



Underemployment Among Postgraduate Turkish Students

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The aim of the study is to understand the issue of underemployment among postgraduate students in Turkey through highlighting its main causes, characterizing which of the underemployment causes are affecting more, identifying its consequences on life, and understanding and learning the tactics that the participants use to handle the negative consequences of underemployment.

Method: A qualitative research method using semi-structured interviews was adopted to collect data from five postgraduate Turkish students.

Results: The results showed that, there are four main causes of underemployments, which are: income, skill, status and time-income unbalance.

Originality: This is the one of the pioneer studies considering underemployment phenomenon deeply using a qualitative method in Turkish context.

Lisansüstü Eğitim Gören Türk Öğrenciler Arasında Alan Dışı İstihdam

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ÖZ

Amaç: Bu çalışmanın amacı, lisansüstü eğitim gören Türk öğrenciler arasında alan dışı istihdam sorununun incelenmesidir. Bu amaca ulaşmak için, çalışmada dört temel nokta öne çıkarılmıştır. Birinci nokta; alan dışı istihdama sebebiyet veren temel nedenlerin belirlenmesi. İkinci nokta; bu nedenlerden hangilerinin ankete katılan kişileri daha fazla etkilediğinin tespit edilmesi. Üçüncü nokta; alan dışı istihdamın katılımcıların hayatlarında doğurduğu sonuçlarla, eksik istihdam sonuçlarının belirlenmesi. Dördüncü ve son nokta ise; katılımcıların bu sonuçlarla baş etmek için takip ettikleri çözüm yolları..

Tasarım/Yöntem: Yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat yöntemi ile beş lisansüstü Türk öğrencisinden veri toplamak suretiyle nitel araştırma gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Sonuçlar: Araştırma sonucunda, alan dışı istihdamın gelir, beceri, itibar ve zaman-gelir dengesizliği olmak üzere dört temel nedeni olduğunu ortaya koymuştur.

Özgün Değer: Çalışma, Türkiye'de alan dışı istihdam kavramını derinlemesine mülakatlar ile ele alan ve nitel yöntem kullanan öncü çalışmalardan birisidir.

1. Introduction

As the number of researches and studies about underemployment increasing, the issue is becoming as a global phenomenon (Livingstone, 1998). The statistics is showing that 25 to 30 % of the employees worldwide have experienced in a way or another some sorts of underemployment (ILO, 1998). Other statistics shows that the issue is getting more critical; and most of those who are experiencing underemployment are young people and women (ILO, 2004, p. 3). The studies are showing also that all youths wither living in a developed, developing or transition economy, are affected by underemployment (ILO, 2012, p. 6). However, the rate of underemployment differs from a country to another. For instance the percentage of youths who do not have a temporary position or job (which is considered to be a type of underemployment) in some selected European countries such as Germany was 6.6% and France was 40.2% and the highest proportion was in Turkey with 77.1% (ILO, 2010). It was found also that almost one young worker out of five had stepped in a job that required skills and knowledge less than his educational level (Li, Gervais & Duval, 2006). These alarming and astonishing rates give the issue of underemployment among young people a significant importance, and should draw researchers' interest to explore and further understand it. Consequently, our goal in the following study is to explore the issue of underemployment among postgraduate Turkish students. However, it is necessary in the beginning to understand and know the background of the phenomenon of underemployment.

2. Literature Review

It is crucial to comprehend the issue of underemployment and its meaning prior than dealing with it. Therefore, it is significant to define firstly what underemployment means.

2.1 Conceptualizing the Underemployment

As it is the case with many concepts in human and social sciences, the term underemployment has been defined differently (Raykov 2009). The disagreement between researchers concerning the conceptualisation of underemployment is a result of the diverse views and the academic fields of the scholars studying it. For instance, looking at underemployment as income loss or being over educated than the job requires is mainly the view of the economists and sociologists (Zvonkovic, 1988). Another conceptualization is that of the social psychologists and organizational behavior specialist, whom they believe underemployment to be the perception of people about their present and past experience of their jobs. Based on them, people compare between their present and past jobs in terms of income, satisfaction, position and the ability of using their skills and education (Maynard, Joseph, & Maynard, 2006).

In another categorization, the BW Research (2011) classified underemployment in three categories which are: 1- unemployed: who are all people who are looking for work but because of some difficulties such as finding adequate child-care or transportation to reach the workplace ... est., but not those who are able to work but are not looking for work as a result of laziness; 2- underused: which it means people who are working in part-time jobs or temporary employment but willing to work as full-time permanent job; 3- underutilized: refers to the people who are not fully using their skills, education, experiences and training.

In order to better understand and define the concept of underemployment, Feldman (1996) conducted a broad review about what has been written about underemployment. He came out with the following opinions:

1. People may have more knowledge than what the job required.
2. People have more skills and experiences than the job is doing.
3. People working in a job that is not in the same field of his training or educational specialization.
4. People who may find themselves engaging in a part-time, temporary, or doing an irregular employment.
5. People getting less salary comparing to their past job or comparing to their academic status.

A more comprehensive definition of the term was offered by Friedland, and Price (2003). The two researchers adapted the definition of the Labor Utilization Framework (LUF) as well as Burris's (1983) point of view. According to them underemployed can be manifested in the amount of the working hours, income, skills, or by status. (Friedland, & Price, 2003). Therefore, in this study the definition of underemployment by Friedland and Price (2003) will be adapted, since it contains most if not all the elements which have been mentioned in the previous definitions.

2.2 Underemployment consequences on health and well-being

Although there are many assumptions about the negative effects of underemployment on the physical and psychological of people's well being, there are a few studies that support scientifically that claims. In addition to the lack of the studies regarding the previous claims, the results of the studies regarding the subject of the harmfulness of underemployment on the health and well-being of workers are having mixed support for the subject (Friedland, & Price, 2003). According to Friedland and Price (2003) the studies showed that underemployment may affect our well being via several indicators such as: job satisfaction, depression and self-esteem. In the same time other studies revealed that the same previous mentioned indicators are unrelated to the well being of the workers.

Friedland and Price (2003) conducted a literature review regarding the effects of underemployment on people's health and well being. They look to three types of underemployments which are skills, income and hours. The results show that skill underemployment affects people's well being. Those who experienced skills underemployment suffered depressive difficulties and less satisfaction in life. Those who experienced income or hours underemployment reported lower self-esteem and increases in symptoms of alcohol abuse and increases in depression.

In another study, Feldman (1996), reviewed several existing studies on unemployment, he presented a list of potential antecedents and consequences of underemployment. Based on his review, the following points were mentioned: Feldman proposed that the following factors should predict individuals' susceptibility to underemployment: economic factors, job characteristics, career history variables, job search strategies and demographic variables can be considered as predictors for a person's ability to experience underemployment. The consequences of underemployment according to Feldman include: job attitudes, job behaviors, career attitudes, overall psychological well-being, and quality of marital, family, and social relationships (see Figure 1)..

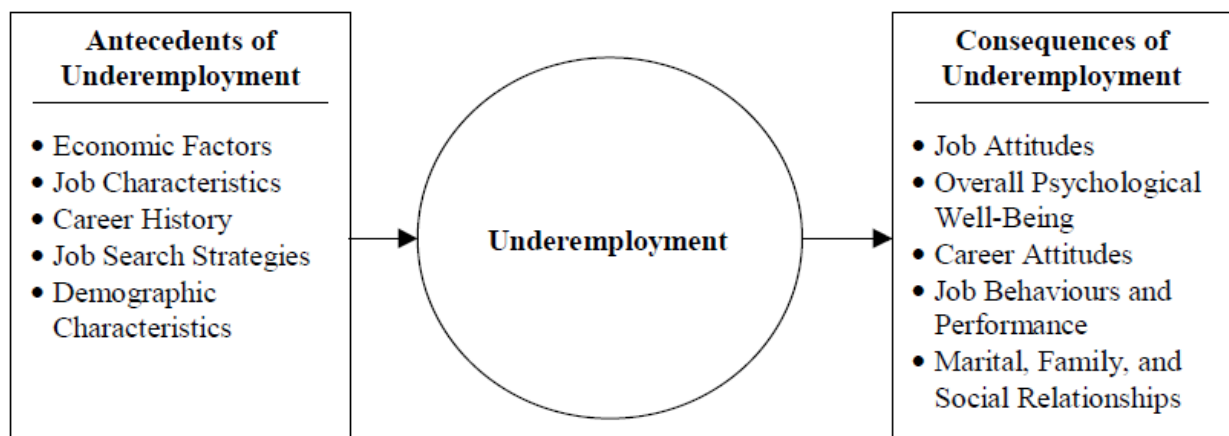


Figure 1: A framework about the antecedents and consequences of underemployment

Based on Friedland and Price (2003) the analysis of the finding the findings highlight several points for conducting future research. First, the offered studies reveal that the relationship between underemployment and health differs by type of underemployment. Most of existing studies focuses on skill underemployment and neglects hours, income, and status. Therefore, in this paper, the sources or the causes of underemployment among postgraduate Turkish student will be explored, as well as the consequences of underemployment on their health and well-being.

2.3 The purpose of the study

Based on the previously presented literature review, the following point can be highlighted. Firstly, most of the studies used young people as sample of their (Friedland and Price 2003; O'Brien & Feather, 1990), and this because of the importance of this social category and because it is the most exposed category to this problem (ILO, 2012). Secondly, there is a divergence of views regarding the reality of the concept of underemployment, its causes and which of the causes is affecting people more (Feldman, 1996; Raykov, 2009; Maddocks, 2012). Lastly, the consequences of underemployment on workers' health and well-being are another argumentative point. Some research findings about underemployment and health provide mixed support for the assumption that underemployment is harmful for the health and well-being of workers (Friedland and Price, 2003).

Consequently, the purpose of the present study is to:

1. Identifies the real causes of underemployment among Turkish postgraduate students.
2. Exploring which one of the causes of underemployment is affecting them more.
3. Recognizing what are the consequences of underemployment on their health, well-being and their social and individual life in general.
4. And lastly, to know the coping strategies that are being used by the Turkish postgraduate students to release themselves from the negative consequences of underemployment.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The study was conducted among post graduate Turkish students. The participants were selected by employing a convenience sampling method. A semi-structured interview with each of a total of five (5) participants has been conducted. Participants ranged from 25 to 30 years old of age. All the participants were single males. They were from different work environments; two of them were research assistants, one of them was administrative assistant, one was a bookseller, and another was a tour guide. Three of the participants were master students in their last stage of writing their theses and two of them were PhD candidates. Their fields of specialization were all in humanities (see table 1 for more details).

Tablo 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Participants	Age	Level of study	Specialization	Type of job
1	30	PhD Candidate	Laws	Research assistant
2	29	Master	Religious studies	Administration assistant
3	26	Master	History	Bookseller
4	31	PhD candidate	Economics	Research assistant
5	27	Master	English literature	Tour guide

3.2. Procedure

The study was started by introducing the participants with the main propose of the research. After giving a brief explanation about the research, the participants were asked to read the informed consent form (and for those who are not able to read English properly, the content was explained to them verbally). The consent form (see appendix 2) contains four points in total. The researcher briefed the participants with each of the points. The first point explain the purpose of the study, the second point was about the process of the study, the third point was about the confidentiality of the personal information and the last point was about the rights of the participants. The semi-structured interview was conducted in a closed room to make the participants feel safe to talk freely. The duration

of every interview lasted almost thirty minutes. During the interviews, notes were taken with the permission of the respondents. All the participants were assured about the confidentiality of the information they share and it would be used only for research purposes..

3.3 Instrument

In this study, the instrument used for data collection was an interview guide (see appendix 1). The interview guide included one question about participants' demographics and 14 questions about underemployment. The questions were developed based on the literature review of underemployment. The interview questions focus on four aspects of underemployment, and they are as follow:

- 1- The causes of underemployment. Under this aspect six (6) questions were formulated. These questions were reflecting the four main sources of underemployment, which are according to the literature: time, income, skills and status.
- 2- The more affecting causes. One question was designed to help participates to identify which of the previous causes is causing more feelings of underemployment than the others.
- 3- The consequences of underemployment: To identify the mental, physical, social, attitude, performance and the career plan of underemployment for each participant, six questions were used.
- 4- The coping strategies: the last question was aimed to know the coping skills being used by the participants to deal with underemployment.

Since the phenomenon of underemployment was not known by most of the people, a brief definition was given in the beginning of the interview)

3.4 Data Analysis

There are different methods for the purpose of analyzing qualitative data. However, generally these different techniques of qualitative data analysis share the following steps:

1. The resources of the data and its process of compilation,
 2. Classifying the data into concepts,
 3. The Connections of the data in order to show how one concept may influence another,
 4. Evaluating alternative explanations and searching for negative cases,
 5. And finely, reporting the findings.
- Therefore, the above five steps will be followed in analyzing the data of the present study. Regarding the coding or categorizing the data, it is important to mention that a priori codes technique was used, since the researcher has developed codes before examining the current data.

4. Results

The findings will be presented under meaningful analytic units. These units or codes are as follow: 1- causes of underemployment, in this unit, the answers will be categorized under one or more of the subunits which were already created. These subunits are: income underemployment, time underemployment, skills underemployments and lastly status underemployment. 2- the more affecting causes of underemployment, 3- the consequences of underemployment, in here the health, mental, social, and other consequences will be presented, and 4- the coping strategies which the participants use to deal with this problem. It is important to highlight that all the meaningless answers were excluded from the data analysis process.

4.1 The Causes of underemployment

In table 2, the responses on the questions related to the main causes of underemployment will be presented. By looking to the answers in table 2, all the participants reported that they have experienced at least one of the underemployment causes. These causes according to them were: Income, skills and status. The time issue based on

the participants' answers was mainly related with low income. In the literature time underemployment was considered to be working less hours, in this study however, participants complained from long working hours. Participants reported feelings of underemployment when linking the long working hours with low income in return. This subtheme will be named Time-Income unbalance.

Table 2.

Causes of the underemployment

Participant responses	Subunits
The <i>days I am working</i> are more than the <i>salary</i> I am getting.	Income
I am doing sometimes <i>duties</i> which are <i>lower</i> than my status	Skills
Almost 70% is <i>mismatching</i>	Skills
Someone a <i>high school student with good computer skills</i> can handle my job. I am <i>just using 30% of my skills</i> .	Skills
I have a strong feeling that <i>I am abused in my work</i> . I only <i>earn half of the others doing the same job</i>	Income
Taking into account my educational background I believe <i>I work under managers and colleagues whose qualifications are lower than mines</i>	Status
Because I am <i>working about 30-32 hours in 4 days</i> but <i>my salary is only 500 tl</i>	Income
Because <i>I have master degree</i> . But <i>my work is just selling books</i> . Elementary school boy can do my job	Skills
Because <i>I got education about history</i> . I cannot use my knowledge.	Skills
Actually, <i>I am working without a standard schedule</i> . I have <i>so much work and the wage is not equal to what I am doing</i> .	Income
Actually, <i>I have no clear schedule</i> . <i>I don't feel things are clear for me</i> .	Time & Skills
<i>I suppose to conduct researches, but I found myself doing administrative work</i> .	Skills
<i>I am working long hours</i> . Also, I know <i>if I go to another job I can get more salary</i> . <i>I have already finished my master</i> other people are getting at least 2500 TL.	Time, Status & Income
I feel I am <i>working over</i> .	Time

4.2 The More Affecting Causes

In table 3, the results about the most affecting cause which makes participants experience underemployment will be presented.

Table 3.

The most affecting causes of undereployment

Participant Responses	Subunits
Ok the first is working more hours and getting less salary (wage not equal with working hours). Second, type of work not using my skills.	1-Income, 2-skills.
Income-underemployed (1) status-underemployed (2)	1-Income, 2-status
First skills than income.	1-Skills, 2-Income
I think, firstly skills than salary.	1-Skills, 2-Income
I feel I am working so much and getting less. In fact I don't want to get more money; instead I want more time for myself. Therefore, firstly it is overworking hours then salary.	1-Time, 2-Income

The results show that, the low income is the most frequently mentioned cause by the participants. All the participants considered low income as sources of their underemployment experiences. In the second level, participants considered not using their skills and educational background as a second source of underemployment.

As a third most affecting cause of underemployment, participants believe is the time. And lastly status was considered to be the last cause of underemployment.

4.3 Consequences of the Underemployment

After displaying the causes of underemployment and the most affecting one of them, in Table 4 the consequences of underemployment will be presented.

Table 4.
Consequences of underemployment

Participant responses	Subunits
I don't have time to visit even my family.	Poor family relationships
After marriage I have to find a new job maybe.	Future financial status uncertainty
I feel I must not be here.	Low commitment and job Satisfaction
Yes, sometimes I feel boring even not willing to do what I am able to do.	Tedium, lack of motivation
I am not able to focus in my study and my research. Yes it is affecting my future career plan.	Affecting educational development negatively.
It fosters more aggressive behaviours on me.	Anger.
My family members insist me on finding a more fruitful job. This is major factor of bad communication with them.	Social Stress. Bad family communication.
The only disappointing result: following career goals from behind.	Unclear future goals
I cannot sleep in peace, you will have problem about your self-confidence, and you cannot have a healthy relation your former friends.	Sleeping disorder. Low Self-esteem. Unhealthy relationships
They are counting on me about getting good job. I am felling like I am disappointing them. It is make me feel kind of angry. Angry myself and the others.	Frustration. Disappointment. Anger.
I cannot see doctor, I cannot use taxi, I cannot gallivant, and I cannot get good dress.	Weak purchasing ability
I don't feel I want to do the work. I am not motivated to do my duties in this job.	Lack of motivation
I am not using my full strength and knowledge. Because I am just living daily.	Low Performance. Despair.
Mental problems such as feeling dizzy and stressed	Stress. Attention focus disorders
I am going very slowly. In Turkish we say: "kör topal".	Slow Progress
It affects me physically. It makes me feel tired.	Fatigue
I can't see my friends or to visit my old sister.	Weakening family and friendships relations

The participants reported that underemployment has psychological, social, physiological and financial problems. In terms of the mantel and psychological effects, the participants reported the following problems: 1- Tedium, 2- Anger, 3- Loss of motivation, 4- Frustration & disappointment and 5- Low self-esteem.

For the social consequences of underemployment, participants mentioned that they mostly experience: 1- Poor family and friendship relationships, participants complained about the poor social activities they do. Most of them they were not able to visit their family members, or to socialize with other people such as friends and colleagues. 2- Poor family and social communication. Participants believe that as a result of the bad psychological status, they are not able to have healthy communications with people around them, and they get angry easily. 3- Social stress. Some participants reported that their parents are putting them under stress by asking them to find new suitable jobs, to have a good future.

There were also some physiological consequences of underemployment, which are: 1- Sleeping disorder, 2- Fatigue, 3- Stress and 4- Attention focus disorder. The financial consequences were also present; the participants

mentioned the following problems: 1- Future financial status uncertainty. Some people believe that their resent job is fine if they are still single, but they believe with this job they will not be able to support a family. 2- Weak purchasing ability. Most of the participants believe that, their salary is not enough for them to fulfill their needs such as: buying books, clothes, traveling and so on.

In addition to the previous mentioned consequences of underemployment on the job holder, the participants did mention some consequences related to the job they are doing. The participants believe that their job attitudes as well as job performance were negatively affected. In term of their performance, it was reported that, participants were not motivated to do the work under their hands, even if it is easy to be done. The same thing can be said about participants' work-related attitudes. They reported that they feel dissatisfied with their jobs, one of them said: "I feel I must not be here. Sometimes I ask myself what I am doing in a place where less skilled people can do the job". They also reported low commitment to their job, a participant stated that: "...but after marriage I have to find a new job". The last point in the consequences of underemployment is its effect on participants' career plan. The participants claimed that underemployment is affecting their career plan in terms of: 1- Slowing down their academic progress, 2- Blurred in terms of their future goals. The last point in the interview which was conducted was about the coping strategies to deal with underemployment. Therefore, in the following paragraphs the coping strategies will be presented.

4.4 Coping Strategies

The participants were asked to describe the coping strategies that they use to deal with underemployment. Their answers will be summarized and analyzed on table 5. Based on the participants' answers presented in table 5, four coping strategies were being used. These strategies are: 1- Hope, by motivating themselves to find a good future job. 2- Positive thinking, some participants think about the positive points of the job they are doing. 3- The belief as a coping strategy was used by some participants and this by giving religious meanings to the job they are doing. 4- The last coping strategy was used is necessity. Some participants believe that what they are doing is a necessary stage in order to achieve their future goals.

Tablo 5
Coping Strategies

Participant Responses	Subunits
Because of the hope that I may find a good job in the near future, so far, I have no other place so I am here.	Hope
I push myself to keep this job by making myself find always positive things in my work place.	Positive Thinking
I am thinking getting job related my education and field of interest.	Hope
I love being an academician, and this position is necessary for my future. Therefore, to reach my aim I have to pass through this way.	Necessity
It is related with belief.... The Academic work specially teaching is a blessed work. It is a work which has a meaning for me. It makes me feel I am doing something meaningful. That is way when I think about my job from this side I feel safe. And I feel motivated to continuo doing my job.	Belief

In general, the previous mentioned coping strategies are all an attempt from the participants to avoid the bad emotions and the cognitive dissonance they have. Therefore, it is possible to label them under one single category called emotional and cognitive balance.

5. Discussion

The aim of the present study was an attempt to understand the issue of underemployment among the Turkish postgraduate students. To achieve its aim, the study highlighted four main points. The First point was identifying the main causes of underemployment. Secondly, to characterize which of the underemployment causes is affecting

the participant more. Thirdly, identify the consequences of underemployment on participants' life. Lastly, the participants' coping strategies to deal with underemployment. Therefore, the discussion of the findings of the present study will focus and follow the earlier mentioned points.

The participants reported four main causes of underemployments. These causes are income, skill, status and time-income unbalance. The income, skills and status causes of underemployments were along with what have been found in previous studies (e.g. Burris 1983; Feldman 1996; & Friedland, and Price 2003). The income as a cause of underemployment can be explained based on Adam's (1976) Equity theory. The theory proposed that individuals' satisfaction with job rewards is influenced by comparisons with coworkers. In equity theory, an individual's satisfaction with pay is determined by how the ratio of an individual's job rewards to job inputs stacks up against the ratio of job rewards to job inputs of his/her colleagues (Adams, 1976). Participants did compare themselves to other friends of them in terms of income. For instance, one of the participants reported that: "... I have already finished my master other people are getting at least 2500 TL".

The skills and status as causes of underemployment can also be explained on the light of the Person-Environment Fit (fit or misfit) theory of French, Caplan & van Harrison (1982). The theory defines psychosocial stress in terms of fit (needs-supplies fit, abilities-demands fit and objective vs. subjective fit) between the person and the environment (Caplan, 1983). Based on the model, two types of stress may threaten the person: either demands, which he/she may not be able to meet, or insufficient supplies to meet his/her needs. The extent, to which the person's skills and abilities match the demands and requirements of the job, represents one kind of fit and the extent to which the person's needs are supplied in the job environment, is another kind of fit. Therefore, in the present study, participants experienced misfit between their tasks from one side and their skills and educational level for the other side. For instance, a participant stated that: "... I ask myself what I am doing in a place where less skilled people can do the job".

The fourth cause of underemployment was time-income unbalance. This cause of underemployment has not been discussed in the literature. The time-income unbalance is different from time underemployment in the fact that, time underemployment refers to people who are involuntarily working less than full-time. However, time-income unbalance can be a cause of underemployment when there is unbalance between person's working hours and his income. In the present study, participants complained from long working hours and fewer wages. This finding could be explained based on the Effort-Reward Imbalance theory of Siegrist et al. (2004). The model of effort-reward imbalance (ERI) claims that failed reciprocity in terms of high efforts spent and low rewards received in turn is likely to elicit recurrent negative emotions and sustained stress responses in exposed people. One of the participants said that: "...the days I am working are more than the salary I am getting".

Based on the findings, it was reported that the income was the most affecting cause of underemployment. The participants complained about their low income. The low income reflects critical issues in the participants' life. One of the participants answered when he was asked why the low income is main cause of underemployment to him: "... I cannot see doctor, I cannot use taxi, I cannot travel, and I cannot get god dress. I am not able to do things which need Money". Participants were talking about basic needs. The findings of this study suggest that the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs still predominate in most participants' lives, and many are concerned with financial security, health care and other basic needs.

The participants reported that underemployment has mental, psychological, social, physiological and financial problems consequences upon them. In addition to that participants reported that by experiencing underemployment their performance and job attitudes were also affected. These findings are supported by many previous studies (e.g. Johnson 1986; Herzog, House & Morgan, 1991; Kahn & Morrow 1991; Feldman & Turnley 1995; Johnson & Johnson 1996). In addition, some theories support the findings of the present study as well. For instance, the person-environment (fit or misfit) model stresses that three kinds of strains are conceived to be function of misfit or threaten to individual wellbeing: a- psychological strains (e.g., anxiety...); b- physiological strains (e.g., sleeping disorders...); and c- behavioral symptoms of strain (e.g., social communication, performance...).

An Emic* sort of findings immersed in this study regarding the social consequences of underemployment. Some participants reported that their parents are putting them under stress by asking them to find new suitable jobs, in order to have a good future. These type of social behaviors, when the family interferes in the personal life of a 28 or 30 years old postgraduate student assure the findings of Hofstede (1991). Hofstede's study found Turkey to be relatively high in collectivistic and power distance type of culture (Hofstede 1991). Therefore, a society with such culture like turkey, tend to consider the father a kind of patriarch to whom others submit. In a collectivistic society the "We" is important, people belong to in-groups (families, clans or organizations) who look after each other in exchange for loyalty. Although the family interfere has a cultural background and it came out of good intentions, however, it is affecting the participants negatively. This can be a sign that the Turkish society is heading toward an individualistic type of culture instead of collectivism.

Regarding the coping strategies, in general it was found that the participants attempt to avoid the cognitive dissonance by creating an emotional and cognitive balance. This coping strategy can find its roots in the cognitive dissonance theory Festinger (1959). The central proposition of Festinger's theory is that, if a person holds two cognitions that are inconsistent with one another, he will experience the pressure of an aversive motivational state called cognitive dissonance, a pressure which a person will seek to remove, among other ways, by altering one of the two dissonant cognitions. Therefore, based on this theory the participants of the present study attempted to remove their cognitive dissonance by looking to the positive side of their work or hope for the future...Etc.

6. Limitations

There are some limitations for this study. First, since this study is conducted in one Turkish city with few participants it cannot be generalized to all Turkish post graduate students. So, it is obvious that if the study included more participants from other cities, the result would have become more conclusive. Secondly, regarding the data collection instrument; a semi-structured interview has been used in the present study. Therefore, it is believed that the findings of the study would be more detailed if an in-depth interview could be used to collect data.

7. Conclusion

Underemployment is a very critical issue which is hitting the modern society. Many workers are experiencing this phenomenon, especially young workers. Therefore, this study was an attempt to explore underemployment among Turkish post graduate students. The study identified the causes of underemployment, the most affecting causes of it, the consequences of underemployment and finely the coping strategies used by the participants to deal with this phenomenon. Further study for this subject is recommended in order to have a better understanding of it and to be able to find means to deal with it.

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* culture specific, knowledge and interpretations are those existing within a culture, that are 'determined by local custom, meaning, and belief

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Interview questions of underemployment

Please think about a job experience (now or in the past) that you believe represents an underemployment situation and describe how you felt in relation to the following aspects. WE MEAN BY UNDEREMPLOYMENT:

People can be underemployed by hours, by income, by skills, or by status. People are "**hours-underemployed**" if they are involuntarily working less than full-time. People are "**income-underemployed**" if their job would not provide them with a livable wage even if they worked full-time. People are "**skill-underemployed**" when their job does not afford them the opportunity to put their skills and training to use. Finally, people are "**status underemployed**" when their job provides less occupational status than expected on the basis of their background (Friedland, & Price, 2003).

I. Demographic characteristics

- 1- Could you please give us a brief idea about yourself (e.g. age, marital status, you field of study....)?

II. Causes of underemployment

- 2- Do you think you are earning lower payment than you believe you deserve?
- 3- Do you think you are being employed at a lower hierarchical level in the organization than you expected?
- 4- Do you think you are working fewer hours than you desire (involuntary part-time work, temporary work or intermittent work)?
- 5- Do you think being in the current job is a mismatch between your education, knowledge, ability or experience and your job?
- 6- Do you think the current job does not give you the opportunity to use your skills fully and utilize your potential?
- 7- Do you think the job does not give you the opportunity to learn new skills and assume challenging assignment?

III. The more affecting causes

- 8- Which one of the previous causes makes you feel more underemployed?

IV. Consequences of underemployment

- 9- What are the effects of underemployment on your physical and mental health?
- 10- What are the effects of underemployment on your relationships with your family?
- 11- What are the effects of underemployment on your financial status?
- 12- What are the effects of underemployment on your job-related attitudes (e.g. job satisfaction, organizational commitment)?
- 13- The effects of underemployment on your performance?
- 14- The effects of underemployment on your career plan?

V. Coping strategies

- 15- How you are trying to cope with this situation?

Appendix 2: The informed consent form

Introduction

The aim of this study is to explore the issue of underemployment among postgraduate Turkish students. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time.

Purpose of project

The purpose of the present study is to:

- 1- Identifies the real causes of underemployment among Turkish postgraduate students
- 2- Exploring which one of the causes of underemployment is affecting them more.
- 3- Recognizing what are the consequences of underemployment on their health, well-being and their social and individual life in general.
- 4- And lastly, to know the coping strategies that are being used by the Turkish postgraduate students to release themselves from the negative consequences of underemployment.

Participant confidentiality

Your name will not be associated in any way with the information collected about you or with the study outcome and findings. The researcher will not share or disclose information about you unless required by law or unless you give written permission.

Participant Certification:

I have read and understand the information provided above. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Signature:

Name:

Date: