

## **THE SUBSTANCE USE PROFILE AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SITUATIONS OF WORKING YOUTH WHO ARE CONTINUING APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING ACCORDING TO THE GENERAL HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE<sup>1</sup>**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Working adolescents is a risk group open to every kind of exploitation in their work lives as they have not completed their development period yet. Inappropriate working conditions cause permanent physical and mental problems in adolescents.

**Objectives:** This study was done with purpose to determine psychological situations and substance use profile of working youth who continuing for apprenticeship training.

**Methods:** The young (N=250) that are continuing to a apprenticeship training center being in center of Sivas formed universe of this study. 189 young people who accepted to participate in the study and to fill in the forms were taken. Datas of research were collected with questionnaire form and General Health Questionnaire-28 (GHQ-28) that formed by researchers. Five and more points show the risk with respect to mental health in GHQ-28. In statistical analyses, it was used frequency distribution, average, t test, Kruskal Wallis and Mann Whitney U test.

**Results:** It indicated that %61.4 of adults have smoked cigarette, %16.9 have consumed alcohol, %4.8 have used thinner and %3.7 extasy. It was determined that GHQ point average of teenagers was  $5.92 \pm 6.72$  and %42.3 of them had risk with respect to mental health, GHQ points of woman and users of any substance were high statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** In study, it was seen that in working young people who continuing for vocational training, use of substance was more than average of community, and nearly half of them had risk with respect to mental health in level what will requiring psychiatric.

**Keywords:** Working youth, the use of substance, mental disorders.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Youth, a transitional period from childhood to adulthood, is an era during which a variety of and multidimensional development issues and alterations in physical, mental and social realms arise and responsibilities and roles peculiar to adulthood are realized (Bilazer et al., 2008; Sarialioglu et al., 1993; Detels, 2002). Youth is an era in that both human beings are quite susceptible to the environmental influences in terms of psychosocial development and that it harbors an intense and fast evolution in its own right (Ozgur Ilhan, 2005). During this period of time, besides reproductive health issues, substance abuse, nutrition disorder, mental issues and risky behaviors may often take place (Cam and Engin, 2014).

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Mental issues are considered to be one of the main reasons behind the morbidity and mortality during youth and psychiatric disease rate in the young population changes between 8-22% (Detels, 2002; Erol et al., 2008). In the study on Mental Health Profile of Turkey, 18% of the population is confirmed to have a mental illnesses during their life time and 11% of the children and adolescent are determined to display problematic behavior according to clinical protocols. Adolescents who have experienced a depression are more likely to develop a major depression in the upcoming years. Depressed adolescents may typically develop anxiety disorders or alcohol and substance abuse (Saralioglu et al., 1993; Detels, 2002; Erol et al., 2008).

Substance abuse during early ages affects cognitive, affective and social development in a negative way (Ogel et al., 2004). Starting substance abuse during adolescence brings along the risk of having a long term addiction. Long-term substance abuse starting at the adolescence period triggers the potential to have probable health problems in the upcoming ages. Moreover, initiating to substance abuse in adolescence might grow out to an addiction in the advancing years and become a treat on the life of the individual (Karatay and Kubilay, 2004).

This study is conducted to determine the existing or probable mental health problems of the young individuals having vocational training or who are employed, to draw attention to these problems, to make the school management and the employers pay attention to the attempts for preventing or solving these problems, to develop strategies for protecting and enhancing their health status.

## 2. MATERIAL METHOD

**Research Population and Sample:** The population of this study is composed of the youth participating in an apprenticeship training center located in the city center of Sivas (N=250). The students who do not have perfect attendance to school or do not accept to take part in this research are not included in the sample of the study. The sample of the study is composed of 189 individuals.

**Data Gathering Forms:** The data of the study is collected via Personnel Information Form and General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28).

**Personnel Information Form:** The personnel information form is composed of 22 questions in total, 10 of which are on socio-demographic characteristics of the youth (age, gender, marital status, education, family structure, having a chronic disorder etc.), 12 of which are about their professional life (term of employment, statute etc.) and their tendency to substance abuse.

**General Health Questionnaire:** It is developed by Goldberger in 1972. The validity and reliability study of the questionnaire is pursued by Kilic (1996) and the Cronbach's Alpha value is found to be 0.94. In this study, cronbach alpha coefficient of General Health Questionnaire was found 99,5. GHQ-28 is a screening test, filled by the individuals themselves, developed to determine the mental problems confronted with in the society and clinical environments other than psychiatry. The questionnaire is composed of four parts each of which contain seven items. One may get a score between 0 to 28 after filling this questionnaire and the higher the score the more probable to have mental problems. 5 or higher scores indicate to the risk of having mental problems.

**The Application of The Survey:** The students in the center are instructed about the study prior to the survey. It has been explained that the information will be used only for research purposes and their identity will be kept confidential. The importance of the information provided by them is explained. The forms are applied in an environment where the students may fill in comfortably. It takes 15-20 min to fill in the forms.

**Ethical Aspect:** Approval from Sivas Cumhuriyet University Scientific Research Ethical Committee is received prior to the study. The forms are applied to the youth who agree to take part in this research after receiving the approval from the institution.

**The Analysis of Data:** The data which does not comply with the normal distribution is analyzed statistically via Mann Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test, and the normally distributed data is analyzed by using student t test and ANOVA test.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1. Findings on Demographic Characteristics

The mean age of the students was  $18.07 \pm 1.61$ , and 72% are male, almost all to be single, most of them to be secondary school graduates, more than half (Table 1).

Tablo 1. Descriptive characteristics of Working Youth Who are Continuing Apprenticeship Training

Descriptive characteristics	n (%)	X±SD
<b>Age</b>		
15-16 age	22 (11.6)	
17-18 age	106 (56.1)	
19 age and above	61 (32.3)	
<b>Mean age</b>		18.07±1.61
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	53 (28.0)	
Male	136 (72.0)	
<b>Marital status</b>		
The married	6 (3.2)	
Single	183 (96.8)	
<b>Educational status</b>		
Illiterate	7 (3.7)	
Literature	4 (2.2)	
School graduate	15 (7.9)	
Secondary school graduate	156 (82.5)	
High education	7 (3.7)	
<b>Economic status</b>		
Minimum wage	122 (64.6)	
1500-3500 TL	67 (35.4)	
<b>Family Structure</b>		
Nuclear family	145 (76.7)	
Extended family	38 (20.1)	
Fragmented family	6 (3.2)	
<b>Labor year average</b>		3.38±2.89

#### 3.2. Findings on Substance Use Profiles

It indicated that %61.4 of adults have smoked cigarette, %16.9 have consumed alcohol, %4.8 have used thinner, %4.2 have used heroin, %3.7 have used cocaine and %3.7 have used extasy (Table 2).

Tablo 2. Substance Use of Working Youth Who are Continuing Apprenticeship Training

Kullanılan maddeler	Evet n (%)	Hayır n (%)
Cigarette	116 (61.4)	73 (38.6)
<b>Nargile</b>	66 (34.9)	123 (65.1)
Alcohol	32 (16.9)	157 (83.1)
<b>Esrar</b>	14 (7.4)	175 (92.6)
<b>Bali</b>	10 (5.3)	179 (94.7)
Thinner	9 (4.8)	180 (95.2)
<b>Eroin</b>	8 (4.2)	181 (95.8)
<b>Cocain</b>	7 (3.7)	182 (96.3)
Extasy	7 (3.7)	182 (96.3)

#### 3.3. Findings Related To Psychological Status

It was determined that GHQ point average of youth was  $5.92 \pm 6.72$  and %42.3 of them had risk with respect to mental health (Table 3).

Tablo 3. GHQ 28 Scores Average of Working Youth Who are Continuing Apprenticeship Training

GSA-28	n	%	X ± SD
4 ve altı puan	109	57.7	
5 ve üzeri puan	80	42.3	
<b>GHQ 28 Scores Average</b>			5.92±6.72

GHQ points of woman and users of any substance were high statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Tablo 4).

Tablo 4. Comparison of GHQ-28 Score Average of Working Youth Who Are Continuing Apprenticeship Training

Features	GSA-28 puan ortalaması X±SD	Test/p
<b>Age</b>		
15-16 age	5.81±5.43	KW=2.413, p=0.124
17-18 age	5.57±7.02	
19 age and above	6.57±6.88	
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	7.50±7.48	t=2.016, p=0.045
Male	5.30±6.43	
<b>Marital status</b>		
The married	5.50±6.49	z=0.156, p=0.87
Single	5.93±6.81	
<b>Madde kullanımı*</b>		
Evet	7.60±6.15	t=-2.737, p=0.05
Hayır	4.87±6.15	

\* The use of any substance is considered "yes".

#### 4. DISCUSSION

In the study, it has been determined that the substance abuse in youth is above the average usage by the society and that almost half of them carry the risk of having mental problems which requires psychiatric treatment. These findings are regarded as remarkable since they refer to the need to take severe measures for protecting the mental health and preventing the problematic behavior of the employed youth in vocational centers. In this study, among the young participants of the apprenticeship training center, while smoking cigarette is in the first rank (61.4%), it is followed by smoking water pipe (34.9%), alcohol usage (16.9%), hashish usage (7.4%), sniffing glue (5.3%), thinner ingestion (4.8%), heroin usage (4.2%), cocaine usage (3.7%) and ecstasy (%3.7). Oner et al., (2005) reported that smoking cigarette, alcohol and substance abuse rate is higher in employed youth compared to the average population (Oner et al., 2005). Youth is a risky era in terms of substance abuse and having mental problems. As a matter of fact, the studies conducted on young people emphasize on the higher rate of substance abuse. However, this rate is even higher in employed youth. In a study conducted by TUBİM in 25 cities in 2011, the substance abuse ratio of the youth aged 15-24 is found to be 2.9%. In the same study, substance abuse in young adults (aged 15-34) is determined to be higher compared to the general population (aged 15-64) such that 1.0% use hashish, 0.05% use heroin and 0.05% use cocaine (TUBİM, 2012). The study by Sungu reports that 20.6% of the university students currently smoke cigarette, 6.9% still use alcohol, 0.9% have tried using drugs and 0.7% quitted using drugs (Sungu, 2014). Sutoluk et al. have determined that the cigarette and alcohol abuse rates of the youth are 25.4% and 29.0%, respectively (Sutoluk et al. 2005).

In the recent year, substance abuse prevalence by young adults (aged 15-34) in Turkey is 29.8% tobacco, 16.3% alcohol, 0.5% hashish, 0.05% heroin and ecstasy, respectively. Likewise, in Germany (89.5% alcohol, 33.7% tobacco, 14.7% hashish, 1% cocaine and 0.8% ecstasy) and in Italy (83.1% alcohol, 35.1% tobacco, 21.6% hashish, 0.9% cocaine and 1.2% ecstasy) at the same age group higher usage rates are observed (Statistical Bulletin, 2016). Findings indicate that even though the substance abuse incidence of youth in Turkey is quite low compared to the prevalence of substance abuse by young individuals in western countries, it is above the average usage rates of Turkey. It is cogitated that the reason behind the ratios to be at this level might be because the socio-economical status and standards of living of the students are not the same. It reveals that in Turkey, in this field, along with the health care services or even prior to the need for treatment, primary protective intervention must have been planned. In all over the world, the studies on preventing substance addiction are of the top priority (Townsend, 2011).

The difficulties in working environment affect the physical and especially the mental development of the adolescent more than it will normally do, and consequently, depressive disorders may occur more commonly in employed adolescents. In the literature, employed youth are specified to be influenced more and to have more psychological problems compared to their peers and professional life is indicated as a triggering factor of depression (Bilir and Yildiz, 2004; Baggio et al., 2015; Kiran et al., 2007). In a comparative study conducted by Hocaoglu et al. between the apprenticeship training center students and middle school students, it has been specified that, the state of mind of the apprenticeship students is worse compared to the students from the other group (Hocaoglu et al. 2001).

In this study, almost half of the youth (42.3%) is determined to be under the risk of having mental problems. 2.2% and 1.4% of the employed youth participating in the apprenticeship training center in

Samsun are identified to have high instantaneous anxiety level and constant state of anxiety, respectively (Canbaz et al., 2005). In a study pursued by Ilhan et al. in five different technical schools, 12.6% of the youth is identified as having anxiety and 22.7% of them are confirmed to have self despair. In the studies conducted at apprenticeship training centers it has been found that the incidence of having depression among the youth changes between 10.9% to 35% (Ozgur Ilhan et al., 2005; Kugu et al., 2000; Oner et al., 2004; Sutuluk et al., 2005). These results might be due to the stress in working environments of the apprentices or long working hours.

In the study, GHQ-28 scores of the women or youth having substance abuse is determined to be at a statistically high significance level ( $p < 0.05$ ). In some studies, the depression and the risk of depression is stated to be at a higher level in smokers, in people who have tried to take volatile substances and in females (Oner et al., 2004; Sutuluk et al., 2005). Stress and depression are important risk factors for starting smoking or substance abuse (Oner et al., 2004). In the study conducted by Oner et al. it has been determined that the risk of having depression is higher at young people who are smoking, who have tried volatile substances and it is 1.7 times higher at apprentices having a smoking history (Oner et al., 2004). In a different study the depression incidence is confirmed to be at a higher level on young individuals who are smoking and having alcohol (Sutuluk et al., 2005). In a study conducted on university students with volatile substance abuse, high level constant state is observed (Turhan et al., 2011).

In the study, the level of instantaneous anxiety and constant state of anxiety are determined to increase for female population (Sutuluk et al., 2005). The incidence of depression in females and males are 26.6% and 17.0%, respectively (Oner et al., 2004). In a study conducted at a vocational training center in Kocaeli, females are determined to have more psychopathology compared to the males (Caglayan et al., 2010). In the studies pursued at the vocational training centers in Edirne and Hayrabolu, self despair and anxiety scores of the female students are found to be at a higher level compared to the male students (Bozkurt and Cam, 2010; Cam and Engin, 2014).

In a Turkish society males have priority and tolerance starting from their childhood. Therefore, the reasons behind the higher incidence rates of mental problems on employed females might be having domestic responsibilities and consequently working longer hours.

## 5. CONCLUSION and SUGGESTIONS

In the study, it has been observed that young individuals participating in vocational training have higher substance abuse rates than the average of the society and almost half of them carry the risk of having mental problems which require psychiatric treatment. Females and youth with substance abuse are determined to be more risky in terms of mental health.

Based on the results of the study, for preventing the alcohol and substance abuse, early realization of the situation and instructing the adolescents, their families and their teachers for avoiding the dangerous outcomes are important. In addition, a qualitative study with an extensive sampling to analyze the reasons behind the problems and their dimensions in details is proposed.

### Declaration of Conflicting Interest

None declared.

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