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## INVESTIGATION OF THE STUDENTS' OPINIONS ON VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE SERVICES CONDUCTED AT HIGH SCHOOLS

*Research article*

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## Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze different views of students studying at Anatolian high school, industrial vocational high school and private high school about vocational guidance services. The sample of the study consisted of 180 high school students from three different school types. Of them, 103 were male and 77 were female. In the study, survey method was employed and the data were collected through vocational guidance service evaluation questionnaire developed by the researcher. The findings showed that some students found the vocational guidance services that provided at school insufficient. In addition, students' opinions on vocational guidance services were found to differ significantly in terms of gender and school type variables. The students stated their opinions on the importance of vocational guidance services and their main problems, expectations and suggestions related to the vocational guidance services.

*Keywords:* vocational guidance services, high school students, school types

## 1. Introduction

The profession is an important part of human life as it has a significant value in determining the social prestige of the human being and even the happiness level of the individuals (Turan & Kayıkcı, 2019). Having a profession is of great importance for all individuals since it is an area of activity that allows people to be respected in society, to establish relationships with others and to have a place in society (Kuzgun, 2000). Moreover, it has a direct influence on the standard of living, social relations, emotional health and the feeling of self-worth (Nyamwange, 2016). Therefore, career planning and career choice are considered as the most important and distinctive aspects of life.

The career choice has a long-lasting influence on the individual. It serves as a predictor and determinant of income level, nature of work and personal development (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). Thus, it can be argued that a wrong choice in career planning can change the fate of an individual. The choice of profession can be defined as the individual's determination of one of the professions based on his/her personal interest and the efforts that he/she makes to acquire this profession (Bacanlı, 1996). According to Savickas and Lent (1994), profession choice process includes three components, which are as *establishing a goal, taking action to implement the choice, and attaining a significant position and stage of performance determining the future directions and career behaviors*.

On the other hand, career choice is not an easy and straightforward process. Making the right decisions depends on the student's self-knowledge, awareness of their interests, needs, expectations and abilities (Tuzcuoğlu, 2000). Career planning becomes significant especially during the early adulthood. During this time, high school students seek information on their career and become more aware of their vocational interests (Khan et al; 2011). In the literature, it is seen that various factors have influences on career choices of high school students. The studies conclude that personality, interests, socio-economic factors, teachers, friends, parents, cultural identity and family business, etc. are among the most prominent factors affecting

career choice (Kumar, 2016; Pascual, 2014; Edwards & Quinter, 2011). In the study conducted by Kıyak (2006), the criteria of high school students on the profession choice are found as the possibility of finding a job in the profession, skills, interest, values, personality traits (self-recognition), the awards of the profession (money, prestige, fame, etc.) and the wishes of the family. On the other hand, Bahar (2002) found a positive relationship between the social-economic situation and the professional choice of the students.

Nyamwange (2016) stated that students should be provided with the adequate information regarding various career choices. Therefore, the consultants at schools are expected to support the students in their career planning. As a result, the guiding and counseling services at schools become more prominent. In Turkey, guiding and counseling services are conducted at schools based on the regulations of Ministry of National Education (MoNE, 2017). It is stated in Article 6 of the Ministry of National Education Regulation on Guidance Services that “*Vocational guidance is a service offered to individuals and the parents for the recognition of self and occupations, making choices for the profession in line with skills, interest, need, value and personality traits, to prepare them for the profession, to start, to continue the profession and to develop himself/herself in the lifelong learning process.*” (Official Gazette, 2018). Guidance services play the most important role in conducting guidance services at schools. In addition, various individuals and boards such as school principals, deputy principals, guidance services executive commission, coordinator guidance teachers, guidance teachers, classroom guidance teachers and other teachers are involved in conducting guidance activities (MoNE, 2017).

In the study conducted by Turan and Kayıkçı (2019), it was aimed to determine the role of school guidance services in senior vocational high school students' professional choice based on the opinions of the guidance counselor, parents and students. Ulaş and Yıldırım (2015) aimed to find out whether family, peer and teacher support variables and demographic properties predict the high school students' career maturity levels. On the other hand, the studies showed that vocational guidance services conducted on high school students have a positive influence on making correct decisions in terms of career choice (Efilti, 1998), choosing the appropriate field based on their interest and recognizing themselves professionally (Öksüz, 2001; Bektaş & Demir, 2004) and making the professional preferences appropriate to the skills and interests of the students (Çetinkaya, 1995).

Based on the information in the literature, in this study it was aimed to investigate the opinions of the Anatolian high school, industrial vocational high school and private high school students about vocational guidance services and the differences between the opinions were tried to be presented. The study is expected to make contribution to the literature since it will provide information on to what extent high school students benefit from school guidance services provided by the vocational guidance services; whether the students understand the importance of vocational guidance services; problems, expectations and suggestions of the high school students about the vocational guidance services. Therefore, the main problem of the study is determined as; “Is there any difference between the opinions of Anatolian high school, industrial vocational high school and private high school students about vocational guidance services?” Based on this main problem, the following sub-problems were tried to be answered:

1. What are the opinions of the high school students on vocational guidance services?
2. Do the high school students' opinions about vocational guidance services differ according to gender and school type variables?
3. What are the opinions of high school students on the importance of vocational guidance services?

4. What are the high school students' main problems, suggestions and expectations related to vocational guidance services?

## **2. Research Methodology**

In the study, the survey method was employed. Survey models aim to describe, compare, analyze and interpret the situations of individuals, institutions, groups or sources in the way that they are (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

### **2.1. Participants**

The sample of the study consisted of 180 students from 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades studying at an Anatolian high school, an industrial vocational high school and a private high school in the spring term of 2018-2019 academic year in Elazığ, Turkey. Of these students, 103 were male and 77 were female. In addition, 60 of the students were studying at Anatolian high school, 60 were at the industrial vocational high school and 60 were at private high school. In terms of school type variable, 90 students were 9<sup>th</sup> grade students while 90 students were 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. On the other hand, the convenience sampling method was employed for the selection of the participants. Since it allows the researcher to choose a situation that is close and easy to access, convenience sampling method gives the researcher speed and practicality (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008).

### **2.2. Data Collection**

In the study, "Vocational Guidance Services Evaluation Questionnaire" was used to collect the data. The questionnaire developed by the researcher aimed to reveal whether the school has provided sufficient awareness and information to the high school students in terms of recognition of the occupations, whether the student has received sufficient assistance from the school for the choice of profession, the students' opinions on the importance of a correct career choice, their problems experienced in the vocational guidance process and the expectations and suggestions of the students for vocational guidance services. The questionnaire consists of 16 closed ended and 4 open-ended questions. The relevant literature and expert opinions were used in the development of the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. In the first part, the participants were asked to answer questions about vocational guidance services. The questionnaire consists of 16 items as a five-point Likert-type instrument, ranging from "1=completely disagree, "5=completely agree". In the second part, four different open-ended questions related to high school students' opinions on vocational guidance services were asked. Since the questionnaire items were handled independently for detailed analysis and interpretation, no analysis of the reliability of the scores (such as Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient) was conducted.

### **2.3. Procedures**

The study was conducted during the spring term of 2018-2019 academic year in Elazığ with 180 high school students studying at an Anatolian high school, industrial vocational high school and a private high school. The vocational guidance services evaluation questionnaire used in the study was applied to the students in the classroom environment. For this purpose, firstly the required permission was taken from the classroom teachers and the most appropriate time was determined for the application. The researcher went to the schools on a determined day. The students were also informed about the aim of the study. The study was carried out on a voluntary basis.

### **2.4. Data Analysis**

The obtained data were analyzed using SPSS 17.0 statistical program. All statistical tests were conducted at significance level of 0.05, which was preferred in the social sciences. In

order to test the validity of the questionnaire, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistics were used. Descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations were computed. Then, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted to see whether the data was normally distributed. The analysis results showed that the data did not normally distributed ( $p < .05$ ). Therefore, Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis H test were used for the data analysis.

### 3. Findings

In the study, students' opinions about vocational guidance services were examined in terms of gender and school type variables item by item using non-parametric tests Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis H test. After analyzing the sub-problems of the problems with statistical data, students' answers on the importance of vocational guidance, problems experienced within the scope of vocational guidance services, expectations from the school administration, guidance teachers and other teachers within the scope of vocational guidance services, and students' suggestions about vocational guidance services are given in tables in frequency and percentage.

#### 3.1. Findings Related to the First Sub-Problem

The frequencies and percentages of the high school students' opinions related to vocational guidance services are given in Table 1.

**Table 1.** *The frequencies and percentages of the high school students' opinions for each item*

ITEMS	Completely Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Completely Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	36	20,0	23	12,08	43	23,09	30	16,7	48	26,7
2	29	16,01	33	18,3	34	18,09	40	22,2	44	24,4
3	11	6,1	34	18,9	36	20,0	44	24,4	55	30,6
4	13	7,2	45	25,0	38	21,1	46	25,6	38	21,1
5	20	11,1	31	17,2	39	21,7	48	26,7	42	23,3
6	43	23,9	42	23,3	27	15,0	46	25,6	22	12,2
7	30	16,7	31	17,2	34	18,9	27	15,0	58	32,2
8	46	25,6	31	17,2	37	20,6	43	23,9	23	12,8
9	24	13,3	45	25,0	33	18,3	26	14,4	52	28,9
10	24	13,3	44	24,4	39	21,7	38	21,1	35	19,4
11	19	10,6	41	22,8	37	20,6	48	26,7	35	19,4
12	13	7,2	41	22,8	43	23,9	36	20,0	47	26,1
13	40	22,2	43	23,9	46	25,6	34	18,9	17	9,4
14	18	10,0	32	17,8	44	24,4	42	23,3	44	24,4
15	20	11,1	36	20,0	39	21,7	41	22,8	44	24,4
16	46	25,6	30	16,7	42	23,3	37	20,6	25	13,9

When the Table 1 is examined, it is seen that some students think that vocational guidance services are insufficient in providing them realize themselves. Most of the students regard vocational guidance services as a professional aid.

Some of the students think that school guidance services are insufficient in providing the actual data about the occupations. In addition, according to some students, there are not enough activities to raise awareness about the occupations.

It is found that some students have the opinion that the measurement tools implemented within the scope of vocational guidance are not applied effectively. Also, most of the students think that the importance of vocational guidance services is sufficiently comprehended by teachers.

### 3.2. Findings Related to the Second Sub-Problem

In the second sub-problem of the study, the Mann-Whitney U Test was applied to determine whether students' opinions differed according to gender variable. The analysis results are given in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Mann-Whitney U test results in terms of gender variable

Items		N	$\bar{X}$	SS	Z	Sig.																																																																						
1. I think that the vocational guidance services provided by the school guidance service make me realize myself.	Male	103	2,88	1,47	-	,002																																																																						
	Female	77	3,56	1,37			3,048	2. I think that vocational guidance is a professional aid.	Male	103	2,82	1,46	-	,000	Female	77	3,73	1,17	4,175	3. I think that vocational guidance services will contribute to my social development	Male	103	3,17	1,32	-	,000	Female	77	4,04	1,02	4,402	4. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, occupational group information is provided sufficiently.	Male	103	2,91	1,15	-	,000	Female	77	3,78	1,22	4,688	5. Guidance teachers who provide vocational guidance services are at a sufficient level in their fields (subject dominance, giving information to students, presentation, occupations, etc.).	Male	103	3,06	1,28	-	,001	Female	77	3,71	1,26	3,426	6. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, the guidance given to us to obtain up-to-date information about the occupations (progress, employment opportunities, etc.) is not sufficient.	Male	103	2,98	1,46	-	,040	Female	77	2,53	1,22	2,052	7. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, the techniques applied to measure the professional tendencies of the student are sufficient.	Male	103	3,07	1,48	-	,022	Female	77
2. I think that vocational guidance is a professional aid.	Male	103	2,82	1,46	-	,000																																																																						
	Female	77	3,73	1,17			4,175	3. I think that vocational guidance services will contribute to my social development	Male	103	3,17	1,32	-	,000	Female	77	4,04	1,02	4,402	4. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, occupational group information is provided sufficiently.	Male	103	2,91	1,15	-	,000	Female	77	3,78	1,22	4,688	5. Guidance teachers who provide vocational guidance services are at a sufficient level in their fields (subject dominance, giving information to students, presentation, occupations, etc.).	Male	103	3,06	1,28	-	,001	Female	77	3,71	1,26	3,426	6. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, the guidance given to us to obtain up-to-date information about the occupations (progress, employment opportunities, etc.) is not sufficient.	Male	103	2,98	1,46	-	,040	Female	77	2,53	1,22	2,052	7. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, the techniques applied to measure the professional tendencies of the student are sufficient.	Male	103	3,07	1,48	-	,022	Female	77	3,58	1,45	2,290									
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5. Guidance teachers who provide vocational guidance services are at a sufficient level in their fields (subject dominance, giving information to students, presentation, occupations, etc.).	Male	103	3,06	1,28	-	,001																																																																						
	Female	77	3,71	1,26			3,426	6. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, the guidance given to us to obtain up-to-date information about the occupations (progress, employment opportunities, etc.) is not sufficient.	Male	103	2,98	1,46	-	,040	Female	77	2,53	1,22	2,052	7. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, the techniques applied to measure the professional tendencies of the student are sufficient.	Male	103	3,07	1,48	-	,022	Female	77	3,58	1,45	2,290																																													
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	Female	77	3,58	1,45			2,290																																																																					

8. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, seminars, conferences, panels, trips etc. aiming to raise awareness about the occupations are not included.	Male	103	3,06	1,41	-	,006
	Female	77	2,48	1,28	2,738	
9. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, guidance teachers give enough space to individual interviews in order to get to know our features better.	Male	103	2,88	1,41	-	,001
	Female	77	3,64	1,36	3,371	
10. I receive adequate assistance and support from my school within the scope of vocational guidance.	Male	103	2,84	1,34	-	,005
	Female	77	3,42	1,25	2,839	
11. I think that measurement tools such as tests, questionnaires etc. applied within the scope of vocational guidance services are implemented to us in a healthy and timely manner.	Male	103	2,99	1,35	-	,008
	Female	77	3,52	1,13	2,654	
12. I think that the guidance counselors in our school are aware of the principles and responsibilities required by the vocational guidance service.	Male	103	3,11	1,26	-	,003
	Female	77	3,68	1,25	2,999	
13. I do not think that the importance of vocational guidance services is well understood by teachers.	Male	103	2,91	1,26	-	,007
	Female	77	2,40	1,23	2,716	
14. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, I think that the guidance hours are evaluated by the class guidance teachers in a healthy and appropriate way.	Male	103	3,16	1,31	-	,022
	Female	77	3,60	1,24	2,297	
15. I find the point of view of the administrators (school principal and assistant principals) on guidance service within the scope of vocational guidance services positive.	Male	103	3,10	1,37	-	,023
	Female	77	3,56	1,24	2,273	
16. I do not find the weekly guidance course hours sufficient within the scope of vocational guidance services.	Male	103	2,98	1,36	-	,047
	Female	77	2,57	1,39	1,987	

As can be seen in the Table 2, the students' opinions on vocational guidance services differ significantly in terms of gender variable [ $p < .05$ ]. When the each item was analyzed separately to determine the source of the differences, significant differences were obtained in favor of the female students in all items. As seen from the table, female students have higher average scores than male students. Therefore, it can be concluded that female students have more positive opinions on the positive sides of the offered vocational guidance services than male students.

In the second sub-problem of the study, it was also aimed to determine whether students' opinions on the vocational guidance services differed significantly in terms of school type variable. For this purpose, the Kruskal - Wallis H test was conducted. The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3.** *Kruskal - Wallis H test results in terms of school type variable*

Items		N	$\bar{X}$	SS	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
1. I think that the vocational guidance services provided by the school guidance service make me realize myself.	Anatolian	60	3,83	1,15	54,719	2	,000
	Private	60	3,67	1,28			
	Industrial	60	2,02	1,21			
2. I think that vocational guidance is a professional aid.	Anatolian	60	3,90	1,08	50,428	2	,000
	Private	60	3,57	1,32			
	Industrial	60	2,15	1,18			
3. I think that vocational guidance services will contribute to my social development.	Anatolian	60	4,12	0,88	77,073	2	,000
	Private	60	4,15	1,10			
	Industrial	60	2,37	0,88			
4. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, occupational group information is provided sufficiently.	Anatolian	60	3,78	1,11	50,663	2	,000
	Private	60	3,72	1,19			
	Industrial	60	2,35	0,88			
5. Guidance teachers who provide vocational guidance services are at a sufficient level in their fields (subject dominance, giving information to students, presentation, occupations, etc.).	Anatolian	60	3,88	1,03	49,663	2	,000
	Private	60	3,75	1,30			
	Industrial	60	2,38	1,03			
6. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, the guidance given to us to obtain up-to-date information about the occupations (progress, employment opportunities, etc.) is not sufficient.	Anatolian	60	2,10	1,10	32,978	2	,000
	Private	60	2,72	1,34			
	Industrial	60	3,55	1,29			
7. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, the techniques applied to measure the professional tendencies of the student are sufficient.	Anatolian	60	4,08	1,01	54,363	2	,000
	Private	60	3,63	1,52			
	Industrial	60	2,15	1,13			
8. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, seminars, conferences, panels, trips etc. aiming to raise awareness about the occupations are not included.	Anatolian	60	1,95	1,00	50,107	2	,000
	Private	60	2,75	1,47			
	Industrial	60	3,73	1,02			
	Anatolian	60	3,97	1,10	50,172	2	,000

9. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, guidance teachers give enough space to individual interviews to get to know our features better.	Private	60	3,48	1,44			
	Industrial	60	2,17	1,08			
10. I receive adequate assistance and support from my school within the scope of vocational guidance.	Anatolian	60	3,48	1,02	52,995	2	,000
	Private	60	3,70	1,31			
	Industrial	60	2,08	1,03			
11. I think that measurement tools such as tests, questionnaires etc. applied within the scope of vocational guidance services are implemented to us in a healthy and timely manner.	Anatolian	60	3,72	0,98	52,715	2	,000
	Private	60	3,70	1,29			
	Industrial	60	2,23	0,96			
12. I think that the guidance counselors in our school are aware of the principles and responsibilities required by the vocational guidance service.	Anatolian	60	3,82	1,05	50,337	2	,000
	Private	60	3,83	1,28			
	Industrial	60	2,40	0,94			
13. I do not think that the importance of vocational guidance services is well understood by teachers	Anatolian	60	2,25	0,99	28,042	2	,000
	Private	60	2,47	1,48			
	Industrial	60	3,37	1,01			
14. Within the scope of vocational guidance services, I think that the guidance hours are evaluated by the class guidance teachers in a healthy and appropriate way.	Anatolian	60	3,82	1,00	35,296	2	,000
	Private	60	3,67	1,39			
	Industrial	60	2,55	1,10			
15. I find the point of view of the administrators (school principal and assistant principals) on guidance service within the scope of vocational guidance services positive.	Anatolian	60	3,87	0,91	52,475	2	,000
	Private	60	3,73	1,39			
	Industrial	60	2,28	1,03			
16. I do not find the weekly guidance course hours sufficient within the scope of vocational guidance services.	Anatolian	60	1,97	0,86	47,464	2	,000
	Private	60	2,77	1,64			
	Industrial	60	3,68	0,95			

As can be seen in the Table 3, the students' opinions on the vocational guidance services differ significantly in terms of school type variable in all items [ $p < .05$ ]. The sources of these differences were analyzed for each item separately. The obtained results showed that the average score of the Anatolian high school students and private high school students were significantly higher than the average scores of industrial vocational high school students.

### 3.3. Findings Related to the Third Sub-Problem

In the third sub-problem of the study, open-ended questions were asked to the students on the importance of vocational guidance services. By the obtained data, it was aimed to determine the opinions of the students on the vocational guidance services. In the Table 4 below, frequency and percentage results are given.

**Table 4.** *High school students' opinions on the importance of vocational guidance*

Opinions	Frequency	%
Increase level of awareness about occupation	16	16.3
Help student in discover himself/herself	14	14.3
Lead students to vocations compatible with students' characters	12	12.2
Provide comprehensive information on different professions	11	11.2
Provide opportunities to explore interests and talents	9	9.2
Lead to the appropriate occupation	9	9.2
Create an activity environment for recognizing professions	7	7.1
Contribute to personal and social development	6	6.1
Help the individual to make a correct profession choice	5	5.1
Help students develop a realistic self-concept	3	3.1
Support lifelong career development	2	2.0
Provide the ability of self-management for the individuals	2	2.0
Support for career planning	1	1.0
Determine the existing qualities of the individual	1	1.0

When the findings in Table 4 are analyzed, it is seen that some students state their opinions on the importance of vocational guidance services as *increasing awareness about the occupations, to help them discover themselves, to guide them to the profession appropriate to their personality characteristics, to give them the opportunity to get to know different occupations more closely, to offer them the opportunity to explore their interests and abilities and to direct them to the appropriate profession.*

### 3.4. Findings Related to the Fourth Sub-Problem

In the fourth sub-problem of the study, open-ended questions were asked to the students on the main problems experienced in vocational guidance services; and students' suggestions and expectations about vocational guidance. In Table 5 below, frequency and percentage results related to the main problems of the students about vocational guidance services are given.

**Table 5.** *Main problems of the high school students related to vocational guidance services*

Main Problems	Frequency	%
Insufficient number of guidance teachers according to the number of students at schools	17	17.5
Lack of physical equipment of guidance services	13	13.4
Students are not sufficiently informed about vocational guidance services	12	12.4
Administrators have a negative perspective on guidance services	12	12.4
Limited time allocated to students by guidance counselors	10	10.3
Failure to evaluate the guidance duration in a healthy and appropriate way	9	9.3
Inadequate guidance hours	8	8.2
Failure to understand the importance of vocational guidance services	5	5.2
Not having the consciousness of principles and responsibility required by the guidance services	5	5.2
Failure to assess the situation with parents	3	3.1
Unwillingness of guidance counselors for guidance	3	3.1

When the findings in Table 5 are examined, the problems experienced by some students related to the vocational guidance services are expressed as *an insufficient number of guidance teachers, lack of physical equipment of the vocational guidance services, insufficient information about vocational guidance, and the negative viewpoints of the administrators on the guidance services*. Other problems such as *inadequate guidance hours and inadequate evaluation of the guidance duration in a healthy and appropriate way* are also stated by some of the students. The expectations and the suggestions of the high school students for vocational guidance services are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6.** *Expectations and suggestions of high school students related to vocational guidance services*

Expectations and Suggestions	Frequency	%
Guidance teachers with professional knowledge and awareness should conduct the classes.	17	19.1
Guidance teachers should develop themselves.	14	15.7
Guidance teachers should communicate more with students.	12	13.5
Vocational guidance services should be introduced to students more clearly	11	12.4
Students' personal development should be supported	9	10.1
The lack of physical equipment in the guidance of the school should be eliminated	8	9
Vocational guidance activities should be organized for families as well.	8	9
More activities should be organized to promote occupations	5	5.6
Branch teachers should be more active in guidance services.	3	3.4
The confidentiality of individual interviews should be ensured.	2	2.2

When the findings in Table 6 are analyzed, the main suggestions and expectations of some students were as *teachers with professional knowledge and awareness should be included in the courses, guidance teachers are required to develop themselves continuously, communication with the students should be increased within the scope of vocational guidance services, students should be more informed about vocational guidance services and it is necessary to support the personal development of the students through activities to be conducted within the scope of guidance studies.*

In conclusion, in the study it was found that the opinions of the students on vocational guidance services differed significantly in terms of gender and school type variables. In addition, most of the students stated that the importance of vocational guidance has significant value in increasing the level of awareness about occupations. On the other hand, some students expressed that the biggest problem experienced during vocational guidance was the low number of guidance teachers at schools and as a suggestion, most of the students stated that guidance counselors with professional knowledge and awareness should first conduct the guidance courses.

#### **4. Discussion and Conclusion**

This study aimed to determine the students' opinions on vocational guidance services. The findings showed that some students found the vocational guidance services provided at school insufficient. In the study conducted by Turan and Kayıkçı (2019) while some students expressed their positive opinions about the guidance services conducted at school, some students expressed their negative opinions about guidance services and stated that the guidance services were quite insufficient. In her study, Şahin (2008) found that students had the opinion that 56% of the psychological guidance services were conducted at school. Similarly, in the studies conducted by Hatunoğlu and Hatunoğlu (2006) and Karagüven (2001), students assessed the services they received from psychological guidance as insufficient. In addition, Karataş and Baltacı (2013) found that while some students assessed the psychological and guidance services as sufficient, some students stated that they assessed the services as insufficient. In their study Arıcıoğlu and Tagay (2008), it was found that the students found guidance services provided by class teachers insufficient. Topçu (2014) found in his study that students found vocational guidance services included in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade guidance program moderately useful. When considering how career choice affects the whole life of an individual, the importance of vocational guidance services becomes more prominent. Therefore, more activities should be conducted at schools on vocational guidance services and the students should be supported.

Students' opinions on vocational guidance services were found to differ significantly in terms of gender variable. When the each item was analyzed separately to determine the source of the differences, significant differences were obtained in favor of the female students in all items. Therefore, it can be concluded that female students have more positive ideas on vocational guidance services provided by school. On the contrary in the studies conducted by Şahin (2008) and Poyraz (2007), the students' scores on assessing the psychological guidance services did not differ significantly in terms of gender variable.

Students' opinions on the vocational guidance services were found to differ significantly in terms of school type variable in all items. The obtained results showed that the average score of the Anatolian high school students and private high school students were significantly higher than the average scores of industrial vocational high school students. Therefore, it can be concluded that students studying at Anatolian high school and private high school have more

positive opinions on the importance, necessity and benefits of the industrial vocational high school students. On the other hand, the opinions of the students on the negative or insufficient side of the vocational guidance services were higher for the Anatolian and private high school students compared to the industrial vocational high school students. In the study conducted by Çivicioğlu (2016), it was found that students' opinions on the vocational guidance services differed significantly in terms of school type variable. In the study, scores of students studying at Anatolian High School were found to be higher than the scores of students studying at different school types. In addition, Peker (2008) concluded that students' expectations on vocational guidance services differed significantly in terms of school type variable.

In the next sub-problem of the study, open-ended questions were asked to the students on the importance of vocational guidance services, main problems experienced in vocational guidance services; and students' suggestions and expectations about vocational guidance. Some students stated their opinions on the importance of vocational guidance services as *increasing awareness about the occupations, to help them discover themselves, to guide them to the profession appropriate to their personality characteristics, to give them the opportunity to get to know different occupations more closely, to offer them the opportunity to explore their interests and abilities and to direct them to the appropriate profession*. In addition, it is understood that the activities aiming at recognizing the professions contributes to the personal and social development, which shows that the students approach the issue from different perspectives. Different opinions have been expressed about the importance of vocational guidance. An individual's profession is the most important element that defines and identifies his/her identity (Herr et al., 2004). The occupation gives a certain form to the thoughts and life of the individual (Kuzgun, 2000). It should be kept in mind that the most important criterion determining the social status of the individual is profession. The answers to the questions such as "What kind of environment will he/she work with, with whom he/she will contact, what kind of lifestyle will he/she have, how much holiday will he/she have?" are related to the profession.

On the other hand, the problems experienced by some students related to the vocational guidance services were expressed as *insufficient number of guidance teachers, lack of physical equipment of the vocational guidance services, insufficient information about vocational guidance, and the negative viewpoints of the administrators on the guidance services*. Other problems such as *inadequate guidance hours and inadequate evaluation of the guidance duration in a healthy and appropriate way* are also stated by some of the students. There is a major imbalance in the distribution of guidance teachers in schools according to provinces and schools. While the recommended rate for conducting these services is 250 students for each counselor (ACA), this ratio varies between 1/905 and 1/2836 in Turkey (Akkök, 2006). Although the psychological counseling and guidance services in Turkey have been adopted from America, where these services are developed most since the beginning of the psychological counseling and guidance services, and all the resources and approaches have been taken from America, in the recent period, with the hope of membership in the European Union and with the support of the EU project, European countries have started to be modeled in vocational guidance and career counseling services and efforts have been made to create a system with some countries there (Akkök & Zelloth, 2010; Cedefop, 2008; Sultana & Watts, 2007).

The main suggestions and expectations of some students were as *teachers with professional knowledge and awareness should be included in the courses, guidance teachers are required to develop themselves continuously, communication with the students should be increased within the scope of vocational guidance services, students should be more informed about*

*vocational guidance services and it is necessary to support the personal development of the students through activities to be conducted within the scope of guidance studies.*

Based on the findings, the following suggestions can be provided:

- In order for the students to benefit more from the vocational guidance services, activities to raise awareness for the student are required.
- Priority should be given to the appointment of guidance counselors for schools that do not have guidance counselors or where the number of guidance counselors is insufficient.
- Deficiencies related to the implementation of vocational guidance services should be eliminated and it should be a priority for the students to make useful activities and practices.
- Student recognition and individual interview services should be increased.
- School guidance services should be turned into places that can serve better in terms of occupational information and awareness-raising.
- Administrators and branch teachers should support the development of vocational guidance services.
- Vocational guidance should be continuous.
- Vocational guidance services should be provided more frequently and with sufficient time.
- Vocational guidance services should not be kept on paper as a plan and implementation and evaluation activities should be emphasized.
- Vocational guidance should not be limited to students, but should also be organized for families that play a major role in the choice and preferences of students.

### **5. Conflict of Interest**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

### **6. Ethics Committee Approval**

The author confirms that the study does not need ethics committee approval according to the research integrity rules in their country.

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