



WCETR 2013

## An Investigation To Determine The Work Values Of Tourism Students

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### Abstract

In this study, it is aimed to determine the work values of tourism students. In addition it has been tried to determine whether there is a significant differences between students' demographic characteristics and work values. The research has been carried out by using data collected with survey method from 397 tourism students. At the end of the research it has been found that the factors of safety, success, work environment and relations with colleague are more important for the tourism students. In addition there are significant age, gender, department and class-based differences regarding some dimensions of the tourism students' work value.

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Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of WCETR 2013.

*Keywords:* Work values, demographic characteristics, tourism education, tourism students, Turkey.

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### 1. Introduction

As a tourist destination, Turkey has demonstrated spectacular growth in recent decades, and it entertains a larger number of vacationers each year. In 2011, Turkey moved up one position to sixth place (with 29 million tourists) overtaking the United Kingdom in the top 10 rankings for international tourist arrivals. It also took twelfth place for receipts (US\$ 23.020 million) (UNWTO, 2012). Visitor expenditure on accommodation, food and drink, local transport, entertainment and shopping is an important contributor to the economy of Turkey, creating much needed

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employment and opportunities for development (Avcikurt and et. al., 2009). The overwhelming success of international and domestic tourism has given rise to a pressing demand for quality professional human resources. Requirements for skilled and efficient human capital pose a serious threat to the future competitiveness of this service industry (Singh, 1997). As tourism plays an important role in the socio-cultural and economic life of many developing countries, tourism education plays a key role at all levels in securing and maintaining sustainable tourism development (Okumus and Yagci, 2005). Consequently, the demand for hospitality and tourism professionals has augmented rapidly. In response to this escalating demand, many Turkish universities are striving to strengthen and expand their hospitality and tourism curricula. Indeed, for developing a practical curriculum, a good understanding of why students desire a career in the hospitality industry becomes critical. Ginzberg et al. (1951) proclaimed that individuals' vocational choice development is influenced by their work value (Chen et. al. 2000: 360). Based on the above tenet, this study attempts to measure the work values of tourism students.

## **2. The Concept of Work Value**

Chen and Choi (2008) defined the values as beliefs and personal standards that guide individuals to function in a society and thus, values have both the cognitive and affective dimensions. The notion of value is a special characteristic of human behavior. Most value theorists agree that individuals act or behave according to their values. Hence, a person's values act as criteria for choosing goals or guiding actions. In the theory of occupational psychology, work values are important components that drive individuals to seek certain kinds of jobs or working environments. The influence of work values on an individual's occupational development has been well documented since the 1950s (Chen et. al. 2000: 360). Chen and Choi (2008) stated that work values are viewed as additional and necessary constructs for vocational theory.

Work may have a variety of meanings for individuals in an industrial society. Work has no inherent meaning but, rather, individuals impute such meanings to their work activity (Kalleberg, 1977: 127). Values are intrinsic, enduring perspectives of what is fundamentally right or wrong. Work values represent these perspectives as applied to work settings. England (1967) suggested that individual value orientations affect how people behave in their jobs by demonstrating that employees with strong value orientations tended to act in accordance with what they thought was "right", whereas employees with more pragmatic orientations tended to behave in ways that they thought were "successful" (Judge and Bretz, 1992: 261). Values have both content and intensity attributes. The content attribute indicates that a mode of conduct or end-state of existence is important. The intensity attribute specifies how important it is. Values lay the foundation for the understanding of attitudes and motivation. Values also influence perceptions and behavior. It is generally accepted that individuals establish relatively stable values through life experiences and that organizational socialization is unlikely to alter the basic value structure an individual brings to the organization. This has been explained as a result of both their genetic component and the way in (Mok et. al. 1998: 2).

Work values are specific expressions of general values in the work setting. Work values are beliefs pertaining to desirable end-states (e.g. high pay) or behavior (e.g. working with people). The different work goals are ordered by their importance as guiding principles for evaluating work outcomes and settings, and for choosing among different work alternatives. Because work values refer only to goals in the work setting, they are more specific than basic individual values. But the work values usually studied are still quite broad: they refer to what a person wants out of work in general rather than to the narrowly defined outcomes of particular jobs. Finally, work values like basic values, are verbal representations of individual, group and interaction requirements (Ros et. al. 1999: 54).

## **3. Methodology**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the work values of tourism students. In addition it has been tried to determine whether there is a significant differences between students' demographic characteristics and work values. In order to accomplish these purposes, a study has been conducted on tourism students with using questionnaire technique in October, 2012. Tourism students of the School of Tourism and Hotel Management at the University of Balikesir were the target population of this study. A total of 450 questionnaires were distributed and 397 valid questionnaires (88,2%) were analyzed in this study.

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