The Investigation of Future Expectations of Individuals Graduated from the Department of Child Development

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to identify the future expectations of graduates who have graduated from the child development undergraduate department and who are not currently assigned to their profession. Phenomenological pattern, a qualitative research method, was utilized in the study. The study was conducted with 14 graduated from the department of child development, 13 of whom were female and 1 male, who were preparing for the Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS) in a private teaching institution located in the Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkey. Participants were chosen using criterion sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods. The research data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Descriptive and content analysis methods were used to analyze the data. The gathered data were coded, categorized into themes, and evaluated. When the opinions of the individuals who graduated from the child development department about their future expectations are examined; it is detected that the participants chose to study in this department for various reasons, including a fondness for children, the ease of getting a job, and having studied the same subject in their previous educational life, they have fears for the future, they want to be in a positive social environment in the future, they have professional and career objectives for their field, desire a prosperous economic future, question the criteria for appointment or finding a job in their field, have a tendency to come up with alternate solutions for getting hired or finding a job, place importance on personal growth in order to live a good life, and have various plans for their personal life.

Keywords: Future expectation, Child development, Finding a job, Good life, Fondness for children

Introduction

From an early age, people make an effort to have a better future. So much so that investing in the future is in human nature. The modern way of living necessitates people to improve their living conditions and secure their future. Efforts must be commenced now to have a better and more peaceful future. In line with this purpose, people make plans for the future and attempt to implement those plans as time goes by. The ability to set goals for the future and work towards that vision is a significant accomplishment. However, each individual's future-oriented ideas, activities, and investments vary from person to person. Then, what kind of future do we envision for ourselves, and what are our future expectations? The fact that people have different worldviews and different understandings regarding the meaning of life makes their answers to these questions also different. People with different life philosophies also have different expectations for the future regarding their careers, titles, financial well-being, private and family lives, academic attainment, and other aspects of their life. Then, what is this "future expectation"? The definition of the word "expectation" is "what is expected to occur" or "a person's forecast about the forms that particular events and situations would take or what is expected of him" (TDK, 2022). Expectations are future-oriented. Future expectations are the person's future goals and the road maps that lead to those goals (Koçak & Çepni, 2017). In order to realize their goals for the future, young people engage in efforts that foster growth and transformation. Certainly, the challenges young people face and their expectations for the future are significant in terms of their mental well-being and happiness, as well as the development and evolution of the environment in which they belong (Yavuzer et al., 2005: 94).

A person's expectation of the future is a complicated and multi-directional process. The future expectations of an individual are influenced by various factors, including their knowledge of the surrounding environment, the viewpoints of those with whom they interact, their past experiences, their social, psychological, and financial situation, as well as their drive for success. Another characteristic of the human mind and behavior is an orientation to future events and outcomes (Nurmi, 1991). This orientation is a natural process in which humans engage, and it is necessitated by the modern way of living. In recent years, psychological theories have focused on future orientation (Nurmi, 1991). A person who does not think about or plan for the future may come to regret it after a certain time. Various studies have reported that children and adolescents with optimistic future expectations and plans are less likely to experience psychological and social problems later in life (McCabe & Barnett, 2000).

For young people, in particular, it is crucial to think ahead and make future-oriented plans (Nurmi, 1991). The future expectations of young people have been the subject of many national and international studies (Aktaş, 2016; Alagöz, 2018; Avar, 2019; Başkonuş et al., 2011; Cunningham et al., 2009; Daigle & Hoffman, 2018; Ege, 2018; Iovu et al., 2018; İleri, 2019; McCabe & Barnett, 2000; Michael, 2019; Savcı, 2016; Schmid et al, 2011; Stoddard & Pierce, 2015; Şahin, 2021; Topaktaş, 2015; Tuncer, 2011; Türkön, 2019). The sample populations of these studies include young people at risk, young people who have experienced violence, high school students, and college students. When the literature is reviewed, it is observed that studies have been conducted on the future expectations of Turkish students. These studies include secondary school students (Baş, 2019), high school students (Alagöz, 2019; Avar, 2019; Ege, 2019; İflazoğlu et al., 2021; Savcı, 2016; Selek Şahin, 2021; Şimşek, 2012; Türkön, 2019), university students majoring in tourism (Davras & Alili, 2019), engineering faculty, economics faculty, law faculty (Koçak & Çepni, 2017), associate degree students (Akbaşlı et al., 2017; İleri, 2019; Tekin & Akgemci, 2018; Üzüm & Uçkun, 2015), business administration majors (Aytar & Soylu, 2019), education faculty majors (Başkonuş et al., 2011), and students majoring in the faculty of administrative and managerial sciences. As can be seen, studies have been conducted on the future expectations of Turkish university students enrolled in a variety of departments.

Depending on their expectations of financial gain and ease of assignment/employment, young people in Turkey may have different preferences for the university they want to attend and the department they wish to study at. These preferences are also influenced by a variety of other factors, such as the cost of living in the city where the university they wish to attend is located; the university's prestige; social opportunities; family; role models; geographical location; cultural values; past experiences; and similar factors; as well as financial gain and the ease of finding a job or assignment. The individual's decision as to which institution he will attend and which major he will pursue there will have an impact on determining his future professional life and career (Topoğlu & Topoğlu, 2018). In recent years, the department of child development has risen to prominence among the departments preferred by young people in Turkey. This may have been influenced by the launch of department-specific distance education programs, the ease of assignment/finding a job, and the broad employment opportunities(nursery, nursing home, hospital, and so on).

The education on child development is provided at the secondary, vocational (two-year), and undergraduate (four-year) levels. Moreover, there are undergraduate child development departments affiliated with faculties of health sciences, health colleges, schools of health sciences, open education, and open and distant education faculties in our country (Doğan-Keskin & Bayhan, 2020). The Child Development Department conducts studies on the health and education of children (Doğan-Keskin & Bayhan, 2020). The department of child development (high school, associate degree, and undergraduate) is one of the departments in which young people have a great deal of interest. Individuals who graduated from the relevant department can find employment in various private and public institutions, including hospitals, social service organizations, and educational institutions. Graduates of the department can find employment in private day nurseries, kindergartens, nurseries, playschools, hospitals, and day-care centers. Additionally, graduates from undergraduate programs who complete initial teacher training are eligible to work as teachers in public or private institutions. Those who graduate from this department and wish to work in government institutions must pass the Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS) with a sufficient score. Every year, thousands of students graduate from this department. Therefore, it has become an important issue to determine the future thoughts and plans of the individuals who have graduated from the department. As a result of the review of the relevant literature, no study investigating the future expectations of child development department graduates in our country was detected. Accordingly, we believe this study will fill this gap in the literature. Moreover, we believe that the findings of this study will contribute to the relevant literature.

The present study investigates the future plans and expectations of individuals who graduated from the department of child development at the universities. In line with this objective, the answer to the following question was sought:

What are the future expectations of individuals who graduate from the child development department?

Method

Research Design

This study aims to shed light on the feelings, thoughts, understanding, and expectations of individuals who graduated from the department of child development. Moreover, this study aims to investigate the perspectives held on the concept of "future expectations" by individuals who have graduated from the department of child development. To achieve this objective, a qualitative research method was utilized in this study. In qualitative research, perceptions and events are presented in a natural setting realistically and holistically (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). This form of research incorporates certain philosophical orientations and approaches (Merriam, 2013). Qualitative researchers collect data through document analysis, behavior observations, and participant interviews (Creswell, 2013). In accordance with the qualitative research methodology, in-depth interviews with the participants were conducted for this study.

Participants

This study, which aims to identify the future expectations of the participants, was carried out with individuals preparing for the Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS) in a private teaching institution in the Eastern Anatolia Region of Turkey. The participants were selected using criterion sampling, one of the methods of purposive sampling. Conditions that meet a number of predetermined criteria by the researcher are addressed using the criterion sampling method (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Since this research aims to identify the future expectations of child development graduates, the primary criterion for selecting participants is that they must have graduated from the department of child development and be preparing for the Public Personnel Selection Exam. The research was conducted with a total of 14 graduates of child development, consisting of 13 females and one male. The ages of the participants ranged from 23 to 34, with a mean age of 27,3. During this process, five of the participants (K2, K4, K5, K10, K11) are working at a private institution, while nine(K1, K3, K6, K7, K8, K9, K12, K13, K14) of them are unemployed. The primary objective of all participants is to take the KPSS exam and be appointed to government staff. Twelve of the participants live with their parents, while the other two live alone. One of the participants is married (P13) and the others are single.

Data Collection Tool, Data Collection and Ethic

The data was gathered using the interviewing method in line with qualitative research designs (Merriam, 2013). Interviews provide a direct source for quoting the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the participants being interviewed. (Patton, 2014). In this regard, the research employed a semi-structured interview form. During the process of preparing the questions that will be included in the interview form, the previous studies investigating the future expectations of individuals were reviewed in order to serve the purpose of the research, (Booth, et al., 2020; Daigle & Hoffman, 2018; Davras & Alili, 2019; Ilgar & Cihan, 2019; İflazoğlu, et al., 2021; Michael, 2019) and a total of twelve open-ended questions were generated. Expert opinion was taken to determine the suitability of the prepared questions for the intended purpose. In light of the feedback from the experts, some questions were eliminated from the form, and some were reintroduced with revisions. Consequently, an eight-question semi-structured interview form was developed. Before conducting the interview, a pilot application was carried out with two pre-service teachers preparing for the KPSS to assess whether the questions were intelligible; it was concluded that they were understandable. The participants were informed of the purpose of the research, how the data would be used, the study's ethical guidelines, and its commitment to confidentiality before the interview commenced. The participants' consent was taken for the interview, and they were informed that they could terminate the interview at any moment and that the data collected would be used solely for scientific purposes. In addition, participants were coded as Participant-1 (P1), Participant-2 (P2), and so on to ensure their confidentiality.

Data Analysis

The gathered data was analyzed using descriptive and content analysis. During the interviews, the participants' responses were initially transmitted to a computer environment, and then the data entered into the computer was revised. Using the obtained data, codes were generated. Then, the related codes were identified and grouped according to particular themes. In the data analysis, two independent researchers concurrently developed a code list, and the codes were then compared. The points of disagreement between the two independent researchers were discussed, and subsequently, a consensus was reached. The Miles and Huberman (1994) reliability calculation formula was employed to establish the reliability of the coding. As a result of the calculation, the reliability between coders was determined to be 91.5%.

Validity and Reliability

In order to ensure the validity and reliability of the study, certain measures were taken. In qualitative research, various methods are used to improve validity and reliability (Merriam, 2013). Some of the findings gathered through data analysis were shared with a group of participants, and their accuracy was confirmed. Data were collected from fourteen participants. The researcher collected data from various participants, and when it was observed that the data fell into repetition after fourteen participants, it was determined that the saturation point for the data had been achieved, and the data collection process was terminated. The semi-structured interview form utilized in the interviews with the participants was submitted for expert review. During the data analysis phase of the study, a second independent researcher was utilized, and discussions were conducted with this researcher. The data obtained in the study are described in detail. Additionally, some participants' views were directly quoted.

Results

The findings of this study, which explores the future expectations of child development graduates, are presented under themes developed based on the participant's responses to the survey questions.

Examining the Opinions of Child Development Graduates Regarding Reasons for Choice of the Department of Child Development

Table 1 presents the themes and codes derived from the responses of graduates of the department of child development regarding their reasons for choice of the department they study.

Table 1. Opinions of child development graduates on the department they study

Theme	Code	f
	Affection towards children	3
	Interest in children/department	2
	Ease of assignment/finding a job	2
Reasons for choosing the department	Having studied the department during the previous educational period	2
	Having effective communication with children	1
	Popularity	1
	To be a better parent	1
	Not my choice	1

When Table 1 is examined, it becomes clear that the participants' reasons for choosing the child development department were varied. Three participants stated that they chose this department due to their affection for children, the pleasure of spending time with children, and the positive feelings associated with spending time with them. In this context, P6 stated, *"I study in this department because I enjoy caring for children, teaching them, and spending time with them. Caring for them is like therapy for me. Yes, I adore children and enjoy what I do for a living—looking after children at work is like therapy for me."* On the other hand, P14 stated, *"I studied the department of child development with passion and affection. I love children very much. I really enjoy spending time with them. Honestly, I chose this department in order to start a nursery and spend time with the children in the future."*

Two participants indicated that they chose this department due to their interest in child development. For example, while P8 stated, *"I purposefully chose this department because I was interested in children's development.* P9 stated, *"I chose this department since I was interested in it and believed it to be a familiar field for me."*

Two of the participants stated that they chose this department because they believed its graduates could easily obtain employment or be assigned. In this context, P3 explained her preference for the department in question as follows: *"I chose this department since it is a department that offers good opportunities and provides ease of assignment and finding a job."* On the other hand, P4 stated, *"The year I decided which university to attend, I was drawn to the department of child development because it offered successful assignment rates. The fact that the assignment status is not favorable at this time has given me some regret."*

Two participants stated they chose this department since it was the department they studied in throughout high school. The opinions of those who formed these codes, P7 and P4, are as follows: *"I studied this department in high school and realized I would enjoy working in this sector.", "I chose the child development department voluntarily." Since I studied the department of child development in a vocational high school, I already had some background knowledge on that subject. Since I am quite fond of children, I felt this department was a good fit for me."*

One participant (P8) reported that she communicated well with children and stated, *"My interaction with children is also quite successful, and I can communicate with adults, mainly parents, very effortlessly."* One of the participants (P1) stated that she chose this department because it was popular and stated the following: *"When I chose the department of child development, it was a department in great demand. Considering that everyone eventually starts a family, it only seems sense that everyone should be knowledgeable about child development. It should be expected of all adults in our society to have some familiarity with child development, but in reality, this topic is given considerably less importance than it deserves in our country. I hope this perception will change and the department of child development will be given more attention."* One of the participants (P5) stated that she chose this department to educate her daughter better and be more helpful to her. She also shared the following opinions: *"I have a daughter. I decided to study in this department to benefit my daughter's education and upbringing."* In addition, one participant (P2) pointed out that she did not choose this department on her own, but that her teachers did, and she voiced the following opinion: *"To be honest, I desired to study in a different department, but my score was not sufficient to get in. So, I let my professors decide for me. My teachers thought this department was a good fit for me. "*

Examining Child Development Graduates' Opinions about Future Concerns

Table 2 displays the themes and codes derived from the opinions of child development department graduates about their future concerns.

Table 2. Child development graduates' opinions about future concerns

Theme	Code	f
	Failure to have a job/failure to be assigned	6
	Failure to give a suitable upbringing for a child	2
	Reliance on the private sector	1
Concern about future	The gradual diminution of the department's advantages	1
	Uncertainty	1
	Inhumane living conditions	1

Examining Table 2 reveals that the participants have different concerns about their future lives. Six participants were concerned that they would be unable to find employment or be appointed in the future. Regarding this topic, P7 stated, *"Concern for the future, the thought of what I would do if I am not appointed."* On the same topic, P8 stated, *"I am quite concerned about the current state of affairs. Unfortunately, I have anxiety over not finding employment. "*

Two participants stated that when they have their children, they fear being unable to raise them properly, provide them with a good education, or teach their children the values they were taught. In this regard, P2 *stated, "When it comes to my children, I worry that I won't be able to put into practice my professional experience, practice, and learning outcomes."* while P8 stated *"Once we become parents, I am concerned about the quality of education and upbringing we will be able to provide our children."*

One of the participants (P2) stated that he feared not being appointed to the government in the future and becoming reliant on the private sector, expressing his opinion as *"I worry about always being dependant on the private sector."* One of the participants (P4) expressed concern that the child development department's advantages might gradually diminish, expressing her opinion as follows: "*Currently, this department's graduates can easily find employment. This is a benefit, but I'm concerned that it come to an end.*" One of the participants (P5) stated that she feared that her future was uncertain, adding, *"I worry that my future is uncertain and that I will not have a clear path."* Lastly, one of the participants (P1) stated that she feared she would not be able to live a humane life in the future, saying, *"I have mainly anxieties about not being able to live a humane life."*

Examining the Opinions of Child Development Graduates on the Social Environment/Life They Desire in the Future

Table 3 presents the themes and codes derived from the opinions of child development department graduates regarding the social environment/life they desire in the future.

Table 3. The opinions of child development graduates on the social environment/life they desire in the future

Theme	Code	f
	Simple/normal/ordinary life	3
	An environment where I can put my plans into action	1
	Application area of specialization	1
	A better environment than today	1
The social environment/life they desire in the future	An environment where I can help others	1
	In the midst of nature, far from technology	1
	Being well-known in one's profession	1
	A fair life	1
	An environment with a high social status	1
	An environment where I can educate children	1

Examining Table 3 reveals that the participants have different expectations regarding their future social lives and environments. Three of the participants expressed a desire to live in a social environment that is simpler, normal, and more ordinary in the future. In this regard, P1 stated, *"I desire a life of simplicity. I want simple and ordinary individuals to be around me. To be more precise, I would like to go back to my village. I care about the village's environment and strong bonds of friendship and affection. This is what everyone desires eventually and the best social circle is where you belong. I hope to find this, however, it does not seem likely."* P1 desired to be in a simple group environment in the future, although it appears she had concerns. Within the scope of this code, P3 states, *"The future environment I desire is a simple, minimal life with real people, as far away as possible from unneeded, complex, and harmful individuals. I desire self-actualization in that life."*

One of the participants (P2) desired an environment where she could put her plans into practice and said: *"I want a fulfilling social life that allows me to fully realize my objectives. Specifically, a social environment where I can implement my plans would be ideal."* K4 echoed this view, expressing a need for a more private environment in which to apply her field-specific knowledge and expressed her opinion as follows: *"In the future, I would like to be in a place where I can put into practice what I have learned about this department and where I can fully practice my child development expertise."* One of the participants (P6) stated that she would like to live in a more social environment in the future and said, *"I mean, it can be better than what I have now. In other words, we want the life to which we are entitled—a normal and humane life."* One of the participants (P7) mentioned that she desired to live in an environment where she could help others and said, *"I want to have a social life where I can help myself and others, where I can reach out to as many people as possible and provide a little joy to their day and a smile to their face."* Within the scope of this theme, one participant (P8) stated that she wanted to live in an environment far from technology and in the midst of nature, adding *"I desire an environment where children may grow up without the influence of mobile phones, tablets, computers, and the internet. I want children to have an environment where they can play games and learn to love animals and nature. I would like to be in a peaceful family environment."* One of the participants (P9) indicated that she desired to be a well-known figure in her are of profession and stated, *"I want to be very successful and well-known figure in my field. I want to be known for my work."* Meanwhile, one participant(P11) desired a fair life by adding, *"A fairer life where I can live in peace with people."*, one (P13) desired to live in an environment with high social status by adding, *"I want to be part of a more educated environment with a vision that goes*

beyond a diploma.", one (P14)desired an environment suitable for raising children by adding, *"My first social plan for my future job is to spend time with children in the nursery."*

Examining Child Development Graduates' Opinions on Their Future Career and Professional Advancement

Table 4 presents the themes and codes derived from the opinions of child development department graduates regarding their future careers and professional advancement.

Table 4. Child development graduates' opinions on their future career and professional advancement

Theme	Code	f
	Being appointed	7
	Studying for master degree	2
Career and career advancement	Starting a business related to the field	2
	Despair	1
	Writing a book	1
	Working as a manager in a children's institution	1

Examining Table 4 reveals that child development graduates have different plans for their future careers and professional advancement. Within the scope of this theme, seven participants stated appointment as their primary objective in their related field. In this regard, P6 stated, *"My biggest dream is to be appointed.."* and P7 stated *"I desire to get appointed and serve as a source of hope for my students and their families by participating in training in my profession"* , P8 stated,*"As a career objective, I wish to be appointed in the field of child development and to offer assistance to those who study and reside in institutions related to child development."* and P14 stated,*"My primary goal is to be appointed…."*

Two participants stated that they desired to study for a master's degree in their field, and P4 added, *"In the future, I plan to pursue a master's degree in my department. I wish to become more knowledgeable and become a specialist in the field of child development."* On the same subject, P14 stated *"After getting appointed, completing a master's degree in this department is one of my top priorities."*

Within the scope of this topic, two participants expressed their intent to start a business in their relative fields. In this regard P6 stated *"I plan to establish a new kindergarten that will be educationally and structurally different from the existing kindergartens."* while P14 stated *"I want to start an institutional nursery. "*

In keeping with this theme, one participant (P3) expressed having a desire for career and professional advancement in the future but that she lacked confidence that this would materialize, stating: *"I have career plans in the future, but I don't know how, or when they will take place. In truth, I do not see a bright future for myself."* On the same subject, one participant stated, *"I intend to become an expert in my field and write a book."*, another participant (P11) wanted to be a manager in a children's institution, stating, *"I want to be a manager in an institution for children, such as a kindergarten, nursery, or care house."*

Examining Child Development Graduates' Opinions on Their Future Financial Situation

Table 5 presents the themes and codes derived from the opinions of child development department graduates regarding their financial situation in the future.

Table 5. Child development graduates' opinions on their financial situation in the future

Theme	Code	f
	Low expectation	7
Financial future	High expectation	2
	Concerned	1

Examining Table 5 reveals that individuals who graduated from the department of child development have varying opinions regarding their financial situation in the future. Seven of the participants seem to have low expectations for their financial situation in the future. In this regard, P1 stated *"There's a good chance I won't do well financially. It has nothing to do with me; it's just how the system works. There is nothing to do. We have to get used to this situation.",* P4 stated, *"I desire to be wealthy, but I have little faith that it will come true given*

the current circumstances.", and P6 stated, *"If things keep going the way they are, I don't think things are going to end well for us financially. I can not even buy gummy bears anymore!"*

Two of the participants have high expectations about the financial situation in the future. As part of this code, P11 *stated, "I have high hopes that my financial situation will improve in the future"* while P14 stated, *"Things will not always play out this way. That's what I think. I believe I will be in a much better position financially."*

In addition, one of the participants (P2) expressed concern for the future financial situation if the current conditions persisted, stating, *"In addition, one of the participants (P2) expressed concern for the future financial situation if the current conditions persisted, stating, "I am concerned that if things keep going the way they are, my future financial situation would not be good. I fear I will be unable to stop living off my father's money with the way things are."*

Examining the Opinions of Child Development Graduates Regarding Future Employment/Appointment

Table 6 presents the themes and codes derived from the opinions of child development department graduates regarding their status of future assignment and finding employment.

Table 6. Opinions of child development graduates regarding future employment/appointment

Theme	Code	f
	Alternative plans	5
Appointment/employment	Hopeful	4
	Despair	2

Examining Table 6 reveals that the individuals who graduated from the department of child development had differing opinions on getting appointed and finding employment. As can be seen, five of the participants came up with alternative solutions for finding employment and getting appointed. Accordingly, these participants want to be appointed to state institutions, but if this does not work out, they will seek employment in private organizations that are related to their fields. In this context, P4 stated *"I am thinking of trying for another year or two to be appointed. If I am not appointed to state institutions, I will continue to work for private ones."* , while P8 stated *"Even though working in the private sector is very challenging, it is a good alternative when there isn't an opening in the government. We are lucky in this regard, because we can also work in the private sector"*. On the same subject, P14 stated the following: *"If I am not appointed, I plan to work at a rehabilitation center or a kindergarten in the future."*

On the other hand, it was determined that four of the participants were optimistic about finding employment and getting appointed within the scope of this theme. On this matter, P3 stated, *"I will get appointed, have a good job, and be a respected woman in my profession.",* P7 stated, *"In the future, I will be appointed as a teacher and rejoined with my students and career."* and P10 stated, *"I consider my chance of appointment to be high."*

Two of the participants expressed pessimism regarding their chances of getting appointed or finding employment. In this regard, P1 stated *"I have no hope of getting appointed and finding an employment, as the department I am studying is not given the importance it deserves. This being the case, it is difficult to be optimistic about getting appointed. That's why it's hard to find a job."* On the same subject, P12 stated, *"It used to be a department with a high rate of appointment, but now it has become difficult to find a job for those who graduated from this* department."

Examining the Opinions of Child Development Graduates on Their Future Private and Family Lives

Table 7 presents the themes and codes derived from the opinions of child development department graduates regarding their future private and family lives.

Table 7. Opinions of child development graduates on their future private and family lives

Theme	Code	f
	A happy family life	5
Private life/family life	Traveling / Vacation	2
	Not getting married	2
	Getting married and having children	1

Examining Table 7 reveals that the graduates of the department of child development have varying opinions on their future private and family lives. Within the scope of this topic, five respondents expressed a desire to have a happy and peaceful family in the future. Accordingly, P1 stated *"As a child developer, I want a happy life with my spouse and children. I would like to move my family to the village and live there."* Meanwhile, P6 stated *"I desire to live a peaceful, modest life with my family. I envision a future in which we can spend every moment together, unwind, and enjoy life side by side."* and P7 stated *"I desire a more peaceful life with my family. I intend to be a caring mother to my spouse and children."*

Two individuals (P6, P8) expressed a desire to travel and see new places in the future, as well as to explore new destinations. In this regard, P3 stated *"Once appointed, I will travel regularly. I have certain plans and places to travel in mind. I have to go and see them."* while P5 stated *"I wish to explore and travel many places. I want to see places that I do not know and have not been to before."*

It is seen that two of the participants (P3, P5) do not intend to marry, however one participant (P14) wants to marry and start a family. In this regard, P3 stated *"I do not intend to get married in the future."*, P5 stated *"If I earn enough money, I will never marry. Though I will not get married even if I don't earn enough."* and P14 stated *"My primary future objective is to be appointed. Then I want to get married and have at least two children since I am so passionate about this field. I want to be a mother and experience this feeling."*

Examining Child Development Graduates' Opinions on Their Desire to Study in a New Department in the Future

Table 8 presents the themes and codes derived from the opinions of child development department graduates regarding their desire to study in a new department in the future.

Table 8. Child development graduates' opinions on their desire to study in a new department in the future

Theme	Code	f
	Special education	2
	Faculty of law	1
Studying in a new department in the future	Speech and language therapist	1
	Classroom teaching	1
	Art teaching	1
	Journalism	1
	Psychology	1

Examining Table 8 reveals that graduates of the department of child development are interested in studying departments unrelated to their fields in the future. Two participants (P7, P12) reported interest in special education, one (P3) in law school, one (P5) in speech and language therapy, one (P9) in classroom teaching, one (P10) in art teaching, one (P11) in journalism, and one (P14) in psychology. In this regard, P7 stated *"In the future, I wish to study special education and become more competent in this field."*, P12 stated, *"I will study in the special education department."*, P3 stated, *"I want to study in the faculty of law in the future. I believe that I should study in this department because it is my dream job."*, P5 stated, *"I would like to be a speech and language therapist in the future. Since I feel like I'm lacking in this area, I'd like to get some training and improve myself in this field."*, P9 stated *"After getting my life in order, I intend to study in the department of classroom teaching.",* P10 stated, *"I want to study in the art teaching department. I was studying in this field, but I had to drop out due to personal reasons. Mine was an unfulfilled dream."*, P11 stated, *"I'm planning to study journalism. It's a dream that will take a long time to realize, but it will."* , lastly, P14 stated, *"I will take the university exam again and this time I am planning to study psychology."*

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was conducted to identify the future expectations of individuals who graduated from the department of child development. Fourteen (14) graduates of a child development program in a province in eastern Turkey participated in this study. These students were receiving education in a teaching institution that provides prepearation courses for KPSS. The study revealed the participants' reasons for choosing the department they are currently enrolled in, their concerns about their future lives, the social environment they want to be part of, the social life they desire to lead, their goals for their professional advancement and career steps, and financial situations they envision for themselves, their plans for getting appointed and finding employment, the family

structures they hope to have in the future/their private lives, and their opinions on the departments they wish to study in the future. It has been determined that the participant's choice of the child development department was influenced by various factors, including their affection for children, being more interested in children, a sense of familiarity with the department, the high potential of getting appointed and finding employment upon graduation, having completed their high school education on the same subject, having a good level of communication with children, the department's popularity among young people in our country, and their desire to raise their children more effectively with the help of the education they received. In addition, it was found that one of the participants did not choose this department on his own. On this basis, it was determined that individuals who graduated from the Department of Child Development chose this department for various reasons.

In the study conducted by Tezcan (2018) with university students, it was determined that the participants had different tendencies when it came to their career decisions, being principled, unplanned, and passive. Previously, we mentioned that one of the participants (P2) did not choose this department voluntarily; this was not the department he desired to study. However, his score on the university entrance exam did not qualify him for the department he wanted to study, and he chose this department with the guidance of his teachers. It has been observed that young people's expectations for the future decrease if they do not make career decisions based on their own preferences (Tezcan, 2018). Upon examination of this participant's (P2) responses to additional interview questions, it was determined that she exhibited future-related fears and concerns. This conclusion is comparable to the scenario described by Tezcan (2018).

As a result of examining the opinions of the participants, it was determined that they had differing views regarding the future social environment or social life they desire. It was observed that participants' ideas on the subject were as follows: an environment where they can put their plans into action, where they can use their expertise in the field of child development, a better environment than their current one, an environment where they can help people, close to nature and away from technology, an environment that provides a fair life, one with good social standing, and one in which children can be educated. After graduation, young people in our country may not easily find employment and get appointed. Long-term preparation for KPSS may be required to get appointed to the state staff. They can be subjected to more criticism from those around them as the exam preparation process prolongs. In order to avoid these negative criticisms, many individuals choose to pursue simpler and easier options. One of the findings of Ilgar and Cihan's (2019) study with students in the department of sports management suggests that the participants are displeased with their social environment and believe that their problems stem from there. Moreover, Aytar and Soylu's (2019) study with students in the business administration department revealed that families are the primary contributors to the problems and stress faced by young people today.

It has been determined that the opinions of child development department graduates on professional advancement and careers are predominantly to be appointed to government positions. In addition, it has been found that they have aspirations such as taking a master's degree, opening a business related to their profession (nursery, kindergarten, and so on), authoring a book, and working as management at a children's institution. In addition, it was determined that one participant lacked optimism for professional advancement and career development. Due to the increase in university graduates in our country, their professional and economic problems begin while they are still in school and only once they leave school and start the job hunt (Musayev & Akcan, 2022). Similarly, Çay and Akpınar (2022) concluded in their study that the employment opportunities and future expectations of people studying in the social services department significantly impacted feelings of despair. One other finding of the present study is that the participants are concerned about the future. It is observed that participants had varying concerns, such as the inability to be appointed to any state institution, failure to raise good children, dependency on the private sector, the gradual decrease in the advantages of the child development department, concern about what the future holds, and anxiety about living inhumanely. Young adults appointed to state institutions believe they have a more secure economic future. It is believed that young individuals whose financial status is poor or who suffer financial crises have negative future expectations. The study by Iovu, Hărăguș, and Roth (2018) conducted with young people in Romania revealed that girls who do not experience economic difficulties, have a positive self-perception, exhibit less depressive symptoms, and have a high degree of optimism had higher life expectancies than their peers.

In order to have a secure financial future, a large number of people begin a demanding work/study schedule at a young age. That is, individuals try to build their futures with the income they earn at a young age. The present study concluded that the majority of the participants in our study were pessimistic about their future financial status. It was observed that the participants showed low levels of expectations about their future economic situation, and one participant expressed concern over this matter. Failure to find a job and get appointed to state

institutions impacts the anxiety level of young people. In fact, unemployment and anxiety appear to have a negative impact on life satisfaction (Turaç & Bayın Donar, 2018). In addition, the study by Sevim and Altun (2017) found that participants had a high level of concern about their professional future. The present study revealed that some of the participants whose opinions were consulted in our study had various alternatives in terms of appointment or employment. The participants' primarty objective is to be appointed to state institutions with KPSS scores. In the event that this does not occur, they will seek employment in a private children's institution. Young people getting appointed or finding employment affects their future economic situation. On this matter, it was observed that some participants had high expectations, while some had low expectations. We believe that an increase in the number of individuals studying or graduating from any university department has a negative impact on the future expectations of those who study or graduate from that department. For instance, the rapid increase in the number of graduates from the department of social services, the limited number of appointments carried out through KPSS, and the decrease in employment opportunities have intensified the level of concern and despair of students studying in this department (Cebeci et al., 2020). It was observed that one of our participants, P2, supported this view, stating *"It used to be a department with a high rate of appointment but now it has become difficult to find a job in this department."* As stated previously, the primary objective of the participants is to pass the KPSS and get employment in government institutions. Tezcan's (2018) study reached a similar conclusion and reported that the participants desire a future that is away from uncertainty and intends to work in the government as much as possible. Although some of the participants in our study are currently working in the private sector, it was observed that they were preparing for the exam in a private teaching institution that provides preparatory training for KPSS to be appointed to state institutions. Additionally, Türköz et al. (2021) concluded in their study that individuals place value on continuing their education and personal development to reduce their future anxiety. Within the scope of this theme, it was observed that some participants had optimistic views for the future and looked forward with hope. In their study with Spanish and Portuguese adolescents, Verdugo, Freire, and Sánchez-Sandoval (2018) concluded that the participants' future expectations were optimistic despite the current financial state. Moreover, Stoddard and Pierce (2015) reported in their study that greater hope and purpose generate a more optimistic view of the future.

Moreover, it was found that the participants had opinions regarding their private and familial life in the future. In this regard, it was determined that some participants desired a happy and peaceful family life, some desired to go to the places they wanted to see, others desired to remain single without marrying, and some desired to marry and start a family. In addition, it was determined that the participants desired to study new departments in the future, including special education, law, language and speech therapy, classroom teaching, art teaching, journalism, and psychology, and that they wanted to improve themselves in these fields.

Recommendations

This study investigated the future expectations of individuals who graduated from the child development department. At the conclusion of this study, it was determined that these individuals have different future viewpoints. It has been observed that the participants had different viewpoints on the social life they envision for themselves in the future, their future financial situation, starting a family, getting appointed, finding a job, and working for the government or private institutions. The present study explored the future expectations of the participants. Future studies can be conducted to examine the future anxiety and optimism levels of individuals who have graduated from the department of child development. The study by Sevim and Altun (2017) conducted with the students of the social services department revealed that the increase in the number of departments and the number of students caused the students to be concerned about their future careers. The department of child development is a popular department among young people in Turkey. Precautions can be taken to ensure that young people studying in this department do not experience concerns about their future professions. The present study determined that some of the individuals who graduated from this department have negative expectations for the future. Researchers can conduct experimental studies that increase the future expectations of individuals who study or graduate from this department.

Scientific Ethics Declaration

The author declares that the scientific ethical and legal responsibility of this article published in EPESS journal belongs to the author.

Acknowledgements

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To cite this article:

Benek, I. (2022). The investigation of future expectations of individuals graduated from the department of child development. *The Eurasia Proceedings of Educational & Social Sciences (EPESS), 28,* 69-82.