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HOLLAND'S THEORY OF CAREERS AND VOCATIONAL CHOICE

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ABSTRACT

The career development of individuals is a long and complex process. In this process, an individual may be affected by many factors. An individual's social environment, psycho-physical dynamics, and factors such as the economic and cultural structure of the environment may shape (direct) the career choices and professions of the people. For this reason, the basis on which we decide and build our career path and profession, which may affect our entire life, is significant. Many theorists in this field have attempted to bring quite complex solutions to the question that on which basis and according to what criterion do we decide our career path. Among the most efficient theories comes John Holland's Theory of Career Choice. The present study aims to examine Holland's Theory of Career Choice in all aspects and determine its impact on career choice. In this respect, the personality types and individual-environment interaction have been analysed. The code map of the data related to the personality types and characteristics present in Holland's Occupational Personality Types has been created using MAXQDA 11. The significance of the study lays in that it puts forwards other studies and results and findings from these studies and it also contributes to the employees and researchers.

Keywords: *Career, Career Selection, Holland's Theory of Careers and Vocational Choice, Personality Types*
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INTRODUCTION

Certain factors such as globalization, technological advances and restructuring in organizations as well as bringing new initiatives to the international markets necessitate making some decisions in career development of individuals. In today's world where change is happening really fast and felt intensely, employees have feelings such as stress, anxiety, unhappiness and despair because of the increase in unemployment rate and people want to work in more qualified professions. For this reason, the period we live in can be characterized as a period in which individuals should take more responsibilities in their own career management compared to the past (Yaylacı, 2006, s. 77).

Career development of individuals is a long and complex process. In this process, individuals can be affected by many factors. Factors such as the social environment of the individuals, psycho-physical dynamics and economic and cultural structure of the environment may direct their career choices and professions. For this reason, the basis on which we decide and build our career path and profession, which may affect our entire life, is significant. Many theorists in this field have attempted to bring quite complex solutions to the question that on which basis and according to what criterion do we decide our career path. Among the most efficient theories comes John Holland's Theory of Career Choice (Osborn, 2000). In our study, we have analysed Holland's Theory of Occupational Personality and important studies carried out in this field. In this context, primarily general information regarding the career will be given and then Holland's theory will be analysed and related studies will be presented.

Career and Related Concepts

Career is defined as improvement. In other words, career can be defined as the promotions that a person gets throughout his professional life in a company (Noe & Çetin, 2009, s. 400; Bingöl, 2013, s. 329). Career can be considered as a chain of business that will last lifelong. According to this definition, everyone has a career. Career can also be defined as the lifelong ordering of experience related to the role. Career defines how individuals experience duties and works in their work history (Noe & Çetin, 2009, s. 400).

Career management is a fact that realizes events such as employment, performance evaluation, orientation and training and integrating the interests and skills of employees with the aims of the organization by means of these. It also takes the organization to its aims. Thanks to career management, the commitment and motivation of employees to the organization increases (Aybatlı, 2008, s. 55; Yaylacı, 2006, s. 87).

Career planning is the systematic programming of the progress within the body of the organization by harmonizing the opportunities that can be offered to the employee by the organization with aims, knowledge, skills and abilities he has in achieving his career objectives he has determined (Kabadayı, 2013, s. 31-32). It is possible to divide career planning into two categories as individual and organizational.

Individual career planning is the plan including all programs, activities and actions that the individual projects in order to improve himself or achieve his career objectives throughout his business life (Bingöl, 2013, s. 343).

Organizational career planning is the process of implementing and developing new strategies in an attempt to correct deviations, provide feedback for career decision and develop realistic career objectives for the employees working in enterprises (İbicioğlu, 2011, s. 177).

In career choice, the personality of the individual and his interests are important factors. Holland analysing the career choice and personality structures stated that individuals choose professions similar to their personality structures. It is also seen that some famous psychologists as well as John Holland touched upon the relation between personality and career choice (Aytaç, 2005, s. 94). When every individual is evaluated comprehensively, it is understood that his cognitive skills, interests, values and personality characteristics affect his career decision processes (Zunker, 2008, s. 44).

In this respect, many theories have been developed regarding career choice. The most important and prominent theories are (Yeşilyaprak, 2008, s. 2-30); Trait-Factor Theory, Holland's Vocational Personality Theory, Work Adjustment Theory, Ginzberg's Developmental Theory, Super's Self Concept Theory, Anne Roe's Personality Theory, Tiedeman and O'Hara's Career Decision Theory, Social Learning Theory, Schein's Career Anchors Theory and Gottfredson's Career Choice Theory. We will analyse John Holland's Theory of Vocational Personality which we come across commonly.

Holland's Theory of Vocational Personality

John L. Holland is a vocational counsellor working in education, military and psychiatry institutions. According to Holland, career choice is the reflection of personality in business world. Holland argues that individuals have certainly traits belonging to at least one of the six personality types defined and again choose a profession appropriate for one of these types. The individual achieves satisfaction if he chooses one of these professions (Yeşilyaprak, 2008, s. 13).

Holland's theory is related with the theoretic viewpoint that has a long history in defining individual differences in personality types. Holland's theory is defined as structural-transactional because it provides an explanation for the connections between various personality traits and related professions and puts important data regarding individuals and professions in order. This theory is bases on four fundamental approaches (Niles, Bowlsbey, & Owen, 2013, s. 69; Zunker, 2008, s. 19; Yeşilyaprak, 2008, s. 13; Jordan, 1983, s. 15-18; Pilavcı, 2007, s. 33):

1. In American culture, many individuals can be placed into one of the six types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising or conventional.
2. There are six vocational environments: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising or conventional.
3. Individuals look for environments giving them a chance to display their own skills and abilities, express their attitudes and values and undertake the problems and roles agreed on.
4. The behaviour of an individual is determined by the interaction between his personality and environmental features.

Holland argues that career interests are mainly expressions of individuals' personalities. Personality traits are defined according to preferred free time activities, school subjects, hobbies and business choices. Every individual is defined according to one of the six personality types at different degrees. At different degrees, every individual resembles one of the six personality types. These personality types are explained below (Niles, Bowlsbey, & Owen, 2013, s. 69; Richards, 2005, s. 148; Kamaşak & Bulutlar, 2010, s. 121-122; Yılmaz, Dursun, Pektaş, & Altay, 2012)

Holland's Personality Types

Realistic Type: Realistic personality type prefers activities that he can form objects, tools, machines and animals systematically and regularly and doesn't like educational and therapeutic activities. Realistic individual has mechanic abilities; however there can be deficiencies in his social skills. Realistic types prefer professions such as car mechanic, cadastral engineer, farmer or electrician. Realistic types are defined as; easy going, modest, free-spoken, materialist, stubborn, openhearted, practical, headstrong, natural, shy, honest and economiser.

Investigative Type: İnvestigative personality type prefers activities that require observational, symbolic, systematic and creative studies on physical, biological and cultural events to understand and control some events. Investigative individuals don't like repetitive activities and social activities requiring persuasion. While these tendencies provide opportunities for scientific and mathematical competences, they also cause deficiencies in leadership skills. Investigative types prefer professions such as biologist, chemist, physician, anthropologist, geologist or medical technician. Investigative types are generally defined as; analytic, independent, openhearted, cautious, intelligent, pessimist, introvert, complicated, rigorous, critical, systematic, curious and shy.

Artistic Type: Artistic personality type prefers flexible, independent and unplanned activities that require the formation of physical, verbal and human-related materials in order to create art forms and products. Artistic individuals don't like systematic and planned activities. While these tendencies provide opportunities for artistic skills in language, art, music, drama and authorship, they can cause deficiencies in office works or management skills. Artistic types prefer professions such as composer, musician, stage director, writer, interior architecture or actor/actress. Artistic individuals are generally defined as; complicated, dreamer, introspective, untidy, unpractical, intuitive, emotional, quick-tempered, independent, free-spoken, idealist and original.

Social Type: Social personality type prefers activities that require directing others for informing, improving, treating, educating and enlightening. They don't like planned and systematic activities including materials, tools or machines. While these tendencies provide opportunities in terms of human relations such as interpersonal and educational competences, they can cause deficiencies in mechanical and scientific skills. Social types prefer professions such as teacher, religious official, psychological counselling, clinical psychologist, psychiatric nursing or speech therapist. Social individuals are generally defined as; persuasive, idealist, social, collaborative, polite, sympathetic, friendly, patient, fine, generous, responsible, understanding, helpful and warm-hearted.

Enterprising Type: Enterprising personality type prefers activities that require directing others for organizational or economic gain. They don't like observational, symbolic and systematic activities. While these tendencies provide opportunities in terms of leadership, interpersonal and persuasion competences, they can cause deficiencies in scientific skills. Enterprising types prefer professions such as marketing, management, business executive, television producer, sports coach or purchase specialist. Enterprising individuals are defined as; greedy, dominant, optimist, adventurer, high-spirited, ambitious, energetic, agreeable, extrovert, quick-tempered, self-confident, social and popular.

Conventional Type: Conventional personality type prefers activities that require the systematic, planned and accurate formation of data such as using computer in order to achieve organizational and economic objectives, organizing texts and numeric data according to a certain plan, reproducing materials and recording. Conventional types don't like activities that are not systematic, flexible, independent or

discovery-directed. While these tendencies provide opportunities in terms of office works, numeric or operating systems, they can cause deficiencies in artistic competences. Conventional types prefer professions such as accountancy, stenography, financial analyst, brokerage or taxman. Conventional individuals are generally defined as; sensitive, introvert, stubborn, conscientious, obedient, practical, cautious, tidy, economic, talented and literal-minded.

Evaluation of Personality Structures in Reference to Holland's Theory

Holland argued by determining the six profession fields mentioned above in the first phase that in every field these six personality types are dominant and individuals will display traits and behaviours related to one of these personality types. It may not be logical to include all individuals in the world in these six personality types. Therefore, after determining the personality type that the individual resembles most, it can also be discovered which other types are suitable for him. For example, an individual can be included in investigative type but he can also have the traits of social type. As a result of this ordering, "personality type" of the individual is defined and thus categorizing the individual as only one type is prevented. From these six personality groups it is possible to obtain 6!=720 different "personality types".

For example, relations between some personality types are more powerful than others. For example, realist-investigative types have more in common than conventional-artistic types. Some individuals differ from others in terms of personality traits. For example, an individual can be included into only one type and have some common features of other types. However, some individuals can resemble six personality types equally.

Holland's Personality Types and Environment Relationship

Different types require different environments. For example, realistic types become more successful in a realistic environment. Such individuals can easily adapt to an environment in which they will meet their needs because they have the same traits with the people in this environment (Ibarra & Gülfidan, 2010, s. 37).

Holland mentions four concepts while defining the relationship of the individuals or environments within themselves or the relationship between individuals and their environments (Kuzgun, 2009, s. 70-74). These concepts are congruence, differentiation, consistency and identity.

Congruence: Congruence is a concept playing a role at the centre of Holland's theory. Congruence shows the congruence of an individual and his environment according to the six types determined by the theory. When an enterprising individual works in an enterprising environment he will be more successful and congruent compared to an individual having the same traits works in an investigative environment. Congruence is assumed as an important outcome such as job satisfaction and profession time.

Differentiation: Differentiation is related to the definitions of individuals' interests. If it is clearly differentiated what an individual likes and dislikes, it is thought that interests are also differentiated in the same way. Career decision becomes easier. However, if the differentiation level is low, career decision rate will be more difficult.

Consistency: Consistency reflects inner harmony of an individual according to the arrangement in the hexagon. An individual having artistic and investigative interests is more consistent than an individual having artistic and conventional interests.

Identity: Identity ensures the prediction of objectives, interests and skills of an individual or clearness of his identity. Like other concepts differentiation, consistency and identity are used to define individuals and environments. In this way, environments as well as individuals can also be identified with differentiation, consistency and identity levels.

These four additional concepts are helpful in estimating vocational results. Privately, an individual who is congruent, differentiated, consistent and whose identity is clear is more satisfied and balanced than an individual who is incongruous, undifferentiated, inconsistent and whose identity isn't clear. For example, a social individual working in a social environment can be happier and more productive than an individual having the same personality traits and working in a realistic environment (careersnz, 2012).

Figure 1: Holland's Vocational Choice Hexagon

Source: (The Career Key, 1987-2013)

Consistency Degree	Personality Patterns
High	RI, RC, IR, IA, AI, AS, SA, SE, ES, EC, CE
Medium	RA, RE, IS, IC, AR, AE, SI, SC, EA, ER, CS
Low	RS,IE, AC, SR, EI, CA

In Holland's theory, hexagon has three functions. First one: the relationship of the individual with the first, second and third types in the hexagon determines the consistency degree of his interest. Second one: determines the consistency degree of the environment. Third one: determines the consistency degree between the individual and environment by comparing the distance between an individual and the types of his environment.

Figure 2: Holland's Six Personality Types Regarding Career Choice

Studies carried out on Holland's Theory of Vocational Personality

In the study of Kamaşak and Bulutlar (2010) titled "Personality, Vocational Choice and Performance Relationship: A Research on Academic Personnel", congruence between vocational choices and personalities of academic personnel and the relationship between career achievements were analysed within the scope of Holland's Theory of Vocational Choice. In the study, it was concluded that personality types and corporate support had no explanatory effect on the performance of faculty members and research assistants.

The study titled "The Personality of Music Teacher Candidates According to Holland's Career Theory" was carried out by Çevik and Perkmen (2010) and the aim of the study was to analyse personality profiles of teacher candidates studying at music department in universities and define the relationship between their personality types and satisfaction about the their department based on Holland's Career Theory. According to the results of the research, it was understood that the majority of the participants were artistic. Although investigative identity is necessary in order to be successful in music department, it was seen that the majority of the participants weren't investigative.

In Farh, Leong and Law (1998)'s study titled "Cross-Cultural Validity of Holland's Model in Hong Kong", internal validity of Holland model was evaluated for Hong Kong with the scale functionalized by UNIACT (Unisex edition of the American College Test), external validity of this theory for Hong Kong was determined and the congruence between cultural values of conventionalism and Hong Kong data in terms of Holland's "R-I-A-S-E-C model was identified. Farh, Leong and Law stated that individual differences in transitive values in societies containing both conventional and western values like Hong Kong can affect vocational behaviours.

Primavera, Church, Katigbak, Bruna, White and Peradilla (2010) carried out "The structure of vocational interests in Filipino adolescents" study. As a result of the study, it was observed that men were more interested in Engineering/Technology fields while women prefer professions in health, art, trade and education fields. Gender difference wasn't observed in science and management/law fields.

In Yang, Stokes and Hui (2005)'s "Cross-cultural validation of Holland's interest structure in Chinese population" study, it was aimed to evaluate Holland's theory (circular order model), he developed in different years, in two societies of China (China and Hong Kong). According to the analysis results, it was seen that men were more coherent with Holland's hexagon than women.

In Long and Tracey (2006)'s "Structure of RIASEC scores in China: A structural meta-analysis" study, the congruence of RIASEC types was evaluated by carrying out structural meta-analysis of 29 RIASEC correlation matrixes with Holland's circular order model, Gati's three group partition model, Rounds and Tracey's alternative three group partition model and Rounds and Liu's modified octant model which represent RIASEC types in four different ways. Results were more accordant with Gati, Rounds and Tracey models compared to Holland's model. The congruence of Liu and Rounds's models showed congruence between Holland and others' models. It is thought that these resulted from the differences of America and China.

In Deng, Armstrong and Rounds (2007)'s "The fit of Holland's RIASEC model to US occupations" study, it was aimed to test the generalizability of Holland's RIASEC model to the professions representing a large part of workforce market in America. In the analysis carried out with these two dimensional MDS (multi-directional scaling), it was concluded that Holland model doesn't comply with the professions

representing 85% of America. However, in three dimensional analyses it was stated that Holland model complies with Prediger's the things/People and Data/Ideas. These findings show that RIASEC types are not sufficient to represent all vocational interests. It was concluded that prestige and gender type ruin this representation.

In Tang (2009)'s "Examining the Application of Holland's Theory to Vocational Interests and Choices of Chinese College Students" study, the relationship between vocational and career choices by testing vocational interests of Chinese university students was analysed in terms of multi-cultural validity of Holland's career development theory. Multi-dimensional scaling results support Holland's R-I-A-S-E-C order model for male students. For female students, distances between six dimensions correspond to Holland's R-I-A-S-E-C typology. According to C index, congruence at medium level was observed between vocational choices and interests in the majority of the participants. It was seen that personal interests, social needs and profession fields are the most important reasons of career choice.

Toit and Bruin (2002)'s "The Structural Validity of Holland's R-I-A-S-E-C Model of Vocational Personality Types for Young Black South African Men and Women" study aimed at analysing the validity of vocational personality dimensions order model in Holland's Hexagon for South African Black men and women. In the study, 459 male and 573 black female students from Northwest Cape and 144 male and 242 female students from East Cape City were chosen. The survey used in the study consists of 216 articles.

In the analysis of data, SPSS ALSCAL algorithm was used for multi-dimensional scaling. Thanks to this analysis, the structure showing Holland's six personality dimension as hexagon was analysed in terms of the distance of the relationship between six vocational dimensions graphically. With this analysis, distance representations of interrelated data were compared with Holland's hexagon graphically.

As a result, ordering for East Cape women and Northwest women showed similarity with Holland's R-I-A-S-E-C model. Only A and S letters changed place (R-I-S-A-E-C). For East Cape men, ordering showed similarity with Holland's R-I-A-S-E-C model. Only I and R letters changed place (I-R-S-A-E-C). Letter ordering of Northwest men was different from Holland's order (R-I-S-C-E-A). In all of the orderings, Artistic letter was in the wrong place. It is seen that this finding doesn't comply with Holland's circular order model.

CONCLUSION

According to John Holland Vocational Career Choice Theory, individuals can be included in six dimensions of personality by considering their interests and skills. These are realistic (R), investigative (I), artistic (A), social (S), enterprising (E) and conventional (C) dimensions. Similarly, it is possible to analyse the environment of individuals within these six dimensions. For example, a business environment where car repair, carwash and maintenance is carried out is a mechanic environment while a business environment where scientific studies and experiments are carried out is an investigative environment.

Individuals look for environments in which they can express their attitudes and values and use their skills and experiences. Personality-environment interaction determines the behaviours of individuals.

In Holland's hexagon, there is an order in the form of RIASEC. Every individual reflects a part from these six personality dimensions. As shown in this hexagon, there are personality dimensions close to each other. 3-letter code from these six personality dimensions is given to individuals, business environments

and profession groups according to the features they resemble most. If these codes are compatible with each other, vocational predictions of individuals increase. Individuals become happier when they practice their professions in an environment compatible with their personalities.

When we look at the studies carried out on Holland in general, we can see that Holland's theory is significantly compatible with personality types found in many parts of the world.

It is very important for both individuals and organizations that individuals choose appropriate professions in appropriate environments by determining their personality structures according to Holland's theory. In case that individuals having different personality structures work in the same organization or they work in inappropriate environments for their personalities, organizations can take certain precautions in order not to lose their employees or business productivity. While these precautions can be related with career opportunities, they can be about offering chances appropriate for their fields of interest.

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