

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Social  
Sciences  
of

Istanbul Bilgi University

Decision Making Process in the Academic Career  
Orientation: Agentic and Communal Perspectives of  
Turkish Postgraduate Education Scholars

By  
Zeynep MERCAN

In Partial Fulfilment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in the  
Department of Organizational Psychology

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Thesis Advisor / Director of the Department: Assist. Prof. İdil  
IŞIK

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Decision Making Process in the Academic Career Orientation:  
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Education Scholars

Akademik Kariyer Yönelimi Belirlenmesinde Karar Verme Süreci: Türkiye'nin  
Burslu Yükseköğretim Öğrencilerine Bireyci ve Toplumcu bir Bakış

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**Anahtar Kelimeler (Türkçe)**

- 1) YLSY
- 2) Akademik kariyer
- 3) Karar verme
- 4) Bireyci- Toplumcu
- 5) Yurtdışında eğitim ve bursluluk

**Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce)**

- 1) YLSY
- 2) Academic career
- 3) Decision making
- 4) Agency- Communion
- 5) Study abroad and scholarship

*“But I shall let the little I have learnt go forth into the day in order that someone better than I may guess the truth, and in his work may prove and rebuke my error. At this I shall rejoice that I was yet a means whereby this truth has come to light.”*

*Albrecht Dürer*

## **TEŞEKKÜRLER**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The Turkish government supports graduate students who want to have higher education overseas, with a scholarship based on Law number 1416. This scholarship currently called “Selecting and Appointing the Candidates to Send Abroad for Postgraduate Education” (YLSY) is now in operation to educate the next generation of academics from Turkey. In this study an investigation was conducted to explore the career decision making process of Turkish academic candidates for the YLSY scholarship. This study seeks to understand the YLSY candidates’ early career decisions, its shift towards an academic career, and the awareness of candidates for possible ways to become an academic. The study also questioned the reasons scholars would revisit their decisions to analyse whether or not if to stay in this particular scholarship overtime. This study serves as an in-depth analysis of scholarship program, which is very much needed to understand the needs of the candidates for an academic career. Even if the research specifically focuses on YLSY, findings -on the decision making process for academic career especially with financial support from various institutions- are generalizable to alternative scholarship programs as well.

An extensive literature review is presented to explain the national laws that are binding for academics and for the YLSY students in Turkey. The literature surrounding the decision making process is showing the availability of alternative theories. The educational decision making process and agentic and communal factors that affect these career decisions of future academics are also explained. In this study, interviews were conducted to

gain an enhanced understanding of the current candidates' cognitions and emotions. Nine female and ten male participants were recruited using snowball and convenience sampling, primarily from Istanbul University. The participants answered seven demographic questions and 23 semi-structured interview questions in a classroom condition. The transcribed data were analysed using content analysis and the rational decision making steps were observed in the data. Five super-ordinate themes emerged from the data that explain the decision making as a process. The five themes are: early career decision and the reasons for decision shift, possibilities participants have for academic career, consideration of YLSY, the binding decision and evaluation of the final decision. The results implied a rational decision and careful consideration of both the agentic and the communal factors surrounding the decision. The five stage of the rational decision in this study is; firstly they made career identification and need analysis, than they considered the possibilities to pay for education, based on their evaluation which is also triggered by the agentic and communal reasons to participant in YLSY they finalized their decision to participate in YLSY. Of course making decision doesn't mean that this process is finished candidates revisit their decisions due to variety of factors like, role ambiguity and lack of support. The results of the current study were discussed under the light of the available literature.

## ÖZ

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, 1416 sayılı kanuna dayanan bir burs ile yurt dışında eğitimini ilerletmek isteyen öğrencileri desteklemektedir. Bu bursun adı Yurt Dışına Lisansüstü Öğrenim Görmek Üzere Gönderilecek Adayları Seçme ve Yerleştirme (YLSY) olup ve güzümüzde geleceğin akademik personelini yetiştirmek için kullanılmaktadır. Bu araştırma YLSY bursuna katılan akademisyen adaylarının kariyerleri için karar verme süreçlerini incelemek için gerçekleştirilmiştir. YLSY adaylarının ilk kariyer kararları, bu kararın akademik kariyere dönüşümü ve adayların akademisyen olmayı mümkün kılan yollar hakkında bilgisi anlaşılmalı çalışılmıştır. Bu araştırma ayrıca akademisyen adaylarının kararlarını gözden geçirme ve bursta kalma fikirlerini değerlendirme nedenlerini de sorgulamıştır. Bu araştırma YLSY programının derinlemesine analizi olma işlevine de sahiptir. Bu sayede akademisyen adaylarının kariyer ihtiyaçları anlaşılacaktır. Özel olarak YLSY programına odaklanma birlikte bu araştırmanın bulguları farklı finansal destekler alarak akademik kariyerini sürdürmeye çalışanların karar verme süreçlerini anlamak üzere genellenebilir.

Tez kapsamında, öncelikle YLSY öğrencileri ve akademisyen adayları için bağlayıcı olan kanunlar kapsamlı bir şekilde sunuldu. Ayrıca karar verme süreçleri etrafında oluşturulan literatür ilgili teorilere değinilerek açıklandı. Yurtdışı eğitim kararı, kişisel ve toplumsal faktörler gibi geleceğin akademisyenlerinin kariyer kararının üzerinde etkisi bulunan faktörler de incelemeye eklendi. Bu çalışmada katılımcıların duygularını ve düşünce süreçlerini derinlemesine anlayabilmek için araştırma yöntemi



olarak yüz yüze ve birebir mülakat tekniđi kullanıldı. Dokuz kadın ve on erkek katılımcı kartopu yöntemi ve kolay erişimli örnekleme yöntemleri kullanılarak büyük çoğunluđu İstanbul Üniversitesi'nden seçildi. Katılımcılar yedi demografik ve yirmi üç yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat sorusuna araştırma için rezerve edilen sınıf ortamında cevap verdi. Deşifre edilen veri tündengelimsel içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılarak incelendi ve rasyonel karar verme adımları veri içerisinde tanımlandı. Beş ana tema veri içerisinde belirlendi ve karar verme mekanizması adımlarına göre sınıflandırıldı. Bu beş ana tema; ilk kariyer kararı ve deđişiminin nedenleri, akademik kariyer için katılımcıların olanakları, YLSY'nin deđerlendirilmesi, bağlayıcı karar ve son olarak da kararın tekrar gözden geçirilmesini açıklamıştır. Araştırmanın sonucu katılımcıların kararlarını kişisel ve toplumsal açılardan deđerlendirerek dikkatle karar verdiklerini belirtmektedir. Özetle bu araştırma, akademisyen adaylarının yollarının başında etkilendikleri kişisel ve toplumsal faktörleri inceleyerek kariyer kararı verme literatürüne katkıda bulunmuştur. Bulgular mevcut literatürü ışığında tartışılmaktadır.

## ABBREVIATION LIST

ALES (Akademik Personel ve Lisansüstü Eğitimi Giriş Sınavı): Entrance Examination for Academic Personnel and Postgraduate Education

GDF: General Directorate of Forestry

GPA: Grade-Point Average

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

KPSS (Kamu Personeli Seçme Sınavı): Public Personnel Selection Examination

LYS (Lisans Yerleştirme Sınavı): Undergraduate Placement Exam

MEB (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı): Ministry of National Education

ÖSYM (Öğrenci Seçme Yerleştirme MERkezi): Assessment Selection and Placement Center

ÖYP (Öğretim Üyesi Yetiştirme Programı): Teaching Staff Training Program

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

TUBITAK (Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknolojik Araştırma Kurumu): Technological Research Council of Turkey

TUİK (Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu): Turkish Statistic Institute

TP: Turkish Petroleum

UAK (Üniversiteler Arası Kurul): Inter-Universities Committee

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

USA: United State of America

USD: United States Dollar

YDS (Yabancı Dil Bilgisi Seviye Tespit Sınavı): Foreign Language  
Proficiency Exam

YGS (Yükseköğrenime Geçiş Sınavı): The transition to Higher Education  
Examination

YLSY (Yurt Dışına Lisansüstü Öğrenim Görmek Üzere Gönderilecek  
Adayları Seçme Ve Yerleştirme): Selecting and Appointing the  
Candidates to Send Abroad for Postgraduate Education

YÖK (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu): Council of Higher Education

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## CHAPTER I- INTRODUCTION

In 2005 the Turkish Government started an initiative to open new universities around the country, with the motto of “A University in Each City”. The aim of this project was to increase the competitive power of Turkish universities and raise the education sector to a level of international recognition. For that reason, between the years of 2005 and 2013, approximately 50 universities were founded and started offering higher education (Sağır & İnci, 2013). With this sudden increase in the number of universities came with a huge need for academic personnel, as was reported in the speech of the Chairman of the Council of Higher Education in Turkey (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu, YÖK). According to CNN Turk’s report<sup>1</sup>, the chairman stated that today Turkish universities need 45,000 lecturers including 20,000 PhD degree holders (CNN Turk, 2014). To supply this massive need, the Turkish government began presenting several opportunities for individuals who believe academia is the right choice for their future.

According to YÖK<sup>2</sup>, today there are 193 universities in Turkey (2016) butnot all of them have the required qualifications for educating PhD students within various departments. For example, there are only 22 PhD programs in the area of Psychology and none of them is specifically in the field of “Organizational Psychology” (YÖK İstatistik, 2016)<sup>3</sup>. On top of

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cnnturk.com/haber/turkiye/yok-baskani-cetinsaya-45-bin-ogretim-eleman-ihtiyaci-var>

<sup>2</sup> <http://yok.gov.tr/universitelerimiz>

<sup>3</sup> <https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/>

this, the Foundation for Political, Economic, and Social Research (Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Arařtırmaları Vakfı, SETA, 2015) reports that with new legislation, many of the present PhD programs might lose their right to graduate students. The new legislation increases the number of professors needed to open a PhD program. The programs that do not meet this criterion will not be able to continue their activities. Given these facts, it is not an easy decision to dedicate your life to getting a PhD degree in Turkey since the process is so competitive. Thus many people try to get their education from an internationally recognized university.

The Turkish government has sent approximately 13,000 students to study abroad since 1929 using governmental financial aid based on law number 1416 (as cited in Güçlü, 2015). On their return back to their home country, these students are expected to work within the state academic institutions or within specified organizations to reimburse this aid (Law No. 1416, 1929). This aid has been renamed several times and is currently called “Selecting and Appointing the Candidates to Send Abroad for Postgraduate Education” (YLSY, Yurt Dışına Lisansüstü Öğrenim Görmek Üzere Gönderilecek Adayları Seçme ve Yerleřtirme). It operates as a refundable scholarship program. The new students getting support from this fund are in fact the participants of the “5,000 Students in 5 years Project”. Since 2006, after the new university initiative, 6,970 students were sent to study abroad to fulfil the specific needs of governmental institutions, especially universities (as cited in Güçlü, 2015). The program was designed to end in 2011; however the program could not attain its target of educating 5,000

students and is therefore still active. There is not enough data to explain this situation and current data show that although the government is ready to send more students, students are hesitant to take this offer and some positions could not be filled (ÖSYM, 2012). This hesitation on the part of the students could be related to the available departments, the students or the cities of mandatory work (the system will be explained later).

This study targets the participants of this refundable scholarship program described briefly above and investigates their decision making process to enrol in this program. This study will address the career related decision making process of participants. The study will also look at the effect of individual/agentive and social/communal factors on their decision.

### **1.1. Decision Making Process For Career Choice**

Selecting a career in which to start working after graduation is one of the most important decisions a young adult has to make (Bluestein, 1997; Grotevant, 1987). Bynner (1998) even states that it is fundamental for identity formation. The career choice is also seen as a determinant for adulthood psychological well-being (Uthayakumar, Schimmack, Hartung, & Rogers, 2010). This decision is generally made when teenagers are preparing for college, as they choose the area of their education at this point. Choosing a specific career path may increase academic performance, because they have made a decision on their future and can focus on this (Uthayakumar, et al., 2010). Thus when a person is making the career decision, the more information they gather about their desired career option the more satisfied they became with their decision (Vertsberger, & Gati,

2015). It is important to understand the career desires and decision making processes of the students, since it could help professors and universities to guide the students to a better transition onto desired career path (Horst, & Good, 2009).

### **1.1.1. Academic Career as a Future Plan**

Deciding to pursue academic development in a field requires a certain level of knowledge and assessment of one's academic abilities. Thus, according to Cueso (2005), students take the decision about their academic career in the first few years of their college education.

Literature highlights various reasons for focussing on an academic career. For example according to White, et al. (2014), pharmacists and pharmacy students choose a career in academia to be able to interact with their future colleagues, to educate them, and to accomplish meaningful achievements. There is also evidence that students who love science are strongly in favour of staying in academia (Roach, & Sauermann, 2010). To pursue an academic career candidates have to overcome the academic, economic and personal barriers that come with the job, such as technical incompetency, job insecurity and geographical security problems (Ünal & Gizir, 2014). However choosing to stay in academia is different from being able to stay; previous research showed that the preconceptions, expectations, beliefs and values of the candidates shape the attitudes of the academia and towards the future of their career (Adcroft, & Taylor, 2013). Thus at every

step of an academic career the candidates may re-evaluate their decisions and may leave academia to pursue professional careers

#### ***1.1.1.1.Reasons to Revisit Decision to Stay in Academia***

The revisit of a career decision occurs when people feel dissatisfaction with their job. Schein (1968) developed the concept of “career anchor” to explain the factors that keep people in their career. He believed people had to have certain “anchors” at certain times to evaluate their job satisfaction. He assumed (1974) that people need motivation to be able to continue their job and also that society has some expectation from certain levels of jobs. Thus career anchors are born from both individual motivators and societal expectations.

According to Ünal and Gizir (2014) the main career anchors for Turkish academics are; job security, facility and commitment, and autonomy-independence. Moreover, Doğan, Demir, and Türkmen, (2016) mention that lack of financial support and work life balance is causing Turkish academics to fail to fulfil their career expectations. Accordingly it is not surprising that Turkish academics have a high rate of burnout or symptoms of burnout, such as psychological and physical staleness. Doğan and his colleagues reported that ambiguous roles of academics play a huge factor in academic staff burnout in Turkey. There are also factors that affect academics depending on their gender or marital status, such as married academic members preferring safer places, while unmarried academics prioritise their chance of promotion over location (Ünal, & Gizir, 2014). Haley and Jaeger (2012) argue that woman do not chose academic work as

much as their male counterparts. In Turkey, female academics mostly value geographical security when considering a career in academia (Ünal, & Gizir, 2014). Similar conditions could be the reason for the high turn-over rate in the academic world (Hailu, Marriam, Fekade, Derbew, & Mekasha, 2013) however there is no data to support this in Turkey. The following section will explain the steps of academic advancements and demonstrate the career barriers in Turkey.

## **1.2. Current Situation of Turkish Academia**

As explained above, the Turkish Academic sector has grown rapidly since 2006. This growth was not only due to the number of new universities but also to the involvement of adults in education. According to the Turkish Statistic Institute reports (TUIK)<sup>4</sup>, between the years of 2007 and 2012 the rates of participants in formal education (schools that are between nursery school and PhD) increased by 2.5% for Turkish people over the age of 18. This increase included the rates of involvement in higher education; people who continue their education after high school also increased by 4.2% as it rose from 12.1 to 16.3%. The reason for this increase is generally attributed to a rise in the number of people feeling that education is the only way towards secure job opportunities. However to accomplish this dream they have to have the appropriate education. Thus it is important to understand the existing situation within Turkish universities.

Higher education in Turkey starts with the national university entrance exams. The exams are comprised of two parts: “The Exam for

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.tuik.gov.tr/MicroVeri/YEA\\_2012/turkce/downloads/ozet-1-yerlessim-yeri-cinsiyet-yass-grubu-eggi.xls](http://www.tuik.gov.tr/MicroVeri/YEA_2012/turkce/downloads/ozet-1-yerlessim-yeri-cinsiyet-yass-grubu-eggi.xls)

Transition to Higher Education” (Yükseköğrenime Geçiş Sınavı, YGS), and Undergraduate Placement Exam (Lisans Yerleştirme Sınavı, LYS). The results for these exams are used to designate students to universities within the range of their scores, and students are free to choose a private university as long as their scores and financial situation allows them to do so. YÖK (2016) reports that there are 109 public universities, 76 private universities and 8 vocational schools of higher education in Turkey<sup>5</sup> and the scores are determined according to the capacity and desirability of these universities. For example universities on the western side of the Turkey are generally more desirable, and as a result the required YGS and LYS scores for them are higher.

TUIK<sup>6</sup> reports that today there are 6,062,886 students at college level and 1,535,409 of them are new applicants that started education this academic year. With the growing number of participating students the need for more academic staff becomes clearer. At present there are 142,437 academic staff working in these universities. In the following section the categorisation of academic staff in Turkey will be explained.

### **1.2.1. The Categories of the Academia in Turkey**

According to YÖK, there are currently three categories of academic employment in Turkey; teaching support people, lecturers and research assistants, and professors (Law No: 2915, 1983). The minimum requirements for these groups are as follows:

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<sup>5</sup> <http://yok.gov.tr/web/guest/universitelerimiz>

<sup>6</sup> [https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/yuksekogretimistatistikleri/2016/2016\\_T1.pdf](https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/yuksekogretimistatistikleri/2016/2016_T1.pdf)



(a) The teaching support group consists of translators, research staff and experts who only need a Bachelors degree and two year's experience , or a Master's degree (YÖK, 2008),

(b) The second class of academics is lecturers/tutors and research assistants; the candidates of this group have to hold a Bachelors degree and a Master's degree or 2 or more years experience. The difference between the first and the second group is that the second group is considered as educators/tutors and could attend the classes of their specific departments however the first group is responsible for certain management jobs and cannot give lectures.

(c) The last category is the one that requires the highest education level, and is usually referred to as educational staff. The layers of this category are; Assistant Professors, Associate Professors and Professors. To reach all these levels, candidates have to complete their PhD education. Being a professor is also the highest rank for academic growth, and thus people's academic dream.

According to the statistics<sup>7</sup> there were 142,437 academic staff working in the academic year 2013-2014 in Turkey. There were 3,713 people in the teaching support team which mostly consisted of experts (3672 people). The second group consisted of 74,535 people and formed the largest academic group. The educational staff category had 64,189 members in total, which included the private universities. Within this number there were 31,345 assistant professors, 12,839 associate professors and 20,005

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<sup>7</sup> [https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/yuksekgretimistatistikleri/2014/2014\\_2.pdf](https://istatistik.yok.gov.tr/yuksekgretimistatistikleri/2014/2014_2.pdf)

professors. In the next chapter the educational requirements and the candidacy procedure for an academic career will be explained.

### **1.2.2. Placement and Promotion Criteria's in Academia**

After completing their education, the candidates enter a life of competition, especially competition for the limited cadres in the universities. Just like the student selection for higher education, the staff selection criteria also depend on the university. YÖK only outline the minimum requirements and depending on the desirability of the university the participants will be selected. All these criteria are documented in Law number 2914 and Delegated Legislation number 2680 which have been in force since 1983.

To be able to apply for a post as an assistant professor, candidates firstly should either finish their PhD, or be an expert in the field of medicine or earn competency in an art field that is recognised by YÖK. After being accepted as an applicant to the university the candidates have to go through a language test set by the university, with the test including assessment by a professor for that specific language. After passing the language exam participants should provide their CV's and academic articles, if they have any. The Dean of the department together with related committee members and managers evaluate the applicants.

For an academic, promotion is a difficult journey. All universities have their own criteria for what they request from different academic layers. For example the requirements for an associate professor of a university from the west of Turkey could be the same as the requirements for a professor in

a university from the east. The west of Turkey raises more successful high school students (YGS'de birinci, 2016), and students also want to stay in the west side of the country due to its safety<sup>8</sup>. Thus better academics choose to work in universities with a better profile of students. However the basics for a promotion are determined by YÖK (Law No: 2915, 1983). Academics in the state universities are appointed as civil servants so that as the tenure changes, there may not be changes in their job title but they may receive a salary increase in line with a small promotion. For academic steps this promotion is given by the Rector of the university and the conditions are based on academic performance and discipline.

In the foundation universities, job titles do not change either until the academic becomes an associate professor or gains a professor degree based on their academic performance and a related evaluation system.

For any academic position, universities must have an open position in their layers to which the academic would be initially appointed or promoted. Secondly the person who wants to be promoted had to spend at least three years in his current position and had to be at least in the 3rd layer of that particular position for a year. Lastly, a positive record on their academic performance over the past three years is required.

Academic performance is evaluated based on criteria including academic publications, participation in scientific meetings, teaching activities and contributions to projects to solve social problems. An assistant professor's promotion to associate professor is also based on these academic

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<sup>8</sup>[http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/egitim/489891/YGS\\_de\\_birinci\\_istanbul\\_Erkek\\_Lisesi.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/egitim/489891/YGS_de_birinci_istanbul_Erkek_Lisesi.html)

performance indicators but it also requires attending a centralized assessment process by the so called “Inter-Universities Committee” (Üniversiteler Arası Kurul, UAK). They accept applications twice a year and the assessment also includes an oral exam.

### **1.2.3. Education for Academic Career**

After their undergraduate education, if the students wish to join the ranks of the academics, they have to attend the Entrance Examination for Academic Personnel and Postgraduate Education (Akademik Personel ve Lisansüstü Eğitimi Giriş Sınavı, ALES). This is mandatory to be able to attend any higher education institute and is even used to choose and promote academics within universities. According to the YÖK regulations (1996), to be a Master’s student the minimum ALES score is 55 and universities could set the required points over 55 and include additional requirements such as interviews or minimum GPA scores should they wish. Candidates can apply to the first and second categories of academic (i.e., support staff, lecturers/tutors, and research assistants) jobs while they are still graduate students.

This is why people who wish to stay in academia choose to have PhD’s in order to increase their chances for the limited job opportunities. Obtaining a PhD is the last educational step that is necessary for academic improvement; and people do not necessarily have to finish their Master’s degree to apply for a PhD. However YÖK states that if a candidate does not have a Master’s qualification, he has to apply with an ALES score of higher than 70 (1996). According to YÖK there are currently 63,944 PhD students

who are getting their education in public and private universities in Turkey, which is equal to 2% of all students (Yükseköğretimde, 2014). Although the number is higher than the stated need by YOK it is still not enough when compared to developed countries such as UK, which have around 9% (Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, 2015).

There are several reasons for the low number of PhD students in Turkey; the major reason is the lack of programs. Moreover due to the policy changes some of the existing facilities will be unable to graduate students anymore (SETA, 2015). On the other hand employability is a huge problem. The academic job market is limited worldwide; even in Australia only 36% of PhD graduates can find employment in academia (Postgraduate Destination, 2010). Although there are no published statistics about the rate of academic employability in Turkey, academics believe that there are not enough positions for PhD degree holders and when the cadre is certainly needed it takes a while for universities to recruit someone (İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi Dayanışma Platformu, 2015). Academics also believe that after obtaining a PhD they might be considered too old for the professional jobs.

Although there seems to be a conflict between what government officials report and what PhD graduates experience, it is a known fact that Turkish universities are not good enough to compete in the international market. According to Quaquarelli Symonds World University Rankings (2015/16), only five Turkish universities are placed in the top 500 university

rankings<sup>9</sup>. The following section will explain how the ranking system works and why many Turkish universities do not rank highly.

### ***1.2.3.1. World University Ranking Systems***

The ranking system for national universities changes from country to country, such as Iran, Japan, Italy, France, Germany etc. (Khosrowjerdi, & Kashani, 2013). However countries also use international ranking organisations which are easy to access with a Google search, such as; Times Higher Education, Shanghai Ranking, Webometrics, and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS). These organisations publish an annual rank list of the top 500 universities. According to the Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe<sup>10</sup>, popular ranking criteria of these systems are as follows: quality of education, quality of faculties, research output, performance for each person within the university, reputation surveys, academic citations and/or Nobel nominated academic staff.

As mentioned, only five Turkish universities -namely, Bilkent University ranked 394<sup>th</sup>, Middle East Technical University ranked 431-440<sup>th</sup>, Bogazici University and Sabanci University ranked 441-450<sup>th</sup>, and Koc University ranked 481-490<sup>th</sup>- were listed for 2015/2016 by QS. Thus the Turkish government is trying to address the need for improvement by sending willing students abroad to get an education in the universities that ranked within the top 500<sup>11</sup> with the condition of mandatory work after

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2015#sorting=rank+region+=country+=faculty+=stars=false+search=>

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.unica-network.eu/sites/default/files/Rauhvargers\\_UNICA\\_IRO.pdf](http://www.unica-network.eu/sites/default/files/Rauhvargers_UNICA_IRO.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [http://yyegm.meb.gov.tr/meb\\_iys\\_dosyalar/2015\\_06/09092843\\_skasorulansorular04.06.2015123.pdf](http://yyegm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2015_06/09092843_skasorulansorular04.06.2015123.pdf)

graduation in specified state universities within Turkey. Universities have to comply with this decision because it is not possible to designate an academic without the knowledge of YOK (Law No: 2915, 1983). That causes unemployment for the PhD students who are not in a research assistant position. To have a better understanding of their possibilities of having an education without a job, the present research will explain the scholarship opportunities for the students.

#### **1.2.4. The Aids to Educate Young Turkish Scholars**

Higher education is one of the biggest educational markets in the world with the budget estimated to be over 70.62 Billion USD by 2020<sup>12</sup>. Thus it is correct to assume that requiring a higher degree is expensive and sometimes hard to fund. Thus many organisations and governments are selecting talented students and providing them with financial support in order to enable them to obtain this higher education. Sometimes the monetary support is re-fundable and sometimes not however each and every organization has their own expectations from the students. Organisations generally give their financial support for certain departments and some even give support under the strict conditions of doing PhD research according to the desires of the organisations. The following section will explain some of the scholarship options for Turkish PhD candidates.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/higher-education-market-worth-7062-billion-usd-by-2020-528182541.html>

### **1.2.4.1. Turkish Aids**

#### *1.2.4.1.1. Teaching Staff Training Program (Öğretim Üyesi Yetiştirme Programı, ÖYP)*

In 2001, alongside the State Planning Organization (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, DPT) ,a special program was founded that would educate the required academic staff for Turkish universities. ÖYP was born to help understaffed universities by educating their staff in Turkish universities with a capacity for higher education. In this program students have to work in their designated universities while getting their higher education in other universities (Kara, Duman, Sevim, & Yıldırım, 2014). The universities where the ÖYP students are going to work were designated by DPT however after 2010 YÖK took over the program (Yükseköğretim Kurumu, retrieved in 2016<sup>13</sup>) and start appointing the new ÖYP students. By making students work, this program actually recognizes them as staff members. However the program is highly criticized as a scholarship by the students who are trying to apply. There was a reported suicide from an ÖYP student who could not fulfill the necessary educational scores and choose to commute suicide (Tahincioğlu, 2013). This is because when the students are not successful they have to pay the money they received back to YÖK.

#### *1.2.4.1.2. Technological Research Council of Turkey (Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknolojik Araştırma Kurumu, TUBITAK)*

TUBITAK is one of the most prestigious scholarship institutions in Turkey. TUBITAK only provide PhD scholarships for limited programs

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<sup>13</sup> <https://yolharitasi.yok.gov.tr/docs/AkademikInsanKaynagi.pdf>



such as natural sciences, engineering and technology sciences, medical sciences and agricultural sciences. To be able to attend this scholarship students have to be a PhD student or planning to be a student in the semester following their application<sup>14</sup>. TUBITAK is not a scholarship that sends students abroad to study however it has collaborative scholarships that students could use to study abroad. It also does not require any mandatory work after graduation, which means after graduation the student have no job security. The difficulty of this scholarship is the requirement of re-payment of the total scholarship fee along with its legal interest<sup>15</sup> if the student is unable to graduate within the agreed time period.

*1.2.4.1.3. Selecting and Appointing the Candidates to Send Abroad for Postgraduate Education (Yurt Dışına Lisansüstü Öğrenim Görmek Üzere Gönderilecek Adayları Seçme Ve Yerleştirme, YLSY)*

Since 1929 the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MEB, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı) has run a scholarship for new graduates under the age of 28 who want to receive higher education in a foreign country and want to work as an academic when they return to Turkey. Throughout its history the name of the program has changed several times and the current name is: Selecting and Appointing the Candidates to Send Abroad for Postgraduate Education (YLSY). The current aim of this scholarship is to educate teaching staff for different universities and governmental positions in the Turkish Petroleum (TP) and General Directorate of Forestry (GDF) in

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.tubitak.gov.tr/tr/burslar/lisansustu/egitim-burs-programlari/2211/icerik-kimler-basvurabilir>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.tubitak.gov.tr/sites/default/files/2211\\_2015\\_ilan\\_dr\\_web.pdf](http://www.tubitak.gov.tr/sites/default/files/2211_2015_ilan_dr_web.pdf)

Turkey. The present research aims to understand the students' decision making to get support from this scholarship program. Further information about the selection period of this scholarship program can be provided in the method section.

#### *1.2.4.2. Foreign Aids*

When PhD candidates decide to go abroad, they are mostly aware of the problems for academics in Turkey. That is to say, it is safe to assume that participants are planning to have better career opportunities by studying abroad. According to McKeown (2009) international study contributes to the growth of the students from an intellectual, cultural and personal perspective. Thus it is not surprising that students are looking into opportunities of having international study options. While many students could afford to have their own education, those who cannot afford it are in search of scholarship options, provided by the desired country of study.

##### *1.2.4.2.1. Fulbright Program*

The Fulbright Program is a USA governmental scholarship that provides support for students from all around the world to study in the USA (Adams & Infeld, 2011). Fulbright is educating students in the USA; however the students do not have a job guarantee after their graduation. Many of them are forced to move back to their home countries due to visa limitations (Kahn, & MacGarvie, 2016). Fulbright does not have a subject limitation, thus as long as they meet the requirements anyone could attend the scholarship. The requirements for Turkish students include a GPA over

3.50 and a TOEFL score over 75. There are students who leave the scholarship, because it forbids students to be a citizen or a green card holder in the USA<sup>16</sup>.

#### *1.2.4.2.2. Other Countries*

There are several other scholarships from all around the world which are not as widely known as Fulbright. For example Japan has a scholarship named Monbukagakusho<sup>17</sup> for students, who are interested in getting an education in Japan and Australia awards scholarships<sup>18</sup> that provide scholarships to developing countries' students for university or higher education within Australia. There are also several scholarships that are provided by foreign governments directly to Turkish students, like France<sup>19</sup>, and Austria<sup>20</sup>. To participate in these scholarship students have to apply both to the government's consulate in question and to the MEB (Ministry of National Education of Turkey). Moreover, we also see foundations like Turkish Education Foundation<sup>21</sup> (Türk Eğitim Vakfı, TEV) giving support for graduate education at master's level in USA, Japan, and European countries like Germany, Italy, Denmark, and Spain. Coverage of these scholarships is varied from just language education to PhD education<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> <http://fulbright.org.tr/file/2016/02/More-Information-About-J-1-Visa.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.tr.emb-japan.go.jp/T\\_05/01.htm](http://www.tr.emb-japan.go.jp/T_05/01.htm)

<sup>18</sup> <http://dfat.gov.au/people-to-people/australia-awards/pages/australia-awards-scholarships.aspx>

<sup>19</sup> <http://paris.bk.mfa.gov.tr/ShowAnnouncement.aspx?ID=229696>

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.grants.at/to\\_the\\_database/EN/](http://www.grants.at/to_the_database/EN/)

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.tev.org.tr/burslarimiz/detay/Yurt-Disi-Burs-Basvurulari/52/49/0>

<sup>22</sup> <http://abdigm.meb.gov.tr/www/yabanci-hukümet-burslari-2013-2014/icerik/237>

International scholarship means leaving the home country, adapting to new culture, and a critical life events caused by these changes and accompanying uncertainties. Even if scholarship provides financial support, still the financial risks are the issue that emerges the question of how students decide to study abroad and, which motivators are facilitating their decisions.

### **1.3. Decision Making Process for Being an International Higher Education Student**

The determinants of decisions made by students for a particular discipline and an institution, and for national or international destinations of study are critically important since this shapes education as an economic and business market. Thus, researchers have adapted different theories to analyze and explain this process.

One of the most frequently cited theories in decision making literature is the “push–pull model” (Lee, 1966). According to the push-pull model, students have both home country based problems that push them out of their country and destination based desires that attract them to the international education system (Maringe & Carter 2007; Lee, 2014). This model is widely used to understand the reasons of attraction to the country of destination (Chen, 2007; Eder, Smith, & Pitts, 2010).

Accepting education as a market and students as consumers, some researchers try to explain the decision making process of international higher education students using marketing theories. Teng and Khong (2015) pointed out that students tend to use social media, the internet and the

feedback of others to gather information and make decisions about purchasing their education. Students as consumers focus more on the financial side of the decision, such as tuition fees, living expenses and possible job options (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

Other studies have revealed that studying abroad is also a personal desire and a social decision. Olivera and Soares (2016) pointed out that desiring to have an international experience is a strong motivator for higher education students. They reported that studying abroad is perceived by higher education candidates as a way to improve, gather new perspectives and ways of thinking, and gain additional value for future employment. The decision is also a cultural decision since the decision could be affected by the values and cultural norms of the home country (Wilkins & Huisman, 2015). Even the gender of the participants plays a role in the decision making. Older women are less likely to pursue education abroad (Netz, 2015).

However these processes explain students whose school fees are paid by themselves or their parents much better than they explain some scholarship students who could face consequences when they fail in their education. Given the notion that students are usually “*irrational*” and even “*ill-informed*” decision makers (Hodkinson & Sparkes, 1997; Baldwin & James, 2000), it might be concluded that they will be illogical while making a career decision. Thus before they could set their career orientation towards academia, a high proportion of higher education students drop out of schools (Baldwin & James 2000). Adshead and Jamieson (2008) state that

rational decision making is realized through problem identification, developing options, evaluation of options, decision making and evaluation of the outcomes. Although rational decision making is a highly agentic process, when individuals reflect on their decisions they are also reflecting on the social context of their decision (Adshead & Jamieson, 2008).

#### **1.4. Effect of Personality Dimensions on Career Decision Making**

Bakan (1966) identified the concepts of agency and communion as personality dimensions. He used agency and communion dimensions to refer to how individuals communicate with their social surroundings. Agency has been defined as motivation concerned with dominance, achievement, and instrumentality. Communion has been defined as motivation concerned with nurture, affiliation, and expressivity. Diehl, Owen and Youngblade (2014) reported that individual agency is correlated with openness to experiences, while communion is more correlated with agreeableness, extroversion and conscientiousness.

Diehl, Owen, and Youngblade (2014) founded the personality traits of agency and communion to be related with different psychological processes such as evaluating social rank, sex roles, self-concept and reasoning. They also reported that aging increases the communion and decreases the agency, thus older people tend to think of others before themselves. Thus it might not be wrong to assume that people with high agency would be more likely to take a risk, such as studying higher education or going abroad. Although these risks could bring great deal of success to the taker, it still does not guarantee the desired outcomes.

Another point is that being an agentic or communal is strongly correlated with the culture of individuals. For example eastern countries such as Turkey are considered to have a communal culture while western countries like Sweden are seen as agentic cultures (Gebauer, Leary, & Neberich, 2012).

#### **1.4.1. Agentic Personality in Career Decision Making**

Agency and communion personality traits affect personal choices and the willingness to discuss and explore possible career choices. Social cognitive theory argues that the most important two factors in career decisions are social support and self-efficacy (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Rogers, Creed, & Glendon, 2008). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's self-reliance on one's skills and this belief makes them confident for their future employment (Lim, & Loo, 2003). Self-efficacy is affected by others' behaviour and by the environmental factors with which the individual is interacting (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1996). This involvement forces people to show personal power and agency and helps to develop the career decision.

Another theory that highlights the individual's involvement and personal agency in career decision making is Planned Happenstance Theory. According to Mitchell, Levin, and Krumboltz (1999) planned happenstance is a skill that individuals have whereby they generate their own opportunities alongside their own learning skills and this makes them able to have a better learning experience from events. The skills of planned

happenstance include: risk taking, flexibility, optimism and curiosity. Students with high planned happenstance are better at coping with negative ideas about their career opportunities (Kim et al., 2015). According to Nordbye and Teigen (2014), agentic individuals are more likely to take risks and it is safe to assume that they would have a higher rate of planned happenstance, which decreases the rate of negative thoughts about their future career (Kim et al., 2015).

#### **1.4.2. Communal Personality in Career Decision Making**

The effects of communal characteristics on career decisions involve the families and the social support systems of the young adults. Mau (2000) found that Taiwanese students are more likely to rely on group decisions and adapt different career decision making styles than American students due to their respective backgrounds. He argued that the difference is born from the communal structure of Taiwanese culture. Another effect of the communal personality trait surfaces when a young adult is consulting others for his career decision. People who have a high level of communion tend to seek social support when they are making decisions. Those who have a more meaningful relationship with others are more likely to consult others about their decisions (Diehl et. al 2014). By consulting others they also increase their level of satisfaction with their decision. For example those who consult others are less likely to change their majors (Vertsberger, & Gati, 2015). According to Vertsberger and Gati (2015) young adults are aware of the importance of their career decision and they are willing to consult on their decisions with others. However it is important to note that



people who are willing to seek help in general are also more willing to consult on their career decisions (Chiesa, Massei, & Guglielmi, 2016). Nevertheless this consulting could also create a problem for young adults from communal cultures. High communion tends to create problems for young people such as desire to comply with the decisions of others. The youth of communal cultures tend to push their agency into second place and try to follow the decision of their surroundings (Guan et al., 2016). For example young people from communal countries tend to be happier and faster in making their decision when their career decision is in line with their family's support (Shin & Kelly, 2014).

One could therefore speculate that YLSY students could have a decision making process mainly based on their cultural values. Thus this research will provide further information, which is needed to understand their reasoning.

### **1.5. The Purpose of This Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of this study is to understand the career decision making process of higher education students, who are under a binding contract. The YLSY scholarship is also aimed at students who want to go abroad, thus this study questions the two critical decisions that the target groups have to make and asks why they are willing to take such huge risks. In order to obtain an answer for the following questions a rational decision making model was adapted and used to construct a first step for the study.

To sum up, this research asks the following questions:

1. How did the prospective academics make up their minds to start a long term academic career?
  - a) Do they consider alternative career options? Why?
  - b) What were the opportunities they had to continue to pursue an academic career without YLSY?
2. What are the motivators when people decided to undertake the financial debt?
  - a) How did they view the scholarship and why did they want to have this scholarship?
  - b) What are the cultural and personal factors they considered?
3. Why participants choose to participate in YLSY?
  - a) Why did they revisit their decision of participating in YLSY?
  - b) What are the agentic and communal factors that were affected their decision?
4. What are the motivators for studying abroad?
  - a) What are the effects of their social environment on their career decision?
  - b) What are the decisions academic career pursuers face?
5. Can the rational decision making model explain the decision making process of the prospective academics getting support from YLSY in Turkey?

#### **1.6. Contributions of the Study**

This will be the first study that will focus on YLSY students' career choices and their decision making process.

There are attempts to address the policy flows and financial problems that come with this specific scholarship in a student thesis (Erden, 2013). The decision to be an academic is not fully studied, thus there is still a gap in understanding the drivers and motivators of the students. Scholarship students with a future work agreement in particular, such as YLSY students' have also not been studied enough to understand their decision making process. Thus this study will provide insight towards understanding the mindset of those who have a designated place waiting in academia.

Alongside contributing to the decision making literature this research will help the YLSY students to evaluate their decision for participation. The presumed nominee scholars could also take advantage of the results, while they are thinking on their own decision. Furthermore MEB could utilise this study to improve both the YLSY scholarship and the candidate selection system.

## **CHAPTER II- METHOD**

This study was designed as a quantitative study, to collect data from a small group. Interviews were conducted which allowed a deeper understanding of the emotions and thought process of participants. In this section the researcher explains the participant selection period, the procedure for interviews and the data analysis methods.

## 2.1. Sampling

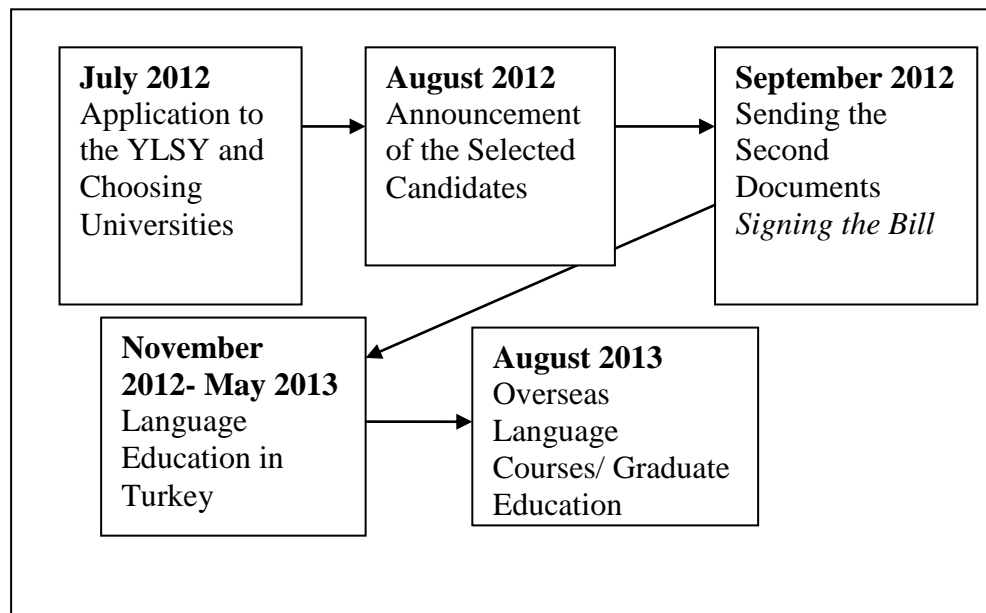
In 2012<sup>23</sup> only 1271 students were selected to participate in the YLSY scholarship and this research chose them as the target. The selection period starts with the reported needs for academics from state universities around Turkey. All these needs are accumulated by YÖK who determine YLSY score to be used to select students, in accordance with the requirements of the department and the university. The candidates need to have a certain degree of academic achievement, such as GPA higher than 2.75 and a score from the Entrance Examination for Academic Personnel and Postgraduate Education (ALES) higher than 70. This information is used to calculate the YLSY score of the candidates. There are three types of YLSY scores that classify the departments into three groups: letters and sciences including non-quantitative disciplines like literature, history, management, and theology; quantitative sciences including engineering, medicine, and natural sciences; and liberal sciences like psychology, law, and international relations. Each candidate chooses 10 of the open positions to apply to. If their undergraduate department is suitable and they are the highest scoring person for the position they will pass the first step of selection.

The second selection period starts with proof of the requested information which includes confirmation of health status, evidence of unemployment (candidates cannot work), and legal history which shows that the candidate has no criminal record or miss of mandatory service (such

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.osym.gov.tr/dosya/1-60656/h/2012-ylys-sayisal-bilgiler.pdf>

as roll call for men). The last and most important document to be provided at this stage is the Bill of Loading. Since this is a refundable scholarship, candidates are requested to guarantee that they will successfully complete their education and start working in their designated position; otherwise they will repay all the expenditure that the government has made throughout their education. This bill has to have two guarantors, who are not married to each other. These guarantors have to sign the bill which costs 75.000 dollar (for USA) or 40.000 pounds (for UK). The activity table for the candidates of 2012 is summarized in the Figure 1 which is constructed using the announcements of the MEB from 2012 (no longer available).



**Figure 1:** The process of student selection and education in YLSY

Candidates who submit all this information are officially accepted as scholarship students; this paper will refer to them as scholars. The first benefit that candidates gain is the language course to improve their language skills. MEB offers language courses in well-known public universities in the biggest cities in Turkey such as Istanbul and Ankara. There are also

overseas language courses available for participants who do not think their skills are good enough to directly start studying within a particular scientific area. Participants can attend language courses for around 6 months in Turkey, and for around 12 months abroad. Although the scholarship sends students all around world such as China or any of the UN countries, only English, German and Arabic courses are available (ÖSYM, 2012). The rest of the students have to prepare themselves over the course of around a year while they are also trying to get accepted to those countries, without any help from the MEB.

The most common destinations for study are English speaking countries, specifically the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK). Thus the participants for this study are chosen from the language courses designed for these two countries (TOELF and IELTS). Participants choose their destination, while they are signing the Bill. So which course they would attend depends on the country choice in their Bill.

## **2.2. Participants**

A connection with the participants on this current study was made in May, 2013, while the 2012 students were receiving their language education in Turkey.

16 participants were recruited from Istanbul University language courses using convenient sampling and three students were recruited using snowball sampling from other language courses (N=19). 10 of the participants were attending TOEFL courses (5 female and 5 male; Mean Age= 24.5; S.D= 1.18). There were nine participants selected from IELTS

**Table 1:** Demographic Information of Participants

<i>Participant Number</i>	<i>Scholarship Organization</i>	<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>University Classification</i>	<i>Date of Graduation</i>
1	MNE	Ali	Male	USA	23	Quantitative Sciences	2012
2	MNE	Burak	Male	USA	24	Liberal Arts and Sciences	2012
3	MNE	Caner	Male	UK	25	Letters and Sciences	2011
4	TP	Davut	Male	USA	25	Quantitative Sciences	2012
5	GDF	Emre	Male	USA	26	Quantitative Sciences	2011
6	MNE	Ferit	Male	USA	26	Quantitative Sciences	2010
7	MNE	Güney	Male	UK	29	Liberal Arts and Sciences	2006
8	MNE	Haluk	Male	UK	23	Liberal Arts and Sciences	2012
9	MNE	İsmet	Male	UK	23	Quantitative Sciences	2012
10	MNE	Kerim	Male	UK	23	Quantitative Sciences	2012
11	MNE	Lale	Female	USA	26	Quantitative Sciences	2011
12	MNE	Meryem	Female	USA	24	Liberal Arts and Sciences	2011
13	MNE	Nazlı	Female	USA	24	Quantitative Sciences	2011
14	MNE	Oya	Female	USA	24	Quantitative Sciences	2012
15	MNE	Pelin	Female	UK	22	Liberal Arts and Sciences	2012
16	MNE	Rüya	Female	UK	26	Quantitative Sciences	2011
17	MNE	Sema	Female	UK	24	Liberal Arts and Sciences	2011
18	MNE	Tülay	Female	UK	23	Liberal Arts and Sciences	2012
19	MNE	Umut	Female	USA	23	Liberal Arts and Sciences	2012

*MNE:* Ministry of National Education

*GDF:* General Directorate of Forestry

*TP:* Turkish Petroleum

courses (4 women and 5 men; Mean age= 24, 2; S.D= 2.17). All participants graduated from Turkish state universities' four year undergraduate programs in the period of 2006 and 2012.

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics including their pseudonyms in order to ensure confidentiality. Since the overall cohort was less than 1300 students, specific information like country selection and the departments would have been creating the risk of disclosing the identities of the individuals. Thus these details were reserved and instead of the specific departments, the YLSY score classifications were used as derived from the YLSY catalog (ÖSYM, 2012). The TP and GDF students are only allowed to have Master's degree however participants who contributed to the study expressed their career orientation as academic career.

### **2.3. Instruments**

The semi-structured interview (Appendix A and B) started with seven structured questions about age, gender, and other demographics of the participants. In the second part of the interview, participants answered 11 questions about their scholarship experience such as the reasons for their involvement and their feelings about the system. The third part led participants to answer seven questions about their feeling of individualism and freedom. In the last part, participants were asked five questions about their future plans, disappointments and ideas about marriage while studying with a scholarship.



## **2.4. Procedure**

### **2.4.1. Necessary Approvals and Permissions**

Before starting this study, ethical approval from Istanbul Bilgi University's Human Participant Research Ethic Committee (Appendix C) was obtained, with the issue number 2013-20630-018. This approval aims to minimize the potential negative psychological and physical effects of the study on the participants. Additionally, in order to get in touch with the participants on the language courses, permission was provided by Istanbul University's Foreigner Languages Department (Appendix D). Data collection started after receiving these permissions.

### **2.4.2. Data Collection**

#### *2.4.2.1. Pilot Study*

Prior to data collection a pilot study was conducted with a scholar from cohort 2012, who is not attending any language courses. The pilot data was used to organize the placement of semi-structured questions and to test the understanding of the questions from the point of view of a person without a psychology background. The pilot study also provided the opportunity to practice and improve the researcher's interview techniques. The pilot data was not included in the final data analysis of the current study.

#### *2.4.2.2. Recruitment*

To access the students, the researcher made visits to every classroom during the lecture hours in Istanbul University language courses.

Furthermore with the permission of the teacher, students were invited to participate in the research with a brief explanation of the study and its purpose. The researcher then made appointments with the volunteers at a later date.

#### *2.4.2.3. Interview Conditions*

The interviews were conducted in quiet classrooms provided by Istanbul University. Before starting the interviews, all participants were asked to read and sign the Consent Form (Appendix E) that guarantees data confidentiality and asks for voluntary participation. The consent form also contained brief information about the current study and the contact information of the researcher. All participants were provided with their own copy of the form and guaranteed that if they changed their mind about participation, their data would not be used in the study and no reason would be required regarding their withdrawal. Participants also gave verbal consent, alongside their written permission, for a voice recorder to be used throughout the interviews.

#### **2.4.3. Semi-Structured Interview**

Each interviewee had a unique way of answering the questions so that every question was not always asked and some additional questions were included according to the process of the interview, to ensure that all the required information was obtained. Thus the lengths of the interviews also showed variation between 20 minutes and 70 minutes. After the interviews, the "Express Scribe Transcription Software" was used to

transcribe the data and “MAXQDA 12” software was used to analyze the transcribed data. Interviews were conducted in Turkish, and coding and data analysis was done on transcribed Turkish interviews. Segments that are included in this report were translated by the researcher.

#### **2.4.4. Deductive and Inductive Content Analysis**

##### *2.4.4.1. Deductive Content Analysis*

Deductive content analysis was used to analyze the transcribed interview data. This method of data analysis was developed by Elo and Kyngas (2007) to analyze a set of data to test an existing theory in a different sample or context, as this study did. The answers were classified according to the Rational Decision Making steps that were mentioned by Adshead and Jamieson (2008) and a structured matrix of the steps was created. The structured matrix was used to determine if the same thought process is possible for young adults in other life changing career decisions. Unrelated data was left out by the researcher to go back and conduct an inductive content analysis on it at a later stage as encouraged by Sandelowski (1995). In the first step of the data analysis the researcher read the data multiple times without making any coding to become familiar with the data and then the researcher reviewed the data to understand the content and to mark the content which fitted into the matrix. The matrix’s code names were changed in the process to explain the data better without changing the actual meaning of the data. As a last step the researcher re-read the remaining data to see if the data could form another code that does not currently exist in the Rational Decision Making matrix.

#### 2.4.4.2. *Inductive Content Analysis*

The existing matrix did not fully explain the decision making phenomena fully, so as Elo and Kyngas (2007) encouraged, the data was subjected to an inductive content analysis as well, to understand if there was any meaning outside the Rational Decision Making matrix. Thus the researcher read the data from the beginning and applied an open coding. In this analysis some codes and sub-codes emerged. After the analysis, deductive and inductive codes were compared and their similarities and differences were noted. These similarities and differences were then combined into a meaningful structure that was reported with direct quotes from the participants.

### **2.5. Reflections of the Researcher**

I am a scholarship student in the YLSY program as well and I had an interest in studying the career decision making process of prospective academics during my enrollment to the language school within the scholarship program. From the very beginning I individually experienced the rational decision making process step by step and I believe this scholarship gives the participants time and opportunity to do so. I chose the qualitative method because there were no prior studies on this group; neither the group as YLSY students or as academic candidates. I want this study to be the first step towards better understanding of the target group, thus qualitative study would also help me and other researchers to develop new research. I also know most of the participants in person and I believe the

kinship we have helped them to trust the study and enabled them to open up emotionally and more honestly about their problems.

## **CHAPTER III- RESULTS**

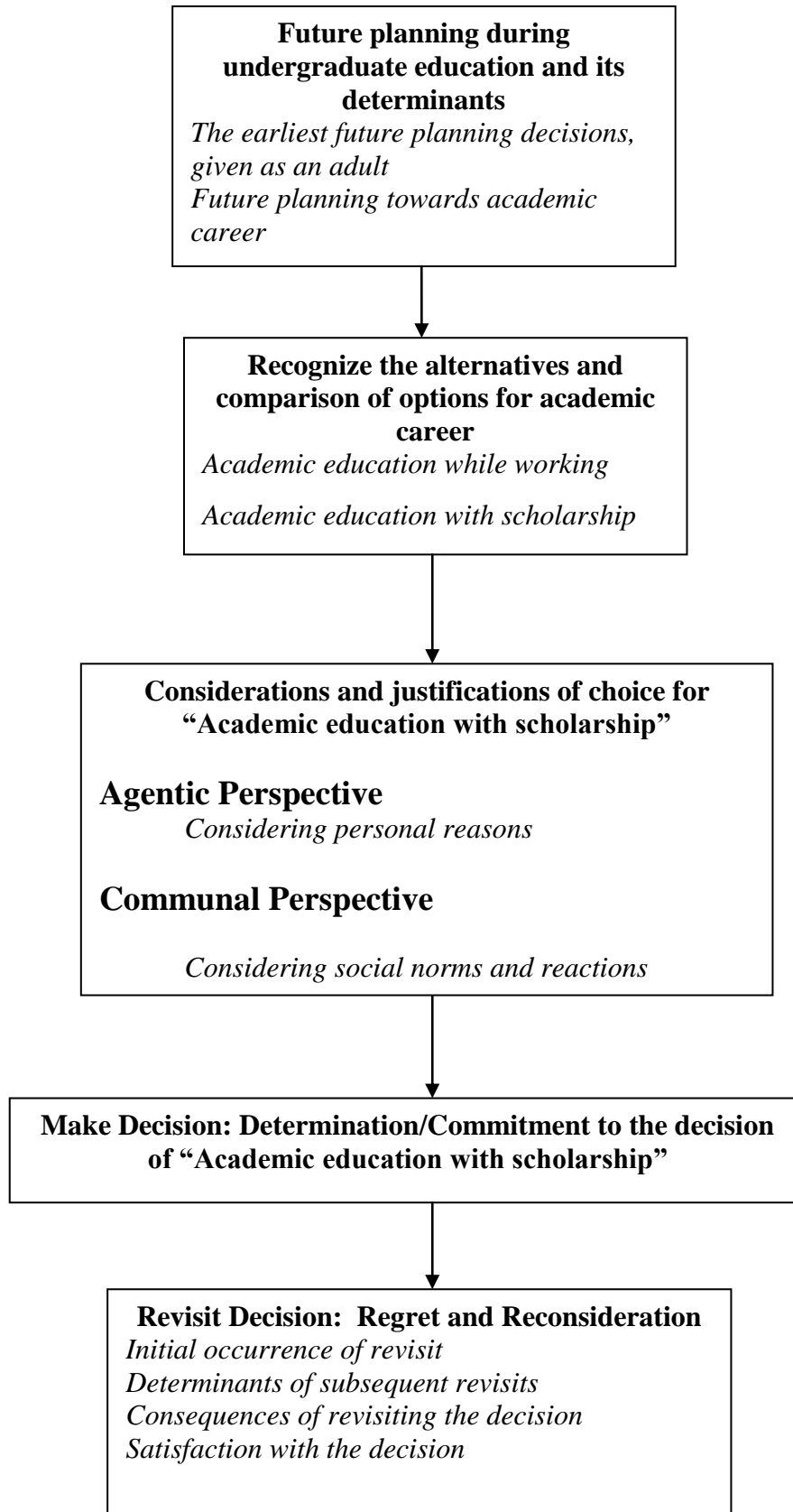
The students who were selected to receive higher education abroad told their stories and the qualitative analysis of transcribed interviews resulted in five super ordinate codes (Figure 2). The figure is designed to show the process of rational thinking of YLSY participants. These codes are presented and explained below with samples of quotes.

### **Theme 1. Future planning during undergraduate education and its determinants**

The analysis showed that the decision making process started with information gathering on future career options during their undergraduate education. This can be discussed under two sub-themes: future planning towards professional career, and future planning towards academic career.

**Table 2:** Theme 1 and Illustrative Quotes: Future Planning During Undergraduate Education and its Determinants

<i>Codes</i>	<i>Illustrative Quotes</i>
The early future planning	<i>...I was thinking private sector [job]</i>
Future planning towards academic career	<i>...I will absolutely have Master and then PhD...</i>



**Figure 2:** The Analysed Structure of the Data

### 1.1. The Early Future Planning

Within this sub-code participants described their undergraduate ambitions and the changes that shaped their goals over the four year period. The undergraduate education was perceived by some participants as a step which will lead them to better work and pay. Participants with a tendency towards a professional career associated their decision with three different reasons which are; be independent and live the life as they want, wait until their desires come true, and an alternative to their impossible dreams.

The expectations of families were constantly mentioned in the data and participants referred to their families as a means of motivation for their decisions. Nevertheless there were participants who wanted to be able to *accomplish their own way of life* separately from their family. For instance Emre (M<sup>24</sup>) reported that he has a family business that he could work for, although he wanted to have a separate path for his future. To accomplish his own things he was thinking of alternative routes on the professional career path. Emre (M) describes this situation as:

*“If you ask me the origin, I was not thinking much in undergraduate, because we have a family business on stainless steel. However until now [until starting the language course] I never thought something like, ‘I shouldn’t get education since it is their only income source when the time comes I will take it over and became the*

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<sup>24</sup> “M” Stands for biological gender “Male”

*boss'... I always said if you get assigned [to government] you could use your own facilities until the end....”*

Another reason for professional career planners was having an undergraduate degree they did not want. The Turkish higher education system is centralized and students are placed in a range of universities and departments by the scores achieved in an entrance exam. However between the years of 1998 and 2009 due to a policy change occupational high school students were unable to change their direction after their junior high school and some of them felt victimized by this situation. Caner (M) is one of them and he described this system as having a negative effect on his future plans since he was not happy with the department he attended. Thus his earliest career choice was around the age of 16 and he felt unhappy, because he wanted to have a different education than what he experienced in high school. Along these lines he describes his current life choices as a way of *spending time until he has the opportunity to accomplish what he wants.*

*“Actually I do not have a career plan, I mean I was going to graduate from ...<sup>25</sup> University and do something related the ..., because I was forced to choose ... University. I am a graduate from ..... High school<sup>26</sup>, it was impossible for me to go some other ... When I went to ... University I decided to be an academic....” (Caner, M)*

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<sup>25</sup> “...” Refers to the information that could potentially reveal the identity of the participant thus this information will not be reported. In these spaces the name of the occupational university was censored for confidentiality reasons.

<sup>26</sup> This space refer to a type of occupational high school



Even for the participants who loved what they studied and dreamed about getting a job related to it, when they actually started working as a professional in this field, they became disappointed and started thinking seriously about becoming an academic. However being an academic in Turkey is reportedly “*impossible*”, “*has limited opportunity*” and has no “*open positions*”. Also, candidates “*have to live depending on their advisors*”, and so demoralized candidates preferred to stay away from academic positions. Thus participants viewed an occupation in the professional sector as the logical thing to choose. As Oya (F<sup>27</sup>) described it;

*“Alongside [wanting to] be an academic, because I was thinking (of studying) system analytic [as a post graduate degree] and there are not many mathematic graduate academic positions in Turkey, so I was thinking private sector [job]”*

As they settled into professional jobs they quickly experienced regret. Starting a path without ambition caused them to give up the work they already had. Different participants pointed out the same issue “*...I saw that I cannot advance much in professional life...*” (Nazlı, F) “*...professional life was not my cup of tea...*” (Caner, M) and started their research on alternative methods for academic career options.

The future planning so far was made between the age of 16 and 23. The young adults reported wanting to reveal their individuality, long lost dreams and optional choices for an alternative dream. This early decision

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<sup>27</sup> “F” Stands for biological gender “Female”

would lead them to feel unsatisfied and to look for alternative routes for career destination.

## **1.2.Future Planning Towards Academic Career**

At the other end of the spectrum there was a group of candidates who did not think they had any other path in life other than academia. This group of participants always dreamt of working in academia. They also assumed that other candidates were just like them in never considering any other career path apart from academia: *“My purpose was actually the purpose of all of us” (Meryem, F)*

This group of participants, who graduated before 2012, even started to obtain their Master’s degree and experienced the Turkish graduate sector first hand. First of all they needed money to support themselves and could not find this in the universities. Secondly they needed to be able to work with Turkish academics that were reportedly “unethical”. Those experiences made the participants believe that it is not feasible to remain as students and that they would have to provide for themselves whilst studying. Thus they started to develop solutions such as working in a professional career while studying.

*“During the undergraduate especially last year I was thinking [pursing] academic career... of course I will have master and then PhD...In my department [Politics<sup>28</sup>] it is usual to think about government works, high rank government works [as career]. This [scholarship] is*

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<sup>28</sup> Could not report the full name of the department for confidentiality reasons

*amazing for me I don't have to provide for myself while pursuing academic career [I will have scholarship money].”(Meryem, F)*

The decision for an academic career was formed around the time when participants started their universities and interacted with academia. Thus the future decision of education left them with the need for opportunities to provide for themselves today and look for a job that could potentially give them a secure work option.

## **Theme 2. Recognize the alternatives and comparison of options for academic career**

After gathering information about their possible life choices and choosing academia as their sole option, participants had to consider ways of accomplishing this career. All of them agreed that they had to pursue an academic career while providing for themselves since none of them felt that it was right to depend upon their family for financial support. The expectation of family support seemingly ended when they graduated from undergraduate level university. This situation did not change for either gender: *“Of course we are getting [support] financially, but I do not want to have any more. You know we graduated from university” (Burak, M) “I did not want to [have graduate study] with [my] father’s money.” (Pelin, F).* Consequently money was the biggest obstacle facing the participants, and the reported solution for this problem had two answers: academic education while working, and academic education with scholarship.

**Table 3:** Theme 2 Illustrative Quotes: Recognizing the Alternatives and Comparison of Options for Academic Career

<i>Codes</i>	<i>Illustrative Quotes</i>
Academic education while working	<i>...I wanted to be able to be a research assistant in somewhere ....</i>
Academic education with scholarship	<i>... I did not want to [have graduate study] with [my] father's money ...</i>

### 2.1. Academic Education While Working

The consideration of this choice actually revealed that almost all participants were not pleased with the current situation of the academic sector in Turkey. One student claimed that if she couldn't get the current scholarship, she would not even leave her job and try to produce alternative ways to pursue an academic career "*...because I already had work there was no need for an alternative I mean I already have the economic power*" (Nazlı, F). Higher education in Turkey alongside working is reportedly only seen as academic growth rather than pursuing an academic career. Some candidates did think of taking into account that there are work options while getting a higher education, such as Tülay (F): "*I wanted to start master's degree as soon as I finished my undergraduate years, while [doing it] I wanted to be able to a be research assistant in somewhere.*", however they believe there was a slim chance of this happening since the required "*staff is limited*". One final problem with this option was that working either outside or within academia while studying is hard, since jobs and academic studies

both require mental work and are time-consuming, which could overwhelm the participants. Hence, so they were hesitant toward this option.

## **2.2. Academic Education with Scholarship**

Realizing how hard it is to actually work while studying or getting a position as a research assistant, all participants searched for scholarship opportunities and they stated that the options were limited not only within Turkey but also abroad. In this sub-code all the scholarship options considered by the students were classified. One of the students stated that she applied for other scholarships such as Fulbright; however she left the process without completing it due to the challenging process and requirements. TUBITAK as the other scholarship organization to which, reportedly, none of the participants got accepted.

*“I applied to the Fulbright but I did not go to its meeting.... Then I applied TUBITAK but I did not know that it was not sending students to abroad. Frankly I applied to [funds] from Turkey however I failed to get it.” (Lale, F)*

The Turkish government also sponsors another scholarship which is called ÖYP. ÖYP is the fund to train academics within academic institutions in Turkey. The difference between ÖYP and YLSY was also represented as the decision of staying in Turkey or going to a foreign country. Some of the participants even tried to attend ÖYP and failed, with “*language of requirements*”, “*requirement for a higher ALES score*” and “*having to stay in Turkey*” given as the main reasons.

Students describe ÖYP as *“In ÖYP you are living bound to your Advisor in Turkey. I mean I believe the education is not sufficient and [system is] hard.”* (İsmet, M) and dismiss the Turkish education system. On the other hand some of them recognized the better aspects of the program by saying *“In ÖYP you are living under the protection of the government this is a huge advantage. Your social security is starting... You are having salary.”* (Ferit, M). All participants agreed on these visible advantages of ÖYP however the biggest weakness was reportedly only allowing 6 months education in a foreign university *“In ÖYP abroad education is maximum 3 months or 6 months that kind of time is not satisfying.”* (Davut, M), *“I think YLSY is sending abroad it is the biggest difference”* (Meryem, F). They also think that ÖYP does not value the competencies an academic should have such as *“freedom to think”* (Sema, F), *“have a great amount of knowledge on his field”* (Haluk, M), *“should know English”* (Caner, M) and *“have to have a broad vision”* (İsmet, M).

The participants who applied to both YLSY and ÖYP reported that some of them could not get into the ÖYP. These participants believed that not many new graduates want to have an academic career by studying abroad. They believe that is the reason for the higher requirements of the ÖYP.

*“I mean I applied multiple times but my scores were not high enough, because it [ÖYP] is in Turkey more people want to attend to be an academic in Turkey. People,*

*because they do not want to go abroad, I mean not very much". (Ferit, M)*

Regarding the financial aspect, the difference obviously highlighted the superiority of ÖYP “*ÖYP has 2 [thousand TL] salary and we have 600 liras but this scholarship has the opportunity of studying abroad.*” (Pelin, F). Thus one could assume that participants who were successful in both of the scholarship-s would automatically choose the ÖYP. However the desire to go abroad made some students ignore their secured placement in the ÖYP and choose the outwardly less desirable program.

*“I [got accepted] to ÖYP... I [choose YLSY] because I want to be an academic at least [if I could not get accepted to YLSY] I wanted to be a good academic by staying in Turkey I still wanted to be in a personnel list”. (Lale, F)*

### **Theme 3. Considerations and justifications of choice for “Academic education with scholarship”**

After searching for a way to gain an academic education in order to pursue an academic career, the students found YLSY to be their best option. Then the decision making process continued with their justification of YLSY. The last question which was asked considering the time before the decision to apply was “*What was your objective, when you applied the YLSY scholarship?*” and before the country choice, “*What were your criteria as you chose the country for the scholarship?*” The answers were interdependent, and two types of consideration emerged from the data. The first consideration was what the participants wanted for themselves (agentic)

and the second one was consideration of the social environment (communal). Each participant had some agentic and some communal reasons that they chose to address separately. These sub codes are: agentic perspective: considering personal reasons, and communal perspective: considering social norms and reactions.

**Table 4:** Theme 3 Illustrative Quotes: Considerations and Justifications of Choice for “Academic Education with Scholarship”

<i>Codes</i>	<i>Illustrative Quotes</i>
Agentic Perspective: considering personal reasons	... <i>Firstly to have an opportunity to go abroad, to eliminate the language problem ....</i>
Communal Perspective: considering social norms and reactions	... <i>I considered my family, you know America is so far away ...</i>

### **3.1. Agentic Perspective: Considering Personal Reasons**

YLSY is known for sending students abroad; when participants were asked “*why do you want to go?*” participants started by explaining the involvement of their agency in the decision. These reasons were classified into five categories; a) wanting to travel, get to know new cultures and people, b) to learn the language c) to have a better education and improve themselves d) to have a guaranteed future e) not having to support themselves while studying, and lastly, f) to prove their capability.



Wanting to travel was the reason that made all participants crack a smile; however all of them recognized that going abroad would give them a chance to experience different places which otherwise would be hard to come by, and it is an additional benefit which is not asked but happily accepted. Travelling is also presented as being an “*opportunity to connect with other cultures*” and “*learn their cultures*”. This was the first excitement participants expressed as their reason for applying to the YLSY, since the scholarship means “*I am free to travel and to be entertained, I mean ... we are going to the course and the time left is ours...*” (İsmet, M)

“*...I love travelling, I love to meet new people, I love to learn something new from different lives that I visit and see. So I think that is going to be a great experience for me and at the same time you know the idea of abandoning everything suits me that is why I think [YLSY] have a connection with me.*” (Oya, F)

Another requirement of the scholarship is to learn the language of the country in which the participant wants to study. Learning English is perceived as a big step towards personal improvement. Thus the majority of YLSY students wanted to study in an English speaking country and this group of participants reported their desires to go the USA or the UK. “*If you want to learn different cultures ... different languages [and] want to improve yourselves from multiple aspects [YLSY] is obviously the only choice.*” (Sema, F). They saw the language as a way to be better than the rest of their home educated Turkish academic rivals.

*“The most attractive side of the scholarship is... firstly to have an opportunity to go abroad, to eliminate the language problem and maybe in our return we will have English as good as our mother tongue. It is something necessary for a person that dreams to be an academic.” (Lale, F)*

Some even claimed that their interest in learning a language is what makes them “different” and “eligible” to succeed in this scholarship, *“Firstly to learn a foreign language is a big joy for me, also learning new things is so compatible with my personality.” (Rüya, F).*

The participants also have problems with the Turkish academic system. They have low opinions about the academics in the system, whom participants described as “not ideal” and “devoid of scientific ethic”, thus participants want to go abroad to experience the “ideal” way of education in a “better educational facility”. *“I believe America is better in the academic field...”* said Oya (F) as she explained why she chooses the USA as a possible destination. This was echoed by Davut’s (M) description summarized the general reasoning that all the students expressed:

*“...I guess usually that country has the best universities and if something going to happen I want the best one. If I am going some I want to go somewhere I want to go a big country to get their vision”*

When they were asked to compare the system of foreign universities and Turkish opportunities the low level of respect towards Turkish facilities was even more visible. Many participants were encouraged by their

professors with overseas experience “...I mentioned my professors affected me. Some of them went to America and especially wanted me to go too...” (Haluk,M) and some of them experienced victimization in the Turkish system.

*“...We are unable to do the stuff we want to do in Turkey. The lack of facility and preventions [by supervisors] are in our way, thus the scientific ethic is not settled in our country. I believe the opportunities and freedom is greater abroad.” (Ferit, M)*

A problem faced by candidates for an academic career is the limited need for new staff in Turkish universities. Thus the participants were going to be forced to study for job entrance examinations alongside higher education studies. Thus participants also stated that this scholarship gave them the opportunity to focus solely on their education without having to consider other problems. The specific examination is named Public Personnel Selection Examination (Kamu Personeli Seçme Sınavı, KPSS) and it is used to designate the new graduates to open positions within governmental organizations.

*“I was thinking about preparing for civil servant examination while pursuing the academic career. However I think this scholarship is so good for me. It is a great opportunity that not only I can support myself financially but also I can make academic career and I do not have to work”*

In this scholarship students are selected to fill the future need for academics in Turkey, so they have the opportunity to choose a city where they want to work after graduation and this gives them a sense of security that encourage them to go abroad. “...*We will have a job when we return and we know where we will return*” (Meryem, F). Participants reported feeling superior not only towards their home grown counterparts but also towards their family members. Thus to prove they were better than their family members they chose to go abroad.

*“I have cousins... They went to America... accepted from a university.... My father says ‘If they can do why would not you do?’ I mean they could not [get in to university] in Turkey. That is why I believe in myself” (Umut, F)*

This statement was further proven when the participants were asked about their capabilities. Most of them reported having agentic characteristic such as “high self-esteem” or aiming to develop this characteristic abroad in order to gain “*control over [their] life*”.

### **3.2. Communal Perspective: Considering Social Norms and Reactions**

YLSY is “*a summit oriented steady process that requires patience*” (Meryem, F) and in case of failure the “*scholarship*” turns into a “*debt*”. The debt does not affect the participant alone but it also affects the guarantors of the participant. When participants were asked why they were willing to take this risk, they reported communal reasons alongside the above mentioned personal reasons. The communal considerations included: (i) to improve

Turkish education, (ii) make their family proud and (iii) to have a stabled future in a city closer to home.

The Turkish educational system was the top agentic reason given by the participants who wanted to have a better education. On the other hand the same participants was aware that they had to return to this system, however instead of fitting in with the broken system the participants wanted to bring a “*better system*” to the university that they will work at and to make a better future for the next generation. This patriotic way of thinking gave them a bigger reason to overcome the hardships.

*“I know there is a mandatory service, but we have to look from this side of the issue. We are the children of this country and have to do something to pay back our fidelity. I will try to do the best thing I can do for my country. I perceive it as my [mission].” (Meryem, F)*

Tülay (F) stressed the same issue and stated that although people kept telling her that once she experienced the “*better option*” she would not want to come back, she believe her gratitude towards Turkey would make her come back: “*...Of course I will take the information, return to my country and improve my country...*” (Tülay, F).

Alongside their country, participants also evaluated their output from the perspective of their parents. When the participants believed that their family was unsupportive they were further encouraged when they gained this support.

*“About the scholarship my family was so happy. I thought they would not want since I had a job in a health centre, but my father was the most supportive one. I mean my family is so supportive they become my guarantor.”*  
(Nazlı, F)

Even when the participants were happy with their early career choice and the jobs they were currently working in, once their family got more excited than they were about the scholarship, they felt obliged to carry on. “[I] did not need an alternative [career path] I was already working [outside the academia] with a good salary.” (Nazlı, F). This raised the question of whether it was more important to participants to fulfill the expectations of family and friends than their own desires. Participants were asked to evaluate themselves when it came to the decision of others and the majority of them believed that even though they gave their “own decisions” they were asking from the opinions of people they trusted such as “professors” and “fathers”. In this case some families was so excited by this rare opportunity that they made some of the participants feel that they had to attend the scholarship to not only make their family proud but also to fulfill their expectations, especially their father’s expectations.

*“Even if I do not want to go my family will be forcing me to go. I mean different from other families, they experienced abroad so it is not a problem for them. They want it more for me, even I change my mind they would not...”* (Pelin, F)

According to participants, since their family paid for their college fees they felt that their families would expect them to at least be able to support themselves and to be successful in life. This life success however is not considered “*complete*” without starting a family through marrying as soon as possible, so marriage was a part of the communal considerations. They could either stay in Turkey and marry or go away and postpone marriage.

*“I considered my family, you know America is so far away and I cannot come back whenever they want. Earning, I also considered the future earnings and my friends thoughts [about the scholarship] ... I am single and then I considered the process of marriage.” (Oya, F)*

Considering their age, some participants got married before the scholarship and had to consider their spouses, yet still wanted to go abroad. *“I was engaged [when I was applying] then marriage happened and so on...my wife is in my hometown and I am here taking language course... We had so many doubts so it was a hard decision” (Kerim, M).* These participants speculated that it was so hard to start a family and they needed additional support, however others believed that if it is hard then one should wait until the end of the scholarship. However marriage was not just an option for some participants but a necessary requirement. Turkish society is perceived as controlling or over-protective towards women. *““What is up my dear! Where are you going?’ would be told [to the girl]. It is in the general*

*structure of our culture” (Güney, M). Thus getting married was the only way for some females to be able to participate in this scholarship.*

*“From the time I was a little, I always wanted to go to America, but my father never let me... For example after I learned this scholarship if I did not get married, he said ‘I won’t let you to go when you are single, if you get married you can go’ Thus for example if I didn’t get married I wouldn’t be able to go. There is no problem for men; they are [free] to go”. (Umut, F)*

The last consideration was regarding the choice of city in which they would receive their final post; since participants would spend a considerable amount of time there they wanted to be closer to their home town. *“I would like to be able to go to my family’s place freely” (Tülay, F).* Thus for some students one of the most important choices in the decision making process was to choose their destination city *“In the decision making process we paid most attention to the cities, because we will work in that city and live there so it was the most [important] thing...” (Umut, F).*

#### **Theme 4: Make decision: Determination/Commitment to the decision of “Academic education with scholarship”**

The process of application is made legally binding after the participants sign the abounding bill, which has power over both guarantors and the participants. All the details of the scholarship are determined before the signatures are made and after that there is no turning back without



consequences. From this point on the bill ties the participants both physically and psychologically.

*“...I talked with my professors and they supported me 100%, so I understand I am in the right way. After I finalized the paper documents and starting to the language course I never thought [giving up]. I mean after I channel [my attention] to the language course all the withdrawal ideas vanished from my mind.” (Sema, F)*

### **Theme 5: Revisit Decision: Regret and Reconsideration**

Having researched the scholarship for a considerable amount of time, when they started being actual scholars many participants reported feeling disillusioned and regretted taking part in YLSY. In this theme, participants were asked when they started to regret their decision, what disappointed them, what consequences of their regrets were, and why they did not leave the YLSY. Their answers were categorized into three sub-codes:

**Table 5:** Theme 5 Illustrative Quotes: Revisit Decision: Regret and Reconsideration

<i>Codes</i>	<i>Illustrative Quotes</i>
Initial occurrence of revisit	<i>I was thinking [about giving up] the reason is.. I missed the deadlines...</i>
Determinants of subsequent revisits	<i>... Firstly to have an opportunity to go abroad, to eliminate the language problem ....</i>
Consequences of revisiting the decision	<i>“Do you think I have that kind of luxury? Because the law is tying us. In the moment we give up we have to pay the fine...”</i>
Satisfaction with the Decision	<i>...I saw the better parts of scholarship..</i>

### **5.1. Initial Occurrence of Revisit**

The first reported regret was related to the application deadlines of the universities. The scholarships officially started in November however many USA universities’ application periods were already over in November: *“I was thinking [about giving up] the reason is.. I missed the deadlines for universities and that means the time I am going to spent abroad was going to be longer... There were my family’s expectations....”* (Davut, M).

However most of the students reported regret after they started the language education. When the reason for the dissatisfaction was asked of

Oya (F) she started to list her reasons, from the lack of knowledge of lecturers, to the very expensive cost of the language course. According to her, the language course is around “20.000 liras<sup>29</sup>” and there are better courses out there for only “4000 or 5000<sup>30</sup>” where she could get a better education.

*“We have to discuss the sufficiency of the teachers ... Before, I went a private language course for TOEFL and my teacher was American. We get a 3 months education without talking a single word of Turkish.... The teachers that are going to give TOEFL education at least have to take the exam 3 times and get scores above 100.... In 21st century a teacher asking the students “Was it this way?” is funny. A very substantial investment is done and huge amount of money is paid to schools for per students.”(Oya, F)*

## **5.2. Determinants of Subsequent Revisits**

The decision made by participants was well thought through and was supported by their social environment; however this did not prevent them from constantly revisiting their decision. When participants talked about the conditions of the scholarship they implied that the “*lack of financial and health support*”, and “*the ambiguity*” of their status were the main culprits of their constant revisiting. The salary participants are paid has to support

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<sup>29</sup> Around 6,917 USD

<sup>30</sup> 1,384 USD or 1,729 USD

them for the duration of the language school and all extra expenses have to be paid for by the student.

*“It is absolutely hard to [pay for] a dorm [room] and travel expenses at the same time with 600 liras<sup>31</sup> ... You also have to take IELTS or TOEFL [exams] and you will give the money for it. It is about our one month salary.” (Sema, F)*

The disappointment regarding support for healthcare was more apparent for participants who left their jobs to start this scholarship, since in Turkey as long as a person is a student they can make use of their family’s health insurance. Some of the participants have a history of working before their application, thus their insurance was separated from their family returning to being a student does not reinstate this family-based support. *“Health conditions are bad there is no insurance. For example I don’t have insurance from my family so when I went to hospital I have to pay for it.” (Meryem, F).*

Another negative outcome of the decision was the title this scholarship provided for the participants. Participants are not currently related with any school, so this makes it impossible for them to use the title “student”. In addition, MEB does not consider them to be a part of the work force, thus participants struggle to understand their place in the system. *“According to MEB [we] are students. I think that they both do not behave like we are students but consider us as students”* said Caner (M) explaining his frustration with this vagueness. Although the participants consider

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<sup>31</sup> 208 USD

themselves students they are unable to take advantage of this status and as soon as their last connection with an educational facility is cut, their rights and benefits also go away “*They cancelled our student cards and these things are so bad they do not try to make things easier for us*” (Meryem, F).

Another reason for revisiting is the paperwork that forces students to have an ongoing interaction with government officials. Students have certain expectations when it comes to the help they will receive however the attitudes of the government officers are not considered satisfactory by the students. Ali (M) says “*the support [network] is inefficient...There is little resources you can use in times of need*”. When the participants were asked “*How much are you satisfied from the support and services you get, currently from your institution?*” all of them said “*No*”. “*I am not satisfied, they behave rudely and throw away [our complaints] it feels like they are kings and we are underlings. I mean it does not make a human satisfied.*” (Umut, F). After experiencing this much negativity from the staff, participants tried several solutions such as a “*letter of requests*” and voiced their concerns in the scholarship conferences, yet nothing changed. This increased the feeling of disappointment over time as they realized that the language school was also not providing the education they had desired.

*“I am not satisfied with the language school especially about the opportunities of language school. People are telling go and get (TOEFL) you will have peace of mind or something. I could not take the TOEFL [I will fail]. I am not satisfied with the language course.”* (Lale, F)

### 5.3. Consequences of Revisiting the Decision

Constantly revisiting the decision made the negative aspects of the scholarship more visible to the scholars and thus this situation forced the students to believe that what they had perceived to be a “*scholarship*” turned out to be a “*debt*”

*“[I] will stay away from my family and will stay for a long time and after my return I have to work two year for every one year [that I stayed abroad]. Also the guarantors and the money that we have to shoulder is a huge amount... I mean before signing something you are thinking willingly or unwillingly” (Ali, M)*

The revisits also established the idea of giving up the scholarship in case of better options. For example some participants were part of the non-academic side of the scholarship and they are not allowed to have a PhD education. Although these participants knew the circumstances, they felt regret after seeing ÖYP participants with greater opportunities. Thus with constant re-visits participants reported higher rates of wanting to drop out of the scholarship after the Master’s degree: “*I believe I will come back after Master’s degree*” (Caner, M), “*I do not want to spend time any longer...Thus I will come back after Master’s degree*” (Tülay, F). These participants stated their continuous desire to give up the scholarship in the future and wanted to pursue better opportunities once they were abroad.

*“The facility are not [letting] me to get a PhD. If [I] become an active student in there...maybe they send me*

*requirement that they will pay for my expenses.... Then I would make review... and maybe pay back to the Ministry of Education...” (Emre, M)*

However leaving the scholarship is the harder option as it has huge consequences. When the researcher asked “*Why did you not give up the scholarship?*” Güney (M) gave a statement which summarized his peers’ fears:

*“Do you think I have that kind of luxury? Because the law is tying us. In the moment we give up we have to pay the fine [of everything] ..... I did not prepare my psychology for this, never... I mean even if it is hard, even if it is time consuming I have to conclude the process.... There was times I cursed but there was no idea in my mind [that in favor of] giving up. There shouldn’t be.”*

#### **5.4. Satisfaction with the Decision**

Not all participants were afraid of the cost that giving up would incur however everyone was aware that the scholarship was not what they were expecting, and that it differed in a negative way. It would be understandable for the participants to give up if they did not fear the consequences, but instead they persisted in staying, stating that expectation of a bigger long term positive effect was more of a valid reason to endure the short time negative consequences. “... *I give up [the idea of leaving the scholarship] when I saw the better parts of scholarship.” (Davut, M). “My dream was to*

*have a Masters degree outside the country so I am thinking of enduring it.”*  
(Tülay, F).

### **3.1. Summary of the Results**

The most important findings of the research can be summarized as follows:

- a) The academic career decision for an adult is a never ending thinking process where people will change their decision when the damages they receive are greater than the benefits they perceive.
- b) Early dreams and career decisions were not always built around academia, but instead focused more on individual achievements and agency of the participants.
- c) A decision with heavy consequences resulted in resentment towards the occupation that was forced on to the participant.
- d) Professional careers were mostly perceived as “dead end” with no way to self-improvement or promotions.
- e) Working whilst also participating in the scholarship was considered highly unfavorable among the participants, since the mental and physical work load was perceived as overwhelming.
- f) Governmental scholarships such as ÖYP and YLSY were often chosen by those who wanted job security more than studying abroad and this group would choose ÖYP over YLSY.
- g) Those who want self-improvement over security choose YLSY and even though there were eligible candidates for ÖYP they refused to give up the opportunity to go abroad.



- h) After the YLSY became a possible option, participants started considering the pros and cons of going abroad before signing the Bill of Loading.
- i) The agentic reasons for choosing YLSY were “travel”, “cultural learning”, “language improvement”, “desire for academic advancement”, “job security”, “money” and “improve the perception of self worth”.
- j) The communal reasons for choosing YLSY were “to benefit the future of Turkish universities, “make one’s family proud” and “live closer to the family home in a secure job”.
- k) Fulfilling the expectations of their family could lead young adults to make a certain decision and convince themselves that the decision is the right one.
- l) The problems caused by the staff of the scholarship organization made candidates revisit their career choice regularly and forced them to evaluate the worth of the process. Constant revisit demoralized them and decreased the engagement of the candidates towards the YLSY.
- m) Overall findings indicated that participants were ready to give up their career decision at a time when they felt that the negative aspects of the scholarship were outweighing the benefits.

## **CHAPTER IV- DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Career decision making is one of the most important decisions that most people face in their late teens or early twenties. The aim of this study was to understand the decision making process of YLSY students in Turkey. Five research questions were formed to try to understand their career decision to be an academic and study abroad in the matrix of a rational decision making process. In this section the results will be explained within the context of existing literature.

The results showed that participants had carefully planned their YLSY participation and their involvement with the academia. From the very first career option to the re-evaluation of their academic career desire, participants presented a rational decision making process.

To begin with, the answers of the participants were wide-ranging towards their early career ideas however the majority of them implied an attraction to a job that guided them to choose the department they are studying in. It is important to remember the exam system also contributed to the career decision and created an unfavourable career decision for some participants. Thus, consistent with the literature (Cueso, 2005), participants' minds shifted towards becoming an academic, especially after participants started their university education. However since the decision is a complicated and long lasting one, students usually considered all possible options for a future career. Some of them even had experience with different jobs, but did not feel satisfied in the field that they had studied for. Most of them believed that professional life is a place that has no room for

satisfactory improvement. Their academic ambitions were in line with their dislike for professional expectations, thus they choose to consider an academic career regardless of their department.

As Adshead and Jamieson (2008) suggested, at this age students become rational thinkers. The results showed that after they decided to follow a path in academia, the participants considered their options for an academic career. Participants were aware of the alternative ways of becoming an academic and as a rational thinker they recognized and evaluated those alternatives. The alternatives they considered generally leaned towards the different routes to achieving the required education such as working while studying or pursuing another scholarship. ÖYP, Fulbright and TÜBİTAK were all mentioned as possible scholarships that the candidates attended or would have attended. Participants claimed that these options were either hard to get into, like the scholarship programs, or required so much extra work that it would make the process of studying for a PhD harder on participants.

Before deciding to continue their path in an academic program, the participants had to evaluate the YLSY from both personal and social perspectives. They had to consider it personally because failure brings a debt that has to be paid by the student. They also have to consider it, because they have to leave their social environment to be a part of YLSY. First of all they had to consider the scholarship from the point of agency and what they were expecting from their future. The first thing YLSY participants wanted for themselves was the opportunity to study abroad. The

positive sides of studying abroad were considered as an opportunity to “travel”, “cultural learning”, and “language improvement”. These things are the motivators for education, however participants believed that this education would bring them “academic advancement”, “job security”, “money” and “improvement of the perception of self esteem”. Some of the gains were similar to the career anchors that were cited as the motivator for Turkish academics (Ünal & Gizir, 2014). Although the motivators for choosing to participate in the scholarship showed variety, their expectations for overseas education were consistent with the aims of the program. Participants wanted to improve themselves, in line with governmental expectations (MEB, 2012), and wanted to have a better education than is currently available in Turkey. Job security is reportedly an important career anchor for Turkish academics (Ünal, & Gizir, 2014) and YLSY participants were aware that they have better conditions for an academic career since they do not have to face career risks such as lack of job opportunities, which were highlighted by their counterparts (İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi Araştırma Görevlileri, 2015).

Another point they raised as a reason for choosing YLSY was the dependency system in Turkey that forces students to be under the rule of their professors. As reported in the literature a certain level of autonomy is needed by academics to feel fulfilled in their job (Ünal & Gizir, 2014) and YLSY participants also wanted a level of independence to be able to work for their academic career. The results also showed that the participants

believe that Turkish academics lack the research ethic to fulfil this need, thus it drives the students overseas.

The communal consideration points were in line with the literature. Most of the participants had discussed the scholarship with their families, although consulting creates a better career decision (Diehl, Owen & Youngblade, 2014), in this situation it might force participants to be a part of both academia and YLSY. Two female participants reported having so much family support that they felt like they had to go for their families. As it is known from the literature, family's expectations could shape the young people's career decision (Mau, 2000), especially in communal countries like Turkey. The reason for their high favourability towards the scholarship is because most of them value the importance of paying back to the country that supports them. As was mentioned in the literature (Gebauer, Leary, & Neberich, 2012) the communal culture of Turkey might have an effect from this point of view.

Participants did not perceive the YLSY program as a debt. Thus the results indicated that as long as the participants were motivated to stay in the scholarship they saw the mandatory service, after their education, as a small price that needed to be paid. Participants had the opportunity to choose their options for mandatory service destination, thus they chose based on their liking. This is in line with the literature, the safety of the city they would work in has a huge effect on their decision (Ünal, & Gizir, 2014).

One of the most important consideration points was the debt perception and the acceptance of the educational cost. The results indicated

that although the participants do not consider the scholarship as a debt at the moment, they are aware they are taking a risk by participating. Participants were taking a risk while being optimistic and creating opportunities for themselves; this situation can be explained using planned happenstance theory (Mitchell, Levin, & Krumboltz, 1999) whereby people with high planned happenstance are less likely to give up in negative situations. The high risk taking could indicate that the YLSY participants had high rates of agency, as Nordbye and Teigen (2014) reported. The participants desired a level of self- improvement which is also one of the agentic characteristics. However there were still communal implications on the decisions made by the participants.

Revisiting of the career decisions was the last part of the rational decision making process (Adshead & Jamieson, 2008). This initially aimed to analyse if the decision actually generated the desired outcome. The results showed that due to them being in a process that will last until graduation, participants revisited their decision to make an evaluation of both harm and benefit. As is suggested by the career anchor theory (Schein, 1974), just like workers YLSY participants also evaluated their motivations and social perspective towards the YLSY. Revisit first happened due to the long time requirements of the scholarship; participants believed they were aging and that this was a problem. They wanted to finish their studies as soon as possible. Thus when their term in the scholarship became longer they revisited the decision. The most important reason for revisit was the ambiguity of their status which is also reported as a reason for burn-out in

the literature (Doğan, Demir & Türkmen, 2016). Participants do not know if the role they have is “student” or “academic” and this creates many loopholes regarding their financial and health benefit rights. The salary participants get in Turkey is below the minimum wage, thus it created worry over the basic needs for living and it increased dissatisfaction. This was especially the case when the participants were attending the language course in another city, and hence they worried over their food, living and health expenses more than others. This created the need for consistent revisits, and increased dissatisfaction.

To sum up Adshead and Jamieson (2008) explain five steps for rational decision making. The first step is problem identification; in these phase participants decided that academia is the career they want and their problem is how to get the adequate education for it. Second step was developing opinions; in this step participants developed their options for an academic education; they decided working while studying is going to be extremely hard and they decided to apply to YLSY. Third step was evaluating the options; in this step participants evaluated the YLSY from the agentic and communal perspective to justify it as a possibility. Forth step was decision making and participants chose to sign the bounding contract. Last step in the rational decision making process was re-evaluation; in this phase participants re-evaluate their decision and try to identify if their participation to the YLSY was a mistake or a risk that worth taking. In this concept it is safe to assume YLSY participants had a very careful rational decision making process for their participation to the scholarship. In the

following section the implications, limitations and future research suggestions will be presented.

#### **4.1. Implications of This Study and Recommendations**

The results of this study have important implications both for the future of the YLSY related people, plus policies and for the decision making for the future career literature. MEB do not report the information surrounding YLSY, thus the accuracy of the statistical information is questionable. To have more accurate data for YLSY researches, authorities should realise an annual report to the public, explaining the current situation. This data could also help students while giving career related decisions. The responsible personnel should be educated to have better understanding of YLSY and they should be encouraged to be more empathic towards students.

##### **4.1.1. Consulting System**

Career decision making is an important area whose importance is widely acknowledged in Organizational Psychology literature. As the literature previously stated, consulting could improve the career decision and increase the satisfaction with the decision (Diehl et. al 2014). Participants did discuss their decision with their families and it is a good thing, but family support could be perceived as expectation by students (Mau, 2000) and it is important to have a third party for reliable consultation.



The results of this study suggested that a consultation department with reliable staff, who have prior overseas experience, could improve the overall experience for the YLSY candidates. Students currently lack the necessary information that would help them anticipate life as an international student, thus having someone with experience could help them to prepare themselves psychologically. This could be a useful motivator and suitable consultation could decrease the late term turn-over rates within the system. People who lack the proper motivation for YLSY could be spotted and guided outside the system, before any more is invested in them. This could also open up space for people with more motivation and drive to succeed.

#### **4.1.2. Clarify the Roles of YLSY Students**

Doğan, Demir and Türkmen, (2016) said that the ambiguity regarding the nature of the role they hold is one of the most important reasons for academic personnel burn-out. The results showed that a great deal of the dissatisfaction of YLSY students came from role and status ambiguity. They are sometimes referred to as students, and other times they are treated as non-students. If their role is “student”, the student status should be acknowledged by all governmental institutions and they should be able to use all student advantages, such as discount bus cards. If they are not students, their admission to the Social Security System should be completed, so they could use the benefits which are due to a government officer. Due to this role ambiguity, students are in danger of losing their motivators and it could increase the turn-out rate in the scholarship.

### **4.1.3. Implications for Research**

The results of this study added value to the career anchor theory (Ünal, & Gizir, 2014; Schein, 1974), in terms of coverage area in academia. It was known that deciding on a career could increase the success of the students (Uthayakumar, et al., 2010); however this study showed that without the proper career motivators the continuation of an academic career could not be ensured.

Another important contribution was made to international students' decision making literature. The international students' decision was considered from the perspective of immigration theories, putting students in place of immigrants (Chen, 2007; Eder, Smith, & Pitts, 2010; Maringe & Carter 2007; Lee, 2014), or from the marketing aspect of international education placing the students as consumers (Teng, & Khong 2015). This study placed the students in the centre of the decision making process of a career decision and took the international studentship as a part of the process, rather than the aim. The YLSY participants are not immigrants; they have a strong desire to return to their home country and they are not spending money on their education, thus they do not consider themselves as consumers of education. This research could be the first step towards understanding the motivations for international students' with a scholarship.

### **4.2. Limitations**

There are several limitations which affected this study. First of all, the researcher collected data only from those who were in language

education. They had only been a part of this scholarship for a couple of months and had only learnt about the system from their peers. Their incomplete knowledge limited their answers about the aftermath of their decision. Another limitation was that the data was only collected from 19 participants, all of whom were taking a language course in Istanbul. Participants from other language courses or other cities could experience the scholarship differently. There is a group of participants who do not have the opportunity to take a language course and hence their experience of the scholarship could be entirely different from the participants in this study. This limitation makes it harder for the researcher to make generalizations with the results for all YLSY students.

The researcher was a part of the scholarship, thus the familiarity with the participants could have had an effect on her and she might not have been completely objective. Thus the researcher read the data several times and took notes, which were sent the notes to her advisor to be checked for objectivity. Familiarity could also affect the students; since this is a governmental scholarship, expressing dissatisfaction could create a fear of losing the scholarship. The participants received a copy of the information and consent form that also contained the details of the researcher. This gave them a sense of security, as it assured them that they had no obligation to participate and if they felt threatened they could withdraw from the study without consequences.

The interviews were conducted within the classrooms of a public university, thus participants could have been affected from the general

ambiance and may have limited their answers. The locations used were also under a scheduled timescale, thus some participants had to rush their answers towards the end of the interviews.

### **4.3. Future Research**

There should be a follow-up study to understand the state of mind of the participants after they have complete their education. As the researcher was writing this thesis by using the available data, she re-contacted some of the participants even if this was not within the scope of this research. In this informal follow-up, the researcher learned that one participant had left the scholarship while she was on the language course and three of them were planning to discontinue after the Master's degree. They presented different reasons for their decisions. The first reason was being unable to adapt to a new society without social support from a Turkish community. The second reason was marriage; participants who met their prospective spouses during the scholarship decided to give up the current program to find a non-binding scholarship. The third reason was the language (i.e., English) itself. Many participants were first time language learners and complexity of the higher education courses requires higher language proficiency and some scholars couldn't improve to this level.

These observations show that a follow-up study is essential for better understanding of the mechanisms of decision making to pursue or withdrawal from scholarship program. It would be useful to add a scale to understand the scholars' adaptability as a competency. With a follow-up study the factors affecting the early withdrawal could be designated and

used to predict and to pin-point people with low adaptability. Additionally another similar study with a larger sample could add more to the current understanding.

A separate study should be done aimed at the participants of YLSY who are designated to work on TP or GDF. They might have a different understanding of the scholarship, since they are not allowed to have a PhD. The limitation on education seems to create disappointment at the end of the Master's degree for those whom want to continue to their higher education. Although they participate in the YLSY knowing the conditions they have, their understanding or expectation of the program is not clear. The YLSY graduates should also be investigated and they should be questioned to see whether or not they have any problems adapting to the Turkish academic system after experiencing different systems overseas.

If it is possible the students who have left the YLSY should be found and questioned about their experience and reasons. This information could be useful for improving the educational system and closing the organizational flaws, which are drawing the students out of the system.

There should be a research aimed at the support personnel/officers, personnel who work for the scholarship,, their job trainings should be investigated and a need analysis should be conducted to understand and meet with their needs. Motivation enhancing training could be conducted to increase their performance and teach them how to handle students more efficiently and empathetically.

There should be also a study concerning the candidates for YLSY, who fail to get accepted, to try to understand their passion for an academic career. Some of the failed student could continue their academic path in some other platform or they could abandon it all together, it is important to create an understanding. This could also help to comprehend young Turkish people's desire to be academics, in consideration to the circumstances.

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## Appendix A: Turkish Interview Questions

### I. DEMOGRAFİK SORULAR

1. Cinsiyet: E K
2. Kaç yaşındasınız?
3. Hangi bölüm mezunusunuz? Ne zaman mezun oldunuz?
4. Okumayı düşündüğünüz bölüm nedir? Bu bölümü nasıl seçtiniz?
5. Yüksek Lisans yaptınız mı?
6. Hangi kadro ile Bursu aldınız? Akademik kadro, TPOAS kadrosu
7. Eğitiminizi Hangi Ülkede devam ettirmek istiyorsunuz?

### II. YLSY SÜRECİ

1. YLSY bursuna katılma amacınız nedir?
2. Lisans döneminizde nasıl bir kariyer planınız vardı? Bu bursa bilinçli ve planlı olarak mı katıldınız yoksa anlık bir kararla mı hareket ettiniz?
3. Herhangi bir destek bulamasaydınız bile yurt dışında eğitim almayı düşünüyor muydunuz? Alternatif planınız ne idi?
4. ÖYP (Öğretim Görevlisi Yetiştirme Programı) gibi diğer burslara da başvurduğunuz mu?
  - a. Neden başvurduğunuz/ başvurmadınız?
  - b. Sizce iki burs arasındaki en önemli fark nedir?
5. Karşılıksız olan burslara da başvurduğunuz mu?
6. Kazandıktan sonra bursu bırakmayı hiç düşündünüz mü?
  - a. Neden böyle bir şey düşündünüz?
  - b. Neden bırakmaktan vazgeçtiniz?
7. Burs konusunda ailenizin tavrı nedir?
  - a. Ailenizden destek görüyor musunuz?
8. Kefillerinizi nasıl buldunuz?
9. Kefil bulma sürecinde herhangi bir zorluk yaşadınız mı?
10. Bursun sağladığı maddi koşullardan memnun musunuz?
  - a. Ekonomik koşullar

- b. Sağlık koşulları
- c. Aylık burs miktarı

11. Bursun size en cazip gelen yanları nelerdir? Bursun size göre kötü özellikleri nelerdir?

### III. KARAR VERME

1. Bu bursa katılmaya karar verme sürecinde ne tarz bir karar verme sürecinden geçtiniz?
  - a. Bir problemle karşılaştığınız zaman nasıl bir karar verme süreci izlersiniz? (Hızlı karar veririm, düşünürüm...)
  - b. Bütün seçenekleri değerlendirir misiniz?
  - c. Bu burs için geçtiğiniz süreç genel karar verme sürecinize uygun muydu?
  - d. Eğer seçtiğiniz çözüm sizi istediğiniz sonuca götürmezse nasıl bir yöntem izlersiniz?
2. Gelecekteki mesleğinize borçla başlama fikrini nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
3. Kendinizi böyle uzun zamanlı bir sürece sokarken göz önünde bulundurduğunuz kıstaslar neydi?
4. Bu burs için gitmek istediğiniz ülkeyi seçerken kriterleriniz neydi?
  - a. Neden bu ülkeyi seçtiniz?
  - b. (Amerika cevabı verenler için) Hangi eyalete gitmek istiyorsunuz? Neden bu eyaleti seçtiniz?
5. Alıştığınız şehirden başka bir şehirde zorunlu çalışma konusunda nasıl hissediyorsunuz?
6. Ailenizden ve arkadaşlarınızdan ayrılma fikri konusunda nasıl hissediyorsunuz?
  - a. Bu duyguları pozitif gördükleriniz ve negatif gördükleriniz olarak sınıflayabilir misiniz?
7. Hangi konularda başkalarının kararlarına bağlı hissedersiniz?

### IV. GELECEK PLANLARI

1. Evli misiniz? Eğer evli iseniz aileniz (karınız/kocanız, çocuklarınızı) sizinle gelecek mi?

2. Evlenmeyi düşünüyor musunuz?
3. Sizce bu burs size evlilik için yeterli destek sağlıyor mu? Neden?
4. Öğreniminizi tamamladığınızda ne yapmayı düşünüyorsunuz?
  - a)Tayin olduğunuz şehre gitmeyi düşünüyor musunuz?
  - b) Gittiğiniz ülkede kalmak ve çalışmak istiyor musunuz? Neden?
5. Herhangi bir aksilik durumu ile karşılaşırsanız ne yapmayı düşünüyorsunuz?
  - a)Bursun yetmemesi
  - b) Okullardan kabul alamama
  - c)Dil sınavını geçememe
  - d) Ders tekrarı yapmak zorunda kalma

## **Appendix B: English Translation of the Questions**

- I. DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS
  1. Gender F M
  2. How old are you?
  3. Which department and university did you graduate from? When?
  4. Which faculty and program are you planning to continue? How did you choose your department?
  5. Do you have a master degree?
  6. Where is your scholarship from?
    - a) Academic staff
    - b) TPOAS staff
    - c) Others: ...
  7. Which country are you planning to go?
- II. YLSY Process
  1. What was your objective, when you applied the YLSY scholarship?
  2. What was your academic career orientation during your undergraduate education? Was your scholarship application a spontaneous decision or an outcome of a reflective career planning?
  3. Did you think to go abroad and get graduate degree for academic career even if you didn't obtain financial support from any institution? What was your alternative plan?
  4. Did you apply for the other scholarships like ÖYP (The Program of Educating Academics)?
    - a) Why did you/ why not?
    - b) What is the difference between these programs?
  5. Did you apply any other scholarship to which you do not have to pay back?
  6. Have you ever thought about giving up this scholarship?
    - a) Why did you think it?
    - b) Why did you not give-up the scholarship?
  7. How are your family's attitudes towards the scholarship? Do you have your family's support?
  8. How did you find your guarantor?
  9. Are you satisfied with .....
    - a) the economical conditions
    - b) Health conditions
    - c) Monthly salary of this scholarship?
  10. What is the most attractive side of this scholarship for you? What is the most unattractive side of this scholarship for you?
  11. Do you trust the scholarship system? How much? Why?
- III. DECISION MAKING
  1. What kind of a decision making process have you been in to apply for the scholarship?

- a) Generally how is your decision making style when you meet with a problem (e.g., fast decision maker, reflective etc.)?
  - b) Would you consider all possible aspects of solutions?
  - c) Was your decision making to apply scholarship coherent with your general style?
  - d) If the solution, which you choose, does not solve the problem, what kind of path would you follow?
2. How do you feel about the idea of starting your future occupation with a loan?
  3. What were your criteria when you decided to start this loan process?
  4. What were your criteria as you choose the country for the scholarship?
    - a) Why do you choose this country?
    - b) (For the answer: USA) Which state would you like to go? Why did you choose that state?
    - c) What were your conditions to decide, when you chose the country for this scholarship?
  5. How do you feel about mandatory employment in another city than the one you used to live?
  6. What kind of emotions are you feeling towards the idea of separating from your parents and friends?
    - a) Positive?
    - b) Negative?
  7. In which phase you feel tied down to others perceptions or decisions?

#### IV. FUTURE PLANS

1. Are you married? If yes, will your family (wife/husband, children) come with you abroad?
2. If you are not married; what do you think about getting married?
3. Do you think this scholarship is providing sufficient support for marriage? Why/ Why not?
4. What do you think to do after completing your graduate studies?
  - a) Are you planning to go to the city to which is you are appointed? Why/ Why not?
  - b) Do you want to stay in the country, in which you have higher education?
5. Do you have any back-up plans for future potential mishaps? In the case of...
  - a) insufficient scholarship (financial problems)
  - b) could not get any acceptance
  - c) could not pass the language examination
  - d) Having to repeat a course

## Appendix C: Ethical Approval Form

### ETİK KURUL DEĞERLENDİRME SONUCU / RESULT OF EVALUATION BY THE ETHICS COMMITTEE

(Bu bölüm İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurul tarafından doldurulacaktır / This section to be completed by the Committee on Ethics in Research on Humans)


Başvuru Sahibi/ Applicant: Zeynep Mercan

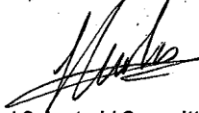
Proje Başlığı / Project Title: Thoughtfully Reflective Decision Making as a Process in the Academic Career Orientation and the Effect of Academics' Agentive and Communal Perspectives

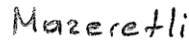
Proje No. / Project number: 2013-20630-018

1.	Herhangi bir değişikliğe gerek yoktur / There is no need for revision.	--XX-----
2.	Ret / Application rejected Reddin gerekçesi / reason for rejection:	-----

Değerlendirme Tarihi / Date of Evaluation: 9 Mayıs 2013

  
Kurul Başkanı/ Committee Chair  
Yrd. Doç. Dr. İtir Erhart

  
Kurul Sekreteri / Committee Secretary  
Yrd. Doç. Dr. Handan Can Otu

  
Üye / Committee Member  
Prof. Dr. Turgut Tarhanlı

  
Üye / Committee Member  
Prof. Dr. Burhan Şenatalar

  
Üye / Committee Member  
Prof. Dr. Diane Sunar

## Appendix D: Istanbul University Permission

*[Faint, illegible text, likely a signature or stamp]*

T.C.  
İSTANBUL ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ  
Yabancı Diller Bölüm Başkanlığı  
Yönetim Kurulu Kararı

Toplantı Tarihi: 18 Nisan 2013  
Toplantı Sayısı: 151

**Madde 10:** MEB-YLSY bursiyerlerinden Zeynep MERCAN'ın 17.04.2013 tarihli dilekçesi görüşüldü ve MEB-YLSY öğrencilerine yönelik anket çalışması yapılmasının uygun olduğuna,

oybirliği ile karar verildi.

  
ASLİNIN AYNIĞIDIR.  
  
Şevket YÜKSEL  
Bölüm Sekreteri  
Yönetim Kurulu Raportörü

## Appendix E: Informed Consent Form

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Thank you for your participation. Please spare a few minutes to read the information above. This information will summarise the aim of this study.

This research is designed as a thesis for Istanbul Bilgi University Organizational Psychology Master Program.

The objective of this study is to examine the graduate students, who decided to continue their grad education abroad. Their way of decision making, participation of change and their personality factors which is effecting this process are the core points of this research. As research method interview is chosen and each interview is expected to last one hour. Personal information of the participants will be kept secret. After the research is done the full thesis will be sent to the participants.

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Signature of the participant

Date

---

The Researcher

Zeynep Mercan

[Zeynep.mercan@bilgiedu.net](mailto:Zeynep.mercan@bilgiedu.net)

If you wish you could withdraw your data from the research please write an e-mail. You can withdraw without showing a reason.