

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Demographic factors in procuring ornamental plants marketing as a career

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There are several factors in acquiring a profession in the present day, that is, in the late 20th century and beginning of 21st century. The most important of these factors are demographic factors. Of those demographic factors, the characteristics such as gender, education level, income level and age are effective. Therefore, people prefer jobs suitable to their own socio-economic structures and gender when they begin to work. In this study, the demographic factors, the effects of gender, age, education level and income level on acquiring floriculture profession were investigated. The results obtained from the field study entitled the effect of demographic factors in the profession of ornamental plants marketing (floriculture) are quite impressive. In the survey conducted in the different points of the provinces Istanbul and Kocaeli, randomly selected 50 subjects were taken as sample and the data were analyzed by SPSS 16.0 program by using several statistical methods. 51 of the subjects were female and 99 were male. This situation shows that masculine station comes to the forefront in floriculture as it does in every profession. Mostly middle-aged or elder people do this profession. Additionally, education is also known as effective in acquiring a profession. However, there may be no need for education for some jobs. It was seen that 54 of the subjects were graduates of primary school, 60 of them were graduates of secondary school, 30 of high school and 6 of universities. This study indicated that people who are graduates of primary and secondary school were more in ornamental plants marketing (in floriculture) and education was not important for the profession of floriculture.

**Key words:** Floriculture, marketing, occupational gender, socio-economic structure.

## INTRODUCTION

In a modern society, one of the important development tasks of an independent person is choosing his/her job. If a person wants to make the right choice in any subject, or in other words, make a healthy decision, first of all, they should know what they want and what opportunities they have to achieve them. After or favourably with this process, they should examine various options and evaluate how suitable they are to their wishes and conditions. People who do not go through these processes mindfully and regard fully will absolutely get disappointed. It is observed that while making an important decision like the choice of profession, some young people do not perform the development task mentioned above and thus become upset. There are some factors which make it difficult for people to make up their minds about which profession to choose. Young people's beliefs and the generalizations they make about the world of business and human characteristics are

some of these factors.

The statement 'In our country people cannot get the job they want' is a wrong generalization. It is true that a group of young people cannot get the job they want because of poverty. However, not being able to get the job wanted is not only due to the lack of money. It is also observed that there are some wealthy young people who head for wrong fields. These people's mistake results from their not questioning whether the job they want to acquire suits them or not (Kuzgun, 2008). While choosing their profession, some people are insensible. In addition, their living conditions and surroundings make them acquire the jobs they do not really want to do as their profession. Demographic factors also play a role in some jobs. One of these jobs is floriculture and now we will have a look at the factors effective in acquiring this profession and floriculture in general.

A Florist is a person who provides, arranges, presents

**Table 1.** Export of ornamental plants in Turkey.

<b>Years</b>	<b>Value (1.000 dollars)</b>
2000	12.956
2001	14.282
2002	22.299
2003	31.485
2004	37.748
2005	36.229
2006	40.522
2007	46.447
2008	45.524
2009	49.150

Anonymous, 2010 b. Source: DTM.

and sells cut flowers and indoor ornamental plants. Floriculture can be defined as buying, selling and marketing all types of flowers and flowery plants; producing soil for flowers and gardens; indoor and outdoor botanic decoration of houses, summer houses, offices, tourism resorts; all services for balcony and landscape gardening, from the project phase to the application and the maintenance agreement; offering irrigation, illumination, plant production and research service and selling of all kinds of special equipment; selling engines, machines, botanic vehicles, medicine and tools for agricultural activity and offering transportation services.

A Florist plans material requirements, determines where to buy the flowers and equipment, classifies the flowers, cuts the flowers according to purpose, increases the stability of the flowers, prepares the pots or other containers of flowers, dresses the flower windows, prepares bouquets, arrangements and wreaths, decorates indoor and outdoor areas, receives orders, determines prices and labels the flowers, does turnovers, keeps records of the orders, prepares submission forms, delivers the order and makes out an invoice.

Today flowers and floriculture are not only ornamental, but they are also a profitable agricultural activity. Many countries in the world have realized this and started to earn money from flowers. African countries are trying to get rid of starvation and Colombia in South America is trying to get rid of drug traffic by growing and selling flowers. The yearly flower sales revenue of Colombia is over \$500 million. Israel brings in \$200 million by growing flowers in the desert and selling them. Holland sells flowers to all European countries. Both in Turkey and in the world, ornamental plants are examined under four headings: cut flowers, indoor (potted) ornamental plants, outdoor ornamental plants and natural flower onions. Cut flowers account for 57% of the total ornamental plant export, the live plants (indoor and outdoor plants) for 24%, wreaths and moss for 13% and flower onions account for 6% (Anonymous, 2008).

Ornamental plants sector started to become commercially important in the beginning of the 20th century, but it had started to develop as an important line of business especially in developed countries (in Holland, the USA and Japan) before the Second World War and then in some developing countries (in Colombia, Kenya and Israel) (DPT 2001:4, Doldur, 2008). Today, for many countries, ornamental plants sector has become an effective commercial sector contributing to economy and one of these countries is Turkey. In Turkey, 20 cities were producing ornamental plants in the early years. This sector, once common in the Marmara region, has started to move to the Mediterranean and the Aegean Regions due to their climatic advantages (Ay, 2009). Ornamental plants production and trade are developing rapidly in Turkey. Ornamental plants are produced in 28 cities in Turkey. The cities which have the highest production rates are Antalya, Izmir, Yalova and İstanbul respectively. Cut flower production made in the Marmara and Aegean Regions (Istanbul, Yalova, Izmir, Aydın) is usually domestic market oriented (Anonymous, 2010a).

In Turkey, there is development not only in the domestic market but also in the foreign one. Turkey's export of ornamental plants started 20 years ago and has had a steady growth. The main export product group is cut flowers, seedlings, saplings, indoor and outdoor plants, flower bulbs, moss and wreaths. The development of ornamental plant export in Turkey by years is given in Table 1.

According to 2008 statistics, 60% of ornamental plants export of Turkey is done in Antalya. After the Province of Antalya, Istanbul (10%), Izmir (8%), and Yalova (6%) respectively are important cities in ornamental plants export. Due to the table land production made in Isparta, Burdur and Korkuteli Regions, export season has risen to 10 months from 7 months. Today, Turkey exports ornamental plants to about 35 countries. The most important markets of Turkey in ornamental plants export are Holland, England, Germany, Russian Federation and Ukraine. In cut flowers export Holland, England, Germany, Russia and Ukraine; and in the live plants export Turkmenistan, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and Hungary are the important markets. The ornamental plants export of Turkey has reached \$45.5 million in 2008. Turkey is in the 24th place in world ornamental plants export (Anonymous, 2009).

Countries want to increase their export, but the inadequacy of the products (ornamental plants) they grow in their own hinterland and the socio-economic and cultural structure lead to an increase in the consumption of ornamental plants. In this case, countries start to import products to meet the demand. Countries cannot meet all the demand as the type and number of the ornamental plants they grow in their hinterlands is limited. For this reason, they import ornamental plants in order to meet the demand (Kelkit and Bulut, 1998). Ornamental plants farming is a general term, which is divided as cut

**Table 2.** The reasons by gender for being a florist.

Gender	The ideas of the florists about the reasons why they are doing floriculture business									
	Has no idea		To learn the profession		Its being an enjoyable profession		Economic benefit		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Female	15	29.5	12	23.5	12	23.5	12	23.5	51	34
Male	0	0.00	18	18.2	45	45.4	36	36.4	99	66
Total	15	10	30	20	57	38	48	32	150	100

As Chi-square: 8.690, Df: 3, Asymp. Sig:0.034,  $p < 0.05$ , Ho: hypothesis is accepted (that is, there is an important relationship).

flowers, indoor ornamental plants, outdoor ornamental plants and natural flower onions farming. With a share of 80%, cut flowers and indoor ornamental plants form an important group in the world market (Groot, 1998).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The article on "the effects of the demographic factors in acquiring the ornamental plants marketing (floriculture) profession", announcements, books, Internet sources and the reports of the relevant institutions and organizations have been made use of. However, the survey study with the florists is the most important material of the research. As the method, a survey was done with 150 subjects chosen with the random sampling method in different points of the provinces Istanbul and Kocaeli. The reason to choose these cities is their being industrial and having a high population density. The data obtained from these surveys were analyzed by several statistical methods and programs. With the SPSS 16.0 program and crosstabs tables and the frequency and khi-kare (with 95% reliability and 5% error margin) analysis, several comparisons were made and the data obtained were evaluated.

## FINDINGS

### Demographic characteristics

#### Gender

Gender identity is the personal conception of oneself according to their masculine or feminine traits. Gender identity is talked about as the psychological gender of individuals and it can also be defined as the existential femininity or masculinity of individuals (Bem, 1981). With the term gender, people usually mean the biological sex, and with gender identity they emphasize the psychological characteristics of the biological sex. According to the Gender Schema Theory, people adopt behaviours, manners and traits matching their gender identity. The individuals' classification of their accepted gender identity may affect their data processing period (Yağcı and İlarıslan, 2010).

In the gender-oriented division of labour, socio-cultural factors and patriarchal cultural values are determinant in the participation and position of women in labour market

(Anker and Hein, 1986: 11; Harttman, 2006; Özçatal, 2009). In terms of profession, gender identity causes differences depending on a person's being male or female. It seems that the careers of women have no importance in almost any sector and being a woman is a reference for them in determining whether they are suitable for the job or not (Torun and Bener, 2009).

In addition, women meet with obstacles while they are starting a job and throughout their occupational life. These obstacles are the conflict between the occupational life and traditional roles of women along with the social expectations fitting these roles (Torun, 2010). The findings obtained from the study conducted show that gender has an effect on acquiring ornamental plants marketing (Floriculture) profession. It is observed that the number of female managers is low, but the number of male managers is high. The reasons by gender for being a florist are given in Table 2.

In the Khi-Kare analysis done to determine whether there is a relationship between the gender and reasons why the florists are doing floriculture business, it came up that the relationship between them is important according to the 95% confidence interval (reliability). In other words, gender is an important factor in the floriculture business and mostly men do it. Men have an idea of why they are doing this business, whereas most of the women florists (29.5%) do not have an idea as to why they are doing it. This result shows that gender is an important factor in acquiring floriculture profession. In the study conducted, out of 150 subjects, 51 were female and 99 were male. As seen in Figure 1, 34% of the florists are female, whereas 66% are male.

It is also understood that, as in most of the professions, there are more males in floriculture too and gender is an important factor in doing this business. This situation can be explained by men's being more pushing in commercial affairs than women and women's falling behind in professional life because of their roles provided by the society. In the study conducted, gender and age ranges of the florists have been examined and the findings are given in Table 3. When Table 3 is examined, it can be stated that there is no difference in the gender and age range distribution between people doing ornamental flower marketing business. The percentage (71%) of

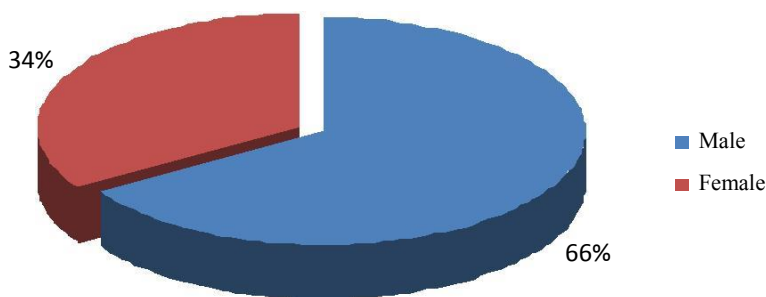


Figure 1. Gender distribution.

Table 3. Gender and age distribution of ornamental plant marketers (Florists).

Gender	The age distribution of florists according to their gender (age ranges)								Total	
	20-30		31-40		41-50		51+			
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Female	15	29	9	18	27	53	0	0.00	51	34
Male	30	30.3	45	45.5	12	12.1	12	12.1	99	66
Total	45	30	54	36	39	26	12	8	150	100

As Chi-square= 1.548, Df:2, Asymp. Sig.: 0.46, p> 0.05, Ho: hypothesis is rejected (that is, there is no relationship).

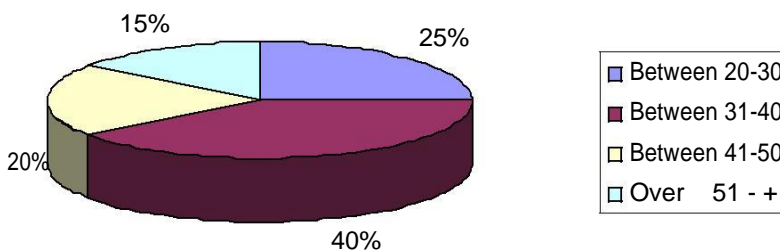


Figure 2. Age range of florists.

women between the ages of 31 to 51+ is nearly the same as men’s (69.7%). There is no important relationship between the gender and age and according to Table 3, the relationship between the age and gender of the florists is not found meaningful according to Khi-Kare analysis done with 95% reliability. It can be interpreted that whatever the age and gender of a florist is, it has nothing to do with their choosing this job as their profession.

**Age**

In the analysis done in the study conducted, it is found that there is no relationship between the income levels and age groups of the people who have the floriculture profession. In addition, in no age range, there are people who have 100-900 TL monthly income. It is shown in Table 4, that in each age group, the level of income is between income brackets of 901-2500+ TL a month.

According to Table 4, 66% of the people in the 31 to 50 age group earn more income from the profession. However, there is a decrease in the employment rate and earning value when the age range decreases or increases. The probable reason is that when people are at an early age or old age, they have difficulty in taking risks and complying with the conditions of the competition in the trading area. According to the study conducted, age also has an important effect in acquiring floriculture profession.

As seen in Figure 2 most of the florists are in the age range of 31 to 50; in other words, they are middle-aged. It is estimated that 15% of the florists are at the age of 20 to 30, 40% are 31 to 40 and 45% of them are in the age range of 41 to 50 and no florists at the age of 51 or over are run into. In this respect, it could be said that people can do this job in their most active period and there is the advantage of being able to follow the innovations and technology and using them. Being a florist requires doing multiple jobs. For instance, floriculture (marketing

**Table 4.** The distribution of the monthly income and age group of the florists.

Age	Monthly income distribution of the florists (TL/Month)								Total	
	100-900		901- 1500		1501-2000		2001-2500+		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%		
20-30	0	0.00	6	14	18	43	18	43	42	28
31-40	0	0.00	3	4.5	33	50	30	45.5	66	44
41-50	0	0.00	15	45.5	15	45.5	3	9	33	22
51- +	0	0.00	6	66.7	13	33.3	0		9	16
Total	0	0.00	30	20	69	46	51	34	150	100

As Chi-Square=3.054, Df: 4, Asymp. sig: 0.549,  $p > 0.05$ , Ho: hypothesis is rejected (that is, there is no relationship).

**Table 5.** The distribution of florists according to gender and education.

Gender	V3 level of education								Total	
	Primary school		Secondary school		High school		College - University		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%		
Female	18	35.3	9	17.6	24	47.1	0	0.00	51	34
Male	36	36.3	51	51.5	6	6.1	6	6.1	99	66
Total	54	36.4	60	40	30	20	6	4	150	100

As Chi-Square: 5,459 df: 3 Asymp. sig.:0.141,  $p > 0.05$ , Ho: hypothesis is rejected (that is there is no relationship).

ornamental plants) starts at the stage when the crops are produced and prepared for the market and ends in the consumers' house.

Meanwhile, the crops go through many processes and delivered in different ways to the customer in need. Ornamental plants and their producers and marketers think of what they will cultivate. Then they start ornamental plants production by investing capital. Next they grow types of plants according to the wishes of the consumers. For a successful marketing, the florist should know the taste and preferences of the consumer (the demand, in other words) and grow plants according to and deliver them to the consumer.

### Education level

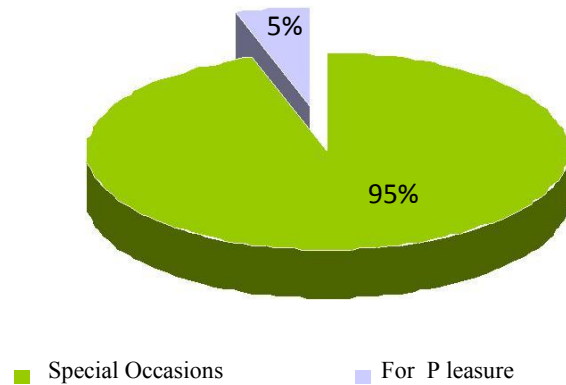
In general, a parallel structure is expected between the education level and the profession; however, in the floriculture business, it can be said that education level is not as important a factor as gender. As seen in Table 5, when the distribution of the education level of people who acquire floriculture profession according to gender is examined, it is seen that there is no difference and relationship. 35.3% of female florists are primary school graduates, 17% are secondary school and 47.1% are high school graduates. There are no university graduate female florists in the subject group. When it comes to male florists, 36.3% of them are primary school graduates, 51.5% are secondary school, 6% are high school and 6.1% are university graduates. In the Khi-kare

analysis done between the gender and the education level of the florists, it is seen that the relationship between them is insignificant (Figure 3). After the survey conducted, it is observed that the education level of people who have the profession of ornamental flowers marketing is low. 36.4% (54) of primary school graduates, 40% (60) of secondary school, 20% (30) of high school and 4% (6) of university graduates are florists.

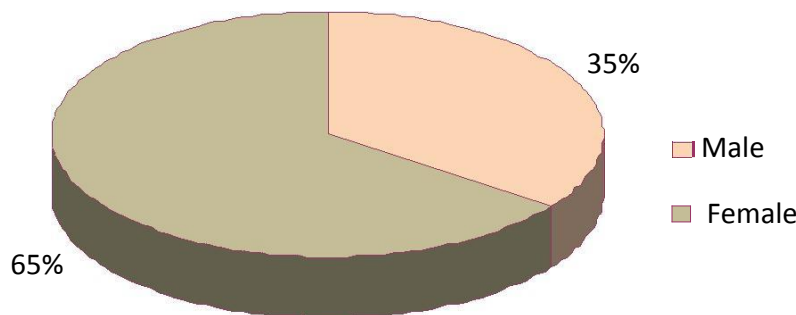
This shows that, in commercial affairs, a person needs to be at a certain age and have self confidence. In similar studies conducted, it is determined that education level is effective on behaviours. A study conducted by Atilgan et al. (2007) showed that as the education level of the producers in the province of Antalya in using chemical and organic fertilisers in the greenhouses increased, they started to give more importance to soil tests and do more farming in bigger greenhouses using more organic fertilizers. This also showed that there is an important relationship between the level of education and these parameters.

### Level of income

Level of income is one of the indicators that determine the socio-economic status of people. To have an income, besides having a profession, a person needs to work somewhere and produce something. The most important variable of the socio-economic status is the profession of the individual (Coleman, 1983). In addition to this, other components, such as education, wealth and hometown



**Figure 5.** Reasons why consumers buy flowers.



**Figure 6.** Gender ratios of flower consumers.

this study, the income levels of the subjects are examined and it is seen that they make enough profit to maintain their life standards in today's conditions. It is determined that 20% of the florists earn 901-1500 TL monthly, 45% earn 1501-2000 TL, and 35% earn 2001-2500 TL. When it is considered that Istanbul and Kocaeli are industrial cities, this level of income will make floriculture one of the preferable professions. Both the high level of income of the consumers and the continual growth of these cities due to migration bring about an increase in demand. In this regard, this question might be asked: What affects the demand for ornamental plants? The demand for ornamental plants is affected by:

- (i) The number of consumers,
- (ii) The income level of consumers,
- (iii) The taste and preferences of consumers,
- (iv) The price of ornamental plants,
- (v) The price of other products used instead of ornamental plants,
- (vi) Advertisements and sales-increasing activities.

According to the study, consumers use flowers for two reasons: As a present on special occasions and for their own taste and pleasure.

- (i) Special occasions: On New Year's Eve, special

occasions (Mother's Day, Teacher's Day, Valentine's Day, birthdays etc.), wedding receptions, festivals and acquaintance visits, consumers necessarily buy flowers and flower sales increase on these days.

(ii) For pleasure: People's use of flowers in their houses, gardens or offices and buying them for these purposes. The development of the flower demand depends upon the increase in the number of such people.

According to a study conducted by Holdur (2008), in the other countries of the world, people buy ornamental flowers for similar reasons to the ones in Turkey. That is, he stated that they buy them for special occasions or for pleasure (Figure 5).

In the study conducted, it is seen that most of the buyers of ornamental flowers and their derivatives are men. The most important reason of this is the opposite sexes' assigning several meanings to flowers and flower types at certain times and men's feeling that they need to buy a flower to the opposite sex at those times (special occasions). Women mostly buy flowers for pleasure and for occasions when it is necessary to buy them. In the study conducted it is seen that most of the flower consumers are male (Figure 6).

65% of the consumers are male and 35% are female. The flower types the consumers prefer change depending

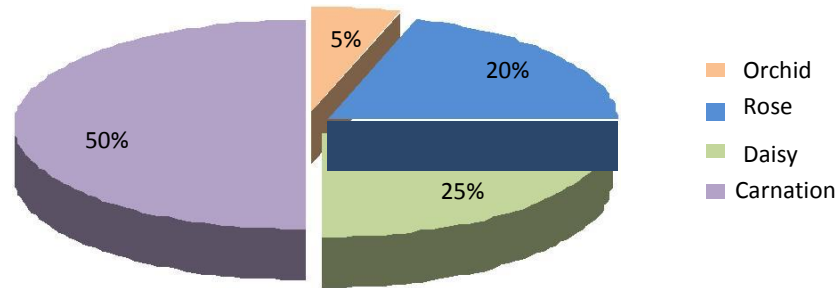


Figure 7. Sales rates according to flower types.

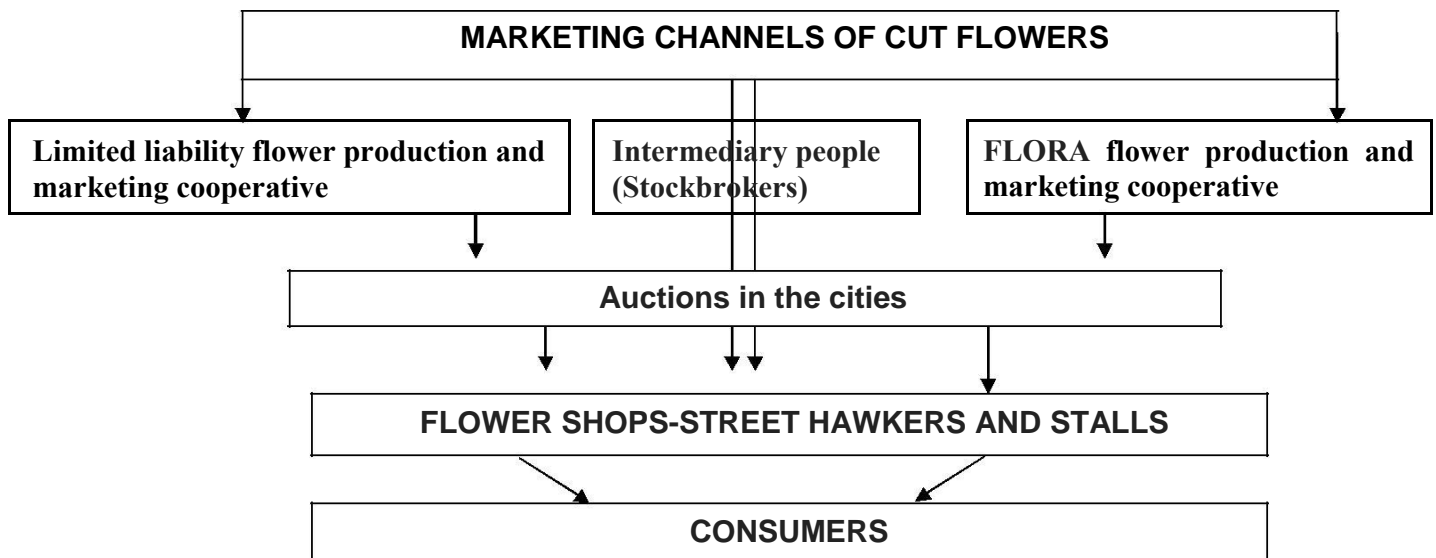


Figure 8. Channels used in the marketing of cut flowers (Source: Samilfidancilik.com).

on the seasons, prices, people's taste and the reason for the need. Research results of the most preferred flower types by the consumers in Kocaeli and Istanbul are given in Figure 7.

Flower market is busy and changeable. As there are a lot of different types and species of flowers, the consumers may have unpredictable demands. Therefore, florists can increase and maintain the continuity of sales by guessing the wishes of the consumers in advance and retaining those flowers. Otherwise, they cause a decrease in the market share and thus affect the market growth rate negatively. According to the data on Figure 7, the sales rates of the flower types in the domestic market are as follows. With 50% Carnation sales have the highest rate, Daisy 25%, Rose 20% and Orchid has the lowest rate with 5%.

According to this order, the types that are most preferred on special occasions are carnations, daisies and roses respectively. Apart from that the flower prices are also effective in preference order. The Orchid has the

lowest sales rates because it is an expensive flower. The flower types that have the highest sales rate are the cut flowers. Therefore, the marketing channels used in the marketing of cut flowers are given on Figure 8.

In our country, as in the other fields of agricultural activity, the businesses that do ornamental plant farming are small family businesses. There are 6 to 7 thousand floriculturists and more than 10 thousand florists in Turkey. About 5 thousand families in Turkey do cut flower business. Today most of the businesses that produce for the domestic market and market their product through the flower cooperatives have the characteristics of small family businesses. The internal marketing of the cut flowers in Turkey is done through flower cooperatives. Currently, there are two cooperatives based in Istanbul in Turkey. In the 20 flower auctions of flower cooperatives in 14 cities, flowers of about 6000 floriculturists are sold to florists. The figures are not official but there are over 9 thousand florists in Turkey and about half of them are in service in Istanbul (Anonymous, 2010c). Gender is a

classification variable, which has been used in traditional marketing for a long time especially to determine consumer behaviours. However, in today's rapidly changing world, it has become necessary to go beyond the traditional models in understanding consumer behaviours. At this point, we come across the term "gender identity" which we hear often recently and which will help the marketers come over the complexity of consumer behaviours (Yağcı and İlarıslan, 2010).

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

As a result of the study conducted, it is seen that gender has an important role in acquiring the ornamental plants marketing (floriculture) profession and that mostly men prefer it. As in all professions, there is hegemony of men in this profession too. This situation results both from the social structure differences and the inadequate availability of the economic freedom of women in working areas and their not being as brave as men in taking risks. When women are acquiring a business or profession, they prefer the less risky ones or the ones with government guarantee (teaching, nursing, pharmacy etc.). It seems that they would rather not be self-employed.

Women's acquiring floriculture profession will bring about more development in this sector and, in case of acquiring this profession; their sophistication and creativity will help them achieve more economic profit. As it will provide more circulation both in flower and side products sales, they will have a steady job and continuity in their financial income.

Furthermore, when flower sales are examined, it is seen that the buyers are mostly men. This situation is an advantage in terms of female florists, but male florists can also make use of this advantage by employing a woman. Why and how? Because flowers are a symbol of elegance, beauty, best wishes happiness, sharing and many more things. When this symbol is combined with the sophistication and creativity of women, there will absolutely be an increase in flower and side product sales. Therefore, acquiring floriculture or ornamental plants marketing profession will be important both for women and men. How? Male managers (acquiring floriculture profession) will see that employing women and men trained for this sector will be much more beneficial for them.

Age profiles are also as important in acquiring ornamental plants marketing (floriculture) profession. In the study conducted, it is observed that mostly middle-aged or elder people acquire this profession. This situation reveals information about people's undertaking economic risks. It seems that they do this business as a second job mostly after retirement or as a predecessor job. Education level of people has also revealed interesting results in acquiring ornamental plants marketing (floriculture) profession. It is determined that people

acquiring this job are mostly primary, secondary or high school graduates. University graduates don't usually acquire this line of business. The most important reason of this is that besides the low number of schools on floriculture, the training on this area is done only as a course/subject in the other occupational groups (such as Landscape Architecture).

In this study, that level of education in acquiring ornamental plants marketing (floriculture) profession is low doesn't mean that education is unimportant. On the contrary, the level of education is very important in all lines of business especially in the ones including marketing. Today, our target market is made up of conscious-consumers and thus they have or want to get information about the products they purchase. For this reason, each profession expert should not only know the details of their business or profession, but they also have to have a good education on the relevant areas. As marketing is an extensive field, people should have the sufficient education and knowledge to become successful. In today's circumstances, when the capitalist class prevails and imperialist powers show themselves, it seems inevitable that to compete with others and become successful, besides education and knowledge, we need to have the ability and the power to be able to use the tools and materials of the information age.

In today's circumstances, the income obtained from ornamental plants marketing cannot be underestimated. A monthly income rate of 1501-2500 TL cannot be regarded as little. This study coincides with the 2009-2010 global crisis period. Getting these figures during this period can mean that these amounts will be higher in normal periods. In addition, if we consider that ornamental plants demand includes products appealing to taste and special occasions -the products other than the necessities- it can be said that, in terms of its being a promising job, the importance of acquiring this profession will increase much more.

The types of flowers sold the most in ornamental plants marketing are carnations, daisies, roses and orchids respectively. This shows that cut flower types are preferred more by the consumers and that these are the most preferable types of flowers for special occasions. The reasonable prices of the flowers demanded the most are also one of the reasons why they are more popular than the other types. In other words, the supply and demand equilibrium in the market affects the sales amount and the price of the products. Therefore, it can be said that people who want to acquire ornamental plants marketing profession (floriculture) need to have knowledge and training on many fields such as the market and the protection and transportation of the products.

Due to the problem of unemployment in the world and in Turkey as well in the present day, the effects of occupational education and training in terms of creating entrepreneurs and employment for the other individuals



while doing their own business, and the florists which are one of the agricultural marketing institutions that provide brokering service for the products produced and play an effective role on marketing were particularly investigated in this research. It was examined whether occupational education and training and education level were effective in doing this profession. In the research conducted, it was found out that education level was not effective; however, it was inferred that occupational education and training would be effective in marketing and creating employment.

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