



Research of the Students' and Alumni's Career Choices and Their Wishes for Career Guidance During the Studies in TAMK

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BACHELOR'S THESIS
October 2022

International Business

ABSTRACT

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Degree Programme in International Business

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Research of the Students' and Alumni's Career Choices and Their Wishes for Career Guidance During the Studies in TAMK

Bachelor's thesis 51 pages, appendices 4 pages
October 2022

This thesis was commissioned by TAMK Career Services and Nopeasti Töihin project and the purpose of this thesis was to better understand the thoughts and feelings of the students and alumni in TAMK about their career plans and career guidance during studies. Based on the findings, the purpose is to develop career guidance services available to the students and alumni of TAMK.

The objective of this thesis was to gather valuable information of the students' and alumni's career choices, thoughts about their career paths and the factors that have had an impact on their decision when choosing a career. Another objective of this thesis was to get information about the students' and alumni's needs and wants concerning career guidance and different career services available for them.

To meet the objectives set for the thesis, the data was gathered via a survey that was divided into three categories: 1st and 2nd year students, 3rd and 4th year students and alumni. The survey was both quantitative and qualitative since it consisted of close-ended and open-ended questions. The quantitative data was analysed by using descriptive statistical analysis method and the qualitative data was analysed by using content analysis. The total number of responses to the survey was 57.

The topic of this thesis is very important, since different career guidance services can be vital for many students and alumni when choosing a career, choosing study modules, applying for jobs, and navigating life after graduating. It is important to keep the career guidance services up to date and to offer all the necessary services for students and alumni in need. In the future, broader research should be conducted concerning the topic to gather more detailed and accurate information. In addition, currently available services should be marketed more visible to reach the target group.

Key words: career choice, career guidance, student of TAMK, alumnus of TAMK, job hunting

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ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMS

TAMK	Tampere University of Applied Sciences
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
OTT	Ohjaus tulevaisuuden työhön project

1 INTRODUCTION

Choosing a field of study is hard, not to mention choosing a professional career to pursue. There are many factors that can have an impact on choosing a career, for example, own interests (e.g. Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft) and the example of parents (e.g. Erling Haaland, a professional footballer). But due to work life constantly changing, nowadays it is very common to change occupation and study many different degrees.

In addition, it can be hard to get a job after graduating. According to a Tampere University alumnus, it took her a year to get a job after graduating. The biggest challenges in job hunting for her were the lack of work experience and networks. She also adds that there were no support or help concerning job hunting available from the university, and that after graduating she felt rather left alone. (Oleander-Turja 2022.)

This bachelor's thesis was done in co-operation with TAMK Career Services and Nopeasti Töihin project, in order to design more beneficial and better career services available for students and alumni of TAMK. This could be done only after understanding the students' and alumni's thoughts concerning career choices, job hunting, and career services needed during the studies, which is why this thesis includes a research survey that was used to collect the needed data. After presenting the research results, some future recommendations were made based on them.

2 THESIS PLAN

The thesis plan introduces the thesis topic, objective, purpose, and the research questions. The thesis plan explains the concepts and theories as well as the working methods and the data collection methods used in the thesis. The thesis plan explains the thesis process and the structure of the thesis. From the thesis plan the reader gets a general view of the thesis.

2.1 Thesis topic

The topic of this thesis is to find out the factors that have had an impact on the career choices of the students and alumni of TAMK and in addition, what kind of career guidance the students would hope for, and the alumni would have hoped for, during the studies at TAMK. The thesis will give helpful insight for TAMK Career Services, and an ongoing project called Nopeasti Töihin, which is a project between the Tampere Universities and the city of Tampere.

The topic itself is not new since it has been studied for decades and the first theories come from the early 20th century. However, the topic remains topical because people and the skills needed in working life change constantly. Consequently, it is important for the career guidance services to keep up with the changes and offer students the right kind of career guidance. According to Isosuo and Karttunen (2021) career guidance means services that offer support for people in all ages and life situations to recognize their abilities, skills and interests. In addition, to be able to make appropriate educational and professional decisions and manage personal paths in education, work and other activities where these skills are needed or learned. (Isosuo & Karttunen 2021, 7.)

2.2 Thesis objective, purpose, and research questions

The objective of the thesis is to gather information of TAMK students' and alumni's career choices, what has impacted their decision when choosing a career and their general thoughts about professional career paths. In addition, the objective is to gather data about the students' and alumni's needs and wants concerning career guidance and other career services for students. Especially the data collected from the alumni about career guidance is unique and never done before in TAMK.

The main research questions supporting the objective are:

“What are the factors that have had an influence on the students' and alumni's career choices?”

“What kind of career guidance does the students hope for during their studies/ the alumni would have hoped for during their studies?”

The sub-questions are:

“Do the students and alumni feel like they have gotten enough information/support regarding career choice and professional career path during their studies?”

“Have the students' thoughts of professional career changed during the studies and did the alumni's thoughts of professional career change during the studies?”

The purpose of the thesis is to develop career guidance services in TAMK and understand the students' and alumni's career plans and career choices, in order to offer suitable career services for both students and alumni based on the findings of the research.

2.3 Concepts and theory

This thesis will next introduce the main theories of career choice, career planning and career guidance. The theories introduced in this thesis are Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory, Holland's Theory of Vocational Types and Social Cognitive Career Theory. In addition, this part of the thesis will include a previous project on student's career guidance services called Ohjaus tulevaisuuden

työhön, which was conducted by the South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (XAMK) in co-operation with five other universities of applied sciences. This part of the thesis also introduces two surveys used for alumni: AVOP-questionnaire and the career monitoring survey. The concepts and theories introduced are closely linked with the objectives and purpose of this thesis.

2.3.1 Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory

Donald E. Super invented his career development theory in the 1950s and continued to develop the theory until the 1990s (Smart & Peterson 1997, 358). Super's theory suggests that vocational likes, desires, interests and self-concepts change over time and experience. Therefore, career development and finding own interests is a continuous process throughout individuals' lives. (Gies 1990, 54.)

According to Gies (1990), Super's career development theory has ten main points. First is that people have their own individual interests, abilities and personalities, and it is important to take that into consideration in career development and counseling. The second point is that all people have a wide range of interests, abilities and personality characteristics and therefore career counselors need to make sure not to narrow down the career options too much. Super's third point is that even though each occupation has a requirement of specific interests, abilities and personality traits, there are differences between the qualifications, and individuals cannot be divided into occupations only based on personality tests and results of ability. (Gies 1990, 54.)

As the fourth point in Super's career development theory is the key of the theory. The point is that Super suggests career choice and adjustment is a constant process throughout life, because individual's interests, abilities, desires, roles and vocational likes change over time and experience. Therefore, career counseling needs to be supporting and recognize the changes in individual's self-concept. (Gies 1990, 54.)

As an important part of the theory, Super has developed a model of different life stages and the development process according to individual's age (Figure 1). The

first stage is growth, which happens between the ages of 0-14. In this stage, the individual experiences physical and psychological growth, their self-concept develops and they gain first knowledge of work. The second stage is called the exploration phase, which is between the ages of 15-24. This phase starts with a fantasy period, in which the individual realizes that they need an occupation one day and starts to dream of different occupations based on their interests at that time. Towards the end of the exploration phase, the individual chooses various possibilities, but begins to increase them based on their goals and opportunities. Between the ages of 25-44 is the establishment stage, where individuals try different occupations and try to figure out if they did correct choices during the exploration phase. Next comes the maintenance stage between the ages of 45-64, in which individuals have found a suitable occupation and are adjusting and improving themselves. The last stage is the decline phase from the age 65 and above, that can also be called preretirement period. In this stage individuals begin to think about retiring and they concentrate on keeping their job rather than improve themselves. (Gies 1990, 54.)

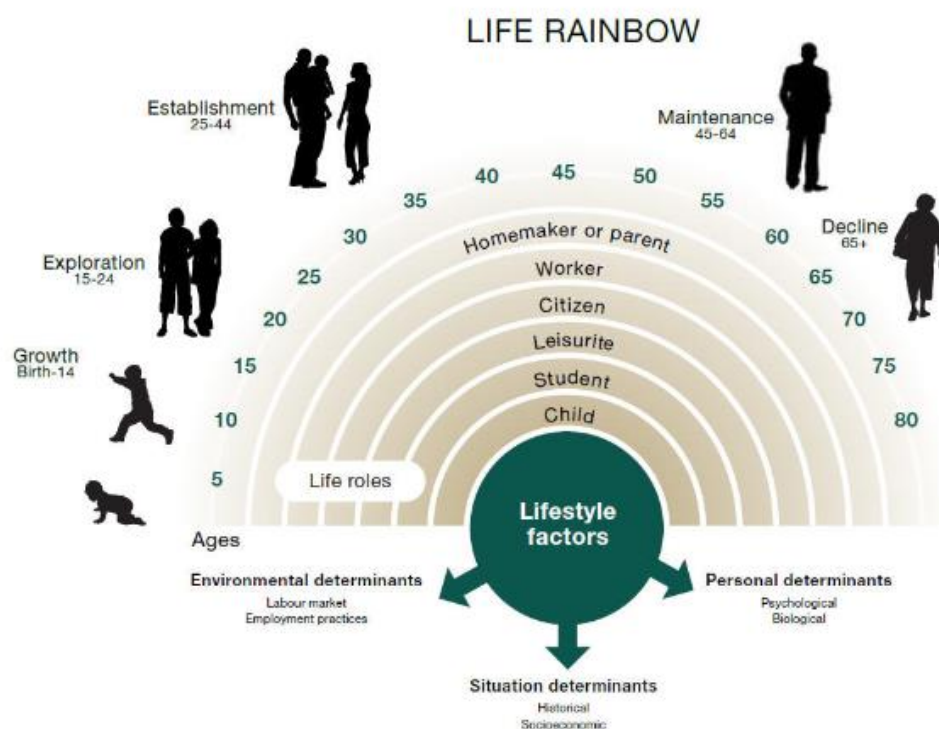


FIGURE 1. Donald E. Super's life-career rainbow (IReasearchNet n.d.).

According to Gies (1990), the fifth point in Super's career development theory is that nonetheless, career counselors should not consider the ages of the theory

to be the only appropriate time to do or be certain things. According to Smart and Peterson (1997), moving between the career stages is not supposed to be only according to individual's age, but more of individual's personality and life circumstances. For example, the exploration stage can stretch if someone decides to extend higher education or have children before entering the working life. On the other hand, middle aged adults who decide to change their career can go through the different career stages many times. (Smart & Peterson 1997, 359.)

As the sixth point Super suggests that individual's career paths are defined by their mental abilities, parental socioeconomic level, personality characteristics and the opportunities given. As a career counselor, it is important to know and respect the backgrounds of the clients and be aware that those factors have an impact on career choice. The next point is that individuals can be assisted through the development of life stages by helping them with the development of self-concept. In order to making pleasant vocational choices, individuals can be helped to discover their own abilities, interests, strengths and weaknesses. (Gies 1990, 54.)

According to Gies (1990), the eighth point in Super's career development theory is that people playing different roles in life is a significant part of self-concept development. As seen in Figure 1, some of the roles played during life are child, parent and worker. These roles include, for example, a brother, a daughter and a friend. For career counselors it is important to remember that the working role is just one of the many roles in people's lives to develop and maintain. It is important to take into consideration the other roles of the individuals and to remember that all of the roles are constantly developing and reforming. (Gies 1990, 54.)

The ninth point of the theory is the fact that students often do not have enough real life experience of working life so that they could make career decisions based on their own experiences. Therefore, students often have to match their self-concept to occupations based on their thought of the work. Luckily, career counselors can help students find realistic occupations based on their self-concept. (Gies 1990, 54.)

The last point in Super's career development theory suggests that both work satisfaction and life satisfaction are related to individual's interests, personality characteristics, abilities and values. Satisfaction is also related to one's beliefs and experiences of their view of an appropriate working style or life style. Lastly, Super suggests that people are able to feel satisfied and pleased with their work if it meets their individual mental image of work. (Gies 1990, 54.)

2.3.2 Holland's Theory of Vocational Types

John Holland developed a person-environment fit theory in the 1960s and improved the theory by the years until the 1990s. The main points of the theory are that individuals and work environments can be divided into six different interest types, occupational choice is a result of an individual trying to unify their interests and environments, and a successful unification results in work satisfaction and stability. (Kidd 2006, 25.)

Holland's six vocational interest types are realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. The realistic type is described as practical, asocial, hard-headed and genuine. A realistic person likes jobs such as electrician and mechanic. The investigative type is described as curious, analytical, independent and critical. An investigative person likes jobs such as chemist, biologist and physicist. The artistic type is described as imaginative, emotional, open and intuitive. An artistic person likes jobs such as writer, musician and stage director. (Kidd 2006, 25.)

The social type is described as empathic, sociable, warm and co-operative. A social person likes jobs such as counsellor, teacher and clinical psychologists. The enterprising type is described as energetic, adventurous, self-confident and ambitious. An enterprising person likes jobs such as manager, sales person and buyer. The conventional type is described as conscientious, careful, unimaginative and inflexible. A conventional person likes jobs such as financial analyst, book-keeper and tax expert. (Kidd 2006, 25-26.)

In the figure below, Holland's vocational interest types can be seen in a hexagonal model (Figure 2). The idea of the hexagonal model is to demonstrate the fact that some of the interest types are more similar than others. The interest types that differ from each other the most are on the opposite sides of the hexagonal. (Kidd 2006, 26.)

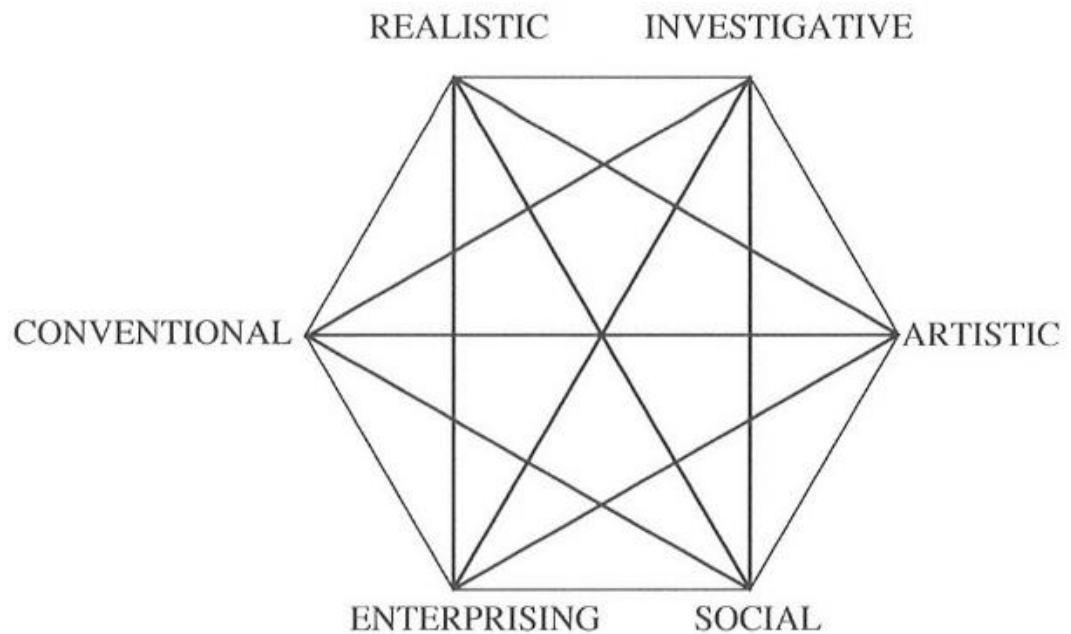


FIGURE 2. The hexagonal model of Holland's six vocational interest types (Arnold, 2004).

Holland's theory of vocational types is used in career counseling. Career counselors can help the clients find their vocational interests and environments and this way develop cognitive structures and frameworks which can help the clients with choosing a career. (Kidd 2006, 26.) According to Osipow, Ashby and Wall (1966, 38), most people have qualities of all the six types, but Holland suggests that there is always one or two types more strong than the others (Osipow et al. 1966, 38).

2.3.3 Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is a relatively new theory on career choice and development, developed by Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown, and Gail Hackett in 1994. SCCT is based on a previous social cognitive theory of Bandura in 1986 and previous work by Hackett and Betz in 1981. Social Cognitive

Career Theory focuses on finding out how certain aspects of people effect their career choices and development throughout their whole working life. Originally SCCT comprised of three linked models, but since 1994, the theory has evolved to five models. (Lent & Brown, 2019.)

The foundation of Social Cognitive Career Theory and all its models are three cognitive-person variables:

- Self-efficacy beliefs
- Outcome expectations
- Personal goals

Self-efficacy beliefs refer to one's own beliefs of their ability to carry out particular performance and activity. (Brown & Lent, 2013, 118.) For example, according to Brown and Lent (2013), one might feel very self-efficient towards mathematical subjects such as accounting, but not feel self-efficient at all towards social subjects such as sales. Outcome expectations refer to the imagined outcome or consequences of the certain performance or activity being done. Personal goals refer to one's desire to take part in a particular activity or to achieve a particular outcome. In SCCT, personal goals are yet divided into two categories: choice-content goals (e.g. pursuing to study medicine) and performance goals (e.g. winning the gold medal in long jump). (Brown & Lent, 2013, 118-119.)

As stated before, according to Lent and Brown (2019), Social Cognitive Career Theory originally consisted of three models. The first model is interest model, which suggests that interest in certain activities begin when one feels competent (high self-efficacy) in the activity and believes the activity to have a positive outcome. When people find activities that are interesting, they might start setting goals concerning the interesting activities and therefore increase performance of the activity to reach the goals set. (Brown & Lent, 2013, 120-121.)

The second model called choice model, is an extension to the interest model. After a person has found their interests, it is very likely that they will choose activities linked to the interests. SCCT divides choice making into three different parts: the expression of the choice (e.g. wanting to study medicine), taking actions (e.g. applying for studying medicine in the university) and subsequent

performance experiences (e.g. good experiences of cardiovascular courses, which might lead to further career choices). Sometimes career choices are constrained by, for example, financial difficulties. In these cases one's interests might not have an influence on career choice. Therefore, SCCT takes into consideration also these kinds of variables that can influence one's career choice process. (Brown & Lent, 2013, 123-124.)

Performance model is the third and last original model of SCCT, which focuses on the level of attainment achieved in educational or work tasks and the degree to which individuals persist on particular tasks or choices especially when facing difficulties. However, the writers state that persistence is an imperfect indicator of performance suitability. (Brown & Lent, 2013, 126.)

The fourth addition to Social Cognitive Career Theory is satisfaction model, that focuses on the factors that influence people's experiences and well-being at school or work. The model suggests that people are most likely to be happy when they, for example, take part in activities they value and see themselves moving towards personal goals. In addition, the model suggests that one's personality and work conditions have an impact on people's experiences and well-being. (Brown & Lent, 2013, 128.) The fifth and most recent addition is career self-management model, that focuses on different career process tasks and challenges throughout the working life (e.g. balancing work life and planning retirement) (Lent & Brown, 2019).

There are numerous studies conducted based on SCCT (e.g. Brown et al. 2011; Kaminsky & Behrend 2014; Brown & Lent 1996). The SCCT models are also used in career counseling to help to find out people's interests and personal thoughts of self-efficacy and outcome expectations. It is also stated that when it comes to career counseling, it is important to discuss about the career thoughts that the client has already eliminated, since it is recommendable to have the broadest possible array of occupational possibilities to choose from. (Brown & Lent, 1996.)

2.3.4 Ohjaus tulevaisuuden työhön project (OTT)

Ohjaus tulevaisuuden työhön project was a two-year-long project (2019-2021) funded by The European Social Fund (ESF) and The Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment of Northern Ostrobothnia. The project was conducted in co-operation with South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (XAMK), Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK), Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK), Turku University of Applied Sciences and Centria University of Applied Sciences. (Isosuo & Karttunen 2021, 8.)

The objective of the project was to develop and model future-oriented career guidance and the pedagogics of career guidance in universities of applied sciences. In addition, the objective was to develop career guidance teaching and knowledge among the teachers. The aim of the project was to increase knowledge of future-oriented career guidance among the universities of applied sciences and the teachers, in order to offer students the right kind of career guidance for them to be more ready for work life. (Ohjaus tulevaisuuden työhön 2021.)

In 2021, there was a workshop held via Teams for the people taking part in the project. In the workshop, they were discussing the elements of future-oriented career guidance in developing universities of applied sciences. The importance of curriculum was brought up and emphasising generic skills more in it. Especially preparing students for changes, uncertainty and constant learning were thought to be important elements in curriculum to best prepare students for working life. In the meeting, it was agreed that career guidance should be a systematic and natural part of the studies. (Karttunen, Isosuo and Komonen 2021, 145-147.)

2.3.5 AVOP questionnaire and the career monitoring survey

AVOP questionnaire is a national feedback survey for students graduating from universities of applied sciences in Finland. In the questionnaire, students are asked to give feedback and evaluate their education. The answers of the survey are used both locally and nationally for improvements. (AVOP questionnaire 2022.)

The career monitoring survey is a national survey conducted for students who have graduated from universities of applied sciences' Bachelor's or Master's degree programmes five years ago. The aim of the survey is to gain information of where the alumni are working, what kind of career paths have they already had and do they feel like their educational programmes correspond to the skills needed in work life. The information gained from the survey is used to improve and plan education in universities of applied sciences. (Korkeakoulujen uraseuranta n.d.)

2.4 Working methods and data

Since this thesis is research of students' and alumni's feelings and thoughts about choosing a career and career guidance during studies, there is a need for a data collection method that can reach many respondents. Therefore, this thesis uses a survey to collect the data. The research method used in this thesis is both quantitative and qualitative, because the survey includes both close-ended questions and open-ended questions. According to Ahmad et al. (2019) the two different research methods work well together, and by using both the researcher gains not only measurable information but also deeper, sometimes even surprising information (Ahmad et al., 2019).

The data is collected with the survey divided into three categories, that are targeted for people in different stages of studying in TAMK: 1st and 2nd year students, 3rd and 4th year students and alumni. By dividing a larger target group into smaller groups, the data collected is going to be more accurate and easier to generalize. According to O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2014), it is common for researchers conducting quantitative studies to generalize to other participants and settings outside of the current study (O'Dwyer & Bernauer 2014, 75).

To analyse the quantitative data gained from the survey, this thesis uses the descriptive statistical analysis method. The method is used to portray the quantitative research data in a more manageable way (Trochim n.d.). To distribute the descriptive statistical analysis, the thesis uses bar graphs and pie charts. The analysing method for the qualitative data used in this thesis is content analysis.

According to Keinonen and Laaksonen (2021) content analysis as a research method is used to analyse the systematic patterns in qualitative data in a quantitative way (Keinonen and Laaksonen, 2021). Therefore, content analysis is a suitable method for analysing open-ended questions in the survey.

2.5 Thesis process

The structure of this thesis is logical and easy to follow. The first chapter shortly introduces the thesis topic. The second chapter is the thesis plan, from which the reader gets a general view of the thesis by learning the objectives, purpose, theories applicable and the working methods of this thesis. The third chapter introduces the commissioners and the ongoing project. The fourth chapter includes the data collection methods in more detail. The survey answers are analysed in the fifth chapter, and the sixth and final chapter is the conclusion and recommendations based on the analysis of the data collected.

3 THE COMMISSIONERS

3.1 TAMK Career Services

TAMK Career Services help students transfer from studying to working life. In addition, TAMK Career Services help students with career planning, job hunting and finding practical training positions. (Urapalvelut 2019.) The services of TAMK Career Services are meant to be used by all of the students in TAMK, regardless of the degree or the stage of studies (Suominen 2021).

There are a lot of beneficial services provided for the students by TAMK Career Services. The services provided are open career coaching and workshops, as well as career coaching and workshops for certain degree programmes. In addition, they provide individual career coaching for students. Individual career coaching can include, for example, exploring possible career paths or tips for the CV. (Urapalvelut 2019.)

Through this thesis and research, TAMK Career Services will receive valuable information about the students' and alumni's needs, wants and opinions of career guidance during studies at TAMK. The information received can be used to develop TAMK Career Services.

3.2 Nopeasti Töihin project

Nopeasti töihin project is a project between the Tampere Universities and Tampere Employment and Growth Services. The project is funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture and is set to take place from April 2021 to June 2023. (Nopeasti töihin... n.d.)

The aim of the project is to develop different solutions and co-operations to help with the employment of newly graduated people. According to the project leader Mira Valkonen, the project is thinking of ways to support newly graduated or other highly educated people with employment. (Oleander-Turja 2022.)

For Nopesti Töihin project this thesis is beneficial, because of the data collected from alumni. The project will get insight of some of the alumni's thoughts of career guidance and employment after graduating.

4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Research objectives

The objective of this research is to get insight into the TAMK students' and alumni's thoughts and opinions of their personal career choices and career guidance during the studies.

Because of the large target group, the research is to be conducted with a survey. The survey is relatively easy to share, it does not take a long time to answer, and it is answered anonymously. Due to limited amount of time, the expected number of answers altogether was between 50-100. The actualized number of all the answers to the research survey is 57.

4.2 Quantitative data

In this research, quantitative data was used to gather information that is simple and fast to analyse and comfortable and fast for the students and alumni to answer. In all the three surveys, everyone answered the first five quantitative questions of the survey, which were language choice, age, sex, field of study and stage of studies. Based on the basic quantitative questions, it is possible to categorize the answers and analyse them more precisely.

In addition, quantitative data was gathered throughout the surveys. All three surveys had a quantitative question about career choice. More quantitative questions were in the surveys of 3rd and 4th year students and alumni, where simple "yes or no" questions were asked concerning career guidance and the process of career thoughts.

4.3 Qualitative data

Qualitative data was used in the survey to supplement answers to quantitative questions or to get a free form answer. In this kind of research where opinions and feelings towards a certain subject are asked, it is important not to guide the answers too much. By asking questions in a qualitative form, the answers can be unexpected and never thought before, which is why most of the survey questions were in qualitative form.

4.4 Validity, reliability, and limitations

Validity is defined as how accurately a concept is measured in research, for example, if a survey measures the phenomena that it was meant to measure from the start, the survey can be considered valid. Reliability is defined as the accuracy of the research method. If similar results are gotten consistently when using the research method in similar situations, the research can be considered reliable. (Heale & Twycross 2015, 66.) According to Mohajan (2017), validity and reliability are the most important features when assessing good research (Mohajan 2017, 59).

This thesis can be considered valid, because the survey measures the topics mentioned in the objectives and research questions of the thesis. The survey being shared in multiple places, and it being anonymously answered, there is no guarantee that all the answers are indeed from students and alumni in TAMK. However, based on the similarity and rationality of the answers, it can be stated that this research is reliable.

It is also good to mention that the concept “career thoughts” was not defined or specified in the survey. The survey in Finnish used the words “career thoughts” and the survey in English used the words “thoughts about your future career”. However, the replies are very similar between the surveys in Finnish and in English, which indicates that everyone defined career thoughts as thoughts of their future career.

A limitation of a research is defined as something that the researcher could not or did not control and which could have an inappropriate impact on the results of

the research. (Price & Murnan 2004.) In this thesis and the survey, the schedule was a limitation. There was not a lot of time to have the survey open for answers, which led to small number of answers. However, this limitation was recognized from the beginning and the survey got as much answers as was anticipated.

When analysing and making conclusions from the survey answers, it is important to keep in mind that only a small number of students and alumni in TAMK answered the survey. Although some of the answers are similar, it does not mean that all the students or alumni think alike.

Another limitation was the language and translation of the survey answers. Most of the replies are in Finnish, which means that they need to be translated into English. The answers are translated as precisely as possible, but there is always a risk of misinterpretation when translating.

4.5 Research ethics

Throughout the whole process of writing this thesis, collecting sources, and conducting and analysing the survey, the ethical aspects of research has been taken into consideration. In addition, the research ethics guidelines of TAMK have been followed.

The questions of the survey were carefully chosen to meet the objective and purpose of the thesis. The survey is answered anonymously to protect the identities of the answerers and to make answering the survey feel comfortable. All the answerers have answered the survey voluntarily. Everyone was informed about the idea and purpose of the survey before answering it.

The chosen languages of the survey were Finnish and English. The survey could have been only in English, but there were a couple of points that lead the survey to be available in two languages. First, it was likely that most of the answerers would be Finnish people. Second, according to Schembri and Jašić (2022), there

are ethical challenges in multilingual research (Schembri & Jašić 2022). The chosen languages to the survey were both Finnish and English because ethical challenges, misunderstandings and uncomfortableness wanted to be avoided.

4.6 Sampling

Sampling is the process of choosing a sample from the target population of a research process. A sample is the result of a sampling process. (O'Dwyer & Bernauer 2014, 76.)

The target population of this research was all the students in TAMK and all the alumni that have graduated from TAMK. It was agreed with the commissioners that there will be no limitations by, for example, age or degree programme. The target population as whole is tens of thousands of people, but the expected number of survey replies was set to 50-100. In addition, more replies were anticipated from the 3rd and 4th year students and the alumni than from the 1st and 2nd year students.

The final sample is formed from the 57 answers to the survey, which reached the expected number of answers. The sample size is very small compared to the whole population, but due to the similarity of many answers, some generalizations can be done.

5 RESEARCH RESULTS

5.1 Answers to the general survey questions

The survey started with five basic questions that every respondent answered. The general survey questions can be found in Appendix 1.

Out of the total of 57 respondents, 48 chose Finnish as their language (84,2%) and 9 chose English as their language (15,8%). Out of the respondents 41 were women (72%) and 16 were men (28%). The age distribution of the respondents can be seen in the figure below (Figure 3). Most of the respondents (54,4%) were between the ages of 18-23 and the second largest age group was 24–29-year-olds (29,8%). The rest of the age groups were quite evenly represented, by 5,3% of the respondents being 30-35-year-old, 7% of the respondents being between the ages of 36-40 and 3,5% being more than 40 years old.

According to Gies (1990), a part of Donald E. Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory is a model of different life stages and the developmental process according to age, which includes five different stages. All of the stages have been gone through in detail earlier in this thesis (Chapter 2). According to the age distribution of the respondents to the survey, most of them would be on the exploration stage, since most of the respondents were 18-23 years old. The second largest age group among the respondents, from 24 to 29 years old, would be on the exploration stage until 24 years of age and then move on to the establishment stage of Super's model. The age groups 30-35 and 36-40 years old both would be on the establishment stage of the Super's model. Respondents being more than 40 years old would be on the establishment stage until the age of 44 and then move on to the next stage, the maintenance stage. However, according to Gies (1990), the ages of the theory should not be considered the only appropriate time to do certain things in life and in career.

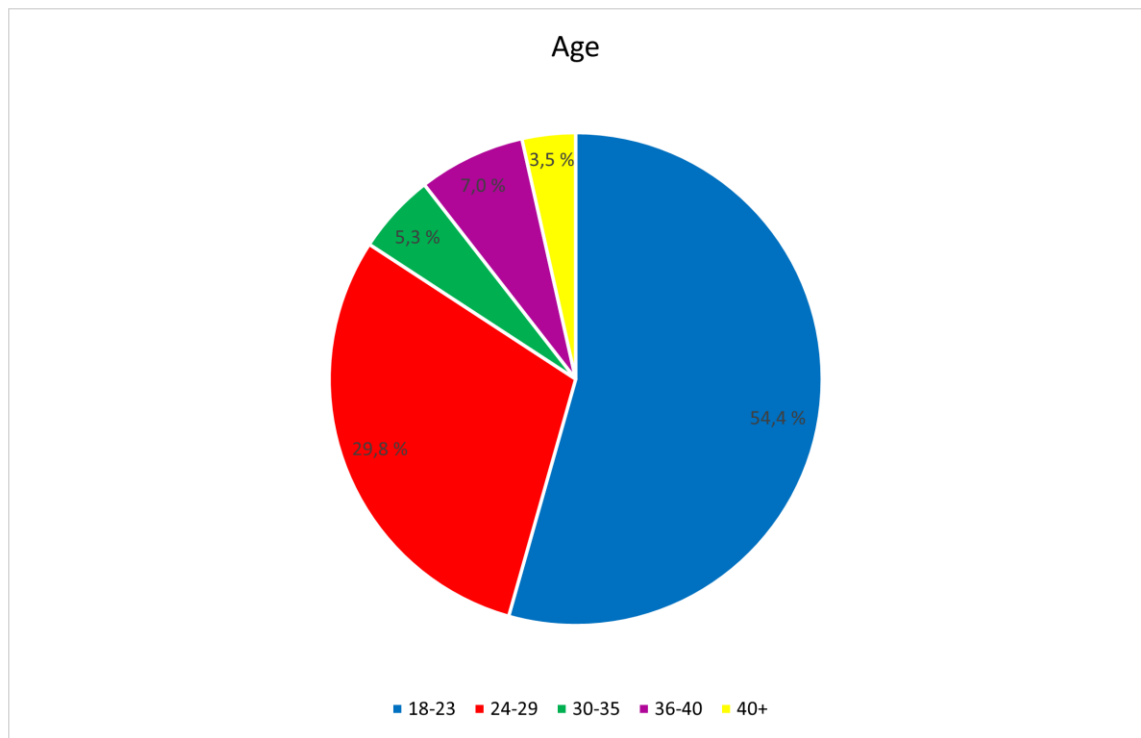


FIGURE 3. Age distribution of the respondents (Autio, 2022).

Next, the survey asked the respondents their field of study. Students chose the field they are studying, and alumni chose the field of study they used to study in TAMK. Figure 4 below shows the distribution between different fields of study among the respondents. More than half of the respondents are studying or have studied leadership, management and economics in TAMK (34 respondents, 59,6%), which could be explained with the fact that the author herself is studying the same field of study and has shared the survey with her peers. The second largest group (17,5%) of respondents are studying or have studied health and wellbeing (10 respondents) and then comes the field of construction with 5 respondents (8,8%). There are 3 respondents from both the field of culture and languages (5,3%) and engineering and natural sciences (5,3%). The smallest number of replies came from the field of data processing and technology, with 2 respondents from the field being only 3,5% of all the responses.

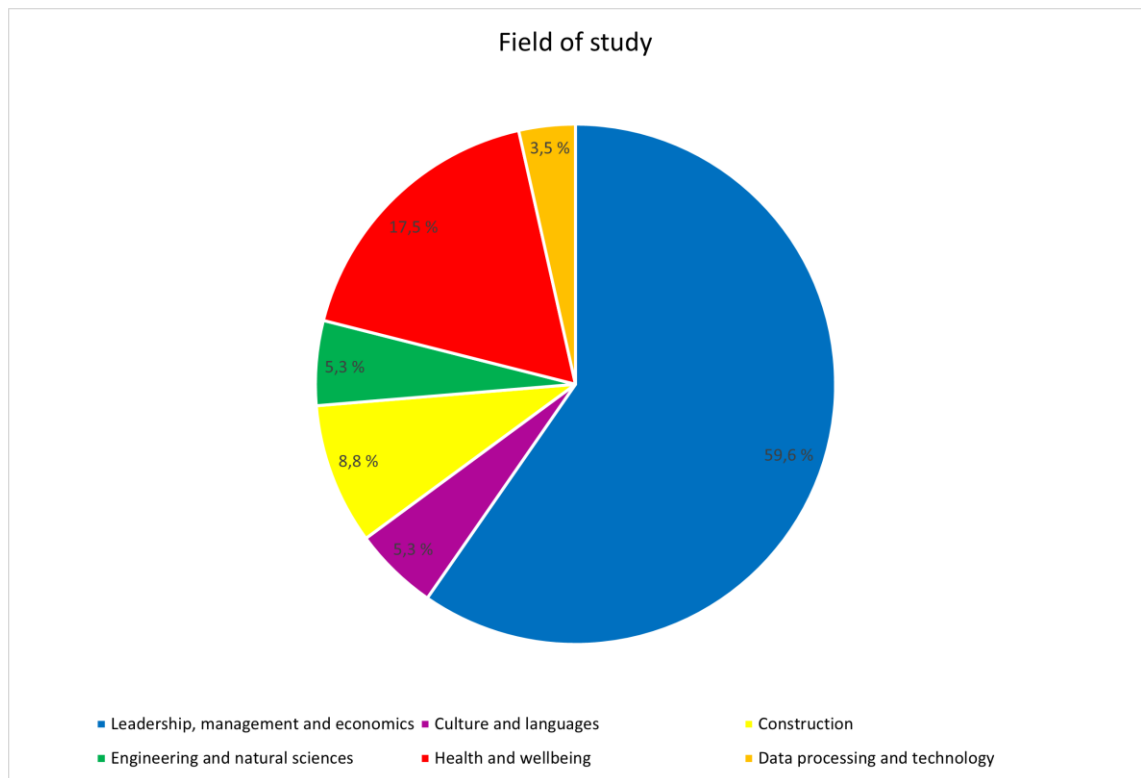


FIGURE 4. Distribution of different fields of study among the respondents (Autio, 2022).

The last general question of the survey was stage of studies. This question is what led the respondents to continue with the right part of the survey based on their answer. The distribution of stage of studies can be seen below in Figure 5. Out of 57 respondents only 5 were 1st or 2nd year students (8,8%). The small amount of 1st and 2nd year students was anticipated from the start, and it does not have a negative effect on the final results. The largest group of respondents were 3rd or 4th year students with 38 respondents and 66,7% of all the respondents. Again, this could be anticipated because the author belongs to the same category and most of her peers and friends too. The number of alumni respondents is about one fourth of all responses, which is a good amount. There were 14 alumni respondents in total, which is 24,5% of all the respondents.

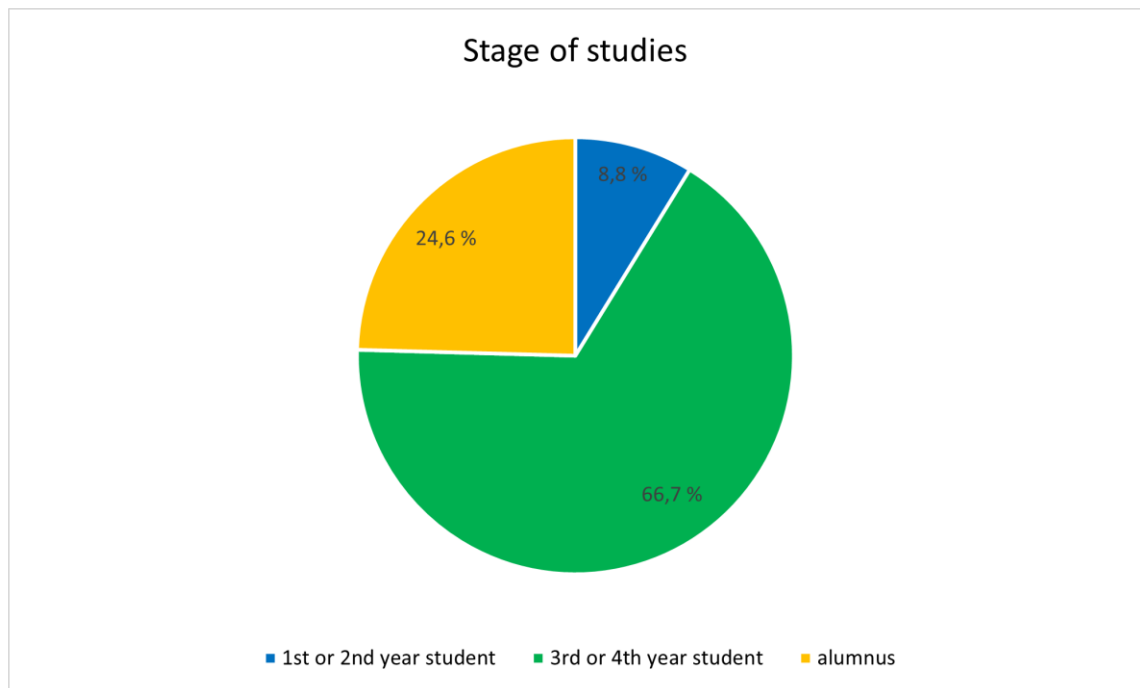


FIGURE 5. Distribution of the respondents' stage of studies (Autio, 2022).

5.2 Answers to 1st and 2nd year students' questions

The survey for the 1st and 2nd year students was relatively short and included general questions about career choice and job hunting since 1st and 2nd year students most likely are not yet able to review different career services and their own needs for career guidance. The survey questions for 1st and 2nd year students can be found in Appendix 2.

The only quantitative question for 1st and 2nd year students asked what factors have had an impact on their career choice this far. From Figure 6, the options and answers can be seen. The multiple-choice question allowed the respondents to choose as many options as they want. Out of the total of 5 respondents, “desire for a high salary level” was chosen once, “the example of parents or other close people” was chosen twice and “own interests” was chosen four times. The fact that no one was impacted by a role model or by the expectations from close people is surprising.

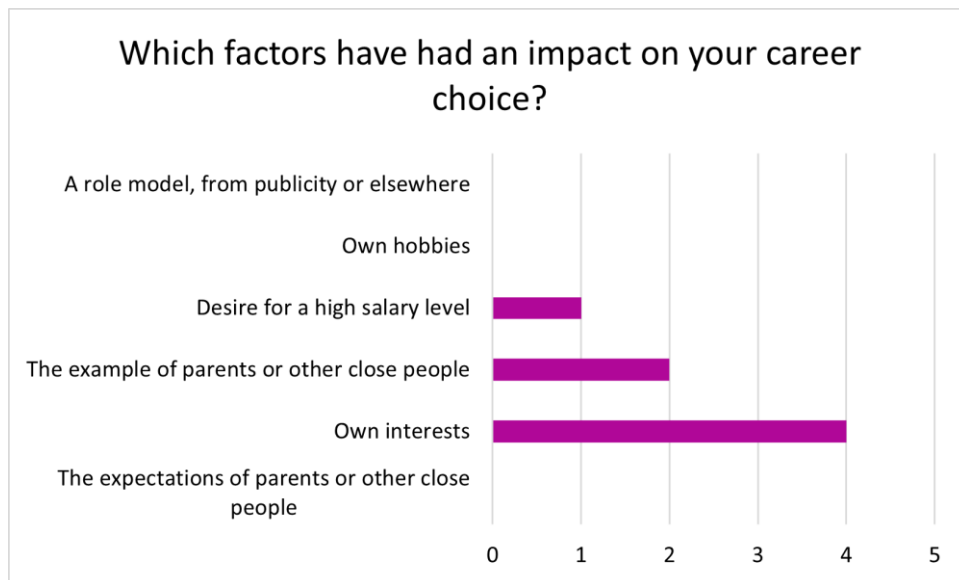


FIGURE 6. Factors that have had an impact on the 1st and 2nd year students' career choices (Autio, 2022).

The rest of the survey questions for 1st and 2nd year students were qualitative, open-ended questions. When asking about what kind of career guidance the students would want, two out of five have answered that they would like to know more about the possible jobs available for them after graduating a certain programme. Other two out of five would like to have more visitors working in the field that they are studying and to hear different career stories. One respondent said that they would like to get more information about further education this early during the studies.

The next question asked what they would like to know more about job hunting or working life. Two respondents would like to know more about further education, other two respondents would like to know more about the salary levels and the other respondent added that it would be nice to know how long they need to work to get higher salary. One respondent said they would like to know the point where their competence is enough.

The last questions asked about the challenges, as well as the respondents' own strengths in job hunting. When asking about the challenges, the answers vary a lot. Some respondents appear to be very relaxed, when responding that they do not have any challenges in job hunting, or that they do not have motivation to accomplish anything concerning job hunting. Others answer that the challenge is

that there are too many options to choose from and then the other challenge is to find a job that is pleasant. The respondents' strengths in job hunting are being self-imposed and active, being genuine, being brave and not afraid to ask questions, and being a quick learner. One respondent also answered that the student status is a strength at the moment, and after graduating the degree is going to be a strength in job hunting.

5.3 Answers to 3rd and 4th year students' questions

The survey for the 3rd and 4th year students is longer and more comprehensive than the survey for 1st and 2nd year students. This survey consisted of 3 quantitative questions and 6 qualitative, open-ended questions. The survey questions for 3rd and 4th year students in its entirety can be found in Appendix 3.

When asking the 3rd and 4th year students about what factors have had an impact on their career choice, the most popular factor was "own interests", as can be seen in the Figure 6. Second most popular factor was "desire for high salary level" that was chosen 15 times. After that came "other" and "the example of parents or other close people" chosen by the respondents 9 times. Then "own hobbies" chosen 8 times, "a role model, from publicity or elsewhere" chosen 5 times and "the expectations of parents or other close people" chosen twice, which was the factor that have had the least impact on the respondents' career choices. When choosing "other" for an answer, the respondents needed to clarify, so here are the other factors that have had an impact on the career choices:

- "Knowing there is always work available"
- "Part of integration program"
- "Applying for further education after graduating"
- "Accidentally ended up in this field of study and there is no way out"
- "That this job guarantees a more stable financial situation. I do not necessarily want a high salary, but so that I do not have to worry how everyday life goes or think about what happens to my pet if it suddenly gets sick."
- "My own characteristics. I have noticed my own personality's strengths and I am interested in making other people feel happy and so that is why I started to study cultural production."
- "A good universal education."

- “Mostly I did not know what I would like to study.”

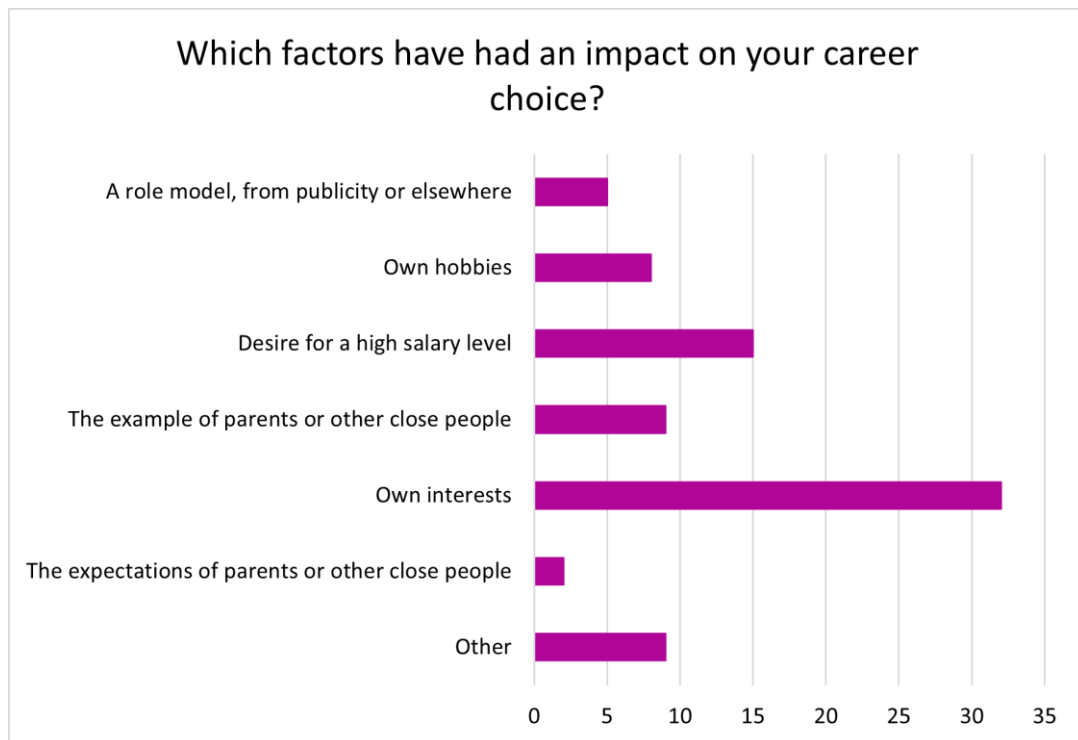


FIGURE 6. Factors that have had an impact on the 3rd and 4th year students' career choices (Autio, 2022).

When asking 3rd and 4th year students about what kind of career guidance they would hope for during the studies, most of the students answered that they would like to get more information about career options and more real-life examples. What stood out from the answers was that the students want more practical and versatile knowledge about working life and their own career options. Many respondents said that they would like to hear more about alumni's career stories and one respondent added it would be good to hear alumni's stories already in the first year of studies. It was also said that more company visits, and visitors would be interesting and helpful, and the students would like the companies to vary. The students would like to know more about everyday working life in certain companies and fields. Some students would also like more information about the field of study they have chosen and the opportunities in it, as well as guidance in choosing the field of study.

A few students responded that they would like career guidance to be more personal, for example to get help with how to steer one's studies based on their own

interests and career wishes. Personal guidance could also include tips of how to price one's own work, what are the workplaces that could be most likely to hire certain students or how to go forward in one's professional career. A few students would also like guidance with job hunting related issues, such as CVs, cover letters and interviews.

Some students would like to know more about further education and its benefits in work life. Some would want to get tips concerning networking and one respondent hopes to get guidance about multi-cultural work environment. There was also a student who would like career guidance to be for self-development and a student who wishes that already in junior high school teachers would talk about other occupations than just a doctor, a hairdresser, or a lawyer. One student wishes to get more information about entrepreneurship.

This question noticeably shared the students' opinions. A couple of students said they are happy with TAMK's career guidance as it is, and one student felt like they are on their own and not guided much. Some students did not have an answer to the question or did not feel like they needed any career guidance.

The next question in the survey asked the 3rd and 4th year students if they feel like they have received enough information and support concerning their career choice and career path during their studies so far. As it can be seen in the figure below (Figure 7), almost half of the students feel they have not gotten enough information and support. 26% of the respondents don't know if they have received enough information and support or not, and another 26% feel they have received enough information and support concerning their career choice and career path.

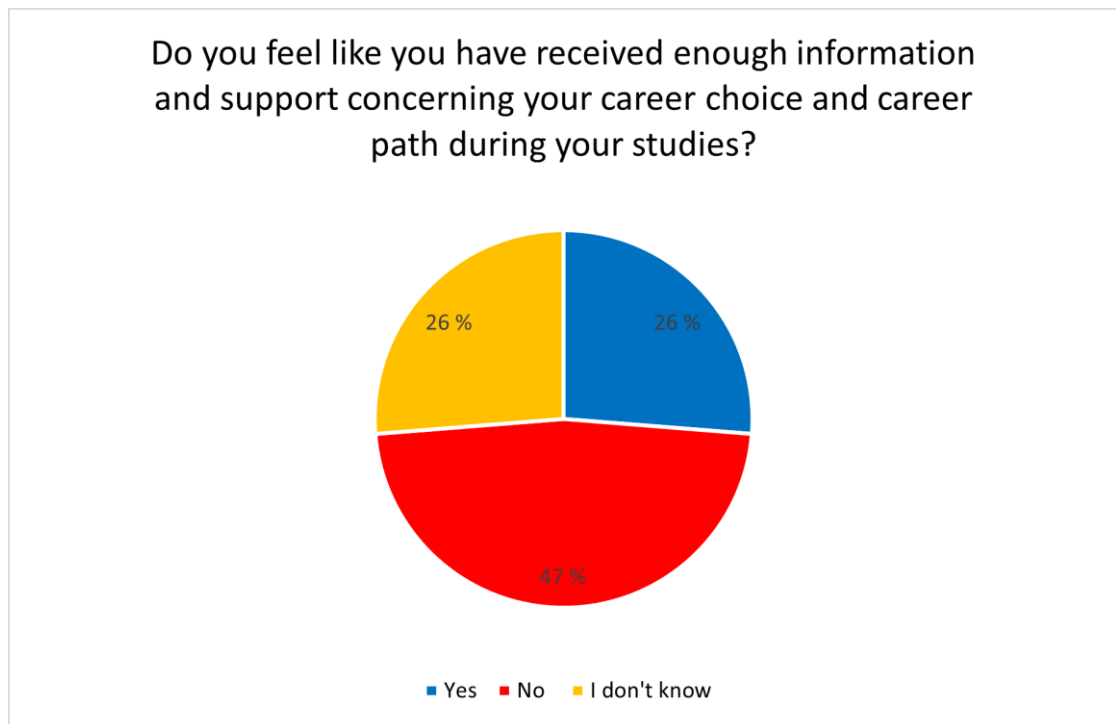


FIGURE 7. The 3rd and 4th year students' feelings whether they have received enough information and support concerning their career choice and career path or not (Autio, 2022).

When someone responded that they have received enough information and support concerning their career choice and career path, they were asked to tell from where or from whom they have received them. Most of the students answered that they have received information and support from their teachers, teacher tutors and from older students, tutors or alumni. Other sources of information and support were TE-office, student counsellor, subject association, own team, general info sessions and community. One student also replied that they have been self-studying a lot about job opportunities in Finland and abroad, and also about further education.

The next question asked the 3rd and 4th year students about the topics they would like to know more about concerning job hunting or work life. Many students said they would like to know more about topics related to salary and their own job opportunities. Many respondents also said that they would like to know more about different work tasks, job titles, and get information about open positions nearby. A few respondents would also like to know more about where to spot open positions that would suit their field of study and more information about businesses in their field of study nearby.

Other students would like to know about the employment situation in different places in Finland, taxation, networking, international job opportunities, self-marketing, long-term career planning, the benefits and disadvantages of different types of employment contracts (e.g. part-time), career development opportunities, information about trade unions, how to make good CVs and cover letters, how to spot a good or a bad workplace and general information of job hunting in Finland. There were also few students who did not know what topics they would like to know more about or who feel that they do not need more information about anything.

In the Figure 8 below, the responses to the next question can be seen. The 3rd and 4th year students were asked to think if their thoughts about their future career have changed during the studies. Out of the 38 respondents, 61% said their thoughts about their future career have changed during the studies. 34% of the respondents felt their thoughts have not changed and only 5% did not know if their thoughts have changed or not.

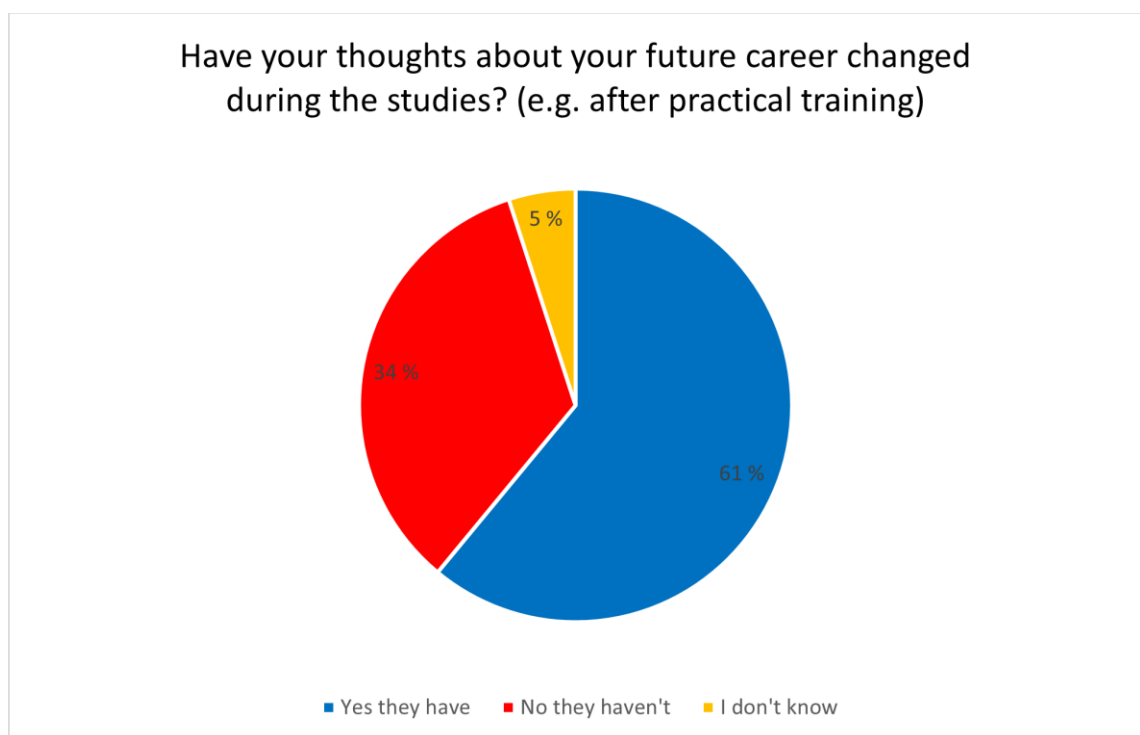


FIGURE 8. The 3rd and 4th year students' feelings whether their thoughts about their future career have changed during the studies or not (Autio, 2022).

After the question, the students who answered that their thoughts about their future career have changed during the studies, were asked to elaborate why and how their thoughts have changed. Most of the students' thoughts about their career have changed because of practical training. Many said that practical training showed them what they do not want to do in the future and gave them realizations of what they would want to try next. Many of the respondents said that their thoughts have changed during the studies because of the courses that weren't as interesting as they thought they would be, or just because the field of study or module was not for them. A few students answered that they have found a job that they like or that they now have come to a realization of what they would like to do and where they would like to work.

One student's thoughts of their future career have changed, because they want a higher salary level. Two students from the field of health answered that they would like to continue their studies and work but are concerned about the salary and working conditions. One student said that the thoughts of future career have changed because of the difficulty of finding a job.

When asking the 3rd and 4th year students about what they feel are the most challenging things in starting a career after graduating, the answers are very versatile. However, the topics that stood out were finding a suitable and interesting workplace, finding a job with only a little or no experience and how to cope with work. Other topics that were mentioned by a couple of students were the fact that it is hard to get a permanent job and that some students feel like they are not ready for working life yet.

Other single answers were fear of losing interest, getting stuck in own career path, not knowing what level of work should be applied to, possibly having to move because of work, a few year gap in CV, defining own skills and salary wish, committing to a job that is not familiar yet, a job that is thought to be self-evident, the responsibility, businesses using rental work which lowers salary and can be complicated, proceeding to be an entrepreneur, similar applicants, getting a job without relations, choosing a work place, having a language barrier, location and

networking. In addition, there were a few students who did not know what to answer or feel like they do not have any challenges with starting their career after graduating.

The last question was a volunteer open-ended question, where the students could say whatever they wanted concerning the topics of the survey. One student left a wish that there should be more information about work opportunities abroad, as well as decent salary and work benefits to expect. Another student left a comment about supporting mental health rehabilitators in finding a job during their studies. The student suggests that TAMK would have an own department, that would offer more social support and where concrete steps could be taken to support the students' employment.

Two students left a comment about TAMK Career Services. The first comment said that the services' availability and significance should be emphasized, and in addition mentioned that practical trainings should be utilized as much as possible, because they enable trying different fields. The other comment about TAMK Career Services was that the services should be marketed more among the students and info sessions should be held throughout the studies, because students do not remember the info sessions from the first few weeks of studies.

Three other students left positive toned comments, one saying that info sessions in International Business Programme have been beneficial and there could have been more of them. The other student commented that they feel like in TAMK students get help and support with finding nice practical training places by, for example, receiving messages from teachers about available places. In addition, the student adds that it is good that TAMK Career Services help with CVs. The last positive comment from a student was that they thought the survey was good.

The last comment suggests that everything is left as the students' own responsibility. The student who has written the comment wishes that there would be more supporting and guiding students in the universities of applied sciences.

5.4 Answers to alumni's questions

The survey for alumni was the longest of all three surveys. The survey consisted of 4 quantitative questions and 8 qualitative, open-ended questions. The survey for alumni can be found in Appendix 4.

When asking the alumni about the factors that have had an impact on their career choice, all the 14 respondents chose at least “own interests” to have affected their choice (Figure 9). As it can be seen in the Figure 9 below, 6 alumni chose “desire for a high salary level” having an impact on their career choice, 3 alumni chose “the example of parents or other close people”, and “own hobbies”, “the expectations of parents or other close people” and “other” all got chosen once. The clarification for “other” was that using own strengths has had an impact on their career choice.

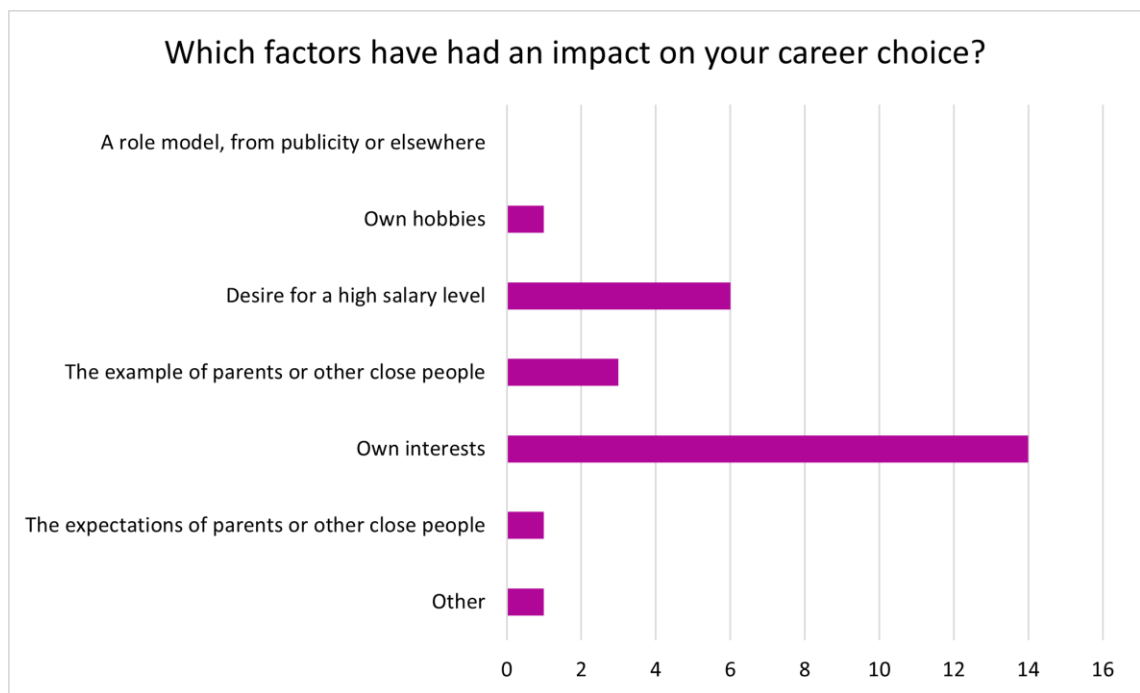


FIGURE 9. Factors that have had an impact on the alumni's career choices (Autio, 2022).

When asking the alumni about what kind of career guidance they would have hoped for during the studies, the things that stand out in the responses are life after graduation and too narrow career guidance. The alumni would have hoped for more information about what happens after graduation and what to do in a

situation of unemployment. The alumni would also have hoped for more broad career guidance, as they feel like career stories and examples focused on only certain topics and that the topics that they would have been interested in were not focused on enough.

A few alumni would have hoped for more concrete demonstration and everyday examples of different career options, career paths and possible workplaces. One respondent would have liked to know alumni's career paths during the studies. Other things that the alumni would have hoped for during their studies are more available career guidance, more visitors from different companies and roles, mentorship by potential employers, discussing career related topics alone with a professional, and suitability tests for the jobs that could be interesting. One alumnus responded that they feel like they got everything they needed.

What comes to suitability tests and personality tests, they might not be a very helpful or accurate tool with choosing a career. According to Gies (1990), one point in Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory is that even though each occupation has requirements of specific interests, abilities and personality traits, individuals cannot be divided into occupations only based on personality tests or ability results.

The next question in the survey asked the alumni if they feel like they received enough information and support concerning their career choice and career path during the studies. As it can be seen in the Figure 10 below, half of the respondents feel like they did not receive enough information and support during the studies, 43% of the respondents do not know if they received enough information and support, and only 7% of the respondent feel like they did. The respondents who answered "yes" to the question were asked to tell from whom or from where they received support and information, but no one answered this.

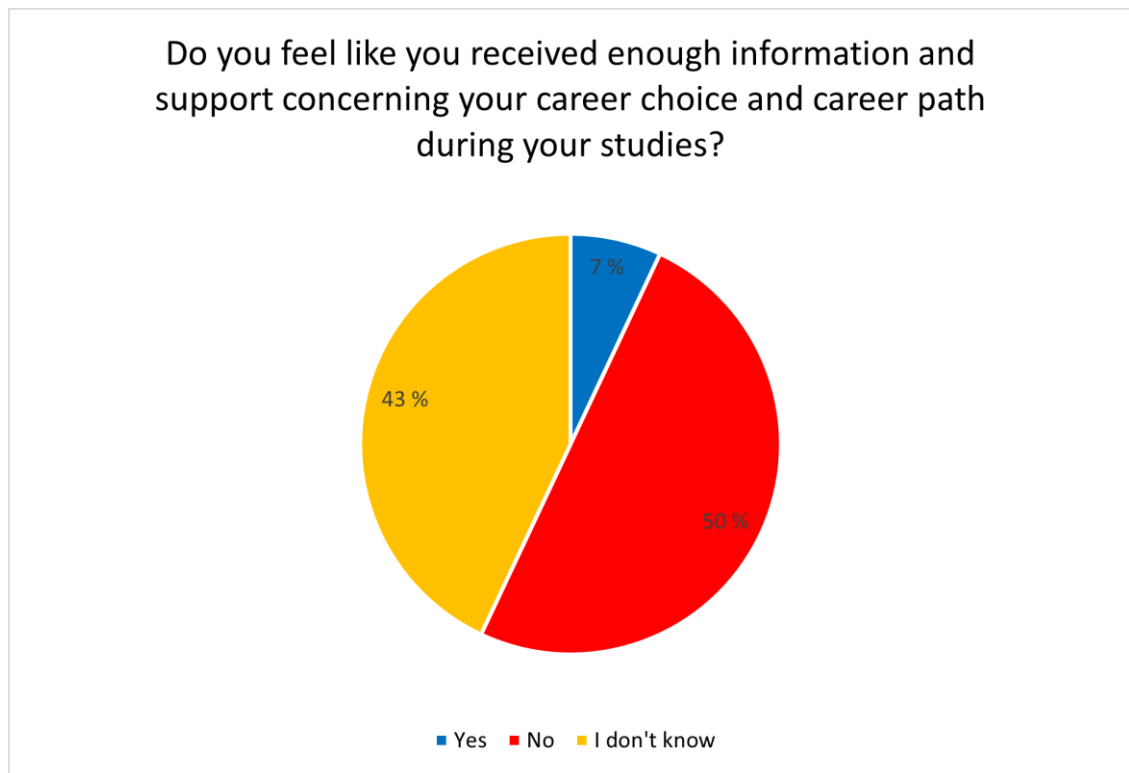


FIGURE 10. The alumni's feelings about whether they received enough information and support concerning career choice and career path during the studies or not (Autio, 2022).

When asking the alumni if there were some topics concerning job hunting or work life that they would have liked to know more about during the studies, there were a few similar answers. A couple of alumni would have liked to know more about job hunting in general. Some alumni would have wanted to know more about salary related topics (e.g. understanding payslips), as well as employment conditions. There were a couple of alumni that would have liked to know more about networking.

Some answers were related to personal development, for example, finding own career path, getting help in finding own strengths and finding "the occupational me". Other things that the alumni would have liked to know more about during the studies were how to use social media, examples of career paths, different roles in specific field of studies, the everyday life at work, concrete examples of workplace cultures and practical issues concerning job hunting and work life. There were a few alumni that could not think of anything they would have liked to know more about.

Figure 11 below shows the answers to the quantitative question about if the alumni's thoughts about their future career changed during the studies. The great majority (71%) of alumni said their thoughts changed during the studies, 21% of alumni answered that their thoughts about their future career did not change during the studies and 7% did not know if their thoughts changed during the studies or not.

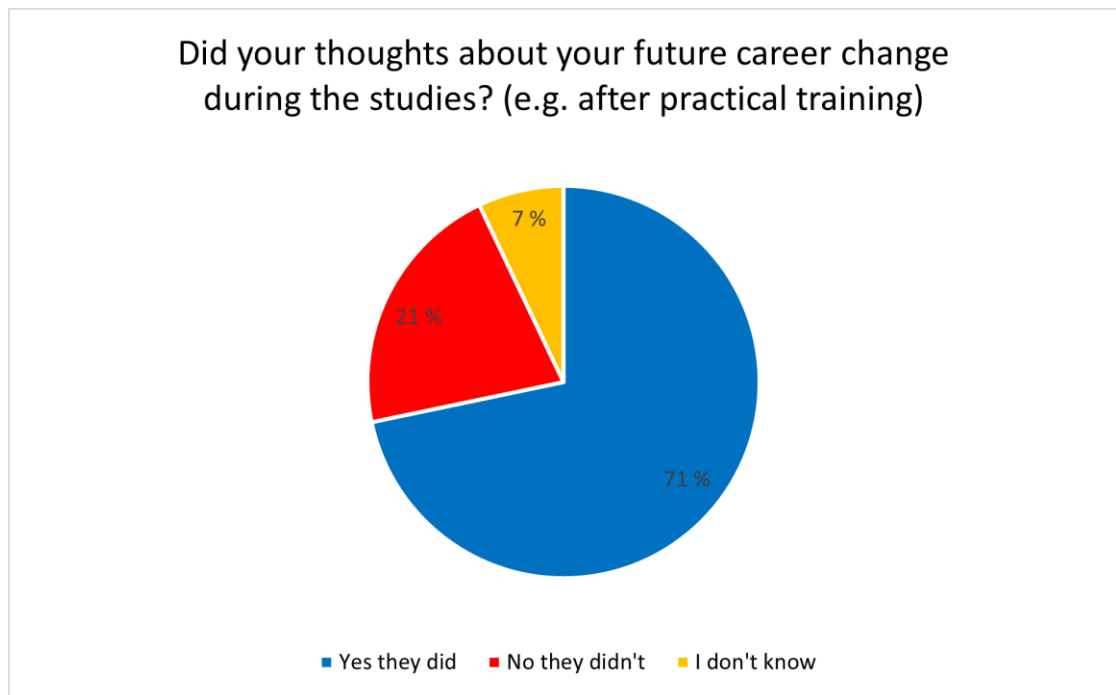


FIGURE 11. The alumni's feelings whether their thoughts about their future career changed during the studies or not (Autio, 2022).

When answering that the thoughts about future career did change during the studies, the respondents were asked to tell how their thoughts changed and why. Most of the responses were related to practical training and how thoughts and interests changed after that. All of the practical training experiences of the alumni that answered the question were positive and due to that some found an interesting job, and some realized what topics interest them. Some alumni responded that their interests simply changed during the studies, so some changed the topic in the same field of study and some even changed the field of study. Other responses were that thoughts about future career changed due to opening eyes for new opportunities, and that the themes of sustainable development in the studies clarified plans and had an impact on the chosen further education.

The last quantitative question of the survey asked the alumni if their thoughts about their future career have changed after graduating. Most of the alumni (64%) answered that their thoughts have not changed after graduating, 21% of the alumni responded that their thoughts have changed after graduating and 14% did not know if their thoughts have changed or not (Figure 11).

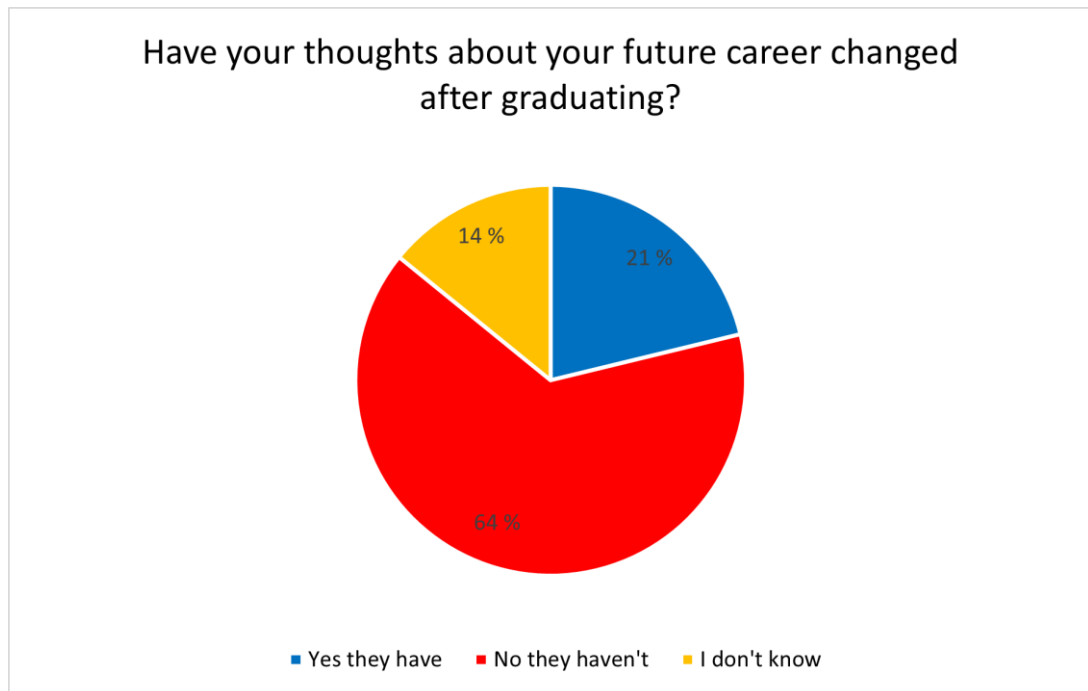


FIGURE 12. The alumni's feelings about if their thoughts of their future career have changed after graduating (Autio, 2022).

The respondents that answered "yes they have" to the previous question, were asked to tell how and why their thoughts about their future career have changed after graduating. A couple of answers are similar, where both alumni have studied a certain subject but after being in work life for a while, the job around the subject did not feel right anymore. Other one of them got a new job from the same field of study but different subject and is now happier. The other one would like to further educate themselves to a more socially meaningful field of study. One alumnus responded that after "opening their eyes", they have gotten an interesting job, where they could not have ended up without being brave and open to new things.

The alumni were also asked about the difficulties in starting a career after graduating. The answers varied very much, from no difficulties at all and being employed already during the studies, to difficulty of finding a job at all. Other answers were the difficulty of finding entry-level positions, salary level, the lack of work and life experience due to young age, not feeling like a professional although having a degree, trusting in self and own know-how, feeling like one's education is not appreciated in working life, the education received not giving the skills needed in working life, not receiving work life guidance during the studies and wanting to change area of work within the field of study.

When asking the alumni if they would have hoped for more support or information about topics related to job hunting or career planning just before graduation or shortly after graduation, the majority of alumni told they would have hoped for help with career planning and more career planning in general. One of the respondents clarified that they would have hoped for personal help and support with career planning. One alumnus would have hoped for information about the challenges in job hunting and how to overcome them, and another alumnus would have hoped for more knowledge of hidden workplaces, LinkedIn and graduating and being an alumnus of TAMK. There were a few respondents that would not have hoped for more support or information.

In the end of the alumni survey, there was a free space for any additional comments concerning the topics of the survey, just like in the survey for 3rd and 4th year students. There were two comments about practical training and two comments concerning TAMK Career Services or career planning. One alumnus said that unpaid practical trainings should be forbidden, because in their opinion it is "exploitation dressed in experience". The respondent also added that many people have noticed that companies that offer paid practical trainings are more likely to hire the interns afterwards. Another alumnus recommends students to open-mindedly benefit from the possibility of practical trainings and to try places that might not be the most interesting, as someone could be positively surprised about the reality.

One alumnus commented that the teachers in TAMK should work together with TAMK Career Services and another one left a comment saying that it is very great if career planning is being invested in.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objective of the thesis was to gather information of TAMK students' and alumni's career choices, career paths and the factors that have had an impact on their career choices. In addition, the objective was to get information about the students' and alumni's needs and wants concerning career guidance and career services in TAMK. A survey was made to get the data as fast and as efficiently as possible. Before conducting the survey, academic literature and theories about the topic were read to get an overall understanding of the topic.

The two main research questions of the thesis were: *“What are the factors that have had an influence on the students' and alumni's career choices?”* and *“What kind of career guidance does the students hope for during their studies/ the alumni would have hoped for during their studies?”*. The answers to these main research questions transpire throughout Chapter 5. To sum up the answers to the question about the factors that have had an influence on the career choices, among all the students and alumni own interests have had the most impact. Second most popular answer among everyone was desire for a high salary level and in third place comes the example of parents or other close people. The expectations of parents or other close people was delightfully the factor that had had the least impact on the students' and alumni's career choices.

Interestingly, “own interests”, which was the most popular answer to have had an influence on the respondents' career choices, is an important part of all the three theories introduced in Chapter 2 of this thesis (Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) and Holland's Theory of Vocational Types). According to Gies (1990), in Super's theory, the key point is that vocational likes, desires, interests and self-concepts change over time, and experience and therefore career thoughts change over time, too. In SCCT, the first model is called interest model, which suggests that interest in certain activities begin when one feels competent in the activity and believes that the activity will have a positive outcome. SCCT's second model is an extension to the interest model, which suggests that after a person has found their interests, they will much likely choose activities linked to their interests. (Brown & Lent 2013, 120-124.) According to the survey responses, that has happened to a lot of

respondents. They have found their interests and by choosing their career based on interests, they have chosen activities linked to their interests. Holland's Theory of Vocational Types includes six different interest types according to Kidd (2006), and based on one's interest type there are suitable occupations listed. The theories are gone through more in detail in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

To summarise the findings to the other main research question concerning hopes for career guidance during the studies, the students would hope for more information about different career options and more versatile and practical career guidance, real-life examples of alumni and visitors. Students would also hope for more information on further education, and some would like personal career guidance. It was noticed that international students would hope for help with job hunting related issues in Finland, for instance with CVs and job interviews. Alumni would have hoped for broader career guidance in general during their studies and more information about life after graduation.

The sub-questions of the thesis were: *"Do the students and alumni feel like they have gotten enough information/support regarding career choice and professional career path during their studies?"* and *"Have the students' thoughts of professional career changed during the studies and did the alumni's thoughts of professional career change during the studies?"*. The answers to these sub-questions are gone through in depth in Chapter 5. Out of everyone who answered the survey, as many as 43,9% felt that they have not gotten enough information or support concerning career choice and professional career path during their studies. To summarise the answers to the other sub-question about whether the thoughts of professional career of students and alumni have changed during the studies, 57,9% of the respondents' thoughts have changed during the studies. Based on the answers, the most popular reason why the thoughts of one's professional career have changed is practical training. In conclusion, practical training is a very crucial part of the studies and finding own interests.

Super's Developmental Self-Concept Theory has taken students' situation with only little work experience into account. According to Gies (1990), Super suggests that since students do not have much work experience, they need to match their self-concept to occupations based on their thoughts of the work. This is yet

another reason why practical trainings are important during studies, because through practical training students are able to try match their self-concept to occupations and explore the work safely to see if their thoughts of the work were right or not.

The purpose of the thesis was to get data from students' and alumni's thoughts and feelings about career planning and career choices, in order to develop career services available for them. The findings of the research are beneficial for the commissioners TAMK Career Services and Nopeasti Töihin project because they might be helpful when designing suitable career services for students and alumni.

After doing the research and conducting the survey, the author has a couple of recommendations for the future. The recommendations are based on the information gotten from the survey answers.

The first recommendation is that the commissioners or other team in TAMK should conduct a broader and more in detail survey of the topic of this thesis. The survey should include more questions about what it is concretely that the students and alumni would like regarding career services. For example, would they prefer a mandatory course or discussions about the topic? Would they like to discuss the topic personally with someone and how often? Based on the survey conducted as a part of this thesis, the topic is important and interests many students. It is noticeably from the survey that many people would need more career guidance during the studies. Information, support, and help is needed.

Another recommendation is directed to TAMK Career Services. They should be more available to the students and market themselves more. Based on the answers of the survey, many respondents hope for the kind of career guidance that TAMK Career Services already provide, for example, help with CVs, job interviews and other individual career coaching. TAMK Career Services should be more openly available for students because career guidance is important and helpful for most of the students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. General survey questions for everyone

1. Choose the language:
Finnish / English
2. Sex:
Male / Female
3. Age:
18-23 / 24-29 / 30-35 / 36-40 / 40+
4. Field of study (if you have already graduated, choose the field of study you studied):
Leadership, management and economics / Culture and languages / Construction / Engineering and natural sciences / Health and wellbeing / Data processing and technology / Other, what?
5. Stage of studies:
1st or 2nd year student / 3rd or 4th year student / alumnus

Appendix 2. Survey questions for 1st and 2nd year students

1. Which factors have had an impact on your career choice?

The expectations of parents or other close people / Own interests / The example of parents or other close people / Desire for a high salary level / Own hobbies / A role model, from publicity or elsewhere / Other, what?

2. What kind of career guidance would you hope for during the studies?
3. What topics concerning job hunting or work life would you like to know more about?
4. What are the things you find challenging in job hunting?
5. What do you think are your own strengths in job hunting?

Appendix 3. Survey questions for 3rd and 4th year students

1. Which factors have had an impact on your career choice?

The expectations of parents or other close people / Own interests / The example of parents or other close people / Desire for a high salary level / Own hobbies / A role model, from publicity or elsewhere / Other, what?

1. What kind of career guidance would you hope for during the studies?
2. Do you feel like you have received enough information and support concerning your career choice and career path during your studies?
Yes / No / I don't know
3. If you answered "yes" to the previous question, from whom or from where have you received information and support?
4. What topics concerning job hunting or work life would you like to know more about?
5. Have your thoughts about your future career changed during the studies? (e.g. after practical training)
Yes they have / No they haven't / I don't know
6. If you answered that your thoughts about your future career have changed during the studies, how have they changed and why?
7. What are the things you find challenging in starting a career after graduating?
8. Is there anything else you would like to say concerning the topic (career services, development of own career related thoughts)? Word is free!

Appendix 4. Survey questions for alumni

1. Which factors have had an impact on your career choice?
The expectations of parents or other close people / Own interests / The example of parents or other close people / Desire for a high salary level / Own hobbies / A role model, from publicity or elsewhere / Other, what?
1. What kind of career guidance would you have hoped for during the studies?
2. Do you feel like you received enough information and support concerning your career choice and career path during your studies?
Yes / No / I don't know
3. If you answered "yes" to the previous question, from whom or from where did you receive information and support?
4. What topics concerning job hunting or work life would you have liked to know more about during your studies?
5. Did your thoughts about your future career change during the studies? (e.g. after practical training)
Yes they did / No they didn't / I don't know
6. If you answered that your thoughts about your future career changed during the studies, how did they change and why?
7. Have your thoughts about your future career changed after graduating?
Yes they have / No they haven't / I don't know
8. If you answered that your thoughts about your future career have changed after graduating, how have they changed and why?
9. What are the things you found challenging when starting a career after graduating?
10. Would you have hoped for more support or information (e.g. about job hunting or career planning) just before graduating or after graduating?
What would you have hoped for?
11. Is there anything else you would like to say concerning the topic (career services, development of own career related thoughts)? Word is free!