

## CAREER DECISION MAKING SELF-EFFICACY, CAREER MATURITY AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS WITH TURKISH YOUTH

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### **Abstract**

*The socioeconomic status of the young people is one of the important factors which have effect on either their career decision making self-efficacy or their career maturity. This research was carried on by Survey method and it was tried to determine the effect of socio economic status on related variables by describing career decision making self efficacy and career maturity of young people who are at different socioeconomic status. The research was conducted with 346 Turkish young people who were determined by random sampling method. The research findings showed that there was a significant relationship between career decision making self-efficacy and career maturity with socioeconomic status. On the other hand it was observed that career decision making self-efficacy and career maturity of young people whose socioeconomic status were different differed in a significant level.*

**Keywords:** Career Maturity, Self-Efficacy, Socioeconomic Status

### **1. Introduction**

Career development is a life long process which includes physical, cognitive and emotional development (Seligman, 1980). There are lots of factors which influence lifelong career development process. These are generally classified as psychological and social factors. The mentioned factors develop by affecting each other mutually. The most important feature which affects vocational development is skill that individual has. However development of these skills can only be possible with environment support. If one were permitted only a single variable with which to predict an individual's occupational status, it surely would be the socioeconomic status (SES) of that individual's family of orientation. As a measurement construct, SES usually incorporates one or more of the following: parents' educational attainment and occupational status, family income. All of these factors, as well as such corresponding variables as values, opportunities, and parental encouragement, serve to enhance or limit an individual's potential occupational status. (Schoenberg et al, 1984).

SES affects multiple dimensions of an individual's life (Liu, 2002; Maher & Kroska, 2002); including the educational and occupational opportunities available to that individual and the attainments she or he achieves (Brown, 2000; Fouad & Brown, 2000; Turner & Lapan, 2003). It was reported that background SES was positively associated with individual's occupational status aspirations and expectations (Bigler et al, 2003; Armstrong & Crombie, 2000) educational aspirations and expectations (Bachmann & Dalton, 2002; Trusty, 1998), occupational status attainment (Korupp et al., 2002) and career decision making self efficacy (Ali et al, 2005). Career maturity also has been found to be positively correlated with background SES (Creed & Patton, 2003). These studies have demonstrated that SES affects the way individuals perceive their opportunities and influences their access to educational and vocational development.

There are some theories about career development. One of them is career development theory. Career development theory building, despite its relatively short history, has established a number of well-defined constructs that are substantiated by a growing body of evidence. Two such constructs are “Career Maturity” (CM) and “Career Decision Making Self Efficacy” (CDMSE).

### ***CAREER MATURITY***

Initially called “vocational maturity”, the construct now known as “career maturity” was proposed by Super 53 years ago (Super, 1955). CM is one of the most widely researched features of career development. CM refers to the individual’s readiness to make informed, age-appropriate career decisions and deal with career development tasks (Savakis, 1999). The first practical measure of CM was published not by Super but by one of his students (who later became a colleague), John Crites. Crites's (1971) model of CM, which includes both cognitive and affective components, has received considerable attention in the career development literature. The cognitive field of CM is represented by career choice competencies, such as specific career decision-making (CDM) problem-solving skills and abilities. The affective field of CM is represented by attitudes toward the CDM process. Patton and Lokan (2001) presented a comprehensive report on research into the correlates of CM in other words character qualities including age, gender, SES, culture, role salience, self-directedness, career indecision and work experience.

Research findings exploring the impact of gender on CM are also equivocal. The great majority of studies, conducted over two decades, have found that females of a number of age groups and in several countries have higher scores on CM measures than males (Alvin & Khan, 1983; Lokan, 1984; Luzon, 1995; Rojewski et al., 1995). In other studies (Fouad, 1988), females were higher on some subscales only. Some studies have however reported males scoring higher than females, including Achebe (1982) in Nigeria, and Gupta (1987) in India. Other studies have failed to find any significant gender difference in CM (Kelly & Colangelo, 1990; Thompson & Lindeman, 1984; Watson et al, 1995).

While SES has been theorized as likely to be an important determinant of career behaviour, even if acting largely through moderator variables (Super, 1990), most studies have found only a minor or no correlation between CM and SES in school age adolescents (Super & Nevill, 1984) . Where a significant relationship has been found, it has usually been between SES and the cognitive CM scales (Super & Forrest, 1972). However, some studies have concluded that economic background and differences in the schools attended played a greater role in CM than did racial background (Ansell & Hansen, 1971; Neely & Johnson, 1981).

### ***CAREER DECISION MAKING SELF EFFICACY***

Hackett and Betz (1981) first tried to apply Bandura’s (1977) propositions about self-efficacy to career behaviour in a seminal study of women’s career development. They demonstrated that career decisions, attainments and adjustment behaviours were subject to the influence of self-efficacy beliefs in both men and women.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) (Lent et al., 1994, 2000) was introduced to explain the career development of adolescents and young adults from a socio-cognitive behavioural framework. Lent et al. (1994) developed SCCT based on Bandura’s (1982, 1986, 1989) social-cognitive theory and Hackett

and Betz's (1981) career self-efficacy theory. SCCT hypothesizes that personal, contextual, and social cognitive factors affect the development of career interests, selection of career goals, and career behaviours.

Self-efficacy beliefs are defined as an individual's "judgments about his or her capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated performances" (Bandura, 1986). Researchers have created strong support for the effect of self-efficacy on the career decision-making process of individuals since the distinctive study by Betz and Hackett (1981), which tried to explain the notion of career-related self-efficacy (Brown et al., 1999; Multon et al., 1991).

A critique of this subject is that the researches carried out have included co relational designs with students enrolled in introductory university courses. The correlates of CDMSE that have been examined include mathematics self-efficacy, generalized self efficacy and global self-esteem (Betz & Klein, 1996), women's attitudes toward non-traditional occupations (Mathieu et al 1993), under prepared college students' institutional integration (Peterson, 1993), college major indecision (Bergeron & Romano, 1994), patterns of career choice development (Giannakos, 1999), occupational barriers (Luzon, 1996), and career maturity (Luzon, 1994). Typically, these studies demonstrate significant relationships between CDMSE and the respective variables, and where group differences are investigated ethnic minorities and undecided participants report lower levels of CDMSE.

According to SCCT, SES is considered to be one of the personal variables, which are a set of individual factors including sex, race, and SES. SCCT outlines the ways in which personal factors such as SES interact with contextual factors (e.g., social support) to affect the development of career interests, the selection of career goals, and career behaviours. Personal and contextual variables do not determine an individual's career interests and goal activities but set the stage for the experiences that influence the career development process. For example, an adolescent from a lower SES background is more likely to have poorer quality schooling, fewer career role models, and less financial support for postsecondary options than higher SES adolescents (Brown, et al, 1999), and these influences may result in lower self efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations for certain careers. While this body of evidence related to young adults is impressive, there have been few studies conducted using adolescents.

In a time of global change in the world of work and in understandings and constructions of career, related changes are occurring in the youth labour market and in adolescent educational and career pathways. Given the key role of the CM construct and CDMSE in career development, research needs to clarify the place of context within career behaviour. Although, there are several researches (Kuzgun, 1982; Bacanlı, 1995; Akbaba, 1999) about factors which affect individuals CM levels, there has been no unique research which determines especially relationship between gender, SES and CM in Turkey. On the other hand there are no any researches about factors which influence CDMSE levels of Turkish adolescents too. The present research's main aim is to investigate the CDMSE and CM levels of Turkish adolescents according to SES and gender.

## **Methodology**

### ***Participants***

Participants for this study were 346 ninth-grade students (153 male, 193 female) in central Konya. The mean age for participants was 14.5 years. Despite there is few consortium on measuring SES the small numbers of researches used the strategy of clustering the participants' occupations, income and educational levels into lower, middle and upper socioeconomic groups. In this research SES of the participants were stratified by considering the variables such as educational levels of parents, occupational situations of parents and income which were gathered by questions in the participant information form. According to this 33.8% (117 persons) of the participants were considered as in lower SES while 39.3% (136 persons) of participants were considered as in middle SES and 26.9% (96 persons) of the participants were considered as in upper SES.

### ***Procedure***

The data gathering instruments of the research were conducted to the participants whose ages were between 13 and 15. After conducting forms belong to 4 participants were eliminated because of information absence. Statistical analyses were made on data gathered from remaining 346 participants.

### ***Instruments***

Participant information form, Career Decision Making Self-Efficacy Scale (CDMSES) and Career Maturity Scale (CMS) were the instruments used in this study.

***Participant information Form:*** Respondents indicated their age, sex, parents' educational level, parents' occupation, family's total income and persons living in the household (mother, father, grandparents, and brothers). Parent educational level was assessed by asking students to check the highest level of education each parent had completed.

***Career Decision Making Self- Efficacy Scale (CDMSES):*** The CDMSE scale (Bozgeyikli, 2004) is a 27-item scale designed to assess three dimensions of students' career decision making self efficacy beliefs (Assessing Personal and occupational features "CDMSE-APOF" (11 items), Gathering occupational information "CDMSE-GOI" (8 items) and realistic planning "CDMSE-RP" (8 items)). Respondents rated their degree of confidence along a 5-point linker scale ranging from 1 (No confidence at all) to 5 (complete confidence), with higher scores indicating a higher degree of career decision making self efficacy. Sample items are "Choosing a career according to your interests and abilities", "Determining your strong and weaknesses features, Making four year plans according to your interests and abilities", "Defining how the subjects which are taught in school are used in several occupations" Reliability and validity evidence for this measure were discussed by Bozgeyikli (2004). Test-retest reliability over a 4-week period with a group of eight grade students yielded a coefficient of  $r = .78$ . And Cronbach's alpha was .92 for the total scale, .89 for the assessing personal and occupational features subscale, for the .87, Gathering occupational information subscale and, for the .81, realistic planning subscales (Bozgeyikli, 2004). For the current sample, a Cronbach's alpha of .91 for the CDMSE total scale .85 for the assessing personal and occupational features subscale, for the .89, Gathering occupational information subscale and, for the .76, realistic planning subscale were obtained.

***Career Maturity Scale (CMS):*** Career Maturity Scale (CMS) which was developed by Kuzgun & Bacanlı (1996) in order to determine the CM of adolescents. There are 40 items in the scale which was developed as five linker type scale. Scale was constituted of options which are from "never suits me" (1) to "totally suit me" (5). Individual CM levels increase when the scores which are gained from CMS increase. The scores gathered from CMS increase the individuals CM levels also increase. In order to

determine the distinguishable power of the CMS items factor analysis was applied and the differences between average scores of the lower and upper groups of students were determined by using t-test. The scale has one factor. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient is .89 whereas correlation coefficient which was estimated by pre-test post-test method is .82. This result shows that the scale is consistent in measuring the variable which is wanted to be measured. CMS's validity was determined according to relationship between scores from CMS and academic skills of the students, whether class level and their ages affect the scores from CMS or not and by checking the degree of effect of social appraisal to CMS scores. The scale has sufficient validity level after the analysis made. For the current sample, a Cronbach's alpha of .85 for the CMS was obtained.

### Findings

This section presents the results of the collected data derived from the test that adolescents took on CDMSES and CMS. A total of two analyses conducted in order to investigate the previously mentioned aim.

#### *Analysis 1: Independent Sample t test using gender on the career decision making self efficacy and career maturity.*

In order to examine whether or not there were significant differences between genders on the CDMSES and CMS, independent sample t test were conducted.

In Table 1, average scores of t-test results of adolescents CDMSE and CM scales according to gender are given. Examining the Table 1, it is evident that the male adolescents average scores of Assessing personal and occupational features (43,73), Gathering occupational information (30,48), and realistic planning (30,54) are higher than that of females adolescents average scores (Assessing personal and occupational features (43,73), Gathering occupational information (30,48), realistic planning (30,54) In accordance with this results, Assessing personal and occupational features ( $t=4,66$ ,  $p<.05$ ), gathering occupational information ( $t=4,85$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and realistic planning ( $t=4,74$ ,  $p<.05$ ) for the gender variable presents a significant difference in favour of the male adolescents.

Examining the Table 1, it is evident that the male adolescents average scores of CM (124, 57) is higher than that of females adolescents average scores (124, 15) In accordance with this results, career maturity ( $t=, 337$ ,  $p>.05$ ) for the gender variable presents not a significant difference.

**Table 1: Independent t Test Results of Adolescents' Career Decision Making Self Efficacy and Career Maturity According To Gender**

Variables	Gender	n	$\bar{X}$	S.s.	t	Sig.
CDMSE- APOF	Female	193	39,87	8,86	4,66*	,001
	Male	153	43,73	5,75		
CDMSE- GOI	Female	193	27,50	6,51	4,85*	,001
	Male	153	30,48	4,36		
CDMSE- RP	Female	193	27,63	6,26	4,74*	,001
	Male	153	30,54	4,83		
CM	Female	193	124,15	10,44	,337*	,736
	Male	153	124,57	12,70		

\* $p<.05$

#### *Analysis 2: ANOVA using socioeconomic status on the career decision making self efficacy and career maturity.*

In order to examine whether or not there were significant differences between lower, middle and upper groups on the CDMSES (Bozgeyikli, 2004) and CMS (Kuzgun & Bacanlı, 1996) a university analyses of variance were conducted.

In ANOVA, significant differences were found between low, middle and high socioeconomic groups (Assessing Personal and occupational features, ( $F=54,691$ ,  $p<.001$ ), Gathering occupational information, ( $F=42,069$ ,  $p<.001$ ) Realistic Planning, ( $F=11,349$ ,  $p<.001$ )). And likewise there were significant differences in CM according to SES. ( $F=28,555$ ,  $p<.001$ )

Table 2 displays the means standard deviations for low, middle and high socioeconomic status on the CDMSES and CMS and ANOVA test results.

**Table 2: Frequencies, Means, standard deviations and ANOVA test results of adolescents' Career decision making self efficacy and career maturity according to socioeconomic status.**

Variable	SES	n	$\bar{X}$	S.d.	f	p
CDMSE- APOF	Low	117	33,44	8,31	54,691**	,001
	Middle	136	41,03	8,83		
	High	93	44,49	5,88		
CDMSE- GOI	Low	117	26,17	5,91	42,069**	,001
	Middle	136	29,13	6,61		
	High	93	33,62	4,40		
CDMSE- RP	Low	117	26,86	5,52	11,349**	,001
	Middle	136	29,19	6,32		
	High	93	30,53	4,93		
CM	Low	117	117,73	7,81	28,555**	,001
	Middle	136	126,03	13,78		
	High	93	128,58	10,37		

\*\* $p<.001$

Follow-up turkey test were conducted to identify specific group differences. Table 3 displays the turkey test results of adolescents' CDMSE according to SES. When Table 3 is examined the average means of adolescents who are in upper SES are than adolescents who are in middle and lower SES in Assessing Personal and Occupational features and gathering occupational information sub dimensions. According to this result the upper SES adolescents are more efficient than the middle and lower SES adolescents are in Assessing Personal and Occupational features and gathering occupational information sub dimensions. On the other hand there is no significant difference between scores of middle and upper level adolescents in realistic planning sub dimension whereas it found that both of the mentioned level adolescents distinguish from lower level adolescents in efficiency perceptions in a significant way. In another words middle and upper level adolescents are more efficient than lower level adolescents in gathering occupational information and realistic planning sub dimensions.

**Table 3: Turkey test results of adolescents' Career decision making self efficacy and career maturity according to socioeconomic status.**

Dependent Variable	(I) Group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
CDMSE- APOF	Lower	Middle	-7,592*	1,003	,001
		Upper	-11,050*	1,105	,000
	Middle	Upper	-3,457*	1,070	,004
CDMSE- GOI	Lower	Middle	-2,960*	,737	,000
		Upper	-7,444*	,812	,000
	Middle	Upper	-4,483*	,787	,000
CDMSE- RP	Lower	Middle	-2,327*	,720	,004
		Upper	-3,674*	,793	,000
	Middle	Upper	-1,346	,768	,187
CM	Lower	Middle	-8,294*	1,406	,000
		Upper	-10,845*	1,549	,000
	Middle	Upper	-2,551	1,500	,207

\*p&lt;.05

In Table 3 there is no significant difference between middle and upper level adolescents in CM factor. However either the average scores of middle level adolescents or the average scores of upper level adolescents in CM are higher in a significant way than the average scores of lower level adolescents' are. According to this result the CM levels of the middle and upper level adolescents are higher than lower level adolescents.

### Discussion

The results determine that there is a significant difference between SES and CDMSE and CM when findings are assessed generally in this research which observed SES, CM levels and CDMSE levels of Turkish adolescents. According to SCCT, SES is considered to be one of the personal variables, which are a set of individual factors including sex, race, and SES. SCCT outlines the ways in which personal factors such as SES interact with contextual factors (e.g., social support) to influence the development of career interests, the selection of career goals, and career behaviours. Personal and contextual variables do not determine an individual's career interests and goal activities but set the stage for the experiences that influence the career development process.

First of all in the research it was observed that whether CDMSE and CM distinguished according to gender or not. It was found that male adolescents assessed themselves more efficient than female adolescents in all sub dimensions of CDMSE. This finding determined a different result from other researches (e.g., Betz et al., 1996; Betz & Voyten, 1997; Luzon, 1993; Taylor & Betz, 1983; Taylor & Poppa, 1990) which reported that there was no significant difference between CDMSE and gender. On the other hand there is no significant difference between genders at CM levels of adolescents. This result is supported by the researches namely Kelly & Colangelo, (1990), and Watson, Stead & De Jager, (1995). The surprising part of this situation is that there is no significant difference between genders in CM factor while they perceive themselves as efficient. In fact this finding is seen consistent according to theoretical fundamentals of self efficacy. According to Bandura (1977) individual's assessing himself or her as efficient is constituted of four ways which interact with themselves. First of them is the information which is gained by individuals after successful or unsuccessful activities. The

second one is the information which is gained by individuals by observing others. The third one is encouragements, recommendations and pieces of advice from others. And the last one is emotional responses during the performance. When the different attitudes in nurturing boys and girls are considered it can easily be seen that boys can access to environments where their efficacy perception is influenced and where they are nurtured liberally than girls can. On the other hand the oral encouragement for boys can be counted as a reason in having higher efficiency perception.

Secondly in the research the differentiation of the CDMSE and CM levels of the adolescents from different SES's and a significant difference was found between lower SES adolescents and upper SES adolescents according to both variables. And the difference is in upper SES adolescents' favour. This finding is supported by several researches' findings (Brown et al 1999; Ansell & Hansen, 1971; Cosby & Picou, 1973; Neely & Johnson, 1981). According to this result SES is an important factor either for CDMSE or for CM. For example, an adolescent from a lower SES background is more likely to have poorer quality schooling, fewer career role models, and less financial support for postsecondary options than higher SES adolescents, and these influences may result in lower self efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations for certain careers. Thus far, there has been a paucity of research examining the role that contextual variables have on the development of domain- and task-specific self-efficacy beliefs and career maturity.

Future research should focus on investigating the subjective experiences of social class and its role in the development of career-related self-efficacy beliefs and areer maturity. One way to understand these experiences in rich detail would be to conduct qualitative investigations that would allow youth to express how they believe that their social class background has influenced their task-specific self-efficacy beliefs and career maturity.

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