successful" (Judge and Bretz, 1992: 261). Values have both content and intensity attributes. The content attribute indicates that a mode of conduct or end-state of existence is important. The intensity attribute specifies how important it is. Values lay the foundation for the understanding of attitudes and motivation. Values also influence perceptions and behavior. It is generally accepted that individuals establish relatively stable values through life experiences and that organizational socialization is unlikely to alter the basic value structure an individual brings to the organization. This has been explained as a result of both their genetic component and the way in (Mok et. al. 1998: 2).

Work values are specific expressions of general values in the work setting. Work values are beliefs pertaining to desirable end-states (e.g. high pay) or behavior (e.g. working with people). The different work goals are ordered by their importance as guiding principles for evaluating work outcomes and settings, and for choosing among different work alternatives. Because work values refer only to goals in the work setting, they are more specific than basic individual values. But the work values usually studied are still quite broad: they refer to what a person wants out of work in general rather than to the narrowly defined outcomes of particular jobs. Finally, work values like basic values, are verbal representations of individual, group and interaction requirements (Ros et. al. 1999: 54).

## **3. Methodology**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the work values of tourism students. In addition it has been tried to determine whether there is a significant differences between students' demographic characteristics and work values. In order to accomplish these purposes, a study has been conducted on tourism students with using questionnaire technique in October, 2012. Tourism students of the School of Tourism and Hotel Management at the University of Balikesir were the target population of this study. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed and 397 valid questionnaires (88,2%) were analyzed in this study.

The survey questionnaire was developed primarily to obtain information on the purposes. The questionnaire was composed of the following two parts: (1) **socio-demographic questions**, including gender, age, class, department, whether the students choosed tourism as an occupation willingly, satisfaction level of the students with choosing the tourism as an occupation, whether the students were thinking to work in the tourism industry after they finish their education; (2) **The Work Values Scale**, seventy five questions used to evaluate the students' work values were adapted from Pilavcı (2007). Each question of work values was answered by marking a scale from 5 (very important) to 1 (very unimportant).

The software generated descriptive statistics relating to socia-demographics were expressed as percentages. Factor Analysis by the Varimax rotation procedure with Kaiser Normalization was used discover and identify dimensions (factors). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Student's t-test analyses were used to assess statistical significance. In all analyses, the usual significance level was 5%. All analyses were conducted by SPSS 16.0. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the items was 0,97, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

#### 4. Findings

The findings part includes the analysis of participants' socio-demographic characteristics and work values. When the socio-demographic distribution of students participating in this study is analyzed it has been seen that 57.5% of participants are males, 42.5% of participants are female. It can be seen that 35,2% of the students participating in this study are between the ages of 17-19, %57,5% are between 20-22 years and 7,3% are 23 years and over the age of 23. The students participating in this study are composed of 39% of them from tourism guiding department, 20,4% of them from hospitality management department and 46,6% of them from travel management department. 27,9% of participants are in first class student, 24% are in second class student, 23,5% are in third class student and 24,6% are in fourth class student. More than half of the students (55,3%) chose their department willingly. 35.8% indicated that they chose their department partially willingly and 8.9% indicated that they chose their department reluctantly. 7,3% participants indicated that they are not satisfied from chosen department, 8,9% are less satisfied, 27,9% are undecided, 36,3% are satisfied and 19% are very satisfied. 44.3% of the students participating in this study stated that they want to do profession after graduating, 13.6% are not want to do profession, 42.1% stated that they are undecided about whether or not do.

In this study, Work Value Scale's reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) was found 0,97. Alpha value gets a value between 0 and 1 and an acceptable value for the social sciences research is desired to be at least 0,7 (Altunışık et al., 2012: 126). The scale's reliability level used in this study is above this value, so it can be said that the scale used is very reliable. Factor analysis was applied to data related with work values, in this study. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test (KMO) was used for the evaluation of applicability of factor analysis.

As a result of the factor analysis of the scale of work values, result of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was found p significance value 0,000 ( $p \leq 0,005$ ) and this value points out high correlation values between the variables. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value is 0,937. This value occurred sufficient for applied factor analysis. Factor loadings to be large enough are important for practical significance of factor analysis (Altunışık et al., 2004: 282-283). In this study, the scale of the work values of factor analysis eigenvalues statistic's greater than 1 and factor load seems to be over 0,30 's. When the results factor analysis's of the work values scale analysed, it was seen that 75 variables was grouped under fifteen factors. The first factor was named "Innovation". Eigenvalue of innovation is 25,15 and explains 33,533% of total variance. The second factor obtained as a result of the factor analysis was named "Relations with Managers". Eigenvalue of relations with managers is 5,716 and explains 7,622% of total variance. The third factor was named "Economic Profit". The third factor's eigenvalue is 4,111 and explains 5,482% of total variance. The fourth factor obtained as a result of the factor analysis was named "Human Relations". Eigenvalue of the factor of human relations is 2,961 and explains 3,948% of total variance. The fifth factor was named "Safety". Eigenvalue of the factor of safety is 2,415 and explains 3,22% of total variance. The sixth factor was named "Variety". Eigenvalue of the factor of variety is 2,214 and explains 2,952% of total variance. The seventh factor was named "Autonomy". Eigenvalue of the factor of autonomy is 1,989 and explains 2,652% of total variance. The eighth factor was named "Success". Eigenvalue of the factor of success is 1,78 and explains 2,373% of total

variance. The ninth factor was named “Prestige”. Eigenvalue of the factor of prestige is 1,692 and explains 2,257% of total variance. The tenth factor was named “Leadership”. Eigenvalue of the factor of leadership is 1,601 and explains 2,134% of total variance. The eleventh factor was named “Life Style”. Eigenvalue of the factor of life style is 1,339 and explains 1,785% of total variance. The twelfth factor was named “Work Environment”. Eigenvalue of the factor of work environment is 1,3 and explains 1,734% of total variance. The thirteenth factor was named “Aesthetic”. Eigenvalue of the factor of aesthetic is 1,12 and explains 1,493% of total variance. The fourteenth factor was named “Relations with Colleagues”. Eigenvalue of the factor of relations with colleagues is 1,029 and explains 1,373% of total variance. The fifteenth factor was named “Intellectual Support”. Eigenvalue of the factor of intellectual support is 1,006 and explains 1,341% of total variance. Participants perceived the all dimensions in the Work Value Scale as important. However, the most important dimensions given by the participants turned out to be success, safety, work environment and relations with colleague.

**Table 1.** The Work Values Scale’s Factor Analysis Results

	Eigenvalue	Explained Variance %	Mean
Innovation	25,15	33,533	3,54
Relations With Managers	5,716	7,622	3,64
Economic Profit	4,111	5,482	3,85
Human Relations	2,961	3,948	3,37
Safety	2,415	3,22	3,77
Variety	2,214	2,952	3,51
Autonomy	1,989	2,652	3,69
Success	1,78	2,373	3,87
Prestige	1,692	2,257	3,26
Leadership	1,601	2,134	3,39
Life Style	1,339	1,785	3,63
Work Environment	1,3	1,734	3,76
Aesthetic	1,12	1,493	3,55
Relations With Colleague	1,029	1,373	3,71
Intellectual Support	1,006	1,341	3,54
<i>Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity significance value of p = 0,000</i>			
<i>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) sample value = 0,937</i>			

Variables associated with socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and relating to work value factors in the univariate analysis were analysed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Independent Samples T Test. According to the results of the ANOVA test (for  $p \leq 0.05$ ) there were statistically significant department-based differences regarding work environment factor ( $F = 3,433$  and  $p = 0,033$ ). There were statistically significant class-based differences regarding economic profit ( $F = 3,299$  and  $p = 0,020$ ), safety ( $F = 4,510$  and  $p = 0,004$ ), autonomy ( $F = 3,035$  and  $p = 0,029$ ), work environment ( $F = 2,838$  and  $p = 0,038$ ) and relations with managers ( $F = 3,104$  and  $p = 0,027$ ) factors. There were statistically significant age-based differences regarding economic profit ( $F = 3,692$  and  $p = 0,026$ ), safety ( $F = 3,407$  and  $p = 0,034$ ), variety ( $F = 3,548$  and  $p = 0,030$ ), autonomy ( $F = 5,422$  and  $p = 0,005$ ), success ( $F = 4,790$  and  $p = 0,009$ ), leadership ( $F = 3,500$  and  $p = 0,031$ ), aesthetic ( $F = 3,467$  and  $p = 0,032$ ) and relations with colleagues ( $F = 5,545$  and  $p = 0,004$ ) factors. According to the results of the Independent Samples T Test, there were significant gender-based differences regarding success ( $F = 9,215$  and  $p = 0,003$ ) factor. The factor of success were considered important by female students at the level of 4,03 and were considered by male students at the level of 3,71.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

While research on work values of university students has been an interesting topic for twenty years, work values of tourism students had gained little attention in Turkey. Based on a survey on the school of tourism and hotel management students, this study analyzed the tourism students’ perceptions of work values. The results provide some information to consider. One important result of the study was that more than half of the students chose tourism willingly, most of the students satisfied with choosing the tourism as an occupation and nearly half of the

respondents were thinking to work in the tourism industry after they finish their education. However, nearly half of the students indicated that they were partially willingly and reluctantly to engaged in tourism industry. This may due to the following reasons: first of all, most of the tourism enterprises do not provide good compensation, job security for 12 months in a year; entry-level tourism jobs are thought to be boring and tiring.

When the results factor analysis's of the work values scale analysed, it was seen that 75 variables was grouped under fifteen factors. Similar results have also been found in the study conducted in Turkey by Pilavcı (2007). These fifteen factors are innovation, relations with managers, economic profit, human relations, safety, variety, autonomy, success, prestige, leadership, life style, work environment, aesthetic, relations with colleague, intellectual support. Work value analysis revealed that success, safety, work environment and relations with colleague were the most important factors tourism students considered. It can be said that socio-psychological dimensions of work values are more important than economic dimensions such as economic profit for the tourism students. Similar results have also been found in studies conducted by Chen et. al. (2000) and Chen and Choi (2008).

Variables associated with socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and relating to work value factors were analysed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Independent Samples T Test. According to the results of the ANOVA test (for  $p \leq 0.05$ ) there were statistically significant differences between department and work environment factor; class and economic profit, safety, autonomy, work environment and relations with managers factors; age and economic profit, safety, variety, autonomy, success, leadership, aesthetic, and relations with colleagues factors. According to the results of the Independent Samples T Test, there were statistically significant differences between gender and success factor. The factor of success was considered more important by female students than male students. It can be said that the feeling of being successful at work was more important for female students than male students.

This study provides useful information relevant to human resource management. From a recruitment perspective, human resource managers in tourism industry might consider measuring students' attitude toward work value for developing effective recruitment strategies. Further study is needed to test the results deriving from this study and to develop further understanding of the tourism students' work values of other universities and impacts of more demographic characteristics on work values should be studied.

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