

# Nursing Students' Employment Hope: Türkiye Example: Cross-Sectional Descriptive Study

## Hemşirelik Öğrencilerinin İş Umudu: Türkiye Örneği: Kesitsel Tanımlayıcı Çalışma

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**ABSTRACT Objective:** Today, unemployment has become an increasing problem. In general, the reason for attending university in our country, Türkiye, is the anxiety about getting a job. The authors' aim was to investigate undergraduate nursing students' employment hope levels and to determine the factors affecting employment hope. **Material and Methods:** In this study, the descriptive-survey research method was used. The sample of the study consisted of undergraduate nursing students who attended the nursing faculty of a public university in the 2018-2019 academic year. The Sociodemographic Characteristics Questionnaire, Employment Hope Scale and Beck Hopelessness Scale were used as data collection tools. **Results:** The sample group of the study consists of 645 students and the participation rate was 59.12%. In the study, 53.5% preferred nursing of their own free will, 82.5% wanted to improve themselves in the profession and to stay in the profession after they graduated, and 89.3% worried about finding a job. The analysis of the correlation between the variable choosing nursing by one's own preference and the employment hope levels revealed that, though statistically not significant, the variable positively correlated with the "psychological empowerment" subscale ( $p=0.067$ ), and significantly positively with the "goal-oriented pathways" subscale ( $p<0.001$ ). **Conclusion:** It is recommended to provide the participants with guidance services on the psychological effects of unemployment and methods to cope with these effects, and to gain them various perspectives to view nursing from different aspects by acquainting them with the fields they are to work in after graduation.

**ÖZET Amaç:** Günümüzde işsizlik giderek artan bir sorun hâline gelmiştir. Ülkemizde üniversite eğitime yönelmenin genel olarak sebebini, iş edinme kaygısı oluşturmaktadır. Bu çalışma, lisans düzeyinde hemşirelik eğitimi alan öğrencilerin iş umudu düzeylerinin incelenmesi ve iş umuduna etkisi olan faktörlerin belirlenmesi amacıyla yapılmıştır. **Gereç ve Yöntemler:** Bu çalışmada betimsel tarama yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın örneklemini, 2018-2019 eğitim öğretim yılında bir devlet üniversitesinin hemşirelik fakültesinde öğrenimlerine devam eden hemşirelik lisans öğrencileri oluşturmuştur. Veri toplama aracı olarak Kişisel Bilgi Formu, İş Umudu Ölçeği ve Beck Umutsuzluk Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. **Bulgular:** Araştırmanın örnekleme grubunu 645 öğrenci oluşturmuştur ve katılım oranı %59,12'dir. Çalışmada öğrencilerin %53,5'i okudukları bölümü isteyerek tercih ettiklerini, %82,5'i mezun olduklarında kendilerini geliştirmek ve mesleğe devam etmek istediklerini, %89,3'ü iş bulma kaygısı yaşadıklarını bildirmişlerdir. Mesleği isteyerek seçme durumu ile iş umudu düzeyleri incelendiğinde, "psikolojik güçlendirme" alt boyutunda ( $p=0,067$ ) istatistiksel olarak anlamlı olmasa bile pozitif bir ilişki olduğu, "amaç yönelimli yollar" alt boyutunda ileri düzeyde pozitif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu saptanmıştır ( $p<0,001$ ). **Sonuç:** İşsizliğin psikolojik etkileri ile baş etme yöntemleri konusunda rehberlik hizmetlerinin verilmesi ve mezuniyetten sonraki çalışma alanları tanıtarak, mesleğe farklı alanlardan bakış açısının kazandırılması önerilmektedir.

**Keywords:** Nursing students; unemployment; hope; burnout

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Hemşirelik öğrencileri; işsizlik; umut; tükenmişlik

Need to have a profession or job stems from the necessity of meeting vital needs and maintaining life. Leading a peaceful and healthy life depends on the meeting of basic human needs. In today's conditions,

if someone is to fulfill their vital requirements, their working, and gaining a financial income in return to their working are extremely important. Among every person's desires and goals to achieve are having a job

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suitable for their abilities, interests, and education, and being able to work in a work environment responding to their values and satisfaction. While people hope to find a job that suits their feelings, views, and expectations, on the one hand, they are faced with the fact of how difficult it is to find a job on the other hand.<sup>1</sup>

Hope is an emotional belief people develop about the possibilities that enable them to obtain positive results when they are faced with events and circumstances in their lives. Hope can be associated with many demographic and socio-economic factors such as economic status, family, culture, circumstances and opportunities, age, sex, social status, and education level. The definition of the concept of employment hope from this aspect may refer to finding a job to meet one's vital needs. The level of meeting such an expectation of a person can be expressed as the level of employment hope.<sup>2</sup> Students may experience anxiety about finding a job because they feel the need to secure their future after university education.

In our country, anxiety about getting a job is the main reason for attending university. However, it was determined that the problems students experienced during their undergraduate education process, such as the city where the school is located, the financial condition of the student, the social environment of the school, housing problems, etc., were also effective on their hope of finding a job or their anxiety levels. It was also determined that anxiety about getting a job level of senior students were higher than those of the other students and it was stated that the common unemployment status among university graduates was effective in the development of such anxiety.<sup>3</sup> Given the business concept today, the unemployment problem is significantly apparent. According to the data released by the Turkish Statistical Institute in 2020, the unemployment rate among those in the 15-24 age group is 27.6% in our country.<sup>4</sup>

In Türkiye, the youth unemployment rate is approximate twice Türkiye average, and this rate demonstrates that young ones' chance of finding a job or being employed paves the way for their anxiety and hopelessness. Feeling hopeless about finding a job leads to negative expectations about the future

and brings about a decrease in motivation levels.<sup>5</sup> The reflections of the hopelessness on work can be interpreted as the decreasing possibility of finding a job day by day. The overall rate of finding or not finding a job in society has an important effect on shaping the level of hope or hopelessness. In cases where the hopelessness level is high and the social support level is low, individuals are more likely to attempt to commit suicide. When economic problems arising from unemployment accompany these negativities, the risk of committing suicide increases even more.<sup>6</sup>

The concept of employment hope is similar to that of unemployment anxiety and the level of anxiety is expected to be consistent with that of hope/hopelessness. The impact of vocational training on levels of unemployment anxiety is expected to be similar to its impact on employment hope. The employment hope levels of young people who are educated in the profession they prefer are not known.<sup>2,7</sup> Our search for studies in which employment hope or effects of education received to acquire different professions on employment hope were investigated demonstrated a gap in Turkish literature.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### OBJECTIVE

Compared to other professions, the number of people who prefer the nursing profession due to easy job finding has been increasing recently. This study was conducted to examine the job hope levels of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> year nursing faculty students in the face of increasing demand and to determine the factors that affect job hope.

### TYPE OF THE STUDY

It was a descriptive cross-sectional study.

### STUDY SAMPLE

The research was carried out in the Faculty of Nursing, in İzmir one of the western provinces of Türkiye, between March and May 2019. Of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students of a nursing faculty, those who volunteered to participate in the study comprised the study sample. The total number of students in the 2018-2019 spring semester is 1,091. The sample group of the

study consists of 645 students and the participation rate was 59.12%. The number of students who participated in the study according to grades is as follows: first-grade: 183, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade: 140, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade: 151, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade: 171. Those who were found to be deficient in the data collection form were excluded from the scope and not included in the analysis.

## DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The Sociodemographic Characteristics Questionnaire, Employment Hope Scale, and the Beck Hopelessness Scale were used as data collection tools. The Sociodemographic Characteristics Questionnaire was developed by the researchers based on the pertinent literature. Employment Hope Scale and the Beck Hopelessness Scale were used to clarifying the relationships between the participating students' views regarding employment hope, their hope levels, and factors affecting their hope levels.

In the Socio-Demographic Characteristics Questionnaire, the following were questioned: the participants' age, sex, year at school, place of residence, parental education level, family type, number of siblings, income status, whether they chose nursing by their preference, satisfaction with nursing at present, and future unemployment anxiety.

**Employment Hope Scale:** The scale developed by Hong, et al. to determine Employment Hope levels of adults is a self-report measurement tool. It was adapted to Turkish by Akın et al.<sup>8,9</sup> The original scale consists of 14 items and 2 sub-scales: "psychological empowerment" (the first 4 items) and "goal-oriented pathways" (the remaining 10 items). "Psychological empowerment" refers to an individual's belief in their abilities within the context of self-esteem and self-efficacy. "Goal-oriented pathways" refers to possibilities for a person to achieve the goal. Hope is an important factor not only contributes to an individuals' coping with stress but also helps them effectively use their qualities such as being successful in life, being respected, struggling against problems, and being motivated. Among the components of the concept of employment, hope is feeling sufficient, believing in this feeling, utilizing the opportunities in getting a job, and developing strategies to overcome the obstacles. In other words,

employment hope is the process in which job seekers get ready for work economically and psychologically.<sup>9,10</sup> The minimum and maximum possible scores to be obtained from the scale are 1 and 140, respectively. The higher the score is the higher the employment hope is.

**Beck Hopelessness Scale:** The scale was developed by Beck, et al. in 1974. Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale was conducted by Durak and Palabıyıköğlü. The scale which includes 20 items with yes and no options is used to assess an individual's hope and hopelessness. Of these 20 items, 11 (2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20) are expected to be answered as "yes", whereas 9 (1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 19) are expected to be answered as "no". If the response to the item is as expected, it is scored as "1", otherwise it is scored "0". The lowest and highest possible scores to be obtained from the scale are 0 and 20 respectively. The lower the score is the higher the level of hope is.<sup>11</sup>

Durak and Palabıyıköğlü conducted the factor analysis of the Beck Hopelessness Scale to investigate the concurrent and discriminant validity of the scale, and to determine its factor structure. Then they assigned the items of the scale into 3 subscales: "feelings about the future", "loss of motivation" and "expectations about the future".

While the "feelings about the future" subscale comprised the items 1, 3, 7, 11, and 12, the "Loss of motivation" subscale included the items 2, 4, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17, and 20 and the "expectations about the future" subscale constituted items 5, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15 and 19.<sup>12</sup> The higher the score obtained from the scale is the higher the person's hopelessness level is.<sup>11</sup>

## ETHICAL ISSUES

Before the study was conducted, the approval of Dokuz Eylül University Noninvasive Ethics Committee (date: May 12, 2018, no: 2018/12-23) and the permission of the institution where the study was to be conducted were obtained. The study was conducted in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Students who were willing to participate in the study were informed about the study and their consents were obtained between March 2018 and May 2019.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

While the data obtained from the Sociodemographic Characteristics Questionnaire and Employment Hope Scale constituted the independent variables of the study, and the data obtained from the Beck Hopelessness Scale constituted the dependent variables. The data obtained were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows 16.0 (SPSS Inc.; Chicago, IL, USA) on the computer.

Number-percentage distribution was used to assess the participants’ socio-demographic characteristics and their opinions of employment, the “t” test was used for intergroup comparisons, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for the analysis of three or more groups of data, and the chi-square analysis was used to determine the differences between the variables.

Correlations between the scores obtained from the subscales of the Employment Hope Scale and the scores obtained from the subscales of the Beck Hopelessness Scale were examined. p values less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant.

**RESULTS**

Of the participating students, 70.1% (n=452) were women, 28.4% (n=183) were in the first grade, 49.1% (n=317) were in the 20-22 age group, 78.6% (n=507) had a nuclear family, 50.4% had primary school graduate mothers (n=325), 37.1% had primary school graduate fathers (n=239), 30.1% (n=194) had four or more siblings. 77.7% (n=501) had a family income

equal to their expense, 60.2% (n=388) chose nursing by their own preference, 76.9% (n=496) liked the department they were attending, 59.8% (n=386) chose the nursing school due to financial reasons, 53.5% (n=345) decided at what department to study, 61.6% (n=397) stated that having university education would give them enough opportunity to find a job, %82.5 (n=532) wanted to improve themselves in the profession and to continue their profession after graduation, and 89.3% (n=576) worried about finding a job. Forty-six point four percent of the students who participated in the study stated that they could find a job within 1 year after graduation.

Mean scores obtained from subscales The Employment Hope Scale and Beck Hopelessness Scale were given in Table 1. The cronbach alpha value for the Employment Hope Scale was found to be 0.92 and the cronbach alpha value for the Beck Hopelessness Scale was found to be 0.67. As a result of the analysis of the data, the Bonferroni test, one of the post-hoc test statistics, was used to determine the source of the significant difference between 3 or more groups. The age group and psychological empowerment sub-dimension were compared. There was a significant difference between the age group of 25 and over and the age groups of 20-22 and 23-25. The age group and the goal-oriented pathways subgroup were compared, there was a significant difference between the age group of 25 and over, and the age groups of 20-22 and 23-25 (Table 2). Compared to the monthly income status and expectations about the future, students with good family incomes differ significantly from those with middle and low family

**TABLE 1:** Mean scores obtained from the subscales of the Employment Hope Scale and Beck Hopelessness Scale.

Employment Hope Scale	Minimum	Maximum	$\bar{x}\pm SD$	
Psychological empowerment	2	40	33.64±5.62	
Goal-oriented pathways	13	100	78.17±15.98	
Beck Hopelessness Scale				
Feelings about the future	5	16	7.85±0.88	
Loss of motivation	8	51	13.80±2.31	
Expectations about the future	7	33	8.71±1.96	
Mean Scores for the overall employment Hope Scale and Beck Hopelessness Scale	Employment Hope Scale (n=645)	35.00	140.00	111.82±20.21
	Beck Hopelessness Scale (n=645)	20.00	100.00	30.37±3.47

SD: Standard deviation.

**TABLE 2:** Analysis of the mean scores obtained from the Employment Hope Scale in terms of the sociodemographic characteristics of the participating students.

		Employment Hope Scale		p value
		Psychological empowerment	Goal-oriented pathways	
		$\bar{x}\pm SD$	$\bar{x}\pm SD$	
Sex	Women (n=452)	33.60±5.27	78.21±15.45	
	Men (n=193)	33.76±6.39	78.08±17.19	
Year at school	1 <sup>st</sup> grade (n=183)	34.26±6.25	80.45±15.10	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade (n=140)	33.84±5.28	77.17±17.12	
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade (n=151)	33.00±5.82	77.26±15.28	
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade (n=171)	33.39±4.95	77.37±16.41	
Age groups	17-19 years (n=206)	34.32±6.03	80.16±15.14	Psychological empowerment
	20-22 years (n=317)	33.35±5.16	76.90±15.94	p=0.009
	23-25 years (n=113)	32.90±6.03	77.12±17.29	F=3.869
	≥26 years (n=9)	38.11±3.10	90.88±9.04	Goal-oriented pathways
				p=0.010
				F=3.847
Income status	Income less than expenses	33.18±6.96	77.57±17.72	
	Income equal to expenses	33.56±5.43	78.00±15.53	
	Income more than expenses	35.26±4.55	80.90±17.06	
Chose nursing by their own preference	Willingly (n=388)	0.58±0.98	0.17±0.91	Psychological empowerment
				p=0.067
				F=3.356
				Goal-oriented pathways
				p<0.001
	Not willingly (n=257)	-0.08±1.01	-0.26±1.06	F=32.300

p>0.05; SD: Standard deviation.

incomes (Table 3). Correlations between the mean scores obtained from the subscales of the Employment Hope Scale and those of the Beck Hopelessness Scale by the participating students were given in Table 4.

## DISCUSSION

Working at a job not only is a lifestyle for humanity but also strengthens one’s sense of belonging to society.<sup>13</sup> The mean scores the participating students obtained from the Employment Hope Scale and Beck Hopelessness Scale indicated that their employment hope levels were good and hopelessness levels were low (Table 1). Seçer and Yazıcı stated that lower burnout levels positively affected the students’ employment hope levels and helped them to get better prepared to take their part in the labor market.<sup>10</sup>

In studies in which why nursing students preferred nursing as a profession was investigated, it

was emphasized that members of nursing took it for granted that they could find a job in a very short time after graduation.<sup>14-17</sup> The majority of the students participating in the study stated that they preferred nursing willingly. This result is consistent with that of Şirin et al.’s study.<sup>18</sup> In national studies, while the proportion of those who preferred nursing was low in the 1990s (18.5%-28.1%), this proportion steadily increased in the 2000s (52.7%-60.9%).<sup>16,19,20</sup> This was probably because the students thought that they could have more opportunities to find a job as a nurse. In our study, the analysis of the correlation between the variable choosing nursing by one’s own preference and the employment hope levels revealed that, though statistically not significant, the variable positively correlated with the “psychological empowerment” subscale, and significantly positively with the “purpose-oriented pathways” subscale (Table 2). As an individual’s belief in his or her abil-

ities increases in the context of self-esteem and self-efficacy, so does their hope of achieving the goal. Unemployment is not only an economic problem,

but also causes fear, loss of physical and mental health, loss of value judgments, poverty and loss of social solidarity.<sup>13</sup>

**TABLE 3:** Analysis of the mean scores obtained from the Employment Hope Scale in terms of the socio-demographic characteristics of the participating students.

		Beck Hopelessness Scale			
		Feelings about the future	Loss of motivation	Expectations about the future	p value
		$\bar{x}\pm SD$	$\bar{x}\pm SD$	$\bar{x}\pm SD$	
Sex	Women (n=452)	7.87±0.81	13.93±1.70	8.59±1.65	<b>Loss of motivation</b> p=0.002 t= 2.11
	Men (n=193)	7.79±1.03	13.51±3.32	9.01±2.52	<b>Expectations about the future</b> p=0.017 t= -2.51
Year at school	1 <sup>st</sup> grade (n=183)	7.95±0.82	13.81±1.65	8.50±1.60	
	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade (n=140)	7.81±0.79	13.57±1.68	8.77±1.70	
	3 <sup>rd</sup> grade (n=151)	7.88±1.08	13.96±3.54	8.82±2.65	
	4 <sup>th</sup> grade (n=171)	7.74±0.83	13.84±1.98	8.80±1.79	
Age groups	17-19 years (n=206)	7.94±0.81	13.82±1.68	8.54±1.62	
	20-22 years (n=317)	7.81±0.95	13.80±2.77	8.81±2.21	
	23-25 years (n=113)	7.77±0.80	13.79±1.93	8.83±1.82	
	≥26 years (n=9)	8.11±0.92	13.77±1.78	7.88±1.16	
Income status	Income less than expenses	7.93±1.20	13.61±4.37	9.35±3.12	<b>Expectations about the future</b> p= 0.002 F= 6.33
	Income more than expenses	7.92±0.82	13.96±1.81	8.30±1.69	
Chose nursing by their preference		0.10±0.93	0.18±1.06	-0.18±0.97	<b>Feelings about the future</b> p=0.001 F= 10.255 <b>Loss of motivation</b> p<0.001 F= 36.971
Not willingly		-0.15±1.07	-0.28±0.97	0.28±0.97	<b>Expectations about the future</b> p<0.001 F= 35.663

p>0.05; SD: Standard deviation.

**TABLE 4:** Correlations between the mean scores obtained from the subscales of the Employment Hope Scale and Beck Hopelessness Scale.

Employment Hope Scale	Beck Hopelessness Scale			Employment Hope Scale Psychological empowerment
	Feelings about the future	Loss of motivation	Expectations about the Future	
	R	r	r	r
Psychological empowerment	0.003	0.052	-0.261**	1
Goal-oriented pathways	0.048	0.187**	-0.374**	0.676**
<b>Beck Hopelessness Scale</b>				
Loss of motivation	0.511**	1	-0.008	0.052

\*\*Correlation is significant.

When the situation of choosing the profession voluntarily and the Beck Hopelessness Scale subgroups are examined, it is seen that those who voluntarily choose the profession are more hopeful in all sub-dimensions than those who do not (Table 3). This result is consistent with the results obtained in Üstün et al.'s, and Taslak and Işııkay's studies.<sup>12,21</sup> The students' conscious selection of the profession can make it easier for them to cope with stressful situations that they can experience during the education period.<sup>21</sup>

They reported that one of the factors affecting their career choice is high earnings expectations.<sup>15,22</sup> When the income status and Beck Hopelessness Scale subgroups are examined, the "expectations about the future" subscale score average of the students with good income is statistically significantly lower than the others (Table 3). This result is consistent with the results of Şanlı Kula and Saraç's study (2017).<sup>23</sup> The low average monthly income of the family increases the levels of hopelessness. That the result of our study was significant may be due to the increase in the current unemployment rates compared to previous years.

When the socio-demographic characteristics of the students and their job hope score averages are examined, a significant difference is observed in age groups and in choosing a profession (Table 2). It was observed that the students in the 23-25 age group believed in their self-esteem and self-efficacy abilities less than did the participants in the other age groups.

The analysis of the correlation between the sex variable and the mean score for the Beck Hopelessness Scale revealed that the mean score for the "feelings about the future" subscale was not statistically significant, but the high mean score indicates that they had negative feelings (Table 3). In Türkiye, the number of unemployed female university graduates is more than that of their male counterparts. According to the data released by TurkStat in November 2019, the unemployment rate is 9.0% for male university graduates and 18.2% for female university graduates.<sup>4,13</sup> "Loss of motivation" was statistically significantly higher in women than in men, which is

probably due to the fact that men are given more employment opportunities in Turkish society. In Gür et al.'s study, the scores obtained from the loss of motivation subscale by the male students were higher, which indicates that their hopelessness level was higher.<sup>24</sup> The male students' worries of not being able to find a job after graduation, having to join the armed forces to perform the compulsory military service for a certain period, and having to take social roles more in the working life may negatively affect their hopelessness scores.<sup>13</sup> In our study, the mean scores obtained from the "expectations about the future" subscale by the female participants were lower than those of the male participants, and the difference was statistically significant (Table 3). This result is consistent with the results of Üstün et al.'s, Taslak and Işııkay's and Şanlı Kula and Saraç's studies, which suggests that women's hope levels are higher due to their gender characteristics.<sup>12,21,23</sup>

In the study of Dereli and Kabataş, 46.1% of the students reported that they could find a job within 6 months after graduation, and in our study, nearly half of the students that they could find a job within one year after graduation.<sup>13</sup> This result shows that the possibility of longer unemployment period is likely over the years. In the study conducted by Üstün et al., a statistically significant difference was determined between the overall Employment Hope Scale scores of the groups in terms of the length of time needed to find a job after graduation. The mean scores obtained from the overall Employment Hope Scale by individuals who could find a job in less than 6 months after graduation were determined to be significantly lower than the scores of those who spent a longer time.<sup>12</sup>

The high number of nursing departments throughout Türkiye has led to an increase in the number of students attending nursing departments each year, which in turn has decreased their opportunities to find a job over the years.<sup>25-27</sup> The increase in the score for the "loss of motivation" subscale affects the students' feelings about the future negatively. This result shows that although the students think positively about the possibilities to achieve the goal, they lose motivation due to the uncertainty about their future (Table 4).

## CONCLUSION

The increase in the number of university graduates brings about the unemployment problem. Therefore, it is recommended that students should be provided guidance on how to cope with the risk of burnout and depression and psychological problems they may experience during job hunting after graduation,

It is also recommended that students should be provided social support in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and local governments and be supported within the scope of the graduate tracking system because social support is a protective factor for unemployed individuals having economic problems.

Finally, during their school years, students should be guided on job finding opportunities by providing them with career counseling.

## Source of Finance

During this study, no financial or spiritual support was received neither from any pharmaceutical company that has a direct connection with the research subject, nor from a company that provides or produces medical instruments and materials which may negatively affect the evaluation process of this study.

## Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest between the authors and / or family members of the scientific and medical committee members or members of the potential conflicts of interest, counseling, expertise, working conditions, share holding and similar situations in any firm.

## Authorship Contributions

All authors contributed equally while this study preparing.

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