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# Examination of Career Choice Competency from Self-Consciousness Level Perspective

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## Abstract

This research aims to determine the relationship between university students' self-consciousness levels and their career choice competencies, to examine the predictive level of self-consciousness and career choice competency and to examine the level of self-consciousness and career choice competence based on education level and gender. The research was designed as a relational screening model, which is one of the descriptive survey types. The research group consists of undergraduate and associate degree students studying at various state universities in Turkey. The research group consists of a total of 569 university students, 398 of whom (69.9%) are female and 171 of whom (30.1%) are male, aged between 18 and 24. 268 (47.1%) associate and 301 (52.9%) undergraduate degree students participated in the research. The average age of the research group was 20.12. In the data collection process; the Self-consciousness Scale, Student Career Construction Inventory and Personal Information Form were used. According to the results of the correlation analysis; a low level of positive and significant relationship was found between the students' self-consciousness levels and career choice competencies ( $r=.147$ ). According to the results of regression analysis; it was found that the level of self-consciousness predicts career choice competency at a statistically significant level. The findings obtained from this study were discussed based on the literature.

**Keywords:** Self-Consciousness, Self-Consciousness Level, Career Choice, Career Choice Competency

## 1. Introduction

People have to make some important decisions at certain periods in their lives, and such decisions have important roles in routing the direction and reshaping their lives. Career choice is considered one of these important decisions in individuals' lives. Career choice is an important responsibility and process to be fulfilled by each individual (Sevinç & Siyez, 2018). Career also refers to a combination of work-related experiences gained by individuals throughout their lives and a process that covers individuals' lives, and it is a phenomenon shaped by progress, regression and pauses throughout life (Kuzgun, 2006; Özyürek, 2013).

According to Super, a career is a series of events that structure individuals' lives. Individuals make various decisions and choices for their career development and structure their careers fulfilling their professional and other

roles considering their state (Yeşilyaprak, 2015). Career refers to a process created by individuals themselves, which is subsequently structured. Individuals need to have a profession and be active in life in society. Thus, individuals strengthen the connection between life and their profession, work and career. The performed work, profession and career process are the most important elements that form and define the identity of individuals (Yeşilyaprak, 2015).

Individuals have hidden innate powers, abilities and potentials. Individuals desire to use and reveal these characteristics in their lives. Having a profession and a job provides individuals with an opportunity to use these characteristics. Having a profession is an important tool for individuals to meet their psychological, physiological and social needs (Herr et al., 2004). Individuals make several decisions, and choices, and thus form their careers by continuing their professional roles in life considering their characteristics (Yeşilyaprak, 2015). Individuals build their career process by themselves. In addition, it is observed that many theories emphasize the importance of individual differences in career choice and development (Roe, 1965; Super, 1990; Tiedeman, 1961).

Career values, which are a self-concept consisting of the individual's perceived abilities and values, have an important impact on the individual's career choice. Many factors play a role in choosing a career. One of them is psychological factors, which include the values such as personality, abilities, interests and values. One of the personality traits associated with career and professional choice and career-related decisions of individuals is self-consciousness. Self-consciousness, which expresses the attention to different dimensions of an individual's self and the environment, plays a role in the behavior, thoughts and feelings of individuals (Akin et al., 2007). Self-consciousness, which is a key concept having an impact on behavior, is the level of attention and awareness of a person about himself and his environment (Wu and Watkins, 2006).

Individuals with a higher level of self-consciousness also have a higher level of self-confidence and satisfaction, and a higher level of self-control, and they are claimed to prevent unwanted actions (Comunian, 1994). These competencies also provide an opportunity for individuals to reconsider their actions and thoughts (Nie et al., 2014). It is estimated that the level of self-consciousness, which affects the control of individuals' thoughts, will also play an important role in making a career choice. Sari et al. (2017) conducted research and examined the relationship between self-transcendence, self-consciousness, self-control and self-management skills and found the relationship between variables was significant and positive (Sari et al., 2017).

It is stated that a high level of self-consciousness allows individuals to rethink their thoughts and actions (Dijkerman, 2015). This makes it less difficult for individuals to make decisions and choices. While some students make their career decisions easier, some students have difficulty in making such decisions (Albion and Fogarty 2002). Satisfaction felt after this decision, which significantly affects life, is also seen as a factor that affects individuals. The success achieved in career choice and satisfaction felt with the obtained result increases individuals' self-esteem, and subjective well-being and helps them feel greater career satisfaction (Kunnen et al., 2008). The satisfaction felt from the career choice is observed to affect individuals positively. Based on this, recruitment processes, professional development and in-service training programs are planned for employee candidates or employees considering their personality and psychological characteristics within the scope of human resources policies, and thus it can contribute positively to career satisfaction and change of work behaviors with structural and psychological empowerment (Cindiloğlu Demirel, 2020).

It has been stated that individuals with a higher level of self-consciousness have clearer self-knowledge and self-schema (Lindwall, 2004). Individuals with higher self-consciousness are considered to be more likely to take action in line with their personality characteristics. There is also a positive significant relationship between the level of self-consciousness and positive expectations regarding the future. There is a positive relationship between the level of self-consciousness and positive expectations about the future. It has been stated that general self-consciousness has a significant positive effect on personal success and competence. (Yurtkoru and Taştan, 2018). Sathapornvajana and Watanapa (2012) researched students studying at the department of computer programming and found that self-consciousness is also among the factors that affect the choice of profession.

This research aims to investigate the relationship between the Self-consciousness levels of university students and their competency in career choice. No research in the literature investigates the relationship between career choice

competency and Self-consciousness level. Since no similar research has been found in the literature the current research will contribute to the field. In this respect, it is thought that this study will contribute to career psychological counsellors, training managers and training planners, human resources specialists and managers facilitating the field applications. It is also considered valuable for researchers working in the relevant field and hoped that it will make an original contribution to the literature.

## 2. Method

This section presents details about the model of the research, the research group, the data collection tools, the data collection process and the analysis of the data.

### 2.1 Research Model

The research is structured as a relational screening model, which is one of the descriptive screening types. The relational screening model is a screening model that tries to explain the relationships between two or more variables and aims to examine the degree of change in variables together (Karasar, 2017). The variables of this research are the level of Self-consciousness and career choice competence.

### 2.2 Research Group

While determining the research group, a convenience sampling technique was used. The convenience Sampling Method is defined as a technique which allows researchers to start sampling with the respondent who can most easily be reached to have the required number of participants (Büyüköztürk et al., 2016). The universe of the research consists of university students studying at associate and undergraduate levels at various state universities. The research group consists of 569 university students aged between 18-24, 398 of whom (69.9%) are female and 171 of whom (30.1%) are male, studying at the associate and undergraduate levels.

### 2.3 Data Collection Tools

Data collection tools were administered to university students in the 2021-2022 academic year and online. The data were collected online by the researcher in a face-to-face environment. In the data collection process; the Self-consciousness Scale, Student Career Construction Inventory and Personal Information Form were used.

#### 2.3.1 Personal Information Form

Prepared by the researcher and includes demographic variables such as gender, age, education level, income level, etc.

#### 2.3.2 Self-consciousness Scale (SCS)

The adaptation studies of the scale developed by Mittal and Balasubramanian (1987) to Turkish were carried out by Akın et. al. (2007). The scale, which is in the form of a five-point rating, consists of 19 items. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to test the validity of the scale. According to the results of CFA, compliance indices were found to be  $\chi^2= 330.91$ ,  $sd = 140$ ,  $CFI = .97$ ,  $RMSEA = .047$ ,  $RFI = .95$ ,  $GFI = .95$ ,  $NFI = .95$ ,  $AGFI = .93$ . The values obtained with the analysis are within the limits of compliance. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was used to test the reliability of the scale. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient for the whole scale was found to be .81. The test-retest reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be .94. The increase in the score taken from the scale reveals that the level of Self-consciousness also increases.

#### 2.3.3 Student Career Construction Inventory (SCCI)

The adaptation study of the scale developed by Savickas and Porfeli (2012) to Turkish was carried out by Sevinç and Siyez (2018). The scale, which consists of three dimensions "Discovery", "Identification", and "Readiness and Decision-making", has 18 items in total. The validity of the scale was tested with Confirmatory Factor Analysis.

According to the results of the analysis, goodness of fit indices were found to be  $\chi^2 = 256.39$ ,  $sd = 130$ ,  $\chi^2/sd = 1.97$ ,  $RMSEA = .056$ ,  $RMR = .069$ ,  $SRMR = .051$ ,  $AGFI = .89$ ,  $GFI = .092$ . All these values are within acceptable limits. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was used to test the reliability. Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient for the whole scale was found to be .87. Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient for identification, discovery and readiness and decision-making sub-dimensions, respectively were found to be  $\alpha = .65$ ,  $\alpha = .72$  and  $\alpha = .87$ .

#### 2.4 Analysis of Data

In the analysis of the data; an independent group t-test was used to determine whether the levels of Self-consciousness and career choice competencies differ based on gender and education level. Pearson correlation analysis was used to find out if there is a significant relationship between the variables. To determine the predictive power of the dependent variable of the independent variable, a simple linear regression analysis technique was used. Descriptive statistics were also used in the testing of the data. The data obtained from the participants were analyzed with the SPSS 17.00 program.

#### 2.5 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues such as confidentiality and informed consent have been considered at the data collection stage. Ethical approval was obtained from Necmettin Erbakan University, Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research Ethics Committee with decision No. 2022/219 before the research was started.

### 3. Results

This section presents the findings regarding if university students' Self-consciousness and career competencies differed based on gender and education level; if there is a significant relationship between Self-consciousness and career choice and its degree if it exists; findings regarding the predictive power of Self-consciousness for career choice.

#### 3.1 Comparison of Students' Self-consciousness Levels to Their Level of Education

The independent samples t-test analysis results, which were conducted to determine whether the total score and sub-dimensions score of Self-consciousness of the students participating in the research differed according to their level of education, are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Results of Independent samples t-test for the general scale score and sub-dimension scores of Self-consciousness based on the education level

	Education Level	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	t	p
<b>Self-reflectiveness</b>	Associate Degree	268	2.92	.65	3.642	.000*
	Bachelor's Degree	301	2.72	.63		
<b>Internal State Awareness</b>	Associate Degree	268	3.16	.70	2.643	.008*
	Bachelor's Degree	301	3.00	.71		
<b>Style Consciousness</b>	Associate Degree	268	1.96	1.12	1.185	.24
	Bachelor's Degree	301	1.86	.99		
<b>Appearance Consciousness</b>	Associate Degree	268	3.17	.70	3.144	.002*
	Bachelor's Degree	301	2.98	.73		
<b>Social Anxiety</b>	Associate Degree	268	2.54	1.11	2.73	.007*
	Bachelor's Degree	301	2.30	1.02		
<b>SCS Total</b>	Associate Degree	268	2.73	.553	4.144	.000*
	Bachelor's Degree	301	2.55	.467		

When Table 1 is examined, students' self-reflevtiveness ( $p=.000$ ), internal state awareness ( $p=.008$ ), appearance consciousness ( $p=.002$ ), social anxiety ( $p=.007$ ) and total self-consciousness ( $p=.000$ ) dimension, there is a significant difference in favor of students studying at associate degree level. However, it was seen that there was no significant difference in the style consciousness of students ( $p=.24$ ).

### 3.2 Comparison of Students' Career Choice Competencies to Their Education Level

The independent samples t-test analysis results, which were conducted to determine whether the general score and sub-dimensions scores of Self-consciousness of the students participating in the research differed according to their education level, are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of Independent samples t-test regarding the general score and sub-dimensions scores of Self-consciousness based on the education level

	Education Level	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	t	p
<b>Identification</b>	Associate Degree	268	3.05	1.06	-1.614	.10
	Bachelor's Degree	301	3.18	.94		
<b>Discovery</b>	Associate Degree	268	3.09	1.21	-1.267	.21
	Bachelor's Degree	301	3.21	1.11		
<b>Readiness and Decision Making</b>	Associate Degree	268	3.15	1.19	-.250	.80
	Bachelor's Degree	301	3.17	1.00		
<b>SCCI Total</b>	Associate Degree	268	3.10	1.04	-.946	.35
	Bachelor's Degree	301	3.18	.90		

When Table 2 is examined, the scores of students in the dimensions of Identification ( $p=.10$ ), Discovery ( $p=.21$ ), Readiness and Decision-making ( $p=.80$ ) and the general SCCI ( $p=.35$ ) were found not to significantly differ based on the education level.

### 3.3 Comparison of Students' Self-consciousness Levels by Gender

Table 3: Results of Independent samples t-test regarding the general score and sub-dimensions scores of Self-consciousness based on gender

	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	t	p
<b>Self-reflectiveness</b>	Female	398	2.84	.65	1.605	.11
	Male	171	2.75	.64		
<b>Internal State Awareness</b>	Female	398	3.09	.69	.652	.52
	Male	171	3.05	.74		
<b>Style Consciousness</b>	Female	398	1.95	1.06	1.436	.15
	Male	171	1.81	1.03		
<b>Appearance Consciousness</b>	Female	398	3.16	.68	4.311	.000*
	Male	171	2.88	.79		
<b>Social Anxiety</b>	Female	398	2.53	1.06	4.079	.000*
	Male	171	2.14	1.03		
<b>SCI Total</b>	Female	398	2.69	.50	3.964	.000*
	Male	171	2.51	.54		

When Table 3 is examined, there was a significant difference between the students' scores in the dimensions of Appearance Consciousness ( $p=.000$ ), social anxiety ( $p=.000$ ) and total Self-consciousness ( $p=.000$ ) in favour of female students. However, there was no significant difference between the students' scores in the dimensions of Self-reflectiveness ( $p=.11$ ), internal self- Awareness ( $p=.52$ ) and Style Consciousness ( $p=.24$ ) based on gender.

### 3.4 Comparison of Students' Career Selection Competencies by Gender

Table 4: Results of Independent samples t-test regarding the career choice competencies, the general score and sub-dimensions scores based on gender

	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	Ss	t	p
<b>Identification</b>	Female	398	2.81	.98	-2.463	.01*
	Male	171	3.03	1.02		
<b>Discovery</b>	Female	398	2.78	1.18	-2.167	.03*
	Male	171	3.00	1.09		
<b>Readiness and Decision making</b>	Female	398	2.77	1.10	-2.301	.02*
	Male	171	3.00	1.06		
<b>SCCI Total</b>	Female	398	2.79	.96	-2.580	.01*
	Male	171	3.01	.97		

When Table 4 is examined, there was a significant difference between the students' scores in the dimensions of identification ( $p=.01$ ), discovery ( $p=.03$ ), readiness and decision-making ( $p=.02$ ) and the total SCCI ( $p=.01$ ) in favour of male students.

### 3.5 Correlation Analysis for the Relationship Between Students' Self-consciousness Levels and Career Choice Competencies

The findings obtained with the correlation analysis conducted to determine whether the relationship between the students' Self-consciousness levels and career choice is significant are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Correlation analysis for the relationship between the students' Self-consciousness and career choice competencies

SCCI	SCI
<b>r</b>	.147
<b>N</b>	569

It was found with the correlation analysis that there was a low but significant positive relationship between the students' scores in the sub-dimensions of Self-consciousness and career choice competency ( $r=.147$ ).

Correlation analysis was performed to test the existence and extent of a significant relationship between the sub-dimensions of Self-consciousness and career choice competency. The data obtained with the analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Correlation analysis for the relationship between the sub-dimensions of Self-consciousness and career choice competencies

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>SCI</b>								
<b>1. Self-reflectiveness</b>	-	.43**	.31**	.34*	.30**	.01	.04	.06
<b>2. Internal State Awareness</b>		-	-.19**	.50**	-.14**	-.08	-.05	-.06
<b>3. Style Consciousness</b>			-	-.07	.58**	.18**	.17**	.19**
<b>4. Appearance Consciousness</b>				-	-.01	-.04	.03	-.02
<b>5. Social Anxiety</b>					-	.14**	.15**	.16**
<b>SCCI</b>								
<b>6. Identification</b>						-	.66**	.69**
<b>7. Discovery</b>							-	.73**
<b>8. Readiness and Decision</b>								-

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### Making

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As seen in Table 6, no significant relationship was found between the Self-reflectiveness dimension of Self-consciousness scale and the sub-dimensions of Student Career Construction Inventory; Identification ( $r=.01$ ), Discovery ( $r=.04$ ), Readiness and Decision-Making ( $r=.06$ ). There was also no significant relationship between the inner Self-consciousness dimension of the Self-consciousness scale and the sub-dimensions of student career construction inventory; Identification ( $r=-.08$ ), Discovery ( $r=-.05$ ), Readiness and Decision-Making ( $r=-.06$ ). No significant difference was found between the Appearance Consciousness dimension of Self-consciousness scale and the subdimensions of the student career construction inventory; Identification ( $r=-.04$ ), Discovery ( $r=.03$ ), Readiness and Decision Making ( $r=-.02$ ). There was a low level of significant and positive relationship between the social anxiety dimension of the Self-consciousness Scale and the subdimensions of student career construction inventory; Identification ( $r=.14$ ,  $p>.05$ ), Discovery ( $r=.15$ ,  $p>.05$ ), Readiness and Decision-Making ( $r=.16$ ,  $p>.05$ ).

#### 3.6 The Effect of Students' Self-consciousness Levels on Career Choice Competency

The data obtained with the simple linear regression analysis conducted to determine the predictive power of the level of Self-consciousness in career choice competency are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Regression analysis revealing the effect of the Self-consciousness level on career choice competence

Variable	B	$\beta$	t	p	R	$R^2$	F
Constant	2.127		10.180	.000			
Self-consciousness level	.276	.147	3.547	.000	.147	.022	12.578

When Table 7 was examined, it was found that the level of Self-consciousness predicted career choice competency at a statistically significant level. According to the obtained data, the Self-consciousness level of university students had a predictive power of 15% for career choice competency. The resulting value of  $F=12.578$  reveals that the level of Self-consciousness significantly explained the career choice competency.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This research aimed to determine the relationship between university students' Self-consciousness levels and career choice competencies, to examine the predictive level of Self-consciousness level for career choice competence and to examine career choice competency as well as Self-consciousness level based on gender and education level. This section discussed the findings obtained regarding the relationship between the Self-consciousness levels of university students and career choice competencies. The interpretation of the findings obtained from the research and their similarity with the literature have also been explained in this section.

According to the findings obtained from the research, there is a significant difference in favour of undergraduate students in the sub-dimensions of inner Self-consciousness and Appearance Consciousness; the total Self-consciousness and subdimensions (Self-reflectiveness and social anxiety) were found to be significantly different in favour of associate degree students. However, it was observed that there is no significant difference in the Style Consciousness dimension, which is one of the sub-dimensions of Self-consciousness. It is observed that there is no significant difference in the total score of the general scale and sub-dimensions of career choice competency (identification, discovery, readiness and decision-making) based on the education level.

It was observed that there is a significant difference in the general scale and sub-dimensions of Self-consciousness (Appearance Consciousness and social anxiety) in favour of female students. In many studies, it has been stated that the level of Self-consciousness of the female is higher compared to that of the male (Allgood-Merten et al., 1990; O'Connor, 1995; Rankin et al., 2004). However, it was observed that there is no difference in the dimensions of Self-reflectiveness, inner Self-consciousness and Style Consciousness based on gender. In some studies, no



difference has been found between Self-consciousness and gender (Goossens et al., 2002). The results of these studies support the findings of the current research.

It was observed that there is a significant difference in the general scale and sub-dimensions of career choice competence (identification, discovery, readiness and decision-making) in favour of male students. A study conducted with French adolescents found that parents have higher educational expectations of boys compared to girls, and therefore boys do more career research, learn more information, and thus can have more confidence in their ability to make career decisions (Vignoli et al., 2005). Gender has a regulatory effect on the self-competence of career decisions (Sovet and Metz 2014; Williams and Ciarrochi, 2020). The results of these studies support the findings of the current research.

There was a significant positive relationship between the students' Self-consciousness levels and their career choice competency. It has been observed that the students with a higher level of Self-consciousness also had a higher level of career choice competency. It is thought that individuals with a higher level of Self-consciousness will be able to reconsider their thoughts and actions, and having a higher level of awareness will ensure that their career selection competencies will also be high. The research conducted on the subject is limited. Sari et al. (2017) stated that there is a significant relationship between the expectation of professional outcomes and Self-consciousness. McCowan and Alston (1998) stated that students with higher Self-consciousness also have higher career-related decision-making competencies. The results of the studies support the findings of the current research.

There is no significant relationship between the sub-dimensions of Self-consciousness (Self-reflectiveness, inner Self-consciousness, Appearance Consciousness) and the sub-dimensions of career choice competence (identification, discovery, readiness and decision making). However, a significant positive relationship was found between the sub-dimensions of Style Consciousness and social anxiety and all sub-dimensions of career choice competency. Brown and Rector (2008) stated that there are many variables associated with career uncertainty (internal characteristics such as anxiety and psychological resilience), and anxiety is also considered among these variables. In addition, it has been stated that a higher level of social support facilitates career decision-making (Winderman et al., 2018 ). Since social anxiety is a problem that prevents an individual from being in a social environment, the individual remains uncommitted to receiving social support. Baltacı and Hamarta concluded in their research conducted in 2013 that there is a significant and negative relationship between social anxiety and social support. This means low perceived social support. When the results of such research are examined, the results obtained from the literature support the findings of the current research.

Another study was conducted by Sari et al. (2017) and found that the Self-consciousness levels of individuals explain the expectation regarding professional outcomes, which also supports the findings of this paper. On the other hand, McCowan and Altson (1998) concluded in their research that the level of Self-consciousness affected the career decision of university students. It could be said that the limited number of studies in the literature supports the results of this research.

When the findings obtained from the research are examined, there is a positive significant relationship between the level of Self-consciousness and career choice competency. It has been observed that Self-consciousness differed according to education level, but the career choice competency did not differ based on education level. In addition, it was observed that the level of Self-consciousness differed in favour of female students, while the career choice competency differed in favour of male students. There are articles in the literature with findings that gender perception significantly predicts career indecision (Demir, 2020). The fact that the current study was conducted in Turkey and the career choice proficiency of women is lower than that of men can be considered as an indication that results in line with the literature have been achieved. Self-consciousness was also found to be an important predictor of career choice competency.

When the literature was examined, there was no research examining career choice competency from the Self-consciousness level perspective. The fact that the relationship between career choice competency and Self-consciousness level has been addressed for the first time in this study is considered valuable specifically for psychological counsellors and guides, career psychological counsellors, human resource professionals, researchers

in the field and human resource policymakers. It is considered that this study will play a guiding role for those having difficulty with their career choice, career uncertainty and career planning, educators, advisory teachers, psychological counsellors, career advisors and field experts in the field.

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